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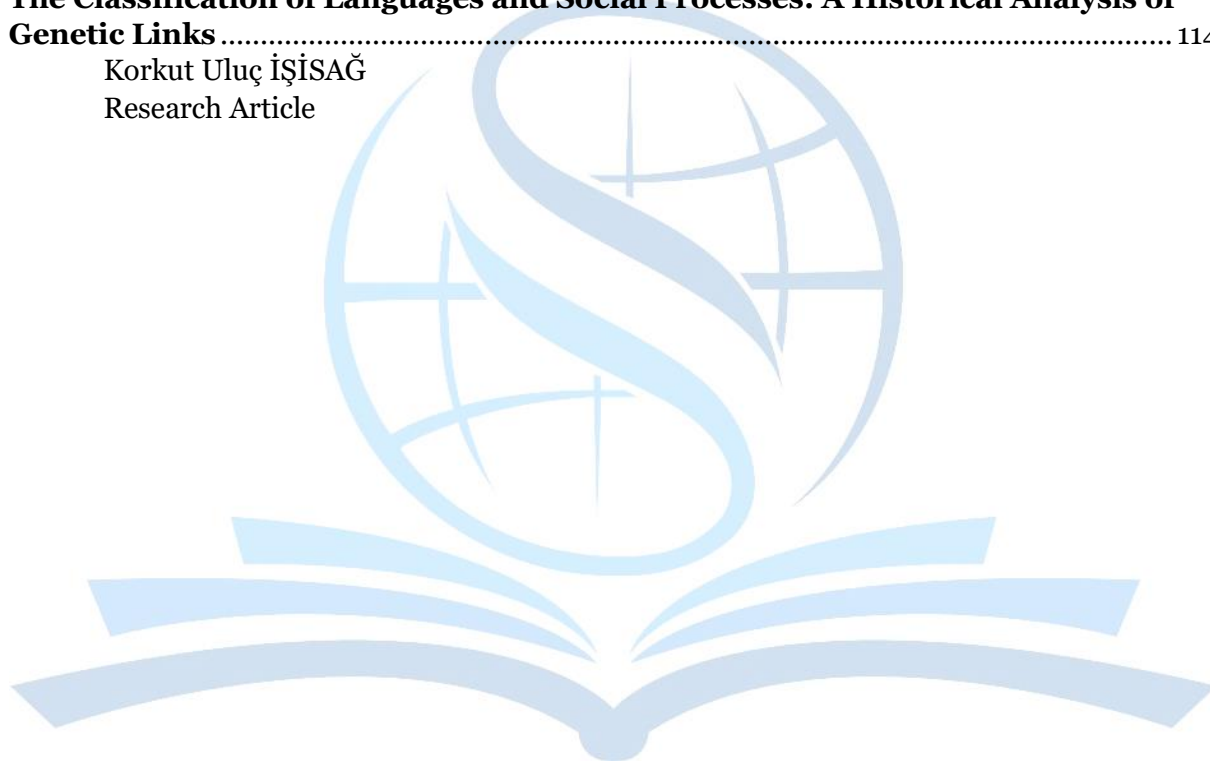


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## Food Culture in ELT Coursebooks: A Neglected Dimension\*

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### Abstract

This study provides a comprehensive examination of how food culture is employed in two English as a Foreign Language coursebook series *Headway* and *Pioneer*. Through a comparative analysis of these books this research focuses on the Elementary, Pre-Intermediate, and Intermediate levels, to explore how food culture is represented in these coursebooks and whether food culture representation changed from the 1990s until the 2010s. The selection criteria of these coursebooks is based on the assumption that these books are used widely and globally, and they play a critical role in shaping language learner exposure to items of food culture. Adapting content analysis, these books are examined regarding seven distinct aspects of food culture to show the representation and change in a significant and meaningful way. The findings reveal that while both series incorporate elements of food culture, the *Pioneer* series notably integrate multicultural dimensions and place greater emphasis on promoting healthier lifestyles, whereas in the *Headway* series there is not a considerable emphasis on health concern. This study highlights the evolving representation of food culture in EFL materials, reflecting broader shifts in societal values towards diversity and health consciousness. Given the widespread use of these coursebooks, the results underscore the importance of embedding diverse, inclusive, and health-promoting content in language learning resources to better align with modern educational and social priorities.

**Keywords:** coursebooks, EFL, food culture, health consciousness, multicultural aspects

### 1. Introduction

Incorporating culture into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms is increasingly essential upon recognizing its beneficial impacts on language learners. Understanding a foreign language's culture is deemed crucial, as culture significantly shapes language acquisition. In the era of globalization, cultural boundaries are more fluid, prompting EFL

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\* This study is produced from Ayşe Nur Sözer's MA thesis entitled "A Comparative Study on How Food Culture is Reflected in English as A Foreign Language (EFL) Coursebooks" at Maltepe University in 2023.

coursebooks to serve as primary sources for exposing learners to different cultures while teaching the target language. Cultural barriers are more brittle in today's globalised environment, emphasising the importance of EFL coursebooks as the main means of transferring cultural knowledge in addition to language teaching. That this study is also supporting and confirming the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 2 (Zero Hunger), Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-being), Goal 4 (Quality Education) and Goal 12 (Ensure Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns) is significant because the contents of the coursebooks were designed according to concerns of promotion of good health, avoidance of unhealthy food and drinks, and development of a healthier environment.

From the 1990s to the first quarter of the 2000s, people's interest in and concerns about health, healthy food, beverages, and lifestyle increased noticeably. Consequently, it is thought that a book published in the 2000s would give more emphasis to such topics and aim to inoculate the right ideas, especially in young people who are impressionable. Thus, considering the aim of the study, the research questions given below are set:

- 1) In what ways is food culture represented in EFL coursebooks?
- 2) What differences can be observed in how food culture of the target language is depicted in publications from the 1990s compared to those from the 2010s?

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Culture and Cultural Reflections in EFL**

Culture encompasses the collective beliefs, values, customs, behaviours, and artifacts that characterize a particular group or society. It spans various aspects including language, religion, social norms, artistic expressions, and technologies. While often transmitted across generations, culture is also subject to change and can be influenced by interactions with other cultures. Research indicates that culture significantly shapes individuals' thoughts, behaviours, and social interactions (Triandis, 1995; Hofstede, 2001). Moreover, culture can impact both physical and mental well-being (Kirmayer et al., 2007; Marsella, 2010). As individuals come together to form a community, a distinct culture emerges, reflecting the group's specific norms and ultimately shaping its identity. Immersion in a culture fosters a unique perspective on the world, allowing individuals to influence other societies with their thoughts. Damen (1987) states that culture is “learned and shared human patterns or models for living; day-to-day living patterns. These patterns and models pervade all aspects of human social interaction. Culture is mankind’s primary adaptive mechanism” (p. 367). People who



can understand people from different cultures are better able to raise awareness and comprehend the multitude of cultures and people that exist in the world.

Regarding the fact that culture is inherently intertwined with language, incorporating culture into language teaching has emerged as a pivotal component of effective language instruction as it enriches students' communicative abilities and cultivates their awareness of diverse cultures. Culture serves as a contextual backdrop for language usage, enabling learners to grasp and utilize language effectively in practical scenarios. The relationship between language and culture is reciprocal, with language recognized as a fundamental aspect of any culture (Brooks, 1964). It is widely acknowledged that without proper emphasis on cultural aspects, language learners may struggle to comprehend language use in context fully. Hence, general consensus is that culture must be integrated into the process of teaching a foreign language (FL) and several researchers assert its crucial role in conveying cultural meanings associated with the target language or second language (L2) (Rodríguez & Espinar, 2015; Tajeddin & Teimournezhad, 2015). As Gerfanova et al. (2018) suggest, culture encompasses “social norms, values, and beliefs that may affect many issues of FL use, teaching and learning” (p. 2), which facilitates the adoption and comprehension process of learners' language acquisition. Furthermore, cultural competence equips EFL learners to engage in cross-cultural interactions sensitively and respectfully, fostering meaningful communication and breaking down barriers. Given that culture largely mirrors the target language, they cannot be treated as distinct entities, necessitating their integration when teaching the language. As Mao (2009) indicates, integrating cultural elements into EFL classrooms enhances understanding of the target language and facilitates cross-cultural connections in authentic settings. Acknowledging the role that culture plays in EFL teaching allows teachers to create a vibrant, welcoming classroom environment that prepares students for cross-cultural communication in today's interconnected world. Instead of concentrating only on teaching culture, language teaching aims to use culture as an instrument to create a smooth and joyful learning environment that is enhanced by cultural understanding. Students naturally become immersed in the culture when language instruction takes place in a cultural setting. As a result, culture continues to be crucial to language teaching and acquisition and it is almost impossible to become proficient in a foreign language without also being aware of the culture that surrounds it, because culture plays a big role in language.

## **2.2. Coursebooks in EFL**

In the realm of EFL education, traditional coursebooks have long served as primary instructional tools alongside teaching materials encompassing any resources utilized to facilitate language learning within the classroom setting. Brown (1995) defines materials as

systematic descriptions of techniques and exercises employed in teaching and adds that teaching materials serve as aids for instructors during the foreign language learning process. According to Nunan (1988), materials not only enrich learning experiences but also constitute an integral aspect of the curriculum, offering tangible examples for classroom application, supporting the curriculum, and assisting teachers in their instructional endeavours. Among these materials, Crookes (2013) claims, EFL materials transmit attitudes and values in addition to linguistic skills. Particularly coursebooks stand out as valuable in English language instruction, as they are specifically designed to furnish both students and teachers with the necessary content and resources for effective learning and teaching. Therefore, coursebooks are instrumental in shaping the learning environment and play a critical role in language education.

Tomlinson (2012) defines coursebook as something which “provides the core materials for a language-learning course. It aims to provide as much as possible in one book and is designed so that it could serve as the only book which the learners necessarily use during a course” (p. xi). Coursebooks provide a structured advancement of language abilities, covering reading, writing, listening, and speaking, to facilitate the comprehensive enhancement of learners' communicative skills. The primary objective of EFL coursebooks is to guide learners in utilizing the target language effectively and functionally to convey messages during communication. By incorporating a variety of activities and tasks aimed at practicing language skills and grammar structures, coursebooks also provide opportunities to encounter real-life situations that reflect the speech norms of native speakers (Fasih & Narcycombes, 2011). Through the utilization of coursebooks in the classroom setting, students are consistently immersed in the target language. Brown (2007) defines language teaching as “guiding and facilitating learning, enabling the learner to learn, setting the conditions for learning” (p. 7). Therefore, coursebooks, serving as the primary instructional tool for teachers, play a significant role in facilitating the language acquisition process and guide learners in effectively and functionally utilizing the target language to convey messages during communication.

While historically valued for their role in facilitating language acquisition, contemporary discourse highlights the fundamental function of coursebooks in both imparting language skills and exposing students to the cultural nuances inherent in the target language. Foreign language teaching is commonly considered as conveying the main aspects of the language which necessitates teaching linguistic skills. It also requires teaching the culture of the target language as well because the foundational aspect of language acquisition lies in its cultural context. Chlopek (2008) states that comprehending the cultural context of a language is essential for achieving proficiency in language acquisition. In the same vein, McGregor (2007) suggests that different types of written communication hold significance when contextualized

within their cultural milieu, serving as representations of societal customs and beliefs. Particularly, the intersection of language and culture in coursebooks, epitomized by elements such as food culture, social culture, clothing culture, family culture, customs, serves as a potent means for students to deepen their understanding of the language they are learning. Due to the close relationship between language instruction and culture, coursebooks selected by teachers which are supposed to cover every facet of the language essential for students to become proficient act as the main tools for raising students' understanding of culture through their content. This recognition of coursebooks as outlets for cultural immersion underscores their relevance in fostering a more nuanced and authentic language acquisition experience.

### **2.3. Food and Food Culture in EFL**

Exploring the culture of a language often involves delving into its fundamental necessities, such as food, which can unveil various societal habits. Culture extends beyond oral and written traditions like literature, encompassing elements like cuisine, clothing, rituals, ethics, morals, and customs, which offer valuable insights into the culture associated with the language. To focus learners' attention on relatable topics and to highlight cultural diversity, food culture can serve as a starting point, facilitating comparisons of cultural changes over time. Food is a basic and complex component of human existence, consisting of a wide range of edible materials that are ingested for pleasure, sustenance, and nutrition. Food has important cultural, social, and psychological value in human cultures in addition to its physiological role of delivering energy and necessary nutrients (Mintz & Du Bois, 2002). Appreciating human behaviour, social interactions and the intricate interactions between people and their environment all depend on an understanding of the complicated nature of food (Sutton, 2010). Kittler et al. (2017) indicate that,

The choice of which foods to ingest is further complicated by another psychological concept regarding eating—the incorporation of food. This means that consumption is not just the conversion of food into nutrients in the human body, but also includes gaining the food's physical properties as well—hence the phrase “You are what you eat.”. (p. 2)

Therefore, it is crucial to incorporate food culture, customs, and traditions into classroom instruction via coursebooks to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of the society where the language is spoken.

Each culture's culinary customs reflect its past, present, and core beliefs. Jacobs, Joyce and Subramaniam (2018) suggest that “research on the depiction of food in learning materials may be timely, as food has drawn increased attention for its roles in many aspects of today's world, including health, environmental protection, and relations between humans and other

animals” (pp. 2-3). By including food-related topics into EFL lessons, teachers can give their students real-world situations in which to practise their language abilities and develop understanding of various cultural perspectives and experiences.

Food culture serves as a mirror reflecting the cultural nuances of the target language. It provides a lens through which the impacts of industrialization, digitalization, and consumerism on the target language's culture can be scrutinized. Additionally, the multicultural influences stemming from the UK's colonial history, its global presence, and the US's irrefutable cultural hegemony are evident in food culture, offering insights into the effects of multiculturalism both domestically and internationally.

Integrating food culture into language teaching can improve students' comprehension of culture and their enthusiasm for learning the language. Gunkel (2016) indicates that “examining foodways requires us to understand the complex ways in which social norms, cultural meaning, historical contexts, and economic realities underlie food habits” (p. 245). According to Kittler, Nelms and Sucher (2017), “an essential symbolic function of food is cultural identity. What one eats defines who one is, culturally speaking, and, conversely, who one is not” (p. 4). Therefore, considering food's essential role in sustaining life and its multifaceted significance encompassing cultural, economic, social, and psychological dimensions, its inclusion in educational materials is indispensable. Wang, Huang & Hsu (2015) suggest that integrating cultural content into language instruction boosts students' motivation to learn English and enhances their proficiency in applying the language in authentic contexts by establishing a connection between their native language (L1) and second language (L2). Cognard-Black and Goldthwaite (2008) suggest on teaching food:

To teach food as a written art form is to teach a part of what it means to be human. Through the record of food traditions, culture and history are transmitted as well as transformed - practices of sharing, preparing, and eating recipes both create and convey human interactions. Moreover, like humanity, food is both elastic and contradictory. It symbolizes birth, rebirth, and death. It represents the natural as well as the artificial. It can mean both health and poison, war and peace, surfeit and hunger, art and commodity. In other words, food texts are multifaceted in terms of their content, and yet they're also complex in terms of genre, tone, and approach - thereby mirroring the intricacies of writers and reader. (p. 422)

Nonetheless, there are limitations in incorporating food culture into EFL coursebooks as some researchers suggest and numerous EFL coursebooks lack thorough and precise depictions of food culture, often relying on stereotypical representations, particularly centred around British and American cultures (Alshenqeeti, 2019; Anita, 2019; Böcü & Razi, 2016; Syahri & Susanti, 2016; Thumvichit, 2018; Waharak, 2015). This emphasises the significance of ensuring that EFL coursebook content is authentic and culturally sensitive to avoid

perpetuating stereotypes and to foster a more accurate appreciation of the culture. Additionally, there is a growing recognition of the need to offer a diverse array of content, including food culture, from various cultures in EFL instruction (Böcü & Razi, 2016). This ensures a more inclusive and comprehensive understanding of different cultures beyond those traditionally featured in coursebooks. Since food items featured in coursebooks help students understand other cultures when studying a foreign language, food and language should be linked together as components of culture to facilitate language acquisition.

In light of these considerations, this study seeks to address a notable gap in scholarly literature by investigating the portrayal of food culture within EFL coursebooks. By scrutinizing two distinct series of coursebooks in three levels, - *Headway* and *Pioneer*, to be precise - the research endeavours to elucidate the manner in which food culture is incorporated and represented within these instructional materials. Through this inquiry, the study aims to shed light on the pedagogical implications of leveraging food culture as a conduit for cultural and linguistic learning within the EFL classroom. Furthermore, the study seeks to raise awareness among language teachers regarding the integration of food culture into classroom instruction and promote appreciation for diverse cultural customs and traditions. To achieve these objectives, the study involves a detailed analysis of six books across three proficiency levels from the two coursebook sets, scrutinizing words, texts, pictures, and exercises to determine the inclusion of food culture elements and customs/traditions from both British culture and other cultures.

### **3. Methods**

Aiming to investigate how food culture is portrayed in EFL coursebooks and compare the variations in two publications from the 1990s and 2010s about the target language's food culture, the study aims to examine the integration of food culture content in EFL coursebooks by examining two different publications that were published in different decades.

The study adopts a case study approach, utilizing qualitative methods with content analysis techniques to compare and examine differences in the portrayal of food culture in the target language from the 1990s to the 2010s. Qualitative research involves various philosophical assumptions, inquiry strategies, and data collection, analysis, and interpretation methods (Creswell, 2009). Content analysis, as a qualitative research method, is employed in this study due to its inherent connection with qualitative analysis methods. Two distinct publications from different decades are analysed to explore and contrast representations of food culture in EFL coursebooks. Qualitative research allows for data collection from diverse sources and in various forms, including interviews, observation, or content analysis of existing

materials (Pardede, 2018). Content analysis is utilized to uncover cultural patterns and beliefs, describe communication themes and trends, and analyse attitudinal and behavioural responses (Berelson, 1952; Krippendorff, 2004; Polit & Hungler, 1991; Weber, 1985). Using content analysis approach, data is gathered by comparing two publications across three different proficiency levels, totalling six coursebooks. The analysis focuses on elements pertaining to food culture and examines how they have evolved over the decades within EFL coursebooks.

In the study, the literature review undergoes thorough content analysis and interpretation, involving comprehensive data analysis. This method entails a holistic examination of samples drawn from relevant studies and articles. The researchers provide objective commentary on the findings, supported by transparently documented notes. Furthermore, previous research studies are utilized as supplementary resources, contributing to the overall framework.

The primary emphasis of the study involves analysing six coursebooks spanning three proficiency levels, complemented by the utilization of articles, books, journals, publications, and online sources as secondary materials. The selected coursebooks include three levels from the *Headway* series - Elementary, Pre-Intermediate, and Intermediate - and three levels from the *Pioneer* series - Elementary, Pre-Intermediate, and Intermediate. The objective is to investigate and evaluate the portrayal of food culture, traditions, and customs related to food across these coursebooks.

During the analysis of data extracted from the chosen coursebooks, a table featuring five columns is utilized, categorizing identified items under the headings Food, Drink, Alcoholic Beverages, Meals, and International/Foreign Food & Drink. Upon completion of the tables for each of the six books, main tables are highlighted under seven headings: 'Eating Out/In a restaurant/Café', 'Cooking at Home', 'Alcoholic Beverages/Pubs/Bars', 'International Food Culture', 'British Food Culture & British Customs', 'Fast Food', and 'Smoking/Cigarettes'. The items are then categorized accordingly to establish connections between them.

#### **4. Findings**

In this section, the analysis focuses on examining how the coursebooks incorporate images, reading texts, and exercises related to food culture, categorizing the findings into seven subcategories. The first subcategory assesses the portrayal and frequency of dining out and visiting restaurants or cafes within the books. The second subcategory evaluates depictions of eating and cooking habits at home. The third subcategory examines the inclusion of alcoholic

beverages and venues where alcohol is consumed. In the fourth subcategory, the representation of international dishes, locations, and customs is explored. The fifth subcategory highlights references to British cuisine and traditions. The sixth subcategory evaluates the depiction of fast food within the books. Additionally, the seventh subcategory identifies instances within the reading texts and units where smoking and tobacco are mentioned. Finally, the last subcategory lists individual food culture-related items not fitting into the previously mentioned categories. Each subcategory features six tables, one for each coursebook, except for the seventh subcategory, which focuses solely on smoking and cigarettes. Tables are divided into six sections to facilitate a clear comparison of how each book addresses the topics. Some items may appear in multiple categories due to their varied contextual relevance.

‘Eating Out/In a Restaurant/Café’ is mentioned a total of 5 times in *Headway Elementary Student's Book*, 7 times overall in *Headway Pre-Intermediate Student's Book*, and once in *Headway Intermediate Student's Book*. In *Pioneer Elementary Student's Book*, it is presented 4 times, twice in *Pioneer Pre-Intermediate Student's Book*, and twice in *Pioneer Intermediate Student's Book*, across all categories.

The first subcategory lists statements and food-related items categorized under themes such as eating out, visiting a restaurant, or going to a café. Each of the six books in this category is analysed and examined within these tables to assess how dining out is depicted in the source material. While the references vary between books, it can be noted that the *Headway* series portrays dining out more frequently than the *Pioneer* series.

For the second subcategory, ‘Cooking at Home’, cooking at home or preparing meals at home is mentioned 4 times in *Headway Elementary SB*, cooking/preparing food at home is mentioned once alongside with mentioning giving a party once and recipes twice in *Headway Pre-Intermediate SB*, and once in *Headway Intermediate SB* while in *Pioneer Elementary SB*, cooking at home is observed 6 times, twice in *Pioneer Pre-Intermediate SB*, and once in *Pioneer Intermediate SB* as “having a barbecue”.

The second subcategory, titled ‘Cooking/Preparing Food at Home’, examines how this theme is represented in the two series across six tables. In the *Headway* series, cooking at home is depicted as a communal activity, with the kitchen portrayed as a central meeting place for British families in the 1990s. The series highlights traditions such as baking and cooking together, sharing recipes, and even introduces vegetarianism as a lifestyle, emphasising the importance of meal preparation in maintaining it. In contrast, the *Pioneer* series mentions cooking at home less frequently, typically portraying it as a quick, practical activity like making

sandwiches or hosting barbecue parties. It also suggests a shift in lifestyle by illustrating how people in the 2010s often cook during weekdays but opt for convenience, such as ordering food, on weekends. This reflects a broader cultural change, where the communal and time-intensive cooking traditions of the past have given way to quicker, more flexible solutions to accommodate modern, fast-paced lives.

‘Alcoholic Beverages/Pubs/Bars’ is mentioned frequently with 10 times of mentioning wine as an alcoholic beverage and going to bars is mentioned 4 times in *Headway Elementary SB*, once in *Headway Pre-Intermediate SB*, and wine as an alcoholic beverage is also mentioned 3 times in *Headway Intermediate SB*, whereas in *Pioneer Elementary SB* wine is seen once in a picture, a glass of beer is observed in *Pioneer Pre-Intermediate SB*, and never mentioned or observed in *Pioneer Intermediate SB*.

The tables in the third subcategory highlight how attitudes toward alcoholic beverages have evolved over the years. In the 1990s, it was more common for people to visit pubs for drinks, as reflected in the *Headway* series. By contrast, in the 2010s, the *Pioneer* series depicts fewer individuals consuming alcoholic beverages. While the *Headway* series does include references to adopting a healthy lifestyle, alcohol consumption remains portrayed as a regular part of daily life during that time.

The fourth subcategory ‘International Food Culture’ is examined throughout the series as following: 6 times in *Headway Elementary SB*, 5 times in *Headway Pre-Intermediate SB*, and 15 times in total in *Headway Intermediate SB*. In the other set of series, in *Pioneer Elementary SB* food from other cultures is mentioned 19 times, 13 times in *Pioneer Pre-Intermediate SB*, and twice in *Pioneer Intermediate SB*.

The *Pioneer* series makes fewer references to international food compared to the *Headway* series, as dishes like pizza, hamburgers, spaghetti, and sushi are presented as commonplace and integrated into everyday diets. Sushi, in particular, is portrayed as so ordinary that people express frustration over the lack of quality sushi restaurants in their area. Additionally, the *Pioneer* series includes references to the dining customs of other cultures, such as a detailed passage on Chinese culinary traditions, which explains proper etiquette and behaviour during meals.

‘British Food Culture & British Customs’ are represented 8 times in *Headway Elementary SB*, 4 times in *Headway Pre-Intermediate SB*, 8 times in *Headway Intermediate SB* while it is observed once in *Pioneer Elementary SB* and *Pioneer Pre-Intermediate SB*, and thrice in *Pioneer Intermediate SB*.



The *Headway* series highlights British culinary traditions, including references to British and English food, the iconic British breakfast, and Easter customs like Easter eggs. While discussing breakfast, the series notes that the traditional British breakfast of sausages, bacon, eggs, tomatoes, and mushrooms had largely shifted by the 1990s to simpler options like cereal with milk and sugar or toast with marmalade, jam, or honey, signalling a change in eating habits. The series also features a recipe for Shepherd's Pie, a classic British dish, and describes fish and chips as a "typical" meal. Additionally, tea culture is emphasized, with mentions of scones, teacakes, and hot cross buns, which are iconic elements of British food heritage. The custom of leaving milk bottles at front doors for the milkman is also noted. In contrast, the *Pioneer* series offers limited insights into traditional British food and customs, with barbecues and barbecue parties being the only activity that could be considered a reflection of traditional British culinary practices.

The subcategory 'Fast Food' is mentioned 18 times in *Headway Elementary SB*; 8 times of mentioning hamburger, four times of mentioning ice-cream, 3 times of pizza and other items. In *Headway Pre-Intermediate SB*, fast food items are mentioned 12 times, and twice in *Headway Intermediate SB* whereas in *Pioneer Elementary SB*, related items are mentioned 14 times, 5 times in *Pioneer Pre-Intermediate SB*, and 7 times in *Pioneer Intermediate SB*.

In the *Headway* series, hamburgers are the most frequently mentioned fast-food item, followed by ice cream. While pizza is also noted, fizzy drinks like Coca-Cola are referenced more prominently than pizza in the *Headway Pre-Intermediate Student's Book*. Coca-Cola is specifically mentioned in a reading passage, giving the impression of brand advertisement. Common fast-food items across both series include ice cream, hamburgers, snacks, pizza, chips/crisps, chocolate, and popcorn. However, the *Pioneer* series introduces strawberry milkshakes and marshmallows as fast-food items, which are not mentioned in the *Headway* series.

The final subcategory, 'Smoking/Cigarettes' is cited in multiple contexts throughout the *Headway* series, functioning as a reference in grammar and vocabulary lessons, in addition to speaking, writing, and reading activities. Conversely, in the *Pioneer* series, this subcategory is neither observed nor referenced in any context.

The incorporation of smoking-related content within educational texts fulfils multiple objectives, ranging from enlightening students about the health risks associated with smoking to shaping cultural attitudes and behaviours. This synthesis examines the various facets of smoking education in textbooks and its cultural ramifications. Smoking-related content has been integrated into a variety of subjects, including biology, social science, chemistry, and geography, in Danish educational materials targeted at students aged 16 to 19. These

publications are part of a broader initiative aimed at influencing the attitudes and behaviours of young individuals towards smoking (Trangbek, 2000). The cultural framing of messages regarding smoking cessation significantly influences their efficacy. For instance, culturally tailored messages directed at low-income African American smokers have demonstrated a greater ability to enhance personal risk perceptions and readiness to quit smoking when compared to standard messages (Webb et al., 2010). The cultural positioning of smoking has transformed over time, with historical contexts affecting its perception. For example, smoking was historically regarded as a symbol of modernity and sophistication in Europe and China, accompanied by various rituals and paraphernalia associated with its use.

## 5. Discussion

In the realm of foreign language education, fostering intercultural understanding and communication is paramount in our increasingly interconnected world. EFL coursebooks play a key role in shaping students' perceptions of diverse cultures, particularly in terms of their culinary traditions, serving as a gateway to intercultural exchange. Food, beyond its mere sustenance, holds profound cultural significance, reflecting the essence of a society's identity. Thus, comprehending how food culture is depicted in EFL coursebooks is crucial for developing an objective perspective on cultural representations within a target language. This study which aims to investigate the reflections of food culture, customs/traditions in the EFL coursebooks analyses the representation of food culture and culinary customs/traditions in two sets of coursebooks and compares them to identify similarities, differences, and potential changes in food habits over time. Additionally, the research investigates any international references to food items and cultural practices within the coursebooks. In this study, six distinct books - *Headway Elementary Student's Book*, *Headway Pre-Intermediate Student's Book*, *Headway Intermediate Student's Book*, *Pioneer Elementary Student's Book*, *Pioneer Pre-Intermediate Student's Book*, and *Pioneer Intermediate Student's Book* - are examined across seven subcategories to gain insight into the portrayal of food over different decades. This analysis encompasses not only food-related items, but also events, food traditions, customs, presentation methods, eating practices, and ingredient usage.

Both the *Headway* and *Pioneer* series of coursebooks frequently incorporate references to food, particularly emphasizing its role as a teaching tool in language instruction, notably in the *Headway* series. Not only do these books feature food items from the target language's culture, especially British culture, but they also showcase elements from other nationalities' culinary traditions. These concepts are seamlessly integrated into the lessons' content, providing students with exposure to diverse cultural aspects. Similarly, the *Pioneer* series utilizes food items as a means to introduce language concepts to learners. However, in this series, international food items are predominantly portrayed as integral components of the

target language's culinary culture. Overall, both sets of coursebooks employ food items as integral elements of the teaching process throughout the entirety of the books.

The analysis compares the differences between the 1990s and the 2010s as depicted in the coursebooks. Firstly, coursebooks from the 1990s reflect the societal lifestyle of that era, where individuals commonly cooked at home and dined in the kitchen. Going to a restaurant or café was perceived as a social activity, particularly for socializing with friends, especially after work or during busy times when cooking at home was not feasible. Contrasting these eating habits with those depicted in the *Headway* series from the 2010s, where individuals are portrayed as frequently eating in front of the TV, illustrates the distinct eating habits prevalent in the 1990s. Conversely, in the *Pioneer* series from the 2010s, the findings suggest that dining out is a prevalent aspect of people's lifestyles, with individuals either dining out or ordering food from restaurants.

Based on the findings derived from analysing the two sets of coursebooks, it is evident that the selected materials effectively showcase both food-related items and culinary customs/traditions of the target language, while also illustrating changes over time. In addition to highlighting British culture within the units, the coursebooks also promote the appreciation of diverse cultures, fostering students' intercultural awareness within the classroom setting.

## **6. Conclusion**

The study concludes that while both sets of coursebooks incorporate elements of food culture, there are noticeable changes in the depicted locations and culinary habits over time. Both sets utilize culinary customs to familiarize students with the culture of the target language, in addition to teaching the language itself. Overall, the variations between the two sets of coursebooks demonstrate content changes over the span of three decades. These differences contribute to students' appreciation of diverse cultures and foster multicultural awareness. As a result, by observing common objects associated with the food culture of the target language, students will have more opportunities to improve their foreign language proficiency.

In addition to the aim of promoting language awareness and developing language skills, the creation and selection of issues and items in the content of the coursebooks is based on the concerns of creating contextually appropriate books, and promoting healthier environment, healthier people, healthier food and drinks for the learners of whom the great majority are thought to be children and teenagers who are at very impressionable and misled.

By incorporating familiar elements of food culture from the target language, students are given more opportunities to enhance their foreign language skills. Encountering and using

items from the coursebooks in their daily lives enables quicker and more effective learning. Unlike themes such as traveling to distant places, extreme sports, historical events, or celebrity lifestyles—which may not resonate with students—food-related texts and topics are universal and directly relevant. Viewing food as a cultural artifact allows students to explore culinary practices, social norms, and the symbolic meanings of different cuisines, fostering culturally responsive teaching. This approach promotes intercultural competence, encouraging students to appreciate and respect cultural diversity. It also provides a practical connection to real-world themes, enhancing communication skills and offering a deeper understanding of the global community they are part of. Additionally, food-based activities and discussions create an engaging, interactive learning environment, making language learning memorable and motivating students through the inclusion of relatable and familiar elements of food culture.

### **Disclosures**

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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## “Intralingual Hijacking” As a Newly Coined Feminist Translation Strategy\*

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### Abstract

Feminist translation studies aim to reveal the intrinsic oppression of male dominance in literary environments occurring on many levels. It has long been discussed that interlingual translation through feminist translation strategies bears major impacts on revealing the gender discrimination and patriarchal oppression in texts and in translation market. This study focuses on the possibilities that can be achieved through applying a newly proposed feminist translation strategy “intralingual hijacking” in order to reveal and deconstruct the own long-established values of a culture. With the aim of raising awareness towards the gender discrimination in texts, rather than introducing a new feminist text to which the reader is alien, this study promotes the idea that it would be easier to catch the attention of the audience to take a well-known text such as a fairy tale and translate it with a critical and opposing approach that removes the misogynistic implications.

**Keywords:** feminist translation, hijacking, intralingual hijacking, manipulation, ideology

### 1. Introduction

Although the relationship between feminism and translation studies dates back to 1970s (Simon, 1996), there have been many shifts and ideological and terminological changes in the field compared to the original opinions and objectives. Translation studies has gone through a period called “the cultural turn,” which has diverted the focus from word-for-word meaning towards the cultural dimension in 1980s. This situation has created a new perspective towards the field of translation, which has led to the beginning of the discussions regarding carrying

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\* This study is extracted from the MA thesis of the first author, titled “Reconstruction of Ideal Female Image in Fairy Tales Through Translation Strategies: The Case of Politically Correct Bedtime Stories.”

out translation tasks in with a feminist agenda. Along with the cultural turn, the prescriptive translation strategies have given their place to the descriptive approaches focusing on the function of the translation, the mechanisms in which it works, and its effects as a mode of communication. Due to these changing in the definition and function of translation, the interplay between translation studies and feminism movement has covered a variety of issues such as “the distrust of traditional hierarchies and gendered roles, deep suspicion of rules defining fidelity, and the questioning of universal standards of meaning and value” (Simon, 1996, p.8). These concerns, along with the incorporation of feminism into translation studies, have caused a shift in the focus of translation studies. Rather than putting all the emphasis on linguistic units, the scholars have started to pay attention to the symbolic aspects of language which has the potential to shape gender roles and perceptions in a society. Feminist translation scholars, then, have started to define the role of feminist translation as “to attack, deconstruct, or simply bypass the conventional language they perceived as inherently misogynist” (von Flotow, 1991, p. 72). Feminist translation studies argues that the deconstruction of the binary opposition between two sexes can be managed by re-evaluation of the existing structures, especially the linguistic ones. They demonstrate a parallelism between the inferior status of women against men, and the inferior status of translations against the original texts, and the inferior status of the translators against the authors. This parallelism has caused the emergence of many rebellious approaches in the commonly used translation strategies by the translation scholars who wants to dismantle the oppression of the “inferiors.” Godard (1989) for example, states that “the feminist translator, affirming her critical difference, her delight in interminable re-reading and re- writing, flaunts the signs of her manipulation of the text” (p. 50). She calls this approach as womanhandling a text, which is supposed to make female translators visible as agents in the publishing processes. This activity, in return, is believed to turn their texts into political acts in order to reveal their ideological stances. Another feminist translation scholar Chamberlain (2000) advances further and asserts that “what must be subverted is the process by which translation complies with gender constructs” (p. 472). This suggests that the gender constructs are not natural bonds to be complied with, but social constructions. Thus, they can be converted during creative processes such as translation based on the ideology of the performer, the translator in this regard. Bozkurt (2014) effectively explains this situation as follows: “it is important to move beyond the sex of the author or translator, and find different strategies in order to deconstruct the conventional translation practices, which have been established in a patriarchal order” (p. 109). Thus, it is safe to deduce that womanhandling a text does not have to be carried out by females, which would create another set of gender discrimination against male translators. This term, in essence, promotes the idea that the role of the translator of a text should be deconstructing the conventional patriarchal writing styles, and the traditional translating practices.



Within this framework, this article introduces a new term, “intralingual hijacking” and its use within the field of feminist translation studies. After defining the term, the study discusses examples from the case book to question whether the intralingual hijacking as a feminist translation strategy may be applied on misogynistic or non-feminist texts to deconstruct the historically constructed ideal female image in order to reveal the underlying gender discrimination. The study utilized the book titled *Politically Correct Bedtime Stories* (2011) by James Finn Garner, first published in 1994, consisting of the reconstructed versions of some of the well-known fairy tales.

## **2. Literature Review**

Social construction of gender, merging point of gender studies and sociology, asserts that gender roles are created within the realm of everyday discourses. In other words, the notion of gender and the related expectations attributed to the two norm genders as male and female are constructed and imposed on individuals. Judith Butler (1990) explains this social construction procedure as “gender performativity” or “doing gender”, stating that “performativity is not a singular act, but a repetition and ritual, which achieves its effects through its naturalization in the context of a body, understood, in part, as a culturally sustained temporal duration” (p. 15). The expectations attributed to the heteronormative gender categories do not remain the same in every context. They change depending on a variety of sub-contexts such as time and place along with the age, ethnic origin, religion, profession, and marital status of the individuals. These alterations based on contexts lead many scholars to conclude that gender roles are created accordingly within the cultural and social structure in which they are being performed (See Haslanger, 1995; Butler, 1990; Kimmel, 2000; Millett, 2016). Thus, the social constructionist approach aims to analyze the creation of gender patterns mainly in language and discourse, considering gender as a socially constructed role rather than an essential and a given aspect of being, which naturally paves the way to the attempt to undo it; its deconstruction. As proposed by Jacques Derrida (1967), the idea of deconstruction is basically built as an opposing ground to the binary oppositions and the hierarchy between the elements of these binary oppositions by focusing on the performative function of the literary texts. This diverts the importance from what a text reads towards what a text does through the meaning it implies. It opposes to the belief that a written text has a fixed meaning. This way of reading enables the readers and scholars to reveal the binary oppositions in the language and the text by claiming that what is not included in the text may sometimes be the main part that establishes the meaning. Thus, the concept of deconstruction looks for the ideologies and the voices that are intrinsic to the language.

By deconstructing the binary oppositions in a text and in the language, it is possible for us to unveil the implied and concealed ways of languages to perform the socially constructed gender discriminations. However, deconstruction of a text does not always yield the same outcomes based on the background information, perception and ideologies of the reader. This is the point where deconstruction becomes null and void. If a deconstruction procedure may yield multiple meanings for the same text, Interestingly, this is exactly what makes the deconstruction invalid. The possibility that a deconstruction procedure applied on a text may yield more than one meaning means that the meaning is not fixed, but dependent on many different parameters such as the readers, their backgrounds, cultural environments, etc. Interestingly, this idea promotes the deconstruction of any kind of inferiority and superiority, for example the binary opposition between man and woman, or the binary opposition between the translator and the author. In this regard, the main objective of feminist translation studies is to eliminate the male dominance in the publishing market, the social discourse around the gender roles, and all the gender discrimination implications in language and culture. In contrast to the source and target oriented translation approaches that have been dominant since the beginning of the translation studies, feminist translation strategies provide an ideology-oriented translation approach. Within this framework, Manipulation School in translation studies can be considered as a solid basis for the feminist translation objectives. Founded around 1990s, the approach of manipulation school has included the translator's agency and the effect of power relations and ideology in the translation process. André Lefevere, one of the founders of this school, asserts the key claim of manipulation school as "on every level of the translation process (...) if linguistic considerations enter into conflict with considerations of an ideological and/or poetological nature, the latter tends to win out" (Lefevere, 1992, p. 39). Hence, Manipulation School can be taken as the origin of this ideology-oriented approach. As claimed by manipulation school scholars, all translations are rewritings and/or manipulations of the original text to some extent. In Lefevere's words:

"Translation is, of course, a rewriting of an original text. All rewritings, whatever their intention, reflect a certain ideology and a poetics and as such manipulate literature to function in a given society in a given way. Rewriting is manipulation, undertaken in the service of power, and in its positive aspect can help in the evolution of a literature and a society." (1992, p. ix)

Translator is seen as the original author of a new text rather than a mere mediator as "translation is seen essentially as a text-type in its own right, as an integral part of the target culture and not merely as the reproduction of another text" (Snell-Hornby, 1988, p. 24). This act of redefining the role and status of a translator works in favour of the deconstruction of the inferior status of the translator and the translation against the author and the original text. This approach enables the translator to dismantle the long-lasting and socially constructed

binary oppositions in the language and the text. As stated by Toury (2000) “wittingly or unwittingly, they all try to interfere with the “natural” course of events and to divert it according to their own preferences” (p. 62). Therefore, we cannot separate the ideological stances of the translators from their products. If one is claiming to adopting a strategy away from any kind of ideology, it may be asserted that they adopt a non-political ideology, which may still be interpreted as a political stance. As proposed by Hermans (1985), “all translation implies a degree of manipulation of the source text for a certain purpose” (p. 11). So, feminist translation may be regarded to be one of the best examples of the manifestation of ideologies through translation. Within this perspective, it would not be wrong to state that although feminist translation seems to be a movement restricted within the boundaries of literature, it has the potential to pave the way to deconstruct the social, cultural and linguistic elements.

The problem of gender discrimination mostly begins with the fact that the discriminating parameters are invisible, or deliberately ignored in some cases. As stated by Sara Ahmed (2017), “what you aim to bring to an end, some do not recognize as existing” (pp. 5-6). The functions of media in modern world, which is highly under the influence of patriarchal system does its best to disregard the negative effects of the gender discriminating content. However, at this point, it is of utmost importance “to introduce the community with marginalizing concepts such as gender, gender discrimination or sexism,” which requires the agent “to go over the limits of dominant ideology and dominant media” (Dağabak, 2018, p. 52) In order to eliminate these factors in media, especially in the field of literature and literary translation, the feminist translation strategies are proposed to deconstruct the binary oppositions and reclaim the manipulative power of translation against patriarchal systems. Within this framework, Louis von Flotow proposes three main feminist translation strategies: Hijacking, prefacing/footnoting and supplementing (von Flotow, 1991). Supplementing strategy consists of different translation methods to alter or eliminate the linguistic aspects of sexism in languages and cultures. Some languages consist of gender-based grammar rules and structures, different articles and conjugations for each gender, derogatory connotations, and non-existent versions of some words for a certain gender category. Prefacing/footnoting strategy aims to make the translator visible in order to challenge the long-lasting inferior positioning of the translation and the translators. Such additions to the text make the translator visible, deconstructing the invisible and inferior status of the translation and the translator. They enable the translators assert themselves as agents. Hijacking strategy may be speculated to be the most striking method of deconstruction among other feminist translation strategies. The other strategies put the emphasize on the visibility of the female agents in the translation act in literary arenas. Hijacking, on the other hand, is the most controversial feminist translation strategy as it explicitly refers to the “the appropriation of a text whose

intentions are not necessarily feminist by the feminist translator” (Simon, 1996, p. 15). This technique may be observed in forms of omissions and additions to the text, manipulations in the illustrations, changes in the storylines, changes in the character developments, reclaims of puns, wordplays and punctions games to reveal any kind of gender discrimination, or putting a female-dominant effect on a text. Any kind of divergence and deviance is allowed and promoted in hijacking. Hijacking strategy, in a way, attributes author privileges to the translators. It defies any kind of boundaries imposed on translators in the traditional sense of translation act. Rather than being a mere carrier of meaning between different languages and cultures, the translator bears a new role “to reveal the marginalizing viewpoints of dominant ideology inherent to language and culture, to eliminate the linguistic and idiomatic inequalities, and to enhance the visibility of the oppressed groups and the oppression itself” (Dağabak, 2018, p. 53). In this regard, it is not only possible for the translator to alter the underlying ideological messages in the texts, but this act is also actually promoted. Luise von Flotow (1997) argues that the feminist translation studies aim to deconstruct the social norms that are intrinsically gender discriminating. Translation act, then, may be utilized as a tool to reveal and destruct these norms.

### **3. “Intralingual Hijacking” as a New Strategy**

Upon the light of the literature review discussed above, this study proposes a new strategy, “Intralingual Hijacking”, as the intracultural application of “hijacking” strategy.

Basically, the “intralingual hijacking” strategy is aimed at being carried out within the same language and culture rather than between different languages and cultures as the first step. People are born into metanarratives which are particular to their own culture and taken for granted for generations after generations. Naturally, these metanarratives settle the pillars of that very culture by creating binary oppositions, settled beliefs and prejudices related to gender and gender issues along with to all the other aspects of the social life. So, it seems essential to begin to deconstruct these metanarratives first within the native culture of the reader in order to create an awareness in the beginning, to raise bias-sensitive generations gradually, and to form bias-blind generations in advance; in order to achieve this, the first step to be taken should be to make intralingual translations of sexist and discriminative literary and non-literary texts by making use of the hijacking strategy to focus the immediate attention of the natives on the discriminating elements in language, culture and literature. Within this perspective, intralingual hijacking as a new strategy may be defined as follows;

Intralingual hijacking strategy is the intentional alteration and manipulation of the texts written in or translated into the native language with the purpose of flashing upon the

secondary position of women, language and culture. It aims to “grind” the sexist, discriminative and culture-bound layers of language and culture, to voice the decentred or suppressed elements, and to polish the visibility of the gender-neutral and non-discriminative changes in already known cultural materials despite the metanarratives. It also intends to deconstruct and reconstruct a text written in the same language and culture in order to advocate and prescribe the feminist discourse and non-discriminative linguistic style.

It can be asserted that, one of the main aims of the feminist translation is to surprise the audience with unexpected elements in texts to raise awareness regarding the underlying gender discrimination in cultures and languages. Accordingly, “intralingual hijacking” as a feminist translation strategy is believed to have the potential to create this shock effect. Further, it is also believed that the alteration and manipulations have the potential to draw more attention if they are applied to well-known and common texts compared to new works. Literary works standing on the very core of the literary systems, such as classics or best-sellers, may draw more attention than the original feminist writings themselves. Intralingually hijacked versions of such books in the market may gain greater visibility due to the potential shock effect and possibly the objections. It is important to note that

“what is suggested here is not to carry into a censor-like practice by decontaminating all the literary works from sexist approaches through feminist translation strategies in order to wipe these original versions off the literary market. The objective is to provide an opportunity to make a comparison between the original versions and the ‘intralingually hijacked’ feminist translations in order to raise awareness about discrimination” (Dağabak, 2018, pp. 55-56).

It may be possible to raise an awareness towards the gender discriminating intrinsic to the language and cultures, which are directly reflected in literary works intentionally or unintentionally. As languages and cultures are everchanging concepts, it may even be possible to change the course of direction towards a non-discriminating, non-sexists, equal societies through the workings of such intralingually hijacked works in the course of time.

As Berk Albachten (2013) indicates, “some cases of intralingual translations can reveal the linguistic, translational and ideological norms of the periods during which these translations were produced” (p. 257), which means, intralingual translations fall may be analyzed in terms of different disciplines such as sociology, translation studies, anthropology, history, etc. From this point of view, it can be deduced that intentional intralingual translation may be useful in re-forming and evaluating the changes and improvements in the society. That is, it is also possible to consider intralingual translation as a means to reflect and assess the

“manipulative intervention stemming from ideological stances and cultural transformations such as intralingual translation of the previously written texts due

to linguistic revolution or modernization in language and cultural elements or technological developments, intralingual translation for children's literature in order to eliminate the content that is considered inconvenient for children with regards to current ideologies, recent approaches to child psychology and contemporary lifestyles, or intralingual translation for conformity to the ideological stances of the publishing or broadcasting mechanisms" (Dağabak, 2018, p. 55).

Even without asserting any feminist stances, it might be argued that they are published through an ideological stance based on the agents taking part in the publishing process. Thus, in line with the aims of the feminist translation strategies which is to challenge the traditional translation act, "intralingual hijacking" offers a new way of translation to deconstruct the binary oppositions and gender discriminating elements in a text within the same language and culture.

#### **4. Case Study: *Politically Correct Bedtime Stories***

The case of this study is James Garner's fairy tale book titled *Politically Correct Bedtime Stories*, which deconstructs and reconstructs some of the well-known fairy tales. Garner questions the political correctness concept in a satirizing manner, along with the censorship trend on children's literature as an ideological shaping mechanism. The writer mainly utilizes the literary tools such as parody, irony, absurdity and satire to reveal the stereotyping aspects of languages and cultures. The author dismantles the common fairytales in terms of the intrinsic gender discriminating and inequalities that are intrinsic to the daily language and discourse as word choices, phrases, idioms, metaphors, etc. He uses satire and parody as a way of subversing the gender stereotyping elements that are accepted as facts through the help of biological determinism.

Within the scope of this study, the casebook *Politically Correct Bedtime Stories* is deemed to be an "intralingual hijacked" translations of the fairy tales included in the book. It must be noted that the author does not claim to produce a work of feminist translation in any manner; however, upon detailed analysis, it is possible to speculate that it utilizes many strategies that are proposed by feminist translation scholars. He takes classical pieces of literary works bearing historical value and meaning, belonging to a common memory of people all around the world, and reconstructs them from a point of view against the political correctness. Thus, it is safe to assume that his positioning in the rewriting of traditional fairy tales conforms to the intentions of feminist translation scholars. As fairy tales and the children's literature are mainly deemed in the periphery of the literary canons, they are mostly believed to have minor importance in literary terms. However, it is also safe to assume that as every person on the planet is somewhat familiar with the common fairy tales, "it is logical to deconstruct and alter the existing texts as they are already in the culture and the

alterations are more likely to be noticed, and for this reason, draw the most attention from readers” (Dağabak, 2018, p. 58). This idea leads the way to practice “intralingual hijacking” intentionally to raise awareness towards the binary oppositions and the gender discrimination in language and culture.

In this part of the study, intralingual hijacking examples found in the one of the fairytales in the case book *Politically Correct Bedtime Stories* by James Finn Garner, which is Red Riding Hood, are analysed compared to two traditional versions of the same fairy tale, one belonging to the Grimm Brothers, and the other belonging to Charles Perrault. As these English traditional versions are commonly known among the English-speaking audience, they are deemed as source texts to the Garner’s book, which is accepted as an intralingually reconstructed and translated version of the traditional versions.

### **Example 1**

#### **Grimm Brothers Version (Source Text 1)**

“Once upon a time there was a sweet little girl. Everyone who saw her liked her, but most of all her grandmother, who did not know what to give the child next.”(Grimm & Grimm, 2015)

#### **Charles Perrault Version (Source Text 2)**

“Once upon a time there lived in a certain village a little country girl, the prettiest creature who was ever seen. Her mother was excessively fond of her; and her grandmother doted on her still more.”(Perrault, 2003)

#### **James Garner Version (Target Text)**

“There once was a young person named Red Riding Hood who lived with her mother on the edge of a large wood.” (Garner, 2011)

In the traditional versions, the female character of the tale is depicted through her physical appearance such as being the prettiest girl or being a sweet little girl. Garner deconstructs this diminutive approach by not attributing any feminine characteristics to the lead character of the story. In the traditional versions, the assisting female characters, which are the mother, and the grandmother are also presented with extremely affectionate personalities in line with what is generally expected from such roles in societies. Garner refuses to conform to that norm, either.

## **Example 2**

### **Grimm Brothers Version (Source Text 1)**

“The grandmother lived out in the woods, a half hour from the village. When Little Red Cap entered the woods, a wolf came up to her.” (Grimm & Grimm, 2015)

### **Charles Perrault Version (Source Text 2)**

“Little Red Riding Hood set out immediately to go to her grandmother, who lived in another village. As she was going through the wood, she met with a wolf.” (Perrault, 2003)

### **James Finn Garner Version (Target Text)**

“So Red Riding Hood set off with her basket through the woods. Many people believed that the forest was a foreboding and dangerous place and never set foot in it. Red Riding Hood, however, was confident enough in her own budding sexuality that such obvious Freudian imagery did not intimidate her. (...) The wolf said ‘You know my dear, it isn’t safe for a little girl to walk through these woods alone.’ Red Riding Hood said, ‘I find your sexist remark offensive in the extreme, but I will ignore it because of your traditional status as an outcast from society, the stress of which has caused you to develop your own, entirely valid, worldview.’” (Garner, 2011)

In *Politically Correct Bedtime Stories*, the original message is subverted compared to the traditional versions. In the traditional fairy tale, the Red Riding Hood ends up in the stomach of the wolf due to the fact that she does not obey what is required from her. Garner, on the other hand, chooses to reconstruct the identity of the character as a self-confident female. The reconstructed Red Riding Hood can make her own decisions. She may object to the patriarchal impositions of obedience. As the top point of the deconstruction of the traditional female image, “Red Riding Hood is turned into a character who is aware of her sexuality as something to embrace rather than a taboo” (Dağabak, 2018, p. 77). At some point of her life, and in some further intralingually hijacked text, she may not even identify as a female at all. Interestingly enough, Garner here embraces an approach that acknowledges the wolf’s point of view as well, giving the message that everyone holds the right to continue their own lifestyles and stand for their own viewpoints as long as they do not try to impose these elements on others. In Garner’s version, the leading female character Red Riding Hood bears a wide range of emotional and mental complexity, on contrary to what might be expected from fairy tale characters due to the depthlessness parameter proposed by a fairy tale scholar Max Lüthi (See Lüthi, 1986).



### **Example 3**

#### **Grimm Brothers Version (Source Text 1)**

“The wolf ran straight to the grandmother's house. (...) He went straight to the grandmother's bed, and ate her up. Then he put on her clothes, put her cap on his head, got into her bed.” (Grimm & Grimm, 2015)

#### **Charles Perrault Version (Source Text 2)**

“The wolf ran as fast as he could, taking the shortest path. (...) He then shut the door and got into the grandmother's bed.” (Perrault, 2003)

#### **James Finn Garner Version (Target Text)**

“Because his status outside society had freed him from slavish adherence to linear, Western-style thought, the wolf knew a quicker route. He (...) ate Grandma, an entirely valid course of action for a carnivore such as himself. Then, unhampered by rigid, traditionalist notions of what was masculine or feminine, he put on Grandma’s nightclothes and crawled into bed.” (Garner, 2011)

Garner prefers not to use the wolf as the symbol of all the evil in the world. Rather, he prefers to reevaluate and discuss his position as a dehumanized and bemonstered creature by the society. He utilizes the translation as a tool to criticize such traditional, internalized and standardized beliefs on good and bad through social and linguistic construction. The binary oppositions in a language contribute to the rationalization of such beliefs. Acknowledging a belief as the norm in a society may have the risk of creating unrooted discrimination and marginalization. Garner carries the deconstruction of human-nature binary opposition to the point of absurdism that he defends the diet of the wolf as he eats the Grandma. These extreme examples, such as the deconstruction of the binary opposition regarding the human dominance over nature, may enable the audience to question the validity of the binary oppositions in the beginning.

### **Example 4**

#### **Grimm Brothers Version (Source Text 1)**

“The wolf had scarcely finished speaking when he jumped from the bed with a single leap and ate up poor Little Red Cap.” (Grimm & Grimm, 2015)

### **Charles Perrault Version (Source Text 2)**

“This wicked wolf fell upon Little Red Riding Hood, and ate her all up.”  
(Perrault, 2003)

### **James Finn Garner Version (Target Text)**

“The wolf said, ‘I am happy with who I am and what I am.’ (...) Red Riding Hood screamed, not out of alarm at the wolf’s apparent tendency towards cross-dressing, but because of his willful invasion of her personal space.” (Garner, 2011)

Satirizing every norm in the society, Garner also refuses to acknowledge Red Riding Hood’s questions on the size of Grandma’s body parts. In modern social norms which are hugely affected by the consumerist and capitalist ideologies, especially the female bodies are deemed as objects to be enjoyed or criticized by the male gaze. As this point of view has become intrinsic to people’s self-perception on different levels, “Garner challenges this process by pointing out through wolf that beings have the right to accept themselves without appealing to the expectations of others, let it be by keeping up with the fashion or cross-dressing” (Dağabak, 2018, p. 78). In the reconstructed version, Garner also makes an addition to the storyline mentioning the importance of personal space. He feels free in such additions to the script whenever he sees an opportunity to touch upon a modern life issue, which further demonstrates the awareness-raising potential of intralingual hijacking strategy to draw attention to the issues deemed important or necessary by the author-translator.

### **Example 5**

#### **Grimm Brothers Version (Source Text 1)**

“A huntsman was just passing by. (...) he took a pair of scissors and began to cut open the wolf’s belly. (...) The three of them were happy. (...) Little Red Cap thought, ‘As long as I live, I will never leave the path and run off into the woods by myself if mother tells me not to.’ (Grimm & Grimm, 2015)

#### **Charles Perrault Version (Source Text 2)**

(The story ends with the death of Little Red Riding Hood. The author provides a moral lesson in the end.)

“Moral: Children, especially attractive, well-bred young ladies, should never talk to strangers, for if they should do so, they may well provide dinner for a wolf. I

say "wolf," but there are various kinds of wolves. There are also those who are charming, quiet, polite, unassuming, complacent, and sweet, who pursue young women at home and in the streets. And unfortunately, it is these gentle wolves who are the most dangerous ones of all." (Perrault, 2003)

### **James Finn Garner Version (Target Text)**

"Her screams were heard by a passing woodcutter-person. When he burst into the cottage, he (...) tried to intervene. But as he raised his axe, Red Riding Hood and the wolf both stopped. 'And what do you think you're doing?' asked Red Riding Hood. (...) 'Bursting in here like a Neanderthal, trusting your weapon to do your thinking. (...) Sexist! Speciesist! How dare you assume that a woman and wolves can't solve their own problems without a man's help!'

Grandma (...) cut the woodcutter-person's head off. After this ordeal, Red Riding Hood, Grandma and the wolf felt a certain commonality of purpose. They decided to set up an alternative household based on mutual respect and cooperation, and they lived in the woods happily ever after." (Garner, 2011)

In the source texts, the fairy tale is finished by a moral line conveying the message that a young female character should conform to the norms and should obey the rules set to protect her. Garner, on the other hand, subverts the binary opposition between the roles of males and females as strong/weak and protector/protectée. Although the act of cutting the woodcutter's head off falls out of the all-accepting manner, it may be speculated that it symbolizes the rebellion against the patriarchal oppression on all inferiors. Also, the fact Garner's version provides an alternative ending to the traditional storylines may be interpreted to indicate that "Another world is not only possible, she is on her way." (Roy, 2003, p. 75), which is one of the main goals of the feminist ideology.

## **5. Conclusion**

The feminist translation strategy proposed within the scope of this study, the "intralingual hijacking" may be deemed offensive to the social values. It may be even considered as an insult, or betrayal to the literary canons by the audience. However, the female existence in the literary arenas, in other words "l'écriture au féminine" were in its beginning days limited to some basic writing projects, and then it enhanced its borders to "to teaching, publishing, (...) and other public activities, thereby making their radical approaches to language more palatable to those who found them frustratingly esoteric and difficult" (von Flotow, 1997, p. 11). The criticism and objections toward feminist translation projects may be interpreted as a proof that such

activisms create the intended effect, which is to raise awareness towards the gender discriminating works of literature. It also works in favour of the visibility of the female translators as well.

This study believes that the “intralingually hijacked” versions of commonly known literary texts may reach to a wider range of audiences as it discusses the social and political aspects of languages and cultures. Although Garner does not categorize his work titled *Politically Correct Bedtime Stories* as a piece of children’s literature, the original fairy tales on which Garner’s book depends are generally categorized within this scope. Through his reconstruction, Garner’s versions of the fairy tales reach beyond the intended child audience. These altered and “intralingually hijacked” fairy tales catches the eyes of the adult readers as well, which can be seen through the sale numbers of the mentioned book. The book has become a bestseller with more than 2.5 million copies sold in a few years after its publishing. It has been translated into 20 languages. The number of commentaries, critics, articles, analyses and many other types of written and spoken content on *Politically Correct Bedtime Stories* also demonstrates that the audience of these reconstructed fairy tales is certainly not limited to child readers. Considering all these factors, it is safe to assume that the case book has had a huge impact on the social order and among the audiences. Thus, “intralingual hijacking” strategy may reveal the “discriminatory speech and thought patterns (...) in the everyday language and writing styles, (...) with a higher possibility of getting the attention of the intended audience” (Dağabak, 2018, p. 160). It is also possible to state that intralingual translation can lead to the deconstruction and reconstruction of the gender discriminating linguistic and structural elements literary texts. This deconstruction can be used to normalize the alternative and untraditional characteristics for female images in social orders. Intralingual hijacking strategy provides an opportunity for the audience to recognize the socially and historically constructed and restricting role patterns on gender roles while at the same time offering and displaying alternatives for different characteristics for the sexes.

Translations of feminist texts create a junction between different cultures, bringing each party into “contact with feminist discourses and agendas produced in different localities”, which enables the activists, scholars, readers and any other parties taking part in the writing, translating and reading process of a feminist text to recognize the shortcomings in “the critical language and discursive repertoires necessary to express our situated gendered experiences and worldviews. (...) Translation, then, pushes us to create a corresponding (hybrid) alternative language and to fill the gaps in the local discursive fields through our own makes and remakes” (Ergün, 2017, p. 46). Creating local feminist agendas and raising awareness towards the unseen discriminations in culture and language may be considered the first role of feminist translation act. After raising such awareness in feminist thinking constituted with an

approach embracing the worldwide feminist agenda, intralingual hijacking strategy aims to further the role of translation within the deconstruction of local gender inequalities. In other words, after the acknowledgement of what is discriminative in culture and language, the intralingual hijacking strategy aims at deconstructing these intracultural, local and maybe unique elements through translation.

## Disclosures

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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## The Historical Significance of Chinese Character Simplification

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### Abstract

Chinese characters are the scripts that the Chinese nation has used to record civilization since ancient times. From the original symbols carved on stone flakes and pottery to the more than 6,000 commonly used Chinese characters today with a history of over 3,000 years. The emergence of writing was needed for social life and has also changed with the development of society. Therefore, Chinese characters have undergone several important changes in history, which can be mainly summarized as oracle bone script - seal script - clerical script - regular script - Song script. During this process, the main trend of Chinese characters has been simplification. Before the 20th century, the simplification of Chinese characters was mainly in the form of changes in shape and reduction of strokes, adapting to the need for rapid learning and writing of Chinese characters. At the beginning of the 20th century, there was a movement for script reform in China. Intellectuals demanded to change Chinese characters to Latin script and created many schemes for this purpose. Although it was not successful, it also reflected the practical needs of that era. Finally, Chinese characters adopted the pinyin of Latin letters to solve the pronunciation problem. The simplification of Chinese characters also basically ended through two reforms after the founding of the People's Republic of China. In summary, the simplification of Chinese characters is beneficial. As a tool for recording Chinese civilization, it is unlikely that the role of Chinese characters can be replaced by other scripts.

**Keywords:** Chinese characters, simplification, script reform, Pinyin, change

### 1. Introduction

Chinese characters, also known as Chinese script, Chinese words, or national characters, are widely used in the Chinese cultural circle. They belong to the logographic syllabary and were invented and improved by the ancient Huaxia<sup>1</sup> people. The exact history can be traced back to about 1300 BC during the Shang Dynasty's<sup>2</sup> oracle bone script. Chinese characters are one of

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<sup>1</sup> Huaxia (华夏Huáxià) is the ancient name of China, and it is also another name of the Han people.

<sup>2</sup> 商朝, Shang Dynasty, B.C. 1600-1646. It is the second dynasty in Chinese history, also known as Yin Shang, and the first dynasty in China with direct written records of the same period.

the oldest continuously used major scripts in the world and the only one of the ancient script systems that has been passed down to this day. Throughout Chinese history, Chinese characters have been the main official script.

Chinese characters are among the oldest scripts in the world. In addition, there are two other oldest scripts in the world. One is the cuneiform script created by the Sumerians living in the two-river area<sup>3</sup>, which dates back 5,500 years, and the other is the hieroglyphics of Egypt, dating back about 4,100 years. Our Chinese characters, as can be seen from recent archaeological materials, can trace their history back to at least 3,300 years ago, and the lifespan of Chinese characters is the longest. We are still using them today, while hieroglyphics and cuneiform scripts are no longer in use (Qiu Xigui, 2006, p. 28).

Chinese characters have a distinct feature; they are independently created and developed scripts. Compared with the phonetic scripts of other ethnic groups, most of them are based on the scripts of other ethnic groups. Chinese characters, on the other hand, are pictographic scripts developed from drawings, and the script system of Chinese characters is based on hieroglyphs (pictographic scripts).<sup>4</sup>

The origin of Chinese characters was the primitive drawing, which ancient people used in their lives to express themselves and to record things and events. Slowly, the primitive drawings turned into “ideographic symbols”.

Around the 14th century BC, the “ideographic symbols” evolved into a more standardized “oracle bone script”. This is considered the first form of “Chinese characters”. The characters carved on animal bones and turtle shells, discovered in the Yin Ruins, are considered the direct ancestors of “modern Chinese characters”, which can prove the continuity of Chinese civilization. For thousands of years, people in the Middle East could not decipher their ancestors’ hieroglyphics. Only modern Chinese people can read some of the “oracle bone script” from the Shang Dynasty (BC 1600-BC 1046). These characters on the turtle shells were originally used for divination. Ancient people believed that by carving questions about diseases, dreams, hunting, weather, etc., on turtle shells and animal bones, and then roasting them with fire, diviners could judge the auspiciousness of the matters by observing the shapes and directions of the cracks. This is the “oracle bone script” - the ancestor of modern Chinese

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<sup>3</sup> Two rivers: refers to the Euphrates River and the Tigris River. The geographical location summarizes parts of present-day Iran, Turkey, Syria, and Kuwait.

<sup>4</sup> Hieroglyphs evolved from pictorial characters and are one of the oldest fonts. Unlike phonetic characters, hieroglyphics are ideographic characters.



characters. To date, more than 5,000 “oracle bone scripts” have been discovered, and more than a thousand can be deciphered.

In the early stages of writing, users were mostly religious figures serving the royal family. It is precisely because the text was controlled by them that the text was also mystified. Therefore, in the creation myths of many ethnic groups, including the Han, the creators of text are attributed to gods (Liang Xiaoqiang, 2015). For example, the creator of Chinese characters is a man named Cangjie with four eyes according to the historical records made by Daoism religion. As recorded in many classic books Cangjie was the historian who coined Chinese characters during the Huangdi<sup>5</sup> period. It is said that when he created characters, it did not rain but fell millet from heaven, and ghosts and gods wept incessantly.

During the Western Zhou<sup>6</sup> period, bronze ware was widely used. Bronze ware is a vessel made of copper and tin alloy, mainly including musical instruments, weapons, tableware, wine utensils, and sacrificial supplies, etc. The characters carved on bronze bells and tripods are called “large seal script”大篆.

## **2. The Evolution of Chinese Characters after the Qin Dynasty<sup>7</sup>**

In the Qin Dynasty, Emperor Qin Shi Huang unified the different scripts used by other vassal states. He collected and organized the existing texts and then beautified and processed them. This unified script is called - “small seal script”小篆, also known as “Qin seal script”秦篆. The script at this time almost no longer had traces of pictographic scripts.

The “small seal script” of the Qin Dynasty period was too standardized and slow to write, so many simplified fonts appeared in the folk. This shows that the simplification of Chinese characters had already begun in this era and was spontaneously carried out by the people. This simplification was in line with the needs of production and life development and was a manifestation of social progress. The characteristics of this font are to change the roundness of “small seal script” to square, change the curves of “small seal script” to straight, and divide some radicals, which is called - “Qin clerical script”秦隶.

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<sup>5</sup> 黄帝Huangdi, leader of ancient Chinese tribal alliances, Huangdi is revered as the “first ancestor of humanities”.

<sup>6</sup> 西周Western Zhou Dynasty (1046 BC to 771 BC), a dynasty in Chinese history.

<sup>7</sup> 秦朝The Qin Dynasty (221 BC - 207 BC) was the first unified feudal dynasty in Chinese history. This first emperor of Qin Dynasty is called as Qin Shihuang秦始皇.

By the Han Dynasty<sup>8</sup>, clerical script was very popular, and the clerical script popular in the Western Han period was called - “Han clerical script”汉隶.

While “Han clerical script” was popular in the Han Dynasty, the new calligraphy style “regular script”楷体 was in its infancy. By the 4th to 6th centuries, it had become very popular, and the structure of Chinese characters was basically fixed at this time. Later generations changed the name to “regular script” because this font was used as a model for learning calligraphy.

During the Tang Dynasty, “regular script” was particularly popular, and calligraphers such as Yan Zhenqing, Liu Gongquan, and Ouyang Xun were the best of the time, and their calligraphy works are still studied as examples today.

In the Song Dynasty<sup>9</sup>, one of the four great inventions of ancient China, woodblock printing and movable type printing, were invented, and the “Song script”宋体 was also born. It first appeared in the Northern Song Dynasty and was derived from regular script. There are fat and thin types, but regardless of fat or thin, they are all thin horizontal and thick vertical, square and upright. It appears simple and dignified. Song script is still one of the most widely used fonts in Chinese text printing to this day (Zhao Liwei, 2004).

### **3. The emergence of cursive script and its contribution to the simplification of Chinese characters**

There is another kind of Chinese writing that originated among the people - cursive script草, which later became a unique calligraphy art. Cursive script - the real beginning of cursive script was found in the early Han Dynasty. The influence of cursive script on the simplification of Chinese characters is in line with the influence of clerical script. At that time, in order to meet the need for quick writing and the creation of calligraphers to express their feelings and express their emotions at the tip of the writing brush, a flowing, smooth, and continuous, with great rhythm and artistic appeal, was created - “cursive script”. With the development of society, the use of Chinese characters has become more and more widespread, and the frequency of use has gradually increased, putting higher demands on the writing speed of Chinese characters. The emergence of cursive script greatly accelerated the writing speed of Chinese characters, and at the same time, it also promoted the simplification of Chinese characters. The basic

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<sup>8</sup> 汉朝The Han Dynasty (202 BC - 220 BC) was a unified dynasty after the Qin Dynasty. It was divided into two periods: the Western Han Dynasty and the Eastern Han Dynasty

<sup>9</sup> 宋朝The Song Dynasty (960-1279) was a dynasty in the Central Plains, divided into two stages: the Northern Song (960-1127) and the Southern Song (1127-1279).

writing methods of these cursive scripts mainly reflect the simplification of Chinese character radicals, components, or parts of Chinese characters. In summary, there are mainly the following aspects:

1) Simplify characters through the simplification of radicals

Due to the development of Chinese characters and the increase in compound characters, the writing method of cursive script has changed the writing method of some single characters, so that compound characters with these single characters as radicals are simplified. Among them, there are those simplified through the form of the radical, and there are those simplified through the sound radical. For example:

① (speech): argument (論); say (說); review (評); poetry (詩); debate (辯)

② vehicle (車): connect (連); sedan (輦); warehouse (庫); turn (轉); light (輕)

③ long (長): Zhang (張); ghost (傴); account (賬); swollen (脹); tent (帳)

2) Simplify Chinese characters by retaining features or outlines

In the writing process of cursive script, often due to the requirements of writing speed, the font of Chinese characters is reduced, following the characteristics of this cursive script writing method, removing the complex parts of Chinese characters, and only retaining the features or outlines of Chinese characters, is another important method for simplifying Chinese characters. For example:

1) Retaining the features of Chinese characters: fly (飛); wife (婦); sound (聲); number (號)

2) Retaining the outline of Chinese characters: seize (奪); real (實); wide (廣)

3) Simplify Chinese characters by replacing with simple symbols

This method is similar to the second method. It also uses the writing form of cursive script to simplify the complex parts of Chinese characters. The difference is that the second method uses a part of the Chinese character font itself to achieve the simplification of Chinese characters, while this method uses some simple symbols to replace the complex parts of Chinese characters, making Chinese characters easy to write and achieve the purpose of simplification. For example:

ceremony (裡); Luo (羅); reach (達); study (學); tree (樹)

#### 4) Simplify Chinese characters through cursive script regularization

The cursive script has the characteristics of fast writing and interlocking strokes. Many cursive script fonts are composed of a few strokes or even one stroke, and the regular script of cursive script is one of the most effective methods to simplify Chinese characters. For example:

music (樂); soup (湯); picture (圖); China (華); east (東) (Hu Ping, Yan Shuang, 2019, 17).

### **4. Chinese Character Reform at the End of the Qing Dynasty and the Early Republic of China**

#### **4.1. Background of the New Culture Movement**

At the end of the Qing Dynasty<sup>10</sup>, the Qing government was corrupt and unambitious, weak both internally and externally. Intellectuals in the folk and the government strongly demanded to learn advanced technology and systems from the West and to carry out reforms in thought, technology, national defense, culture, and other aspects. Under this background, the famous “Wuxu Reform” 戊戌变法<sup>11</sup> took place. The New Culture Movement 新文化运动 that began in 1915 during the Republic of China can be considered a continuation of this reformist thought, but it mainly focused on moral and cultural reforms. This reform was driven by both internal needs and external factors. In addition to the internal reform needs of Chinese society, the external factors mainly included the influence of Japan’s “Chinese character abolition movement” and the Soviet Union’s “Chinese character Latinization movement”. Both of these movements to some extent promoted the reform of Chinese characters.

After the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895, the Qing government was defeated by Japan. The strong demand of the Chinese intellectual community to learn from Japan was urgent. Japan’s rapid rise to a world power after the Meiji Restoration<sup>12</sup> exposed the truth of China’s

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<sup>10</sup> The Qing Dynasty (1616 or 1644-1911) was the last feudal dynasty in Chinese history.

<sup>11</sup> The Reform Movement of 1898, also known as the Hundred Days Reform, was a reform movement in the late Qing Dynasty in which reformers represented by Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao advocated learning from the West, advocating science and culture, reforming the political and educational systems, and promoting agriculture, industry, and agriculture, commerce, etc. bourgeois reform movement. The Reform Movement of 1898 was implemented on June 11, 1898.

<sup>12</sup> The Meiji Restoration (Japanese: めいじいしん) was a bourgeois reform movement that transformed Japan from feudal society to capitalist society. On January 3, 1868, Japan’s Meiji promulgated the “restoration” edict, which was the beginning of Japan’s famous Meiji Restoration movement.

superficial strength and actual decline. Therefore, the academic community called for learning from Japan in all aspects in order to achieve the ideal of a rich country and strong army.

In a sense, the trend towards the abolition of traditional Chinese medicine and Chinese characters during the Republic of China was related to China's urgent desire to catch up with Japan and change the country's declining situation.

The origin of Japanese script is Chinese characters. The Japanese writing system developed on the basis of Chinese characters. In Japanese, Chinese characters are called "male characters" (main official script), and kana (Japanese syllabary) is called "female characters" (folk script). Until the early Meiji Restoration, all official documents and official documents were written in Chinese characters.

As early as 1866, Zenbei Mitsu, the founder of Japan's modern postal system, proposed the "Discontinuation of Chinese Characters" to the last shogun Tokugawa Yoshinobu. He believed that the foundation of saving the country lies in education, and education should be penetrated to all citizens, regardless of nobility or commonality. However, to popularize education, simple and easy-to-learn characters are needed. Chinese characters are complicated and difficult to learn, and classical Chinese is profound and difficult to understand, which is not conducive to the widespread popularization of compulsory education. "The learning process of Chinese characters is inefficient and should be abolished," and it is necessary to replace Chinese characters with "kana"<sup>13</sup> in Japanese. During the Meiji Restoration in Japan, the country learned from Germany and adopted "education as the foundation of the country" as a national strategy, vigorously popularizing compulsory education. Zenbei Mitsu's "Discontinuation of Chinese Characters Theory" and "Consistency of Speech and Writing, I Write as I Speak" and other theories became the basic principles of the education sector to carry out compulsory education for primary and secondary school students, and deeply influenced China's New Culture Movement and the subsequent movement to abolish Chinese characters.

After the October Revolution in Russia, "learning from Russia" became another mainstream in the ideological world. The Soviet Union actively promoted Lenin's "Great Eastern Revolution" - the "New Script Movement", also known as the Chinese character Latinization movement, especially in the far-eastern minority regions, the government actively promoted Latinized scripts to accelerate socialist construction.

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<sup>13</sup> Katakana (カタカナ, katakana) is Japanese A phonetic symbol in, similar to hiragana. Together, they are collectively called "kana".

According to statistics, two years before the fall of the Qing Dynasty, the number of literate people in the country was less than 3 million, and the total population of the Qing Dynasty at that time reached 400 million, with a literacy rate of only one percent (Zhao Yi, 2021). Seeing the rapid progress of our neighboring country Japan after the “abolition of Chinese characters”, and the enthusiastic participation of Chinese workers in industrial construction after the “Chinese character Latinization” in the Soviet Union, Chinese intellectuals were anxious. They actively called on the government through various means to carry out reform actions to change the current situation of the country. From the situation at that time, imperialism was accelerating its aggression against China, and the rule of warlords in the country was becoming increasingly dark. Therefore, the people must continue to carry out anti-imperialist and anti-feudal struggles. Economically, during World War I, Chinese national capitalism further developed. The strength of the national bourgeoisie grew, they stepped onto the political stage, and strongly demanded the implementation of democratic politics and the development of capitalism, which was the fundamental reason. In terms of thought and culture, after the Xinhai Revolution 辛亥革命<sup>14</sup>, Western Enlightenment ideas further spread, and the ideas of democracy and republicanism took root in people’s hearts, while the Beiyang warlords 北洋军阀<sup>15</sup> at that time were still insisting on going against the historical trend and implementing retrogressive policies. More importantly, it was the reflection of the failure of the Xinhai Revolution. After the Xinhai Revolution, advanced intellectuals realized that the root cause of the failure of the revolution was the lack of democratic and republican consciousness in the minds of the people. It was necessary to attack feudal ideas and feudal consciousness from the cultural and ideological level, and to popularize republican ideas to achieve a true republican government.

Thus, driven by various factors, the New Culture Movement began in 1915. The New Culture Movement was an ideological liberation movement initiated by some advanced Chinese intellectuals in the early 20th century to oppose feudalism. Its basic slogan was to support “Mr. Democracy” (Democracy) and “Mr. Science” (Science), that is, to advocate democracy and science. The leaders of the New Culture Movement used the theory of evolution and the idea of individual liberation as their main weapons, fiercely attacked the “sages of the past” represented by Confucius, and vigorously advocated new morality and opposed old

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<sup>14</sup> The Revolution of 1911 refers to the national revolution that took place in the year of 1911 in the Chinese lunar calendar, that is, from 1911 to the beginning of 1912, aiming at the autocratic monarchy of the Qing Dynasty and the establishment of a republic.

<sup>15</sup> The Beiyang Warlords were the warlord forces coming out during the ruling of Republic of China and were composed of the main generals of the New Beiyang Army after Yuan Shikai came to power.

morality, advocated new literature, and opposed classical Chinese.(People's Publishing House, 2021).

In September 1915, Chen Duxiu founded the “Youth Magazine” in Shanghai, which was later renamed “New Youth”, and the New Culture Movement began. This movement powerfully attacked and shook the long-standing dominant position of feudal orthodox thought, awakened a generation of young people, and allowed Chinese intellectuals, especially the broad masses of youth, to be baptized by Western democratic and scientific ideas, thus opening the floodgates that had been holding back the surge of new ideas and setting off a vibrant tide of ideological liberation in Chinese society.

At that time, the leaders of the New Culture Movement compared Chinese characters with Western phonetic scripts and generally believed that Chinese characters at least hindered China's development and progress in four aspects:

1) Chinese characters are difficult to learn, write, and recognize, which is an insurmountable obstacle to popularizing compulsory education, resulting in a very high illiteracy rate at that time;

2) Chinese characters mostly wrote in classical Chinese, which was difficult to read and understand, and it was not conducive to promoting vernacular Chinese;

3) China was eager to learn advanced science and technology from the West, but Chinese characters were very inconvenient when learning and recording modern scientific and technological terms from Europe and America. Moreover, typewriters, telegrams, and other advanced technologies were all based on Western phonetic scripts, and Chinese characters were “incompatible” with these new technologies;

4) Chinese characters were not the script of the then 400 million Chinese people. Only a very small class had the opportunity to learn, and only 3% to 4% of Chinese people could use them proficiently.

The leaders of the New Culture Movement, Hu Shi, Chen Duxiu, Lu Xun, and others, clearly advocated science and democracy, advocated vernacular Chinese, and opposed classical Chinese. These benevolent people further proposed the abolition of Chinese characters.

Since modern times, due to the invasion of Western powers, Chinese intellectuals have generally developed varying degrees of radical thinking, believing that traditional characters represent a backward and ignorant symbol of autocracy, which is not conducive to the

educational and cultural development of the nation. Therefore, it is necessary to achieve the Latinization of Chinese characters. It was the intense collision of Chinese and Western cultures that stimulated intellectuals to reflect on their own cultural traditions and engage in social practice. After being baptized by the New Culture Movement, the vernacular Chinese movement became more popular, and traditional characters were obviously gradually replaced.

#### **4.2. The official initiation and development of the Simplified Chinese character movement**

In 1909, Lubi Kui<sup>16</sup> published a paper titled “General Education Should Use Vernacular Characters” in the inaugural issue of the “Education Magazine”. This was the first time in history that the use of simplified characters was openly advocated (Zhang Shuyan, 1997, p. 8). Subsequently, on February 1, 1920, Qian Xuanton published an article titled “A Proposal to Reduce the Strokes of Chinese Characters” in “New Youth”. The pioneer of Chinese character simplification was Qian Xuanton, a famous linguist and educator. He believed that the reform of phonetic scripts needed to go through a long and complex process, and could not be rushed or divorced from reality. The strategic task of Chinese phonetic script reform in the short term was to carry out the reform of Chinese character simplification. He also compiled the “Simplified Character Spectrum”, which included 2,400 simplified characters. This was the earliest systematic dictionary of simplified characters (Zhang Shuyan, 1997, p. 10).

The promoter of Chinese character simplification was the National Language Unification Preparation Committee, which was a special institution established by the Ministry of Education in 1932 to promote and unify the national language. It compiled the “National Phonetic Commonly Used Character Collection”, which included most of the commonly used simplified characters since the Song宋 and Yuan元 dynasties. It also passed Qian Xuanton’s “Collection of Inherent and More Applicable Simplified Characters” and submitted it to the Ministry of Education for implementation. This was the first simplified character scheme proposed by a government institution.

The advocate of Chinese character simplification was the Handwriting Movement<sup>17</sup> 手头字运动, which was a social movement jointly initiated by Cai Yuanpei, Shao Lizhi, Tao Xingzhi,

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<sup>16</sup> 陆费逵 Lubi Kui (1886-1941), a native of Tongxiang, Zhejiang, was a famous educator and publisher in modern China and the founder of Zhonghua Book Company.

<sup>17</sup> Handwriting movement -It was a literary reform movement initiated by Chinese cultural and educational circles in early 1935. The purpose of this movement is to formally promote the common characters commonly used by the people, that is, the characters that everyone writes in this way but are



and dozens of other well-known scholars in 1935. Its purpose was to enable more people to use simplified characters. It also published the “Handwriting” magazine, which included 300 simplified characters. This was the first simplified character scheme proposed by a civilian group.

The Ministry of Education of the Republic of China officially announced the “First Batch of Simplified Characters” on August 21, 1935. This was the first simplified character scheme officially promulgated by the government. It included 324 simplified characters, most of which came from Qian Xuantong’s “Simplified Character Spectrum” and the “Handwriting” magazine of the Handwriting Movement. This was the first time the government has carried out large-scale simplification of Chinese characters, but due to strong opposition from cultural conservatives, the “First Batch of Simplified Characters” was withdrawn and abolished on February 5, 1936. This was the first time the government gave up on simplifying Chinese characters (Xiang Guangzhong, 2011, p. 11).

### **4.3. Phonetic Script Reform from 1982 to 1911**

After the Opium War<sup>18</sup>, some patriotic intellectuals proposed the idea of saving the country through education. Scholars such as Liang Qichao pointed out that the complexity of Chinese characters was the reason why education could not be popularized, thus setting off a “phonetic script movement”. In February 1913, the Reading Unification Conference was held in Beijing. At this meeting, the pronunciation of 6,500 Chinese characters was determined, and the “standard national pronunciation” was determined by voting by representatives from various provinces; a set of phonetic alphabets was formulated, totaling 39, which used the stroke style of Chinese characters, and the letters were selected from ancient Chinese characters. The syllables used the three-syllable system of initials, rhymes, and tones. Its purpose was only to mark the pronunciation of Chinese characters and not as a phonetic script. From 1920 to 1958, the phonetic alphabets were used in China for nearly 40 years. This played a great role in unifying the pronunciation of Chinese characters, promoting the national language, and popularizing phonetic knowledge.

After the establishment of the Republic of China in 1912, the Chinese pinyin movement entered a new stage. “Qieyin”切音 is “pinyin”, also called “hesheng”合声. The letters of these schemes used Latin letters and their variants, strokes and individual ancient scripts, shorthand

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not printed in books, to the printed media, so as to realize the unity of handwritten and printed characters.

<sup>18</sup> Opium War usually refers to the first war of opium trading. The British often call it the First Sino-British War or the “Trade War”. It was an unjust war of aggression launched by the British against China from 1840 to 1842.

symbols, numbers, and self-made symbols. In 1892, the late Qing scholar Lu Ganzhang wrote “A First Step at a Glance”, trying to use Latin letters and their variants to spell the Amoy dialect, which started the “phonetic script movement”. He was the first advocate of Chinese character pinyin in China. In fact, the Latinization of Chinese characters was not unique to the Republic of China. As early as the late Ming Dynasty, the Italian missionary Matteo Ricci tried to annotate Chinese characters with Latin letters and wrote a monograph titled “The Wonders of Western Characters”<sup>19</sup>; at the same time, the French missionary Martino Martini also published “A Guide to the Ear and Eye of a Western Scholar”<sup>20</sup> in Hangzhou, which also used Latin letters to annotate Chinese characters.

#### 4.4. National Romanization Reform

National Romanization is a set of Chinese character Latinization schemes and was once the national standard of the Republic of China. It uses complex spelling rules to mark tones, unlike other schemes that use diacritical marks or numbers; it is the Roman alphabet applied by the Nationalist government’s Academy in 1928, different from the 注音Bopomofo symbols (ㄅ ㄆ ㄇ, etc.). Its features to use variations in Roman letters to indicate tones, such as iou (you), you (byou), yeou (you), yow (you). After the announcement of the National Romanization, in addition to publishing a small number of textbooks, teaching materials, character tables, and readers, it was not widely taught and used in schools and society (Zhao Yuanren, 1948).

#### 4.5. Latinization New Script Reform

The 1892-1911 Qieyin character movement proposed a total of 28 individual Qieyin character schemes, marking the first climax of the Chinese pinyin movement.

Since 1840, the powerful ships and cannons of the Western powers have shattered the illusion of China’s “Celestial Empire”. For the first time, Chinese literati opened their eyes to the world and suddenly found that compared with the West, our old empire had already fallen so far behind. The backwardness of the country is the backwardness of technology, and the backwardness of technology is due to the backwardness of education. As a result, Chinese intellectuals began to re-examine the Chinese culture that had been passed down for thousands

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<sup>19</sup> 西字奇迹

[https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E8%A5%BF%E5%AD%97%E5%A5%87%E8%BF%B9/739460?fromModule=search-result\\_lemma-recommend](https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E8%A5%BF%E5%AD%97%E5%A5%87%E8%BF%B9/739460?fromModule=search-result_lemma-recommend)

<sup>20</sup> “Ears and Eyes of Western Confucians” is a book published by Literary Reform Publishing House in 1957. A Help to Western Scholars, compiled by Jinnige (1577-1628), a missionary of the Catholic Society of Jesus in the late Ming Dynasty. Romanesque phonetic vocabulary to help Westerners learn Chinese and Chinese characters.

[https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E8%A5%BF%E5%84%92%E8%80%B3%E7%9B%AE%E8%B5%84?fromModule=lemma\\_search-box](https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E8%A5%BF%E5%84%92%E8%80%B3%E7%9B%AE%E8%B5%84?fromModule=lemma_search-box)

of years. Chinese characters are a carrier of Chinese culture, so this kind of examination naturally includes the Chinese script system.

Some Chinese intellectuals, seeing the advanced science and technology of some Western countries, thought that everything about them was advanced. They fully accepted the one-sided and erroneous “linguistics” of the West. They also saw that the phonetic alphabets of the West could be written as long as they could speak (which is not entirely true), and the literacy rate of the population was very high; while Chinese characters were independent of language, with complex strokes, resulting in an illiteracy rate of over 98% in China. So they thought that the education was backward because Chinese characters were too difficult. So they thought that the Latin alphabet was more advanced than Chinese characters, and therefore, they proposed to reform Chinese characters and tried to replace the Chinese script system with “Chinese pinyin script” composed of Roman letters.

The Chinese learned the “principle of pinyin” from foreigners, decomposed the phonetics of Chinese into “initials” and “rhymes”, and used symbols representing “initials” and “rhymes” to annotate Chinese characters, thus replacing the “Chinese Qieyin method” that had been used for 2,000 years. This is indeed a progress. However, Chinese is a “language with multiple loads of voice”, and there are a lot of “homophonic words with different meanings”. The “Chinese characters” composed of pure phonetic alphabets cannot distinguish these “homophonic words with different meanings”.

After the release of the “Character Table”, scholars during the Republic of China period started discussions on whether “simplified characters” are the future of Chinese character reform from various schools of thought on Chinese character reform. Some argued that we should completely follow the path of phoneticization, some thought that the “simplified character” path was also feasible, and some believed in “multiple paths integration”.

At that time, there were still many scholars who believed that the path of phoneticization was the target direction of Chinese character reform. Typical representatives include Xiao Dichen, Zhi Guang, Da Niu, Deng Weihua, etc. These scholars either thought that the “simplified character” path was “changing the soup without changing the medicine”, or thought that “simplified characters” broke the systematic nature of Chinese characters, or thought that Chinese characters no longer met the needs of the times, etc.

In summary, the occurrence and development of the Chinese character simplification movement during the late Qing Dynasty and the Republic of China can be divided into four stages: the exploration stage of solving character shape problems, the germination stage of the simplification of the character system, the convergence stage of the results of character

simplification, and the summary and reflection stage of the related problems of character simplification.

## **5. Conclusion**

The evolution of Chinese characters has gone through a long process of more than 3,000 years. During this period, some Chinese characters have become more complex from simple, but the vast majority of Chinese characters have become more and more simplified. This shows that the simplification of Chinese characters has existed since ancient times and has been continuing. For example, in the book “Simplified Character Sources” by Chinese scholar Li Lexi, 535 Chinese characters were studied, and a detailed examination and analysis were conducted for each character. A table was compiled, and he pointed out that about 80% of the current simplified characters come from the pre-Qin and Han dynasties (Li Shuxian, 2009, p. 4). Wang Liuchun pointed out in “The Relationship between the Age of the Appearance of Simplified Chinese Characters and the Evolution of Chinese Character Development” (Wang Liuchun, 1996, p. 22). that simplified Chinese characters had already emerged in the oracle bone script of the Shang Dynasty, and modern-shaped simplified characters were widely used during the Western Han Dynasty. On the one hand, the simplification of Chinese characters is related to the convenience of writing needed in social life, and on the other hand, it is also related to the promotion caused by historical conditions. The simplification of Chinese characters began in the Qin Dynasty and reached a climax during the Republic of China. Not only were more texts standardized and simplified, but many methods such as pinyin were also created for the convenience of Chinese character pronunciation. This shows that while Chinese characters are developing themselves, they also pay great attention to drawing on Western methods.

Of course, the simplified character movement did not end during the Republic of China period. After the founding of the People’s Republic of China, the government also carried out important reform work to simplify Chinese characters and promulgated two simplified character schemes. The second scheme did not conform to reality and was not accepted by society, so it was abolished in 1972. The current simplified character table is the one promulgated by the Chinese government in 1964, which includes a total of 2,235 simplified characters (Yuan Zhongrui, 2019, p. 4).

From a modern perspective, the simplification of Chinese characters has many advantages. First, it is conducive to display and reading on electronic screens. The electronic screen itself is not large. If Chinese characters have too many strokes, they are not easy to recognize or easy to misread when reduced; second, it is conducive to the dissemination of Chinese culture. Chinese characters are an important carrier of traditional Chinese culture.

Ancient Chinese classics and famous works are all written in Chinese characters. In recent years, with the deepening of cultural exchanges between China and foreign countries and the strengthening of China's national power, more and more foreigners are beginning to learn Chinese and Chinese characters. Simplified Chinese characters are easier to learn and write, which is very efficient for cultural dissemination; the simplification of Chinese characters is conducive to more people learning Chinese characters. At present, the main users of traditional characters are calligraphers and artists. Ordinary people only use simplified characters for writing. Therefore, the emergence of more simplified characters is beneficial to increasing the audience and is conducive to the promotion of Chinese characters.

The Latinization of Chinese characters has enhanced the vitality of Chinese characters. Although the character shape is simplified, the pronunciation has not changed, so it does not affect the meaning of Chinese characters. This is a major feature of Chinese characters. Although some people propose that Chinese characters should be completely phoneticized, believing that phoneticization can fully connect China with the world and facilitate learning and writing, this is against the traditional Chinese culture and the laws of social development. If Chinese characters are completely phoneticized, it means that the symbols of Chinese characters as a record of Chinese civilization will completely disappear. The understanding of civilization and culture will undergo great changes, and the continuation and inheritance of Chinese civilization and culture will be greatly impacted. The consequences are hard to estimate. Therefore, it is necessary to take a very cautious approach to the issue of phoneticization of Chinese characters.

### **Disclosures**

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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## **The Classification of Languages and Social Processes: A Historical Analysis of Genetic Links**

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### **Abstract**

This study examines the similarities between languages and their development over time. The findings show how certain languages are inherited through generations as well as how different languages may have a common ancestry. The data from Romance languages, East Asian number systems, and Indo-European properties are used in the study to demonstrate the systematic cross-linguistic patterns. By focusing on limitations resulting from temporal depth and differentiating inherited features from elements introduced by contact, the study displays methodological problems for establishing the genetic ties. The findings of the study improve our knowledge of language categorisation and evolution. The investigation substantiates extant scholarship in classical linguistics through its delineation of a systematic analytical framework that synthesizes traditional comparative methodologies with contemporary linguistic approaches in examining genealogical relationships among linguistic systems.

**Keywords:** genetic linguistics, the classification of languages, the comparative method, historical linguistics, language families

### **1. Introduction**

The genealogical affiliation among linguistic systems constitutes a fundamental paradigm within diachronic linguistics. This investigation posits that such relationships illuminate the mechanisms of linguistic diversification processes and the evolutionary trajectories of language systems through time. By examining the relations, researchers can follow the language family trees of human communities and grow together with the forces that unfold the language change. Beekes (2011) provides a basic definition for that: “Languages are related to each other when they all derive from one common ancestor. The study of the relations which exist between such cognate languages is what we call their comparative linguistics” (p. 4). This statement, however, means that the fact of “descent from a common ancestor” makes it very clear that anything similar which comes through chance, propensity, or pairs more differ, and acquisition through one language for the other language should not be part of the genetic

nature of the languages. Also, the term “comparative linguistics” implies that it is not enough simply to notice similarities; we have to compare them systematically.

As articulated by Campbell (2013), “historical linguistics deals with language change” (p. 3), thereby implying that the examination of genetic affiliations is fundamentally linked to temporal transformation. Such changes are discernible across all facets of linguistics: phonological, morphological, syntactic, and semantic, which generate analysable patterns that exhibit systematic evolution among languages. In the perspective of Harrison (2003), the objectives of comparative historical linguistics can be characterized as “essentially three in number: the identification of cases of genetic relationship between languages; an investigation of the history of individual languages; and the construction of a theory of linguistic change” (p. 214).

The methodical analysis of linguistic structures is of critical importance, as highlighted by Greenberg's (2005, p. 364) pivotal assertion: "In the world, we observe numerous distinct and mutually unintelligible languages. We discern that their variations are not fortuitous. German and English, despite being two separate languages, are evidently much more similar to each other than either is to French." This empirical assertion sheds light on the organized interconnections among linguistic frameworks, thus establishing the foundational principles of genealogical linguistics. The theoretical implications reside in the acknowledgment that all linguistic frameworks, despite their superficial disparities, exhibit systematic relationships rather than arbitrary ones.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

In linguistics, thinking about how languages are related gives us the methods for looking at language change and diversity. In his work, Ruhlen (1987) suggests that genetic classification involves the subgrouping of each and every relevant language into genetic nodes (p. 4). Having a hierarchical conceptualization of genetic classification makes it easier to group languages into families and subgroups according to their shared inherited characteristics. As language assigning and classification are concerned, a core issue in historical linguistics arises. Blust (2013) notes that scholars must “weigh the relative merits of four competing explanations for similarity: 1. chance, 2. universals, 3. borrowing, 4. divergent descent from a common ancestor” (p. 687). This systematic evaluation helps to identify the true genetic relationship from linguistic similarities. Taking into account and eliminating each potential explanation, genetic relations can be established among languages. To comprehend these relationships, it is imperative to acknowledge the temporal dimension intrinsic to the evolution of language. According to the findings of Ruhlen (1987, p. 6), all languages undergo continual



transformation. Thus, the dialects that exhibit mutual intelligibility are likely to diverge progressively, assuming they remain isolated from one another for an extended duration.

The methodological process of examining genealogical relationships among the linguistic systems necessitates meticulous analytical procedures and diverse evidentiary sources. Aikhenvald and Dixon's (2001, p. 1) theoretical framework delineates distinct categories of linguistic similitude by encompassing universal properties or tendencies, chance similarities, diffusion phenomena, and genetic retention. This taxonomic classification provides a systematic framework for investigating linguistic interrelationships through multiple analytical dimensions.

### **3. The Process of Language Diversification**

The diversification of the linguistic systems constitutes a multifaceted and incremental process manifesting through diverse mechanisms. François (2014) articulates that “new languages often arise from the internal diversification of a single language, which gradually evolves into separate daughter languages over time. In this process, external input does not necessarily play a central role” (p. 161). The evolutionary trajectory and the developmental patterns of the linguistic systems proceed autonomously, independent of exogenous variables. Through the examination of endogenous linguistic enrichment processes, a salient theoretical paradigm within diachronic linguistics emerges: linguistic systems manifest divergent trajectories and developmental patterns absent external catalysts.

Furthermore, the mechanisms underlying diversification are clarified through notable case studies. Millar (2015) contends that “The inevitable processes of language change of course affected English: new words, new meanings, new pronunciations and grammatical forms began to creep into their speech and, at the same time, old ones began to drop out of use” (p. 154). Thomason and Kaufman (1988) explicate this phenomenon, asserting: “all languages change. The main stimuli for the change are drift as tendencies built into the language to change in certain ways as a result of structural imbalances; strongly differentiated dialects and between weakly differentiated dialects of particular changes” (p. 9). This analysis unveils a multitude of factors relevant to linguistic diversity. Bybee (2010, p. 1) posits that languages exhibit “both structure and variance” and experience “considerable variation at all levels: languages vary from each other but after all, it is evident that all languages are structured by the same principles”.

As François (2014, p. 162) notes, the world languages do not stay the same all the time. The new language emergence through diversification and the language extinction through

social pressure are the two opposite forces that work towards the genetic relationship. The methodological emphasis on observable patterns of linguistic diversification, juxtaposed against the inherently unknowable characteristics of extinct linguistic systems, illuminates a fundamental epistemological constraint within diachronic linguistics.

#### **4. The Comparative Method**

The comparative methodological framework serves as the principal analytical paradigm for elucidating genealogical associations among various linguistic systems. Campbell's (2013) theoretical exposition articulates this methodology as "a method (or set of procedures) which compares forms from related languages, cognates, which have descended from a common ancestral language (the proto-language), in order to postulate, that is to reconstruct, the form in the ancestral language" (p. 109). This definitional structure accentuates the dual analytical aims: the establishment of genealogical linkages and the reconstruction of ancestral linguistic forms via systematic comparative examination.

Thomason and Kaufman (1988) provide four important methodological aspects, which are: "the establishing of phonological correspondences among words of the same or related meanings, the reconstruction of phonological systems, the establishing of grammatical correspondences, and the reconstruction of grammatical systems" (p. 202). This is a methodological framework to establish linguistic relations. The identification of phonological correspondences can be seen as a first step of the analysis when we see that sound changes happen regularly. The rebuilding of phonological systems shows that the change is systematic. The reconstruction and the grammatical correspondence allow us to see how grammatical systems and their structural features change over time.

Harrison's (2003, p. 215) theoretical framework elucidates that the foundational criterion for the genealogical inference necessitates the systematic elimination of features exhibiting potential independent emergence through natural processes, chance occurrence, or inter-linguistic diffusion and borrowing phenomena. Milroy's (1985) work goes on to say that 'although the ultimate aims of historical linguistics may be to specify universals of change, the methodology of historical linguistics has always been comparative' (p. 344). This methodological paradigm underscores the centrality of comparative analysis within diachronic linguistic investigation, while acknowledging the broader theoretical objectives of identifying universal patterns of linguistic transformation. As a result, we see that the centrality of comparative method to the study of linguistic change and establishing genetic relationships is of utmost importance.

The Romance linguistic family presents paradigmatic manifestations of genealogical relationships, offering substantive empirical evidence for systematic inter-linguistic connections. Campbell's (2013) analytical framework, particularly through the presentation of cognate relationships in Table 1 (p. 110), demonstrates systematic phonological correspondences across these linguistic varieties. This empirical investigation serves as persuasive substantiation for the systematic phonetic correspondences that delineate genealogical affiliations within Romance language systems, consequently elucidating the patterns of historical evolution and metamorphosis throughout this linguistic family.

**Table 1: Some Romance cognate sets**

<b>Italian</b>	<b>Spanish</b>	<b>Portuguese</b>	<b>French (Latin)</b>	<b>English gloss</b>	
capra	cabra	cabra	chèvre	capra	'goat'
caro	caro	caro	cher	caru	'dear'
capo	cabo	cabo	chef	caput	'head, top'
carne	carne	carne	chair	caro/carn-	'meat, flesh'
cane	can (archaic)	cão	chien	canis	'dog'

The changes from Latin initial "c" exhibit regularities across daughter languages: so a daughter language like Italian preserves the Latin /k/, a daughter language like French regularly palatalizes to /j/. The systematic alterations and description-preserving transformations indicate inheritance, not borrowing, very strongly. Spanish and Portuguese share similar correspondence patterns, given their close genetic relationship within the Romance languages.

The diversification of Romance languages shows how a language develops into genres. Table 1 shows that the sound correspondences have a systematic nature, which differ in inheritance.

The evidence from the Germanic language family is similarly illuminating. As shown by Millar (2015, p. 167) with comparative linguistic data, English, for instance, belongs to a group of languages chiefly spoken in northern Europe. Here are a few samples of some of those other languages that the family resemblance can easily be seen.

"- Dutch: De kat is in de keuken. 'The cat is in the kitchen.'

- German: Dies ist ein gutes Buch. 'This is a good book.'

- Swedish: Nils har en penna och en bok. 'Nils has a pen and a book.'

- Icelandic: Fólkið segir, að hún sé lík Anna. 'People say that she is like Anna.'

These examples show how words and grammar work in Germanic languages. The family includes Frisian (which is spoken in corners of The Netherlands and Germany) Dutch, Afrikaans (a distinctive offshoot of Dutch in South Africa), German (High and Low) Yiddish (a distinctive offshoot of medieval German) Danish, Faeroese (in the Faeroe Islands) Norwegian, Swedish and Icelandic (Millar, 2015, p. 167). This big language family shows the way genetic relations show up in a lot of related varieties when systematically compared in structure and lexis.

The Germanic linguistic exemplars delineated above constitute substantive empirical evidence for systematic interconnections in grammatical structures and lexical inventories. The sentential patterns demonstrate unambiguous correspondence mechanisms: core lexical elements (manifested in cognates such as “book”/“Buch”/“bok”), syntactic organizational principles (exemplified through subject-verb-object configurations), and systematic phonological correspondences. The geographical dispersion of Germanic linguistic varieties, extending from English to Icelandic and from Frisian to Yiddish across the northern European geographical sphere, empirically demonstrates the expansive developmental potential inherent within a singular linguistic family.

In the East Asian linguistic context, the genealogical relationships and borrowing phenomena manifest distinct patterns of interconnection. Rankin’s (2003) methodological framework employs a tabular representation for the comparative numeral analysis (p. 188), facilitating systematic cross-linguistic comparison through structured taxonomic classification. This analytical approach illuminates patterns of both genetic inheritance and historical contact phenomena within East Asian linguistic systems.

**Table 2: Basic numerals in East Asian languages**

	<b>Numeral</b>	<b>Tibetan</b>	<b>Chinese I</b>	<b>Chinese II</b>	<b>Burmese</b>	<b>Japanese</b>	<b>Korean</b>	<b>Thai</b>
'one'	čiq	1	it	tiʔ	iči	il	(nə)ŋ	
'two'	ňis	ær	ńzi	hnił	ni	i	sə:m	
'three'	sum	san	sa	hnił	san	sam	sa:m	

The comparative methodological framework illuminates intricate patterns of genealogical inheritance and linguistic borrowing mechanisms. The analysis of lexical

variations in cardinal numerals 'one' and 'three' demonstrates how fundamental vocabulary elements may simultaneously manifest inherited features from antecedent linguistic strata while incorporating borrowed elements from exogenous sources. The observable variations across these linguistic systems illuminate a significant theoretical principle: even core lexical inventories, traditionally resistant to borrowing phenomena, may exhibit substantial cross-linguistic influence under conditions of intensive language contact.

The quantitative evidence presented in Table 2 elucidates complex patterns of both genealogical transmission mechanisms and inter-linguistic borrowing phenomena. Rankin's (2003) significant observation that "in East and Southeast Asia, however, it is well known that even the simplest numerals are often borrowed from Chinese" (p. 187) provides a crucial analytical framework for interpreting apparent similarities in numerical systems across linguistic varieties that likely lack close genealogical affiliation. This theoretical insight facilitates more nuanced interpretations of linguistic similarities, distinguishing between genuine genetic relationships and patterns of historical linguistic contact and influence.

The stability of linguistic features is a good theoretical concept which is useful to understand the genetic relationship. Nichols (2003) performs a systematic comparative analysis of Indo-European features using their stability with the help of the tabled data (p. 285).

**Table 3: Three Indo-European features and their stability**

<b>Language 1sg. suppletion Genders Declension classes</b>			
English	Yes	No	No
German	Yes	Yes	Traces
Lithuanian	Yes	Yes	Yes
Russian	Yes	Yes	Yes
Bulgarian	Yes	Yes	No
French	Yes	Yes	No
Albanian	Yes	Yes	In part
Ossetic	Yes	No	No
Armenian	Yes	No	Traces

This comparative framework illustrates the remarkable stability of certain features, such as the first-person singular suppletion, in the Indo-European languages, while other features, such as gender systems and declension classes, are more variable. This pattern provides

important methodological advice for determining which features are the readiest or easiest to use in drawing the genetic relationships.

The study of genetic connections shows different patterns of stability across the linguistic features. The Indo-European property data given in Table 3 shows that the first person singular suppletion is one of the most stable features across languages, while other features show more variation.

## **5. Deep-Time Relationships Across Languages**

The methodological constraints inherent in investigating the genealogical relationships across extended temporal dimensions manifest particular epistemological challenges, notably when juxtaposed against other scientific disciplines. Nichols' (2003) comparative analysis illuminates this methodological limitation by noting that "Compare this with the record of biological genetics, which is able to trace descent lines back with certainty for thousands of millions of years... we know that humans do descend from a shared ancestor" (p. 284). Whereas genetic material preserves ancestral information across millennia, linguistic systems demonstrate significantly reduced temporal preservation capacity. This temporal constraint constitutes a fundamental methodological impediment to linguistic reconstruction processes and semantic interpretation, particularly regarding proto-linguistic systems across extended chronological dimensions. This methodological limitation necessitates the development of alternative investigative frameworks for examining deep linguistic interconnections.

Greenberg (2005, p. 371) elaborates that the processes involved in the development of the variation and eventual separation take place in the same way as the one in the past does in the present. The cyclicity leads to a sort of evolution due to genetic linguistics. Languages often slip from its sources through complicated social processes. Whenever people who talk a language get something new from abroad, a new word must go with that new thing. The text can be rewritten as—due need or prestige, one language words get adopted into another language (Campbell, 2013, p. 58) and language is the medium. Campbell continues that the geographical patterning of languages often depends on the depth of their borrowing, which in turn gets affected primarily by their prestige and need. So, languages borrow words from the others due to the prestige and need of that other language (Campbell, 2013, p. 58). In addition, the distribution of the genetic relationships among languages usually reflects the history of the migration of people, and the subsequent geographical dispersal of languages. Nichols (1992), who examines the spread phenomena, states that there are "two types based on the amount and kind of diversity they replace" (p. 234). The language was spoken in the small city of Rome, some 2,500 years ago. Nonetheless, in a few hundred years the Romans had made an empire

which included most of the area around the Mediterranean and much of Western Europe (Millar 2015, p. 165). As a result, the Latin language offers us a fascinating research object. This example shows how political and social factors are the main agents for spreading and diverging language. The process typically involves what Nichols (1992) calls “spreads that probably followed earlier spreads” (p. 234) generating a complex layering of languages in particular areas of the world. The analytical framework that distinguishes between the structural and the genetic diversity offers a sophisticated way to understand language relationships.

The interplay between the genetic transmission and the language contact gives rise to intricate paths in which languages develop and change. According to Thomason (2003), “most of what historical linguists study under the rubric ‘language change’ is due to contact” (p. 687) so it is necessary to distinguish between inherited and contact features carefully. The theoretical placement of contact as a primary agent of change marks a paradigmatic shift in the theoretical framework of historical linguistics. The idea of contact itself has the potential to account for language change, thereby challenging simplistic models of inheritance alone. This theory can help explain complicated processes we see in language families, where inherited features are being used and borrowed in dynamics.

In studying the genetic relations among languages, the sociocultural as well as the geographical factors have become important. The social and the geographical factors continue to significantly shape the development and the distribution of the genetic relationships. According to Renfrew (1989), “until the more recent trend of sociolinguistics, many academics tended to have rather a fixed view of individual languages” (p. 99). Furthermore, Mufwene (2003) makes an important theoretical remark about the classification process that goes as follows: “The identification of genetically similar language varieties as the dialects of the same language or as separate languages is somewhat analogous to identifying populations as belonging to the same or to different races’ (p. 126). The relationship between languages is not only linguistic but also social.

## **6. Methodological Advances and Future Directions**

Current advances in genetic linguistics continue to show the methodological evolution. As Campbell (2013, p. 159) notes, further work will shrink the number of independent language families since as research proceeds, some of these families and isolates may prove to be related to others. Still, it is unlikely that the total number of independent language families will change much for Europe, most of Asia, or North and Central America.

The investigation of the genealogical relationships yields significant theoretical implications regarding the interpretation of linguistic transformation processes and human historical trajectories, particularly within diachronic linguistics. Greenberg's (2005) theoretical framework problematizes the phylogenetic modelling approach, noting parallels with genetic taxonomies: “the basic family tree approach, like gene trees, has problems. For example, at the lowest taxonomic level, difficulty in distinguishing separate species from varieties of the same species has its parallel in distinguishing dialect from language” (p. 371). This biological parallel throw light on some fundamental taxonomic problems in making discrete classificatory boundaries. This difficulty in methodology does arise especially at the basic level when the distinguishing traits begin to lose focus. The biological taxonomy issue is about whether a genetic change is a new species or a variant of an existing species. While the linguistic issue is the difficulty in deciding whether two languages are different or two dialects of one language.

## **7. Conclusion**

The scientific comparison of languages in relation to their genetic relationship can tell us a lot about the history of language and language change through time. The use of the comparative methodology on different language families shows the existence of the systematic linguistic relation by evidence. The study of Romance languages, East Asian number systems, and the Indo-European family shows that there are features that can be inherited or borrowed. By focusing on the limits in time depth and boundaries in classification, some methodological issues in studying genetic relations through languages are noted.

The connection between genetic inheritance and language contact is essential for understanding the linguistic relations. An investigation of some sociocultural and geographic factors reveals the patterns and processes that shape relationships of languages and influence their diversification. Additionally, the study provides a structural and analytical framework for the analysis of the relationship among languages genetically.

By combining traditional comparative techniques with more recent theoretical ideas, we are able to achieve a fuller understanding of languages and how they evolve. This methodologically integrated approach identifies both the systematic nature of the relationships between languages and the social dynamics that impact the diachronic change.

## **Disclosures**

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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