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Dr. Manoj Kumar

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FOREWORD

I am pleased to put into the hands of readers Volume-7; Issue-5: 2025 (September-October 2025) of “**Journal of Humanities and Education Development (JHED) (ISSN: 2581-8651)**”, an international journal which publishes peer reviewed quality research papers on a wide variety of topics related to, Humanities and Education development. Looking to the keen interest shown by the authors and readers, the editorial board has decided to release print issue also, journal issue will be available in various library also in print and online version. This will motivate authors for quick publication of their research papers. Even with these changes our objective remains the same, that is, to encourage young researchers and academicians to think innovatively and share their research findings with others for the betterment of mankind. This journal has DOI (Digital Object Identifier) also, this will improve citation of research papers.

I thank all the authors of the research papers for contributing their scholarly articles. Despite many challenges, the entire editorial board has worked tirelessly and helped me to bring out this issue of the journal well in time. They all deserve my heartfelt thanks.

Finally, I hope the readers will make good use of this valuable research material and continue to contribute their research finding for publication in this journal. Constructive comments and suggestions from our readers are welcome for further improvement of the quality and usefulness of the journal.

With warm regards.



Dr. Manoj Kumar

Editor-in-Chief

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The Integrative Application of Conceptual Metaphor in English Vocabulary Teaching

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Abstract— This literature review selects domestic and international literature based on the application of conceptual metaphors in English vocabulary teaching in the past thirty years. After sorting and summarizing, it is found that both domestic and foreign literature have confirmed the feasibility and effectiveness of conceptual metaphors in English vocabulary teaching; some scholars have also found that the application of conceptual metaphors in teaching can help students to better maintain short-term vocabulary memory and independently transfer theories to the acquisition of new words; and some scholars also found that the application of conceptual metaphors in English vocabulary teaching can effectively alleviate the effect of negative transfer of the first language. The application of conceptual metaphors in second language teaching is becoming more and more mature, but there are still some problems, for example, the selection of subjects is fixed, the range of vocabulary is narrow, and it is not known how conceptual metaphors work in the teaching... Nevertheless, these shortcomings can be a source of inspiration for future research.

Keywords— *cognitive linguistics, conceptual metaphor, second language vocabulary, vocabulary teaching*

I. INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary is the cornerstone of language learning. If the process of foreign-language learning is likened to constructing a high-rise building, vocabulary constitutes the foundation. As the British applied linguist D. A. Wilkins famously remarked, “Without grammar, very little can be conveyed; without vocabulary, nothing can be conveyed.” H. G. Widdowson likewise contends that, in terms of communicative function and the expressive resources of language, lexis is primary and grammar secondary. Accordingly, the importance of lexical learning has been widely acknowledged in the field.

Nevertheless, several problems persist in vocabulary pedagogy. English vocabulary teaching still largely relies on traditional rote memorization: teachers tend to adopt conventional, low-efficiency methods, presenting decontextualized word lists with limited attention to usage or discourse context. Learners, for their part, memorize forms mechanically without grasping the denotational and connotational range of items, which leads to frequent

misinterpretation and inflexible use. Although such cramming may yield short-term retention of word meanings, it is far less effective for long-term maintenance, for acquiring context-dependent extended senses, or for deploying vocabulary productively in communication. The aim of vocabulary instruction should not be merely to have students recall an item’s basic meaning; more crucially, it should foster robust, nuanced lexical knowledge and flexible use, thereby enhancing accuracy in lexical deployment and, ultimately, their overall second-language (L2) proficiency.

In 1980, the publication of Lakoff and Johnson’s *Metaphors We Live By* marked the true beginning of research on conceptual metaphor. Conceptual metaphor, in brief, refers to understanding and experiencing a less familiar, abstract, and hard-to-grasp concept in terms of a more familiar and concrete one. This proceeds via mappings from a source domain to a target domain and is grounded in shared human experience. Authors argue that metaphor is pervasive in our daily life: our language, our thoughts, and the very conceptual system that undergirds

human activity are fundamentally metaphorical in nature. Indeed, the formation and meanings of a considerable portion of lexical items are motivated by metaphor. Metaphor is therefore closely related to language learning, and to vocabulary learning in particular.

In the Chinese context, the application of conceptual metaphor to English vocabulary teaching began relatively late, and to date, there has been no review article that systematically synthesizes its current state of development, future trends, and existing problems. Accordingly, this literature review surveys research from the past three decades, both domestic and international, with the aim of summarizing the achievements to date in integrating conceptual metaphor into English vocabulary instruction, identifying avenues for further expansion, and diagnosing present limitations. The goal is to foster a deeper understanding of the integration between conceptual metaphor and English vocabulary pedagogy.

II. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

2.1 The Cognitive Linguistic Basis of Conceptual Metaphor

In the era of traditional metaphor studies, metaphor was treated as a rhetorical figure whose function was to make discourse more vivid and aesthetically appealing. This view, however, confined metaphor to the shell of language itself. With the rise of cognitive linguistics, scholars began to ground inquiry in the basic principle of “reality–cognition–language,” taking human experience and perception as foundational and, from a cognitive perspective, probing the substance and characteristics of the mechanisms that underlie metaphor comprehension.

The publication of Lakoff and Johnson’s *Metaphors We Live By* (1980) ushered cognitive linguistics into a new stage of development. The suite of theories concerning conceptual metaphor broadened the horizons of semantic research and offered a renewed understanding of the longstanding linguistic problem of “meaning.”

2.2 Definition of Conceptual Metaphor

Building on Lakoff and Johnson’s characterization in *Metaphors We Live By*, conceptual metaphor may be defined as a cognitively grounded account of metaphor: it is a way of understanding or experiencing one entity in terms of another. As such, metaphor is not merely a rhetorical device; it constitutes a fundamental mode of human cognition.

2.3 Mechanism of Conceptual Metaphor

At its core, conceptual metaphor involves understanding and experiencing one class of phenomena in terms of

another—using something concrete and familiar to make sense of something abstract and unfamiliar. Such cross-domain understanding presupposes some perceived similarity between the two. Two key notions are the source domain and the target domain: the source domain comprises entities that are concrete, familiar, known, and readily definable, whereas the target domain comprises entities that are abstract, unfamiliar, unknown, and hard to define. The directional interaction from source to target—i.e., mapping—constitutes the operative mechanism of conceptual metaphor.

2.4 Classes of Conceptual Metaphor

According to Lakoff and Johnson, conceptual metaphors fall into three broad classes: structural metaphors, orientational metaphors, and ontological metaphors.

2.5 Conceptual Metaphor and Dual Coding Theory

Why can conceptual metaphor be leveraged in English vocabulary instruction? The Dual Coding Theory (DCT) proposed by Paivio and Desrochers (1980) provides a compelling answer. DCT posits the coexistence, in bilingual cognition, of a verbal system (encompassing the L1 and L2 language systems) and a nonverbal system (also called the imagery system). These two systems can operate independently or interactively. Empirical findings suggest that information encoded by both systems is comprehended and remembered at roughly twice the level of information encoded by a single system. Specifically, concrete lexical items are typically processed in the form of image schemas and stored across both systems, whereas abstract concepts tend to be represented only within the verbal system; as a result, abstract concepts are generally more difficult to understand and remember than concrete ones.

Conceptual metaphor functions precisely by concretizing abstract concepts. When learning the abstract, extended senses of lexical items, conceptual metaphors activate the imagery system, allowing it to participate in the processing of abstract meanings. This, in turn, strengthens learners’ comprehension and memory, and improves learning outcomes. It is therefore feasible to apply conceptual metaphor to the teaching of English prepositions in particular.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

The integration of conceptual metaphor into vocabulary teaching has focused primarily on prepositions, polysemous words, and phrasal verbs. Among these, work on prepositions includes both theoretical and empirical studies, whereas research on polysemy and phrasal verbs is predominantly empirical. Accordingly, this review surveys

applications of conceptual metaphor to each of these areas in turn.

3.1 A Review of Conceptual Metaphor in the Teaching of English Prepositions

Within the English lexicon, prepositions constitute a special class of polysemous items. Their basic senses are spatial—high-frequency in everyday use and directly grounded in human perception and experience—yet their extended senses are both numerous and abstract. In many contexts of English-as-a-second-language instruction, traditional approaches to teaching prepositions rely chiefly on translation, verbal explanation, and the presentation of vivid illustrative pictures (Hung, 2017; Lőrincz & Gordon, 2012). Recent studies, however, indicate that such methods do not reliably foster genuine mastery of English prepositions or measurable gains in achievement (Lőrincz & Gordon, 2012). Cho (2010) further argues that these approaches depend heavily on simple memorization, with learners acquiring target items largely through rote learning; in his study, Japanese learners taught via traditional methods showed little subsequent improvement in performance. Against this backdrop, there has been a steady increase in studies that analyze the semantic networks of prepositions from a conceptual-metaphor perspective and implement such insights in pedagogy.

A substantial body of scholarship has applied conceptual metaphor to the teaching of English prepositions, and a subset has conducted empirical studies to assess its effectiveness. Boers (2000), through three experiments with intermediate-level learners of English residing in Belgium, examined the effect of metaphor awareness on L2 lexical retention. The findings indicated that explicit training in metaphor during language instruction can enhance learners' vocabulary memory and language-use skills. Boers also noted limitations: in all three experiments, participants' first languages (Dutch or French) are typologically close to English, and the metaphors motivating the "figurative expressions" under study are common in those L1s, which may have facilitated comprehension. Owing to cross-cultural differences, learners with other L1s might face greater difficulty; moreover, the results are restricted to learners at an intermediate proficiency level.

Similarly, Tyler et al. (2011) conducted an empirical study to evaluate a cognitive-linguistics-based approach to teaching the semantics of the prepositions *to*, *for*, and *at*. Fourteen professional translators whose L1 was Italian participated. The treatment asked learners to reason about each preposition's uses in terms of a polysemy network radiating from a central spatial scene, and to consider the role of metaphor in sense extension. Comparisons

between pretest and immediate posttest revealed significant score gains, indicating substantial improvement in these advanced learners' understanding of the three prepositions. The authors further argued that, although clear gains were observed on the pre- to posttest measures, a delayed posttest is essential to determine whether such gains reflect deeper understanding of extended meanings and of the processes (e.g., metaphor) by which they develop.

Song et al. (2015) compared a cognitive-linguistic instructional approach with a traditional translation-based approach. The lesson sequence comprised a warm-up, instruction using image schemas, and controlled practice, targeting the prepositions *in*, *on*, and *at*. The cognitive-linguistic condition drew on cross-domain mapping, conceptual metaphor theory, and the ITPC model, whereas the traditional condition relied on rote memorization and teacher-led verbal explanation. Posttest results showed that learners receiving the cognitive-linguistic treatment scored significantly higher than those in the traditional group; however, this study likewise did not include a delayed posttest.

Because the three studies above were conducted in European language communities (where the L1 is relatively close to English), subsequent work has tested whether conceptual-metaphor-based instruction is equally effective in settings where the learners' L1s differ more substantially from English. In Vietnam, Huong (2005) taught English textual vocabulary to Vietnamese learners using an image-schema-based approach. Participants were assigned to two groups receiving either image-schema instruction or traditional teacher-led verbal explanations. The results showed that the cognitive (image-schema) group significantly outperformed the traditional group on the posttest.

Building on Song (2015), Hung, Vien, and Vu (2018) conducted an empirical study with 50 Vietnamese university students of English as a second language. Drawing on cross-domain mapping, conceptual metaphor theory, and the ITPC model, they compared a cognitive-linguistic approach to instruction in both the spatial and metaphorical meanings of English prepositions with a traditional method. Ten prepositions were targeted: *above*, *among*, *at*, *after*, *beside*, *under*, *in*, *in front (of)*, *on*, and *under*. The findings paralleled Song's positive results: although the traditional group scored slightly higher on the pretest, both groups improved after instruction, and the cognitive group's gains on the immediate and subsequent posttests were markedly greater than those of the traditional group.

In the Chinese context, Chen and Xu (2009) examined 46 first-year senior high school students, comparing an image-schema-based approach with a translation-based approach for the polysemous prepositions *on*, *over*, and *above*. Their results showed that instruction grounded in image schemas was significantly more effective than translation-based instruction, indicating the strong pedagogical value of image-schema theory for teaching polysemous English prepositions. Liu and Li (2011) addressed a limitation in Tyler et al. (2011) by including a delayed posttest. Focusing on the preposition *in*, they investigated the feasibility of applying conceptual metaphor to preposition teaching with 130 Grade-12 students from a key high school in Shaanxi Province (control group: 66; experimental group: 64). The experimental group received instruction based on conceptual metaphor. Without prior notice to participants, a delayed posttest was administered 22 days later. The experimental group showed significant improvement on the immediate posttest and performed significantly better than the control group on both the posttest and the delayed posttest. The authors thus concluded that, relative to traditional preposition teaching, conceptual-metaphor-based instruction more effectively facilitates the teaching of *in*, supports learners' long-term retention, and aids inference about the extended senses of *in*.

3.2 A Review of Research on Teaching Polysemy through Conceptual Metaphor

Nation argues that “high-frequency words in language are obviously very important, and teachers and learners should spend a great deal of time on them” (2001, p. 16). However, Howards (1964) maintains that teaching polysemous words is particularly challenging, and that the difficulty stems from frequency: the more frequently a given word is used, the more senses it tends to develop. Consequently, when learners study high-frequency vocabulary, they are likely to encounter large numbers of polysemous items—words that possess multiple, semantically related senses (Lyons, 1977). Because of this polysemy, learners often find it difficult to discern intuitively how the seemingly disparate meanings are semantically related (Tyler & Evans, 2004).

Cognitive linguists contend that the development of a word's extended senses is grounded in human metaphorical thought. The various senses of a polysemous item are not random or unmotivated; rather, they are richly interconnected and systematically motivated. This claim provides strong justification for applying conceptual metaphor theory to language pedagogy, especially in the teaching of polysemy. Research on polysemy instruction from this perspective is largely empirical: most studies implement instructional interventions and employ multiple

instruments—tests, questionnaires, interviews, and the like—to investigate, from multiple dimensions of lexical knowledge, the advantages of conceptual-metaphor-based instruction over traditional approaches and its positive effects on learners.

Boers (2000) argues that diagrammatic/imagistic presentation can be used to introduce polysemous items. He conducted an experiment with 73 French L1 undergraduates majoring in Business English. Target items included trend-describing vocabulary such as *soar*, *skyrocket*, *plunge*, *dive*, *slide*, *peak*, as well as domains evoked by *aircraft*, *diving*, and *mountaineering*. Learners in the experimental group classified the lexical items by source domains involving airplanes, diving, and mountaineering—that is, they engaged in a degree of imagistic reasoning while processing the words. The control group classified the same items along a primary dimension marked by rate and direction of change. In the immediate posttest, both groups wrote a short essay based on two graphs showing unemployment rates. A tally of distinct “up/down” expressions in the essays revealed that the experimental group used substantially more such expressions than the control group. These findings suggest that making learners aware of the literal imagery underlying figurative uses of polysemous items facilitates vocabulary retention. Boers also noted, however, that the advantage appears stronger for short-term retention and less evident for long-term memory.

Similarly, Lindstromberg and Boers (2005) investigated 24 motion verbs (e.g., *hobble*, *stagger*, *teeter*, *veer*, *saunter*, *slump*, *flit*). Students in the experimental condition took turns acting out the verbs for peers to guess, whereas control participants provided verbal definitions for peers to identify. The results paralleled Boers (2000): on the immediate posttest, the experimental group remembered the verbs more readily than the control group, and on the delayed posttest they were also better at recognizing the verbs' metaphorical uses.

Other scholars have presented polysemy through sense extension from a central or prototypical meaning. For example, Csábi (2004) examined instruction on the polysemous verbs *hold* and *keep* with 52 Hungarian secondary students assigned to control and experimental groups. The experimental group received instruction grounded in conceptual metaphor and image schemas, while the control group was taught via translation. Both groups sat an immediate posttest and a delayed posttest (one day after instruction). The results showed that learners in the experimental group were significantly more likely to select the appropriate sense (i.e., higher sense-selection accuracy) than those in the control group.

Because conceptual-metaphor-based instruction for polysemy had shown positive effects with English L1 learners and learners whose L1s are typologically close to English, Morimoto and Loewen (2007) designed a study with 58 Japanese high school students to examine the effects of image-schema-based instruction (ISBI) versus translation-based instruction (TBI) on learners from a non-European language community. Target items included the verb *break* and the preposition *over*. Results indicated that both ISBI and TBI benefited learners' understanding and use of polysemous items, but ISBI was more effective in certain respects. The authors concluded that image schemas can serve as an effective pedagogical tool for teaching L2 polysemy.

Similarly, Cheng and Li (2016) investigated two cohorts totaling 84 first-year university students (non-English majors), using *over*—together with compounds where *over* functions as a prefix and phrasal verbs where *over* functions as a particle—as target items. Combining quantitative and qualitative methods, they assessed the impact of a cognitive-linguistic intervention on learning multiple senses. The control group received traditional translation-based instruction, whereas the experimental group was taught using cognitive-linguistic principles, including image schemas, conceptual metaphor, and techniques of construal and conceptual integration (blending), to explicate the cognitive motivation behind sense extension. Learners were then given example sentences and guided to infer the meanings of *over* in context and to understand how its semantic network is structured.

Findings showed that the experimental group significantly outperformed the control group in acquiring multiple senses, in identifying the cognitive motivations of derived senses, and in transferring cognitive strategies for semantic inference. Notably, students exposed to the cognitive-linguistic treatment were able to spontaneously transfer these strategies to infer senses of other polysemous items—an outcome not reported in prior research.

3.3 A Review of Research on Teaching Phrasal Verbs through Conceptual Metaphor

Phrasal verbs are widely regarded as particularly difficult for learners of English. The difficulties stem from at least two sources: (1) the opacity of many phrasal-verb meanings, and (2) the apparent arbitrariness of particle semantics noted by Side (1990). Within the framework of cognitive linguistics, however, many phenomena traditionally deemed arbitrary have been shown to be systematic. Because the semantics of the particle in a phrasal-verb construction exerts a strong influence on the

construction's overall meaning, most cognitive analyses of phrasal verbs focus on particles.

Lindner (1981), through analyses of *out* and *up*, argued that the meanings of English phrasal verbs are analyzable: the literal and metaphorical senses of particles are inseparable within a shared image schema and jointly shape the composite meaning of the construction. Lindner further suggested that the 134 particles occurring in phrasal verbs, like many other aspects of language, display extensive semantic coherence—an early and influential claim. In a similar vein, Lakoff (1987) conducted an in-depth study of the particle *over*, demonstrating how the spatial relation between an element designated as the Trajector and an element designated as the Landmark motivates a wide range of metaphorical extensions in particle meaning.

Early empirical work primarily examined the effectiveness of conceptual-metaphor-informed instruction for phrasal verbs. As early as 1996, Kövecses and Szabó investigated the use of phrasal verbs with *up* and *down* among thirty Hungarian learners. Fifteen students in the experimental group learned ten target phrasal verbs accompanied by explanations grounded in cognitive linguistics, designed to heighten awareness of the underlying conceptual metaphors (e.g., MORE IS UP, HAPPY IS UP). The fifteen students in the control group learned the same items via traditional translation. On an immediate gap-fill posttest, the experimental group outperformed the control group by nearly nine percentage points.

Similarly, Boers (2000) focused on phrasal verbs motivated by instantiated conceptual metaphors, such as VISIBLE IS OUT (*find out*, *turn out*) and VISIBLE IS UP (*look it up*, *show up*). Participants were French L1 students. The experimental group (n = 39) studied twenty-nine phrasal verbs presented through these metaphor instantiations, whereas the control group (n = 35) learned the same items through translation. On an immediate posttest covering the taught phrasal verbs, the experimental group scored markedly higher than the control group.

Condon and Kelly (2002) conducted an eight-week experiment in which a cognitive-linguistic group and a traditional group were both taught 28 phrasal verbs containing *up*, *down*, *in*, and *out*. On the immediate posttest, the cognitive group outperformed the traditional group. Taken together, these three studies indicate that instruction grounded in conceptual metaphor is more effective for phrasal verbs than traditional grammar-translation approaches.

Condon (2008) extended earlier work along five dimensions—participant sample, number of target phrasal verbs, treatment duration, assessment methods (including a delayed posttest), and the magnitude of the treatment effect. The results again corroborated Boers (2000): conceptual metaphor helps learners better grasp phrasal-verb meanings, thereby improving accuracy on related tasks. Additional findings included: (i) explicit instruction in conceptual metaphor benefits the teaching of English phrasal verbs; (ii) cognitive-linguistic methods can be successfully integrated into existing curricula to yield superior long-term outcomes; and (iii) such methods are particularly well suited to relatively concrete instances and to vocabulary items amenable to cognitive-linguistic stimulation.

Beyond overall effectiveness, researchers have explored memory retention and autonomous meaning prediction. Yasuda (2010) examined Japanese learners' acquisition of phrasal verbs via conceptual metaphor, comparing a cognitive-linguistic treatment with traditional instruction. The experimental group demonstrated better mastery of the target items and greater success in transferring the theory to infer the meanings of novel phrasal verbs—an insight especially pertinent to L2 contexts where learners' L1s differ markedly from English. With 45 Iranian learners, Ganji (2011) compared translation, sentence contextualization, and metaphorical conceptualization. Although immediate posttest differences were not significant, on the delayed test and on tests involving untaught phrasal verbs, metaphorical conceptualization and sentence contextualization significantly outperformed translation. This pattern suggests that these approaches better support long-term retention and learners' ability to predict phrasal-verb meanings.

IV. DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

Broadly speaking, research on the application of conceptual metaphor to vocabulary instruction emerged earlier abroad than in China. Both international and domestic studies nonetheless attest to its feasibility and pedagogical implications, and on this basis have proceeded to empirical verification. Most scholars employ comparative designs to demonstrate the feasibility and effectiveness of conceptual-metaphor-based approaches in vocabulary teaching and acquisition, and have subsequently extended their inquiries to examine effects on learners' retention of word meanings and their autonomous inference of novel meanings.

In terms of instructional materials, the majority of studies selected 3–5 target items, with the largest sets

including up to 10 items. As for participants, samples have included learners from European contexts (where the L1 shares similarities with English) as well as from Asian contexts (where L1–L2 similarity is lower). Participants are typically cognitively mature and older—professional learners, university students, or secondary-school students—whereas studies involving younger learners (e.g., primary school pupils) are relatively scarce, plausibly because conceptual metaphor constitutes a higher-order cognitive operation that may pose greater difficulty for children. Despite differences in proficiency, nationality, and age, all participants in these studies were learning English as a second or foreign language.

V. LIMITATIONS & FUTURE DIRECTIONS

i. Participant profile. As the foregoing review indicates, most studies have focused on L2 learners at intermediate proficiency or above, with little work targeting younger learners and those at lower proficiency levels. Future research should extend to these populations to provide a more comprehensive test of the feasibility of conceptual-metaphor-informed vocabulary instruction.

ii. Scope of target items. The majority of studies examine only 3–5 high-frequency items, and even the largest samples include at most ten words—far short of what is needed in real classrooms. Given the costs of scaling up item-by-item experiments, future work might instead derive generalizable pedagogical procedures for different lexical types, yielding methods applicable across wider sets of vocabulary.

iii. Lexical domains. Existing research concentrates on prepositions, polysemous words, and phrasal verbs, with relatively little attention to other categories (e.g., gerunds, denominal verbs). While conceptual metaphor has clear advantages for lexicon with inherently spatial semantics, future studies should explore applications to a broader range of lexical types to open new pathways for L2 vocabulary instruction.

iv. Learning outcomes beyond recognition. Although most studies repeatedly confirm the effectiveness of conceptual metaphor in vocabulary teaching, few investigate learners' productive use of the target items—e.g., whether students can appropriately and accurately deploy them in writing and conversation, or whether their ability to form semantic associations has improved. These are promising directions for subsequent research.

v. Learning-to-learn and higher-order thinking. Reported outcomes are typically framed in terms of expanded linguistic knowledge and enhanced language ability, without recognizing that learning vocabulary via

conceptual metaphor is itself a form of learning capability and an exercise in higher-order cognition.

vi. Underlying mechanisms. Current studies, using tests, questionnaires, and interviews, document positive cognitive outcomes but seldom probe the mechanisms that produce them—i.e., what cognitive changes occur as learners engage with metaphor-based instruction. Future research should examine how conceptual metaphor shapes the process of L2 vocabulary learning. Starting from the mechanisms may enable more principled pedagogical use of conceptual metaphor and, ultimately, better support for vocabulary acquisition.

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Research on Strategies for Resolving Peer Conflict in Children's Autonomous Play

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Abstract— *Autonomous play is a common activity in kindergarten, during which young children often experience various conflicts. If these conflicts are not properly addressed, they can negatively impact children's psychological and social development. Therefore, it is important to explore effective resolution strategies. This study selected children from the senior class of a public kindergarten, referred to as Kindergarten D, as the research subjects to conduct an in-depth investigation into peer conflicts during autonomous play. Through data collection, interview outlines, and case analysis, the study found that differences in teachers' perceptions of conflicts lead to varied guidance approaches for children; the kindergarten lacks scientific environmental design; parents hold diverse understandings of conflicts and employ different parenting styles, while also failing to fully exercise their agency in home-kindergarten collaboration. In response to these findings, the following recommendations are proposed: teachers should enhance their professional competence to better guide children in resolving peer conflicts; classrooms should be designed more scientifically; parents should understand the universality of peer conflicts, avoid excessive intervention or solving problems on behalf of their children, serve as role models, and emphasize the importance of home-kindergarten collaboration; children themselves should improve their cognitive abilities and undergo social skills training.*

Keywords— *Autonomous Play, Peer Conflict, Resolution Strategies.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Autonomous play is an essential part of early childhood development, playing a significant role in promoting peer interaction and conflict resolution. Through peer conflicts that arise during autonomous play, children learn how to cooperate with others, express their thoughts and emotions, and gradually develop a healthy self-concept, thereby enhancing their ability to adapt to society and better face future challenges. This study analyzes children's peer conflict behaviors in autonomous play, aiming to help educators gain a more comprehensive understanding of the occurrence and resolution processes of conflicts. It also examines the factors influencing peer conflicts among young children and offers concrete suggestions to assist teachers in responding to and intervening in conflicts more effectively. Additionally, it seeks to raise parents' awareness of the phenomenon of peer conflicts in early

childhood, thereby providing practical and strategic guidance to optimize positive interactions among children.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Research on teachers' guidance strategies for Autonomous play

Regarding the guidance of autonomous play, Qiu Xueqing proposed three guidance methods: verbal guidance, material provision, and game intervention[1]. Chen Qi emphasized that teachers should conduct in-depth observation during game guidance, keenly capture educational opportunities, and assist children in resolving difficulties encountered in play. At the same time, teachers should carefully consider the necessity and method of intervention before stepping in[2]. Wang Caiping argued

that children should be granted full autonomy in play. Therefore, teachers should provide appropriate game materials and create a favorable play environment. Teachers' guidance methods should be flexible and adaptable, employing reasonable strategies based on actual situations and formulating effective guidance plans through practical observation[3]. Yue Li believed that the methods and attitudes teachers adopt when intervening in conflicts directly impact children's peer interactions[4]. Ekaterina Moore suggested that conflicts allow children to experience various emotions and attempt to resolve disagreements between themselves and others[5].

2.2 Research on strategies for resolving peer conflicts in young children

Xiang Haiying and Sun Wenjie identified the following strategies for resolving conflicts among young children: cooperative, aggressive, withdrawal, and seeking-help strategies[6]. Xue Yuanyuan's research indicated that the most frequently used strategy after a conflict is seeking help from teachers. Among negative strategies, verbal disputes and threats are the most common, while positive strategies such as negotiation and explanation also account for a certain proportion[7]. Duan Jingfeng suggested that kindergartens should scientifically create environments to reduce external factors inducing peer conflicts. Teachers should update their educational concepts and adopt methods such as cognitive training and role-playing to cultivate children's internal abilities to resolve conflicts. Parents should foster a positive family environment and collaborate effectively in home-kindergarten partnerships[8]. Tang Minhong emphasized that teachers should learn to observe children's conflict behaviors and provide appropriate guidance[9]. Roland Nji Angu advocated training children to use play and humor to negotiate and control disagreements and anger[10].

Through a systematic review of relevant literature, scholars generally agree that the role of teachers should be multifaceted. Particularly in guiding strategies for peer conflicts, teachers need to fully recognize the educational value inherent in conflicts, observe children's conflict behaviors during peer interactions, and encourage children to independently address challenges in interpersonal relationships. Synthesizing domestic and international research, current studies often broadly focus on children's daily activities, which offers extensive research value. However, there remains a lack of in-depth research specifically targeting peer conflicts in autonomous play. Therefore, this study aims to explore the specific

manifestations and root causes of peer conflicts in autonomous play, with the goal of proposing more targeted and actionable suggestions and solutions. It seeks to enrich the theoretical research on peer conflicts in young children and provide practical references and insights for kindergarten teachers facing similar issues in actual teaching.

III. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

3.1 Research subjects

Over a four-month observation period, the author conducted systematic recordings of 34 children in the senior second class of Kindergarten D, with detailed documentation of peer conflict incidents that occurred during autonomous play activities.

3.2 Research methods

3.2.1 Observation method

Throughout the four-month observation period, systematic observations were carried out on the 34 children in the senior second class of Kindergarten D. The strategies adopted by the children to resolve conflicts in different situations were recorded.

3.2.2 Interview method

This study selected two lead teachers from the senior second class as interviewees. Through in-depth exchanges, the research aimed to explore differences in teachers' perspectives on peer conflicts and to further examine the significance and effectiveness of teachers' guidance strategies in the process of resolving peer conflicts among children.

IV. STATISTICS AND ANALYSIS OF PEER CONFLICT BEHAVIORS AMONG SENIOR KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN DURING AUTONOMOUS PLAY

This study, conducted over a four-month period, involved systematic observation of 34 children in the senior class of Kindergarten D, with a focus on recording various peer conflict incidents that occurred during play activities. After collation and screening, a total of 107 valid cases were obtained. These cases were then analyzed in depth, and drawing on existing scholarly research, an analytical framework was developed. Specific details are provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Analytical Framework for Peer Conflict Behaviors in Young Children

Types of game activities	Morning games, area games, corridor games, outdoor games
Gender of the conflicting parties	Same-sex (male-male; female-female), opposite-sex (male-female)
Types of conflicts	Competing for game resources, violating game rules, game opinion differences, interfering and controlling others, physical actions causing conflicts
Duration of conflicts	Within 1 minute, 1-2 minutes, 2-3 minutes, more than 3 minutes
Strategies for resolving conflicts	Negotiation and mediation, apology and comfort, reporting and seeking help, third-party intervention, neither side giving in, aggressive behavior, threatening and commanding, crying and getting angry

Through in-depth field investigations, data were collected on the occurrence and gender distribution of peer conflicts, the time periods in which conflicts occurred, conflict types, resolution strategies, and duration during autonomous play among senior kindergarten children. These data were coded and statistically analyzed using an observational framework. By comparing and examining this information, the study aims to comprehensively reveal the characteristics and existing issues of peer conflict behaviors among children in the senior kindergarten class.

4.1 Types of activities in which peer conflicts occur among young children

By categorizing the 107 collected conflict incidents, the distribution of children's conflicts across four types of play activities was obtained, as shown in Table 2.

As can be seen from the table, conflict behaviors among young children occurred most frequently during

Table 2. The situation of children's conflict behaviors in different types of game activities

	Morning games	Area games	Outdoor games	Corridor games	Total
Number (times)	22	47	7	31	107
Percentage (%)	20.6	43.9	6.5	29.0	100

Table 3. Types of Peer Conflict Behaviors in Young Children

	Scrambling game resources	Violating game rules	Disagreement on game opinions	Interference in controlling others	Physical actions triggering conflicts
Number (times)	32	26	20	21	8
Percentage (%)	30.0	24.3	18.7	19.2	7.5

From an overall analysis of the causes of conflicts, the following patterns can be observed:

First, competition for play resources is particularly prominent. Children in the senior kindergarten class tend to focus primarily on their own needs and interests, often

area play, while corridor play and morning play ranked second and third, respectively. Conflicts occurred less often in outdoor areas, primarily because other curricular activities encroached on outdoor time, resulting in relatively fewer opportunities and shorter duration for outdoor play.

4.2 Types of peer conflict behaviors in young children

The author has categorized factors likely to trigger conflicts among children during autonomous play activities into five main types: competition for play resources, violation of game rules, disagreements over play ideas, interference with or control of others' behaviors, and conflicts arising from physical actions. These categories account for 30.0%, 24.3%, 18.7%, 19.2%, and 7.5% of the total conflicts, respectively, as detailed in Table 3.

lacking awareness of fairness and cooperation in the distribution of play resources. Second, as children in this age group begin to develop independent thinking skills and form their own opinions, they become more sensitive to perceived violations of game rules by their peers. Third,

some children in the senior class have started to attempt to demonstrate their strength or attract others' attention by interfering with or provoking their peers. Finally, due to their ongoing cognitive and social development, conflicts arising from physical actions are relatively infrequent among senior kindergarten children.

4.3 Gender distribution of peer conflict behaviors in young children

An analysis of the 107 collected conflict incidents revealed that 78 cases involved conflicts between children of the same gender, while 29 cases occurred between children of different genders, as detailed in Table 4.

As shown in the table, conflicts are more likely to occur between children of the same gender. Specifically, conflicts between male-male, female-female, and male-female pairs account for 51.4%, 21.5%, and 27.1% of the total incidents, respectively. Boys are involved in conflicts

Table 4. Specific Situations of Peer Conflicts Occurring Among Children of Different Genders

	Same-sex (Man-Man)	Same-sex (Woman-Woman)	Different-sex (Man-Woman)	Total
Number (times)	55	23	29	107
Percentage (%)	51.4	21.5	27.1	100

Positive strategies include negotiation mediation and apology comforting, comprising 12.8% and 7.6% of the total, respectively. Compromise strategies consist of seeking adult intervention and third-party involvement, accounting for 24.4% and 19.8%, respectively. Negative strategies encompass refusing to yield, aggression, threats, and crying/anger, representing 11.0%, 9.3%, 9.3% and 7.0%, respectively.

The data analysis indicates that senior kindergarten children primarily employ compromise strategies to

Table 5. Specifics of Peer Conflict Resolution Strategies in Children's Play

	Negotiation Mediation	Apology Comforting	Seeking Adult Intervention	Third-Party Involvement	Refusing to Yield	Aggressive Behavior	Threats Commands	Crying Anger	Total
Number (times)	22	13	42	34	19	16	14	12	172
Percentage (%)	12.8	7.6	24.4	19.8	11.0	9.3	8.1	7.0	100

4.5 Duration of peer conflict behaviors in young children

significantly more often than girls. These findings indicate that during the preschool stage, children tend to interact more frequently with peers of the same gender.

4.4 Resolution strategies for peer conflicts in young children

This study categorizes the strategies used by children to resolve peer conflicts during autonomous play into the following eight types. Analysis of the 107 recorded conflict incidents identified a total of 172 strategy instances, as detailed in Table 5.

Based on the analysis of the eight resolution strategies and in accordance with existing classification standards, the author categorizes children's conflict resolution strategies into positive strategies, compromise strategies, and negative strategies [15], accounting for 20.4%, 44.4%, and 35.4% of the total, respectively.

resolve conflicts, with negative strategies and positive strategies ranking second and third, respectively. These findings reflect the cognitive developmental level of children in this age group. Senior kindergarten children are in the preoperational stage, characterized by egocentric thinking. Consequently, they often struggle to consider others' perspectives when resolving conflicts and tend to view situations solely from their own standpoint. This, to some extent, explains why children in this stage less frequently adopt positive strategies during conflicts.

Among the 107 recorded incidents of peer conflicts, the specific duration of these conflict behaviors is detailed in Table 6.

Table 6. Overall Distribution of Peer Conflict Resolution Strategies in Children's Play

	< 1 min	1-2min	2-3min	> 3 min	Total
Number (times)	89	15	1	2	107
Percentage (%)	83.2	14.0	0.9	1.9	100

83.2% of the recorded conflict incidents lasted no longer than one minute. Following these conflicts, most children did not show significant emotional distress and quickly resumed their original play activities. Approximately 14% of the children exhibited a subdued emotional state after the conflict but were able to regulate their emotions within 1–2 minutes, with minimal disruption to their ongoing play. In very few cases, the conflict state persisted for a longer period until the children's attention was diverted by other stimuli.

Overall, the duration of peer conflicts among young children was relatively short. This observation is generally consistent with findings from the author's previous studies.

V. FACTORS INFLUENCING PEER CONFLICT RESOLUTION STRATEGIES IN CHILDREN'S AUTONOMOUS PLAY

Based on interviews with teachers and observations of children, the author analyzes the causes behind the emergence of peer conflicts and the choice of resolution strategies among senior kindergarten children during autonomous play, thereby providing direction for proposing effective guidance strategies.

5.1 Teacher factors

5.1.1 Perception of conflict

Teachers' views and attitudes toward conflict directly influence their educational methods. If teachers perceive conflict as negative and something to be avoided, they tend to intervene quickly and stop the conflict, which may deprive children of opportunities to learn how to resolve conflicts independently. Conversely, if teachers view conflict as an opportunity for growth and learning, they are more likely to adopt an open and supportive attitude, encouraging children to resolve conflicts through negotiation and communication.

In the interviews, Teacher A believed that conflicts help children correct mistakes, reflecting a positive and open attitude. Teacher B believed that most conflicts among senior kindergarten children are resolved by the children themselves, with only a few children frequently involved in conflicts, requiring targeted management. This indicates that Teacher B holds a relatively negative view

of conflict, focusing only on easily observable conflicts rather than all students.

During play activities, both teachers recommended observing children's behavior, assessing conflicts before deciding whether to intervene, and allowing space for children to resolve issues independently while observing their natural responses and conflict resolution abilities.

When handling conflicts, Teacher A emphasized flexibility, tailoring strategies to individual children's personalities and receptiveness. Teacher B stressed the importance of reasoning with children but also believed in displaying sternness to ensure compliance, indicating a belief that authority and attitude are crucial in conflict resolution.

In summary, teachers' perceptions of conflict vary significantly, leading to different approaches in handling conflicts.

Below are excerpts from interviews with the two teachers:

Interview 1: How do you view conflicts among senior kindergarten children?

Teacher A: "During conflicts, we can clearly see children's progress. For example, Cai Cai, who has a quick temper, often conflicts with others. But with proper guidance, he avoids repeating the same mistakes. So, as long as it benefits the children, we should view conflicts objectively and guide them correctly."

Teacher B: "Senior children have higher cognitive development than younger ones. They usually resolve conflicts themselves. Prolonged conflicts are rare, and only a few children frequently cause trouble. Managing those few is sufficient."

Interview 2: What should teachers do during play activities?

Teacher A: "Observe children's performance. When conflicts occur, we should first observe and then decide whether to intervene."

Teacher B: "Definitely observe the children."

Interview 3: How do you handle conflicts between children?

Teacher A: "Experts propose many methods, but they aren't always practical. Managing children requires authority. Gentleness doesn't work with our class—being firm makes them remember. We need to tailor solutions

based on what each child responds to.”

Teacher B: “Reason with them, but be stern. Otherwise, they won’t listen.”

5.1.2 Lack of scientific design in kindergarten environments

Creating an environment requires comprehensive consideration of spatial layout, area arrangement, and the selection of toys and materials. The physical environment and rational use of space significantly influence children’s daily behavior. In the observed kindergarten, corridor autonomous play is held weekly for senior children, leading to overcrowding in popular areas. Competition for space often results in physical collisions, highlighting the importance of adequate space.

5.2 Family influences

5.2.1 Parental perception of conflict and parenting styles

Parents’ words, actions, attitudes, and methods toward conflict serve as models for children to learn and imitate. Therefore, parents’ correct understanding and handling of conflicts positively influence children, helping them learn appropriate ways to respond to and resolve conflicts.

Based on Interview 4, Teacher A emphasized the importance of parents’ correct understanding of conflict. When parents demonstrate calmness, rationality, and problem-solving abilities, children observe and imitate these behaviors in their daily lives. Such parenting styles not only reduce conflicts but also help children develop emotional management and problem-solving skills.

Teacher B explained the impact of parenting styles on children’s conflict behaviors, further emphasizing the role of parental modeling.

In summary, parental perceptions of conflict and parenting styles significantly influence how children resolve peer conflicts.

Below are excerpts from the interviews:

Interview 4: Do you think families influence children’s conflict behaviors?

Teacher A: “Parents’ understanding of conflict is crucial. If parents handle conflicts correctly, children are more likely to adopt appropriate methods.”

Teacher B: “Parenting styles affect children. If parents calmly resolve problems, children will imitate them, reducing the likelihood of conflicts.”

5.2.2 Lack of parental agency in home-kindergarten collaboration

Some parents misunderstand the concept of home-kindergarten collaboration, overly relying on kindergartens and believing that teachers shoulder the primary responsibility for educating children.

Interview 5 revealed that both parents and teachers play essential roles in home-kindergarten collaboration, with parents being particularly important.

Interview 5: What factors adversely affect children’s conflict behaviors with peers?

Teacher A: “It’s related to families. There’s a saying online: ‘5 + 2 = 0.’ Five days of good habits learned in kindergarten can be undone by two days at home with parents—though this refers to some parents.”

Teacher B: “Many factors are involved, but families play a bigger role. Many parents think education is the teacher’s job, but parents are children’s first teachers. Their words and actions are crucial.”

5.3 Children’s cognitive and social skills

Senior kindergarten children are in the “egocentric” stage of cognitive development, where they prioritize their own perspectives and struggle to consider others’ viewpoints. In the first case study, when Cai Cai and Yuan Yuan competed for magnetic tiles, they focused solely on winning the toys rather than considering each other’s feelings.

As children grow, their social skills improve, and they tend to adopt positive strategies to resolve disputes. However, some children with weaker social skills may feel helpless in conflicts and resort to inappropriate or even violent methods. For example, observations showed that some children attempted to join peers’ games by 强行介入 (forcing their way in) rather than using appropriate strategies.

VI. CONCLUSION

This study selected children from the senior second class of Kindergarten D as research subjects and employed observation, interviews, and case study methods to conduct an in-depth investigation into peer conflict behaviors during autonomous play. Through data collection, analysis of interview outlines, and case studies, the research found that: differences in teachers’ perceptions of conflicts lead to divergent guidance approaches; the kindergarten’s environment lacks scientific design in its setup; parents vary in their understanding of conflicts and parenting styles, and fail to fully exercise their agency in home-kindergarten collaboration. In response to these findings, the following recommendations are proposed: teachers should enhance their professional competence to better guide children in resolving peer conflicts; classrooms should be designed more scientifically; parents should understand the universality of peer conflicts, avoid excessive intervention or solving problems on behalf of their children, serve as

role models, and emphasize the importance of home-kindergarten collaboration; children themselves should improve their cognitive abilities and undergo social skills training. It is hoped that this study will provide valuable insights and references for early childhood educators and parents.

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Analysis of Representative Works by Chiang Wen-yeh

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Abstract— *Exploring the Distinctive Features of Chiang Wen-yeh's Representative Works: An Analysis of His Integration of Traditional and Modern Musical Elements, with Emphasis on Melody, Orchestration, and Emotional Expression. Through in-depth study of these works, we may better understand his innovative spirit in musical creation and his role in preserving and developing traditional Chinese culture, thereby gaining new insights for the advancement of music composition.*



Keywords— *Taiwanese musician, Chiang Wen-yeh, Ethnomusicology, Orchestral Music.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Music, as a form of cultural expression, carries human emotions, thoughts, and values. Different cultural contexts are reflected in corresponding musical characteristics. In the field of ethnic music, the Taiwanese composer Chiang Wen-yeh has garnered significant attention for his distinctive compositional style. He skillfully incorporated traditional Taiwanese folk elements into his works while adeptly integrating modern musical techniques, creating a series of highly acclaimed compositions. [1].

II. CHIANG WEN-YEH (1910–1983): A LIFE ACROSS CHANGING TIMES

Chiang Wen-yeh (originally named Chiang Wen-pin) was born in 1910 in Sanzhi Village, Tamsui District, Taiwan during the Japanese colonial period. Around 1916, he moved with his parents to Xiamen (though his household registration remained in Taiwan). After arriving in Xiamen, he attended the Kyokugin Academy, a school established by the Xiamen Taiwanese Association that followed the Japanese educational system. The academy emphasized practical training and overseas studies, offering courses in commerce, foreign languages (including Japanese and English), as well as basic medical and artistic knowledge [2].

At that time, Xiamen's Gulangyu Island was a foreign concession, exposing Chiang to various forms of Western culture. Additionally, Christian church music on the island had developed considerably in the early 20th

century. Possessing a natural sensitivity to music, Chiang encountered the Western musical system during his time in Gulangyu.

After completing six years of study at the Kyokugin Academy, the 13-year-old Chiang Wen-yeh left for Japan in 1923 to pursue further education. Due to social unrest in Japan at the time, he moved to Nagano Prefecture with his Japanese servant, Yamasaki Akira, to continue his studies. During his middle school years in Nagano, Chiang displayed a clear musical talent—often experimenting with school instruments and teaching himself to play.

In 1928, after graduating from the five-year middle school program, he enrolled at the private Musashi Technical High School (located in Gotanda, Tokyo) for a three-year program. Meanwhile, he took private voice lessons in his spare time under a teacher named Abe. In fact, Chiang did not receive formal musical training from a young age but was largely self-guided by his innate talent and strong interest.

After graduating from Musashi Technical High School in 1932, Chiang was recruited as a vocalist by Columbia Records (Japan), marking the beginning of his professional music career. He went on to participate in multiple vocal competitions in Japan, consistently advancing to the final rounds.

III. ANALYSIS OF REPRESENTATIVE WORKS BY CHIANG WEN-YEH

Chiang Wen-yeh's significant place in music history can be attributed first to the remarkable diversity of genres in which he composed, and second to his distinctive integration of contemporary Western compositional techniques with traditional Chinese musical thought and indigenous stylistic elements.

3.1 Orchestral Work *Formosan Dance*

Formosan Dance (Taiwan no Bukyoku), composed by Chiang Wen-yeh, stands as one of his most representative works. It was the first Chinese orchestral composition to receive international recognition, winning an award at the 1936 Berlin Olympic Arts Competition (a category later discontinued), and remains an indispensable part of Chinese music history. While employing Western compositional techniques, the piece is not constrained by conventional Western forms; instead, all techniques serve the musical expression. Chiang drew from the profound and enduring Chinese cultural tradition, using traditional melodic elements and sincere emotion to convey his deep nostalgia for his homeland, Taiwan. This section provides a detailed analysis of *Formosan Dance* from three perspectives: musical form, tonality and harmony, and melodic structure.

Composed in 1934, *Formosan Dance* was one of Chiang's earliest major works and earned him the top prize in music at the 1936 Berlin Olympics (after which the award was discontinued). The piece is structured as a compound ternary form, consisting of an exposition, a middle section, and a recapitulation—each itself in ternary form. However, some scholars argue that it is more freely constructed as a single-movement work, integrating characteristics of Western form with traditional Chinese instrumental music structures, creating a sense of “loose form but coherent spirit.” Melodically, the work exhibits a fusion of modal and melodic elements.

In terms of modality, Chiang incorporated Taiwanese indigenous modes as well as the Japanese *Miyako-bushi* scale. Although both are pentatonic, they differ from the traditional Chinese pentatonic system, lending the work a distinctive melancholy and mysterious quality. The modal choices also reflect Chiang's psychological state within his political context: on one hand, he received a Japanese colonial education, while on the other, he remained deeply influenced by native Taiwanese musical traditions, which became rooted in his creative practice [3].

3.1.1 Musical form

The formal structure of *Formosan Dance* remains a subject of academic debate, with multiple interpretations proposed from various analytical perspectives.

One view, focusing on musical character, suggests that the work resembles a compressed compound ternary form akin to a waltz, combining multiple sections of contrasting moods. The opening section is a small ternary form depicting joyful singing and dancing scenes of his homeland. The central section is the most extensive, comprising two major parts: a lyrical *moderato* followed by a developmental bridge, creating strong dramatic contrast. The recapitulation is shortened to a single phrase followed by a brief coda.

Another perspective, rooted in Chinese musical thought, argues that while the piece exhibits certain features of Western sonata form, it follows its own structural logic. The seven sections relate contrastively and unfold independently according to emotional progression, free from strict Western formal constraints, thus subordinating structure to expressive purpose [4].

From a Western theoretical standpoint, some scholars analyze the work as a sonata-rondo form. The exposition includes not only the typical sonata elements—main theme, transition, secondary theme, and closing—but also inserts a return of the main theme between the secondary and closing themes, giving the exposition a rondo-like character. The development section introduces new episodic material followed by development of earlier themes. A transitional passage leads to an abbreviated recapitulation, omitting the transition and secondary theme, while expanding the closing into a final conclusion.

A melodic perspective highlights the piece's use of traditional Chinese developmental techniques. The seven sections are structurally distinct yet interrelated through variation and transformation of a core motif, lending the work both variational and rondo-like qualities.

In summary, *Formosan Dance* is a large-scale work with a multifaceted structure. Regardless of analytical approach, it clearly reflects Chiang Wen-yeh's innovative breakthroughs in formal conception.

3.1.2 Tonality and mode

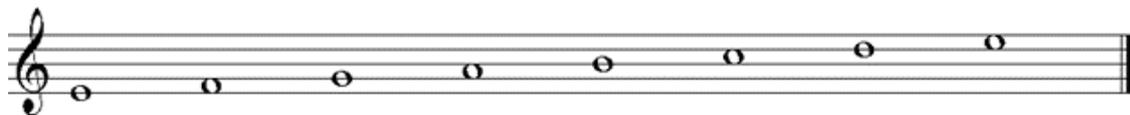
Chiang Wen-yeh's *Formosan Dance* exhibits a multifaceted approach to tonality and mode, synthesizing Chinese and Japanese modal characteristics—a reflection of his early studies in Japan and the consequent influence of Japanese culture on his work.

The first modal type draws from Taiwanese folk traditions, employing a pentatonic scale without minor seconds. The interval sequence consists of a minor third,

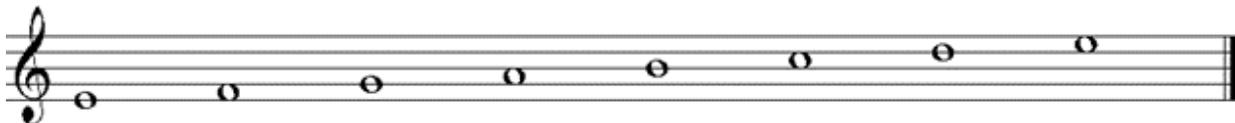
major second, minor third, major second, and major second. This mode emphasizes progressions based on minor thirds and major seconds, resulting in a gentle and lyrical character.

The second modal type is influenced by the Japanese *Miyako-bushi* scale, which incorporates minor seconds. Its interval structure is: minor second, major third, major second, minor second, and major third. Additionally, a tritone relationship exists between the second and fourth degrees of the scale, producing a sharp and tense quality (see Music Example 1).

Rather than keeping these two modes separate, Chiang often blends them within *Formosan Dance*, creating a natural mode with Phrygian characteristics (see Music Example 2). This synthesis reflects both his cultural background and his innovative approach to modal harmony [5].



Music Example 1: (Left) Pentatonic Scale Without Minor Second Intervals;
(Right) Pentatonic Scale Containing Minor Second Intervals



Music Example 2

3.1.3 Harmonic structure

Chiang Wen-yeh's approach to harmony was not confined to traditional functional relationships. Influenced by early 20th-century Western harmonic theory, he placed expressive purpose at the center of his harmonic language [6]. His works incorporate both conventional tertian harmonies and non-tertian structures. In the middle sections of the piece, he often employs traditional triadic chords enriched with added tones, lending a fresh color to familiar harmonies. In his use of non-tertian structures, he frequently inserts perfect fourths or fifths within pure octaves, enhancing the pentatonic character of the music. By innovatively reinterpreting traditional harmonic functions and integrating them with modal structures and progressions, Chiang developed a harmonic language that conveys distinct modal qualities.

Composed in 1940 after Chiang Wen-yeh moved to Beijing, *Festival Overture: Confucian Temple* stands as a major representative work from this period. It was created in response to Alexander Tcherepnin's call for a synthesis of Chinese and Western musical traditions and reflects Chiang's deep engagement with Confucian musical

philosophy. The work consists of six movements: "Welcoming the Deity," "Initial Offering," "Secondary Offering," "Final Offering," "Clearing the Offerings," and "Seeing Off the Deity." Premiered in Japan, the piece gradually gained international acclaim for its profound cultural synthesis and spiritual depth.

3.2 Analysis of Piano Works

Between 1934 and 1953, Chiang Wen-yeh composed a substantial body of music. According to the 2016 edition of *The Complete Works of Chiang Wen-yeh* published by the Central Conservatory of Music, over twenty of his works survive to this day—excluding those that have been lost—with an average of one high-quality composition produced per year, attesting to his remarkable productivity. Among these works, many exhibit distinctive Chinese national characteristics.

The piano suite *Sixteen Bagatelles*, composed in

1936, marks a watershed in Chiang's engagement with folk music. Prior to this work, his compositions still retained elements of Japanese musical culture. However, beginning with *Sixteen Bagatelles*, Chiang began incorporating substantial Chinese national elements, initiating his mature period of folk-inspired creation.

Influenced by Béla Bartók of Hungary, Chiang experimented extensively with modern compositional techniques in his piano suite *Five Sketches*, which stands as a significant achievement of his exploratory efforts. This section focuses on two pieces from the suite—*One-Legged Scarecrow in the Rice Field* and *The Field Behind the House*—analyzing their formal structure and melodic organization.

One-Legged Scarecrow in the Rice Field composed in February 1935, is the first of the *Five Sketches*. Its form is relatively free and can be divided into four sections based on the development of musical ideas [7].

The first section (19 measures) is a parallel binary form comprising two contrasting phrases, derived from three thematic materials (a, b, and c). Material A employs the E *Miyako-bushi* mode with a minor quality. In the first



Music Example 3

phrase, the tonic E is sustained as a suspension through measure 4, followed by a second phrase that ends openly on the dominant B. The pitch material is simple and austere, using only tonic and dominant, while the rhythmic texture—with left-hand block chords and right-hand ascending arpeggios—vividly depicts a solitary scarecrow standing guard over the vast fields (see Music Example 3).

Material B modulates to the dominant key of B *Miyako-bushi* mode, with rhythm serving as the primary expressive element. Material C continues the rhythmic emphasis of Material B but contrasts with Material A through accelerated tempo and gradually increasing dynamics.

The second section is a varied and compressed repetition of the first. Modally, it shifts toward traditional Chinese pentatonicism and Western church modes, transitioning first to F *Zhi* mode (F pentatonic) and then to B Dorian mode [8].

The third section represents the climactic point of the piece, characterized by intense conflict and developmental fragmentation. Thematic elements from Material A are combined with rhythmic patterns from Material C, and further developed through modulation and sequence, building progressively toward the structural climax.

The fourth section recapitulates the theme from the first section and concludes with a final arpeggiated passage in the coda.

The Field Behind the House, the second piece in the piano suite *Five Sketches*, is written entirely using pentatonic modes, giving it a distinctly Chinese character. The work follows a clear formal structure, adopting a traditional Western binary form with two independent and parallel sections.

Section A comprises 33 measures and consists of four phrases. Phrase A establishes a rhythmic foundation built on an eighth-note anacrusis followed by a half note, set in the E *Jiao* mode (E pentatonic; see Music Example 4). Phrase B unfolds in the A *Yu* mode (A pentatonic). To enhance tonal color, Chiang introduces the non-diatonic

pitches A \flat and B \flat in the bass line. Phrase C employs a sixteenth-note rhythmic pattern and is set in the D *Shang* mode (D pentatonic), contributing to a cheerful and lively character. Phrase D returns to a more straightforward texture, with both hands moving in homorhythmic block chords, conveying a plain and unadorned musical quality.

Section B, also 33 measures long, contains four phrases. The first two phrases are variationally related and transition to A natural minor. The upper voice of the final two phrases shifts to E \flat Dorian mode, creating a deliberate tonal juxtaposition with the natural minor harmony in the lower parts. The two sections contrast markedly in mode, character, and expression: Section A is bright and energetic, while Section B is contemplative and subdued.



Music Example 4

3.3 Analysis of Vocal Music Works

Chiang Wen-yeh's musical achievements extend well beyond instrumental composition into the realm of vocal music, where he demonstrated exceptional mastery. Not only did he set numerous classical Chinese poems to music, but between 1936 and 1946 alone, he composed 15 solo song cycles and 11 choral works, followed by a considerable number of vocal compositions in later years. In these works, the piano accompaniment is an indispensable element, often serving as a finishing touch that elevates the entire piece. Melody, poetry, vocal line, and piano are seamlessly integrated into a unified artistic expression. Although many of Chiang's works have been lost, those that survive attest to his remarkable creativity and unceasing courage in artistic exploration.

In 1938, Chiang compiled the *Anthology of Chinese Folk Songs* and composed several folk-inspired works such as "Beautiful Sun" and "Good Lad." He also wrote songs based on classical five- and seven-character poetry.

Motivated by nostalgia, he composed “Song of the Taiwanese Mountain Tribe,” reflecting his profound affinity for Chinese traditional culture. After the founding of the People’s Republic of China, Chiang produced the *Lin Geng Lyric Songs* in 1956—a work emblematic of his ideological transformation.

Completed in the early years of the PRC, this song cycle consists of ten pieces set to modernist poetry by Lin Geng, with music by Chiang Wen-yeh. This study focuses on two songs from the collection: “Spring Field” and “A Lone Cloud Is Like a Wild Flower on Earth,” analyzing their musical form and modal-tonal structure [9].

“Spring Field” is the second song in the cycle, with lyrics selected from Lin Geng’s 1934 poem “Spring Field and the Window.” The lyrics read approximately:

The blue water of spring flows down the mountain;
Green grass grows on both banks of the river.
No one remembers, no one knows—
Where the winter wind has gone.
Like the stillness around noon,
Soft as the wind in March,
Following unnamed butterflies,
Into the spring fields.

Chiang structured the song in ternary form (ABA') with an introduction and coda. The three-bar introduction begins with flowing thirty-second-note figures in the piano’s upper register, depicting a spring breeze sweeping across the land. The 15-measure A section, based on a Chinese pentatonic mode, continues the elaborate piano accompaniment, evoking vivid images of spring. The 10-measure B section introduces contrast through shifting meters, chordal textures, and frequent modulations. The 20-measure A' section expands the original theme and, after a series of modulations, concludes in B-flat *Gong* mode.

Lin Geng’s poetry, while rooted in classical tradition, embodies a modern sensibility. Chiang’s choice of this poem reflects the historical context of the early PRC—a nation emerging from hardship into renewal, much like winter turning to spring. Through this work, Chiang expressed both personal and collective hope for the future.

“A Lone Cloud Is Like a Wild Flower on Earth” is selected from Lin Geng’s *Beiping Love Songs* and is set in two-part form (AB). Chiang used a line from the poem as the title. The lyrics are:

Spring, so quiet; the wind rests on the grassy shore.
By the bridge, one feels the river rising.
A lone cloud is like a wild flower on earth—
It falls on the wanderer’s blue collar.

Section A comprises 19 measures divided into two contrasting phrases. Section B consists of 29 measures, also in two phrases, and incorporates a Peking opera-style vocal technique of elongating syllables, enhancing the expressive spontaneity and emotional depth. The song is set in E-flat *Gong* mode with a primary meter of 2/4. The form is straightforward, and the melody is highly lyrical.

Chiang made deliberate revisions to the original poem. In the third line, he replaced the word “如” (*rú*, “like”) with “像” (*xiàng*, also “like”) to avoid phonetic monotony, as both “孤云” (*gū yún*) and “如” (*rú*) contain the vowel “u.” In the fourth line, he changed “便落” to “落在” (“falls on”), intensifying the tone of certainty and deepening the sense of solitude. These adjustments illustrate Chiang’s acute sensitivity to linguistic nuance and musical prosody.

IV. A CRITICAL REVIEW OF CHIANG WEN-YEH’S ARTISTIC LIFE

Chiang Wen-yeh was a renowned Chinese music educator and composer, a pioneer in the creation of national music, and a key figure in the development of modern piano music. He made outstanding contributions to the advancement of piano music and left a precious musical legacy to the world.

In 1990, the first symposium after Chiang’s death was held in Hong Kong, introducing him and his works to Chinese music communities across the mainland, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and abroad. In 1992, the Chiang Wen-yeh Memorial Week in Taiwan reignited interest in his work among music circles and the general public. In 1995, the Central Conservatory of Music hosted an academic conference on Chiang Wen-yeh—the first large-scale comprehensive seminar on his musical output and scholarly achievements in mainland China. This conference provided an opportunity to reassess Chiang’s musical accomplishments and secure his artistic recognition. In 2010, an academic conference was held in Xiamen, Fujian, to commemorate the centenary of his birth, serving as a significant event for deeply remembering Chiang Wen-yeh in domestic academia.

Although Chiang was born during the Japanese colonial period and deeply influenced by Japanese education, he was also fervently dedicated to studying traditional Chinese music theory and compositional techniques, laying a solid foundation for modern Chinese music creation. To truly evaluate his legacy, we must not only acknowledge his achievements but also examine his creative thinking to inspire music that resonates with the

people. Below are several key evaluations and reflections on his musical contributions:

First, Mr. Chiang Wen-yeh's contribution to musical creation. Chiang was a prolific composer in Chinese music history, renowned for the sheer volume and diversity of genres in which he worked. Throughout his life, he created over 20 piano works (including individual pieces and suites), not including those that have been lost.

Second, Mr. Chiang Wen-yeh was a pioneer in nationalizing Chinese piano music. Despite the challenging social environment of his time, Chiang remained active on the creative front and produced many outstanding works. These not greatly advanced the development of Chinese music but also embodied a rare personal integrity that continues to inspire later generations. With youth and dedication, he forged a path in music development. Early in his career, he not only recognized the need to "reflect national characteristics in composition" but also created numerous works that embodied these characteristics. This was an invaluable contribution to the yet-to-be-established process of nationalizing modern Chinese music.

The journey of modern Chinese music has been arduous and prolonged, filled with numerous challenges before finally entering an era of flourishing diversity. However, a country with five thousand years of history, vast territory of 9.6 million square kilometers, and rich multicultural traditions of 56 ethnic groups has faced unexpectedly difficult development. Taking piano composition as an example, although certain achievements have been made through generations of efforts, they still pale in comparison to the output of European composers. Perhaps due to insufficient understanding of Chiang Wen-yeh, his contributions and status remain undervalued, compounded by his complex life experiences and political-historical factors. Therefore, researching his historical status and contributions is essential both for introducing this outstanding composer to the world and for advancing Chinese music.

Chiang's complex and tumultuous life experiences not only led to a diverse body of musical works but also left behind extensive written materials and publications. His resilient character and distinct artistic individuality provided invaluable professional insights and exerted a significant influence on later generations.

In expressing "Chinese style," composers primarily innovated in two aspects: thematic material and musical language. As early as 1936, when piano music in China was still in its infancy, Chiang stated, "I had already begun striving to shed Western European influences." He believed that "music should not merely be about ideology,

appearance, or surface-level expression; there must be more to music itself." This idea took root and drove his creative practice, as evidenced by the diverse works he produced in the 1930s—an unprecedented achievement in the history of Chinese piano music [10].

Earlier, his works were often debated for their "national style." Although he employed techniques of program music and incorporated folk music elements from Taiwan and mainland China, he did not directly quote existing folk songs nor merely convey superficial meanings of titles. Instead, he explored and expressed the inner essence of his subjects.

Eighty years ago, Chiang proposed: "Without using perceptible tonal elements, one can delve into the depths of Chinese cultural tradition, draw inspiration from music, literature, and other arts, and create piano works that embody an inner connection to Chinese cultural tradition or a profound Chinese cultural spirit." Later, the Chinese piano music community recognized and validated his perspective, indicating that his ideas influenced others to some extent.

Today, many modern Chinese composers have broken away from the traditional "folk song plus harmony" approach. Their styles have gradually become richer, more unique, and diverse, emphasizing bold explorations of new techniques. This shift has been influenced to some extent by Chiang Wen-yeh's creative concepts and thinking. For example, Luo Zhongrong, one of Chiang's students and a renowned Chinese composer, employed a "pentatonic twelve-tone series" in his *Three Piano Pieces*, focusing on rhythmic combinations and highlighting sonic color—techniques frequently used by Chiang. Luo's development of these methods fully illustrates the profound influence of his teacher, Chiang Wen-yeh.

In summary, Chiang Wen-yeh was a composer of important status and influence in modern China. Unlike others, he eventually held mainland Chinese citizenship and nurtured many outstanding composers and musicians. Despite facing unfair treatment, his transformation from a colonized Taiwanese to a progressive musician was a conscious choice in his life.

V. CONCLUSION

This paper offers an in-depth exploration of the compositional style and musical works of Taiwanese composer Chiang Wen-yeh. It not only illuminates Chiang's unique understanding of music and his innovative approaches, but also highlights his contributions and enduring influence on Taiwan's musical

culture. Through detailed analysis of his works, two defining characteristics of Chiang's style are identified: "diverse modern expressions of traditional music" and "profound emotional depth infused with national sentiment." His versatile creativity and patriotic expression distinguish his popular songwriting, while his meticulous attention to instrumentation and vocal arrangement further enriches the texture and diversity of his sound.

Similarly, the study of Tyzen Hsiao's musical output allows for a deeper understanding of his artistic evolution and his distinctive integration of diverse cultural elements. His music not only conveys personal emotion and aesthetic ideals but also reflects and extends Taiwan's musical traditions within a contemporary context.

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Digital Reading and Comprehension Experiences: A Focus on New Narratives and User Experience

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Abstract— This study investigates the impact of digital formats on reader comprehension within modern literature, specifically focusing on the influence of multimedia components and non-linear narrative structures. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the research analyzes a corpus of digital texts, including interactive fiction and enhanced e-books, to examine how hypertextual linkages, embedded media, and interactive elements affect reader interpretation. Cognitive functions, such as critical thinking, information processing, and attention span, are explored in relation to reader agency in navigating non-linear narratives and constructing meaning. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants to explore their subjective experiences and comprehension processes. Thematic analysis of the interview transcripts, alongside a quantitative analysis of reader interaction data from the digital texts, provides a comprehensive understanding of the cognitive and experiential dimensions of digital reading. This research aims to delineate the potential advantages and challenges of digital reading, offering evidence-based recommendations for educators and designers to optimize the creation and utilization of digital texts for effective instruction.

Keywords— Digital Reading, Reader Experience, User Interface Design, Interactive Elements, Comprehension, Learning, Thematic Analysis, Mixed-Methods, Cognitive Processing

Introduction

The digital format has significantly transformed the way readers engage with contemporary texts. By offering interactive and dynamic experiences, digital platforms challenge traditional linear narratives (Huei-Chun, 2022) and introduce non-linear storytelling techniques. Hypertextual links, embedded videos, and other multimedia elements invite readers to explore texts in multiple directions, creating a more personalized and immersive reading experience. However, this shift also presents challenges to comprehension. While digital formats can enhance understanding by providing context and visual aids, they can also overwhelm readers with information overload. The rapid pace of digital culture can hinder deep reading and critical thinking, as readers may be tempted to skim through content rather than engage with it thoughtfully. Moreover, the fragmented nature of digital texts (Gubbins, 2012) can make it difficult to follow complex storylines and develop a coherent understanding of the narrative.

Strong reading comprehension skills are essential for understanding and appreciating literature. By developing these skills, readers can better grasp complex literary devices, analyze themes, and interpret the author's intent. Metacognitive reading strategies, such as active reading, questioning, and summarizing, can significantly enhance comprehension by making the reading process more intentional and engaging. These strategies empower readers to get deeper into texts, identify key ideas, and connect them to personal experiences and broader contexts. Ultimately, strong reading comprehension skills are the foundation for a rich and rewarding literary experience (Reza Ahmadi et al., 2013). However, there are complex challenges confronted in modern storytelling, with non-linear plot constructions, digital formats, and complex social issues, demanding refined reader skills in interpretation and understanding.

Digital tools facilitate a more collaborative and fragmented approach to writing, where multiple voices and perspectives can contribute to a single text. This shift is evident in the

rise of hypertextual and networked literature, which emphasizes interconnectivity and reader participation, ultimately blurring the lines between author and reader.(Antonielli, 2023)

The advent of digital technology has ushered in a new era of storytelling, where interactive digital narratives offer immersive experiences that blur the lines between creator and consumer. This emerging narrative style leverages the power of new media to engage audiences in unprecedented ways.(Sanchez-Lopez et al., 2020) Sociotechnical imaginaries, shaped by influential stakeholders, envision future social and technological landscapes. To foster more democratic and sustainable futures, we need to broaden the scope of innovation narratives. However, replacing dominant policy narratives isn't merely a matter of presenting scientific truths; it requires a deeper understanding of the complex interplay between knowledge, belief, and agency within research and innovation systems. (Strand et al., 2018)

Traditional literary studies often prioritize critic-centered interpretations, neglecting the active role of the reader. This approach can hinder student learning by discouraging active engagement with texts and focusing solely on surface-level information. Schema theory (Swaffar, 1986) suggests that efficient readers actively construct meaning by organizing textual information. Encouraging students to read for facts rather than actively analyzing and interpreting the text can limit their comprehension and retention. Hence Multimodal narratives, digital storytelling, and the integration of visual and interactive elements can significantly enhance readers' comprehension skills by fostering a more dynamic and engaging reading experience.

Reader-response theory emphasizes the active role of the reader in constructing meaning, fostering a dynamic interaction between the reader and the text. By engaging in discussions and sharing interpretations, learners can deepen their understanding, develop critical thinking skills, and build a stronger connection with the text. This theory promotes active and meaningful reading, ultimately enhancing comprehension and fostering a more holistic reading experience.(Mart, 2019)

Research comparing comprehension in digital versus print formats reveals a recurring trend: readers often experience reduced comprehension when reading on digital devices compared to paper, especially with complex or long texts. Studies suggest that the tactile and focused nature of paper encourages better comprehension retention (Lebedeva et al., 2020). A study examined the knowledge gap hypothesis by comparing the comprehension of news information between individuals with different education levels across newspaper and online formats. The findings revealed that

while highly educated individuals could access information equally well from both sources, those with lower education levels benefited more from traditional newspaper formats (Yang & Grabe, 2011).

Hence, we can find Digital formats though offers personalized reading experiences with hyperlinks and multimedia, the information overload and rapid consumption can hinder deep reading and critical thinking.

Analysis of Contemporary Digital Stories and their Interactive Elements

Digital Text 1 – “Snow Fall: The Avalanche at Tunnel Creek” (The New York Times)

The interactive elements included to enhancing the reading experience are: **parallax scrolling with environmental animations**, a technique that creates a sense of depth and immersion by layering multiple visual elements that move at different speeds as the reader scrolls. For instance, the background might slowly shift while foreground objects move more rapidly, simulating a three-dimensional effect. **Environmental animations**, such as falling snow or swaying trees, further enhance the immersive experience, drawing the reader into the narrative. The integration of videos, photos, and audio clips enriches the storytelling by providing multiple sensory inputs. Videos can capture the dramatic moments of the avalanche, while photos offer detailed visual information about the aftermath. **Audio recordings**, such as interviews with survivors or experts, add a personal touch and bring the story to life. **Interactive maps** allow readers to visualize the path of the avalanche and understand the scale of the disaster. By zooming in and out, exploring different perspectives, and following the progression of the avalanche, readers can gain a deeper understanding of the event. **Real-time weather animations**, such as wind gusts and snowfall, create a dynamic and realistic representation of the conditions leading up to the avalanche. These animations can help readers visualize the severity of the weather and the challenges faced by those involved.

Let us see the impact on comprehension these can possibly have, by visually representing the terrain, readers can better understand the physical context of the story. This spatial understanding aids in comprehending the scale of the event and the challenges faced by the characters. The integration of snow animations and wind sounds creates a multisensory experience, drawing the reader deeper into the narrative. These elements can evoke emotional responses and enhance the reader's empathy for the characters. The smooth transition between text, images, videos, and audio ensures a cohesive and engaging reading experience. By avoiding abrupt shifts in format, the narrative flow remains uninterrupted, allowing readers to focus on the story. The

gradual unveiling of information prevents cognitive overload and maintains reader interest. By pacing the delivery of content, the reader can process the information effectively and build a clear understanding of the events.

However, there do exist possible potential barriers like while multimedia can enhance comprehension, excessive use can distract from the core narrative. Overwhelming the reader with too many visual and auditory elements can hinder their ability to focus on the text. Access to the interactive experience may be limited by factors such as device compatibility, internet connectivity, and browser capabilities. This can exclude certain readers from fully engaging with the story. Continuous scrolling can disrupt the reading rhythm and make it difficult to return to specific sections of the text. This can be particularly problematic for readers who prefer a more linear reading experience.

Digital Text 2 – “Firestorm” (The Guardian)

Interactive elements employed here are **full-screen video backgrounds**, these immersive visuals transport the reader to the heart of the Australian bushfire, creating a powerful emotional connection to the story. However, it's essential to balance the visual impact with text readability, ensuring that the text is easily discernible against the background. Then **chapter-based navigation** which is a structured approach that allows readers to explore the story at their own pace. By breaking down the narrative into manageable chunks, readers can easily navigate through the content and focus on specific areas of interest. Another element is **interactive photo galleries**; these galleries offer a deeper dive into the visual aspects of the story. By allowing readers to zoom in on images and view them in full-screen mode, the details of the bushfires can be examined closely. And finally, **audio narratives with transcripts**, these audio narratives provide an alternative way to engage with the story. Transcripts offer additional support for readers who prefer a visual or textual format.

Impact on comprehension of these elements would be visual immersion where the full-screen video backgrounds create a powerful immersive experience that can enhance emotional engagement and comprehension. multiple entry points offering various formats (text, video, audio) that caters to different learning styles, ensuring that all readers can find a way to connect with the story. Clear chapter structure which provides a clear organizational framework, making it easier for readers to follow the narrative and retain information. parallel narrative streams allowing readers to explore different aspects of the story simultaneously, the interactive elements can encourage deeper understanding and critical thinking.

Potential barriers that can hinder the comprehending skills of the reader would be complex navigation, a cluttered or

confusing navigation interface can hinder the reader's experience. A clear and intuitive design is crucial to avoid overwhelming users. Similarly, video backgrounds though are visually striking, can compete with the text and make it difficult to read. It's important to balance the visual impact with text readability. Heavy use of multimedia elements can strain device resources and slow down the loading time, potentially frustrating users. Optimizing the design for different devices and internet speeds can help mitigate this issue.

Digital Text 3 – “Welcome to Pine Point” (National Film Board of Canada)

The unique and interesting interactive elements incorporated in this digital text are **scrapbook-style interface**, this nostalgic design evokes a sense of personal history, inviting the reader to delve into the past. The scrapbook metaphor provides a familiar and intuitive framework for exploring the narrative. **User-controlled progression** allowing users to navigate the story at their own pace, this approach caters to individual learning styles and preferences. Readers can revisit specific sections, skip ahead, or take detours, fostering a more personalized experience. **Mixed media presentation** where the combination of text, images, audio, and video offers a multisensory experience that can enhance comprehension and memory retention. By engaging multiple senses, the reader can develop a deeper understanding of the story. **Interactive artifacts and memorabilia**, incorporating interactive elements like letters, diaries, and photographs can bring the past to life. By clicking on these artifacts, readers can uncover hidden details, listen to audio recordings, or view additional images, enriching the narrative.

The enhancing factors that created the desired impact on comprehension skills of the readers are emotional connection, the personal nature of the scrapbook format can evoke strong emotional responses, making the story more relatable and memorable. Active participation by navigating through the story makes the readers become more engaged and invested in the narrative. This active involvement can enhance comprehension and retention. Multiple narrative layers that allows multiple layers of information, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the historical context. The tactile interface metaphor, the familiar scrapbook interface can possibly make the navigation experience more intuitive and user-friendly.

Nonlinear Structure though offers flexibility, it may confuse readers who prefer a more traditional, linear narrative. Similarly, fragmented narrative focus while engaging, can potentially disrupt the flow of the narrative. It's essential to balance the interactive elements with the core story. The

learning curve, it may require some initial learning time on the side of the reader to get the whole of the text. Clear instructions and a user-friendly design can help mitigate this issue. These are potential barriers that could hinder the comprehending skill of the reader.

From the above analysis we can see in interactive storytelling, cognitive load poses a significant challenge, as multiple elements compete for the reader's attention. Complex navigation demands cognitive effort, often disrupting narrative flow. Technical issues—such as slow loading and unresponsive interfaces—further hinder the experience, while access barriers (device requirements, bandwidth needs, technical literacy) can exclude some readers, particularly those with disabilities or limited access. Maintaining narrative coherence is crucial; too much freedom leads to confusion, while excessive constraint stifles creativity. Optimizing interactive elements for comprehension requires a multi-faceted approach. Progressive disclosure, where information is revealed gradually, helps prevent overload and lets readers control their learning pace (García, 2023). Multimodal support—using visuals, audio, and interactive features—enhances understanding by appealing to diverse learning styles (Yohannes et al., 2023). Visual aids like diagrams and infographics clarify complex ideas, while audio elements add depth. Ensuring alignment between content and interactive elements reinforces learning objectives effectively.

Qualitative Interview with Digital Readers

Methodology

50 digital readers were recruited to participate in this study. The participants were selected based on their regular consumption of digital content, including e-books, online articles, and digital magazines. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with each participant. The interviews were approximately 30 minutes in length and were conducted face to face.

Table 1: Profile of the Digital Readers

Number of Digital Readers	50 (22 Male and 28 Female)
Age	Range 18 - 45
Basic Educational Qualification	UG - PhD

The interview consisted of six open-ended questions designed to elicit information about the participants' experiences with digital reading. The questions were as follows:

- i) How do you feel about reading digitally compared to traditional print formats? What strategies do you use to stay engaged and focused while reading digitally?
- ii) Do you find it easier or harder to comprehend information when reading digitally? What factors influence your understanding of digital texts?
- iii) How do you process information when reading digitally? Do you use any specific techniques or strategies?
- iv) Do you believe that digital reading promotes critical thinking and analysis? How do you evaluate the credibility and reliability of information found online?
- v) How has digital reading impacted your overall learning experience? What are the advantages and disadvantages of digital reading for learning?
- vi) What are your preferred formats for digital reading (e.g., e-books, online articles, digital magazines)? How often do you read digitally?

Data Analysis

The interviews were transcribed verbatim and analyzed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis involved identifying, analyzing, and interpreting patterns within the data. The analysis focused on the following themes:

- a) Engagement and Motivation: Factors influencing reader engagement and motivation.
- b) Comprehension and Understanding: Strategies used for comprehension and understanding.
- c) Information Processing: Cognitive processes involved in digital reading.
- d) Critical Thinking and Analysis: Evaluation of information and development of critical thinking skills.
- e) Learning Experience: Impact of digital reading on learning and knowledge acquisition.
- f) Reading Habits and Preferences: Preferred formats, frequency of reading, and reading behaviors.

Observations

A. Enhanced Engagement and Motivation

Many respondents expressed that digital reading is more engaging due to interactive elements, multimedia content, and the ability to customize the reading experience is promising (e.g., font size, theme). Some highlighted the convenience of digital reading, especially for those with visual impairments or physical limitations. The ability to adjust font size, brightness, and text-to-speech features makes reading more accessible is what they said. Digital platforms often facilitate social interaction and community building around shared reading interests. This actually enhanced engagement and motivation. Also many respondents cited distractions as a major challenge to focus and engagement while reading digitally. Notifications,

social media, and other online temptations can disrupt the reading flow. A common concern was the absence of a physical book, which can be a tangible and nostalgic object that fosters a deeper connection to the text.

Suggestions

Using dedicated reading apps and software can minimize distractions and optimize the reading experience. Mindful Reading Techniques like active reading, annotation, and summarizing can improve focus and comprehension. Also creating a Dedicated Reading Space, a specific area for digital reading can help reduce distractions and create a conducive environment. Finally setting specific reading times and taking regular breaks can help maintain focus and prevent fatigue.

B. Comprehension and Understanding

Many readers reported using skimming and scanning techniques to quickly identify key points and relevant information. This can be particularly useful for long articles or complex texts. Highlighting and Note-Taking was also mentioned by few readers as it allowed the users to highlight text, add notes, and bookmark important passages. These features enhanced comprehension and retention. Some readers relied on built-in tools like dictionaries, thesaurus, and translation features to clarify unfamiliar words and concepts. Strategies like questioning, summarizing, and visualizing was also said to be applied to digital texts by the respondents to deepen understanding. However, they also stated that Pop-up ads, auto-playing videos, and other distracting elements hindered comprehension. Also, prolonged screen time led to eye strain and reduced cognitive capacity, affecting comprehension. Unlike physical books, digital texts lacked physical cues like page numbers and chapter breaks, which made it difficult to track progress and orient oneself within the text was the stand of many respondents.

Suggestions

Mindful Reading that is focusing on the content and minimizing distractions can improve comprehension. Using Text-to-Speech Features which means listening to the text can be helpful for some readers, especially those with visual impairments or learning disabilities. Overall creating a Conducive Reading Environment - a quiet, well-lit space can enhance focus and comprehension. Finally, shorter, frequent reading sessions can be more effective than long, uninterrupted periods.

C. Information Processing and Critical Thinking

Many readers reported using these techniques to quickly identify key points and relevant information. This is particularly useful for long articles or complex texts. Techniques like questioning, summarizing, and visualizing

helped readers engage with the text more deeply. Some readers engaged in multitasking while reading digitally, such as listening to music or watching videos. Regarding the evaluation of information and the development of critical thinking skills, respondents are aware of the importance of evaluating the credibility and reliability of online sources. They used techniques like checking the author's credentials, verifying information with other sources, and considering the overall tone and purpose of the text. Some readers actively sought out additional information to verify claims made in digital texts. Many respondents believed that digital reading fosters critical thinking skills.

Suggestions

Utilizing digital tools like annotation tools, mind mapping software, and research databases to support information processing and critical thinking can be the best to improve critical thinking. These tools can help readers organize information, identify patterns, and generate new ideas.

D. Learning Experience and Reading Preferences

Many reported that digital reading has positively impacted their learning experiences. The ability to access a vast amount of information, customize the reading experience, and engage with multimedia content enhanced understanding and retention. Digital reading has fostered a lifelong learning mindset by providing easy access to a wide range of topics and subjects. Some argued that digital reading has improved writing skills as the readers are exposed to diverse writing styles and formats. Regarding reading habits and preferences, respondents shared that they prefer e-books, online articles, or digital magazines, depending on the content and their personal preferences. The frequency of digital reading varied widely among individuals. Some read daily, while others read occasionally. Readers engaged in different reading behaviors, such as skimming, scanning, or deep reading, depending on the purpose of their reading. Some readers enjoyed discussing books and articles with others online, either through social media or dedicated reading forums.

Suggestions

Developing adaptive digital reading platforms that can tailor content and difficulty levels to individual learners' needs and preferences can be done. By providing personalized recommendations and challenges, these platforms can motivate readers and optimize their learning experience.

CONCLUSION

The digital age has transformed reading. While digital texts offer accessibility and engagement, challenges like

distractions and information overload persist. Striking a balance between digital and traditional reading is key. To enhance digital reading, prioritize content clarity over technical novelty, integrate interactive elements thoughtfully, and offer diverse navigation options. User-friendly interfaces with clear navigation cues, optional interactivity, and progressive enhancements are crucial. Well-structured content with clear hierarchies, balanced pacing, and multiple entry points can significantly improve comprehension. By combining these design principles and user experience considerations, we can harness the power of digital technology to foster a more engaging and effective reading experience.

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From Welcome to Weariness: Understanding Integration Fatigue in Contemporary Europe: A Conceptual Exploration of Emotional, Institutional, and Societal Exhaustion (with a Focus on Western and Northern European Societies, 2019–2025)

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Abstract— This conceptual paper examines the emerging phenomenon of integration fatigue in contemporary Europe, with a focus on Western and Northern societies between 2019 and 2025. Once characterised by solidarity and empathy during the 2015 refugee influx (Triandafyllidou, 2018), Europe now faces emotional, institutional, and societal exhaustion. Drawing on theoretical perspectives from migration, psychology, and sociology (Betts, 2021; Miller and Goodman, 2022), the study proposes a three-dimensional framework of integration fatigue: emotional fatigue (the decline of public empathy and compassion) (Bauman, 2019), institutional fatigue (policy overload and bureaucratic stagnation) (Scholten and Penninx, 2020), and societal fatigue (polarisation and the erosion of collective trust) (Eberl et al., 2021). The paper argues that the COVID-19 pandemic intensified pre-existing strains (Dahlberg et al., 2022), transforming integration from a hopeful moral project into a contested, draining process. Rather than viewing fatigue merely as resistance, this article interprets it as a symptom of overextended emotional and institutional capacities (Kleist, 2023). It concludes by suggesting that “sustainable integration energy” requires renewed emotional literacy, resilient governance, and inclusive communication strategies (Isin and Nyers, 2020; Favell, 2023). By reframing fatigue as both a challenge and a diagnostic tool, this study contributes to understanding Europe’s shifting integration landscape and offers new directions for theory and policy.

Keywords— *Integration fatigue; Emotional exhaustion; Institutional resilience; Migration policy; Europe 2019–2025.*

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 From Solidarity to Fatigue: Shifting European Attitudes

In the mid-2010s, Europe was often celebrated for its *welcome culture*, a collective expression of humanitarian solidarity towards refugees and migrants (Triandafyllidou, 2018; Goodman, 2020). Germany’s “Wir schaffen das” and Sweden’s open-door stance symbolised a continent that prioritised empathy and moral responsibility (Krzyżanowski, 2020). However, by the late 2010s and especially after 2019, these narratives began to fade (Börzel and Risse, 2021).

The combined pressures of economic uncertainty, rising populism, and the COVID-19 pandemic have contributed to what scholars describe as integration fatigue, a sense of emotional, institutional, and societal weariness towards migration and diversity management (Kleist, 2023; Betts, 2021). This shift does not simply reflect hostility or xenophobia; rather, it reveals a deeper exhaustion across emotional and structural levels (Eberl et al., 2021). Governments face administrative overload (Scholten and Penninx, 2020), welfare systems struggle with stretched resources (Favell, 2023), and communities experience a decline in compassion (Bauman, 2019).

As public empathy weakens, integration risks becoming a bureaucratic duty rather than a social commitment (Miller

and Goodman, 2022). Understanding this transition from solidarity to fatigue is crucial for reimagining integration not as a burden but as a sustainable process rooted in emotional literacy and collective resilience (Isin and Nyers, 2020).

1.2 Why Post-2019 Matters: The Pandemic and Policy Exhaustion

The period following 2019 marked a turning point in Europe's integration landscape. The COVID-19 pandemic did not create integration fatigue, but it profoundly magnified existing strains across emotional, institutional, and social domains (Kleist, 2023; Dahlberg et al., 2022). Lockdowns, restricted mobility, and economic insecurity reshaped the contours of belonging and intensified divisions between citizens and migrants (Favell, 2023). Migrant populations were disproportionately affected by health risks and job precarity, while host societies experienced growing anxiety about resource distribution and welfare sustainability (Betts, 2021).

Public narratives that once centred on solidarity and humanitarian values shifted towards self-protection, national resilience, and border control (Börzel and Risse, 2021; Triandafyllidou, 2022). This shift gradually eroded the moral energy that had sustained earlier efforts at integration. Institutions that were already struggling with bureaucratic complexity and inconsistent policy coordination began to display clear signs of policy fatigue, an administrative weariness caused by repeated policy reforms and contradictory objectives (Scholten and Penninx, 2020; Goodman, 2020).

Moreover, the pandemic revealed a form of *emotional bureaucracy* (Miller and Goodman, 2022), in which frontline workers, educators, and social service providers became emotionally drained while attempting to maintain inclusion under crisis conditions. The post-pandemic years have thus exposed the limits of Europe's integration machinery: a structure overextended by overlapping crises, from public health emergencies to renewed migration inflows and geopolitical instability (Eberl et al., 2021; Isin and Nyers, 2020).

Understanding the post-2019 period as both a rupture and a mirror allows scholars to trace how compassion, governance, and societal trust have evolved under continuous strain. It is within this context that *integration fatigue* emerges not merely as political disinterest but as a deeper psychosocial phenomenon embedded in the European experience of crisis and recovery (Bauman, 2019; Kleist, 2023).

1.3 Research Aim and Conceptual Relevance

The primary aim of this conceptual paper is to develop a multidimensional understanding of *integration fatigue* in

contemporary Europe by linking emotional, institutional, and societal forms of exhaustion within a shared analytical framework. While previous studies have explored specific aspects of migration governance, such as policy failure, populist backlash, or declining solidarity (Favell, 2023; Börzel and Risse, 2021), few have examined how these elements converge to produce a pervasive sense of weariness across Europe's integration systems (Kleist, 2023).

This article argues that *integration fatigue* should not be dismissed as a temporary reaction to crisis but recognised as a structural condition emerging from cumulative emotional and administrative overload (Scholten and Penninx, 2020; Dahlberg et al., 2022). By synthesising perspectives from migration studies, sociology of emotion, and policy theory, the paper seeks to conceptualise fatigue as both an outcome and a diagnostic indicator of Europe's shifting moral and institutional capacities (Bauman, 2019; Miller and Goodman, 2022).

Conceptually, the study contributes to a growing body of literature that views integration not merely as an institutional mechanism but as a *moral economy of empathy* (Isin and Nyers, 2020; Triandafyllidou, 2022). Understanding fatigue through this lens enables a re-evaluation of how emotions, governance, and social trust interact under sustained pressure. The analysis is thus situated within the post-2019 European context (2019–2025), where successive crises, pandemics, economic disruptions, and geopolitical instabilities have tested the endurance of integration systems (Eberl et al., 2021).

Ultimately, the paper's relevance lies in offering a *conceptual bridge* between the emotional and institutional dimensions of integration. By doing so, it provides a foundation for future empirical research and policy dialogue on how Europe might renew its commitment to inclusion without succumbing to exhaustion (Betts, 2021; Goodman, 2020).

II. CONCEPTUALISING INTEGRATION FATIGUE

The previous sections outlined how integration fatigue has been defined and situated within emotional, institutional, and societal dimensions. These perspectives suggest that fatigue should not be viewed as a single or isolated condition, but rather as a dynamic process that circulates between feelings, structures, and collective attitudes (Hochschild, 2019; Scholten and Penninx, 2020; Eberl et al., 2021; Kleist, 2023). This conceptual foundation enables the view that integration fatigue is a multi-layered phenomenon shaped by the interplay of emotional, bureaucratic, and social forces.

2.1 Defining Integration Fatigue

The concept of *integration fatigue* refers to a growing sense of exhaustion, both emotional and institutional, experienced by both host communities and policy systems in managing diversity and migration (Kleist, 2023; Favell, 2023). While not yet a fully theorised construct, it draws on related concepts such as *compassion fatigue* (Figley, 2018), *policy fatigue* (Scholten and Penninx, 2020), and *empathy decline* (Bauman, 2019). Integration fatigue thus captures the emotional desensitisation, bureaucratic stagnation, and social weariness that emerge when the moral and administrative energies sustaining integration become depleted.

This fatigue does not imply rejection of migrants per se but highlights a deeper ambivalence within European societies that oscillates between humanitarian ideals and policy pragmatism (Triandafyllidou, 2022; Börzel and Risse, 2021). As integration becomes institutionalised, its affective power weakens, empathy turns procedural, and inclusion becomes transactional rather than relational (Goodman, 2020). The term, therefore, reflects a condition of *emotional overextension*: societies that have cared too intensely, too long, and too unevenly, leading to burnout among both institutions and individuals (Miller and Goodman, 2022).

Conceptually, *integration fatigue* offers a diagnostic lens for interpreting Europe’s shifting integration discourse. It invites scholars to move beyond the binary of “successful vs. failed integration” and instead interrogate the *emotional sustainability* of inclusion efforts (Betts, 2021; Isin and Nyers, 2020).

2.2 Theoretical Roots: Emotional, Institutional, and Societal Dimensions

The theoretical grounding of integration fatigue lies at the intersection of emotional sociology, migration governance, and social psychology. From an emotional standpoint, it builds upon theories of *compassion fatigue* and *emotional labour*, which describe the psychological toll of prolonged empathy in social and professional contexts (Hochschild,

2019; Figley, 2018). Applied to migration, this lens helps explain how sustained exposure to crisis narratives, refugee arrivals, humanitarian appeals, and political debates can lead to public desensitisation and empathy depletion (Bauman, 2019; Krzyżanowski, 2020).

Institutionally, the concept connects to debates on *policy fatigue*, defined as the diminishing effectiveness of repeated or fragmented integration policies (Scholten and Penninx, 2020; Goodman, 2020). Over time, continuous reforms, inconsistent objectives, and resource strain contribute to administrative inertia, resulting in what Dahlberg et al. (2022) term *bureaucratic exhaustion*.

At the societal level, integration fatigue intersects with *trust erosion* and *polarisation theories* (Eberl et al., 2021). Societies under sustained strain, economic crises, populist politics, and pandemic anxiety experience what Isin and Nyers (2020) call a *civic fatigue*, where the collective willingness to engage in solidarity weakens. These emotional, institutional, and societal dimensions together form an integrated analytical framework that situates fatigue as both a symptom and a signal of Europe’s transformation in the post-2019 era.

2.3 Integration Fatigue as a Multi-Layered Phenomenon

Integration fatigue operates across interconnected layers that reinforce one another. Emotional exhaustion within individuals and communities often triggers institutional stagnation, which in turn amplifies societal polarisation (Kleist, 2023; Eberl et al., 2021). This recursive relationship forms a *fatigue cycle* where compassion wanes, bureaucratic systems harden, and social trust erodes.

Drawing from emotional sociology and governance theory (Hochschild, 2019; Scholten and Penninx, 2020), this paper conceptualises integration fatigue as a *multi-layered phenomenon* that extends beyond policy efficiency to encompass collective feelings and moral capacities. Each layer represents both a site of strain and a potential point of renewal.

Table 1. Dimensions of Integration Fatigue in Contemporary Europe (2019–2025)

Dimension	Core Features	Manifestations in Post-2019 Europe	Representative Sources
Emotional Fatigue	Decline of public empathy, compassion fatigue among citizens and practitioners	Desensitisation to refugee crises; media fatigue; emotional burnout in social services	Figley (2018); Bauman (2019); Miller and Goodman (2022)
Institutional Fatigue	Bureaucratic overload; repetitive policy reforms; loss of innovation energy	Fragmented integration frameworks; short-term projects; policy recycling	Scholten and Penninx (2020); Dahlberg et al. (2022).
Societal Fatigue	Polarisation; distrust in multiculturalism; civic disengagement	Normalisation of anti-immigrant rhetoric; declining social cohesion	Eberl et al. (2021); Isin and Nyers (2020); Favell (2023)

Integration fatigue, therefore, is not a static condition but a dynamic process of reciprocal depletion. Recognising this cyclical nature allows policymakers and scholars to identify *intervention points* where renewal can begin, through emotional literacy programs, institutional reflection, or community-based trust restoration (Favell, 2023; Isin and Nyers, 2020).

2.4 Emotional and Institutional Dynamics of Integration

The dynamics of integration in post-2019 Europe can be understood within a broader emotional and institutional framework. Emotional, institutional, and societal energies continuously interact to shape how integration unfolds over time. Emotional energy refers to empathy, compassion, and care within communities. Across European societies, emotional energy has weakened due to a decline in empathy and compassion fatigue; yet it remains renewable through care ethics and emotional literacy (Figley, 2018; Bauman, 2019; Miller and Goodman, 2022).

Institutional energy refers to how governments, educational systems, and policy networks respond to the increasing complexity of migration. Bureaucratic pressures and policy repetition often limit flexibility, but reflective and adaptive governance can restore trust and effectiveness (Scholten and Penninx, 2020; Dahlberg et al., 2022). Societal energy concerns public attitudes and social cohesion. Rising polarisation and distrust reduce collective engagement, but renewal becomes possible through civic imagination and community participation (Eberl et al., 2021; Favell, 2023; Kleist, 2023).

Together, these emotional, institutional, and societal dimensions create a circular flow of depletion and renewal. When empathy is strengthened, institutions become more responsive, and communities more inclusive. This process can be described as a regeneration of integration energy, where emotional care, flexible governance, and civic participation sustain the long-term well-being of both migrants and host societies (Kleist, 2023; Isin and Nyers, 2020; Papadopoulos, 2021).

III. DIMENSIONS OF EXHAUSTION

Integration fatigue unfolds through three interrelated dimensions —emotional, institutional, and societal—each reflecting a distinctive yet connected form of exhaustion. These dimensions do not operate in isolation; rather, they interact in a feedback loop where the decline of empathy undermines institutional innovation, and bureaucratic stagnation, in turn, erodes social trust (Kleist, 2023; Betts, 2021). Examining these layers separately enables a deeper understanding of how fatigue spreads across Europe’s integration systems in the post-2019 period.

3.1 Emotional Fatigue: The Erosion of Empathy and Compassion

Emotional fatigue represents the affective foundation of integration exhaustion. It captures the gradual decline of public empathy, compassion, and moral motivation that once sustained Europe’s “welcome culture” (Triandafyllidou, 2018; Krzyżanowski, 2020). During the height of the refugee arrivals, emotional solidarity functioned as a moral resource for social inclusion. Yet over time, continuous exposure to humanitarian crises, negative media portrayals, and populist discourse led to desensitisation and what Figley (2018) terms *compassion fatigue*.

In the post-2019 context, the COVID-19 pandemic further depleted emotional reserves. Social isolation, health anxiety, and economic stress shifted public attention inward, reducing collective emotional energy for empathy and cross-cultural understanding (Dahlberg et al., 2022; Bauman, 2019). As Favell (2023) notes, when empathy becomes institutionalised through bureaucratic mechanisms, it risks turning procedural rather than heartfelt. Teachers, social workers, and community volunteers, once emotional mediators of inclusion, reported burnout and disillusionment (Miller and Goodman, 2022).

This emotional fatigue also manifests at the political level. Leaders increasingly adopt pragmatic, crisis-oriented rhetoric, replacing earlier moral narratives with “realist” or security-focused frames (Börzel and Risse, 2021). Consequently, compassion becomes episodic rather than sustained, fluctuating with media attention and political expediency. The erosion of empathy not only weakens interpersonal relations; it undermines the emotional infrastructure necessary for long-term integration. Recognising and addressing this affective depletion is thus a prerequisite for rebuilding inclusive, emotionally literate societies (Isin and Nyers, 2020).

3.2 Institutional Fatigue: Policy Overload and Bureaucratic Inertia

Institutional fatigue reflects the declining capacity of governance systems to sustain coherent, innovative, and compassionate integration policies. Across Europe, institutions once celebrated for their humanitarian coordination have become sites of *administrative exhaustion* (Scholten and Penninx, 2020). Since 2019, integration governance has faced multiple overlapping crises, pandemic management, economic recovery, and renewed migration inflows, resulting in what Dahlberg et al. (2022) describe as a “bureaucratic overload.” As the number of initiatives multiplies, their coherence diminishes: short-term pilot projects replace long-term strategies, and

integration becomes fragmented across ministries and funding cycles (Favell, 2023).

Policy repetition has produced what Goodman (2020) terms *policy recycling*, the re-adoption of earlier frameworks with new terminology but similar structural weaknesses. This cycle generates a false sense of activity while masking institutional stagnation. The consequence is a form of organisational burnout: public servants, educators, and social programme coordinators operate under pressure to deliver results with diminishing emotional and financial resources (Miller and Goodman, 2022).

Furthermore, the increasing bureaucratisation of empathy, through measurable outcomes, standardised forms, and contractual obligations, has transformed inclusion into a technocratic exercise rather than a moral commitment (Bauman, 2019; Betts, 2021). Institutions now prioritise compliance over creativity, efficiency over empathy. In this context, *integration fatigue* emerges not only from policy failure but also from the accumulation of procedural weariness. As Kleist (2023) argues, integration fatigue exposes the paradox of European governance: the more institutions attempt to systematise inclusion, the more they risk depleting the moral and emotional energy that sustains it.

Reversing this trend requires a new institutional ethos, one that values emotional literacy and reflective governance alongside administrative performance (Isin and Nyers, 2020). Without such recalibration, European integration systems will continue to operate as overextended mechanisms, fatigued by their own procedural success.

3.3 Societal Fatigue: Polarisation and the Limits of Solidarity

Societal fatigue signifies the broader collective exhaustion that extends beyond individual emotions and institutional pressures. It captures the erosion of shared meaning and the weakening of social trust that once underpinned Europe's multicultural ethos (Eberl et al., 2021). Unlike emotional fatigue, which centres on empathy decline, or institutional fatigue, which concerns policy stagnation, societal fatigue unfolds within the moral and communicative fabric of everyday life. It is visible in rising polarisation, shrinking spaces for dialogue, and the normalisation of scepticism towards diversity (Börzel and Risse, 2021; Triandafyllidou, 2022).

The post-2019 era has intensified these dynamics. Economic uncertainty, digital misinformation, and populist narratives have blurred the boundary between social fatigue and social fracture (Favell, 2023). The pandemic further disrupted the collective rituals of belonging, public gatherings, cultural events, and intergroup contact, which once served as an emotional glue in plural societies

(Dahlberg et al., 2022). As these encounters diminished, imagined communities hardened, reinforcing “us versus them” distinctions and weakening the sense of mutual obligation (Betts, 2021).

Societal fatigue thus manifests not only as ideological polarisation but as a *loss of civic imagination*, the ability to envision coexistence beyond crisis management (Isin and Nyers, 2020). When societies grow accustomed to division, integration ceases to function as a transformative project and becomes a defensive one. The challenge is therefore not simply to rebuild solidarity but to *reimagine* it: cultivating spaces where emotional connection, cultural recognition, and collective purpose can regenerate (Kleist, 2023). Only through this renewal can Europe move from endurance to genuine co-existence.

3.4 Interconnections and Implications

The three layers of integration fatigue —emotional, institutional, and societal —form an intricate ecosystem rather than separate fields of strain. Emotional depletion narrows the moral bandwidth of communities, reducing the energy that institutions rely on to innovate and sustain trust. In turn, procedural rigidity within governance systems radiates frustration outward, shaping the collective mood of fatigue that saturates public life (Kleist, 2023; Betts, 2021). This interplay can be viewed as an *energy economy* of integration: when emotional and organisational reserves are consumed faster than replenished, the entire social circuitry dims (Bauman, 2019; Favell, 2023).

Yet, the same interdependence that fuels exhaustion also offers the possibility of renewal. When empathy is cultivated through education, institutional learning, and participatory dialogue, new social energy can circulate through the system (Isin and Nyers, 2020). Small-scale interactions, community classrooms, local cultural initiatives, and transnational networks can act as *micro-generators of resilience*, restoring meaning where policy structures alone fall short (Dahlberg et al., 2022). Conceptually, understanding fatigue through this relational lens transforms it from a symptom of decline into a diagnostic indicator of Europe's evolving moral metabolism. It invites a shift from measuring integration by outcomes to sustaining it through affective balance, institutional adaptability, and civic renewal (Triandafyllidou, 2022).

IV. REFRAMING INTEGRATION: TOWARDS EMOTIONAL LITERACY AND SUSTAINABLE RENEWAL

Overcoming integration fatigue requires a paradigmatic shift from reactive policymaking to reflective, emotionally

intelligent governance. Instead of merely managing diversity through bureaucratic tools, Europe must reimagine integration as a *relational process*, a continuous negotiation of emotions, ethics, and belonging (Isin and Nyers, 2020; Betts, 2021). Emotional literacy, in this context, refers to the collective ability of institutions and citizens to recognise, articulate, and respond to emotional climates that shape integration outcomes (Miller and Goodman, 2022). It is not an abstract sensitivity, but a practical skill embedded in educational, civic, and communicative practices.

Developing emotional literacy can help prevent the emotional numbness that accompanies prolonged exposure to crisis narratives (Figley, 2018; Bauman, 2019). When policy actors and educators are trained to read the emotional tone of communities, acknowledging fatigue, frustration, or hope, they can design responses that are restorative rather than extractive. This perspective positions empathy not as sentimentality but as a renewable civic resource (Triandafyllidou, 2022).

Parallel to this affective renewal, integration policy must cultivate *institutional resilience*: the capacity to adapt without collapsing under repeated shocks (Scholten and Penninx, 2020; Dahlberg et al., 2022). Resilient institutions prioritise flexibility, participatory design, and reflective evaluation over rigid compliance. Small, locally grounded initiatives, language hubs, mentoring schemes, and intercultural networks can function as nodes of innovation within fatigued systems (Favell, 2023).

Finally, sustainable integration depends on restoring *social circulation*, the flow of recognition, reciprocity, and emotional investment among groups (Kleist, 2023). When societies regain the courage to imagine belonging as a shared emotional project, they begin to transform fatigue into a new moral rhythm. This approach reframes integration not as an administrative obligation but as a living, adaptive ecosystem capable of self-renewal through empathy, reflection, and collective care (Isin and Nyers, 2020; Bauman, 2019).

4.1 Emotional Energy and the Ethics of Care in Migration Governance

The concept of emotional energy offers an important extension to understanding integration fatigue in contemporary Europe. It refers to the collective emotional vitality that sustains cooperation, trust, and the willingness to engage with difference (Collins, 2020). When emotional energy diminishes, the connective force between citizens, institutions, and migrants in relationships also loses its strength. In post-2019 Europe, this depletion has become particularly visible as repeated crises have eroded the optimism and compassion that once shaped integration discourse (Kleist, 2023). The capacity to care is not simply

an individual virtue but a shared social resource that requires continuous renewal through institutions and public narratives (Tronto, 2013; Papadopoulos, 2021).

The concept of emotional energy provides an important extension to understanding integration fatigue in contemporary Europe (Collins, 2020; Kleist, 2023).

The ethics of care provides a theoretical lens through which this emotional dimension can be reframed. Unlike abstract moral theories based on duty or utility, care ethics situates moral responsibility in interdependence, empathy, and responsiveness to human vulnerability (Gilligan, 2018). Within migration governance, this perspective recognises that both migrants and host societies occupy fragile moral positions shaped by uncertainty, dependency, and fatigue. To sustain integration, therefore, emotional energy must be treated not as a private sentiment but as a form of civic infrastructure. As Tronto (2013) argues, societies that neglect care eventually weaken their democratic and ethical foundations.

Policies that cultivate emotional literacy and care-based leadership can counterbalance the technocratic tendencies of modern governance. Emotional energy is replenished when institutions engage citizens as moral participants rather than administrative clients (Isin and Nyers, 2020). Local initiatives that foreground shared experiences, intercultural storytelling, mentorship networks, and participatory urban projects demonstrate how emotional connection can repair frayed social fabrics (Favell, 2023). These practices move beyond empathy as a feeling toward empathy as a civic act, embedding compassion in public life through collective rituals of recognition and reciprocity (Bauman, 2019).

At the policy level, the ethics of care suggests a reorientation of integration frameworks from managing difference to sustaining relational wellbeing. This involves rethinking evaluation metrics: instead of measuring success through economic participation or linguistic attainment alone, attention must also be paid to affective indicators such as belonging, dignity, and mutual trust (Scholten and Penninx, 2020; Dahlberg et al., 2022). When emotional energy is cultivated through education, cultural institutions, and community participation, integration becomes less about endurance and more about relational flourishing.

The post-pandemic years have revealed that emotional energy is both finite and renewable. It diminishes under chronic stress but can regenerate through recognition and shared purpose. A care-oriented approach thus shifts the focus of migration governance from controlling populations to maintaining humane connections. Rather than viewing exhaustion as an endpoint, this framework invites Europe to view care as the core of resilience: a moral practice through

which empathy, solidarity, and belonging can be continually reimagined (Papadopoulos, 2021; Kleist, 2023).

V. CONCLUSION: BEYOND WEARINESS – RETHINKING HOPE AND COEXISTENCE IN EUROPE

Integration fatigue, as explored across this paper, reveals more than a temporary social tiredness; it exposes the moral metabolism of a continent negotiating its limits of empathy and endurance (Kleist, 2023; Bauman, 2019). Europe's post-2019 experience demonstrates that when emotional, institutional, and societal energies fall out of sync, inclusion becomes unsustainable. Yet fatigue, rather than signifying failure, can also act as a mirror reflecting where recalibration is needed. Recognising exhaustion is the first step toward renewal.

The conceptual framework proposed here, the triadic model of emotional, institutional, and societal fatigue, highlights how integration processes depend not only on policy coherence but on emotional sustainability and civic imagination (Isin and Nyers, 2020; Betts, 2021). The erosion of empathy, bureaucratic rigidity, and polarisation are not isolated phenomena; they are intertwined consequences of overextended moral and administrative effort. By reframing fatigue as a relational dynamic rather than a static decline, the paper encourages migration scholars to treat weariness as both an analytical category and a call to reimagine the emotional architecture of integration.

Moving beyond weariness requires shifting attention from crisis management to *coexistence cultivation*—a process of rebuilding shared meaning, restoring emotional reciprocity, and fostering institutional humility (Favell, 2023; Triandafyllidou, 2022). Europe's challenge is not simply to welcome or manage migrants, but to sustain the emotional and ethical vitality that makes such inclusion possible. Future research may therefore explore how micro-level practices, community dialogue, intercultural pedagogy, and narrative exchange contribute to resilience within fatigued societies (Miller and Goodman, 2022; Dahlberg et al., 2022).

Ultimately, the way forward lies in cultivating an emotionally literate Europe: one capable of feeling without fracturing, governing without hardening, and coexisting without exhaustion. Through this lens, fatigue becomes not the end of solidarity, but the threshold of a more reflective and sustainable form of belonging.

5.1 Policy and Research Implications

Integration fatigue, while often discussed at a conceptual level, carries profound implications for both public policy

and academic inquiry. Recognising fatigue as a multidimensional condition, encompassing emotional, institutional, and societal aspects, requires rethinking how integration is governed, evaluated, and studied in Europe's post-2019 context (Kleist, 2023; Favell, 2023). Policy responses must move beyond administrative efficiency to consider how social systems distribute not only resources but also emotional energy and moral attention. When policies overlook these affective dimensions, they risk reproducing the very exhaustion they seek to alleviate (Betts, 2021).

One major implication concerns the need for *emotionally intelligent governance*. Institutions that acknowledge emotional climates, public anxiety, declining compassion, and erosion of trust can develop more adaptive and humane responses. Training programmes for public servants, educators, and local authorities should include components on emotional literacy and intercultural communication (Isin and Nyers, 2020). These skills enable practitioners to recognise when fatigue manifests as frustration, avoidance, or apathy and to respond with empathy rather than procedural rigidity. Emotional awareness also enhances crisis preparedness by ensuring that communication remains grounded in respect and care, even during periods of political tension or social unrest (Miller and Goodman, 2022).

Another policy dimension involves designing integration frameworks. Current systems often prioritise measurable outputs, such as employment or language proficiency, while neglecting intangible yet critical outcomes, like belonging and trust (Scholten and Penninx, 2020). Policy renewal should adopt a *relational metrics* approach, evaluating the quality of interaction between migrants and institutions rather than counting isolated achievements. Incorporating participatory assessment tools, such as focus groups, narrative evaluations, and community-led surveys, would allow for more responsive governance that captures both emotional realities and administrative results (Dahlberg et al., 2022).

Education and media also play pivotal roles in mitigating fatigue. Schools, adult learning centres, and universities can function as laboratories of empathy, where intercultural competence and critical emotional reflection are cultivated (Triandafyllidou, 2022). Public media outlets, similarly, can counter empathy erosion by highlighting stories of resilience and cooperation instead of crisis-driven narratives. By shifting representation from suffering to contribution, such practices restore a sense of shared agency and positive affect in the public imagination (Bauman, 2019).

At the community level, *micro-integrative practices*, local mentoring schemes, storytelling festivals, and volunteering networks help disperse the concentration of emotional labour that burdens institutions (Papadopoulos, 2021). When care responsibilities are distributed through civil society, emotional energy becomes renewable rather than extractive. These initiatives decentralise integration from government offices to everyday social spaces, allowing fatigue to be absorbed and transformed through collective participation (Favell, 2023).

For researchers, integration fatigue presents both a challenge and an opportunity. Methodologically, future studies should move beyond policy analysis to include emotional ethnography, discourse analysis, and participatory action research (Kleist, 2023). Such approaches can capture the lived experience of exhaustion and renewal as they unfold within communities. Longitudinal and comparative research could trace how fatigue patterns vary across regions, comparing Northern, Western, and Southern European contexts, to reveal how political culture and welfare regimes mediate resilience. Scholars may also examine the role of digital communication and social media in amplifying or mitigating fatigue by influencing emotional discourse surrounding migration (Eberl et al., 2021).

Finally, a renewed partnership between academia and policy practice is essential. Universities, think tanks, and local authorities can co-create evidence-based strategies to monitor integration energy and develop early-warning indicators for fatigue. These collaborations can ensure that integration remains not merely a bureaucratic goal but a living, adaptive social process grounded in empathy, learning, and reflection (Isin and Nyers, 2020; Betts, 2021).

By embedding emotional intelligence, participatory design, and reflective evaluation into Europe's integration landscape, policymakers and researchers can jointly move the conversation from fatigue to regeneration. This approach reframes policy not as a control mechanism but as a collective act of care through which social cohesion and moral resilience can be sustained (Papadopoulos, 2021; Favell, 2023).

VI. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

As a conceptual inquiry, this study's strength lies in its interpretive synthesis rather than empirical verification. Yet, this focus also establishes certain limitations that future research must address. By analysing integration fatigue through the lenses of emotional, institutional, and societal exhaustion, the paper offers a broad analytical framework but does not empirically test its mechanisms. Future studies

could therefore operationalise the concept of fatigue using mixed methodologies, combining discourse analysis, ethnography, and policy evaluation, to trace how exhaustion is experienced, communicated, and institutionalised across different European contexts (Scholten and Penninx, 2020; Kleist, 2023).

Another limitation concerns geographical scope. While the analysis primarily focused on Western and Northern Europe, integration fatigue may manifest differently in Southern and Eastern regions where migration histories, welfare regimes, and civic cultures diverge (Triandafyllidou, 2022; Eberl et al., 2021). Comparative investigations could reveal whether emotional resilience and policy adaptability vary according to socio-economic and cultural structures. Such cross-regional perspectives would help determine whether integration fatigue is a pan-European phenomenon or one shaped by specific governance models.

Conceptually, the model developed here privileges emotional and relational interpretations. This emphasis may overlook structural and material dimensions such as economic precarity, housing inequality, and digital misinformation, all of which influence the texture of social fatigue (Favell, 2023). Integrating political economy and media analysis would enrich our understanding of how power and communication sustain or deplete the energy of integration. Similarly, more attention could be devoted to intersectional aspects, including gender, religion, class, and ethnicity, which mediate how fatigue is experienced by both migrants and host societies (Isin and Nyers, 2020).

Longitudinal research could further explore the temporal rhythms of fatigue and recovery. Rather than treating exhaustion as a static condition, future work might examine its oscillations over time, how compassion revives after crises, how institutions recover legitimacy, and how societies rebuild moral focus (Betts, 2021; Bauman, 2019). This temporal approach would move the debate beyond crisis-driven narratives and illuminate the cyclical nature of social energy in Europe's integration landscape.

Finally, there is a need to bridge the conceptual and policy worlds. Academic discussions of integration fatigue risk remain detached from practical policymaking unless translated into actionable frameworks. Collaborative platforms involving scholars, civil society organisations, and local authorities could pilot new approaches grounded in emotional literacy, participatory evaluation, and care-oriented governance (Papadopoulos, 2021; Dahlberg et al., 2022). Through such partnerships, theory and practice can inform one another, creating a dynamic cycle of reflection and renewal.

In essence, the limitations of this study point not to weaknesses but to potential avenues for improvement. Integration fatigue, as articulated here, is an evolving concept that reflects Europe's emotional and moral transformations. Future research should continue to refine its contours, testing its explanatory value while expanding its ethical and empirical reach. By doing so, scholars and practitioners alike can contribute to building a Europe that not only learns to manage diversity but also sustains the emotional imagination required for coexistence.

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Cognitive Construction Grammar in Translation Studies

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Abstract— *The construction grammar (CG), as a major ramification of cognitive linguistics, has attracted more and more attention in recent years. The study of grammar under cognitive construction grammar takes "construction" as the basic unit of translation, uses the concept of construction to elaborate and explain various phenomena and thinking representations in the field of translation, and reveals the law and essence of translation behavior from the cognitive level. This paper briefly discusses the integration of the constructional grammar and translation studies, reviews and evaluates the principles and strategies of the constructional grammar in promoting translation, the development of translation process and translation transformation, and finally discusses the contribution of translation studies in promoting the constructional grammar.*

Keywords— *construction grammar; constructional translation view; translation studies*

I. INTRODUCTION

Wang Yin (2005) argues that translation is a cognitive process involving multiple interactions among cognitive agents whose activities are grounded in real-life experience. Translators must thoroughly grasp the rich meanings conveyed by the source text and strive to transfer and project these meanings into the target language. A translation should aim to faithfully reflect the reality and cognitive world portrayed by the original author, thereby laying a solid foundation for the advancement of cognitive translatology.

After more than a decade of development, current research in cognitive translatology primarily focuses on using theories from cognitive linguistics to explain translation phenomena. "By integrating categorization theory, construal theory, metaphor theory, conceptual integration theory, and other frameworks into translation studies, researchers have been able to uncover the cognitive mechanisms and mental activities underlying translation, thereby expanding the boundaries and perspectives of translation research" (Luo Dijiang, 2022). Among these approaches, cognitive studies explaining translation phenomena through categorization, construal, and metaphor theories are relatively common, while

research based on construction grammar remains comparatively limited. However, as construction grammar and translation research become increasingly integrated, the importance of constructions in translation studies is gaining recognition. Many scholars have explored translation principles, strategies, processes, and transformations through this lens, offering valuable insights for guiding translation practice.

Zheng Man (2022) proposed the Construction-Based Translation View: "The construction-based translation view regards the 'construction' as the basic unit of translation, uses the notion of construction to describe and explain various phenomena and mental representations within the domain of translation, and reveals the cognitive rules and essence of translation behavior." Scholars have increasingly acknowledged the importance of construction grammar in guiding translation practice. They have discussed cognitive research principles and strategies for construction-based translation, examined translation processes and transformations, and provided case studies involving special linguistic phenomena in English and Chinese, as well as sentence-level and discourse-level analyses. These efforts have introduced new perspectives to translation studies. However, more in-depth and

fine-grained research is still needed.

This paper outlines the integration of construction grammar and translation studies, reviews and evaluates how construction grammar has promoted the development of translation principles and strategies, translation processes, and translation transformations, and finally discusses how translation studies, in turn, contribute to the theoretical development of construction grammar. Construction-based thinking and translation research thus demonstrate a mutually beneficial and bidirectional relationship.

II. THE INTEGRATION OF CONSTRUCTION GRAMMAR AND TRANSLATION STUDIES

Construction Grammar, an important theoretical branch of cognitive linguistics, offers a new perspective on the relationship between language and thought and provides multiple advantages for guiding translation practice.

Goldberg (2006) defines the concept of a construction as follows: “Any linguistic pattern whose form, meaning, or function is not fully predictable from its constituent parts or from other constructions already established should be regarded as a construction. Moreover, even if certain linguistic patterns are fully predictable, they may still be stored as constructions if they occur with sufficiently high frequency.” This means that any linguistic expression — whether a morpheme, word, phrase, clause, sentence, or even discourse — can be viewed as a construction if some aspects of its form or meaning cannot be entirely predicted from its components or from pre-existing constructions. In other words, constructions cover all levels of language, and adopting the construction as the basic translation unit gives translators greater flexibility in selecting appropriate translation units.

Wang Yin (2005) points out that “Construction Grammar adheres to a ‘non-modular’ view of grammar, viewing grammar as a continuum of syntax–semantics–pragmatics. The ‘form’ of a construction encompasses knowledge of phonology, morphology, and syntax, while its ‘meaning’ involves semantic, functional, pragmatic, and discourse-related information.” According to Szymańska, the pragmatic and cultural turns in translation studies have already been

integrated into the Construction Grammar perspectives of form–meaning pairing, continuum, and usage-based theory. Construction Grammar thus holds promise as a unified framework for explaining classic issues in translation. In other words, taking the construction as the translation unit allows for simultaneous consideration of structural, semantic, functional, and cultural dimensions, making it more advantageous for guiding translation practice than defining translation units along a single dimension. Szymańska (2011), in the first chapter of her book, summarized the development of translation studies into three stages: the linguistic approach, the discourse and pragmatic approach, and the cultural turn. By adopting the construction as the translation unit, the longstanding debates over these “turns” in translation studies may be deemphasized.

According to Shi Chunhong (2022), Construction Grammar exhibits both online generativity and entrenched conventionality. It places strong emphasis on the frequency of linguistic forms. Using constructions as translation units can make translated texts more idiomatic, as translators must consider the usage frequency and structural features of constructions in the target language. By choosing the most frequently used and natural expressions, translations can become smoother and more authentic.

Yang Zi and Wang Xueming (2014) argue that constructional thinking effectively captures how differences between the source and target languages affect the choice of translation units. When two languages are highly similar, more equivalent correspondences exist across linguistic levels, leading to smaller translation units; conversely, when the languages differ greatly, translation units tend to become larger (for example, translation units between English and French are often smaller than those between English and Chinese. Chinese scholars studying English–Chinese translation often propose larger units than Western scholars studying translation among Indo-European languages). Construction Grammar emphasizes the language-specificity of constructions — each language has its own ways of structuring and combining constructions. Translation, therefore, is a process in which the constructional networks of the source language are transformed and reorganized within the target language environment. The selection of translation units

must thus account for how constructions and their combinations correspond across languages. In this way, operating at the constructional level inherently integrates the bilingual characteristics of both source and target languages, giving the construction-based view of translation units a broadly cross-linguistic applicability.

III. THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONSTRUCTION-BASED THINKING IN GUIDING TRANSLATION STUDIES

The construction-based perspective on translation has provided new theoretical insights into research on translation principles and strategies, the translation process, and translation shifts, yielding many valuable achievements for guiding translation studies.

3.1 Constructions and Translation Principles and Strategies

Regarding special constructions in English, Yang Zi (2015) adopted the construction as the basic unit of analysis and classified the Chinese translations of English personal-name constructions into four types: personal-name constructions, quasi-personal-name constructions, super-personal-name constructions, and non-personal-name constructions. He analyzed how imagery is constructed in the translated text and explained how to select strategies in name translation, including reverse transliteration, approximate phonetic transliteration, and semantic translation. This study shows that the constructional patterns underlying the translation play a decisive role in shaping the representational imagery of the translated text and in determining translation strategies.

Regarding special constructions in Chinese, Tang Jing and Yang Yang (2016), drawing on Goldberg's Cognitive Construction Grammar, conducted an in-depth analysis of the structural properties, formation mechanisms, and cognitive motivations of the “好不 + AP” construction. Their research revealed that when this construction carries a metalinguistic negation meaning, it is often rendered in translation as a prefix of negation plus an adjective; when it lacks such metalinguistic negation, it is typically converted into a noun phrase corresponding to the adjective phrase or a noun phrase with a similar meaning. Their work enriched the translation strategies and practical handling of the “好不 + AP” construction and provided

valuable guidance for translation practice. Exploring the form-meaning characteristics, usage features, and translation strategies of such special constructions offers important reference value for translating other idiosyncratic constructions and contributes to the formulation of more generalizable translation strategies.

At the sentence level, Wei Zaijiang (2020), taking sentence constructions in Zhang Peiji's Selected Modern Chinese Essays Translated into English as examples, proposed four translation principles based on key tenets of Construction Grammar: the Holistic Principle, the Salience Principle, the Interaction Principle, and the Polysemy Principle. The Holistic Principle requires translators to consider both how lexical meaning influences the construction and how the construction as a whole constrains the meaning of its lexical items, thus guiding the overall translation process. The Salience Principle emphasizes that translators should highlight the salient elements of the construction in the target language context and creatively reconstruct them in the translation. The Interaction Principle holds that the meaning of a specific sentence pattern is primarily determined by the integration of the construction's meaning and the verb's meaning, rather than requiring strict one-to-one equivalence with the source text. The Polysemy Principle stresses that multiple constructions can share features while also having unique characteristics, forming complex inheritance networks that enable innovative translation solutions. However, Wei's work explored translation principles only at the sentence level and did not extend to other linguistic levels.

Building on Wei's research, Ma Junjie (2022) further investigated translation principles and strategies at the discourse level under the construction-based perspective. Ma proposed three guiding principles: the Meaning-Centered Principle, the Holistic Principle, and the Interactive Principle. The Meaning-Centered Principle emphasizes that translation is fundamentally a process of meaning transfer and communication. The Holistic Principle builds on meaning-centeredness while requiring translators to maintain the overall integrity of the form-meaning pairings in constructions. The Interactive Principle highlights the interaction between constructions and syntax. Ma also proposed three basic translation strategies: constructional equivalence, constructional

fine-tuning, and constructional variation. Constructional equivalence seeks to find target-language expressions that closely match the source construction. Constructional fine-tuning modifies an initially equivalent construction to ensure syntactic consistency or preserve patterns such as rhyme. Constructional variation applies when no equivalent construction exists in the target language and structural adaptation is required.

Although construction-based translation principles and strategies have significantly contributed to guiding translation practice, more empirical studies are still needed to verify their applicability and to further test their universality.

3.2 Constructions and the Translation Process

In exploring the translation process, Szymańska (2011) proposed a unique analogy, likening translation to the reconstruction of a mosaic. She argued that the source text is like a mosaic composed of a library of source-language constructions, and the translator's task is to recreate this mosaic using the construction inventory of the target language. This "mosaic reconstruction" process, grounded in Fillmore's Frame Semantics and Goldberg's Cognitive Construction Grammar, helps us grasp the cognitive mechanisms of translation as a whole and provides valuable insight. However, Zheng Man (2022) notes that current translation models have yet to fully capture the mental activities of translators across different stages of the process.

Addressing this gap, Yang Zi and Wang Xueming (2014) analyzed Chinese translations of the opening sentence of *Pride and Prejudice* to explain translation operations. They argued that in the pre-translation analysis stage, translators decompose the source text into constructions of different attributes and levels and map their interactions. During the execution stage, translators adopt a bottom-up approach: they begin with basic constructional units and progressively move toward higher-level constructions. This study demonstrates the effectiveness and flexibility of using constructions as translation units, enabling translators to freely select appropriate units.

Similarly, Hu Yanqi and Li Qingming (2017), drawing on Conceptual Integration Theory, Frame Semantics, and Cognitive Construal Theory, developed a

cognitive model of the translation process. From a micro-level perspective under the framework of Construction Grammar, they proposed that translation involves understanding, deconstructing, and reconstructing meaning across Construal Space I, Construal Space II, the Generic Space, and the Blended Space. Using the translation of English caused-motion constructions into Chinese as an example — for instance, rendering "the wind blows the ship off the course" as "风把船吹离航道" — they demonstrated the applicability and effectiveness of this model for analyzing the cognitive process of translation.

3.3 Constructions and Translation Shifts

Halverson (2007) and Szymańska (2011) examined the cognitive mechanisms behind translation. Halverson systematically analyzed translation strategies proposed by earlier scholars such as Vinay and Darbelnet, linking them to four cognitive operations described by Croft and Cruse — attention, judgment, perspective, and constitution. She argued that translation shifts can be explained through these detailed cognitive processes. Szymańska, meanwhile, viewed translation as a re-creation of source constructions within the cultural and linguistic environment of the target language, emphasizing the form–meaning unity and language-specific properties of constructions. From this perspective emerges the notion of constructional resistance — the difficulty translators encounter when attempting to replicate the features of a source construction in the target language. Translation shifts, therefore, can be seen as translators' efforts to negotiate partial matches when faced with such resistance.

Tan Yesheng (2010) focused on the translation shifts of metonymic constructions between Chinese and English. He argued that these shifts occur at the complex "schema–instance" level, where translators perform cognitive processing within interconnected conceptual frameworks. For example, the Chinese expression "..... 二人闲谈漫饮....." can be translated as either "drinking slowly" or "between leisurely sips of wine"; the latter employs a manner–action metonymic schema, representing a richer and more nuanced translation choice. Such schema-instance relationships in constructions open new perspectives for studying the translation of metonymy and metaphor and shed light on how translators use diverse

metonymic and metaphorical instances to achieve creative translation solutions.

Analyzing texts from the perspective of constructional units not only clarifies the complex processes behind translation shifts but also reveals the trade-offs and priorities in translation decision-making. Nevertheless, the classification and hierarchical structuring of constructions in translation shifts still require further refinement. Moreover, hypotheses about the cognitive mechanisms of translation depend on large-scale corpus validation and additional empirical research to be fully substantiated.

IV. THE CONTRIBUTION OF TRANSLATION STUDIES TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONSTRUCTION-BASED THINKING

In research on Construction Grammar and the translation process, the relationship between the two is not one-directional: while construction-based thinking has advanced translation studies, translation studies have likewise contributed to the growth of constructional thinking. This interaction reflects a mutually beneficial and bidirectional development.

First, the methodological diversification within translation studies has created new opportunities for the advancement of construction-based translation theory. With progress in computer science, cognitive science, cognitive psychology, and neuroscience, empirical research in translation studies has made significant achievements. These empirical methods now provide solid support for testing and applying construction-based translation theory, allowing researchers to validate theoretical claims with data-driven evidence.

Second, applying construction theory to translation practice offers new evidence for the psychological reality of constructions. If human language processing indeed follows the patterns proposed by Construction Grammar — namely, that linguistic competence consists of a fixed network of form–meaning pairings — then translators, when engaging in the highly cognitively demanding task of translating across languages and cultures, will naturally rely on constructional principles to guide their comprehension and reformulation of texts.

Finally, the products of translation themselves can

serve as a direct evidence base for testing Construction Grammar. By examining translated texts across different languages, researchers can observe and analyze how constructions in the source language correspond to those in the target language. This comparative analysis provides empirical insight into the applicability and explanatory power of Construction Grammar in real-world translation practice.

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Research on the identity of pre-service English teachers and its influencing factors

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Abstract— To explore the experiences and influencing factors of identity construction among pre-service English teachers, this study examined three pre-service English teachers enrolled in the second year of an Academic English Master's program at a university. Employing semi-structured interviews combined with multi-level coding data analysis, the research was conducted within a three-dimensional framework encompassing professional identity, personal identity, and situational identity. Findings reveal that identity construction among pre-service English teachers is a dynamic and complex multi-stage process, evolving sequentially through role recognition, theoretical learning, practical exploration, and identity formation. This process is shaped by both personal factors (teaching experience, professional competence, teaching motivation) and external factors (significant others, institutional environment), with the influence of “significant others” being the most pronounced. These findings offer practical insights for optimizing pre-service English teacher training systems. However, the study acknowledges its limitation of a relatively short time span, suggesting future research could track the identity development dynamics of pre-service teachers after they enter the profession.

Keywords— Pre-service English teachers, Teacher identity construction, Teaching practicum, Influencing factors

I. INTRODUCTION

Against the backdrop of educational globalization and deepening reforms in English education, teacher identity—as a core factor influencing teaching quality and professional development—has emerged as a research hotspot in teacher education. The pre-service stage, serving as a critical foundational period for teachers' professional growth, directly shapes future educators' sense of professional belonging, teaching beliefs, and practical

competencies. The dual nature of English as both a tool and a humanities subject presents unique challenges for pre-service English teachers' identity formation. They must not only enhance both their linguistic expertise and pedagogical competence but also navigate the transition from “student” to “teacher” through the interplay between theoretical learning and teaching practice.

Existing research has explored the connotations and influencing factors of teacher identity from diverse

perspectives. Among these, the three-dimensional framework proposed by Christopher Day et al., encompassing professional identity, personal identity, and situational identity, provides crucial theoretical support for analyzing the multidimensional composition of teacher identity. Additionally, studies by domestic and international scholars on the role of personal traits and external environments in identity construction lay the foundation for this research. However, existing research still holds room for further exploration regarding the details of identity construction among pre-service English teachers in the critical context of educational practicum, particularly concerning the differences in identity experiences between pre-service teachers with different educational backgrounds (English education majors versus non-English education majors). Educational practicum serves as a bridge connecting theory and practice, representing a crucial stage where pre-service teachers confront real teaching scenarios, encounter role conflicts, and undergo identity reshaping. Systematically exploring the identity construction experiences and their influencing mechanisms during this process holds significant practical implications for refining teacher training models.

Based on this, this study focuses on the identity construction process of pre-service English teachers during their three-month secondary education practicum. The core research questions include: What identity construction experiences do pre-service English teachers undergo during their practicum? What key factors influence the formation and development of their teaching identity? Through in-depth interviews with three pre-service English teachers

from different academic backgrounds, this study aims to reveal the dynamic characteristics of identity construction among pre-service English teachers and clarify the mechanisms of various influencing factors. This research seeks to provide empirical evidence for optimizing university English teacher education curricula and refining internship guidance systems, thereby facilitating smoother professional identity construction and transition for pre-service English teachers.

II. RESEARCH DESIGN

2.1 Research subjects and content

In response to our research question:

- (1) What are the pre-service teacher’s experiences of teacher identity construction?
- (2) What factors impact on teacher identity construction?

The subjects of this study were three pre-service English teachers enrolled in the second year of a Master's program in Academic English at the same university. Among them, two had undergraduate degrees in English Education, while one had a degree in Business English. All participants were required to complete a three-month teaching practicum at secondary schools. During this period, they engaged in subject teaching practice under the joint supervision of university mentors and school supervisors, undertaking tasks such as lesson preparation, classroom instruction, homework grading, and textbook research. Their basic information is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Basic information of questionnaire survey participants

Research subjects	Undergraduate institution and major	Whether there is internship/educational experience	Educational level
A	Teacher training institution, Teacher training English	Yes	Second year in junior high school

B	Comprehensive university, Teacher education English	Yes	Second year in high school
C	Comprehensive university, Business English	No	First year in high school

2.2 Research subjects and content

The four dimensions and sub-dimensions of identity construction in this study primarily reference Christopher Day and Alison Kington's (2008) classification of English teachers' professional identity, encompassing professional identity, personal identity, and situational identity. Their theoretical framework is presented in Fig. 1. Professional identity refers to pre-service English teachers' understanding and perception of the profession, their positioning and assessment of their professional competence development, including their beliefs about English teaching and their evaluation of their professional knowledge (i.e., English language proficiency). Personal identity refers to the extent of commitment and behavioral tendencies demonstrated by teachers during their practicum both inside and outside the classroom, as well as their self-assessment of teaching management capabilities. Situational identity pertains to the support and assistance received from schools and mentor teachers, along with teacher-student relationships, experienced by pre-service teachers during their educational practicum.



Fig. 1. Research framework

The two major dimensions of influencing factors are categorized into personal and external factors based on existing literature, drawing on findings from Xie Shuhai (2016), Wei Ge and Chen Xiangming (2015), Luebbbers (2010), and others regarding identity construction determinants. Personal factors include pre-service teachers' own teaching motivation, teaching experience, and professional competence. External factors primarily stem from significant others encountered during practicum, such as practicum mentors, students, and fellow colleagues, as well as the work environment and atmosphere of the host school.

2.3 Research methods

This study primarily employs the interview method. The process of constructing teacher identity is often achieved through narrative approaches such as descriptive recollection. Semi-structured interviews assist pre-service English teachers in recalling daily teaching experiences, summarizing and reflecting on their work performance and role positioning. Furthermore, interviews validate, explain, and supplement findings from questionnaire surveys. While questionnaires broadly outline changes in pre-service English teachers' identity during their three-month practicum, interviews delve deeper into analyzing the dynamic shifts across different identity dimensions. The interview content focuses on pre-service English teachers' sense of identity and its influencing factors, while also examining potential identity conflicts encountered during practicum. The interview outline was designed with reference to Xun Yang's (2012) interview questions for a survey on high school English teachers' identity formation. It primarily focuses on changes in pre-service English

teachers' professional identity, subject identity, personal identity, and situational identity. Modifications were made based on the research subjects and the educational practicum context, resulting in a final set of 11 interview questions. Specific interview questions include the degree to which student teachers identify with their professional roles and their sense of professional belonging; their understanding of English teaching and learning; reflective evaluations of their commitment to teaching work; and their perceptions of the school's organizational environment. They also cover the primary difficulties and pressures

encountered during the internship, issues identified in teaching practice and their perspectives on these issues; conflicts and contradictions in role positioning; and the extent to which various factors influence English teaching practice during the internship.

2.4 Research process

Based on the objectives and research design of this study, three pre-service teachers were selected for in-depth interviews. Detailed interview information is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Interview information

Interviewer	Respondent	Internship targets	Interview time	Interview location	Duration
Wang	A	Eighth grade	2024.9.5	Playground	36 Mins
He	B	11th grade	2024.9.5	Playground	35 Mins
Liu	C	10th grade	2024.9.5	Dormitory	38 Mins

Each interview lasted approximately half an hour. The researcher invited participants to recall their internship experiences, answer questions from the interview outline, and, with informed consent, recorded the sessions and transcribed them into verbatim transcripts. For data analysis, this study employed a multi-level coding approach to examine changes and characteristics in pre-service teachers' identity construction during educational internships, as well as potential identity conflicts faced by pre-service English teachers. When reviewing the interview transcripts, the author adopted the perspective of the research subjects to identify representative, emotionally charged expressions. These raw examples were then semantically summarized and categorized into primary codes, further grouped into secondary conceptual categories, and ultimately elevated to tertiary codes: professional identity, personal identity, and situational identity.

III. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Pre-service English teacher identity

3.1.1 Professional identity

The category “Mission and Responsibilities of English Teachers” refers to respondents' understanding and perception of the duties and mission-based responsibilities associated with the role of an English teacher. “Role Adjustment” denotes the potential shifts in identity that pre-service English teachers may encounter during their practicum (e.g., transitioning from student to teacher identity), the fatigue experienced when juggling different role-based tasks (such as subject teaching duties and homeroom teacher responsibilities), as well as situations where role identities lack clarity and presence. “English Language Proficiency” encompasses “Oral Expression” and “Subject Knowledge.” “Oral Expression” refers to pre-service English teachers' ability to communicate in English during teaching practice. “Subject Knowledge” denotes pre-

service English teachers' mastery of the English subject matter appropriate for the grade level they will teach. The encoding information is shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Partial encoded information on professional identity

Level 3 encoding	Level 2 encoding	Level 1 encoding	Original example sentence
Professional identity: Understanding of values, sense of belonging, and understanding of teaching	Professional values	The mission and responsibilities of an English teacher	I believe a good teacher keeps up with the times, pays attention to students, and is full of passion. (B)
	Professional belonging	Character adjustment	It won't be like before, where being full of ideals was itself an idealized state. To view teachers in that way is to indulge in wishful thinking. (B)
	English teaching philosophy	Understanding of English teaching	Focus on students and approach teaching from their perspective, maintaining a fresh perspective on instruction and adapting teaching methods according to the subject matter. (B)
	English language proficiency	Spoken expression	Oral expression requires contextual simulation and practice. (B)
Subject knowledge		Corpora have transformed my teaching philosophy, while discourse analysis has given me a clearer understanding of the content I teach, enabling a more meticulous refinement of teaching materials and methodologies. (B)	

3.1.2 Personal identity

“Task Completion Rate” refers to the level and extent to which pre-service English teachers fulfill their duties and complete assigned tasks during their teaching practicum. “Self-directed learning and seeking assistance” refers to the extent to which pre-service English teachers proactively engage in professional learning or seek guidance from others when encountering challenges during their practicum.

“Professional conduct evaluation” encompasses “teaching competency” and “practicum performance.” “Teaching competency” denotes the pre-service English teacher's assessment and reflection on their instructional abilities during the practicum; “practicum performance” refers to the pre-service English teacher's evaluation and perspective on their own behavioral and work performance throughout the practicum period. And the encoding information is shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Partial encoded information on personal identity

Level 3 encoding	Level 2 encoding	Level 1 encoding	Original example sentence
Personal identity: Commitment to teaching and related professional behavioral tendencies	Work Commitment: Enthusiasm and dedication toward internship work	Task completion rate	There weren't many opportunities to attend classes during the internship; I only attended one session. (B)
		Self-directed learning	Will ask peers, teachers, or look online to solve the problem. (B)
	Professional behavior evaluation: Assessment of internship performance	Teaching competence	Through practical experience, I have come to recognize some shortcomings in my teaching approach. (B)
		Internship performance	Through the internship, I enhanced my diverse skills. (B)

3.1.3 Situational identity

“Sense of organizational support” encompasses “guidance and learning opportunities provided by the school” and “assistance and guidance from mentors and colleagues.” “Guidance and learning opportunities provided by the school” refers to professional growth opportunities offered by the practicum school to pre-service English

teachers, such as classroom observation opportunities and teaching research discussions. “Support and guidance from mentors and colleagues” refers to professional guidance and assistance provided to pre-service English teachers by mentor teachers and other subject group teachers. “Teacher-student relationships” includes “average relationships” and “harmonious relationships.” And the encoding information is shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Partial encoded information on Situational identity

Level 3 encoding	Level 2 encoding	Level 1 encoding	Original example sentence
Situational identity: Support and assistance from the internship school, relationships with supervising teachers and students	Sense of Organizational Support: Assistance and support provided by teachers at the internship school, parents, elders, and others.	Guidance and learning opportunities provided by the school	My internship supervisor has been very supportive, encouraging me to teach using my own ideas without imposing restrictions, and giving me considerable freedom to explore. (B)
		Guidance provided by mentors and colleagues	Each teacher has a different teaching focus and their own unique teaching philosophy, and there is something worthwhile for me to learn from each of them. (B)

	Teacher- student relationship: The relationship with students, as well as the attitude and feelings toward interacting with them.	Relationship is average	My relationship with students is generally average. Sometimes, even when I put in the effort, I don't see results—the students play a crucial role too. If they don't receive feedback on their learning, they can become discouraged. (B)
		Get along well	I get along quite well with my students, and they are very supportive of me. (B)

3.2 Factors influencing pre-service English teachers' identity formation

3.2.1 Personal factors influence pre-service English teachers' professional identity

Upon entering the practicum setting, the identity construction of pre-service English teachers is influenced by their teaching experiences, encompassing both prior teaching history and experiences gained during the practicum. Conducting practicum classes is a major task every pre-service English teacher must complete. Through repeated teaching practices, pre-service teachers generate new pedagogical insights and reflections. Pre-service teachers accumulate practical teaching experience during their practicum. Through repeated practice, they generate fresh insights and reflections on teaching, which significantly contributes to enhancing their instructional proficiency. One teacher mentioned in an interview: “The first time I stood at the front of the classroom, I felt I had some semblance of a teacher. Overall, it went reasonably well. Subsequent lessons saw me grow increasingly proficient, with my classroom management skills improving significantly. I not only learned to control the pacing of a lesson but also effectively managed student discipline.” As teaching practice experience accumulates, pre-service teachers enhance their ability to manage English classrooms.

All three teachers mentioned in the follow-up interviews that one reason they chose to become English teachers was their solid English proficiency.

“I chose to become an English teacher because I have more to rely on in this area; this profession aligns with my major.” (Teacher A)

“After all, I majored in English, so I have some foundation, which makes me feel I have the capability to be an English teacher.” (Teacher B)

“I believe my language knowledge is sufficient for teaching high school English.” (Teacher C)

Teaching competence influences pre-service English teachers' evaluations of their own professional conduct. Teacher B remarked in the second interview:

“During my first class, I followed the PWP model (pre-reading; while-reading; post-reading) step by step as taught in school. Yet I wasn't sure how to refine and implement it more effectively. While preparing, I often felt helpless. Ultimately, the teaching outcomes were unsatisfactory, leaving me quite disappointed.”

3.2.2 External factors exert a significant influence on the construction of identity

In the study, the author found that while both pre-service teachers chose English teaching because it aligned with their own English proficiency, the support of those around them also played a significant role. Their motivation to pursue English teaching stemmed primarily from external factors, including their recognition of the advantages

inherent in the teaching profession and their own professional limitations. From Teacher A's interview, it became clear that the stability of working within the system was seen as a major draw of the teaching profession. When explaining their choice to become a teacher, Teacher A even quoted a popular online phrase that best reflects the job-seeking orientation of young graduates today: "The end of the universe is a permanent position." This indicates that pre-service teachers highly value the stability of the teaching profession. Furthermore, the relationship between teachers and students directly impacts teachers' work morale and experiences, making the construction of pre-service teachers' identities inextricably linked to teacher-student dynamics. Teacher B stated in the interview: "I think what motivated me to want to become a teacher was, well, interacting with students and the influence of role models among the teachers around me. Then, during my practicum, my relationship with students was, well, okay—just average. I dreaded teaching them. This might stem from a gap between my expectations of students and their reality." This demonstrates that the teacher-student relationship is also a crucial factor in shaping teacher identity.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

1. The process of constructing teacher identity is dynamic and complex, involving exploration and growth across multiple stages and dimensions.

Role Perception Stage: Before embarking on their teaching career, pre-service teachers first develop an initial understanding of the teaching role. This typically stems from their educational background, family influences, societal perceptions, and personal expectations of the teaching profession. **Theoretical Learning Stage:** Pre-service teachers receive systematic instruction in educational theory and teaching methodologies at universities or teacher training colleges. **Practical Exploration Stage:** During internships or educational placements, pre-service teachers begin applying theoretical

knowledge to real-world teaching contexts. **Identity Formation Stage:** Through teaching practice, pre-service teachers start to develop a sense of identity with their role as educators.

2. The construction of pre-service English teachers' professional identity during educational internships is influenced by both personal and external factors.

Personal factors include teaching experience, professional competence, and motivation for teaching, while external factors encompass significant others and the school environment.

Analysis indicates that the factor of "significant others" exerts the most pronounced effect on pre-service English teachers' identity construction, followed by professional competence, school environment, teaching motivation, and teaching experience.

Overall, the experience of pre-service teachers in constructing their professional identity is an ongoing process of exploration, learning, and growth. They encounter various challenges and difficulties but also gain development and progress through these experiences. Through this journey, they gradually clarify their educational philosophy and teaching methods, forming their unique teaching style.

Additionally, this study focuses on the impact of educational internships on pre-service English teachers' identity construction, with a relatively short time span. During this period, teachers' sense of identity may experience temporary fluctuations and instability, thus only representing identity construction during the internship phase. Consequently, the study lacks sufficient attention to the subsequent professional identity development of pre-service English teachers.

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The Role of the Constitution in Managing Ethnic and Religious Diversity in India

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Abstract— India is one of the most ethnically and religiously diverse societies in the world, making the constitutional management of diversity a critical aspect of democratic governance. This paper examines the role of the Constitution of India in regulating and accommodating ethnic and religious plurality through principles of equality, secularism, federalism, and minority protection. It analyses fundamental rights relating to religion, culture, language, and education, as well as affirmative action policies aimed at achieving substantive equality and social inclusion. The study also highlights the role of the judiciary in interpreting constitutional provisions to safeguard pluralism and restrain majoritarian impulses. Further, it identifies key challenges, including political polarisation, implementation gaps, and institutional limitations. The paper concludes that while India's constitutional framework is robust and inclusive in design, its effectiveness depends on consistent enforcement, constitutional morality, and sustained commitment to plural democratic values.

Keywords— *Pluralism, Constitutional Morality, Political Polarisation, Constitution of India.*

I. INTRODUCTION

India is one of the most ethnically, linguistically, and religiously diverse countries in the world. Its population comprises numerous religious communities, including Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, and others, as well as hundreds of ethnic groups and more than a thousand linguistic and cultural identities. This diversity is not incidental but foundational to the Indian social fabric. However, such pluralism also presents inherent challenges for governance, national integration, and social harmony. In this context, the Constitution of India plays a central and indispensable role in managing ethnic and religious diversity by providing a normative framework for equality, freedom, and coexistence (Austin, 1966).

The Indian Constitution, adopted in 1950, was framed in the aftermath of colonial rule and the traumatic experience of Partition, which was marked by intense communal violence and mass displacement along religious lines. The Constituent Assembly was acutely aware of the dangers posed by religious majoritarianism, ethnic exclusion, and cultural homogenisation. Consequently, the Constitution was deliberately designed as a pluralistic and inclusive document that seeks to accommodate diversity while preserving the nation's unity and integrity (Granville

Austin, 1999). Unlike assimilationist models, the Indian constitutional vision is premised on the recognition and protection of difference within a common civic framework.

At the core of India's constitutional approach to diversity lies the principle of equality. Articles 14, 15, and 16 guarantee equality before the law, prohibit discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth, and ensure equal opportunity in public employment. These provisions establish a constitutional commitment to non-discrimination while simultaneously acknowledging the deep-rooted social hierarchies that characterise Indian society (Basu, 2015). Importantly, the Constitution goes beyond formal equality by permitting affirmative action for socially and educationally backward classes, Scheduled Castes, and Scheduled Tribes, thereby adopting a substantive conception of equality aimed at correcting historical injustices (Austin, 2010).

Religious freedom constitutes another foundational pillar of constitutional governance in India. Articles 25 to 28 guarantee freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practise, and propagate religion, subject to public order, morality, and health. These provisions reflect India's commitment to religious pluralism and the peaceful

coexistence of diverse faiths. At the same time, the Constitution empowers the state to regulate or restrict religious practices that are inconsistent with fundamental rights or social reform, thereby striking a balance between individual religious liberty and collective constitutional values (Bhargava, 2010). This balance has been central to India's model of secularism, which differs from strict separationist approaches by maintaining a principled engagement with religion rather than complete state indifference.

The protection of minority rights is a distinctive feature of the Indian constitutional framework. Articles 29 and 30 provide cultural and educational rights to religious and linguistic minorities, enabling them to preserve their languages, scripts, cultures, and institutions. These safeguards are crucial for preventing cultural assimilation and ensuring that minority communities retain a sense of security and belonging within the Indian state. By constitutionally recognising group rights alongside individual rights, India adopts a multicultural approach that acknowledges diversity as a permanent and valuable feature of national life rather than a temporary challenge to be overcome.

Federalism also plays a significant role in managing India's ethnic and linguistic diversity. The reorganisation of states on linguistic lines, beginning in the 1950s, exemplifies the constitutional accommodation of regional and cultural identities. Special provisions under Articles 371A–371J further recognise the unique social, cultural, and customary practices of certain regions, particularly in the North-East. These asymmetrical federal arrangements reflect the Constitution's flexibility in responding to diverse regional aspirations while maintaining national unity (Tillin, 2013).

The judiciary has been instrumental in interpreting and enforcing constitutional provisions related to ethnic and religious diversity. Through landmark judgments, the Supreme Court of India has elaborated doctrines such as secularism as a basic feature of the Constitution, constitutional morality, and harmonious construction of rights. Judicial interventions have often served as a check against majoritarian impulses and executive excesses, reinforcing the Constitution's role as a guardian of pluralism (Baxi, 2014). At the same time, judicial decisions also reveal the tensions and complexities involved in balancing religious autonomy with constitutional values of equality and dignity.

Despite its comprehensive constitutional framework, India continues to face significant challenges in managing ethnic and religious diversity. Communal polarisation, identity-based politics, and uneven implementation of

constitutional guarantees often undermine the promise of equality and secularism. Nevertheless, the Constitution remains the primary instrument for addressing these challenges. Its emphasis on justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity provides a normative compass for navigating diversity in a democratic society.

In this backdrop, the present study examines the role of the Indian Constitution in managing ethnic and religious diversity. It seeks to analyse constitutional principles, institutional mechanisms, and judicial interpretations that collectively contribute to the accommodation of plural identities while safeguarding national unity. The study underscores that the success of India's democratic experiment depends fundamentally on the continued commitment to constitutional values in both law and practice.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Khosla (2020) argues that India's Constitution was designed to *create* democratic citizenship amid deep social heterogeneity. He shows how universal adult franchise, rights, and institutional design were meant to integrate diverse religious and ethnic publics into a shared constitutional project, making constitutionalism a tool of nation-building rather than a mere limitation of power.

Govind (2023) critically examines secularism's constitutional status after *S.R. Bommai*, focusing on how courts justify secularism as part of the Constitution's "basic structure." The article helps explain why judicial doctrine is central to managing religious diversity—both by restraining communal state action and by setting standards for constitutional reasoning on religion–state relations.

III. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Meaning of Ethnicity, Religion, and Multiculturalism

Ethnicity refers to a shared sense of identity based on common ancestry, language, culture, traditions, or historical experience. Ethnic identity is socially constructed and evolves over time through collective memory and group consciousness. In plural societies like India, ethnicity often intersects with language, region, and caste, shaping political mobilisation and claims for recognition (Horowitz, 1989).

Religion denotes an organised system of beliefs, practices, rituals, and moral codes relating to the sacred or divine. Beyond personal faith, religion serves as a powerful social institution that shapes norms, law, and public life. In constitutional democracies, religion becomes a critical

category for protecting rights, particularly freedom of conscience, equality, and minority safeguards (Bhargava, 2010).

Multiculturalism is both a descriptive condition and a normative framework. Descriptively, it recognises the coexistence of diverse cultural, ethnic, and religious groups within a single political community. Normatively, it supports public recognition, accommodation, and protection of cultural differences through law and institutions, rather than enforced assimilation (Kymlicka, 1995). Multiculturalism thus seeks to reconcile diversity with democratic citizenship.

Constitutionalism and Diversity Governance

Constitutionalism refers to governance based on constitutional supremacy, limited state power, protection of fundamental rights, and adherence to the rule of law. In diverse societies, constitutionalism provides mechanisms to manage difference through equality, non-discrimination, minority rights, federalism, and judicial review (Ghai, 2000).

Diversity governance under constitutionalism involves balancing unity with pluralism by institutionalising legal safeguards that prevent majoritarian domination while enabling peaceful coexistence. Constitutions act as instruments of integration by recognising diversity as a permanent feature of society and embedding pluralism within the framework of democratic governance (Khosla, 2020).

Historical Context of Diversity and Constitutional Development

Diversity in Pre-Constitutional India

India's social landscape prior to the Constitution was marked by plural ethnic, linguistic, and religious traditions deeply rooted in its historical evolution. The subcontinent encompassed a mosaic of kingdoms and communities with distinct customs and belief systems, creating a plural society long before colonial rule. Colonial governance, especially under the British, further institutionalised identities through administrative categorisations and legal pluralism, inadvertently reinforcing fault lines and communal identities. These historical dynamics underscored the necessity for a democratic constitutional order that could reconcile diversity with political unity in the post-colonial period (Arushi, 2024).

Evolution of Constitutional Responses to Pluralism

The Constitution of India emerged as an inclusive framework crafted to manage this deep diversity through principles of equality, secularism, and justice. Anchored in the Preamble's commitment to a *sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic republic*, the constitutional project

sought to secure liberty of thought, belief, and worship for all, reflecting plural commitments (Indian Constitution Preamble). Foundational jurisprudence and rights protections—especially in Part III (Fundamental Rights)—aim to prevent discrimination and promote equal citizenship (sec. Articles 14–16; Articles 25–30*). Recent scholarship emphasises that constitutional secularism and pluralism are legally protected through these guarantees, even as debates around their interpretation continue (James Halte, 2023).

Judicial interpretation has further shaped the constitutional response to pluralism, balancing individual freedoms with communal rights and compelling the state to remain neutral toward religious differences. Cases involving religious expression, minority rights, and secular governance illustrate how the Constitution adapts to evolving social contexts while affirming its pluralistic ethos.

Constitutional Principles Governing Diversity

Equality and Non-Discrimination

Equality is the foundational principle through which the Indian Constitution governs ethnic and religious diversity. Articles 14, 15, and 16 guarantee equality before the law and prohibit discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth. Contemporary constitutional scholarship emphasises that the Indian Constitution adopts substantive equality, permitting affirmative action to address historical and structural disadvantages faced by marginalised communities (Khosla, 2020). Equality thus functions not merely as formal neutrality but as an instrument for inclusive citizenship in a deeply stratified society.

Secularism and Freedom of Religion

Secularism is a core constitutional principle that regulates religious diversity in India. Articles 25–28 guarantee freedom of conscience and the right to profess, practise, and propagate religion, subject to public order, morality, and health. Indian secularism differs from strict separationist models by adopting a framework of principled state engagement, allowing regulation of religious practices to uphold constitutional values such as equality and reform. Judicial interpretations have consistently affirmed secularism as part of the Constitution's basic structure, reinforcing state neutrality and plural coexistence.

Dignity, Fraternity, and Social Justice

The Preamble's emphasis on dignity, fraternity, and social justice provides the moral foundation for diversity governance. Constitutional dignity requires respect for individual and group identities, while fraternity promotes

unity amid difference. Social justice, achieved through redistributive and protective measures, seeks to integrate historically excluded groups into the constitutional order. Recent scholarship highlights that these principles collectively prevent majoritarian dominance and sustain democratic pluralism in India.

Fundamental Rights and Protection of Minorities

Cultural and Religious Rights

The Indian Constitution's Part III guarantees cultural and religious protections essential for managing diversity. Articles 25–28 secure freedom of conscience and religion by allowing citizens to practise, profess, and propagate their faith, subject to public order, morality, and health, and require the state to treat all religions impartially. Articles 29–30 specifically protect distinct cultural identities: Article 29 enables any citizen group to conserve its language, script, or culture without state discrimination, while Article 30 empowers religious and linguistic minorities to establish and administer educational institutions to preserve their heritage.

Linguistic and Educational Rights

Article 29 applies to any citizen section with a unique culture or language, restricting state interference in its preservation and protecting entry into state-funded institutions on non-discriminatory grounds. Article 30's educational rights underscore minority autonomy by safeguarding their ability to run institutions of their choice, though reasonable state regulation for standards remains permissible. Judicial interpretation has reinforced the autonomy of minority institutions while balancing inclusive educational standards and state oversight.

Protection Against Majoritarianism

Constitutional safeguards aim to shield minorities from majoritarian pressures by embedding non-discrimination and cultural autonomy within justiciable. However, scholars note ongoing challenges in actual enforcement due to uneven political will, socio-economic disparities, and communal tensions that can weaken these protections. Institutional mechanisms, including the judiciary and policy interventions, play key roles in upholding constitutional guarantees in practice.

Federalism, Autonomy, and Decentralisation

Territorial Accommodation of Diversity

Indian federalism has been a central constitutional mechanism for accommodating ethnic, linguistic, and regional diversity. Unlike classical federal models, the Indian Constitution adopts an asymmetrical and flexible federal structure, allowing differential treatment of states to respond to diverse historical and cultural contexts. The

linguistic reorganisation of states and the continuing creation of new states illustrate how territorial restructuring functions as a democratic response to identity-based demands. Contemporary scholarship highlights that Indian federalism balances unity and diversity by combining strong central authority with space for regional self-governance, thereby reducing separatist pressures while preserving national integrity.

Special Provisions for Ethnic or Religious Groups

The Constitution incorporates special provisions under Articles 371A–371J, particularly for states in the North-East and other historically distinct regions. These provisions recognise customary laws, land rights, and social practices of tribal and ethnic communities, reflecting constitutional sensitivity to group autonomy. Scholars argue that such differentiated constitutional arrangements are essential for protecting minority identities and preventing cultural homogenisation in a majoritarian democracy. Decentralisation through Panchayati Raj Institutions and autonomous district councils under the Sixth Schedule further strengthens local self-rule and participatory governance. Recent studies emphasise that while these arrangements enhance inclusion, their effectiveness depends on genuine political decentralisation and consistent constitutional enforcement.

Affirmative Action and Inclusive Constitutional Policies

i. Constitutional Basis of Reservations

The Indian Constitution expressly permits affirmative action through Articles 15(4), 15(5), and 16(4), enabling the State to provide reservations for socially and educationally backward classes, Scheduled Castes, and Scheduled Tribes to address historical exclusion.

ii. Reservations as Special Measures

Reservations in education, public employment, and political representation function as special constitutional measures aimed at correcting systemic disadvantages rather than granting privileges, reflecting the Constitution's commitment to distributive justice.

iii. Substantive Equality Framework

Indian constitutional jurisprudence recognises **substantive equality**, which allows differential treatment to achieve real equality. This approach moves beyond formal non-discrimination to address structural inequalities embedded in caste, ethnicity, and social hierarchies.

iv. Judicial Safeguards and Limits

The judiciary has upheld affirmative action while imposing limits such as the exclusion of the “creamy layer” and the 50% ceiling principle, ensuring that reservations remain proportionate and aligned with constitutional equality.

v. *Social Inclusion and Representation*

Affirmative action policies have expanded representation of marginalised groups in education, governance, and employment, promoting social inclusion and enhancing democratic participation within diverse societies.

vi. *Dynamic and Evolving Policy Tool*

Affirmative action in India is not static; it evolves through constitutional amendments, judicial interpretation, and policy reforms, reflecting changing social realities and the ongoing pursuit of inclusive constitutional governance.

IV. ROLE OF JUDICIARY IN MANAGING DIVERSITY

Constitutional Interpretation

The judiciary plays a central role in managing ethnic and religious diversity in India by interpreting and enforcing constitutional provisions in a plural society. As the guardian of the Constitution, the Supreme Court has developed interpretive doctrines that balance individual rights, group identities, and constitutional values such as equality, secularism, and fraternity. Through purposive and progressive interpretation, courts have ensured that fundamental rights are not applied mechanically but are adapted to India’s complex social realities.

Judicial interpretation has been particularly significant in giving substantive meaning to secularism and minority rights. By recognising secularism as part of the **basic structure of the Constitution**, the judiciary has limited the scope of majoritarian political action and reinforced state neutrality in religious matters. Courts have also applied the doctrine of **harmonious construction** to reconcile religious freedom with other fundamental rights, especially equality and dignity. This approach protects religious practices while subjecting them to constitutional scrutiny when they conflict with public order, social reform, or gender justice.

In matters concerning ethnic and cultural diversity, judicial oversight has strengthened constitutional federalism and minority autonomy. The courts have interpreted Articles 29 and 30 expansively to protect the linguistic and educational rights of minorities, while permitting reasonable regulation to maintain academic standards.

Judicial review has thus acted as a stabilising force, mediating tensions between unity and diversity.

However, scholars note that the judiciary’s role is not without challenges. Inconsistent reasoning, delays, and heightened politicisation of identity-related disputes sometimes weaken judicial effectiveness. Despite these limitations, the judiciary remains a crucial institution for protecting pluralism and constitutional morality in India. Its interpretive authority ensures that diversity is governed by constitutional principles rather than shifting political majorities.

Landmark Judicial Decisions

i. *Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala (1973)*

Established the *basic structure doctrine*, ensuring that core constitutional values such as secularism, equality, and minority rights cannot be diluted by parliamentary majorities.

ii. *S. R. Bommai v. Union of India (1994)*

Declared secularism to be part of the basic structure of the Constitution and limited the misuse of Article 356, strengthening constitutional protection against communal governance.

iii. *St. Stephen’s College v. University of Delhi (1992)*

Affirmed the autonomy of minority educational institutions under Article 30 while allowing reasonable state regulation, balancing minority rights with equality principles.

iv. *Indian Young Lawyers Association v. State of Kerala (2018) (Sabarimala case)*

Held that religious practices violating constitutional morality and gender equality are subject to judicial review, reinforcing dignity and substantive equality over exclusionary customs.

Limitations and Challenges

i. *Majoritarian Political Pressures*

Democratic majoritarianism sometimes undermines constitutional protections, as electoral politics may prioritise dominant religious or ethnic narratives over minority rights.

ii. *Inconsistent Judicial Interpretation*

Divergent judicial approaches to secularism, religious freedom, and constitutional morality can create uncertainty and weaken uniform protection of diversity.

iii. *Implementation Deficit*

Constitutional guarantees often suffer from weak enforcement at the administrative level, limiting their impact on the ground realities faced by minority communities.

iv. Communal Polarisation and Identity Politics

Increasing communal polarisation and identity-based mobilisation challenge constitutional ideals of fraternity and social cohesion.

v. Centre–State Tensions in Federal Governance

Centralised decision-making can dilute federal autonomy, particularly in culturally distinct regions, weakening constitutional accommodation of diversity.

vi. Socio-Economic Inequalities

Persistent poverty, educational disparities, and economic marginalisation among minority groups reduce the effectiveness of legal and constitutional safeguards.

vii. Misuse of Religion and Culture

Religious and cultural symbols are sometimes politicised, blurring the line between legitimate cultural expression and exclusionary practices.

viii. Delayed Judicial Remedies

Prolonged litigation and case backlogs restrict timely access to constitutional justice for minorities and marginalised groups.

ix. Erosion of Constitutional Morality

Declining public commitment to constitutional values such as tolerance, pluralism, and fraternity weakens the normative force of diversity governance.

Way Forward

Strengthening Pluralism

Strengthening pluralism requires reaffirming the constitutional commitment to diversity as a foundational value rather than a contingent political choice. The Indian Constitution already provides an inclusive framework through secularism, federalism, minority rights, and substantive equality. However, effective pluralism depends on consistent enforcement and institutional commitment. Scholars argue that pluralism must be actively sustained through inclusive public policies, protection of minority institutions, and respect for cultural autonomy within constitutional limits (Bhargava, 2010). Reforms should focus on strengthening federal decentralisation, empowering local self-governing institutions, and ensuring meaningful participation of marginalised communities in decision-making processes. Additionally, constitutional interpretation should continue to adopt a purposive

approach that recognises diversity as integral to national unity rather than a threat to it (Khosla, 2020).

Enhancing Constitutional Morality and Tolerance

Constitutional morality plays a crucial role in translating constitutional text into lived democratic practice. It requires all state institutions, particularly the executive and legislature, to act in accordance with constitutional values of equality, dignity, fraternity, and tolerance, even when such actions are politically inconvenient. Judicial discourse in recent years has emphasised constitutional morality as a safeguard against majoritarian impulses and exclusionary practices. Enhancing constitutional morality necessitates civic education, judicial accountability, and public discourse rooted in constitutional values. Promoting tolerance also requires countering misinformation, communal polarisation, and identity-based hostility through law, education, and institutional neutrality. Ultimately, constitutional reforms must aim not only at legal compliance but at nurturing a constitutional culture where diversity is respected, dissent is protected, and plural coexistence is seen as essential to India's democratic future.

V. CONCLUSION

This study finds that the Constitution of India functions as the primary and most effective instrument for managing ethnic and religious diversity through a carefully balanced framework of equality, secularism, federalism, and minority protection. The analysis demonstrates that constitutional guarantees of fundamental rights, particularly cultural, religious, linguistic, and educational rights, provide essential safeguards against discrimination and majoritarian domination. Judicial interpretation has played a decisive role in reinforcing secularism as a basic feature, advancing substantive equality, and applying constitutional morality to protect dignity and inclusion. The study also finds that asymmetrical federal arrangements and decentralised governance have helped accommodate regional and ethnic aspirations within the constitutional order. However, persistent challenges—such as implementation gaps, political polarisation, and uneven enforcement—limit the full realisation of constitutional ideals. Overall, the findings confirm that while India's constitutional framework is normatively robust and institutionally comprehensive, its effectiveness in managing diversity ultimately depends on sustained judicial vigilance, political commitment, and public adherence to constitutional values of pluralism, fraternity, and tolerance.

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