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Original Research

The Power of Female Speech in two Medieval Tales: A Comparative Study

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Abstract The story has been a fundamental vehicle for teaching throughout history, especially during the medieval period. Two enlightening medieval collections of stories are the Eastern *The Arabian Nights* and the Western *Lais of Marie de France*. Several Comparative Literature programs teach these two literary works in their courses. The tales within these collections function for the two female storytellers, Scheherazade and Marie de France, to educate their political authorities through the positive influence of their speech. This paper examines the power of speech in convincing Medieval rulers to change their attitudes toward women. Throughout these two collections of stories, we find several types of indirect persuasive methods of speech, such as cause and effect, logic, evidence, seduction, and emotion, used by the characters to affect their audience positively. The target of the paper is to discover how these two female storytellers make use of the duality of speech and quick convention in a way that supports their efforts to change a powerful ruler's attitude toward women and to convince him that speech, in general, and women's speech, in particular, are valuable things.

Keywords Comparison · Arabian Nights · Lais of Marie de France · Medieval woman

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1. Introduction

The two collections of stories, *The Arabian Nights* (or *One Thousand and One Nights*) by an unknown author and the *Lais of Marie de France* by Marie de France, are similar in several respects. The tales in the two collections enable the two storytellers, Scheherazade and Marie de France, to persuade their audience of the core messages of their stories. Scheherazade, the narrator of *Arabian Nights*, aims to change King Shahryar's attitude toward women to release Muslim women from a crisis that affects the entire city, whereas Marie de France, the narrator of the *Lais*, seeks to convince a powerful audience, referred to in the prologue as "nobles reis" (p. 2)—"noble king" (Burgess & Busby 1988: 41)—of her writing talent. Scheherazade uses her storytelling talent to narrate marvelous tales to raise questions in the king's mind about women and their right to exist on an equal basis with men. Her aim is to relieve Shahryar of his psychological dilemma[1] and to change his attitude toward women in a way that will lead to happiness and harmony throughout the kingdom. On the other hand, Marie de France, to achieve her purpose, employs her storytelling talent to prove to her lord that women can be great storytellers.

2. Materials and methods

The two stories selected to be models for the present study are Scheherazade's tale of "Ma'aruf the Cobbler"[2] and the third story of the *Lais of Marie de France,* "Le Fresne." Each of these stories is narrated within a broader context linked to the challenge that the female storytellers have faced. Scheherazade seeks to change King Shahryar's attitude toward women to compel him to release the Muslim women and herself from a crisis, whereas Marie de France's purpose in her *Lais* is to convince the king of her writing talent as a woman. The storytellers use their talents of persuasion. Scheherazade, in her long journey, attempts to use female characters to convince King Shahryar that not all women are the same, and not all of them are unfaithful like his previous wife. However, Marie de France aims to convince her king that writing talent is not monopolized by men and that she, as a woman, has the right and talent to re-tell stories in a rhetorically innovative manner. Accordingly, the two selected stories cannot be analyzed apart from the framing story of *The Arabian Nights'* framing story and the Lais of Marie de France's (1995) prologue.

The comparative approach taken in the present study will analyze separately the depiction of the power of speech in convincing the audience to change their attitude toward a certain issue. Although this comparison involves the empowerment of women, their goals, and perhaps subtly different strategies, the aim is to reveal how the two female storytellers manage the power of speech in a way that supports

[1] After learning that his wife betrayed him, Shahryar decided to marry a virgin girl every night and have her killed in the morning to avoid being betrayed by women. Scheherazade insists on marrying the king, and when night falls, she tells him a story (Unknown 2007, 1: 2–23).

[2] The version of the English translation of this story is: Unknown (1973: 372–405). The Arabic version: Unknown (1999b, 4: 403–438).

their different projects of changing a powerful audience's attitude toward women in general. I will begin with a general discussion of the differences between the contexts in which these stories are told, then analyze, first, Scheherazade's "The Tale of Ma'aruf the Cobbler" to show how speech could be more powerful than any other kind of power, and, second, Marie de France's "Le Fresne" to show how this *lai* employs the power of language through the voice of a woman to prove that not all women are bad narrators. The two storytellers resist the idea of the stereotype that all women are the same. The target is to discover how the two female storytellers make use of speech as a way to support their efforts.

The events of both stories are not created by the two storytellers, Scheherazade and Marie de France, but are re-narrated by them for a purpose related to a larger project. These two projects differ in many respects but are similar in their treatment or depiction of the power of speech. This paper seeks to show the degree to which these two tales are similar, especially in how they realize the final project's aim.

Several previous studies shed light on some aspects of the similarity between the themes of *The Arabian Nights* and that of medieval and premodern literature. In his article, "The Study of The Social Stereotyping of Jews in *The Merchant of Venice* and *The Arabian Nights*," Binmayaba (2016) compares two Eastern and Western literary texts: *The Arabian Nights* and Shakespeare's *the Merchant of Venice*. He examines the different depictions of Jewish characters in two various literary works, one from the European Renaissance and the other from the medieval East. He compares descriptions of Jewish characters in William Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* and *The Arabian Nights* to reveal the opposing views the two works provide of the internal aspects of their Jewish characters and their behavior toward others. He argues that the depiction of this character in Shakespeare's play bears resemblances, on the surface, to the representation of Jewish characters in *The Arabian Nights* (*One Thousand and One Nights*). Still, the two works differ at a deeper level. His comparison focuses on the social relations between the Jewish people and society and the intimate relationships among the Jewish characters within their families and communities. Binmayaba states that the differences between the Jewish characters in these two works can be interpreted as a reflection of how people of the medieval and Renaissance eras were accustomed to seeing Jews and the relation between the Jew, his society, and his woman. As for the similarity between the two works, he argues that it is possible that Shakespeare may have been indirectly influenced by *The Arabian Nights* in depicting the external image of the Jew as represented in *The Arabian Nights* and used it in a different context.

As for the theme of women in *The Arabian Nights*, Grossman (1980) discusses in her "Infidelity and Fiction: The Discovery of Women's Subjectivity in Arabian Nights" women's subjectivity in *The Arabian Nights* to show that women do not have the evil subjective motivations they are portrayed as having in *The Arabian Nights*. She argues that women are considered evil just because their true self has never had a chance to be free. Grossman says, "Shahrazad has offered the King massive amounts of evidence for the existence of a variety of subjective motivations in men and women alike" (p. 125).

In addition, Shamma (2017), in "Women and Slaves: Gender Politics in The Arabian Nights," argues that *The Arabian Nights* can be seen as an extended, layered affair about mysteries, especially the inherent dangers of female sexuality. It draws on

an interpretive strategy used by male storytellers, reviewers, and anecdote-checkers to attempt to understand, address, and grapple with the disturbing prospect of female sexual empowerment and the consequent loss of masculine power. Shamma explains how the frame story of Shahryar and Scheherazade relates a threat to the institution of marriage, uniting two groups subjugated by the socio-political system: women and enslaved people. He then explores how this framework tale is reproduced, adapted, and refracted in Scheherazade's stories. He says, "What emerges is a complex network of motifs, tropes, and narrative units that permeates the collection, forming a unifying thread and elaborating the central dynamic of the narrative—the homosocial order in response to the dread of women's sexual empowerment—from various angles and in different contexts" (p. 241). For Shamma, the epilogue of the collections is the reconciliation of the patriarchal fear of female sexual empowerment with family law, in which the role of women is indispensable.

On the other side, modern scholars consider Marie de France among the most prominent literary voices of the 12th century and the first woman of letters to write in French. In "The Prologue to the Lais of Marie de France and Medieval Poetics," Leo Spitzer examines Marie's poetic style in her Prologue of the *lais*. He argues that Marie was intentional in her role as a poet, philosopher, and theologian in writing the *lais*. He talks about her reference to the classical model of grammarian Priscian among the philosophers, reinforcing an approach of biblical exegesis in her text.

In a chapter entitled "Aesop's Cock and Marie's Hen: Gendered Authorship in Text and Image in Manuscripts of Marie de France's Fables," Sandra Hindman sheds light on Marie de France's creation, use, and patronage of works and the representation of women in them that depicts the relationships between women and books in medieval art. Hindman tries to show Marie de France's poetics and their reception by her readers in her two works: the *Lais* (1160–70) and the *Fables* (1167–89). She examines the textual and pictorial poetics in Marie's manuscripts of the *Fables* to show how the manuscripts give visual form to the concept of a *translation studii* that is not only feminine, but also conveys the Christian religious view.

Likewise, one multiauthored work that provides essential studied focus on Marie de France's three works: the *Lais*, the *Fables* (or *Isopet*), *L'Espurgatoire Seint Patriz*, and *La Vie Seinte Audree*, is "A Companion to Marie de France" (2011) edited by Logan E. Whalen. In the first chapter of this volume, "The Prologues and Epilogues of Marie de France," Whalen discusses the prologues and epilogues of these works and the opening and closing remarks of the *Lais* to prove how they frame the work and serve some rhetorical purposes. He explores how Marie, in all her prologues, especially the 12 stories of the *Lais*, reflects themes found within the text, such as adventure and memory, the core themes of medieval French romance.

Additionally, Whalen states that the tales in the *Lais* illustrate love as a vital concern and a problematic force in the lives of medieval noblemen and women. Marie de France also, somehow or other, juxtaposes life and death, fecundity, and sterility and develops the story to fit her plan.[3] Whalen says that Marie de France was "the first author to compose narrative *Lais*, brief tales in octosyllabic rhymed

[3] Whalen, Logan E. "The prologues and epilogues of Marie de France," in A companion to Marie de France (Leiden: Brill, 2011), pp. 1–30: 7, 14

couplets based on oral stories she claims to have heard from the Bretons…, whom she often mentions in the opening and closing comments of individual *lais*."[4]

Unlike these previous studies and other studies that focus on *The Arabian Nights* and *Lais of Marie de France*, the present study focuses on the power of the female speech in the two literary works to compare an aspect of the female image in the western *Lais of Marie de France* with its eastern counterpart, *The Arabian Nights,* to shed light on the depiction of the female voice in these two medieval works.

3. Discussion

3.1. Historical context

In their introduction to the *Lais of Marie de France*, Burgess and Busby (1988) notice, "Marie is anxious to make herself known to her audience and to stress that she does not intend to squander her talents" (p. 9). We also know that the surviving manuscript of Marie de France's *Lais* was written down in Old French (Burgess & Busby 1988: 7). The core of *The Arabian Nights* was translated into Western Europe by Antoine Galland (d. 1715 C.E.) in 1704 (Irwin 2009: 42). Scheherazade concludes almost all of her tales with the mention of her name, saying,

> And Scheherazade noticed that dawn was approaching and stopped telling her tale [the permissible speech] (The Story of King Shahryar, p. 36; Shahryar 1999a: 13).

And we find Marie de France, in a similar fashion, alluding to herself in the first lay saying, Oëz, seignurs, ke dit Marie (1995: 3)

hear, my lords, the words of Marie (1988: 43).

However, the specific date of both *The Arabian Nights* and the *Lais*, the exact identities of their authors,[5] and the attribution of the complete literary works to these writers are unknown. The prologue of the *Lais* is most likely a part of her literary work. Freeman (1987) claims, "Marie is the author of the twelve short narrative poems, with General Prologue, of Harley MS 978, commonly referred to as the 'Lais of Marie de France'" (p. 5).

We should keep in mind three major differences between The Arabian Nights and the Lais: first, The Arabian Nights is fictional while the Lais is mostly historical; second, Scheherazade and her king are characters within a narrative frame narrated by an unknown author, or authors, while Marie de France is most likely both the author of the entire Lais and the narrator of the tales; third, Scheherazade addresses a king within her narrative work while Marie de France addresses a powerful audience outside the work. However, despite these three major differences, the argument in this paper focuses on the techniques of persuasion in the two stories within the literary text without evoking the historical context of the two literary works. For example, considering the prologue of the Lais as part of the literary text,

[4] Whalen, Logan E. "The prologues and epilogues of Marie de France," 16

the audience referred to in the text as "noble king" is the equivalent of King Shahryar in The Arabian Nights because both tales are directed to a similar audience, a king. Therefore, it is not important for the present argument to identify the exact external audience that is mentioned in the Lais' prologue or to know if Marie de France addresses a real character, such as King Henry II of England (d. 1189 C.E.), or only an imaginary king.

In addition, the exact identity of Scheherazade and Marie de France is unknown to us, although there is some evidence. Despite of the intriguing efforts to determine the original author of Arabian Nights, Irwin (2009) emphasizes the fact that "the history of the textual transmission of the Nights has been muddied by forgers and compilers of pastiche manuscripts of the stories" (p. 42). Similarly, Marie compiled the collection of the Lais for a king mentioned in some medieval sources. Bloch (1999) says about the identity of Marie that "in the absence of any further information about Marie, in the face of her almost complete anonymity, the traits associated with her allow us to take for granted only the fact that Marie de France was a woman" (p. 42). However, in my argument, these historical indications of the real author of The Arabian Nights and of Marie de France's Lais are not as important as the fact that the two storytellers of the tales within the literary texts are women named Scheherazade and Marie.

3.2. Analysis

Despite the uncertainty about the origins of these two collections of stories, they significantly impact on audiences throughout later periods. Both storytellers are depicted as educated women belonging to noble families. Scheherazade is depicted in the frame story as follows:

> The older one, Scheherazade, had read the books, annals, and legends of former kings, and the stories, lessons, and adventures of famous men. Indeed, it was said that she had collected a thousand history books about ancient peoples and rulers.[5] She had perused the works of the poets and knew them by heart. (The Story of King Shahryar and his Brother, 13; Shahryar 1995: 9).

Likewise, Marie knows Latin and French and knows religious and lyric poetry. She says in her Prologue,

> Pur ceo començai a penser
> De aucune bone estoire faire
> E de latin en romaunz traire (1995: 1).
> [I begin to think of working on some good story and translating a Latin text into French] (1988: 41).[6]

[5] The Arabic text does not mention the following sentence, "She had perused the works of the poets and knew them by heart." Still, the text indicates that besides collecting a thousand history books about ancient peoples and rulers, she had compiled the works of poets (Shahryar 1999a: 9).

[6] It also can be translated as "I began to think of working on a good story and translating a Latin text into

Burgess and Busby (1988) point out Marie de France's education,

> She was obviously a good linguist and acquired a sound knowledge of English before translating the fables. She was also fully conversant with the life and aspirations of the nobility of her time. Her education could well have been obtained in a convent and her knowledge of court life from her upbringing and personal experiences in England (p. 18).

Their acquired knowledge encourages the two women to narrate their stories to the highest political powers of their time. Both storytellers can speak or remain silent; but their great knowledge motivates them to speak out. Scheherazade asks her father to marry her to the king and uses her storytelling talent to change the king's attitude towards Muslim women. Marie de France, on the other hand, initiates the prologue of her *Lais* by saying,

> Ki Deus ad dune escïence
> E de parler bon' eloquence
> Ne s'en deit taisir ne celer,
> Ainz se deit volunters mustrer (1995: 1).

[Anyone who has received from God the gift of knowledge and true eloquence has a duty not to remain silent: rather one should be happy to reveal such talents] (1988: 41).

Another similarity between these two collections of stories is the time, specifically nighttime, during which Scheherazade's tales were narrated, and Marie de France's stories were composed. Scheherazade's tales are narrated to the king from sunset until dawn. Marie emphasizes in the prologue that she stayed awake at night,

> Soventes fiez en ai veillié (1995: 2).
> [worked on them late into the night] (1988: 41).

For Scheherazade, nighttime is the only chance for her to avoid death the next morning. She must keep the king in suspense each night with her narrative in order to avoid the fate of the previous women. For Marie, in contrast, night represents a time of quietness and meditation during which she puts tales into verse and composes poems. However, unlike Marie de France, Scheherazade focuses on elements of suspense and excitement in her tales more than on the beauty of the language itself.

Despite the general difference in the aims of these storytellers, I will discuss similarities in how they succeed in changing their powerful audiences' opinions of women. The following discussion will move from the characteristics and the historical context of these two collections to analyze, separately, Scheherazade's and Marie de France's treatments of the power of speech in two selected tales: "The Tale of Ma'aruf the Cobbler" (*The Arabian Nights*) and **"**Le Fresne" (*The Lais of Marie de France*).

French."

3.1.1. "The Tale of Ma'aruf the Cobbler"

The tale of Ma'aruf can be divided into three stages: The Cairo stage begins when Ma'aruf is living with his wife Fatimah and ends when he is carried by the Jinnee to another city to find refuge from his wife; the second stage begins when he meets his old friend Ali in the city and ends when he finds the treasure; and the third stage begins after finding the treasure and lasts until the end of the story. Ma'aruf has a different character in each in these three stages, each of which is reflected by a difference in the way he speaks. His speech dramatically drives the story's events and plays a significant role in changing his social status.

In the first stage, Ma'aruf is a sensitive man abused by his wife, Fatimah. This woman is described as a "shrew" because of her malicious speech against others, especially her husband Ma'aruf. In this initial stage, Ma'aruf is a listener more than a speaker. He silently tolerates his wife's harsh speech at home, in the street, in the court, and, later, in the Governor's Court. He does not dare to stop his wife or reply to her malicious verbal attacks on him. All men who meet Ma'aruf in this stage conclude that he is a sad and abused man. Then, a pastry cook offers him the traditional Arab dessert *kunafah* after hearing the story about his wife. Likewise, Judge Cadi gives Ma'aruf a quarter of a dinar to buy the *kunafah* for his wife. In this stage, his speech is less prominent than his miserable situation with his wife.

The tale of Ma'aruf cannot be isolated from the frame story, "The Story of Shahryar and his Brother," especially when we remember that it is the final story in the Arabic version of *The Arabian Nights*. By concluding her tales with Ma'aruf's tale, Scheherazade depicts a different relationship between a man and a woman. Unlike "The Story of King Shahryar and his Brother," as well as many of Scheherazade's tales in which men have power over women and women are quasi-silent, this first stage in Ma'aruf's tale presents the dominance of the voice of a woman over a man who is depicted as her victim. The situation of Ma'aruf in this first stage with his first wife is similar to that situation of all Muslim women in the frame story who remain silent and accept being victims. However, this sad situation changes when Ma'aruf discovers the power of speech in the second stage of his tale, after leaving Cairo to enter the big city and meet his old friend Ali, the son of Ahmed, the perfume seller.

Ali gives Ma'aruf advice that changes his life entirely. He teaches him what he should and should not to the people of this new city. Ali says, addressing Ma'aruf,

> If you tell the people of this city that you are a poor cobbler, that you have run away from a nagging wife and left Cairo only Yesterday, no one will believe you and you will become the laughing-stock of the whole town. If you tell them that you were carried here by a jinnee, you will frighten everyone away and they will think: "this man is possessed with an evil spirit." No, my friend, this will not do [Arabic version: "and they would say: Whoever comes close to him will be harmed, and this will be a bad rumor"] (The Tale of Ma'aruf the Cobbler, 379; Hikāyat Ma'rūf al-Eskhāfī, 409).

Ali's advice is only about speech, not how Ma'aruf can learn a real craft to make money. Comparing this tale to that of "The Porter and the Three Ladies of Baghdad," for example, we find the tailor, in the porter's tale, teaches the second kalandar the craft of chopping wood to earn his daily bread when the latter arrives at a new city during his journey to Hind. Although the second kalendar is an expert in theoretical sciences, such as art, science, math, and orthography, the tailor tells him that he cannot make money from these sciences and must learn a handicraft. On the other hand, Ma'aruf knows the handicraft of patching old shoes, but Ali guides him in the different craft of speech. His advice is to avoid saying anything about his bad situation, including his past craft, although it is the truth, to talk instead about his flourishing present and future, although that is not the truth. Ali used this verbal technique previously in a successful way. This advice changes Ma'aruf's life entirely and forever.

In this second stage of Ma'aruf's story, Scheherazade sends a message to King Shahryar about the difference between acting and speaking. Ma'aruf is acting as a perfect husband, but while his perfect act with his wife in the first stage is presented as an act that leads him to a worse life, conversely, his craft of speaking in this second stage after meeting his old friend Ali is presented as something that leads him to a better present and gives him hope for the future. Both Scheherazade, in the frame story, and Ma'aruf, in his story within the frame story, employ the technique of suspense for the future in their tales: to avoid the fate of death in the case of Scheherazade and for future trade and to avoid prison or even death in Ma'aruf's case.

Ma'aruf's new speech craft changes his life entirely, even though it is fake. This fake speech changes not only the life of Ma'aruf but also the lives of all social classes in the city. For example, Ma'aruf convinces the wealthy to give him money, and then, he gives it to the poor. He uses his strategy of convincing the wealthy, and even the king of his caravan, to re-distribute the city's wealth to the poor. Even the social perception of marriage changes through Ma'aruf's speech, as the city's king offers his daughter as a wife to Ma'aruf, a stranger. Ma'aruf the cobbler, as Marzolph (2004) points out, "represents the ordinary man, distinguished by honesty, kind-heartedness, and faith in human values, which paves the way to more social justice and humanistic qualities of Sufism" (p. 58). This extreme change in Ma'aruf's life and the social class of the whole city resembles, in one way or another, the change that happens to Scheherazade and the whole city due to her speech and storytelling.

The final stage of Ma'aruf's story begins after he finds the magic ring. This magic ring enables him to change his speech into action. When he finds the power of the Jinnee, his speech becomes an act, and his lie becomes truth. Hence, the core message of this story, in general, and this stage in particular, is that speech may have the power of action. In the first stage, he has the power to act in bringing the *kunafah* to his wife, and he has a craft, that of cobbling shoes; and, in the second stage, he has the power of speech, but it is not a real craft. However, in this final stage, Ma'aruf has the two powers of speaking and acting, for the magic ring has helped Ma'aruf change his speech into action. Furthermore, Ma'aruf's speech is crucial for him in this final stage, both consciously and unconsciously. Marzolph says, "The elevated spirits caused by the consumption of wine can result in either pleasure or disaster and

foolish behavior" (p. 239). What makes the difference in this stage is not the wine itself but Ma'aruf's speech while drunk. He becomes the victim of his own words when he reveals the secret of his magic ring to the vizier, who uses it against him.

Scheherazade, in the last moment of her long journey that continues for one thousand and one nights, reminds King Shahryar of the importance of speech that can be changed into a powerful act. The king in Ma'aruf's story loses his power and becomes a captive in an unknown place through the power of magic. Thus, one of the core messages of this story is that any king, like Shahryar, could lose his power at any time. Likewise, Ma'aruf becomes a powerful and rich man after being a poor cobbler who does not have enough money to buy a *kunafah.* He becomes one of the richest and most powerful men in the city, which is another important message to Shahryar, showing him that seemingly weak people, such as Scheherazade or any Muslim woman, can become powerful people and exert power over others.

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3.1.2. "Le Fresne"

The means of conveying information can be divided into two different communicative functions: The first, reading and listening, involves receiving a message, while the second, writing and speaking, enables people to send information. History tells us that many medieval women faced a challenge in these two aspects of communication. The philosopher Cixous (2001) describes women in the past who were "muffled throughout their history; they [lived] in dreams, in bodies (though muted), in silences, in aphonic revolts" (p. 2049). However, we can argue that the gender challenge that medieval women generally faced derives from competition with men in proving their skills in sending rather than receiving messages. Marie composed her "Le Fresne" to challenge a male audience to confirm her ability to dominate in the skill of sending, namely, writing. As the storyteller, she portrays a woman's ability to persuade a male audience using the other skill of sending: speaking. The story of "Le Fresne" begins with a make-believe speech and ends when the same speaker reveals the truth of her make-believe speech.

Speech is used by women as an effective tool by which they can obtain their good and bad aims from society in general but from men. When the wife of a worthy knight gives birth to two children, the wife of another knight receives this as bad news for her. Accordingly, she uses speech to slander the wife of the other knight, saying,

> Si m'aït Deus, jo m'esmerveil
> U cest produm prist cest conseil
> Que il ad mandé a mun seignur
> Sa huntë e sa deshonur,
> Que sa femme ad eü dues fiz.
> E il e ele en sunt huniz.
> Nus savum bien qu'il i afiert:
> Unques ne fu ne ja nen iert
> Ne n'avendrat cel' aventure

Que a une sule porteüre
Quë une femme dues fiz eit,
Si dues hummes ne li unt feit (1995: 36).
[So help me God, I am astonished that this worthy man decided to inform my husband of his shame and dishonor, that his wife has had two sons. They have both incurred shame because of it, for we know what is at issue here: it has never occurred that a woman gave birth to two sons at once, nor ever will, unless two men are the cause of it] (1998: 61).

Although the speech contains a major untruth, it succeeds in diverting attention from the slanderer's situation of not giving birth to the situation of the wife of the other knight, who has given birth to twin boys.

The same woman uses the same technique at the end of the story, but contrarily to solve the dilemma caused by her first speech against her innocent neighbor. She confesses to her husband her sin of slandering the wife of the other knight. She says,

Verité est que j'enceintai,
Deus filles oi, l'une celai;
A un muster la fis geter
E nostre paile od li porter
E l'anel que vus me donastes
Quant vus primes od mei parlastes.
Ne vus peot mie ester celé:
Le drap e l'anel ai trové.
Nostre fille ai ci coneüe,
Que par ma folie oi perdue (1995: 47).
[The truth is that I became with child and had two daughters, one of whom I hid. I had her abandoned at a church and sent with her our brocade and the ring you gave me when you first spoke with me. It can be hidden from you no longer. I have found the cloth and the ring, and have recognized here our daughter whom I had lost by my folly] (1988: 67).

Similar to Ma'aruf, who accepts his wife Fatimah's apology, Le Fresne's father accepts his wife's speech and unexpectedly pardons her by saying,

Li sires dit: 'De ceo sui liez;
Unques mes ne fu[i] si haitiez;
Quant nostre fille avum trovee (1995: 47)
[I was never as happy as I am now that we have found our daughter] (p. 67).

Remarkably, the husband of the envious lady reacts positively to his wife's speech despite the great sin she committed. This is testimony to the power of women's speech. This unexpected reaction by the husband can be understood if we consider H. Marshall Leicester's interpretation of the bad intention behind the first knight's decision to give one of his twins to a neighbor. Leicester (2005) believes that "it is another instance of the way men in the world of these poems use their women to

play power games with each other" (p. 144). However, the reaction of the knight, the husband of the envious lady, when he thanks God and gives the messenger a fine gift is an act that may suggest that while there is no hostility between the two men, there is between the two women.

The long-term bad effect of this short, ill-intentioned speech extends beyond the other knight's family to affect the speaker's family. The slandered woman becomes hated by society because of the rumor. Her husband accuses her of betrayal and locks her up. On the other hand, the speaker herself must get rid of one of her twins, Le Fresne, because of her own words. Comparing the slanderer's loss to that of the slandered the story's beginning, the former loses more than the latter; she tries to kill her daughter for no reason, simply to avoid the consequences of her ill-intentioned speech.

The quick spread of the gossip here, as in Ma'aruf's news about his coming trade, is remarkable, as is the audience's quick belief in gossip. The proof that the slanderer gives in accusing her neighbor is not logical proof because she is not the first woman to give birth to twins; moreover, the slanderer herself conceived twins in the same year. This malicious rumor becomes widespread throughout Brittany. The spread of illogical gossip reflects the power of rumor during Marie's time. The rumor in this story is based on two mistaken assumptions: the first is the misinformation about the link between having twins adultery, and, the second, which is a result of the first, is the accusation of the knight's wife of having an affair with another man. The gossip spread by word of mouth all over the country is related only to the second assumption, the accusation against the knight's wife, without mentioning the first assumption, the misinformation, because this first assumption may reveal the falsity of the second one. This provides an example of how rumor in medieval times was created in a small neighborhood and then circulated throughout the country.

Metaphor is also a significant element in the context of the comparison between the tales of Ma'aruf" and Le Fresne and is necessary for a full understanding of the power of speech in these tales. Marie de France, in her prologue likens knowledge to a blossom, which, when acquired by many people and bonded to widespread praise, reaches the full bloom of a flower (p. 41). Spoken knowledge needs to be spread by many voices for it to blossom into a flower. We find an allusion to this metaphor in the character of Le Fresne, whose speech is first spread and heard by Gurun like a blossom that flowers when he begins to love her after hearing about her but before seeing her.

Similar to the tale of Ma'aruf", in which his wife is nicknamed *Al-Irrah* because she is an immoral, evil woman with little modesty and many temptations. She rules over her husband, and every day, she insults and curses him a thousand times; the metaphor is used in the context of names in the story of "Le Fresne" by the followers of the knights to persuade Gurun to marry Le Codre instead of Le Fresne. They link Le Fresne to the ash that never bears fruit and Le Codre to the hazel with nuts that give pleasure (p. 65). Bruckner (2006) says of this metaphor that,

> The narrator's more generous description of the ash, whose four-branched trunk carefully cradled and shaded the infant wrapped in her fancy cloth (167–73), sets up a different relationship between woman and tree in

> which Fresne herself appears as the ash tree's unexpected fruit. Fertility may thus belong to the ash as much as to the hazelnut, though it takes a different shape. Twin sisters separated at birth may be equally fertile, as they are equally noble (p. 955).

This persuasive strategy of using metaphor succeeds in convincing the knight Gurun at the beginning to decide to leave his beloved Le Fresne and plan to marry Le Codre, whom he has not met. However, he returns to marry his beloved Le Fresne at the end when her mother discovers that Le Fresne is her lost daughter and the sister of Le Codre.

Despite the painful experience that the slandering woman has suffered after losing her daughter because of her malicious speech and her self-condemnation, she says,

> Ki sur autrui mesdit e ment
> Ne seit mie qu'a l' oil li pent (1995: 37)
> [whoever slanders and lies about others does not know what retribution awaits him] (1988: 62)

Like Fatimah in Ma'aruf's story, who returns to her bad behaviors despite pretending to be regretful for her previous bad actions, Le Fresne's mother is still thinking wicked thoughts despite behaving well. On the day of Le Codre's wedding, before the slanderer finds out that Le Fresne is her lost daughter, she is worried about Gurun's love for Le Fresne, which may cause ill will between the groom and the bride, so she plans to get rid of Le Fresne. She plans to marry her to her son-in-law using the same advising speech technique.

Thus, the king who received the story of "Le Fresne" should have concluded that women's spoken words might have a powerful impact on the audience. On the surface, the story of "Le Fresne" has been re-narrated to prove Marie de France's ability to write an outstanding story. However, interpreting the text considering the prologue of the *Lais*, the story, at a deep level, delivers a message to the audience about women and their ability to bring happiness through speech and silence. Marie uses her talent to enlighten the king about women's writing and speaking abilities. Almost all women in the story have been given a different type of gift. The envious lady is nearly the only woman who uses her gift of knowledge in a negative context. In contrast, the servant uses her gift of intelligence to release the newborn baby from death and her lady from killing her child. Similarly, Le Fresne presents her gift of kindness when she prepares the bed chamber for her lover. Finally, those who use their gifts well can bring pleasure to all despite the envious lady's poor use of the gift of knowledge.

4. Conclusion

After analysis of "Ma'aruf the Cobbler" and the third story of the *Lais of Marie de France*, "Le Fresne," it is obvious that the storytellers in the two tales depict the power of speech in a way that supports their different final goals in narrating these tales. Despite the differences between their goals, both attempt to convince a

male audience that women are not as they expect: they differ in terms of the kind of writing skills used by Marie de France in narrating "Le Fresne" and, in the case of Scheherazade, they differ in terms of disloyalty to their husbands.

Scheherazade and Marie focus their stories of "Ma'aruf the Cobbler" and "Le Fresne" on one single character who develops throughout the story from a poor man to a very rich person, in the case of Ma'aruf, and from an infant dumped in the street to a wife of one of the lords of Brittany, in the case of Le Fresne. Both writers also use adventure in their tales, depicting a magical adventure in Scheherazade's tale of Ma'aruf and a more realistic adventure in the case of Marie's tale of Le Fresne. In addition, the societies within the two tales are similar in terms of believing illogical speech, such as Ma'aruf's deceptive speech about his coming trade that leads people to give him their money and the king to give him his daughter in marriage, and the speech of the slandering woman who says that twins are a result of the mother sleeping with two men. The happy ending is also a shared element of both "Ma'aruf the Cobbler" and "Le Fresne" that may bring a positive reaction from the powerful male audience. Overall, the tales demonstrate the skill of these two female storytellers and illuminate their purposes for narrating these tales.

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Age of Immersion Effect on Second Language Phonological Acquisition: A Rare Case Study

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Abstract This paper integrates and critically reviews current literature on the age effect on second language (L2) phonology. It adds new data to the discussion as it cites a rare case of a Saudi child who was mistakenly raised by a Turkish family for 4 years and 5 months due to hospital malpractice. At the time of the study, he was learning his real family language, Arabic, as an L2. The main focus of this paper is to examine the effect of age of immersion (AOI) on L2 phonology after the cutoff of his first language (L1), investigating the availability of foreign accent (FA). The findings indicate that the case has crossed the boundary into native-level performance from a native speaker's (NS's) perspective. Nevertheless, the child's production differs in a statistically significant way from that of the control group. FA was detected in his controlled production, depicting a possible effect of AOI on L2 phonology.

Keywords Age of Immersion · Foreign Accent · Critical Period Hypothesis · L2 phonological attainment

1. Introduction

Children are universally acknowledged to be better than adults at learning second languages (L2s). This belief points to the critical period hypothesis (CPH) (Lenneberg 1967; Scovel 1988) or to the sensitive period (SP) (Long 1990), beyond which success in acquiring another language changes drastically. The notion of the CPH was first formulated for first language (L1) acquisition among individuals who have been deprived of normal language acquisition during their early stages of life (Lenneberg 1967). This notion was borrowed for L2 acquisition, suggesting that young children

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in suitable environments pick up a language with little trouble, whereas late learners seem to struggle ineffectively with a new language (Scovel 1988; Long 1990; Flege et al. 1999, among others). Age of immersion (AOI) is typically cited as a decisive factor in the debate over L2 acquisition. Late-onset learners are assumed to be identified by their pronunciation as they are more likely to be perceived as having a foreign accent (FA).

Given the debate that exists relating to the question of the AOI effect on L2 phonology, this research endeavors to examine a rare case of early immersed Second Language Acquisition (SLA). The case is unique because the subject has been learning his family language, Arabic, as an L2. In Najran, a town in the southern region of Saudi Arabia, Ali and Jacob were mistakenly switched at birth at King Kahled Hospital due to hospital malpractice at the time of their birth 8 years ago. Ali, born into a Turkish family living in Najran, was mistakenly given to a Saudi couple whose son Jacob was given to a Turkish family. After spending 4 years with their false families, the Turkish family contacted the Saudi health ministry, reporting that Jacob was not their real son. Both families underwent DNA testing that proved the swap of the children. Both families underwent emotional crises in preparing to switch back their children. The children spoke different languages from their real families, which added to the problem.

After 4 years of living with their real families, Ali and Jacob have encountered many linguistic, psychological, and social problems. Many variables have played vital roles at this juncture. Newspapers have reported the difficulties the children have faced learning their L2.

In response to the reported news, a private school offered the Saudi child a grant in an attempt to facilitate his experience of learning Arabic as an L2. The present study, hence, sheds light on this case and investigates the effect of AOI on the speech of Jacob, who is learning his real family's language, Arabic, as an L2. The study focuses on the availability of FA in his speech in the context of the myriad age-related variables that play out in this case.

The objectives of this study are to: 1) examine the effect of AOI on L2 phonological outcome, 2) investigate the possible age-related variables playing out at this juncture, and 3) report insightful findings for the fields of SLA and language teaching. The present study contributes to the SLA literature by accounting for a rare case involving subjects who speak different languages. It also sheds light on Arabic, one of the least studied languages in the field of SLA. Furthermore, this study provides valuable insight into the debate about the best L2 onset age from a pedagogical perspective.

The notion of nativeness is practically associated with pronunciation or accent. In studies of SLA, the pronunciation of native speakers (NSs) is widely used as a measurable and representative benchmark against which L2 phonology is assessed (Piske et al. 2001; Moyer 2004). AOI is considered the central predictor and is correlated with FA in the SLA literature. Such correlation does not imply causation, however, as every L2 experience is unique, ending up with a different degree of nativeness (Munro & Mann 2005; Montrul 2008).

Munro and Mann (2005) defined AOI as "the age at which a person becomes immersed in and begins to become a speaker of an L2." For the sake of the present study, a minimal length of immersion indicated in the SLA literature is considered for examining

L2 attainment, which is approximately 1–3 years, depending on the focus of the study. Generally, 3 years is considered the most convincing estimate (Piske et al. 2001).

Native-like pronunciation is a significant component of success in L2 learners. The detection of accented speech by NSs will negatively affect the L2 learners' social acceptability, intelligibility, and professional success. FA can be cited as evidence of non-native competence among L2s. In addition, NSs may react in a negative way to accented speech. For example, they may respond with accented speech to facilitate communication with L2 learners. Others may be impatient with individuals with accented speech, especially when it signals an ethnic minority (Ioup 2008; Munro 2008). Such effects are witnessed in everyday life as an accent is crucial for professional success and social assimilation and acceptance.

Munro (1998) defined FA as a "non-pathological speech produced by L2 learners that differs in partially systematic ways from the speech characteristics of NSs of a given dialect." FA can be identified by either segmental or supra-segmental features. At the segmental level, the deletion, insertion, and substitution of segments, vowels, or consonants that differ from those of natives signal the existence of an FA. At the supra-segmental level, prosodic properties that differ from those of NSs, such as pitch, stress, voice quality, tone, and intonation, lead to the FA determination (Munro 2008).

Research on SLA has suggested two main explanations for the notion of FA in the speech of late-L2 learners. Most of the evidence indicates that beyond a certain age, individuals do not acquire authentic pronunciation as NSs. To investigate the causes for the reported effect of AOI on L2 phonology, (1) perceptual and (2) neurobiological explanations are reviewed here.

The first explanation for the age effect on L2 phonological outcomes is often cited to be the failure of L2 learners to perceive L2 sounds that are different from their L1 phonological system. This imperfection in the perceptual ability causes an accented L2 production. The contrastive analysis hypothesis, Flege's (1995) speech learning model, and the perceptual assimilation model are important models that have been proposed to explain this theoretical approach (Ioup 2008). Nevertheless, this explanation will not be used in the present study as the focus here is mainly on speech production.

The fundamental explanation for the non-native L2 outcome in relation to the age effect is the well-attested CPH. Other related, subsequent models, such as the SP, strong and weak versions of the CPH, and the constant ability model, will be defined here. The CPH has a straightforward relation to other neurobiological issues, such as lateralization and the innateness hypothesis or universal grammar, which are reviewed below.

The biological foundation for language acquisition was originally proposed by Lenneberg (1967) in the form of the CPH for primary language acquisition based on his observations of cases of brain injuries and cases of wild and isolated children. At the heart of the idea is that a biological timetable exists for language acquisition in early childhood, which is necessary to develop linguistic skills. Lenneberg (1967) stated that late language acquirers would be subjected to neurobiological constraints, emphasizing phonology as a particular linguistic component that is vulnerable to such a constraint.

The notion of the CPH has been extended in numerous ways. For some researchers, a distinction can be made between a *critical* and a *sensitive* period. The classic version of the CPH refers to the biological timetable when full access to L2 skills is possible. The SP, on the other hand, entails the period during which only partial access to L2 is possible (Mack 2003; Brown 2014). Nevertheless, the distinction between the Critical Period (CP) and the SP is not widely accepted in SLA literature; hence, the two terms are usually used interchangeably (Hyltenstam & Abrahamsson 2003).

Another extended distinction is available in the SLA literature between the *strong* and *weak* versions of the CPH. The *weak* version assumes that L2 acquirers must start after the onset of the CP to achieve a native-like outcome. The *strong* version of the CPH, on the other hand, holds that it is impossible for L2 learners to achieve a native outcome after the conclusion of the CP and that the process of language acquisition will cease to continue after the end of the CP even if learners start within the CP (Brown 2007; Ioup 2008).

In the age-based argument, the notion of *lateralization* is widely cited in the SLA literature to explain the difficulty of attaining a native-like outcome after the maturation of the brain as certain functions are lateralized (Scovel 1969). During the process of lateralization, children gradually assign functions to one of the brain hemispheres. Language functions are essentially controlled by the left hemisphere. After the completion of lateralization, the process of L2 acquisition changes qualitatively (Moyer 2004; Brown 2014).

The controversy over the time of lateralization is endless. Lenneberg (1967) suggested that lateralization begins around the age of 2 years and is completed by puberty. For Krashen (1973), the completion of lateralization is by the age of 5 years. Scovel (1988) rejected Krashen's (1973) assumption, stating that a difference is seen "between 'emergence' of lateralization (at birth, but quite evident at five) and 'completion' (only evident at about puberty)." Scovel (1988) argued that lateralization is not the cause of the attainment of a non-native outcome; rather, it is the loss of neuro-plasticity signaled by the completion of lateralization.

Although the CPH is taken for granted in many studies in the SLA literature, the theoretical model of constant ability rejects the notion of the CPH, arguing that late learners can acquire a native L2 outcome naturally and effortlessly (Munro & Mann 2005). In some studies, late learners are privileged, dismantling the common belief that "younger is better." This model cites cases of exceptional late L2 learners who achieve a native-like outcome (Bongaerts 1999) and early learners who fail to attain authentic outcomes as counter-arguments (Flege et al. 2002). For some researchers, the whole notion of CPH is unproven (Marinova-Todd et al. 2000).

Another significant predictor in L2 learning is the learner's *attitude* toward the target language. Children are suggested to be better than adults at language learning because they have not yet developed an attitude toward any language. This assumption is supported by immigrant children who succeed in assimilating to any new culture easily. By the age of 4 years, children develop attitudes toward language (Moyer 2004).

The methodological dimensions used in experimental studies investigating the effect of the Age of immersion (AOI) on L2 phonological attainment in terms of production have taken acoustic, perceptual, and impressionistic dimensions. The

acoustic dimension is based on a computational analysis by linguistically trained raters of the acoustic properties of the speech elicited from the L2 learners, in comparison to natives, in terms of voice onset time, vowel duration, syllable structure production, formant frequencies, and pitch (Flege 1995; Flege et al. 1999; Altenberg 2005). The second approach, which is used for the present study, is perceptual analysis, where non-linguistically trained NSs rate L2 speech in comparison to that of natives. NSs are very sensitive to the deviation from the native norm and can easily detect FA from a very short utterance or determine whether the utterance is an accented or dialectical variety (Long 1990; Flege et al. 1996; Piske et al. 2001). The impressionistic analysis, on the other hand, is the assessment of nativeness from phonologically trained linguists based on the segmental or prosodic properties of the language (MacKay et al. 2006). Experimental studies examining accented speech have elicited speech samples from subjects by various techniques. Subjects can produce a control output such as a reading task of sentences (Moyer 1999), paragraphs (Bongaerts et al. 1995), or individual words (Elliott 1995).

The repetition technique is another strategy to elicit a control speech. Previous studies have used either the direct repetition technique (Markham 1997) or the delayed repetition technique (Bongaerts et al. 1995). Semi-control speech is elicited by means of describing pictures or a story narration about certain pictures (Moyer 1999). Spontaneous speech is a widely used elicitation technique where subjects describe a personal experience or talk about any topic (Elliott 1995; Moyer 1999). Nevertheless, control speech is a much more reliable technique as it gives sufficient samples of the subjects' phonological attainment. Subjects may be conscious of their choices in free speech, so it may not serve as an adequate sample representing their competence. Many studies have used more than one technique to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings (Bongaerts et al. 1995; Moyer 1999).

The rating techniques used in the studies evaluating speech samples elicited from L2 learners vary according to the purpose of the study. Three main scales have been used in FA detection studies: equal-appearing interval (EAI), direct magnitude estimation (DME), and the continuous scale. The EAI rating scale is widely used in FA detection studies where NSs are asked to choose a number on the scale, similar to a Likert scale, which can be a three, five, six, seven, or nine-point scale (Piske et al. 2001).

In the DME scale, NSs also rate the degree of accentedness, though the raters listen to a standard utterance to which they assign a numerical value. They then rate a given utterance relative to the number assigned to the standard. The continuous scale, on the other hand, is a computational scale by which linguistically trained raters judge the level of nativeness by moving a cursor on a computer monitor rather than choosing a numerical value. Another computational rating is sensory modality matching, where raters are asked to squeeze a dynamometer to rate the speech samples rather than assigning a numerical value (Edwards 2008).

The number of listeners who detected accentedness in previous studies varies from 1 rater (Snow & Hoefnagel-HoKhle 1977), 2 (Oyama 1976), to 85 (Neufeld 1979). Some studies depended on the intuition of naïve NSs to judge the level of nativeness (Flege et al. 1995). Other studies have used linguistically trained linguists to detect

the accented properties from speech samples. Bongaerts et al. (1997) reported that no differences were seen between linguistically trained and naïve raters.

The purpose of the study is to determine the type and number of raters asked to judge the degree of accentedness. The judgments of naïve raters are advantageous when the purpose of the study is to rate the intelligibility and accentedness of the speech from the target society's perspective because their judgment is crucial for successful social and linguistic assimilation. Trained raters, on the other hand, are privileged when the aim of the study is to examine the segmental or prosodic features of FA in the speech of L2 learners (MacKay et al. 2006).

The amount of speech elicited from L2 learners in previous studies ranges from long speech (i.e., paragraphs or sentences) and monosyllabic words to single segments (Flege et al. 1999). NSs are sensitive to deviation from the native norm and can detect FA for any given stimulus at any length.

This exploratory research is a case study that took place in 2012. It observes the characteristics of an individual subject with the aim of intensely analyzing the effect of AOI on L2 phonology in the context of possible age-related influences.

2. Research questions

The investigation is guided by the following questions:

1. Does the Najrani child Jacob's L2 pronunciation pass as an NS of Arabic from an NS's perspective?
2. Did the Najrani child Jacob develop an FA in his L2 pronunciation, considering the possible reported effect of the AOI on L2 phonological proficiency?
3. What are the possible age-related effect variables that can be attributed to the success or failure of the phonological attainment of this highly individualized phenomenon?
4. What are the theoretical and pedagogical implications of the findings to the fields of SLA and language teaching with a special focus on the learner's overall needs for cultural and linguistic assimilation to the L2 community?

3. Study design and methodology

The hypotheses guide the methodology for the present study. In this section, the experimental part of the study is described, including the design, sample, procedures, and tools. A perceptual assessment of nativeness was used to investigate the effect of AOI on L2 phonological attainment in the context of age-related variables. Perceptual assessment is crucial for the study as it aims to measure the success of the case in assimilating into L2 society as a native member. NS listeners rated the speech samples produced by Jacob and compared them to the control group consisting of 13 NSs. Their judgment is advantageous as nativeness is a social construct based on the intuition of NSs. They can easily detect deviations from L1 native norms as they are highly sensitive to FA (Moyer 2004).

Arabic is the language examined in the present study. It is a language that has been overlooked in the SLA literature. L2 learners of Arabic encounter many important challenges when dealing with the phenomenon of diglossia, and a continuum exists between Standard Arabic and a regional variety in the diglossic speech community. Consequently, modeling NSs of Arabic is a difficult undertaking. The dialectical variety involved here is the Najrani dialect, a variety spoken in Najran, a town in the southern region of Saudi Arabia.

4. Participants

4.1. Jacob

Jacob is the subject of the case being investigated in the present study. He was born on September 7, 2003. He lives with his family in Turkey, and during vacations, he visits his father, who works in Najran. The Turkish father was suspicious that Jacob was not his son from his first day of life. He contacted the Saudi Ministry of Health, but they did not provide him with a satisfying answer. After 3 years, the Turkish family grew increasingly suspicious, which led them to take a DNA test in Turkey that proved that the child was not their son. His father again contacted the Saudi Ministry of Health asking for his real son. The Saudi family was informed of this when the children were 4 years, 3 months old. A month later, a DNA test was taken for both families, proving the swap. The Turkish father

lives in Najran and has a good command of Arabic. He began talking to Jacob in Arabic once the DNA proved that his real family was Saudi. The real L2 active immersion began on November 25, 2007, as the two families moved to a new house to live together in preparation for the gradual separation of the children. Ten months later, the Turkish family traveled to Turkey with both children and stayed there for 4 months. They then returned to the same house in Najran. On September 20, 2009, the Turkish family traveled to Turkey with their real son, leaving Jacob for the first time with his real Saudi family. The two families separate during the school year and reunite on vacations. Jacob's age of testing (AOT) was 8 years, 4 months, after 2 years of formal instruction and 4 years of active L2 immersion (see Table 1).

4.2. Control group

Table 1 Participants' demographic information

Participants	AOI	Age of testing	LOR	Duration of formal instruction	Amount of L1 and L2 use
Jacob	4 years and 5 months	8 years and 5 months	2 years and 4 months	2 years	88% Arabic 2% English 10% Turkish
Control group	Natives	(8 years)	8 years	2 years	Arabic with very basic English

To ensure the reliability of the findings, 13 control NSs, normally developing Najrani children from the same age and at the same educational level, were randomly selected and underwent the same procedures as used to elicit speech from Jacob. They reported in semi-structured interviews that they (and their close relatives) were all originally from Najran and spoke Arabic as their L1, with basic English. None of them suffered from any speech or hearing problems.

5. Elicitation techniques (instruments)

The data for this integrative study was gathered from three main instruments:

1) A set of controlled, semi-controlled, and free production tasks.
   a) Picture naming task

A picture naming test was used to elicit control speech samples, including all of the sounds of the Arabic language from diverse syllable structures from the wordless pictures.

   b) Picture narration task

A picture narration test was used to elicit semi-control speech.

   c) Free conversation (around 35 utterances)

Free conversation was used to elicit spontaneous and connected speech from the participants.

5.1. Justifications for using the different tasks

Each task, in its own unique way, was designed to test L2 phonological attainment in the sense that they require phonetic, suprasegmental, lexical, and syntactic fluency. Nevertheless, presenting the speakers with long utterances could cause the listeners to wonder how to rate such long sets of speech. Speakers may also be conscious about their choices in the extended and uncontrolled task and with regards to the mispronunciations of children's speech that could be less developed than adults. Thus, the control stimuli were designed to optimize comparability and control for the possible variation in the extended and uncontrolled tasks.

2) A semi-structured interview with Jacob's father and Arabic language teacher was conducted to elicit background information and biological-experiential, social-psychological, and instructional data.

5.2. Stimuli

The controlled stimuli contained 50 pictures of polysyllabic words representing the 28 consonants in initial, medial, and final positions, providing sufficient data to

detect accentedness at both segmental and prosodic levels. In the picture narration task, a wordless picture was chosen to elicit semi-controlled speech. In the free speech, speakers were asked to talk about their daily activities during school. Audio recordings of the speech samples were made using a high-quality digital recorder (Sony ICD-UX300F).

5.3. Rating scales

Following Moyer (2004), an EAI scaling technique with 1–6 intervals as the binary variable (native *vs.* non-native) was used in combination with a confidence scale to form a six-point rating scale as follows: 1 = definitely native, 2 = native, 3 = perhaps native, 4 = perhaps non-native, 5 = non-native, and 6 = definitely non-native.

If the raters report that any subject is non-native, they were asked to rate the degree of perceived accentedness on a five-point scale: 1 = very slight FA, 2 = slight FA, 3 = noticeable FA, 4 = heavy FA, and 5 = very heavy FA.

5.4. Raters

A control group of 15 naïve native Najrani males, with ages ranging from 18 to 20 years (mean of 17 years), was randomly selected to rate the speech samples. None of them suffered from any hearing problems, and none of them were proficient in any language other than Arabic or had lived in a non-Arabic country.

5.5. Procedures

1) Jacob and the control group underwent speech production tests by means of the previously mentioned elicitation techniques.
2) The speakers' speech samples were recorded, cut into tokens, labeled: A1, A2, and so on, and randomized as: A2, B4, C5, and so on, so that the listeners were rating tokens and not speakers for each task to avoid bias.
3) In a 45-minute rating session, samples were played through speakers located in front of the raters in natural speech conditions. The raters listened to the recordings and were asked to judge each item as to whether the subject was native or non-native, and then assign a level of confidence to the rating. They were asked to focus mainly on the phonological aspects and assess only accent at the segmental and suprasegmental levels. Examples were given to ensure that the raters understood the instructions.
4) If any rater reported the existence of a non-native production (in his or her judgment), then the rater would rate the degree of perceived accentedness on an FA scale. Raters were encouraged to write any notes regarding the criteria for their judgments.

6. Framework for the data analysis

The present study investigates the effect of AOI on L2 phonology in the context of other related variables. The theoretical framework for this study is the CPH, as it

provides a biological explanatory account of the AOI effect on L2 phonology and offers a predictive empirically testable model of SLA. Considering the validity of the other views of the ending age of the CPH, the availability of FA in the speech of the subject of the case study would not necessarily disprove the CPH. Regardless of how dominant a particular factor might seem, a single theory of its own cannot account for the complexity of the experience of L2 acquisition, and an interplay of variables would be needed to explain the L2 outcome. Thus, the present study combines both quantitative and qualitative analyses in an integrated approach of the CPH to examine the phonological attainment of Jacob.

7. Limitations and potential problems

The case study approach is limited in its focus, but it provides a rich and detailed picture of the experience of an individual subject. A cluster of operative influences can be proposed, some of which have yet to be identified and many of which are difficult to measure. In addition, statistical testing is appropriate to see if the mean rating obtained for the case differs significantly from that of the control group. This is especially appropriate because of the large difference in the sample sizes of the two groups.

FA lacks a defined physical referent, which may increase the variability as listeners' internal standards of FA differ. Furthermore, comparisons with studies that also examine the effect of AOI on L2 phonology are difficult as the focus, methodology, stimuli, elicitation, and scaling techniques can vary considerably. Thus, caution should be taken to avoid generalizing the findings from a single case to the whole field of SLA or language teaching.

8. Case study results and discussion

With the proposed hypotheses and research objectives in mind, this section presents the findings of the study. The order of the findings is of no hierarchical importance. The data analysis was done using version 11 of the SPSS statistical analysis program. The quantitative findings are presented first, and the discussion is expanded through the qualitative analysis.

8.1. Quantitative findings

8.1.1. Nativeness scale

The following tables represent the overall performance ratings of nativeness (definitely native, native, and so on) for the speakers. Each participant was assigned an overall performance mean based on the average of judgments across all raters.

Distinguishing native from non-native performance in task 1, Figure 1 shows that the speakers' mean ratings differ from each other, with speakers 4 and 5 being the highest on the non-native side of the six-point scale (1.47 and 1.48), respectively, followed by Jacob with a mean of 1.43. Not surprisingly, the performance ratings are

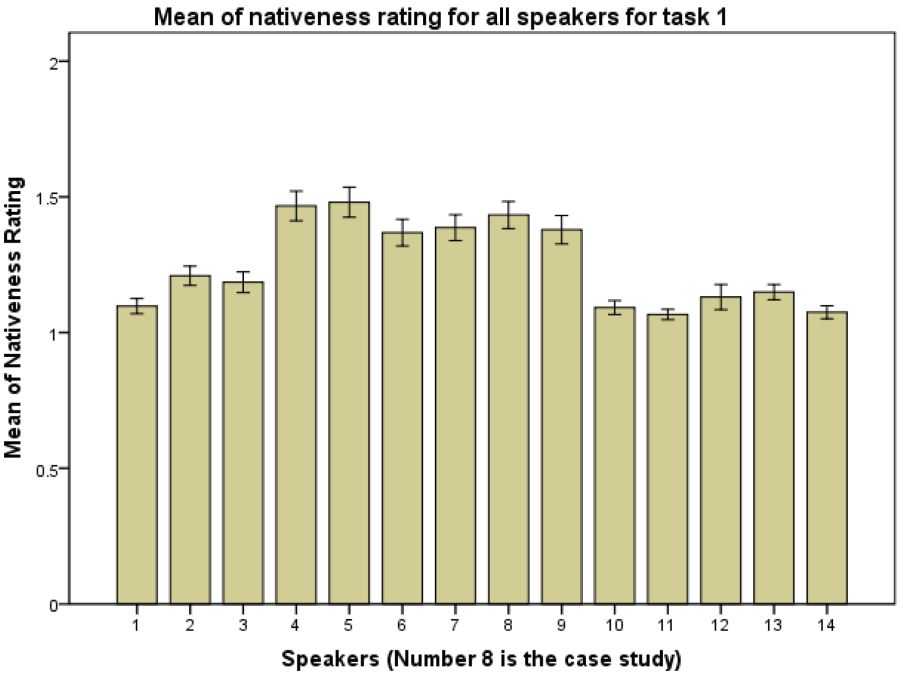

Figure 1. Task 1, overall performance ratings of nativeness for the speakers

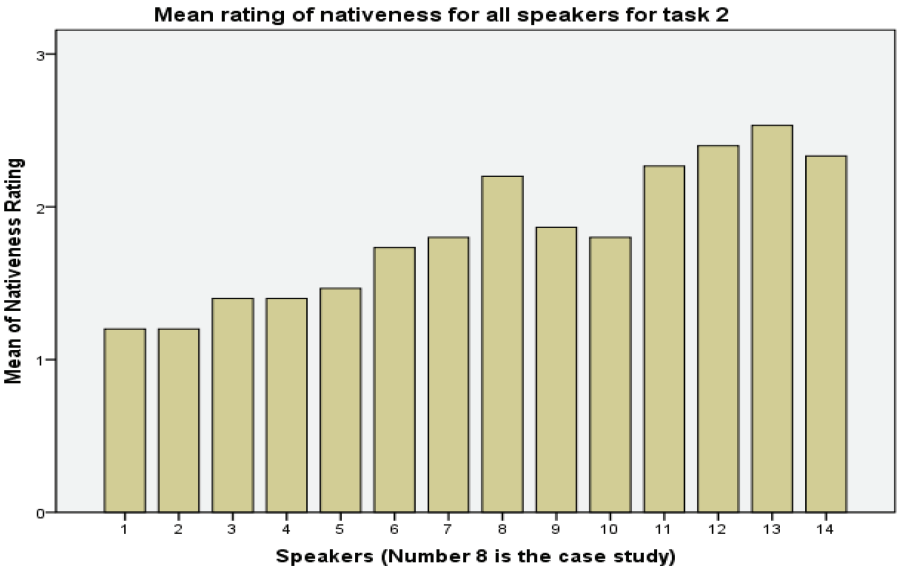

Figure 2. Task 2, overall performance ratings of nativeness for speakers

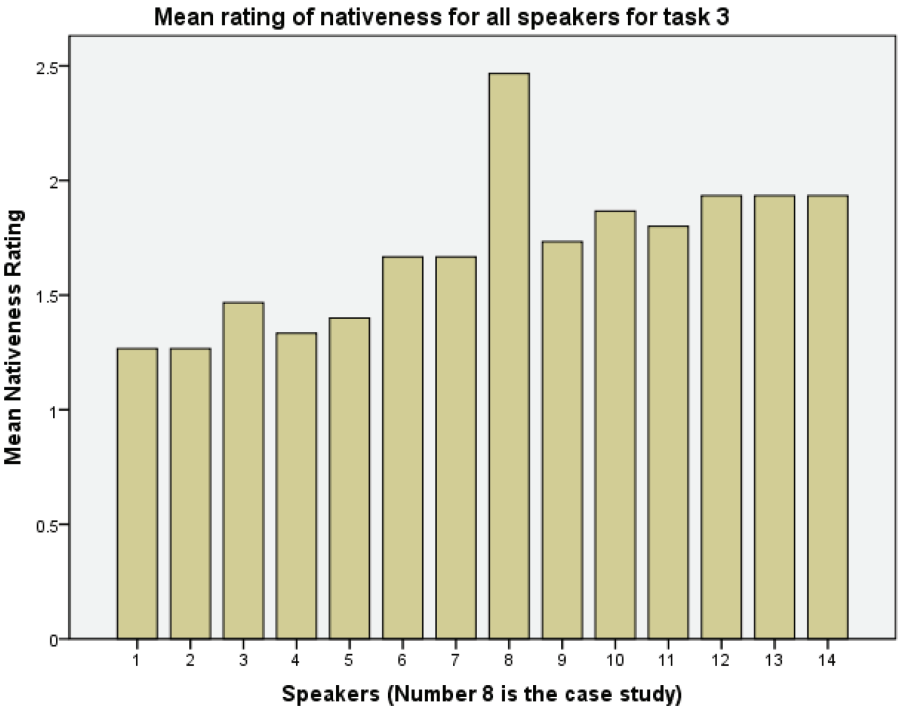

Figure 3. Task 3, overall performance ratings of nativeness for speakers

marked by a variation across speakers. As expected, Jacob's performance received scores within the native-level ratings in this task.

Figure 2 shows that Jacob had crossed the boundary into a native-level performance in task 2, with speakers 4, 12, and 13, and 11 being the highest (least native), with means of 2.33, 2.40, 2.53, and 2.27, respectively, followed by Jacob with a mean of 2.20.

Figure 3 shows an apparent strong difference between Jacob and the control group in regard to performance ratings, with Jacob being the highest (less native) (mean = 2.47). One can assume that the age effect is obvious: the older the AOI, the higher (less native) the mean rating. Thus, the *t*-test was run to see if this difference between the case study and the control group was statistically significant.

8.1.2. One sample t-test

Running a two-sample *t*-test to see if the mean rating obtained for the speaker in the case study differed significantly from the control group would be inappropriate because the case study contained only one speaker. A one-sample *t*-test was performed where the assumed population mean was set at 1.64, which is the mean rating obtained for the control group, and the ratings given for the speaker in the case study were used as the sample test. The difference was found to be statistically significant ($t(14) = 6.2$, $p < 0.01$).

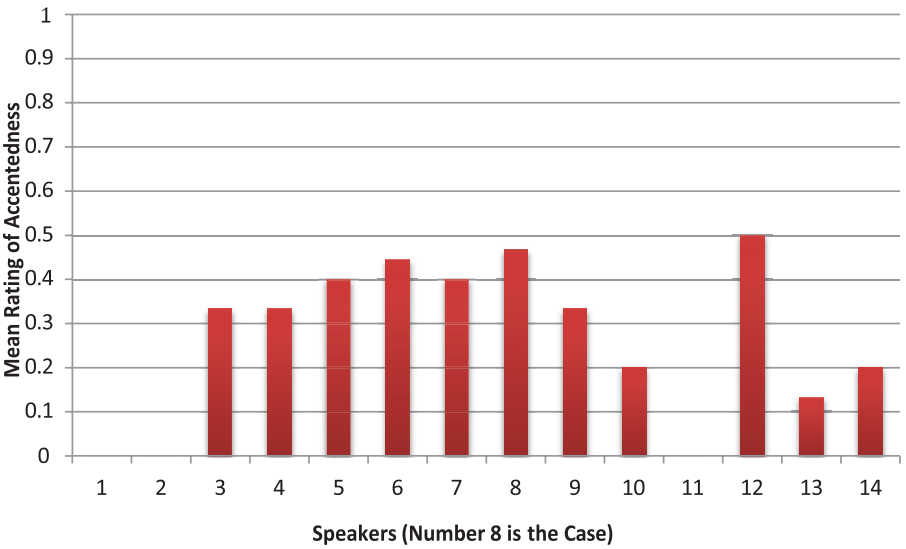

Figure 4. Task 1, overall performance ratings of accentedness for speakers

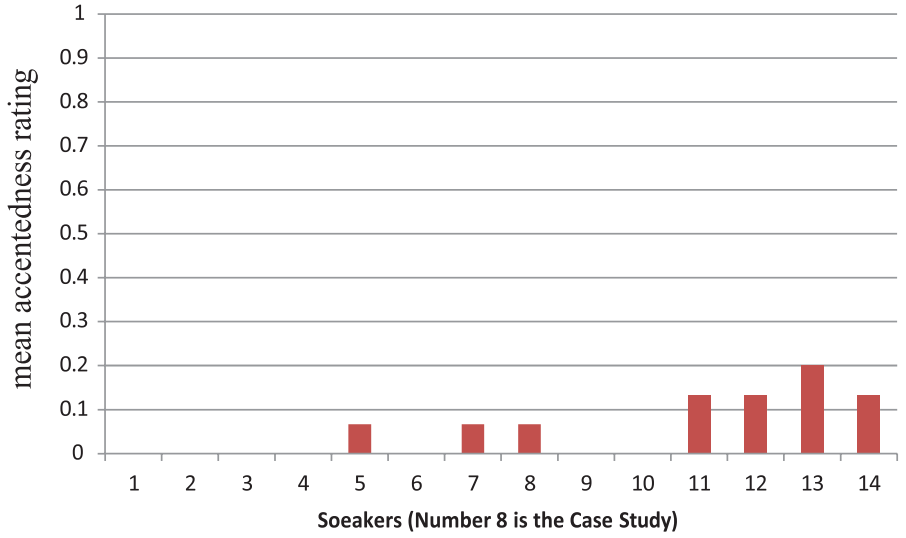

Figure 5. Task 2, overall performance ratings of accentedness for speakers

8.1.3. FA scale

The following figures represent the overall performance ratings of the degree of perceived FA (very slight FA, slight FA, noticeable FA, heavy FA, and very heavy FA) for speakers who were assigned with non-native labels (definitely non-native,

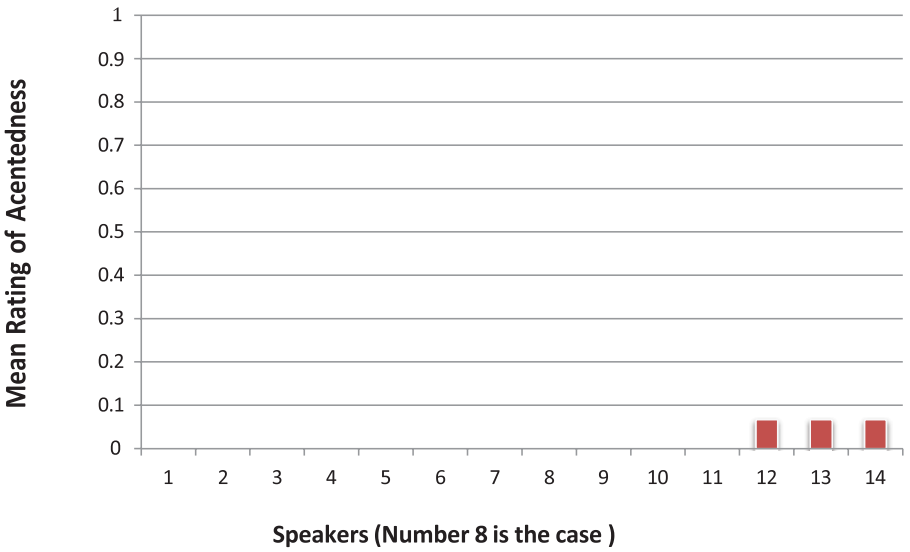

Figure 6. Task 3, overall performance ratings of accentedness for speakers

non-native, perhaps non-native). Each participant was assigned an overall performance mean based on the average of judgments across all raters.

As shown in Figure 4, 10 out of 14 native control participants were perceived to have an accented speech in task 1 by 3 of the 15 raters, in addition to Jacob. Speakers 6, 7, and 12 received the highest ratings of accentedness (0.53, 0.93, and 0.73), respectively, followed by Jacob with a mean of 0.46.

Figure 5 indicates that 6 out of 14 native control participants were perceived to have an FA in task 2 by 4 of the 15 raters, in addition to Jacob. Speakers 11, 12, 13, and 14 were assigned with the highest ratings of accentedness (0.13, 0.13, 0.2, and 0.13), respectively, followed by Jacob and speakers 5 and 7 with means of 0.66.

In task 3, Jacob was not assigned with non-native labels. Nevertheless, 3 out of 14 of the native control participants were judged to have an FA from 1 rater out of 15, with a mean of 0.06 (see Figure 6).

8.2. Qualitative results

Following the statistical analysis of the performance ratings, the study turns to a close analysis of the social, psychological, experiential, and instructional data reported by Jacob's father and Arabic language teacher from a semi-structured interview that investigated points that are not easily evaluated by the quantitative analysis. An account of the age-related variables that color the experience of Jacob's L2 acquisition from his father's and Arabic language teacher's perspectives will be explored in depth according to the following themes.

Jacob's father was asked to estimate his overall amount of use of Arabic and his use of Turkish at home, with friends, and at school. The Turkish and Arabic use

estimates were averaged as follows: 88% Arabic, 10% Turkish, and 2% English. He was completely immersed in an L2 society and presented with an optimal experience of formal and informal exposures. The time that Jacob spent in Najran was 2 years, 4 months, though his actual active immersion was 4 years as he had traveled back and forth between Turkey and Najran. He used to live with his Turkish family in Antakya, near the border with Syria, where the people spoke Arabic, or they were originally Arabic.

Jacob studied at a private school that offered him a grant after the news was reported of his linguistic difficulties. He memorized some verses of the Quran before the swap, and at the AOT, he had studied three semesters at school in grade two. From the perspective of his Arabic language teacher, Jacob had successfully assimilated into the Najrani culture. He started with broken Arabic and gradually improved by the end of grade one. His teacher believes that Jacob will still need some special attention until the end of grade three. He observed that Jacob has developed a sense of intimacy with his surroundings, though he likes to stay with his teacher during the break, possibly because of his fear of criticism.

An instructional focus was given to Jacob at school to improve his L2 phonological, pragmatic, and interactive skills, though he has not received any extracurricular courses. The focus of the school's Arabic curriculum is mainly on phonological, lexical, and sentence levels. He also studies other subjects in Arabic, which exposes him to content-based instruction. The teacher used an integrated approach to teaching methods, including the audio-lingual method in the form of repetition drills and the communicative approach, which involves authentic materials that reflect real-life situations. He was encouraged to participate in school activities, and he read stories, watched cartoons with his peers, and played games involving linguistic, interactive, and communicative skills. He received both formal corrective feedback from his teachers and informal corrective feedback from his surroundings (family and peers).

According to his father, Jacob had not received any psychological treatment to prepare him for the swap. His nationality was still Turkish at the time of testing. He produces some Turkish words to express himself when he is emotionally stressed. He does not know the real reason for the separation of the families. He describes his personality as shy and quiet, and he does not talk or express himself until he feels an intimacy with the surroundings or when he is with his peers. He loves his school and is motivated to learn Arabic. He unhesitatingly considers Turkish as his L1. He has assimilated into the Najrani culture and maintains some L1 values. He supports a Turkish football team. He refused to leave his home during school days, and sometimes, he receives harsh criticism from his peers who mock and laugh at him, using an accented speech when he mispronounces certain sounds or words, which causes him to speak with embarrassment. For instance, he sometimes mispronounces the Arabic word "shokran," which means "thank you," with the Turkish counterpart "shokrya," which causes some of his peers to mock him. His father emphasizes that Jacob considers himself Turkish and Arabic, having two families, and that he is an NSs of the two languages, though his emotional preference is always for Turkish.

9. Discussion

The quantitative analysis confirms the first hypothesis in that Jacob's overall performance ratings for tasks 1 and 2 were within those of natives. Since a number of NSs were rated consistently in the non-native category, Jacob had crossed the boundary into a native-level performance. Nevertheless, Jacob's spontaneous production in task 3 had the poorest mean scores (i.e., most *less-native*), so the difference between the case study and the control group was statistically significant. This may be due to the fact that free speech reflects a more natural rhythm, with individual style and suprasegmental and pragmatic features.

The second hypothesis was also confirmed in tasks 1 and 2 as Jacob's performance was judged to have a detectable FA overlapping with several of the native-speaker controls. Contrary to this hypothesis, his free production was not assigned with non-native labels to be rated for accentedness. This may be because control and semi-control tasks have the greatest level of control over articulation, and they include challenging segmental and phonotactic features, while the free speech task was uncontrolled, and thus, it allowed for avoidance. These findings reflect a key point that the rater's tolerance to variations in pronunciation differs, as some may be more lenient than others.

As for the third hypothesis, information elicited from the father and teacher in the case study, accounting for age-related factors that color the multivariate and dynamic experience of the subject, is highly significant. Jacob had the opportunity to engage in authentic communication with NSs, and his successful rating among the natives confirms that the amount of active participation in spoken interaction plays a key role in performance abilities. His 2-year Length of Residence (LOR) in Najran was significant, and the consistent access to authentic spoken interaction affected the quality of his fluency in profound ways. Thus, AO and LOR had a significant influence on the subject's phonological outcome, which may be extended to psychological, affective, interactive, and instructional realms. In addition, L2 formal instruction and learning strategies had a strong positive effect on the subject's L2 phonological outcome.

Affective, social, and psychological factors had a significant impact on the subject's L2 phonological outcome, in terms of motivation, linguistic and cultural identity, attitude, psychology, social abilities, emotional resistance, maintaining L1 values, peer pressure, and the L2 community's high expectation for him as an NS. Jacob has successfully assimilated into L2 society and has overcome the threats in reconciling his language ego to bring about the desired equilibrium.

The findings of the present study confirm the fourth hypothesis, evoking theoretical and pedagogical insights to account for a rare experience of a successful, early immersed L2 learner.

9.1. Theoretical implications

The findings of this study agree with previous studies and the literature on the AOI effect on L2 phonology. Jacob's AOI is significant for his L2 pronunciation, demonstrating a clear effect, though possibly not a direct one. He succeeded in being

perceived as a native from NSs' perspective, though FA was detected in his control and semi-control production when compared to natives. Considering the validity of different views about the ending age of the CPH, the presence of FA in the subject's speech would not disprove the CPH, though it would demonstrate that some factors other than AOI may contribute to the presence of FA.

The empirical study explores the significance of social-cultural and psychological factors, such as sense of belonging, linguistic and cultural identity, motivation, attitude, emotional resistance, maintaining L1, language preference, L2 society expectation of the learner, and peer pressure. An interplay of various variables exists that can influence the success or failure of an individual learner.

9.2. Pedagogical implications

The findings of this study are of academic value as they provide an insightful indirect contribution to the debate over the best L2 AOI. Jacob's overall performance ratings emphasize the folk belief that "the earlier, the better." Children have the optimal orientations to engage in the process of SLA and have the best opportunity to attain a native pronunciation, though it is impossible to state a definite FA avoidance AOI.

Pedagogically, cultural and social concerns about belonging and identity are undoubtedly much more significant than AOI in the language classroom. Thus, L2 learners should combine optimal orientations along with optimal experience. Teaching approaches and learning strategies should also be adapted to the learners' needs. Language teachers should play roles not only as teachers but also as guides who can help learners reduce their affective filters or inhibitions and become more aware of their strengths and weaknesses.

Little attention has been paid to phonology and pronunciation in currently used teaching methods, and these aspects should receive more attention in the language classroom. Language teaching objectives should emphasize phonological instruction and training in an integrated approach with current teaching methods to fit the learners' needs.

10. Conclusion

The quantitative and qualitative findings of this study show that AOI is the most important factor in terms of L2 phonological attainment, which is contextualized with other age-related variables shaping the experience of SLA. The difference between the case under question and the control group is statistically significant. The subject crossed the boundary into native-level performance from an NS's perspective, though FA was detected in his controlled speech, evoking an AOI effect on L2 phonology. The qualitative results provide an account of the age-related factors that color the subject's experience of SLA from his father's and Arabic language teacher's perspectives, which help to interpret the quantitative findings.

SLA research that investigates the AOI effect on L2 phonology should not neglect the socio-psychological profile of individual subjects, and each L2 experience should be considered as a variable. Moreover, a socio-educational model of SLA is needed

so that L2 language teachers can better understand their students' needs and adapt the L2 instruction to be more relevant. Hopefully, Jacob's Arabic production will be the foundation for a freely accessible online corpus, as the speech samples elicited from him will be available for subsequent research in Arabic linguistics in a freely accessible online corpus.

Much remains to be investigated in this rare case. Future research could involve a longitudinal study of Jacob's ultimate attainment and progress over time. Furthermore, a similar study could be conducted comparing Jacob's and Ali's L2 phonological attainment. In addition, the focus of research could be on their L1 attrition to evaluate the effect of the acquisition of an L2 on their L1. Other research may be designed to study the acoustic features of Jacob's L2 production. Finally, the perceptual theoretical model could be the focus of other research examining Jacob's ability to perceive L2 sounds differently from his L1 phonological system.

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Original Research

Poetry and the Prophetic Tradition: Al-Mushidd's Invocation of Prophetic Hadith of the Fire of Hijaz to Interpret the Contemporary Event

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Abstract The eruption of a volcano in Hijaz near Medina in 654/1256 inspired many poets to create praise poems for the Prophet Muḥammad, known as *madīḥ nabawī.* The article focuses on a poem written by Sayf al-Dīn ʻAlī ibn Qazal al-Mushidd (d. 656/1258) that describes the volcanic eruption in Hijaz as a Prophetic miracle and praises the Prophetic miracle of foretelling that volcanic eruption, as narrated in one of his *ḥadīth* (tradition), centuries before it happened. By applying the speech act theory formulated by the contemporary philosopher of language John Austin (d. 1960), the article argues that the poet evokes the Prophetic *ḥadīth* and the event of the fire to praise the Prophetic miracle, perform prayer, and repentance to God. In addition, the article expands on Suzanne Stetkevych's application of Marcel Mauss's (d. 1950) theory of gift exchange to underscore the spiritual aspect of the ritual exchange in the *madīḥ nabawī* poem that involves the poet's "praise/supplication/apology" and the supernatural gift of "intercession" on the part of the Prophet. The poem highlights the deep spiritual connection between the Prophet and his followers and demonstrates the power of faith and belief in the face of natural disasters.

Keywords Poetry · Ancient archeology · Prophetic tradition · The Hijaz, Medina

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1. Introduction

The seventh-century historian ʻAbd al Raḥmān Abū Shāma (d. 656/1267) is one of the historians who lived during the time of the Hijazi volcanic eruption of 654/1256. In his book *Kitāb Tarājim Rijāl al-Qarn al-Sādis wa-al-Sābiʻ: Al-Maʻrūf bi al-Dhayl ʻala al-Rawḍatayn*, Abū Shāma (1947) recounts what he heard from people of Medina about the horrific lava "fire" there in Jumada II of the year of 654/1256. Abū Shāma narrates,

> A terrific fire appeared on the first Friday of Jumada II in the year 654 on the east side of the honorable city of Medina. The distance between the fire and Medina was half a day, erupting from the ground and flowing like a river of fire until it reached Mount Uḥud. Then it suddenly stopped for a while and returned—we do not know what to do. When it appeared, the people of Medina came to the Prophet's [chamber/al-Rawḍa al-Sharīfa], peace and blessings be upon him, asking for forgiveness and repentance from Almighty God. These are signs of Judgment Day (Abū Shāma 1947: 191).

Abū Shāma (1947) describes Banū al-Fāshinī's acts of supplication to God in Medina, saying,

> The fire has appeared with red lava "tongues" that go up in the air to reach the sky like a castle. It started getting huge, which made people run to the Prophet's Mosque and then to his noble Chamber. They surrounded the Chamber, uncovered their heads, acknowledged their sins, and performed supplication "prayer" to God. People came to the Mosque from every mountain highway in Medina. Women and children left their homes, and everyone gathered to show their sincerity to God. The redness of the fire covered the whole sky, and people remained in what looked like moonlight. People were certain of their perdition and torment. They spent that night worshipping and reciting from the Qur'ān, bowing and prostrating, supplicating to Almighty God, trying to get rid of their sins, and seeking forgiveness and repentance. Then the fire stayed in its place, and its spreading and flames started to decrease (p. 192).

According to the belief in the power of the Prophet's intercession to affect this life, these narrations demonstrate the physical actions of going to the Prophet's Mosque, performing prayer, supplicating God, and seeking the Prophet's intercession to stop the volcanic eruption on earth that was thought by some Medinan's to be a sign of Judgment Day. Among those people were the poets whose performative poems were believed to be as effective as the physical supplications of the people of Medina. In these poems, the poets attempt to approach the Prophet to obtain his intercession to God and perform the supplication or apology to God via the Prophet's intercession.

2. Research methodology and thesis

The present study focuses on a poem composed by Sayf al-Dīn ʻAlī ibn Qazal al-Turkumānī al-Miṣrī al-Mushidd (d. 656/1258) in the context of the fire of Hijaz. The

poet evokes the Prophet's prophecy of *blowing out the fire from the land of Hijaz,* which is considered one of the signs of the Last Hour and the end of the world. This prophecy, as attested by Imām al-Bukhārī (Book 92, *ḥadīth* 7118, 1760) and Imām Muslim (Book 52, *ḥadīth* 2902, 1328) dictates that *Lā taqūmu al-sāʿatu ḥattā takhruja nārun min arḍ al-Ḥijāz tuḍīʾu ʿaʿnāqa al-ʾibili bi-Buṣrā* (The Hour will not come till a fire comes out of the land of Hijaz, and it will lighten the necks of the camels at Buṣrā [of the Levant]).

Considering the historical context of al-Mushidd's poem, the study uses the 20th-century philosopher Austin's (1975) speech act theory to focus on the kind of performative poem whose language not only says something but also a procedure to perform a specific act with specific consequences. According to Austin (1975),

> (A. 1) There must exist an accepted conventional procedure that has a certain conventional effect, that procedure is to include the uttering of certain words by certain persons in certain circumstances, and further, (A. 2) the particular person and in a given case must be appropriate for the invocation of the particular procedure invoked. (B. 1) The procedure must be executed by all participants correctly and (B. 2) completely. (I. 1) Where, as often, the procedure is designed for use by persons having certain thoughts and feelings ... (I. 2) must actually so conduct themselves subsequently (Austin 1975: 14–15).

The analysis will also consider Suzanne Stetkevych's application of Marcel Mauss's (d. 1950) gift exchange ritual in his book *The Gift.* S. Stetkevych applies Mauss's gift exchange ritual to the relationship between the praise and prize to examine the spiritual connection between the supplicant/poet and the Prophet as the poet hopes to gain the intercession of the Prophet with God. She argues that Mauss's gift exchange "presents the Arabic praise ode as part of a multifaceted exchange ritual, whereby a bond of mutual obligation and allegiance is formed between the poet and patron." In this context of *madīḥ nabawī*, this paper explains how the poet performs speech acts and a kind of "ritual" exchange between him and the Prophet; the poet gives his *madīḥ* (praise) as a supplicatory gift to the Prophet to receive the Prophet's intercession.

3. Previous studies

Several researchers have studied the ritual exchange between poet and patron in pre-Islamic, Islamic, Abbasid, Andalusia, and Modern poetry from different angles. S. Stetkevych examines the ritual exchange between poet and patron to reveal how some classical panegyrics were successful performative statements. She uses Marcel Mauss's (d. 1950) ritual of gift exchange in his book *The Gift* (1967) to argue that the poet, "the giver," recites his panegyric as a gift before the patron "receiver"; then, the patron is obligated to reward him with "a return-gift" by accepting the poem and giving the poet a counter-gift.

Moreover, Gruendler (2003: 157–169; 2008: 325–389) studies the role of Abbasid panegyrics in the patronage relationship between the poet Ibn al-Rūmī (d. 283/896)

and his first patron ‘Ubayd Allāh ibn Ṭāhir (d. 300/913), the governor of Baghdad in the third century of the Islamic age. In a similar context, Al-Mallah (2003) discusses the historical contexts of Ibn Darrāj al-Qasṭallī’s (d. 421/1030) panegyrics “Hā’īya” and “Rā’īya” that led Al-Mallah (2003: 45–81) to examine how the political circumstances of each poem affect the ode structure and its accomplishments in the court and community.

Likewise, Mishari Al-Musa’s (2011) dissertation, “The Andalusian Panegyric *Mu’āraḍah* Rhetorical Strategy and Speech Act Theory,” studies how some Andalusian poets create successful performative panegyric ode by using effective and persuasive rhetorical and structural strategies that respond to his political situation to fulfill his responsibilities to the patron. Mustafa Binmayaba’s (2016) article “*al-ʿIstikhdām al-Shiʿrī lil-Lugha bayna al-Taṭafful wa-al-Injāz*” (The Poetic Use of Language between Parasitism and Performance) analyzes the ritual *exchange* in the Saudī poet Ibn Uthaymīn (d. 1363/1944) *al-’Izzu wa al-Majdu* (Honor and Glory), a poem composes to King ‘Abd al-’Azīz (d. 1373/1953). Binmayaba (2016) explores how this poetic text includes performative sentences that transform the whole text, on the one hand, and some of its sentences, on the other hand, from an imaginative, entertaining poem into a successful performative statement.

As for studies that examined *madīḥ nabawī,* two main modern works are related to this topic: first, Stetkevych’s (2010) *The Mantle Odes: Arabic Praise Poems to the Prophet Muḥammad* discusses three *madīḥ nabawī* poems: the pre-Islamic poet Kaʿb ibn Zuhayr’s (d. 26/646) (Su’ād Has Departed), *al-Burda* (the Mantle Ode) of the Sufī poet al-Būṣīrī (d. 696/1295), and Aḥmad Shawqī’s (d. 1351/1932) *Nahj al-Burda* (The Way of the Mantle). She interprets these odes considering the supplicatory ode’s structural elements, the odes’ performative function as speech acts, and the ritual exchange of poems for the prize. Second, Al-Shereif’s (2013) dissertation *Madīḥ Nabawī in al-Andalus: From Rituals to Politics* analyzes different types of *madīḥ nabawī* poems that serve as *madīḥ* to the ruler in Al-Andalus and focusses on the political function of these poems.

4. The analysis and discussion: Al-Mushidd’s “O [my two friends] Send my Blessings”

Al-Mushidd says:

1) O [my two friends] send my blessings to the greatest Messenger
whose grace is like *a flood washed down from the heights.*

2) And to the honest one toward whom we set our mounts on a journey
seeking the sweetest drink of mad love.

3) There bore us, every unkempt dust-colored one of us,
it is amazing the mount that was born off!

4) To a master whose high status and miracle
the verses of the Revealed Book [Qur’ān] have told [us].

5) A Prophet who guided us to the righteousness with signs,
whose meaning we understood through the excellent interpretation.

6) Muḥammad who was sent when error darkened [the world];
the face of righteousness came to shine like a polished mirror.

7) [My friends] say to him [Muḥammad]: I am longing for you,
Perhaps God will bring me closer to your place,

8) So that you [Muḥammad] will extinguish my longing and calm my lovesickness,
So, I will become removed from all [other] passions.

9) When the news [of the fire] banished sleep [from my eye]
that lit up Idhin and then two the mountains of Raḍwā and Yadhbul

10) Its flash shone from Qurayḍa's mountains
to people of Tayma, then of al-Liwā and then of the big sandy valley of ʻAqanqal.

11) You informed us about it in your lifetime warning
of a long, harsh, and distressful day

12) And you said words that none but you,
no matter how eloquent, could say:

13) 'A glowing fire will appear in the Hijaz
shining like the necks of the white camels heading toward Buṣrā.'

14) Indeed, it surely occurred just as you said.
You told the truth; and how often did you give the lie to your deniers.

15) It had sparks that look like lightning, but its roar sounds like
thunder to him who listens.

16) The face of the sun became eclipsed like a night
and the full moon was in darkness that does not dispel.

17) The stars set before their due time
and the unceasing smoke of the fire maked them lose their luster.

18) The scorching winds blew like the *scalding water* [of Hell]
and they withered the tall palm trees.

19) It revealed of the signs of every amazing thing,
and the earth quaked with a mighty Earthquake.

20) All the people were sure that their [eternal] punishment
had been moved up to this life without any postponement.

21) Children lamented with their mothers:
O my soul, sacrifice yourself! O, my tears, pour down!

22) I was distraught [but] the people stood and gathered around me
saying: do not perish out of sorrow, control yourself!!

23) Perhaps the God of all humankind will have mercy on their weakness
and on what they have shown him of deep humility.

24) The people repented and sought forgiveness for their sins
and sought refuge in the path of [God] the Noble and Revered.

25) You [Muḥammad] interceded for them with God,
so they became safe from the fire and hastened to piety.

26) God the Most Gracious relieved them with a whiff of your [fragrance]
that is more delicious and desired than fruit and honey.

27) The glowing light of your shrine extinguished the fire
until it became a safe fire that does not harm the one who warms himself.

28) And the hope of the people has revived after [being close to] death
O what a bright and famous day!

29) O you, departing from Ṭayba,
Ṭayba is the ultimate goal of all who are hopeful.

30) *Halt, [my two friends], and weep over its memory.*
For he who is there is the most honored beloved and it is the noblest of dwellings.

31) I entered it performing *iḥrām* and *talbiya*
and turned away *from Siqṭ al-Dakhūl,* then *Ḥawmal*

32) What places [in Ṭayba]! as for its soil, it is ambergris
and, as for its grass, *it is the clove-flowers.*

33) Whose scent wafts out and then returns fragrant
because of *the two winds that fan over it from south and north.*

34) O best Messenger, most generous intercessor,
best fulfiller of hopes and safest refuge.

35) Peace of God be upon you after His blessing
Just as the fragrant musk is coupled with the oud of al-Mandal (al-Suyūṭī, 1968, 2:47–48).

Considering the belief that the Prophet has the power to intercede with God to help Muslims in this life and the next, al-Mushidd's *O* [*my two friends*] *Send my Blessings* serves as a kind of "spiritual" *exchange* between the poet and the Prophet. Al-Mushidd's (d. 656/1258) *O* [*my two friends*] is a *madīḥ nabawī* (praise poem to the Prophet Muḥammad) and a *mu'āraḍa* (contrafaction) in which the poet uses the same meter and rhyme (and often similar thematic content) of a previous famous poem while trying to exceed the model. However, the impact of the classical model on the *muʿāraḍa* poem is not limited to meter-rhyme-topic but rather is extended to echo the model in the overall language of the *muʿāraḍa*.

Al-Mushidd, in the present poem, imitates the most celebrated pre-Islamic poem, which is the *Mu'allaqa* of Imru' al-Qays (d. 540) in its rhyme *lām* and meter *al-ṭawīl*. It responds to the *Mu'allaqa* of Imru' al-Qays and modifies some of its subjects, images, words, and phrases to challenge Imru' al-Qays, whose poem was answered by Arab poets, even in *madīḥ nabawī* (Meisami, 1997), all over Islamic history and considered to be the most famous Arabic poem. In addition, the crucial element in this poem is the use of quotes from Imruʾ al-Qays. The poet's challenge of Imruʾ al-Qays in this context of the fire of Hijaz recalls the Prophet's name for Imruʾ al-Qays, "the leader of the poets into Hellfire" (IbnAbī Shayba 1989, ḥadīth: 30070) which is the opposite of Muḥammad who will lead the Muslims into the Garden. Therefore, he challenges Imru al-Qays, the leader, into Hellfire and goes against him to get the Prophet's intercession that can keep him away from the fire in this life and the next, and the Prophet Muḥammad bears the Banner leading Muslims onto Heaven of Judgement Day (I ʻIyāḍ 2014: 228–229).

In this *madīḥ nabawī* poem, the ritual of spiritual *exchange* within the text affects its language and structure. The poet selects the effective elements of the conventional ode to praise the Prophet and get his intercession. However, the poet's audience in the *madīḥ nabawī* differs from the regular audience of the classical tripartite *qaṣida*, as explained by ʿAbd Allāh ibn Muslim IbnQutayba (see IbnQutayba 1964: 75) and his hoped reward differs from the personal reward of the classical panegyric ode. The poets of *madīḥ nabawī* utilize some essential elements of the court panegyric ode structure in a spiritual way to supplicate to the high authority of the Prophet. As Binmayaba (2012: 52) points out, "the main difference between the supplication to the worldly authority and the supplication to the spiritual authority is in the return gift that the supplicant receives. While in the former type of supplication, history often tells us what the return gift was, in the latter supplication, we cannot determine the nature of the return gift."

Furthermore, one of the first obvious things about al-Mushidd's poem is that the poet relates the event of the volcanic eruption and fire within the *madīḥ nabawī* structure in the past tense as an example or proof of the Prophet's (1) ability to predict the future (praise of his prophethood) and (2) power of intercession, as proven by his successful intercession with God to put an end to the fire. In other words, while other *madīḥ nabawī* poems such as the *Burda* "the Mantle Ode" by the Egyptian Sufi poet Sharaf al-Dīn al-Būṣīrī (d. 694/1294) use examples of the Prophet Muḥammad's miracles from the Prophet Muḥammad's lifetime as proof of his prophethood, here, the poet uses an example of the Prophet Muḥammad's miraculous intercession from the poet's own lifetime.

We can understand from the first line that al-Mushidd's poem is *madīḥ nabawī*. This poem can be divided, according to the theme of *madīḥ nabawī*, into two kinds

of *madīḥ* (praise): direct praise (the opening journey section and the last section) and indirect praise (the volcano description). Keeping in mind the structural difference between the sections of al-Mushidd's poem and its classical counterpart that includes, respectively, the three sections of *nasīb*, *raḥīl* (journey), and the main theme (e.g., *madīḥ* "praise," *fakhr* "pride," and so on), the structure of al-Mushidd's poem can be read in a different way with the following sections: first, separation/*nasīb* journey to Ṭayba (lines 1–8), second, recognition and praise of the Prophet, the volcano episode and his intercession (lines 9–28), third, the departure from the sacred site back into profane world—bidding farewell to Ṭayba (lines 29–33), and fourth, *taṣliya* a benediction and prayer for God to bless the Prophet (lines 34–35).

4.1. First: Separation/*Nasīb* Journey to Ṭayba (lines 1–8)

Al-Mushidd opens his *madīḥ nabawī* poem with the mood of *nasīb ṭalalī* convention of asking to stop at ruins (*istīqāf*), asking his friend to send his blessing to the Prophet saying,

1) O [my two friends] send my blessings to the greatest Messenger
Whose grace is like *a flood washed down from the heights.*

This opening line functions: first, to establish a relationship between the poet and his two companions and Imru' al-Qays in his *Muʿallaqa* when he "implores his companions to stop and weep at traces of an abode where his beloved once dwelt" (Stetkevych 1993b: 259); second, to establish a relation between his journey with that of Imru' al-Qays in his *Mu'allaqa* using the latter's description of his steed as follows:

45. Now wheeling, now charging, advancing, retreating,
all at once,
Like a mighty boulder the torrent has *washed*
Down from the heights (Stetkevych 1993b: 254).

Third, to determine the poem as a *madīḥ nabawī* poem when he begins with greeting the Prophet; and fourth, to indicate, using Jakobson's (1987: 353) (d. 1982) communication factors, that the poem is created in the form of a message that is sent from addresser/the poet to addressee/the Prophet.

The poet's journey in this section has the mood of a praise/supplication to the Prophet. As in the conventional use of the journey as a prelude to the theme of praise that reflects the poet's sense of direction, the poet in the present poem praises the Prophet on the journey section in which he knows his goal,

4) To a master whose high status and miracle
the verses of the Revealed Book [Qur'ān] have told [us].

It can be concluded from al-Mushidd's method of using the images (e.g., journey) and structure (e.g., the two units of *nasīb ṭalalī* and journey) of the classical *qaṣida* that he manipulates these images and structure in a way that serves his own message

of praising the Prophet. Incorporating elements from the classical poem to deliver a new message in a different context highlights the tension or conflict between the poetic and referential functions within the poem (Jakobson 1987: 66–71). Jakobson (1987) explains this sort of conflict, saying, "Ambiguity is an intrinsic, inalienable character of any self-focused message, briefly a corollary feature of poetry [...] The supremacy of poetic function over referential function does not obliterate the reference but makes it ambiguous" (p. 42). This allusion to Mu'allaqa of Imru' al-Qays in the opening line of *madīḥ nabawī* generates a tension between that highly erotic and highly celebrated Jāhilī poem and the conventional poetry and spirituality of the emotionally Islamic poem of Prophetic praise.

Taking the theoretical foundation of Naiden's (2006: 72) work on the ancient supplication, it can be argued that this section of the poem performs the verbal act of supplication, which corresponds to the first act of the ancient supplications that, includes approaching, gesture or word, request, or argument, and receiving a response from the one supplicated (p. 29). Riding the mounts, *riḥālunā* (our mounts) (line 2), and praising these mounts for bearing the poet and his companions during their journey, *taḥammalna minnā* (bore [us]) (line 3), symbolize the physical attempts to reach his *mamdūḥ* (patron) and to complete the first step of approaching the one supplicated the Prophet.

Another aspect of the act of approaching the patron is related to the purpose of his *madīḥ* to the Prophet. First, the poet praises the destination of his journey, "to the honest one toward whom we set out mounts on a journey" (line 2). Second, he praises the miracles of the patron "to a master whose high status and miracle the verses of the Revealed Book [Qur'ān] have told [us]" (line 4). Third, the poet praises the guidance of the Prophet, which carries the meaning of self-abasement, "A Prophet who guided us to the guidance with signs" (line 5). Finally, he praises the universality of the patron's message that enlightens the dark world (line 6). All these praises related to the *madīḥ nabawī* theme pave the way for the poet to recount the natural miracle of the volcano.

4.2. Second: Recounting of the Prophet's Miracle of the Intrasession in Volcano (lines 9–28)

The poet in this section uses the Hijaz volcanic eruption and fire as proof of the Prophet Muḥammad's prophethood and his power of intercession. The difficulty of this phase was experienced by the people of Medina (lines 20–21) and emotionally by the poet, who feels horrified while his people gather around him (line 22). Moreover, this poem's suffering during this challenging phase has two physical and psychological dimensions. First, the physical suffering of the poet is portrayed in the image of him with his two unkempt dust-colored companions crossing the desert (line 3). However, the psychological suffering of the poet is a result of the news that comes from Medina regarding the fire, which prevents the poet from sleeping: "When the news [of the fire] banished sleep [from my eye]" (line 9). It is also evidenced later when he says, "I was distraught [but] the people stood and gathered around me" (line 22). This hard disaster experienced realistically by the people of Medina and metaphorically by the poet is used in this section to praise the Prophet as the one who interceded to God to stop the volcanic eruption and fire.

As discussed, this poem stands between the pre-Islamic tradition, which is represented in evoking Imru' al-Qays's *Mu'allaqa*, and the Islamic dimension related to its main theme of *madīḥ nabawī.* In the context of imitating the pre-Islamic poem, al-Mushidd borrows some aspects of the *nasīb* section in Imru' al-Qays's *Mu'allaqa,* such as the sequence of abodes ruined by nature (e.g., Siqṭ al-liwā, al-Dakhūl, and Ḥawmal) to locate the abode of his beloved/Prophet that was affected by the volcano [e.g., Idhin, the mountains of Raḍwā and Yadhbul (line 9), Qurayḍa's mountains, Tayma, then of al-Liwā and 'Aqanqal (line 10)]. However, evoking the names of places in Imruʾ al-Qays's poem, such as al-Liwā and 'Aqanqal, al-Mushidd does not refer to the geographical whereabouts but rather aims to evoke the mood of loss and destruction in Imru' al-Qays's poem.

As for the Islamic dimension in the present poem, the mood of loss that is evoked by the imitation of Imruʾ al-Qays is not only a poetic or imaginative one but rather is a result of an actual contemporary event that was predicted by the Prophet, as the poet says,

11) You informed us about it in your lifetime warning
of a long, harsh, and distressful day

12) And you said words that none but you
no matter how eloquent, could say:

13) 'A glowing fire will appear in the land of Hijaz
that shining like the necks of the white camels heading toward Buṣrā.'

14) Indeed, it surely occurred just as you said.
You told the truth; and how often did you give the lie to your deniers.

Line 11 alludes to the Prophet's prophecy of *blowing out the fire from the land of Hijaz,* considered one of the signs of the Last Hour and the end of the world. This prophecy, as attested by Imām al-Bukhārī (d. 256/870) and Imām Muslim (d. 261/875), dictates that *Lā taqūmu al-sāʿatu ḥattā takhruja nārun min arḍ al-Ḥijāz tuḍīʾu ʿaʿnāqa al-ʾibili bi-Buṣrā* (The Hour will not come till a fire comes out of the land of Hijaz, and it will lighten the necks of the camels at Buṣrā [of the Levant]) (*al-Bukharī,* book 92*, ḥadīth* 7118, 1760; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* 52, *ḥadīth* 2902, 1328). In addition, the poet uses some Qur'ānic expressions such as *yawmin ʿabūsin qamṭarīrin* (a long, harsh, and distressful day) (line 11) that imitates the Qur'ānic verse, *Innā nakhāfu min rabbinā yawman ʿabūsan qamṭarīrā* (for we fear from our Lord a frowning day, inauspicious) (al-Qur'ān 76:10) to establish a relation between the fire of this volcano and Hellfire, to add the Islamic religious and moral element of torment to the nostalgic loss in the pre-Islamic *ṭalal*.

It is worth noting that the language of this section is used to discuss or describe the sayings, or language, of the Prophet, especially when the poet paraphrases the Prophet's words (lines 12–13). Jakobson notes regarding the multifunctions of language that "the predominance of the poetic function and the subordination of the other functions does not mean that the other functions are subordinated to the extent of being excluded.

On the contrary, any one or more of the functions may be present in a variety of ways and with more or less importance vis-a-vis the poetic function" (Waugh, 1985: 145). Although the poetic functions that focus primarily on the form of the message itself dominate the whole text of al-Mushidd for the sake of praising the Prophet for his prophecy about the fire of Hijaz, the metalingual function that focuses on the code itself is accentuated in the previous two lines to deliver this religious meaning clearly.

In fact, the main purpose of language in this poem is to praise the Prophet, regardless of the nature or function of that language. For example, the metalingual function of language is intensively used in line 14 to praise the Prophet for his prophecy of Hijaz's fire, asserting that this fire is precisely the one described by the Prophet, *fa kānat kamā qad qulta ḥaqqan bilā mirā* (indeed, it surely occurred just as you said) (line 14). This is achieved by describing the contemporary fire in the same terms as the Prophet's *ḥadīth.* The poet uses the two emphasizing phrases *ḥaqqan* (truly) and *bilā mirā* (undoubtedly) to stress the accuracy of the Prophet's words. Then, the poet emphasizes that the Prophet tells the truth *ṣadaqta* and proves the lie of his enemies, *wakam kadhdhbta kulla muʿaṭṭilī* (how often did you give the lie to your deniers!) (line 14). Hence, the language's function is switched from poetic to metalingual one so as to prove the veracity of the Prophet and his miraculous prediction. Then, the poet moves on to describe what occurred in Medina and the fire using referential and poetic functions.

Al-Mushidd converts the natural event of Hijaz's fire into a ritual or mythical context. The poetic language enables al-Mushidd to interpret the contemporary event and absorb it into a myth of religious identity, here, of the prophethood of Muḥammad and his contemporary miracle of intercession for his Umma (community). The poet in this poem is, as Stetkevych : indicates about the Abbasid master poet Abū Tammām's (d. 231/788) victory ode *Al-Sayfu Aṣdaqu* (The Sword Is More Veracious), not "attempting to reconstruct a narrative sequence of events; rather, he selects those elements of the actual occurrence that can be reconfigured within the ritual and ceremonial structure of the qasida as emblems, symbols, or metaphors of ʻAbbāsid legitimacy and an Arabo-Islamic 'manifest destiny'." Al-Mushidd follows a similar poetic strategy with the aim of raising the Hijaz fire to be one of the Prophet's miracles, proving the patron's power of intercession in this life.

The poet starts to picture the volcano by describing two kinds of suffering: the suffering of the environment and nature (lines 15–19) and the suffering of humans (people of Medina and the poet himself) (lines 20–24). As for nature and natural cycles, the poem links the sparks of the lava fire with lightning and its sounds with thunder (line 15). The scene caused by the volcano of Medina is depicted as disrupting nature; the sun and the moon became eclipsed like night (line 16), the stars have disappeared and lost their luster (line 17), and the palm trees of Medina are withered (line 18). Moreover, the fire has produced scorching heat like simoom winds (line 18), and the earth is shaken and shocked by earthquakes (line 19), which recalls the Qur'ānic image of the final earthquake as narrated in the Sūrat of al-Zalzala (al-Qur'ān 99:1–2).

Lines 20–21 present the suffering of people, which functions as an important step to complete the rites of supplication in this challenging phase. The poet portrays the ritual supplication of all people in Medina, including children, women, and men (line 21), who admit that this volcano is a sign of God's earthly punishment for their sins (line

20). In performing supplication, the poet narrates how the people of Medina follow a specific path to get the intercession of the Prophet to God to end this disaster. First, they express terror and repentance when children cry with their mothers (line 21).

Lines 25–28 represent the rebirth of the people of Medina. We can understand from the change of the poet's word choices and similes [e.g., *aghātha* from *ghayth* (rain) (line 26), and al-Raḥmān from *raḥma* (mercy) (line 26)] that the poem enters the new phase of rebirth and filling. Unlike the word *nār* (fire) (lines 13 and 27), which symbolizes death, the word *nūr* (light) (line 27) carries the meaning of the beginning of the rebirth. In fact, the use of the word *salāman* (safe) (line 27) in the context of the fire that became peaceful evokes the Qur'ānic miracle of the fire of the Prophet Ibrāhīm/Abraham, in which the fire was safe for him and would not hurt him (al-Qur'ān 21:69). The evocation of Abraham's miracle purposes to praise the Prophet Muḥammad, whose intercession to God could calm the great fire of al-Medina. Moreover, the portrayal of the sweetness of the Prophet's intercession as "more delicious and desired than fruit and honey" (line 26) reflects how the people of Medina began feeling the happiness of rebirth. In sum, the antithesis between *wa'āsha* (revived) and *ba'da mamātihim* (after being close to death) (line 28) symbolizes the peak of the sense of relief after being close to death.

Depicting the natural cycles and nature affected by the volcano, the poet tries to show how the Prophet's intercession with God succeeds in reversing this great and universal crisis. It should be noted here that al-Mushidd's poem raises this disaster to a universal level by starting with the picture of how the volcano affects the natural cycles and sky and ends his description of the volcano as an earthquake that shakes the earth (line 19), which shows how this volcano is a divine catastrophe that affects the lightning, thunder, sun, moon, and stars before moving down to earth affecting winds, mountains, and, most importantly, human beings. In this context, the depictions of the volcano's eruption serve to praise the greatness of the Prophet, who has the power to be intercessor to God, who is the only One who can stop this universal disaster.

In line 22, the poet identifies himself emotionally with the people of Medina, which eases his way to taking a physical journey seeking a similar, but personal, intercession of the Prophet. The function of quoting Imru' al-Qays's image of the poet's companions warning him saying, "Do not perish out of sorrow, control yourself!" (Line 22)

5. My companions, halting
there their mounts for me,

Say, Do not perish out of grief,
control yourself! (Stetkevych 1993b: 250).

The companions of both poets attempt to console the poet in his moment of despair and encourage him to stop weeping over the separation from their beloveds. Unlike the response of Imru' al-Qays, who continues to weep over his lost beloved (Stetkevych 1993b: 260–161), the two companions of al-Mushidd evoke the religious practice of seeking help from God as if they are suggesting to the poet to be better

than the pagan Imru' al-Qays who does not stop weeping and to act as a Muslim who believes in God and his mercy. Accordingly, the function of evoking Imru' al-Qays in the present poem is to present the contrast between the intemperance of the Jāhilī poet and the Muslim believer.

4.3. Third: Bidding Farewell to the Prophet's City/Ṭayba (lines 29–33)

After depicting the volcano incident and taking a journey to the patron/Prophet, the poet reaches his beloved's dwelling, "Ṭayba," the place of aggregation with the Prophet, and describes it as "the ultimate goal" (line 29). Although this final section of al-Mushidd's poem appears different from the final storm section of *Mu'allaqa* by Imru' al-Qays, they are similar in terms of function. Following Stetkevych's (1993b: 261) suggestion about the storm scene at the end of *The Mu'allaqa of Imru'al-Qays* that "is a sublimated or metaphorical expression of the achievement of blood vengeance," the *ṭalal* in the present section of al-Mushidd's poem is a metaphorical expression of the achievement of the poet's goal of aggregation with the Prophet's city.

However, compared to the *nasīb* in Imru' al-Qays's poem, which pictures the poet leaving the abode of his beloved and taking a desert journey, the poet here resists the idea of departure and separation from his beloved. Furthermore, unlike Imru' al-Qays's *ṭalal* section, in which the poet weeps, laments, and begs his companions to stop at abandoned encampments and to express the pain of separation from his beloveds, the separation from community (first section) in the hope of aggregation with the Prophet (present section) brings happiness to al-Mushidd's *ṭalal* since his patron is the best beloved and his dwelling is an honest place to halt over (line 30). In addition, while Imru' al-Qays, in the opening line of his *Mu'allaqa,* calls his friends to stop and halt over the two places of al-Dakhūl and Ḥawmal, saying,

1. Halt, two friends, and we will weep
   for the memory of one beloved
   And an abode at Siqṭ al-Liwā
   between al-Dakhūl, then Ḥawmal (Stetkevych 1993b: 249).

al-Mushidd refrains from stopping at the same places (line 31) to halt at the honest dwelling of the greatest beloved: The Prophet (line 30). Thus, in al-Mushidd's *ṭalal*, there is no place for the sad mood of separation that dominates Imruʾ al-Qays's halt over the dwellings of his lost beloveds.

Furthermore, al-Mushidd rejects the worldly passions that are the subject of the very long, highly erotic *nasīb* of the *Mu'allaqa* of Imru' al-Qays. He continues challenging the master poet Imru' al-Qays when he ignores halting at Siqṭ al-Dakhūl and Ḥawmal (lines 31), which shows that al-Mushidd's journey is more difficult than Imru' al-Qays's and his lover is more beautiful than that of Imru' al-Qays. The poet also utilizes some elements from Imru' al-Qays's ode in an opposite context. For example, Imruʾ al-Qays depicts the wind in the *ṭalal* section, saying,

2. Then Tūḍaḥ, then al-Maqrāt, whose trace
   was not effaced.

By the two winds weaving over it
From south and north (Stetkevych 1993b: 249).

Unlike these winds that bring sadness to Imruʾ al-Qays, the north and south winds bring life and happiness to the dwelling of the Prophet: Medina (line 33). The poet considers Ṭayba, not al-Dakhūl or Ḥawmal, to be the ultimate goal of all hopeful ones (line 29) and its *mawāqif* (holy places) (line 32) as the most beautiful places with soil like ambergris and grass like the flower of clove (line 32).

Furthermore, unlike the mood of loss and weeping over the past that is spread throughout the *ṭalal* section of Imru' al-Qays's poem, a mood of happiness dominates the *ṭalal* section in al-Mushidd's poem, even though he evokes the same image of *ṭalal* from Imru' al-Qays's ode to describe the dwelling of his beloved in Ṭayba. In other words, Imru' al-Qays's *ṭalal* represents the eclipse of life, while the *ṭalal* here represents the spiritual rebirth of the poet. In addition, the *ṭalal* in Imru' al-Qays's *Mu'allaqa* speaks about the lost past, while the present poem speaks about the ongoing present and future. For example, the use of present tense verbs indicating present and future [e.g., *yafuḥu* (wafts) and *ya 'qubu* (turns to) (lines 33)] reflects the poet's hope for present and future during this spiritual experience of halting over the Prophetic city, is similar what we find in the Sufi poetry of twelfth and thirteenth centuries such as in that of Ibn al- Fāriḍ (d. 632/1234(in which he links between *ṭalal* and hope for the future (Stetkevych 1993a: 89).

In this final section, the poet performs the physical act of supplication to make ritual contact with the one supplicated/the Prophet. The declaration of the poet's journey's end, Ṭayba, in his saying,

29) O you, departing from Ṭayba,
Ṭayba is the ultimate goal of all who are hopeful,

makes the language of this section like that of the Sufi Ibn al-Fāriḍ in terms of declaring Mecca as his ultimate destination. Stetkevych (1993a: 89) notes the function of Mecca at the end of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's "Did lightning flash," saying, "The language of hope also proves to be the most direct one. All meaning is now contained in one word quite clearly and explicitly. No images are necessary. The word is "Mecca"—the name and its symbolic content are one. It is as if other symbolic connotations have now receded into the background, now that the goal has been reached." Equally, the name of the symbolic content of Ṭayba in the concluding section of al-Mushidd's poem functions as Mecca does in the mystical poetry of Ibn al-Fariḍ. It is derived from the root *ṭ, y, b,* which has the meaning kindness *ṭība* in addition to the meaning of the beautiful smell or perfume *ṭīb* that is appropriate for the simile between the smell of Ṭayba's soil and the scents in lines 32–33.

Furthermore, when the poet says, "Ṭayba is the ultimate goal of all hopeful ones" (line 29) and when he says,

31) I entered it performing *iḥrām* (the enter state of al- Ḥajj and al ʿUmra) and [the utterance of] *talbiya*
and turned away from *Siqṭ al-Dakhūl,* then *Ḥawmal;*

He completes the physical step of approaching the place of the one supplicated/the Prophet. The performance of the pilgrimage rites of *iḥrām* with the utterance of *talbiya* is, in speech act terms, a performative utterance with a locutionary form, illocutionary force, and perlocutionary consequence. The linguistic utterance of *talbiya* indicates that the poet does an act to enter the religious rite *iḥrām.*

Following the four steps of the ancient supplication as explained by Naiden (2006), the poet enters the land of Hijaz, performs *iḥrām*, pronounces the prayer of *talbiya* after a long journey, and performs the second step of the physical and verbal acts of gesture or word. However, the last two verses have a direct praise to the Prophet and an indirect request to him. Naiden (2006: 104) says, "The first two steps [approaching, gesticulating] lead to the third, and the third often features either a request like an acquittal or pardon, an argument from fairness, or an appeal to pity that only an innocent can make…The fourth step [receiving a response from the supplicandus], in turn, resembles the third." However, the poet of the present poem does not come to the Prophet to perform a direct request, the third step of F. Naiden's (2006, line 34) supplication, but to praise the Prophet and ask indirectly for his intercession. The poet praises the Prophet as "best Messenger, most generous intercessor, best fulfilled of hopes and safest refuge" (line 34), which can be interpreted to mean he performs a personal and an implied request for the Prophet's intercession to God in hopes of obtaining his unmentioned request.

The relation between signifier and signified differs from one section to another within al-Mushidd's poem. In the first section, this relation oscillates between direct [e.g., the adjectives of "best messenger" (line 1) and "master" (line 4)] and symbolic [e.g., the image of the mounts (lines 2–3)] relations. Then, the direct relation between signifier and signified overshadows the description of the volcano, especially in lines 20–26, in which the language becomes narrative in style in a rationally determined framework. However, the symbolic relation dominates the final section of the poem with the imitation of the pre-Islamic *ṭalal* in lines 29–33. This change of language from direct to symbolic has two functions: first, it facilitates the transition from the physical world, which is pictured in the poet's description of the volcano and the fire, to the spiritual realm, in which *ṭalal* does not only have physical and psychological dimensions, such as in Imru' al-Qays's case, but also a religious, spiritual one. Second, using the symbolic language of *ṭalal* bridges the gap between the world of reality (the volcano) and the spiritual world of miracles (telling about the volcano). It reflects the change from the poet's reality (taking an actual journey or sending a real missive to the Prophet) to his spiritual status in making spiritual contact with the Prophet. Consequently, the change of language and evoking of Imru' al-Qays's *ṭalal* eases the way for the poet to address the Prophet with second-person pronouns and to direct his prayer to him (lines 34–35).

4.4. Fourth: Benediction/*Taṣliya* (lines 34–35)

The poet concludes by performing a *taṣliya* (the utterance of blessing and greeting upon the Prophet Muḥammad) in the last two lines, which emphasizes his use of language, and to use Austin's (1975: 5) terms, it is not merely a "parasitic use" of language that only says something, but rather a performative use of language that is used to

do something. Considering the poem as a message, the poet's performing *taṣliya* (benediction) at the end of his poem can be interpreted as a sign of the completion of his supplicatory ritual act. It is believed that without *taṣliya,* a prayer will not be answered. It has been related to the virtues of bestowing *taṣliya* upon the Prophet that Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb narrated: "Indeed the supplication stops between the Heaven and the earth. Nothing of it is raised up until you [the praying person] utters *taṣliya* upon your Prophet" (Al-Tirmidhī, Sunan al-Tirmidhī, book 3, *ḥadīth* 486, 129).

Accordingly, *taṣliya* is not merely formula praise of the Prophetic but a performative utterance that completes the act of prayer *du'ā.* Also, *taṣliya* performs an important role in such supplicatory odes. As Stetkevych (2010: 146) points out about the function of *taṣliya* in the context of the ritual exchange in the panegyric ode: "Indeed a requisite part of the poet's (verbal, performative) gift to the patron is the blessing—the power of which may be more palpable to us when we consider it as the opposite of a curse." Therefore, *taṣliya* on the Prophet in these two lines seals the supplicatory message sent to the Prophet.

5. Conclusion

As explained above, al-Mushidd did not compose his poem merely as a reaction to the shocking disaster of the volcano of Medina or to express his feelings about the human situation, but rather to seek the metaphysical miracle of the Prophet's intercession. Al-Mushidd's poem aims to recount the story of the Hijaz's volcano eruption and fire as proof of the Prophet Muḥammad's prophethood and his power of intercession. In addition, al-Mushidd's poem performs a speech act as a kind of "spiritual" *exchange* between the poet and the Prophet in which the poet praises the Prophet with the hope of getting the Prophet's intercession. The poet re-performs Imru' al-Qays's poem and modifies some of the subjects, images, words, and phrases to challenge Imru' al-Qays and to present the difference between the pre-Islamic polytheists and Islamic lovers, beloveds, dwellings, journeys, and experiences of love.

The study of *madīḥ nabawī* holds significant potential for future exploration. Al-Mushidd's model has demonstrated how this type of poetry can be used to confront natural disasters. Researchers can further examine *madīḥ nabawī* to understand its impact on Islamic societies in different contexts. From the early Islamic era to the present day, poets have used *madīḥ nabawī* to address personal, military, political, and social crises. This makes it a valuable tool for understanding the role of poetic language in Islamic societies.

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The Efficacy of Using Translation Process Research Tools in Developing Students' Translation Competence

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Abstract This study investigates the efficacy of using methods traditionally used in translation process research for teaching purposes, namely the use of screen recordings of the process of translation to stimulate reflection and increase awareness of the process of translation amongst students. The aim is to determine whether exposing students to the process of translation has any effect on their translational performance in terms of the acceptability of their translations and their ability to reflect on the translation process. Thirty-four students enrolled in the BA of translation program at Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University (PNU) were recruited for this study. The students were randomly assigned to either a control or experimental group of 17 students each. The research used a post-translation test as well as open-ended questions to compare the results of the two groups. The acceptability of the translations was judged against the acceptability criteria of the PACTE research project. Reflections were assessed using an adapted scheme based on Kemper et al. and Bain et al. Students in the experimental group significantly outperformed the control in the reflection category in both the amount and level of reflections provided. However, the differences between the two groups were less marked with regards to translation acceptability, although the experimental group still performed slightly better than the control. The study finds that the use of process research tools is a viable tool to stimulate reflection in translation students, although their effect on translation performance might take longer to develop.

Keywords Translation process research tools · translation competence · screen recordings · pedagogy · Arabic

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1. Introduction

The teaching of translation is a challenging task. This is due, among other things, to the complex nature of language and translation. Even when students are equipped with knowledge of strategies, methods, and theories of translation, the task remains largely challenging. This is because of the many factors usually at play in any given translation situation. For this reason, instructors of translation are always trying to expose their students to varying contexts and genres in hopes of helping them develop the skills necessary to navigate the multiplicity of complex factors typical of translation problems. This study will look at the potential of translation process research tools as one way to help students develop the translation competence necessary to deal with translation problems successfully. The study specifically focuses on the potential of such tools to foster reflective thinking and improve translation performance. The following Section 1.1 study background will attempt to give a general background to the study followed by the research questions, significance, and objectives.

1.1. Study background

The issue of translation problems is at the heart of translation studies and has long been addressed in the literature, with many solutions and approaches suggested. However, even with these tools to help, teaching remains a challenging task, and there is no guarantee that students will apply these solutions successfully. This is probably what prompted Newmark (1988) to write in the introductory chapter to his famous book "A Textbook of Translation," "*I cannot make you into a good translator; I cannot cause you to write well. The best I can do is to suggest to you some general guidelines for translating…*" This difficulty stems from the fact that translation problems always involve novel elements with no predefined solutions. This leaves the translator with the task of making the best choice from a large pool of suggested strategies, methods, and theories, sometimes needing to synthesize new solutions or combine two or more approaches together while considering the various linguistic and extralinguistic factors that affect a translation in any given moment. This is not an easy task, and merely teaching theories, strategies, and methods is not sufficient (Massey 2017).

One suggestion for dealing with problems of that nature is through the teaching of reflective thinking (Schon 1991; Massey 2017). Reflection is said to help students incorporate theory into practice (Wong). It helps in successfully applying the knowledge gained in classrooms to real-life situations (Wong). Schon (1991) argues that real-life problems are often complex and ill-structured, always involving a level of uncertainty and uniqueness. According to him, such problems are best dealt with through employing reflection. Through reflection, practitioners make sense of the situation before they come up with a solution. As practitioners reflect, it helps them situate and make sense of the problems before they attempt a solution. Therefore, he suggests the incorporation of reflective thinking as a way to cope with problems in the real world (Schon 1991).

Considering these views, reflection seems especially well-suited for translation problems since all texts pose unique and badly structured problems that were never

encountered before. Alves (2005) in his paper maintains that "meta-reflection… is the key to promote awareness-raising and, as a consequence, an increment in the quality of translators training."

1.2. Research objectives

The aim of the study is to test the efficacy of using screen recordings and retrospective verbalization protocols (RVPs) as teaching tools. Specifically, it looks at the effects of such tools on students' ability to reflect and the acceptability of their translations.

1.3. Key research questions

This study intends to investigate whether screen recordings used as cues for retrospective verbalizations (RVs) would be a good tool to stimulate reflection and increase awareness in students and to determine whether such awareness will be reflected in improved translation quality. Accordingly, the study attempts to answer the following research questions:

1. Does exposing students to the process of translation through screen recordings of the process coupled with the production of RVs stimulate reflection in translation students?
2. Is there a difference in the quality of the reflections provided by students who undergo the treatment compared with the control?
3. Does increased reflection translate into better translation products, i.e., increased acceptability of the proposed solutions for translation problems?

1.4. Research hypotheses

The current study makes use of the following null hypotheses.

1. There is no difference in the level of reflections provided by the students in the experimental group compared with the control group.
2. There is no difference in the amount of reflections provided by the students in the experimental group compared with the control group.
3. There is no difference in the acceptability of the proposed solutions provided by the experimental group compared with the control group.

1.5. Significance of the study

The current study helps shed some light on the efficacy of process research tools, specifically screen recording and verbal protocols, as pedagogical tools in the translation classroom. The findings can contribute to increased quality of teaching and learning and help empower students to be more engaged in their own learning by providing them with and guiding them to the resources they need to accelerate their learning and to heighten their awareness of the factors at play (e.g., place and time of text production and translation production, author and intended audience, linguistic and extralinguistic elements in the text to be translated among others). The study

also has the potential to add to our understanding of how translation competence is acquired.

1.6. Limitations of the study

One limitation of the current study is the relatively short period of exposure, which makes it difficult to see significant improvements in students' performance. This is due to the time scale and scope of the study, which limit the time in which the researcher is able to collect the data. However, previous studies have also implemented comparable designs carried out in a short period of time and were still able to record some positive improvements in students' performance. An example is the study conducted by Massey and Ehrensberger-Dow (2011). Another point to note is that the short time frame can be helpful in determining the time necessary for measurable competence to develop in students. This can be highly implacable for developing course objectives, outcomes, and curriculum design.

2. The theoretical framework

The following section will briefly review the most relevant research previously conducted in the field. It will outline studies that have either explicitly discussed the benefits of process-oriented teaching methodologies in the classroom or those that have referred to the role of reflection and cognition in the development of translation competence.

One of the most closely related studies is the one conducted by Massey and Ehrensberger-Dow (2011). The experiment was part of the ongoing project Capturing Translation Process, which is a longitudinal project carried out at the Institute of Translation and Interpreting of Zurich University of Applied Sciences (Massey and Ehrensberger-Dow 2011). The experiment recruited eight students enrolled in the MA program for specialized translation at the researchers' institution as well as their instructors. In the experiment, the students' processes were recorded while they translated using keystrokes, screen movements, and eye movements. The students were then asked to provide a RVP for themselves and their peers, respectively. Semi-structured interviews were carried out in which the students were asked to compare their processes with their peers. The recordings were also viewed by their instructors, and semi-structured interviews were used to collect data for the analysis of the results. The researchers found the screen recordings to be very highly stimulating for both students and teachers, eliciting them to provide rich and detailed commentaries on the process of translation. For the students, they showed a tendency to focus on strategies and procedures, which suggests that using process research tools in the translation classroom can be a viable means of bridging the gap between declarative and procedural knowledge (Alves 2005, as cited in Massey and Ehrensberger-Dow 2011). It also seems to be useful as a diagnostic tool, giving instructors a reliable source of insight into translation behaviors in a way that traditional product-oriented methodologies cannot provide. The researchers conclude that process research techniques coupled with RVPs can be a valuable resource to provide students and instructors with insight into the translation process.

Another study that looked into the efficacy of process protocols used as self-reflection activities is the one by Angelone (2015). The study compared three types of process protocols, which are integrated problem and decision reporting logs, recorded verbalizations, and screen recordings with the aim of determining the most fruitful in terms of mitigating translation errors in the revision stage. The study concluded that screen recordings proved to be the most effective in reducing errors in students' revised translations. The author speculates that a possible reason for this drastic success for screen recordings is that they, unlike the two compared protocols, required no parallel processing during the translation as the protocol is generated automatically by the screen recording software. Another possible reason the author gives is that the protocol is essentially an "overt" one, drawing more attention to problem areas in the translation (e.g., when students see themselves pausing, it can be because they found something difficult which they can give more attention to in the revision). The author concludes with recommendations for using screen recording protocols as successful tools for fostering self-reflection in students for reducing the occurrence of translation errors.

Pym (2009) also conducted an experiment using screen recordings with the aim of increasing students' awareness of their behaviors during the translation process. In the experiment, which was conducted as part of class activities for students doing their Masters in translation, the students were asked to translate while using screen recording software. The students were then given a number of questions about the translation process, which they were supposed to answer after viewing their own recordings. The questions served to stimulate students' observations about certain behaviors in relation to three areas: the use of machine translation, translator styles, and translating under time pressure. Pym concludes that such exercises can be highly effective as teaching tools saying:

> *The use of experiments in this way allows students to make direct observations about their own translating and to draw their own conclusions; students are then in a position to challenge much of what is commonly said about translation (—"don't use MT,"—"the faster you go, the more mistakes you make," etc.)*
>
> *(153, 2009)*

All of these studies and many others (Alves 2005; Hansen 2006; Norberg 2014) confirm the idea that exposure to the process fosters increased reflection and awareness among translation students. Other studies have been concerned with addressing the relation between increased awareness and improvements in translation competence.

One such study is conducted by Francesc Fernández and Patrick Zabalbeascoa (2011). In the study, the researchers evaluate the correlation between the assessments provided by instructors and the self-evaluations provided by students. The study makes use of post-translation metacognitive questionnaires designed to help students evaluate their translations. The researchers found that the high-performing students (as judged by their instructors' assessments) showed better awareness of translation strategies and provided higher-quality justifications for their selected solutions. This led the authors to conclude that reflection and metacognitive abilities are correlational with translation performance.

Although there is increasing interest in the field of process research and many papers are being written to address its possible applications, many researchers haveten to mention that their results are only tentative and that the research is in its preliminary stages. Many questions about what happens in the process of translation and the possible applications of process research remain unexplored. There are many aspects to be studied in order to gain a better and broader understanding of how process research can affect the teaching of translation for both the instructors and the students. One of the areas that this study addresses, and one that is not sufficiently or explicitly explored by previous research, is the relation between awareness and the quality of translation products and if awareness, which we saw, was positively affected by exposure to the process, as demonstrated by the studies outlined above, will translate into improved translation quality with exposure as will.

3. Research methodology

This section of the paper presents the methodology and research design implemented in this study. The first section covers methodology and research design. Sections 3.2 and 3.3 discuss recruiting participants and the instruments used for data collection, respectively. Section 3.4 discusses the procedure and timeline, while Section 3.5 is dedicated to the analysis of the data. Finally, Section 3.6 discusses the ethics and limitations of concern in this study.

3.1. Methodology and research design

To answer the third research question, a post-translation test was administered to participants. Students were required to translate a text of 263 words. The text was utilized from the research carried out by the PACTE group as the text was tested to be representative of prototypical translation problems (PACTE 2017). The group specifically mentions they make their data collection resources available to be used by other researchers to aid in building the validity and reliability of results (PACTE 2017: xxvi).

3.2. Analysis

3.2.1 Reflection

To assess the level of reflective thinking displayed in the responses obtained from both groups, the data was first read and analyzed qualitatively. This was done with the aim of gaining familiarity with the data and facilitating the selection of an assessment scheme that will accurately represent the data. Through the qualitative analysis, some categories of reflection emerged, and the researcher attempted a preliminary evaluation of the levels of students' reflections based on their quality and depth. This helped in the selection of a suitable assessment scheme later.

The main concerns in selecting a scheme were finding one that would represent the reflection categories identified from the responses of both groups and one that would be sensitive enough to illustrate the differences between them.

After reviewing the literature, it was decided to adopt the coding scheme developed by Kemper et al. (2008) with some adaptations. The scheme was developed to be suitable for application in any professional development course that requires reflection (Kemper 1999). This meant that the scheme would be suitable for the purposes of this study, which attempts to investigate the effects of two different treatments on reflection.

The scheme utilizes four categories of reflection based on Mezirow's seminal work (1999). These are habitual action/non-reflection, understanding, reflection, and critical reflection. The scheme also introduces transitional categories. According to Kemper et al. (2008), "It is unlikely that all pieces of work will fit neatly into one of the four categories. As with any qualitative categorization or coding scheme, intermediate cases are inevitable." The introduction of these categories was seen as especially helpful as they granted some flexibility and helped to account for relatively small differences in the levels of reflection.

Another decision taken in the analysis of the responses is to code everything the participants wrote. This was seen as crucial as it shows how much of students writing is actually reflective. The adoption of the Kemper et al. scheme (2008) allowed for such a thorough analysis as it evaluates students writing, starting at non-reflection up to critical reflection. Other schemes that only evaluated writing starting at reflection did not fit the purpose.

However, the unit of analysis recommended by the scheme had to be adapted. Kemper et al. (2008) argue that the assessment should be performed at the whole-paper level, where one category is assigned to the writing based on the highest level of reflection detected. This is because they see reflection as an integrative process where some parts that may not be reflective alone become reflective when considered together with other parts of the writing, as writers sometimes use descriptions and feelings to set the stage for their reflections, which might come later in the text. This is a very valid point when considering reflection for the purpose of giving feedback in a classroom setting. However, for the purposes of research, where it is important to learn the details of the level of reflection students engage in and how much of their writing is reflective, following this method might cause some parts of the data to be lost or obscured. Actually, Bell et al. (2011) question the notion that a piece of writing that contains one critical reflection shall be regarded as being of higher quality than one that contains many reflections but does not reach the critical reflection level.

For this reason, the unit of analysis considered in this study was the sentence, and when complex or compound sentences were present, a T-unit was taken as the unit of

Table 1 Summary of reflection assessment schemes

Kemper et al. (2008) four categories of reflection with the transitional categories added	Bain et al. (1999) five-point level reflection scale
Non-reflection • The answer shows no evidence of the student attempting to reach an understanding of the concept or theory that underpins the topic. • Material has been placed into an essay without the student thinking seriously about it, trying to interpret the material, or forming a view. • Largely reproduction, with or without adaptation, of the work of others.	Reporting • The learner describes, reports, or retells with minimal transformation and with no added observations or insights.
Transitional	
Understanding • Evidence of an understanding of a concept or topic. • Material is confined to theory. • Reliance upon what was in the textbook or the lecture notes. • Theory is not related to personal experiences, real-life applications, or practical situations.	Responding • The learner uses source data in some way but with little transformation or conceptualization. • The learner makes an observation or judgment without making any further inferences or detailing the reasons for the judgment. • The learner asks a "rhetorical" question without attempting to answer it or considering alternatives. • The learner reports a feeling such as relief, anxiety, happiness, and so on.
Transitional	Relating • The learner identifies aspects of the data that have personal meaning or that connect with his/her prior or current experience. • The learner seeks a superficial • understanding of relationships. • The learner identifies something he or she is good at, something that he/she needs to improve, a mistake he/she has made, or an area in which he or she has learned from his/her practical experience. • The learner gives a superficial explanation of the reason why something has happened or identifies something he/she needs or plans to do or change.

Table 1 (Continued)

Reflection • Theory is applied to practical situations. • Situations encountered in practice will be considered and successfully discussed in relationship to what has been taught. There will be personal insights that go beyond book theory.	Reasoning • The learner integrates the data into an appropriate relationship, e.g., with theoretical concepts and personal experience, involving a high level of transformation and conceptualization. • The learner seeks a deep understanding of why something has happened. • The learner explores or analyses a concept, event, or experience, asks questions and looks for answers, considers alternatives, and speculates or hypothesizes about why something is happening. • The learner attempts to explain his/her own or others' behavior or feelings using his/her own insight, inferences, experiences, or previous learning with some depth of understanding.
Transitional	Reconstructing • The learner displays a high level of abstract thinking to generalize and/or apply learning. • The learner extracts and internalizes the personal significance of his/her learning and/or plans his/her own further learning on the basis of his/her reflections.
Critical reflection • Evidence of a change in perspective over a fundamental belief of the understanding of a key concept or phenomenon. • Critical reflection is unlikely to occur frequently.	

analysis (Fung & Liu 2018). A T-unit is "a main clause plus all subordinate clauses and non-clausal structures attached to or embedded in it" (Hunt 1970: 4 as cited in Gaies 1980). Should adjacent sentences or T-units discuss the same idea or theme, they were treated as one unit and coded only once. This method is not uncommon in the literature. Many researchers used similar units to divide students writing into segments to be coded individually (Wong et al. 1995; Bell et al. 2011; Fung & Liu 2018).

Another modification that was applied to the scheme was the addition of further descriptors to the category **understanding** (see Table 9). The descriptors of this category seemed to apply mostly to the control group, and it was felt that responses provided by the experimental group that did not fit into the non-reflection category nor the transitional (1) category (transitional before reflection) were not covered by

the descriptors provided by Kemper et al. (2008). Supplementary descriptors to assist the coding were needed.

To answer to this need, other schemes were reviewed, and another matching category, "**responding**" was adopted. This was taken from Bain et al. (1999) five-point level reflection scale. It is worth mentioning that the earlier scheme by Kemper (1999) contained the category **introspection,** which shares some similarities with Bain et al.'s **responding** category. **Introspection** was considered to be on the same level as **understanding** or the "**thoughtful action**" category, as it was referred to in the earlier scheme. This shall increase confidence in this choice. Table 10 shows the placement of the category **responding** in relation to the Kemper et al. (2008) scheme.

3.2.2. Interpretation of the scheme

Following is a detailed description of how the adapted categories of Kemper et al. (2008) were interpreted and applied in this study. Such transparency shall give the reader the ability to assess the level of subjectivity exercised on the part of the researcher.

3.2.2.1. Non-reflection

The non-reflection category is described as showing no engagement on the part of the student with no attempt to understand or engage with the material (Kemper et al. 2008). In this study, comments that were found to be the least thoughtful were ones that gave very generic opinions on the treatment itself and which did not show any elaborate involvement. These were comments similar to "the discussion was very nice," "I had fun watching the recording," and "the discussion was beneficial."

3.2.2.2. Transitional (1)

The transitional (1) category was dedicated to units that showed more engagement or reported gained benefits but did not elaborate on what these benefits are. They were higher than non-reflection but did not warrant being rated at the level of understanding/responding.

3.2.2.3. Understanding/responding

According to Kemper et al. (2008) the understanding category shows a deep approach to learning. Comments that were coded under understanding/responding were ones that relayed what was learned or discussed in the session but did not show any further addition or relation to previous knowledge, experience, or personal insight. They remain at the level of understanding. Comments that showed more elaborate judgments regarding the translation or the treatment were also coded under this category as they are covered by the response category of Bain et al. (1999) scheme. These were comments of higher quality and showed more involvement with the material but did not yet begin to show signs of reflection. Descriptions or simple observations that show understanding but involve no effort to relate to previous knowledge or experience were also coded under this category.

3.2.2.4. Transitional (2)

The transitional (2) category was given to comments that go beyond the material. These were comments which showed evidence of the beginning of reflection. They involved simple attempts to link what is discussed or observed to previous knowledge or experience. Sometimes, they were good observations that showed a successful relation of knowledge and/or experience to the new situation. Comments that show awareness or personal insight regarding the content of the treatment were also coded under this category.

An example of what is coded under this category is this comment taken from one participant in the control group. The student says, "The discussion addressed a topic that I have not paid attention to in a long time, and I don't know why." Here, the student is relating the experience to herself and is beginning to ponder on the reasons for her behavior. However, she does not attempt to answer or speculate on why this was the case for her, so this is kept at the transitional level before reflection.

3.2.2.5. Reflection

The reflection category was given to statements that involved profound personal insight or those that combined observation with the addition of some perspective or framing it. Sometimes, they were speculative or attempted to explain the motives or reasons behind their behavior or that of their peers. Instances where a discrepancy between outcome and expectation was highlighted were also regarded as reflective.

3.2.2.6. Transitional (3)

The transitional (3) category was assigned to comments that questioned a fundamental belief or understanding or showed signs of beginning to consider alternative perspectives.

3.2.2.7. Critical reflection

The critical reflection category shows "evidence of a change in perspective over a fundamental belief of the understanding of a key concept or phenomenon" (Kemper et al. 2008). There were no comments that reached that level in this study. This aligns with Kemper et al. (2008) view that "critical reflection is unlikely to occur frequently."

3.2.2.7.1. Post-translation test evaluation criteria

The PACTE's model for evaluating the acceptability of translations was used to evaluate the translations submitted by the participants (PACTE 2017). The criteria make use of a three-level scale in which solutions are categorized as acceptable (A), semi-acceptable (SA), or non-acceptable (NA). They are given the following numeric values, respectively, A = 1, SA = 0.5, and NA = 0.

The acceptability of solutions provided for each rich point (RP) in the text is judged based on "whether or not the solution found to a translation problem

effectively: (1) communicates the meaning of the source text; (2) fulfills the function of the translation (within the context of the translation brief, the target readers' expectations, genre conventions in the target culture); and (3) makes appropriate use of language" (PACTE 2017: 120). The group's model goes further to assign each of these aspects a numeric value where meaning is always assigned a higher value than function and language use (PACTE 2017: 122). However, for the current study, it was deemed sufficient to rate solutions as acceptable, semi-acceptable, or non-acceptable and to use PACTE's definitions for the level of acceptability for the translations of RPs in the text (PACTE 2017: 360).

3. Ethics and limitations

One of the concerns usually raised in studies that rely on qualitative analysis is the issue of validity and reliability of the results. This is addressed by increasing the transparency of how the categorizations were interpreted. This shall allow others to assess the level of subjectivity exercised.

4. Data analysis

In this section of the paper, the results will be presented. The results section will be divided into four main parts. The first one will present the findings of the analysis of the first and second research questions related to reflection. The second section will report on the results of the post-translation test. The third section will address the findings related to the fourth research question regarding the affective factor. The fourth and final section will report on the results of the post-treatment questionnaire administered to the participants.

4.1. Word counts produced by the experiment

One observation that was clear from the beginning is the amount of writing produced by each group. The participants in the experimental group tended to write more than the control. This was evident through a simple word count conducted through Microsoft Excel (2010). Tables 2 and 3 show the word counts for each group. Looking at the tables, the number of words produced by the experimental group over the three weeks of treatment reached 2,793 words. The control group, on the other hand, produced 1,697 words over the same period. On average, the students in the experimental group wrote 20 more words compared to the control.

4.2. Results of the reflection assessment

Once the assessment scheme was selected and the interpretations were defined, the coding process was started. Every response was read carefully and divided into the analysis unit defined in section 3.5.1. Following reflection categories were assigned to each identified analysis unit, and the total number of units under each category was calculated. The following section will present the results of this analysis. Section

Table 2 Word count for the experimental group

Experimental group	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Mean
TR31	34	58	34	42.0
TR33	108	49	34	63.7
TR13	81	40	32	51.0
TR14	32	64	52	49.3
TR26	72	75	60	69.0
TR10	153	90	64	102.3
TR28	70	65	24	53.0
TR27	94	105	57	85.3
TR24	34	53	61	49.3
TR29	18	43	36	32.3
TR2	54	92	9	51.7
TR15	28	27	26	27.0
TR22	93	82	82	85.7
TR23	48	39	42	43.0
TR7	11	58	34	34.3
TR5	29	26	35	30.0
TR9	31	130	25	62.0
Total no. of words	990	1,096	707	2,793
Mean by week	58.2	64.5	41.6	54.8

4.2.1 is dedicated to showing the overall performance of the two groups, while Section 4.2.2 shows the highest level of reflection achieved for individual participants of each group.

For convenience, analysis units will be referred to as **response units** for the rest of this chapter.

4.2.1. Comparing the results of the two groups

To compare the performance of the two researched groups, the results for each reflection category will be discussed separately. This shall help highlight the differences between the two groups.

Tables 4 and 6 (for the experimental and control groups, respectively) show the total number of response units calculated under each reflection category for each week of the treatment. Tables 5 and 7, show the percentages of the response units which belong under each reflection category. Before going into the detailed analysis, it is worth taking stock of the total number of response units identified for each group. A quick look at Tables 4 and 6 below shows the response units identified in the experimental group to have reached 230 units, whereas it was 158 for the control. This shows that the experimental group tended to write more compared to the control. This is in line with the simple word count presented in Section 4.1.

Table 3 Word count for the control group

Control group	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Mean
TR20	43	52	16	37.0
TR4	55	19	17	30.3
TR30	55	20	21	32.0
TR12	44	27	25	32.0
TR21	55	5	10	23.3
TR11	34	13	35	27.3
TR16	81	52	53	62.0
TR18	73	64	44	60.3
TR17	54	0	30	28.0
TR8	43	19	62	41.3
TR25	22	38	32	30.7
TR19	31	18	17	22.0
TR32	7	9	5	7.0
TR1	33	8	19	20.0
TR3	47	45	47	46.3
TR6	29	25	14	22.7
TR34	42	36	52	43.3
Total no. of words	748	450	499	1,697
Mean by week	44.0	26.5	29.4	33.3

4.2.1.1. Performance according to reflection categories non-reflection

A comparison of the percentages of response units that belong to the non-reflection category shows that 22.2% of the total response units by the control group were non-reflective, whereas only 2.6% of the total units by the experimental group were non-reflective. This shows that the control group tended to engage in non-reflective writing significantly more compared to the experimental group.

4.2.1.2. Transitional (1)

Both groups did not seem to engage a lot in this category. However, the experimental group engaged less compared to the control with response percentages reaching 3% and 8.9%, respectively. This further shows the tendency further away from non-reflective writing in the experimental group.

4.2.1.3. Understanding/responding

For the category understanding/responding, there was a clear difference in performance between the two groups. The control group showed a clear preference for writing at this level, with the majority of their responses going under this category (with a percentage

of 41.1% of their total response units). This was in stark contrast with the experimental group, which only engaged at this level for 13.5% of their writing.

4.2.1.4. Transitional (2)

Here, there is also a stark difference between the two groups, with the experimental group showing a significant tendency to engage in writing at this level. In fact, more than half of their total response units belonged to this category, with their percentage reaching 54.3%. Although lower, the control group also showed a preference for this category, with their responses reaching 19.9% of their total writing.

4.2.1.5. Reflection

The performance of the experimental group was also superior for the reflection category. 26.5% of the response units of the experimental group belonged to this category. The control lagged severely behind, with only 7% of their response units going to this category. This again shows a clear and significant tendency for the experimental group to engage in the more reflective categories of the scheme.

4.2.1.6. Transitional (3)

For the transitional (3) category, only the control group was able to provide responses at this level with a percentage of 1.9% of their total writing. Looking at Tables 6 and 7 show that this percentage represents three response units. These all belonged to the same participant (TR18). No participants reached this level in the experimental group.

4.2.1.7. Critical reflection

There were no responses identified under this category for both groups. This is in line with Kemper et al. view that critical reflection does not occur frequently (Kemper et al. 2008).

For a detailed look at the frequency counts for all reflection categories identified in the responses of the participants, see Appendices I and II.

Table 4 Frequency of reflection categories (experimental)

Week	Non-reflection	Transi-tional (1)	Under-standing/ responding	Transi-tional (2)	Reflect-ion	Transi. tional (3)	Critical reflection	Total response Units
1	4	1	14	30	27	0	0	76
2	1	4	4	48	24	0	0	81
3	1	2	13	47	10	0	0	73
Totals	6	7	31	125	61	0	0	230

4.2.2. Individual performance: highest reflection achieved

The previous section focused more on the number of responses that belonged under each reflection category. This section will look at the highest levels of reflection achieved by students individually, regardless of the concentration of this level in a student's writing.

Tables 8 and 9 below show that 15 students were able to reach level 5 (the reflection category) in the experimental group, while only five students reached this level in the control. For level 4 [transitional (2)], the experimental group only had two students whose highest level was under this category, while the control group had the highest number here, with eight students stopping at this level. The control group also showed more variance in the results, whereas the highest and lowest-performing students belonged to this group, with one student reaching level 6 [transitional (3) category] and three students stopped at the understanding/responding category (level 3) in all three of their responses. The experimental group showed a more consistent behavior in the levels of reflection achieved by its participants.

5. Translation test results

In this section, the analysis of the results of the post-translation test will be presented. Translations for RPs in the texts were extracted to an Excel file and evaluated for acceptability. Following the PACTE's model, they were assigned the following numeric values; acceptable solution (A) = 1, semi-acceptable solution (SA) = 0.5, and non-acceptable (NA) = 0.

Table 6 Frequency of reflection categories (control)

Week	Non-reflection	Transi-tional (1)	Under-standing/ responding	Transi-tional (2)	Reflect-ion	Transi. tional (3)	Critical reflection	Total response Units
1	12	8	17	20	3	3	0	63
2	11	3	19	5	5	0	0	43
3	12	3	29	6	3	0	0	52
Totals	35	14	65	31	11	3	0	158

Table 7 Percentages of reflection categories (control)

Week	Non-reflection	Transi-tional (1)	Under-standing/ responding	Transi-tional (2)	Reflect-ion	Transi. tional (3)	Critical reflection	Total response Units
1	7.6%	5.1%	10.8%	12.7%	1.9%	1.9%	0.0%	39.9%
2	7.0%	1.9%	12.0%	3.2%	3.2%	0.0%	0.0%	27.2%
3	7.6%	1.9%	18.4%	3.8%	1.9%	0.0%	0.0%	33.5%
Totals	22.2%	8.9%	41.1%	19.6%	7.0%	1.9%	0.0%	100.6%

Table 8 Experimental group

Codes	W1	W2	W3	Highest reflection
TR13	5	4	4	5
TR22	5	5	5	5
TR28	5	5	5	5
TR26	5	5	5	5
TR7	4	5	4	5
TR24	5	5	5	5
TR31	5	5	4	5
TR14	5	5	5	5
TR5	4	4	4	4
TR33	5	5	4	5
TR23	3	4	4	4
TR15	4	5	4	5
TR29	3	5	5	5
TR2	5	5	3	5
TR9	5	5	4	5
TR27	5	5	5	5

Table 9 Control group

Codes	W1	W2	W3	Highest reflection
TR21	4	1	3	4
TR19	3	4	4	4
TR8	4	3	3	4
TR30	5	3	5	5
TR4	4	3	3	4
TR34	4	5	4	5
TR16	5	5	3	5
TR6	4	3	3	4
TR11	4	4	4	4
TR12	4	3	3	4
TR20	4	5	4	5
TR25	4	4	4	4
TR3	3	3	3	3
TR1	3	2	2	3
TR18	6	4	3	6
TR17	5	Missing	5	5

Due to the fact that some of the students participating in the experiment could not complete the post-translation test before their finals and studying in preparation for their examinations was seen as a strong element that might contribute to improvements in students' performance that are not a result of exposure to the experiment, there were some concerns regarding the validity and reliability of the data.

Therefore, to ensure the validity and reliability of the results, a sample was chosen from the pool of participants to represent the two groups. The selection of the sample was in terms of the students who completed the test the earliest to minimize the effects on students' preparations for the final examinations of the semester. The maximum number of participants that can be included while not risking serious distortions to the results was included. The sample constituted about 55.8% of the participants (19 students).

For the most part, the characterizations of acceptable solutions defined by the group were followed except in a few cases where minor adjustments were implemented to the characterizations to better account for the English–Arabic language pair and translation culture.

An example where such a modification was applied is in the case of RP 4, where the group defines an acceptable solution as either translating the term "Trojan horse" to its equivalent in the TL and providing an explanation or providing an explanation alone. If the participant chose to provide the name of the program only in English coupled with an explanation, this was deemed a semi-acceptable solution. For the purposes of this research, and considering the background of the participants,

omitting the English term and only providing an explanation alone was not deemed acceptable but semi-acceptable.

Another modification was also applied to RP 5. The characterization provided by the PACTE defines acceptable solutions as "a natural-sounding term or paraphrase that explains what the firm does and where it is based." However, many of the errors in the translations came from students' confusion with regard to the structure of the phrase, where they understood the name of the company as a separate entity that is not related to the explanation of what the company does and its location. Therefore, the whole phrase was taken into account when accessing the level of acceptability as it posed a textual problem (PACTE 2017: 320). Other such minor deviations from the group's definitions were also present.

Table 10 Acceptability for individual RPs for the control group

Translator	RP1	RP2	RP3	RP4	RP5	Acceptability mean	Group
TR1	1	1	0	0	0	0.4	Control
TR2	**0.5**	**0.5**	**0.5**	**0.5**	**0.5**	**0.5**	**Control**
TR3	1	0	0	0.5	1	0.5	Control
TR8	**0.5**	**1**	**0.5**	**0.5**	**0**	**0.5**	**Control**
TR10	0.5	0	0	0.5	0	0.2	Control
TR11	**0.5**	**1**	**0**	**0.5**	**1**	**0.6**	**Control**
TR15	0	0	0	0.5	1	0.3	Control
TR17	**0.5**	**0**	**0.5**	**1**	**1**	**0.6**	**Control**
TR18	0	0	0.5	0.5	1	0.4	Control
TR19	1	1	0.5	1	0.5	0.8	Control
Mean acceptability for the control group						0.48	

Table 11 Acceptability for individual RPs for the experimental group

Translator	RP1	RP2	RP3	RP4	RP5	Acceptability mean	Group
TR4	0.5	0.5	1	0.5	1	0.7	Experimental
TR5	1	0	0	1	1	0.6	Experimental
TR6	0.5	0	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.4	Experimental
TR7	0.5	0	0	0.5	0	0.2	Experimental
TR9	1	1	0	1	1	0.8	Experimental
TR12	1	1	1	1	1	1	Experimental
TR13	0.5	0	0	0.5	1	0.4	Experimental
TR14	0	0	0	1	0	0.2	Experimental
TR16	1	0	1	1	0.5	0.7	Experimental
Mean acceptability for the experimental group						0.55	

For the analysis of the level of acceptability, a sample consisting of 19 participants (10 controls and 9 experimental) was used. Following the model of the PACTE, after assigning a numerical value for each RP, the mean was calculated, and a score was given as an overall evaluation of the acceptability of the translation provided by the research participant. The analysis of the students' performance is shown in the charts below.

Looking at the results of the two groups, we can see the following:

1. The experimental group has performed slightly better than the control as their mean acceptability indicates (0.5 and 0.4, respectively). However, this is in line with what this research seeks to prove in terms of the positive effects of exposure to the experiment on translation performance. The difference is very slight, and it does not account for the other variables that might have affected the results. Therefore, to better understand the results and consider the small sample size here, the next section will look at the individual performances of participants in an attempt to identify any pattern or effect that could be attributed to the experiment. Table 12 below shows mean acceptability scores along with the other variables that might have affected the results.

For example, taking the case of participant TR4, who belonged to the experimental group, we can see that she performed better than the majority of the control group in spite of less favorable factors like a lower language level, motivation, and practice. Except in one case (TR19), she out performed all the others who had a better language level (TR1, TR3, and TR18). This might indicate an advantage for students in the experimental group. However, it does not guarantee that this elevated performance is due to exposure to the experiment, and other factors not considered here might be at play.

Another case where the experimental group outperformed the control despite less favorable conditions are in the case of participant TR5. Looking at the other variables for this participant, she scored 58 on the language placement test, and reported moderate motivation and only very little practice in translation. However, this participant performed similarly to or higher than the control group, and even in the cases where they performed similarly to her (TR11 and TR17), these students had an advantage in terms of language (scored 78 and 89, respectively). All of these cases indicate that the experiment might have had a positive effect on the acceptability of the translations.

However, there is also the case of TR6, which could be looked at as the opposite case of TR4 and TR5. This participant also belongs to the experimental group, scored better in the language test than the majority of the students in the control and performed the same or lower than the majority of the students in the control group. This could mean that in the case of the current study, other factors have had a very strong and marked effect on the students' performance, and with such a small sample, coming to any conclusions might be difficult.

There were also other cases that did not specifically show positive outcomes due to the experiment. For example, looking closely at the lowest-scoring students, at 0.2, 0.2, and 0.3 (TR7, TR14, and TR15, receptively), we can see that their performance corresponded mostly with their language level more than any other factor, such as motivation or study and practice levels. There was no marked difference in relation to whether they belonged to the control or the experimental group.

Table 12 Mean acceptability along with other variables considered

Translator (TR)	Group	Mean acceptability	Language placement		Study level	Motivation	Practice
			CEFR	Score			
TR1	control	0.4	C1	96	7	C	C
TR2	control	0.5	C1	89	7	B	B
TR3	control	0.5	C1	96	7	A	C
TR8	control	0.5	C1	88	7	A	C
TR10	control	0.2	C1	81	8	A	C
TR11	control	0.6	B2	78	8	A	C
TR15	control	0.3	B1	56	7	A	C
TR17	control	0.6	C1	89	7	A	C
TR18	control	0.4	C2	101	6	A	D
TR19	control	0.8	C2	101	8	C	B
TR4	Experimenta l	0.7	C1	94	7	B	B
TR5	Experimenta l	0.6	B1	58	7	B	A
TR6	Experimenta l	0.4	C1	99	7	A	B
TR7	Experimenta l	0.2	B1	55	7	A	B
TR9	Experimenta l	0.8	C2	100	7	A	C
TR12	Experimenta l	1	C1	83	7	A	D
TR13	Experimenta l	0.4	C1	93	7	A	C
TR14	Experimenta l	0.2	B1	50	6	A	B
TR16	Experimenta l	0.7	C2	101	8	E	B

Next, we have two students belonging to the control group performing very differently from each other, where one student (TR10) scored well below the other (TR11) even through their respective language level scores were not very different from each other.

In fact, the student with the lower score had a better score on the English language placement test.

These results could mean that other factors might have had a stronger effect than language level for some of the participants. Possible reasons may be differences in linguistic command of the TL (Arabic), knowledge of the subject at hand, and engagement at the time of completing the translation. This is important to take into consideration as it might mean that achieving any conclusions with confidence might be difficult here and could be one of the limitations of this study. It is also possible that these students are outliers, as command of the SL is one of the strongest predictors for high performance in translation.

Motivation—A: highly motivated; B: moderately motivated; C: not very motivated; D: not at all motivated; E: other.Practice—A: very little practice, even for translation classes; B: practice is confined to translation classes; C: moderate practice inside and outside of class; D: heavy practice inside and outside of class; E: other.

6. Findings and conclusions

This chapter of the thesis discusses the findings of the study and puts forward some recommendations for future research.

The results of the data analysis presented in the previous chapter provide ample insight into the usefulness of process research tools in the translation classroom. The focus of the following discussion of the findings will be to answer the three research questions posed in the first chapter. These are:

1. Does exposing students to the process of translation through screen recordings of the process coupled with the production of RVs stimulate reflection in translation students?
2. Is there a difference in the quality of the reflections provided by students who undergo the treatment compared with the control?
3. Does increased reflection translate into better translation products, i.e., increased acceptability of the proposed solutions for translation problems?

To answer the first research question, the results of the data analysis for the two groups are considered. First, looking at the amount of reflections provided by each group shows that the reflections provided by the experimental group have far exceeded those by the control. This is evident through both the simple word count conducted for the two groups and through the total number of analysis units identified for each group.

While this measure of the quantity of reflection is good to see how stimulating screen recordings can be, it does not reflect the depth of the reflections provided by each group. Therefore, to answer the second research question, the assessment of the level of reflections based on the model adapted for this study is used. With this measure, the performance of the control group will be reviewed first for all six categories on the scale, followed by the experimental group.

The assessment of the levels of reflection of the control group shows that the majority of their reflections fell under the understanding/responding category with a percentage of 41.1%, followed by the non-reflection category with a percentage of 22.2%. For the higher levels of reflection, their engagement was at 19.6%, and 7% for the transitional (2) and reflection categories, respectively. Their results show that they engaged more at the lower levels of the scale, and their most contribution remained at the level of understanding/responding.

While the understanding/responding category shows good engagement with the material and a deep learning approach (Kemper et al. 2008). It remains at the lower end of higher-order thinking and shows no effort of the student to go beyond understanding the material presented to them.

However, the group also showed a good level of engagement at the level of the translational (2) category with a percentage of 19.6%, and it also had the highest level of reflection achieved for both groups, with three analysis units falling under the transitional (3) category. These accounted for 1.9% of the total percentage of the control group reflections and belonged to one student (TR18).

On the other hand, the experimental group engaged the least at the non-reflection category level, with a percentage of 2.6%. Their engagement with the understanding/responding category remained low, with a percentage of 13.5%. Overall, they engaged less with the lower levels on the assessment scale.

The majority of the reflections provided by the experimental group fell under the transitional (2) category with a percentage of 54.3%, followed by the reflection category with a percentage of 26.5%.

The results show that not only was the amount of reflections produced by the experimental group higher, but the percentage of higher levels of reflection from their total reflection was also higher.

These results show that the experimental group showed more incentive to go beyond the material and reflected more and reached higher levels in their reflections.

To answer the third research question, which looks at the acceptability of the translations produced by the two studied groups, the results of the post-translation test are considered. The results discussed in the previous chapter show that the experimental group has performed slightly better than the control as their mean acceptability indicates (0.5 and 0.4, respectively). This is in line with what this research seeks to prove in terms of the positive effects of exposure to the experiment on translation performance; however, the difference is very slight. This could be attributed to many factors, among them the time frame in which the experiment was conducted. The time required for measurable improvement to show translation competence is also a common topic discussed and addressed in the literature, with many scholars writing on the difficulty of activating declarative knowledge as procedural knowledge (Alves 2005).

To conclude, although the overall results indicate that the experimental group performed slightly better in terms of acceptability, the statistically small sample used in the current study might have caused individual differences to stand out. Using a larger sample is crucial to yield clearer results as the effect of individual factors affecting students' performance would be less apparent, and it is expected that the experimental group would perform better still.

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Appendices

Appendix I. Reflection assessment results (experimental)

Table 1 Experimental (week 1)

Codes	Non-reflection	Transitional (1)	Understanding/responding	Transitional (2)	Reflection	Transitional (3)	Critical reflection	Total
TR13	1			3	2			6
TR22			1	3	1			5
TR28				2	4			6
TR26			2	2	1			5
TR7			1	1				2
TR24				1	1			2
TR31			1	1	1			3
TR14				1	1			2
TR5			1	2				3
TR33				2	4			6
TR23	2	1	3					6
TR15			1	2				3
TR29			2					2
TR2				4	1			5
TR9			1		2			3
TR27				3	2			5
TR10	1		1	3	7			12
Total	**4**	**1**	**14**	**30**	**27**	**0**		**76**

Table 2 Experimental (week 2)

Codes	Non-reflection	Transitional (1)	Understanding/responding	Transitional (2)	Reflection	Transitional (3)	Critical reflection	Total
TR13				5				5
TR22			1	2	2			5
TR28			1	3	1			5
TR26		1		4	1			6
TR7				4	1			5
TR24				2	1			3
TR31				5	1			6
TR14				3	2			5
TR5				3				3
TR33				2	1			3
TR23		2		2				4
TR15			1	1	1			3
TR29				2	1			3
TR2				4	2			6
TR9				3	3			6
TR27		1	1	1	4			7
TR10	1			2	3			6
Total	**1**	**4**	**4**	**48**	**24**	**0**		**81**

Table 3 Experimental (week 3)

Codes	Non-reflection	Transitional (1)	Understanding/responding	Transitional (2)	Reflection	Transitional (3)	Critical reflection	Total
TR13				4				4
TR22			2	5	1			8
TR28			1	1	1			3
TR26				3	1			4
TR7				4				4
TR24			1	3	1			5
TR31				4				4
TR14			1	2	2			5
TR5			1	4				5
TR33			1	2				3
TR23				2				2
TR15				3				3
TR29				2	1			3
TR2			2					2
TR9	1	1	2	1				5
TR27		1	1	2	3			7
TR10			1	5				6
Total	**1**	**2**	**13**	**47**	**10**	**0**		**73**

Appendix II. Reflection assessment results (control)

Table 4 Control (week 1)

Codes	Non-reflection	Transitional (1)	Understanding/responding	Transitional (2)	Reflection	Transitional (3)	Critical reflection	Total
TR13		1	1	2				4
TR22			4					4
TR28	1		2	1				4
TR26	1	1		1	1			4
TR7				2				2
TR24	2	1		1				4
TR31				3	1			4
TR14			1	2				3
TR5	1	1	1	1				4
TR33			1	2				3
TR23		1		2				3
TR15			1	1				2
TR29	1		3					4
TR2	1	1	2					4
TR9		1	1	1		3		6
TR27	3	1		1	1			6
TR10	2							2
Total	**12**	**8**	**17**	**20**	**3**	**3**	**0**	**63**

Table 5 Control (week 2)

Codes	Non-reflection	Transitional (1)	Understanding/responding	Transitional (2)	Reflection	Transitional (3)	Critical reflection	Total
TR21	2							2
TR19				2				2
TR8	1		2					3
TR30			2					2
TR4			1					1
TR34			1		2			3
TR16			2		1			3
TR6	3	1	2					6
TR11				1				1
TR12			2					2
TR20					2			2
TR25	1		2	1				4
TR3			2					2
TR1	1	1						2
TR18	1		3	1				5
TR17								0
TR32	2	1						3
Total	**11**	**3**	**19**	**5**	**5**	**0**		**43**

Table 6 Control (week 3)

Codes	Non-reflection	Transitional (1)	Understanding/responding	Transitional (2)	Reflection	Transitional (3)	Critical reflection	Total
TR21	1		1					2
TR19			2	1				3
TR8			4					4
TR30					2			2
TR4			2					2
TR34			1	2				3
TR16			2					2
TR6	1		1					2
TR11	2		4	1				7
TR12			3					3
TR20			1	1				2
TR25	1	1	1	1				4
TR3	2		2					4
TR1	2	1						3
TR18	1		3					4
TR17	2	1	1		1			4
TR32			1					1
Total	**12**	**3**	**29**	**6**	**3**	**0**		**52**

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Original Research

Food and Diasporic Identities in Diana Abu Jaber's Crescent, Richard C. Morais' The Hundred-Foot Journey, and Marsha Mehran's Pomegranate Soup

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Abstract This paper applies the post-colonial theory to three novels—*Crescent* by Diana Abu-Jaber, *Pomegranate Soup* by Marsha Mehran, and *The Hundred-Foot Journey* by Richard Morais—to show the role that ethnic food from "home" plays for diaspora immigrants. To do so, it applies the concepts of ethnicity, cultural dominance, the third space, exoticism, stereotypes, the subaltern, Radhakrishnan's concept of three phases of migration, Bhabha's concepts of hybridity and imitation, and Said's concept of exile.

The paper consists of four sections. The Introduction focuses on the three focal writers and their representation of ethnic food, explores post-colonial theory, and adopts related concepts for the analysis of the three novels. Section 1 applies the abovementioned concepts to Abu-Jaber's *Crescent*, considering ethnic food in the context of diaspora. Section 2 focuses on *Pomegranate Soup* by Mehran, and how cultural background affects the characters' identities in relation to food. Section 3 explores Morais's *The Hundred-Foot Journey*, focusing on the character of Hassan, who was exposed to Indian food and its aromas from the moment he was born. Section 4 aims to compare the aforementioned three novels in regard to their treatment of immigrants and the connection between ethnic food and their identity. It also links the authors with their characters.

Keywords Food literature • Diasporic identity • Hybridity • Post colonialism

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1. Introduction

First, Abu-Jaber (2003), the author of *Crescent*, is an American writer with Jordanian heritage. She was born in Syracuse, New York, to an American mother and a Jordanian father. Her family moved to Jordan many times throughout her childhood. This kind of hybrid life, or "in-betweenness," has inspired Abu-Jaber's fiction. Her literary focus revolves around Arab and Arab–American identities, showcasing her keen interest in representing the significance of food as a central element of culture in her works. *Crescent* is a multicultural love story set in Los Angeles and focuses on Hanif, an Iraqi exile, and Sirine, an Iraqi–American chef.

Second, Mehran (2005), an Iranian novelist, wrote her novel *Pomegranate Soup* as a fictionalized account of her own life alongside her family. Within her writing, she explores her passion for food and cooking. The three sisters in *Pomegranate Soup* consistently overcome their negative emotions through the act of cooking. Through their culinary skills and the establishment of a café, they not only integrate themselves into a new Irish society but also forge meaningful connections and relationships. Moreover, Mehran was inspired by a Lebanese family who ran a shop that sold spices in Mayo. Furthermore, she revealed that the book is based on the experiences of her family.

Third, Morais (2011), a Canadian–American novelist and journalist, skillfully portrays Hassan in *The Hundred-Foot Journey*, a character distinct from himself regarding nationality, religion, and occupation. Morais reflects his interest in acting and other cultures through Hassan, the Indian chef. The manner in which he presents the Indian culture, as though he were Indian, shows his interest in stimulation and his dedication to capturing the essence of India and its culture, particularly its rich culinary traditions. In a conversation that takes place at the end of the book, Morais mentions that he has been surrounded by exceptional cooks since his childhood. He also expresses his passion for acting, which has inspired him to write *The Hundred-Foot Journey*.

It is important to observe the life and identity of immigrants who still cook their homelands' recipes. This idea can be examined fruitfully through Diana Abu-Jaber's *Crescent,* Marsha Mehran's *Pomegranate Soup*, and Richard Morais's *The Hundred-Foot Journey*, as the main characters in these three novels find themselves living far from their homelands, working in restaurants where they prepare and serve the authentic recipes of their respective cultures.

2. Aim of the study

This paper explores the role of food in representing identity in *Crescent, Pomegranate Soup*, and *The Hundred-Foot Journey*.

Employing post-colonial theory, this research provides a cultural analysis of the identities of immigrants who cook and eat in a country (a hostland), while both their roots and their food belong to another country (a homeland).

3. Research problem

Previous research has largely overlooked the idea of connecting a character's identity to their cooking while residing in a hostland. The thesis sheds light on this analytical concept by discussing the identities of Sirine in Abu-Jaber's *Crescent*; the three sisters Marjan, Bahar, and Layla in Mehran's *Pomegranate Soup*; and Hassan in Morais's *The Hundred-Foot Journey*. It aims to explore the expression of cultural identity in the characters through their cooking, through the following questions:

- How are diasporic cultural identities represented in Abu-Jaber (2003) *Crescent*, Mehran (2005) *Pomegranate Soup*, and Morais's (2011) *The Hundred-Foot Journey*?
- How do the major characters in the selected works of Abu-Jaber, Mehran, and Morais reflect the relationships between cultural identity and food?

4. Literature review

Her essay "Social Food and Ethnic Identity," House (1984)explains that Toni Morrison relies heavily on food metaphors to convey images of idyllic life and dreams of success in the lives of her characters. In *The Bluest Eye*, Morrison (1970) links milk and sweets with beauty: Geraldine, a "pretty milk-brown lady" (p. 3), wants her son to play only with white children. She exemplifies a class of black girls who are "sugar-brown" and "sweet and plain as butter-cake" (p. 74).

As Pecola, the protagonist of *The Bluest Eye,* grows up, she becomes influenced by the competitive values of her society. Morrison shows the results of this influence when she uses the metaphors of milk and sweets to link Pecola to Geraldine's dreams of success. Just as her mother "loved" Jean Harlow, Pecola worships the beautiful, and therefore, lovable, Shirley Temple. When she visits the MacTeers' home, she is offered milk in a Shirley Temple mug. Captivated by the beauty of the mug, the girl repeatedly requests more milk, leading Mrs. MacTeer to perceive her actions as a display of greed.

Another example is when Pecola enters a candy store. She sees wild, beautiful dandelions and wonders why people dislike them even though they can make soup and wine using this plant. However, simultaneously, she is treated with disdain by the white owner and, thus, when she sees dandelions again, she thinks of them in a different way, saying, "They are ugly. They are weeds" (Morrison 1970: 37). Just as she changes her own judgment about dandelions, Pecola also acquires

the shopkeeper's belief that she herself is unworthy of notice. In this way, Morrison metaphorically links the girl's self-rejection and success values with the candy she has bought.

In *Sula*, Morrison (1973) describes two black World War I veterans, Plum and Shadrack, who after the war do not come home to the Bottom, a black Ohio community. Instead, Plum writes "letters from New York, Washington, D.C., and Chicago full of promises of homecomings…" (Morrison 1973: 45). When he finally leaves these cities, the healthiness suggested by his name is destroyed by his drug

addiction; Plum arrives at the Bottom with a "black bag, a paper sack, and a sweet, sweet smile" (Morrison 1973: 45). Shortly before Plum's death, his mother visits his room and finds evidence that proves that his life was an unhealthy one: "There in the corner was a half-eaten, store-bought cherry pie. Balled-up candy wrappers and empty pop bottles peeped from under the dresser. On the floor by her foot was a glass of strawberry crush…" (Morrison 1973: 46). Metaphorically, the soldier's connection with the city contradicts healthy connotations, even those of nourishing fruits such as plums and strawberries.

Toombs (1993) writes in "The Confluence of Food and Identity in Gloria Naylor's 'Linden Hills': "What We Eat is Who We Is" about the way Naylor presents the struggles for authentic African–American identity in her novel. Naylor focuses on the food and its rituals, suggesting that they are effective way to understand some of the problematics of African–American identity.

In Naylor's novel, Willie and Lester, two African–American men, are working at a wedding reception in Linden Hills. The families of the bride and groom prefer to hire white waiters and servers and, thus, Willie and Lester are hired to take out the trash and garbage and assist with loading and unloading various items. While they are working, they seize the opportunity to catch glimpses of the wedding festivities through the kitchen door. There, Xavier Donnell, who was invited to the wedding, prefers to bring a white woman with him as his date for propriety, as the wedding guests believe in "white for white's sake." Xavier "sat with his arm thrown over the chair of a young, blond woman. He playfully offered her a bit of cheese and she ate it from his fingers" (Naylor 1993: 84).

The "bit of cheese" symbolizes Xavier's own cultural starvation, for after the wedding, he is disturbed by the thought that he is falling in love with Roxanne Tilson, a black woman, as he believes that Roxanne does not suit his professional and pecuniary pursuits. He is hesitant about asking Roxanne to marry him because she does not belong to his social (or geographical) level. Actually, his main concern is his position as vice president of minority affairs at general motors. He is conscious of the potential impact that his marriage to Roxanne could have on his position. He blinds himself from seeing that Roxanne might be the ideal spouse for him personally, because he fears that her association might jeopardize his professional standing. Roxanne is determined to "marry well—or not to marry at all." (p. 53). Moreover, her eating habits, which "consisted of nibbles: bits of lettuce and cucumber, dabs of fish and cottage cheese" (p. 53) suit Xavier's social level. By describing her eating habits, the novel shows how food is connected to class and appearance.

In another scene, Willie and Lester go to Chester Parker's house for another unspecified job. Mr. Parker's wife has died, and it is the night before her burial. The narrator focuses on the guests' eating behavior and observes how they insincerely offer condolences, reflecting the emptiness and emotional detachment that pervade their lives. Something was "haunting [Willie] about the rhythm of the knives and forks that cut into the slices of roast beef… The plates never seemed empty of the brown and bloody meat." (Naylor 1993: 134).

Moreover, Willie is surprised when Luther Nedeed, a direct lineal descendent of the town's original developer, arrives "carrying a cellophane-wrapped cake," (Naylor 1993: 136) as Willie "knew that his family always fried chicken and baked stuff for

a wake" (Naylor 1993: 136). Luther lies and tells the guests that his wife baked the cake. Willie feels that these people are like machines, and everything related to them is a lie, except for the food. However, even when Parker gives Willie and Lester the leftover food, Willie tells Lester, "That stuff Parker gave us upset my stomach… There was something strange about that cake" (Naylor 1993: 152). This reflects the notion that the residents of Linden Hills lack a true sense of "home" in their lives.

In essence, through food rituals and behaviors, the narrator portrays all of the characters who live in Linden Hills, or seek to live there, as individuals who have lost their connection to their African–American identity.

Jaffe (1993) writes for women writers in "Hispanic American Women Writers' Novel Recipes and Laura Esquivel's *Like Water for Chocolate*," which focuses on a conference held in 1984 dedicated to the writings of Latin American women, concentrating on the importance of the kitchen for Latina writers. In the conference proceedings, published under the title *The Frying Pan by the Handle*, editor Patricia Elena Gonzalez summarizes their discussions of women's writing with a metaphoric call to take up their pots and pans, which indicates the harmony between cooking and writing: "We could say that as we cut the onion, we cried; but upon peeling off the layers superimposed artificially over our identity as Latin American women, we found a center. Alright now, time to take the frying pan by the handle and start cooking" (Jaffe 1993: 201).

The Kitchen Table Press was founded in 1981 by women writers of color in the United States, including several Latina writers. "The name was chosen 'because the kitchen is the center of the home, the place

where women in particular work and communicate with each other" (Jaffe 1993: 219). Latina writer Helena Maria Viramontes, who shares this vision, entitled her essay about her commitment to writing "Nopalitos": The Making of Fiction" and equates her own writing creativity to that of her mother preparing *nopalitos*.

From beginning to end, Laura Esquivel's (1989) *Like Water for Chocolate* creates a link between culinary and literary creation. The protagonist, Tita de la Garza, is born prematurely on the kitchen table among what will be the ingredients of her art: "the aromas of a noodle soup that was cooking, of the thyme, the bay leaf, the cilantro, the boiled milk, the garlic and, of course, the onion" (Jaffe 1993: 220). Each section's title represents the recipe to be presented in that section. A list of ingredients serves almost as a table of contents for each section, and the narrative begins with instructions for preparing the recipe that Tita is engaged in making. Each section concludes with a crisis resolved and a meal completed, only to precipitate another unforeseen occurrence and accompanying dish, to be prepared in the following section.

This literary work shows how the unique manner of preparing a recipe can reflect happiness or despair. For example, when Tita's sister Rosaura betrays her by marrying Tita's true love, Pedro, Tita is expected to prepare the wedding cake. Her tears in the cake batter inspire a disastrous eruption of nostalgic weeping and vomiting among the wedding guests.

Finally, there is reference to the boundless nature of the number and variety of possible recipes. The ingredients essential for a recipe include a recipe-sharing community, "like Tita and her grand-niece, whose voices unite to create the work we

read; a kitchen, like the room for creative expression described long ago by Virginia Woolf [in *A Room of One's Own* (1929)]; and the capacity for invention, which Helena Maria Viramontes finds in her mother's nopalitos" (Jaffe 1993: 228).

The three novels—*Crescent* by Abu-Jaber (2003), *Pomegranate Soup* by Mehran (2005), and *The Hundred-Foot Journey* by Morais (2011)—have not been previously studied widely in terms of the relationship between identity and food. Tawfiq Yousef (2010) in "Diana Abu-Jaber's *Crescent* as a Post-modernist Novel," examines the novel from various perspectives, including characterization, language, identity, hybridity, exile, multiculturalism, ethnic plurality, intertextuality, narrative method, fragmentation, setting, and ambiguity.

Yousef clarifies that, in *Crescent*, most of the characters have hybrid identities that are fluid and flexible, and they all bring their memories and family stories to Um-Nadia's café, which becomes, in the words of Fadda–Corney, 'the symbol of a recreated home in the midst of a foreign and alienating culture' (Yousef 2010: 232). Furthermore, Abu-Jaber addresses the question of mixed origin (hybridity) and the possibility of reconciliation with a torn self, a dilemma that haunts most Arab–Americans trying to adjust to a multicultural American society.

Haryono and Muslim's (2019) paper, "Stereotypical Portrayal of Indian and French in Richard C. Morais' *The Hundred-Foot Journey*: An Orientalism Study," attempts to examine the stereotypical portrayals of Indians and French in *The Hundred-Foot Journey* drawing on Said's theory of Orientalism. The findings reveal that the author presents Indians and French in a contrasting way, where the Indians are regarded as inferior and the French as superior.

De Salazar (2010) writes about Mehran's *Pomegranate Soup* in his essay "Marsha Mehran and Multiculturalism in Irish Fiction." He shows how Mehran "represents a fictionalized imagining of how Ireland commenced to cope with the latest, strongest, and on-going influx of immigration" (De Salazar 2010: 182) and how new immigrants interact with the Irish host society, self-conceived as monocultural. Furthermore, De Salazar shows how Mehran portrays the Ireland of the 1980s as an experimental site for a new national future, where Italians, Anglo–Irish, Pakistanis, and Iranians can live together.

In *The Impact of Multiculturalism on the Remaking of Identity in Diana Abu-Jaber's "Crescent" and "Arabian Jazz,* Suais (2009) declares that Abu-Jaber interconnects different cultures and minority groups, introducing a dialogue between Arabs and the West through her portrayal of the relationship between Arabs and non-Arabs. According to Suais (2009), *Crescent* uses food to reveal the impact of multiculturalism on the remaking of identities.

5. Research methodology

The word *diaspora* is derived from a Greek word meaning "to disperse." Diaspora means the displacement or spread of a community/culture into one or more new geocultural regions. The literature on diaspora is usually concerned with questions of preserving or exchanging identity, language, or culture in the context of another culture or country. Thus, a relationship exists between post-colonial literature and

the literature on diaspora. Post-colonial theory involves discussions about experiences such as slavery, displacement, emigration, suppression, resistance, representation, difference, racial and cultural discrimination, and gender. The academic community witnessed the explosion of post-colonial literature in the 1990s, as critical approaches challenged classical thinking and built upon thought-provoking and challenging works in the field from early writers such as Frantz Fanon, Aimé Césaire, Albert Memmi, and Edward Said.

The first version of Edward Said's *Orientalism* was published in 1977. In Said's analysis, the term connotes "the high-handed executive attitude of 19-century and early 20-century European colonialism" and a "Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient" (Said 1979: 2). Said (1979) explores how the European culture gained strength and identity by defining itself against the Orient.

One may also mention the contributions of philosopher-critics Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Homi K. Bhabha to the post-colonial field. Spivak uses key terms frequently in her writings, such as "subaltern" and "othering," while Bhabha developed the technical meanings of several key theoretical terms, including "hybridity," "mimicry," "ambivalence," and "stereotype." Bhabha (1994) explains these concepts in his prominent book *The Location of Culture*. Furthermore, Spivak uses the term "subaltern" to draw attention to the representation of the "third world" within Western discourse. She refers to Antonio Gramsci, who adopted the term "subaltern," meaning "inferior rank," to refer to those groups in society who are subject to the hegemony of ruling classes. This thesis shows how ethnic "subalterns" speak and express themselves and their identities through their cooking.

Cultural studies is a field of theoretically, politically, and empirically engaged cultural analysis. According to Simon During (2010), "It aims to enhance and celebrate cultural experiences: to communicate enjoyment of a wide variety of cultural forms in part by analyzing them and their social underpinnings" (p. 1). Stuart Hall, an influential British cultural theorist, clarifies that individuals have several different, often mutable identities rather than a single fixed identity. In his essay "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," Hall (1990/2021) clarifies that "the migrant can be seen as the prototype of the modern or post-modern New World nomad, continually moving between center and periphery" (Hall 1990/2021: 393). Moreover, in his book *Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies,* he declares that "post-coloniality… prepared one to live in a rather post-modern relationship through identity. I don't feel that as a typically western experience at all. It is a very diasporic experience. The classic post-modern experience is the diasporic experience" (Hall 1995: 393).

Moreover, according to Hall, cultural identity acknowledges "what we really are" or rather "what we have become" (Hall 1990/2021: 91). From this perspective, cultural identity "belongs to the future as much as to the past" (Hall 1990/2021: 91). Thus, it comes from somewhere and has a history; however, like everything that is historical, it undergoes constant transformation. This idea can be examined within the context of our three focal novels. First, in *Pomegranate Soup*, the three sisters, Marjan, Bahar, and Layla, have fled the Iranian revolution to seek refuge in an Irish town called Ballinacroagh. They run their own café, Babylon, which serves Iranian food to the local community. Significantly, despite the sisters' attempt to escape their

past, they decide to open their café on Norooz, the Iranian New Year. This choice ensures that from the very beginning, the past is vividly revived and intertwined with their restaurant.

The Hundred-Foot Journey chronicles the culinary rise of Hassan Haji, a young Muslim Indian chef who immigrates to France and blends his Indian heritage with French culinary traditions to achieve great fame and success. In *Crescent*, the main focus is on the life of Sirine, a 39-year-old woman whose mother was American and whose father was Iraqi. Her parents passed away when she was a child, and she was raised by her uncle in Los Angeles. Sirine works in a Lebanese (Arabic) café, where she meets Hanif (Han), an Iraqi exile. She builds a relationship with her Arabic roots through her work and her relationship with Han, which forces her to examine her own cultural identity as she is faced with his own past in Iraq and his problematic identity as an exile.

Crescent challenges the traditional conception of identity as fixed and predetermined. It places Han and Sirine in a unique position where they must believe that the idealized home they yearn for no longer exists in the exact form they remember or have heard about. This realization becomes essential for them to create a new sense of home and identity that they, in turn, must accept as continuously evolving. Similarly, in *The Hundred-Foot Journey,* the conception of identity is challenged, as the food that one eats shares a relationship with one's identity, religion, nationality, and ethnicity. For example, Muslims are not allowed to eat pork, and Hassan assures his father that he does not eat pork when he starts working in the French restaurant. However, alongside Indian cuisine, he also started to explore and prepare French dishes. This highlights the significant role that food plays in facilitating interactions with the dominant culture and forming a distinct subculture.

In the essay titled "Is the Ethnic 'Authentic; in the Diaspora" on the context of ethnicity in America, Radhakrishnan (1996) identifies three phases of migration. The first stage is when immigrants arrive at a hostland. They imitate the major culture and do not display their ethnic culture. In the next stage, they shift to concentrating on their ethnic culture. In the third phase, they deal with both the ethnic and host cultures, concentrating on both (205); this concentration includes identity symbols such as food. Therefore, in the first phase, when they reach the hostland, they show a tendency toward local cuisine and neglect the cuisine of their motherland, especially in public spaces. During the next phase, they show their need to prove their identity as well as their position in the host society. Thus, they consume traditional flavors from both their homeland and hostland. In the third phase, the immigrants, especially from the second generation onward, become conscious of their hyphenated identity. This is seen through fusion cuisine, in which the ingredients of traditional recipes are replaced with locally available ingredients. At this stage, immigrants are willing to try new tastes and flavors that link the homeland and hostland. This step helps in creating a transnational identity.

Terms such as "diaspora" and "hybridity" provide other ways to analyze the nature of identity. Byfield (2000) argues that "the creation of diaspora is in large measure contingent on a diasporic identity that links the constituent parts of the diaspora to a homeland" (p. 5). Thus, home and exile can be linked to Byfield's concept.

In *Crescent*, the characters' traumas are grounded in their positions as exiles: Han is physically exiled from Iraq, his family, and his home; Sirine is exiled from her parents, who represent both the notion of home and the source of her hybrid identity. Moreover, in *The Hundred-Foot Journey*, Hassan's cooking serves as a way to return to the days he spent in his homeland. In *Pomegranate Soup*, the three sisters open a café that links them to their homeland.

6. Division of sections

The next sections focus on the three abovementioned novels—*Crescent*, *The Hundred-Foot Journey*, and *Pomegranate Soup*. Section 1, titled "Crescent Looking to be a Moon," discusses post-colonialism, food, and diasporic identity in Diana Abu-Jaber's *Crescent.* It examines the title and concentrates mainly on the character of Sirine, while uncovering the main elements of post-colonialism addressed in the novel (hybridity, ethnicity, identity, multiculturalism, exile, and language).

Section 2, titled "Soup of Roots and Diaspora," discusses Marsha Mehran's novel *Pomegranate Soup*, focusing on how cultural background affects the characters' identities in relation to food. It probes into the symbolism of the title and concentrates on Marjan, the eldest of the three sisters. Furthermore, this section shows how the novel uses the concept of exoticism and Homi Bhabha's concepts of stereotypes and the third space. Moreover, it tackles the diasporic identities' view of food, and it demonstrates how nostalgia plays a crucial role in the diasporic identities in the novel.

Section 3, titled "A Journey Toward Self-Identification," explores food as a language of love, memory, and safety, with reference to *The Hundred-Foot Journey*. It discusses the title of the novel and concentrates on the interaction between the main character's (chef Hassan) parent culture and the new culture. It shows how food, a device used to conjure up life in the homeland and family history, is an important platform for self-expression.

Section 4, titled "Diasporic Identities in the Selected Novels," offers a compressive comparison of the three novels. It explores multiple aspects, providing a nuanced understanding of how these novels approach and intertwine several themes, culminating in a final comparative analysis that sheds light on the multifaceted nature of immigrant experiences and cultural identities. Finally, the Conclusion section concludes the whole research.

7. One: Crescent looking to be a Moon

This section discusses post-colonialism in relation to food and diasporic identity. Referring to Diana AbuJaber's *Crescent*, it discusses the title of the novel and primarily concentrates on Sirine and her cooking. However, it also discusses Hanif and Sirine's uncle in relation to Sirine and Sirine's relationship with Hanif, which forces her to examine her own hybrid identity as she is faced with his own problematic identity as an exile. This section uncovers the main elements of post-colonialism addressed in *Crescent*: hybridity, ethnicity, identity, multiculturalism, exile, and language.

Furthermore, it shows how Abu-Jaber deploys post-colonial theory in her narrative techniques within the novel.

The novel's title is "taken from the image that shows only a small segment of the Moon; it is a symbol that fully represents the Muslim world" (Limpár 2009: 254). Thus, it represents Arab–Americans as a crescent moon that wishes to be a full moon. Moreover, the crescent is related to the Islamic calendar, as the phases of the moon mark important religious dates such as Ramadan and Eid Al-Fitr. Thus, when Sirine's uncle refers to the crescent moon when it appears while they have gathered at the thanksgiving night, he shows "the coexistence of the hyphenated characters in America's social fabric" (Ghouaiel 2015: 253). Furthermore, the crescent appears at the beginning of Hanif's and Sirine's relationship when they meet at Lon Hayden's party: "Look there," Han points to the sky. ''An Arab Crescent.'' She looks at the paper-fine moon. 'Why do you call it that?' … 'It reminds me of the moon from back home.' He looks at her. 'It's a good omen" (Abu-Jaber 2003: 45). Here, Hanif links the crescent to the Arabs by imparting it an Arabic identity, calling it an "Arab crescent."

The novel's first section mentions that Sirine has quit working at French, Italian, and even American restaurants because she has not "found herself" in those settings. Instead, she has chosen to work at Nadia's Café because it connects her to "her parents' tiny kitchen and her earliest memories" (Abu-Jaber 2003: 19). This connection is through "her parent's old recipes and… her favorite–but almost forgotten–dishes of her childhood" (Abu-Jaber 2003: 19).

Sirine is first attracted to Hanif because he speaks Arabic and longs for his Arab country, Iraq. The way he speaks about different Arabic poets reminds her of her father, her main and first connection to Iraq in her life. As Sirine gradually discovers more about Hanif, spends time with him, and deepens her connection, he begins to embody Iraq in her perception.

When Hanif feeds her a piece of meatloaf, an Iraqi dish he has cooked based on his mother's recipe, he says "Min eedi," meaning "from my hand" (Abu-Jaber 2003: 71); he reminds her of her father feeding her a bite of bread and saying the same phrase.

Furthermore, Hanif introduces her to Arabic customs and cultures. Thus, he serves as a gateway to Sirine's childhood memories with her father and their shared Arabic culture. Hanif is attracted to Sirine mainly because of his own Arabic identity. It seems like he wants to adapt to the new American culture through Sirine: "He needs someone to show him how to live in this country [America] and how to let go of the other [Iraq]" (Abu-Jaber 2003: 47), and Sirine might be the perfect person, as an Iraqi–American. One may notice through his apartment and the way he lives in it that Hanif is unable to belong to America. He says, "I haven't had much incentive to buy furniture. I suppose in some way I had the sense that it would be like commitment–to a place, I mean" (Abu-Jaber 2003: 70). This shows his inability to settle in America, because he belongs to and is attached to Iraq. Furthermore, in Los Angeles, he loses his sense of direction. He says, "I really don't get the geography of this town…. It seems like things keep swimming around me. I think I know where something is, then it's gone" (Abu-Jaber 2003: 75). This shows how lost he feels outside Iraq:

"It is significant to observe that in current theoretical debates on identity construction, fragmented identity has turned to be characteristic of post-colonial[ism]" (Zbidi 2016: 666). Hanif is like many Arabs who miss their homeland and feel lost in their hostland. A lot of them try to compensate through Arabic cuisines, which serve as a connection between them and their homeland. In addition, another character, Nathan, an American photographer with prior experience in Iraq, refers to this concept from the other side. He observes how Arabs thrive in their motherlands, expressing their identities and understanding themselves within their familiar surroundings: "[T]hey really seem to know who they were. They dressed the way their grandparents dressed, they ate the way they have eaten for hundreds of years" (Abu-Jaber 2003: 87). Nathan refers to food as a part of Arab people's identity and a way to express themselves.

From the very beginning of the novel, it becomes evident that Sirine establishes meaningful connections with those who hold significance in her life through the medium of food. For example, she bonds with her uncle, who is her only family member, while she "carves a tiny bit of peel from a lemon for her uncle's coffee" (Abu-Jaber 2003: 17) in the mornings and shares meals with him. Another important relationship is the one she shares with Um-Nadia and Marielle. She prepares her recipes and eats with them in the café; they also share their perspectives on life and love and tell her about her future through the leftover coffee grounds in her cup. Thus, Sirine's relationships are mainly connected to the experience of sharing food, whether preparing it or consuming it with others.

Arabic cuisine plays a vital role in bridging the connection between Sirine, her motherland, and her parents, as noted. Although Sirine's mother is American, she cooks Arabic dishes for the sake of her husband, Sirine's father, who "always said his wife thought about food like an Arab" (Abu-Jaber 2003: 49–50)—a phrase that suggests that Arabic "cooking is an attitude and not a mere matter of ingredients and recipes" (Limpár 2009: 255). She even taught Sirine as a child how to roll the leaves to make stuffed grape leaves. This explains Sirine's reaction toward the sad news of the death of both her parents in Africa when she was only nine years old: "On the day she learned of their deaths, Sirine went into the kitchen and made an entire tray of stuffed grape leaves all by herself. Then she and her uncle ate them all week" (Abu-Jaber 2003: 50). One may argue that in her grief, Sirine is figuring out how to maintain a connection with her parents after their deaths. The act of cooking and enjoying the food they used to prepare together serves as a powerful symbol of their enduring connection. Ghouaiel (2015) writes: "In fact, the choice of grape leaves to baptize her entry into the kitchen world is highly significant because cooked grape leaves provide the very soul of Middle Eastern food in the form of dolmas that are stuffed with rice, olive oil, garlic, lemon, onions, herbs, and ground lamb" (p. 248).

In his book *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*, Edward Said (2000) defines exile as the "unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home" (p. 173). This definition is applicable to both Hanif and Sirine. Sirine is exiled from her parents, her main link to her origin and bicultural identity. Hanif is exiled from his home and family. In addition, after meeting Hanif, Sirine feels ashamed that she has not cared so much about any news

from her motherland and begins to realize that she actually misses it, although she has never been there. The more she interacts with Hanif, the more she questions her identity and feels the other side of it, the Iraqi side. Even when Hanif invites her to dinner and apologizes that he cannot play American music for her as he does not own any, she says "But I'm not really all-American" (Abu-Jaber 2003: 68). Diasporic subjects often deal with consciousness, which provides an awareness of difference.

People of, for instance, Iraqi heritage born and living in America may become aware, starting from childhood, that the food they eat at home is different from that of the other American children with whom they interact.

It has been argued that the characters' traumas emerge out of their positions as exiles. Hanif thought that he would leave Iraq until the political situation got better and did not imagine that he would be unable to go back. Sirine has also not chosen to be exiled from her parents and her homeland. Furthermore, Sirine has never felt that America is her real home. When Hanif asks her, "What makes a place feel like home for you, then?" (Abu-Jaber 2003: 118), she says, "Work…. Work is home" (Abu-Jaber 2003: 118), which for her means the kitchen, Arabic food, and her Arab customers. Her work as a cook of Arabic dishes connects her to her motherland and Arab identity. "For her, cooking becomes agency: when all else fails in her life, when she is confronted with uncertainty, confusion, and identity conflict, she goes to the kitchen and cooks herself and her history into existence" (Mercer & Strom 2007: 40). For Sirine, who was born in her father's exile rather than her own, food becomes a profound connection to a distinct memory and a way to explore her roots: "Every ingredient tells of its root. In food, Sirine performs her otherwise silenced identity…. Sirine, however, does not speak through words, but through food. This is the reason why she never stops cooking: she is constantly performing her identity anew" (Cariello 2009: 334). In this way, "identity here becomes 'a product of articulation' of finding ways of telling oneself and others one's story of exile and of crossing and negotiating cultural boundaries" (Michael 2011: 315).

Crescent shows the half-and-half experience, metaphorically presented via Sirine, who, by origin, belongs to two cultures. She looks "American" like her mother: "She is so white. Her eyes wide, almond-shaped, and sea-green" (Abu-Jaber 2003: 205); and as she has never been to Iraq and does not know much about it, she does not feel that she belongs to the immigrant community where she lives. She looks at herself in the mirror, and "All she can see is white" (Abu-Jaber 2003: 195), as if she is a guest among them in the only country she knows. However, at some points, "She feels like her skin is being peeled away. She thinks that she may have somehow inherited her mother on the outside and her father on the inside" (Abu-Jaber 2003: 205). Thus, the characters in *Crescent*

> embody instances of cross-culturalism and exist in the in-between places described by Bhabha. According to Bhabha, ''What is theoretically innovative, and politically crucial, is the need to think beyond narratives of originary and initial subjectivities and to focus on those moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural differences''. These "in-between" spaces 'provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood—singular or communal—that initiate new signs of identity,

> and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself" (Mercer & Strom 2007: 41).

Ashcroft et al. (2003) refer to hybridity as "one of the most widely employed and most disputed terms in post-colonial theory" (p. 108). It is noticed that

> the use of a hybrid language, for instance, is very obvious. Arabic words with no English translation prevail in the structure of the novel. These words and expressions provoke familiarity and belonging to a multicultural condition…. Indeed, *Crescent* shows how Arab–American and American characters live between two different cultures, making codeswitching a major feature of this novel where speakers move back and forth between Arabic and English. (Zbidi 2016: 664)

Furthermore, Sirine changes her usual thanksgiving to "an Arabic thanksgiving with rice and pinenes and ground lamb in the turkey instead of cornbread, and yogurt sauce instead of cranberries" (Abu-Jaber 2003: 184). As Limpár (2009) states, "her most successful strategy to bridge the distance between her two identities remains cooking" (p. 255).

Although Thanksgiving "was her mother's favorite holiday and the traditional American foods always made Sirine think of her … things are different now. Her mind has been taken up by Han" (Abu-Jaber 2003: 184), who represents her motherland, Iraq. "This ongoing process of border crossing between different languages and cultures and, more specifically, between host land and homeland echoes the in-progress phenomenon of acculturation. The concept of border/borderland is a key feature of post-colonial studies" (Zbidi 2016: 664). One may notice that Sirine and her friends' thanksgiving dinner is a mixture of different cuisines, which reflect different identities. There are Sirine's Iraqi dishes, an Iranian "big round fatayer–a lamb pie …. Six sliced cylinders of cranberry sauce from Um-Nadia; whole roasted walnuts in chili sauce from Cristobal; plus Victor brought three homemade pumpkin pies and a half-gallon of whipping cream" (Abu-Jaber 2003: 191). In *Crescent*, the language of food serves as a way back to ethnic history, culture, and roots.

The novel highlights the significance of food and communal dining as a primary link that brings the immigrants together. It is noticed that

> even though Um-Nadia claims to have no religion and many of their customers are Christians, they all like to eat the traditional foods prepared throughout the Middle East to celebrate the nightly fast-breaking during Ramadan. There are dishes like sweet qatayif crepes and cookies and creamy drinks and thick apricot nectar. (Abu-Jaber 2003: 244)

This shows that what connects them is Arabic food. It reflects their yearning for their homelands and the joy they experience when reconnecting with their true origins and customs. It seems that their gathering at Nadia's café echoes Homi Bhabha's notion of "gathering spaces" where immigrants and exiles come together in a host country (Ghouaiel 2015)

With customers from Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, and other places, the café represents a Middle Eastern home space within the United States. Most of the customers come from the nearby university, both students and professors, who create this hybrid environment with the women who run the café, similar to what Bhabha (1994) has expressed in his concept of "cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy" (p. 4).

Sirine's uncle explicitly connects food to their country and identity when he reminisces about the things he misses as an immigrant. He says, "we had lived in this country together with a gang of other immigrant friends—all of us half crazy with missing home, our parents, our language, our food" (Abu-Jaber 2003: 307). On Sirine's 14th birthday, his gift to her is "a recipe book from Syria published in 1892, On the Delights and Transfigurations of Food" (Abu-Jaber 2003: 314).

In the novel, the kitchen serves as a way to relive the past with parents and dear ones in the motherland. Hanif evokes this experience many times, for example, when he talks about his childhood back in Iraq and how he preferred his mother's kitchen over his father's orchard. "I liked the kitchen. The table. Stove. Where the women were always telling stories. My mother and my aunts and the neighbors and my sister" (Abu-Jaber 2003: 60). He also expresses his nostalgia toward his mother's food and quotes from the Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish, who had also lived in diaspora: "I miss my mother's coffee/I miss my mother's bread" (Abu-Jaber 2003: 61). Sirine, too, prefers spending her time in the kitchen, which serves as a bond between her and her parents. She dedicates Mondays to making baklava, which she had learned to make by watching her parents prepare it together when she was a child: "Her instincts are clearly associated with her Arab heritage, not simply because it is Arabic food that she cooks, but also because the act of 'cooking the favorite–but almost forgotten–dishes of her childhood' (Abu-Jaber 2003: 19) is accompanied with the process of remembering" (Limpár 2009: 255).

Notably, the novel concentrates on the theme of memory, which takes on various forms throughout its narrative. The interplay between memory and identity serves as a central focus in the novel, shedding light on both personal and collective dimensions of remembrance through its characters.

> Memory-recall pervades *Crescent*…. in Sirine's cuisine. Her food is a continuous process of recall, precisely to that part of herself that seems to have been removed, and in food, Sirine looks for that sense of "origin" that, because missing, marks the deep distance she suffers from herself. It is her own inward exile (Cariello 2009: 333).

This might explain why "Sirine feels unsettled when she tries to begin breakfast without preparing the baklava" (Abu-Jaber 2003: 59), as if she misses the weekly connection with her parents. She also notices that the baklava is important because it cheers up the Arab students. She notices how they close their eyes when they bite into its crunchy layers, while enjoying its beautiful scent of orange blossoms. It seems that they connect the orange blossom with the oranges of their motherlands, as many Arab countries have abundant orange trees. This also shows that Nadia's café has become "the symbol of a recreated home in the midst of a foreign and alienating

culture" (Zbidi 2016: 666). Food as a means of memory and the kitchen as a place for the inheritance of family and ethnic traditions are recurring themes in post-colonial literature. According to Bardenstein, "food, its preparation, and the ritualistic aspect of it, often constitute a form of articulation, of symbolic communication of the individual and collective memory of exile; memory is reshaped by exile itself, identity performed at the crossroads of new ethnic, class, and gender configurations" (Cariello 2009: 333).

As for Sirine, food serves as the link between herself and her lost memory and serves as a gateway to her origins, with each ingredient serving as a tangible reminder of its cultural roots. Sirine has her own opinions when it comes to food and identity. She believes that "food should taste like where it came from…. You can sort of trace it back. You know, so the best butter tastes a little like pastures and flowers, that sort of stuff. Things show their origins" (Abu-Jaber 2003: 69). This may explain why, when Sirine asks him about his family and friends in Iraq, Hanif mentions "the grassy green olive oil" (Abu-Jaber 2003: 186) on his parents' kitchen table.

Furthermore, it explains why he asks timidly for *frekeh*, "smoked wheat kernels with olive oil and garlic" (Abu-Jaber 2003: 206), when Sirine asks him what he would like to have for breakfast. His longing for *frekeh* reflects his longing for his motherland. He describes his childhood with "treats on the table like sesame candy, and pressed apricots, and frekeh with smoked pigeon breast, and an extra sheep in their stock" (Abu-Jaber 2003: 222). Moreover, one may notice that after Hanif's friend Victor tells Sirine that Hanif is missing Iraq and is thinking about returning, she stops cooking *frekeh* for him. It seems that she is afraid of his nostalgia for Iraq and the idea that he might try to return. He also talks about his childhood in "a small village at the edge of Baghdad and [his] father owned a few acres of orchard land where [they] grew lemons, figs, and olives" (Abu- Jaber 2003: 215). His description, which concentrates on food, again shows how his motherland's memory and his identity are connected with food. To him, "Sirine's food tastes like home, independently of the precise origin of the dishes she prepares, which suggests that the way she cooks and the food she cooks have a quality that may generally be identified as Arabic" (Limpár 2009: 255). Furthermore, Sirine connects food with its cook's personality. She says, "tasting a piece of bread that someone bought is like looking at that person, but tasting a piece of bread that they baked is like looking out of their eyes" (Abu-Jaber 2003: 197), which shows how much a recipe is connected with its cook.

The novel shows the relationship between the psyche of a cook and the taste of their food through Sirine, who, after one year of Hanif's absence, has started to taste her cooking again in a professional way. "Detached, critical, and overly scrupulous. It tastes somewhat different from how she remembers it. Her flavors have gotten somehow stranger, darker, and larger" (Abu-Jaber 2003: 340). It is as though the melancholy of Hanif's absence seeps into the very essence of the flavors she creates in her cooking. At the same time, the novel shows how the taster's feeling is affected by the cook's feeling: "Her customers—the young Arab students, professors, and the families–seem more serious than before, more given to brooding, hugging, and thinking. And on several occasions someone–usually a student–has burst into tears while eating the soup or tearing the bread" (Abu-Jaber 2003: 341).

The novel, thus, extensively explores the complex dilemma experienced by many immigrants—the realization that their motherland has undergone profound changes since their departure. Thus, they belong to and long for a home that no longer exists in the familiar way they remember. This poignant struggle is epitomized in Sirine's journey. As someone who has not yet set foot in Iraq, her uncle serves as a guide, enlightening her about this intricate predicament that she, herself, has yet to fully comprehend. He says,

> Immigrants are always a bit sad right from the start anyways… And there's all kinds of reasons why, but the big one is that you can't go back. For example, the Iraq your father and I came from doesn't exist anymore. It's a scary place. When your old house doesn't exist anymore, that makes things sadder in general. (Abu-Jaber 2003: 126–127)

When immigrants initially depart from their motherlands, they believe that they will have the opportunity to return when conditions improve. However, as time progresses, they are compelled to acknowledge that their once familiar home no longer exists in the same way. To accept this, "they must give up their imagined and idealized notions of home and instead rethink the notion of home as always in process of formation" (Michael 2011: 313), creating new, contingent, and evolving identities to help them conduct themselves and belong to the new host society. They try to keep in touch with their motherlands; however, they can, such as by cooking their motherlands' cuisines and eating with people in their new home. This supports the idea that culture is not static, but constantly in motion. In *Crescent*,

> food functions as a complex language for communicating love, memory, and exile…food also becomes an avenue for questioning boundaries of culture, class, and ethnicity. Food is a natural repository for memory and tradition and reveals the possibility for imagining blended identities and traditions. In *Crescent*, metaphors of food register both the presence and absence of cultural and familial bonds. Indeed, food structures the narrative; much of the action takes place in various kitchens, which mark the pain of exile and loss as well as the hope of family and community. (Mercer & Strom 2007: 33).

Cariello analyzes *Crescent* as a post-colonial novel, referring to "The Gender of Nostalgia," in which Carol Bardenstein defines "Cookbook Memoirs": "at once recipe collections and collections of identity fragments, by (in the cases she studies) Middle-Eastern exiles" (Cariello 333–334). Bardenstein connects food with the fragments of identity and explains how the food's preparation and its ritualistic aspects "often constitute a form of articulation, of symbolic communication of the individual and collective memory of exile; memory is reshaped by exile itself, identity performed at the crossroads of new ethnic, class, and gender configurations" (Cariello 2009: 334).

One may notice that most of the characters in *Crescent* have hybrid origins and are shown as alienated or exiled:

> The depicted setting/hostland appears to be as a borderland or a meeting point of diverse hyphenated identities, cultures, languages, and characters…. The concept of border/ borderland is a key feature of post-colonial studies and is interconnected with matters related with the already established borders between peoples (Zbidi 2016: 664).

One of the characters who represents the experience of exile is Hanif. He describes himself as a "ghazal" or an oryx, "always wandering looking for his lost love, and they say he has to go away before he can find his way home again" (Abu-Jaber 2003: 39).

Sirine also experiences anxiety as she questions her identity as an Arab–American. There is "a sense that she's had–about knowing and not-knowing something. She often has the feeling of missing something and not quite understanding what it is that she's missing" (Cariello 2009: 335). However, the difference between them is that Hanif's identity is not hybrid and is not defined by its diasporic dimension like Sirine's identity because he has not lived in America since his childhood like Sirine has. In addition, the main characteristic that defines people with hybrid identities is the fact that "home" is neither represented by their country of origin, nor by their host country. However, in Hanif's case, home is always Iraq.

8. Two: Soup of roots and diaspora

This section discusses Marsha Mehran's novel *Pomegranate Soup.*

It focuses on the effect of cultural background on the characters' identities in relation to food. It probes into the symbolism of the title and analyzes the characters of the three sisters, Marjan, Bahar, and Layla, concentrating on Marjan, the eldest, because she has a closer connection to her homeland. Likewise, it explains how the three sisters' cooking defines them and introduces them to a new culture in a new hostland.

Moreover, this section shows how the novel uses the concept of exoticism as a way for the characters to conduct themselves in the new society, and the obstacles they face after moving to the small Irish town of Ballinacroagh. This section refers to Homi Bhabha's concepts of stereotypes and the third space; moreover, it explores the diasporic view of food and how it goes beyond simple needs. Finally, it demonstrates how nostalgia plays a significant role in the diasporic identities in the novel.

Marjan, the eldest of the three sisters, tries to build an Iranian environment wherever she goes. She has "a great talent for growing plants" (Mehran 2005: 7) and has planted different cooking herbs like basil, parsley, and tarragon in the "gloomy English flats she and her sisters had occupied" (Mehran 2005: 8). She uses the herbs not only for cooking but also for providing comfort. In fact, she declares after moving to Ballinacroagh that "if she had planted something here in Ballinacroagh, she could have avoided the anxieties that were now creeping up her spine" (Mehran 2005: 8). The small herbal gardens she plants transport her to the peaceful childhood she enjoyed in Iran, and she uses the herbs in Iranian recipes. She also brought an Iranian tea samovar with her from Iran, and she cooks *abgusht*, an Iranian stew that reminds her of the early spring nights in Iran—as if she can live the seasons in Iran through

her cooking. Her way of celebrating her good fortune is by cooking an Iranian sweet, *gush-e fil*, which is usually made during celebratory moments. When her sisters suffer from something, she tries to help them by cooking Iranian recipes. Moreover, she insists on opening the new café on Norooz, the Iranian New Year, pushing herself and her sisters too hard for five days. Furthermore, she and her sisters decorate the café with Iranian artifacts, including a framed woven calligraphy reading "tea" in Farsi, five old-style samovars, and a large print of a painting showing a traditional Iranian teahouse, complete with an indoor fountain and hookah pipes. Finally, they decorate one of the walls with a handmade tapestry "from Iran," and Marjan plans to plant a small herbal garden in the backyard, enhancing the Iranian vibe.

The second sister, Bahar, experiences a sense of loss and displacement. She had escaped from her husband several times and lived in different societies and yet belonged to none. In her last escape, alone without her sisters, she was looking for a sense of home where she can belong, away from her husband, Hossein, and the sense of fear. She feels rejected in Irish society, which considers the three sisters as foreigners, but also cannot accept the restrictive, patriarchal rules imposed on her and her sisters in Iran. She is the "other" where she lives and searches for a hyphenated identity straddling cultures.

Layla, the youngest sister, adapts herself easily to Irish society. She enters a new school, which helps her adapt to Irish culture and makes a new friend: Malachy McGuire, Thomas McGuire's son, who falls in love with her. However, it should be noted that Layla, unlike her elder sisters, Marjan and Bahar, is unfamiliar with her country, Iran, from before the revolution:

> Up until the early 1990s, the first generation of Iranians in exile, those who had witnessed the revolutionary upheaval and experienced traumatic loss, frequently compensated for their longing for the home country «as they had known it» by nostalgically reproducing what they thought of as «authentic» Iranian culture (Mohabbat-Kar 2015: 10).

Marjan and Bahar, unlike Layla, are familiar with their country before the revolution and belong to the first generation of Iranians in exile. Thus, they present the Iranian recipes in their authentic form and with their authentic ingredients. In contrast, Layla makes "cinnamon-rose *dolmeh* [which] never really surprised her sister" (Mehran 2005: 11), which reflects the sisters' familiarity with her uniqueness. While Layla is open to assimilating and making friends across cultures, Bahar is concerned about it. Moreover, Layla has never known her parents, unlike her sisters, because her mother passed away "shortly after pushing her out into the harsh world" (Mehran 2005: 29), and her father passed away two months before her first birthday.

Bahar's and Layla's different ways of rolling *dolmeh* show how different they are. "Bahar's method for rolling *dolmeh* was always successful" (Mehran 2005: 10), which shows that she cares about the details. However, Layla's way is "carefree" (Mehran 2005: 10), reflecting and symbolizing her generally open personality.

Identifying immigrants with their original homeland does not necessarily mean that they have a desire to return to it. Furthermore, immigrants may feel at home in their host country, but still feel nostalgia and attachment to their homeland:

For the Iranian diaspora … the complex relationships between their multiple homes were manifested most clearly through a wide range of food practices. For them, certain foods, foodways, and food rituals become, in many ways, sites of memory and can be understood as performative vehicles, through which both individual and collective connections to their real and/or imagined homes are embodied, enacted, and reworked. (Sayadabdi 2019: 58).

A great example of this phenomenon is how the samovar and the Iranian tea inspire Marjan while she pours the tea to contemplate her life and think about Iran. In Iran, she thinks, her cup of tea "would be accompanied by angelica-powdered pomegranate seeds, toasted nuts, or sticky saffron and carrot halvah" (Mehran 2005: 77), and the whole family would gather in the living room around the tea and tell stories.

In another example, Bahar's memory of pomegranate soup in Iran makes her avoid it in Ireland. Pomegranate soup, for her, is no longer just a pot of soup on the stove; it consistently represents that night in Iran when her husband invaded the sisters' apartment to take her back, and she poured the hot pomegranate soup on him to free herself. The terrifying memory of that night remains with her, and she keeps herself away from the stove most of the time by taking the job of making salads, *dolmeh*, or *torshi* and organizing the tables in the dining room.

This novel uses the concept of exoticism as a way for the characters to conduct themselves in the new society: "Largely exotic elements play around in the narrative, as the author furnishes the reader with their details. Exoticism runs through and around them in variegated ways–their facial features, skin tone and complexion, their attire, their language, their religion, and most of all their food and tastes" (Mundackal 2020: 88).

> It is not easy to be the owner of "the first café" (Mehran 2005: 74) in a small community, especially for foreigners with a different culture and background. "Exoticism makes one group of people, its culture and cuisine very different from the others and thus making it very hard to assimilate with the local culture. Exoticism can also add curiosity, magic, and a renewed interest in that culture" (Ragamalika 2016: 92). The Aminpour sisters and the cuisine they cook and serve are exotic in their context; at the same time, their cuisine serves as their main means of survival. In *Pomegranate Soup*, the exoticism of Iranian cuisine casts a spell on Father Mahoney, the town priest, and ignites a newfound passion within him to pursue his long-forgotten dreams. He realizes his dream of scripting a play after eating at the Babylon Café for the first time.

Marjan's exotic dishes also cast their spell on Fiona Athey, a former actress who used to work in the Galway Theatre. It seems that her life in Galway made her an open-minded person who is not afraid to visit the new Babylon Café in Ballinacroagh, unlike most of the townspeople. She even shows her familiarity with the samovar: "That's a Russian-made samovar, isn't it?" (Mehran 2005: 113). She supports Marjan and declares that she is impressed by her and the Babylon Café. She also becomes a successful director of Father Mahoney's play. Although she had been "a bit terrified

about it" (Mehran 2005: 114) before visiting the Babylon Café, it is as if the same magic encourages her as it did to Father Mahoney. Furthermore, the novel "attempts to make Persian food exotic by discussing the ingredients, particularly certain herbs such as nigella seed…. [It] stresses on the magical and medicinal qualities of the herb, which … is seldom used in Western recipes" (Ragamalika 2016: 88).

The three sisters face many obstacles in Ballinacroagh after they open their café (Mehran 2005: 75). The first is Thomas McGuire, who wants to own their place because it is next door to his pub, which he wants to expand into a disco. However, the Italian owner, Mrs. Estelle Delmonico, refuses to sell it. Thus, when she gives it to the three sisters to open their café, Thomas orders his family to avoid them and their café. Unfortunately, when one of his sons, Malachy, falls in love with Layla, and Thomas finds out about their relationship, he shows his racism, by swearing at them and calling them "foreigners" and "Arabs" (Mehran 2005: 100).

Mehran (2005) uses culinary metaphors to depict ethnicity through the different descriptions of Thomas McGuire. For example, she describes the McGuire clan's male physique as turnip-like (p. 35) and McGuire as having an "eggplant face" (p. 57), reflecting his purple hue as he confronts Councilman Padraig in his fury about Delmonico's old bakery being rented out to foreigners. Along with his turnip body, she even writes that he has a head shaped like a potato, the most classic of Irish root vegetables (p. 4), to reflect his Irish identity and roots.

The second obstacle the three sisters face is their neighbor in Main Mall, Dervla Quigley, a proud Ballinacroagh native. She spends most of her day spying out of her bedroom window, because she has an embarrassing bladder problem that prevents her from going out of her home. She wants her town to remain "pure" Irish and has a history of refusing to accept and talk to any foreigner. She shows disgust when she first sees the three sisters, perhaps experiencing the emotional response described by Scheffler (2007):

> Immigration, by definition, presents immigrants with a new situation. But the host communities are also affected by change, as the old residents must come to terms with the presence in their midst of new neighbors, new customs, new ideas, new modes of dress, new expectations, new languages, new cuisine, new tastes. Even if they adopt as radically exclusionary a stance as they can muster, their way of life will now be shaped by the need to exclude these neighbors, ideas, customs, modes of dress, expectations, values… (p. 103).

Thus, when Dervla Quigley sees the Aminpour sisters opening their café, "She looks upon them as creatures that carry a nasty reek of foreignness" (Mundackal 2020: 92), especially as they are cooking unfamiliar recipes—an attack on "pure" Irish culture in the realm of food. Mundackal (2020) highlights that

> The exotic Irani aromas become transgressive when they start to permeate the familiar smell of Irishness and make an encounter inevitable. Food dramatizes a cross-cultural encounter in *Pomegranate Soup* and offers the

> Aminpour sisters a "place"/"home"; a sense of being rooted and, thereby, allowing them to dream anew and live with renewed hopes (p. 92).

The Aminpour sisters face a lot of racism after their arrival in the Irish town. However, Bahar feels and suffers from it the most compared to her sisters. While Layla is in a relationship with Malachy and Marjan is busy concentrating on their new café and cooking different Iranian recipes, Bahar contemplates the racism she faces in her new home, the ways in which she and her sisters are misidentified in accordance with stereotypical Western discourse as Arabs, and how this society enhances her feeling of being a stranger. "She wasn't blind to the stares thrown her way whenever she stepped out of the café doors. How could she ignore the obvious cuts of silence, the breaks in street conversations whenever she walked by a cluster of townspeople?" (Mehran 2005: 126). When Bahar misses Layla and begins to look for her, asking the townspeople about her, they are unkind. For example, when she asks the local woman Assumpta if she has seen Layla, Assumpta replies, "No. Haven't seen anybody like *that* around here," making the word *that* sounds almost filthy (Mehran 2005: 134). When Bahar goes to Thomas McGuire's Ale House hoping to find Layla, all the punters at the bar turn their backs on her, and Thomas McGuire says to himself, "Bleedin' Arabs" (Mehran 2005: 139). She finds herself being pushed out through the pub door. "Just as the door slammed behind her, a sinister voice called out: 'Go back to year stinking camels!'" (Mehran 2005: 140). In his article "The Other Question: Stereotype, Discrimination and the Discourse of Colonialism," Bhabha (1994) clarifies that "colonial discourse produced the colonized as a social reality which is at once an 'other' and yet entirely knowable and visible" (p. 391). Therefore, "stereotypes translate the unfamiliar into coherent terms by seeming to account for the strangeness of other peoples" (McLeod 2000: 53).

Iranians are Arabs in the Aminpour sisters' case.

If Father Mahoney were not open to different cultures, he would not have been their first customer, and indeed, the Aminpour sisters would not have had any customers on the opening day of this strange and exotic restaurant run by outsiders. However, Marjan's eyes are closed to the possibility that they may not be accepted there. On the opening day, Marjan expects the locals to line up at the café door to "taste her fares with questioning eyes and curious tongues" (Mehran 2005: 9). Just as Edward Said (1979) explains in *Orientalism* that the West constructs its identity against its perceptions of the East, Marjan's desire to share her food comes from the desire to both support herself and her sisters and make the café appealing to the locals with whom the sisters wish to share their culture, food, and friendship. Instead, their exoticism causes both curiosity and suspicion among the locals. Father Mahoney declares that he travels a lot, and this explains his openness toward the Aminpour sisters. He is charmed by their *abgusht*: "I have never, in all my years traveling, tasted anything as divine" (Mehran 2005: 79). Moreover, although he notices that the Aminpour sisters are not Christians, he treats them with kindness and humor. It is important that Father Mahoney, the Catholic parish priest and representative of the Church in Ballinacroagh, is the first customer of the Babylon Café. He is the first, therefore, to experience the magical or transformative properties of Marjan's recipes

and becomes a regular customer, foreshadowing the change that would eventually take place in the community.

On opening day, tongues wagging all over the town, with comments like "she looks right foreign to me. Spanish or Italian, wouldn't you say?" (Mehran 2005: 30). These comments reveal the closed nature of Ballinacroagh society. However, although few customers enter the café in the first week, curiosity starts to win out. Some locals are hesitant but are won over by the weird shape of the samovar and the smell of frying elephant ears, a traditional Iranian sweet. The sisters maintain a modest business and start to find common culinary ground with the locals: cups of hot tea and pastries, foods familiar in both cultures. Later, the sisters even emerge from their café space and begin to participate in town life, taking Estelle to the hospital, taking care of her, bringing her food when she is ill, and preparing "jars of *torshi* that Marjan had promised the ladies of the Patrician Day Dance committee for their table of charity" (Mehran 2005: 121). The three sisters become members of the community.

The relationship between the Aminpour sisters and the Irish people of Ballinacroagh is determined by their mutual dependence on each other, where a kind of attraction takes place. This forms what Bhabha calls the third space: a contradictory and ambivalent space for intercultural encounters, in which cultural identities are negotiated and questioned. It is a space of hybridity and cultural difference, a productive space that opens up new possibilities. Moreover, the third space is basically open. It illustrates the ability of meaning to flow in multiple directions, not solely between colonizers and the colonized or native land and host country, but also among various positions and meanings. The third space is then used as a metaphor for the ambiguous virtual space that emerges when two or more individuals or cultures meet and interact. It is the space of hybridity itself.

Mehran creates a microcosm of the post-colonial world in Ballinacroagh, one that appears to encompass dislike of the other and desire for separation by some locals, like Thomas McGuire and Dervla Quigley, and a sense of welcome among others, like Father Mahoney and Fiona Athey. The café serves as a mediator of the interaction between the sisters and the townspeople that offers all of them exposure to new recipes, a new culture, and a previously impossible relationship leading to a new community.

In this light, one may discuss the titular dish and metaphor: pomegranates and pomegranate soup. This traditional Iranian dish is mentioned in multiple instances in the novel. First, it is the last Iranian dish the sisters cooked in Iran before leaving, and indeed, it saved them "in the middle of their apartment's kitchen…, in the midst of a revolution, deep into a Tehran night" (Mehran 2005: 97). That night, Marjan had tried to save Bahar from Hossein by thrusting a wooden stake into his leg, and Bahar had decided to revolt against Hossein's oppression of her by pouring the hot pomegranate soup onto his head.

The pomegranate soup that saved them from Hossein symbolizes Iran, revolution, and revenge against oppression, which is a recurring theme in Iranian culture. This moment also marks a turning point in the Aminpour sisters' life, as it is the "traumatic past that the three sisters escape… Therefore the fruit symbolizes hope and a promising future in the hostland. The Aminpour sisters open Babylon cafe on No Rooz or the Iranian New Year as it symbolised new beginnings and optimism"

(Ragamalika 2016: 72). The soup is mentioned again when Bahar is missing, after she runs away from home, and Marjan decides to make pomegranate soup, invoking a strong sentimental attachment to home.

For Marjan, with her diasporic identity, a traditional recipe from home may help in keeping away feelings of anxiety and insecurity. "Pomegranate soup relies entirely on the fruit for its inspiration… She wished Bahar could smell it now. She would realize that there was nothing to fear–real or imaginary" (Mehran 2005: 205). In addition, pomegranates symbolize women in their youth; "its many seeds make it a symbol of fertility" ("Pomegranate, Miracle Fruit"). The pomegranate also evokes Iranian culture, as it is mentioned in Iranian legends, and holds a place of esteem in Iranians' imagination and Iranian cuisine. For example, "[d]uring the Persian wedding ceremony, a basket of pomegranates is placed on the ceremonial cloth to symbolize a joyous future" (Pomegranate Council n.d.). Many Iranians consume it daily, either fresh, as in pomegranate soup, or dried, as in tea and rice, and it is an important cash crop. In addition, they eat it at Yalda, which is the celebration on the longest night of the year—the winter solstice—as it is taken as a "reminder of the cycle of life–the rebirth and revival of generations" (Sayadabdi 2019: 108). It represents "Iranianness" because the pomegranate originated in ancient Iran and has been cultivated there since ancient times. Marjan chooses to believe the Persian soothsayers who insist that the pomegranate was, and always would be, the fruit of hope.

Mehran's novel shows how the diasporic view of food exceeds the concept of need through the Aminpour sisters' interaction with Mrs. Estelle Delmonico. For example, when Layla is nervous, she starts to have "debilitating hiccups… Until she had taken a good swill of Marjan's famous dugh drink" (Mehran 2005: 36). *Dugh* is a Persian yogurt drink flavored with herbs like mint and rose; it is popular in Iran and is considered a national drink. Moreover, Marjan deals with Bahar's unpredictable temperament using the ancient Zoroastrian practice of gastronomic balancing, by categorizing food into cold and hot dishes.

Zoroastrianism, the major religion of pre-Islamic Iran, advises people who are hot or quick to react to consume "cold" foods, such as freshwater fish, yogurt, coriander, watermelon, and lentils. Conversely, calm people who have too cold a temper and want some energy may consume "hot" foods such as veal, mung beans, cloves, and figs. Thus, Marjan "diagnose[d] Bahar as a *garmi* (on account of her extreme anxiety and hot temper)…. And knew exactly when to feed her sautéed fish with garlic and Seville oranges to settle her hot flashes, or when a good apple *khoresh,* a stew made from tart apples, chicken, and split peas, would be a better choice to pull Bahar out of her doldrums" (Mehran 2005: 60).

Thus, Marjan feeds her sister with reference to an old religious concept from her homeland. In addition, Bahar uses a powder made of Persian herbs to cure her migraines instead of using a medicinal drug. "The powder, a mixture of ground nutmeg, cardamom, and cloves, was a potent Baluchi remedy that cured mild migraines within minutes of swallowing" (Mehran 2005: 182).

Amir Sayadabdi (2019) clarifies in his thesis *Food and Identity: The Iranian Diaspora of New Zealand* that in many of the spontaneous conversations he had with Iranian immigrants in New Zealand, or the ones he listened to in gatherings,

and so on, Iranian food was often distinguished, quite clearly, from non-Iranian food by the usage of the determiners/possessive pronouns such as "our/ours" and "their/theirs." For those immigrants, Iranian food was often preferred over non-Iranian food in terms of look, smell, taste, and healthiness. "Our food" was mainly described as being "decent,' "tasty," "healthy," and "aromatic, " while "their food" or "foreigners" food' was usually characterized as "bland," "strange-smelling," "funny-tasting," "greasy," "processed," or "pre-made" (p. 86).

Nostalgia plays a significant role in the diasporic identities in the novel. It is reflected in the Aminpour sisters' foods and the environment they have created for themselves. Marjan lives the four seasons of Iran through seasonal Iranian dishes. She cooks "a peasant stew that translates literally as 'meat water' because it relies on the core ingredients of lamb shanks and neck bones to create a broth abundant in minerals, gelatin and collagen" (Niknamian 2016: 36), and she declares that this traditional dish is "a very nourishing dish, especially during the winter months" (Mehran 2005: 77). In addition, *abgusht* always reminds Marjan of cold early spring nights in Iran. She relives her happy childhood in Tehran through the delicious recipes she used to eat when she was a child. Almost every day, she makes elephant ears in her café. Moreover, when the Aminpour sisters decide to participate in a charity day in Ireland, they choose to prepare and sell an important side dish that connects them to their homeland: vegetable *torshi* (pickled vegetables). Thus, they have chosen to participate in an important part of their homeland's culinary traditions. The Aminpour sisters feed their nostalgia through the surrounding environment. Marjan plants many Persian herbs at the Babylon Café, making a Persian environment for her and her sisters. "The jasmine fluttered their tiger eyes seductively in the gentle wind. With her own hazel eyes closed, Marjan could almost imagine that she was back in the afternoon gardens of her childhood home, in northern Tehran" (Mehran 2005: 151). Their kitchen becomes filled with "the motherly embrace of *advieh*—a mixed all-spice of crushed rose petals, cardamom, cinnamon, and cumin; the warm womb of turmeric; and that spice worth more than its weight in gold—za'feran or saffron" (Mehran 2005: 18).

It is well-documented that Iranian society is characterized by migration. Usually, men migrate due to political reasons, while women migrate as a result of male dominance and hegemony. There are some Iranian dishes and spices that connect the Aminpour sisters to home and remind them of sad memories related to Iran before their migration. First, the famous Persian bread, *lavash*, always reminds Marjan of her four days in prison, because it was the only thing she had eaten there. "And as much as she loved the smell of baking lavash bread, she couldn't deny the hint of dread she felt each time she rolled out the dough for a new batch" (Mehran 2005: 113). Furthermore, Layla used to eat *sumac*, a red, sour spice, when she was a child, whenever she felt particularly blue.

However, one day, when she was seven years old, she was "reaching for her second scoop when she heard Bahar scream" (Mehran 2005: 95). This sad incident, when Hossein assaulted Bahar, and she and Marjan left his "mangled body lying on the kitchen floor" (Mehran 2005: 95), is what gave them a reason to run away from Iran. Thus, when Layla is assaulted by Thomas Junior, she remembers the past, and "the taste of sumac [is] suddenly everywhere" (Mehran 2005: 97). In addition, Bahar relates herself to Persian pickled vegetables, because in Iran, people would describe

her as a "*torshi*"—without a husband, and that she is "left to dust away on the shelves of love" (Mehran 2005: 122). However, Bahar tries to think positively whenever this sad Iranian metaphor comes to her mind. "No, she wouldn't be ashamed of being labeled a *torshi*, she decided. Despite the assault of vinegar, *torshi* vegetables somehow managed to survive their pickling period. And that was what she wanted to be: a survivor, afraid of nothing" (Mehran 2005: 123). Thus, she comes to view the comparison to *torshi* vegetables as a source of inspiration instead of a reminder of a sad, traumatic memory.

9. Three: A journey toward self-identification

This section discusses *The Hundred-Foot Journey* by Richard C. Morais, focusing on the effect of cultural background on the identity of the main character, chef Hassan, in relation to food and the role it plays in the interaction between the character's parent culture and the new culture. It reveals the novel's use of food as a language of memory, comfort, and personal expression. Furthermore, the section considers Hassan's journey and the effect of the countries he visited on his identity in relation to food. Moreover, it shows how Indian food, which is the food of his homeland, is a comfort zone, a source of inspiration, and a device used to conjure up life in the homeland and family history. In other words, it is an important form of self-expression and a vessel of national, immigrant, and diasporic cultures.

Hassan's grandfather ran an Indian restaurant, and Hassan was born in the small flat upstairs where the family lived: "I suspect my destiny was written from the very start, for my first sensation of life was the smell of machilid ka salan, a spicy fish curry, rising through the floorboards to the cot in my parent's room above the restaurant" (Morais 2011: 3). He referred to the smell of food, "the aromatic packet of cardamom, fish heads, and palm oil" (p. 3) behind his cot bars when he was an infant as a suggestion of "the unfathomable riches to be discovered and savored in the free world beyond" (p. 3)—a hint of the bright future that is waiting for him in the world of cooking outside his homeland.

Hassan's family and early experiences encouraged him on his path as a chef. For example, during World War II in Bombay, "a million soldiers from around the world were passing through its gates" (Morais 2011: 5), and Hassan used to watch his grandmother wandering out and chatting with the "homesick soldiers missing the dishes of their own countries. 'What you like to eat?' she'd ask 'what you eat at home?" (p. 6) and the British soldiers would get excited to tell her about their local recipes. His grandmother tried to cook recipes that would remind the soldiers of their home, to give them the feeling of being at home. At the same time, she tried to build a bridge between her Indian cuisine and the soldiers' cuisine, "re-creating in her tandoori oven interpretations of what she had heard" (p. 6). This inspires Hassan to wish to do the same in the future. When his grandmother employs Bappu, a cook from a village in Kerala, and some teenagers to help in the restaurant, she allows Hassan to spend his childhood days sitting with them in the kitchen chatting and of course getting inspired; he describes Bappu as being one of his "idols" (Morais 2011: 15), who teaches him many pre-cooking basics.

His father, Haji Abbas, significantly impacts Hassan. First, he tells his son how he fell in love with his mother, Tahira: how her smell, "the most intoxicating whiff of chapatis and rose water" (Morais 2011: 8) makes him feel that he belongs to her because he belongs to Indian food as a part of his identity. This teaches Hassan the importance of food in relation to identity. Furthermore, Haji Abbas sends young Hassan to Anwar, who teaches Hassan how to buy fish and judge its quality.

Moreover, Hassan's father trusts him and offers him the chance to express his opinion when it comes to creating new recipes or improving a recipe. For example, when his father asks Bappu to improve a chicken dish before he approves it, Hassan suggests to "make it drier" (Morais 2011: 20). Hassan explains his suggestion: "too oily, Papa. Bappu skims butter and oil off top. But much better he dry-fries. Make a little crunchy" (Morais 2011: 20). Thus, he has shown talent in dealing with recipes, and as Hassan recalls this incident, "it was the only hint of what would become of me, because the chicken dish established itself as one of our bestsellers, renamed, by my father, Hassan's Dry Chicken" (Morais 2011: 20).

When Hassan's father decides to leave his motherland, he takes his son with him, which gives him the chance to become familiar with international food. At Heathrow Airport, he gets his "first taste of England" (Morais 2011: 31): "a chilled and soggy egg-salad sandwich wrapped in a triangle of plastic. It is the bread, in particular, that I remember, the way it dissolved on my tongue. Never before had I experienced anything so determinedly tasteless, wet, and white" (Morais 2011: 31), in sharp contrast to the spiced food of home. Hassan's mother also plays a vital role in his life, encouraging him to be open to other cultures: "Never be afraid of trying something new, Hassan. Very important. It is the spice of life" (Morais 2011: 24). In his early childhood, Hassan was introduced to the recipes and food culture of France when his mother took him to "a strange-looking restaurant called La Fourchette" (Morais 2011: 23). When it was his first time eating French cuisine, he grapples with "the smell of wine-soaked beef and foreign cigarettes" (Morais 2011: 23). However, his mother expresses her enjoyment of the food, saying: "Let's tell your father French food is new favorite. Nah? Much better than Indian, we'll say. That should get him excited!" (Morais 2011: 24).

In fact, by the time he is 14, Hassan is studying "math and French" diligently (Morais 2011: 24), balancing logic and science with foreign culture. This could be his reason for accepting France as a new home without facing any culture shock and gravitating toward its cuisine. Visiting London introduces him to a whole new realm of international food. He finds lots of interesting cuisines, like "Iranian barbecue, fish stews from Brazil, Caribbean pots of plantain and goat, and thick wedges of Italian pizza" (Morais 2011: 44). His older brother, Umar, leads the family to the Mumbai Grill, where they can find familiar dishes like "lamb Madras or chicken curry…. [and they] get a delicious dollop of rice and okra and chicken vindaloo" (Morais 2011: p. 44). However, the covered market and Harrods food hall affect Hassan's father, showing him that he is unfamiliar with the different cuisines of the world. Thus, he decides "to expand his knowledge of the world ….eating his way across Europe, tasting any local dish that was new and possibly tasty" (Morais 2011: 54). One may ask why London was the first destination in the family's journey. Was

it to join their family members who were already settled there? Or did Hassan's father choose London because its Southall is "the unofficial headquarters of Britain's Indian" community (Morais 2011: 36) and one of the largest immigrant communities of Indians in the world? He might have also chosen it because of its history with India and the mutual influence of England and India because of colonization. To illustrate, Britain's national dish is chicken tikka masala, which is a curry dish, adopted from India many years ago.

Hassan's "Hundred-Foot Journey" is a journey toward self-identification. In India, his family belonged to the middle class; by the time they became millionaires, he had lost his mother, and his father decided to migrate. Even living in the South Asian community in Southall, Hassan and his family need two years in London to get used to their new life. After two years, Hassan still has the feeling of being lost; his girlfriend's name, Abhida, or "longing" (Morais 2011: 44), is a symbol of his situation. He longs for his homeland and his mother, and lacks a sense of belonging. Thus, when he first meets Abhida, he wishes he could ask her to help him find himself. He thinks that she is the right person to help him, as her family is originally from Uttar Pradesh. Thus, he expresses, "she….would bring out that driving ambition buried deep inside me, that part starved to taste the flavors of life far beyond the comfort zone of my heritage" (Morais 2011: 44)—because she is British Indian and can introduce him to different cultures other than the Indian culture. For example, she takes him to a Soviet-era play; there, however, he is touched by the idea of exile and how the Russian characters miss their homes and mothers and how foods from home are so comforting to them. He cries because he feels, just like the play's Russian characters, that he is in exile, and he too treasures the Indian food available in London because it reminds him of his mother and motherland.

However, the same comforting food may lead to homesickness; for example, when he finds "the delicious deep-fried dessert that Bappu the cook used to buy for [him] at Crawford Market. A pang of homesickness and a craving for the old taste suddenly hit with great force" (Morais 2011: 51). This incident is a turning point in Hassan's life. He applied for his first job at the same bakery. The same day, he dreams of driving a train "through stunning, snow-peaked mountains, taking me through a world rich beyond my wildest imagination, and I was exhilarated at never knowing what new sight in store for me through the next alpine tunnel" (Morais 2011: 51). This dream can be interpreted as referring to the possibility of moving to a higher stage in his life, represented by the higher mountains—as high as the Alps of France. After this dream of a bright future, he finds himself "selling sticky twists of jalebi to children and their grandparents" (Morais 2011: 52). Although he was lost away from home, he finds himself in London as a cook: "I will always be grateful to England for this, for helping me realize my place in the world was nowhere else but standing before a vat of boiling oil, my feet wide apart" (Morais 2011: 52).

Furthermore, the dream represents Hassan's subconscious mind as a place where real identity and deep memories appear. In *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Sigmund Freud (1900/1955) asserts that one's unconscious reshapes one's concealed wishes and presents them as images or symbols in dreams. Thus, when Hassan says, "a

world rich beyond my wildest imagination" (Morais 2011: 51), this world could be France, transmuted by his unconscious.

There are two journeys in the novel. The first is the family's journey, which gives Hassan an idea of different identities and cultures as their "Mercedes caravan ran through Belgium and Holland, into Germany, then, in rapid succession, Austria, Italy, Switzerland, before winding mountain roads lead us back into France" (Morais 2011: 53). Most importantly, it offers him many new experiences when it comes to international food because of his father's propensity to try any attractive local dish. This journey ends in France, in Lumière, where his father decides to open his own restaurant; Hassan reflects, "Certainly clear to me. We have new home […] at long last we were back where we belonged, back in the restaurant business" (Morais 2011: 59). He connects having a home with having a restaurant business, as if the restaurant is home in itself, and they belong to this home. Moreover, they call the restaurant Maison Mumbai, as if they are bringing their own Mumbai, their own home, to France.

The second journey is the one mentioned in the title of the novel: *The Hundred-Foot Journey*. It is Hassan's journey when he crosses the street from his father's restaurant to Madam Mallory's, expanding his identity to Indian as well as French through his craft of cookery. Hassan describes this journey: "It was such a small journey, in feet, but it felt as if I were striding from one end of the universe to the other, the light of the Alps illuminating my way" (Morais 2011: 133). He knows deep inside that he is going through a hero's journey, a journey of expanding his identity, a journey of becoming partly French and coming to understand France's exquisite cultures, "the lights of the Alps" (Morais 2011: 133). Moreover, the hundred-foot journey is not just the distance between two restaurants; it is the distance between two ethnic groups and two cultures. This is also a journey into hybridity and cultural relativism as opposed to cultural chauvinism (Lin & Wang 2019).

Hassan's recipes and his ways of cooking reflect his cultural identity as well as his individual creativity. For example, when he is preparing for the grand opening, he argues over an Indian recipe with Ammi. She asks him to cook the recipe exactly as his father does.

However, he refuses. He adds a tomato at the end, although it is not included in the main recipe. He believes that it will add a lovely color to the dish (Morais 2011: 82). The way he insists on doing it in his way shows his desire to be creative by adding his own touch. Likewise, it shows that he wants to avoid the exact Indian recipes that could conjure up too strong a memory of his homeland. Lin and Wang (2019) exemplify it as follows:

> People tend to determine whether the cuisine is good or not through their own knowledge or experience of food culture. Any deviation from their codes of food culture would be deemed inferior or bizarre. Thus, the interpretation of different food cultures based on one's own culture may lead to the preference of an ingroup food culture and a bias toward different food cultures (p. 25).

Moreover, on the same day of the grand opening, Hassan's father says to him, "Make us proud, Hassan … Remember, you are a Haji" (Morais 2011: 86). Furthermore, when Madam Mallory objects to having the Indian restaurant in her town, she says to the mayor: "Aren't you the mayor of this town? Aren't you meant to preserve our way of life? You shouldn't be encouraging these foreigners. It's a disgrace" (Morais 2011: 100). Her words reflect the idea that food is part of identity, and she wants to protect the French identity from any addition.

One may notice that Madam Mallory has thought of the Indian restaurant as a big threat because, in her opinion, it will ruin the elegant French atmosphere of the surroundings, mainly her French restaurant, Le Saule Pleureur. Even when she has seen Hassan's talent and is trying to convince him to work for her, her esteem is couched in prejudice. She says to his father, "This is a chance for your son to become a truly great French chef, a man of taste, a proper artist, not just some curry cook working in an Indian bistro" (Morais 2011: 126). Here, she acts in the service of an assimilative French culinary hegemony—insofar as Hassan is a man of taste and proper artist, he is a French one. India remains othered, politically disordered, and poor. Thus, she starts teaching Hassan the basics of French cooking from the beginning, starting with "peeling carrots" (Morais 2011: 139).

Cooking is represented as a language of memory, comfort, and expression of one's personality. Food refreshes Hassan's memories of childhood. One restaurant presents "a scene that instantly brought forth pictures of mummy and steaks and frites and café de Paris, Bombay memories" (Morais 2011: 72). Furthermore, the smell of tripe and onions reminds him of his dead friend Chef Verdun, to the extent that he feels his presence. He muses, "It was this earthy smell … that finally pulled up from my depths a stew of memories, and in that moment, my friend Paul—not the three-star Chef Verdun—was restored to me" (Morais 2011: 182).

At the play about the men in the Soviet gulag, tears gush from Hassan's eyes; in his opinion, the play is about "homesick men achingly missing their mothers and comforting foods from home" (Morais 2011: 46). Furthermore, cooking is represented as a language to express one's personality. Hassan himself asserts this idea when he says, "I am not good with words … I talk best through my hands" (Morais 2011: 203). At the beginning of the novel, Hassan's cooking shows his confidence in his early life. Moreover, when he starts to work for Madam Mallory, his cooking reflects his new position under her control, where he needs to obey her, follow her directions, and bear her scorn. For example, when she scolds him because he does not know "in what waters do the *Ostrea lurida* grow" (Morais 2011: 139) and asks him to read a book on shellfish, he simply says "oui madame" (Morais 2011: 139). Moreover, when she asks him to make the "day's souffles, a lunchtime favorite made from cheese and pistachio" (Morais 2011: 144), he fails because he does not yet have enough experience to complete this French dish.

However, Hassan's identity does ultimately hybridize and become a mixture of both Indian and French. Instead of cooking pure French recipes, he adds touches that reflect his Indian identity and his nostalgia for India. He says, "The side dishes I prepared were mint-infused couscous, rather than the traditional butter noodles, and a cucumber-and-sour- cream salad ... I realize the cucumber and cream was, conscious

or not, inspired by raita, the yogurt-and-cucumber condiment of my homeland" (Morais 2011: 151).

This also demonstrates that food can be used as a language to express one's identity. Hassan began as a literal subaltern in Madam Mallory's kitchen, but also as the figurative subaltern of Spivak's conception, unable to speak up as they become dependent on Western intellectuals to speak for their condition. Spivak argues that the subaltern simply cannot speak, because no one will listen; if anyone does, then the subaltern is not subaltern anymore. They can neither speak for themselves nor can anyone else speak for them without reinscribing their marginalization. Hassan dares to break this oppressive silence, revealing his own culture and achieving a non-subaltern status. He dares to express himself and reflect his identity through his recipes.

The ideas of hybridity, coexistence, and openness to others, their ideas, and cultures are highly valorized in *The Hundred-Foot Journey*. One example is when Hassan moves to work with Chef Rossier, who is "amazingly open to new ideas, despite his advanced age" (Morais 2011: 165). He gives Hassan the freedom to try new creations. "According to Bhabha's theory of hybridity, on the process of intercultural communication and literary inheritance, people do not refuse other's culture, but borrow and identify it, and further enrich and renew one's self-culture" (Wang 2018: 654). As a result of his creative freedom, the restaurant, La Belle Cluny, gained its second Michelin star when Hassan was just 35 years old. This incident symbolizes the importance of coexistence and acceptance of others and their cultures to live a better life.

One may analyze the theory of cultural mimicry through the change in Hassan's character. Bhabha says, "mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognizable other, as a subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite" (Bhabha 1984: 126). A clear change occurs in Hassan after he begins to work with the French. The very thing that his family dreaded the most has now befallen them. His brother asks him, "They make you eat pig?" (Morais 2011: 136). These fears are not inaccurate: Hassan mentions that "the champagne loosened our tongues" (Morais 2011: 176) as he and his friends celebrate his second Michelin star. "Now drink up," a friend says. "We are off to the discos" (Morais 2011: 177). He even shows new knowledge of the regions and different types of wines, which pushes his uncle to comment in anger, "'What a ting', said Uncle Mayur. 'Imagine dat. Our Hassan. Knows French wines" (Morais 2011: 137), because wine is unacceptable in their religion. Moreover, when Hassan decides to open his own restaurant, he mimics French culture to achieve a high standard. Madam Mallory has taught him that "details make the restaurant" (Morais 2011: 188). Thus, he uses handmade crystal glass from northern Bohemia and deploys heavy silver flatware stamped at a family-run factory in Sheffield, England; and attaches to each table a mahogany footstool.

One may discuss the effect of cultural background on the main character's identity in relation to food and his job as a chef. In colonized India, Hassan's family used to cook for American and British soldiers in Mumbai. As a subaltern, he belongs to "the lower or colonized classes who have little access to their own means of expression and are thus dependent upon the language and methods of the ruling class to express

themselves" ("Key Terms in Post-colonial Theory"). It is noticed in many situations that Hassan expresses himself in the French way. For example, when asked about his friend Chef Paul, who has passed away recently, and whether his death was really an accident or rather a suicide, he "shrugged, the French way" (Morais 2011: 185). Furthermore, when he celebrates his third star at his restaurant, he serves "pistachio madeleines," expressing his happiness with a traditional French cake.

Moreover, it seems that Hassan is influenced by the idea that "achievement that is achieved by the Indians are mostly influenced by French characters' role and help" (Haryono & Muslim 2019: 5). This is because when he is promoted after just two years to the position of premier sous chef at La Gavroche, he thinks about the possibility that Madam Mallory was behind this promotion and "the steady rise over the following years" (Morais 2011: 163).

One of the main themes of post-colonial literature is "cultural dominance," especially in relation to ethnocentrism—"the belief that the people, customs, and traditions of your own race or country are better than those of other races or countries" (Cambridge Dictionary n.d.).

Ethnocentrism can be conceptualized into three levels: positive, negative, and extremely negative. The positive level is when people prefer their own ethnic culture over other cultures, while in the negative level, people consider their own ethnic culture as dominant and use its cultural norms to evaluate other cultures. At the extremely negative level, people also consider their culture as the dominant culture. Moreover, they do not just evaluate, but instead actually expect other ethnic groups to follow their social codes and schemas (Lin et al. 28). This is applicable to Madam Mallory. From the first time she met Hassan and his family, she criticizes their new restaurant and its music: "I don't like the music, the placard.

It's ugly. So unrefined… It's in very bad taste… you must take it down" (Morais 2011: 78). She considers Indian taste "bad" because it does not match the French taste and goes so far as to demand the mayor to take the placard down. She dismissively says, "that sort of thing is all right in India, but not here" (Morais 2011: 78). Moreover, she shows a tendency toward domination when she orders the townspeople to stop selling things to Hassan's family and to ignore them. Thus, the townspeople return Hassan's and his family's greetings with a "cold response" (Morais 2011: 96). She orders the townspeople to avoid Hassan's family because she is against the existence of an Indian restaurant in her town, as it represents a different culture and taste. In her complaint to the mayor, she says that Hassan's father has "turned that beautiful Dufour mansion into a bistro. An Indian bistro! Horrible… Shut him down" (Morais 2011: 74). She cannot stand the smell of "oily cooking all up and down the street" (Morais 2011: 74). Therefore, in her opinion, the Indian restaurant must not be opened, its ugliness must not be mixed with French beauty, and the French culture must dominate the other culture instead of accepting it as it is and must be saved from any changes.

Thus, Hassan describes Madame Mallory as a "culinary nun" (Morais 2011: 63), because she likes her classic French cuisine safe from any changes or additions. She is "a classicist by education and instinct" (Morais 2011: 64), and in part, as a way of taking a stand against intrusion or hybridization, she decides to dominate Hassan's

talent the day she tries his cooking. She realizes that he is "a great artist" (Morais 2011: 93) and declares that "He has it … under all the fire, hidden, brought out by the cool yogurt. There, yes, distinctly there. It's in the point and counterpoint of tastes" (Morais 2011: 93). She leaves immediately after tasting the first dish, without any comment, deciding to harness his talent and make her restaurant benefit from it by making him work for her and learn the art of French cuisine from her. Only then does she admit to him that he is a talented chef: "I must say, Hassan, you have the right feel for game" (Morais 2011: 153). Hassan perceives his domination by Mallory, comparing himself to a slave: "I was slave to Le Saule Pleureur's rhythms but still clinging to Maison Mumbai's doorknob" (Morais 2011: 141). His heart remains with his fathers' restaurant, but he has to obey Madame Mallory, cooking only in the French way because she does not let him use Indian techniques. This situation reflects his diasporic state, between the two cultures. It also helps him build his own unique cooking style, mixing the two cuisines, and the two cultures together, reflecting his new hybrid identity. One may argue in this regard that Madame Mallory is a symbol of not only France but all of Europe. Europe is growing older and needs inter-generational solidarity; it is thirsty for young blood and new generations. However, Haji Abbas, is a symbol of the old generation, which was colonized and now resists anything from the colonizer. As for Hassan, he is a symbol of the new generation that is targeted by Europe, and this might be the reason behind Madame Mallory's choice of him.

One may notice that Hassan tends to be a bridge between the Indians and French through their cuisines. His reaction to seeing a pig being butchered in Madame Mallory's kitchen is different from that of his family. While Uncle Mayur is disgusted and keeps hissing "Pig-eaters," Hassan admires their different way of life:

> I had seen few things so beautiful … few things spoke to me so eloquently of the earth and where we come from and where we are heading. How could I tell him, moreover, how could I tell him that I found myself secretly and passionately wanting to be a part of this pig-butchering underworld? (Morais 2011: 84).

He also reveals how fascinated he is when he witnesses Madam Mallory's technique in cutting up an artichoke. Hassan does not accept the idea that food should be framed by one culture. He loves his Indian cuisine, but simultaneously, he appreciates other cuisines. When Madame Mallory asks him to work for her restaurant, his father refuses because Hassan is an Indian, whose Indian food reflects his identity and culture. Nevertheless, when his father asks him, "What you think, Hassan? You want to study French cooking? You wanna work for dis woman?" (Morais 2011: 132), Hassan answers, "I want nothing more in this world" (Morais 2011: 132). This shows how Hassan is open toward others and their cultures. Furthermore, Paul Verdun and Hassan become best friends because both have the same taste, "the same ingredients" (Morais 2011: 195), and the same technique of serving a cuisine "built on the simplest of *French* truths" (Morais 2011: 205). Paul Verdun is just like Madame Mallory when it comes to cultural dominance and protection of the classic cooking principles of French cuisine; however, he accepts Hassan as a friend because Hassan is not a

pure Indian chef when he meets him. He serves as a bridge between the Indian and French cuisines, being an Indian who can cook both cuisines and who can be called, according to French culture, a French chef. By cooking the two cuisines, Hassan expresses a new hybrid identity.

Hassan creates his new hybrid identity in Bhabha's "third space" or "in-between space." This refers to the gap between clashing cultures, a liminal space that leads to something different, a new area of representation. The third space as a concept is fundamentally open. Its meaning can be applied in all kinds of directions, not only between the colonial and colonized or the native and host country. The third space is a virtual place that emerges when two or more individuals or cultures interact; in a sense, it is the space of hybridity itself. In this space, new cultural identities are formed and reformed, just like Hassan's identity. "The Parisian offer was the gate for Hassan's new identity" (Maissa 2020: 47). He realizes that to bridge two different cultures and form his hybrid identity—and to be away from his father's desire for him to be only a "Haji" and from Madame Mallory's desire for him to be a French chef—he has "to see the world!" (Morais 2011: 159). He decides to make new recipes based on the Indian as well as the French cuisines, to reflect his new hybrid identity. This is the main reason behind his decision to open his own restaurant: to identify himself with his own recipes. Hassan's participation in the cultural ritual of cooking French cuisine plays an important role in the formation of his cultural identity. Usually, such rituals symbolize the transformation of the social status of the person. In *Les Rites de Passage*, Gennep analyzes the transitory in-between space of cultural rituals (Bhandari 2020: 79). His analysis of these rituals consists of the three rites that Hassan has undergone: rites of separation, rites of transition, and rites of adoption. In rites of separation, the person undergoing the ritual is stripped off the social status they have possessed. This applies to Hassan, who has left his country and his father's restaurant and started to learn the French way of cooking, away from his homeland, family, and culture. Then, Hassan undergoes various ritual practices when he starts to cook based on Madam Mallory's instructions. This second liminal period of social status is known as the transitional phase. Gennep clarifies that this transitional second stage is crucial in shaping and preparing the person to adopt a new social status (Bhandari 2020: 79). After undergoing the transitional phase, the person finally adopts their new cultural and social roles. Hassan's role is to serve as a bridge between the Indian and French cultures.

10. Diasporic identities in the selected novels

This section aims to compare the three novels in regard to their treatment of the immigrants and their ethnic food connection to their identity. It also links the authors with their characters. Jordanian–American author, Diana Abu-Jaber, wrote *Crescent* in her late thirties, exploring the Arab and Arab–American identities through the character of Sirine, an Iraqi–American woman of a similar age to herself, each with an Arabic father and an American mother. In an interview, Abu-Jaber declared how Sirine's uncle, who is a remarkable storyteller, resembles her own father and uncle when it comes to storytelling. She also declares that if someone's parents are from a

really traditional culture—as her Jordanian father is—one has to work really hard to "break through," (Stevens 2005: 22) find one's voice, and establish one's identity—metaphorically killing one's parents. This is the reason why she had Sirine's parents die when she was a child (Stevens 2005: 22). Abu-Jaber declares her interest in writing about children from such backgrounds and adults who have had to experience this great struggle to form an identity (Stevens 2005: 22). Moreover, she talks about her father's interest in food and his long-time wish to have his own restaurant (Stevens 2005: 25).

Thus, her work shows her interest in representing food as a key part of culture. In addition, *Crescent* represents the Arab community in the United States and the way Americans treat Arab immigrants in what later becomes Nadia's café. In 1990, the café is owned by an Egyptian cook and his wife, who call it "Falafel Faraoh." One year later, "the Americans begin firing on Iraq… When Iraqi president Saddam Hussein advanced into Kuwait" (Abu-Jaber 2003: 18). Falafel Faraoh is a place where many Arabs, especially students, gather; these customers begin to notice two men in business suits who come every day, sitting at the counter and writing notes. The customers begin to suspect that they are from the CIA, and thus, the restaurant eventually loses customers and fails. In the end, "the two men took the cook aside and asked if he knew of any terrorist scheme developing in the Arab-American community" (Abu-Jaber 2003: 18). Abu-Jaber's father faced similar racist stereotyping when he worked in an administrative job at a hospital in Syracuse, New York. Abu-Jaber shows how racism can be subtle and mentions how people did not even know that they were being racist. She describes the essence of racism: it takes for granted that this is how the world is and that one is superior to another because of how one looks or where one is from (Stevens 2005: 25).

As for Marsha Mehran, she was born in Iran; her family left during the 1979 Revolution when she was just a baby and moved to Argentina, where they opened a Middle Eastern eatery. She had been married to an Irishman, and then they were divorced. Her novel *Pomegranate Soup* is inspired by her own family as well as another Lebanese family she met, who ran a deli in Ireland and sold cans of chickpeas, *tahini*, and Mediterranean condiments, rare in Ireland at the time. She declares in a conversation written at the end of *Pomegranate Soup* that this family reminded her of her parents, as "they carried the same haunted, lonely look on their faces that [her] mother and father had, as they struggled to build a life in a country so vastly different from their homeland" (Mehran 2005). When her parents migrated to Argentina, they "opened a Middle Eastern café, El Pollo Loco "the Crazy Chicken," where the heady smells of dolmas and spicy beef kebabs were an instant hit with Argentine locals" (Mehran 2005). Moreover, she tries to correct the dark image that Westerners have about Iran and Iranians by introducing an important part of their culture: their cuisine, with its aromatic recipes and long history. Thus, she includes Iranian recipes at the beginning of each section of *Pomegranate Soup*. In addition, Mehran talks about November 4, 1979, the day her father planned to file the visa applications with the American Embassy: "Good timing has never been a talent in the Mehran family. That very day, a band of revolutionary students stormed the embassy's front door and took its employees hostage. With the embassy under siege, visas were no

longer issued to Iranians" (Mehran 2005). This evokes the episode in the novel where Marjan cannot file their visa applications when she goes to the American embassy early in the morning after her sister Bahar has run away from her husband Hossein—nearly four months after their marriage and four days after the Black Friday massacre in Jaleh Square in Tehran.

Unlike Abu-Jaber and Mehran, Richard C. Morais does not reflect his own life and family in the characters of his novel *The Hundred-Foot Journey.* He is an American and was born in Lisbon, Portugal. Because of his father's work, his family moved to Zurich, Switzerland, when he was 10 months old. Here, he went to private British and American schools; at age 16, he left Switzerland to attend Sarah Lawrence College in New York City. Thus, he was an American who had never before lived in the United States.

The cover of each novel is particularly significant. First, the cover of the first edition of *Crescent*, by Norton, has a picture of the back of a white woman, wearing a pink dress and cooking in a kitchen. Under the picture is the title of the novel, framed by arabesques. The woman represents Sirine, and the arabesques represent her roots. The first edition cover of *The Hundred- Foot Journey*, by Scribner, pictures the Eiffel tower, a symbol of France and French culture; at the bottom, there is a picture of a woman's hands, cutting a mango. The mango symbolizes India and Indian culture, where it is a national symbol and a symbol of good luck and prosperity; it is also associated with welcoming and is generally omnipresent in cuisine. Even India's largest beverage brand, Maaza, which Coca-Cola owns, is a mango drink. The middle of the cover contains a picture of a footbridge, which symbolizes Hassan, who links the Indian and French cultures through his cooking and new recipes. As for *Pomegranate Soup*, the Random House edition cover from 2006, designed by Barbara M. Bachman, shows a half plate full of pomegranates, representing Iranian identity.

It should be noted that this thesis discusses three kinds of immigrants. The first type refers to those who left their homelands when they were adults, thus making it more difficult to adapt to the hostland and society. The second kind is those who left their homeland during their childhood. The third kind is those who are born to immigrant parents: their parents migrated from the homeland before their birth. The second and third kinds are represented by Sirine in *Crescent* and Layla in *Pomegranate Soup*, respectively, whose reactions and experiences contrast with those of Hanif in *Crescent*, Hassan in *The Hundred-Foot Journey*, and Marjan and Bahar in *Pomegranate Soup*, who represent the first group. While the first group exerts a defensive mechanism against the host society, as they have faced rejection because they are strangers, Sirine, born in America, has not felt this rejection nor experienced this resistance. She is considered an American, and Arabic food is a mechanism for nostalgia that links her to her roots and father. She is a member of the community, while the diasporic identities of the other groups make them strangers. Moreover, Sirine sees her mother's culture through the eyes of others, mainly Hanif and her uncle. Just like Layla, who left Iran when she was only seven years old. Layla knows about her parents and her mother's culture through her sister's knowledge and stories about their parents and Iran. They are the bridge linking her with her roots.

Crescent and *Pomegranate Soup* present information about Iraqi and Iranian history, respectively, and show nostalgia toward the changed homes that their characters and authors cannot go back to. Hanif in *Crescent* and the sisters in *Pomegranate Soup* revisit the past when they settle in their hostland. In contrast, *The Hundred-Foot Journey* does not present much about Indian history.

In *Crescent*, Hanif clarifies how the situation in Iraq forced him to leave twice. The first time, he was only 14 years old. His father had accepted an offer from Janet, an American woman who had asked Hanif to teach her Arabic every summer since he was 11 years old. She offered to send him to a special private school in Cairo—a place where kings and diplomats sent their sons. His father had to agree because of the political situation in Iraq at that time.

In Cairo, Hanif studied English language, literature, and Western history, and this was his first escape from Iraq. The second and final escape from Iraq was when he was 22 years old. He talks about Iraq in 1980 when Saddam Hussein declared war on Iran and conscripted Iraqi men. As Hanif did not want to be conscripted, he decided to escape the country, helped by his family and friends. He expresses that "it's very dangerous–it was terribly difficult … to get out of the country in the first place" (Abu-Jaber 2003: 62), but he had left Iraq for good at that time. He admits that when he decided to escape, he had not realized that he could not go back—in fact, the homeland he left does not even exist anymore, a painful fact that affects his diasporic identity.

This reminds us of the Aminpour sisters in *Pomegranate Soup*, who left Iran during the 1979 revolution when demands for death were heard everywhere: "Death to the traitor Shah! Death to all things from the opiate West!" An end to the America that had brought Layla the Tom and Jerry cartoons and peanut M&M's she loved so much." (Mehran 2005: 67). Moreover, women were forced to wear full-length veils. The novel mentions that in the 1980s, Iran suffered a lot of changes, and civil war had been raging against Islamic socialists. The whole situation makes Bahar and Marjan's hearts extremely sad because their homeland is changing; after their migration, they long for the peaceful country they remember, which no longer exists.

In *The Hundred-Foot Journey*, Morais does not focus on Indian history. After Hassan arrives in France, he becomes busy developing himself as a chef. He does not show a lot of nostalgia toward India.

However, he does have feelings under the surface for his home country, his dead mother, and his father after winning his third Michelin star. He declares that

> I was filled with an ache that hurt, almost to breaking. A sense of loss and longing, for mummy and India. For lovable, noisy papa. For Madam Mallory, my teacher, and for the family I never had, sacrificed on the altar of my ambition. For my late friend Paul Verdun. For my beloved grandmother, Ammi, and her delicious pearlspot, all of which I missed, on this day, of all days. (Morais 2011: 234)

It is noticeable that the diasporic identities make a difference in the societies in which the characters live. In each of the three novels, the food the characters cook

functions as a kind of bridge. Hassan serves as a bridge between Indian and French cultures through his cooking.

In addition, he is the first foreigner who has received three Michelin stars. Sirine's cooking is similarly able to bridge different ethnicities and connect the present and past of her customers. In addition, Marjan and her sisters instill a new culture in a small, insular community with their cooking and create a bridge between this society and themselves.

As for the concept of the "host" country in the three novels, "Basch et al. refute the term 'hostland' and propose instead 'country of settlement' because, in their opinion, 'hostland' presupposes that the country where the immigrants settle down is willing to accept newcomers. Moreover, 'hostland' emphasizes that newcomers are temporary guests" (Stefani 2012: 33).

In *Crescent*, as noted, Sirine was born and raised in America; she is not a newcomer and does not feel that she is a guest in America. She has never traveled abroad. In contrast, the Aminpour sisters in *Pomegranate Soup* and Hassan in *The Hundred-Foot Journey* have experienced the feeling of being newcomers in places that have not accepted them directly and the possibility of being "temporary guests" who might move to another country. They are thus diasporic.

Diaspora, then, relates to special kinds of immigrants who have a memory of their homeland and still have a cultural connection with it. They suffer from doubts about being fully accepted by the hostland, and many of them hope to return (Stefani 2012: 36).

Next, this section examines the three different settings in the novels and their effects on the characters' lives. First, in *The Hundred- Foot Journey*, Hassan and his family have settled at the end of their journey in Lumière, a small French town. It is the place where the Hajis have built their new life and where Hassan is offered the opportunity to become a great chef. However, as it is a small town and everyone knows each other, Madam Mallory can control the only available vendors in the town market, preventing them from selling any fresh food to the Hajis to cook at their new restaurant. She also blackmails many citizens to prevent them from going to the Hajis' restaurant. Had the restaurant been located in a big city, it could not have been emptied by the orders of one person; this could happen only in a small community.

Second, the Aminpour sisters in *Pomegranate Soup* also decide to live and open their café in a small place, an Irish town called Ballinacroagh. "Not a single customer had stepped inside the inviting Café" (Mehran 2005: 69) because the owners of this first café in Ballinacroagh are strangers, and their recipes are exotic and unfamiliar to Irish cuisine. In this small town, social stability is based on the controlling power of the gaze. Constant monitoring of all forms of social activity seems to be a strategy most inhabitants of the town employ to resist chaos, disorder, anarchy, social misbehavior, cultural otherness, and so on (Kubisz 2009: 36). Marjan, however, thinks the main reason the café is struggling is the lack of proper marketing. However, Bahar is more realistic when she thinks about the matter. She realizes that it is not about marketing, but something in the small, enclosed Irish community around them: "We had the curtains opened and all the lights on yesterday and no one even stopped to look through the windows" (Mehran 2005: 70).

Furthermore, while the Haji family suffers from persecution by Madam Mallory, the Aminpour family suffers owing to Thomas McGuire, who orders his family to avoid them and their café and shows racism toward them. The three sisters also face racism from the townspeople. They have been deprived of their roots by the male dominance of Iranian politics and society. Thus, they look for a safe place to live in. However, many townspeople see them as a threat to the stability of the town, while what the sisters seek is a sense of peace and settlement and a hostland in which they can rebuild their sense of belonging. One of Ballinacroagh's inhabitants who sees the Aminpour sisters as a threat to the stability of the town is their neighbor, Dervla Quigley. Dervla sees their arrival as a challenge, as she is forced to face the lived experience of three exiles who become her neighbors. This

> enforces upon her the acknowledgement of the fact that "mobile lives need nomad thought to make a new kind of sense." This making of a "new kind of sense" is slow and often happens to be uncomfortable because it endangers well-known and secure paths of cognition; nevertheless, it is inevitable in this world, in which mobility is recognized as one of the main markers of our time (Kubisz 2009: 38–39).

In *The Hundred-Foot Journey* and *Pomegranate Soup,* tradition is confronted by modernism. The confrontation is concretized by the unfamiliar Indian food presented in the small French town by the Haji family, and the unfamiliar Iranian food of the three Aminpour sisters: "The symbolic dimension of food preparation and food consumption serves as an illustration of the process of transformation, while the evolution of the taste of the inhabitants … is indicative of the change they all undergo" (Kubisz 2009: 39). This is the change that Madam Mallory in Morais's novel and Thomas McGuire and Dervla Quigley in Mehran's novel have been afraid of. As Mehran (2005) expresses it,

> Dervla Quigley, she already knows that something has changed: Yes, a nasty reek of foreignness was definitely in the air. It was different to the smell she remembered coming from Papa's Pastries all those years ago. She recognized the same unyielding yeasty scent of rising bread and perky almond intonations, but there was also a vast and unexpected array of undertones she could not name. The wicked, tingling sensation taunted Dervla's sense of decency, laughing at her as if it knew her deep, dark secrets (p. 26).

Her dark sensation at the moment she smells the foreign Iranian recipes shows her desire to preserve what she views as Irish culture and identity from any interference. She wants to protect her "sense of decency" by protecting her authentic culture. Her sense-perceptions reflect the idea that food is a main part of this culture. She is just like Madam Mallory, who objects to the opening of an Indian restaurant in her French town. Mallory says to the mayor, "Aren't you meant to preserve our way of life" (Morais 2011: 100). Both Madam Mallory and Dervla Quigley react viscerally to the new, different smells in their streets.

Madam Mallory declares that she cannot stand the smell of the Indian "oily cooking all up and down the street" (Morais 2011: 74).

Furthermore, Thomas McGuire reveals his fear of change when he refers to "the dangers of foreign smells" (Mehran, *Pomegranate Soup* 69); "[t]he foreign smell is negatively coded because it becomes a symbol of displacement and uprootedness, a harbinger of change" (Kubisz 2009: 40).

In contrast, in *Crescent*, Sirine does not face this issue. She was born in America and lived in Los Angeles, a big, crowded American city that is full of immigrants from different countries. Thus, the café in which she works is also full of Arab immigrants who long to eat Arabic food.

However, she herself has never been out of the United States, her mother is American, and she passes as white. Thus, she has never faced any kind of racism toward herself.

One may notice that the immigrants in the three novels, except Hassan, open their restaurants and cafés in the hostlands or work in restaurants that cook their homelands' foods; they do this not just to earn a living, but to preserve their memories of their country before the revolutions or wars and to preserve their good family times too. Thus, they decorate their restaurants and cafés in a way that represents their countries, and they name them with names that are related to their homelands. For Sirine, in contrast, home is just a mysterious and uncertain place. She needs a place that links her with her homeland, like the Mediterranean café, where she cooks Arabic food and spends her days with Arab immigrants. Thus, when she works at various restaurants in Los Angeles, she feels lonely and alienated. However, when she works at Nadia's Mediterranean café, she settles there and never leaves to work elsewhere. Thus, when Han asks her, "What makes a place feel like home for you, then?" (Abu-Jaber 2003: 118), she replies, "Work," and "Work is home" (Abu-Jaber 2003: 118). Furthermore, the kitchen is represented as a place where Sirine can preserve her good times with her parents, who used to cook together and explore her parents' heritage through their traditional food and recipes.

As for the Haji family, they might have called the restaurant Maison Mumbai because they want to preserve their good memories with their mother in Mumbai and of their prewar and prerevolution homeland through the restaurant's Indian name, vibes, and decorations. Therefore, they write the restaurant's name "in massive gold letters on an Islamic green background" (Morais 2011: 73) and play Indian music loudly.

Concerning the Aminpour sisters, they call their café "Babylon." It is painted red inside and decorated with plants, new and old samovars, hand-woven tapestries hung upon the walls, and hookahs lining the shelves above wooden cases filled with Persian culinary delights.

Furthermore, one day, when Marjan fills Father Mahoney's teacup from the samovar, she remembers herself with her family, gathered and sitting on the rug, sharing snacks and stories. Thus, the Babylon Café, with its Iranian décor, becomes a tool to remember Iran and the good days with family before the revolution.

The customers in the three novels play an important role in the narrative. While customers of the Haji family in *The Hundred-Foot Journey* and the Aminpour sisters

in *Pomegranate Soup* are locals; the customers of Sirine are Arab immigrants. Thus, the Haji family and the Aminpour sisters take a long time before winning customers and gaining their acceptance. However, in *Crescent*, Sirine works in a café that is popular with the Arab immigrant society, especially as the food and the decorations are familiar to them:

> Despite not sharing the same homeland, the very fact of coming from the Middle East serves as a common denominator that nurtures the characters' feelings of solidarity and community for living under the same predicament of being Arab in the U.S.A. … the feeling of estrangement for the new environment forms a fictional ethnic community united by the very notion of sharing a common language – the language of Sirine's food (De Sena 2011: 101).

This all contrasts with Madam Mallory in *The Hundred-Foot Journey* and the Irish townspeople in *Pomegranate Soup*. For them, "the exotic décor evoked curiosity and interest in some who entered, and in others evoked fear and disgust, no doubt influenced by Western media perceptions of Iran" (Gray 2021: 12).

A brief historical discussion of Babylon helps in giving context to the townspeople's reactions to the café's name, shedding light on the sisters' diplomatic intentions and the townspeople's perceptions of difference. In naming the space, the sisters focused on classical literature that refers to the beauty of the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, which Father Mahoney mentions in a conversation with Marjan, reinforcing the choice of the name for her because of its apparent positive connotation for the priest. In addition, biblically, Babylon was the location of the Tower of Babel that ancient people attempted to build to reach heaven (Gray 2021: 12).

The Aminpour sisters try to be diplomatic by choosing a name familiar to the townspeople. Luckily, they can be seen as diplomatic as they offer a drink familiar to the Irish, which is their Iranian tea. When Marjan meets Father Mahoney for the first time, she tries to convince him to enter the café by offering him a cup of tea: "Are you sure you can't come in–for a cup of tea at least? You'll be our first customer" (Mehran 2005: 74). However, tea is not the only shared ingredient between the two cultures. Both use lamb as a main ingredient in the stews of their cuisines. Iranians use it in the *abgusht*, while the Irish use it in *stobhach gaelach*. This similarity might be a way of attracting Irish customers to their café, especially as they are not open to trying new, foreign recipes.

Food is crucial in other ways for the immigrants in the three novels who are trying to conduct themselves in a new society, and it is also related to generational change in diasporic cultures. In *Crescent,* Sirine's father has not taught her his mother tongue, Arabic, and has not told her a lot about Iraq. However, he used to cook Arabic recipes for her. In *The Hundred-Foot Journey,* Hassan's father, Abbas Haji, continues to cook with his family; he sells and eats Indian food until the last day of his life in *Lumière*. In *Pomegranate Soup*, Marjan introduces Layla, who lost her parents early in her childhood, to various Iranian recipes even when they move from one country to another. For the diasporic people, their traditional food, which belongs to their homeland's cuisine, is a critical element of their identity; thus, they try to

maintain their uniqueness to save these traditions. Food becomes the bridge between the immigrants and the next generation because it helps them pass on a part of their culture to the next generation. As Atkins (2003) states,

> It has been noted that inertia in food habits is strong amongst first generation immigrants living in a new land … even where the ingredients for their traditional type of cookery may be difficult to obtain. The language of origin may be abandoned before the diet changes. Second and third generations find assimilation unavoidable, but some dishes survive as a link with the past (p. 273).

As for the ways in which power relations are depicted, both Abu-Jaber's and Mehran's novels present

> a shift of roles in relation to power and gender [where] some displaced immigrant characters … question their lives … where there is a clear shift of configuration in relation to gender differences – for instance, the fact that women and men cannot sit together at the same table, as we see in the episode of the Thanksgiving dinner in Abu-Jaber's novel (De Sena 2011: 30).

However, in *Pomegranate Soup*, the exoticism of Marjan's food affects many locals, like Father Mahoney, and makes them question their lives. Moreover, in *Crescent*, Sirine, Um-Nadia, and her daughter Mireille are the ones who cook and control the café and the food served in it, mainly to regular male customers. "To a certain extent, it suggests that the male immigrant characters are powerless because of the adversities they find in the host country and this nostalgia is demonstrated through their complex relationships with the food cooked by Sirine" (De Sena 2011: 30). In addition, the Aminpour sisters, who also cook and control the food served in their Babylon Café, have decorated the café with "a print of a painting showing a traditional Iranian teahouse (men only)" (Mehran 2005: 20), while Iranian women control their café and accept both men and women. This symbolizes their struggle to be set free from the system of their homeland, where they have little or no control over their lives, and make their own system in the hostland, where they can control instead of being controlled.

As for *The Hundred-Foot Journey*, Hassan and his father, Abbas Haji, have been keen to open their restaurant in the hostland. In their case, as male immigrants, it is not about changing their position from being controlled to having control over their lives; rather, it is about gaining control after losing it:

> Immigrants are stripped of many of their sustaining social relationships, as well as their roles which provide them with culturally scripted notions of how they fit into the world. Without a sense of competence, control, and belonging, they may feel marginalized. These changes are highly disorienting and nearly inevitable lead to a keen sense of loss (De Sena 2011: 62).

11. Conclusion

This research applied post-colonial theory to the three selected novels: *Crescent* by Diana Abu-Jaber, *Pomegranate Soup* by Marsha Mehran, and *The Hundred-Foot Journey* by Richard Morais. It shows the extent to which ethnic food is related to immigrants' identity by analyzing certain characters, especially those who do not live in their motherland, experience diaspora, and cook or eat dishes belonging to their original homeland.

This study discusses immigrants who cook and eat the food of their homeland. It compares the aforementioned three novels and their characters. Abu-Jaber is an author with a Jordanian–American father and an American mother. In *Crescent*, she focuses on Arab and Arab American identities. She writes about Sirine, who is also an American in her late 30 seconds and belongs to an Iraqi–American father and American mother. Similarly, Marsha Mehran, author of *Pomegranate Soup*, was born in Iran; her family left Iran during the 1979 revolution, when she was a little girl, and moved to Argentina, where they opened a Middle Eastern restaurant. Her novel is inspired by her family as well as another Lebanese family, who ran a deli shop in Ireland. Unlike Abu-Jaber and Mehran, Richard Morais's life is not reflected in the characters of his novel, *The Hundred-Foot Journey*. He is an American born in Lisbon, who lived in Zurich and did not go to the United States until he was 16; thus, he was a young

American who had never lived in the United States. The main character in his novel, Hassan, was born and raised in India until he was 17 years old; then, he emigrated with his family and settled in a small French town called Lumière.

Three types of immigrants inhabit these works. The first type is those who leave their homelands as adults and, therefore, face difficulties in smoothly adapting to the host country and its community. The second type is those who leave their homeland during their childhood. The third type is immigrants whose parents migrated from the homeland before their own birth.

One finding recorded in this research is that diasporic identities make a difference in the societies in which they live. In the three novels considered here, food prepared by the diasporic characters serves as a kind of bridge. In The *Hundred-Foot Journey*, for example, Hassan's cooking serves as a bridge between the Indian and French cultures.

Similarly, Sirine's cooking in *Crescent* links different races to one another. It also links the present of Sirine's customers with their past. In addition, Marjan and her sisters in *Pomegranate Soup* infuse a new culture in a small, closed community through cooking, creating a bridge between them and this community.

Memory is an important point of discussion in post-colonial literature; it serves as a major theme in these three novels, because many old memories are refreshed by food. The concept of diaspora is associated with immigrants who carry a memory of their homeland and are still culturally connected to it. It is noticed that such characters usually suffer from doubts about their full acceptance by the hostland, and many of them put faith in the myth of a return to their homeland. The concept of diaspora also focuses on awareness, which provides a sense of difference, an essential aspect of diasporic identity. *Crescent* and *Pomegranate Soup* provide information about Iraqi

and Iranian history, in which Hanif and the three sisters return in memory to visit the past while they are in their hostland.

This study focuses on tradition as confronted by modernism through food. In *The Hundred- Foot Journey*, the confrontation takes place through the unfamiliar Indian food served by the Haji family in the small French town, and in *Pomegranate Soup*, it occurs through the unfamiliar Iranian food that the three sisters cook in their café in Ireland.

This study also compares the host countries in which the immigrants or their ancestors had settled and the extent to which the nature of the society of each host country or community affected the identity of the immigrant. For example, in *The Hundred-Foot Journey*, Hassan and his family settled at the end of their journey in Lumière, a small French town. If Hassan's family had settled in a bustling city and successfully established their restaurant there, the café would not have been left empty due to the whims of a single community member's orders (Mrs. Mallory). Similarly, the smallness and closedness of society negatively affect the opening night of the Iranian sisters' café in *Pomegranate Soup*, as the closed Irish society does not accept them or their Iranian recipes at the beginning. On the contrary, in *Crescent*, Sirine does not face a similar issue as she is born and lives in Los Angeles, which is a large and crowded American city full of immigrants from different countries; the café where Sirine works is also full of Arab immigrants who crave Arabic food.

Another point that has been discussed here is the importance of food for immigrants who are trying to integrate into a new society. For example, in *Crescent*, we find that Sirine's father has not taught her his mother tongue, Arabic, and has not told her much about Iraq. However, he used to cook Arabic recipes for her. Furthermore, in *The Hundred- Foot Journey,* Hassan's father continues to cook with his family; he sells and eats Indian food until the last day of his life in Lumière. In *Pomegranate Soup*, Layla, who loses her parents early in her childhood, learns many Iranian recipes through her sister, Marjan.

Above all, it is important to assert that for diasporic characters, their traditional food, which belongs to their homeland's cuisine, is a critical element of their identity. Thus, they try to maintain their unique culinary customs to preserve these traditions. Food serves as a bridge between immigrants and future generations, enabling them to transmit a significant aspect of their culture across time. It is a way of telling their children about their homeland—a way of continuity.

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