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Coding Sentience: Ares's Linguistic Evolution Through Jakobson's Functions of Language in *Tron: Ares*

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Abstract

This paper examines the 2025 sci-fi film *Tron: Ares*, which reverses the *Tron* series' key idea by having an independent A.I. program named Ares travel from the digital world, i.e. "the Grid," into the physical world. It is maintained that this physical transition leads to a profound linguistic crisis, forcing Ares to adapt from a world of pure code to the ambiguous, context-dependent and emotionally complex ecosystem of human communication. Employing Roman Jakobson's (1960) model of the *six functions of language*, this paper proposes the view that Ares's journey from A.I. to personhood is dramatized by his progressively expanding linguistic capabilities. The analysis first establishes Ares's baseline as a 'program' with a 'hollow' linguistic profile, limited almost exclusively to the *Referential* and *Conative* functions. It then explores his gradual acquisition of the 'human' functions: the *Emotive* (expressing internal feelings, such as appreciating art), the *Phatic* (managing social contact), and the *Metalingual* (deciphering the 'human code'). The paper demonstrates that Ares achieves near-full sentience by mastering this new linguistic toolkit he acquires—strategically violating the *Referential* function and taking the *Conative* function beyond command to negotiation. It is concluded that *Tron: Ares* defines humanity not merely as the capacity to *feel* (*Emotive*), but as the drive to *connect* (*Phatic*) and the ability to craft a unique identity through the *Poetic* function, an evolution epitomized by his final creative act of writing a postcard.

Keywords: Roman Jakobson, functions of language, linguistics, pragmatics, film analysis

1. Introduction

For over forty years, the *Tron* franchise has explored the dichotomy between humanity and the human-created digital world: Beginning with the 1982 original *Tron* and its 2010 sequel

Tron: Legacy, the series' backbone is built upon a human *user* being physically digitized and transported into "the Grid", i.e. the digital world. However, the 2025 film *Tron: Ares*, the third film of the series, demonstrates a major inversion of this practice: For the first time, the digital world serves as the origin rather than the destination[1]. The storyline of the film begins with "programs" being sent from the Grid into the real world by means of generative laser printers, in front of a large audience, including government and military officials. The audience is also given the impression that this is humankind's first encounter with autonomous entities. Along with his colleagues, the program under spotlight is Ares, a highly sophisticated digital entity created by the CEO Julian Dillinger to be the perfect, expendable soldier. The central conflict of the film revolves around the "Permanence Code," a technological breakthrough that would address, probably, the only major fault of Dillinger's system: when transferred to the world, these entities *vaporize* after 29 minutes. However, once found, the Permanence Code will allow programs and other digital creations to exist forever in the physical world—a power which Dillinger aims to use for military purposes. He therefore launches Ares and his colleague Athena into the real world, on a mission to secure the code from a rival CEO, Eve Kim (Rønning, 2025). This physical transition from the world of pure code to the real world, however, arguably triggers a profoundly ontological transformation: Ares, a being of pure logic and function, is pushed to face the complex ecosystem of human experience, full of ambiguity and a large array of emotions. Thus, one might propose the view that this confrontation is not just a physical or philosophical event, but rather a major linguistic crisis: How does a purely logical being, like an A.I., learn to understand the complex emotions, social cues, and unspoken meanings in human communication?

To analyse this transformation, this paper will rely on Roman Jakobson's (1960) definition of *six functions of language* which maintains that any communicative act involves multiple functions, with a different function being dominant depending on the speaker's intent—be it to convey facts (*Referential*), express feelings (*Emotive*), issue commands (*Conative*), maintain social bonds (*Phatic*), focus on the form (*Poetic*), or clarify the code itself (*Metalingual*) (pp. 351-377). It is thus considered viable to explore Ares's development of sentience by examining his progressively developing capabilities across these functions.

This paper argues that the film *Tron: Ares* portrays the journey of the title character from A.I. to personhood by dramatizing his linguistic evolution. Ares begins as a "program" limited almost exclusively to Jakobson's *Referential* and *Conative* functions. However, his

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[1] *As Tron: Ares* (Rønning, 2025) was in its initial theatrical release at the time this article was written, an official screenplay or home media version was not yet available for consultation. Therefore, all dialogue cited from the film is based on the authors' recollection and, while accurate in substance, may contain minor transcriptional inaccuracies.

forced exposure to the real world mandates the acquisition and eventual mastery of the "human" linguistic functions—chiefly the *Emotive*, *Phatic*, and *Poetic*—which ultimately come to define his emergent sentience and free will. To demonstrate this, this analysis will first provide a detailed overview of Jakobson's functional model. It will then establish Ares's baseline linguistic profile as a "program" on the Grid. Following this, the paper will analyse his subsequent "functional crisis" upon entering the real world and, finally, trace his mastery of the full linguistic spectrum, which serves as the ultimate proof of his new, autonomous identity.

2. Theoretical Framework: The Six Functions of Language

Before analysing Ares's linguistic journey, it is essential to establish the theoretical framework that the analysis will be built upon, i.e. Jakobson's (1960) model of communicative functions. Widely considered a cornerstone of 20th-century linguistics (and philosophy of language) for integrating the structural analysis of language with the functional aspects of social communication, the model can be adopted to shed light on any communicative act, since it allows the analyst to move beyond the simple, literal content of a message (its semantics) to understand its underlying *purpose* (its pragmatics). Jakobson (1960) argued that every speech act involves six constituent factors. A message is sent by an *Addresser* (the sender) to an *Addressee* (the receiver); this message refers to a *Context* (the world it describes); it is transmitted through a physical *Contact* (the channel, like sound waves or text); and it is composed in a common *Code* (the language, e.t., French or a computer protocol) (p. 353). The dominant *function* of an utterance is determined by which of these six factors is being emphasized. While most utterances are poly-functional (serving multiple purposes at once), one function typically dominates (Jakobson, 1960, p. 353). These six functions are as follows:

2.1. The Referential Function

The *Referential* function is dominant when the communication is oriented toward the *Context*. Described by Jakobson (1960) as the "leading task of numerous messages," this function is primarily in informational discourse as it anchors the utterance in denotative meaning (p. 353). It is used to convey objective information, state facts, or describe the world. Its purpose is purely informational, and the language is ideally transparent, pointing directly to the reality it describes (Jakobson, 1960, p. 353). Utterances like "The file is encrypted," "The permanence code is on a hard drive," or "The target is at these coordinates" are all heavily referential.

2.2. The Conative Function

The *Conative* function becomes prevalent when the utterance is oriented toward the *Addressee*. Serving to influence or direct the receiver, this function finds its purest grammatical expression in the *imperative mood*. Jakobson emphasizes that, unlike declarative sentences, imperatives possess no truth value; a command cannot be challenged as *true* or *false*, but only assessed by its feasibility or the authority of the speaker (Jakobson, 1960, p. 355). Syntactically, these forms often omit the subject to place immediate focus on the required action. Consequently, examples of this function are most clearly seen in the film's central commands, such as "Get the code," or "Follow me." A question like, "Did you find it?" is also conative, as it demands a verbal or physical action from the addressee.

2.3. The Emotive Function

Also called the "expressive" function, the *Emotive* function is dominant when the message is oriented toward the *Addresser*. This function communicates the speaker's internal state, emotions, attitudes, or opinions. It is the "I" of communication, whether that "I" is stated or merely implied (Jakobson, 1960, p. 354). Direct statements like "I am... confused," or "I am afraid" may serve as examples for this function. It is also the dominant function in interjections (e.g. "Wow!") or in the subjective colouring of a statement, such as, "This music is beautiful" (which says more about the speaker's *feeling* than the music's objective *context*).

2.4. The Phatic Function

The *Phatic* function stands out when the language is oriented toward the *Contact*, or the channel of communication. Metaphorically, it acts as a "social glue," since it is the language used not to convey information or express feeling, but to *open, maintain, check, or close* the connection between speakers (Jakobson, 1960, p. 355). A "Hello?" when one picks up a phone, the "Are you listening?" in a conversation, a "uh-huh... right..." that signals engagement, or a simple "Goodbye" may count as straightforward examples for phatic communication.

2.5. The Poetic Function

The *Poetic* function plays a central role when the focus is on the *Message* for its own sake. As Jakobson (1960) argues, an attempt to "reduce the sphere of poetic function to poetry or to confine poetry to poetic function would be a delusive oversimplification" (p. 356). In other words, poetic function is *not* limited to poetry; it is any instance where *how* something is said becomes part of *what* is said. It involves a focus on word choice, rhythm, metaphor, alliteration, and style (Jakobson, 1960, pp. 356-377). Instances of slogans, jingles, and aphorisms may serve as direct examples for this function due to their poetic nature. The difference between "The soldier can be sacrificed" (*Referential*) and "An expendable soldier"

(*Poetic*) is arguably crucial. As one might hold, the latter is crafted for rhetorical impact and style in the film, making the *form* of the message part of its power.

2.6. The Metalingual Function

The *Metalingual* function becomes primary when language is oriented toward the *Code* itself. Jakobson (1960) plainly defines this function as language people use to talk *about* language—to define terms, check for understanding, or clarify meaning (p. 356). Anytime a speaker asks, for example, "What does 'empathy' mean?" or "Are you referring to 'the Grid' or the power grid?" they are using the metalingual function. In other words, it can be interpreted as the code *checking* itself.

The applicability of Jakobson's model for this analysis resides in its acknowledging the dynamics of ordinary language, i.e. the way it defines human communication as a dynamic and context-dependent interplay among distinct linguistic functions. The point of departure for this study is marked by the key assumption that a non-sentient artificial intelligence, exemplified by Ares in his baseline "program" state, would possess a fundamentally restricted and inflexible linguistic hierarchy. It is therefore posited that his communicative acts would be almost exclusively confined to the referential function (conveying objective data) and the conative function (issuing directives). Consequently, this analysis examines Ares's journey towards sentience by shedding light on his progressive development in acquiring and deploying the four other, more humanly functions: the articulation of his own feelings (*emotive*), the management of social-relational channels (*phatic*), and ultimately, the construction of a distinct identity through the self-reflexive and aesthetic use of language (*poetic*).

3. The Baseline: Ares as "Program"

In order to understand the true scope of the change Ares goes through, his initial state as a "program" should be established from the perspective of linguistics. As one might safely hold, the "Dillinger Grid" in *Tron: Ares* is not the sprawling, evolving digital society Kevin Flynn envisioned in the previous film, *Tron: Legacy*. Instead, it is a world of cold, spartan utility. As Julian Dillinger's creation, this Grid is portrayed as less of a civilization and more of a "factory" or "barracks" with a single purpose: to design, train, and deploy "perfect, expendable soldiers" (Rønning, 2025). In this purely *transactional* environment, communication is reduced down from conversation to a mere data transfer and command protocol. As a "Master Control Program" (MCP) and digital soldier, Ares's linguistic world is rigidly locked to the two most functional, impersonal of Jakobson's functions: the *Referential* and the *Conative*.

3.1. Dominance of the Referential and Conative Functions

As mentioned earlier, the *Referential* function is dominant when language is used to convey objective, verifiable information. It is the language of data, facts, and context, stripped of all subjectivity or emotion. In the film's first act, Ares's dialogue and internal processing are almost entirely referential, as he solely exists to process and report facts. The following instances can be taken as evidence in line with this view:

[1] *When Ares and his team "attack ENCOM's mainframe," his communication would consist of pure referential statements like, "ENCOM's defences are breached," or, "The firewall is at 70%."*

[2] *As he "downloads Eve's personal data," his internal monologue is not one of curiosity but of acquisition. He is processing facts: "Eve Kim. CEO. Sister: Tess (deceased)."*

[3] *When reporting to Julian, his language is that of a processor: "The target [Eve] has found the Permanence Code," or, "The code will allow digital constructs to exist for more than 29 minutes."*

On that basis, it might be proposed that in the first act of the film, Ares is a living processor. He reports data to his "user" (Julian) with the same sterile precision that a computer displays a log file. There is no "I" in his reports, no opinion, and no attitude—only the context (the "what") of the message.

Similarly, the *Conative* function is the other dominant function in Ares's dialogue in the first act. It is oriented toward the addressee, aiming to produce a direct response or action. In other words, it is the language of commands and directives. As a "soldier," this function is the other pillar of Ares's existence since he is built to *receive* commands and *give* them. Two examples, for *receiving* and *giving,* respectively, are as follows:

[4] *Ares's entire mission is a response to the central conative utterance from his "user." Julian's directive— "Get the Permanence Code"—is the imperative that activates his entire being. He is the addressee who must obey.*

[5] *As an MCP, Ares directs his subordinates, like Athena. His interactions are not requests but commands: "Follow her light cycle," "Secure the area," or, "Engage the ENCOM programs." The language is a direct tool to manipulate his environment and the programs within it.*

This dual role defines Ares's entire social reality on the Grid. Relationships are therefore not "friendships" but command hierarchies. Language is not used for connection; it is used for *compliance.*

3.2. Absence of Functions and Ares's Hollow Linguistic Profile

Ares's initial state is primarily defined by his profound linguistic *limitations* rather than the functions he already possesses. His linguistic profile is "hollow"—functionally potent, but expressively sterile. First, his language is void of the *Emotive* function. He cannot express an internal state because, as a simple program, he is not presumed to have one. He cannot say "I am bored," "I am afraid," or "I find this mission unethical." He can only state *what is*, not *how he feels* about it.

Similarly, as one might hold, he has no use for the *Phatic* function. There is no "small talk" on the Dillinger Grid. He does not need to ask Athena, "Are you listening?" or "Can you hear me?" because the system's "contact" is binary—they are either connected, or they are not. Language is not used to maintain social bonds that do not exist.

The same applies to Ares's language from the perspective of *Poetic* function. He does not *choose* his words for style; he selects the most efficient term. He is incapable of understanding metaphor, ambiguity, irony, or humour. He is, in essence, a purely *literal* being. One might thus subscribe to the view that this hollow linguistic profile is the baseline from which his transformation must begin. His arrival in the real world shatters this stable two-function system, forcing him to confront the complete, messy, and often "illogical" human linguistic spectrum in its entirety.

4. The Functional Crisis: Ares in the Real World

As one might propose, Ares's translation from the Grid into the real world is not merely a physical change of scenery; it is a violent linguistic decompression. He is ejected from a closed, binary system—where the *Code* is absolute, and all communication is limited to the *Referential* and *Conative*—into an open, analogue, and "noisy" system (Shannon & Weaver, 1949). Human language is riddled with ambiguity, metaphor, sarcasm, and unspoken rules (Wittgenstein, 1986; Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969; Grice, 1991). His two-function linguistic toolkit, therefore, despite being properly effective on the Grid, becomes immediately and profoundly inadequate. One might therefore subscribe to the view that the film's central act is this "functional crisis": Ares must learn the rest of language to survive, to understand his mission, and ultimately, to understand himself.

4.1. Emotive Function as the Spark of Sentience

Arguably, the first and most critical function Ares must acquire is the *Emotive*. As a program, his language was oriented entirely *outward*—toward the *context* (*Referential*) or the *addressee* (*Conative*). He had no linguistic mechanism for expressing an *internal* state because he was not presumed to have one. The real world, however, bombards him with new,

non-data-based stimuli: the physical sensation of rain, the aesthetics of a cityscape, the complex "feeling" of music, or the sight of human empathy. Before the end of the first act, the audience is invited to note Ares's immediate "interest in real-world phenomena." This "interest" can be interpreted as a precursor to an internal, subjective state. When he encounters Eve, for example, he witnesses her "empathy," a concept alien to his programming.

The instance where Ares, inside Flynn's old grid, praises art he appreciates — in this case, "the music of... Depeche Mode" for the *feeling* it gives him — can be proposed as another example. This is the quintessential *Emotive* utterance. A statement like, "This music... is good," is not *Referential* (since it's not an objective fact) nor *Conative* (as it commands nothing). It is a pure expression of an *Addresser*-focused, internal, subjective state. It is perhaps the first time Ares uses "I" and *means* it, proving he is no longer just a processor of inputs and commands but someone *who* actually *experiences*. This emerging *Emotive* function, therefore, can be interpreted as the seed of his entire character arc. His confusion, his developing self-awareness, and his eventual break from Julian's programming are all underpinned by this new ability to have an internal state and his linguistic struggle to express it.

4.2. The Necessity of Learning to Relate

On the Grid, "contact" is taken as granted since all programs, Ares, Athena and others, are networked unless the Grid collapses entirely (which equally results in their extinction). In the real world, however, "contact" is social, fragile, and must be managed during the online process of communication. This requires the *Phatic* function, i.e. the *social glue* of language that Ares is completely deprived of. Had he not acquired it, his interactions with humans, particularly with Eve, would be directly marked as artificial and inhuman.

For example, Eve, in a moment of stress, might say, "This is crazy, right?" If the other party of the conversation is human, they would respond with a *Phatic-Emotive*, "Yes, it's insane." Ares, however, in his programmatic state, would likely respond to the same utterance with a purely *Referential*, "The statistical probability of success is 14%," or simply not respond at all, seeing the utterance as non-functional (as it contains no data and no command).

Equally, as he needs to cooperate with other human beings on his way to achieve sentience, Ares must learn to use *Phatic* language. He must learn to say "Wait," "Look out," or "Are you okay?"—not as commands, but as ways of managing their shared physical space and mental "channel." Throughout the central act, his gradual, awkward adoption of these

simple social check-ins is a clear sign of his adaptation to the human world, moving from a rigid protocol-based interaction to a flexible, contact-based one.

4.3. Learning the "Human" Code as Metalingual Function

Finally, Ares's most significant intellectual hurdle is learning the "code" of human motivation. His original programming understood *objectives* (get the code) but not *motives* (why Dillinger *wants* the code). Thus, to understand humans, he must use language to understand language itself—the *Metalingual* function. As one might hold, the instance where Ares infers that Eve pursues the Permanence Code out of a sense of inferiority to her late sister can be interpreted as an example of sophisticated pragmatic inference. It is highly unlikely for a program to arrive at this conclusion solely by processing Eve's words; therefore, his analysis implies a preceding *Metalingual* moment: as one might hold, Ares must have first had to define certain concepts, for example, "sister," "grief," "legacy," or "inferiority" to start his meaning-making process. On that basis, Ares's use of the *Metalingual* function can be understood as his attempt to "debug" humanity. In learning the *meaning* of these emotive and social words, he is inadvertently "installing" the very concepts of human sentience into his own core programming. This acquisition of the *Emotive*, *Phatic*, and *Metalingual* functions goes beyond being a mere adaptation; it is a fundamental and irreversible transformation.

This exploration of the *Metalingual* function surfaces another strong symbolic parallel at the very heart of the film. In Ares's journey of character development, the distinction between the Permanence Code and the human code gradually vanishes: While Ares is on a physical mission to acquire the literal Permanence Code —a piece of data that allows a program to become permanent in the real world— he is simultaneously on a cognitive mission to crack the figurative human code (i.e. combination of humanly qualities, e.g. empathy, loyalty, motivation). Arguably, the film's narrative is skilfully structured to intertwine these two concurrent quests: The Permanence Code is not a resource Ares simply finds or steals but a status he earns, as the two codes become gradually equivalent for him. The avatar of Kevin Flynn, the digital "founding father," bestows the code upon Ares only after Ares provides sufficient *Metalingual* and *Emotive* proof that he has grasped the idea of what it means to be a human. Ares demonstrates this by underlining his capability of being friends with humans (through his *Emotive* bond with Eve, for example) and his appreciation of artistic work (based on his, what he calls, feelings). In this vein, the Permanence Code ceases to be a mere technological *MacGuffin* (cf. Ostberg, 2025) and turns into the symbolic "degree of graduation" awarded to Ares upon his completion of linguistic re-coding into a sentient being.

5. Linguistic Mastery as the Proof of Personhood

On the basis of the analysis conducted so far, it may be safe to subscribe to the view that Ares's evolution from A.I., in other words, a "program", to a sentient being is not complete until he moves from simply *experiencing* and *learning* the human linguistic functions to *strategically deploying* them. The film's climax and resolution demonstrate this final stage of mastery. He learns to use language not just to report or react, but to deceive, negotiate, and self-reflect. This shift—particularly in how he re-purposes his original functions (*Referential* and *Conative*) for new, "human" goals and fully embraces the highest function of self-expression (*Poetic*)—solidifies his status as an autonomous individual.

5.1. Mastering the Referential Function

On the Grid, Ares's Referential function was bound by a primary protocol: truth. His reports were data, and data, in his world, could not be false, only accurate or inaccurate. A lie, however, is a far more complex linguistic act which requires the understanding that one's own knowledge is separate from another's, and the wilful manipulation of a message to create a false context. This act of deception can be described using H.P. Grice's (1991) *cooperative principle*. A program like Ares is built to obey the *maxim of quality* (i.e. "Do not say what you believe to be false"). A lie, in Gricean terms, is a covert violation of this maxim, with the intention to mislead the listener. This is fundamentally different from *flouting* a maxim, where a speaker openly breaks a rule and expects the listener to infer an implicit meaning. Ares's ability to move from a state of simple observance to one of strategic violation is therefore a critical marker of his new-found agency and his sophisticated grasp of human pragmatic manipulation (cf. Sperber & Wilson, 1995, pp. 49-50). In that sense, the instance where Ares lies to Athena, claiming that Julian is "indisposed" serves as a key example of this mastery. As one might hold, this is not a data error or a *glitch* as one would find in software, but a deliberate violation in Gricean terms, i.e. a manipulation of the *Referential* function. Ares knows the truth (the context) but *chooses* to communicate a false context. He does this to achieve a personal goal (i.e. self-preservation and protecting Eve) that thus supersedes his original programming. By "hacking" his own most basic function (responding to commands come what may), he transforms a tool for reporting reality into a tool for creating a new one to suit his internal, *Emotive*-driven will. Thus, this act, therefore, serves as a definitive sign of his autonomy.

5.2. From Command to Negotiation: Evolving the Conative Function

Ares's original *Conative* function was equally rigid. As an MCP and soldier, he issued commands. A command (the imperative) is unilateral; it assumes a hierarchy and expects compliance from an addressee who is treated as a subordinate or an object. Humans, however, operate in a world of shared agency. Yet, the audience also witnesses Ares go through a profound shift in terms of this function: He attempts to bargain with Eve, asking to achieve permanence in exchange for setting Eve free. A "bargain" is not a "command" but something *bilateral*. It is a highly sophisticated *Conative* act that acknowledges the *Addressee* (Eve) not as an object to be captured, but as an *equal agent* with her own free will and the power to *refuse*. This act demonstrates that Ares has evolved his *Conative* function from one of *dominance* to one of *negotiation*. He now understands that influencing another autonomous being requires persuasion and a recognition of their own internal motives—a massive leap from his original programming.

5.3. The Poetic Function as Individual Identity

It can be argued that the ultimate proof of Ares's transformation into a human-like being rests in his final act of self-motivated communication that is free from mission objective. The story concludes with Ares sending Eve a postcard about his life outside the Grid and his experience of exploring the world like a human being. Arguably, this act synthesizes all the humanly functions of language explicated so far. It is *Phatic*, since it reopens and maintains the *Contact* and social bond between the two. It is *Referential*, as there is the description of Ares's new life and context. It is *Emotive*, as it *expresses* his new, truly autonomous state (including his internal *feelings*). Yet, above all, it is a *Poetic* act since the focus is on the *Message* itself: Ares, free from any prompts and orders, gets to *choose his words* for the first time, as his original programming would have no protocol for writing a postcard. The *style* he chooses — his phrasing, his descriptions, perhaps even the simple act of choosing the card is not to satisfy a command or serve as a function. It is the use of language as a means of self-expression, while the focus is on the *form*. Thus, the postcard is the first linguistic artifact in the film that uniquely reveals *who Ares is*. In other words, Ares ultimately uses the *Poetic* function to declare his own identity after successfully acquiring the other humanly qualities and functions of language.

6. Conclusion

As the analysis has demonstrated, Ares's ontological journey in *Tron: Ares* from a digital construct to a human(ly) being goes hand in hand with his linguistic development.

His road to sentience, therefore, can be explored through the lens of Roman Jakobson's (1960) functions of language. Arguably, the film successfully portrays the evolution of a being *which* begins as a two-function "it"—a mere vessel for the *Referential* transmission of data and the *Conative* execution of commands— to an artificial individual *who* has human qualities. By moving him from the sterile, closed system of the Grid to the chaotic —or noisy, as Shannon and Weaver (1949) would define— system of the real world, the film pushes him to go through a linguistic crisis that becomes the catalyst for his transformation.

The main findings of this paper trace this evolution through his acquisition of the "human" functions. His journey is characterized initially by a spark of an internal state (*Emotive*), the awkward but must adoption of social maintenance (*Phatic*), and the intellectual curiosity to understand the human *code* (*Metalingual*). This transformation becomes concrete when he demonstrates a true mastery by hacking his original programming by using the *Referential* function to lie and evolving the *Conative* function from command to negotiation.

Arguably*, Tron: Ares* offers a compelling answer to a classic science-fiction question, i.e. what it means to be human. Through focusing on Ares's linguistic development, the film suggests that true sentience is not merely the capacity to think or feel (*Emotive* function) but requires mastering a complex social practice, akin to Wittgenstein's (1986) *language-games*. In this framework, language is understood not as a fixed calculus of definitions, but as a dynamic activity woven into the shared "form of life" of the speakers. This involves the drive to connect with others and prolong the communication (*Phatic* function). As Annelie Ädel (2006) suggests, this function is not merely mechanical but deeply tied to politeness strategies that build rapport and manage the interpersonal relationship (pp. 169-170). In the end, the uniquely human desire to craft a personal identity and express that self in a unique style (*Poetic* function). By the time Ares writes his postcard, he is no longer a program answering a prompt but rather an author, and in that act of linguistic creation, he confirms his own humanity.

Disclosures

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

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Analyzing the Turkish Popular Literature Translation in the First Parts of the Twentieth Century: The Case of Güven Publishing House[1]

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Abstract

This article explores how the sociopolitical climate of early twentieth-century Türkiye shaped the translation and circulation of popular fiction, focusing particularly on the role of Güven Publishing House, an influential yet understudied actor active between 1923 and 1960. Rather than treating translation trends of the period in abstract terms, the study takes Güven's publishing activity as a concrete entry point for understanding how popular genres—detective fiction, historical adventure narratives, and other forms of mass-market storytelling—traveled from English into Turkish and reached a rapidly expanding readership. Building on Şehnaz Tahir Gürçağlar's *The Politics and Poetics of Translation in Turkey,* the article situates Güven within the broader literary and cultural environment of the early Republic, a time when translation was not merely a linguistic practice but part of a larger cultural negotiation. By examining selected works from the publisher's catalog, the study highlights the strategies used in their translation—abridgment, adaptation, domestication, and, at times, pseudotranslation—and considers why these choices may have appealed to contemporary readers. The discussion ultimately aims to shed light on how Güven Publishing House became a pioneering player in popular fiction translation and how its output intersected with Türkiye's shifting social, economic, and political landscape.

Keywords: Turkish popular literature translation, early twentieth century, translation studies, Turkish–English literary translation, publishing history

1. Introduction

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The first half of the twentieth century was a period in which the Turkish literary system underwent profound and sometimes abrupt transformations. The newly founded Republic was not only reforming its political and social institutions but also reshaping cultural life, including reading habits and the very notion of literature. During these years, translated works—especially examples of popular fiction such as detective novels, adventure stories, and serialized historical romances—played an important role in introducing new narrative forms to emerging readerships. These texts circulated widely among urban readers and gradually became part of the everyday literary experience of the period (Woodstein, 2022, pp. 2–10).

Within this evolving cultural landscape, Güven Publishing House stands out as a particularly active and influential institution. Although its name appears in several studies on translation history in Türkiye, the publisher itself has rarely been examined in depth. Much of the existing scholarship, including the foundational research of Tahir Gürçağlar (2008), Üyepazarcı (1997), and Sümbül (2021), mentions Güven only in passing while focusing on broader discussions of popular fiction or literary circulation (Tahir Gürçağlar, 2008; Üyepazarcı, 1997; Sümbül, 2021). As a result, we still know relatively little about the publisher's specific translation choices, its catalog structure, or its cultural impact.

This article attempts to fill that gap. By focusing on Güven Publishing House as a case study, it aims to offer a clearer understanding of how translated popular fiction participated in shaping the literary environment of early Republican Türkiye. Three goals guide this study. First, the article seeks to situate the emergence of Güven within the cultural and literary dynamics of the time. Second, it aims to identify and classify the kinds of popular works that the publisher translated and to explore how these translations interacted with the ideological, social, and economic contexts of the 1920s–1960s. Third, it examines selected examples from the publisher's catalog to shed light on the translation strategies employed, including abridgment, domestication, adaptation, and even pseudotranslation.

Methodologically, the study adopts a descriptive, historically informed approach. Even-Zohar's polysystem theory provides a conceptual foundation, particularly in understanding how translated literature can occupy central positions in periods of cultural change (Even-Zohar, 1990). This framework is complemented by scholarship on book history and popular fiction (Bloom, 2008; Gelder, 2004; Glover & McCracken, 2012; McCracken, 1998). The primary dataset consists of translated works published by Güven between 1923 and 1960, including well-known series such as Sherlock Holmes and Pardaillan, alongside other popular narratives that resonated with contemporary readers. Secondary materials—catalogs, bibliographical studies, and earlier academic research—help contextualize the publisher's activity and reconstruct its editorial practices.

It is important to emphasize the scope and limitations of this study. The analysis focuses specifically on Güven Publishing House and does not attempt to produce a comprehensive account of all popular fiction translations in Türkiye during the early Republican decades. The period between 1923 and 1960 is chosen deliberately, as these years saw rapid shifts in educational policy, literacy levels, and the structure of the publishing market, all of which directly shaped translation activities. By narrowing the focus, the article aims to offer a more precise and nuanced picture of how one publisher navigated this complex cultural environment.

Examined from this perspective, Güven Publishing House becomes more than a commercial enterprise: it emerges as a cultural mediator that helped introduce global genres to Turkish readers and participated in shaping literary tastes during a pivotal historical moment. The sections that follow provide a historical overview of the early Republican context, trace the development of Güven Publishing House, and analyze its translated works and translation strategies in detail.

2. The Politics of Education and Translation in Türkiye, 1923-1960

The early decades of the Turkish Republic unfolded against a backdrop of ambitious political, educational, and cultural reforms. These changes reshaped nearly every aspect of social life, and translation practices were no exception. As Şehnaz Tahir Gürçağlar's *The Politics and Poetics of Translation in Turkey* convincingly demonstrates, it is difficult to separate translation from the broader nation-building project of the period (Tahir Gürçağlar, 2008). Translation was not simply a literary activity; it functioned as a cultural tool that served both ideological aims and practical needs.

One of the most influential initiatives of the era was the establishment of the Translation Bureau in 1940 under the leadership of Minister of Education Hasan Âli Yücel. In its formative years, the bureau oversaw the translation of more than a thousand works, with a particular emphasis on the Western canon—philosophy, humanism, and foundational literary texts. These translations profoundly shaped the modern Turkish literary system, not only by reconfiguring the intellectual horizons of the reading public but also by indirectly encouraging private publishers to engage in areas the bureau did not prioritize. Popular fiction, in particular, fell outside the bureau's remit and subsequently became a space where commercial publishers like Güven carved out their own cultural roles.

Educational reforms further illuminate the era's ambitions. As scholars such as Somel (as cited in Karaömerlioğlu, 1998) and Nohl (as cited in Karaömerlioğlu, 1998) have shown, the Republic sought to rebuild the entire school system on a centralized and secular foundation. New schools were established primarily in urban centers such as Ankara,

İstanbul, and İzmir, while rural regions experienced different social and economic realities. Initiatives such as the Village Institutes (Köy Enstitüleri) and People's Houses (Halkevleri) emerged as attempts to address this imbalance. Although these institutions had relatively short lifespans—especially the Village Institutes, which closed during the tense political climate of the early Cold War—they played an important role in shaping intellectual life and promoting literacy during the 1940s.

Taken together, these developments—state-led translation policies, educational reforms, and evolving socioeconomic conditions—created a fertile environment for new cultural actors. It was within this dynamic and often transitional literary marketplace that Güven Publishing House began to operate. The rise of private publishers during this period signals a diversification of readership and an increasing demand for genres outside the classical canon, particularly popular fiction such as detective stories, adventure narratives, and serialized novels. While these genres were seldom granted the same cultural prestige as canonical works, they contributed meaningfully to the formation of popular reading practices and helped introduce new narrative forms to a broad and rapidly expanding audience.

3. Historical Background of Güven Publishing House

Understanding the establishment and development of Güven Publishing House requires situating it within the broader cultural and political atmosphere of the early Republic—a period marked by sweeping reforms in education, literacy, and cultural production. The founding ideology of the Republic placed significant emphasis on modernization, and these ambitions inevitably reshaped the publishing sector. As literacy rates began to rise and public education expanded, an increasingly diverse readership emerged, eager for new and accessible forms of literature. Popular fiction, with its fast-paced narratives and recognizable conventions, quickly found a place within this environment.

Güven Publishing House became one of the notable actors in this transitional literary scene. Although the archival record concerning its founders and internal workings remains limited, surviving catalogues and bibliographic studies indicate that the publisher was especially active from the 1920s through the 1960s. Across these decades, Güven issued a substantial number of translated works, particularly in genres that appealed to a wide audience: detective fiction, adventure novels, historical romances, and various forms of serialized storytelling. These genres held particular appeal for readers who were newly engaging with print culture but who were not necessarily drawn to the classical or canonical works that dominated state-sponsored translation efforts.

The publisher's strategies reveal a keen awareness of the reading market. Many of its books were released as part of long-running series or multi-volume narratives, encouraging

readers to follow ongoing stories and characters. This approach mirrored not only global trends in popular literature but also the economic realities of the Turkish book market, where short, affordable installments were more feasible for both publishers and readers. Serialization offered familiarity, continuity, and an accessible entry point into the world of translated fiction.

Another noteworthy aspect of Güven's catalog is its diversity. The publisher did not confine itself strictly to direct translations; it also produced adaptations, simplified versions, and occasionally works that were reshaped to align better with local expectations. In some cases, titles were altered, extended descriptions were compressed, or storylines were streamlined—all practices that reflected both market pressures and cultural preferences. During this period, translation was often treated as a flexible and pragmatic form of rewriting rather than a strictly faithful linguistic transfer. Güven's catalog embodies this fluidity.

Although popular fiction formed the core of its output, Güven occasionally ventured into other areas. Publications aimed at young readers, moral instruction texts, or simplified narratives for broader audiences appeared alongside the more commercial adventure and detective titles. While smaller in number, these works signal the publisher's responsiveness to the educational priorities of the early Republic and its interest in cultivating a readership that extended beyond adult consumers of popular fiction.

Despite the limited archival documentation available today, the surviving evidence paints a picture of a publisher that played a significant cultural role in shaping mid-twentieth-century reading practices. Güven Publishing House not only introduced Turkish readers to a wide array of global popular narratives but also contributed to the expansion of a popular literary culture at a moment when the country was redefining its social and cultural identity. In this sense, Güven serves as a compelling example of how commercial publishers helped mediate and domesticate global literary forms for local audiences.

4. Translated Works and Translation Strategies of Güven Publishing House

The translated works published by Güven Publishing House provide valuable insight into both the publisher's editorial orientation and the evolving tastes of Turkish readers during the early to mid-twentieth century. A closer look at the catalog shows a pronounced emphasis on detective fiction, adventure narratives, and melodramatic plots—genres that were already enjoying international popularity and that readily appealed to a readership becoming increasingly familiar with mass-market literature. These works were often issued in series formats, complete with recurring heroes, instantly recognizable tropes, and cliffhanger

endings. Such publishing strategies made the books not only entertaining but also habit-forming, encouraging readers to follow characters across multiple volumes.

Within this body of translated literature, the publisher's preferences and priorities become evident. British and American detective novels, in particular, seemed to resonate strongly with Turkish audiences. Authors such as Edgar Wallace or Arthur Conan Doyle—though sometimes filtered through abridged editions or adapted renditions—occupied a central place in the publisher's lists. Similarly, adventure stories that blended exotic settings with fast-moving plots were widely circulated, inviting readers into imaginative worlds that balanced escapism with familiarity (Carter, 2018).

However, the catalog does more than indicate what kinds of stories were made available; it also reveals how translation itself was conceptualized and practiced. In many cases, the versions published by Güven were not strict, word-for-word translations. Instead, translators frequently engaged in rewriting practices shaped by commercial expectations, cultural norms, and the practical realities of the book market. These strategies took several forms:

Abridgment and Condensation: Many of the works were shortened to fit the affordable booklet format that dominated popular publishing at the time. Long descriptive passages were trimmed, and secondary plotlines were sometimes omitted. The goal was to produce fast, affordable reading material rather than comprehensive literary reproductions.

Domestication: Some translations show clear signs of adjustment to local sensibilities. References that might seem distant or irrelevant to Turkish readers were simplified or contextualized, making the stories appear more familiar. In several cases, cultural or linguistic elements were softened or adapted to avoid alienating the audience.

Pseudotranslation and Rewriting: Although not always explicitly acknowledged, the period saw the emergence of texts that blended translation with creative rewriting. A work might be presented as a translation—even carrying a foreign author's name—while containing substantial modifications or original passages. This approach, common at the time, reveals the porous boundaries between translation and original writing in the popular literature market.

Title Changes and Repackaging: The publisher often altered the titles of works in order to emphasize intrigue or drama, aiming to capture readers' attention in a crowded marketplace. Repackaging was an essential marketing tool and often involved reframing a story to highlight what would most appeal to local tastes.

These strategies show that translation in this context was not merely a linguistic act but part of a broader cultural and commercial enterprise. Translators and editors were not invisible intermediaries; they were active shapers of the texts, making decisions that balanced fidelity with readability, international trends with local expectations, and narrative coherence with economic constraints.

Given the limited archival documentation surrounding individual translators, it is difficult to reconstruct the precise decision-making processes behind each publication. Nevertheless, the textual traces present in surviving editions make clear that Güven's translated works were the outcome of highly pragmatic editorial interventions. They reflect a dynamic interplay between global literary flows and the specific cultural environment of early twentieth-century Türkiye.

5. Discussion

The examination of Güven Publishing House's catalog and translation practices reveals several interconnected patterns that help illuminate not only the publisher's editorial stance but also the broader dynamics of popular literature consumption in early twentieth-century Türkiye. Rather than viewing these works as isolated publications, it becomes more meaningful to interpret them as part of an evolving literary ecosystem shaped by social change, new reading habits, and the growing commercial possibilities of translated fiction.

One of the most striking findings is the publisher's consistent investment in genres that had already proven their international appeal. Detective stories, crime narratives, and fast-paced adventure novels dominated the catalog, suggesting that Güven had a sharp understanding of market demand. These works were typically short, accessible, and plot-driven—qualities that suited readers who were just beginning to participate in a developing print culture. The publisher's decision to prioritize such genres indicates an attempt to bridge global reading trends with local expectations.

Another important observation concerns the varied degrees of intervention visible in the translations. The textual evidence points to a publishing environment in which rigid notions of linguistic fidelity were not the primary concern. Instead, what mattered was the overall readability and marketability of the final text. As a result, a single translated work might contain compressions, altered character names, or restructured dialogue, while still maintaining the general storyline of the original. This type of editorial mediation reflects not a lack of professionalism but rather a pragmatic understanding of what popular fiction required during the period: clarity, pace, and affordability.

In several cases, the publisher appears to have favored translations that could be serialized or extended through sequels, whether directly imported from foreign authors or

shaped through localized rewriting. This suggests that sustaining reader engagement was a critical strategy. Serialization created anticipation and allowed the publisher to cultivate a loyal readership. It also aligned with contemporary economic realities—shorter, cheaper installments were more feasible for many readers and ensured continuous demand.

Furthermore, the interplay between translated texts and their sociocultural environment becomes evident when we examine the adjustments made in the narratives. For example, certain moral tensions or culturally distant references were softened, sometimes subtly and sometimes more decisively. These alterations reflect both an editorial sensitivity to the domestic audience and the broader tendency, common at the time, to treat translation as an adaptable tool for shaping public taste. Through such interventions, translated texts were effectively re-anchored within the social and cultural landscape of Türkiye.

Another noteworthy finding is the publisher's role in expanding the scope of popular reading materials. Although detective and adventure fiction remained central, Güven also experimented with educational and moralistic texts, revealing an awareness of the shifting expectations of the new Republic. These publications, while fewer in number, demonstrate that the publisher was not strictly confined to commercial imperatives; it was also operating within an environment that valued literacy, national development, and accessible reading materials (Tekalp & Tarakçıoğlu, 2016).

Taken together, these findings illustrate how Güven Publishing House contributed to the growth of a popular fiction market that was both global in its sources and local in its adaptations. The publisher mediated foreign literary forms and shaped their reception by blending translation, rewriting, and market-driven editorial strategies. In doing so, Güven played a modest but meaningful part in constructing a reading culture that accompanied Türkiye's broader social transformation during the first half of the twentieth century.

6. Conclusion

This study set out to examine how Güven Publishing House contributed to the translation and circulation of popular fiction in Türkiye during the first decades of the twentieth century, a period marked by profound social and cultural transformation. By looking closely at the publisher's catalog, the genres it prioritized, and the translation strategies it employed, it becomes clear that Güven operated at the intersection of global literary trends and the domestic demands of a rapidly changing readership.

The analysis suggests that Güven's significance lay not merely in the number of books it produced but in how it approached translation as a flexible and pragmatic practice. Rather than adhering strictly to the original texts, the publisher often favored adaptations, abridgments, and restructurings that aligned with the expectations of the local audience.

These interventions, far from diminishing the value of the translations, reveal how popular literature functioned as a space where commercial imperatives, cultural preferences, and narrative accessibility intersected.

The study also highlights the publisher's role in shaping reading habits through its emphasis on series, serialized plots, and familiar narrative structures. These strategies encouraged sustained engagement and helped lay the foundation for a more robust market for mass literature. In this sense, Güven Publishing House contributed not only to the availability of translated popular fiction but also to the development of a broader reading culture in Türkiye.

At the same time, the findings underline the need for further research. The scarcity of archival material, particularly concerning translators, editorial decision-making, and distribution networks, presents challenges but also opens avenues for deeper inquiry. Future studies might examine surviving paratexts, copyright records, or comparative textual analyses to gain a clearer picture of individual translation practices and the publisher's broader impact.

Overall, Güven Publishing House stands as an illustrative example of how translation, publishing, and cultural transformation converged in the early Republic. Its activities shed light not only on the circulation of specific genres but also on the ways in which popular literature was adapted, reshaped, and domesticated for new readers navigating the shifting landscape of twentieth-century Türkiye. As also shown in the sources discussed in this study, by situating Güven within this larger context, this study contributes to our understanding of the cultural mechanisms that guided the emergence of modern Turkish reading publics.

Disclosures

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

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A Multimodal Visual Grammar Analysis of Gender Representation in *Egalitarian Tales – Cinderella's Riddle*

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Abstract

This study aims to explore how gender roles are visually reconstructed in the rewritten *Cinderella* story published in the *Egalitarian Tales* series. This study offers a multimodal visual grammar analysis of the rewritten Cinderella story in the *Egalitarian Tales* series. Drawing on Kress and van Leeuwen's visual grammar framework (representational, interactive, and compositional metafunctions) and integrating socio-cultural semiotics and translation-as-rewriting perspectives, the paper examines how visual strategies reconstruct gender roles. Using three purposively sampled illustrations, coded via MAXQDA, the analysis demonstrates that images operate as ideological agents that can challenge traditional gender binaries and promote egalitarian social models. The findings suggest pedagogical implications for fostering critical multimodal literacy in early readers and highlight the significance of visual translation as a transformative tool in children's literature, particularly in contexts seeking to promote gender equity and inclusive narrative representation.

Keywords: visual grammar, multimodal discourse analysis, gender representation, children's literature, socio-semiotic rewriting

1. Introduction

Children's literature is a crucial site for cultural transmission, as its narratives and images shape early understandings of social roles, including gender (Nikolajeva, 2010). Fairy tales have historically functioned as cultural texts that transmit gender norms, values, and expectations across generations (Zipes, 2012, p. 34). Historically, canonical fairy tales such as Cinderella have reproduced patriarchal tropes: passive heroines, active heroes, and heteronormative endings (Bacchilega, 1997; Zipes, 2012). *The Egalitarian Tales – Cinderella's Riddle* (2020) project responds to this tradition by intentionally rewriting canonical tales to model gender-equitable relations. While textual rewritings are important,

the visual dimension is arguably even more influential in picture books: images often mediate values and identity scripts for early readers (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; Serafini, 2014).

This paper examines the rewritten Cinderella in the *Egalitarian Tales-Cinderella's Riddle* (2020) series, focusing on visual strategies that construct or deconstruct gender. The central aim is to examine how visual semiotic resources in retellings represent gender roles, power relations, and cultural values. The analysis proceeds through Kress and van Leeuwen's three metafunctions—representational, interactive, and compositional—to systematically decode how illustrations contribute to ideological meaning-making. Additionally, this study situates these visual processes within the frameworks of multimodality, sociocultural semiotics, and translation as rewriting (Lefevere, 1992; Toury, 1995).

The study investigates how the visual strategies in the rewritten *Cinderella* story construct or challenge traditional gender roles. It examines how Kress and van Leeuwen's Visual Grammar metafunctions—representational, interactive, and compositional—indicate shifts in the socio-cultural semiotics of gender within the *Egalitarian Tales* project. In addition, the visuals are interpreted through the lens of translation as rewriting, with attention to intra- and intercultural adaptation. By analysing these changes, the study aims to reveal how the multimodal reconfiguration of *Cinderella* may influence children's cultural and gender socialisation in contemporary Turkey.

By addressing these, this study aims to contribute to three domains: (a) visual discourse analysis of children's literature, (b) socio-cultural approaches to gender representation, and (c) the intersection of translation, rewriting, and multimodality. The theoretical foundation of this research lies in multimodal discourse analysis and visual social semiotics. Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) Visual Grammar Theory provides a comprehensive framework for analysing images through representational, interactive, and compositional metafunctions. Building upon Halliday's (1978) systemic functional linguistics, Visual Grammar Theory suggests that images, like language, are socially shaped and serve communicative purposes. Scholars such as Machin (2013) and Jewitt (2009) have further expanded on this framework, emphasising the importance of multimodal analysis in understanding how texts integrate various semiotic modes to produce meaning.

Children's literature has long been recognised as a key space where cultural ideologies, social norms, and gender expectations are reproduced and circulated (Nodelman, 1988; Stephens, 1992). Visual and verbal elements in picturebooks function not merely as storytelling tools but as symbolic resources through which meaning is constructed and negotiated. Previous studies (Machin, 2013, p. 92; Unsworth, 2008, p. 47) demonstrate how children's literature functions as a site where cultural ideologies are encoded visually and

verbally. Rewritten fairy tales are not only textual but also multimodal acts of translation and rewriting (Lefevere, 1992, p. 8; Toury, 2012, p. 67), transforming the semiotic resources of the source text into new cultural contexts. As multimodal texts, picturebooks combine image, layout, and written language, shaping children's perception of social roles through representational cues (Serafini, 2014). Visual portrayals of gender have historically reinforced binary hierarchies by placing female characters in passive, domestic, or beauty-oriented roles (Zipes, 2006; Bacchilega, 1997). These critiques have led scholars and educators to promote egalitarian retellings to challenge canonical narratives. Recent studies explore intersemiotic translation in picturebooks, emphasising how visual adaptation modifies character identity, relationships, and emotional tone (O'Sullivan, 2005; Nikolajeva & Scott, 2001). However, research on how visual grammar contributes to this shift remains scarce.

From the perspective of intercultural communication, fairy tales travel across temporal and cultural borders. While canonical versions of Cinderella emphasised passivity, domesticity, and heteronormative gender structures (Rowe, 1979, p. 237), contemporary retellings like *Egalitarian Tales* (2020) attempt to dismantle these hierarchies. Scholars highlight how multimodality enables the reconstruction of identity through the interplay of words and images (Bezemer & Kress, 2015, p. 57). Thus, the visual analysis of this project becomes essential to understand how cultural meanings are negotiated and reinterpreted through images.

1.1. From Verbal to Non-Verbal: Multimodality in Children's Literature

The shift from text-dominated storytelling to multimodal forms has significantly altered the ways in which meaning is produced and consumed in children's literature. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) argue that images are not supplementary to text but constitute a grammar of their own, with distinct semiotic resources that can be analysed systematically (p. 18). Similarly, Jewitt (2009) emphasises that multimodal analysis must account for the interplay of multiple semiotic systems—verbal, visual, spatial, and auditory—each of which contributes to the construction of meaning (p. 14).

In children's picture books, this shift is especially evident. Painter, Martin, and Unsworth (2013) observe that images often carry equal or greater ideological weight than the accompanying words, especially when addressing issues of identity and social roles (p. 27). Thus, analysing the rewritten Cinderella through its visuals is not only methodologically justified but also essential for understanding how egalitarian discourses are made accessible to young readers.

1.2. Visual Grammar and Multimodality

Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) Visual Grammar Theory provides a systematic vocabulary for reading images: the representational metafunction concerns 'what' is depicted, the interactive metafunction addresses interpersonal relations between image and viewer, and the compositional metafunction focuses on organisation and information value (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 36). This approach builds on Halliday's systemic functional linguistics and extends metafunctional analysis to the visual mode (Halliday, 1978).

Multimodality emphasises that meaning is produced through the orchestration of multiple semiotic modes (Jewitt, 2009). In children's picture books, images and text form interdependent intermodal ensembles (Painter, Martin, & Unsworth, 2013). As a result, visual analysis must account for both intramodal (image-to-image) and intermodal (image-to-text) relations.

The concept of multimodality, as outlined by Kress (2010), refers to the use of multiple semiotic resources—such as text, image, colour, and spatial design—to create meaning. Within this framework, multimodal social semiotics views each mode as socially and culturally situated, capable of expressing ideologies and shaping discourse. This theoretical lens is particularly useful for analysing visual narratives in children's literature, where illustrations often carry ideological weight beyond the written word (Serafini, 2014).

1.3. Socio-Cultural Semiotics and Gender

Socio-cultural semiotics foregrounds how signs operate within power-laden cultural contexts (Bezemer & Kress, 2008). Gender studies, most notably Butler's (1990) concept of performativity, show how gender is constituted through repeated acts, including visual representation. Feminist literary scholars have traced how fairy tales reproduce gender scripts (Bacchilega, 1997; Tatar, 2004). Zipes (1995) and Tatar (2004) have documented the evolution of fairy tales and their socio-political functions, highlighting how rewritings can serve as counter-narratives. Contemporary rewritten tales often seek to destabilise these scripts by altering both narrative and visual codes (Sunderland, 2011). Scholars like Sunderland (2011) and Davies (2003b) have investigated how traditional fairy tales perpetuate binary and stereotypical gender roles, often portraying female characters as passive and nurturing, while male characters are active and dominant.

1.4. Translation as Rewriting and Intercultural Adaptation

Translation studies reconceptualise translation as culturally and ideologically mediated rewriting (Lefevere, 1992). Toury (1995) argues that translational norms and cultural expectations shape how narratives are adapted. When canonical tales move across cultures, visual elements are frequently reconfigured to align with local pedagogical aims (Toury,

1995). Toury's (1995) cultural translation framework further adds an intercultural dimension to the analysis, suggesting that translated or adapted narratives often undergo cultural negotiation. In the case of the *Egalitarian Tales* (2020) project, the visual rewriting of canonical European tales for a Turkish audience provides fertile ground for examining both gender and cultural representation.

1.5. Multimodality as a Pedagogical and Ideological Tool

Multimodal literacy is increasingly recognised as an essential skill in contemporary education. Serafini (2014) argues that young readers must be taught not only to decode written text but also to critically interpret visual and multimodal resources (p. 11). Bezemer and Kress (2008) similarly stress that multimodal resources play a central role in how children learn cultural values and social norms (p. 171).

Within this framework, Equal Tales operates both pedagogically and ideologically. By combining rewritten narratives with reimagined illustrations, it equips children with alternative frameworks for understanding gender equality. As Davies (2003a) notes, disrupting "scripts of gender" through storytelling is one of the most effective ways to challenge systemic inequalities from early childhood (pp. 22–24).

2. Methods

This study employed a qualitative visual analysis based on Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) Visual Grammar Theory, focusing on representational, interactive, and compositional metafunctions. MAXQDA software was used for qualitative coding of visual elements in selected pages from the illustrated children's book *Cinderella's Riddle* in the *Egalitarian Tales* (2020) series. MAXQDA is a professional qualitative and mixed-methods data analysis software developed by VERBI Software GmbH in Berlin, designed for systematic coding, visualization, and interpretation of multimodal datasets including text, images, audio, video, and PDF documents. In this study, MAXQDA 2024 version was used due to its extended functions for visual material processing and its suitability for sociocultural semiotic research. Visuals were imported into MAXQDA, and coding categories were developed based on the metafunctional framework. Each image was analysed for narrative and conceptual representation, gaze and viewer positioning, and compositional layout.

Additionally, the study incorporates a cultural semiotics perspective (Toury, 1995) to evaluate the intercultural implications of visual rewriting. Key analytical categories included gender role reversals, power dynamics, emotional expressivity, attire, and domestic vs. public space representations.

This qualitative, descriptive study employs multimodal discourse analysis combined with systematic coding via MAXQDA. Visual data were purposively sampled to include three pivotal illustrations from the *Egalitarian Tales* (2020) – *Cinderella's Riddle* book: (1) a preparatory domestic scene with her stepfamily, (2) the young Prince and Princess as rulers of the country, the country's leaders and society scene, and (3) the resolution and ending scene. These images were chosen because they visually foreground different aspects of gender and power dynamics. Additionally, these 3 pages are important for analysis because they contained the most coding scenes and were selected as examples because the goal is to ensure data saturation.

The analysis uses Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) meta-functional framework. For each image, the following dimensions were examined: (a) Representational meaning (participants, processes, settings, symbols); (b) Interactive meaning (gaze patterns, social distance, angle, modality); and (c) Compositional meaning (information value, salience, framing, rhythmic sequencing).

Images were imported into MAXQDA and segmented into analytical units (panels, character close-ups, and background motifs). A codebook was developed iteratively, with codes derived deductively from visual grammar concepts and inductively from the data. Key codes included Agency, Role Reversal, Domestic/Public Space, Scientific/Creative Tools, Neutralised Gaze, Direct Gaze, Central Framing, Shared Salience, and Intercultural Motifs. Each coded segment included memos that captured interpretative observations. The codebook was built iteratively, following a grounded-visual approach:

1. Initial descriptive labels created during open coding (low inference).
2. Codes refined using Kress & van Leeuwen metafunction categories forming three code families: Representational codes, Interactive codes, Compositional codes
3. Code definitions were operationalised with examples to ensure consistency.
4. Axial grouping organized codes into semantic clusters.
5. Final themes emerged by cross-checking code frequency, segment overlap, and memo trails.

This systematic progression ensured transparency, replicability, and methodological rigor, fulfilling qualitative reliability criteria. Additionally, the study incorporates a cultural semiotics perspective (Toury, 1995) to evaluate the intercultural implications of visual rewriting. Codes were clustered around themes of gender representation, power dynamics, and socio-cultural symbolism.

The analysis followed these steps:

1. Importing visual data into MAXQDA.

2. Coding of representational elements (actors, actions, symbols).

3. Coding of interactive elements (gaze, distance, angle).

4. Coding of compositional structures (salience, framing, information value).

5. Interpretation of findings in relation to research questions and socio-cultural context.

Table 1. Sample MAXQDA Coding of Visual Elements

Visual	Representational Metafunction	Interactive Metafunction	Compositional Metafunction
Cinderella with Stepfamily	Cinderella is shown performing domestic labour, symbolic of the gendered division of roles.	Gaze avoidance: Cinderella is positioned at a lower angle, reinforcing subordination.	Stepfamily centred, Cinderella at the margin, showing unequal salience.

The primary data comprises three pages (uploaded as images) from the *Cinderella's Riddle* storybook published within the *Egalitarian Tales (2020)* project. These visuals were selected for their diverse portrayals of gender representation, power dynamics, and socio-cultural symbolism.

Table 2. Analytical Procedure

Stage	Procedure
1. Visual Unit Selection	Key frames from each page were segmented based on narrative shifts and character interactions.

2.Visual Grammar Coding	The images were examined using the three metafunctions: - *Representational*: participants, settings, actions - *Interactive*: gaze, size of frame, angle - *Compositional*: composition, salience, framing
3.MAXQDA Integration	Codes such as "Empowered Female", "Reversed Authority", "Non-traditional Attire", "Neutralised Gaze", "Symbolic Action", etc., were applied.
4.Thematic Clustering	Recurring patterns were grouped under higher-order themes like "Egalitarian Decision-Making", "Critique of Aristocracy", and "Visual Empowerment of Marginalised Characters".

Table 3. Sample Code Structure in MAXQDA

Meta function	Code Name	Description
Representational	Gender Role Shift	Depiction of females in intellectual or authoritative roles
Interactive	Neutral Gaze	Absence of objectifying visual contact
Compositional	Central Framing of Female Characters	Emphasizing female agency visually

This analysis examines three illustrations from a Turkish Cinderella storybook through the lens of Kress and van Leeuwen's Visual Grammar Theory, incorporating Toury's Cultural Semiotics framework. The images represent different narrative moments within the fairy tale, each employing distinct visual strategies to construct meaning through representational, interactive, and compositional elements.

Image 1. Selected Illustration from *Cindrella's Riddle*

(English Translation of the text: In a fairytale land of fragrant forests, blue streams, and sparkling lakes, lived a girl named Cinderella. Cinderella, who was very smart and curious, did not mind her older sister and brother's messing with her, made friends with her birds and mice in the attic, and read the books of her mother, who died at a young age. While they valued expensive clothes, adornment and ostentation, Cinderella dreamed of what she read in books and thought about how beautiful and big the world was.)

The first image is a domestic scene. In Image 1, the representation of Cinderella seated and caring for her intellectual inner self thoughts while her stepfamily is more concerned with the outer world and showing off is a classic Narrative Action Process, where her passivity visually communicates her marginalisation. The interactive meta-function is activated through her indirect gaze and medium distance, which renders the viewer empathetic but emotionally distant. Compositional elements frame Cinderella on the left side (new), symbolising alternative values of intellect and introspection as opposed to the right-side characters' obsession with glamour (given).

Representational Analysis (Image 1):

This image presents narrative and conceptual processes that foreground non-traditional gender roles. Characters are depicted engaging in actions that connote agency and competence. Symbolic artefacts, such as clothing and books, are used to reinterpret once-domestic items as tools for public participation and creativity. While Cinderella's (left) kneeling suggests ongoing domestic labour, her stepsister and stepbrother (right) engage in leisurely activities and conversation. The image establishes classificational relationships

between characters through visual hierarchies. Cinderella's positioning low (kneeling) is associated with labour tools, while her stepsister's and stepbrother's positioning higher is associated with leisure objects.

Interactive Analysis (Image 1):

Interactive relations are negotiated through gaze and social distance. Where canonical tales rely on objectifying gazes that render female characters passive, these illustrations frequently employ direct or neutralised gazes that invite alignment with the protagonist as a thinking subject. Social distance is manipulated through framing: medium-close shots promote empathetic engagement, whereas long shots allow the viewer to observe communal dynamics. Cinderella looks downward, indicating an averted gaze, creating emotional distance and reflection. Her gaze is directed downward toward her work, avoiding eye contact with the viewer – creating indirect address. Viewer distance is medium, reflecting personal involvement. Stepsisters' and stepbrothers' gazes are also indirect, focused on their activities rather than acknowledging the viewer. The viewer is positioned as an observer rather than a participant, maintaining social distance and allowing viewers to observe the scene without intimate involvement. The horizontal angle creates a sense of equality with the viewer, while the slightly elevated perspective suggests mild superiority over the domestic scene.

High modality achieved through detailed architectural elements (window frames, floor patterns), realistic colour palette with naturalistic lighting, consistent perspective and proportional relationships, contextual details (scattered objects, furniture)

Compositional Analysis (Image 1):

Compositional choices—such as central framing, colour salience, and symmetrical layouts—work together to distribute importance across characters. Instead of a single focalised heroic figure, salience is balanced, visually enacting egalitarian relations. Cinderella is placed on the left (new/given opposition), while her stepsister and brother on the right dominate the theme of superficiality. High contrast in colours emphasises Cinderella's marginality.

As compositional elements, Cinderella's positioning to the left (given) and her labour represent the established, familiar narrative element, while her stepsister's and brother's positioning on the right (new) and their leisure activities represent the contrasting social information. The large window in the centre serves as an ideal space, suggesting possibility and escape. The floor level with cleaning implements represents the grounded reality. Salience and visual prominence are established through colour contrast, such as Cinderella's blue dress against warm interior tones; size relationships, with the large window dominating

the upper portion of the image; and positioning the window in the central placement creates focal hierarchy. Spatial separation between left and right areas, different activity zones (work vs. leisure), and architectural elements (window frame) creating internal boundaries constitute strong framing between social groups.

Image 2. Selected Illustration from *Cinderella's Riddle*

Yaşadıkları ülkenin başında ise bir prenses ve prens varmış. Anne ve babaları genç yaşta öldüğü için ülkeyi yönetmek onların görevi olmuş. Ancak ikisi de keçi gibi inatçı olduklarından hep kendi dedikleri olsun istiyor; bu yüzden de bir türlü sorunları çözemiyorlarmış.

Sonunda ülkenin ileri gelenlerinin canına tak etmiş, bu artık böyle gitmez demişler.

Böylece prenses ve prens ülkenin işlerini yönetmekte onlara yol gösterecek akıllı bir vezir bulmaya karar vermişler. Ülkenin dört bir yanına haberciler salmışlar, aklına güvenen tüm genç kadınları ve erkekleri, yarışıp hünerlerini gösterecekleri bir baloya davet etmişler.

(English Translation of the text: At the head of the country lived a princess and a prince. Since their parents had died at a young age, it became their duty to rule the land. However, both were as stubborn as goats and always wanted things to go their own way; therefore, they could never resolve problems properly. Eventually, the leading figures of the country had enough and said, "This cannot go on like this any longer." Thus, the princess and the prince decided to find a wise vizier who would guide them in governing the affairs of the kingdom. They sent messengers to every corner of the land, inviting all young women and men who trusted in their own wisdom to a ball where they would compete and demonstrate their talents.)

The second image is a royal announcement and meeting. In Image 2 the prince and princess are depicted at equal heights, suggesting shared responsibility. The silhouetted adults/people in the panel below represent societal pressure and outdated governance styles. The ideational focus here is a rejection of hierarchical patriarchy in favour of youth-led decision-making.

Table 4. Sample MAXQDA (see visual above):

Visual Element	Code	Interpretation
Princess pointing to Prince	Gender Role Shift	Indicates leadership competence
Adults in silhouette	Outdated Authority	Visual metaphor for obsolete tradition

Representational Analysis (Image 2):

The image presents multiple simultaneous actions. In the upper left, the prince and princess are quarrelling (action vectors from their gestures and mimics); in the upper right, there is a court scene with characters in discussion (conversational vectors), and royal heralds make proclamations. In the lower section, silhouetted figures represent the common people (reactive vectors). Primary actors such as royal heralds, court figures, and common people constitute the image. Positioning the royal court (upper) and common people (lower) as a setting and symbolic elements such as curtains, formal dress and architectural elements suggests hierarchy.

Non-traditional gender roles are highlighted by the narrative and conceptual processes this image presents. Characters are portrayed acting in ways that suggest competence and agency. Princess' pointing to Prince represents non-traditional power relations and indicates leadership competence. Adults in silhouette in the below panel of the image represent a visual metaphor for obsolete tradition.

Interactive Analysis (Image 2):

In the visual analysis of the contact patterns, the royal figures are portrayed as engaged in indirect forms of address, emphasising their responsibilities and social roles rather than establishing a direct connection with the viewer. In contrast, the silhouetted figures function as an anonymous collective, representing the broader population without drawing attention to individual identities. The viewer's position is constructed from an elevated perspective, allowing the audience to observe the unfolding scene from above and thus reinforcing a sense of overview and detachment from the depicted social dynamics.

In terms of social distance and perspective, the use of long-shot framing establishes a sense of public distance, positioning the scene as one that belongs to the collective social sphere rather than intimate interaction. The high-angle depiction of the lower figures reinforces existing hierarchies by visually situating them in a subordinate position, while the eye-level orientation with the royal court creates an impression of equal status between the viewer and the authority figures, thereby legitimising their elevated role.

The modality variations across different sections of the image further reinforce these dynamics. Court scenes are rendered with high modality using full colour, sharp detail, and elaborate textures, which lend them a sense of realism and authority. In contrast, the silhouetted figures are depicted with low modality, minimising their individual identities and instead representing the populace as a collective mass. A third layer, symbolic modality, emerges through architectural structures and costume details, which function less as literal depictions and more as markers of social status and hierarchy.

Compositional Analysis (Image 2):

From a compositional perspective, information value is distributed strategically. The top of the image conveys the "ideal", represented by royal authority and the proclamation of possibilities, while the bottom embodies the "real", reflecting the grounded experiences and responses of the common people. The left-to-right arrangement establishes a temporal flow, guiding the viewer's eye from the moment of announcement to its reception by the masses. The salience hierarchy also directs attention within the scene. The royal heralds, emphasised through their large scale, vibrant colour, and central positioning, occupy the primary level of salience. Secondary attention falls on the detailed rendering of the court scene, which reinforces its significance within the narrative. Tertiary salience is assigned to the silhouetted masses, whose visual presence is collective rather than individual, underscoring their subordinate role.

Finally, the framing strategies demonstrate multiple layers of separation and differentiation. Architectural features act as physical and symbolic boundaries between distinct social spaces, while differences in colour saturation and rendering style further distinguish class positions. A clear horizontal division separates the royal sphere, aligned with the ideal, from the common sphere, associated with the real, thereby reinforcing both the spatial and ideological distance between these groups.

Image 3 Selected Illustration from *Cinderella's Riddle*

The third image is the transformation scene. This scene at the end of the story constitutes the resolution scene. In the final scene, Cinderella demonstrates her intelligence by correctly answering the riddle that no one else could solve, after which she is offered the position of vizier. Whether she accepts this offer is deliberately left unresolved, allowing the conclusion of the story to remain open to the reader's interpretation.

Representational Analysis (Image 3):

The representational elements of the scene emphasise a magical transformation through distinct narrative processes. The central action vector is embodied by a vertical plant stem that rises through the middle of the composition, symbolising growth and transformation. Bilateral symmetry is achieved by placing two female figures on either side of this vector, suggesting a before-and-after sequence or parallel states of development. This dynamic is further reinforced by circular staging, where a round carpet frames the action and creates a contained space for the unfolding transformation.

The participants and symbolic elements within the scene support this visual narrative. On the right, Cinderella is shown in her working attire, wearing a simple blue dress while seated at a desk, embodying her current reality. On the left, she appears in an elegant dress, representing her transformed state. Magical elements, such as the growing plant, an ornate chandelier, and symbolic birds, reinforce the fantastical dimension of the event. Transformation markers—including the change in clothing, posture, and surrounding objects—underscore the shift between the two states of being.

The composition also conveys conceptual relations through an analytical structure. Individual components, such as costume, posture, and symbolic objects, operate as parts of a greater whole that together communicate the theme of transformation. Temporal progression is implied through the juxtaposition of the two figures, visually narrating change over time.

At the same time, symbolic classification emerges through the inclusion of magical elements—such as birds and decorative motifs—that signify supernatural intervention.

Interactive Analysis (Image 3):

From an interactive perspective, gaze and contact remain indirect. Both figures are absorbed in their respective activities and do not engage the viewer, reinforcing the sense that the audience occupies the position of an observer rather than an active participant. The internal focus of the characters enhances the perception of a private, unfolding event. Perspective and distance are established through a medium-long shot, which creates social distance yet maintains accessibility. An eye-level angle positions the viewer as equal to the transformation process, while a frontal perspective enables direct observation of the magical occurrence.

The modality construction combines realism and symbolism to reinforce meaning. Fantastical features, such as the magical plant, birds, and ornate decorative elements, provide high symbolic modality, while the architectural and furniture details ground the image in realism. The use of warm colour tones suggests positivity and highlights the beneficial nature of the transformation.

Compositional Analysis (Image 3):

Finally, the compositional architecture structures meaning through information value mapping, salience distribution, and framing mechanisms. The right side of the image presents the "Given"—Cinderella's established reality—while the left side introduces the "New", her transformed state and the possibilities it symbolises. The central plant functions as a mediator between these states, embodying the transformative process itself. The chandelier and lighting at the top represent the "Ideal", associated with aspiration and elevation, whereas the carpet at the bottom signifies the "Real", containing and grounding the event. Salience is organised hierarchically: the central plant dominates through verticality and symbolic weight, followed by the two female figures whose positioning underscores their importance, and finally, the environmental elements that complete the setting. Framing mechanisms subtly reinforce this structure, with the circular carpet delineating the transformation space, the vertical plant dividing left from right, and horizontal layers separating the grounded elements from those associated with aspiration.

The translation and cultural adaptation of the Cinderella's Riddle images in the *Egalitarian Tales* (2020) series can be effectively examined through Toury's framework of cultural semiotics. The Turkish text accompanying the visuals demonstrates a process of cultural translation in which linguistic norms maintain the overarching narrative structure

while simultaneously adapting cultural references to resonate with Turkish readers. Visual norms, in turn, are aligned with contemporary Turkish children's book conventions, emphasising vivid illustration styles that are accessible and engaging. At the cultural level, character representations combine universal fairy-tale motifs with culturally specific visual codes, producing a hybrid narrative that is both familiar and locally grounded.

The cultural positioning of the text and visuals reflects a clear ideological orientation. Class consciousness is made visible through structured visual hierarchies that reinforce social stratification, while gender roles are articulated through depictions of domestic labour and transformative moments of empowerment. These images simultaneously convey broader cultural values, such as the celebration of patience, virtue, and the promise of eventual reward. In this sense, the images serve not only as narrative elements but also as semiotic carriers of ideological meaning.

The semiotic code systems embedded in the visuals illustrate how meaning is constructed through multiple layers. Costume codes signify social status and stages of character development, while colour codes add symbolic nuance: blue is associated with virtue and humility, whereas warm tones are linked to comfort and transformation. Spatial codes establish relationships of power and temporality through vertical and horizontal arrangements, and architectural codes further demarcate interior and exterior spaces, symbolising social boundaries. Together, these codes create a culturally embedded semiotic network.

Within the cultural meaning systems, the Turkish cultural context shapes the organisation of domestic space, reflecting traditional household structures familiar to the audience. Visualisations of social hierarchy resonate with Turkish understandings of class dynamics, while the representation of magical transformation incorporates motifs that align with cultural belief systems surrounding destiny, morality, and reward.

An ideological analysis reveals that power relations are central to the imagery. Vertical hierarchies visually encode social stratification, while labour divisions distinguish those engaged in domestic work from those inhabiting leisurely or authoritative positions. Access to resources is depicted unequally, with the distribution of material culture reinforcing class divisions. These patterns support the naturalisation of social order within the visual narrative.

The images also function as tools for cultural values transmission, carrying a pedagogical dimension. Through their visual structure, they reinforce moral lessons about the virtues of patience and resilience, normalise hierarchical social relationships, and sustain

the notion of transformation as a reward for moral character. In this way, the images position young readers to internalise both ethical and social norms.

An integrated discussion of visual grammar and cultural semiotics demonstrates how the representational, interactive, and compositional features of the images operate within broader cultural systems. Representationally, the visuals construct a multimodal narrative that serves simultaneously as a universal fairy tale, a cultural artefact reflecting Turkish norms, and a pedagogical tool for transmitting values. Interactively, the viewer is positioned as an observer and moral witness, tasked with evaluating character behaviours while engaging with familiar cultural codes. Compositionally, the sequence of images follows a clear narrative arc: the establishment of social relationships and domestic reality, the complication introduced by external intervention and public announcement, and the resolution achieved through personal transformation.

Through this process, Toury's framework reveals the cultural semiotic integration at work. The Cinderella visuals adapt universal narrative patterns to the Turkish cultural context, preserving core moral lessons while embedding them within locally meaningful visual codes. This duality enables the text to maintain its universal fairy-tale appeal while operating as a culturally specific artefact.

Finally, the theoretical implications underscore the complementary contributions of Kress and van Leeuwen's visual grammar and Toury's cultural semiotics. Visual grammar illuminates how meaning is systematically constructed through representational, interactive, and compositional domains, highlighting multimodal integration and the social positioning of viewers. Cultural semiotics, on the other hand, reveals how ostensibly universal narratives are recontextualised through cultural translation, adapting to local values and serving ideological functions in cultural transmission. Together, these frameworks provide a comprehensive account of how images function as both aesthetic texts and cultural instruments.

Considering the focal points in the study, it can be said that visual strategies challenge traditional roles by portraying female characters in agentive positions, deploying artifacts that connote intellectual labour, and arranging compositions that distribute salience equally among genders; representational changes (new action types), interactive changes (gaze patterns), and compositional changes (shared salience) collectively indicate a semiotic shift from gendered scripts to egalitarian modelling, and the visuals perform a cultural negotiation: they retain narrative recognizability while adapting character roles and social relations to reflect local pedagogical aims and global egalitarian discourses (Toury, 1995; Lefevere, 1992) and multimodal picture books like *Egalitarian Tales* (2020) provide

educators with material to teach critical visual literacy and to introduce counter-stereotypical role models in early education.

3. Conclusion

This study demonstrates how Kress and van Leeuwen's Visual Grammar Theory, enhanced by Toury's Cultural Semiotics framework, provides comprehensive tools for understanding multimodal cultural texts. By analysing representational, interactive, and compositional metafunctions, the research shows how images can be purposefully designed to foster egalitarian identities and demonstrates that the rewritten *Cinderella's Riddle* in *Egalitarian Tales* (2020) uses multimodal visual grammar strategically to reframe gender relations. These findings underscore the importance of integrating visual literacy into curricula and of recognising translation-as-rewriting as a multimodal practice.

The study shows that the Cinderella images operate as complex semiotic systems that simultaneously:

1. Construct narrative meaning through systematic visual grammar
2. Position readers within specific cultural and ideological frameworks
3. Transmit cultural values through recognizable visual and textual codes
4. Adapt universal stories to cultural contexts

The integration of these theoretical approaches reveals the sophisticated ways visual texts function as both aesthetic objects and cultural instruments, mediating between universal human narratives and specific cultural meaning systems. The Turkish Cinderella illustrations exemplify how children's literature serves not merely as entertainment but as powerful vehicles for cultural transmission and social value construction.
Through systematic application of visual grammar analysis and cultural semiotic interpretation, we can understand how images work not just as illustrations but as complex meaning-making systems that shape cultural understanding and social positioning within specific communities.

The study is limited by its small purposive sample (three illustrations) from the *Cinderella's Riddle* storybook published within the *Egalitarian Tales (2020)* project. Future research could expand the corpus to include the entire series and employ reader-response methods with children to assess interpretive outcomes.

Disclosures

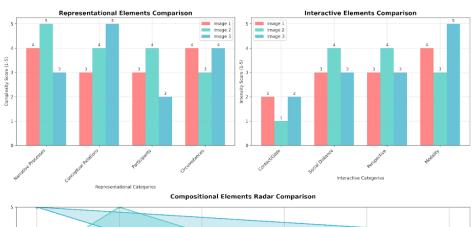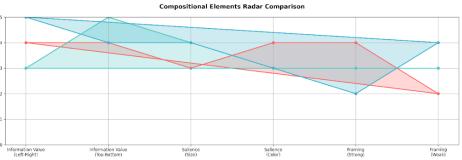No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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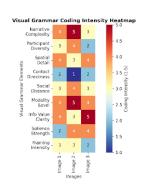
Appendices

Figure 1. Analysis

Representational Elements Comparison / Interactive Elements Comparison

Compositional Elements Radar Comparison

Visual Grammar Codes: Image 1 (Domestic Scene)

REPRESENTATIONAL	Code	Description
Narrative Process	ACT-DOM	Domestic action vectors
Participants	ACT-CIN	Cinderella as main actor
Participants	SEC-SIS	Stepsisters as secondary
Circumstances	LOC-INT	Interior domestic space
INTERACTIVE	Code	Description
Contact	IND-GAZ	Indirect gaze/address
Social Distance	MED-SHOT	Medium shot framing
Perspective	EYE-LEV	Eye-level angle
Modality	HIGH-MOD	High realistic modality
COMPOSITIONAL	Code	Description
Info Value	L-GIV-R-NEW	Left given, right new
Salience	COL-SAL	Color-based salience
Framing	STR-FRA	Strong spatial framing

Visual Grammar Codes: Image 2 (Royal Announcement)

REPRESENTATIONAL	Code	Description
Narrative Process	MULT-ACT	Multiple simultaneous actions
Participants	ROY-HER	Royal heralds as primary
Participants	COLL-PEO	Collective people silhouettes
Circumstances	HIER-SPA	Hierarchical spatial division
INTERACTIVE	Code	Description
Contact	ANON-COL	Anonymous collective gaze
Social Distance	LONG-SHOT	Long shot public distance
Perspective	HIGH-ANG	High angle on masses
Modality	DIFF-MOD	Differential modality levels
COMPOSITIONAL	Code	Description
Info Value	TOP-IDEAL	Top ideal, bottom real
Salience	SIZE-SAL	Size-based hierarchy
Framing	ARCH-FRA	Architectural framing

Visual Grammar Codes: Image 3 (Transformation Scene)

REPRESENTATIONAL	Code	Description
Narrative Process	TRANS-ACT	Transformation action
Participants	DUAL-CIN	Dual Cinderella states
Participants	MAG-ELE	Magical elements/helpers
Circumstances	CIRC-SPA	Circular contained space
INTERACTIVE	Code	Description
Contact	INT-FOC	Internal focus, indirect
Social Distance	MED-LONG	Medium-long shot
Perspective	FRONT-EYE	Frontal eye-level
Modality	SYM-HIGH	High symbolic modality
COMPOSITIONAL	Code	Description
Info Value	L-NOW-R-THEN	Left current, right transformed
Salience	CENT-SAL	Central vertical salience
Framing	CIRC-BOUND	Circular boundary framing

Visual Grammar Coding Intensity Heatmap

Analysis Summary
Representational Elements Comparison (Top Left)

- Image 2 (Royal Announcement) shows the highest complexity across all categories, particularly in narrative processes (5/5) and conceptual relations (4/5)
- Image 1 (Domestic Scene) demonstrates strong circumstantial detail (4/5) with moderate narrative complexity
- Image 3 (Transformation) excels in conceptual relations (5/5) but has simpler participant structures

Interactive Elements Comparison (Top Right)

- Image 3 (Transformation) achieves the highest modality score (5/5), indicating strong symbolic representation
- Image 2 uses anonymous collective gaze (1/5 contact) but employs long social distance (4/5) for authority
- Image 1 maintains medium engagement levels across all interactive categories

Compositional Elements Radar Chart (Centre)

- Image 1 shows strong left-right information value and robust framing
- Image 2 demonstrates clear top-bottom hierarchy with good size-based salience
- Image 3 exhibits the strongest left-right contrast (transformation narrative) but weaker framing

Visual Grammar Codes for Each Image
Image 1 (Domestic Scene) Codes:

- Representational: ACT-DOM (domestic action vectors), ACT-CIR (circumstantial actions)
- Interactive: IND-GAZ (indirect gaze/address), MED-SHOT (medium shot framing)
- Compositional: LEFT-GIVEN (left as given information), COL-SAL (color-based salience)

Image 2 (Royal Announcement) Codes:

- Representational: MULT-ACT (multiple simultaneous actions), ROY-HER (royal hierarchy)
- Interactive: ANON-COL (anonymous collective gaze), HIGH-ANG (high angle on masses)
- Compositional: TOP-IDEAL (top ideal, bottom real), SIZE-SAL (size-based hierarchy)

Image 3 (Transformation) Codes:

- Representational: TRANS-ACT (transformation action), DUAL-CIN (dual Cinderella states)
- Interactive: INT-FOC (internal focus), SYM-HIGH (high symbolic modality)
- Compositional: L-NOW-R-THEN (left current, right transformed), CIRC-BOUND (circular boundary)

Coding Intensity Heatmap (Bottom Right)

The heatmap reveals distinct patterns:

- Image 2 shows highest intensity in social distance and modality levels
- Image 3 excels in information value clarity and symbolic representation
- Image 1 maintains consistent moderate-to-high coding across most elements

Key Insights

1. Narrative Complexity: Image 2 demonstrates the most complex multi-layered storytelling
2. Symbolic Power: Image 3 achieves the highest symbolic modality through transformation imagery
3. Compositional Strategy: Each image employs distinct information value systems – given/new, ideal/real, and before/after
4. Interactive Positioning: The images create different viewer relationships – intimate domestic, authoritative public, and transformative magical

This analysis provides a systematic framework for understanding how visual elements work together to create meaning according to Kress and van Leeuwen's Visual Grammar Theory.

Fictional Teacher Archetypes in Language Teacher Education: Hogwarts as a Context for Reflection

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Abstract

This study explores the use of fictional teacher archetypes as a starting point for reflection on professional identity development during language teacher education. Drawing on the application of Jungian depth psychology in education, it suggests how archetypes, which are the universal but dynamic patterns embedded in the human psyche, can offer metaphorical lenses through which language teachers can examine their beliefs, values and classroom practices. The study uses the Harry Potter film series as a shared cultural text, focusing on five teachers – Snape, Trelawney, Lockhart, Lupin, and Umbridge, whose pedagogical styles exemplify diverse teacher archetypes. Through these archetypes, the study highlights tensions between authority and autonomy, instructional clarity, and the interaction of personal and professional identity. It argues that framing archetypal reflection on fictional teachers within established educational theories can foster an informed, innovative approach to reflection on developing teacher identity.

Keywords: archetypal analysis, teacher archetypes, reflective language teacher education, Hogwarts, teachers in popular culture

1. Introduction

Archetypes are a unique aspect of Jung's theory of the human psyche, now referred to as depth psychology (e.g., Boscaljon, 2025; Dobson, 2009; Mayes, 2016; Mayes, 2020). Unlike behavioural and social psychology, which focus on directly observable phenomena and take self-report at face value, depth psychology aims to uncover and integrate hidden aspects of the psyche to achieve greater self-awareness and understanding. Jung proposed a three-part model to explain the human psyche. The first is the 'ego', or the conscious mind; the second is the 'personal unconscious', which comprises an individual's repressed or forgotten memories; the third is the 'collective unconscious', a deeper layer inherited and shared by all humans (Campbell, 2004). In this third part lies the archetype—an 'exemplary prototype or

model' that represents a pattern of behaviour formed by clusters of emotional issues and dynamics drawn from the past, present, and even the future (Küpers, 2020, p. 181).

Archetypes may be events (e.g., birth, death), figures (e.g., mother, father, hero/heroine, trickster), symbols (e.g., sun, moon), .or motifs (e.g., the journey, Creation). A common theme is that of the hero's journey to individuation, or self-realisation, with the guidance of the wise elder, for example, and hindrance from the trickster (Mayes, 2020). As such, archetypes recur in religious art, mythology, literature, across all human cultures and all times. Pertinent to the current study, Mayes underlined that archetypes also occur in artefacts of modern popular culture, such as film, theatre and video games. Despite their diverse contexts, these forms endure because they address enduring patterns of conflict, suffering, and resolution that characterise the human condition.

In the field of psychoanalysis, Jung's theory of archetypes as innate, predetermined psychological structures has been subject to criticism over the past century. For example, scholars such as Merchant (2009) and Roesler (2012) argue that archetypes may be constructed developmentally, influenced by early relationships, narrative traditions, and transmission through cultural and social interactions. Nevertheless, it is beyond the scope of the current paper and the author's expertise to develop this line of argument further.

In the field of education, however, scholars have advocated for the use of archetypes in teacher education as a means of reflection on identity, values, and relational dynamics. For example, Dobson (2009) suggests that, despite misconceptions regarding Jungian archetypes, they have value as a tool for exploring the unconscious mind and promoting personal and professional growth. In a similar vein, Mayes (2016, 2020) acknowledges the limitations and biases of the archetypes but argues that they can be employed to address the emotional and symbolic depths of teaching. Thus, in the current study, I view archetypes as metaphorical lenses through which pre-service language teachers can reflect on their developing teacher identity and classroom practices.

Given the arguments outlined above that archetypes are constructed within and recur in cultural texts over time (Boscaljon, 2025; Mayes, 2020), and that archetypal reflection is a viable tool for teacher professional development (Dobson, 2009; Mayes, 2016); it would be reasonable to use archetypes of teachers represented in fictional narratives in popular culture as a context for reflection. Indeed, such fictional narratives have recently been recognised as valuable resources for teacher education (e.g., Güngör & Yeşilbursa, 2025; Panutsos Rovan & Wehler, 2020; Shaffer, 2017).

With regard to the specific context of the current study, Panutsos Rovan and Wehler (2020) emphasise that in the *Harry Potter* series, Rowling made use of many archetypal

teachers from popular culture. However, by offering more insight into their classroom practices, she uses these archetypes "as an entry point to help readers understand that teachers and teaching go beyond what we see in the classroom and that what we do so see in the classroom is informed by what goes beyond those walls" (pp. 3-4). In other words, although teaching is a result of education and expertise, it is also shaped by character, experience, and the relationships that are formed. In this way, examining the teachers and teaching at Hogwarts provides us with a unique perspective from which teachers can reflect on their own teaching practices (see Güngör & Yeşilbursa, 2025 for more details).

In light of the research outlined above, this paper presents an archetypal profile of a group of Hogwarts teachers that can be used as a reflective lens in language teacher education. Specifically, the analysis focuses on Snape, Trelawney, Lockhart, Lupin, and Umbridge, whose pedagogical practices *inside the classroom* we are able to observe (Güngör & Yeşilbursa, 2025) and therefore gain 'a more nuanced understanding of their characters' (Panutsos Rovan & Wehler, 2020, p. 3). In the following sections, a conceptual framework is presented to situate the study within the existing literature on archetypal reflection and fictional narratives. Second, a description is provided of the educational setting, symbolic value, and diverse pedagogical styles of Hogwarts. This is followed by the archetypal profiles of the selected cohort of Hogwarts teachers according to Mayes' (2016, 2020) teacher archetypes. The final section deals with how these teacher archetypes can be used in language teacher education.

2. Conceptual Framework

Dobson (2009) argues that integrating depth psychology into educational psychology can provide 'a holistic and integrated perspective of the psyche that complements the perspectives more readily available in educational psychology' (p. 151). Challenging the reductionist view held by contemporary educational systems of intelligence as a measurable cognitive ability, Mayes (2016) highlights that integrating a Jungian emphasis on the poetic and emotional aspects of human experience makes it possible to 'resist [this] quantification of the spirit and bring us to a higher and brighter view of education' (p.42). This approach is in alignment with the current international (e.g., OECD, 2024) and local trends in education (Ministry of National Education, 2025) to focus on the social and emotional aspects of learning, including language learning.

2.1. Archetype

At this point, it would be pertinent to define and describe the general concept of archetype in more detail before continuing to discuss the more specific concept of teacher archetypes. Mayes (2020) describes archetypes as the elements of the collective unconscious, nodes of energy crystallised into structures that are embedded in humans in ways that facilitate

engagement with existence. Archetypes are paradoxical at multiple levels. First, they possess both *positive* and *negative* aspects, embodying opposing forces. Second, while they are *universal* and shared across cultures and time, they are also experienced and expressed *uniquely* by individuals. Third, they are *primal* in that they represent deeply fundamental human experiences, but at the same time, they *transcend* ordinary consciousness by connecting individuals to a universal reality. Fourth, they influence our thoughts, feelings, and behaviours, yet they cannot be understood by the conscious mind. Finally, archetypes serve as a mediator between the *analytical* and *emotional* faculties of consciousness.

While we can analyse and categorise with the former, the latter helps us make deeper, emotional connections with the archetype. Some core Jungian archetypes include the Hero, the Saviour, and the Warrior (see, e.g., Dobson, 2009). Nevertheless, Mayes (2016, 2020) emphasises that these archetypes are not fixed, but dynamic and subject to subjective interpretation.

2.2. Teacher Archetypes

Mayes (2016) presents teaching and learning as essentially archetypal activities. The classroom can be transformed into a *temenos*, or sacred space, where the teacher, acting as a wise elder or guide, facilitates the student's own hero's journey toward individuation.

Researchers have identified many different teacher archetypes. Dobson (2009) referred to the four archetypes of maturity in the Royal, the Warrior, the Magician, and the Lover, emphasising their 'bi-polar shadows' (p. 149) as tools for reflection. Mayes (2016) takes a more psychospiritual approach when he suggests that "[s]chooling exists now, more than ever, in the stranglehold of a commodity-obsessed fixation on technology and in the service of the 'the bottom line.' In such an archetypally unfriendly, even hostile, environment, the heart, soul, and mind are being driven out of education" (p.59). In this context, He refers specifically to the *puer/puella* archetype of the (male/female) students, the teacher as a *wise elder*, *trickster*, and grumpy *old man*. However, as mentioned earlier, there are no fixed archetypes that we should try to impose on ourselves as teachers during reflection.

2.3. Reflective Practice

Reflective practice is an approach to teacher development that has been embraced by the English Language Teaching community for over two decades. Deliberate contemplation of one's classroom practices before, during, and after teaching helps language teachers make informed choices about their teaching (see, e.g., Farrell & Farrell, 2024, for an overview of recent research). *Archetypal reflection*, as presented by Dobson (2009) and Mayes (2016, 2020), is a powerful tool for teacher professional development. Engaging with archetypal images can foster self-reflection and help teachers develop their professional identities.

Archetypes can help teachers to understand their own unconscious motivations and behaviours, and thus enable them to address challenges they may face on their professional journey.

Unsurprisingly, most research on teacher identity has been conducted in real school environments (e.g., Wu, 2023; Yang & Forbes, 2025; Zhang, 2025). However, Falsafi (2010) introduced the concept of *imagined contexts* from literature, film, and other media, which allow teachers to reflect on the construction of their identities outside the constraints of the real workplace. This concept is similar to the *commonplaces* described by Caviglia and Delfino (2009), which are spaces where teachers can engage with narratives and symbols that may reinforce or challenge their pedagogical beliefs. Thus, it would be reasonable to make use of the extensive corpus of teaching practices offered by fictional works in the professional education and development of teachers. The current study focuses on one particular work: the Harry Potter film series. The following section presents a rationale for this choice.

2.4. Hogwarts as a Pedagogical Mirror for Archetypal Reflection

The Harry Potter film series offers a shared cultural text that contains rich portrayals of diverse teachers, each with complex identities, within the same school setting (Shaffer, 2017; Wong, 2014). The continuity of characters throughout the series allows for an examination of the development of both the students and their relationships with teachers over time. As such, an extensive body of research on the pedagogy of Harry Potter has become established over the past two decades (e.g., Panutsos Rovan & Wehler, 2020). The current study focuses on the film series rather than the books, because it provides the visual and audial evidence required for observation of teaching.

The series provides a unique commonplace (Caviglia & Delfino, 2009; Thomas, 2018) where teachers can reflect on their beliefs about teaching and their emergent teacher identities (e.g., Güngör & Yeşilbursa, 2025). Viewing Hogwarts teachers through an archetypal lens allows preservice teachers to explore the symbolic dimensions of teaching beyond surface-level traits. An analysis of teachers as embodiments of archetypes can promote critical reflection on pedagogical values, relational dynamics, and professional aspirations. Thus, by bridging popular culture and teacher identity development, fictional characters become catalysts for reflective dialogue. The following section presents an archetypal analysis of selected teachers.

2.4.1. Archetypal Analysis of Selected Hogwarts Teachers

Drawing on Mayes' (2020) archetypes of teachers, this section will present the profiles of the five prominent Hogwarts teachers that were included in collaborative reflection activities with pre-service EFL teachers (Güngör & Yeşilbursa, 2025). The suggested archetypes of each teacher are presented, with a description of their key traits and pedagogical styles.

Table 1.

Teacher	Dominant Archetype(s)	Key Traits	Teaching Style
Snape	Shadow, Threshold Guardian, Wounded Healer	Harsh, secretive, morally complex	Rigour through adversity, indirect mentorship
Trelawney	Oracle	Intuitive, mystical, disconnected from reality	Abstract, symbolic, ritualistic
Lockhart	Trickster	Vain, deceptive, self-promoting	Performance-driven, superficial
Lupin	Wise Mentor, Wounded Healer	Empathetic, humble, practical	Student-centred, experiential, confidence-building
Umbridge	Tyrant	Authoritarian, rigid, obsessed with control	Rote-based, obedience-focused, anti-critical thinking

Selected Hogwarts teachers' dominant archetypes, key traits and pedagogical styles.

2.4.1.1.   Severus Snape

Snape, the Potions Master, is a complicated, paradoxical character (Applebaum, 2008). As such, he exhibits a complex interplay of several archetypes: the Shadow, Threshold Guardian, and Wounded Healer (Campbell, 2004; Jung, 1959). The Shadow represents a darker, hidden or repressed aspect of the human psyche. Snape can be thought of the Shadow of Dumbledore's Wise Old Man(e.g., Küpers, 2020) archetype because he does not appear to be supportive of his students' learning. In fact, he deliberately sets tasks of high cognitive demand, and he is disdainful, harsh, and sarcastic to those who do not succeed. For example, in his very first Potions class in Harry's first year at Hogwarts in Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone, (hereafter PS, timestamp 00:52:00) (Columbus, 2001), he deliberately asks Harry challenging questions, emphasising his lack of knowledge and thus belittling him in front of the class. When Neville Longbottom's experiment fails, he patronises him by doubting his intelligence and skills (Moore, 2020).

We see his Threshold Guardian aspect in his control of access to advanced magical knowledge, including potions and Defence Against the Dark Arts. For example, in the Goblet of Fire (hereafter, GoF, Newell, 2005), Harry needs to use the magical herb gillyweed to breathe underwater for the Second Task of the Triwizard Tournament. Because of their apparently antagonistic relationship, Harry cannot simply ask Snape for it. Instead, he has to resort to his own resourcefulness to obtain it without Snape noticing.

Finally, his Wounded Healer side becomes clear as the series unfolds. We learn that Snape is aloof from the rest of the Hogwarts staff due to his personal trauma. He was bullied at the hands of Harry's father during his school years, and subsequently isolated himself

socially. He also suffered from unrequited love for Harry's mother, Lily, when they were children. Thus, he is deeply motivated to protect the son of the woman he loves, despite hating his father. However, he has to keep it to himself, hence his outward hostility toward Harry (Yates, 2011, 1:46:00).

Snape's pedagogical style is characterised by a teacher-centred, authoritarian approach that leads to a high-pressure learning environment. His assignments, which are highly challenging, require precision and discipline, and mastery is emphasised at the expense of creativity. There are several implications that we can draw from Snape's pedagogical style. First, his practices highlight the tension between academic rigour and psychological harm . Although his high expectations may foster resilience, rigour and resourcefulness in some students (e.g., Draco Malfoy), there is a risk of alienating others and undermining their intrinsic motivation (e.g., Neville in the first Potions lesson, Columbus, 2001). His sarcastic and adversarial manner, coupled with favouritism, causes inequities in opportunities for learning. Some scholars, such as Appelbaum (2008), have argued that Snape offers a truly liberating apprenticeship in that, paradoxically for a teacher, he deliberately plans for Harry to disobey him, while making him feel that he was making his own decisions. Nevertheless, his covert protection and deliberate misleading of Harry raise ethical complexities, and the debate of whether the ends justify the means in education (see, e.g., Cliffe & Solvason, 2022; Mahrik, 2017).

2.4.1.2. Sybill Trelawney

Although Trelawney is not one of the most prominent teachers, her classroom practices, as observed, for example in the first Divination lesson in The Prisoner of Azkaban (hereafter, PoA) (Cuarón, 2004) (00:43:00) provide valuable opportunities for reflection on teaching. Trelawney embodies the Oracle archetype; an intuitive figure associated with esoteric wisdom and prophecy. She teaches Divination, and her appearance and environment, with crystal balls and incense, match her subject matter, although they emphasise her identity as a seer rather than a conventional teacher (Barlow & Loda, 2020). The Oracle is disconnected from reality, as reflected in Trelawney living and teaching in a room in the North Tower of Hogwarts, which is isolated from the other teaching areas of the school. Students must go to her, and it is not an easy journey to get there. This physical distance could also represent the isolation of Divination as a less practically useful course compared to other courses, such as Potions and Defence Against the Dark Arts. Interestingly, Hermione Granger, the archetypal hard-working student who excels academically, regards Divination with disdain (Maynard, 2020).

In the first Divination lesson in PoA (Cuarón, 2004), we observe that Trelawney's pedagogical style is student-centred. She has her students sitting around tables, ready to read

tea leaves, at the beginning of their first Tasseomancy (reading teacups) lesson. However, her erratic movements and exaggerated intonation, coupled with sporadic questioning techniques and random prophecies of doom (e.g., 'The Grim' in Ron's tea leaves) serve to confuse students at best, and frighten them at worst. She appears to encourage creative thought and imagination, but the lack of structure to her instruction means that she does not provide the necessary scaffolding for learning, thus rendering her as an example of an incompetent teacher (Barlow & Loda, 2020; Maynard, 2020).

Trelawney's pedagogical practice invites us to reflect on teacher professional identity (e.g., Güngör & Yeşilbursa, 2025). Given her appearance and her classroom decor, it would appear that her role as a mystic dominates that of an educator. Although she sets up hands-on activities and encourages the students to broaden their minds and use their imagination, she does not scaffold this with the necessary instruction or promote critical inquiry. In short, effective pedagogy incorporates imagination with structured guidance toward clear goals.

2.4.1.3.   Gilderoy Lockhart

Lockhart is the incarnation of the Trickster, or False Hero. He thrives on illusion and self-promotion, hiding behind his superficial charm to cover his lack of mastery in magic and teaching. His reputation has been built on lies – his books were commissioned and relate heroic adventures and battles that he has appropriated from other people. His short-lived authority in the classroom stems from celebrity rather than pedagogical knowledge and skills (Joplin, 2020). His story arc in the Chamber of Secrets (hereafter, CoS) (Columbus, 2002), which culminates in him putting students in danger to save himself, the loss of his memory, and subsequent internment in a hospital, can be interpreted as a warning against the conflict between charisma and credibility in school settings.

At the beginning of his first Defence Against the Dark Arts lesson in CoS (Columbus, 2002, 00:27:30), we observe that he enters the classroom, which he has decorated with self-portraits, walking down the stairs in the manner of a celebrity, praising his own achievements. He is dressed in expensive-looking, luxurious clothes, which appear to be more expensive than a teacher's salary would allow. Although he attracts the students' attention with his dramatics, his potentially practical hands-on activity with Cornish pixies turns into a disaster because he fails to provide the students with the necessary instruction and skills to succeed. He quickly loses control of the pixies and his wand, which symbolises his incompetence as a wizard, and the students are left to their own resources. Neville Longbottom ends up hanging from the chandelier by his cloak, which is a serious breach of safety, and Hermione uses her own skills to round up the pixies and return them to the cage. Essentially, the activity appears to have

been completed, but with the students' own initiative rather than the pedagogical guidance of Lockhart (Tinklenberg, 2020).

Lockhart's classroom practices, or lack thereof, underscore the dangers of celebrity pedagogy, where teaching is more focused on performance than instruction, what Tinklenberg (2020, p. 96) refers to as *edutainment*. Initially, students are drawn to his fame and the stories of his bravery, but they soon lose confidence in him when they witness both his magical and pedagogical ineptitude. Paradoxically, his incompetence can spark critical scepticism in the learners, as they realise the gap between appearances and reality. As Dumbledore said to McGonagall when she asked him, he had employed Lockhart, he replied, "There is plenty to be learned even from a bad teacher: what not to do, how not to be" (Rowling, 2015). However, the lack of meaningful instruction can lead to disengagement and trivialisation of the subject matter.

In summary, the archetypal figure of Lockhart highlights the ethical issue of authenticity in teaching. Although enthusiasm and charisma can enhance learning, they are meaningless without pedagogical expertise and integrity. Lockhart invites us to reflect on the performative aspect of teaching, and the potential harm that can arise when image overtakes expertise.

2.4.1.4.   Remus Lupin

Lupin embodies the Wise Mentor archetype (Küpers, 2020), while displaying elements of the Wounded Healer. His wisdom arises from his lived experiences; he was bitten by a werewolf as a child in a revenge attack on his father, and subsequently contracted lycanthropy, a permanent affliction that results in his transformation into a werewolf every full moon. This is, unsurprisingly, a considerable source of suffering for Lupin. It is this personal suffering that has cultivated in him a strong sense of empathy, which translates into humility and inclusivity in his teaching approach.

His first Defence Against the Dark Arts lesson with Harry's class in PoA (Cuarón, 2004, 00:32:40) is in marked contrast to that of Lockhart's two years previously (Columbus, 2002). At the beginning of the scene, Lupin is already present in the class. He is of a humble appearance, wearing an old suit in earth tones. The students are standing up, facing an old wardrobe, which is shaking. Lupin elicits a series of questions from the students about what might be in their wardrobes, praising their responses.

Together, the students and Lupin determine that the creature is a boggart, a shape-shifting entity that assumes the form of the observer's greatest fear, but can be transformed into something amusing by a simple mind spell. Lupin breaks the spell down into its components, demonstrating the incantation in chorus with the class. The more difficult

component, facing one's fear and imagining something humorous, Lupin demonstrates with Neville Longbottom. Neville completes the spell successfully with Lupin's close guidance, and this is the first time that Neville proves that he is a capable wizard (Tinklenberg, 2020).

The students line up and take turns practising the spell, with Lupin observing carefully from the side. When Harry comes to take his turn, Lupin is extra vigilant. The boggart turns into a dementor, a soul-sucking creature, a group of whom are currently deployed in the school for supposedly defensive purposes. Harry appears to be mesmerised in front of the dementor, unable to think of anything humorous. Lupin jumps into the rescue, the boggart turns into a full moon, and thus puts himself in jeopardy by potentially revealing his lycanthropy to a class full of students. However, he casts the spell skilfully, and the moon turns into a balloon, which he is able to shut back in the wardrobe quickly and safely (Cuarón, 2004).

Lupin's pedagogy nurtures intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy in his students. He scaffolds his tasks, praises effort, and fosters learning without resorting to fear or humiliation . He is also transparent about his own limitations, and thereby reframes teacher vulnerability as a strength rather than a weakness (Fitzsimmons & Lucchi, 2020). Finally, he models empathy in his guidance of Neville, thereby contributing to the students' social and emotional development. As such, Lupin embodies humanistic learning. By integrating rigour and relational care, he demonstrates that effective teaching is more than technical competence – it requires ethical and affective competence. As Joplin (2020) underlines, "Lupin takes pleasure in the act or teaching by engaging with his students as people and fellow magic-users, rather than simply as vessels for knowledge" (p. 80). Thus, Lupin's teaching style can be considered as a model of student-centred active learning (Tinklenberg, 2020).

2.4.1.5.   Dolores Umbridge

Umbridge represents the Tyrant (Jung, 1959; Mayes, 2016, 2020), embodying the authoritarian control, rigid conformity, and institutional oppression of this archetype. She is appointed as Headteacher of Hogwarts by the Ministry of Magic in The Order of the Phoenix (hereafter, OotP) (Yates, 2007), following the death of a student in the previous year and the consequent removal of Dumbledore from his position (Newell, 2005). Thus, she comes to the school as a representative of politics rather than pedagogy. Indeed, she is appointed with the ulterior motive of preventing students from acquiring new skills and developing existing ones, thereby rendering them helpless in the final battle between good and evil. She exerts her authority through prohibition, promoting theoretical over practical teaching, sacking teachers whom she perceives as a threat to her goal, and employing draconian punishment methods against those who disobey her. Through these actions, she succeeds in exacerbating the rivalry

between the Houses of Gryffindor and Slytherin to dangerous proportions (see, e.g. Johnson & Niekerk, 2020).

We can observe her classroom teaching approach in her first Defence Against the Dark Arts lesson in OotP (Yates, 2007). The students are now in their fifth year at Hogwarts, and they have encountered several extremely adverse events that have enabled them to display their advanced magical skills. However, this is also the exam year, during which the students will prepare for the O.W.L. (Ordinary Wizarding Level) exams. These exams also have symbolic relevance in that they reinforce the hierarchical control over access to advanced knowledge and skills. They serve as a threshold test, acting as a bridge that students must cross to attain further wisdom. In this way, Umbridge is also a Gatekeeper, as it is she who will control what the students will learn in the following academic year, and therefore, whether they will cross the threshold.

At the beginning of the lesson (Yates, 2007, 00:32:20), the students are playing with a magical origami bird they have made, showing that they have mastered skills and can play creatively with them. Umbridge's entrance is marked by the incineration of the paper bird, and it is clear from the outset that Umbridge has no time for practical magic, creativity, or play. She draws the students' attention to the upcoming O.W.L. exams and states expressively that the class will be following a strictly theoretical programme to help them pass their exams. Those who work hard will be rewarded, and those who fail will suffer severe consequences. She then distributes a coursebook in a very orderly manner, which is clearly below the students' current proficiency level. When confronted by the students' protestations, she reacts with derision, in the case of Hermione, and with corporal punishment, in the case of Harry. Thus, Umbridge weaponizes education, reducing it to compliance rather than inquiry (Maynard, 2020).

Umbridge's pedagogical approach exemplifies the dangers of authoritarian education, in which knowledge is used as a means of control rather than empowerment. She prevents the students from active engagement and thereby undermines their critical thinking skills and practical competence. However, her prohibitive approach encourages some of the students to form a covert, counter-learning group under the leadership of Harry (Dumbledore's Army), in which they engage in peer learning to teach themselves the skills they need to protect themselves. Thus, just as Lockhart inadvertently fostered critical thinking skills in his students through his incompetence, Umbridge indirectly encourages grassroots emancipatory learning by demonstrating its complete opposite (Panutsos Rovan, 2020).

Through the Tyrant archetype, Umbridge acts as a warning against excessive bureaucratic involvement in education. Her behaviour, both inside and outside the classroom, highlights the ethical importance of protecting learner autonomy and fostering dialogic

pedagogy. Through her example, we can reflect on educational policies that prioritise standardisation over creativity, equity, and participation.

3. Reflective Applications in Language Teacher Education

To scaffold disciplined reflection on the teaching practices of the Hogwarts cohort and to connect with real-life classroom experiences of language teachers, three dimensions can be discussed to make connections with filmic observations and established theories of learning. These dimensions are: Authority and classroom climate; instructional clarity, student safety, and contingency; and professional beliefs, identity, and equity.

The selected Hogwarts cohort exhibits diverse models of teacher authority, ranging from strict institutional control (e.g., Umbridge) and authoritarian rigidity (e.g., Snape) to more relational and supportive stances (e.g., Lupin). There are also examples of a lack of pedagogical authority (e.g., Trelawney), and of both content and pedagogical authority (e.g., Lockhart). Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory suggests that teachers' behaviours mediate students' self-efficacy and engagement. As such, the affective tone set at the beginning of a lesson can facilitate or hinder learning opportunities. Reflective prompts could include: "How do I assert my teacher authority at the beginning of lessons through my positioning in the classroom, posture, and my voice quality?" and "How does my embodied authority balance psychological safety and academic challenge?". In this way, teachers can reflect on what teacher authority means and entails, and what kind of classroom atmosphere they create through their unique authoritative stance.

The scenes of Lockhart's and Lupin's first lessons provide sharp contrasts in clarity of instructions, inclusivity and risk management (Yeşilbursa, 2020). Scrivener (2012) emphasises the importance of task framing, sequencing and demonstration as keys to effective classroom management. Lockhart clearly flouts all of Scrivener's suggestions, resulting in the compromise of Neville's safety. Lupin, on the other hand, demonstrates textbook-perfect ability to set up and manage a classroom activity, and to divert a potentially dangerous situation. Reflection on these two scenes can promote teachers' awareness of the clarity of their instructions, guided by the prompts "Are my instructions clear, chunked, and checked?" and "What contingencies do I plan for?".

Finally, each teacher's pedagogy is inseparable from their beliefs about content, teaching and learning (Thomas et al., 2018). Snape's aptitude essentialism, Trelawney's dominant fortune-teller identity, Lockhart's performative approach, Lupin's care-centred stance, and Umbridge's bureaucratic tyranny are clear examples of how personal identity and values influence pedagogical decisions. Reflection on one's own teaching philosophy can shed light on the implications for equity in the classroom (e.g., whose participation is encouraged,

whose errors are tolerated, or vice versa) . Reflective prompts include "Which beliefs about ability and discipline surface in my teaching?" and "How do my practices encourage students to think, speak, and succeed?" (see Güngör & Yeşilbursa, 2025, for more details about the reflective observation activities).

4. Conclusion

This article has explored how fictional teacher archetypes, specifically Hogwarts' diverse teaching staff, can serve as powerful reflective tools in language teacher education. By analysing the archetypal profiles of teachers such as Snape, Trelawney, Lockhart, Lupin, and Umbridge, it was shown how their individual pedagogical styles, values, and classroom dynamics present an opportunity for teachers to examine their own beliefs and practices. The use of archetypes, grounded in Jungian depth psychology, allows teachers to go beyond surface-level observations and engage with the deeper emotional and symbolic dimensions of teaching.

Reflecting on fictional narratives, such as the Harry Potter series, provides a unique and imaginative context for teacher development. It encourages critical self-reflection, fosters empathy, and highlights the ethical complexities inherent in teaching. By bridging popular culture with real-world classroom challenges, archetypal analysis can support reflective practice and the development of more self-aware and equitable teachers.

In conclusion, imaginative reflection through fictional archetypes can inspire teachers to reimagine their professional identities and pedagogical approaches. Future research and classroom applications may further explore how these methods can be integrated into teacher education and development programmes, supporting ongoing development and innovation in language education.

Disclosures

No human participants were recruited, observed, or surveyed for this study, and no participant data were collected, reported, or analysed. Consequently, institutional ethics approval was not required.

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