IMAGE: A MAP OF THE STARS OF THE ORION CONSTELLATION

Print ISSN: 2515-5784 Online ISSN: 2515-5792

JournalPreview

London Journal of Research in Humanities & Social Science

Volume 25 | Issue 15 | Compilation 1.0

Great Britain Journals Press

WWW.JOURNALSPRESS.COM

Journal Content
In this Issue

Great Britain Journals Press

The History of the Anomalous Verb to be, from Old to Modern English

Rogério Cardoso

Federal University of Amazonas

ABSTRACT

This article aims to describe the intricate history of the verb to be, focusing on its abundant inflection irregularities, from Old to Modern English. As any other research on historical linguistics, this article's main goal is not only to point diachronic changes within the language, but also to explain how and why they happened, relying for such purpose on reputed theorists like Campbell (2013) and Bybee (2015), in addition to historical linguists whose works deal specifically with the development of the English language, such as Algeo (2010), Hogg & Fulk (2011), Ringe & Taylor (2014), among others. From a methodological point of view, this text displays each verbal tense on synoptic tables containing inflections from Old, Middle and Modern English, followed by several explanatory comments in order to clarify certain phonetic or morphologic phenomena. In short, one can say that the numerous irregularities found throughout the conjugation of the verb to be derive from the intermixing of two Old English verbs, bēon and wesan, which in turn were already irregular themselves.

Keywords: historical linguistics, old english, irregular verbs.

Classification: LCC Code: PE1075

Language: English

Great Britain Journals Press

LJP Copyright ID: 573341
Print ISSN: 2515-5784
Online ISSN: 2515-5792

London Journal of Research in Humanities & Social Science

Volume 25 | Issue 15 | Compilation 1.0

The History of the Anomalous Verb to be, from Old to Modern English

Rogério Cardoso

ABSTRACT

This article aims to describe the intricate history of the verb to be, focusing on its abundant inflection irregularities, from Old to Modern English. As any other research on historical linguistics, this article's main goal is not only to point diachronic changes within the language, but also to explain how and why they happened, relying for such purpose on reputed theorists like Campbell (2013) and Bybee (2015), in addition to historical linguists whose works deal specifically with the development of the English language, such as Algeo (2010), Hogg & Fulk (2011), Ringe & Taylor (2014), among others. From a methodological point of view, this text displays each verbal tense on synoptic tables containing inflections from Old, Middle and Modern English, followed by several explanatory comments in order to clarify certain phonetic or morphologic phenomena. In short, one can say that the numerous irregularities found throughout the conjugation of the verb to be derive from the intermixing of two Old English verbs, bēon and wesan, which in turn were already irregular themselves.

Keywords: historical linguistics, old english, irregular verbs.

Author: Graduated in Portuguese Letters at the Federal University of Amazonas (UFAM), having earned a master and a doctoral degree from the University of São Paulo (USP).

I. INTRODUCTION

Why are there so many irregular verbs in English and in other languages around the world? Who or what made them so irregular? These are quite legitimate questions that many young or even adult students usually make themselves while struggling to memorize exhaustive lists of irregular verbs. Although legitimate, this is the kind of question to which very few teachers from elementary or language schools could give a satisfactory answer, since it requires a more specific background on historical linguistics. At first glance, one could explain that these verbs are what they are simply because the languages evolved this way or, even worse, because grammarians and writers would have arbitrarily decided to impose it. However, the former explanation is no more than an oversimplified vision on the issue, whereas the latter is an obvious misconception about it, since irregular verbs were already in use centuries prior to the publication of William Bullokar's pioneer *Pamphlet for Grammar* (1586), regarded as the first English grammar ever (Auroux, 1992, p. 112).

Fortunately, modern-day students who are at least acquainted with the basics of linguistics have now access to a wide range of theoretical works on the historical branch of the discipline and on the history of the English language itself, giving them enough background to understand how and why languages change over the centuries. For such a purpose, two main theorists were chosen: Campbell (2013) and Bybee (2015), who bring us accessible overviews on the major issues of historical linguistics, with plenty of explanatory examples. But, in order to gather specific information on the development of the verb *to be* and certain grammatical features, the chosen authors were Algeo (2010), Hogg & Fulk (2011), Ringe & Taylor (2014), among others.

This article was divided in the following sections: 1) *Historical linguistics*, which summarizes the primary goals and theoretical principles of the discipline; 2) *Methodology*, which describes certain methodological obstacles and the steps taken during the research; 3) *The history of the verb to be*, which brings a diachronic analysis of

the referred verb, focusing on its anomalous conjugation in simple verbal tenses and moods, namely: indicative present, subjunctive present, indicative preterit, subjunctive preterit and imperative, in addition to its nonfinite forms. At last, the conclusions.

II. HISTORICAL LINGUISTICS

Before diving into the intricate development of the verb *to be* and its anomalous inflections, from Old to Modern English, it is worth remembering the primary goals of historical linguistics. According to Campbell,

> Historical linguists study language change. If you were to ask practicing historical linguists why they study change in language, they would give you lots of different reasons, but certainly included in their answers would be that it is fun, exciting and intellectually engaging, that it involves some of the hottest topics in linguistics, and that it has important contributions to make to linguistic theory and to the understanding of human nature. There are many reasons why historical linguists feel this way about their field. For one, a grasp of the ways in which languages can change provides the student with a much better understanding of language in general, of how languages work, how their pieces fit together, and in general what makes them tick. For another, historical linguistic methods have been looked to for models of rigour and excellence in other fields. Historical linguistic findings have been utilized to solve historical problems of concern to society which extend far beyond linguistics (see Chapter 16). Those dedicated to the humanistic study of individual languages would find their fields much impoverished without the richness provided by historical insights into the development of these languages-just imagine the study of any area of non-modern literature in French, German, Italian, Spanish or other languages without insights into how these languages have changed. A very important reason why historical linguists study language change and are excited about their field is because historical linguistics contributes significantly to other sub-areas of linguistics and to linguistic theory (Campbell, 2013, p. 1-2, emphasis added).

At first, one could ask why historical linguists put so much effort in studying not only the old stages of a language, but also its multiple changes over the centuries, even though no one is able to go back in time and have a casual conversation with an English speaker from 1000 years ago, for example. Apart from being exciting and intellectually engaging, as Campbell (2013, p. 1-2) points it out, the field provides its researchers and scholars in general with a deeper understanding of how languages actually work, demonstrating what can or cannot change within them. Furthermore, whoever intends to read texts from a distant past and dive into an old culture must learn at least the basic features of the old language in which they were originally written, even when the reader is dealing with previous stages of his own mother tongue – otherwise, great portions of his people's cultural heritage may start falling into oblivion. From the perspective of Modern English speakers, for instance, the so-called Old English would have to be learned as a foreign language, insofar as the severe diachronic changes that it underwent from the 11th century onwards rendered both varieties mutually unintelligible and almost unrecognizable. As Campbell (2013, p. 1-2) states at the beginning of the transcribed excerpt, historical linguists study language change, whose main aspects are described and exemplified in the following section.

2.1 The Main Aspects of Language Change

First and foremost, all natural and living languages change over time (Campbell, 2013, p. 2-3; Bybee, 2015, p. 1-2). Since every human society changes its own habits, beliefs, art and culture to a larger or smaller degree, it would be senseless to depict languages as hard monoliths, detached from their historical background and the cultural interchanges of their speakers. The only languages that are not susceptible to diachronic variation, at least in theory, are the artificial and

the dead ones, assuming they do not have native speakers[1].

Moreover, the language change affects all linguistic levels: phonetic, morphologic, syntactic, semantic and lexical. At the phonetic level, sounds may be inserted, dropped or transformed, as it can be seen in the following adjective: *hlud* > *loud*. From Old to Middle English, the initial consonant [h] was dropped in a process called aphaeresis, by which *hlud* became *loud*, pronounced [luːd] at the time, but spelled with *-ou-* due to the French orthography influence. By the 16th century, from Middle to Early Modern English, a wide complex of phonetic changes known as the Great Vowel Shift took place and eventually turned the old long vowel [uː] into a diphthong [aʊ], due to which the former pronunciation [luːd] became the modern-day [laʊd]. Thus: *hlud* > *loud* [luːd] > *loud* [laʊd] (Campbell, 2013, p. 20; Bybee, 2015, p. 52; Klein, 1966, p. 907). At the morphologic level, several diachronic phenomena may occur, such as the loss of grammatical gender that happened during Middle English. Until then, definite articles had masculine, feminine and neuter forms (*sē*, *sēo*, *þæt*), as follows: *sē cyning* ("the king"), *sēo cwēn* ("the queen") and *þæt land* ("the land")[2]. The modern article (*the*) came from the masculine nominative form *sē*, becoming *þe* (> *the*) by analogical influence from other case inflections beginning with thorn (*þ*) (Algeo, 2010, p.96-97). At the syntactic level, it is worth mentioning the lack of auxiliary verbs in yes-no questions back in Early Modern English, namely in Shakespeare's plays, such as *Macbeth* (IV, i): *Saw you the weird sisters?*, instead of *Did you see the weird sisters?* (Campbell, 2013, p. 9). At the semantic level, words may take different meanings somewhat randomly, in a way that historical linguists cannot indicate which items from the lexicon are more or less susceptible to undergo such kind of diachronic change. For example, the Old English noun *hund* could refer to any dog in the past, but its modern counterpart *hound* designates only the ones used for hunting. In other words, this noun has undergone a semantic narrowing, by which its previous and wider meaning became more restricted over time, whereas its German cognate *Hund* has retained the etymological sense of "dog" (Campbell, 2013, p. 223; Klein, 1966, p. 471). Last but not least, the lexical level is particularly sensitive to diachronic changes driven by historical and cultural issues. Within the Germanic family, for instance, English speakers started to borrow several words from French after the fateful Battle of Hastings, in 1066, which brought about the fall of the Saxon Dynasty and the subsequent ascension of the Norman kings, whose language had greater prestige among the nobles. From this point onwards, considerable portions of the English original lexicon were replaced by Romance-based items or survived alongside a Romance near-synonym, forming pairs like *go on - continue, dig up - excavate, make up - invent, etc.* (Campbell, 2013, p. 58; König, 1994, p. 562). On the other hand, Icelandic speakers have lived for many centuries in small and isolated communities in the North Atlantic Ocean, making almost no contact with European continental peoples. As a result, their language has undergone only a few changes, so that modern Icelanders are still able to read medieval sagas (Harbert, 2007, p. 23-24). These historical facts explain why English is receptive to foreign vocabulary, whereas Icelandic is firmly attached to its lexical origins.

Another remarkable aspect of language change is gradualness. In effect, the whole process is so slow and gradual, that it is barely noticeable from one generation to another, making non-specialized speakers possibly think of their own mother tongue as a static object, rather than a dynamical one. However, a quick look at older texts provides us with unquestionable empirical proofs of such dynamicity, whose changing pace can be increased or decreased depending on historical or

[1] Esperanto, regarded as the most successful artificial language in history, was created by a Polish doctor called Ludwik Zamenhof (1859-1917) in the late 19th century and now has its own speaking communities around the world, where children can learn it from birth. As Esperanto spread across many countries, it consequently became susceptible to some variation.

[2] The words *sē, sēo, þæt* were originally demonstrative modifiers, so that the nominal phrase *sē cyning* could be interpreted as "the king" or "that king" depending on the context.

cultural circumstances, as previously mentioned about English and Icelandic.

Finally, the last aspect worth pointing out is that language change is not good or bad. Indeed, from a strictly scientific point of view, all languages maintain their semiotic potential, regardless of how deeply they may have changed and thus remain able to fulfill their speakers' communication purposes. In other words, no language in history has ever disappeared because of internal malfunctioning. Nevertheless, among ordinary people, regular changes are usually seen as mere grammar mistakes, caused by someone's illiteracy or low educational level. Even during the Golden Age of Comparative Linguistics in the 19th century, scholars like Jacob Grimm (1785-1863) depicted this changing process as a linguistic impoverishment or corruption, drawing on their aesthetic or personal preferences, rather than on scientific assumptions. In any case, languages do not get inherently poorer or richer; they simply change (Campbell, 2013, p. 2-3; Bybee, 2015, p. 10).

III. METHODOLOGY

If, on the one hand, linguists from various branches are able to conduct their researches by collecting scientific data from interviews and recordings, on the other, historical linguists rely almost exclusively on written sources, since it would be impossible to interview a centuries-old speaker or to listen to audio records made before the second half of the 19th century. That's why Lass (1997, p. 45) both briefly and metaphorically describes these methodological obstacles by stating that historical linguists must "hear the inaudible", while Labov (1982, p. 20) describes their task as "the art of making the best use of bad data".

Notwithstanding the usual "bad data" available for research, the authors consulted here have managed to collect from ancient texts much valuable information concerning the history of the verb *to be*, displaying its inflectional anomalies from Old to Modern English and its dialectal variations. Thus, this article's main goals are to organize these data in a didactic way and, more importantly, to interpret them, since historical linguists must not only point out the language changes, but also try to explain how and why they happened. The next section brings synoptic tables containing the anomalous verb *to be* in simple tenses and nonfinite forms, after which there are some additional comments in order to clarify certain phonetic or morphologic phenomena.

IV. THE HISTORY OF THE VERB *TO BE*, FROM OLD TO MODERN ENGLISH

When the oldest known English texts came to light by the 7th century AD, the verb *to be* had already a complex set of irregular inflections, due to its tricky Proto-Indo-European and Proto-Germanic origins. In effect, during this unrecorded past, two ancient verbs, *bēon* and *wesan*, intermixed and eventually formed a single anomalous conjugation. This intermixing process by which words from different lexical roots form a single inflection paradigm is known as suppletion, which has taken place in many languages around the world, mainly in nouns, adjectives and verbs with high using frequency and feeble roots, whose forms were partially replaced by other semantically related ones (Bybee, 2015, p. 109-112). It is no coincidence, for example, that the highly used comparative degree of "good" take a different stem in English, Portuguese and Russian: *good-better, bom-melhor* e хороший-лучше (transliterated: *khoróshiy-lútchshe*). Thus, in order to make the intricate history of this suppletive verb clearer, each of its simple verbal tenses is described in a separate sub-section.

4.1 Indicative Present

Although *bēon* and *wesan* share a whole verbal paradigm, the former tends to express a gnomic present or a simple future (*e.g. Wyrd biþ ful aræd*, "Fate is fully inexorable"; *Iċ bēo sē cyning*, "I will be the king"), whereas the latter tends to express an ordinary simple present (*e.g. Iċ eom sē cyning*, "I am the king"). This subtle difference explains why Hogg & Fulk (2011, p. 309) reclassify the present tense of *bēon* as a consuetudinal or future tense, whose inflections became obsolete in English centuries later, but were partially maintained in German: *ich bin* ("I am"), *du bist*

("you are", 2nd person singular). Regardless of any classificatory issues, the table below displays both verbs conjugated in Old English (c. 449-1100) on the lateral columns and their resulting diachronic forms in Modern English (1500-onwards) on the center:

Table 1: The development of the indicative present

bēon (Old English)		Middle English	Modern English		Middle English		wesan (Old English)
bēo, bīom	>	*bē*	*am*	<	*am, æm, em*	<	*eom, eam*
bist	>	*bēs, bēst, beest*	*art*	<	*art**	<	*eart**, *ært, earþ, arþ*
biþ, bið	>	*bēs, bēþ, bēoþ, büþ, bȳeþ*	*is*	<	*is, ys*	<	*is*
bēoþ, bēoð	>	*bēoþ, bē(n), bēþ, büþ, bȳeþ*	*are*	<	*sinden, ār(e), arn*	<	*sind(on), sint earon*, aron**
bēoþ, bēoð	>	*bēoþ, bē(n), bēþ, büþ, bȳeþ*	*are*	<	*sinden, ār(e), arn*	<	*sind(on), sint earon*, aron**
bēoþ, bēoð	>	*bēoþ, bē(n), bēþ, büþ, bȳeþ*	*are*	<	*sinden, ār(e), arn*	<	*sind(on), sint earon*, aron**

(cf. Hogg & Fulk, 2011, p. 309; Ringe & Taylor, 2014, p. 373; Mossé, 1952, p. 84)

* The forms *ert* (2nd person singular), *es* (2nd or 3rd person singular) and *ęīre* (plural) used in Northern dialects were borrowed from Old Norse, whose verb *vera* ("to be") was a Germanic cognate of *wesan* (Wardale, p. 114, 1949).

** The forms *eart* (> *art*) and *earon* (> *are*) came from a Proto-Indo-European root **er-* ("to arise") (Algeo, 2010, p. 105).

Since there is no written record of ancestor languages like Proto-Indo-European and its Proto-Germanic branch, historical linguists have drawn on comparative evidences and internal reconstruction in order to trace the origins of each verbal form displayed on the table.

Firstly, the infinitive *bēon* (> *be*) and all inflections beginning with *b* are etymologically related to the hypothetical Proto-Indo-European root **bheu-* or **bhú* ("to be", "to exist" or "to grow"), whence also came भवति (*bhávati*, "becomes") in Sanskrit, φύειν (*phýein*, "to bring forth") in Ancient Greek, *fuī* ("I have been") in Latin, *etc.* The other infinitive, *wesan*, is related to a different root, **wes-* ("to remain" or "to dwell"), cognate of the Sanskrit verb वसति (*vásati*, "dwells") (Algeo, 2010, p. 105; Hogg & Fulk, 2011, p. 309-310; Klein, 1966, p. 156).

The forms *eom, is, sindon* and their variants are related to another root: **es-* or **hes-*, from whose reconstructed inflections **esmi* ("I am"),**esti* ("he is") and **senti* ("they are") also came their semantic counterparts अस्मि (*ásmi*), अस्ति (*ásti*) and सन्ति (*sánti*) in Sanskrit, in addition to *sum*, *est* and *sunt* in Latin, plus **immi, *isti* and **sindi* in Proto-Germanic (Algeo, 2010, p. 105; Hogg & Fulk, 2011, p. 309-310; Klein, 1966, p. 156; Ringe & Taylor, 2014, p. 113). The 1st person singular *eom* turned into *eam* because of a probable analogy with *eart* and later into *æm* by monophthongization, thus: *eom* > *eam* > *æm* > *am*. The change from *sindon* to *sinden* was the result of major vowel leveling in unstressed syllables by the Middle English period, during which all former 3rd person plural endings became *-en* (Algeo, 2010, p. 124, 129; Ringe & Taylor, 2014, p. 373)[3].

[3] As mentioned here, there were only two subjunctive forms: singular (*e.g. iċ helpe, þu helpe, he helpe*) and plural (*e.g. we helpen, ġe helpen, hi helpen*). The indicative mood had in turn more verbal endings: *iċ helpe, þu hilpst, he hilpþ, we helpaþ, ġe helpaþ, hi helpaþ.*

On the other hand, the 2nd person singular *eart* (> *art*) and the Anglian 3rd person plural *earon* (> *are*) have etymological ties with another Proto-Indo-European root: **er-*, which originally meant "to arise". In the transition from Old to Middle English, their short diphthong *ea* became *a* by monophthongization and, due to the vowel leveling mentioned above, *-on* turned into *-en*, whose final *-n* was later dropped. Roughly speaking: *earon* > *aren* > *are* (Algeo, 2010, p. 124, 129).

Lastly, it is worth noting that the original 1st and 2nd person plural inflections from Proto-Germanic (**izum* and **izud*) had long been replaced by their 3rd person plural counterpart (**sindi* > *sind*) due to a morphologic leveling (Algeo, 2010, p. 105; Ringe & Taylor, 2014, p. 113).

4.2 Subjunctive Present

Unlike Modern English, the subjunctive mood was used in a wider range of sentences, expressing wishes or commands and forming numerous types of subordinate clauses. For example: *God ūs helpe* ("God help us"); *Ne hēo hundas cēpe* ("She shall not keep dogs"); *Sume men cweðaþ þæt hit sȳ feaxede steorra* ("Some men say that it [a comet] be a long-haired star"). It could also be seen in constructions where it is still in use today: *swelċe hē tam wære* ("as if he were tame") (Algeo, 2010, p. 102, 106-107). The Old English subjunctive mood had only two verbal forms: one of them for singular and the other for plural. See the table below:

Table 2: The development of the subjunctive present

bēon (Old English)		Middle English		Modern English	Middle English		*wesan* (Old English)
bēo	>	*bēo, bē, bō̄*	>	*be*	*sī, sie*	<	*sȳ, sie*
bēo	>	*bēo, bē, bō̄*	>	*be*	*sī, sie*	<	*sȳ, sie*
bēo	>	*bēo, bē, bō̄*	>	*be*	*sī, sie*	<	*sȳ, sie*
bēon	>	*bēon, bē(n), bō̄n*	>	*be*	*sien*	<	*sȳn, sien*
bēon	>	*bēon, bē(n), bō̄n*	>	*be*	*sien*	<	*sȳn, sien*
bēon	>	*bēon, bē(n), bō̄n*	>	*be*	*sien*	<	*sȳn, sien*

(cf. Hogg & Fulk, 2011, p. 309; Mossé, 1952, p. 84)

Although both Proto-Indo-European roots, **bheu* and **es*, are easily detectable on each inflection displayed above (*e.g. bēo / sȳ*), there was not a clear semantic distinction between them due to the inherent sense of contingency or consuetude of the subjunctive mood (Hogg & Fulk, 2011, p. 310). In any case, the forms deriving from **bheu* have eventually driven out those deriving from **es*, which were less likely to express permanent states or qualities in general.

During the course, a few phonetic changes occurred. By the 11th century, the long diphthong *ēo* turned into *ē* by monophthongization, changing *bēo* into *bē*, pronounced [be:]. Afterwards, by the 16th century, the already mentioned Great Vowel Shift took place, raising the long high-mid vowel [e:] into [i:], then: [be:] > [bi:]. Finally, after the dropping of the plural ending *-n* between Middle and Modern English, all subjunctive present forms became indistinguishable from then on (Algeo, 2010, p. 124; Bybee, 2015, p. 52).

4.3 Indicative preterit

The Proto-Indo-European verb based on the root **es-* or **hes-* ("to be") had neither a known infinitive nor perfect tenses, leaving a blank to be filled by suppletion in multiple descendant languages (Hogg & Fulk 2011, p. 310). Thus, from a hypothetical root **wes-* ("to remain", "to dwell") emerged the old verb *wesan*, whose former present tense inflections were dropped out when

it came to fulfill such blank, changing its meaning accordingly. The verb *bēon* in turn had no preterit tenses since its main purpose was to express the gnomic present or the future. It explains why there are many blank spaces on the table below:

Table 3: The development of the indicative preterit

bēon (Old English)	Middle English	Modern English		Middle English		*wesan* (Old English)
∅	∅	*was*	<	*was, wes*	<	*wæs*
∅	∅	*wast**	<	*was, wes, wǭre, wēre, wast** *wēore*	<	*wǣre*
∅	∅	*was*	<	*was, wes*	<	*wæs*
∅	∅	*were*	<	*wēr, wār, wēre(n), wǭren* *wēore*	<	*wǣron*
∅	∅	*were*	<	*wēr, wār, wēre(n), wǭren* *wēore*	<	*wǣron*
∅	∅	*were*	<	*wēr, wār, wēre(n), wǭren* *wēore*	<	*wǣron*

(cf. Hogg & Fulk, 2011, p. 309; Mossé, 1952, p. 84)

**Wast* was created by analogical influence from *art* (2nd person singular, indicative present).

According to Verner's Law[4], the Proto-Germanic voiceless fricative consonant *[s] underwent a sonorization process when surrounded by voiced sounds, which then turned it into a voiced fricative *[z] in West Germanic. Later, this resultant *[z] underwent another sound change called rhotacism, turning now into the Old English approximant [r], present in *wǣ**r**e* and *wǣ**r**on*. Predictably, the original [s] remained intact in *wæs* because it was not surrounded by other voiced vowels or consonants, preventing sonorization and rhotacism (Algeo, 2010, p. 73-75).

From the Late Old English onwards, other sound changes took place. First, the short [æ] turned into [a] in most dialects, as it can be seen in *wæs* > *was*, whereas the long [æː] turned into [ɛː] or [aː], bringing forth *wēre(n)* in the East Midlands and *wār* in the North (Brunner, 1970, p. 13; Mossé, 1952, p. 84). Unlike these, the forms *wǭren* and *wēore*, found in the West Midlands and in the South, may not have come from *wǣron* directly, but perhaps from an Old English variant of it, since a vowel change such as *ǣ* > *ēo* would be hard to explain. Inasmuch as the final *-n* was already weakening during Middle English, it was unsurprisingly dropped: *wǣron* > *wēren* > *were*. The standard pronunciation [wər] is more recent, but it still has plenty of variations across English-speaking countries.

Lastly, the 2nd person singular inflection *wast* is not a diachronic product based on regular phonetic changes undergone by *wǣre*, which resulted in *wēre*, but rather an analogical creation based on the indicative present form *art*, which brings a typical final *-t* (Algeo, 2010, p. 177).

4.4 Subjunctive Preterit

As mentioned before, the subjunctive mood was used in a wider range of sentences, namely in subordinate clauses, including the ones where it is still in use today: *swilċe hē* wǣre ("as if he were"). Similarly to the present tense of the same mood, the subjunctive preterit only distinguishes singular and plural; the former with *-e* and the latter with *-en*:

[4] Karl Adolph Verner (1846-1896), a renowned Danish linguist.

London Journal of Research in Humanities & Social Science

Table 4: The development of the subjunctive preterit

bēon (Old English)	Middle English	Modern English		Middle English		*wesan* (Old English)
∅	∅	*were*	<	*wār(e), wǭre, wēre*	<	*wǣre*
∅	∅	*wert**		*wār(e), wǭre, wēre*	<	*wǣre*
∅	∅	*were*	<	*wār(e), wǭre, wēre*	<	*wǣre*
∅	∅	*were*	<	*wār(e), wǭre(n) wēre(n)*	<	*wǣren*
∅	∅	*were*	<	*wār(e), wǭre(n) wēre(n)*	<	*wǣren*
∅	∅	*were*	<	*wār(e), wǭre(n) wēre(n)*	<	*wǣren*

(cf. Hogg & Fulk, 2011, p. 309; Mossé, 1952, p. 84)

**Wert* was created by analogical influence from *art* (2nd person singular, indicative present).

Sentences like *swilċe hē wǣre* ("as if he were") demonstrate that the modern-day inflection *were* (< *wǣre*) is one of the few recognizable remnants of the Old English subjunctive preterit. In fact, it is no more than a pale remnant of this verbal tense and mood, whose current forms are almost identical to the indicative ones. The original voiceless consonant *[s] from the Proto-Indo-European root **wes-* was turned into a voiced *[z] by sonorization and later into an approximant [r] by rhotacism (Algeo, 2010, p. 73-75).

Centuries later, the long diphthong [æː] became [ɛː] in the East Midlands dialects and [aː] in the Northern ones, resulting in *wēre* and *wār* (Brunner, 1970, p. 13; Mossé, 1952, p. 84), but their West Midland's variant *wǭre*, with a long stressed *ǭ*, could not be satisfactorily explained based on this regular vowel change from Old to Middle English, as mentioned. In the plural, the final *-n* was predictably dropped: *wǣren* > *wēren* > *were*.

At last, the 2nd person singular form *wert* is no more than an analogical creation based on the indicative present *art*, which brings a typical final *-t*.

4.5 Imperative

During the Old English period, there was not a clear semantic distinction between imperative inflections derived from the Proto-Indo-European root **bheu-* and those deriving from **(h)es-*, because the sense of contingency or consuetude is somewhat inherent to this verbal mood, thus "it is not surprising that the reflexes of **bhew(H)-* have entirely supplanted those of **Hes-* in these categories" (Hogg & Fulk, 2011, p. 310), as demonstrated below:

Table 5: The development of the imperative mood

bēon (Old English)	Middle English		Modern English		Middle English		*wesan* (Old English)
bēo (sing.)	*bē, bēo, bō̄*	>	*be*		∅	<	*wes* (sing.)
bēoð (pl.)	*bēs, bēþ, bēoþ*	>	*be*		∅	<	*wesað* (pl.)

(cf. Hogg & Fulk, 2011, p. 309; Mossé, 1952, p. 84)

As usual, the long diphthong *ēo* turned into a long *ē* by monophthongization in Middle English, but this resulting long vowel [eː] was later raised into [iː] due to the Great Vowel Shift occurred by the

16th century, in Early Modern English. Therefore: *bēo* > *bē* > *be* [biː]. In the plural form *bēoð*, the final *ð* had been long devoiced into *þ*, which later turned into [s] by assibilation. However, unlike the modern 3rd person singular inflections from the indicative present (*e.g. makes, does, dies, is, etc.*), the resulting final sibilant [s] was dropped, making both imperative forms visually indistinguishable (Algeo, 2010, p. 176-177). Roughly speaking: *bēoð* > *bēoþ* > *bēþ* > *bēs* > *be* [biː].

4.6 Nonfinite Forms

The same remark previously made about the subjunctive and imperative moods can also be made about the four nonfinite forms in Old English, namely: the simple infinitive (*bēon / wesan*), the inflected infinite (*to bēonne*), the present participle (*bēonde / wesende*) and the past participle (*ġebēon*). In effect, as the sense of contingency and consuetude is inherent to them all, the Proto-Indo-European root **bheu-* was the one to prevail, preventing nonfinite forms based on the root **wes-* from thriving in English (Hogg & Fulk, 2011, p. 310). It is worth noting that the so-called inflected infinitives were remnants of an earlier past in which they were declined as nouns and used as the modern gerund: *Is blīðe tō helpenne* (*i.e.* "It is joyful to help" or "Helping is joyful") (Algeo, 2010, p. 102). See the table below:

Table 6: The development of the nonfinite forms

bēon (Old English)		Middle English		Modern English	Middle English		*wesan* (Old English)
bēon	>	*bē, bēn, bēon, bōn, bō, bi, bīe*	>	*be*	∅	<	*wesan*
to bēonne	>	*to bēonne*		∅	∅		∅
bēonde	>	*bēand(e), bēing, bēyng*	>	*being*	∅	<	*wesende*
ġebēon	>	*bēn, ybēn, ibē*	>	*been*	∅		∅

(cf. Hogg & Fulk, 2011, p. 309; Mossé, 1952, p. 84)

The simple infinitive underwent the regular monophthongization from *bēon* to *bēn*, whose final *-n* was later dropped and whose stressed vowel [eː] was later raised into a long [iː] due to the Great Vowel Shift, in Early Modern English: *bēon* > *bēn* > *bē* > *be* [biː]. Since the simple and the inflected infinitive were formally similar (*bēon / bēonne*) and were somewhat interchangeable in medieval times, the latter was understandably absorbed, disappearing as a recognizable grammar feature (Algeo, 2010, p. 102-103, 124; Bybee, 2015, p. 52).

The present participle in turn was a verbal adjective, much like its modern counterpart. According to Brunner (1970, p. 72), it had three dialectal endings back in Middle English: *-inde* in the South, *-ende* in the Midlands plus *-and* in the North. From Southwestern Britain emerged the form *-inge*, later *-ing*, most likely as a result of an analogical leveling with the deverbal noun-forming suffixes *-ing(e)* and *-ung(e)*, rendering the present participle and the modern gerund formally identical. In short: *bēonde* > *beend(e)* > *being(e)* > *being* [ˈbiŋ].

Unlike other Germanic languages, the Old English participial prefix *ge-* was already weakening insofar as its plosive consonant [g] was getting semivocalized into [j] before front vowels such as [e] and [i] (Algeo, 2010, p. 88) – that's why it is often spelled *ġ*, with a dot above: *ġecumen* > *ycomen* > *come*; *ġedōn* > *ydon* > *done*; *ġedruncen* > *ydrunken* > *drunk*. Indeed, the table 6 confirms that it was initially reduced from *ġe* to a feeble *y* and eventually dropped within the Middle English period: *ġebēon* > *ybēn* > *bēn* > *been* [bɪn]. In German, on the other hand, the same prefix remained quite vivid as it can be seen in these cognate past participles: *gekommen* ("come"), *getan* ("done"), *getrunken* ("drunk"). At last, it should be noted that *been* preserved the typical strong participle ending (*-en*), found in verbs such as *seen, beaten, given, stolen, etc.*

V. CONCLUSIONS

The numerous irregularities found throughout the conjugation of the verb *to be* can be explained by a single major reason: they are the result of a gradual intermixing between two Old English verbs, *bēon* and *wesan*, driven by a process known as suppletion (Bybee, 2015, p. 109-112). On top of that, *wesan* was itself the result of a prior intermixing between three different Proto-Indo-European verbal roots (**wes-, *es-, *er-*), due to which the verb *to be* became by far the most irregular one in English.

In the indicative present, *bēon* and *wesan* were used for slightly different purposes: the former to express a gnomic present or a simple future (*e.g. Wyrd biþ ful aræd*, "Fate is fully inexorable"; *Iċ bēo sē cyning*, "I will be the king"), the latter to express an ordinary simple present (*e.g. Iċ eom sē cyning*, "I am the king"). From Middle English onwards, the inflections deriving from *bēon* slowly became to disappear, so that the ones deriving from *wesan* eventually prevailed:

1st person singular: *eom* > *eam* > *æm* > *am*;
2nd person singular: *eart* > *art*;
3rd person singular: *is* > *is*;
Plural: *earon* > *aren* > *are*.

In the subjunctive present, *bēon* and *wesan* were again competing against each other, but this time the former was the one to prevail. In Old English, it had only two inflected forms, one of them for singular and the other for plural, but these became formally identical centuries later, as soon as the plural ending *-n* was dropped:

Singular: *bēo* > *bē* > *be* [biː];
Plural: *bēon* > *bēn* > *bē* > *be* [biː].

In the indicative preterit, there were no inflections deriving from *bēon*, clearing the way for those deriving from *wesan* to evolve unopposed:

1st person singular: *wæs* > *was*
2nd person singular: *wart* (analogical creation);
3rd person singular: *wæs* > *was*;
Plural: *wǣron* > *wēren* > *were* [wər].
In the subjunctive preterit, likewise, there were no inflections deriving *bēon*, thus:

1st person singular: *wǣre* > *wēre* > *were* [wər];
2nd person singular: *wert* (analogical creation);
3rd person singular: *wǣre* > *wēre* > *were* [wər];
Plural: *wǣren* > *wēren* > *were* [wər].

In the imperative mood, *bēon* and *wesan* forms were competing against each other in Old English, but those deriving from *wesan* could barely endure until the Middle English period. Therefore:

Singular: *bēo* > *bē* > *be* [biː];
Plural: *bēoð* > *bēoþ* > *bēþ* > *bēs* > *be* [biː].

Last but not least, all current nonfinite forms derived from *bēon*. As previously mentioned, the old inflected infinite (*to bēonne*) was absorbed by the simple infinite (*bēon*) due to formal and syntactic similarities between them, whereas the old present participle (*bēonde*) became formally identical to the gerund due to an analogical leveling occurred in Middle English. During the same period, the past participle lost its old Germanic prefix (*ge-*). Therefore:

Infinitive: *bēon* > *bēn* > *bē* > *be* [biː];
Present participle: *bēonde* > *beend(e)* > *being(e)* > *being* [ˈbiɪŋ];
Past participle: *ġebēon* > *ybēn* > *bēn* > *been* [bɪn].

Far from being arbitrary creations introduced by grammarians or writers, these remarkable irregularities are, in fact, the result of a gradual and spontaneous process of language change, whose nuances date back to the ancient Proto-Indo-European and stretch until Modern English, obliging historical linguists to operate with hypothetical reconstructions and "bad data" along the way.

REFERENCES

1. ALGEO, J. The origins and development of the English language. Boston: Wadsworth, 2010.
2. AUROUX, Sylvain. A revolução tecnológica da gramatização. Tradução: Eni Puccinelli Orlandi. Campinas, SP: Editora da Unicamp, 1992.
3. BRUNNER, Karl. An Outline of Middle English Grammar. Translated by Grahame Johnson. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1970.

4. BYBEE, Joan. Language change. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2015.
5. CAMPBELL, Lyle. Historical Linguistics: an introduction. Third edition. Edinburgh University Press, 2013.
6. HARBERT, Wayne. The Germanic Languages. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
7. HOGG, Richard M.; FULK, R. D. A Grammar of Old English, Volume 2: Morphology. Wiley-Blackwell, 2011.
8. LABOV, William. Building on Empirical Foundations. *In* LEHMANN, W. & MALKIEL, Y. (orgs.). Perspectives on Historical Linguistics. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1982, p. 17-92.
9. LASS, Roger. Historical Linguistics and Language Change. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
10. KLEIN, Ernest. A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the English Language. Volume I: A-K. Amsterdam: Elsevier Publishing Company, 1966.
11. KÖNIG, Ekkehard. English. *In*: KÖNIG, Ekkehard; AUWERA, Johan van der (editors). The Germanic languages (Routledge language family descriptions). London and New York: Routledge, 1994, p. 532-565.
12. MOSSÉ, Fernand. A Handbook of Middle English. Translated by James A. Walker. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1952.
13. RINGE, Don; TAYLOR, Ann. A Linguistic History of English, Volume II: The Development of Old English. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2014.
14. WARDALE, E. E. An Introduction to Middle English. Second impression. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul LTD, 1949.

This page is intentionally left blank

Exploring the use of AI-Writing Assistant for Foreign Language Learners: A Mixed-Methods Study in the Saudi EFL Context

Dr. Haifa Fayez Alhusaini

King Abdulaziz University

ABSTRACT

Artificial intelligence (AI) writing assistants are reshaping second language writing, yet little is known about how learners actually interact with these tools or interpret their feedback. This study explores how Saudi EFL undergraduates engaged with the AI writing assistant Type, focusing on the kinds of prompts they used and their perceptions of AI feedback. A mixed-methods design was employed, combining learner surveys with analysis of interaction logs from 27 male university students completing short writing tasks. Findings revealed two broad patterns of interaction: anticipated uses such as grammar checking, idea generation, and revising for word counts; and unexpected behaviors such as non engagement, over-prompting, or treating the AI as if it were human. Learners most often used style, grammar, and word-count prompts. While many valued the tool for improving accuracy, vocabulary and motivation, others expressed reservations linked to trust, difficulty, or the need for clearer guidance. The results were interpreted through the Community of Inquiry (COI) and Students' Approaches to Learning (SAL) frameworks, highlighting how learners displayed differing levels of critical engagement and autonomy.

Keywords: ai-based writing assistant, chatgpt, learner perceptions, saudi efl context, automated feedback.

Classification: LCC Code: LB2395.7

Language: English

Great Britain Journals Press

LJP Copyright ID: 573342
Print ISSN: 2515-5784
Online ISSN: 2515-5792

London Journal of Research in Humanities & Social Science

Volume 25 | Issue 15 | Compilation 1.0

Exploring the use of AI-Writing Assistant for Foreign Language Learners: A Mixed-Methods Study in the Saudi EFL Context

Dr. Haifa Fayez Alhusaini

ABSTRACT

Artificial intelligence (AI) writing assistants are reshaping second language writing, yet little is known about how learners actually interact with these tools or interpret their feedback. This study explores how Saudi EFL undergraduates engaged with the AI writing assistant Type, focusing on the kinds of prompts they used and their perceptions of AI feedback. A mixed-methods design was employed, combining learner surveys with analysis of interaction logs from 27 male university students completing short writing tasks. Findings revealed two broad patterns of interaction: anticipated uses such as grammar checking, idea generation, and revising for word counts; and unexpected behaviors such as non engagement, over-prompting, or treating the AI as if it were human. Learners most often used style, grammar, and word-count prompts. While many valued the tool for improving accuracy, vocabulary, and motivation, others expressed reservations linked to trust, difficulty, or the need for clearer guidance. The results were interpreted through the Community of Inquiry (COI) and Students' Approaches to Learning (SAL) frameworks, highlighting how learners displayed differing levels of critical engagement and autonomy. The study underscores the potential of AI to complement rather than replace teacher feedback, with implications for curriculum design, teacher training and policy on ethical AI use. Limitations relate to the sample and context, suggesting the need for broader and more diverse studies.

Keywords: ai-based writing assistant, chatgpt, learner perceptions, saudi efl context, automated feedback.

Author: TESOL Program, King Abdulaziz University.

I. INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of AI has presented both opportunities and challenges, particularly in the context of chatbots like ChatGPT. This study explores how language learners interact with AI-based writing assistants, particularly in providing feedback to enhance their writing skills. It aims to fill gaps in existing literature and increase understanding of the influence of AI feedback on writing skills. It also seeks to understand how learners use AI-based writing assistants to prompt their input, thereby filling the gap in understanding learners' comprehension of teaching instructions and motivation for learning in AI tools.

As educational landscapes evolve with the integration of artificial intelligence, understanding how learners engage with AI tools becomes increasingly significant. The adoption of AI-based writing assistants like ChatGPT represents more than just technological enhancement-it signifies a paradigm shift in learner autonomy, feedback reception and writing development processes. While AI tools offer instant support, corrections and suggestions, the way learners interpret, evaluate and act on this feedback remains largely underexplored. Moreover, the dialogic nature of tools like ChatGPT allows for dynamic learner-AI interactions, which may influence not only linguistic accuracy but also learners' motivation, confidence and critical thinking. This raises important pedagogical considerations: Are learners equipped to navigate and interpret AI feedback meaningfully? Do they engage with AI as a replacement for teacher feedback or as a

supplementary tool? How do these interactions shape their understanding of writing conventions, structure and coherence? By situating AI-assisted learning within broader educational and technological contexts, this study seeks to uncover patterns of learner engagement, potential misconceptions, and the pedagogical implications of AI-mediated instruction. The findings are expected to contribute both to AI-enhanced curriculum design and to the theoretical discourse surrounding digital literacies in language education.

This study explores the relationship between learners and AI tools in education and technology. It aims to understand how language learners interact with advanced AI and the types of interactions between learners and ChatGPT. The findings will help language educators determine appropriate teaching strategies and benefit educational tool developers. The study's primary objectives include exploring the nature of interactions between learners and AI, identifying the type of prompts learners use to express themselves, and understanding how learners perceive AI-based. Understanding the following depends on the research questions:

- How do EFL students interact with an AI-based writing assistant?
- What kind of questions do L2 writers ask when using AI-based writing assistant systems?
- What is the perception of the learner of AI- an AI-based writing assistant?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 AI Assistants for Second Language and Writing

Nowadays, various language learning opportunities have become possible due to recent advancements in AI technology. For instance, productive skills, such as speaking and writing, require more effort and time to work with teachers and learners to improve their abilities. Artificial intelligence AI-based computer and mobile programs provide interactive and tailored tools for improving writing skills and increasing motivation (Jiang, 2022; Meunier et al., 2022; Yan, 2023). Moreover, AI in education (AIEd) has three paradigms. First, AI-directed means learners can communicate with AI-powered virtual tutors or assistants. The second paradigm is called AI-supported, a partner collaborating with learners to develop skills like critical thinking and problem-solving. For example, Chang et al. (2021) investigated how an AI-supported writing feedback tool affects EFL learners' writing performance. Through an experimental group that used Grammarly to edit and revise their written texts, whereas the control group did not have access to Grammarly. It resulted in the experimental group outperforming the control group in writing skills, which resented how AI-powered language learning tools in developing EFL learners' writing ability. The last paradigm is the AI-empowered paradigm, when learners are the controllers of their learning and only use AI to supply the resources and tools they need Ouyang and Jiao (2021). However, integrating AI tools in learning and teaching would match the lifestyle of learners outside of the school and reassure teachers about the purpose of any tool and manage their time and effort smartly. For example, Link et al. (2020) presented an ideal hybrid case in which an AI writing evaluation (AWE) tool provided sentence-level feedback and then the teacher concentrated on higher-order writing mistakes.

On the contrary, AI-assisted writings have challenges and limitations that show the normal face of any innovation in our lives. The first dilemma is the lack of human interaction. AI tools enable live conversations with tutors or native speakers, but their self-guided learning approach poses challenges for learners who require personalized and interactive experiences (Khanzode & Sarode, 2020). To illustrate, Marzuki et al. (2023) highlights the positive impact of AI tools on learning, but also highlights the potential for over-reliance on technology when learners become accustomed to solving their difficulties, leading to a lack of creativity. Grammarly's limited error recognition may not accurately identify errors in content and style, and its effect on content and organization is less significant than that of teachers (Ghufron &

Rosyida, 2018). Transparency is crucial for users to comprehend the inner workings and limitations of AI language learning tools, enabling informed decision-making and fostering trust (Ruane et al., 2019). AI's limitations make it a product that constantly evolves, but cannot fully replace the human mind, requiring users to understand its limitations.

2.2 Automated Feedback

Each learner needs to be guided in the learning process to enhance language acquisition. As Wichadee (2013) highlighted, the significant role of feedback would improve learners' proficiency in many aspects of the language, such as grammatical errors, spelling errors, and diction errors. There are many types that educators have to deal with in the learning process, especially indirect corrective feedback, which is given in different ways by the teacher, such as highlighting, underlining, or coding. At the same time, learners will make self-correction and self-reformulation (Bitchener et al., 2005) Nowadays, feedback could be provided by AI writing tools that carry some burden on teachers to be facilitators even though they promote the learners to be actively involved in learning by doing extra work cognitively without shame or fear of making mistakes. AI writing tools have affected learning a second language effectively, like Quillbot, Word Tune, Jenni, ChatGPT, Paper Pal, Copy, and Grammarly. Qassemzadeh and Soleimani, (2016) examined the impact of AI writing tools on EFL teachers' writing quality, specifically content and organization. They found that AI tools enhance clarity, promote logical progression, and have diverse perspectives on their influence on vocabulary use and growth. The study highlights the positive role of AI in student writing.

The types of feedback: direct, indirect and metalinguistic that guide learners. First, direct feedback positively impacts students by helping them identify their errors and, thus, improve their writing (Qassemzadeh & Soleimani, 2016). For example, the teacher just provides the learner the correct answer, representing straightforward learning. Second, Indirect corrective feedback is when highlighting the errors, in the same manner as when learners are given indications (by means of highlighting, underlining, or coding) by their teacher on errors that they have made (Bitchener et al., 2005). Metalinguistic feedback is a teaching method that encourages learners to independently search for answers and take responsibility for their learning abilities. Errors are identified or labeled and explanations provided using annotations, examples, or both, depending on their nature (Barrot, 2023). The feedback provides real-time, consistent, and correct metalinguistic explanations, which teachers struggle to provide due to time or resource constraints (Barrot). Specifically, the teacher identifies the error and briefly explains the correct usage of the answer that would advance learners' deep thinking for their knowledge.

2.3 Community of Inquiry and Students' Approaches to Learning to Research Design

The CoI framework is a process model for digital instructional settings that includes three key concepts: social, teaching, and cognitive presences (Garrison et al., 2010). It focuses on meaningful learning through community interactions and has been widely utilized to influence the development of quality online education (Garrison & Arbaugh, 2007; Lomicka, 2020; Smidt et al., 2021). By applying the CoI framework, I can evaluate how learners progress through the phases of cognitive presence when engaging with AI feedback, which is crucial for understanding their knowledge absorption and critical thinking development. The framework also allows for an examination of social and teaching presence, which is crucial for understanding learners' interactions with peers and instructors in AI-mediated environments. Analyzing social presence will enable me to identify the types of prompts learners use when interacting with AI tools. This insight will provide understanding of their collaborative learning experiences and how they communicate their learning needs. Therefore, Students' approaches to learning have a strong relationship with students' academic performance and provide a useful framework for understanding the quality of student learning (Ellis & Bliuc, 2019). There are three types of SAL: deep, surface, and organized

approaches. SAL concerns the various methods and processes by which students engage in learning activities (Ellis et al., 2008; Thompson, 2013). By combining CoI and SAL, this study situates learner-AI interactions within broader debates on online pedagogy. Both frameworks highlight that the effectiveness of AI integration depends not only on the technology, but also on how learners approach and interpret it. In practice, this means that AI writing assistants can support meaningful learning when accompanied by critical engagement and teacher guidance, but risk promoting superficial learning if adopted passively. The frameworks therefore provide the conceptual foundation for interpreting the study's findings and for framing subsequent recommendations The research examines the impact of engagement strategies on language acquisition and academic success, emphasizing the importance of thoughtful use of online technologies. It also explores the types of questions L2 writers ask when using AI-based writing assistants, providing insight into how learners value tools that reflect their performance.

III. METHOD

The study adopts a mixed design to explore the interaction between L2 learners and an AI-based writing assistant called Type. Learners' interactions (e.g., their prompts, questions, logs) will be stored for quantitative and qualitative analyses. The qualitative method tries to comprehend people's meaning in a specific setting (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The learners will be asked to use Type to write short essays, and their interaction data will be stored for later analysis. Then, learners will have a survey to examine their experience with the tool. This method would achieve the answers that were out of scope, using a mono-method opinion (Şahin & Ozturk, 2019). Each angle of the mixed method would help to better understand the missing parts, like the qualitative side, which focused on mutual causation, intuition, and deep knowledge in the natural settings (Şahin & Ozturk). This enhanced the comprehension of learners' interaction with AI tools in an educational context. While the quantitative side identified a clear level of learners' background and ability in order to construct the idea of the study well. It involved pre-survey, capturing process highlights and the writing prompts learners used qualitatively and then assessing the interaction quantitatively again, which expanded the perspectives of the research question.

3.1 Participants

This study used a purposive sampling method to select participants based on characteristics relevant to the study's objectives (Andrade, 2021). Twenty-seven Saudi male participants were from the western region of Saudi Arabia, where Arabic was their native language. The participants were in two groups of different classes on the same science track at the university, which required them to have intermediate-level proficiency in English. The range of age was twenty to twenty-three and all were foundation-level learners in the second semester.

The two groups were selected randomly from the science track, whereas the learners in this track had previously had extensive English courses in the foundational year. For instance, the learners' proficiency is regarded as satisfactory when encountering A2, B1 and B2 writing prompts. The setting was a laboratory, and the data collection was done using the laboratory devices at the university, where the participants' teachers were present to facilitate the process. Twenty-seven participants participated in the study. The sample size was appropriate for the study's aims, ensuring that the findings reached were within the sample's parameters.

3.2. Instruments

3.2.1 Type

Two instruments were used to collect the data. First, an AI-based writing system called Type was used to collect data about participants' interactions with AI. Type is an AI-powered document editor that enables learners to produce high-quality content rapidly by creating drafts, modifying material, and recommending what to create next. Specifically, Type integrated OpenAI's GPT-3.5 model into a feature-rich document editor to help language learners brainstorm ideas,

receive feedback on their writing and grammar use (Type.ai: The all-in-one AI writing assistant, n.d.). The software's user interface was designed for learners at all skill levels (see Figure 1, the user interface). On the Type website, there are prompts used in interaction with AI that are open-ended and quoted from the British Council to match and level up their proficiency. The British Council is an organization that specializes in English language teaching and learning and works with individuals and governments to support learners in building networks in learning English, receiving a high-quality education and gaining internationally recognized qualifications. The prompts were classified into A2, B1, and B2 and have some changes to match the study's objectives, like more explanation to encourage learners to extend with details.

3.2.2. Pre and Post Surveys

Pre and post-surveys were used to assess the participants' interaction with AI and identify pros and cons of their experience with Type. The system usability scale survey (SUS) is a Likert scale that selects the statements with which respondents agree or disagree, with some changes to suit the study (Brooke, 1996). The Likert scale was changed slightly to match the study's needs in clarifying and meeting the objectives' scope in the post survey by changing numbers and the types of questions (Appendix C, the original survey, Appendix D, the post-survey).

The pre-survey contains demographic information and has four questions: age, academic year, and background in utilizing AI assistants, especially in academic areas, such as the primary goals for using AI-based writing tools and the general feeling about using AI tools for learning and writing. Besides, at the end of the pre-survey, two open-ended questions give important insights into user experiences and goals with AI-based writing tools.

The post-survey presented scale questions that allowed users to rank their thoughts about the type and provide useful insights into user experiences. These questions determine whether users want to use Type regularly, find it simple to navigate and value the integration of its numerous capabilities. They also investigate if users feel they require assistance, how quickly they believe others could learn to use it, and their overall trust in utilizing the platform. On the other hand, the open-ended responses can add meaning to scale ratings, helping to explain why participants ranked certain characteristics the way they did. All surveys were written in Arabic and English, allowing the participants to answer freely in their favorite language.

The first phase, the pre-survey, allowed for a more detailed analysis of their success and ensured that all participants feel prepared to use the tools effectively. This enhanced the ability to define learners' input that would align with their motivations for using AI tools in education. Second, participants randomly encountered one of the writing prompts, a short essay, and interacted with an AI-assistant writing in Type. The interactions will be analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively to assess the effectiveness of the AI assistance. Finally, the participants will complete the post-survey to evaluate their experience, which could lead to more thoughtful and insightful comments.

3.3 Experimental Manipulations or Interventions

The main data collection involved Type, where all learners' interactions with AI are stored. The participants received an Arabic tutorial on properly using Type. After that, they randomly used one of the writing prompts to write a short essay. The prompts were developed (Appendix B, the developed prompts) to facilitate critical thinking and creativity, encouraging learners to engage deeply with the writing process.

The data analysis was divided into qualitative and quantitative processes. First, the data was analyzed using Saldaña's Framework for qualitative data in NVivo15 and subsequently transferred to Excel for further elaboration. According to Saldaña (2012), 32 coding methods were identified that represent the first or second cycle, with one hybrid approach in between. It described that data should have filters through a specific process to polish it clearly and well-

represented. Second, Quantitative data from pre- and post-surveys were obtained using Google Forms. Moreover, there were sheets for both surveys to have more explanation and representation in Excel, which would enhance the clarity of the quantitative data.

3.4 Data Collection

The data collection occurred in two steps. The main data collection method was Type. The software stored all learners' interactions with the AI (ChatGPT and Cloud) and their writing. First, participants were given an Arabic tutorial on properly utilizing Type for data collection, ensuring they grasped its features and applications. The data collection took place in the laboratory of the university, where the participants' teachers were present to facilitate the process. After the tutorial, the participants were asked to write randomly about one of three prompts. Their input was then collected into NVivo 15, and subsequently transferred to Excel for further elaboration.

The quantitative data identified the areas in which improvement was needed for Type and AI-based writing assistance in general. Input for the pre- and post-surveys was received and collected in Google Forms. At first, the responses of both surveys were received in Google Forms and there was a function to analyze them in the same place, except for the open-ended questions, which were analyzed in Nvivo 15 and then organized into Excel for explanation.

3.5 Data analysis

The analysis was divided into qualitative and quantitative phases, and Salanda's Framework was used for the qualitative data. 32 initial codes were identified that represent the first or second cycle, with one hybrid approach in between. It described that data should have filters through a specific process to polish the data clearly and well represented. The qualitative data was learners' input in Type and open-ended questions in pre and post surveys. First, the extensive data was in type to cover research questions that started with first cycle to notice any recurring ideas and pattern throughout the data and labeled them by descriptive codes in Nvivo15. The first cycle of coding had seven subcategories: grammatical, elemental, affective, literary and language, exploratory and procedural. Each subcategory has various code kinds, for which the elemental method was utilized with data and made it easy to link with a simple label. At the end of the first cycle, there were 13 codes for the two research questions and then the second cycle refined the codes to be themes. The primary goal during second cycle coding is to develop a sense of categorical, thematic, conceptual and/or theoretical organization from the array of first cycle codes (Saldaña, 2016), which enhanced the codes and developed into themes. Second, the axial and focused coding methods for polishing the data, such as the codes, were nine under four themes for two research questions. The axial coding is beneficial to list each category's characteristics and aspects, find dominant codes, remove redundant codes, and identify the most illustrative codes, which help to group coded data with comparable themes and ideas, whereas the focused coding identified the most significant codes in the data. Finally, all data was organized and presented in Excel in order to provide data visualization via graphs and charts, efficient organizing, a thorough dataset overview, simplicity of usage using a known tool and fast production of summary tables and reports.

The second group of the qualitative data was from surveys, first, the pre and post-surveys had open-ended questions in Google Forms that summarized the responses and then started with descriptive codes because responses are straightforward and did not need to delve in depth analysis. After that it used pattern coding for promoting a unified awareness of what the responses performed together imply. Finally, the data of the two surveys were analyzed in details in Excel due to representing open-ended responses as percentages is a simple and effective technique for identifying the respondents' perspectives on certain subjects. This strategy highlights frequent replies and focuses on the frequency of specific codes, making it easier for audiences to understand the material without requiring complicated theme analysis or complicated

explanations. On the other hand, the quantitative data were easy to analyze by Google forms that offered a function of summarizing and reporting the surveys' input, like there was a report for each participant and there were diagrams to represent the total of responses for each question, which eased the process. Moreover, there were sheets for both surveys to have more explanation and representation in Excel so that would enhance the clarity of the quantitative data.

3.6 Ethical Consideration

Prior to data collection, ethical permission was sought, which includes university approval, participant informed consent and data confidentiality. An informed consent form was distributed in Arabic and English, ensuring that participants were aware of the study's objectives. Participants' identities were kept anonymous in accordance with ethical research standards designed to protect their privacy.

IV. RESULTS

The first research question was to discover the nature of the interactions that happened during this process. To answer this question, the data indicated an Interaction Styles theme divided into sub-themes: anticipated interaction and unexpected interaction. It describes how each learner interacted with AI-based writing, especially in the chat box. This theme explains how data can be classified into regular and irregular. While certain data was expected in the chat interactions between learners and the AI, other data revealed unexpected differences in the learners' inputs.

The results showed predictable interactions that learners would have with AI. Twenty learners tended to check on AI for grammar mistakes to improve the writing style and achieve the word count (figure 1). The previous diagram shows how a learner was concerned about the word limit, and thus demanded the AI to add words to his input to meet the requirement.

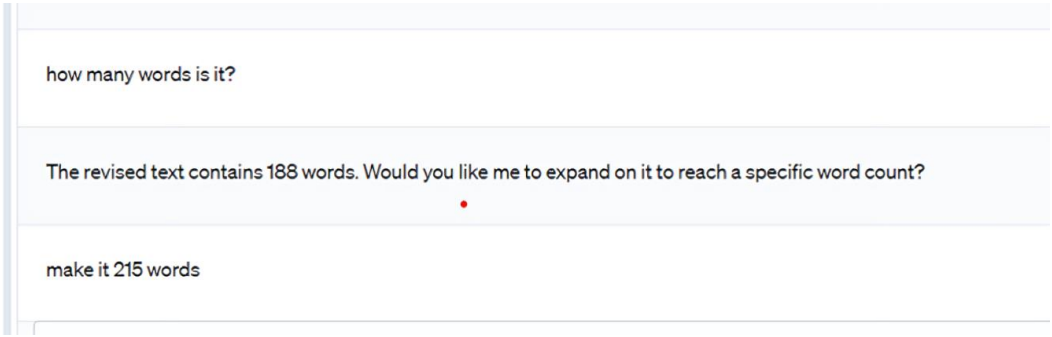


Figure 1: A learner interacted with AI in Type's chat box

Learners had assistance from AI during the experiment process in multiple ways, such as generating ideas, proofreading, or reviewing. Learners' prompts were simple and spontaneous in nature and were utilized in their daily lives (figure 2), such as asking a human to help him without realizing the grammar of the prompt. Moreover, this theme identified and shared these interactive prompts with AI to understand what learners need to rely on AI feedback and where they felt to have support through the experiment process like in the beginning or in the middle or at the end, which reflected their academic experiences and how they approached towards challenges, indicating their reliance on AI for assistance.

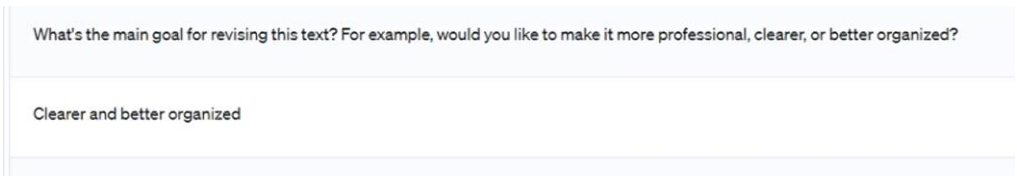


Figure 2: A learner interacted with AI in Type's chat box

The data indicates the irregular responses from the interaction of the learners with AI in Type's chat box that kind of the prompts that need to be shared. First, seven learners did not interact with AI-based writing and left their chat empty, which was a surprising action, especially when they encountered A2 and B1 writing prompts. Even though they had input without reaching the required word limit (figure 3) , this raised significant questions about their trust in AI or their trust in their ability to success or relating to their motivation to learn English.

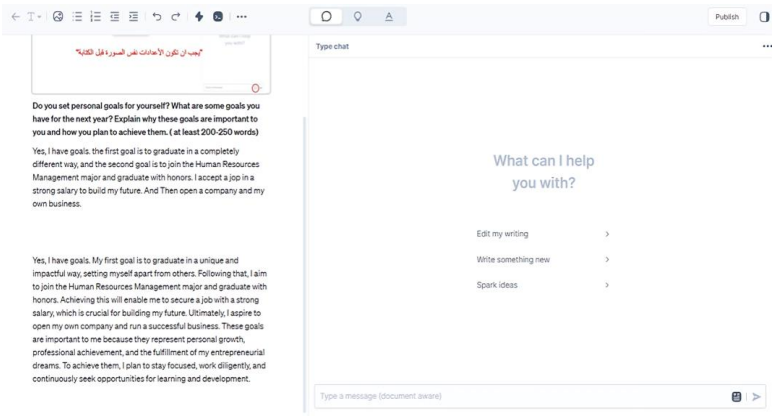


Figure 3: A learner left the chat box without interacting with AI in Type

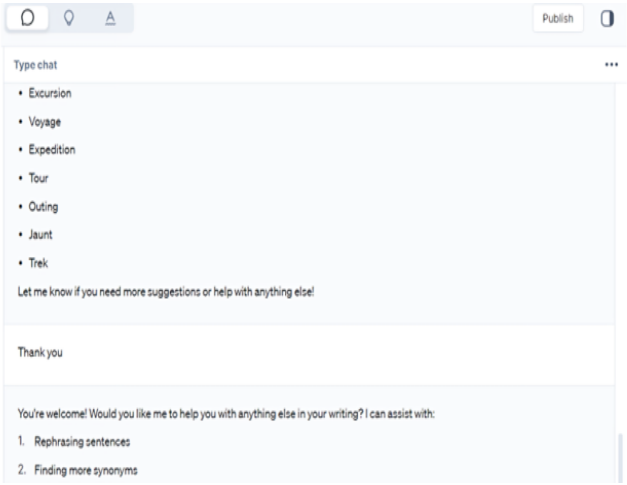


Figure 4: A learner thanked AI for the help

In Figure 4, two of them thanked AI for the feedback, which showed a positive attitude toward artificial intelligence tools. Moreover, learners' interaction prompts humanized with AI as it is human beings have their own goals and feelings without realizing it is a machine that was made for a purpose. For example that presented in figure 5 and 6, they treated AI as if they asked humans about its schedule for today in order to catch some ideas. Furthermore, these interaction prompts were repeated in various contexts.

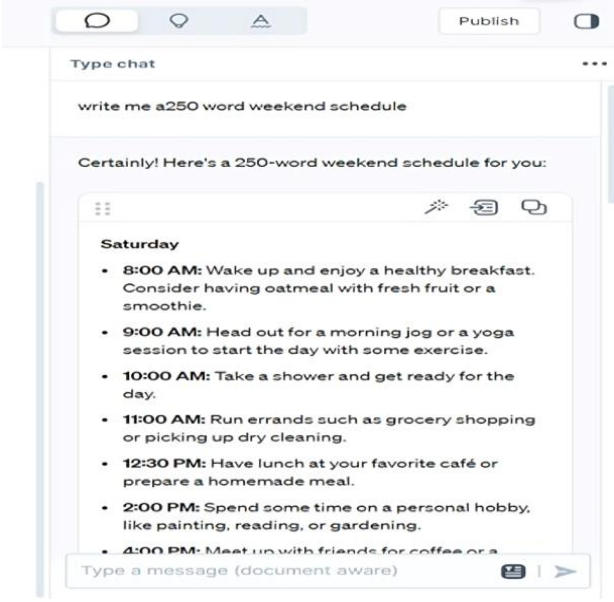


Figure 5: A learner caught ideas from AI in Type's chat box

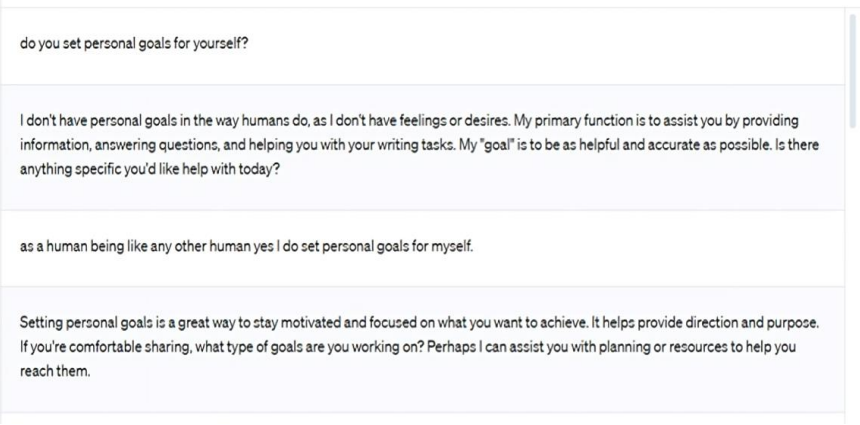


Figure 6: A learner treated AI as human in Type's chat box

The second research question aimed to identify the types of prompts that learners used to interact with AI tools during the experiment. To answer this question, three main themes covered various aspects to enhance the identification of the kinds of interaction prompts. The themes were the types of prompts by learners, feedback from AI, and error identification prompts.

The data suggests the types of questions that learners utilized in the chat box with AI to complete the required writing prompt. This theme has three sub-themes: style prompts, grammar prompts, and word count prompts (Figure 7).

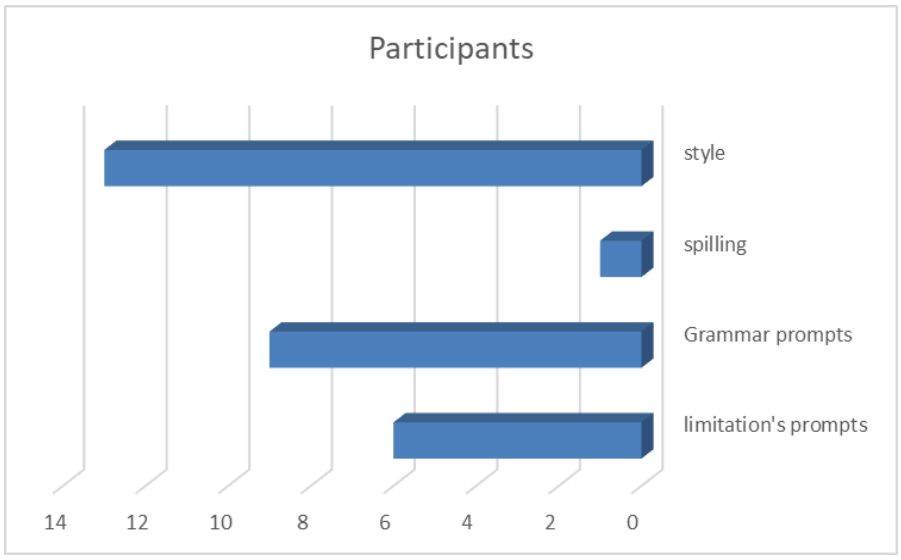


Figure 7: The number of learners that used the specific prompts in Type's chat box

44.83% of the learners recurred to improve their vocabulary and tone in any aspect of the language. They always checked if they were using a suitable term or needed a synonym list to choose the best in Figure 8.

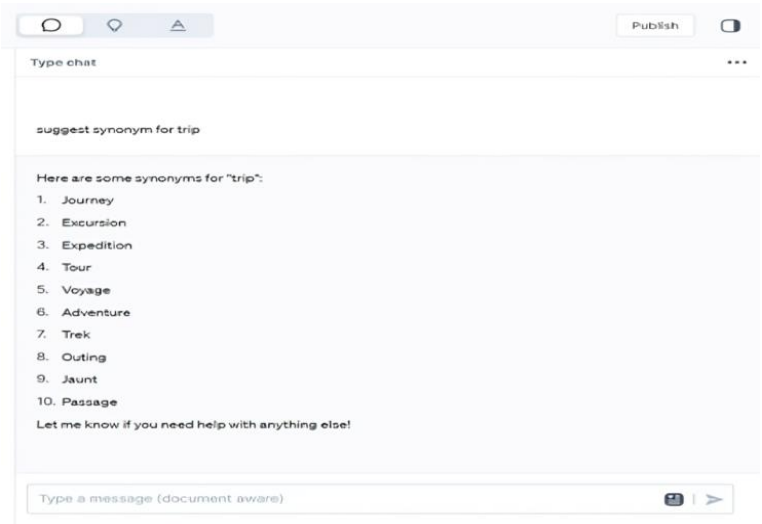


Figure 8: A learner required a list of synonyms from AI-assistant writing

In contrast, others focused on simplicity, like in Figure 9, so they could understand what was quoted from AI and be satisfied with their input. Also, others required formality in his input, which was shared with the AI assistant writing in Type in Figure 9, to follow the academic writing style.

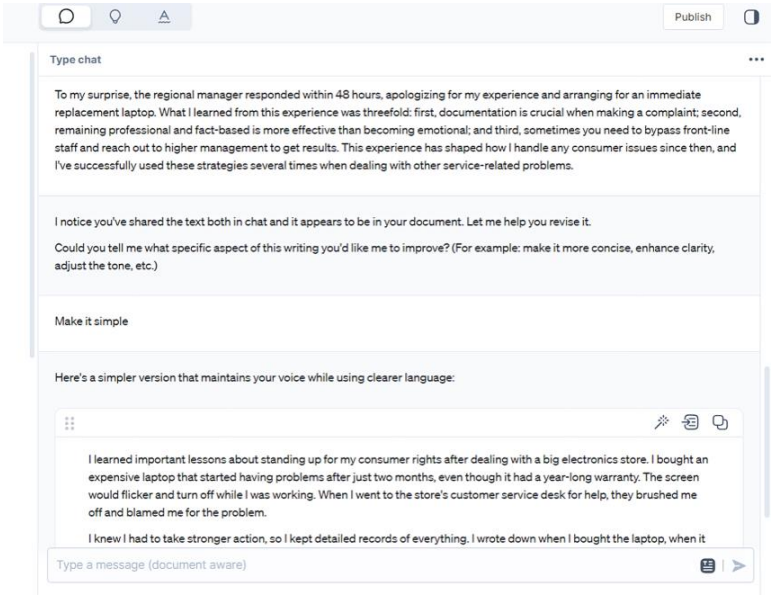


Figure 9: A learner prompted simplicity from Type in the chat box

Nine learners concentrated on grammar mistakes and interacted with AI to check and rephrase the correct structures for their whole input. On the other hand, eight were different in interacting with AI in Type to correct their grammar, like some of them shared a complete sentence in the chat box that confused them during the process, like in figure 10.

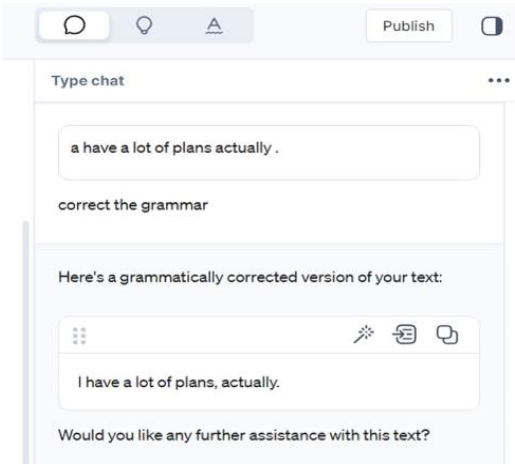


Figure 10: A learner checked the grammar of a complete sentence

20.69% of learners were concerned about reaching 200 words, which was a condition for each writing prompt they encountered in the experiment. They could not extend their input until they had support from AI to lengthen their answers suitably, which represented the limit as a challenge to their linguistic ability, especially for A2 and B1 writing prompts, as shown in Figures 11 and 12. In contrast, none of the participants completed the condition in the B2 writing prompt.

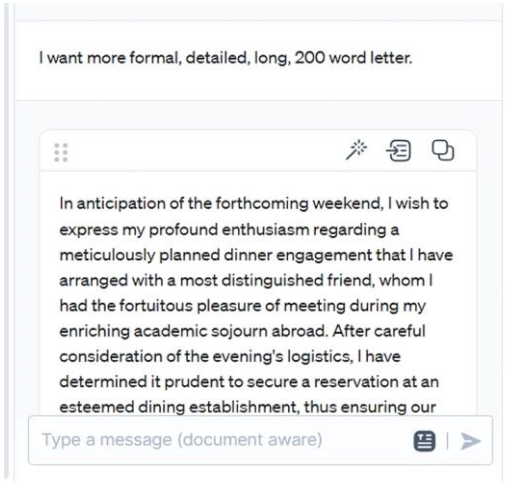


Figure 11: A learner required a specific word limit from AI in the A2 writing prompt

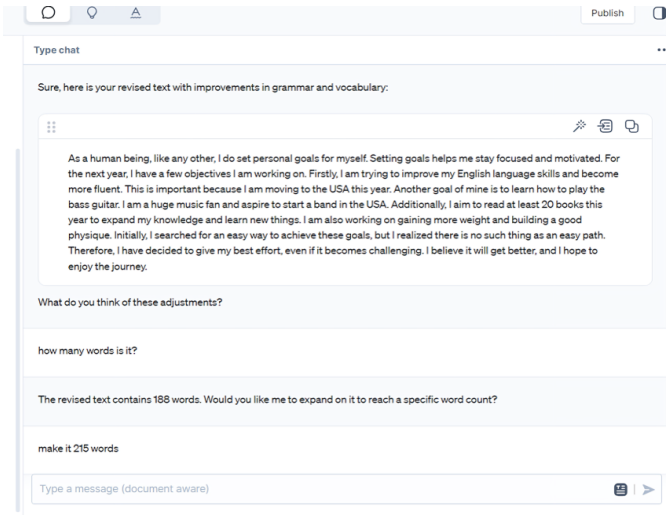


Figure 12: A learner encountered the B1 writing prompt that interacted with AI for the word limit condition

The data showed that the AI response depended on the learners' interaction prompts in the chat box with the AI that was divided into learners' inputs and AI suggestions. It was titled as AI evaluation feedback for learners' input and AI feedback and suggestions (Figure 13).

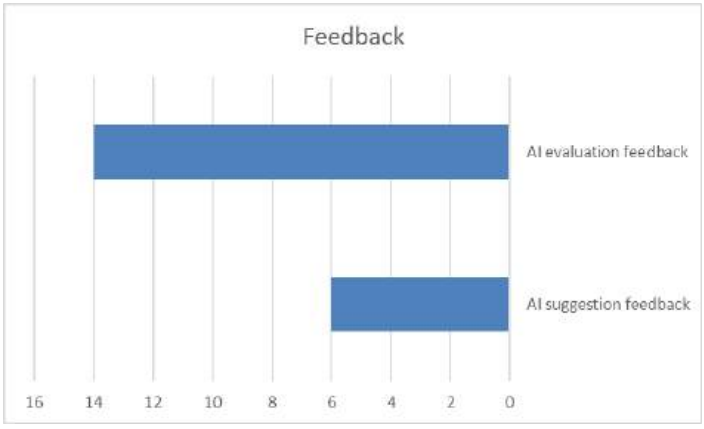


Figure 13: A percentage of the learners scoped for feedback by AI theme in Type

The last theme for the second research question stood for the limited ability of AI to deal with some interaction prompts and the insufficient interaction prompts by learners in the chat box. The first subject is errors by AI that covered 36.36% of errors that AI could not transact with all of the learners' interaction prompts because it was beyond AI's ability. As indicated in figure 14, a learner copied the writing prompt and pasted it immediately without any instruction that would distract AI to conduct with it and provide a correct response.

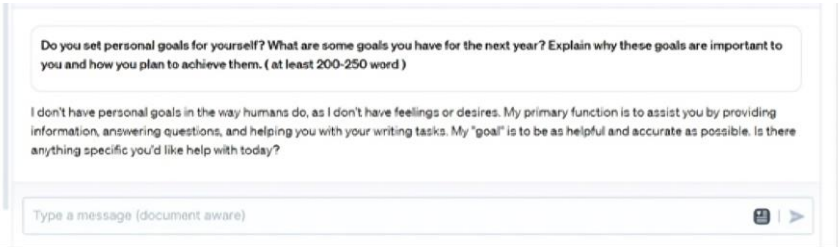


Figure 14: A pasted writing prompt by a learner to AI in Type

Question three covered the quantitative data collected twice before and after the experiment to capture the learners' opinions on Type. It was presented in two phases to organize their background and reactions before and after the experiment. The first phase of the collection, the pre-survey, was a demographic form that was indicated in Table 1.

Table 1: The learners' percentages in the demographic survey

Participant	Age	Academic year
70.4%	18-19	Second semester of the foundation year
25.9%	20-21	
3.7%	22-33	

The third question demanded a long answer and described learners' experiences using another recommended AI-based writing tool. The learners' responses in Arabic and English encouraged them to express themselves widely and share their experiences. As shown in Figure 15, one learner provided an example of an AI assistant writing Gemini, which was a good experience for him. In comparison, 34.21% of learners indicated they use AI tools, while 28.95% had never used them. 21.05% of the learners generally liked AI assistant writing, while 10.53 % of the participants emphasized their liking for the AI tool because of its ease, and 2.63% of them mentioned how the AI tool was fast.

Figure 15: A learner's experience with another AI tool

The fourth question used a Likert scale approach to focus on the participants' perceptions about using AI assistance (Figure 16). 66% of the learners strongly like AI assistance when writing and learning English, 25% just like it, and 7.4% have a neutral opinion about writing and learning English with AI tools. The percentage reported a positive attitude toward AI tools.

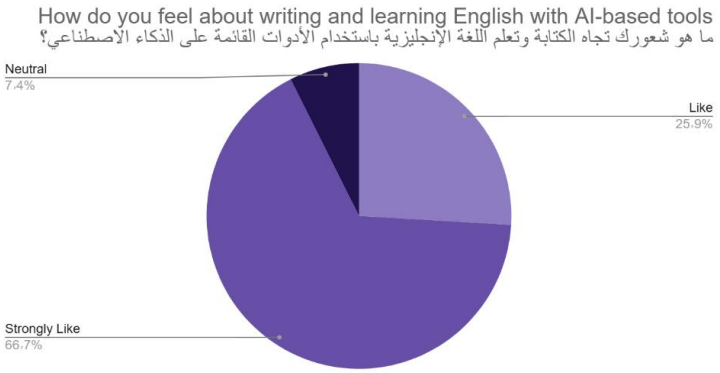


Figure 16: The fourth question in the pre-survey

The last question required a short answer that showed the participants' intention to utilize AI-based writing tools. 50% of the learners commented on the same reason for using AI-based writing tools, which were helping them to improve their writing, such as checking grammar, as shown in Figure 17. Meanwhile, 6.67% of learners considered AI to save time and effort. 6.67% of the participants stated using AI to generate ideas for their work. On the other hand, 13.33% of learners refused to mention the reason. Also, 7.41% of learners do not use AI at all.

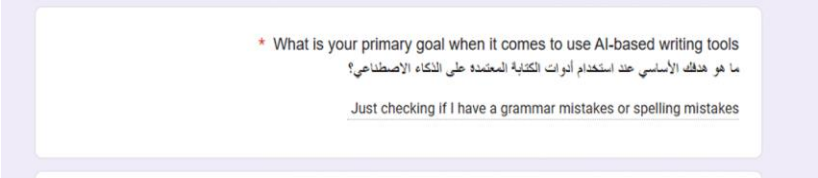


Figure 17: A response of the learner for the last question

Post-survey

The System Usability Scale (SUS) is viewed in relation to the Type, its use and its appropriateness. It is derived from SARD: A Human-AI Collaborative Story Generation, a ready-made form modified to match the study's purposes. There were eight scale questions and two open-ended questions. This survey captured the differences of learners after using the Type and drew links with their backgrounds before the experiment, which enhanced their understanding of their input in Type and their motives. As shown in Figure 18, most of the learners strongly agreed to use Type frequently after the experiment.

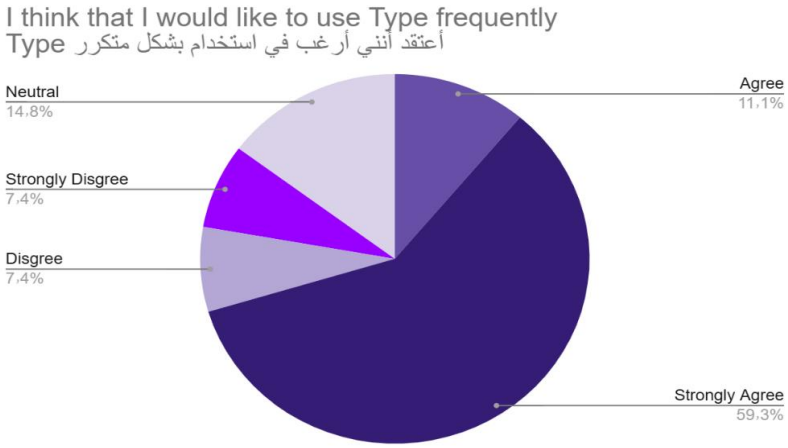


Figure 18: percentages of using Type in the post-survey

The second question was about the ease of Type, and it appeared that 55.6% of learners strongly agreed with it (Figure 19). While 11.1% of learners were neutral about utilizing Type, 11.1% of them strongly disagreed that the website is difficult, even though there was a tutorial for using it.

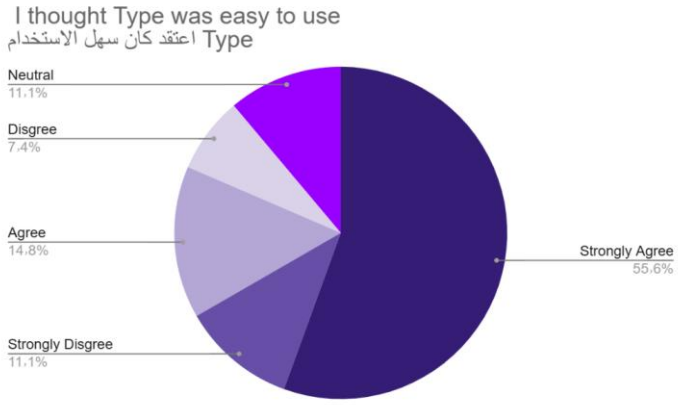


Figure 19: The second question showed in the post survey learners' responses

The third question highlighted Type's functions and whether the learners integrated it well. Type has various functions, but the experiment selected limited settings to achieve the study's objectives, such as chatting with AI to receive feedback for their writing. The AI in Type is Cloud and Chat GPT (Figure 20). For instance, the votes were close to each other: 18.5% of the learners chose neutral and agreed, while 14.5% disagreed.

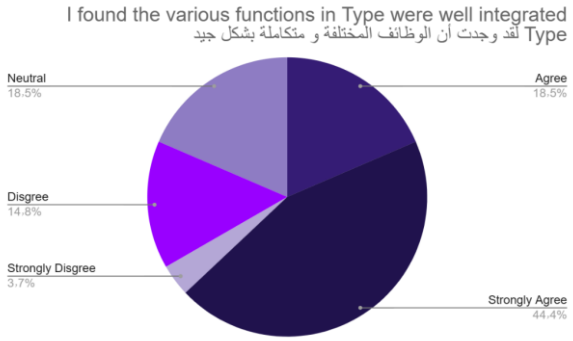


Figure 20: The participants voted for the third question in the post survey

The fourth question clarified that learners needed to understand various functions. The researcher and the teacher have already given a tutorial on using Type to enhance them, and an illustrative picture in each folder for each learner. The data indicated that 18.5% of the learners agreed and were neutral, as they had assumed previously in the fourth question in the pre-survey that 5.88% disliked Type. Also, in the last question in the pre-survey, 14.81% of learners refused to mention the reason, which may be seen as a negative attitude toward AI tools. In comparison, 7.41% of learners do not use AI in daily life, which is related to their difficulties, as 25.9% of the learners agreed they needed assistance before utilizing Type.

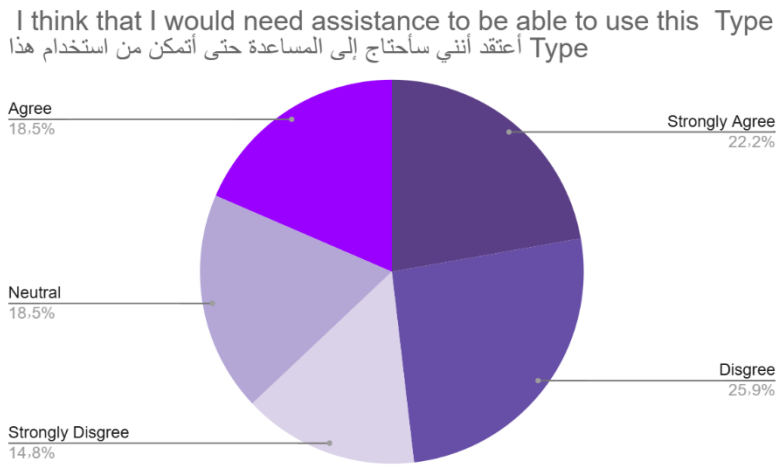


Figure 21: The learners' percentages to have a guide for using Type

V. DISCUSSION

5.1 Discussing Qualitative Findings

5.1.1 How do EFL Students Interact with an AI-based Writing Assistant?

The qualitative data answers the first question which explores that each participant has their way of interacting with the AI-assistant writing in the chat box, which is crucial for understanding the nature of interaction that required in the first research question. The theme classified the *interaction style* of the learners into two different ways that present the learners' comprehension of AI tools' ability and trust.

Interaction style is anticipated interaction and unexpected interaction. First, the group indicates predictable interactions like asking for various improvements to their input. It highlights how the learners accept to rely on the AI tool and share their knowledge with it which shows how this group can be opened for the new material learning that enhances their skills. The qualitative data findings show that 20 out of 27 participants interacted with AI during the experiment on Type, which confirms that learners appeal for feedback in their learning. As the findings suggest, the scope of the learners' interaction is anticipated prompts such as checking grammar, generating ideas, improving style, and word limit. This supports the work of Chang et al. (2021) utilized Grammarly, an AI-powered writing feedback tool, to enhance EFL learners' writing performance. The experimental group outperformed the control group, highlighting the potential of AI-powered tools in improving writing skills. This captures the nature of the interaction between learners and the AI assistant writing on how the learners utilize AI for feedback in order to enhance their writing skills.

On the other hand, unexpected interaction identifies irregular prompts from the interaction between learners and AI tools. The qualitative data presents seven learners who left the chat box empty, which raises a question about their acceptance and understanding of the effects of the AI's assistance on their learning. For instance, a learner provided two answers presented in separate paragraphs, highlighting the oscillation of making decisions besides their trust in their knowledge and how they ignored the assistant tools to ease and enhance the learning. Moreover, this theme expands the nature of the interaction in each level of proficiency and knowledge with AI assistants during the learning process, such as the suitability of utilizing AI tools in each level. This connects with as Tight's (2017) investigation of Spanish learners, which indicated that while participants frequently used online writing tools, low-level errors were still common in their output. This is strong evidence that the Col's importance aligns well with the CoI framework, which is a model for digital educational contexts that incorporates three essential concepts: social, teaching, and cognitive presences (Garrison et al.,

2010). It emphasizes meaningful learning through community interactions and has been widely used to impact the development of quality online education (Garrison & Arbaugh, 2007; Lomicka, 2020; Smidt et al., 2021).

To discuss the second question, the qualitative data is divided into three main themes: *the types of prompts by learners*, *feedback from AI*, and *error identification prompts*, which identify the type of prompt the learners use to express themselves through dealing with AI tools that each theme captures various angles of the types of prompts.

5.1.2 What kind of Questions do L2 Writers ask when using AI-based Writing Assistant Systems?

The first theme is *the types of prompts by learners*, suggesting the types of questions that learners utilized in the chat box with AI to complete the required writing prompts, such as style prompts, grammar prompts, and word count prompts. First, the frequent prompts that learners seek are the style prompts, which reinforce the learners' comprehension of the best version of their input. Such as asking for suitable writing style, and a synonym list. This was indicated by Utami and Winarni (2023), who conducted a study on three Indonesian students who used AI-assisted writing for academic research. They discovered that AI-assisted language learning tools positively affected students' academic research writing and improved their involvement in tasks. Second, Grammar prompts that were a concern for nine learners in their interaction with AI-assisted writing, like sharing the whole input or a specific sentence to correct. Finally, word limit prompts were widely employed because the writing prompt required a length of 200 to 250 words. The data captures their attempts to reach and expand their input to the requirement, showing their motivation for success in the task. Several studies emphasize motivation with learning, including the work of Marzuki et al. (2023), who stated that the AI tools are regarded as ongoing interactive training that stimulates internal incentive and responsibility for learning.

This second theme *Feedback by AI* addresses the study's second question by showing how the learners' prompts influenced the AI's responses in the chat box. It is divided into AI evaluation feedback and AI suggestions feedback, which focuses on the dark side of AI. First, evaluation feedback frequently filters out the human touch, resulting in a lack of personal detail in responses. The data shows fourteen participants chose AI feedback over their original inputs, which was disappointing because their input would not need that much change. However, they blindly believed this was the best choice. This demonstrates a negative reliance on AI-assisted writing, as learners could fail to identify their exact areas for improvement. In a previous study, Marzuki et al. (2023) highlight the positive impact of AI tools on learning, but also highlight the potential for over-reliance on technology when learners become accustomed to solving their difficulties with AI, leading to negative consequences. Second, AI suggestions feedback, which happened during the experiment, showed that AI convinced learners of the feedback provided in the chat box like list the changes made to their input or the positive advantages of its feedback so learners could understand it and grasp it as the only correct information they needed. This contrasts with educators provide indirect corrective feedback through highlighting, underlining, or coding, while learners make self-correction and self-reformulation, utilizing various methods in the learning process (Bitchener et al., 2005). AI suggestions feedback often offers immediate changes without necessitating learners to engage in self-reflection or error exploration.

The last theme *Errors Identification prompts* that elaborated on the second question in the study stood for AI's limited ability to deal with some interaction prompts and learners' insufficient interaction prompts in the chat box. The first subject is learners' errors with AI in the chat box in Type, which were covered 63.64% of the time, which shows how the effect of the wrong prompt would confuse AI feedback. For instance, learners shared their input with incorrect prompts, so the AI could not understand what it should be helping with. This strongly relate to Ruane et al. (2019) stated transparency is crucial for users to comprehend the inner workings and limitations of AI language learning tools, enabling informed

decision-making and fostering trust. The second subject is errors by AI, which covered 36.36% of errors that AI could not transact with all of the learners' interaction prompts because it was beyond AI's ability. For example, a learner copied the writing prompt and pasted it immediately without any instruction that would distract AI to conduct with it and provide a correct response. Also, the learners' misspelling prompts could affect the AI's reaction, which would repeat the same provided interaction prompt. This relates to the limitation of the AI as mentioned by Ghufron and Rosyida (2018), Grammarly has limitations in error recognition, potentially not accurately identifying errors in content and style, and has less effect on content and organization in writing. To gain deeper insights into participant experience with Type, open-ended question was includes in the post survey that reveals 10.34% encountered technical problems like system glitches which is normal because many participants were utilizing the same account simultaneously.

5.2 Discussing Qualitative Findings

5.2.1 What is the Perception of the Learner of AI-an AI-based Writing Assistant?

This indicates to ascertain how language learners perceive the use of AI-based writing assistants for educational purposes. Pre- and post-surveys were used to assess the participants' interaction with AI and identify pros and cons of their experience with Type.

The first phase, pre-survey, contains demographic information to help define the study scope and highlight the background information of learners' learning with AI assistance. It has three questions: age, academic year, and general feeling about using AI tools for learning and writing. The findings show 66% of the learners strongly like AI assistance when writing and learning English, 25% just like it, which presents a positive attitude toward AI-assisted writing. Ellis and Bliuc (2019) found a high correlation between students' approaches to learning (SAL) and academic success.

In the second phase, the post-survey presented scale questions that allow users to rank their thoughts about the type and provide useful insights into user experiences. The quantitative data indicates that 59.3% of the learners strongly agreed to use Type frequently after the experiment. Also, 55.6% of learners strongly agreed that Type is easy to use, whereas 44.4% of the learners felt confident when using Type. These high percentages demonstrate that learners are eager to incorporate AI-assisted writing into their learning. Also, they tend to show deeper learning and higher interaction with AI-assisted products for educational purposes. It strongly aligns with the CoI framework is a model for digital educational contexts that incorporates three essential concepts: social (SP), teaching (TP), and cognitive (CP) presences (Garrison et al., 2010). It emphasizes meaningful learning through community interactions and has been widely used to shape the development of high-quality online education (Garrison & Arbaugh, 2007; Lomicka, 2020; Smidt et al., 2021)

On the other hand, the data indicates that 18.5% of the learners agreed and the same percentage were neutral about the need to understand various functions of Type. Also, 18.5% of the learners confirm that they need background knowledge to use Type, which requires an awareness of the significance of AI-assisted tools in learning, so they cannot be distracted from their own aim. Yılmaz (2020) providing learners with Learning Analytics data in online courses can improve their perspectives of the Community of Inquiry by boosting the self-directed learning abilities of their participation.

VI. CONCLUSION

The results and conclusions of this study indicate several subjects for additional examination, resulting in the following recommendations for future research endeavors. The study recommends that policymakers and educators integrate AI writing assistants in EFL contexts to enhance language learning and critical engagement while maintaining academic integrity. Policymakers should include AI literacy in EFL curricula and invest in teacher training focused on higher-order writing skills. Educators need to differentiate AI use based on student

abilities, fostering critical engagement by having learners compare AI feedback with that from peers and teachers. Balancing AI feedback with teacher input is crucial, and assignments should encourage students to document their interactions with AI to promote mindful and sustainable writing strategies. Key research questions focus on EFL students' interactions, inquiries, and perceptions, contributing to a deeper understanding of AI's influence on language learning. The study used a mixed-methods design to explore the interaction between L2 learners and Type, an AI-based writing assistant. Data was collected through pre- and post-surveys, assessing user experiences and feedback. The findings of this study reveal significant insights into how second language learners interact with the AI-based writing assistant, Type. Qualitative data indicates that learners exhibit both anticipated and unexpected interaction styles, highlighting their varying levels of trust and comprehension regarding AI tools. Participants primarily sought feedback on style, grammar, and word count, demonstrating a proactive approach to utilizing AI for writing enhancement. However, challenges such as over-reliance on AI feedback and errors in prompts were also evident. The study reveals a positive perception of AI assistance in language education, with most users finding it user-friendly. However, some learners lack understanding of the tool's functions, emphasizing the need for adequate training and resources. The findings highlight the potential of AI tools in language education and suggest areas for improvement.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As part of the master dissertation, this study has been conducted at a public university in Saudi Arabia.

REFERENCES

1. Barrot, J. S. (2023). Using automated written corrective feedback in the writing classrooms: Effects on L2 writing accuracy. *Computer Assisted Language Learning, 36*(4), 584–607. https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2021.1936071Taylor & Francis Online
2. Andrade, C. (2021). The inconvenient truth about convenience and purposive samples. *Indian Journal of Psychological Medicine, 43*(1), 86–88. https://doi.org/10.1177/0253717620977000SAGEJournals+3PubMed+3ResearchGate+3
3. Bitchener, J., Young, S., & Cameron, D. (2005). The effect of different types of corrective feedback on ESL student writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 14*(3), 191–205. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2005.08.001SCIRP
4. Brooke, J. (1996). SUS: A 'quick and dirty' usability scale. In P. W. Jordan, B. Thomas, B. A. Weerdmeester, & I. L. McClelland (Eds.), *Usability evaluation in industry* (pp. 189–194). Taylor & Francis.
5. Chang, T. S., Li, Y., Huang, H. W., & Whitfield, B. (2021, March). Exploring EFL students' writing performance and their acceptance of AI-based automated writing feedback. In *Proceedings of the 2021 2nd International Conference on Education Development and Studies* (pp. 31–35). https://doi.org/10.1145/3459043.3459065
6. Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). Sage Publications.
7. Ellis, R. A., Goodyear, P., Calvo, R. A., & Prosser, M. (2008). Engineering students' conceptions of and approaches to learning through discussions in face-to-face and online contexts. *Learning and Instruction, 18*(3), 267–295.
8. Ellis, R. A., & Bliuc, A. M. (2019). Exploring new elements of the student approaches to learning framework: The role of online learning technologies in student learning. *Active Learning in Higher Education, 20*(1), 11–24. https://doi.org/10.1177/1469787417721384SAGE Journals
9. Garrison, D. R. & Arbaugh, J. B. (2007). Researching the community of inquiry framework: Review, issues, and future directions. *The Internet and Higher Education, 10*(3), 157–172. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iheduc.2007.04.001

10. Garrison, D. R., Anderson, T., & Archer, W. (2010). The first decade of the community of inquiry framework: A retrospective. *The Internet and Higher Education, 13*(1–2), 5–9. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iheduc.2009.10.003
11. Ghufron, M. A., & Rosyida, F. (2018). The role of Grammarly in assessing English as a Foreign Language (EFL) writing. *Lingua Cultura, 12*(4), 395–403. https://doi.org/10.21512/lc.v12i4.4582
12. Jiang, R. (2022). How does artificial intelligence empower EFL teaching and learning nowadays? A review on artificial intelligence in the EFL context. *Frontiers in Psychology, 13*, 1049401. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.1049401
13. Khanzode, K. C. A., & Sarode, R. D. (2020). Advantages and disadvantages of artificial intelligence and machine learning: A literature review. *International Journal of Library & Information Science, 9*(1), 21–30. https://iaeme.com/MasterAdmin/Journal_uploads/IJLIS/VOLUME_9_ISSUE_1/IJLIS_09_01_004.pdfIAEME+1IAEME+1
14. Link, S., Mehrzad, M., & Rahimi, M. (2020). Impact of automated writing evaluation on teacher feedback, student revision, and writing improvement. *Computer Assisted Language Learning, 35*(4), 605–634. https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2020.1743323ERIC+1ResearchGate+1
15. Lomicka, L. (2020). Creating and sustaining virtual language communities. *Foreign Language Annals, 53*(2), 306–313. https://doi.org/10.1111/flan.12456Wiley Online Library
16. Marzuki, Widiati, U., Rusdin, D., Darwin, & Indrawati, I. (2023). The impact of AI writing tools on the content and organization of students' writing: EFL teachers' perspective. *Cogent Education, 10*(2), 2236469. https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2023.2236469Taylor & Francis Online+1Taylor & Francis Online+1
17. Meunier, F., Pikhart, M., & Klimova, B. (2022). New perspectives of L2 acquisition related to human-computer interaction (HCI). *Frontiers in Psychology, 13*, 1098208. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.1098208
18. Ouyang, F., & Jiao, P. (2021). Artificial intelligence in education: The three paradigms. *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education, 18*, 1–13. https://doi.org/10.1186/s41239-021-00249-3
19. Qassemzadeh, A., & Soleimani, H. (2016). The impact of feedback provision by Grammarly software and teachers on learning passive structures by Iranian EFL learners. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies, 6*(9), 1884–1894. https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.0609.20
20. Ruane, E., Birhane, A., & Ventresque, A. (2019). Conversational AI: Social and ethical considerations. In *Proceedings of the 2019 AAAI/ACM Conference on AI, Ethics, and Society* (pp. 153–159). https://doi.org/10.1145/3306618.3314284
21. Şahin, M. D., & Ozturk, G. (2019). Mixed method research: Theoretical foundations, designs and its use in educational research. *International Journal of Contemporary Educational Research, 6*(2), 301–310. https://doi.org/10.33200/ijcer.599138
22. Saldaña, J. (2012). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications.
23. Smidt, E., Chau, M. H., Rinehimer, E., & Leever, P. (2021). Exploring engagement of users of Global Englishes in a community of inquiry. *System, 98*, 102477. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2021.102477
24. Thompson, P. (2013). The digital natives as learners: Technology use patterns and approaches to learning. *Computers & Education, 65*, 12–33. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2012.12.022
25. Tight, D. G. (2017). Tool usage and effectiveness among L2 Spanish computer writers. *CALICO Journal, 34*(1), 1–18. https://doi.org/10.1558/cj.27615
26. Type.ai: The all-in-one AI writing assistant. (n.d.). https://type.ai/
27. Utami, S. P. T., & Winarni, R. (2023). Utilization of artificial intelligence technology in English language learning: A case study. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research,*

14(2), 456–462. https://doi.org/10.17507/jltr.1402.23
28. Wichadee, S. (2013). Peer feedback on Facebook: The use of social networking websites to develop writing ability of undergraduate students. *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education, 14*(4), 260–270. https://doi.org/10.17718/tojde.34 338
29. Yan, D. (2023). Impact of ChatGPT on learners in a L2 writing practicum: An exploratory investigation. *Education and Information Technologies, 28*(11), 13943–13967. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-023-11752-5
30. Yılmaz, R. (2020). Enhancing community of inquiry and reflective thinking skills of undergraduates through using learning analytics-based process feedback. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning, 36*(6), 909–921. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcal.12446

This page is intentionally left blank

Contract Faculty in Telangana Universities: Disparities in Recognition, Workload and Professional Development

Ram Shepherd Bheenaveni, Parandamulu Chinthakindi, Srinivas Katherasala, Shireesha Methri, Satheesh Kaitha, Karthik Medi & Shiva Kumar Medhari

Osmania University, Hyderabad

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the disparities in recognition, benefits, teaching load, job security and professional development opportunities experienced by contract faculty in Telangana universities. Despite their critical role in sustaining higher education, contract faculty often face systemic challenges not encountered by their tenure-track counterparts. The objective is to evaluate these inequities and propose actionable recommendations for fostering a more equitable and supportive academic environment. Using a descriptive survey design, data were collected from 211 contract faculty members across nine universities in Telangana, spanning disciplines such as Sciences, Social Sciences, Humanities & Arts and Engineering. A semi-structured questionnaire incorporating a five-point Likert scale was administered via Google Forms. Statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS, employing descriptive statistics, one- way ANOVA, and homogeneity tests to assess disparities. Findings reveal that 100% of respondents reported receiving no Dearness Allowance, House Rent Allowance, or medical benefits. Additionally, 30.3% lacked leave benefits and only 21.8% had access to professional development opportunities.

Keywords: contract faculty, recognition disparities, job security, professional development, teaching load, higher education, faculty benefits, academic equity, university governance, job satisfaction.

Classification: LCC Code: LB2331

Language: English

Great Britain Journals Press

LJP Copyright ID: 573343
Print ISSN: 2515-5784
Online ISSN: 2515-5792

London Journal of Research in Humanities & Social Science

Volume 25 | Issue 15 | Compilation 1.0

Contract Faculty in Telangana Universities: Disparities in Recognition, Workload and Professional Development

Ram Shepherd Bheenaveni[α], Parandamulu Chinthakindi[σ], Srinivas Katherasala[ρ], Shireesha Methri [ↀ], Satheesh Kaitha[¥], Karthik Medi[§] & Shiva Kumar Medhari [χ]

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the disparities in recognition, benefits, teaching load, job security, and professional development opportunities experienced by contract faculty in Telangana universities. Despite their critical role in sustaining higher education, contract faculty often face systemic challenges not encountered by their tenure-track counterparts. The objective is to evaluate these inequities and propose actionable recommendations for fostering a more equitable and supportive academic environment. Using a descriptive survey design, data were collected from 211 contract faculty members across nine universities in Telangana, spanning disciplines such as Sciences, Social Sciences, Humanities & Arts, and Engineering. A semi-structured questionnaire incorporating a five-point Likert scale was administered via Google Forms. Statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS, employing descriptive statistics, one-way ANOVA, and homogeneity tests to assess disparities. Findings reveal that 100% of respondents reported receiving no Dearness Allowance, House Rent Allowance, or medical benefits. Additionally, 30.3% lacked leave benefits and only 21.8% had access to professional development opportunities. The mean score for recognition-related perceptions was 2.92 (SD=1.690), indicating low institutional acknowledgment. Teaching loads were reported as equal or higher than those of regular faculty, with 65 respondents indicating a "very high" workload. This study offers region-specific insights into the lived realities of contract faculty in Telangana, contributing to the discourse on academic equity in Indian higher education. The recommendations-enhancing recognition practices, ensuring equitable benefits, balancing workloads, improving job security and expanding professional development access-align with broader institutional reforms and aim to improve job satisfaction, retention, and the overall quality of education.

Keywords: contract faculty, recognition disparities, job security, professional development, teaching load, higher education, faculty benefits, academic equity, university governance, job satisfaction.

Author α σ ↀ ¥ §: Department of Sociology, Osmania University, Hyderabad, TG, India. 500007.

ρ χ: Department of Social Work, Osmania University, Hyderabad, TG, India. 500007.

I. INTRODUCTION

Universities are multifaceted institutions that serve as engines of intellectual growth, social transformation and economic development (Sanyal & Martin, 2008). They function not only as centres of learning and research but also as workplaces for a diverse spectrum of academic professionals (Harris & Holley, 2016). Among these, contract teaching faculty constitute a significant and growing segment, particularly in Indian public universities, where they are often appointed on temporary or fixed-term bases to meet rising student enrolments and faculty shortages (Baume & Popovic, 2016; Gallas & Shah, 2024).

In Telangana, the reliance on contract faculty has intensified over the past decade, yet their professional experiences remain markedly different from those of regular, tenure-track faculty. This study evaluates disparities in five key

dimensions: recognition, benefits, teaching load, job security and professional development opportunities. These disparities raise critical questions about fairness, institutional equity, and the sustainability of higher education systems. While contract faculty contribute substantially to teaching and departmental operations, they often lack access to institutional recognition, comprehensive benefits, and long-term career pathways (Klainot-Hess, 2020a; Cohen, 2013).

Recognition, a cornerstone of academic identity and job satisfaction, is frequently elusive for contract faculty (Day et al., 2005). Without the permanence or visibility afforded to regular faculty, they may struggle to establish reputations or participate in governance structures, leading to diminished morale and professional disenfranchisement (Locke & Latham, 1990). Similarly, disparities in benefits-such as health insurance, retirement plans and leave entitlements-create financial and personal stress, undermining their well-being and long-term engagement (Klainot-Hess, 2020b).

Despite these challenges, limited scholarship has addressed the lived realities of contract faculty in the Indian context, particularly within Telangana's state universities. Existing studies tend to generalize faculty experiences or focus on national-level policy without capturing region-specific dynamics. This research fills that gap by offering empirical insights into the conditions of contract faculty across nine universities in Telangana, thereby contributing to the discourse on academic equity and institutional reform.

By framing the study around five core dimensions-recognition, benefits, teaching load, job security, and professional development-the research provides a structured lens to examine systemic disparities. These issues are not only administrative but also pedagogical, as they influence faculty motivation, student learning outcomes, and the overall quality of education. Addressing them is essential for fostering inclusive governance, enhancing institutional resilience and advancing social justice in higher education.

Teaching load is a significant factor in the work-life balance of faculty members (Rashid et al., 2022). Contract faculty often carry heavier teaching loads, sometimes with less support and fewer resources than regular faculty (Qazi Abdul Subhan, 2023). This increased workload can lead to burnout and negatively affect the quality of education they provide (Van Droogenbroeck et al., 2014). Job security is another major concern for contract faculty. The temporary nature of their contracts can create a sense of instability and uncertainty about their future (Smithson & Lewis, 2000), affecting their long-term career planning and overall well-being. In contrast, regular faculty often enjoy the stability of tenure or long-term contracts. Professional development opportunities are essential for faculty growth and advancement (Kilag et al., 2023).

1.1 Understanding the Nature of Work for Contract Faculty

The professional experiences of contract faculty differ markedly from those of regular faculty due to the temporary and often precarious nature of their appointments. Typically hired to meet immediate teaching demands, fill staffing gaps, or manage rising student enrollments, contract faculty often assume highly variable roles across disciplines (Levin & Quinn, 2003). This flexibility, while beneficial to institutions, can result in a lack of specialization and continuity for the faculty themselves.

Balancing teaching responsibilities with research, service and community engagement poses significant challenges. Respondents noted that their temporary status often excludes them from supervising Ph.D. scholars or participating in scholarly activities essential for career advancement (Duffy, 2019). This imbalance can lead to a cycle where teaching dominates their workload, limiting opportunities for professional growth and institutional visibility.

Recognition of contract faculty contributions is frequently constrained by their transient roles. Unlike regular faculty who benefit from long-term departmental integration, contract faculty may struggle to establish a lasting presence or receive

acknowledgment for their work (Schenkewitz, 2019; Brandford et al., 2022). This lack of recognition can erode professional identity and diminish their sense of belonging within the academic community.

Access to professional development resources-such as workshops, conferences and research grants-is critical for faculty advancement (Baldwin & Others, 1981; Smith & Gillespie, 2023). However, many contract faculty report limited institutional support in this area, which hinders skill enhancement and long-term career planning.

The disparities in recognition, benefits, workload, job security and development opportunities between contract and regular faculty present urgent challenges. Addressing these inequities is essential to fostering a more inclusive and supportive academic environment. By evaluating these differences, this study aims to identify actionable solutions that ensure contract faculty feel valued, empowered and able to contribute meaningfully to the university's mission.

II. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- To assess disparities in institutional recognition between contract faculty and regular faculty in Telangana universities.
- To evaluate differences in access to faculty benefits, including allowances, insurance and retirement provisions.
- To analyse variations in teaching load and workload distribution across disciplines.
- To examine the level of job security and contractual stability experienced by contract faculty.
- To investigate the availability and utilization of professional development opportunities among contract faculty.
- To develop actionable recommendations for improving equity, support, and institutional inclusion of contract faculty.

This study employs a quantitative research design using survey methodology, with data collected from 211 contract faculty members across nine universities in Telangana. Statistical tools such as ANOVA and descriptive analysis were used to identify patterns and disparities.

2.1 Importance of the Study

The significance of this research lies in its region-specific focus on Telangana's public universities, offering empirical insights into the lived experiences of contract faculty-a group often overlooked in national policy discourse. By highlighting disparities in recognition, workload, and career advancement, the study contributes to the broader conversation on academic equity and institutional reform.

The findings have implications for

- Higher education policy-making, especially in the context of faculty recruitment and retention strategies.
- Institutional governance, by informing equitable practices in workload distribution and benefit allocation.
- Student learning outcomes, as faculty well-being directly influences teaching quality and academic engagement.
- Social justice in academia, by advocating for inclusive and supportive environments for all faculty members.

This research fills a critical gap in the literature by contextualizing contract faculty challenges within Telangana's higher education landscape, thereby offering practical recommendations for systemic improvement.

III. MATERIAL AND METHODS

This study employed a descriptive survey design, which was deemed appropriate for capturing the perceptions and lived experiences of contract faculty regarding disparities in recognition, benefits, teaching load, job security and professional development. The design facilitated the collection of standardized data across a diverse population, enabling comparative analysis and the identification of patterns within the academic workforce.

The research was conducted across nine public universities in Telangana state: Osmania University, Telangana University, Kakatiya

University, Palamuru University, Satavahana University, JNTU(H), Mahatma Gandhi University, Telangana Mahila University, and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University. These institutions were selected to represent a cross-section of higher education contexts in the region. The study focused on four major academic disciplines: Sciences, Social Sciences, Humanities & Arts and Engineering.

The target population consisted of 1,445 contract faculty members employed across these universities. A sample of 211 faculty members-approximately 20% of the population-was selected using simple random sampling, ensuring a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. Randomization was achieved by generating a randomized list of faculty contacts from departmental rosters and inviting participants through stratified outreach across disciplines. Regular faculty were excluded from the sample to focus exclusively on the self-reported experiences of contract faculty. Comparative insights regarding regular faculty were drawn from institutional norms and secondary literature, rather than direct survey data.

Data were collected using a semi-structured questionnaire developed and distributed via Google Forms. The instrument included both open-ended and closed-ended items, with a five-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." The questionnaire was reviewed by subject experts for content validity and piloted with a small group of faculties to refine clarity and relevance. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, yielding a coefficient of 0.82, indicating acceptable internal consistency. The questionnaire measured dimensions such as perceived recognition, access to benefits, workload intensity, job stability and professional development opportunities.

To mitigate response bias, participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. Reminders were sent to non-respondents and participation was voluntary to reduce self-selection effects. The final dataset was analysed using SPSS software. Descriptive statistics were used to calculate measures of central tendency (mean, standard deviation), while cross-tabulation was applied to examine relationships between variables such as discipline, community status, and qualification levels. One-way ANOVA and homogeneity tests were employed to test hypotheses regarding disparities across groups. Assumptions of normality and homoscedasticity were verified prior to conducting ANOVA.

While the methodology was rigorous, certain limitations must be acknowledged. The study relied on self-reported data, which may be subject to personal bias or selective recall. The representativeness of the sample, though statistically justified, may not capture all nuances of contract faculty experiences across institutions. Additionally, the exclusion of regular faculty from direct survey participation limits the scope of comparative analysis.

Despite these limitations, the study offers a robust and contextually grounded examination of contract faculty conditions in Telangana universities, contributing valuable insights for institutional reform and policy development.

IV. RESULTS

4.1 Work Experience of Contract Faculty

The study examined the work experience distribution among 211 contract faculty members across nine universities in Telangana. The data reveal a notable trend of long-term service among contract faculty. The majority of contract faculty (84.3%) have over a decade of teaching experience, with 42.8% serving between 11 to 15 years and 41.5% exceeding 16 years. This reflects a high degree of institutional continuity and professional commitment. However, despite their long tenure, many faculty members remain in precarious employment conditions without access to promotion, retirement benefits, or job security.

4.1.1 Qualitative Insights from Group Discussion (GD-I)

Faculty members participating in group discussions expressed deep concern over the lack of institutional recognition and benefits, even after decades of service. Several recurring themes emerged:

- *Absence of Retirement Benefits:* Faculty reported retiring as assistant professors after 30–35 years of service without receiving pension, gratuity or other retirement entitlements.
- *Equal Workload, Unequal Recognition:* Participants emphasized that their teaching responsibilities often matched or exceeded those of regular faculty, yet they were excluded from formal recognition and career advancement.
- *Unacknowledged Contributions:* Despite publishing in reputed journals and guiding students, contract faculty felt their academic contributions were undervalued.

One faculty member noted:

"Some of our colleagues retired without any promotion or retirement benefits. We perform the same duties as regular faculty, yet we are invisible when it comes to recognition."

These insights underscore systemic inequities in job security and recognition-two core objectives of this study. The persistence of long-term service under temporary contracts reflects institutional gaps in policy implementation and workforce planning. The findings call for urgent reforms to ensure that contract faculty are not only retained but also respected and supported within the academic ecosystem.

4.2 Community Representation Across Disciplines

The study analysed the distribution of contract faculty members across academic disciplines and community categories, revealing patterns of representation and potential gaps in inclusivity. Table 1 presents the demographic breakdown.

Table 1: Community Status and Type of Faculty

Community	Sciences	Social Sciences	Humanities & Arts	Engineering	N
General Category	25	6	0	6	37
Other Backwards Classes	77	45	13	13	148
Scheduled Tribes	7	6	0	0	13
Schedule Caste	6	0	0	7	13
Total	115	57	13	26	211

The data indicate that the Sciences department hosts the largest number of contract faculty (115), followed by Social Sciences (57), Engineering (26) and Humanities & Arts (13). The Other Backward Classes (OBC) constitute the most represented community, accounting for 70.1% of the total sample. In contrast, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes each comprise only 6.2% of the faculty population.

Notably, SC and ST faculty members are absent in Humanities & Arts and underrepresented in Engineering and Social Sciences. This uneven distribution suggests potential barriers to entry or retention for marginalized communities in certain disciplines. The absence of General Category faculty in Humanities & Arts also reflects a skewed demographic pattern.

These findings align with the study's broader objective of examining equity and recognition within university systems. The data underscore the need for targeted inclusion strategies and community-sensitive recruitment policies to ensure balanced representation across disciplines. Enhancing diversity not only promotes social justice but also enriches academic discourse and institutional resilience.

4.3 Ph.D. Status of Contract Faculty

The study examined the academic qualifications of contract faculty across four major disciplines, focusing on whether faculty members had secured their Ph.D. degrees in accordance with University Grants Commission (UGC) norms. Table 2 presents the distribution.

Table.2: Type of Faculty and faculty Ph.D. status

Type of Faculty	No Ph.D.	Yes, as per UGC norms	N
Sciences	13	102	115
Social Sciences	13	44	57
Humanities & Arts	0	13	13
Engineering	13	13	26
Total	39	172	211

The data reveal that 81.5% of contract faculty (172 out of 211) have earned their Ph.D. degrees in compliance with UGC standards, reflecting a strong commitment to academic excellence. The Humanities & Arts discipline shows full compliance, with all faculty members holding Ph.D. qualifications. However, notable gaps exist in Sciences, Social Sciences, and Engineering, where a combined total of 39 faculty members have yet to attain doctoral degrees.

This disparity highlights areas where further academic support and professional development may be needed. In particular, the Engineering department shows an equal split between Ph.D. holders and non-holders, suggesting potential challenges in qualification pathways or institutional support mechanisms.

The findings align with the study's objective of evaluating professional development opportunities. While the overall qualification rate is commendable, the presence of faculty without Ph.D. credentials-especially in technical and research-intensive fields-underscores the importance of sustained efforts to promote higher academic attainment. Institutional initiatives such as research grants, mentorship programs, and eligibility support for doctoral enrolment could help bridge these gaps and enhance the quality of education and research across disciplines.

4.4 Teaching Eligibility Qualifications: NET and SET Status

The study assessed the teaching eligibility qualifications of contract faculty across disciplines, focusing on their status with respect to the National Eligibility Test (NET) and the State Eligibility Test (SET). These certifications are critical for academic recruitment and career progression in Indian universities. Table 3 presents the distribution.

Table. 3: Type of Faculty and Qualified for teaching eligibility test

Faculty	No, NET or SET	Only NET	Only Set	Both NET & SET	N
Sciences	26	20	56	13	115
Social Sciences	12	18	14	13	57
Humanities & Arts	0	0	7	6	13
Engineering	13	7	0	6	26
Total	51	45	77	38	211

The data reveal that SET is the most commonly attained qualification, with 77 faculty members (36.5%) holding only SET certification. A total of 38 faculty members (18%) have qualified for both NET and SET, while 45 (21.3%) hold only NET. However, 51 faculty members (24.2%) have not qualified for either test, indicating a significant gap in teaching eligibility credentials.

Disciplinary variations are evident. The Sciences department shows a strong presence of SET-qualified faculty (56), but also the highest number

of faculty without NET or SET (26). Engineering presents a concerning profile, with 50% of its faculty lacking either qualification. In contrast, Humanities & Arts demonstrates full compliance, with all faculty members holding at least one certification.

These findings align with the study's objective of evaluating professional development opportunities. The presence of faculty without NET or SET qualifications-particularly in Sciences and Engineering-suggests the need for targeted institutional support. Initiatives such as preparatory workshops, mentoring programs, and financial assistance for test registration could help bridge these gaps and enhance faculty eligibility.

Moreover, the uneven distribution of qualifications across disciplines may reflect structural barriers, such as limited access to test preparation resources or differences in recruitment practices. Addressing these disparities is essential for fostering equitable career advancement and maintaining academic standards across Telangana's universities.

4.5 Teaching Load Compared to Regular Faculty

The study examined the perceived teaching load of contract faculty across disciplines, comparing it to that of regular faculty. The data reveal significant disparities, particularly in Sciences and Engineering, where contract faculty report heavier workloads. Table 4 presents the distribution.

Table 4: Type of faculty and teaching load compare to regular faculty

Faculty	Equally	Somewhat High	Very High	N
Sciences	58	25	32	115
Social Sciences	32	12	13	57
Humanities & Arts	6	7	0	13
Engineering	0	6	20	26
Total	96	50	65	211

Overall, 45.9% of contract faculty (96 members) report teaching loads equal to those of regular faculty, while 23.7% (50 members) describe their workload as somewhat high, and 30.8% (65 members) consider it very high. The Engineering department stands out, with 76.9% of its faculty reporting very high teaching loads and none reporting parity with regular faculty. In contrast, Humanities & Arts shows a more balanced workload, with no faculty reporting excessive teaching demands.

These findings align with the study's objective of evaluating workload disparities. The data suggest that contract faculty, particularly in Sciences and Engineering, are often tasked with heavier teaching responsibilities, potentially without corresponding institutional support or recognition. This imbalance may contribute to burnout, reduced job satisfaction and diminished teaching quality.

The results also highlight the need for equitable workload policies that consider discipline-specific demands and ensure fair distribution of teaching responsibilities. Addressing these disparities is essential for fostering a supportive academic environment and enhancing the overall effectiveness of faculty contributions.

4.6 Access to Employment Benefits

The study assessed the availability of employment benefits for contract faculty across Telangana universities. The data reveal stark disparities in financial, health, and professional support when compared to tenure-track faculty. Table 5 presents the distribution of benefits.

Table 5: Benefits Received by Contract Employees in Universities

Statement	N (YES)	%	N (NO)	%
Dearness allowance (DA)	0	0	211	100
House rent allowance (HRA)	0	0	211	100
Conveyance allowance	39	18.5	172	81.5
Medical allowance	0	0	211	100
Leave encashment	0	0	211	100
Pension	0	0	211	100
Gratuity	0	0	211	100
Provident fund	0	0	211	100
Medical insurance	0	0	211	100
Group insurance	0	0	211	100
Leave benefits	64	30.3	147	69.7
Academic leave	72	34.1	139	65.9
Professional development opportunities	46	21.8	165	78.2

The data show that contract faculty are systematically excluded from core employment benefits. All 211 respondents reported receiving no DA, HRA, medical allowance, pension, gratuity, provident fund, or insurance coverage. Conveyance allowance was available to only 18.5% of faculty, while leave benefits and academic leave were accessible to 30.3% and 34.1% respectively. Professional development opportunities were reported by just 21.8% of respondents.

These findings reflect a critical gap in institutional support, directly impacting the financial security, health coverage and career advancement of contract faculty. The absence of basic entitlements-often extended even to industrial workers-raises concerns about the structural marginalization of academic professionals in temporary roles.

4.7 Qualitative Insights from Group Discussion (GD-II)

Faculty members with over 15 years of service voiced deep frustration over the lack of benefits despite their sustained contributions. Key themes included:

- Disparity in Compensation: Faculty highlighted that their salaries were lower than those of regular faculty, despite performing equivalent duties.
- Exclusion from Research Opportunities: Contract status limited their eligibility to apply for government-funded projects or serve as Ph.D. supervisors.
- Unrecognized Excellence: Despite publishing in reputed journals and mentoring students, their achievements were not institutionally acknowledged.

One participant remarked

"We are treated as temporary, yet we have served for decades. Even basic benefits like medical insurance and gratuity are denied to us-benefits that are standard in private sectors."

These insights reinforce the study's objectives related to recognition, benefits, and professional development. The findings call for urgent policy reforms to ensure that contract faculty are not only retained but also respected and supported. Equitable access to benefits is essential for enhancing job satisfaction, institutional loyalty, and the overall quality of education.

4.8 Recognition and Professional Development Opportunities

The study assessed contract faculty perceptions regarding institutional recognition and access to professional development opportunities. Responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree), with mean scores and standard deviations calculated for each item. Table 6 presents the results.

Table 6: Faculty perception on recognition with in university

Statement	N	Min	Max	Mean	St. Div
Establish specific awards or honours for contract faculty, recognizing excellence in teaching, research, or service	211	1	5	2.92	1.690
Include contract faculty representation on the faculty senate or other governing bodies.	211	1	5	2.97	1.737
Contract faculty as opportunities for professional development, such as workshops, conferences, or research grants	211	1	5	3.19	1.640
Contract faculty with experienced tenure-track to offer mentorship and guidance	211	1	5	3.03	1.696
Highlight the contributions of contract faculty in university newsletters, websites, or public events.	211	1	5	3.24	1.543
Recognize contract faculty achievements within their departments	211	1	5	3.20	1.582
Contract faculty have opportunities for professional development and advancement	211	1	5	2.94	1.674
universities often provide funding or support for contract faculty to attend workshops, conferences, or professional development seminars	211	1	5	2.61	1.613

The highest mean score (3.24) corresponds to the visibility of contract faculty contributions in public-facing platforms such as newsletters and websites, suggesting moderate institutional efforts in external acknowledgment. Recognition within departments (mean=3.20) and access to professional development activities (mean=3.19) also received general agreement, indicating some support for skill enhancement and career visibility.

However, the lowest mean score (2.61) reflects limited funding or institutional support for attending workshops and conferences-an essential component of academic growth. Similarly, the moderate scores for awards (2.92), governance inclusion (2.97), and career advancement (2.94) suggest that contract faculty perceive recognition structures as insufficient or inconsistently applied.

These findings align with the study's objectives concerning recognition and professional development. While faculty acknowledge the importance of institutional support, the data reveal gaps in implementation and resource allocation. The relatively low scores for funding and advancement opportunities point to systemic barriers that may hinder long-term career progression and morale.

Addressing these disparities requires universities to institutionalize inclusive recognition practices, allocate dedicated resources for contract faculty development, and ensure their representation in decision-making bodies. Such reforms are

essential for fostering a more equitable and empowering academic environment.

4.9 Faculty Perceptions Based on Experience

The study assessed contract faculty perceptions across ten key statements related to recognition, compensation, workload, job security, professional development, and institutional support. Responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree), with mean scores and standard deviations calculated. Table 7 presents the results.

Table 7: Faculty response with their experiences

Statement	N	Min	Max	Mean	St. div
I feel adequately recognized for my contributions as a contract teaching faculty	211	1	5	2.28	1.381
The salary I receive as a contract teaching faculty is fair and competitive	211	1	5	1.84	1.204
I have sufficient opportunities for professional development and advancement	211	1	5	1.82	1.215
The benefits provided to contract teaching faculty are comparable to those offered to regular faculty.	211	1	5	1.38	.798
I believe that contract teaching faculty are treated fairly and equitably within the university.	211	1	5	1.55	.921
The workload assigned to contract teaching faculty is reasonable and manageable	211	1	5	3.10	1.414
I feel secure in my position as a contract teaching faculty	211	1	5	1.89	1.256
I am satisfied with the overall job satisfaction and work-life balance as a contract teaching faculty	211	1	5	1.92	1.166
The university provides adequate support and resources for contract teaching faculty	211	1	5	1.80	1.126
I would recommend a career as a contract teaching faculty to others.	211	1	5	1.62	1.082

The data reveal consistently low mean scores across most indicators, suggesting widespread dissatisfaction among contract faculty. The lowest mean score (1.38) pertains to benefit comparability, indicating that faculty overwhelmingly perceive their benefits as inferior to those of regular faculty. Similarly, perceptions of salary fairness (1.84), job security (1.89), and institutional support (1.80) are notably low, reflecting systemic gaps in compensation and workplace stability.

Recognition (mean = 2.28) and professional development opportunities (mean = 1.82) also scored poorly, underscoring the need for inclusive acknowledgment and career advancement pathways. The only relatively positive response relates to workload manageability (mean = 3.10), suggesting that while teaching demands are high, they may be perceived as manageable in some contexts.

Importantly, the mean score for recommending a career in contract teaching (1.62) reflects deep concern about the desirability and sustainability of such roles. These findings align with the study's objectives and reinforce the urgency of institutional reforms to improve equity, support, and long-term engagement of contract faculty.

4.10 Impact of Work Experience on Recognition

To evaluate whether work experience influences the level of institutional recognition received by contract faculty, a one-way ANOVA test was conducted across five experience categories: below 5 years, 6–10 years, 11–15 years, 16–20 years, and 21 years and above. Table 8 presents the descriptive statistics and test results.

Table 8: One way ANOVA results for work experiences and recognition within university

			Test of Homogeneity of Variances		ANOVA	
Experiences in years	mean	Std. Deviation	Levene's Statistic	Sig.	F	Sig.
Below 5	3.74	1.378	3.787	.005	4.197	.003
6 to 10	2.78	1.672				
11 to 15	2.82	1.660				
16 to 20	3.80	1.486				
21 and above	3.08	1.038				

Test Statistics

- Levene's Statistic (Homogeneity of Variances): 3.787, p = .005
- ANOVA *F-value: 4.197, p = .003*

The ANOVA results indicate a statistically significant effect of work experience on recognition (F=4.197, p=.003). Since the p-value is below the conventional threshold of 0.05, the null hypothesis-stating no difference in recognition across experience levels-is rejected. This confirms that faculty members' years of service significantly influence their perceived recognition within the university.

Interestingly, faculty with 16-20 years of experience reported the highest mean recognition score (3.80), followed closely by those with less than 5 years (3.74). In contrast, faculty with 6-15 years of experience reported lower recognition scores, suggesting a possible mid-career recognition gap. The relatively moderate score for those with over 21 years of experience (3.08) may reflect institutional fatigue or stagnation in acknowledgment practices.

These findings align with the study's objective of examining disparities in recognition. They suggest that while long service may enhance visibility, it does not uniformly translate into institutional appreciation. The results underscore the need for structured recognition frameworks that consistently honour contributions across all career stages, thereby promoting morale, retention and equity among contract faculty.

V. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study underscore the persistent disparities faced by contract faculty in Telangana universities, revealing systemic inequities in recognition, benefits, workload, job security and professional development. These disparities reflect broader trends in academic labour markets, where contingent faculty often occupy structurally marginalized positions (Rhoades & Slaughter, 1997). Situating these findings within equity frameworks and higher education policy discourse offers deeper insight into the implications for institutional sustainability and academic quality.

5.1 Recognition and Institutional Visibility

The data reveal that contract faculty perceive a lack of institutional recognition for their contributions. Low mean scores on recognition-related items suggest that many faculty members feel undervalued, which aligns with existing literature on academic precarity (Varma, 2017). This lack of acknowledgment can erode morale, diminish engagement and ultimately affect teaching quality and student outcomes. From a policy perspective, recognition is not merely

symbolic-it is foundational to building inclusive academic cultures and retaining skilled educators.

5.2 Benefits and Financial Security

Contract faculty report receiving few or no core employment benefits, including Dearness Allowance (DA), House Rent Allowance (HRA), medical insurance, and retirement provisions. These findings reflect a structural exclusion from institutional welfare systems, contributing to financial stress and job dissatisfaction. The absence of benefits, even among faculty with over 15 years of service, suggests a disconnect between service duration and institutional reward. This phenomenon resonates with labour market segmentation theory, where long-term service does not guarantee upward mobility or security.

5.3 Workload and Burnout

The study highlights significant disparities in teaching load, particularly in Engineering and Sciences, where contract faculty report "very high" workloads. This imbalance not only risks burnout but also limits time for research and professional development-key components of academic growth (Sabagh et al., 2018; Barnett & Bradley, 2007). The findings suggest that workload policies may disproportionately burden contract faculty, undermining both educational quality and faculty well-being.

5.4 Job Security and Career Stagnation

Low perceptions of job security among contract faculty reflect broader concerns about employment precarity. Despite long-term service, many faculty members remain on temporary contracts without promotion or retirement benefits. This stagnation aligns with global trends in contingent academic labour, where career pathways are often opaque or non-existent (Darvishmotevali & Ali, 2020). The lack of security not only affects mental health but also discourages talented professionals from entering or remaining in academia.

5.5 Professional Development and Governance Inclusion

Limited access to workshops, conferences, and research grants further compounds the challenges faced by contract faculty. The low mean scores on professional development indicators suggest that institutional support for skill enhancement is insufficient. Moreover, the absence of contract faculty representation in governance bodies restricts their ability to influence policies that directly affect their work. This exclusion perpetuates inequities and weakens participatory decision-making structures.

5.6 Comparative and Contextual Insights

While the study focuses on Telangana, similar patterns are observed nationally and internationally. In India, contractual appointments have increased amid budget constraints and faculty shortages, often without corresponding policy safeguards. Globally, contingent faculty face comparable challenges, as documented in studies from the United States, Canada, and Australia, where academic precarity has become a defining feature of higher education employment (Fahnert, 2015). Positioning the Telangana experience within this broader context highlights the urgency of reform.

5.7 Policy and Institutional Implications

The findings call for targeted interventions to address the identified disparities. Recommended measures include:

- Standardized contracts with clear provisions for benefits, promotion, and renewal
- Incremental benefit structures tied to years of service and performance
- Mentoring programs to support career development and research engagement
- Inclusive governance frameworks that ensure contract faculty representation
- Dedicated funding for professional development and academic participation

Such reforms are essential for fostering equity, enhancing faculty retention, and sustaining institutional excellence. Recognizing and

supporting contract faculty is not only a matter of fairness-it is a strategic imperative for the future of higher education.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Drawing from the study's findings, it is evident that contract faculty in Telangana universities face systemic disparities in recognition, benefits, workload, job security, and professional development. To address these challenges, the following recommendations are proposed, organized into thematic categories and prioritized by feasibility.

6.1 Recognition and Institutional Inclusion

Short-Term (University-Level Interventions)

- Establish awards and honours recognizing excellence in teaching, research, and service among contract faculty.
- Regularly highlight contract faculty achievements in university newsletters, websites, and public events.
- Include contract faculty in departmental meetings and academic planning processes to foster visibility and inclusion.

Long-Term (Policy-Level Reforms)

- Develop transparent promotion pathways that allow contract faculty to apply for government-funded projects and serve as Ph.D. supervisors.
- Create digital platforms showcasing contract faculty research, teaching innovations, and community engagement.

6.2 Compensation and Benefits

Short-Term (University-Level Interventions)

- Offer competitive salaries that reflect qualifications, workload, and contributions.
- Provide cost-neutral benefits such as access to university health clinics, subsidized transport, and academic leave.

Long-Term (Government and Regulatory Interventions)

- Extend core benefits-Dearness Allowance (DA), House Rent Allowance (HRA), Gratuity, Pension, and Medical Insurance—to contract faculty through standardized employment policies.
- Introduce multiyear renewable contracts with incremental benefit structures tied to years of service and performance.

6.3 Workload Management

Short-Term (University-Level Interventions)

- Implement equitable workload distribution policies across departments, ensuring parity between contract and regular faculty.
- Monitor teaching assignments to prevent burnout and maintain instructional quality.

Long-Term (Regulatory Oversight)

- Mandate workload audits and reporting mechanisms to ensure compliance with fair teaching load standards.

6.4 Job Security and Career Progression

Short-Term (University-Level Interventions)

- Offer longer-term contracts with clear renewal criteria and performance-based incentives.
- Establish mentorship programs pairing contract faculty with senior faculty to support career development.

Long-Term (Policy-Level Reforms)

- Create tenure-track conversion pathways for long-serving contract faculty.
- Introduce state-level guidelines for career progression and retirement planning for contract faculty.

6.5 Professional Development

Short-Term (University-Level Interventions)

- Allocate professional development funds for contract faculty to attend workshops, conferences and training programs.
- Provide access to internal research grants and collaborative projects.

Long-Term (Government and Institutional Collaboration)

- Develop centralized platforms for contract faculty to apply for national and international development opportunities.

- Encourage partnerships with academic bodies to offer certification and skill enhancement programs.

6.6 Representation and Governance

Short-Term (University-Level Interventions)

- Ensure contract faculty representation in faculty senates, curriculum committees, and grievance redressal forums.
- Conduct regular feedback sessions to incorporate contract faculty perspectives into institutional planning.

Long-Term (Regulatory Frameworks)

- Institutionalize governance inclusion through UGC or state-level mandates requiring proportional representation of contract faculty in decision-making bodies.

6. 7 Job Satisfaction and Work-Life Balance

Short-Term (University-Level Interventions)

- Foster a supportive work environment through peer networks, wellness programs, and flexible scheduling.
- Recognize emotional and professional well-being as integral to faculty performance and retention.

Long-Term (Institutional Culture Building)

- Promote inclusive academic cultures that value all faculty contributions, regardless of employment status.

These recommendations aim to balance immediate institutional reforms with long-term policy transformations. By implementing both cost-effective and structural interventions, universities and governing bodies can create a more equitable, supportive and sustainable environment for contract faculty-ultimately enhancing the quality and integrity of higher education.

VII. CONCLUSION

This study set out to evaluate the disparities faced by contract faculty in Telangana universities across five key dimensions: recognition, benefits, teaching load, job security, and professional development opportunities. Through a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative analysis and qualitative insights, the research has confirmed that contract faculty experience systemic inequities that hinder their professional growth, institutional inclusion, and overall well-being.

The findings reveal that recognition remains inconsistent, with many contracts' faculty feeling undervalued despite long years of service and significant academic contributions. Benefits such as Dearness Allowance, House Rent Allowance, medical insurance, and retirement provisions are largely absent, creating financial insecurity and emotional distress. Teaching loads are disproportionately high in disciplines like Engineering and Sciences, contributing to burnout and limiting time for research and development. Job security is tenuous, with many faculty serving for over a decade without promotion or tenure pathways. Opportunities for professional development are limited, and representation in governance structures remains minimal, further marginalizing contract faculty voices in institutional decision-making.

By focusing on Telangana universities, this study offers context-specific insights that enrich the broader discourse on contingent academic labour in India. It contributes to existing literature by documenting the lived realities of contract faculty in a regional setting, highlighting the urgent need for policy reforms that address both structural and cultural dimensions of academic employment.

If left unaddressed, these disparities risk long-term consequences: faculty attrition, declining educational quality, erosion of academic morale, and weakened institutional credibility. Urgent reforms are necessary to ensure equity, sustainability and excellence in higher education. Universities and governing bodies must collaborate to implement inclusive policies, equitable benefit structures, and transparent career pathways that recognize and support all faculty members.

Future research could explore comparative studies across Indian states, longitudinal tracking of contract faculty career trajectories, and case studies on successful policy interventions. Such scholarship would deepen understanding and inform evidence-based reforms that strengthen the academic workforce.

In conclusion, addressing the disparities faced by contract faculty is not merely an administrative obligation-it is a moral and strategic imperative for the future of higher education in India.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest associated with the publication of this research.

Funding Statement

This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors. No institutional funding was allotted for the completion of this study.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author(s) extend sincere gratitude to all participants for their invaluable contributions and thoughtful responses, which greatly enriched the research process.

REFERENCES

1. Baldwin, R. & Others, A. (1981). Expanding Faculty Options: Career Development Projects at Colleges and Universities. *ERIC*.
2. Barnett, B. R., & Bradley, L. (2007). The impact of organisational support for career development on career satisfaction. *Career Development International*, *12*(7), 617–636. https://doi.org/10.1108/13620430710834396/FULL/XML
3. Baume, David., & Popovic, Celia. (2016). Supporting part-time teachers and contract faculty. In *Advancing Practice in Academic Development* (Vol. 1). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315720890-15
4. Brandford, E., Wang, T., Nguyen, C. & Rassbach, C. E. (2022). Sense of Belonging and Professional Identity Among Combined Pediatrics - Anesthesiology Residents. *Academic Pediatrics*, *22*(7), 1246–1253. https://doi.org/10.1016/J.ACAP.2022.05.017
5. Cohen, L. A. (2013). The "other" professors: job insecurity, health and coping strategies among contractual university teachers. In *Memorial University Research Repository*. http://research.library.mun.ca/id/eprint/10318
6. Darvishmotevali, M., & Ali, F. (2020). Job insecurity, subjective well-being and job performance: The moderating role of psychological capital. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *87*, 102462. https://doi.org/10.1016/J.IJHM.2020.102462
7. Day, C., Elliot, B. & Kington, A. (2005). Reform, standards and teacher identity: Challenges of sustaining commitment. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *21*(5), 563–577. https://doi.org/10.1016/J.TATE.2005.03.001
8. Duffy, A. (2019). A delicate balance: how postsecondary education dance faculty in the United States perceive themselves negotiating responsibilities expected for tenure. *Research in Dance Education*, *20*(1), 73–84. https://doi.org/10.1080/14647893.2018.1523382
9. Fahnert, B. (2015). Teaching matters-academic professional development in the early 21st century. *FEMS Microbiology Letters*, *362*(20). https://doi.org/10.1093/FEMSLE/FNV156
10. Gallas, A. & Shah, A. (2024). Challenging the fixed-term contract: the difficulties and prospects of organising Germanys academic precariat. In *Elgaronline*. Edward Elgar Publishing. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.4337/9781803926865.00019
11. Harris, M. & Holley, K. (2016). Universities as Anchor Institutions: Economic and Social Potential for Urban Development. *Higher Education: Handbook of Theory and Research*, 393–439. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-268 29-3_8
12. Kilag, O. K. T., Bariquit, I. A., Glipa, C. G., Ignacio, R. A. R. A., Alvez, G. U., Guilot, R. T. & Sasan, J. M. (2023). Implication of Individual Plan for Professional Development (IPPD) on Teachers' Professional Development and Career Advancement. *Basic*

and Applied Education Research Journal, *4* (1), 12–18. https://doi.org/10.11594/BAERJ.04.01.02
13. Klainot-Hess, E. (2020a). TEACHING ON CONTRACT: JOB SATISFACTION AMONG NON-TENURE-TRACK FACULTY. *Research in the Sociology of Work*, *34*, 59–82. https://doi.org/10.1108/S0277-283320200000034007/FULL/XML
14. Klainot-Hess, E. (2020b). Teaching on Contract: Job Satisfaction among Non-Tenure-Track Faculty. *Research in the Sociology of Work*, *34*, 59–82. https://doi.org/10.1108/S0277-283320200000034007/FULL/XML
15. Levin, J. & Quinn, M. (2003). Missed Opportunities: How We Keep High-Quality Teachers out of Urban Classrooms. *ERIC*, *2*.
16. Locke, E. A., & Latham, G. P. (1990). Work Motivation and Satisfaction: Light at the End of the Tunnel. *Psychological Science*, *1*(4), 240–246. https://doi.org/10.1111/J.1467-9280.1990.TB00207.X
17. Qazi Abdul Subhan, S. R. A. H. (2023). Impact of Work Life Balance, Workload and Supervisory Support on Teachers' Job Performance in Private Institutions of Islamabad. *JELM*, *2*(1). https://ojs.aiou.edu.pk/index.php/jelm/article/view/160
18. Rashid, S., Subhan, Dr. Q. A. & Imran, M. (2022). Impact of Work Life Balance, Workload and Supervisory Support on Teachers' Job Performance with Mediating Role of Stress: A Case of Private Institutions of Islamabad, Pakistan. *International Journal of Business and Management Sciences*, *3*(1), 21–34. https://ijbms.org/index.php/ijbms/article/view/116
19. Rhoades, G., & Slaughter, S. (1997). Academic Capitalism, Managed Professionals and Supply-Side Higher Education. *Social Text*, *51*, 9. https://doi.org/10.2307/466645
20. Rössler, W. (2012). Stress, burnout, and job dissatisfaction in mental health workers. *European Archives of Psychiatry and Clinical Neuroscience*, *262*(2 SUPPL.), 65–69. https://doi.org/10.1007/S00406-012-0353-4/TABLES/2
21. Sabagh, Z., Hall, N. C., & Saroyan, A. (2018). Antecedents, correlates and consequences of faculty burnout. *Educational Research*, *60*(2), 131–156. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131881.2018.1461573
22. Sanyal, B. C. & Martin, M. (2008). The complex roles of universities in the period of globalization. *Higher Education in the World*, 3–17. https://upcommons.upc.edu/handle/2099/8111
23. Schenkewitz, K. A. (2019). Short-term commitment, long-term impact: Reflections on teaching as contingent faculty. *Teaching Theology & Religion*, *22*(4), 310–314. https://doi.org/10.1111/TETH.12511
24. Smith, C., & Gillespie, M. (2023). Research on Professional Development and Teacher Change: Implications for Adult Basic Education. *Review of Adult Learningand Literacy: VOLUME 7: Connecting Research, Policy and Practice*, *7*, 205–244. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003417996-7/RESEARCH-PROFESSIONAL-DEVELOPMENT-TEACHER-CHANGE-IMPLICATIONS-ADULT-BASIC-EDUCATION-CRISTINE-SMITH-MARILYN-GILLESPIE
25. Smithson, J. & Lewis, S. (2000). Is job insecurity changing the psychological contract? *Personnel Review*, *29*(6), 680–702. https://doi.org/10.1108/00483480010296465/FULL/XML
26. Van Droogenbroeck, F., Spruyt, B. & Vanroelen, C. (2014). Burnout among senior teachers: Investigating the role of workload and interpersonal relationships at work. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *43*, 99–109. https://doi.org/10.1016/J.TATE.2014.07.005
27. Varma, C. (2017). Importance of Employee Motivation & Job Satisfaction For Organizational Performance. *International Journal of Social Science & Interdisciplinary Research*, *6*. https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=3073813.

Ethnolinguistics and Lexical Contact between Spanish and Mapudungun for an Intercultural Territory

Aracelly Paz Pradenas Muñoz

ABSTRACT

This paper describes the research of Dr. Gilberto Sánchez Cabezas and his importance in the lexical aspect of Spanish-Mapudungun contact in Chilean territory. This Mapuche language scholar is relevant today due to his reconsideration of Rodolfo Lenz's ideas and the life experiences linked to the quality and authenticity of his academic work, which contribute to a genuine recognition of the connection between culture and language within the discipline of ethnolinguistics. The author is not only important in the field of linguistics, but his approaches are also linked to interculturality for the territory and one of the most relevant ways of transforming our society: education.

Keywords: culture, language, Mapudungun, contact, vocabulary, interculturality.

Classification: LCC Code: P118.2

Language: English

Great Britain Journals Press

LJP Copyright ID: 573344
Print ISSN: 2515-5784
Online ISSN: 2515-5792

London Journal of Research in Humanities & Social Science

Volume 25 | Issue 15 | Compilation 1.0

Ethnolinguistics and Lexical Contact between Spanish and Mapudungun for an Intercultural Territory

Aporte del Dr. Gilberto Sánchez Cabezas: etnolingüística y contacto léxico del español – mapudungun para un territorio intercultural

Aracelly Paz Pradenas Muñoz

RESUME

This paper describes the research of Dr. Gilberto Sánchez Cabezas and his importance in the lexical aspect of Spanish-Mapudungun contact in Chilean territory. This Mapuche language scholar is relevant today due to his reconsideration of Rodolfo Lenz's ideas and the life experiences linked to the quality and authenticity of his academic work, which contribute to a genuine recognition of the connection between culture and language within the discipline of ethnolinguistics. The author is not only important in the field of linguistics, but his approaches are also linked to interculturality for the territory and one of the most relevant ways of transforming our society: education.

Palabras clave: culture, language, Mapudungun, contact, vocabulary, interculturality.

RESUMEN

En el presente trabajo, se describen las investigaciones del Dr. Gilberto Sánchez Cabezas y su importancia en el aspecto léxico del contacto del español- Mapudungun en el territorio chileno. La figura de este estudioso de la lengua mapuche posee relevancia en la actualidad por la reconsideración de las ideas de Rodolfo Lenz y las experiencias vitales que se vinculan con la calidad y autenticidad de sus trabajos académicos, en tanto aportes para un reconocimiento genuino de la conexión entre cultura y lengua ámbito propio de la disciplina etnolingüística. El autor no sólo tiene importancia desde el ámbito de la lingüística, sino que sus planteamientos se vinculan con la interculturalidad para el territorio y una de las formas más relevantes de transformar nuestra sociedad: la educación.

Palabras clave: cultura, lengua, mapudungun, contacto, léxico, interculturalidad.

Author: Candidata a Magíster en Lingüística, Upla.

I. INTRODUCCIÓN

Si bien existen numerosas investigaciones en torno al pueblo y lengua mapuche, el aporte que, desde hace años, ha hecho la figura de Gilberto Sánchez Cabezas- el políglota-, se distingue su conocimiento exhaustivo sobre la lengua y centrarse en elementos de revitalización en territorios concretos y sus ceremonias; como también en el contacto español- mapudungun.

El autor evidencia un manejo de variadas lenguas, no obstante, la que provoca su interés principal es la lengua mapuche, influenciado de modo importante por la figura y obra de Rodolfo Lenz, de quien se considera discípulo. Lo anterior, se vincula con la necesidad de los y las lingüistas de conocer las lenguas en profundidad y atesorar su cosmovisión a partir del contacto con nuestra sociedad occidentalizada. La identidad chilena está permeada de elementos europeos e indígenas; nuestra labor es develar en qué sentido la lengua nos otorga una ventana para introducirnos en la construcción de la interculturalidad desde una perspectiva crítica.

Toda vez que la hegemonía cultural en la que nos encontramos inmersos no se propone abandonar su vocación de poder, tras un pretendido

monolingüismo y monoculturalismo,, trabajos como los realizados por autores tales como Chiodi, Olate, Loncón, Walsh, entre otros, y, obviamente, Gilberto Sánchez, permiten desestructurar un sistema basado en el racismo que continúa viendo al indígena como un ser inferior y sin derechos. La lingüística y, dentro de ella, la etnolingüística, posee un rol claro en "estudiar todas las formas en las que la cultura ("las cosas") o, para ser más precisos, el conocimiento de la cultura ("el conocimiento de las cosas") interacciona con la lengua y con el uso que hacen de ella los hablantes" (Coseriu en Martín, 2018: p.586).Y es en estas coordenadas que proponemos valorar la obra de Gilberto Sànchez.

En lo que sigue, comprendiendo la vigencia de este lingüista chileno consideramos relevante reunir sus estudios y valorarlos , con miras a robustecer el panorama de las lenguas indígenas y ordenar los elementos que la componen considerando los neologismos e incluso cómo el léxico indígena se inmiscuye en la Real Academia Española, considerando su biografía y la persistencia de la figura de Lenz como los sustentos de su trabajo etnolingüístico con el fin de otorgar vigente e importancia para la transformación desde una visión antropológica, lingüística y política de las lenguas indígenas, en especial el Mapudungun. Aquello se comprende como una forma de resistencia que se construye desde los márgenes en nuestro territorio vinculando con la educación y su perspectiva intercultural.

II. EL POLÍGLOTA DE CHILE : TRAYECTORIAS Y CONSOLIDACIÓN DE SU INTERÉS POR EL MAPUDUNGUN

A fines de los años 50- específicamente el año 1957-se vislumbra tímidamente la figura de uno de los lingüistas más relevantes de nuestro país: Gilberto Sánchez Cabezas. Como nos cuenta Alfredo Matus Olivier en el *"Discurso de recepción de Dr. Gilberto Sánchez Cabezas en la Academia de la Lengua"* en 1993, aquel era un joven estudiante del Colegio Germania, oriundo de la ciudad de Puerto Varas quien a sus 19 años llamaba la atención por la facilidad para aprender distintas lenguas. Cabe destacar que su interés había comenzado desde los 8 años, según lo ha planteado el mismo profesor Sánchez en comunicaciones personales.

Su denominación como "políglota", proviene de su participación como intérprete de la delegación de deportistas en el Mundial de Fútbol de 1962, quien para ese momento ya era estudiante de la Universidad de Chile en la carrera de Pedagogía en alemán. En este contexto, fue entrevistado por periodistas suizos, como también chilenos, tal como Erika Vexler, quien publicó una crónica en la revista Ercilla, titulada "El hombre de los 26 idiomas". Esta experiencia le permite al autor vincularse con las lenguas y la ciencia del lenguaje de manera estricta, por lo que define en ese momento su perspectiva como futuro lingüista, continuador del camino de Rodolfo Lenz. Sin embargo, lo que causó mayor interés fueron los métodos que utilizó para ser llamado "el políglota de Chile", pues, según narraba en tal entrevista, el colegio, los libros y la radio fueron su principal fuente de conocimiento y práctica de los idiomas, lo que- señaló- aprendía con gran pasión.

De manera paralela a sus estudios de grado en el instituto pedagógico de la Universidad de Chile, en las carreras de Pedagogía en Castellano e italiano, así como también sus estudios doctorales en Filosofía mención en Lingüística General en Hungría, el profesor Sànchez decidió participar en un programa de televisión llamado "Un millón para el mejor", transmitido en ese entonces por por Canal 13 de la Pontificia Universidad Católica. Este programa, específicamente su último capítulo,en el que se le otorga el segundo lugar, constituye un archivo clave para la Lingüística chilena, pues Sànchez evidencia un manejo excelso de un tema tan vasto como "las lenguas del mundo en la actualidad y la historia", comprendiendo sus familias y diferencias entre ellas. Sin embargo, lo que resulta más destacable es la inspiración que encontró para participar en este espacio televisivo, lo que revela la naturaleza profunda de su preocupación por el lenguaje y su genuino deseo de compartirla con la sociedad, pues para Sánchez lo importante de su participación en este espacio era que "el público se diera cuenta de lo complicado que es el lenguaje

en el mundo y las múltiples facetas que componen su estudio" (Sánchez en Matus, 1993: p.93).

Tras estas experiencias, académicas y extraacadémicas, y, su paso por Hungría, Sánchez declaró sentirse "extranjero" de la cultura europea, en la que había estado inmerso, y decidió buscar raíces en una de las lenguas indígenas más relevantes de nuestro territorio: el mapudungun. En este camino él comienza a viajar a zonas aisladas del sur de Chile y se interna en comunidades del Alto bio-bio, quienes lo reciben en primera instancia como un foráneo y luego, comprendiendo su sincera necesidad de estudiar su lengua, le abren las puertas a su forma de vivir e, incluso, sus hogares. Esto último, puede comprobarse en los lazos estrechos que construyó con muchos de los integrantes de las comunidades pehuenches, como Ramón Naupa - uno de sus informantes-, de cuyo hijo se convirtió en padrino (Sánchez en Delgado, 2022).

Este cambio en sus intereses, desde la hispanìsicioa y la germanìstica hacia las lenguas indígenas de Chile, tuvo que ver con la convicción que alcanzó respecto a que la labor realizada por Rodolfo Lenz en el pasado debía ser retomada por los autores actuales, volcando asì su vida a la conexión de la academia con las comunidades indígenas, en aspectos tales como los propiamente lingüísticos (léxico), como también la etnoliteratura presente en las comunidades - desde los epew y nütram, hasta los cantos - y su importancia en la enseñanza de la cosmovisión, en tanto elementos primordiales de la relación lengua y cultura mapuche.

De esta manera, la trayectoria formativa e investigativa de Don Gilberto, dan cuenta de una historia y habilidades personales, así como de un genuino compromiso con el fenòmeno lingüístico y humano lo, que lo erigen como uno de los pocos lingüistas que especializados en la relación entre el lenguaje y la cultura, y que se se consideran a sí mismos como etnolingüistas, cumpliendo un rol social, político y académico que motiva a continuar con su legado en nuestro país.

III. CONTACTO LÉXICO ESPAÑOL-MAPUDUNGUN ¿UNA REALIDAD VIGENTE?

Con el propósito de comprender la importancia del léxico en el trabajo del Dr. Gilberto Sánchez, esta se vincula con el hecho de que este nivel de la lengua es en el que las relaciones con la cultura y visión de mundo es más patente y evidente, al ser más propenso a modificaciones con el tiempo, a diferencia, por ejemplo de los niveles morfosintáctico y fonológico. La cultura es dinámica en relación con las necesidades de las comunidades, a través de la historia, por lo que eso se verá reflejado en su caudal léxico de ellas. Es por esto por lo que los estudios realizados por el Dr. Sánchez vincula la disciplina de la antropología- extrayendo metodologías y constructos- y la lingüística; áreas del conocimiento que se necesitan mutuamente y que son sistematizadas por el autor en las experiencias con comunidades de habla del sur de Chile.

Esto se ve plasmado, por ejemplo, en las investigaciones y publicaciones que el profesor Sánchez realiza acerca del impacto de las lenguas indígenas, principalmente el mapudungún, en el caudal léxico de la lengua española. los que permiten sostener a Sánchez (2022) que "en Chile empleamos con frecuencia un léxico que proviene del quechua (el antiguo) y de la lengua mapuche" (p.3); aquello otorga el inicio a todo etnolingüista que quisiera estudiar el contacto de la lengua indígena con el español de Chile.La visión particular que presenta el autor a este respécto se nutre desde lo práctico- educativo- con la percepción de la autora Catherine Walsh (2009) quien define la interculturalidad crítica como:

> Una herramienta, como un proceso y proyecto que se construye desde la gente -y como demanda de la subalternidad-, en contraste a la funcional, que se ejerce desde arriba. Apuntala y requiere la transformación de las estructuras, instituciones y relaciones sociales, y la construcción de condiciones de estar, ser, pensar, conocer, aprender, sentir y vivir distintas (p. 4).

La autora plantea en sus trabajos académicos que la interculturalidad crítica debe cambiar el sistema en el que se construye el conocimiento pues, a diferencia de sus otras significaciones permite cumplir con las necesidades de los pueblos y el respeto que ellos se merecen, tal como plantea Sánchez (2022) en su revisión de la impronta léxica dejada por las lenguas indígenas en la lengua española, señalando: "la lengua originaria puede ser muy importante dentro del respectivo grupo para la intercomunicación, la expresión de su cultura y la creación literaria" (p.14). En ese sentido, el autor complementa con la relevancia que otorga a que la cosmovisión y el mapudungun sea enseñado en las escuelas del territorio, pues ello fortalece su identidad indígena y la nuestra como mestizos.

Teniendo en cuenta esta declaración de principios en su obra, en este apartado se comentarán cinco artículos del autor en orden cronológico. El primero titulado *"El estado actual de las lenguas aborígenes en Chile",* publicado en el año 1996,se centra en la recopilación sobre las lenguas y su importancia para la incorporación de ellas en la comunidad académica, teniendo en consideración que

> "En comparación con otros, nuestro continente posee un sinnúmero de lenguas, pertenecientes a muchas familias (o troncos). No pocas de ellas ya han desaparecido- y siguen desapareciendo en el presente- por los avatares de las conquistas u colonias; otras, no obstante, ha logrado sobrevivir y muestran todavía vitalidad" (Sánchez, 1996: p.69).

Con el propósito de realizar un panorama general, el autor evidencia su conocimiento sobre distintas lenguas de Latinoamérica, como también de Chile, incluyendo elementos de análisis lingüístico, tales como la morfosintaxis y el léxico que se vincula con el español hablado en las distintas naciones. Aquello se evidencia como un rescate a lenguas de características polisintéticas y aglutinantes que, a pesar de su diversidad al oído colonizador, han desarrollado su identidad profunda (Weltanshauung) desde la otredad en la que se encuentran.Cabe destacar que la inclusión de este artículo, a pesar de su antigüedad, obedece a que se posiciona en un contexto socio histórico, local y global, en que las políticas lingüísticas en Chile- y en el mundo- abrían puertas o más bien ventanas a la diversidad y riqueza que representaban los pueblos indígenas en el respeto y fomento de su cultura. Aquello tendría sus frutos de manera posterior, pero el autor con su visión crítica e irrestricta con los pueblos vincula la disciplina con el quehacer académico de un etnolingüista.

Un segundo que creemos relevante de destacar, se publica en el año 2005, titulado "*La contribución léxica del mapudungu al español de Chile"*. En él se evidencia el contacto de ambas lenguas, atribuyendo esta relación en la lengua estándar escrita, pues la naturaleza e identidad construida en este territorio debe ser nombrada, por lo que en muchas ocasiones se recurre a la lengua de sustrato para ello. Algunos ejemplos nombrados por el autor son, entre otros, pino, laucha, pololo, boldo, litre, huemul, Ñuñoa, Peñalolén, Talcahuano, etc. El léxico nombrado permite evidenciar la influencia de la lengua indígena en nuestro cotidiano, como también "pone de manifiesto el carácter mestizo de la nación chilena" (Sánchez, 2005: p.183).

Tras esto, en 2007 publica en las actas del VI Congreso chileno de Antropología una conferencia dictada en la ciudad de Valdivia, titulada *"Lenguaje y cultura, ¿Por qué se implican?"* Este escrito se incluye en esta revisión, pues otorga numerosos aportes en el ámbito de la etnolingüística. El Dr. Sánchez realiza un recorrido sobre la importancia de la obra seminal (tanto para la Antropología como para la Lingüística) de Franz Boas, las propiedades del lenguaje destacadas por Charles Hockett y el trascendental aporte de Dell Hymes como antropólogo lingüístico. Cabe señalar que el autor menciona- en virtud de la relación entre cultura y lenguaje- que este último se podría definir como: "un sistema de símbolos vocales que permite la comunicación, la constitución y la transmisión de la cultura" (Sánchez, 2007: p.69). Para él la relación existente entre la sociedad y la lengua es primordial para entendernos y es deber de los y las lingüistas registrar, conocer y vincularse con los pueblos indígenas en profundidad, por tanto.

En su siguiente trabajo, titulado, *"Los mapuchismos en el DRAE",* publicado en el año 2010 en el Boletín de Filología, el dr. Sánchez traza una línea de continuidad, complementando y actualizando, con su anterior publicación acerca del aporte del mapudungun a la lengua española.. En este sentido, además de ir incorporando vocabulario nuevo, proyecta que aquello iría en aumento. En tal sentido, define al mapuchismo como un "préstamo lingüístico de origen mapuche introducido en el español o vocablo o giro de origen mapuche empleado al hablar o escribir en español" (p.153). Desde este modo de entender el contacto observa que existen "302 voces de origen mapuche, pertenecientes a diversos campos semánticos" (p.153); lo anterior es considerado por el autor como un avance significativo, pues las leyes no han favorecido a la lengua mapuche- al menos en Chile- y a su revitalización, como se ha dado en el caso del quechua en Perú y Bolivia. Sin embargo, las formas originales de pronunciación y escritura deben ser corregidas en algunos casos, pues pierden la calidad de contacto intercultural, comenta.

Finalmente, en 2012 publica el artículo *"Las lenguas originarias en el español de Chile"*. Este texto basa su perspectiva desde el contacto que posee el español de nuestro país con otras lenguas amerindias, tales como el guaraní, aimara, quechua y mapuche. Concluye que estas dos últimas son las que evidencian más préstamos lingüísticos hacia la lengua española, así como también han generado, producto de un sincretismo, modificaciones morfosintácticas en las zonas de bilingüismo, generando nuevas y particulares variedades de español. Muchas de estas expresiones son utilizadas por los hablantes sin saber su origen exacto, es por esto por lo que el trabajo con crónicas coloniales y obras literarias es primordial al momento de recuperar el origen etimológico, como también las variantes de uso del léxico indígena.

Los artículos mencionados se consideran un material valioso para comprender que la labor iniciada por Lenz es sostenida y que depende de la perseverancia de los y las lingüistas por comprender la necesidad de incorporar a las lenguas indígenas en la academia, tienendo en cuenta su innegable relación con la cultura. Lo mencionado anteriormente, permitirá que las próximas generaciones se vinculen de manera intercultural con los pueblos para dejar de observarlos como un otro desconocido, sino como una comunidad autónoma por conocer y valorar.

IV. UN DISCÍPULO DE RODOLFO LENZ

Como se evidencia en los artículos mencionados con anterioridad la perspectiva sustratista de Lenz es rectificada por los trabajos en el ámbito léxico del profesor Sánchez, quien, siguiendo los pasos del lingüista alemán, decide aprender su lengua e ir a estudiar a las comunidades que albergaron a su maestro, llamado el padre de los araucanistas modernos. Cabe destacar que el autor posee bastantes investigaciones sobre el Dr. Lenz, pues se considera uno de los promotores de la lengua indígena en nuestra nación; sin embargo, con el propósito de sintetizar los principales elementos, hemos optado por seleccionar y comentar solo dos artículos que, creemos, representan de manera clara la admiración del maestro Gilberto Sánchez por el Dr. Rodolfo Lenz.

El primer artículo se titula *"La contribución del Dr. Rodolfo Lenz al conocimiento de la lengua y cultura mapuches", y fue* publicado en 1992. En este escrito el profesor Sánchez comenta diversas experiencias del Dr. Lenz en el contexto de 1890, incluyendo hechos tales como la recepción que tuvo por parte del Instituto Pedagógico y los cambios que generó en la, en ese entonces hegemónica, perspectiva purista del lenguaje, y siguió vigente por décadas posteriores, hasta la aparición de Eugenio Coseriu. El lingüista alemán fue el primero en dar atisbos sobre la importancia de estudiar el habla particular con sus fenómenos fonéticos, gramaticales y léxicos; no obstante esto, Lenz todavía estaba apegado a la influencia de la lingüística comparada, por lo que sus ideas serán retomadas más adelante cuando la disciplina logra transformarse en una ciencia moderna, con su objeto de estudio específico.

Uno de los elementos de la obra de Lenz y más valorados por el Dr. Sánchez, y que sigue presente en su obra e intereses hasta la actualidad, es la recopilación que realizó de relatos orales a

comunidades de habla mapuche, así como también (a) su solidez científica, evidenciada en trabajos tales como el Diccionario etimolójico de las voces chilenas derivadas de lenguas indígenas americanas; (b) su capacidad de comprender sus falencias; y (c) la necesidad de retroalimentación propia de un maestro y su preocupación genuina por el desarrollo de los seres humanos y la cultura, cambiando la visión despectiva y discriminatoria hacia los y las indígenas d para considerarlos a excelentes informantes de la lengua y sujetos dignos de valoración (Sánchez, 1992).

Respecto del impacto de la obra del Dr. Lenz, su importancia y trascendencia en el área de los estudios indigenistas, el profesor Sánchez realiza un recorrido por las influencias que tuvo sobre las misiones religiosas y docentes, las que se sintieron motivados a inicios del siglo XX, a partir de su legado, por la etnología y el folclore de la cultura mapuche y su lengua. En tal sentido, Sánchez destaca que a partir del rigor en su trabajo de campo y teórico, Rodolfo Lenz logró cimentar un camino para las futuras generaciones de lingüistas, en Chile y el mundo, como, por ejemplo, al hacerse parte de la idea clara y sustentada de que el español de Chile había sido influenciado por el sustrato indígena,una hipótesis que, si bien ha sido refutada, permeó a distintos estudiosos del lenguaje en nuestra historia.

Otro aspecto que llama la atención de la obra de Lenz, destaca el profesor Sánchez, es su calidad al momento de recopilar léxico para el diccionario ya mencionado, y que constituye su principal aporte. En esta tarea necesitó de colaboradores mapuches, lo que le permitió comprender, enfatiza Sánchez, "que todos los cuentos, narraciones i cantos que había aprendido con exactitud fonética eran a la vez interesantes documentos para estudiar el alma de los indíjenas, Comencé a dedicarme a la etnolojía araucana" (Lenz en Sánchez, 1992: p.279). Precisamente, con afirmaciones como esta - en un contexto sociohistórico en el que aún se ponía en cuestión si los indígenas tenían o no "alma" - Lenz rompió, de alguna manera, la dicotomía entre "civilización" y "barbarie", para poner de manifiesto la cosmovisión del pueblo mapuche y su importancia para el conocimiento del español de Chile como variante mestiza. En el mismo sentido, Sánchez destaca también que Lenz en ocasiones "denunció los atropellos de que eran víctimas y propuso medidas para incorporarlos al resto del país y convertirlos en ciudadanos útiles" (p.282). En ese aspecto, se considera que aquello pertenecía al ideario moderno de homogeneidad cultural y lingüística, no obstante, abre un espacio para comprender la "inteligencia" de los indígenas araucanos - tal como los llamaba- y su fuerza para sobrevivir; el contexto permite comprender las palabras de Lenz con altura de mira y recordar lo importante que era su reconocimiento en la academia para su estudio desde las comunidades.

Para finalizar nuestro comentario a este importante artículo, destacamos que el profesor Sánchez también hace un recorrido por diversos elementos de la obra *Estudios araucanos, los que* permiten destacar el aporte de Lenz para la Lingüística del siglo XX, tales como la incorporación de la "psicología" de los pehuenches, su literatura oral y su figura como representantes vivos de la tradición mapuche. Pone así de relieve la figura de Lenz, no sólo en su dimensión metodológica en el rigor de su investigación lingüística, sino también en la recopilación de un corpus y metodologías invaluables para quienes en el futuro pretenden reafirmar las diferencias del español de Chile desde su origen araucano e incluso con otros pueblos indígenas en nuestro largo territorio.

El segundo artículo obra del profesor Sánchez en torno al autor de "Estudios araucanos" corresponde a "*El Dr. Rodolfo Lenz, primer investigador científico de la lengua y cultura mapuche*" publicado en el año 2013. En este escrito, Sánchez sintetiza las reflexiones mencionadas en los escritos anteriores. Se va un paso más allá en la fundamentación de la trascendencia de su obra al considerar al lingüista alemán como un etnolingüista obligatorio al momento de comenzar los estudios sobre el mapudungun y su contacto con el español de Chile. Es por esto por lo que este artículo se centra en la vida de Lenz, sus diferentes vivencias y reflexiones; incorporando fragmentos de sus

obras como el siguiente: “Conozco [escribió] pero no creo justificada la opinión que tienen tantos chilenos, de que no valgan para nada los indios actuales. Creo que hai muchos entre ellos que pidieran llegar a ser miembros útiles del pueblo chileno, si se los tratara de una manera conveniente, si se supiera asimilarlos” (Lenz, 1987 en Sánchez, 2013).

Lo anterior, así como el escrito previo acerca de él, permite comprender la profunda admiración del Dr. Sánchez hacia esten estudioso extranjero que jamás volvió a su tierra natal- incluso luego de su muerte-, y que, a pesar de sus opiniones, en ocasiones sesgadas, aportó de manera incalculable al desarrollo de grafemarios y la incorporación paulatina pero sostenida de las lenguas indígenas a la academia.

V. PROYECCIÓN DE LAS LENGUAS INDÍGENAS EN EL TERRITORIO: INTERCULTURALIDAD CRÍTICA

A modo de discusión, las investigaciones científicas del profesor Gilberto Sánchez Cabezas permiten comprender la importancia que poseen los cambios en el nivel léxico- semántico y la incorporación de “mapuchismos” en nuestra comunidad de habla, como también aquellos traspasan fronteras hasta llegar al DRAE. Esta tarea del etnolingüista sureño se acompaña de su capacidad innata para el aprendizaje de idiomas, que, sin buscarlo, le permitió desempeñar con mayor agudeza y experticia la relación con las comunidades, además de probar en los hechos cómo el involucrarse emocionalmente con la otredad es producto y proceso del trabajo etnográfico. Uno de los aspectos más relevantes es que el profesor continúa aún vigente en su trabajo académico, a través de sus publicaciones anteriores y aquellas que sigue preparando, mostrando la importancia de la interdisciplinariedad, con la antropología, la Historia e , incluso con aspectos literarios, todas áreas que forman parte- en su opinión- de la promoción y fortalecimiento de la cosmovisión mapuche.

Sin lugar a duda, el contexto sociohistórico actual del país es sumamente crítico y convulso para efectos de la construcción y legitimación del valor de la interculturalidad y la diversidad, incluyendo la fallida de constitución que los intentaba consagrar, lo que deja a los pueblos indígenas en un statu quo permanente que no vislumbra ser resuelto pronto, a pesar de los símbolos levantados por el pueblo de Chile en el estallido (guñelve) y la participación de personas de la comunidad. Respecto a lo anterior, se considera necesario comprender la relevancia del autor en el contexto de inicio de su carrera como lingüista y su trabajo en la etnolingüística, para conceder un espacio a la variedad de la lengua en sus comunidades de habla y el respeto de la cultura mapuche en igualdad de condiciones, como plantea el mismo profesor Sánchez (2022):

> El reconocimiento es muy importante, así como el reconocimiento constitucional y su acceso a la salud pública y la educación. Yo he convivido con ellos conozco muy bien todo eso. Por lo tanto, es falso que los indígenas sean poco diligentes, flojos, viciosos, etc. Eso es falso. Si no han podido contribuir más al desarrollo del país, es porque han sido víctimas de prejuicios. Entonces, el acercamiento a ellos es muy importante. Yo pienso que eso debe producirse, sin que uno se forme ideas falsas (p.15).

Las ideas planteadas por Sánchez se complementan con su seguridad respecto a la educación como el medio predilecto para revitalizar la lengua. Es por esto, que en los elementos teóricos de este trabajo se evidencia que la visión debe ser la educación intercultural desde un enfoque crítico que permite desestructurar las normas impuestas por un poder hegemónico en nuestro territorio. En ese sentido, una de las maneras más relevantes de contribuir a la transformación del sistema es que la educación intercultural desde los pueblos y para los pueblos ancestrales sea un derecho en cada una de las escuelas de Chile. Esto, pues en palabras del profesor, somos más mestizos de lo que creemos, por lo que más que tolerar debemos aceptar y construir nuestra identidad desde esa característica cultural y genética.

En ese sentido, la investigación académica se nutre de la visión de autores como Catherine Walsh o Elisa Loncón. La primera, desde la

interculturalidad crítica y su vinculación con la educación en distintos espacios. La segunda- más cercana al lugar de Sánchez- desde la lingüística y la cosmovisión, centrada en la importancia de los neologismos y grafemarios que, a pesar de romper con la tradición oral del mapudungun permiten su trascendencia a futuras generaciones. cultural, política y territorial.

VI. CONCLUSIONES

La dedicación de los autores sobre la lengua se vincula con el entendimiento de la importancia de la relación lengua- cultura y en ello es evidente que se escapan un sinfín de investigadores que propician la comprensión de su importancia, como también de los ámbitos lingüísticos relacionados a la gramática o fonética. Sin embargo, este artículo de revisión bibliográfica pretendía reconocer la importancia del Dr. Gilberto Sánchez Cabezas, quien desde su humildad y trabajo riguroso hace persistir las ideas del contacto entre el mapudungun y el español, generando nuevo conocimiento en base a la relación estrecha con las comunidades.

En este sentido, este escrito realiza un homenaje en vida al maestro incorporando distintas fuentes bibliográficas, dibujando un breve recorrido desde un aspecto más personal como lo son su infancia, participación mediática y formación académica; la vinculación de aquello con su interés por las lenguas indígenas y el trabajo exhaustivo realizado con las comunidades y para la permanencia del mapudungun en nuestro territorio. En virtud de lo anterior, se enfatiza en el trabajo sobre el léxico y su relación con el español de Chile y en la medida que ello ha provocado modificaciones en las zonas de mayor contacto. Finalmente, se vincula el trabajo de Sánchez con su maestro Rodolfo Lenz, quien a pesar de las diferencias que con él demuestra, se configura como un lingüista que marca un antes y un después en los trabajos sobre lenguas indígenas. Cabe destacar que producto de todo el camino recorrido por el Dr. Gilberto Sánchez no solo analiza el pasado, interpreta el presente, sino que también configura su visión en el futuro y aquello corresponde a otro aspecto valorable del autor hasta la actualidad.

Las universidades deben cumplir un rol fundamental, en especial las estatales, pues tal como plantea Gilberto Sánchez (2019) “ojalá haya carreras universitarias que se impartan en mapudungun” (p.2). Lo anterior, permite extrapolar que no es tan alejado de la realidad que la situación de la lengua mapuche puede cambiar o más bien mejorar por el trabajo que realizan los investigadores y grupos que se dedican a la creación de material; políticas lingüísticas macro y micro que tengan el mismo objetivo: revitalizar la lengua desde las comunidades en relación con la cosmovisión y el buen vivir.

REFERENCIAS BIBLIOGRÁFICAS

1. Camacho, J. C. M. (2018). La Etnolingüística como disciplina científica. Propuesta de definición y ámbitos de estudio. In Actas do XIII Congreso Internacional de Lingüística Xeral: Vigo: 13-15.
2. Hasler, F., Olate, A., & Soto, G. (2020). Persistencia de las ideas de Lenz en el estudio del contacto mapudungun-español. Algunos ejemplos de la investigación actual. Boletín de filología, 55(2): 115-135.
3. Lenz, Rodolfo. 1895-1897. Estudios Arauca nos. Materiales para el estudio de la lengua, la literatura i las costumbres de los indios mapuche o araucanos. Santiago: Cervantes.
4. Olate, Aldo. 2017. Contacto lingüístico mapuzugun/castellano. Aspectos históricos, sociales y lingüísticos. Revisión bibliográfica y propuesta de análisis desde la dimensión morfosintáctica y tipológica. Onomázein 36: 122-158.
5. Sánchez, G. (1992). La contribución del Dr. Rodolfo Lenz al conocimiento de la lengua y cultura mapuches. Boletín de Filología, 33 (1): 273- 299.
6. Sánchez, Gilberto. (1996). Estado actual de las lenguas aborígenes de Chile. Boletín de la Academia de la Lengua N° 71: 68- 87.
7. Sánchez, Gilberto. (2005). La contribución léxica del mapudungu al español de Chile. UniverSOS 2: 169-184.
8. Sánchez, Gilberto. (2007). Lenguaje y cultura, ¿Por qué se implican? VI Congreso Chileno de Antropología. Colegio de Antropólogos de Chile, Valdivia.

9. Sánchez, Gilberto. (2010). Los mapuchismos en el DRAE. Boletín de Filología, Tomo XLV. N°2: 149-256.
10. Sánchez, Gilberto. (2012). Las lenguas originarias en el español de Chile. Anales del Instituto de Chile, Vol. XXXI: 75-101.
11. Sánchez, Gilberto. (2013). El Dr. Rodolfo Lenz, primer investigador científico de la lengua y cultura mapuches. Lenguas Modernas 42: 99-113.
12. Sánchez, Gilberto. (2019). Gilberto Sánchez: "Todavía puede sobrevivir la lengua mapuche/ Entrevista por Prensa Nacional. GILBERTO SÁNCHEZ: 'TODAVÍA PUEDE SOBREVIVIR LA LENGUA MAPUCHE' (www.lanalhue noticias.cl)
13. Sánchez, Gilberto. (2022). Un aprendizaje polígloto para la adquisición de una cultura proteiforme. / Entrevistado por Jesús Miguel Delgado del Águila. Argus-a, Vol. XII. Ed. N°45.
14. Walsh, C. (2010). Interculturalidad crítica y educación intercultural. Construyendo interculturalidad crítica, 75(96): 167-18

This page is intentionally left blank

A Semiotic Reading of Patterns of Trauma in Achmat Dangor's Bitter Fruit

Khadidiatou Diallo

Gaston Berger University

ABSTRACT

This paper conjugates Ferdinand De Saussure's and Charles Sanders Peirce's theories on the sign with recent developments in literary semiotics to analyze textual and symbolic patterns that connote apartheid and postapartheid traumas in Bitter Fruit. It first connects Dangor's text to the universe of signs of individual and social disintegration, to explain that characters' tragic experiences and posttraumatic stress disorders imbue the text with its historically based meanings. Then, it demonstrates that by mapping out traumas bred by the age of iron, the text discloses expressive glimpses of the burning question of reconciliation and identity in the post-apartheid era. At a final level, the semiotic reading of Bitter Fruit foregrounds the ambivalent meaning of semiotic patterns in Dangor's narrative, suggesting the social tension in which the text was created, the aesthetic representation of which not only signifies individual and collective sufferings but also the author's essential gesture in the country's effort to build a fairer and more humane nation.

Keywords: sign, literary semiotics, trauma, posttraumatic stress disorder, identity.

Classification: LCC Code: PR9369.3.D36

Language: English

Great Britain Journals Press

LJP Copyright ID: 573345
Print ISSN: 2515-5784
Online ISSN: 2515-5792

London Journal of Research in Humanities & Social Science

Volume 25 | Issue 15 | Compilation 1.0

A Semiotic Reading of Patterns of Trauma in Achmat Dangor's Bitter Fruit

Khadidiatou Diallo

ABSTRACT

This paper conjugates Ferdinand De Saussure's and Charles Sanders Peirce's theories on the sign with recent developments in literary semiotics to analyze textual and symbolic patterns that connote apartheid and postapartheid traumas in Bitter Fruit. It first connects Dangor's text to the universe of signs of individual and social disintegration, to explain that characters' tragic experiences and posttraumatic stress disorders imbue the text with its historically based meanings. Then, it demonstrates that by mapping out traumas bred by the age of iron, the text discloses expressive glimpses of the burning question of reconciliation and identity in the post-apartheid era. At a final level, the semiotic reading of Bitter Fruit foregrounds the ambivalent meaning of semiotic patterns in Dangor's narrative, suggesting the social tension in which the text was created, the aesthetic representation of which not only signifies individual and collective sufferings but also the author's essential gesture in the country's effort to build a fairer and more humane nation.

Keywords: sign, literary semiotics, trauma, posttraumatic stress disorder, identity.

Author: Ph.D. Gaston Berger University.

I. INTRODUCTION

Bitter Fruit is a work from South Africa's transition era that offers insightful glimpses into the chaotic social and political conditions of a new nation rising from a violent past and seeking reconciliation and identity. The story focuses on the Ali Family, haunted by traumatic memories and the need to confess unspeakable experiences. It not only parodies the Truth and Reconciliation Commission but also highlights "traumas born from a Janus-faced conception of race superiority and prejudices" (Diallo 64), through symbolic patterns. Through the novel, Achmat Dangor explores ways to confront the past, reexamining the complex choices available to former targeted communities of the state's repressive machinery and expressing the inexpressible traumas they endured during the height of oppression. As a sensitive point of his community, the core of his writing is to imagine how his multicultural country can handle the hectic present and look toward what seems to be an uncertain future. He weaves *Bitter Fruit* as "an appropriate metaphor for the tragic mulatto. It combines the notion of ripe possibility with sour prospects, which is the tragic inheritance of his literary character. (…) The novel is set on the cusp of the new millennium, at the end of Nelson Mandela's presidency and at the conclusion of the TRC hearing." (Mafe 113)

Bitter Fruit is a Dangor novel that has received significant critical acclaim for its skillful thematic and aesthetic depiction of the traumas rooted in South Africa's social and political history. From magical realism in his first published book, *Kafka's Curse* (1997), to realism in *Bitter Fruit*, Dangor, as Meg Samuelson notes in "Speaking Rape 'Like a Man': Achmat Dangor's *Bitter Fruit*," returns to realism to document South Africa's transition and its confrontation with the past. Indeed, as further discussed by Irele Abiola, the South African writer's work reflects a core belief that "the burden of past atrocities, is not confined to the victim, but leaves its marks on the victim's family." (255) This image of burden reverberates in the words of Diana Adeselo Mafe who argues, in her exploration of Mixed Race Stereotypes in South African and American Literature, that "the bitter legacy of the old South Africa and the ripe promise of the new nation thus coexist in a fragile stasis, which is captured by the public and political TRC and its mediation of private and

personal stories. (113) This taste of political democracy was made sourer by the somehow deliberately lacunary account of the sexual abuse of women, as part and parcel of the apartheid state repression, noted by members of the hearing like Dangor. The South African writer buttresses this view through these words of his, reported by Ronit Frenkel in his analysis of the close ties between race, memory and apartheid: "the fact that sexual abuse of women in the struggle against apartheid was far more systematic and widespread than we want to believe or that the TRC has addressed... So, all I did was try to address a viewpoint.t" (161) In an interview with Stacy Knecht (March 2005), Dangor explained how during hearings "often the sexual abuse ones" were held in closed sessions, frequently at the victim's request (Knecht 1). Watching these hearings, he felt it was something that "needed to be done from a re-imagined point of view" (Knecht, 1).

Though Akpome Aghogho points out that "analyses of *Bitter Fruit* have so far tended to focus on its critique of such issues as identity, cultural (re) construction, historicization, gender, and juridical inadequacies, of the TRC" (6) still, Dangor takes up the gauntlet to address the issue of rape and its aftermath, as a core means to stifle political dissidence. In this way, the story further raises critical scholarship, with special attention laid on the lamentable condition of "a coloured woman who refuses to allow her personal experiences of trauma to be undermined and defined as merely wartime 'collateral damage'." (Bhardway 83) Such an insight into the psychological dimension of the narrative is stirred by Dangor's decision, as a mapmaker of truth, to re-enact, in the narrative landscape, the traumas caused by intimate assaults on individuals and the nation, providing thus both victims and perpetrators with a space to express unspeakable experiences. Unlike other authors like John Maxwell Coetzee, who chose not to disclose the sexual violation of women as a weapon to quell dissent, Dangor held firm on his belief that the rainbow's colors would fade from the young nation if victims of intimate violence were not only recognized but also given avenues to verbalize their unshareable traumas. This is the thought flow of Madeleine Laurencin's comparative study of John Maxwell Coetzee's and Achmat Dangor's narratives of the transition, titled "A Polychromatic Approach to the Rainbow Nation Today" (2012). By exploring how aspects of the rainbow nation grapple with questions of Black, White, and Coloured identities, as well as reconciling the past and present (Laurencin 51), she suggests that in "Bitter Fruit," Dangor depicts the unraveling of the Ali family through the resurgence of a secret that tears a hole in the web holding Silas, Lydia, and Mickey together, exposing old wounds and new desires (Laurencin 51). The strength of her argument lies in calling to attention the symbolism of the narrative condition of the family members, struck by a heartbreaking experience: Lydia's rape and the birth of her child. This bitter fruit forever distances them. Laurencin's discussion emphasizes the textual and semiotic elements embedded in the historical context of South Africa, evoking a country long broken and yearning for healing and unity to become what Nelson Mandela described as "a Rainbow Nation... at peace with itself and the world" ("Inauguration Speech," 1994). This historically informed reading offers a comprehensive view of the story's symbolic power and lays the groundwork for analyzing Dangor's work through a semiotic lens. Such an approach could reveal the many signs and rhetorical devices within the text, offering parallel interpretations of the patterns of trauma and posttraumatic disorder experienced by the Ali family and South Africans. It could also show that some ambivalent semiotic images whisper a less rigid and more hopeful outlook from the author. These embers fuel Dangor's pursuit of reconciliation and "transnational connectivity" (Frenkel 149) in post-apartheid South Africa.

While supporting the ideas developed in scholarly work on *Bitter Fruit*, it must be recognized that few have approached Dangor's core gesture of portraying the problems that weaken the new nation, as ciphered in the array of signs (linguistic and literary) that fill the narrative. This research paper argues that *Bitter Fruit*, through a set of linguistic and narrative devices, acts as a

profound silence of the layered suffering of individuals and a nation still struggling with past demons. By conducting a semiotic reading of the story, our study offers new insights into the literary significance of Dangor's text, explaining that the disconnected lives of characters and their post-traumatic stress disorder can symbolize the historical aspects of the story.

In this way, its foremost aim is to explain that building on signs is a crafty way for the author to connote that characters' bodies and minds in pain are a semiotic text of inexpressible traumas. Second, through ambivalent semiotic patterns, it brings to light the author's conviction that dealing with unsaid traumatic experiences like rape is a *sine qua non* of reconciliation and identity, in a nation staggering out of doom.

Meanwhile, the research paper seeks to illuminate a set of questions: how is Dangor's text, a sign system symbolically "telling" through linguistic and nonlinguistic objects or behaviors, traumas that cause family breakdown? How can a semiotic reading of Lydia's posttraumatic stress disorder allow for a comprehensive interpretation of the psychological sequels of oppression and their symbolic bearing on the overall situation of South Africa? To what extent does *Bitter Fruit* help excavate the lingering effects of apartheid traumas on the Ali family and on the democratic nation? How can building on ambivalent semiotic patterns representing these traumas be interpreted as the author's brushing off the TRC's *modus vivendi* and *modus operandi*, on the one hand, and his whingeing obstinacy to participate in the building of a society where individuals are stripped of the personae of race, on the other hand? To what extent can ideas from Saussure, Peirce and Morris spell out the characters' behaviors, expressed in linguistic and non-linguistic elements, that are a covert expression of unspoken pain?

Since the study is limited to a text, the methodology relies on textual analysis, drawing on developments in signs from literary semioticians within the frameworks of structuralism, wedded to trauma and deconstruction theories to clarify research questions.

Saussure and Pierce are foundational figures of semiotics. Their works are useful forerunners to semiotic analysis, with the groundbreaking dissection of the multiple aspects and interpretations of the sign. Their developments are resourceful documents for our discussion because the linguistic approach, at the core of the literary dimension, they both elaborated – through different perspectives – are a map road that can allow expressing that Dangor's text is steeped in South African historical context, and that the sign, whether interpreted in a binary (Saussure) or triadic (Pierce) angle, can only be analysed in close relationship with its context. Their contributions to the field of semiotics can lead to a multilayered interpretation of patterns of trauma in the story. This will help demonstrate that the language of intimate and public wounds bears the same echo, and that the emotional recovery of the collective is concomitant with the individual's reconstruction from traumatic experience.

Thus, the study first elaborates on the theoretical underpinnings, with a cross-discussion of full-blown theories on the sign. This will allow elucidating and better defining the scope, as a primary development of the study. On a second level, it evidences that *Bitter Fruit* is a semiotic text of inexpressible traumas, an audible silence of the pain collectively felt and individually reenacted, the impacts of which are deftly insinuated in the myriads of rhetorical devices. Finally, it explores, from a *semiotic- deconstructive* perspective, the ambivalent aspect of sign systems in *Bitter Fruit*, to affirm that this is a symbolic expression of the writer's optimism in the quest for reconciliation and identity redefinition in the new South Africa.

II. SEMIOLOGY, SEMIOTICS, SEMIOSIS: NAVIGATING THE WORLD OF SIGNS

Diving into the sea of signs, the reader encounters layers of harmonious and sometimes conflicting developments regarding signs, created by foundational figures through extensive work in semiotics. "In its broadest sense, semiotics comprises all forms of formation and exchange of meaning on the basis of phenomena which have

been coded as signs." (Johansen & Larsen 4) What appears to be an overabundance of signs is further buttressed by Umberto Eco in *A Theory of Semiotics*, where he maintains that "semiotics is concerned with everything that can be taken as a sign. A sign is everything which can be taken as significantly substituting for something else." (7) If a sign can be substituted or interpreted through something else, it implies a certain inter-connectedness that can form a whole, composed of components that can be autonomous, yet, part of a coherent sign system. As Dmytrenko and Khailuna rightly put it, "semiotic analysis is designed to perceive and understand the context transmitted by the sign system and translate it into the language of another sign system. (104) Such a position gives credit to Yu Lotman's stance, expressed in *The Structure of an Artistic Text,* which has it that signs in language, in a text, carry a semantic load, due to their interaction and interrelation. Roland Barthes proceeds to a structural analysis of narrative in *Elements of Semiology*, to argue that within or outside the borders of a text-a word, a compound, a sentence, a piece, or a whole-the element must be part of a system to qualify as a sign (190). Any explanation of the intended meaning of a sign outside a system will not be relevant, as proponents of semiotics like Saussure, within the framework of structuralist linguistics, believed that language should be understood "… not as a collection of individual words with individual histories but as a structural system of relationships among words as they are used at a given point in time, or synchronically. This is the structural focus" (Tyson 217).

The Swiss linguist further develops his structuralist approach to language in *General Course of Linguistics*, through the science of semiology, a major influence in structuralism. Saussure's semiology not only leads to a dualistic analysis of the sign (signifier and signified) but also sheds light on the crucial point that a word is not merely a "sound-image' (signifier), nor is it simply a concept; a sound-image can only be a word, can only have an intended meaning when it is closely related to a concept. If it is a truism that structuralism "sees itself as a human science whose effort is to understand, in a systematic way the fundamental structures that underlie all human experience and, therefore, all human behaviour and production," (Tyson, 217) then, it is easy to grasp Saussure's core principle in semiology, which states that the relationship between the signifier and the signified is merely conventional, a matter of consensus within the sign system, involving a networking relationship between signs and arbitrary systems.

Semiology[1], as "science of signs", which, according to Saussure, was destined to become basically a *linguistic science* "thus limited to human communication" (Merrel 5), finally distinctively embraces all modes of communication found in human societies, "including both human linguistic expressions and nonverbal devices such as gestures and signals along nonlinguistic channels" (Merrel 5). Based on this new turn of Saussure's semiology, then, the description of the facial expression, the moan, and the behavior of Lydia during and after the sexual assault all constitute signs that can be further interpreted as images of trauma syndrome and posttraumatic stress disorder.

Such breakthrough developments from Saussure have inspired the sound contribution of the American Charles Sanders Pierce, in his discussion of the sign. Both theorists wished to ring the bell of a rigorous study of systems and signs. From a pragmatic perspective, however, Pierce rows against the tide of Saussure's semiological bent to introduce "the term 'semiotics', which, according to him, is synonymous with the concept of logic that focuses on the knowledge of human thinking process as portrayed in his writing published in 1931/1958" (Yahkin & Totu 6). Although both theorists of the sign were motivated by the same desire to expand the domain of signification and subsequently

[1] In his semiology, Saussure excluded the writing aspect, in his dichotomic language premise (langue-parole). Such a position, inherently contradictory, was deconstructed by theorists like Jacques Derrida. This urged semioticians of the 1960s to thrust language to even greater prominence. A groundbreaking step was taken with Roland Barthes' averment that "linguistics is not part of the general science of signs, even a privileged part, it is semiology which is a part of linguistics". (1968 11)

decode the relativity of meaning behind signs and symbols, their approaches differed.

Indeed, unlike Saussure's dualistic methodology (sign=signifier+signified), Peirce's semiotics, built on a triadic structuration, splits the signifier to fill it with "objects, gestures, activities, sounds, images, in short anything that the senses can perceive. Clearly, semiotics gives the signifier a wide range of possibilities" (Tyson 217). Peirce encapsulates the breadth of his vision of semiotics thus: "I define a sign as anything which is so determined by something else, called its object, and so determines an effect upon a person, which effect I call its interpretant, that the later [sic] is thereby mediated, determined by the former." (EP2 478). Thus, in this tryptic method of Pierce (sign = sign[2]+ object + interpretant), Lydia's silence in *Bitter Fruit* is the sign or *representamen*, or even the *ground* for the deleterious atmosphere in the family; the *object/referent* or cause is her rape by the police man; the *interpretant*, "a sign system, [that can be] a linguistic or nonlinguistic behavior [to be] analysed as a specialized language" (Tyon 214), is the repercussion of the rape on her husband, Silas and family. This symbolic bearing around Pierce's semiotics is corroborated by its structuralist ground that favors interpreting the sign system by foregrounding a group of similar objects – rape victims in South Africa-, synchronically (under apartheid/postapartheid periods). If for Pierce everything can be a sign, as long as it has the power to "represent" something, or symbolically "tell" something, according to individual's interpretative thought, then, the *competent readers* of Dangor's text can easily interpret the gallery of images and other rhetorical devices as possible *representame* signifying the backbreaking experiences individually and collectively undergone by South Africans. The meaning of patterns of trauma in Dangor's story, then, is not directly attached to the sign system at the surface level of the text; instead, it is mediated through the interaction between the *representamen*, *interpretant*, and *object*. This is for Peirce, the process of semiosis.

The signifier or symbol in Pierce's theory is then the subject and object of multiple and continuing interpretations; this is foregrounded by the fleeting nature of the symbolic aspect of the sign, which explains the fact that "the relation of ground[3] and object is not immediately posited but is rather represented to mind through a mediating representation, or interpretant." () Such is the bedrock idea of his *semiosis*, which has been further expanded by Charles William Morris, another seminal figure of the field, who brought forth the philosophical issues of signs, and who strongly influenced, with his work in *Foundations of the Theory of Signs* (1938b) and *Significance and Signification* (1964) linguists and philosophers. This is how he explains his developments, inspired by the contributions from Peirce's semiotics:

> On some interpreter in virtue of which the thing in question is a sign to that interpreter. These are three components in semiosis that may be called, respectively, *the sign vehicle*, the *designatum*, and the *interpretant*. The *interpreter* may be included as a fourth factor. These terms make explicit the factors left undesignated in the common statement that a sign refers to something for someone. (1938b 3)

Morris's comment not only expands Pierce and Saussure's postulates but also brings to light a

[2] Like many semioticians, Pierce recognized the threefold dimension of the sign: sign Index + icon, + symbol. An index is a sign in which the signifier has a concrete causal relationship to the signified; with an icon, the signifier physically resembles the signified. However, with a symbol, the relationship between signifier and signified is not natural but arbitrary; what we put within a symbol is decided on by conventions of a community or and social agreement. Of the three, only the symbol is the object of interpretation.

[3] For Pierce, going against the line of thought of Descartes, instead of a self of which we are conscious, through a special power of introspection, a sign is considered to have a ground. Such ground is not an object of immediate cognition. It is, rather, the element of immediate consciousness in the cognition of the object, "the thought itself, or at least what the thought is thought to be in the subsequent thought" (CP 5-285). This ideological stance of the theorist is suggestive of the ongoing interpretation of sign systems, driven by the immediate consciousness of the object, a cognition not subjected to the Cartesian ego, which analyses the ground of the object through immediate cognition.

new allure in the domain of sign systems, which is a flurry of intellectual perspectives. Through his contemporary contributions to semiotics, Morris deflects Peirce's *ground* by introducing the concept of *sign vehicle* (that which acts as a sign), and *object* to mean *designatum*[4] (what the sign refers to). The only difference between Morris's line of thought and Pierce's is that

> These *designata* seem to correspond to what Pierce called the dynamical object, and the designatum to the *immediate object*, except that Pierce argued that the sign object is an element prescinded from process and therefore can be known only as it is represented to be in further signs, and not immediately (Rochberg-Halton & McMurtrey 142).

Therefore, following Morris's logic, the Ali family's disunity in *Bitter Fruit* can either be a symbol of past demons that have suddenly arisen from Silas's unexpected encounter with Du Boise, the policeman who raped his wife before his eyes, or a motif of meeting that, according to Pierce's argument, gives rise to new forms of drama. All of these are representations, symbols of new specters that the family, in pain, must confront and which can only be understood through ongoing interpretation.

Given all these complementary and sometimes conflicting theories about signs and although the current lack of consensus on what defines semiotics might insinuate its vitality and broad scope, "(…) its practitioners share a common concern with (…) the role of signs and symbols in whatever the object of study happens to be." (Rochberg-Halton & McMurtrey 142) Therefore, if we agree with Lois Tyson that instead of examining the *parole* of literature, which is a surface phenomenon, "structuralism seeks instead the *langue* of literary texts, " (220), and bearing in mind with Yu Lotman that the literary text is hierarchically organized[5], an interpretation of these structures allow texts to create meaning, often referred to as grammar, then we can set out to explore our object of study, through the lens of literary semiotics. In this case, the objective is to decipher the world of signs in *Bitter Fruit,* to understand how they generate meaning from the syntactic allure, and from the semantic and pragmatic dimensions, and to analyze the interactions between them and the ways they are symbolic of characters' semiotic meaning (behaviors, gestures, expression, etc.).

In doing so, we wed the myriads of semiotic postulates with theories of rape trauma syndrome and posttraumatic stress disorder (Herman 1992; Caruth, 1995, 1996; Luckhurst, 2008; Schonfelder, 2013), to decode how the universe of signs is a textual device, images hinting at patterns of traumas of individuals and a nation staggering out of the doom of physical and emotional abuses. Interpreting Dangor's text under the prism of trauma theories and semiotics serves as a theoretical background, making *Bitter Fruit* a *representamen* of private words of wounds echoing the social disintegration of a society, generated by the dry white season of apartheid.

More importantly, analyzing patterns of trauma and characters' various reactions to posttraumatic stress disorder through semiotic and trauma theories helps highlight Dangor's moderate stance, especially when compared to other writers of the transition period regarding the future of the new nation. Indeed, by allowing victims of sexual abuse to carry their burdens and confront past demons through self-chosen paths, the South African writer, as our discussion will show, transforms his story into a sign system, leading to other subtexts that can be the subject of later interpretations. In this respect, he epitomizes Pierce's more flexible approach to the sign, which bears ideological underpinnings of deconstruction theory. For the American semiotician, "the sign as proxy cannot properly carry out its role of incessantly becoming other signs, along the flow of semiosis. With each new instantiation a sign has invariably become a difference; it has become a new sign; not merely the same standing for the same object or event" (Merrel 3). In other words,

[4] Actual or not

[5] The text is segmented into subtexts (levels, phonological, grammatical, syntactic, rhythmic, etc.), and each segment can be considered part and parcel of the semiotic analysis of literary texts.

Lydia's silence, at the beginning of the story, is a symbol of posttraumatic stress disorder; the same silence cannot be interpreted as suggesting the same "object of event" because, a psychoanalytic reading can consider it an *interpretant* of her recovery. Dangor's narrative bears, thus, ambivalent signs whose exploration will certainly support Pierce's position, in line with Jacques Derrida's deconstruction theory, which shuns any immediacy of the sign process of which we are conscious here and now.

III. THE ALI FAMILY IN PAIN: A SEMIOTIC EXPLORATION OF UNSPOKEN TRAUMAS

The story in *Bitter Fruit* unfolds the horrendous experiences of a family that has forever been torn apart, after the sexual violation of the mother figure, Lydia, by a white policeman, Du Boise. "Under apartheid, sexual violation was an expression of white power over blacks; it was a *verb* with which white racists communicated with black combatants; rape was a means to create and reproduce multiple systems of domination, including racism and colonialism." (Diallo 61) The disintegrative effects of the rape memory have been revived by the impromptu meeting between Du Boise and Silas, a motif for the narrative voice to put the reader at the heart of the trauma borne by Lydia, but also to make him aware of how severe the consequences of the violation are, almost twenty years later. The anger and hyperarousal raised in Lydia by the evocation of the name of her rapist are signs of posttraumatic stress that she thought she had repressed, but which, unfortunately, ended up destroying the couple's life. Indeed, "Lydia straightened her leaning body as the car straightened, peering into the side mirror as she entered the slow city traffic" (10), is not only a *representamen* of an unhealed wound, a sign of a persistent fear, but also the image of a "caught moon" (11), as the narrator describes her in the lines below, a metaphorical pattern, that can be interpreted as a symbol of the woman's entrapment, while being molested by the white policeman. This is how the scene is disclosed, from the perspective of Silas:

> And then, one day, the moon was caught in the bars of a window that seemed familiar yet very different somehow, further away than even that distant township window that the architects had put it as an afterthought. (...) He heard Lydia's voice, different as well, hoarse and rich, vibrating like a singer's voice too deep to be played loudly through a set of worn-out speakers (...) while someone laughed above the sound of an idling engine and then Lydia's voice was sharp, ascending into a scream, before fading into a moan so removed it seemed to come from his dreams. (11-2)

This metaphorical part is a sign system that provides symbolic elements of the traumatic effects of the sexual assault upon the direct victim, but also on her husband. Like in *Disgrace*, where we have a pronounced encoded expression of the rape of Lucie by four black men, Dangor also makes an exquisite resort to sensory imagery that functions as a signifying system to share the horror heaped on Lydia in the van. In this reenactment of the trauma scene, Silas describes, through the changing tempo of Lydia's scream, the agony she was subjected to. The "moon" as cosmic image is used as a *designatum* (following Morris' terminology) of the innocence and liveliness of Lydia before the abuse, set against the cold and hyperaroused one, after the assault. As an innocent "moon", Lydia was one day caught in the cloudy atmosphere of her country, having to bear the brunt of her husband's commitment to the struggle against the pecking order of races in South Africa. Lydia's scream is presented in an oxymoron allure, a semiotic pattern that further expresses the acute pain of the woman; "hoarse and rich" at the same time, "vibrating like a singer's voice" and yet unable to be accompanied by a symphonic assemblage, "too deep to be played loudly through a set of worn-out speakers", reaching the apex before fading into a "moan", the expression of inexpressible pain. Indeed, as Meg Samuelson correctly reasons, "rape causes physical and psychological dissociation as it 'robs women of speech, reducing their voices to screams and moans..." (1). Thus, Dangor has well understood with Judith Herman in *Trauma and Recovery*, that "traumatic memory lacks verbal

narrative and context. Rather, they are encoded in the form of vivid sensation and images." (1992 n.p.), Elaine Scarry, in " *Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*, further foregrounds the resistance of physical pain to verbalization, when she relevantly pinpoints that

> Whatever pain achieves, it achieves in part through its unsharability, and it ensures this unsharability through its resistance to language. (...) Physical pain does not simply resist language but actively destroys it, bringing about an immediate reversion to a state anterior to language, to sounds and cries a human being makes before language was learned. (4)

Therefore, Lydia, Silas, and Mikey, the bitter fruit from the rape, are all in pain in their bodies and minds because they are caught in a web of unspeakable memories. The abuse of Lydia, like the devastating pain caused to the whole nation by the apartheid system, whose bitter fruits are still sour to swallow in the transition era, has become what Crista Schonfelder called "family trauma". It denotes "how the whole family may be affected by the individual jarring moments and how, in particular, interpersonal trauma within a family tends to shatter the group's sense of safety and stability as well as to damage the bonds of the familial community" (18).

The family disintegration, born and bred by the rape, is made more pronounced in this cold exchange between the couple, a syntagmatic pattern made of short cut sentences, that are *representamen* of the emptiness, rage, and feeling of void tearing Lydia, ever since that night. This is not only a signifier of the distance between them, but also a sound object, following Saussure's structural approach that symbolically translates the sentiment of angst that gnaws at a whole nation, after the demise of apartheid, where citizens, like walking ghosts, are overloaded by unexplainable private trauma and pain:

> "Fuck you, Lydia, I know the difference, I know pain from pleasure."
>
> She stood up, her angry reaction showed by the coldness in her body. 'You don't know about the pain. It's a memory to you, a wound to your ego, a theory.' She thrust her face into his. '*You can't even begin to imagine the pain*' (...)
>
> "What else do you remember?"
>
> "That Sergeant Seun's face, our black brother, the black, brutal shame in his face.'
>
> "You don't remember my face, my tears..."
>
> He closed his eyes almost as she closed hers. When he opened them again, she was inside, busy dialling on the phone. He followed her." (Dangor 14)

The narrative option to detach the voice from this cold, ideologically driven exchange about the meaning of pain for the victim and their community and how it can be expressed (Scarry), is a semiotic image that provides an encoded way to depict the conflicting perceptions of agony-both physical and psychological—that the direct victims of rape and collateral parties experience. Vipasha Bhardway pertinently argues that "horrific memories of the past strike the Ali family with renewed viciousness, and this time, the family disintegrates irrevocably. Following the rape, Lydia and Silas had been trapped in a loveless and non-communicative marriage, drifting away from each other emotionally and physically" (85). Lydia is seething because, convinced she is, like all rape victims, that her husband will never be able to grasp the pain she was enduring, the tears, and the expression on her face during the act. These are, in light of Morris's semiotic thought, sign vehicles, *representamen of the object* (the rape), the remembrance of which can be taken as an interpretant of lingering traumatic spin-offs, in Pierce's semiotics.

Lydia's ire and spitting her truth at Silas's face is one ultimate expression of her post-traumatic stress disorder. Unlike what she admits to her husband after the latter announced bumping into her violator-"Silas, I'd forgotten..." (13)-her agitation, delineated in the above quotation, is a sequel to an uncured wound, the symptoms of which are intrusiveness, reexperiencing, avoidance, hyperarousal, and hypervigilance, with a general feeling of anxiety and dysphoria. Her

conviction that Silas cannot understand what she experienced, her refusal to speak about the unspeakable, her attempt to banish it from her consciousness, give credit to Judith Herman's belief that "certain violations of the social compact are too terrible to utter aloud (1992 n.p.)

These alterations of the dissociated mind of the rape victim are symbolically drawn at the horizon of Dangor's text, especially through the syntactic and semantic registers used by the voice to give another textual *designatum* of the backlashes sexual violence has on Lydia and the family. Lydia's dance on the broken beer glasses can be called a *semiosis of suffering*. Read in light of Pierce's triadic approach, it is composed of the sign (silence/coldness), the object (referent/the rape), and the interpretant (dance on the jagged glasses as symbol/*representamen* of the trauma). The three concepts at the core of Pierce's theory of semiosis always interact and interrelate, as is the case in posttraumatic stress disorder, with the cause, manifestations, and consequences of the dissociation of the body and mind of the victim.

Therefore, dancing with delicate feet on broken, bloody glasses is Lydia's non-verbal language, a semiotic expression of her desire to forget the demon of the past. However hard she tries to forget, through intrusion, the atrocities from rape are tenacious as they refuse to be buried: the desire to avoid and deny the terrible past is made impossible by the conviction that denial does not work, due to a continual reenactment (traumatic neurosis for Freud) of the dreadful event. Hence, Lydia's conflict "between the will to deny horrible events and the will to proclaim them aloud is the central dialectic of psychological trauma" (Herman n.p.). The dancing scene is pregnant with symbolism as it sends back Dangor's text into signs of individual and family disintegration. It makes his narrative become what Yuri Tynjonov calls in his essay "on Literary Evaluation" (1927) a system with a semiotic status in relation to other historical series (or orders), implying a dynamic interplay where one system mediates meaning for another. This leads to approaching *Bitter Fruit* within "the cultural semiotic framework in which literary discourse is understood as a set of cultural texts mediated/translated through and with other cultural texts." (Kroo' 248) In other words, by bridging the ordeals suffered by Lydia and the ones of all rape victims to the cultural *con-text* underlying the narration, *Bitter Fruit* provides the system of South African culture with new textual internal translations through its poetic practice of intertextuality and intermedialitity (Kroo' 249); from a structuralist perspective, a semiotic analysis of patterns of trauma gives way to exploring the novel as a sign system by foregrounding similar objects (all rape victims of the apartheid regime, the unsung heroines of the struggle), synchronically, according to Saussure's semiological line. Thus, to highlight the historically and culturally imbued aspect of the narrative, the position given by Madeleine Laurencin must be taken at face value: "The description of the ordeal Lydia suffers is harsh and unforgiving. It forces the reader to recognize the weight of characters and of the country's past. (56). This is given credence by psychologists who often theorize trauma as an experience that is not easily represented, because the "unspeakability of trauma constitutes a pathology of history itself" (Frenkel 160), which can be interpreted, in the South African context, as a specialized language, bearing intertextual connections.

Still in on the path to seeking the *langue* of *Bitter Fruit*, the structure that allows its text to make meaning, our focus shifts, with the narrative perspective, from the couple to the bitter outcome of the rape, Mickey, to further exemplify the interrelated condition of all victims of the violation apartheid was, and through whom other signifying elements are provided about the deleterious atmosphere in the Ali abode. Reading with him the diary of his mother, we discover

> A ghost from the past, a mythical phantom embedded in the 'historical memory' of those who were active in the struggle. *Historical memory. It is a term that seems illogical and contradictory to Mickey;* Yet, it has an air of inevitability, solemn and compelling, especially when uttered by Silas and his comrades. It explains everything: the violence periodically sweeping the country, the crime rate, even the strange 'upsurge' of brutality against women. It is as if history has a

> remembering process of its own, one that gives life to its imaginary monsters. How his mother and father have received a visitation from that dark past, some terrible memory brought to life. (32, our emphasis)

The pervasive and unavoidable historical memory is, actually, the focus on the breakdown of the Ali family. In fact, the intense trauma experienced by Lydia and Silas, along with its lasting effects, is conveyed here through Mickey's consciousness. The widespread presence of historical memory in the South African context-the root cause of uncontrolled violence-is symbolically expressed through the use of the tense that defies time: the simple present. This not only allows the narrator to spotlight the tension between Silas's generation, which clings to historical memory as a semiotic object to facilitate remembrance and sharing experiences in the process of healing, and Mickey's different perspective, but it also underscores the cultural and psychological disparities involved.

Thus, the unwarm condition of Silas, Lydia and Mickey is an allegorical image, a sign system representing three crucial stages in the country's historical evolution. From Pierce's semiotics, Silas, as *representamen* of former anti-apartheid activists, who look back in time, is an *interpretant* of South Africans holding desperately on to memories to avoid the challenging and uncertain reality after the official end of racial discrimination; Lydia symbolizes the many unsung preys to white repression who pluck up courage to face their so-long stifled traumas, through different avenues; and Mickey, 'the bitter fruit' of the violation of the mother/country, is a sound-image that signifies the youth, lost bitter fruits of the system, less blissful by the political transformation, alienated from family and society and who slip into zones of violence.

In this way, shifting the narrative perspective from one character to another, placing the reader at the heart of a textual web of accounts of the same experience-the sexual abuse of Lydia and its lifelong impacts - is a sign system activated by the author to encode the *langue* of his text. This is done through a large use of the technique of psycho narration, which opens the door to the minds of characters to foreground the mental dissociation caused by the traumatic experiences that have befallen the family and nation. A telling illustration is in this section of the narrative where Lydia's posttraumatic stress not only triggered inclement family environment but also utterly destroys couple life which progressively drifts away to fall into unbearable silence, to such a point that "their time spent together passed quietly, each one reading on their, or listening to their own music through earphones or in their separate sanctuaries." (61) This humdrum family life, expressed through the continuous regime of the verbs in the passage is actually a *representamen* of the general condition of South Africans in the transition, lost, disconnected, and paining to give meaning to the new political system. The silence and separation in their 'sanctuaries' are symbols of a persistent separation between racial communities, consequent to past traumas. Reading this passage as a semiotic pattern of past traumas for the whole county is all the more grounded because, as Luckhurst rightly puts it in his seminal work *The Trauma Question*, "the traumatic memory persists in a halflife, rather like a ghost, a haunting absent presence of another time in our time". (81) Each moment of the past stubbornly clings to the affected mind of Lydia, Silas, Mickey, to South Africans, who pain to forget, a sign of trauma-born trouble in which "the overwhelming events of the past repeatedly possess, in intrusive images and thoughts, the one who has lived through them." (Caruth 151) These intrusive images and thoughts repeatedly imposed and thus making it difficult for Lydia to explain to her husband what it's like to be raped is, in reality, a symbolic pattern of South Africa's difficulty to give words to moral wounds. On this, we partly concur with Meg Samuelson's interpretation when she avers that with her words flung to her husband,

> Lydia breaks the gender divide that names what happens to men's bodies as torture and what happens to women's bodies as rape. The implication is that to speak of rape within the structure of the TRC would only confirm its

production of women as the victims of sexual abuse and of sexual abuse as a special category of harm pertaining only to women." (2)

On the contrary, knowing with Elaine Scarry that rape as a form of psychological suffering does have referential content and is susceptible to verbal objectification (11), Dangor offers possibilities for the victims of sexual abuse to choose their path to therapy. This is what Lydia has done by refusing to share her story with the TRC. Instead, she uses her diary, which is a third space of enunciation (Homi Bhabha), as an alternative to get psychological aid and public confession. The diary, unfolded to the reader by Mickey, is a private space to tell what rape trauma is to her, a space of reenactment of the rape scene, where she can speak of the trauma in crude detail. In that therapeutic space, Lydia can journal the utter transformation that occurs in her life, "to speak of that which remains unspeakable within available public discourse" (Samuelson 2). Such a narrative formulation from the victim's perspective gives another swell attention to the semiotic dimension of the story in *Bitter Fruit* and the diversified use the author makes of images and other linguistic turns at the core of the narrative grammar of his text, through a well-set semantic relationships (between the signs evoked and the objects they stand for) and a pragmatic dynamic that allows discussing signs and how they can be interpreted as symbols of Dangor's commitment to bring light to the contradictions and traumas bred by apartheid. It also allows a critical exploration of his unflinching hope for a safer and more humane South African nation, which he somewhat manages to express through a hybridized use of sign systems.

IV. DANGOR, A MAPMAKER OF HOPE THROUGH AMBIVALENT SEMIOTIC PATTERNS

The discussion on the Ali family's body and mind in pain has foregrounded insights into the debilitating effects of sexual assault during the anti-apartheid struggle. The set of semiotic images explored in light of the theories of Saussure, Morris, but also Peirce, has allowed us to conclude with Frenkel that, "Dangor's texts reveal the nexus between the ambiguities of identity and the ambiguities of history that characterizes contemporary South African culture as a place of indeterminacy." (11) Truly, sexual assault is a running theme in *Bitter Fruit*, the symbolism of which is under the form of an allegory of the assault of the country as a whole by white zealots, with its mortifying consequences on the psyche of the victims, fighting to meet up with the blurred identities and contradictions that hinder the quest for reconciliation, so longed for by political leaders.

Such a cultural indeterminacy can account for the presence of ambivalent signs that whisper, at the same time, the harshness of the themes unfolded at the textual level, and a glimmer of hope sprouting, despite contradictions, uncertainties, and frustrations in the transition period. In this way, *Bitter Fruit* can be approached as *cultural semiosis* because it imbues its universe of signs with the cultural realities of South African society. Indeed, unlike the somewhat rigid structural perspective-"that language is *nonreferential* because it doesn't refer to things in the world but only to our concepts of things in the world" (Tyson 256)-Dangor disseminates in his story a system of signs that endlessly interact and interrelate with other signs "out there", (as *sign-events*), and in the minds (as *thought signs*), following Peircean semiosis. These signs are nothing outside the entire community of sign producers and processors to which South Africans belong (Merrill 3). The multilayered rhetorical turns and linguistic systems that wrapped the thematic line of the story is the product of Dangor's commitment to read and interpret the South African culture-world at the time of the transition; "he fashioned semiotic patterns that not only translate the traumatic experience lived by the family and nation, but also that constitute a *representamen* of the historical condition, the sign vehicle as Morris labels it.

Knowing that no "sign is a full-blown sign without all the signs for they are all interdependent, and they incessantly engage in interrelated interaction with one another (Merrell 2), it will be more relevant to explore Dangor's atypical technique to express hope, through a sign system that seems to

suggest, at the surface level, the difficulty for his fellow citizens to step out of the zone of racial conflict, but which, at an underlying level, is a resounding expression of his optimism as far as the future is concerned. This ambivalent nature of the sign system in *Bitter Fruit* can be dissected through the variable analysis of the sign conducted by Pierce, combined with Jacques Derrida's deconstructive theory, informed by Bakhtin's polyphonic method of text analysis. Should we recall it, while Peirce, in his work, sets out to develop the idea of the sign's mediary role, because he was convinced that there is no immediacy of the sign, as Cartesian philosophy postulated it, of which we can have immediate consciousness, Derrida demonstrated, first in *Of Grammatology* and in *Positions* (1981) that the sign (at the core of language, culture, human being, literature and even identities) is dynamic, ambiguous, and unstable, continually disseminating possible meanings, because of the interplay between language and the construction of meaning. Consequently, if, as Peirce posited, the concept of mediation resists taking signs in a rigid binary correspondence with their respective objects as they are in the here and now, a literary text like *Bitter Fruit* is made, according to deconstruction theory, of multiple, overlapping, and conflicting meanings in dynamic, fluid relation to one another and to us. (Tyson 259) The consequence of such dynamic interrelationships is an ambivalent and shifting meaning of semiotic patterns of trauma in the story that resist what Derrida refers to as the "myth of presence."[6]

The following examples from the story serve as evidence of the impossibility of interpreting symbols and other semiotic images of the trauma experienced by the Ali family and the country in a fixed and immediate manner. It rather calls for a mediatory reading of the signs and their ever-shifting signifying system, because, should we repeat it with Derrida, "language has two important characteristics: (1) its play of signifiers continually defers, or postpones, meaning, and (2) the meaning it seems to have is the result of the differences by which we distinguish one signifier from another.[7]

What strikes the competent reader of *Bitter Fruit* is a constant shift between tenses, in the temporal axis of the narrative, shown in tense change between "past" and present." Dangor appropriates the position of French theorist Roland Barthes, who stipulates that the role of the writer is to tackle the why of the world in a how-to-write. In this way, attention should be put on this unstable verbal regime that is, actually, a sign of hybrid narration at the first level, impersonal (with the past tense, recalling historical events) that constitutes underlying elements of the narration, at the second level (with the timeless present tense) where characters are monologuing. The interpretation of the signifying system of this change in tenses can be expanded to infer that the breaks in the temporal line of the story are semiotic patterns suggesting the rape victims' inability to control the continuity of life after the trauma. One telling example is when Mikey's psycho narration is disclosed to the reader after having discovered that he is the bitter fruit of the rape (30). Such a traumatic experience is expressed through a Mickey cloaked in deep silence, the symbol of South Africa itself, at the moment, lost in a transitional condition, unable to reconcile with himself and his family. The discovery is a sign, representing the trauma borne by South African youth during that tumultuous period, from which the reader-interpretant can infer, following Peirce's triadic semiotics, uncertainty about the future that lies ahead.

More importantly, knowing that the sense made of the sign is in the mind of the observer (*Sanford Encyclopedia*, online), another meaning can be

[6] Derrida delineates his deconstruction ideology, the opposition between speech and writing, which he considers a manifestation of the logocentrism at the core of Western culture. Through the latter concept, he infers the general assumption that a certain homogenized truth exists priorly to and independently of its representation by linguistic signs. Such a logocentric approach to truth and reality as existing outside language derives in turn from a deep-seated prejudice in Western philosophy, which Derrida features as "myth or metaphysics of presence", a process that fundamentally ignores the crucial role of absence and difference in the conceptualization of such phenomena as truth, identity, and reality.

[7] Derrida combines the French words for "to defer" and "to differ" to coin the word *différance,* which is his name for the only "meaning" language can have.

inferred: the *representamen*, which is the discovery that he is the child of sexual abuse, stirs in the young man an existential quest, symbolized by his decision to step out of the comfort zone of his family house and to go and roam the street of Soweto. Indeed, conscious with Judith Herman that a consideration of the past is a prerequisite to heal from psychological trauma, Michael, who shuns the sobriquet Mickey, which is itself a semiotic image of a new personhood-"like traumatized people [needs] to understand the past in order to reclaim the present and the future" (n.p.)

Thus, through the technique of the story in the story, a large window is opened to the story of Hajera, aged sixteen, a distant relative of the Ali family, raped by a British officer. This is a second-level narration through which the reader listens to the story, mediated through Michael's consciousness, told by Moulana Ismail (198-204-205), where the 19-year-old man realizes that rape was a long-time weapon used not only to dampen resistance but also as a sign to represent power dynamics, in colonial India. We learn along with Michael that

> In the middle of all this historical ennui-how else can I describe it?-a British officer, a lieutenant, rapes Ali Ali's sister. She is sixteen years old, one year younger than Ali Ali. Her name is Hajera (...). Of course, no action is taken against the soldier! He is English, he is white, and a commissioner officer! Untouchable! No one believes Hajera. (...) Ali Ali decides to act. He manages to get a message to the officer, through one of the Indian workers (...) The officer goes, hoping to pay another bribe. (...) They meet in the same mango grove where Hajera used to walk, on the banks of the river where she sat dreaming of another world. They find the officer, days after he has been reported missing, hanging from a tree, his hand bound by his back. Ali Ali flees away from Bombay, in the opposite direction to the one the British think he will take. (200-1-2)

The use of the timeless tense, the simple present, is a fully-fledged semiotic image that implies a shared method used in all regions where the subaltern, to borrow Spivak's term, are subjected to silence through rape. Hajera's story is the only one among many dishonored women, violated, and left with lifelong scars from abuses inflicted by those in power. Such a story can symbolize sexual violence, if interpreted as Pierce suggests, through the interaction between what it signifies in the South African context (as a form of subjugation) and its interpretation and object. In other words, in India and South Africa-where there is colonial rule and resistance to domination-rape was an unconventional weapon, a carefully considered technique at the core of power relations between oppressor and oppressed. Indeed, Moulana Ismaila's powerful words echo in Michael's mind:

> There are certain things people do not forget, or forgive. Rape is one of them. In ancient times, conquerors destroyed the will of those whom they conquered by impregnating their women. It is an ancient form of genocide. It does not require a Sufi prophecy to see the design in that. *The Romans and the Sabine Women, the Nazis and Jewish women in the concentration camps, the Soviets in Poland, Israeli and Palestinian refugees, white South African policemen and black women*. (my emphasis)
>
> You conquer a nation by bastardizing its children. (204)

The enumerative style of the passage (highlighted here) is a literary device used to drive at the repetition and even trivialization of a means of using women's bodies as a terrain to inscribe lifelong sign patterns of trauma. Their bodies serve as a means to conquer a nation through rape, but more importantly, they can also be interpreted as a sign that stimulates and emulates Michael in his quest for justice. The story of Hajera, then, functions as a catalytic semiotic system with an ambivalent meaning for the young man. First, he has now fully understood the past and has begun to confront his present traumatic experience, aiming to face the future with peace, like Ali Ali. As he listens to the story of Ali Ali, Michael endorses the mission to seek justice

through regenerative violence, "to negotiate and recreate his uncomfortable identity as a child conceived in shame and terror." (Mafe 114) Second, he believes that the last cancerous seeds of the past, symbols of apartheid, must be uprooted to foster hope for the future. In this context, the killing of his genitor, Du Boise (253), is narrated in a straightforward style that involves the reader. The killing regenerates the dislocated identities-the bitter fruits of abuses inflicted by those wielding power over the more vulnerable community segments. After the murder of his father, his "heritage," he whispers, unwanted, imposed, "his" history, "his" beginning (276), Michael, the bitter fruit, the bastard, is dead and is reincarnated into a new version—"Noor/light" (277), the seed of a new identity. Such a new name, expressed in an indirect thought, adds to the ambivalent nature of the story, which allows a dialogic interpretation: *Noor* is a sign of an assumed hybrid identity; "Even at its most private and silent, that is nonetheless a dialogue between [Micheal's] self at one moment and [his] oncoming self of the next moment." (Merrel 12)

Still, the ambivalent image of Michael the justice seeker can be read differently, in a Peircean and Derridean perspective, especially when connected to the fleeting nature of the sign, which automatically leads to the instability, and even *(im)possibility* of constructing a new identity in the South African context. Jacques Derrida, in his ideology about the deconstruction of human identity, rightly believes

> that by the language we speak, and because all language is an unstable, ambiguous force-field of competing ideologies, we are, ourselves, unstable and ambiguous force-fields of competing ideologies. The self-image of a stable identity that many of us have is really just a comforting self-delusion, which we produce in collusion with our culture, for culture, too, wants to see itself as stable and coherent when in reality it is highly unstable and fragmented. (in Tyson 257)

If in Peirce's *infinite semiosis*, "the importance of the interpretation (…) is that signification is not a simple dyadic relationship between sign and object [because] a sign signifies only in being interpreted" (Stanford), this argumentation of Derrida holds ground in the context of South Africa, where the quest for a new identity seems daunting for the young like Micheal. The instability of the social and cultural fabric, born from the conflicting ideologies between apartheid upholders and combatants, but subsequently between the new authorities and the younger generation, leads to the fragmented personhood of the latter, who no longer know on which foot to stand. Therefore, it is the meaning, the signifying element (Peirce), and not the quest itself that is more important. In the same vein, Michael's determination to deconstruct what his person symbolized before he knows the truth about his birth and reconstruct himself is part of the healing process from a traumatic family/social past, the sequel of which still follows him in his street roaming. This is articulated in monologues and questioning-"a written manifestation of doubt, incomprehension, a request for an explanation…" (Aiuthier-Revuz)-that are signs of posttraumatic stress disorder, but also in his social bonding with his friend Vinu, a victim of incest, and Moulana Ismaila. Judith Herman rightly posits that "to hold traumatic reality in consciousness requires a social context that affirms and protects the victims and that joins victims and witnesses in a common alliance. For the individual victim, this social context is created by relationships with friends, lovers and family." (n.p.)

In the story, Lydia's transformation from victimhood to healing is also expressed through a double-meaning sign system that avoids strict correspondence between the signs used to depict her healing journey and the signifiers, and whose meaning, within the narrative context, is always fleeting and variable. In the reconceptualization of rape in new feminism, it is argued that rape is a form of violence that destroys the person's sense of self, yet from which the survivor can recover. Dangor reinterprets this core belief by creating a character who is found in the darkest part of her life but becomes a woman who fully embraces her past and is aware of her new identity. Her directly quoted thought, "only women, wombed beings, can carry the dumb tragedy of history around with

them" (251), serves as a symbol of a more confident woman on her way to recovery, and also as a sign of her acceptance and subsequent healing from past trauma. Let's consider this part of her routine:

> "She *sips the tea she has made - ritually heating the teapot, spooning in the exact measure of green leaves, inhaling the jasmine fragrance* (…) She would also sleep with someone younger now, if he – or she- could offer their bodies *unselfishly as her instrument of release*. From the years, the decades of sexual hunger, a simple, unadorned and unpretentious tapping of the swollen darkness, bruised, discoloured, of the place in which she has imprisoned her sensuality. She no longer needs to protect herself from her rapist, from her husband's fierce but all transient desires. She wants now to be lowered into an *abyss of the flesh*, *unquestioned and unquestioning*, to descend as if she is drowning, she wants the death of her sexual being, and thinks it could only happen dramatically, sinful and sinned against, sacrificed like Sister Catherine on the Cross of her Christ's disembodied lust. (Dangor 248)

This long psycho narration directly quoted by the voice is the ultimate expression of Lydia's long way to psychological recovery from trauma and her total break away from rape trauma syndrome. The sign of the slow but progressive recovery, wrapped in a curative silence, is hinted at in the meaningful routine (*sips the tea she has made - ritually heating the teapot, spooning in the exact measure of green leaves, inhaling the jasmine* fragrance) she builds around herself, and which is delineating her determination to take back her social, cultural, and sexual life in hand. The passage shows not only her decision to no longer let her abductor traumatize her but also it can be further interpreted as the imposition of her own therapeutic method: to sleep with someone younger, (…) to quench the decade long sexual hunger, "a simple, unadorned and unpretentious tapping of the swollen darkness, bruised, discoloured, of the place in which she has imprisoned her sensuality." Through this, Dangor's text can be approached as a narrative language system that defies Western psychological assumptions holding that the victim of rape trauma can only be cured through well-established 'scientific' methods. Instead, through Lydia, the author believes that the victim-survivor can overcome the burdensome past through a conversion, a confession to themselves. The narrative option to foreground the character's thought, wrapped in the present tense, is another telling sign that symbolically whispers that now she has a greater command of her emotions, motivated by her dogged will to free herself from the swamp of smothering social and cultural expectations. Lydia moves from a haunted subject to a full actor of her sexual life; from an eerie past life to a more peaceful one. He is conscious that her desire can only be fulfilled through an "unquestioned and unquestioning sexual relationship.

This is suggested in the enumerative allure and imperative verbal regime of this other thought of hers directly reported by the narrative voice: "Hand Silas his heritage, say, something short and profound, kiss him on the cheek, then walk away, free of him and his burdensome past." (251) These elements of narrative grammar of the story are *representamen* of the Lydia's fraught relationships with Silas, based on the conviction that he is part of the object that caused her trauma. Thus, in her will to deconstruct the old Lydia and to construct the new one, Silas, symbolizing the haunting days of the past, must be effaced. This is another expression of the ambivalent meaning of the semiotic image of trauma at the textual level in *Bitter Fruit*. Although Silas, following Pierce's ideology, is a textual semiotic sign, symbolizing the victims of the apartheid repressive apparatus, for Lydia, Silas's inactivity translates the *dynamical object* (the *denotatum*, according to Morris) of the inevitable dislocation of the couple. That is the reason why she does not shiver to step into "transgressive" sex publicly. This is how the narrator, using an iterative design, draws a painstaking image of Lydia's sexual intercourse with a young man, the agent of her freedom from sexual dormancy:

> *He remembers Lydia lying on the billiard table, that young Mozambican, Joao, perched above her, birdlike, a heron, uncommonly black, his awkwardness given grace by her arched body. Silver shadows lighting up the loveliness of their coupling: green upon her olive skin, deep blue against his dark, dark back*. She held him, no more than that, moored him, as if to prevent him from drifting into space, his head in her hands, whispering in his ear, as if instructing him in the art of sex. On the other side of the room, lit up by a full moon, stood Silas, staring intently, like a voyeur. Then he stumbled away, as if intoxicated. (Dangor 268-9)

The nominal structure opening the passage, introduced by the verbum dicendi "remembers", indicates a meticulous rendering of the action of lovemaking, and these are syntactic elements that infer the passion that drove Lydia in the act. The narrative choice, to come back, through the son's perspective, to the scene of Lydia's releasing sexual act is another way for the narrator to reveal that the event was at the same time so liberating for Lydia, so shameful for the husband, as well as so indifferent to Micheal, who no longer feels a sense of belonging with the 'family'. This "adulterous" act of love, which is, according to Silas, Lydia's "public declaration of freedom" (272), is wrapped in an evocative style, (asyndetic enumerative structure, "birdlike, a heron, uncommonly black (...) body"), framed with intensifiers ("*dark, dark back*"), and other animal images that constitute grammatical devices expressive of the intensely healing nature of the sexual intercourse. The overall structure of the passage (short cut and enumerative) keeps pace with the mating couple and Michael's eyes watching his mother's uncommon "boldness grudging but irresistible" (266).

The iterative mode of presenting the scene takes on a new allure when relayed by Silas; it is composed of a set of questions that are both a sign of the husband's agitation and a certain tranquility raised in him by the recovery of his wife (272)

Therefore, Lydia is no longer the embodiment of the caught moon, the victims of sexual abuse evoked in the first part of our discussion. She has become a full-blown moon, an ambivalent image that translates Dangor's shifting images to give body to his hope, and through which he calls the bitter fruits of South Africa's past demons to bear on retributive acts and engage the demanding process of healing.

The sexual relationship with the young man, which is the verbalization of her psychological recovery, can be further interpreted, following Peirce and Derrida's postulates. The love scene is a reflection of Peirce's infinite semiosis of the sign itself, as the multifocalised approach to present it supposes a plurality of meanings and interpretations, if we refer to Derrida's ideas in *différance*. If it is true that in Peirce's semiotic model, "the interpretant is created by the observer, the object is not given, but inferred, this makes a sign's meaning highly dependent on context (San Diego). Thus, it can be the object of a context-bound interpretation, through which Dangor, as both a detached and committed observer of his society's walk from doom to gloom, seems to whisper that each South African woman victim of sexual abuse should have the liberty to define their own way to deal with the traumatic experience, to meet the challenge of the present and look ahead to the future. Thus, the question of sex itself is highly symbolic in the narrative world of Dangor; through it, he sends snippets of his optimistic vision, based on an ambivalent approach to the possibilities for national reconciliation. From a sign bearing subversive overtones to a signifier of renewal with life and intimacy, sex (the consensual one with the young Mozambican) has helped Lydia survive rape trauma syndrome. Its ambivalence can be further expanded to explain that, by representing the question of sex as a therapy to address and eventually redress the tragic history of his country, Dangor takes his narrative as a pretext to map the road that should lead to a brighter future. This is further accounted for by the symbolic connection that can be made between Lydia's journey to an unknown and yet safer place and South Africa's one, a journey where "time and

distance, even this paltry distance, will help to free her. Burden of the mother. Mother, wife, lover, lover-mother, lover-wife, unloved mother…", free from past demons. The motif of the journey is another encoded expression of the author's hope that is dissonant with the cold and close textual patterns of trauma at the surface level of the narrative, through which the author refuses to turn a blind eye to a certain unidirectional option for healing that is proposed to victims, through the TRC. However, beneath that apparent coldness of the text lies his unflinching hope, symbolically designed in the open-ended aspect of the story. In this way, Laurencin is right to affirm that Dangor, compared to other writers of the period, "has a much more positive vision. The ambiguous citation of Leonard Cohen's *Last Year's Man at the end* of *Bitter Fruit*, provides the reader with an interpretative key to the novel." (58-9) This paratextual inscription-the song-is highly symbolical as it sets the primal step for the author's quest for reconciliation: he is calling his fellow countrymen to carry the burden of the past, should they want, like Lydia, "to claim for themselves the metaphor of past and future from last year's labor to tomorrow's crops." (Laurencin 59) *Bitter Fruit*, then, straddles between the rigid structural binary division of the South African world under apartheid, reflected in the textual patterns of trauma and the more flexible, open, and fleeting realities symbolized by the ambivalent signs swarming the story, through which the author is mediating the possibilities for traumatized individuals and communities to deal with the past.

V. CONCLUSION

This discussion has aimed to analyze Dangor's *Bitter Fruit* through semiotic principles, seeking to decode the underlying sign system that shapes the surface meaning of the troubled transition period in his country. The analysis shows that his narrative revolves around signs that symbolically represent the intense suffering and experiences of characters dealing with the brutality of apartheid, whose lingering effects are still felt both individually and collectively. By integrating ideas from Peirce, Saussure and Morris, the discussion has tackled the complex question of the trauma of characters who endure pain to rise above the chaos of the transition era. Through a cross-analysis of literary semiotics and trauma theories, the study demonstrates that the characters' bodies and minds in pain serve as a signifying system reflecting the widespread feeling of angst affecting and afflicting South Africa. As a skilled writer, Dangor constructs signs that act as symbols addressing the urgent issue of national reconciliation and identity in a multicultural society. Using the Ali family as the representamen of the entire nation, the story initially depicts the breakdown of family and national ties, but also reveals what the author strongly believes are the prerequisites for reconciliation: the crucial need for individuals and communities to confront past demons directly and in their own ways if they hope to recover from the dissociative trauma caused by abuses like rape and other dehumanizing methods used by the repressive apartheid system. In this way, Dangor challenges the approach of the TRC, expressing this counterposition through various fleeting signs in the story, implying that South Africans, in general, still hold many possibilities for rebirth from the system's oppressive grip.

The ambivalent aspects of the sign system, deciphered through Peirce's semiosis approach informed by deconstruction ideas, have led us to foreground the open-ended aspect of the story, which is the ultimate expression of the author's unblinking faith in the future, after the transition. Such an open-ended closure, reminiscent of Nadine Gordimer's *July's People*, is a symbol of his role as mapmaker of truth and justice seeker, who needs, like Michael/Noor, to explore other horizons, but also his decided will, along fellow writers like André Brink, to become the sensitive point of his community, the torch bearer, as Achebe has it, that should walk his community from the throes of apartheid to the more clement spaces. As cold and painful images of trauma seem to be at the surface level of the text (symbolizing the binary rigidity of the racist system and the lingering social tension in the new democracy), the underlying signs, beneath the text and composing the *langue* of the story, analysed from a deconstructionist perspective, are

interpretants of a loud yet unsaid optimism that counters the unspeakable trauma suffered by characters. By their polyphonic meanings, the system of signs, in *Bitter Fruit,* like deconstruction theory, "defies institutionalization in an authoritative textual paradigm." (Turner, "Jacques Derrida", online) In a parallel thought flow, the symbols of characters' recovery from trauma, and their construction of a hybrid identity (through Micheal's reincarnation into Noor), and the author's optimism, "overturn the hierarchy imposed by any system of dominance of one particular way of thinking over others, and belies the idea of fixed meaning, overturning, and therefore exposing, the existence of the binary and destabilizing previously fixed categories of understanding" the South African society. (Turner "Jacques Derrida", online) This is the artistic expression of the author's unwavering belief that all the Lydias, as *sign-agents* of the transformation from victim to survivor, are representamen of multiple possibilities offered to South Africans to not only carry the burden of the past, but also to look ahead to the future, humming a new song of life.

WORKS CITED

1. Achebe, C., "The Novelist as Teacher", in *Morning Yet on Creation Day*. New York: Doubleday, 1975.
2. Aghogho, A., « Ominous Inevitabilities: Reflecting on South Africa's Post-Transition Aporia in Achmat Dangor's *Bitter Fruit*, *Africa Spectrum*, 2013, 48-2, pp. 3-24.
3. Authier-Revuz, J. « Parler avec des signes de ponctuation » ou: de la typographie à l'énonciation », *Documentation et Recherche en linguistique allemande contemporaine. 21,* 76-87, 1979.
4. Bhabha, H. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994.
5. Bhardwaj, V., "Lydia's silence: Representation of trauma from an ex-centric position in Achmat Dangor's *Bitter Fruit*", *Transcript: An e-Journal of Literary and Cultural Studies,* Vol. 1, Issue No. 2, July-Dec 2021, 83-99. https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9466-3870
6. Caruth, C. *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995.
7. Coetzee, J. *Disgrace*. 1999. London: Vintage, 2000.
8. Dangor, A. *Bitter Fruit*, London: Paperbacks, 2005
9. ……*Kafka's Curse*, New York: Pantheon, 1997.
10. De Saussure, F. Course in General Linguistics. In Gottdiener, M., Boklund-Lagopoulou, K. & Lagopoulos, A.P. (2003). *Semiotics*. London: Sage Publications, 1974
11. Derrida, J. *Of Grammatology*, trans., Gayatri Spivak, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974.
12. …….*Positions*, trans., Alan Bass, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981.
13. Diallo, K, "The Rhetoric of Sexual Violence in Achmat Dangor's *Bitter Fruit." Décembre 2017, Mélanges offerts au Professeur Mamadou Kandji. Dakar : Harmattan, Sénégal.*
14. …… Unspeakable Things Spoken: The Narration of Incest in Yvonne Vera's *Under the Tongue", GELL : Groupe d'Etudes Linguistiques et Littéraires*, n° 28. Presses Universitaires de Saint Louis. Sénégal, Décembre 2020, pp. 25 à 44.
15. Dymentrenko V. I. & Khailuna N. F, "Application of Semiotics Analysis in Modern Literary Criticism (Theoretical Discourse). *Modern Systems of Science and Education in the USA, EU, and Other Countries*, January 2022. https://www.proconference.org/index.php/usc/article/view/usc09-01-018; DOI: 10.30888/2709-2267.2022-09-01-018
16. Eco, U. *A Theory of Semiotics*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976.
17. Frenkel R, "Performing Race, Reconsidering History": Achmat Dangor's Recent Fiction", *Research in African Literatures*, March 2008, 39 (1): 149-165; Doi: 10.1353/ral.2008.0000.
18. --------"Reconsidering South African Indian Fiction Postapartheid", *Research in African Literatures*. Indiana University Press, vol 42 (3), Fall, 2011, 1-16.

19. Gordimer, N. *The Essential Gesture: Writing, Politics, and Places*. eds by Stephen Clingman. Chicago: Knopt, 1988.
20. ----------*July's People*. New York: Penguin Books, 1981.
21. Herman, J. L., *Trauma and Recovery*. *The Aftermath of Violence—From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror*. New York: Basic Books, 1992.
22. Irele, Abiola F. *The Companion to the African Novel*, Eds. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
23. Johansen J. D. & Swend E. Larsen. *Signs in Use. Introduction to Semiotics*, trans., Dinda L. Gorlée & John Irons, London: Routledge, 2002.
24. KNecht, S., "Interview Achmat Dangor." The Ledge (March 2005): 5 June 2011 <http://www.theledge.com/flash/ledge.php?conversation=57&lan=UK>.
25. Kroo', K., "From the Formalist to the Semiotic Theory of Literature, *Communications* 2018/2, Editions Seuils, DOI 10.3917/commu.103-0247.
26. Laurencin, M., "A Polychromatic Approach to the Rainbow Nation Today: *Bitter Fruit* by Achmat Dangor, "Nietverloren" and *Disgrace* by J.M. Coetzee", *Commonwealth Essays and Studies* [Online], 34.2 |2012, 19 April 2021, DOI: https://doi.org/10.4000/ces.5488
27. Lotman, Y. *The Structure of the Artistic Text* (1970). Robert Vroon (trans.). Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1977.
28. Luckhurst, T. 2008, *The Trauma Question*. New York: Routledge, 2008.
29. Mafe, D. A, "Tragic to Magic? Achmat Dangor's *Bitter Fruit*" in *Mixed Race Stereotypes in South African and American Literature*, 2013.
30. Merrel, F., "Semiotics and Literary Studies", *The Commens Encyclopedia. The Digital Encyclopedia of Peirce Studies*. Eds by Mats Bergman and Joao Queiroz, 90-4, 2023.
31. Morris, Charles W. 1938. *(PDF) Foundations of the Theory of Signs (1938)*. Available from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/331469588_Foundations_of_the_Theory_of_Signs_1938 [accessed Sep 23 2025].
32. ..... *Significance and Signification*. Massachusetts Institute of Technology: M.I.T. Press, 1964.
33. Rochberg-Halton, E. & Kevin Mc., "The Foundations of Modern Semiotic: Charles Sanders Peirce and Charles Morris", *American Journal of Semiotics*, vol. 2, n°1-2, 1983, pp. 129-156.
34. Samuelson, M., "Speaking Rape "like a man": Achmat Dangor's *Bitter Fruit*. " *Annual Review of Islam in South Africa* 7 (2004): 11-4.
35. Schonfelder, C., *Wounds and Words: Childhood and Family Trauma in Romantic and Postmodern Fiction*, 2013 https://library.oapen.org/bitstream/id/6c605c78b7c0418bbfb70559db82ca7f/627792.pdf.
36. Scarry, E. *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*. Oxford University Press, 1985.
37. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Online), "Charles Sanders Peirce." August 4, 2022; First published 13 October 2006. https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/peirce/
38. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. "Jacques Derrida". First published Wednesday, November 22, 2006. Substantive revision Friday, August 27, 2021. https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/derrida/
39. Turner, C., "Jacques Derrida: Deconstruction". https://criticallegalthinking.com/2016/05/27/jacques-derrida deconstruction/ https://criticallegalthinking.com/2016/05/27/jacques-derrida-deconstruction/, 27 May 2016.
40. Tynjanov, J., "On Literary Evolution" (1927). In: Ladislav Matejka and Krystyna Pomorska (eds.). *Readings in Russian Poetics: Formalist and Structuralist Views*. Cambridge MA: The MIT Press, 1971, pp. 66-78.
41. Tyson, T. *Critical Theory Today. A User-Friendly Guide* (second Edition), New York: Routledge, 2006.
42. Yakin, H. S. & Andreas T., "The Semiotic Perspectives of Peirce and Saussure: A Brief Comparative Study", *Procedia. Social and Behavioral Sciences,* 1-55, 2014, pp. 4-8.

43. University of California San Diego. Peircian Semiotics. https://cseweb.ucsd.edu/~ddahlstr/cse271/peirce.php
44. *Writings of Charles S. Peirce: a Chronological Edition*, Volume I 1857–1866, Volume II 1867, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, Indiana, 1982, 1984, 1986, 1989, 1993, 2000, 2010).

An Empirical Study on Green Consumerism among College Students of Mumbai with Respect to Electric Vehicles

Dr. Sheetal Mody

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the attitudes, perceptions, and purchase intentions towards electric vehicles (EVs) among college students in Mumbai, a demographic crucial to the future of sustainable consumption. A quantitative approach was employed, utilizing a structured questionnaire distributed to a sample of 312 students across various colleges in Mumbai. The findings reveal a strong environmental consciousness (Mean= 4.42) and a positive attitude towards EVs as a symbol of modernity (Mean=4.05). However, a significant intention-behavior gap exists. The primary barriers to adoption are high purchase cost (72.1%), perceived lack of charging infrastructure (68.3%) and range anxiety (55.4%). While government subsidies are seen as a key motivator (65.7%), awareness of existing policies remains moderate. The study concludes that while Mumbai's youth are ideologically aligned with green consumerism, practical and economic barriers hinder the translation of intention into purchase behavior. Recommen-dations include enhanced policy communication, targeted educational campaigns and infrastructure development focused on academic institutions.

Keywords: green consumerism, electric vehicles, purchase intention, college students, mumbai, sustainable transportation, theory of planned behavior.

Classification: LCC Code: HC79.E5

Language: English

Great Britain Journals Press

LJP Copyright ID: 573346
Print ISSN: 2515-5784
Online ISSN: 2515-5792

London Journal of Research in Humanities & Social Science

Volume 25 | Issue 15 | Compilation 1.0

An Empirical Study on Green Consumerism among College Students of Mumbai with Respect to Electric Vehicles

Dr. Sheetal Mody

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the attitudes, perceptions, and purchase intentions towards electric vehicles (EVs) among college students in Mumbai, a demographic crucial to the future of sustainable consumption. A quantitative approach was employed, utilizing a structured questionnaire distributed to a sample of 312 students across various colleges in Mumbai. The findings reveal a strong environmental consciousness (Mean= 4.42) and a positive attitude towards EVs as a symbol of modernity (Mean=4.05). However, a significant intention-behavior gap exists. The primary barriers to adoption are high purchase cost (72.1%), perceived lack of charging infrastructure (68.3%) and range anxiety (55.4%). While government subsidies are seen as a key motivator (65.7%), awareness of existing policies remains moderate. The study concludes that while Mumbai's youth are ideologically aligned with green consumerism, practical and economic barriers hinder the translation of intention into purchase behavior. Recommendations include enhanced policy communication, targeted educational campaigns and infrastructure development focused on academic institutions.

Keywords: green consumerism, electric vehicles, purchase intention, college students, mumbai, sustainable transportation, theory of planned behavior.

Author: Ph.D., M.Phil., M.Com., UGC-NET.

I. INTRODUCTION

The urban landscape of Mumbai is characterized by severe traffic congestion and alarming air pollution levels. The transition to electric vehicles (EVs) is a critical component of India's strategy to achieve its climate goals and improve urban air quality. While government initiatives like FAME India are accelerating this transition, long-term success hinges on widespread consumer adoption.

College students represent a pivotal demographic. As the first generation of digital natives coming of age in the climate crisis era, their attitudes are formative. They are near-future car buyers, influencers within their families, and shapers of market trends. Understanding their perception of EVs is essential for crafting effective policy, marketing strategies, and educational initiatives. This study aims to bridge the gap in literature by empirically investigating the drivers and barriers of EV adoption among college students in Mumbai.

1.1 Research Objectives

- To assess the level of environmental consciousness and its influence on the attitude towards EVs.
- To evaluate the awareness and perception of EVs among students.
- To identify the key factors (drivers and barriers) influencing their purchase intention.
- To analyze the impact of government policies on their decision-making process.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW & THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Green consumerism refers to the purchasing of products that are environmentally friendly. In the automotive sector, this translates to the adoption of EVs. Previous studies have highlighted factors such as environmental concern, perceived value, and social influence as key drivers (Yadav & Pathak, 2016).

Barriers consistently identified include high purchase cost, range anxiety and lack of charging infrastructure (Rezvani et al., 2015). The **Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)** (Ajzen, 1991) provides a robust framework for this study. It posits that **Behavioral Intention** (BI) is determined by:

Attitude (A): The individual's positive or negative evaluation of performing the behavior (buying an EV).

Subjective Norm (SN): The perceived social pressure from important others (peers, family) to perform the behavior.

Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC): The perceived ease or difficulty of performing the behavior, influenced by barriers and facilitators.

This study operationalizes these constructs to understand the EV purchase intention of Mumbai's students.

There three factors as Attitude, Social Norms and Environmental Concerns all strongly influence the green consumption behavior of Vietnamese people. Although the awareness factor does not directly affect green consumption behavior, it has a close relationship with other factors. From there, it also contributes indirectly to green consumption behavior. At the same time, this helps us better understand customers' green consumption habits. In addition, the research results will guide the strategy for businesses that will capture and tap into people's psychology, as well as green consumption habits to build marketing and advertising strategies to attract people. Nguyen, Luan Trong,, Tri Huu.

Key Source(s): Peattie, K. (1995); Ottman, J.A. (1998)

Early literature on green consumerism focuses heavily on definitional clarity and the psychological underpinnings of environmentally responsible behavior. Peattie (1995) provides a foundational framework by defining green consumerism as a consumer's preference for products that are less harmful to the environment. Ottman (1998) complements this by identifying characteristics of green consumers, including their attitudes toward pollution, conservation and ethical production. Both authors highlight the value-belief-norm (VBN) theory, emphasizing that internalized values drive green choices. However, critics argue these early models overestimate the role of individual agency and ignore systemic influences like availability and price.

Key Source(s): Vermeir & Verbeke (2006); Johnstone & Tan (2015)

A recurring theme in green consumerism literature is the "attitude-behavior gap"—the discrepancy between consumers' expressed environmental concern and their actual purchasing behaviors. Vermeir and Verbeke (2006) explore this gap in the context of sustainable food consumption and find that even highly motivated consumers often fail to act accordingly due to external barriers such as cost, lack of information, or product availability. Johnstone and Tan (2015) confirm these findings in the fashion industry, showing that although consumers express eco-consciousness, fast fashion's convenience and affordability dominate decision-making. These studies suggest that contextual and structural factors play a larger role than previously assumed.

Literature Review 3: Socio-Demographic Determinants of Green Consumption

Key Source(s): Diamantopoulos et al. (2003); Dangelico & Vocalelli (2017)

Green consumer behavior has often been linked to demographic and psychographic factors. Diamantopoulos et al. (2003) challenge simplistic assumptions that younger, more educated consumers are automatically greener. Their empirical study finds inconsistent correlations between socio-demographic variables and actual environmental behavior. More recently, Dangelico and Vocalelli (2017) propose a multidimensional approach, integrating lifestyle, values and awareness, rather than relying solely on demographics. This shift indicates a more nuanced understanding of consumer segmentation in green markets, encouraging marketers to look beyond age and income when targeting eco-conscious consumers.

Key Source(s): Chen (2010); Hartmann & Ibáñez (2006)

Green branding and marketing strategies are crucial in influencing consumer behavior. Chen (2010) discusses the concept of green brand equity, arguing that environmental claims enhance brand image and consumer trust-if they are perceived as credible. Hartmann and Ibáñez (2006) further explore how emotional and functional brand appeals affect green product preferences. They find that emotional appeals (e.g., guilt, pride) can significantly impact decision-making, especially when combined with clear, tangible environmental benefits. However, overuse or misuse of green claims can lead to greenwashing, which damages trust and reduces consumer motivation to engage in sustainable consumption.

Key Source(s): Gupta & Ogden (2009); Biswas & Roy (2015)

Much of the earlier literature focused on Western contexts, but more recent studies explore green consumerism in emerging economies. Gupta and Ogden (2009) examine Indian consumers and find a strong environmental concern but weak behavioral response due to infrastructural and cultural constraints. Biswas and Roy (2015) analyze the same in urban India, showing a growing segment of green-aware consumers but emphasizing the need for education, affordability, and policy support. These studies highlight that green consumerism is not universally applicable and must be understood within specific cultural and economic contexts.

Key Source(s): Thøgersen (2006); Young et al. (2010)

Beyond consumer choice, scholars emphasize the role of policy and institutional support in promoting green consumerism. Thøgersen (2006) argues that regulatory frameworks, such as eco-labeling, taxation on non-sustainable goods, and subsidies for green products, are essential to overcoming the attitude-behavior gap. Young et al. (2010) support this by showing how trusted eco-labels and government-backed certifications can legitimize green claims and guide consumer behavior. This literature emphasizes that green consumerism is not merely an individual ethical choice but also a result of institutional scaffolding and regulatory design.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design: A descriptive and cross-sectional research design was employed.

Data Collection: Primary data was collected via a structured online questionnaire using a 5-point Likert scale. The survey was distributed through student forums and college groups.

Sampling: A non-probability sampling method (convenience and snowball) was used to reach 312 students from arts, science, commerce and engineering streams across Mumbai.

Data Analysis: Data was analyzed using SPSS software. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, mean, SD) were used for profiling and perception analysis. Inferential statistics (Correlation analysis) was used to test relationships between TPB constructs.

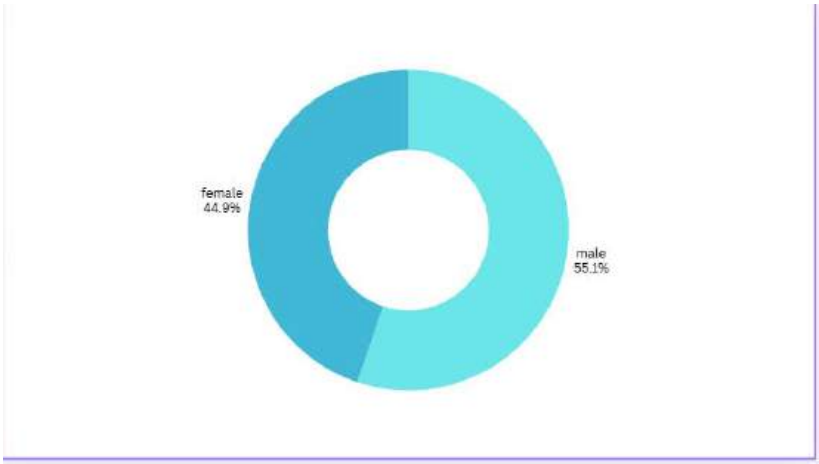
IV. DATA ANALYSIS & FINDINGS

4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics (N=312)

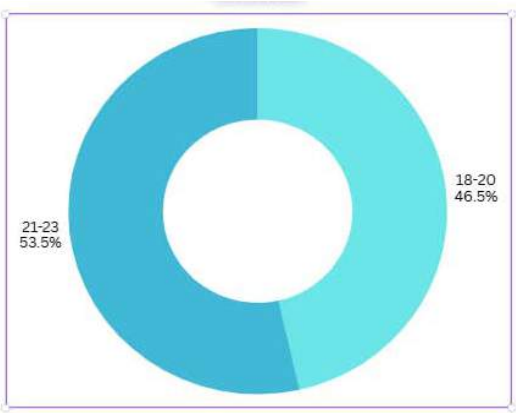
Gender

SR.NO.	Male	Female
1	172	140



Age

SR.NO.	18-20	21-23
1	145	167

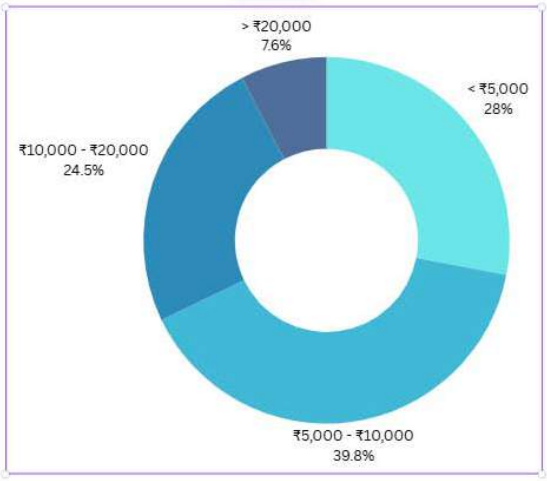


Field of Study

SR.NO.	Category	Frequency
1	Commerce and Management	110
2	Engineering and Technology	25
3	Arts and Humanities	85
4	Sciences	92

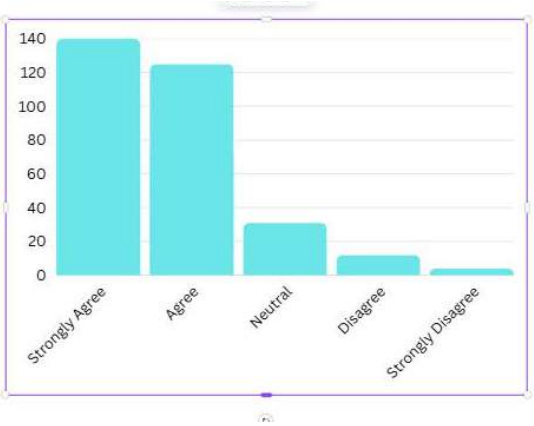
Monthly Pocket Money

SR.NO.	Category	Frequency
1	< ₹5,000	88
2	₹5,000 - ₹10,000	125
3	₹10,000 - ₹20,000	75
4	> ₹20,000	24



4.2 Environmental Consciousness and General Attitude

Students exhibited a high level of environmental concern.



Mean = 4.29, SD = 0.82

- Strongly Agree: 45% (140)
- Agree: 40% (125)
- Neutral: 10% (31)
- Disagree: 4% (12)
- Strongly Disagree: 1% (4)

Figure 1: Agreement with the statement: "I am deeply concerned about environmental issues like air pollution and climate change

4.3 Awareness and Perception of Electric Vehicles

Table 2: Perception of EVs (5-Point Likert Scale: 1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree)

Perception Statement

Sr. No	Positive Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	EVs are better for the environment than petrol/diesel cars	4.42	0.71
2	EVs are a modern and trendy technology	4.05	0.88
3	Operating an EV (charging) is cheaper than fueling an ICE vehicle.	3.98	0.91

Sr. No	Negative Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	EVs are too expensive to buy.	4.25	0.76
2	I am worried about running out of battery.	3.95	1.02
3	Finding a charging station in Mumbai is difficult	4.10	0.87

4.4. Key Motivators and Barriers to Adoption

Sr. No.	Particulars	Frequency
1	Lower Operating/Running Cost	225
2	Government Subsidies/Tax Benefits	205
3	Environmental Benefits	190
4	Low Maintenance Cos	175
5	Trendy/Modern Image	110

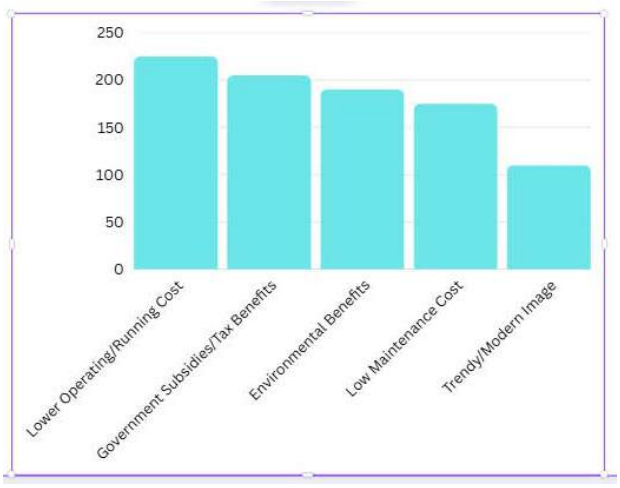


Figure 2: Factors that would MOTIVATE you to purchase an EV (Multiple Responses Allowed)

Sr. No.	Particulars	Frequency
1	High Purchase Price	225
2	Lack of Charging Infrastructure	213
3	Range Anxiety (Fear of battery draining)	173
4	Lack of Trust in New Technology	142
5	Limited Model Options	135
6	Lack of Awareness/Information	118

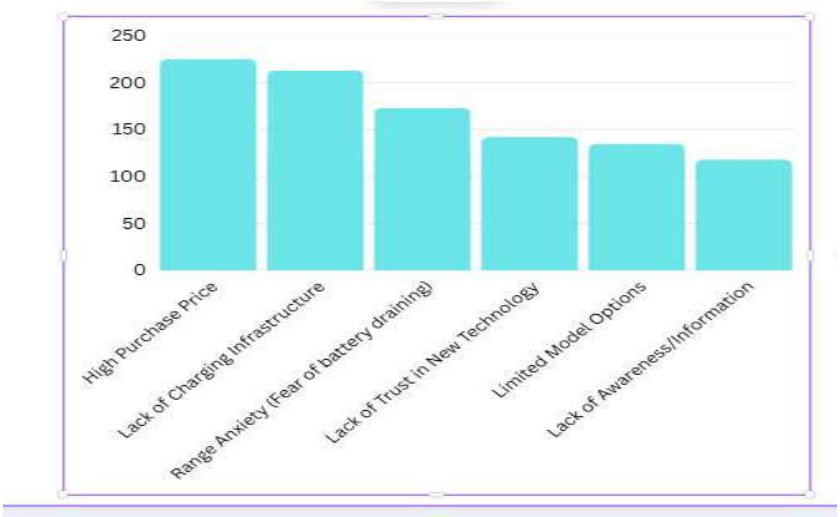


Figure 3: Factors that PREVENT you from purchasing an EV (Multiple Responses Allowed)

4.5 Purchase Intention and the Role of Policy

Sr. No.	Particulars	Frequency
1	Definitely Yes	62
2	Probably Yes	109
3	Maybe / Not Sure	94
4	Probably Not	31
5	Definitely Not	16

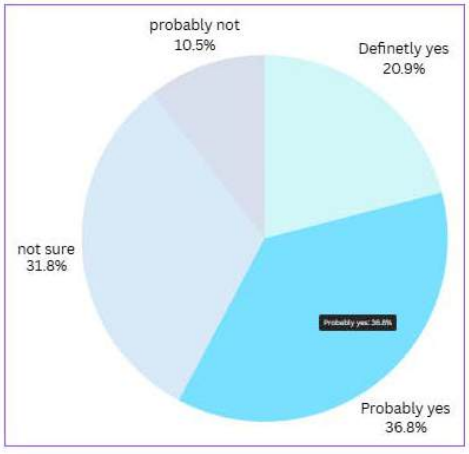


Figure 4: Intention to Purchase an EV as your next vehicle

Awareness of FAME-II Policy: Only 35% of students reported being "aware" or "very aware" of the government's flagship EV subsidy scheme.

A correlation analysis confirmed a significant positive relationship ($p<0.01$) between **Attitude ** (environmental concern), **Subjective Norm** (peer influence) and **Purchase Intention**. **Perceived Behavioral Control** (e.g., "I could easily find a charging spot") showed the strongest correlation with intention.

V. DISCUSSION

The study reveals a classic intention-behavior gap governed by the Theory of Planned Behavior. Students have a highly positive **Attitude** (A) towards EVs driven by environmentalism and

cost-saving perceptions. **Subjective Norms** (SN) also play a role, with EVs being viewed as trendy.

However, **Perceived Behavioral Control** (PBC) is low. The significant barriers-high cost and infrastructure concerns-create a perception that adopting an EV is difficult, thereby suppressing the translation of positive intention into concrete purchase plans. The low awareness of government subsidies further exacerbates the cost barrier.

VI. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The study concludes that college students in Mumbai are a fertile ground for EV adoption due to their strong environmental consciousness and positive attitudes. However, practical concerns regarding economic accessibility and infrastructure are the primary impediments.

Implications

For Policymakers: Enhance communication strategies targeted at youth (e.g., social media campaigns) to raise awareness of subsidies (FAME-II). Consider incentives for installing charging stations on or near college campuses.

For EV Manufacturers: Develop targeted marketing campaigns highlighting long-term cost savings (TCO-Total Cost of Ownership) over initial price. Engage with student communities through college festivals and seminars to demystify technology and address range anxiety.

For Educational Institutions: Incorporate sustainability and EV technology into curricula. Partner with OEMs to set up demonstration projects or charging points on campus, transforming the institution into a living lab for green consumerism.

REFERENCES

1. Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational behavior and human decision processes*.
2. Rezvani, Z., Jansson, J. & Bodin, J. (2015). Advances in consumer electric vehicle adoption research: A review and research agenda. *Transportation Research Part D: Transport and Environment*.
3. Yadav, R. & Pathak, G. S. (2016). Young consumers' intention towards buying green products in a developing nation: Extending the theory of planned behavior. *Journal of Cleaner Production.
4. Goyal Pramod, (2018) An Empirical Study on Customers Profile and their Consumption Pattern, of Green Tea In Mumbai Region.
5. Pahwa Tanya (2024), A Study on Consumer Behaviour towards Eco-Friendly Products in Mumbai City.
6. Prasadbabu Yamini (2023), Green Consumer Behaviour, Lindokule Mbokane and Lee-Ann Modley (2023) Green Consumerism in Young Adults: Attitudes and Awareness in University Students in Johannesburg, South Africa.
7. Ministry of Heavy Industries. (2019). *FAME India Scheme Phase II [PDF]*.

Webibiliography

8. https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/16/5/1898
9. https://www.vedatya.ac.in/research/blog/dynamics-of-green-purchase-behavior-in-india/#:~:text=Proposing%20Framework%20for%20Dynamics%20of,to%20encompass%20rural%20demographics%20also.
10. www.researchgate,net
11. www.sciencedirect,com

Why is Someone a Sporty Cyclist? Athletic Trajectories and Male Socialization of Cyclists in Mexico City

Aldo Bravo Vielma

Universidad Iberoamericana

ABSTRACT

This article presents the preliminary results of a research project on road and mountain cyclists residing in Mexico City. The analytical axes presented are based on the findings gathered during semi-structured interviews with four male cyclists. These axes are their initiation into the sport, their habituation to sport, the places they visit thanks to cycling, and the masculinized socialization that occurs among cyclists. The article is accompanied by a guiding question: Why is someone a sport cyclist? This question is addressed from different sociological perspectives.

Keywords: sport cycling, masculinity, sporting trajectories, sport-masculine socialization.

Classification: LCC Code: GV1048

Language: English

Great Britain Journals Press

LJP Copyright ID: 573347
Print ISSN: 2515-5784
Online ISSN: 2515-5792

London Journal of Research in Humanities & Social Science

Volume 25 | Issue 15 | Compilation 1.0

Why is Someone a Sporty Cyclist? Athletic Trajectories and Male Socialization of Cyclists in Mexico City

Aldo Bravo Vielma

ABSTRACT

This article presents the preliminary results of a research project on road and mountain cyclists residing in Mexico City. The analytical axes presented are based on the findings gathered during semi-structured interviews with four male cyclists. These axes are their initiation into the sport, their habituation to sport, the places they visit thanks to cycling, and the masculinized socialization that occurs among cyclists. The article is accompanied by a guiding question: Why is someone a sport cyclist? This question is addressed from different sociological perspectives.

Keywords: sport cycling, masculinity, sporting trajectories, sport-masculine socialization.

Author: PhD candidate in Critical Gender Studies at the Universidad Iberoamericana.

I. INTRODUCTION

Sport cycling is experiencing a boom among practitioners in Mexico City. Unlike cycling as a means of transportation or as a game, without reaching high-performance or professional levels, this cycling is competitive (Hardwicke, 2023) practiced in an organized, disciplined and committed manner, both personally and financially, as cyclists invest significant amounts of money that not all social classes can afford.

The sport cycling practiced by Mexico City residents, which I distinguish from so-called urban cycling, which is practiced as a means of leisure or transportation within the city, has two preferred modalities: mountain biking and road cycling. The former is practiced in the forests and hills within the city[1]. The latter consists of tours (or, as Mexican cyclists call them, *rodadas*), on roads that depart from the city and head to different parts of the country. These *rodadas* can range from 50 km to 500 km, on average. For this, cycling organizations that bring together small groups of friends are necessary[2].

Faced with this phenomenon, I wondered why anyone, even as a non-professional, would get involved in this physically demanding sport, which requires a significant investment of time, financial resources, and physical conditioning. It therefore requires significant dedication; it is a serious leisure activity. This article is part of a larger, ongoing research project, so preliminary results will be presented, focusing on aspects of the cyclists interviewed, such as their sporting careers, socialization among men, and masculine subjectivity.

II. METHODOLOGY

The results presented below were obtained through semi-structured interviews with four male cyclists. These interviews were conducted via video call in two sessions with each participant, lasting from 45 minutes to 1 hour 30 minutes. The real names of these interviewees have been replaced by pseudonyms to protect their privacy.

The selection profile was initially limited to men only. The essential requirement was that the

[1] To learn more about Mexico City's ecological reserve, known as "conservation land," visit: chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/http://data.sedema.cdmx.gob.mx/sedema/images/archivos/noticias/primer-informe-sedema/capitulo-03.pdf

[2] If you would like to consult information about these organizations, you can visit: https://pedalia.cc/grupos-ciclistas-rodar-cdmx-alrededores/

individual had practiced mountain or road cycling consistently enough to have participated in excursions, races, rides or cycling tours in Mexico City or with Mexico City as a starting point. Although this was not a requirement, all four interviewees were originally from and residents of Mexico City. Potential participants with little experience or commitment to cycling were not considered, even if they had practiced it or had significant athletic ability. The interviewees were contacted through contact with cycling groups in the city.

A table is now presented with the basic information of each interviewee.

Table 1: Source: own elaboration

Name	Age (at the time of the interview)	Profession	Time practicing sports cycling	Marital status
Joel	31 years old	Actuary	19 years	On a relationship
Tonatiuh	36 years old	Architect	15 years	On a relationship
Felipe	43 years old	Doctor/Researcher	12 years	Single
Alex	46 years old	Systems engineer	5 years	Single

Regarding the research method used, which was a semi-structured interview, it is important to emphasize that I follow Taylor and Bogdan's (1996) warning: "People say and do different things in different situations; it should not be assumed that what a person says in the interview is what they believe in other situations." (p. 107)

Therefore, in this research, the problematic notion of "objectivity" is achieved through the rigor of the data collection method and the analytical dimension offered here. I conceive the idea of "objectivity" in the terms proposed by Maffia (2007) when he says: "Revised objectivity must involve not only rethinking individuals' relationships with the world they seek to understand, but also articulating appropriate social structures and relations for the research contexts" (p. 83). Therefore, the aim is not to generalize but rather to adequately analyze the context in which one works.

Finally, the guiding question of this article is: Why is someone a cyclist? I think of this question as a mystery to be solved, so I return in a methodological key to Umberto Eco's suggestion for solving a mystery:

> ...It's not like deducing from certain principles. Nor is it like collecting a pile of particular data to then infer a general law. It's more like coming across one, two, or three particular pieces of data that apparently have nothing in common, and trying to imagine whether they might be so many instances of a general law that is not yet known and perhaps has never been stated. (1984, p. 372, as cited in Durand, 2015)

III. THE MASCULINE KEY TO SPORTS INITIATION

In many cases, masculinized subjectivities, in order to exist, require the social conditions inherent to sports socialization. The masculinity and sport dyad is an effective alliance in the construction and internalization of the mandates of masculinity. If one wants to raise a boy to become a man, it seems like a good idea to introduce him to a sport. As Vidiella et al. say: "You have to be actively masculine and participate in the hegemonic practices and discourses of masculinity, that is, act, speak, gesticulate, and embody masculinity... One of the imaginaries most closely connected to this sense of being a man is that linked to sport." (2010, p. 100).

In an old text taken up by the sociology of sport, Pierre Bourdieu (1990) asks, "How can someone be an athlete?" And he notes:

> ...It is not possible to understand the logic that leads agents towards a particular sporting

> practice or a particular way of doing it without taking into account the dispositions towards sport, which in turn constitute a dimension of a particular relationship with one's own body and are inscribed within the unity of the system of dispositions, the habitus, which is the principle of lifestyles (p. 217) (italics in original)

The perception we have of our own body stems from the physical education we receive throughout our lives. This makes it possible to determine what type of physical activity is most appropriate for us in institutional settings whose mission is to promote athleticism. However, all of this would be insufficient, at least in the case of three of our four interviewees, without a disposition toward sports that emerged thanks to the obligation or encouragement of family members who encouraged them to take up sports.

When the interviewees were asked how they got started in sports, three of the four stated that their parents initiated them, if not forced them. Not without nuances in the stories we will discuss below, it is evident that it is crucial for children to find something enjoyable and fun in sports. However, for many, their initiation is not possible without parental intervention, which reflects their interest in introducing their children to sports. This is a social necessity, that is, a socially accepted activity regarding the importance of sports in children's development, and therefore it is legitimate to force them to practice a sport. Although children may abandon sports activities later on or express rejection from the outset, none of this is enough to affect the social acceptability of sports, so this is perpetually reproduced.

Since parents are the ones who introduce their children to sports, this suggests the masculine and homosocial nature of sports. It is as if, for parents, sports represent a means of emotional closeness with their children, but also a disciplinary device, which is implicit in the obligation they impose on them. Let's look at the testimonies to the question: How did you become an athlete?

> *Joel:* More than anything, it was because of my dad, who's the athletic type. From a young age, starting in elementary school, he started instilling it in me. At first, I didn't like it, like any kid who you tell to exercise and says no. But once several friends started getting involved, I started getting into it. It all started in sixth grade, when I had my first contact with mountain biking. A friend of mine was already more involved, since his dad worked in a mountain bike shop. He was the one who invited me.
>
> *Alex:* Back in '93, I was a fat kid, very fat. And my dad said, I can't have a fat son, and he put me in running. My dad was very athletic because his job required it. He worked for a private security agency, so being in shape was vital to him. My dad was basically a version of Rambo... So, he couldn't have a fat son. I remember one of the first times he took me out for a run was when he surprised me one morning in Reynosa while I was sleeping. He woke me up and said, "Put on your sneakers and let's go outside." I wasn't even fully awake, but I had to run so I wouldn't make him angry.
>
> *Tonatiuh:* I recently wondered why I got into cycling when, as an adult, I only liked extreme sports, but the bike was something my dad gave me. When I was six, my parents separated, and on the weekends he had to spend time with us. He didn't know how to act as a father, and he wondered, "What do I do with kids when I have them?" So, the first thing he did was take us to a toy store in Polanco. He bought my sister and me a bike. And so we got around on that bike, going to Chapultepec, and from a very young age, we rode around the city like that. At that time, it was unusual to move around the city like that. Perhaps that bond with my father was never lost, and I rekindled it.

The construction of a bond, whether voluntary or involuntary, between fathers and sons through sports activities is clear. It is observed that for fathers, it is necessary to establish bonds of coexistence and sports activities are a practical and efficient solution for this. Perhaps because sports are typical of male socialization and are familiar to them. The homosocial nature of the

issue is reinforced by what Joel points out, that is, receiving invitations from friends with whom to share interests and activities. This socialization allows for the reproduction of the construction of masculine subjectivities. It can be said that this is a social effort to perpetuate masculinity, as proposed by some such as Messner (2002), Núñez Noriega (2016), or Seidler (2007).

For his part, Felipe, the fourth interviewee, stated that he began his sporting career at age 28 and did so, in his words, for "health and vanity," in an act of congruence with the medical discourse, according to him. While it's not possible to establish a connection between his father and his initiation into sports, it can be said that he was drawn into sports socialization into adulthood thanks to broader social discourses such as beauty and health. Thus, he began cycling thanks to urban cycling in Mexico City and the so-called *ciclotones* organized on weekends[3].

IV. SPORTS HABITUATIONS, EMBODIED TRAJECTORIES

To speak sociologically about sports habituations, it is necessary to refer to Bourdieu's (2002) concept of habitus. The classic understanding of habitus is as a system of enduring, transferable, and dynamic dispositions that produces a worldview and assigns value to certain things and not to others. This habitus develops in self-reproducing social fields; these social fields provide the necessary conditions for something like the social need to engage in sports.

In Bourdieu's words, habitus is: "the history objectified in things under the form of a system of enduring dispositions" (2002, p. 41). As demonstrated elsewhere (Sánchez García, 2008), habitus is an important tool for understanding how someone approaches a sport that is not only appropriate for them but also valuable in a sense similar to art appreciation. One may engage in sport solely for the love of it, although this cannot be seen as a mere result of rational choice.

Among our interviewees, while cycling occupies an important place in the development of their sporting careers and habitus, it is not the only sport that interests them. Our interviewees show a particular interest in what we might call adventure sports, and not just in two or three sports, but in several more. This is a clear indication that they are individuals with a sporting habitus. Let's look at the stories surrounding their sporting activities.

> *Joel:* I've tried climbing, mountaineering, hiking, and I'm also very active in paragliding, mountain biking, and road cycling. Occasionally, I accept invitations to sports I don't usually participate in. For example, my girlfriend wanted to run a 17-kilometer race, and I agreed to participate. I got into the running and paddleboarding craze through colleagues at work. Although I'm not an expert in any of these sports, I like to practice them at an acceptable level. So, I set out to train, prepare, and set records. I take them seriously, even if I don't do them all regularly.

> *Alex:* For me, it's an absolute necessity to keep my body moving and engage in some physical activity. I've tried many activities, some of which I do infrequently. For example, trekking races. I really like that one. I enjoy it immensely. It's a hiking race, in a forest. I love being in contact with nature and feeling the cold of the forest. I started experimenting with that in college. Later, through my dad again, I did tae kwon do for a while, but I didn't get into it in the end; it was too rough. In college, I played basketball. A friend from another office and I were into rock climbing for a while. Before that, I was invited to mountain biking at work.

> *Felipe:* After the bike rides, I started doing the cyclothon, which was already 60 kilometers around the entire circuit. And from there, I started doing interstate *rodadas* and became more frequent. I always thought about doing it

[3] Sunday walks held in Mexico City, which can be attended by bicycle, roller skates, skateboard, or as a runner. These can be of varying lengths (from 9 km to 35.5 km) and are regularly held on the road known as the Inner Ring Road (62.5 km in total, when the walk is not divided into sections). This road delimits, at least geographically, the center and the periphery, although in political and symbolic terms this would be subject to discussion.

> for my health, but I started because a friend I liked started inviting me to bike rides. Then I got excited and bought my road bike. I got the necessary equipment and started cycling more formally. It also motivated me, and I got used to it, so I started biking for work and any other activity.
>
> *Tonatiuh:* I was thinking that for me, cycling wasn't a sport, it was part of my everyday life, it was a way of transportation or exploring the city with my dad. Then I got into other sports. First it was horseback riding and then climbing. That allowed me to get out of the city and I loved it. After that, I got into motocross, which I combined with mountain biking. Lately, my main activity is road cycling, which I started doing during a time I lived in London. So far, I've only done 180-kilometer races from Zona Esmeralda to Valle Bravo, and I want to do a 300- or 400-kilometer long-distance race or something like that.

These sporting trajectories, despite their variations depending on the case, should not be viewed as mere individual trajectories, that is, as a taste acquired over the years thanks to certain completely rationalized experiences that transform taste into a rational decision. Nor does the concept of habitus explain them as the result of the strong influence of social institutions such as family, school, or the sports industry. It is a negotiation between personal trajectory and institutional influence. Sánchez García says:

> If habitus is understood as a kind of natural relationship (being comfortable) with one's own corporeality, we start from the fact that, for someone to practice any physical activity... there must be a certain coherence between the habitus of the participant who enters the activity and what they find there. (2008, p. 105)

Thus, beyond parental or institutional imposition, a love of sports is forged over the years of physical education (which extends to gestures, ways of walking, sitting, standing, eating, inhabiting spaces or the ways of approaching a person and the physical skills acquired).

The stories should be complemented with the following information provided by the interviewees. For Joel, since childhood, playing sports with friends and meeting new friends through them has been crucial. For Alex, the key factor is visiting natural environments, getting out of the city, and experiencing the country's rural world. Although over time, and after a bad experience mountain biking (which we'll discuss later), he abandoned adventure sports to focus on functional exercise (burpees, push-ups, etc.).

For his part, Felipe repeatedly explained his fondness for road races as challenges to overcome, as well as his special relationship with physical suffering, which he began to enjoy in the gym where he began his sporting career. He said: "In the gym, I was already accustomed to suffering, because the truth is that cycling is about suffering." Finally, Tonatiuh stated that he never disciplined himself with any sport nor did he manage to do them frequently. It was only until he came across road cycling that he decided to establish training and preparation routines, which is why the athleticism of his body also continued into his adult life. He explains this thanks to the cycling groups he met in London and which he also sought out upon his return to Mexico, as they gave him a sense of belonging.

V. THE PLEASURE OF DISCOVERING NEW PLACES

As I mentioned with Alex, a constant among the shared interests or interests of the interviewees is visiting places recognized as natural environments. This interest complicates the purely sporting aspect and transforms it into a kind of aesthetic experience that could not be understood without the dispositions of habitus. Let's look at the testimonies regarding the places where the interviewees cycle.

> *Joel:* I started here in La Noria, Xochimilco. There's a hill next to my parents' house. I suggested we visit that hill to my elementary school friend. I said, "Let's go mountain

biking." Over the years, I discovered there's a mountain biking community with many practice spots within the city. That's how I got to know Ajusco, the Desierto de los Leones, several national parks, even independent parks of just one hectare in Milpa Alta where there's barely a single ramp, but I still want to see it... When I graduated from university, I asked my parents for a trip to Canada instead of a party. They accepted, and I couldn't believe it. I went to a village called Whistler for a month and a half. Every day from seven in the morning to seven at night, I went mountain biking and came back exhausted. When I returned to Mexico, I discovered more practice spots in states like Oaxaca.

Alex: It's been important for me to get to know our entire country through sports. First, when I went running with my father. Imagine the entire eastern coast of our country, Newfoundland, passing through Veracruz, Ciudad del Carmen, Yucatán... I mainly did mountain biking here in Mexico City, on what we have near the city. For example, Ajusco, Chapultepec, and the basic circuits. Later, I want to say that I made a mistake... because with the cycling group I joined, called Lobo Alfa, a 48-kilometer mountain race was organized in the State of Mexico; that was my debut and farewell to competitive cycling. What pain! What a real ordeal! ... I arrived on my knees, basically. I was fine up to kilometer 20? 25? But the rest of the time, walking, I couldn't go on. That's true. The views are fabulous, the speed the bike picks up, and all the landscapes you see thanks to cycling, such as Pico del Águila or San Andrés Totoltepec. I think we're very lucky to have places like this so close to us.

Felipe: The routes I've done are Mexico City-Teotihuacán, which is a round trip. I've also done Mexico City-Pachuca, Mexico City-Cholula, Mexico City-Ixtapa de la Sal, and Mexico City-Tequesquitengo. What's great about cycling is just that: the places, the views. For example, I love bike rafting. Although you really miss the scenery, road cycling demands a lot of attention from what's in front of you. It's unlikely you'll turn around and appreciate the surroundings, and on the way back in the car, you're exhausted.

Tonatiuh: In London, I started training with a cycling group. They had pre-established routes. Later, I wanted to train alone. I used maps and apps to plan routes with distances of 80 or 100 kilometers, although in the end, I improvised. In London, they were routes in the countryside. It takes about 40 minutes to get out of the city, and then you're in the countryside like London's. There aren't many ups and downs, but there are small, very enjoyable forests. Already in Mexico, I was very excited to be back on my carbon bike... And I said, finally, in Mexico, I'm going to see what it's like to ride big climbs, really be on uneven ground, and experience steep gradients. I already had some routes in mind from riding on the road. For example, Los Dinamos or Paso de Cortés. I thought it must be beautiful to go up there, halfway between the two volcanoes, and the forests too. Also in Tlayacapan, I imagined it must be beautiful to see the mountain like that, or the Otomi Ceremonial Center, which is in the Emerald Zone.

An appreciation for the landscape, the natural environment, even the climate, and the pleasure of the excursion itself are fundamental to engaging in this type of activity. These sensations are aesthetic and hedonistic experiences in that they vindicate pleasure for its own sake.

It is striking that everyone, in one way or another, expresses the effort, suffering, and pain of cycling at this level. However recreational it may be, it is a serious leisure activity, still conceived as a pleasurable experience. Lipovetzky (2002) views hedonism as a phase in the history of Western individualism that has generated new forms of behavioral control. As "democratic societies" advance, what he calls a process of personalization becomes more latent. In our case, we can observe that the enjoyment of cycling, in a pleasurable sense, appreciates the activity for its own sake. It does involve effort, but that physical sacrifice is the price of pleasure.

Lipovetzky (2002) explains that, beginning in the 1950s, the process of personalization intensified because it is, at its core, a strategy of capitalism (which shifted from savings capitalism to debt capitalism) through which the general population began to value aesthetic experiences. Before then, only the artistic and psychoanalytic spheres anticipated hedonistic values, the cult of personal liberation, relaxation, humor, and sincerity. With this comes the "fundamental value of personal fulfillment, respect for subjective singularity, for the incomparable personality, regardless of the new forms of control and homogenization." (2002, p. 7)

This is associated with the demand for solitude and introspection that the interviewees insist on emphasizing, which is part of the personalization process. For example, Tonatiuh recounted: “I grew up in Desierto de los Leones, it was very easy to go to the forest. I missed that a lot in London. I missed that connection. That escape from the city, from the people, from everything.” This is the search for self through an introspective and pleasurable activity.

However, the above must be qualified. Although the pleasurable and experiential nature of cycling insists on appearing and reappearing, it seems that the physical challenge is actually a leitmotif that never loses its predominant place. This is how Felipe problematizes it:

> When we traveled from Mexico to Cholula, it's a little less than 130 kilometers. So, I remember we arrived, rode our bikes, bought a beer, chatted for a while the whole group arrived, and on the way back, we slept the whole way because you'd end up literally destroyed... So it's not like you really visit the places we went to; we don't know them.

As you may have noticed throughout this section, excursions and visits to different places have a prominent socializing component, with which cycling groups are formed, and it seems that the average cyclist should join these groups to get to know different locations.

VI. FRIENDS AND RIVALS. SPORTS-MALE SOCIALIZATION

A brief definition of sports socialization would be the social interactions that occur between athletes and in sports environments, that is, all socialization mediated by the sports environment. But as we will see, sports socialization, or socialization under the guise of cycling, goes beyond cycling itself.

We will begin with Tonatiuh's account when questioned about his involvement in cycling groups:

> Groups that are very regimented really bore me. What I ended up doing was going with closer friends, with whom we organize more of our own things, although sometimes we join larger groups... The world of road cycling, when you do it at a certain level with an expensive team, can have very important personalities, gallery owners, executives, etc. At first, I liked it, but now it makes me feel incredibly bored, especially since I already have my core group, which I met unexpectedly, organically, through cycling itself, with whom we understand each other and where we sometimes look out for each other.

Later, Tonatiuh recounted that with this group of friends, he was able to establish a relationship beyond cycling. They go out to eat, invite each other to family gatherings, spend weekends together, or go out to entertainment venues like a gallery opening, but cycling is their main activity. Even before returning to Mexico, when he went out cycling with London groups without making friends, Tonatiuh already discovered a value of socialization, an inadvertently masculine value:

> The truth is, I liked getting to know them from the London groups. Even if I didn't make friends, there's something like belonging to something different. And that's also what motivated me; I'd never had anything like that before. I never liked watching sports on television. Not at all. I was one of those people who didn't understand those who get excited watching football; I used to say, "What

> Neanderthals!" It seemed like a simple-minded man thing to me. But I started watching the Tour de France at a friend's house, and he would explain to me what was going on... Then I began to have that thing, which for me was something I felt men had, but I didn't... I found that kind of masculinity on the bike.

In contrast, we have Alex, who started cycling thanks to an invitation from a couple of friends from his workplace. He appreciates and appreciates the insistence they had on him to try mountain biking during the pandemic. He saw it as an opportunity to escape his isolation by going to the mountains. With this, he joined a group of cyclists he also calls "the team," a sort of manly brotherhood.

In Joel's case, his friendships are always mediated by sports activities. Although he has met new friends through the various sports he practices, they aren't interested in meeting up without a sports excuse. Joel thinks this is because he isn't particularly interested in going to parties. All his socializing takes place while hiking, swimming in a lagoon, or camping. In Joel's words, his communication with his friends should always be based on something close to the context in which they met. In fact, he's surprised at how easily circles expand through snowballing-friends inviting friends:

> ...It happened recently when we went to Oaxaca. A friend introduces you to another friend, and suddenly you find yourself in a WhatsApp group with ten strangers. Once you get to the ride, we're all like buddies; you realize who you like and who you don't. From there, future trips can emerge; you end up with a lot of contacts. Before you know it, one of those contacts says, "Let me know when you're camping." And I say, "Sure, let's go!"

On the other hand, there's the case of Felipe, who didn't necessarily expand his social circles because he discovered a common interest among his previous friends, or better yet, they built a love of cycling with them. When Felipe was asked what differentiated his interest in cycling from other activities or interests, he replied:

> Partly, it's the satisfaction of doing something that not everyone does, you know? Not everyone gets on a bike and rides like that, 60 kilometers or more, just because. I don't do competitive cycling, so I don't earn anything, I even pay to participate... But the reality is that it's more about personal satisfaction. After you tell your friends about it and realize you started from Mexico City to Cholula, no one believes you. But yes, it's something I did, so you get that satisfaction. And I won't deny that accumulating your medals from all these places also makes it exciting.

From the above, from these personal satisfactions through cycling, different themes for analysis can be inferred. For now, I will focus on the fact that this has an intrinsic derivation of sporting-masculine socialization: competition.

Continuing with Felipe's relationship with his friends, he recounted that for some time he attended the Ciudad Universitaria circuit[4], where he competed in races with his friends thanks to the fact that it is a closed circuit, which is different on the road. Felipe notes: "On the road, you don't have as many opportunities. Although you compete with your friends because you want to finish first, and maybe not be first in the race, but you do want to be first among your friends, so you focus on the journey."

As Ramírez de Garay (2016) explains, while masculinity consists of denying aspects of emotional vulnerability, friendships between men are formed through shared interests and activities oriented toward achieving goals. The space for confidences is limited because the notion of intimacy often generates discomfort among men. Of course, friendships between men can allow for in-depth discussion of emotions, but it is not a priority and usually occurs after many years of knowing each other.

[4] This is within the campus of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM).

Thus, following Ramírez de Garay (2016), competition is a constant in friendships between men and the most common way to ritualize it is through sports. The same author says that competition erects barriers as long as one cannot demonstrate weakness in front of one's rival. This prevents recognition of others, fosters resistance to intimate matters about oneself, arises the need to demonstrate superiority among men, and exacerbates a concern with gaining power, prestige, position, and standing out to reconfirm one's virility. This type of friendship-building does not only occur between men; it can occur in male-female or female-female friendships. But it is a type of masculine socialization, which is encouraged in masculinized institutions such as sports. The theme of competition is a constant among the interviewees. Felipe himself clarifies that competing with his friends "is pure play" and explains that each person has their own unique characteristics, as his friend is better on the slopes, while he demonstrates his strength with sprints on flat terrain. However, the idea of competition reappears and it always seems more justified when the interviewees argue that the true competition is against oneself. Felipe says: "In the end, my competition wasn't against her, but rather with improving my time, with finishing less tired. That also sees it as a triumph. And you think, I wasn't as exhausted as I was on the previous ride. So it's more of a personal challenge."

Alex's case is unique in that he is the only one of those interviewed who, in some way, accepts that the effort of cycling is something he can no longer handle. Perhaps because of his age, perhaps because cycling isn't necessarily his favorite activity, perhaps because he didn't reach the necessary athletic level, he retired from cycling, losing his enthusiasm for it. Which isn't just related to the physical aspect, but also to the competition and sacrifice he encountered there. When asked how he lost his enthusiasm, he recounted:

> I don't know, I don't know. I think that tough competition did something to my brain. It was something very tough (the 48km mountain race). And the team captain told me. He said, it's great that you decided to participate. But it's also possible that this is the last time you do something like that. I asked him, what's wrong with you? Do you really believe that? He said, yes, it happens, and it's okay. Because there comes a point where mentally, physically, you just can't reach, you can't pass, you can't ride. I think that somehow I put that physical punishment in a place in my mind. Nowadays, I'm too lazy to go for a mountain ride, even though I miss it.

Tonatiuh's response to the topic of competition reveals a sporting career less involved in physical sacrifices and resorts to the notion of competing against oneself:

> I was telling some cyclists I went out with this weekend that I've never competed. I've only participated in mass races. These are open to the public; everyone pays to enter, everyone gets a medal, and you're only given a time to finish, but it's not a competition with a podium finish. I've never been competitive. I'm not interested in any of the sports; I do it just for myself, although I can say there are challenges I like to try to meet. For example, saying I climbed 2,000 meters higher (in climbing) or reached 180 kilometers on the road. It's like pushing that bar, like saying, I never thought I'd achieve that mark. It's a competition with myself in which you aim to endure certain distances. Your records, your own records, yes, it's a competition with your records.

When asked why he's motivated to break his own records, Tonatiuh said, "I don't know, I don't know. I think it's because I never did disciplined exercise and I never felt fit... Exercise has shown me that I swore that at 30, my body wasn't going to change, that I'd already lost my chance."

For his part, Joel changes his habits, eating, sleeping and conditioning routines when he's preparing for a competition. However, his interest in individual sports led me to ask the question differently. Given that in team sports, you have an opponent face to face, the notion of competition is essential. How does this translate to individual

sports, where he's more interested in being creative?

> Wow. It's hard to answer because I like to compete, but I don't like how my opponent might react. I've always tried to be very relaxed in all sports; it seems that's not compatible with the idea of competition, which is why I've distanced myself from the competitive environment quite a bit. It's been about 10 years since I last competed in a mountain bike race. I've been thinking this ever since I was first introduced to team sports, because there's always someone who gets me fired up and the truth is, I practice sports to release tension, not to build more tension. This happened to me a lot when I played football; I couldn't concentrate, they made fun of me for socializing with my opponent... The truth is, the races I've done recently, for example, running, weren't about finishing on the podium or anything. They were about seeing how long I could run a certain distance. Ultimately, it was a competition with myself, and I've liked to keep it that way; it's always a competition with myself.

It can be observed how the interviewees know that an athlete, but also a man, is expected to be competitive, to not shy away from confrontation, whether through sports or physical violence. Competition and constant displays of virility are typical attitudes in sports socialization (Bravo Vielma, 2020; Magazine and Duarte Bajaña, 2021; Varela Hernández, 2013). Rivalry or competition also occurs outside of sports environments; it can be an intellectual discussion or through the colloquial language known in Mexico as "albures," or it can also be a business discussion or in the institutional political arena.

On the other hand, a proposal for reflecting on the notion of competition against oneself, in addition to the personal fulfillment already reviewed, is proposed by García Cruz (2023), using the notion of linear time and the preparation of the body as a form of progress. This author says: "Linear time as a place for action is one of the symbolisms we have in common across different Western contexts. We tend to think of the future as a "place" that reflects progress." (p. 105) (quotation marks in original)

The above interpretation of time, with a Western imprint, which informs all types of planning or projects, usually assumes that experiences, knowledge, or skills increase and accumulate over time, reflecting some improvement or progress for a person or institution. This same thing happens in the world of sports, says García Cruz when referring to running:

> We consider increasing the distance we are capable of running or increasing the speed at which we run; as an illustration of the arrow of progressive linear time, we can imagine the same race: it's about not stopping and always moving forward. Time conceived as linear or an ascending spiral gives rise to cycles in which we prepare ourselves through specialized knowledge of body techniques to culminate in a "race," "competition," or "test" in which we hope to be faster or more resistant than the previous one. (2023, p. 106)

That said, we can expand the notion of personal fulfillment to that which seeks benefits in the form of progress or self-improvement. In this way, the self-condemnation of competing against oneself acquires meaning. One makes one's body a competitive body with the understanding that this prepares it for the passage of time, that is, as a form of planning, as a way of combating uncertainty, facing the finiteness of the body's vital energy and the inevitable passage of time that consumes life. This can be seen as a fiction, given that the contingencies of the future are unpredictable-possible injuries, possible illnesses- but the modern promise of progress and improvement, not only constant but unstoppable, have an effect on the construction of subjectivities.

Self-demand, perhaps a parody of parental mandates, but also a manifestation of what one values, must be understood in terms of habitus: it is neither free nor voluntary, nor is it purely externally imposed; it is a disposition negotiated in light of social trajectories. What does one

demand of oneself when one demands improvement? The self-discipline required by competing against oneself is one of the modes of behavioral control that Lipovetzky (2002) discusses with the personalization project, and that García Cruz (2023) calls self-surveillance.

Finally, all of the above can be related, from a masculine perspective, to the inescapable significance that competition has in shaping a masculinized subjectivity. For, even when avoiding competition against another with whom virility is demonstrated, confirmed, and validated through rivalry, the idea of competing is present even in solitude or "for oneself." Validating that virility and those demonstrations expressed in the phrases "I was able to do it," "I achieved another goal," "I overcame my fears" are another way of expressing strength, power, and capacity, even if only to oneself and then to recount it.

VII. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

So far, we have reviewed the first four analytical axes chosen thanks to the information obtained through the interviews. In the course of the analysis, other topics will be addressed that will allow us to delve deeper into what we have seen so far. Some of the following axes have to do with the construction of the body in athletic, aesthetic, sartorial, and masculine terms. Furthermore, I will need to discern whether there is any specificity to the masculinity constructed in cycling in relation to other sports such as boxing.

For now, it can be concluded that sports cyclists in Mexico City are associated with the notion of adventure sports and embody a permissive masculinity, not as rigid as traditional masculinity demands. Although the classic mandate to always be virile, strong, and masculine continues like a ghost, present with their absence.

REFERENCES

1. Bourdieu, P. (1990). *Sociología y cultura*. CONACULTA/Grijalbo.
2. Bourdieu, P. (2002). *Lección sobre la lección*. Anagrama.
3. Bravo Vielma, A. (2020). ¡*Arriba la guardia! ¿Qué significa boxear? Una aproximación desde las masculinidades, el cuerpo y las emociones*. [Tesis de Maestría-UNAM].
4. Durand, J. (2015). El oficio de investigar, en M. Ariza (coord.), *Métodos Cualitativos y su aplicación empirista. Por los caminos de la investigación sobre la Migración internacional*. El Colegio de la Frontera Norte -UNAM.
5. García Cruz, A. (2023). *Running y corporeidad. Análisis antropológico de las representaciones sociales de las y los corredores en la Ciudad de México*. [Tesis de Doctorado-ENAH].
6. Guevara, Jesús, (s/f), Grupos ciclistas para rodar en la CDMX y alrededores. Link: https://pedalia.cc/grupos-ciclistas-rodar-cdmx-alrededores/
7. Hardwicke, J. (2023). *Masculinities and the Culture of Competitive Cycling*. Palgrave McMillan.
8. Lipovetzky, G. (2002). *La era del vacío*. Anagrama.
9. Maffia, D. (2007). Epistemología feminista: La subversión semiótica de las mujeres en la ciencia. Revista Venezolana de Estudios de la Mujer v.12 n.28, pp. 63-98.
10. Magazine, R. y Duarte Bajaña, R. (2021). Rebeldes Pospolíticos: Chavos de la calle, los homeless, jóvenes aficionados al futbol, aficionados transnacionales, varones homosexuales, jóvenes con SIDA, nahuas de la sierra. Universidad Iberoamericana.
11. Messner, M. (2002). *Taking the field: Women, Men and Sports*. University of Minnesota Press.
12. Núñez Noriega, G. (2016). Los estudios de género de los hombres y las masculinidades en México: reflexiones sobre su origen en *Gén Erós Revista de Investigación y Divulgación sobre los Estudios de Género*, Núm. 19 Época 2 Año 23, Pp. 31-62
13. Ramírez de Garay, R.M. (2016). Amigos simplemente amigos: intimidad entre hombres y masculinidad en T. E. Rocha Sánchez e I. Lozano Verduzco (Comps.), *Debates y reflexiones en torno a las masculinidades: analizando los caminos hacia la igualdad de género*. Facultad de Psicología-UNAM.

14. Sánchez García, R. (2008). Habitus y clase social en Bourdieu: una aplicación empírica en el campo de los deportes de combate. *Papers Revista Sociológica*, núm. 89, pp. 103-125.
15. Secretaría del Medio Ambiente de la Ciudad de México. (2022). Capítulo 3. Suelo de conservación y biodiversidad. Link: chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/http://data.sedema.cdmx.gob.mx/sedema/images/archivos/noticias/primer-informe-sedema/capitulo-03.pdf
16. Seidler, V. (2007). *Masculinidades: culturas globales y vidas íntimas*. Montesinos.
17. Taylor, SJ. y Bogdan, R. (1996). *Introducción a los métodos cualitativos de investigación*. Paidós.
18. Varela Hernández, S. (2013). *Al América se le odia o se le ama: afición futbolera, melodrama, aguante, identidad y clientelismo en México*. [Tesis de Doctorado – Universidad Iberoamericana].
19. Vidiella, J., Herraiz, F., Hernández, F. y, Sancho, J.M. (2010). Masculinidad hegemónica, actividad física y deporte. *Movimiento Porto Alegre*, volumen 16, núm. 4, 93-115.