

Athens Journal of Philology

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Intertextuality, Ecocriticism, and Human Interaction with Nature in Wilhelm Schäfer's Novella "Anckemanns Tristan" (1936). How to Engage with Literature by a Nazi Sympathizer in the Twenty-First Century

*By Albrecht Classen**

This essay makes an effort to rescue a completely forgotten novella from a German writer, Wilhelm Schäfer (d. 1952), who was, horribly dictu, a strong advocate for the Nazis at least until 1945. While fully acknowledging the highly problematic political background of the author, the analysis focuses on the intriguing and masterly intertextual operations in the text, the superior psychologizing of the emotional relationships, and the ecocritical aspects in the story which could be of considerable relevance today despite the author's explicitly formulated ideology in support of Adolf Hitler and his movement and actions.

Introduction

This paper re-introduces a highly popular German novella from the 1930s that scholarship has completely ignored but which promises to appeal to us again for numerous reasons once again. The problem with Wilhelm Schäfer's novella, "Anckemanns Tristan", consists of the author's close political affiliation with the Nazi regime. Although he continued to publish after the end of the Second World War, he does not seem to have changed his ideological outlook, so it does not surprise us at all that the modern generation of readers does not want anything to do with him or to acknowledge his literary qualities, if those can be determined and defined. In the wake of the Reception Theory, however, we have recognized the great value of source studies because the examination of literary *Quellen* (sources) sheds important light on a poet's educational background, intertextual perceptions, and the continuity of literary themes.

Because the issue to be addressed here proves to be highly complex, even within a political context, I will first reflect on the role of literature at large when created during the time of a dictatorial regime. The issue at stake consists of the question of what to include into our literary canon, as problematic as that term might be, and what to exclude. And we also need to reflect on the tension between a close reading (*immanent*) that disregards the author's biography and a social-political interpretation of texts determined by ideological value judgments.

In the case of "Anckemanns Tristan," first published in 1936 and republished many times thereafter, and this even most recently by a nationalist press in 2022, we face a huge intellectual and ethical challenge. Should we condemn this text outright because of the author's political orientation, or should we try to analyze and evaluate it first of all on its own ground in disregard of Schäfer's ideology of "Blut und Boden"?

*Professor, University of Arizona, USA.

To what extent does a poet's or author's value system matter in our critical assessment of their narratives or poems? Can we associate musical compositions such as the *Carmina Burana* by Carl Orff (1937) with the Nazi regime or its ideology just because they were composed during that time period?

Even Günter Grass's admission that he had joined the "Waffen SS" as a young man (see his interview online on July 2, 2007, at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_U_Rz7BxdBY) has not changed our high estimation of this winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1999. Why has Schäfer hence suffered the complete condemnation and then ignorance by modern readers? This paper does not intend to reanimate the previous admiration for this Naturalist and probably Fascist writer, but it turns to just one of his short prose texts which stands out for its value as a story about the world of people living in the Rhinelands and whose existence is deeply determined by the Rhine. Surprisingly, this lends itself exceedingly well to a modern ecocritical reading and a much more reflective and considerate approach to literature produced within a dictatorial system. We can also recognize in this story a remarkable example of a complex intertextual strategy which makes this novella, despite its certainly problematic ideological background, to a valuable contribution to the history of German literature in the twentieth century.

The Oddity and Contradictory Nature of the Literary Canon

To gain a global understanding of the ups and downs of the literary canon, let us first consider what is regularly happening in the field of humanist scholarship. The literary process is marked by many turns and twists, much dependent on our current political or ideological stance and our willingness to look back and evaluate what has preceded us in an unbiased manner. Public and scholarly tastes and values have changed in the course of time, as is also reflected in the curricula at the school and college level. Research has discussed the issue of canonicity for a long time, and each generation of scholars and readers faces the same necessity to reorient themselves in an ever-widening field of literary documents from the past and present. Bestseller lists are very poor postmarks to help us to assess older or contemporary works since the public opinions easily change, vacillate, or move into new directions responding to constantly changing social, political, religious, ethical, or material conditions.

To help us out of this quagmire, literary historians have regularly produced vast outlines, *Literaturgeschichten* (literary histories), literary encyclopedia, lexica, and other reference works, but those have also proven to be subject to value judgments, ideals, and political, religious, or aesthetic concerns. One of the most recent efforts in this regard consists of the online reference work, *Literary Encyclopedia*. The editors have been highly open to anything we would critically identify as 'literary,' even if individual texts might not fall into the 'canon,' however defined (<https://www.litencyc.com/>; it is a reference work that requires readers to pay for access, but many libraries have a subscription).

Nevertheless, as research has demonstrated over a long period of time, we are not lost in a sea of randomness or arbitrariness and can identify a body of certain texts at least from the past that continue to be significant, relevant, and meaningful also for us

today and tomorrow. To point out a smattering of relevant examples; we could think of Homer's Ancient Greek *Iliad*, the Old English *Beowulf*, the Middle High German (MHG) *Nibelungenlied*, Dante's medieval Italian *Divina Commedia*, Gottfried von Strassburg's *Tristan und Isolde* (MHG), the anonymous Middle English *Pearl* and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, or Thomas Malory's *Mort d'Arthur*. The same applies to literatures from all over the world and throughout time. We only need to 'translate' them slightly for us to gain deep insight into universal human concerns, ideals, dreams, terrors, failures, or disasters. Even texts that might seem to be irrelevant for the modern audience because they are situated in different continents and remote times can thus suddenly gain great relevance for us today because of the insights proffered by the poets, if they are universally valid, as the entire school of ecocriticism, for instance, has convincingly demonstrated. Every attempt to address questions pertaining to love, death, God, the meaning of life, and our natural environment deserves our attention, so we face a very short but universal list of thematic categories that allow us to identify what literary works might be valid for us and what not.

At present time, however, the number of published literary texts has increased tremendously, and we often find ourselves lost in a quantitative quagmire regarding the proper selection of contemporary novels, plays, or poems and might hence have to wait several decades to determine retrospectively what works have passed the test of time. A simple gauge or litmus test, however, would be, which also applies to modern films, music, paintings, etc., whether readers or respondents find enough material or productive ideas in a narrative work to continue the discourse initiated by a poet, whether we agree with him/her or not (as to bestsellers, triviality, and the canon, Classen & Parra Membrives 2016, as to the canon within the context of world literature, Longxi 2024, cf. also the contributions to Bradford et al. 2024).

Fortunately, or misfortunately, we often do not know anything about the biographical background of medieval poets and must hence rely entirely on the textual evidence, which in a way frees us from ideological concepts prevalent in that period. But these constraints have come off fully since ca. 1500, which has opened the doors for many ideologically predetermined value judgments in modern times. We currently witness, for instance, a growing criticism of famous poets from the past who are now suddenly attacked and even rejected because of their presumed racism, imperialism, colonialism, misogyny, and other evil categories, such as famous Joseph Conrad with his *Heart of Darkness* (1899).¹

Books have been condemned and burned throughout the ages, whether by the Holy See, the Spanish Inquisition, the Nazis, or by conservative and religious groups in the United States at current time (2025/2026).² However, unreflectively condemning any literary work for ideological or religious reasons always takes us to a

¹For one list of specific titles viewed now as highly problematic, see <https://libguides.cedarcrest.edu/c.php?g=1058230&p=7750687>; or <https://specificwriters.com/problematic-authors-can-we-separate-the-art-from-the-artist/>; see also the contributions to Derbew, Orrells, and Vasunia, eds., 2025; for pedagogical approaches, see the contributions to Macaluso and Macaluso, eds., 2019).

²See, e.g., <https://pen.org/banned-books-list-2025/>; chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcgiclfindmkaj/<https://docs.house.gov/meetings/GO/GO02/20220407/114616/HHRG-117-GO02-20220407-SD018.pdf>; both last accessed on Jan. 7, 2026).

slippery slope because it could blind us to the narrative's possibly intrinsic value and would make us subject to our own ideological bent. There is, for instance, a certain danger to discard many of our most valuable literary works from the past in the name of modern efforts to recenter the margin, to combat gender inequalities, and to fight against ideological enemies perceived as a threat to a true democracy. These efforts might satisfy our current political values but they would also threaten to deprive us of our most precious cultural heritage. In art history, for instance, we face the highly thorny issue whether we should be iconoclasts and remove the images or sculptures of those individuals we no longer identify with, or whether we should acknowledge the historical-cultural context and engage with that critically without simply destroying it or blinding ourselves to it (see the current operation in Ukraine to free the country from all Russian traces, or the most recent allegations against Cesar Chavez, March 2026).³

To reiterate the central issue, in contrast to the Middle Ages, the situation today proves to be particularly difficult and problematic because virtually every writer, poet, or playwright is identifiable as to his/her personal background, world view, or value system and can thus be associated with a certain ideology, a political concept, social, moral, and ethical attitudes, and religious orientations. This can easily lead to an interpretive process more concerned with the external or public framework than with the text's actual value, a neo-positivist approach; whereas the aesthetic, ethical, moral, or spiritual dimension of the narrative is then ignored or sidelined.

Dictatorial regimes or tyrannies have been around all over the world throughout time, so the question really looms large whether writers under their rule have enjoyed any freedom to express themselves according to their own principles or concepts, or whether they served in the interest of the one party and its leader (see, for instance, the contributions to Barbian & Sturge 2014). How would we view affirmative literature, for instance, that had been officially authorized and legitimized by a repressive government? Would we have to condemn novels or short stories today written by East German authors who supported their system between 1949 and 1990? What would we have to do in the case of white South African authors who fully embraced Apartheid, or in the case of Chilean poets who endorsed the dictator Pinochet? Undoubtedly, we must not ignore, if it is known, the author's or poet's intentions, political orientation, attitudes, or propagandistic purposes for a full interpretation of a certain text. But it seems rather questionable to give the biographical dimensions such complete priority over the intrinsic value of the actual text, artwork, or musical composition. A good example of the complexity of the matter proves to be Ernst Jünger's *In Stahlgewittern* from 1920 (revised and re-issued numerous times thereafter) which glorifies the masculine experience in the trenches during World War I on the Western Front. The Nazis greatly welcomed this work, a kind of a diary, but following World War II, it was harshly condemned, and yet it enjoys today once again a great reputation, at least outside of Germany (Schöning 2014), as the great number of translations into many different languages confirms (Vollmert 1985, Theweleit 1977, 1978, Hirschfeld 1997, Springer 2024, Schöttker 2025).

³See, e.g., <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/03/21/us/cesar-chavez-statues-murals-removed.html>.

Nazi Ideology and Contemporary Literature

To illustrate and probe the complexity, challenges, and controversy surrounding the rather problematic reading of literature produced within a dictatorship further, this study next turns to a German author who was directly involved in the Nazi regime and enjoyed high esteem well before since the 1920 and then throughout the twelve horrible years from 1933 to 1945, and who continued to publish for a few years after the end of World War II until his death in 1952. Our interest is focused on an intriguing novella, “Anckemanns Tristan,” significant also for us once again, as this article will argue, a fairly short text by an author who fully and actively sympathized with the German government under Adolf Hitler and received the highest accolades.

Wilhelm Schäfer (1908–1952) belonged to a group of poets whom we associate today with a highly conservative and nationalist/racist attitude, commonly captured by the slogan of “Blut und Boden” (blood and soil; Corni & Gies 1994, Staudenmaier 2011). Its members strongly promoted the ideal of nature, the homeland, the people’s culture, and hence the fatherland at all costs, defending their own race against non-white people, above all. Since those poets naively believed that the Nazis embraced the same values as they did, they blindly followed that political course, if they did not promote it actively themselves (Düsterberg et al. 2022, though they do not consider Schäfer). We could also argue that those who embraced “Blut und Boden” ideologically prepared the ground upon which Nazism could sprout so effectively.

During the Nazi Reich, there were only three options available for the contemporary *literati*, either to go into exile, such as Finland, Switzerland, the UK, or the USA, or to attempt to hide from government control by going into an inner exile and only to pretend to be a supporter, or, finally, to align themselves with the Nazi party and endorse its ideology. Possibly, there was also a fourth option. Authors could keep writing in a non-political, non-ideological fashion, adapt naively to the current discourse, not stir up any controversies, and thus live out the time without taking any stance, that is, to remain non-political and simply ignore the outside challenges – of course, that denial of the political reality was highly political in its own terms.

Our Focus

The purpose of this paper, however, is not to examine once again the history of German exile literature, or German Nazi literature, to name the two extremes (Dardan 2025, Longerich 2025). We also cannot discuss the situation for German writers at large during the 1930s and 1940s, which has been examined already many times (Schnell 1978, Bock & Hahn 1978). Instead, the focus will rest on one novella published in 1936, already at the height of the Nazi regime’s effort to transform all of Germany and subordinate it under its extremely right-wing ideology, which had also a deep if not devastating impact on German-language culture in every respect (Martin 2006). Was it even possible for German writers to produce quality work then which we might enjoy today simply for its aesthetic, ethical, or spiritual appeal? Or do we need to distance ourselves entirely from that period of German literature for political reasons, except those works produced by those living in exile, such as Thomas Mann,

Bertolt Brecht, Anna Seghers, or Stefan Zweig? In other words, can we separate a literary text from its author to allow it to speak for itself, irrespective of the writer's political views and ideology? Following, this study will try to pursue just that path and bring to light a small but brilliant literary masterpiece that deserves our appreciation irrespective of the author's political worldview (Klein 1960, 501–03).

An Interlude, Literally: Great Music During the Nazi Regime: Carl Orff

As horrible as the Nazi regime was, this does not necessarily mean that anything written, composed, painted, or sculptured at that time (1933–1945) would have to be condemned today. One major example from the world of music allows us to recognize the high degree of ambivalence and the amorphous nature of the relationship between the Nazis and artists/writers. Carl Orff is famous until today for having produced his hugely successful *Carmina Burana*, a cantata composed between 1935 and 1936. It was based on twenty-four satirical and erotic poems from the medieval collection *Carmina Burana* (ca. 1220, maybe created in the Monastery of Neustift near Brixen, Southern Tyrol). Having been performed for the first time in 1937, Orff's work quickly gained popular appeal and became highly renowned throughout the world, and this until today. The Nazis deeply admired these compositions as well, and when we listen to them in the present time, no one would categorize them as Nazi-inspired or as supportive of the Nazi ideology and regime (Kater 2000, Babcock 2006). No one would question Orff's musical genius and his brilliant adaptation of the thirteenth-century songs for his own purposes, which in a way revolutionized twentieth-century music (Thomas 1990, Applegate & Potter 2002). But he indirectly supported the Nazi regime without having embraced its ideology publicly, whether he wanted to or not. Would that justify us today to condemn Orff's extraordinary music because it was highly praised by the public and the German government during the 1930s? The enormous popularity of the *Carmina Burana* as symphonic performances and in countless iterations, including commercials, fully contradicts this notion.

Wilhelm Schäfer

His contemporary, Wilhelm Schäfer, certainly a very successful author of his time, was not so lucky, and he has been harshly criticized and condemned outright for his active support of the Nazis and their cultural revolution. After 1945, scholarly attention completely turned away from him, and today he is practically unknown both among researchers and the general readers (for a noble exception, Klein 1960, 501–03; he identifies him as a non-Christian who was determined by his knightly values). However, his novel *Der Hauptmann von Köpenick* (1930, *The Major from Köpenick*) contributed to some extent to the enormous popularity of this hilarious figure, who was also portrayed by Carl Zuckmayer in his actually even more popular novel from 1931, among others. Today best known might be the film version from 1956 with the famous actor Heinz Rühmann in the main role (<https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haupt>

mann_von_K%C3%B6penick).

From 1900 to 1920, Schäfer published the magazine *Die Rheinlande* (The Rhinelands) which aimed at the idealization of the Rhine landscape in history, geography, and literature, reflecting deeply on the people populating that region. Moreover, throughout his life, he created many short stories and novels, which earned him much respect, at least until 1945, when everyone who had been associated with the Nazis was suddenly greatly suspected and became, so to speak, a *persona non grata*. From early on, with the publication of his *Dreizehn Bücher der deutschen Seele* (1922, Thirteen Books of the German Soul), Schäfer became the darling of strongly nationalist readers because here he idealized or idolized the German (Aryan) character, so he was a nationalist and soon fascist in essence.

The list of his published works is very long, and in light of their highly conservative character, it is not surprising that Adolf Hitler admired him deeply and granted him the highest accolades, although he was not an official member of the NSDAP. After 1945, Schäfer published five more novels, but he was rapidly forgotten or deliberately ignored because of his ideological orientation. But a primary school, that had been opened at his birthplace, Ottrau near Alsfeld (Hesse), in 1951, was still named after him in 1977. However, in 2020, the local school board finally realized the rather problematic nature of this name and so they removed this label abruptly to distance themselves publicly from this ‘Nazi’ author (Dohnke 1996).

There is very little critical literature on Schäfer, at least from after 1951, though he was later acknowledged for his literary reflections on the Rhine (Brenner 2001, Delseit 2005). His close association with the Nazis constitutes a toxic mantra literary scholars want to avoid at all costs. Hence, the stark void in modern literary-historical research concerning Schäfer whom no one reads anymore today most likely because he has been projected as an unacceptable outcast, a follower of the Nazis.

Returning our attention to this author, and this despite many political objections we might have today, finds its justification in a number of reasons, such as his undoubtedly high level of narrative skills and broad appeal to his audience during the 1930s and 40s, and, as this article will demonstrate below, his major contribution to ecocriticism, as we call it today. Moreover, as we can observe through a close reading, we can certainly appreciate his sophisticated reception of medieval, *Sturm und Stress*, and classical literature to explore the topics of complex love relationships and generational conflicts. However, there is no intention at all to reactivate and reevaluate his political and ideological views, and the author of this study actually explicitly distances himself from those.

The focus will only rest on his novella *Anckemanns Tristan* from 1936, in which the author operates in an impressively complex mode of intertextuality (Schäfer 1947, this was republished one more time in Stuttgart, 1954, and then again in Leipzig, 2022, both times by nationalist publishers). It is based on an anecdote told by the famous classical author Heinrich von Kleist (1811), but Schäfer was not content with the simplistic outcome presented there and hence developed it considerably further, reaching in that process a remarkable literary plateau where he could effectively project sensitive and psychological character portraits and situate them deeply into their geographic framework.

The Medieval Context and Sources

The events take place primarily in Bingen, a noteworthy wine-producing town on the Rhine west of Mainz. Herr Anckemann is a robust and successful wine grower and especially a wealthy trader who takes on an orphaned boy out of a sense of moral duty because his father, who drowned in the Rhine, had worked for him as a loyal cooper. Ironically, he calls the boy 'Tristan' because he associates him with the famous medieval figure in the romance by Gottfried von Strassburg (ca. 1210) (Classen 1996). However, Anckemann has only a fragmentary memory of this medieval work and actually confuses Tristan with Parzival in Wolfram von Eschenbach's eponymous Grail romance (ca. 1205).

Parzival is initially identified as a "tumble tor," i.e., a foolish person who at first does not understand much of the world and needs extensive learning from a variety of teachers before he grows up and gains maturity. His ignorance is due to his mother's decision to raise him in a sylvan solitude to protect him from the world of knighthood after her husband, Gahmuret, had died in a war campaign. Young Parzival is, unbeknownst to himself, predestined to take over the Grail where the king is suffering badly from a wound resulting from a sexual transgression. However, Parzival, the last heir of the Grail family, is ignorant of the specific expectations and follows traditional instructions by his knightly teacher, Gurnemanz, so he does not ask about the suffering of the Grail king, Anfortas, remains silent, and thus loses the opportunity to relieve the entire Grail. Only much later does he gain the opportunity to return and then he knows what to do, which quickly leads to a happy end for himself and the rest of the world. This 'dumbness,' however, is not meant to be real stupidity; instead, Parzival operates according to the standard norms of behavior characterizing the Arthurian court, but those are no longer sufficient at the Grail, a sacred kingdom. In short, Parzival fails to demonstrate his empathy verbally, so he is expelled and then has to roam the world for a long time until he has proven himself as a worthy successor after all and is hence called back to the Grail to ask the long-awaited question (Edwards 2004/2006). In Schäfer's novella, the young protagonist performs similarly, being extremely shy, withdrawn, reserved, and acting at times rather foolishly because of a lack of education which thus justifies, in a way, Anckemann's decision to call him 'Tristan,' although he had meant 'Parzival.'

Kleist and Goethe

Anckemann uses the name 'Tristan' for the boy, which might be the wrong one in literary-historical terms because the medieval Tristan is actually the very different type of person, energetic, strategic, artistic, and brilliant in almost every way, but in the course of time, it proves to be the correct name after all because the entire story by Schäfer is predicated on a profound but problematic love story somewhat influenced by the medieval romance. But we can go much deeper than that in intertextual terms because Schäfer's source provided by Heinrich von Kleist (1777–1811) and published in the *Berliner Abendblätter* on January 1, 1811, actually drew to some extent from Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Die Leiden des Jungen*

Werther (1774), where the sorrowful protagonist cannot win the heart of his beloved lady, Lotte, so he commits suicide. Kleist was aware of this famous epistolary novel, but he changed it in a decisive way because the lover is a young aspiring tradesman, whereas the lady is married to an old man, his employer. The protagonist pines away but keeps a respectful distance, until one day, with him staying behind to supervise the business as instructed by his master, the couple goes on a trip. In the evening, the lover happens to enter her bedroom, and in a kind of trance, he lies down in her bed where he is surprised several hours later by the couple upon their sudden return. The young man wakes up, is deeply shocked and ashamed, leaves for his room, and then shoots himself. However, he does not die and recovers; whereas the old husband suffers such a shockover the sound of the shot from the pistol that he soon after dies from a heart attack. The shock from anecdote concludes with the young man finding himself in the arms of his beloved lady, whom he can marry a year later and with whom he has subsequently thirteen children.

Schäfer was much more ambitious than Kleist when he composed his *Anckemanns Tristan*, developing the background of the youthful protagonist extensively, but in that process, numerous intertextual references to medieval literature emerge as well, as it has been indicated above. Moreover, the author endeavors quite successfully to reflect intensively on the two conflicting love relationships as they develop throughout the novella. The young apprentice, Tristan, originally identified as Karl Heckenrot, works in Anckemann's business as a clerk and commands an almost calligraphic handwriting which qualifies him well to keep the ledger books. But at one point when his employer needs to go on a business trip and discovers that he has no clean shirts in his cupboard – his housekeeper who had secretly been in love with him had quit her job out of frustration over not achieving her goal of marrying Anckemann – he sends Tristan to a washing woman with his dirty laundry. The business owner, a morose and elderly lady, is helped by her young niece, Veronika Müller, whom Tristan finds immensely attractive and whom he soon falls in love with.

Tristan does not understand much of the reality around him and views the world in rather simplistic terms. Hence, people tend to laugh about him or mock him, and some even spread the rumor that he might have been responsible for the death of his foster mother because he did not report anything about her condition and was unaware of what had happened with her for a long time. For that reason, Anckemann brought him into his household and called him Tristan (meaning Parzival) to protect him from the crude people in town. Quite naturally, when he encounters the young woman, Veronika, he is entirely overwhelmed by her appearance, and he imagines unreasonably that she responds to his feelings in like fashion, though she does not say anything in that regard and only treats him kindly and jovially, apparently being much more mature than he is.

Allowing his fantasy to take charge of him, Tristan is determined to marry Veronika in the assumption that she is filled with the same emotions, which mirrors his utter ignorance of reality. This is actually closely paralleled by Parzival who, on his first venture out into the world, following his mother's advice verbatim but foolishly, encounters a lady and violently takes her ring and kisses her, though he has no erotic interest in her. However, his actions throw this poor

woman, Jeschute, into dire distress because her male partner (husband?) Orilus immediately accuses her of adultery based on the material evidence he observes upon his arrival once the stranger has left. It takes Parzival a long maturation process to encounter the couple again, to fight on her behalf, and to admit his own guilt to the other knight, who then takes back his lady and begs for her forgiveness.

One day, Tristan confronts Anckemann with his plans to marry, which greatly irritates his employer who correctly identifies this idea as a silly whim. But since Tristan is so determined, they set up a secret agreement that Anckemann would not oppose his plans if he accepts an assignment to work for a business partner in Cologne for a year without contacting Veronika. Ironically, at the same time, the latter had gotten into a bitter fight with her aunt who does not want to pay out her salary, and when Tristan visits her to say goodbye, he misreads her sorrow and downtrodden attitude as an expression of her sadness of not going to see him for such a long time.

Again, in terms of the Reception Theory, we recognize the full extent to which Schäfer had various medieval romances in mind and impressively merged and combined his sources with his own narrative, creating thereby a 'mise en abîme.' Eventually, as we will recognize, we can thus place this novella within the larger context of the reception history of the *Tristan* material from Eilhart of Oberg to Gottfried of Strassburg to Heinrich of Freiberg, and countless others throughout the centuries.

Mismatched Marriage

The very moment when the ship carrying off Tristan has departed, and this a bit early, Veronika appears and is shocked that she reached the harbor a little too late. Anckemann quickly realizes who she is and immediately finds her very attractive. So, he hires her as a replacement for his former housekeeper, a task which she handles impressively. Things soon develop as to be expected, old Anckemann decides to woo her and can eventually convince her to accept him as her husband. To some extent, she is responsible for this development herself because when he had asked her what kind of man she would be looking for as a husband, she had identified her dream man as a 'werewolf,' a beast that would take her with force and make sure to hold on to her for good. The old man believes to be that kind of person and fights for her with all his might, especially when they are all at a dance where Anckemann presents himself as a dandy dancer who occupies Veronika with all his energy. For him, this relationship helps him to demonstrate his masculinity because he can fend off younger suitors and take charge of the young woman.

The age difference between them is huge, but this does not stop him from pursuing his intention, and after their wedding, she soon gets pregnant. However, she experiences a premature birth and loses her daughter, which changes everything in her mind and attitude. Not surprisingly, her sadness and sorrow do not please her husband at all, who feels disappointed and even cheated in this marriage arrangement because he had only seen in her a cheerful, witty, and charming individual, not a person by herself with feelings he could not control. In a way,

Anckemann wanted to have this young woman as a 'plaything' to affirm his social position and sexual potency despite his older age, so he is rather disappointed when he has to realize that she has complex feelings and suffers deeply from the stillbirth of her child.

At that point, Tristan returns from Cologne, having matured considerably, and he is still in love with Veronika, although he now has to accept that her life has changed dramatically, which does not leave any room for him, which might well be a strong echo of the situation for Werther in Goethe's epistolary novella, which concludes with the young protagonist's suicide out of frustration not gaining Lotte's love, and this also by means of a pistol. More significantly, however, at this point, the anecdote by Kleist and the novella by Schäfer merge more specifically because the focus now rests on the internal tensions raging in Tristan who knows that he has lost any entitlement to Veronika's love, if he ever had any. To maintain himself emotionally, he observes strict formalities to distance himself from her, but this does not mean that his feelings for her would have diminished. This finds its expression in the following scene that is very parallel to the one already outlined by Kleist, but again, there is a unique psychological twist in Schäfer's version.

The young woman is homesick, especially since she has lost her child. Throughout her first year of marriage, she had repressed that longing completely, but Tristan, upon his return to Bingen, reminds her of the parents and the family. On his way from Cologne upstream (going south), he had passed through Godesberg near Bonn, where Veronika had originated from. Moreover, he had visited her family, apparently in the assumption that he ought to make their acquaintance since he wanted to marry their daughter.

Anckemann had consistently neglected to inform him during his time in Cologne about his own intentions with Veronika, which in reality amounts to a kind of betrayal of their mutual trust and their arrangement. The old man had not thought that Tristan would seriously pursue his marriage plans and naively assumed that spending time in the big city of Cologne would change Tristan's mind or make him fall in love with another woman there.

The Medieval Source and *Anckemanns Tristan*

In a way, we can recognize some interesting parallels with the medieval *Tristan* romance insofar as Gottfried's protagonist is also forced to leave his beloved behind and to roam the world after they both have been discovered by King Mark, Isolde's husband, *in flagrante*. Curiously, Tristan then encounters another woman with the same name, Isolde, and it might be that he is even forced, so to speak, to marry her despite the fact that his true feelings for the Irish princess remain the same. Gottfried then breaks off his account, whether by accident or intentionally, not exploring the subsequent development in marriage (Tomasek 2007, 225–27). However, in the continuations by other poets, such as Ulrich von Türling and Heinrich von Freiberg, he marries the other Isolde indeed and subsequently gets mortally wounded in a war campaign. In his desperation, he calls for the Irish princess as the only one with sufficient medical skills to save him. The latter actually arrives by ship, with a white sail, which indicates that she is truly coming because she loves him despite all the new

circumstances. But Tristan's wife, out of jealousy, lies to him and pretends that the sail is black. The forlorn man thus loses all hope ever to regain his love and life and dies, and when the original Isolde arrives in his bedroom, she follows him in death (Schausten 1999).

Kleist and Schäfer

Schäfer indirectly picked up this motif in combination with the narrative account provided by Kleist. Because Tristan delivered some news from Veronika's family, she urges her husband to let them go on a visit to Godesberg. Grudgingly, he agrees and appoints Tristan as his proxy during their absence, which proves to be highly challenging for the young man because he has to assume Anckemann's role in the business, while the latter has already assumed Tristan's role as Veronika's husband. Feeling very forlorn, the young man, taking his responsibilities very seriously, happens to notice in the evening while walking through the garden that the window in Veronika's room is open, so he enters her private space and feels completely overwhelmed by all the objects there that speak of his beloved. Like in a trance, Tristan undresses and lies down in her bed to enjoy her love at least vicariously and falls asleep.

In the meantime, the couple experienced a series of mishaps with their coach and are eventually forced to return home, where they discover Tristan in Veronika's bed, which greatly embarrasses them all. For Tristan, this is the end, he can no longer live, especially not without her love and facing social disgrace, so he returns to his room in the attic where he shoots himself in an attempt to commit suicide. Just as in Kleist's account, however, the loud boom of the pistol shocks Anckemann so much that he has a heart attack and dies the same night. Tristan, by contrast, though badly wounded, survives, and under Veronika's care, he slowly recovers. In other words, contrary to the medieval narrative tradition, the love story does not end in a tragedy, and there are clear indications that he stands to have hope for her love, after all. Kleist had quickly rounded off his anecdote with a few remarks concerning the young man's survival, the widow's new love for her suitor, and their marriage after a year of waiting. As the narrator in the anecdote comments, the couple had at the time of reporting thirteen children.

Schäfer here proves to be a much more sensitive writer than Kleist because he develops the subsequent events in a highly subtle, psychologizing manner analyzing the protagonists' hidden feeling that prove him to be an excellent novelist. Veronika, like a modern-day Isolde, constantly attends to the recovering Tristan, and at one point, when he half awakens from his coma, he sees her face bent over him. This vision fills him deeply with a sense of happiness, as revealed by a short moment of boundless joy shining forth in his face. This moment proves to be like an epiphany for her because she suddenly realizes the true force and depth of his love for her, although nothing else happens for quite some time.

Once Tristan has recovered, he resumes his previous task of managing the business without Anckemann being around anymore, but he observes a respectful distance from the widow in the clear awareness that he has no right whatsoever on

her and so cannot develop at all emotionally. So, he decides one day to organize a business trip to Cologne to sell leftover wine there, but in reality he wants to use this opportunity to escape from her and hence from his burning passion for her. Ironically, she decides to do just the same and appears at the harbor in her old clothing and simple baggage to go home again. For Tristan, this constitutes a grave challenge, but as much as he tries to maintain the mask of a disengaged person, the two ultimately grow together and we can assume that they will eventually be able to live out their love, although the narrator does not cover the future events. Very much like Gottfried, this novella concludes as a fragment and invites us to reflect upon the possible developments involving those two people.

However, in contrast to the medieval romance, although the two people separate at the end, she returning to Bingen to wait for him, and he walking all the way to Cologne to arrive there before the ship and to carry out the wine sale for the Anckemann business, they both hold their hands in silent agreement, and she observes the same bright smile on his face as it had appeared when he had briefly woken up from his coma and had seen her bending over him like in an erotic promise. They are lovers now and just need to wait out the time until her mourning would be officially over so that he can marry her, as we also know from Kleist's novella.

Ecopoetry/Ecocriticism

Even though the entire movement of "Blut und Boden" was badly compromised by the Nazis or through its representatives themselves who promoted that political ideology and so brought about their own self-destruction, we might face here a unique opportunity to discover antecedents of ecocriticism we today are deeply interested in, and this already during the 1930s. Although Schäfer worked hard on glorifying the regime's values in many of his other works, this novella stands out for its own literary quality free from any political implications, highlighting the huge impact of a natural region, here the Rhineland, on the people who live next to the river.

We have already observed the intricate intertextual web of allusions and references extending from the novella all the way back to the Middle Ages. Then we realized that the author can certainly be credited with a creative adaptation and further development of the Werther-motif and the suicide story by Goethe and Kleist respectively. Finally, we recognize also a passionate effort to bring the world of the Rhineland into profile and to allow us to grasp deeply the culture of the people living along the Rhine, growing grapes and selling wine. Until today, the same conditions determine the entire region almost all the way down to Cologne.

In recent years, scholarship has turned its attention to ecopoetry/ecocriticism in world literature and in that context to the motif of the river as a decisive factor in the lives of the people habituating along its shore. Medievalists, above all, have already identified the significant role of such bodies of water in the narrative development, giving such rivers almost an agency on their own, such as in *Herzog Ernst*, Priest Lamprecht's *Alexander*, the *Nibelungenlied* or Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival* (Classen 2018, Locher & Poser 2019).

In modern literature, rivers also matter deeply, such as in Manuel María Madiedo's novel *La maldición* (1859), in Mark Twaine's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876) and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884), Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899), Robert Müller's *Tropen: Der Mythos der Reise. Urkunden eines deutschen Ingenieurs* (1915), Werner Bergengruen's novella "Der Strom" from 1953 (Bergengruen 1986), or Zhang Chengzhi's *Rivers in the North* (1984) (García 2024). Many poets throughout time have paid great respect to the river (Abba & Onyemachi 2020, Cespedes 2025, Xausa 2025), and so did Schäfer, whose novella, however, has not yet been studied in this context. Big rivers such as the Rhine have always attracted the literary imagination, and Schäfer actually enjoyed considerable respect for his narrative skills to combine the history and lives of people with the river, as *Anckemanns Tristan* illustrates so powerfully (Balmes 2021, Göttert 2021, Nitzke 2024).

Tristan's father had worked for Anckemann but drowned together with his wife in the river during a crossing after the couple had attended a wedding. Anckemann is a very experienced wine seller and has many connections up and down the Rhine. Tristan, by contrast, knows nothing but Bingen and the environs. Only once he has met Veronika and fallen in love with her, is he forced to leave his hometown and travel down to Cologne. She comes from Godesberg, also situated on the river, and once she has learned that Tristan had visited her parents, nothing can stop her from traveling there following her stillbirth, except that the various accidents force them to return home prematurely without having reached their goal.

The most important moment associated with the Rhine comes, however, not until the very end when Tristan arranges the shipment of wine to Cologne, as a ploy to leave Veronika clandestinely. The foggy weather, however, makes it impossible for the captain to embark on the journey, and this delay provides the crucial moment during which the two lovers confront each other and open their hearts, she confessing her feelings for him and he recognizing that she is also filled with love for him. Neither one then continues with the journey on the ship; she returns home to manage the house and business, while he walks on foot down the Rhine to reach Cologne by himself where he intends to carry out the sale himself. But they silently reach a deep understanding of each other's love, and in that moment the future is already beckoning toward them, and this on the embankment of the river.

All three figures are deeply shaped by the Rhine as their geo-cultural framework, and they live and love as members of the Rhineland. Tristan's parents drowned in the river, and Veronica has come from Godesberg near Bonn down to Bingen, and always longs for going home to see her parents again. The Rhine turns into their lifeline associating them intimately with life and death. We hear a little about Anckemann's brother and his wife, and yet practically nothing about Veronika's parents, but they also belong to the larger community of river people, as we could call them. Water matters all the time, first swallowing Tristan's parents, then in the workshop of Veronika's aunt, the river itself as the central mode of transportation of people and goods, and Tristan's interrupted flight away from Veronika, which ends up in both their admission of love for each other. Only because the ship with both of them on board cannot proceed due to the fog, the time then comes for their open conversation, and we can assume that there will be a happy end because both figures find themselves and can thus bridge the distance between their fantasies

and social reality, allowing true and deep love to flourish in their partnership (Klein 1960, 503).

Schäfer as a Nazi – What to do in this Case?

If we did not know anything about Schäfer's biography, as was commonly the case in medieval literature, we could easily appreciate his novella as a literary gem for all the reasons outlined above. We would hence be able to embrace *Anckemanns Tristan* as a valuable contribution to Rhineland literature, as an intriguing fictional account determined by extensive psychological depth, and as a mirror of timeless intergenerational conflicts. Normally, we hear of the topos of the young woman unhappily married to an old and miserly husband, which was already very popular in the Middle Ages. Schäfer adapted it, however, and instrumentalized the medieval Tristan-and-Isolde motif for his own purposes, although Anckemann had really thought only of Wolfram's *Parzival*. Not only does the old wine merchant marry a woman much below his age, he also 'steals' her from Tristan and thus creates a tragedy, the only victim, however, he himself then proves to be. Finally, the author impressively interweaves the river landscape with the destiny of his three protagonists, and in this way, he contributes to a very old discourse on the river as life-giver and life-taker in literature from antiquity until today.

Sadly, Schäfer was a strong follower of the Nazi ideology, which has prevented us until today to appreciate anything created by his pen. It will remain a personal choice to condemn him for his political views and hence to put all his literary works aside despite their huge impact during their time. Or, as we might want to consider it, we should acknowledge the author's very dark past on the one hand and characterize it as what it was, and then, on the other, turn our attention to this novella all by itself and appreciate its literary quality and its significant contribution to the discourse on ecocriticism.

Certainly, this would not be an easy decision, but we constantly confront the problematic situation all over the world with poets or writers who cannot help but adjust to the political regime if they want to continue publishing. The famous philosopher Martin Heidegger, a strong Nazi, enjoys highest respect today despite his political past, with modern readers focusing primarily on his deep philosophical insights, for instance, into the *Ding* and *Wesen*, which really gives us much pause (Sherratt 2013, O'Brien 2015, Wolin 2022). Those on the radical left or right will not easily agree with this moderate compromise, but this novella, like many other texts created under similar circumstances, certainly deserves our respect all by itself. This stance would not amount to any exculpation of Schäfer and his strong support for the Nazis, but it allows us at least to acknowledge the literary quality of this one story as an extraordinary narrative reflection of the culture and people living in the Rhineland. The most reasonable approach in this case seems to be to face the author's ideological orientation as a specific biographical fact, whereas we could appreciate the text all by itself, in which the Rhineland gains an impressive profile and in which the author intriguingly relied on a complex web of intertextuality to create his novella, drawing both from

medieval and classical literature. To use another example, we are today certainly willing to accept Heidegger's philosophy as offering some of the most leading concepts taking us forward in theoretical explorations of our world, irrespective of his political views during the 1930s and 1940s. Logically, then Schäfer certainly deserves, as an author, the same treatment, especially if this one novella, at least, warrants its renewed respect because of its literary quality. Klein (1960, 503) notes that Schäfer was probably the most popular author of novellas since Gottfried Keller, here disregarding Thomas Mann, but this does not mean that we could ignore the vast discrepancy between his nihilism on the one hand and his adulation of the Nazi ideology on the other.

Significantly, there are no noticeable echoes of Nazi ideology in this novella, as far as we can tell, which can stand on its own as a literary masterpiece intriguingly predicated on the concepts of ecocriticism and intertextuality, as we would call it today. Although the name of 'Tristan' appears to be an intellectual lapsus by Anckemann, in the long run, it turns out to be a very fitting choice because in a way we can recognize here a modern version of the *Tristan* motif, though strongly modified by Schäfer in direct response both to von Kleist's and Goethe's works.

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Translingual Textures in Contemporary Russophone Prose: Code-Switching, Ethnocultural Markers, and Identity in Guzel Yakhina and Narine Abgaryan

By Ekaterina Protassova*

This study examines literary multilingualism and translingual practices in contemporary Russophone prose, focusing on Guzel Yakhina's Zuleikha Opens Her Eyes and Narine Abgaryan's Three Apples Fell from the Sky and People Who Are Always With Me. Bridging linguistics and literary studies, the analysis situates these works within debates on code-switching, ethnoculturally marked language, postcolonial reflection, and identity formation. Building on theoretical insights into written code-switching, multilingual literacy practices, and the paradox of language boundaries in literature, the study shows how authors deploy embedded foreign words, dialectal forms, accented Russian, and culturally specific lexicon as representational strategies. In Yakhina's novel, Tatar, Russian, Mari, Chuvash, German, and French elements create a polyphonic narrative that foregrounds Soviet-era multilingualism, minority language challenges, and the sociocultural work of glossaries and untranslatable terms. Abgaryan's prose showcases Armenian village lifeworlds through lexicon drawn from cuisine, kinship, ritual, material culture, and blessings, alongside Cyrillic transliterations, Armenian script, and playful Russian interjections. These translingual devices function not merely as stylistic ornamentation but as sites of negotiation of power, cultural memory, and belonging. Russophone literature, especially by women writers, mobilizes multilingual repertoires to represent superdiverse realities, interrogate colonial legacies and linguistic hierarchies, and reconfigure readerly perception through deterritorialized language use. The conclusion advances a translingual perspective that views language as dynamic, emergent, and locally reconstituted, demonstrating how these works exemplify the re-localization of meaning and writerly agency in the post-Soviet and diasporic contexts.

Keywords: code-switching in modern prose; cultural heritage; ethnocultural legacy; literary multilingualism; Russian as a lingua franca; Russophone literature; translingual practices

Introduction

Research on multilingualism in literature bridges linguistics and literary studies, forming a multidisciplinary area of inquiry (Deganutti 2024, Hoffmann & Mastelotto 2023, Taylor-Batty & Dembeck 2023). As interest in multilingualism and code-switching has grown in recent years, scholars have increasingly focused on how multiple languages function in fiction and how literary practices relate to spoken code-switching and other written multilingual forms (Cano 2016, Mona 2024, Ramaila 2025). Literary texts provide a unique lens for examining how languages interact within individuals and societies, as well as how authors use

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language choice to shape texts and guide readers, raising questions about cultural depiction, characterization, stylistic strategies, representational techniques, and the sociolinguistic implications of languages in contact (Benaglia & Smith 2022).

In an era defined by globalization and heightened mobility, contemporary literature increasingly foregrounds minority experiences and transcultural identities, reflecting shifting local and global interdependencies that reconfigure both individual and collective allegiances (Bakalova 2024, Pahta et al. 2018, Schulze-Engler & Helff 2009, You 2016). By contrast, relatively little attention has been devoted to such processes in contemporary Russian prose, although recent studies have begun to address this gap (Kulieva 2020, Proshina 2024). The traces of multilingualism in diverse literary works can be found by treating translation as a key mode of experiencing the world and as an expression of Europe's cultural richness and examining how deterritorialization and translation reshape literary form, cultural memory, and readers' perceptions (Laukkanen & Parry 2017).

This article argues that the repertoire of inclusions identified in the works of Russophone authors frequently mirrors shared cultural knowledge from the Soviet and post-Soviet eras, while also introducing regionally specific and emotionally resonant material. Dialectal forms, distinctive speech styles, and representations of accented Russian further enrich these texts, capturing the verbal texture of the environments they depict. By embedding foreign words and phrases (elements that appear to the protagonists as alien, unfamiliar, strange, or incomprehensible) within otherwise Russian-language narratives, writers simultaneously celebrate linguistic diversity and emphasize continuities of human experience amid the complexities of contemporary communication. In this sense, translingualism emerges not only as a distinctive artistic device but also as a critical lens for analyzing evolving cultural and linguistic identities in Russian literature.

Research Questions

This article investigates the complexities of literary multilingualism and translingual practices in contemporary Russophone prose, with a focus on Guzel Yakhina's *Zuleikha Opens Her Eyes* and Narine Abgaryan's *Three Apples Fell from the Sky* and *People Who Are Always With Me*. By integrating the above mentioned perspectives, I try to answer the following questions:

RQ1: What are the narrative and ideological functions of multilingualism in contemporary Russophone prose, and how do these functions contribute to the readers' understanding of the text?

RQ2: How do intra-linguistic shifts and cross-linguistic insertions interact to create heteroglossia, and what impact does this interaction have on character development and thematic depth?

RQ3: In what ways do the authors' strategies for translation and glossing mediate access to meaning and shape the ethical considerations of reading their texts?

RQ4: How do Yakhina and Abgaryan uniquely employ translanguaging to articulate concepts of history, community, and identity, and what distinctions can be made between their approaches?

Literature Review

The present study is situated at the intersection of literary multilingualism, code-switching, postcolonial reflection, and ethnoculturally marked prose, drawing on research that conceptualizes language not only as a medium of representation but also as a site of tension, negotiation, and meaning-making. Prade (2013) addresses a central paradox of literary criticism: while distinguishing between languages is essential for reading, literary texts simultaneously destabilize this distinction by revealing the interconnectedness of languages, cultures, and the estrangement inherent even in one's mother tongue. Drawing on texts from the sixteenth to the twenty-first century, Prade argues that literature transcends linguistic norms both formally and semantically and thus serves not merely as evidence of cultural transition but as a privileged site where language itself is questioned and reshaped. By examining works in several European languages, the study demonstrates that linguistic boundaries are both demonstrably precise and irreducibly uncertain, with the separation between "mother tongue" and "other tongues" defined by this productive uncertainty.

Research on code-switching has traditionally focused on spoken language, leaving written language alternation comparatively underexplored despite its long historical presence and widespread use in both traditional and digital media. Sebba et al. (2014) address this gap by examining multilingual writing across time, media, and language pairs, using diverse empirical and interdisciplinary methods. Treating written code-switching as a distinct discourse phenomenon, they emphasize literacy practices, multimodal semiotics, and the interaction between textual and visual environments. Complementing this perspective, Kannadhasan and Ganesan (2019) collect contributions that examine how global circulation, reception, and translation shape literature, emphasizing the rise of world literature amid globalization and the formation of a relatively stable canon. Their volume explores how literary texts and debates expand in response to rapid cultural change, covering literature across historical periods, travel writing, reception and translation studies, exile and diaspora, colonialism, and postcolonialism. It argues for the value of marginalized literatures and underscores how cultural encounters shape literary production and interpretation, advocating a more inclusive and globally aware literary scholarship. Bakić and Škifić (2017) examine how bilingualism relates to a person's identity and the ways they express emotions and thoughts, exploring both theoretical foundations (definitions of bilingualism and its link to identity, emotion, and cognition) and empirical research that investigates whether bilingual individuals prefer their first or second language or a mix of both when expressing feelings and thinking, showing that language choice varies by context and influences identity construction.

In literary depictions of travel to foreign-language settings, interactions between linguistic minorities and majorities, and the lived experiences of immigrants, the presence of borrowings and code-switching is almost inevitable in constructing

characters' speech (Danilina & Khromova 2021, Hausbacher et al. 2025, Lebedeva 2022, Sorvari 2016). At the same time, the extent and manner of employing these devices vary considerably across authors. Contemporary Russian women's prose, in particular, examines a female perspective on the formation of new identities, language use, and self-positioning in a superdiverse world (Protassova & Yelenevskaya 2024).

Multilingualism has also been interpreted differently in the Soviet and post-Soviet periods. In the USSR, interaction among the peoples of the Soviet Union was encouraged, and books by ethnic minorities were translated into Russian as the language of interethnic communication, with culturally specific vocabulary preserved and explained as exoticisms (e.g., Arutyunova 2012, Pomerantseva 1979). In the post-Soviet era, newly independent states began to pay greater attention to their own cultural identities, and Russian came to be perceived as a language that belonged to them but also partially hindered the development of national literatures and administrative practices (Krasnykh 2011, Smyth & Opitz 2013). Gradually, scholars recognized that varieties of Russian functioning in different cultural contexts needed to be understood and described in different ways, and Russian increasingly began to be interpreted as a colonial legacy (Fedorova & Protassova 2024). Through this process of self-reflection, a new literature emerged that connects past and present while critically reassessing linguistic and cultural hierarchies.

Within this framework, numerous scholars have explored recurrent motifs in ethnically marked prose, particularly in Guzel Yakhina's *Zuleikha Opens Her Eyes*. Bogumil and Pobivaylo (2020) analyze transformations of hunting motifs in the novel, while Oshchepkova and Sleptsova (2023) examine its mythological and folkloric poetics. Wang (2020) systematizes color metaphors, and Kondakova (2019, 2020) focuses on motifs of dream and death. Cuiying and Nesterova (2019) compare women's communicative practices in traditional lifestyles in China and Russia through a cross-cultural reading of works by Yakhina and Lu Xun, demonstrating how verbal and non-verbal communication reflects the dual, which means constructive and destructive, role of ethnocultural traditions amid tensions between established norms and socio-cultural change. Kravtsova (2022) further argues that *Zuleikha* legitimizes Russian (neo-)colonial and (neo-)imperial narratives by portraying Soviet-era assimilation as emancipation, reinforcing an image of harmonious Russian–Tatar coexistence while obscuring inner coloniality. She situates this reading within contemporary expansionism, civilizational nationalism, Islamophobia, and liberal intellectual complicity, against which decolonial feminist and indigenous movements propose a transformative counter-vision.

A substantial body of scholarship also addresses the novel's narrative and linguistic style. Karaeva and Minibayeva (2022) examine the use of exoticisms, arguing that foreign lexical items reflect the social structure and everyday life of the Tatar people while contributing to the novel's artistic concept. They conclude that non-equivalent vocabulary lends a literary text a distinct national flavor by enabling readers to perceive national intonation, visualize everyday life and culture, and metaphorically enter a foreign cultural space—either discovering common ground or recognizing cultural uniqueness. Sirota (2020) focuses on linguistic and stylistic features, highlighting the blend of realistic and romantic tendencies, the interaction of prosaic and poetic principles, and the role of syntax in

conveying ideological and artistic meaning. Gareeva (2017) analyzes the Tatar worldview through untranslatable vocabulary, while Arzjamova (2015) demonstrates how Yakhina constructs an ethnoculturally marked idiolect through domestic and material culture lexemes (mainly Turkisms and Tatarisms), mythological and folkloric figures, customs, rituals, religious terms, culturally mediated formulas, and onomastics. Arzjamova identifies three types of markers (ethnosemantic, culturally mediated, and transposed) and shows how their interaction encodes Tatar cultural consciousness while inflecting Soviet realities with specific connotations. Salimova and Solunova (2019) describe the speech portraits of the novel's main characters, and several authors focus on the mythology of the bird Semrug (e.g., Kukleva 2020). At the same time, Zhuchkova (2020) offers a sharply critical view, claiming that Yakhina commits numerous linguistic errors in every language used in the text.

Some articles address Narine Abgaryan's *Three Apples Fell from the Sky* and *People Who Are Always with Me*. In reviews, the first novel is described as an account of an exotic, memory-laden place and as an extraordinary, near-miraculous narrative (May 2020, Prindiville 2020, Zilberbourg 2021). Osiecki (2023) critically evaluates the Polish translation from an Armenological perspective, noting the lack of reliable linguistic research in Armenology and the frequent incorrect transliteration of Armenian terms. Zimina (2024) analyzes the challenges of translating the text into English, while Sargsyan (2023) emphasizes the importance of translating works rooted in Armenian cultural and linguistic specificity from Russian into Armenian, highlighting the need to preserve dialectal wordplay and stylistic richness through shared humanistic values. The second novel is characterized as a comforting and intimate depiction of everyday life (Hayden 2015). Molodtsova and Vertinskaya (2024, 2025) argue that Abgaryan's work illustrates how national language, mythology, rituals, and religion preserve cultural heritage and strengthen ethnic identity, demonstrating literature's vital role in transmitting cultural and spiritual values in the context of globalization. They highlight the use of native language, the description of customs and vernacular realities, the value of ethnic roots, family, lineage, and memory, as well as connections with mythology, ancestors, omens, God, and nature; they also note the inclusion of local recipes and the polyphonic character of the text. Kurchastova (2024) focuses on the notions of home and family, while Pavlova (2023) analyzes Abgaryan's works through the lens of gender, demonstrating that the representation of female genealogy, memory, and women's psycho-emotional experience shapes the narrative structure, artistic concept, and aesthetic potential of her texts, while underscoring the gender specificity of her writing and women's literature more broadly.

The aforementioned studies demonstrate that literary multilingualism, code-switching, and ethnoculturally marked language function not merely as stylistic devices but as sites where power relations, identity formation, and cultural memory are negotiated, thereby providing the theoretical foundation for the present analysis. All quotations from the novels discussed are translated by the author of this article.

Guzel Yakhina's "Zuleikha Opens Her Eyes"

In recent scholarship on multilingualism in contemporary Russian-language literature, increasing attention has been paid to how linguistic diversity functions as a narrative and ideological resource. Within this context, the work of Guzel Yakhina offers a particularly productive case for examining the intersection of language, identity, and historical experience.

Guzel Yakhina, a Tatar-born Russian writer currently residing in Kazakhstan, offers in her novel *Zuleikha Opens Her Eyes* (Yakhina 2018) a sophisticated exploration of linguistic and cultural diversity, capturing the complex interrelations of identities in the Soviet Union during the 1930s and 1940s. Tatar, Russian, Mari, and Chuvash voices intersect in Tatarstan, where protagonist lives in the village Yulbash. Another constellation of human destinies happens in Siberian settlement with representatives of twenty-one nationalities. The narrative unfolds through the perspectives of a Tatar woman, a Russian man, and a German professor.

The novel portrays the linguistic challenges confronting minority groups who had to acquire Russian, while Tatar words, customs, and worldviews serve as salient cultural markers throughout. A glossary at the end of the book defines fifty-six Tatar terms, encompassing clothing and footwear (e.g., *yaga*, *tulup*), objects, pagan spirits, Islamic practices, forms of address, animal names, and even insults. Many Tatar words are intelligible from context, for instance, "It's impossible to pass silently in felt kota" or "To slip quietly behind the chintz charshau." However, intuition alone can be misleading, as these terms carry culturally specific meanings. In ambiguous cases, expressions are translated with the Tatar word italicized, e.g., *Ubyrly karchyq* (female ghoul), *zhebegän tavyk* (wet hen), while others remain untranslated, e.g., *eni* (mother) and *janym* (my soul). Exclamatory interjections, such as *Oy-ya-a-a...*, and Muslim prayers are similarly left in the original.

Zuleikha's struggles with Russian linguistic barriers: she hears *kolkhoz* as *kalkhuz* and *yacheika* (cell) as *yashcheika*. The grain requisitioning campaign is rendered as "more frightening with each passing year—like an *albasty* [female demon], greedier than a *dev* [evil giant spirit], more insatiable than a *zhalmavyz* [giant old woman, man-eater]." Soviet authorities adapt traditions, renaming the pagan holiday *Saban-tuy* ("Plow Festival") as *Traktor-tuy*.

Even in Siberia, Zuleikha remains connected to the spirits of her native place, such as *shurale*. She recalls household rules arrangements, where "children sleep on the chests, and adult women are allotted a small part of the *säki*, separated from the men's section by a thick *çibıldak* [curtain or partition]."

In the world of the Russian-German Doctor Leibe, code-switching extends to German words (*Januar*, *Mein Gott*) and Latin phrases, e.g., *Hic locus est ubi mors gaudet succurrere vitae* ("This is the place where death rejoices to help life"). The arrival of Leningrad aristocrats introduces French as a coded language, with phrases like "Votre Grand Hôtel m'impressionne, mon ami" and "Messieurs, ne vous disputez pas!" signaling irony or exclusivity.

Prison slang features prominently in the speech of the thief Gorelov, including terms such as *amba* (the end of it all), *shkety* (kids), and prison songs with lines

like “Done two stints, bro. Did time in Sakhalin, soaked in Solovki.” GULAG official Kuznets occasionally employs rustic or regional expressions.

Italicized terms signal concepts that are new to Zuleikha, such as railway terminology *rukav*, *bokobaia vetka*, *otstoinik* (“sleeve,” “side branch,” and “settling tank”). For Ignatov, neologisms include euphemisms such as *ubezhat’ na tu storonu* (“escape to the other side”), *vybit’* (“beat out”), and *kulackii rost* (“kulak growth”). For Leibe, Sovietisms function as neoplasms, for example *vakhtovyi metod* (“rotational work system”). Each new activity introduces specialized vocabulary, enriching the narrative with practical and culturally grounded lexicon. The cook Ashkenazi, called *maître*, incorporates culinary terminology such as *passer* and *blanchir*, as well as *bouillon* for soup, *goujon* for pieces of fish, and *grenki* for rusks, terms that were previously unfamiliar to Zuleikha. Similarly, when a painter decorates the local club, colour terminology is introduced, culminating in the declaration, with an Italian touch, *Finita la comedia* (a misspelled variant of *commedia*).

Through this intricate layering of languages, registers, and discourses, Yakhina constructs a richly textured and polyphonic narrative in which multilingualism functions as a key mechanism of representing identity, power, and cultural memory. The novel not only reflects the historical realities of linguistic contact in the Soviet context but also demonstrates how language mediates experience, shapes perception, and encodes ideological transformations. In this sense, *Zuleikha Opens Her Eyes* contributes to a broader literary rethinking of multilingualism as an essential component of narrative form and as a critical lens for understanding the entanglement of individual lives with larger historical and cultural processes.

Narine Abgaryan’s Novels

Within the broader discussion of multilingualism and translingual practices in contemporary Russian-language literature, particular attention has been given to how authors represent culturally marked spaces through linguistic diversity. In this regard, the prose of Narine Abgaryan provides a compelling example of how multilingualism operates as both a narrative strategy and a means of cultural preservation.

Narine Abgaryan, an Armenian-born Russian writer currently residing in Germany, offers in her works *Three Apples Fell from the Sky* and *People Who Are Always With Me* (Abgaryan 2018) a vivid literary exploration of life in highland Armenian villages, particularly those situated along the Armenian–Azerbaijani border. Her narratives unfold against a backdrop dense with historical and cultural nuance, shifting between places such as Kirovabad and Moscow while engaging with the complex history of the South Caucasus, including references to events such as the rise of the Musavatists in Baku. These novels poignantly depict the experiences of repatriates from regions as diverse as Europe, Iran, Lebanon, Syria, and the United States, foregrounding their linguistic challenges. Although many of these characters are fluent in Western Armenian, English, French, Greek, Persian, Turkish, and Arabic, they struggle with Eastern Armenian and the Berd dialect, illustrating the deep cultural and linguistic diversity that permeates Abgaryan’s prose.

Abgaryan's characters embody the influence of multiple cultures, which is reflected in their environments, thought patterns, and dialogues. Her texts frequently incorporate foreign-language elements, often rendered in Cyrillic transliteration and occasionally in the Armenian alphabet. For example, a carpet is embroidered with lines from Grigor Narekatsi's *Word to God from the Depths of the Heart* in classical Armenian. The author herself provides translations and glosses, such as *Tsavt tanem* ("I will take your pain"), or "little black bricks of bread — for some reason people called it 'klooch'" thereby facilitating the reader's access to idiomatic expressions and cultural realities. However, some concepts are explained much later than when they first appear in the text, or even in a different work, and some are not always translated at all (*mintana*, *skhtor*; *karas*, *alabai*). "Es ko tiroj mery!" is spoken during a children's ring game, which is presented both in Russian and in Armenian (in the Armenian alphabet with a translation).

Eating habits include chasing hot bean soup with pickled Solomon's seal and a crescent of homemade bread. "The memorial menu is strict and unadorned, with no frivolous salads or pickles." For a woman who has just given birth, one must prepare a tarragon pie, lightly salted bryndza, a peppered meat appetizer, and sweet havets—a dish made from wheat flour. Bread is made with sourdough, not yeast. There are mentions of cherry plum compote, goose baked with dried cornelian cherries, a salad of boiled chicken with crushed walnuts, and slices of lightly salted bryndza fried in a batter of cornmeal and white wine. Foods and dishes include: matsoni ("a fermented dairy product similar in taste to clabber"), kamats matsoni, lavash, wedding baklava with nuts and honey with a lucky coin tucked inside, basturma, sujukh, spas ("a fermented dairy soup with wheat groats, eaten cold in summer and hot in winter"), sali—layered flatbreads with sugar, "sali should be eaten hot," arisa—wheat porridge with meat, tsipul—dried slices of potato, zhengilov hats—"flatbreads filled with herbs," pohindz—"flour made from roasted wheat." "When the bread gets stale, she makes konchol—country bread soup on fried onions." Also: gata, krkeni—gata for important occasions ("For dessert they chose krkeni—a special gata baked exclusively in ashes and served on the most important dates"), khokhobe made with turkey (a dish of poultry, onion, and pomegranate seeds; one dough baked within another), beef khashlama, a Persian-style omelet with onion, mint, cheese, and black pepper, tsogol—unripe apricot eaten with salt, dzaval—"wheat groats," with its porridge called kashika, one of the obligatory Easter dishes (as are "last year's aged bryndza in dried mountain herbs, a spinach and red bean pâté, and buttermilk-scented butter," etc.), and kchakhash—an autumn porridge of corn, beans, and spelt with salted cabbage.

Plants (e.g., *lalazar*, *aveluk*, *kotem*, *sindruk*, *shushan*), clothing, and everyday objects further enrich the cultural landscape. References include *gulpa* socks and *trekh* shoes, traditional garments such as *arkhaluk* and *mintana*, *mutaka* – an elongated divan cushion (declinable), *tonir* – a traditional oven, *chipot* – a stick used for beating wool. The reader learns geographic names (e.g., *Manish-kara*, *Khali-kar*) and musical instruments (*zurna*, *doohl*, *duduk*). Characters are named *Ano*, *Nazeli*, and *Tatevik*; kinship terms include *ayric* ("father"), *babo* ("grandmother"), and *dayi* ("uncle") etc. The addition of *-jan* ("my soul", term of endearment conveying affection and intimacy) in forms of address occurs after the name, as in *Vano-jan*, *Volodya-jan*.

The text is interwoven with blessings (invocations such as *May my foot step onto your threshold with goodness! I have brought sweet things, so that your work may go easily! May your hands never know weariness, and your eyes never know tears! May the sun always shine in your home's windows!*) and descriptions of rituals, including the ways to utilize every part of the walnut and the burning of incense in an iron bowl on graves. Specific mythological names include *azhdaak* (giant); the four sons of the Heavenly King, *Arevelk* (East), *Yusis* (North), *Arav* (South), and *Arevmut* (West); the evil *dēv* *Aslan-Balasar*.

Interjections coordinate the phrases: *Ohai!* (a satisfied exclamation accompanying each sip of tea); *Ohaaa-ai!* (an address to God); *vuy* (horror), *vaime* (regret, apprehension), *uy?* (surprise) etc. A lot of expressions are notable for their cultural nuances, e.g., “It’s as if *zahremar* [Persian: snake venom] is dripping from his eyebrows!” — a sign of respect toward a strong man, accompanied by clicking the tongue. Some curses are written in the Armenian alphabet.

The narrative also incorporates Russian playful rhymes that capture the rhythm of accentuated colloquial speech, such as *Ligushka – bitaya kruzha* (“Little frog – broken mug”), *Komu griaz, a komu almaz!* (“What is dirt to some is a diamond to others”) and *U ptitsi gusi – belye trusi!* (“That bird goose has white underpants”) [some words are orthographically/grammatically incorrect].

Abgaryan’s novels constitute a celebration of cultural distinctiveness, offering a richly textured mosaic of traditions, languages, and histories. Through her narrative strategies, she demonstrates how multilingualism functions as a lived and embodied practice, shaping perception, memory, and social interaction. From a translingual perspective (Lu & Horner 2013), her work exemplifies how meaning emerges through the dynamic interplay of languages rather than through adherence to fixed norms. This observation aligns with Pennycook’s (2010) view of language as continuously re-localized and produced across centers and peripheries.

Discussion and Conclusion

A translingual approach views language as a dynamic, evolving practice shaped by time, context, and user interaction, emphasizing that meaning and difference emerge through repeated language use rather than fixed standardized rules, thereby challenging monolingual ideologies and recognizing writers’ agency in shaping language (Lu & Horner 2013). What we have observed supports the idea that language is continually re-localized in different locations, reconstructed spontaneously and produced not only from one center, but from periphery as well (Pennycook 2010). Contemporary Russian literature demonstrates a rich interplay of language, culture, and identity, with authors employing diverse stylistic strategies to explore these intersections.

Narine Abgaryan and Guzel Yakhina foreground the cultural and linguistic specificity of their settings. Abgaryan evokes the layered heritage of Armenian highland communities through language, rituals, food, and folklore, while Yakhina captures the multilingual complexity of Soviet multiculturalism, illustrating identity formation amid Tatar, Russian, German, and other voices.

Yakhina's historically grounded narratives and Abgaryan's autobiographically inflected realism differ substantially in genre, but each is a marker of identity, a stylistic resource, and a cultural or historical trace. Taken together, these works demonstrate how Russophone writers mobilize translingualism across genres to feature self-reflection, critique, and cultural hybridity.

In comparison with Guzel Yakhina, whose historically colored narratives foreground multilingual Soviet realities, Abgaryan emphasizes the micro-level of community life and cultural continuity. Despite differences in genre and narrative scope, both authors employ translingualism as a key literary device: it serves simultaneously as a marker of identity, a stylistic resource, and a repository of cultural and historical meaning. Taken together, their works demonstrate how contemporary Russophone literature mobilizes multilingualism to articulate hybridity, enable cultural self-reflection, and challenge monolingual frameworks of interpretation.

In the works discussed, multilingualism operates, beyond stylistic ornamentation, as a narrative mechanism for identity construction, power negotiation, and cultural memory. Foreign insertions, dialectal forms, and accented Russian index social positions and cultural affiliations; they also stage tensions of center/periphery and majority/minority relations. In Yakhina, Tatarisms, German and Latin formulae, prison argot, and Sovietisms map the social stratigraphy of 1930s–40s Soviet space; in Abgaryan, Armenian lexicon and blessings enact a lived ethnolinguistic world, preserving ritual knowledge and communal bonds. Culinary terms, blessings, and object lexicons are dense repositories of cultural knowledge, anchoring language in practice. They scaffold memory and identity (e.g., Armenian and Tatar dishes, ritual formulas), enabling the prose to “show” culture rather than “tell” it. These domains facilitate naturalistic insertion of non-equivalent vocabulary, reinforcing the sense of place and communal ethics. Thus, multilingualism is constitutive of plot world-building and ideological critique, not mere decoration.

Intra-linguistic mixing (e.g., colloquial, argot, regional speech) calibrates social evaluation and character voice within Russian; cross-linguistic mixing (Tatar, German, Latin, Armenian) foregrounds intercultural contact, otherness, and translation as experience. Together, they produce a layered heteroglossia that both reflects historical multilingual realities and creates interpretive friction, prompting readers to navigate partial intelligibility and cultural distance. Paratextual tools (Yakhina's glossary) and typographic cues (italics for new concepts) scaffold comprehension while preserving cultural specificity. Deferred or absent glossing (Abgaryan) sustains immersion and invites inferencing, fostering an ethics of hospitality/strangeness: readers are asked to inhabit uncertainty, accept partial understanding, and learn culturally situated meanings over time.

The texts align with research that treats translation and deterritorialization as central to modern literary form. Yakhina's glossary and selective translation practices dramatize the reader's movement between linguistic regimes; Abgaryan alternates explanation, delayed glossing, and non-translation to simulate immersion and estrangement. Both models turn translation into a narrative event, making readers feel the pressures of mobility, diaspora, and cultural mediation.

The inclusions mirror shared Soviet/post-Soviet cultural knowledge, like Sovietisms, prison slang, and bureaucratic terms, while adding region-specific, affectively charged lexicon (Tatar household terms; Armenian foodways, blessings, and

interjections). This combination encodes collective memory (e.g., GULAG discourse, collectivization) and local particularities (rituals, cuisine, kinship terms), demonstrating how post-Soviet literature integrates macro-historical frames with micro-ethnographic textures. Yakhina dramatizes Soviet center-periphery dynamics via Russian as lingua franca and Tatar as local identity marker, showing both coercive assimilation and resilient cultural practices. Abgaryan recenters the periphery: Armenian village life becomes the epistemic core, with Russian serving as relay while Armenian carries ritual authority and affective intensity. Both thereby complicate the notion of a singular “center” of Russophone culture. Yakhina’s historically grounded, multi-perspective narrative uses multilingualism to map institutional power (state, imprisonment, medical discourse) and to track identity formation amid coercive modernization. Abgaryan’s community-focused realism foregrounds continuity, ritual, and naturality; multilingual elements preserve microcultural memory and intimacy rather than adjudicating imperial structures. Both rely on translanguaging, but with distinct emphases: Yakhina toward sociopolitical stratification; Abgaryan toward cultural preservation and affect.

By situating Russian alongside Tatar, Armenian, and other languages, the texts expose Russian’s dual role: a shared interethnic medium with translational reach and a language historically implicated in domination. The interplay of Russian with minority lexicons and rituals makes visible both assimilationist pressures and countervailing local sovereignties, supporting current scholarship that reads Russian as a colonial legacy variably reappropriated across contexts. Distinguishing intra- vs. cross-linguistic mixing clarifies semiotic functions, while integrating historical sociolinguistics and translation studies situates textual devices within broader language ideologies and mobility regimes.

In the classroom, the texts enable multiliteracies: students can practice interpreting code-switching, register shifts, and culturally laden lexicon; they learn how language indexes identity and power, and how translation mediates meaning. Centering such texts advances critical literacy by requiring evidence-based inference, contextual research, and reflection on monolingual ideology, aligning with calls to integrate authentic, translanguaging materials in advanced classrooms. Close reading should be paired with paratext analysis (glossaries, typography), reception studies (how readers process multilingual cues), and light quantification (distribution of code-switching by narrator/character/scene) to avoid impressionism. Such texts normalize partial comprehension, require readers to explore multiple codes, and problematize any single authoritative voice. The result is a reading practice attuned to ambiguity and heterogeneity, aligned with translanguaging: meaning emerges from use-in-context and circulation across centers/peripheries, not from fixed linguistic norms.

Answers to the Research Questions:

RQ1: The narrative and ideological functions of multilingualism in contemporary Russophone prose serve to enrich character development and thematic depth. In Yakhina’s work, multilingualism conveys the complex identity struggles faced by minority groups during the Soviet era, underscoring the challenges of language acquisition and cultural retention. Conversely, Abgaryan’s use of linguistic diversity emphasizes cultural continuity and the significance of communal

memory. Both authors employ multilingualism to create textured narratives that reflect the sociopolitical landscapes of their respective cultures while providing readers with a nuanced understanding of identity formation.

RQ2: Intra-linguistic shifts, such as the use of different registers within Russian, and cross-linguistic insertions, including Tatar or Armenian lexicon, contribute to heteroglossia by foregrounding the diverse voices and identities present in the narrative. This interaction enhances character development by allowing for a more comprehensive portrayal of their backgrounds and cultural conflicts. For instance, Yakhina's characters express their identities through various languages, demonstrating how language use reflects their social positions and experiences. Abgaryan achieves similar effects by integrating the Armenian language and cultural references, which creates deeper emotional connections for readers and illustrates the characters' struggles and joys.

RQ3: The authors' strategies for translation and glossing play a critical role in mediating access to meaning. Yakhina provides a glossary that facilitates understanding of Tatar terms, allowing readers to engage with the text while preserving cultural specificity. On the other hand, Abgaryan's approach often introduces foreign terms without immediate glosses, creating a sense of immersion and prompting readers to infer meanings through context. This invites an ethical reading practice where readers must grapple with cultural nuances, fostering a sense of curiosity and engagement with the narrative's linguistic diversity.

RQ4: Yakhina and Abgaryan employ translingualism distinctively to represent history and community. Yakhina's narrative hinges on a nuanced portrayal of Soviet-era language encounters, using linguistic diversity to juxtapose various cultural identities and to critique historical power dynamics. In contrast, Abgaryan's narratives focus on the intimate realities of Armenian village life, emphasizing continuity, cultural rituals, and everyday experiences. The distinctions in their approaches praise different aspects of identity formation: Yakhina interrogates historical trauma and assimilation, simultaneously Abgaryan celebrates cultural heritage and community resilience. Together, these works underscore the importance of translingual practices in articulating complex social realities and challenging monolingual paradigms.

In sum, literary multilingualism constructs identity, negotiates power, and preserves cultural memory, shaping world-building and reader positioning. Register shifts calibrate social evaluation within Russian; insertions foreground intercultural contact and alterity; together they create layered, partially intelligible worlds. Glossaries, italics, and deferred explanations balance accessibility with immersion, inviting readers into translational labor and cultural hospitality. Yakhina maps multilingual Soviet modernity and institutional power; Abgaryan centers communal continuity and ritual, both challenging monolingual interpretive norms.

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Between Veil and Voice. Boundaries of Identity in “Three Daughters of Eve” by Elif Shafak and “Snow” by Orhan Pamuk

By Borislava Ivaylova Ivanova*

This article examines the construction of Muslim female identity in Elif Shafak’s Three Daughters of Eve through a comparative and interdisciplinary lens, drawing on intersectionality theory, postcolonial critique, and feminist debates on representation. Focusing on the characters of Peri, Shirin, and Mona, the study explores how the novel destabilizes essentialist understandings of Muslim womanhood by revealing the competing cultural, political, and emotional forces that shape their subjectivities. Integrating Anna Carastathis’s critique of intersectionality, the article argues that identity categories—such as secular, devout, or conflicted—risk becoming static when divorced from the historical and ideological structures that produce them. To broaden this framework, the discussion juxtaposes Shafak’s work with Orhan Pamuk’s Snow, highlighting how veiling, secularism, and political Islam function as shifting sites of negotiation rather than fixed markers of belief or oppression. Through this comparison, the article contends that both authors challenge binary narratives of East and West, tradition and modernity, by portraying female agency as emergent, relational, and fundamentally unfinished. Ultimately, the study proposes a cosmopolitan feminist praxis grounded not in identity as a precondition for politics but in solidarity, ethical action, and the ongoing process of becoming.

Keywords: Muslim womanhood; intersectionality; veiling politics; cosmopolitan feminism; postcolonial identity

Introduction: Framing Identity Between Worlds

In *Three Daughters of Eve*, Shafak traces the intersecting lives of three young women from different corners of the Muslim world, each carrying the weight of unique sociopolitical pressures, family expectations, and personal questions of faith. When their paths converge at Oxford University, the campus becomes a backdrop for intellectual discovery as well as a crucible for identity formation. Through their conversations, conflicts, and private reckonings, the novel explores how cultural heritage, belief, and modern aspiration collide. Their internal dilemmas echo the external tensions of a globalised era, creating a layered narrative about the universal search for belonging, purpose, and a place to stand amid competing worlds.

In addition to the topic of defining identity through religious practices, Orhan Pamuk’s *Snow* (2002) provides a compelling counterpoint to Elif Shafak’s *Three Daughters of Eve*, as it revisits similar concerns—veiling, political Islam, and female subjectivity—through a more overtly political and socially charged lens. Pamuk’s main protagonist, Ka, a Westernised poet, travels to the provincial town of Kars to investigate

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the suicides of young women excluded from school for wearing headscarves. What initially appears to be a binary conflict between Islam and secularism, East and West, veiling and unveiling, gradually unfolds into a complex interplay of faith, desire, grief, and ideological allegiance. The novel thereby destabilizes the perceived dichotomy between modernity and tradition, exposing the contingent and contradictory processes through which identity is shaped in contemporary Turkey.

By juxtaposing these two novels, the act of veiling can be traced through both female and male characters. In *Three Daughters of Eve*, Peri, the Turkish protagonist, emerges from a chaotic household torn between her atheist father and devout mother. Her inner confusion mirrors Turkey's broader geopolitical and cultural liminality. Her encounters with Shirin—an outspoken secularist of Iranian descent—and Mona—a proud American Muslim feminist—draw her into a philosophical, emotional, and existential exploration. The description of their physical appearances leads the path to a deeper understanding of their characters:

Their differences contrasted with the architectural harmony of the street: Mona with her long umber coat and beige headscarf; Shirin with her full makeup, short black dress and highheeled boots; Peri in her jeans and blue trenchcoat. (Shafak 2016: 317)

These three daughters of Eve stand as allegorical figures of belief (Mona), disbelief (Shirin), and confusion (Peri), representing broader tensions within contemporary feminist and postcolonial discourse. By framing them explicitly as the daughters of Eve—the primordial mother in both Islamic and Judeo-Christian traditions—the text taps into a universal, ancient origin myth. While mainstream scriptural narratives focus heavily on Adam and Eve's sons (Cain and Abel), leaving daughters largely to the margins of traditional folklore and commentary, the allegorical symbolism here is a deliberate subversion. The three young women symbolise a modern fracturing of the primary feminine psyche. By adding a third category to the rigid binary of absolute faith and absolute skepticism, the text highlights the liminal space in the middle—an existential grey area defined by doubt, questioning, and beautiful confusion. These allegorical connotations are further reflected in the semantics of their names.

Tracing the origin of the characters' names deepens the perspective regarding their nature. The name Mona, for example, appears in numerous languages with varying meanings worldwide, but in Arabic it derives from the word *munya*, meaning 'wishes', 'desires', or 'hopes'. It is widely used across Arabic-speaking countries and Muslim communities worldwide. Mona embodies the figure of belief, not only through her convictions but also through her physical expression of faith, such as veiling her hair.

The name Shirin originates from Persian and means 'sweet'. Shirin is also a prominent historical figure – a Christian princess of Armenian descent who married the powerful Sasanian king Khosrow II. This historical allusion blurs the boundaries of the traditional East–West dichotomy, as Shirin used her influence to protect the Christian minority in Iran, though she had to act discreetly. This illustrates that true faith does not require public display or spectacle but can be preserved through quiet, profound acts.

The name Peri, or as her full name Nazperi, comes from the Turkish words *naz* ‘charm’ and *peri* ‘fairy’, itself derived from Persian. It can refer to a beautiful young woman and is associated in Persian mythology with winged, ethereal, and sometimes mischievous beings. The character of Peri in the novel embodies this liminal quality – existing on the threshold between the real world and the world of dreams and desires – which results in her inability to fully belong to either realm. Peri grows up in a family divided by ideology: “The thought that she had to make a choice, once and for all, between her mother’s defiant religiosity and her father’s defiant materialism almost paralysed her.” (Shafak 2016: 28)

Shafak’s structuring of the female characters as reflections of ideological positions enables a reconfiguration of the East-West dichotomy not as a binary but as a spectrum. Peri, the character suspended in confusion, spends much of her life merely observing ideological disputes—first between her parents, and later between Mona and Shirin—without asserting her stance or “paralysing her”.

Theoretical and Historical Foundations: Hegemony, Secularism, and the Veil

Pamuk situates this spectrum of belief, disbelief, and confusion within Turkey’s broader socio-political transformation. The Kemalist principle of *laiklik* (secularism)—one of the six foundational “arrows” of the Republic’s ideology—was intended to separate religion from the affairs of the state in order to facilitate modernisation. Since the rise of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in 2002, however, religion and politics have become increasingly intertwined, challenging the secular consensus and reconfiguring the visibility of Islam in the public sphere. The fictional Kars in *Snow* functions as a microcosm of these national tensions: a space where the ideological rigidity of both secularism and Islamism collapses under the complexity of lived experience. Ka’s ambivalent position as a Westernised intellectual oscillating between atheism and spiritual yearning mirrors the existential uncertainty of Turkey’s urban elite—suspended between inherited secular modernity and resurgent religiosity.

Pamuk’s engagement with the politics of veiling resonates strongly with Turkey’s historical reality. The headscarf bans of the 1980s and 1990s—defended in the name of Kemalist modernity—transformed the veil into a politically charged emblem of dissent. As Shafak (2007) notes in *Divided by the veil*, the Turkish language offers multiple words for the headscarf (*yemeni*, *türban*, *eşarp*, *çarşaf*), reflecting its social and emotional plurality. Once a marker of prestige in Ottoman society, the veil was redefined during the Republican era as a sign of patriarchal backwardness, then reappropriated by Islamist movements as a symbol of resistance and autonomy.

Kadife is a complex embodiment of these tensions. Through her character, Pamuk foregrounds the veil as a dynamic site of negotiation where ideology, emotion, and aesthetics converge. Her character is saturated with contradictions. After beginning her studies at the Pedagogical Institute, she decides to cover her hair. This surprising decision is further compounded by her initial “mocking curiosity” toward the girls wearing headscarves, as she describes it herself. Her act of veiling cannot be reduced to religious submission or political conformity; it is instead a performative gesture shaped by love, grief, and defiance, rooted in her feelings for a religious man. *Snow* thus

transcends simplistic dichotomies, revealing the porous boundaries between Islamism and secularism, belief and scepticism, East and West.

Elif Shafak offers a similar reflection in her article *Divided by the veil*:

As a novelist, when writing in Turkish I can encounter more than eight different words to stand for the headscarf, each is different. Different women wear the headscarf for different reasons. Some wear it out of habit or for traditional reasons rather than religious ones. For others the motivation is political. Not all women wear a headscarf because of religious conservatism. And not all headscarved women are “ignorant” or “repressed”. (Shafak 2007)

This linguistic diversity illustrates the cultural and psychological significance of the headscarf in Turkish society. Originally reserved for the Prophet's wives as a symbol of high status, it later became a marker of backwardness under Kemalist reform, which aimed to modernize women's roles in public life. The military, often seen as the guardian of Kemalist values, reinforced this secular ideal—most notably through the coups of 1980 and 1997, which imposed strict bans on veiling in universities. Many women resorted to wearing wigs over their headscarves to circumvent these restrictions.

The processes of the “Westernization” of Turkish society can be traced back to Mustafa Kemal, who rose from the ranks of the military, embodied their ideas, and in the following decades it was they who carried out military coups in the name of democratic Kemalist principles. One such example is the bloodless coup of September 12, 1980, after which the military commanders acquired almost unlimited power. The new regime introduced a ban on headscarves in universities. The restrictions imposed by this coup were tightened after the so-called “Postmodern Coup” of 1997, when, under pressure from the generals, Necmettin Erbakan resigned as prime minister. In fact, he could be considered the ideological father of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Abdullah Gül and their Justice and Development Party (AKP).

This raises a fundamental question regarding the nature of these reforms and shifting ideologies: it is clear that the issue is not merely religious, but deeply cultural and political. To understand this, one might look to Edward Said's characterisation of European culture in relation to the Orient through the lens of ‘hegemony’:

In any society not totalitarian, then. Certain cultural forms predominate over others, just as certain ideas are more influential than others; the form of this cultural leadership is what Gramsci has identified as hegemony, an indispensable concept for any understanding of cultural life in the industrial West. (Said 1979: 7)

This hegemony is understood primarily at the ideological level, manifesting not only in the relationship between coloniser and colonised, but also between centre and periphery. What we can summarise, then, is that the relationship between these pairs is directly proportional: the West (the coloniser) corresponds to the centre, and the Orient (the colonised) to the periphery (for example, the Balkans). On the other hand, the centuries-long dependence of the Balkans on the Ottoman Empire has left a lasting imprint on each of their cultures—linguistically, ethnographically, architecturally, etc.—which signals both the hegemony of Ottoman cultural ideas over the Balkan ones, and

also the converse process of penetration. This hegemony was both accepted and rejected, yet its presence is evidenced even by the religious conversion carried out by various social and missionary groups. It is important to note, however, that when speaking of hegemony, Gramsci is referring his assertions to non-totalitarian societies. Their nature may be thought of as opposed to totalitarian ones. Undeniably, however, this hegemony of ideas possesses a certain universality that allows it to be applied to different socio-cultural contexts.

Edward Said makes several other meaningful generalisations concerning Orientalism, which continue to resonate today—especially when considering how processes in both the Near and Far East influence world politics, along with the relative political instability of those regions. For Said, the cultural and the political are intertwined in the understanding and exploration of the Orient:

My idea is that European and then American interest in the Orient was political according to some of the obvious historical accounts of it that I have given here, but that it was the culture that created that interest, that acted dynamically along with brute political, economic, and military rationales to make the Orient the varied and complicated place that it obviously was in the field I call Orientalism. (Said 1999: 19)

Moreover, the European cultural model has functioned for centuries as a hegemonic cultural-civilisational model, which partitions the intercepted cultural space (i.e., the colonised or peripheral societies) by imposing norms and values that cannot be fully recognised as authentic by their members. This division is reflected not only in abstract theory but also in personal and familial dynamics. For example, in the portrayal of Peri's life, the parental figures embody this schism: the mother is the religious, "everyday" Turkish woman, rooted in the traditions of the Orient; while the father is the supposedly Westernised individual whose actions and choices remain defined by his mental and ancestral memory. This duality exposes how the peripheral subject is caught between the hegemonic centre's model of civilisation and the inherited cultural memory of the periphery—neither of which can claim full authenticity for the subject. In Pamuk's *Snow*, on the other hand, Kadife, supposedly devoted muslim woman, is actually the ex-marital lover to an islamist, which entirely contradicts the virtues in which muslim women believe.

This framework of hegemony and cultural-political entanglement can be brought to bear on subjectivity and identity-formation in literature. As Anna Carastathis (2008) notes, a critical obstacle to agency in contemporary subjectivity is what she terms "intersectional overload", wherein the subject—rather than being liberated by intersecting identities—is rendered paralysed by them. In the case of Elif Shafak's portrayal of Peri, this paralysis is dramatised: she remains in passive roles until moments of revelation or solidarity compel her to act. In Peri's familial and cultural context, then, we can see how the hegemonic European cultural-civilisational model and the peripheral inherited memory both converge to shape a subject who is beset by conflicting identities—religious and secular, traditional and modernized, centre-oriented and periphery-rooted—thus illustrating how the external model of civilisation and the internal memory of tradition alike constrain authentic subjectivity.

Faith and Power: Azur and Blue as the Ambivalent Patriarch

The Oxford professor Azur, a charismatic yet controversial figure who hosts seminars on God, science, and morality, embodies both the intellectual seducer and the moral transgressor. In Eastern narrative tradition, the elder man typically functions as a sage or spiritual guide; however, Azur's romantic involvement with Shirin subverts this archetype, revealing the fragile boundary between moral authority and personal compromise. Azur can be seen as a modern Byronic hero, with his image shifting in the perception of each woman: to Shirin, he is a lover; to Mona, a philosophical adversary; and to Peri, a surrogate father or lost ideal.

Extending the semantic chain of the characters' names, Azur derives primarily from the Old French *azur* 'sky blue', which in turn originates from the Arabic word for the gemstone lapis lazuli. In some Hebrew and Biblical contexts, it can also mean 'one who helps', while in Old Norse it carries the sense of 'to answer' or to 'respond'. These layered meanings resonate with Azur's multifaceted role in the narrative – as an object of longing, an intellectual catalyst, and a reflective surface for the three women's inner conflicts. His character thus functions less as an autonomous moral center than as a mirror refracting each woman's search for faith, transcendence, and, on a more worldly plane, the "fruitful symbiosis" between political ideologies and religious belief.

The women's divergent responses to Azur illuminate the subjective construction of faith and the gendered frameworks through which women negotiate authority and knowledge. The tension between intellectual enlightenment and emotional dependency complicates feminist discourse on power, particularly regarding the possibility of mentorship within hierarchically structured, patriarchal systems. This dynamic invites a broader inquiry: to what extent do the protagonists' feminist or religious orientations represent autonomous belief systems, and to what extent are they symptomatic of internalized trauma – both personal and collective – rooted in the sociocultural and historical contexts that shape female subjectivity within postcolonial modernity?

This intersection of intellectual charisma and moral ambiguity is not exclusive to Shafak's novel; it finds a stark, provincial counterpart in Orhan Pamuk's *Snow*. Just as the "three daughters" must navigate the magnetic yet destabilising presence of Professor Azur to define their own ideological landscapes, the female characters in *Snow* are similarly thrust into orbit around male figures who wield religious or political authority. The transition from Azur's seminar room to the volatile streets of Kars reveals that the struggle for female subjectivity is a universal constant, whether it is being played out through the lens of secular academia or within the high-stakes, uncompromising arena of radicalized political Islam.

Orhan Pamuk's gallery of political figures is enriched by one of the most vivid among them – the Islamist leader Blue. His character is introduced ambiguously, as both a religious preacher and a man accused of inciting young veiled girls to suicide. Despite his role as a spiritual figure, Blue himself deviates from religious principles, maintaining an affair with the veiled Kadife and previously with her married sister Ipek. Like other leaders in *Snow*, he represents the hypocrisy of ideologies whose advocates pursue power while ordinary people bear the cost.

Pamuk portrays Blue as a strikingly attractive, educated, and self-assured man – far from the stereotypical image of a provincial fanatic. His questions to the West

reveal a sharp critique of its perceived double standards: he challenges whether Western nations truly value democracy and human rights or merely wish to see “backward” countries imitate them. Through this, Pamuk highlights the ideological clash between East and West, and the manipulation of religion for political ends. Blue’s statements about state violence and media censorship expose the distortion of truth in times of political upheaval. His discourse merges nationalism, religion, and anti-Western rhetoric into a single ideological front, while paradoxically seeking Western attention and validation.

The color blue serves as a symbolic bridge between these two characters. It is compelling to trace the resonance of this hue within Islamic culture, where it is frequently associated with the infinite sky, the depths of the sea, and divine protection. This sense of transcendence suggests an overcoming of boundaries—a reaching for the “beyond”—which is also contained in the poem by Hafez that Azur cites when asked about his favourite poem about God, regardless of whether he believes or not:

*I have learned so much from God
that I can no longer call myself
A Christian, a Hindu, a Muslim, a Buddhist, a Jew
The Truth has shared so much of itself with me
that I can no longer call myself
a man, a woman, an angel or even a pure soul* (Shafak 2016: 191)

Ultimately, while these male characters appear to function as embodiments of concrete academic, religious, or political ideologies, they actually reveal a greater capacity for transcendent consciousness than the female protagonists. In contrast, the women in both narratives often find their identities gravitating around the figures they love, admire, or, conversely, detest; their subjectivity is frequently constructed through their proximity to, or resistance against, the male influence that dominates their respective spheres.

This dynamic can be further explored through the character of Kadife in Pamuk’s *Snow*. The paradox is deepened by Fazıl and Necip’s perception of Kadife, most clearly implied in Ka and Necip’s conversation in a teahouse. The high school student reads to the famous writer the beginning of a science-fiction novel he is writing. The story is set in the year 3579, and the main characters are also two high school boys – close friends and confidants. They read the books written by Fazıl and Necip thousands of years earlier and take their names. Both are in love with the virgin Hicran, so they decide that one of them will die and the other will marry her. Thus, Fazıl dies, and Necip marries Hicran. On their wedding night, Necip realizes that his wife had loved his friend, and for many years their marriage remains unconsummated.

In this story, Hicran (from Turkish *hicran*, meaning ‘separation’) – a figure that symbolically mirrors Kadife – is idealized, portrayed as pure and moral, which in real life turns out not to be true. The following conversation between Ka and Necip reveals more about Kadife’s mysterious nature. According to the student, she had been an unbeliever only because of her atheist father’s influence. She came to Kars from Istanbul to film a commercial in which with a single turn of her head she waves her long, chestnut hair down to her waist like a flag (Pamuk 2013). The

advertisement symbolizes the West, and the association of her hair with a flag refers to the manifestation of certain ideals.

Thus arises the opposition between the veiled and the freely flowing hair – a metaphorical representation of the contrasts between East and West (an opposition external to Turkish society) and between religion and democracy (an internal political opposition). One day, Hicran is invited for tea by the veiled girls and takes the opportunity to mock them. She continues visiting them until one day she joins them and abandons her life in Istanbul. This creates yet another internal opposition within Turkish space – Istanbul as a metaphor for Western thought and provincial Kars as a metaphor for traditionalism and religiosity.

Necip concludes his story about Hicran with the words that she is a saint who would help turn the headscarf into the political banner of “the oppressed Muslim Anatolian woman” (Pamuk 2013). Thus, Kadife’s freely flowing hair – the banner of Western thinking – will be covered and become a symbol of religious conviction. For the reader, the question of why the heroine puts on the headscarf remains open.

However, another detail proves equally significant. At the end of Ka and Necip’s conversation, Hicran appears on the street and enters the teahouse – but the real Kadife turns out to be somewhat different from Necip’s Hicran. She wears “a rather plain headscarf, rather than a turban, the political symbol of Islam” (Pamuk 2013: 145). Thus, she is not a proclaimer of ideological causes but a woman with personal motives for wearing a head covering.

Could this be Orhan Pamuk’s hidden message—that a veiled Muslim woman is not necessarily a bearer of political ideology, that the fixation on a single religious attribute is exaggerated and should not be of such importance? And above all—that personal choice stands higher than imposed religious conventions?

Pamuk deepens this paradox through the story told by Necip, the idealistic student who portrays Kadife as both saint and symbol. His fictional tale of the virtuous Hicran—whose name means ‘separation’ as mentioned above—mirrors Kadife’s transformation from unveiled modernity to veiled devotion. Once the woman who “waves her long chestnut hair like a flag” in a commercial symbolising Western ideals, Kadife now conceals that same hair as a sign of faith and defiance. The opposition between covered and uncovered hair thus becomes a metaphor for East–West and religion–democracy divides. Yet, Pamuk leaves the question of why she veils ultimately unresolved—inviting readers to confront the ambiguity at the heart of modern Turkish identity.

Against this backdrop, Kadife’s voice emerges as a counterpoint. She refuses to act as anyone’s representative, insisting instead on the right to tell her own story, shaped by both her faith and her reading of European novels that grant individuality to their characters. Her stance reflects a deeper humanist message – the individual’s right to self-expression beyond ideological or religious confines.

Intersectionality, Representation, and the Politics of Identity

The novel's engagement with intersectionality challenges the reader to consider how religion, ethnicity, gender, and class operate simultaneously in constructing identity. Yet, as Carastathis (2008) and Bilge (2010) warn, intersectionality can be diluted or even depoliticised when it becomes an overly descriptive catalogue of "differences," thereby reifying the very categories it aims to unsettle. Crenshaw's critique (Crenshaw 1989) is also pertinent here: an overreliance on single-axis frames obscures how forms of oppression are co-constitutive rather than merely additive, and risks reproducing hegemonic assumptions by privileging one axis—such as gender or religion—at the expense of their complex entanglement.

Peri's experience of gender-based violence—from childhood abduction attempts to harassment at her brother's wedding—demonstrates how women's bodies in patriarchal societies become sites where multiple structures of domination converge. Her father's silent consent to a virginity test, despite being a secular and ostensibly progressive man who drinks and admires Atatürk, reveals how deeply entrenched patriarchal norms can override individual dispositions. In this moment, he aligns not with his professed modernist values but with the communal logic of honour. This reflects broader feminist critiques, echoed by Crenshaw, that violence against women is legitimised through structural, rather than merely cultural, mechanisms, and that the regulation of female sexuality functions as a form of communal property management.

The novel thus suggests that political or symbolic representation is insufficient without interrogating the underlying power relations that construct identity (Carastathis, 2008). Shafak illustrates this through the invisible constraints that shape the lives of all three women, regardless of their apparent freedom, privilege, or defiance. Their experiences embody the intersectional insight that emancipation cannot be fully understood, let alone achieved, without confronting the mutually reinforcing structures—legal, cultural, familial, and political—that circumscribe women's agency.

Shirin, described as a "born warrior," represents resistance to both religious conservatism and Western infantilization of Muslim women. Her hyper-feminised appearance—short skirts, high heels, and heavy makeup—serves as a political aesthetic, signaling both personal agency and rejection of stereotypical expectations. Her anger toward the hijab stems from its role in exiling her family from Iran and its symbolization of state oppression.

Citing Sadeghi (2008), Shirin's performance can be read as a form of *misveiling*, a tactic used by Iranian women to subvert legalistic religiosity. Yet, even in the West, she faces patronizing savior complexes, notably from Troy, an Oxford student who treats her as a vulnerable subject needing protection—thus echoing colonial narratives of the "civilized man rescuing the veiled woman".

Her refusal to embody any fixed identity—religious, ethnic, or gendered—reflects Ridgeon's (2005) observation that many Iranians remain ambivalent about their cultural authenticity, torn between tradition and Western liberalism.

Mona's choice to wear the hijab is an assertion of spiritual autonomy. Though raised in a progressive Muslim household, her decision is personal and politically charged. She challenges the idea that feminism and faith are mutually exclusive: "I am a Muslim feminist, and if that's a contradiction to someone, it's not my problem."

Despite her assertiveness, Mona is continually subjected to suspicion and reductive stereotyping. Her hijab is interpreted by some as a sign of gendered oppression, compelling her to explain and justify her choices in ways not demanded of others. These interactions exemplify what Bilge (2010) identifies as a core concern of intersectional analysis: the ways in which social categories such as gender, ethnicity, and religion become sites of differential power, producing complex and often contradictory expectations for minority women. Mona's experiences thus illustrate how intersecting structures of inequality shape the meanings imposed on Muslim women's appearance and identity.

Mona's creation of the "Oxford Feminist Avengers" critiques the selective universality of Western feminism, which often excludes non-Western women by assuming their "oppression." She insists that women in Oxford need feminism just as much as rural women in Egypt, thereby exposing the racial and geographical boundaries that undermine solidarity.

Rather than simply showcasing differing perspectives, Shafak uses the tensions between the three women to suggest an alternative feminist ethic—solidarity. Despite their clashes, moments of empathy and shared struggle emerge, particularly through Peri's evolving recognition of other women's burdens. Her realization that her mother's silence was survival, not weakness, marks a turning point from judgment to compassion.

This echoes Carastathis' (2008) call for solidarity as a more effective feminist norm than the mere inclusion of "difference". By centering the relational and affective dimensions of identity, Shafak offers a model of feminism grounded not in fixed categories but in mutual recognition of struggle.

Solidarity as Praxis: Toward a Feminist Politics of Becoming

In her theoretical framework, Carastathis (2008) contends that political identity should not be seen as a precondition for participation in feminist struggle but rather as something that emerges from that struggle. This is reflected in Peri's slow realization that her identity is not merely inherited (from her secular father or religious mother), but formed in the space between competing loyalties, emotional alliances, and ethical commitments. By the end of the novel, when Peri protects the professor's reputation and embraces her mother's lived resilience, she begins to embody what Carastathis describes as a "transformative subjectivity"—one that moves between being "of/in" and "for" communities in struggle. This movement signals a shift from static notions of identity toward a feminist praxis based on solidarity, collective responsibility, and ethical action. In this way, *Three Daughters of Eve* serves as a literary testament to the possibility of a "politics of becoming"—an unfinished, ongoing process of negotiating one's place in a fractured world. In invoking Istanbul as a metaphorical and literal bridge, Shafak places the burden—and the promise—of synthesis on women like her protagonists. In the face of systemic pressures, whether from patriarchal families, religious institutions, or Western secularism, their collective resistance lies in reclaiming the right to define themselves.

Pamuk's nuanced portrayal of the veiled character Kadife exemplifies this call to shift feminist analysis from identity to solidarity and "subjectivity-in-action." The

young women of Kars, who refuse to remove their headscarves despite state orders, embody a central paradox: the state pursues secularism in the name of democracy, while the women assert their personal faith and honor. Thus, Pamuk exposes the tension between collective political ambition and individual conviction—a central conflict in modern Turkish identity.

Kadife's motivations for wearing the veil are ambivalent—rooted in personal grief, romantic entanglement, and sociopolitical defiance. Initially portrayed as ironic and performative, her veiling gradually acquires depth and sincerity. The evolution from a politicized headscarf to an “elegant Istanbul scarf” not only signals a shift in aesthetic self-presentation but also redefines agency itself—from collective rebellion toward an individualized, cosmopolitan identity. As in Shafak's novel, the symbolic weight of the veil is destabilized: it is no longer a clear-cut indicator of oppression or resistance but becomes a site of negotiation where power, identity, and belonging intersect in unpredictable ways.

Conclusion: Toward a Cosmopolitan Feminism

Shafak's *Three Daughters of Eve* and Pamuk's *Snow* collectively illustrate that Muslim female identity is not a monolith but a dynamic negotiation shaped by personal, political, and spiritual forces. Through their respective characters, both novels critique religious fundamentalism and secular liberalism, showing how both systems can reduce women to ideological caricatures. Anna Carastathis's critique of intersectionality as an identity model proves particularly illuminating here. While Shafak's novel ostensibly celebrates the diversity of Muslim women's voices, it simultaneously exposes the very limitations that Carastathis identifies. The narrative presents these women as already-formed intersectional subjects—confused, secular, or devout—who achieve political consciousness through their preexisting identities. Yet, intersectionality often fails to interrogate the historical and ideological conditions under which such identities are produced. Consequently, it risks reducing complex social subjects to static points on a diagram rather than recognizing them as participants in transformative political processes.

Peri's paralysis and inarticulateness throughout the novel exemplify not only personal confusion but also a broader structural failure: the difficulty of rendering visible a subject situated at the intersection of multiple oppressions without collapsing her into abstraction or stereotype. The roots of this paralysis can be traced back to the colonial dynamic that Edward Said describes between colonizer and colonized. As the colonizer imposes a foreign cultural model upon the colonized, identity becomes fragmented—divided between what is authentic to one's native culture and what is imposed from without. This tension is vividly manifested in contemporary cultural contexts. Turkish identity, for instance, oscillates between its religious affiliation with the Muslim world and its political aspiration to be recognized as a modern, secular member of the European community. Similarly, Iran remains split between the liberal intellectualism of its pre-revolutionary past and the enforced religiosity symbolized by the veil after 1979. Muslim expatriates, particularly women, experience this same fracture in the diaspora:

torn between a homeland that is no longer entirely familiar and a host culture that never fully accepts them.

Taken together, *Three Daughters of Eve* and *Snow* reveal how the politics of gender, religion, and modernity in contemporary Muslim societies cannot be reduced to simplistic binaries. Shafak and Pamuk, in distinct but complementary ways, confront the same core dilemma: the struggle of women to define themselves amid ideological pressures that seek to fix their identities in advance. Both authors demonstrate that veiling, faith, secularism, and feminist self-expression are never stable categories but dynamic practices shaped by emotion, memory, power, and historical contingency.

This study has shown that intersectionality, while useful for mapping overlapping forms of oppression, reaches its limit when it treats identity as a pre-given essence rather than a process shaped by struggle. Peri's paralysis, Mona's politicized piety, Shirin's defiant misveiling, and Kadife's shifting relationship to the headscarf all illustrate how subjectivity becomes fragmented when the structural forces that produce "difference" remain unexamined. Carastathis's critique therefore becomes crucial: political agency emerges not from possessing certain identities but from participating in ethical, relational acts of solidarity.

Both Shafak and Pamuk ultimately push beyond representational politics. Their narratives refuse to romanticize either secular modernity or religious revival, exposing the hypocrisies and vulnerabilities embedded in each. More importantly, they center women as the primary interpreters—and disruptors—of the ideological boundaries that shape Turkish and Middle Eastern societies. Women's choices, whether to veil, unveil, resist, or conform, are shown not as signs of cultural essence but as responses to specific historical, emotional, and political conditions.

What emerges from this comparative reading is a vision of cosmopolitan feminism grounded in becoming rather than being. Instead of anchoring political emancipation in identity categories, both novels advocate for forms of solidarity that recognize the instability of identity itself. In these stories, transformation happens not when characters fully reconcile their contradictions, but when they learn to inhabit and negotiate them. The cosmopolitan feminism proposed here is therefore not a universalizing ideal but a practice: a willingness to listen across difference, to act ethically amid uncertainty, and to acknowledge the complex entanglements of power that shape women's lives. In this sense, Shafak's and Pamuk's works stand as literary interventions into global debates on Muslim womanhood, challenging the reader to rethink the assumptions underlying both Western feminist narratives and local patriarchal discourses. Their protagonists resist being read as symbols of East or West, Islam or secularism, modernity or tradition. Instead, they exemplify a feminist politics oriented toward agency, relationality, and the continual making—and remaking—of the self.

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Fostering Language learning in Later Life: The Impact of Consciousness-raising Grammar, Multimodal Resources, and Emotion-focused Pedagogy on Elderly Learners

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This study investigates the effects of a holistic approach based on the principles of consciousness-raising grammar (CRG), multimodal resources, and emotion-focused pedagogical strategies on linguistic outcomes, emotional involvement, and self-efficacy among elderly language learners. Conducted within an action research framework over three cycles, the study involved the design and implementation of three didactic units for a group of native Spanish-speaking learners aged 50 to 80 (primarily 70 to 80), with intermediate English proficiency (A2–B1). Data collection methods included reflective journals, surveys, and grammar tests, yielding both quantitative and qualitative data, which were analyzed using statistical, content, and thematic analysis. The results indicate that this integrated approach enhances communicative competence, emotional engagement, and learner confidence. In conclusion, grammar-aware instruction, combined with multimodal resources and delivered in an emotionally supportive environment, has proven effective for elderly language learners. Thus, the combined approach presented in this study underscores the importance of addressing both cognitive and emotional needs in elderly language learning, providing practical insights for creating inclusive and engaging learning environments.

Keywords: *consciousness-raising grammar, action research, multimodal resources, emotion-focused pedagogy, elderly learners.*

Introduction

Emotional challenges, particularly a lack of confidence, are recognized as significant barriers to language learning. Although well-designed lessons are essential, their effectiveness is often compromised if learners do not feel emotionally safe or understood (Liu and Dong 2025). Consequently, it is crucial to create learning environments that prioritize empathy and emotional support in language education. Researchers such as Mercer (2016), Oxford (2017), and Dewaele et al. (2018) affirm that emotional safety and teacher responsiveness are critical for fostering motivation and overcoming affective obstacles. Nevertheless, establishing emotionally supportive classrooms remains particularly difficult within traditional grammar-focused instruction, which can disengage both learners and educators (Cowie 2011; Larsen-Freeman 2015).

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While consciousness-raising grammar (CRG) can help learners notice and understand language forms in context, research suggests that CRG alone may not be sufficient to sustain involvement or promote communicative competence without the integration of additional interactive or meaningful practices (Ellis 2002; Roza 2014). Given the importance of emotionally supportive learning environments and the limitations of CRG by itself, it is essential to enrich lessons with other methodologies or approaches. In this sense, multimodal instruction, which incorporates diverse media such as visuals, audio, and interactive elements, emerges as a promising alternative for implementing CRG lessons while simultaneously providing an emotionally enriched learning environment, as it has demonstrated not only linguistic benefits but also the potential to foster emotional involvement (Guo and Guo 2024).

The need for more inclusive and engaging approaches is further underscored by demographic trends: by 2030, one in six people globally will be 60 or older (World Health Organization 2025). As a result, older adults are increasingly turning to language learning not only for communication but also as a means to support cognitive functioning, enhance quality of life, and foster social interaction—factors which have been shown to delay memory decline and promote healthy aging (Antoniou et al. 2013; Ware 2021).

The study aims to investigate how the integration of CRG-based activities, multimodal resources, and an emotion-focused language learning environment influences language development, emotional involvement, and self-efficacy among elderly learners. The hypothesis of the study is that CRG-based instruction, complemented by multimodal resources and delivered in an emotionally supportive environment, promotes language development, emotional involvement, and self-efficacy among elderly learners. The study addresses the following research question: How does the integration of CRG-based activities, multimodal resources, and an emotion-focused language learning environment affect language development, emotional involvement, and self-efficacy in elderly learners?

Literature Review

This literature review draws on empirical research and theoretical frameworks to identify and examine key factors that shape language learning among older adults. It explores four central themes: (1) language learning in elderly learners, (2) the role of consciousness-raising grammar instruction, (3) the use of multimodal resources in language learning, and (4) the impact of emotional factors on language learning in later life.

Language Learning in Elderly Learners

Various theoretical perspectives, i.e., neurological, sociocultural, psychological, and motivational shape the understanding of language learning in older adults, each offering distinct insights into second language learning in aging populations (VanPatten and Benati 2015; Marinova-Todd et al. 2000; Singleton and Ryan 2004). Although debates persist and stereotypes about aging often complicate the discussion, researchers are

increasingly acknowledging that elderly learners can still acquire new languages effectively by leveraging neuroplasticity, life experience, and metacognitive strategies (Nilsson et al. 2021; Ware et al. 2021).

Neurologically, cognitive functions such as memory, attention, and processing speed may decline with age, compromising language learning (VanPatten and Benati 2015). Though Klimova and de Paula Nascimento e Silva (2024) emphasize the ongoing role of neuroplasticity in adulthood, and Klimova and Pikhart (2020) highlight that intensive foreign language learning can enhance cognitive functions, particularly working memory. Cendoya (2024) suggests that phonological skills may be especially vulnerable to age-related decline. According to D’Acierno (2011), the primary difference between adults and children in learning a foreign language is related to pronunciation, as adults’ vocal tract muscles are less flexible for producing unfamiliar sounds.

Others argue that psychological, educational, and social factors often play a more substantial role than biological limitations. Elderly learners compensate for these challenges by leveraging their rich life experience, strong personal identity, and metacognitive awareness (Marinova-Todd et al. 2000; Singleton and Ryan 2004).

According to the World Health Organization (2025), by 2030, one in six people globally will be aged 60 or older, marking a significant shift toward aging populations worldwide. As longevity increases, many older adults pursue second language learning not only as a cognitively stimulating activity but also as a means to foster social connections, enhance cultural participation, and maintain a strong sense of purpose and autonomy (Antoniou, et al. 2013; Brouwer et al. 2024). This growing interest underscores the potential of language education as a valuable tool for promoting healthy and active aging.

The Role of Consciousness-raising Grammar Instruction

Consciousness-raising grammar is founded on the principle that learners gain more from a clear understanding of grammatical rules through meaningful and context-rich input, rather than through rote memorization (Chomsky 1967; Fotos and Ellis 1991). CRG fosters metalinguistic awareness, critical thinking, and retention by encouraging learners to notice and analyze language patterns within authentic communication contexts (Nassaji and Fotos, 2011). It emphasizes learner independence, minimal correction, and collaborative learning, aligning with sociocultural theories that regard language learning as a socially influenced process (Larsen-Freeman 2003; Lantolf and Thorne 2006).

Krashen (1982) distinguishes between implicit knowledge, which is acquired subconsciously through communication, and explicit knowledge, which is obtained through conscious instruction. Ferraro (2020) further elaborates on this distinction by describing interface models that connect implicit and explicit knowledge. This perspective supports the notion that explicit knowledge can enhance the development of implicit competence through processes such as noticing, hypothesis testing, and repeated practice.

For adults, particularly elderly learners, explicit instruction often proves to be more effective due to age-related cognitive changes that affect memory, processing speed, and

attention. Ellis (2021) emphasizes that first language (L1) grammar acquisition is implicit and derived from language usage rather than explicit rules. Simple exposure to linguistic input is sufficient for L1 acquisition, eliminating the need for explicit instruction. Nevertheless, adult second language (L2) learners generally require additional conscious and explicit learning resources to achieve accuracy, as implicit acquisition through communicative contexts is often limited compared to native speaker norms. VanPatten and Benati (2015) argue that adult learners typically rely more heavily on conscious instruction to attain grammatical accuracy, although they still benefit from implicit learning opportunities. Nassaji and Fotos (2011) advocate for a balanced approach that integrates both implicit exposure and explicit guidance, which is particularly suitable for elderly learners who may face cognitive and affective challenges, such as anxiety, reduced working memory, or diminished confidence.

The use of Multimodal Resources in Language Learning

As described by Donaghy (2023), multimodality is defined as the use of multiple modes of communication: linguistic (text or spoken), visual (images, design), aural (sound, tone), gestural (body language, facial expressions), and spatial (layout and arrangement) within a single text to convey meaning. The author emphasized that these modes work together to shape the overall message, reflecting the complex, multimodal nature of human communication. Multimodality plays a crucial role in language teaching by enhancing comprehension, memory, and engagement through the stimulation of diverse sensory channels via videos, images, interactive games, and collaborative tasks (Eisenmann and Summer 2020; Fernández Fontecha et al. 2019; Belabbas 2024). Additionally, Dressman (2019) argues that communication has always been multimodal, even before the digital era, as meaning is conveyed not only through written text but also through elements such as typography, illustrations, and page layout. Similarly, spoken language has consistently relied on both verbal and nonverbal cues.

Kress and van Leeuwen (2021) emphasize that communication is inherently multimodal, involving not only language but also images, layout, gestures, and other semiotic modes. Their work argues that meaning is constructed through the interaction of these modes, and that literacy in the modern world must extend beyond text to include an understanding of how different modes collaborate. In educational contexts, their theory supports the design of learning environments that engage multiple senses and forms of representation, thereby making content more accessible and meaningful. Additionally, technological advancements and a growing awareness of emotional involvement have made multimodality increasingly essential for creating supportive, emotionally responsive learning environments (Guo, 2023).

Kress and van Leeuwen (2021) also emphasize that meaning emerges through the interaction of various modes within cultural contexts. This necessitates interdisciplinary frameworks that integrate social semiotics and pedagogy to support identity and critical thinking. Additionally, multimodal texts extend learning beyond the classroom, fostering inclusivity and addressing social issues, which is particularly valuable in language learning environments (Belabbas 2024).

The Role of Emotions in Language learning for Elderly Learners

Emotions significantly influence language learning outcomes, yet their full impact remains underexplored, especially among older adults. Positive emotions such as enjoyment and self-efficacy enhance motivation and cognitive flexibility, while negative emotions like anxiety and frustration, when constructively managed, can also support learning (Mystkowska-Wiertelak and Słowik-Krogulec 2024; Li and Dewaele 2020).

Li and Dewaele (2020) emphasize the necessity of a comprehensive, context-sensitive approach that acknowledges the full emotional spectrum in language learning. Supporting this perspective, Méndez and Fabela (2014) found that Mexican students were able to transform negative feelings toward teacher feedback into motivation, while Imai (2010) demonstrated how Japanese learners channeled boredom and frustration during group work to enhance engagement.

When considering elderly learners, emotional factors such as self-efficacy and encouragement become particularly critical. Research conducted by Acosta (2024) and other recent studies further demonstrate that affective factors, including motivation and self-efficacy, enhance elderly learners' willingness to engage in communicative tasks and increase their long-term commitment to learning. These findings underscore the central role of emotional motivation and perceived competence in fostering sustained language study among elderly learners.

Geng and Jin (2023) found that among Chinese older adults learning English, motivation is strongly associated with intrinsic emotional rewards. Their study indicates that older adults prioritize enjoyment, social interaction, and personal fulfillment over traditional performance metrics such as grades or test scores. These affective factors—particularly enjoyment—boost their persistence in the face of cognitive or linguistic challenges, underscoring the role of emotional motivation in sustaining engagement in language learning during later life. Nevertheless, anxiety arising from age-related stereotypes can undermine individuals' confidence and motivation, emphasizing the importance of supportive and empathetic learning environments (Trishina 2024; Baran Łucarz and Słowik-Krogulec 2023). Furthermore, age-related differences in emotional regulation affect both communication and pedagogical strategies, highlighting the necessity for tailored approaches that take into account these unique emotional dynamics among elderly learners (Rojas & Riffó 2022).

Methodology

The study utilized both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques, including a reflective journal, emotion survey, and grammar tests, within an action research framework implemented across three cycles. In each cycle, a didactic unit was planned, implemented, and analyzed using statistical, thematic, and content analysis methods. The results from these analyses helped to make adjustments throughout the process and highlighted the principal findings of this study.

Participants and Context

This study focused on a group of 15 elderly native Spanish-speaking learners, ranging in age from 50 to 80, with most participants falling between 70 and 80 years

old. They were all attending English classes offered by the *Universidad Permanente de la Universidad de Alicante* (UPUA), a lifelong learning institution dedicated to fostering active aging and encouraging social involvement through ongoing educational opportunities. They represented diverse academic and professional backgrounds, contributing a wide range of life experiences to the classroom dynamic. Their English proficiency ranged from A2 to B1(CEFR), indicating an intermediate level of language competence. Their primary motivations for learning English included social involvement, leisure, and travel, reflecting a desire to connect with others and explore new cultural experiences.

Instruction focused primarily on listening and speaking skills, as these are essential for effective communication in social and travel-related contexts. Age-related health conditions, such as decreased vision and slower mobility, were taken into account, as they could influence learning pace and preferences. Despite these challenges, participants were motivated to improve their communicative abilities. They were participative, approachable, critical, and open to new learning experiences, embodying the values promoted by UPUA in fostering intellectual curiosity and personal development in later life.

Instruments

To collect data, the teacher used a reflective journal and administered an emotion survey and a grammar test to the students. The reflective journal followed a consistent structure throughout all 17 lessons, systematically documenting key details that included the date, place, time, participants, lesson topic, objectives, and classroom activities. It also recorded observations related to learner involvement, emotional responses, multimodal interaction patterns, and the role of the CRG (see Appendix A).

The emotion survey structure also remained the same, being administered at the end of each instructional cycle. It included a multiple-choice question inviting learners to select all adjectives that best described their emotions during the lessons implemented during the cycle. (e.g., confused, embarrassed, ignored, nervous, overwhelmed, confident, connected, curious, engaged, inspired, and joyful). In addition to the multiple-choice question, the survey included an open-ended “Comments” section where learners could describe their emotional experiences in their own words (see Appendix B).

The grammar test varied across the three cycles. Two cycles featured multiple-choice questions, while one cycle used a grammaticality judgment test. Each version was designed to assess learners’ understanding of the grammar points targeted in each specific cycle. The tests were administered at the end of each cycle to evaluate the effectiveness of the consciousness-raising activities implemented within a multimodal, emotion-focused learning environment designed for elderly learners (see Appendices C, D, and F).

Procedure

This study followed an action research framework, involving a dynamic cycle of planning, action, evaluation, and reflection, which enabled continuous improvement and adaptation. The researcher, who also served as the teacher, critically assessed and refined teaching strategies over three iterative cycles through ongoing reflection and adaptation to enhance the learning experience. During the planning stage, the teacher designed didactic units that incorporated multimodal and CRG-based activities, with particular attention to the learning needs and experiences of elderly learners. Each didactic unit consisted of five or six lessons, organized as summarized in Table 1 below:

Table 1. *Summary of the Three Units' Design*

Units and themes	Unit 1: The colors of emotions	Unit 2: Hidden talents and lifelong skills	Unit 3: Travel and culture
Duration	5 lessons (60 minutes each)	6 lessons (60 minutes each)	6 lessons (60 minutes each)
General objective	To encourage students to talk about their feelings and emotions when exposed to different situations using various forms of expression.	To guide learners to explore and express their talents and lifelong skills, fostering self-reflection and meaningful emotional connections.	To inspire students to explore global travel destinations and cultural traditions, and to build emotional awareness through reflecting on their experiences.
Main target skills	Listening and speaking	Listening and speaking	Listening and speaking
Linguistic features	Grammar: gerund phrases Vocabulary related to feelings and emotions	Grammar: can, be able to, be good at. Vocabulary related to artistic, physical, intellectual, and social talents	Grammar: past simple Vocabulary related to travel and culture.
Competencies	- Cognitive (critical thinking, visual interpretation) - Linguistic (gerunds, adjectives) - Social and emotional (collaboration, empathy, expressing feelings) - Teamwork and collaboration	- Communicative (discussing talents/abilities) - Linguistic (modals, related vocabulary) - Socio-emotional (confidence, empathy, valuing long-life learning and experiences) - Teamwork and collaboration	- Communication (discussion, presentations) - Cultural awareness (diversity, open-mindedness) - Linguistic competence (correct tenses) - Emotional intelligence (reflection) - Critical thinking and creativity - Teamwork and collaboration

Methodology	Inquiry-based, inductive, implicit grammar, multimodal	Inquiry-based, inductive, implicit grammar, multimodal	Inquiry-based, inductive, implicit grammar, multimodal
Resources and materials	Pictures, audio, tangible objects, and blindfolds	Kahoot, YouTube, photocopies, and body language	Brochures, videos, online games, photocopies, images
Class organization	Individual, pairs, groups, whole class	Individual, pairs, groups, whole class	Individual, pairs, groups, whole class
Teacher's Role	Facilitator, model, observer, feedback provider	Facilitator, model, encourager	Guide, facilitator, feedback provider
Adaptations	Scaffolded for A2–B1 range	Designed for mixed A2–B1 levels	Accessible for A2 with extensions for B1
Sample activities	- Picture analysis - Emotion vocabulary games - Music and emotion blindfold game - Emoji-based gerund expressions	- Video and discussion on talents - Kahoot on intelligences - Bingo game - Talent presentations	- Role-play interviews - Brochure analysis - Travel agent "hot seat" game - Video on Colombian culture
Next steps	More time needed for deeper structural practice	Keep extended lesson duration; reduce the number of grammar structures per cycle.	Maintain lesson count; balance cultural exploration and language structure focus

Source. Own creation

In the first unit, *"The colors of emotions,"* students completed five sixty-minute lessons focused on using gerund phrases to describe feelings and emotions. They participated in activities that encouraged them to express their feelings and emotions in different situations through visual, gestural, auditory, kinesthetic, and linguistic modes. In the second unit, *"Hidden talents & lifelong skills,"* students engaged in six sixty-minute lessons where they practiced using modals of ability (can, could, be able to, be good at) accurately in spoken language. This unit encouraged students to engage in meaningful conversations that helped them recognize and articulate their talents, skills, and abilities, as well as those of others, while further developing their linguistic competence. In the third unit, *"travel and culture,"* students exchanged experiences about travel destinations and cultural traditions around the world to obtain a deeper understanding and appreciation of diversity, fostering open-mindedness and inclusivity. They focused on using the past simple tense as the target grammar structure.

Across all three units, the learning experience implemented a CRG-based, multimodal, emotion-focused pedagogy that integrated diverse resources and communication modes to promote linguistic skills, emotional well-being, and self-accuracy among elderly learners. By embedding grammar instruction in meaningful, discovery-based contexts and incorporating emotion-focused reflective activities and collaborative group work, the approach fostered personal connections, empathy, and

intercultural sensitivity, creating a dynamic, supportive environment where learners developed language competence, emotional awareness, and confidence in their abilities.

During the implementation stage, the teacher assumed a dual role as both facilitator and observer, delivering instructional content while carefully monitoring student engagement, comprehension, and emotional responses. After each lesson, the teacher recorded observations and personal reflections in the reflective journal, which helped track student progress and identify strengths and areas for improvement. At the end of each cycle, the teacher administered an emotion survey (see Appendix B) to assess the emotional impact of the methodologies and activities implemented in the unit. Additionally, the teacher administered a grammar test (see Appendices C, D, and F) to evaluate the effectiveness of the CRG within a multimodal, emotion-focused pedagogy. The collected data was subsequently analyzed using statistical, content, and thematic analysis methods. This process of evaluation and reflection provided a comprehensive understanding of the impact of the didactic unit while highlighting necessary adjustments for the next cycle.

Findings

The following findings draw on data collected from reflective journal entries (17 entries, one per lesson), emotion surveys (three in total), and grammar tests (three in total) administered during the three cycles. These findings provided a foundation for understanding how CRG and multimodality within an emotion-focused learning environment influence language learning outcomes, emotional involvement, and self-efficacy among older adult learners.

Findings from the Reflective Journal

These findings are based on a thematic and content analysis of the journal entries, identifying key patterns in observed student behaviors, teacher involvement, and student reactions for each unit. Table 2 below presents a summary of the main observations recorded across the 17 entries of the journal used during the three instructional cycles. Table 2 illustrates the progression of classroom interactions and learning experiences over time, providing insight into students' emotional and linguistic growth, along with the teaching strategies used to foster and support that development.

Table 2. *Summary of the Main Observations documented in the Reflective Journal Entries*

Unit and Theme	Observed behaviors	Teacher's involvement	Students' reactions
Unit 1: The colors of emotions	- Initial nervousness, reluctance to speak - Some students dominated, others stayed silent - Gradual increase in participation and risk-taking - More laughter and relaxed	- Balanced talking time and space - Approached mistakes as a natural part of learning - Shared personal experiences	- Anxiety shifted to gratitude and enjoyment - Confidence steadily rose - Students explicitly noted motivation and

	body language - Active engagement in creative, multimodal tasks (music, images, emojis)	- Provided emotional and linguistic scaffolding - Creative/multimodal lesson design	comfort (“ <i>You made me realize I can also speak English</i> ”)
Unit 2: Hidden talents and lifelong skills	- Self-doubt or modesty about personal talents - Reliance on “can” for abilities - Increased engagement through peer/group activities (games, talent mapping) - Growing peer encouragement and support	- Modeled wider language for talents - Broadened definition of abilities - Extended practice time for structure variation - Encouraged positive feedback between peers	- Surprise and pride at discovering their own and others’ skills - Grew more supportive of peers - Enjoyed group atmosphere and positive challenge
Unit 3: Travel and culture	- High, self-motivated participation from the start - Authentic exchanges of travel stories and opinions - Consistent use of learned grammar/vocab in real contexts - Energetic role-plays and respectful discussion - Humorous anecdotes and authentic group dialogue	- Facilitated real-life scenarios and cultural comparisons - Provided prompts for question formation and perspective sharing - Modeled cross-cultural respect - Targeted feedback only when needed	- Expressed excitement and independence - Sense of accomplishment in using English “for real” - Valued classmates’ stories and input - Pride in their progress

Source. Own creation

Across all units, the integration of visual, auditory, gestural, linguistic, and spatial modes significantly increased both emotional and cognitive involvement among elderly learners. In Unit 1, during the activity “*What is this picture telling me?*”, students analyzed images and inferred emotions using gerund structures such as “*Seeing this picture makes me feel sad.*” This visual-linguistic approach not only prompted language production but also encouraged personal reflection. Group work, such as “*Are we seeing the same?*”, allowed students to compare interpretations, reinforcing the idea that emotional responses are diverse and subjective. In another activity, “*Musical Heart Vibes*,” students listened to music blindfolded and described the emotions evoked, with one sharing, “*Listening to this melody makes me think of my childhood.*” This aural mode elicited deep emotional responses and authentic language use. The use of emojis in “*The emotions bag*” activity further supported the connection between visual cues and linguistic expression. Throughout these lessons, students naturally used gestures, facial expressions, and body language to reinforce meaning, and spatial arrangements (e.g., group circles, audience-facing presentations) encouraged collaboration and participation.

Grammar instruction was consistently embedded in meaningful, contextualized input rather than delivered through explicit explanation. For example, in Unit 1, the teacher modeled gerund phrases in context “*Talking in front of a large audience makes me feel nervous*” and guided students to use similar structures when expressing emotions. While students often reverted to familiar forms like “*I feel...*” or “*I am...*,” ongoing scaffolding encouraged them to expand their grammatical repertoire. In Unit 2,

activities such as “*Eleven talents*” and “*Connecting skills with multiple Intelligences*” prompted students to use structures like “*I am good at...*,” “*I can...*,” and “*I am able to...*,” with the teacher offering varied examples to promote flexibility in language use. Grammar tests at the end of each unit indicated that most students could recognize and apply the target structures, with scores ranging from 74% to 81%. Only a few students requested explicit grammar explanations, suggesting that the implicit, consciousness-raising approach was generally effective.

The emotion-focused approach encouraged learners to reflect on their feelings, share personal stories, and connect classroom content to their identities. In early lessons, some students expressed nervousness and discomfort, particularly when speaking in front of peers. The teacher addressed this by normalizing mistakes and emphasizing the value of everyone’s contributions, which helped create a supportive atmosphere. In Unit 2, several students initially believed they had no special talents, viewing abilities as exclusive to “special people.” However, after watching a video and engaging in discussion, they began to recognize and appreciate everyday skills, stating, “*We all have something unique and special to share.*” At the end of Unit 1, a student remarked, “*You made me realize I can also speak English.*” Such reflections underscore the positive impact of emotional safety and encouragement on communicative participation and self-confidence.

Group and pair activities played a crucial role in building camaraderie and regulating participation. As lessons progressed, students became more proactive in managing turn-taking and supporting quieter peers. For example, by the end of Unit 3, the teacher noted that almost all students wanted to participate, with many focusing more on communication than on the fear of making mistakes. Activities that required group reflection or comparison of perspectives (e.g., “*Are we seeing the same?*” and “*Comparing responses*”) nurtured mutual respect and empathy. The teacher’s efforts to balance talking time and provide individualized support ensured that all voices were heard.

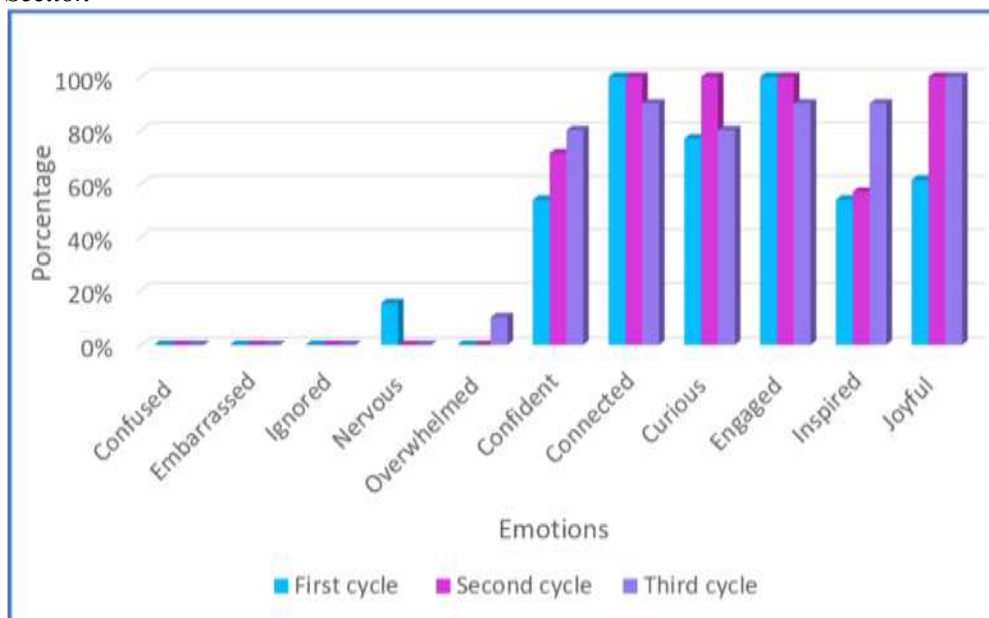
The data consistently indicated that as students became more emotionally engaged, their linguistic confidence and communicative competence grew in parallel. By the second lesson of Unit 2, students appeared more relaxed, laughed more, and even the shyest participants became increasingly willing to contribute. At the end of each unit, students expressed satisfaction and gratitude, describing the activities as “*motivational*” and the classroom environment as “*comfortable enough to participate.*” These outcomes suggest that fostering emotional well-being and self-appreciation directly supports language development and risk-taking in communication.

Findings from the Emotion Surveys

The following findings are based on data collected from the three emotion surveys administered at the end of each instructional cycle. Together, Figure 1 and Table 3 below offer both quantitative and qualitative insights into how students’ emotional experiences evolved throughout the learning process. Figure 1 shows the emotional responses reported by students in the multiple-choice section of the three surveys conducted at the end of each instructional cycle. It represents the percentage of students who identified with each emotion during their learning experience, ranging from

negative emotions such as nervousness and confusion to positive ones like confidence, engagement, and joy. The results reflect students' growing sense of confidence, connection, and enjoyment as they become more comfortable and engaged in the learning process.

Figure 1. *Trajectory of Emotions across the Three Cycles based on the Multiple-choice Section*



Source. Own creation

Positive emotions grew consistently across the cycles. All participants (100%) reported connection in cycles 1 and 2, with a slight decrease to 80% in cycle 3. Involvement followed a similar trend—100% in cycles 1 and 2, and 90% in cycle 3. Curiosity started at 76.9% in cycle 1, rose to 100% in cycle 2, then dipped slightly to 80% in cycle 3. Joy increased from 61.5% in cycle 1 to 100% in cycles 2 and 3. Confidence improved steadily: 54% in cycle 1, 71.4% in cycle 2, and 90% in cycle 3. Inspiration also rose, moving from 54% in cycle 1 to 57% in cycle 2, and reaching 90% by cycle 3. Learners reported minimal negative emotions. Nervousness appeared in 15.3% of learners in cycle 1, and disappeared by cycles 2 and 3. Overwhelm did not appear in cycles 1 or 2 but affected 10% of learners in cycle 3. Learners did not report confusion, embarrassment, or feeling ignored during any cycle.

The increase in confidence and inspiration indicates that learners increasingly believed in their ability to learn and use English meaningfully. The decrease in nervousness and the complete absence of confusion, embarrassment, and feeling ignored highlight the psychological safety that the classroom provided. The high levels of connection, involvement, and joy suggest that learners felt welcomed, valued, and interested throughout the course. Learners' reports of overwhelm in cycle 3, a 10% may stem from the cognitive and emotional demands of the course, personal life circumstances, or the emotional difficulty of ending a rewarding group experience. The slight decreases in connection, curiosity, and involvement during this final cycle may

also reflect emotional fatigue or a reduced sense of novelty, common patterns in the later stages of a program.

Table 3 below presents a thematic and content analysis of students' reflective comments, categorized according to six key emotions identified throughout the course: confidence, connection, curiosity, engagement, inspiration, and joy. The analysis highlights the emotional state of students, revealing how the classroom environment, teacher practices, and instructional design contributed not only to language development but also to emotional growth. Each category captures a distinct aspect of the learners' journey, offering insight into how emotions shaped their motivation, participation, and overall satisfaction with the course.

Table 3. *Trajectory of Emotions across the Three Cycles based on the Comments Section*

Emotion	Representative Comments	Key themes identified
Confidence	- <i>"I believe speaking English is possible."</i> - <i>"It increased my self-confidence..."</i> - <i>"I have learned a lot and felt very good."</i> - <i>"It helped reinforce grammatical structures and learn new ones."</i> - <i>"This is a good way to improve and expand my skills and vocabulary..."</i>	Self-efficacy, linguistic progress, empowerment
Connection	- <i>"The teacher encouraged everyone's participation, balancing speaking time."</i> - <i>"Conversations with our classmates in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere."</i> - <i>"I gained a deeper understanding of how people around me feel."</i>	Classroom community, peer support, emotional connection
Curiosity	- <i>"Very interesting for expanding communication and making progress."</i> - <i>"It made me think more about how I express myself."</i> - <i>"It could help me learn better."</i> - <i>"A good methodology that motivates learning..."</i>	Discovery, reflective thinking, language exploration
Engagement	- <i>"The activities have been very interesting."</i> - <i>"The class is very interesting and practical."</i> - <i>"A very interesting and engaging class."</i> - <i>"The classes were very varied and fun..."</i> - <i>"I like having the opportunity to practice speaking."</i> - <i>"The teacher made the classes very enjoyable and participative."</i>	Task involvement, sustained interest, and active learning
Inspiration	- <i>"A very good and meaningful experience."</i> - <i>"I feel lucky to have met such a great person."</i> - <i>"The teacher is very dynamic."</i> - <i>"I am very happy with this teacher."</i> - <i>"It has been a pleasure to attend your classes."</i> - <i>"It encouraged me to make a greater effort to understand and speak."</i>	Motivational climate, teacher influence, and transformative learning
Joy	- <i>"The teacher creates a joyful and pleasant environment."</i> - <i>"I enjoy English class..."</i> - <i>"The classes were very fun, keeping our attention."</i> - <i>"A joyful and pleasant environment."</i> - <i>"It has been a pleasure to attend your classes."</i> - <i>"I have learned a lot and felt very good."</i>	Positive affect, fun learning, and emotional satisfaction

Source. Own creation

Table 3 shows that students expressed a strong sense of confidence, noting improvements in their language skills and a reinforced belief in their ability to succeed. This reflects increased self-efficacy, noticeable linguistic progress, and feelings of empowerment. The environment encouraged learners to feel capable and motivated to continue developing their English proficiency. The theme of connection emerged through comments about inclusive teaching practices and supportive peer interactions. Students valued the balanced participation encouraged by the teacher and the relaxed, friendly atmosphere, which fostered a sense of community and emotional bonds within the classroom. This social support network contributed to emotional security and facilitated more open communication.

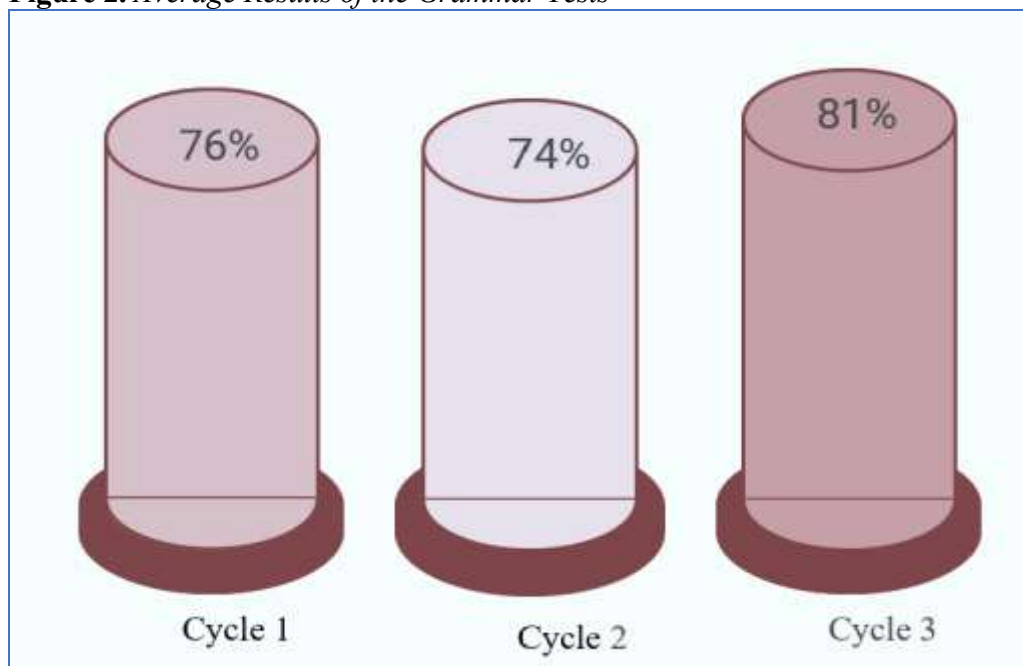
Curiosity was another prominent emotion, as students found the activities interesting and thought-provoking, leading them to reflect on their language use and explore new ways of expressing themselves. This curiosity promoted discovery and metacognitive engagement, essential for deep and lasting language learning. The class environment was described as highly engaging, with varied and enjoyable activities that maintained student interest and encouraged active participation. This sustained engagement highlights the effectiveness of practical, student-centered tasks that involve learners directly in the learning process. Students also felt inspired by the teaching style, describing the teacher as dynamic and motivating. This inspiration created a positive motivational climate that encouraged learners to put forth greater effort, fostering transformative learning experiences that extended beyond mere language acquisition. Finally, the feedback reveals a strong sense of joy associated with the classes. Students appreciated the fun, pleasant atmosphere, which not only made learning enjoyable but also contributed to emotional satisfaction. Such a joyful environment supports effective learning by reducing anxiety and enhancing retention.

Overall, the findings based on the emotional surveys suggest that integrating CRG with multimodal and emotion-focused strategies promotes not only language development but also emotional well-being. For elderly learners, emotional outcomes—such as increased confidence, reduced anxiety, and a strong sense of joy and connection—matter as much as cognitive gains. By fostering an inclusive and emotionally rich classroom environment, the teacher supported both the affective and linguistic development of learners, making the learning experience both effective and meaningful.

Findings from the Grammar Tests

The teacher designed three grammar tests to evaluate the effectiveness of CRG integrated with multimodal and emotion-focused strategies for elderly learners. Thus, the findings were drawn from the three grammar test scores, administered at the end of each unit within its respective cycle. Figure 2 below illustrates the development of grammatical competence among elderly learners across three instructional cycles.

Figure 2. *Average Results of the Grammar Tests*



Source. Own creation

In cycle 1, the teacher implemented five lessons focused on a single grammar structure, resulting in a 76% success rate among learners. Although this outcome was generally positive, the results indicated areas for improvement. To address these issues, the teacher first analyzed potential factors that may have limited success. One identified element was the limited exposure to and practice with the target language. Based on this analysis, the teacher decided to add a lesson in the next cycle. Nevertheless, when designing the didactic unit for cycle 2, the teacher introduced various target grammar structures, unlike in the first cycle.

The grammar test administered at the end of cycle 2 did not yield the anticipated improvement; instead, the success rate decreased by 2% compared to the first cycle. After analyzing and reflecting on the possible causes of this decline, the teacher concluded that the increased grammatical content may have caused cognitive overload for some elderly learners, resulting in a slight drop in performance. In response to this outcome, the teacher made a key adjustment in cycle 3 by returning to a single grammar structure while maintaining the number of lessons at six. This modification led to a significant improvement in learners' performance, with the success rate rising to 81%.

The data collected across the three instructional cycles reveal a clear and significant pattern in the relationship between instructional design and learner performance in grammar acquisition among older adults. The findings underscore the importance of focused, cognitively manageable instruction combined with sufficient exposure and practice time. In cycle 1, the teacher implemented a targeted approach by concentrating on a single grammar structure over five lessons. This design resulted in a success rate of 76%, indicating that learners responded positively to concentrated instruction. However, despite this relatively strong outcome, the teacher recognized that the limited time for repeated exposure and practice may have hindered learners' ability to fully internalize the target structure. This insight paved the way for further pedagogical refinement.

In cycle 2, the instructional time was extended to six lessons to provide students with additional practice. However, the teacher concurrently introduced multiple grammar structures within the same cycle. While the intention was to enhance grammatical knowledge, the increased cognitive demands may have overwhelmed the learners. As a result, the average performance declined slightly to 74%, which likely indicates cognitive overload. This is particularly relevant for older adults, who often require more time and mental resources to process and retain new linguistic information.

Drawing on insights from previous cycles, cycle 3 maintained the extended six-lesson format while returning to a single grammar structure. This last adjustment resulted in the highest performance outcome, with an average success rate of 81%. The results underscore the importance of balancing instructional time with depth of focus, enabling learners to engage more meaningfully with the material without the distraction or confusion of competing grammatical content.

Despite the significant improvement observed in the third cycle, there remain areas for enhancement that should be addressed in future studies. For instance, the implementation of explicit grammar instruction for specific students and the exploration of alternative methodological strategies in further investigation. Additionally, an important aspect to consider is the evaluation of grammar structures within communicative skills, such as listening, speaking, and writing, in contextualized settings. This includes recording and monitoring learners' use of grammar structures in natural speech to assess their integration into real-life language use.

Discussion

In accordance with the views of Nilsson et al. (2021) and Ware et al. (2021), the findings of this study support the notion that elderly learners can successfully learn new languages by leveraging neuroplasticity, their accumulated life experiences, and metacognitive skills. The observed improvements in communicative competence and learner confidence, as evidenced by journal reflections and emotional surveys, support the arguments made by Singleton and Ryan (2004) and Klimova and de Paula Nascimento e Silva (2024). They assert that elderly learners benefit from leveraging their life experiences, employing

metacognitive strategies, and engaging personally in the language learning process.

Participants' reflections on their growing willingness to speak and a newfound sense of capability reflect psychological assertions that self-efficacy and emotional safety play critical roles in late-life language learning (Acosta 2024; Baran Łucarz and Słowik-Krogulec 2023). Throughout the course, students' transitions from nervousness to confidence and joy align with Geng and Jin's (2023) observation that personal rewards, including enjoyment and social connection, gradually pressures during sustained language engagement.

While the literature frequently emphasizes the importance of explicit grammar instruction for older adults (Ellis 2021; VanPatten and Benati 2015), the findings suggest that grammar presented in meaningful, emotionally engaging, and multimodal contexts can lead to significant improvements, even when explicit rule explanations are minimal. The consistent increase in grammar test scores (from 76% to 81%), coupled with a low demand for direct explanations, indicates that contextualized CRG can enhance grammatical accuracy.

The use of multimodal instructional strategies was essential for promoting emotional engagement. Incorporating images, music, emojis, gestures, and spatial organization facilitated comprehension and authentic use of language, and Van Leeuwen's (2021) assertion that meaning construction relies on multiple, integrated semiotic modes. In agreement with Eisenmann and Summer (2020), classroom activities such as "Musical Heart Vibes" and "The Emotions Bag" were found to elicit deep emotional profound, and genuine communicative intent, enhancing intent, thereby engagement and inclusivity.

Peer interaction, self-expression, and empathy thrived in this multimodal, learner-centered environment, as advocated by Guo (2023) and Belabbas (2024). Survey and journal data consistently indicated an increase in positive emotions, particularly confidence, connection, and joy, alongside a concurrent decline in nervousness. This finding echoes Imai's (2010) theory that constructively addressing initial negative emotions can foster long-term engagement and learning.

Learners' affective responses closely aligned with dimensions emphasized in recent studies, such as engagement, emotional safety, and self-efficacy (Geng and Jin 2023; Mystkowska-Wiertelak and Słowik-Krogulec 2024). Additionally, expressions of pride, joy, and gratitude further support Li and Dewaele's (2020) assertion that emotional factors are central to language development in older adulthood.

The evident presence of peer support, mutual respect, and collaborative reflection fostered by group tasks enhanced both engagement and learners' willingness to communicate. These findings align with sociocultural theories (Méndez and Fabela 2014; Larsen-Freeman 2003; Lantolf and Thorne 2006), which view language learning as an inherently social, collaborative, and emotionally mediated process.

Conclusions

This study examined the impact of integrating CRG-based activities, multimodal resources, and an emotion-focused learning environment on language development, emotional involvement, and self-efficacy among elderly English learners. The findings indicate that this combined pedagogical approach can significantly enhance both linguistic competence and emotional well-being in older adult learners. Participants reported increased confidence, engagement, and motivation, and demonstrated measurable improvements in grammatical accuracy and communicative ability. The supportive, multimodal classroom environment—characterized by empathy, collaboration, and meaningful, context-rich tasks—fostered a sense of connection and joy while reducing anxiety and self-doubt. These outcomes suggest that addressing both cognitive and affective dimensions of learning is particularly beneficial for elderly populations, who often prioritize social interaction, intellectual stimulation, and personal growth as key motivators for language study.

Nevertheless, while the action research design provides rich, context-specific insights, it is susceptible to potential researcher bias and exhibits limited methodological rigor compared to traditional experimental approaches. The absence of a control group, a restricted participant pool, and a brief implementation period further constrain the extent to which the findings can be generalized or sustained over time. These limitations underscore critical directions for future inquiry, including the necessity for longitudinal studies to assess the enduring impact of emotion-focused and multimodal instruction on language retention and learner well-being. Comparative research involving diverse populations and instructional models would enhance the understanding of the generalizability of these findings and identify age-specific challenges and strengths. Furthermore, as digital and hybrid learning environments become increasingly prevalent, further investigation into the role of technology in facilitating emotion-centered, multimodal learning is essential. Future studies should explore the influence of teacher-related factors, such as emotional intelligence and pedagogical adaptability, on classroom dynamics and learner outcomes.

These limitations underscore significant opportunities for future research. Longitudinal studies are essential to assess the long-term effects of emotion-focused and multimodal instruction on language retention and learner well-being. Comparative research involving diverse populations and instructional models would enhance our understanding of the generalizability of these findings and help identify age-specific challenges and strengths. Additionally, as digital and hybrid learning environments become increasingly prevalent, it is crucial to investigate the role of technology in facilitating emotion-centered, multimodal learning. Future studies should also explore the impact of teacher-related factors, such as emotional intelligence and pedagogical adaptability, on classroom dynamics and learner outcomes. By addressing these limitations and pursuing these research directions, the field can cultivate a more comprehensive understanding of how to establish inclusive, effective, and emotionally supportive language learning environments for elderly learners and other diverse groups.

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Appendix A. *Reflective Journal used in the 17 Lessons*

Reflective journal

 Date: _____
  Place: _____
 Time: _____
  Participants: _____
 Lesson Topic: _____
 Objective: _____
 Main Activities:



Learners' Reaction and Engagement:



Emotional Responses:



Multimodal Interactions:


 Grammar Role:

 Insights and Next Stage Adjustments:

Appendix B. *Emotions Survey used in Units 1, 2, and 3*

Date: _____ **Place:** _____ **Unit:** _____

La siguiente encuesta es completamente anónima y confidencial. Su único propósito es recopilar datos relevantes para el alcance del proyecto relacionado con la Enseñanza y Aprendizaje del Idioma Inglés, manteniendo un enfoque exclusivamente académico.

Check (✓) the adjective(s) that best describe how you felt during the class. You can choose more than one

☐  Confused	☐  Overwhelmed	☐  Engaged
☐  Embarrassed	☐  Confident	☐  Inspired
☐  ignored	☐  Connected	☐  Joyful
☐  Nervous	☐  Curious	

Comments: _____

Appendix C. Grammar test administered in Unit 1

Date: _____

Place: _____

Circle the correct sentence.**1.**

- a) Live in a new country can be both exciting and challenging.
- b) Living in a new country can be both exciting and challenging.
- c) Lived in a new country can be both exciting and challenging.

2.

- a) Make mistakes is a natural part of learning.
- b) Made mistakes is a natural part of learning.
- c) Making mistakes is a natural part of learning.

3.

- a) Work for long hours without breaks can lead to exhaustion.
- b) Working for long hours without breaks can lead to exhaustion.
- c) To work for long hours without breaks can lead to exhaustion.

4.

- a) Starting new hobbies can be a great way to reduce stress.
- b) Start new hobbies can be a great way to reduce stress.
- c) Started new hobbies can be a great way to reduce stress.

5

- a) Learn a second language takes time and dedication.
- b) Learning a second language takes time and dedication.
- c) Learned a second language takes time and dedication.

6.

- a) Receive compliments from her teacher made Emma feel proud.
- b) Receiving compliments from her teacher made Emma feel proud.
- c) Received compliments from her teacher made Emma feel proud.

7.

- a) Win the championship left the whole team delighted.
- b) Winning the championship left the whole team delighted.
- c) Won the championship, left the whole team delighted.

8

- a) Been in a difficult situation can make people feel frustrated.
- b) Be in a difficult situation can make people feel frustrated.
- Ac) Being in a difficult situation can make people feel frustrated.

9.

- a) Visit her childhood home made Sarah feel melancholy.
- b) Visited her childhood home made Sarah feel melancholy.
- Ac) Visiting her childhood home made Sarah feel melancholy.

10.

- a) Walk without an umbrella in the rain left them annoyed.
- b) Walking without an umbrella in the rain left them annoyed.
- c) Walked without an umbrella in the rain left them annoyed.

Appendix D. Grammar Test administered in Unit 2

Date: _____ Place: _____

The following test is entirely anonymous and confidential. Its sole purpose is to gather data relevant to the project's scope in English Language Teaching and Learning, with an exclusively academic focus.

(La siguiente prueba es completamente anónima y confidencial. Su único propósito es recopilar datos relevantes para el alcance del proyecto relacionado con la Enseñanza y Aprendizaje del Idioma Inglés, manteniendo un enfoque exclusivamente académico)

In front of each sentence, write  if it is correct and  if it is incorrect.

1. I am able painting beautiful landscapes with watercolors. _____
2. I am able dance ballet. _____
3. I am able to drive a car. _____
4. I am able can speak three languages fluently. _____
5. I am able to cook different type of food. _____
6. I am able to climb high mountains. _____
7. I am able to speak three languages fluently. _____
8. I am able to speak in front a huge public. _____
9. I am not good at cook Italian food. _____
10. I am good at swim long distances. _____
11. I am good at writing creative stories. _____
12. I can draw beautiful landscapes with watercolor. _____
13. I can sing and play the piano at the same time. _____
14. I can swim very well because I practiced a lot. _____
15. I am able to paint. _____
16. I am able to solve difficult math equations without a calculator. _____
17. I am good at learning new languages quickly. _____
18. I am good at playing the piano and composing music. _____
19. I am good at solving complex math problems. _____
20. I am good at to play the violin. _____

Appendix F. Grammar Test administered in Unit 3

Date: _____

Place: _____

Circle the correct answer

1. What did you do when you were in Paris?

- a) I visit the Eiffel Tower.
- b) I visited the Eiffel Tower.
- c) I am visiting the Eiffel Tower.

2. When did you visit the Great Wall of China?

- a) I visited the Great Wall last year.
- b) I visit the Great Wall last year.
- c) I visitted the Great Wall last year.

3. Who did you travel with to Japan?

- a) I travel with my sister.
- b) I traveled with my sister.
- c) I didn't travel with my sister.

4. How did you get to the beach in Portugal?

- a) I got there by train
- b) I went there by train
- c) I did got there by train

5. Where did you go for your last vacation?

- a) I went to Italy last summer.
- b) I go to Italy last summer.
- c) I am going to Italy next summer.

6. Why did you choose Brazil for your vacation?

- a) I chose Brazil because of its Carnival of Rio de Janeiro
- b) I choose Brazil because of its Carnival of Rio de Janeiro
- c) I choosed Brazil because of its Carnival of Rio de Janeiro

7. Did you try any local food during your trip to Mexico?

- a) Yes, I ate tacos and loved them!
- b) Yes, I eat tacos and loved them!
- c) Yes, I am eating tacos and loved them!

8. Did anything surprising or funny thing happen during your trip to Australia?

- a) A kangaroo jumped into our car!
- b) A kangaroo jumps into our car!
- c) A kangaroo is jumping into our car!

9. What was the most interesting place you visited in New York?

- a) I visited the Statue of Liberty.
- b) I visit Statue the of Liberty.
- c) I wasn't in the Statue of Liberty.

10. What did you take with you on your trip to the Japan?

- a) I take just my passport and my wallet.
- b) I took just my passport and my wallet.
- c) I taken just my passport and my wallet.