1 Introduction

Summary   1.1 Demographic Changes. – 1.2 Linguistic Changes. – 1.3 Literary Developments. – 1.4 Research Questions and Aims of the Study. – 1.5 Materials of Analysis and Selection Criteria . – 1.6 The Necessity to Criticise and to Keep Using the Concept *Invandrarlitteratur*. – 1.7 Theoretical and Methodological Background. – 1.8 Layout of the Study.

This study aims to offer an analytical overview of the linguistic phenomena characterising part of contemporary Swedish literature, in a Sweden which, nowadays, can be defined as a superdiverse and 'postmigrant' society. Based on a doctoral project in Nordic Languages and Literatures, carried out between 2018 and 2022, and a monograph entitled *Storie d'identità. La Svezia postmigrante* (Stories of Identity. Postmigrant Sweden), published in 2023, this work seeks to offer a critical glimpse at linguistic aspects that, over time, have become typical of migration-related literature in Sweden in the twenty-first century.

Through the critical lens of Postmigrant Studies, Sweden is framed as a country where migration has now become a structural phenomenon, multilingualism plays a key role in literature,[1] and

---

[1]   For example, according to recent surveys, Arabic is now the second most spoken language in Sweden. This data is particularly significant, since the second most spoken language in Sweden has for long time been Finnish for historical, political and cultural reasons (Parkvall 2018).

multiculturalism works as a political resource of intercultural co-existence and tolerance.

Considering the central role played by linguistic varieties in framing societies as postmigrant, this study investigates the so-called *invandrarlitteratur* (immigrant literature), a phenomenon traced in the Swedish literary field since at least the late 1960s and ideally divided into two main waves: first – and second-generation (Gröndahl 2002; Wendelius 2002; Kongslien 2007). Actually, the phenomenon is much more complex than this simple division. The wave known as 'second-generation' investigates contemporary Swedish fiction written by authors of non-European origin who either belong to second or 1.5 generations (Pérez Firmat 1994; Suleiman 2002). These terms refer, respectively, to people born and raised in Sweden by at least one foreign parent, and those born abroad but immigrated at a pre-adolescent age (Larrucea 2015, 81), or born in the host country.[2]

This work needs to be contextualised in what Sweden has become over time. In particular, it is necessary to investigate the way in which migration has changed Swedish society from the second half of the twentieth century to the present.

1.1 Demographic Changes

As of the 31 December 2024, official statistics reported that Sweden reached a population of 10,587,710 inhabitants.[3] Of these, 2,200,238 are foreign-born Swedes,[4] and 831,813 are resident as non-Swedish citisens.[5] This means that almost 30% of the total population in Sweden has foreign origins. Compared to 2000, when statistics indicated that approximately one-tenth of the Swedish population was foreign-born (De los Reyes 2000, 29), we see how in the last twenty years, in particular after the so-called 'Migrant Crisis', Sweden has been experiencing a strong demographic growth, reaching more than ten million inhabitants in 2017. Furthermore, at the end of 2015

---

2 Concerning the concept of 'second generation', it is important to point out that "[w]hile it obviously refers to children of international migrants it seems logically and ethically wrong to categorise these children as migrants if they are born in the country to which their parents immigrated, in this case Sweden, many of them being citizens of the country" (Westin 2000, 18).

3 For data about population in Sweden, cf. https://www.scb.se/hitta-statistik/sverige-i-siffror/manniskorna-i-sverige/sveriges-befolkning/.

4 For data about foreign-born population in Sweden, cf. https://www.scb.se/hitta-statistik/sverige-i-siffror/manniskorna-i-sverige/utrikes-fodda-i-sverige/.

5 For data about foreign citisens in Sweden, cf. https://www.scb.se/hitta-statistik/sverige-i-siffror/manniskorna-i-sverige/utlandska-medborgare-i-sverige/.

Sweden was the nation with the highest number of asylum seekers per capita, when 163,005 new arrivals were recorded.[6]

Although Swedish population is growing, the birth rate is decreasing (from 1.89 in 2013 to 1.45 in 2023, which however is still above the 1.38 EU average),[7] as well as (although neither gradually nor constantly) the total annual number of immigrants. In the period 2023-24, only slightly more than 210,000 people emigrated to Sweden, of which 22,289 applied for asylum. Compared to 2013-14, when more than 242,000 new immigrants came to Sweden, of which more than 135,000 were asylum seekers, we observe that immigration (and the political acceptance of this phenomenon) is affected by a significant decrease.[8] On the one hand, from 2016 onwards, Sweden experienced a drastic drop in asylum seekers. On the other hand, immigration contributes to at least 60% of the annual population increase.[9]

These interesting data show what Catrin Lundström and Tobias Hübinette have termed "supermångfaldspräglade befolkningssammansättning" (superdiverse demographic composition) (2020, 74). The adjective *supermångfaldspräglad* (superdiverse) draws on the concept of *superdiversity*, coined by Steven Vertovec (2007) to analyse the complex nature of today's western societies, seeking to overcome the definition of diversity intended only in terms of ethnicity.[10]

Swedish superdiversity depends on several factors. The most evident one is the fact that around 40% of young people aged 0-18 years have a foreign background, displaying a population that, potentially, in future can reach even higher percentages of citizens with foreign origin than today. Furthermore, in demographic terms, Swedish superdiversity only measures up to global multicultural models such as the United States, Canada, France and Great Britain.

How does such superdiversity come about? As will be explained in Chapter 2, in the second half of the twentieth century, Sweden enjoyed exponential economic and industrial growth, which fostered immigration waves that created encouraging conditions

---

6 For data about asylum seekers in Sweden, cf. https://www.scb.se/hitta-statistik/sverige-i-siffror/manniskorna-i-sverige/asylsokande-i-sverige/.

7 For data about Swedish and European population growth, cf. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tps00199/default/table?lang=en.

8 For data about immigration to Sweden, cf. https://www.scb.se/hitta-statistik/sverige-i-siffror/manniskorna-i-sverige/invandring-till-sverige/.

9 For data about annual population increase in Sweden, cf. https://www.scb.se/hitta-statistik/sverige-i-siffror/manniskorna-i-sverige/sveriges-befolkning/.

10 Vertovec develops superdiversity in British context as an interdisciplinary notion determined by additional variables to ethnicity, such as class, age, gender, residential patterns, etc. (2007, 1025). The term refers to the radical changes in Western societies brought about by global and regional events prompting international migration, thus stimulating scholars to re-evaluate investigative methods and epistemologies on migration as a social phenomenon.

for the free development of intercultural forms of coexistence, in which the legal-political equalisation of minorities and non-Swedish citizens brought about an important enlargement of the until then (supposedly) homogeneous Swedish nation.

Currently, the demographically most influential countries on migration flows in Sweden are Syria, Finland, Iraq and Poland.[11] The reasons constitute prime examples of the historical role played by Sweden within the global migration flows during the last century. Sweden's reputation as a welcoming nation for guest workers and refugees, as well as its generous welfare system, turned the country into a privileged destination for people fleeing conflicts and seeking a better life. Sweden's demand for labour, particularly in sectors like healthcare, building industry and services has attracted workforce from Southern and Eastern Europe, as well as from Finland. Finland's geo-historical and, in part, linguistic proximity to Sweden, have facilitated long-standing flows over the Baltic Sea, particularly after the end of World War II. Further details will be provided in the next chapter.

1.2 Linguistic Changes

Another aspect of Swedish superdiversity is that approximately 2.2 million people have a mother tongue other than Swedish (Parkvall 2019, 39), i.e. almost a quarter of the total population.[12] Although there is a lack of official data, it is estimated that over two hundred languages are spoken in Sweden today (Josephson 2018; Parkvall 2019). The practices of everyday life reflect the way people express their identity. Language is part of it, especially for the descendants of migrants who have access to at least two languages, namely Swedish – learnt at school and through contact with society – and the language of their parents, acquired at home and through family contacts, where, however, the use of Swedish is not excluded. Since the 1970s, Swedish superdiversity has been testified to several varieties emerging from contacts between Swedish and immigrants' mother tongues. In the second half of the 1980s, the sociolinguist Ulla-Britt Kotsinas detected such phenomena in the neighbourhood of Rinkeby, in northern Stockholm, in her article "Invandrarsvenska

---

11 For data about the most influential countries on migration flows in Sweden, cf. https://www.scb.se/hitta-statistik/sverige-i-siffror/manniskorna-i-sverige/utrikes-fodda/.

12 This is even more significant if we consider that in 1950 only one twenty-fifth of the population had a mother tongue other than Swedish (Aktürk-Drake et al. 2021, 5).

och språkförändringar" (Immigrant Swedish and Language Changes) (Kotsinas 1985).

Focusing on academic research about suburban youth multilingualism in Sweden, there is a vast terminological variety, which is not unproblematic and needs to be observed in order to obtain a more precise analytical framework. When speaking of suburban youth languages, in this study we refer to the domain of multilingualism, i.e. what in Swedish scholarship is known as *flerspråkighet*. Research on this area distinguishes at least between three areas of investigation: *andraspråk* (second language), *tvåspråkighet* (bilingualism), and *flerspråkighet* (multilingualism). The former deals with Swedish as a language learned by foreign people in educational contexts, while the second is usually part of education studies, framed as a phenomenon involving individual competences (Björklund 2016, 16).[13] *Flerspråkighet* refers to a field that, rather than focusing on linguistic competence, examines cognitive and social dimensions of multilingual societies (16).The increasing diversity in the three main cities (Stockholm, Göteborg and Malmö), especially in the *Miljonprogram* (Million Programme) areas,[14] has attracted sociolinguistic interest since the end of the Seventies (Hammarberg, Viberg 1976; Wigforss 1981), when important migration flows occurred from both abroad and the countryside. Thanks to the scientific curiosity towards these new linguistic phenomena, a new research strand on multilingual varieties of Swedish was established, which was later systematised by the aforementioned Kotsinas – who is usually attributed the role of pioneer in these studies – and by the *Centrum för tvåspråkighetsforskning* (Centre for Research on Bilingualism),[15] founded in 1988 at Stockholm University, and coordinated by Kenneth Hyltenstam.

In recent times, a thorough investigation into the changes occurred within such varieties comes from the linguists Ellen Bijvoet and Kari Fraurud, who have devoted many studies to what is also known as *Rinkebysvenska* (Rinkebyswedish, henceforth RS): according to them, RS is a way of speaking Swedish originated and developed in multilingual metropolitan environments among young people of different ethnic origins (Bijvoet, Fraurud 2013). These varieties develop all over the country, especially in areas populated by immigrants, thus they are not limited to the multicultural suburb

---

13 For further insights into the field, see the research work of Kenneth Hyltenstam, starting with his *Svenska i invandrarperspektiv* (Swedish from an immigrant perspective) from 1979.

14 Projects for residential development carried out in the 1960s and 1970s throughout the country. See Chapter 2.

15 Homepage of the Centre for Research on Bilingualism available at https://www.su.se/centrum-for-tvasprakighetsforskning/.

of Rinkeby, but rather concern many areas around Stockholm and the main Swedish cities. As a matter of fact, RS is just one of several popular denominations, as we identify, among others, the following ones: *invandrarsvenska* (Immigrant Swedish), *blattesvenska* (Blatte Swedish),[16] *bushiska*,[17] *förortsslang* (Neighbourhood slang),[18] *ghettospråk* (Ghetto language), *kebabspråk* (Kebab language),[19] *miljonsvenska* (Million Swedish),[20] *shobresvenska* (*sho bre*-Swedish).[21] In addition to these terms, we also find several local names, such as *Albysvenska* (Alby Swedish), *Gårdstenska*, *Rosengårdska*, and many others.[22]Besides these popular denominations, many definitions have arisen in academic fields, which attempt to summarise the complexity of such linguistic varieties: *svenska på mångspråkig grund* (Swedish on a multilingual basis) (Große 2007, 25), suburban Swedish (Young 2014), urban youth styles (Jonsson 2018), *förortsförankrat tal* (suburb-anchored speech) (Bijvoet, Senter 2021), etc. Most recently, Bijvoet has proposed an umbrella term to describe such varieties: *migrationsrelaterad språklig variation* (migration-related language variation) (Bijvoet 2020, 25), by which she means varieties that can be traced back to (mainly) suburban youth languages. The different denominations used to describe suburban youth languages in Sweden suggest that new ways of understanding interlinguistic relationships are leading to a "multilingual turn" (May 2013), whereby multilingualism is defined as an everyday practice, rooted in several Western societies for half a century now. This multilingual turn envisions languages no longer as discrete, bounded entities, but as stylistic and multimodal repertoires available to speakers, regardless of their origins or native language. In recent years, this turn has contributed to interesting reflections on the understanding of phenomena concerning the relationships between two or more languages. Just to provide some examples, in Denmark the concept

---

16　A term introduced by Ebba Witt-Brattström in 2006 in the newspaper *Dagens Nyheter*, where she stated that these varieties were good only for "selling bananas in Rosengård" (Malmö) (Milani 2010; Agazzi 2015). *Blatte* is attested at least since the 1960s (Lacatus 2008, 11), and was used against dark-skinned immigrants, resulting more offensive and racially connoted than *invandrare*. In recent decades it has enjoyed a positive revaluation. Cf. Leonard 2022, 202.

17　Untranslatable term related to the practices of suburban youth language.

18　Slang influenced by different languages in multicultural areas (Agazzi 2015, 94). This denomination also inspires the title to a glossary written by Dogge Doggelito and Ulla-Britt Kotsinas in 2004.

19　Attested at least since 1987 (Agazzi 2015, 95).

20　Introduced in 2005 by the cultural magazine *Gringo* (cf. Agazzi 2015, 163).

21　Literally 'hello brother', a typical Bosnian greeting well established in Swedish suburbs.

22　Respectively immigrant-dense districts of Stockholm, Göteborg and Malmö.

Perkerdansk has become very popular (Quist, Møller 2003). Janus Møller has proposed the term 'polylingual languaging' (2009, 188) to define multilingualism in Copenhagen, whereby 'languaging' refers to a performative dimension of language. In Norway, today we find the term *Kebabnorsk* (Svendsen, Røyneland 2008; Aarsæther 2010) which, although no longer undisputed, is still widely used.

Regardless of their specific denomination, all these phenomena are spread in many European countries. In Great Britain, the sociolinguist Ben Rampton has formulated the concept of 'stylised heteroglossic speech practices' (2011, 276), denoting them as 'speech practices' with 'stylised' or indexicalised features from different languages or varieties. In Germany, multilingualism is often connoted with the popular terms *Kanak Sprak* (Deppermann 2007) and *Kiezdeutsch* (Wiese 2012; Diko 2019), while France has the famous *verlan* (Lefkowitz 1989),[23] the Netherlands *Straattaal* (street language) (Nortier, Dorleijn 2013), and *Citétaal* (city language) in Belgium (March 2005).

1.2.1   A New Attempt at Definition: Multilingual Styles

Adapting Rampton's aforementioned definition of 'stylised heteroglossic speech practices', in Sweden Ellen Bijvoet moved on to designations such as "new urban youth styles" (2018). In this study, we also propose to start from the definition of 'style' to frame youth multilingualism in Sweden. More precisely, we adopt the concept of 'multilingual styles' (henceforth MS), already theorised (Gendolavigna 2019) as a more neutral and less controversial term, without prefixes that risk to over-emphasise ethnic backgrounds, age, residential areas and extra-linguistic factors, focusing on the composition of these varieties as resources used by heterogeneous social categories. In both everyday interactions and literary representations, MS often appear with stylised features, i.e. used with such frequency and emphasis as to become a defining element of the identity of a group or one speaker.

First, it is necessary to provide a definition of style: derived from the Greek στῦλος (stylos, column), style means a way of constructing reality, a concrete or figurative action (Compagnon 2004, 125). Style pertains to the modality (the 'how?') of linguistic communication, proposing an agentive perspective on it (Coupland 2007; Nortier, Dorleijn 2013, 237; Svendsen, Røyneland 2008). Inspiring in this

---

23   *Verlan* is a multiethnic youth variety with strong slang features, distinguished by syllabic inversions, elisions, and substitutions of final letters. The word *verlan* itself is a syllabic inversion of the French *l'envers* (the inverse).

respect is Penelope Eckert's reflection on style, defined as "the activity in which people create social meaning" (2003, 43).

The employment of the term 'style' finds support in various scientific contributions. Rampton defines 'stylization' as a "reflexive communicative action in which speakers produce specially marked and often exaggerated representations of languages, dialects and styles that lie outside their own habitual repertoire" (2009, 149).

Moreover, the concept of style has also been employed by the scholars Tommaso Milani and Rickard Jonsson who, using 'youth styles and stylized performances' (2012, 46-7), tried to capture the dimension of youth multilingual languages as resources for determining the self (46). In 2021, Bijvoet and Senter also alluded to such varieties by using 'style':

> [i]nom den etnografiska inriktningen beskrivs den aktuella språkliga variationen ofta i termer av stil. Stil är där något man gör – med hjälp av språk […] i konstruktionen av identiteter. (172)[24]

> [w]ithin the ethnographic approach, current linguistic variation is often described in terms of style. Style is something one does – through language […] to construct identities and social relations.

The employment of the plural form *styles* relates to the heterogeneity of MS, where both phonetics and vocabulary of several languages merge (46). Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that 'Multilingual Styles' is a term able to reflect the current polyvalence and complexity of the repertoires available to multilingual speakers. To give a comprehensive definition, MS are contact varieties resulting from a complex intersection of linguistic, historical and social processes, commonly spoken by people from mono – and multilingual backgrounds and interacting in a post-migratory context. As they arise from different features of different languages, most notably Greek, Turkish, Arabic, Spanish, Kurdish, Farsi, Serbo-Croatian, etc. (Rydell, Ganuza 2024, 9), MS consist of a heterogeneous vocabulary that has found its way into Swedish over time. MS do not replace the use of Swedish in every communicative situation, and do not work as an alternative to an alleged lack of grammatical, syntactical, and lexical competence, but rather have a specific diaphasic connotation, as they constitute a part of several repertoires collected along different biographical trajectories (Blommaert 2009), where Swedish is often (but not always) the speakers' native language or the language through which they have been educated. Thus, languistic choice in

---

24   Unless otherwise stated, translations are by the Author.

a multicultural environment becomes a matter of identity, but also a semiotic resource in response to social demands, and the practices of intercultural coexistence.

1.2.1.1 Multilingual Styles: Features

MS can be analysed from multiple points of view, as they display interesting phenomena in every aspect of language. These languages are characterised by a set of phonetic features with a strong foreign accent, inconsistent syntax, imprecise morphology, and a varied vocabulary, rich in loanwords, resemantisations, 'recycled' archaisms, terms from urban dialects and the use of the recent derivational suffix -*ish*.

1.2.1.1.1   Phonetics

A MS speaker is immediately recognisable as the prosody appears rather monotonous compared to the tones of Swedish. In fact, MS phonetics is strongly influenced by the phonetic systems of the speakers' mother tongues, which give rise to a prosodic disconnection also known as *brytning* (breaking).[25] To provide a couple of examples, the distinction between long and short vowels is often blurred, complicating word discernment, e.g. between *ful* 'ugly' (long vowel) and *full* 'full'/'drunk' (short vowel). In addition, complex consonantic conjunctions, such as *sch-*, *sj-*, *sk-*, *sh-*, *stj* – and *tj-*, are reduced to a simple postalveolar fricative [ʃ] or to a sound somewhere between a voiceless velar fricative [x] and a voiceless pharyngeal fricative [ħ].

1.2.1.1.2   Morphology

MS are characterised by a pecualiar employment of certain grammatical categories. One example is the confusion between common and neuter gender, as reported in the example "de e mitt framtid de handlar om" (it's my future we are talking about) (Kotsinas 1994, 134), where the neuter possessive *mitt* (my), related to the common gender noun *framtid* (future), replaces the common gender possessive *min*. We also recognise overgeneralisation

---

25 The Swedish Academy Dictionary (SAOB) defines the term *brytning* as follows: "tala på ett sätt som förråder inflytande l. reminiscenser från ett främmande språk l. en viss dialekt o.d." (speak in a way that betrays influence or reminiscences of a foreign language or a particular dialect and similar), cf. `https://www.saob.se/ artikel/?seek=bryta&pz=2`.

and simplification, which affect prepositions, where we see an overextension of the most common *på* and *i* where they should not be used. MS often lack congruence in the conjugation of plural adjectives and nouns: "sen dom blir lite rik" (then they get a little rich) (Kotsinas 1994, 145), with the adjective *rik* (rich) expressed in the singular instead of the plural *rika*. These are just some of the phenomena concerning the morphology of MS. Other phenomena will be discussed in the analytical section.

1.2.1.1.3   Syntax

The phenomena analysed so far could be judged as mistakes committed during a language learning process. This may be partly true, but when it comes to syntax, we can see that MS are not always a matter of simple failures, but rather a result of multilingualism as a social phenomenon coupled with conscious stylistic choices. Let us start with the main peculiarities of MS: the missing verb-subject inversion. According to Swedish grammar, in declarative sentences the finite verb always takes the second place (V2-rule). In main sentences preceded by subordinate clauses, and in main sentences that do not begin with the subject, verb and subject are inverted, where the finite verb precedes the subject. However, MS speakers seem to ignore these rules, resorting to a V3 structure (verb in the third place) (Bylin, Tingsell 2021). Let us look at the following data collected by the scholar Natalia Ganuza: "om du inte vill gifta dej vi bryr oss inte" (if you don't want to get married, we don't care); "å sen publiken får avgöra" (and then the audience can decide) (Ganuza 2008, 100-1). In the first example, the main sentence "vi bryr oss inte" is preceded by the subordinate "om du inte vill gifta dig". According to rules, after a subordinate clause, the main clause verb precedes the subject: "om du inte vill gifta dej bryr vi oss inte", where the verb keeps its position while the subject moves after the verb. In the main sentence "å sen publiken får avgöra", however, the verb is not in the second position, but rather after the subject which, in turn, is placed between the tense adverb *sen* (then) and the verb *får* (may, can): the correct version is: "å sen får publiken avgöra". One of the first theories concerned with word-order issues postulated a tangible difficulty for first-generation migrants to acquire Swedish syntax.[26] This is partly due to the syntactic systems of migrants' languages, that might be unfamiliar with the practice of inversion, and therefore may prove difficult to acquire, especially if Swedish is learned at an older age (as in the case of first-generation immigrants). On the

---

[26]   These theories have beed highlighted and criticised by Kotsinas 1994; Otterup 2005.

contrary, with regard to the second and third generation, recent research has shown that word-order switches are not always related to language-acquisition issues, but rather they become a deliberately incorrect mode of expression for identity and social reasons according to a given position towards what is judged as standard Swedish. As explained by Kotsinas,

> När ungdomarna som är uppvuxna i Sverige gör 'fel' inom språkliga system behöver det inte nödvändigtvis bero på att de inte känner till rätt form. I stället [...] använder de uttryck som de dagligen hör i området av föräldrar, andra vuxna, nyinflyttade kamrater, osv. (1994, 147-9)

> When young people who have grown up in Sweden make 'mistakes' within linguistic systems, it is not necessarily because they do not know the correct form. Instead [...] they use expressions that they hear daily in the neighbourhood from parents, other adults, newcomers, etc.

In the preface to the glossary *Förortsslang* (2004), written with the rapper Dogge Doggelito, Kotsinas noted that these linguistic peculiarities should not be simply labelled as mere formal errors, because they are signs of social distinction, supporting the thesis that some aspects of MS are communicative acts for identity purposes. As pointed out by Bijvoet and Fraurud (2011), we should rather speak of conventionalised XSV practices, i.e. the assignment of the verb (V) to the third place when the sentence begins with an element (X) other than the subject (S), which can be reduced only and exclusively to intimate contexts, between bi – or multilingual speakers (Ganuza 2008; 2011). In other words, descendants of immigrants recognise their own morpho-syntactic traits, but they intentionally insist on using them as a common factor of social identification (Kotsinas 1994, 156-7).

1.2.1.1.4   Vocabulary

Like phonetics and syntax, MS vocabulary is also influenced by co-production phenomena with other languages, in which words from the basic vocabulary of a foreign language become constitutive elements of a new, suburban vocabulary. The main language currently contributing to the lexical enrichment of everyday language, slang and professional jargons in Sweden is English. The pervasive influence this language is exerting on the basic vocabulary of many languages introduces widely spread terms, such as *jobba* (from job), *kicka* (from to kick), *missa* (from to miss), *tuff* (from tough), *najs* (nice), etc. However, English is not the only language influencing Swedish,

least of all MS, where it actually has a non-dominant (when not marginal) role. Due to a centuries-old presence of Finnish and Roma minorities in the country, many MS words come from Finnish and, above all, Romani Chib. Categorised as an official minority language, which has been present in Sweden for at least five centuries, Romani has been a lexical source for jargons such as Månsing and urban *koinè* such as *ekensnack* (a Stockholm dialect spoken in the early twentieth century),[27] and is attested in several glossaries as an active and prolific source of MS. Some examples are *gola* (to gossip), *lover* (money), *tjalla* (from *čalla*, to gossip), *tji* (no/not). Following post-World War II migration flows, Swedish came into contact with many Southern and non-European languages, which today are in considerable expansion as synonymic and supplementary resources (with different semantic nuances). Consider the influences of Turkish through words such as *aina* (from *aynasız*, cop), *çok* (very), *guss* (from *kız*, girl), *län* (from *ulan*, boy), *para* (from *parra*, money), *benim* (I, my, mine); and Arabic, with *jalla* (let's go), *keff* (from كف, bad), *wallah* (I swear), *zutta* (from Maghreb slang *zatla*, grass, hashish). The spread of MS has prompted language authorities such as the *Svenska Akademien* (Swedish Academy) and the *Institut för Språk och Folkminnen* (Swedish Institute for Language and Folklore – ISOF) to lexicalise some of these terms. To provide a couple of examples, the noun *guss* and the adjective *keff* are included in the thirteenth edition of the *Svenska Akademiens Ordlista* (Swedish Academy Glossary – SAOL). However, none of them are included in *Svenska Akademiens Ordbok* (Swedish Academy Dictionary – SAOB).[28] Another example is the first-person personal pronoun *benim*, included in the 2019 ISOF *nyordslista* (neologism list).[29] Due to their lexical diversity, the use of such terms evidences a clear distance between the lexical material within specific semantic domains. MS, in fact, construct their vocabulary by reflecting the interests and attitudes of the speakers. This is why, for example, the currently available glossaries on youth slang[30] contain many references to clothing brands, leisure activities, drugs, police, fights and sexuality (Kotsinas 1994, 119-26).

---

27 Literally 'eken-speak', where *eken* stands for a shortening of *ekenskisar*, the *månsing* name by which the inhabitants of Stockholm were called, itself renamed *Storhäcken* in the same jargon (see Kotsinas 2001).

28 Similar phenomena occur in Norwegian, where the Norwegian Academy Dictionary (NAOB) recognises the interjection *wolla* from the above-mentioned *wallah* (cf. `https://naob.no/ordbok/wolla`).

29 *Benim* is the genitive of the Turkish first-person pronoun *ben*, often used in MS as an exclamation meaning 'here I am'. *Benim* shows that a neologism can also be introduced into a traditionally 'closed' class of vocabulary, such as pronouns. However, research points out that its use is restricted to MS and hip-hop music (see Young 2021).

30 Kotsinas 1998; Doggelito, Kotsinas 2004; Agazzi 2015; Sjödin 2017.

All these dimensions constitute part of the *ungdomskulturer* (youth cultures), which, as pointed out by Aleksandra Ålund, do not result from a lack of reference points and social discomfort, but are marks of a new culture in the making, developing from a multitude of resources (1997, 165-6). However, it is important to emphasise that, reflecting contemporary interests, habits and approaches, the linguistic expressions of such youth cultures are extremely variable. As more recent literary texts and audiovisual products show, much of the vocabulary used (and captured by research) in the early 2000s is today already obsolete or no longer popular. As for semantic expansions, similar to youth languages MS employ given words out of their usual context. Expansions usually occur in endogenous terms, such as the use of the verb *gå* (to walk) instead of *åka* (to go by transport) (Kotsinas 1994, 145). The same verb *gå* simplifies many expressions, replacing more specific verbs such as *bli* (to become) and *lämna* (to leave) (145). Semantic expansions also occur through resemantisation processes. An example is the employment of the verb *baxa*, reported by SAOB as an archaism for 'carrying heavy objects'. Today, this verb is disused and has been semantically recycled as synonymous with *stjäla* (to steal). Often used in criminal parlances, *baxa* often recurs in the form *baxish*, which will be discussed shortly (Doggelito, Kotsinas 2004, 43; Gendolavigna 2023b). Even simple interjections (sequences of sounds such as single words, exclamations) contribute to semantic expansions. For such features, these expressions are classified as fillers. Endogenous examples are the use of *ba'* (from *bara*, only) as a discursive marker to introduce indirect speech or to quote something (*citatmarkör*), expanding its original meaning (cf. *like* in English). Exogenous examples in MS are *wallah*, which originally expresses the sacral dimension of oath, overextending its function to ask for seriousness, sincerity, attention or to express marvel; *abou*, an expression of astonishment that also serves to attract attention; *aide*, an expression from Greek serving as an exhortation ('let's go!', 'come on!'). These elements generally do not convey any particular meaning (although they possess it), but perform the speakers' expression of emotional involvement.

1.2.1.1.5   The *-ish* suffix

A distinctive feature of MS is the use of a new derivational suffix added to various parts of speech, usually not to change their meaning, but rather to make them more unclear to outsiders: *-ish*. Swedish youth languages are rich in suffixes from which nouns and adjectives are created: consider – *is*, which has produced and still produces very popular words, such as *dagis* (from *daghem*, kindergarten), *grattis* (from *gratulering*, congratulations), *kompis* (from *kumpan*, friend),

fritis (from *fritidsgård*, youth centre); or the suffix – *o* in *drogo* (from *drogpåverkad*, drugged) and *fyllo* (from *full*, drunk)According to Maria Arnstad (2008), *-ish* arose from the need to conventionally transform certain words to make them less understandable to outsiders, ensuring group identity and secrecy, thus assuming an argotic function. In fact, the suffix occurs in so-called taboo words, whose recognisability must be hidden. Arnstad notes that the suffix may originate from the identical English adjectival suffix *-ish* (cf. *reddish*). Even though the use of adjectives in *-ish* does not seem to be attested outside MS (Doggelito, Kotsinas 2004), this suffix deserves special consideration because it has both a linguistic and social function. Linguistically, it can be added to any part of speech without altering its grammatical category: it forms not only adjectives such as *braish* (from *bra*, good) or nouns such as *kranish* (from *kran*, drug dealer),[31] but also verbs, constituting a new desinence alongside the well-known infinitives -a, -e,-o, -y, -å and-ö, creating forms such as the already mentioned *baxish*, but also *haffish* (from *haffa*, to arrest), *plankish* (from *planka*, to jump the turnstiles),[32] *meckish* (from *mecka*, to roll a joint), and other verbs for actions that are usually illegal or related to youth groups. On the other hand, from a social point of view, the heterogeneous patchwork of words in *-ish* does not only serve the need to conceal sensitive topics, but also to reflect the variegated reality of the suburbs. As will be seen below, the use of this suffix is extensively attested in second-generation immigrant literature.

Following these brief descriptive sections on the various linguistic domains of MS, it clearly emerges why we lean towards the employment of the term 'styles', as it more accurately reflects the set of linguistic practices (phonetic, morphosyntactic and lexical) to which, as noted above, are given numerous names. Although often geographically delimited, we cannot say that MS are a dialect, a pidgin or, properly speaking, a variety of Swedish. In other words, it is not possible to say that one speaks in MS, but rather with MS, as it is a tool by which speakers express themselves.

---

31 *Kran* usually means tap (for water). However, in suburban slang there has been a semantic shift whereby, just as a *kran* is used to run water, a dealer is used for letting drugs circulate.

32 Related to *plagiera*, *planka* was defined by the Swedish linguist Gösta Bergman as "skaffa sig tillträde utan entrebiljett" (to get entrance without a ticket) (1970, 103).

1.3 Literary Developments

The gradual development of Sweden as a multicultural and multilingual society has generated interesting developments in the literary universe. Since the late 1960s, there has been a tradition of foreign and migration-related authors who have provided an important contribution to Sweden's international literary prestige, which was given the conventional label *invandrarlitteratur*.

The concept of *invandrarlitteratur* emerged with the literary debuts of first-generation immigrants, many of whom were women, such as the Argentinian Ana Martinez and the Iranians Fatemeh Behros, Azar Mahloujian, and Jila Mossaed. Among the most prominent figures is Theodor Kallifatides, born in Greece in 1938, whose prolific literary career, spanning over almost six decades, has established him as one of the most influential and widely read voices in both Swedish and international cultural circles.

The first-generation *invandrarlitteratur* begins (conventionally) with Kallifatides' debut collection *Minnet i exil* (The Memory in Exile) from 1969, although this is preceded by an anthology of short stories edited in 1959 by Roland Hentzel, entitled *Mitt Stockholm. Tjugotvå utlänningar ser på stan* (My Stockholm, Twenty-Two Foreigners Look at the City). The first-generation *invandrarlitteratur* narrates the condition of diaspora and exile, linguistic and cultural foreignness and the contrasts between rootedness (in the country of arrival) and uprooting (from the country of origin). Reflections on the political situation in the country of origin are frequent, particularly among authors fleeing dictatorial regimes (Gröndahl 2002; Wendelius 2002, Kongslien 2021).

On the other hand, the literary production of recent generations is confronted with more complex issues generated by ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity, which has fostered a new cultural production that stretches far beyond literature, reaching into the domains of music, filmmaking, and television, through which artists with migration background have employed their artistic talent to develop "nuove costruzioni di vita, [...] nuovi spazi e [...] mondi trasversali che sfidano i limiti del concetto normativo di cittadinanza" (Calvani 2021, 185).[33]

Since 2001, a new literary aesthetic has taken shape thanks to young voices of mainly non-European origin, born between the late 1970s and the early 1980s, and raised during the difficult 1990-2000 decade (see Ch. 2). To name a few: Alejandro Leiva Wenger, Johannes Anyuru, Jonas Hassen Khemiri, Marjaneh Bakhtiari, Hassan Loo

---

[33]   "New life constructions, [...] new spaces and [...] transversal worlds that challenge the limits of the normative concept of citizenship".

Sattarvandi, Sami Said, Daniel Boyacioglu, Athena Farrokhzad. Some of them were born in Sweden (Anyuru, Boyacioglu, Khemiri), while others were born abroad, but have spent their lives in Sweden since childhood (Leiva Wenger, Bakhtiari, Sattarvandi, Farrokhzad, Said). Some of them have employed MS in their texts, dealt with issues related to racialisation, and the relationship with the suburban dimension, but also with social, emotional and psychological problems which are not necessarily related to diversity and exile. This recent generation constitutes what the scholar Peter Leonard has called "ethnic turn" (2008, 33) in Swedish literature, which coincided with the publication of Leiva Wenger's *Till vår ära*.[34] Renamed in a more recent study by Leonard himself as "post-ethnic turn", this term refers to a phenomenon that, "[in] the first decade of the twenty-first century saw the rise of several young Swedish authors who put national identity under a new lens, one in which multiculturalism was the norm, not the exception" (Leonard 2022, 191).

1.3.1 The Advent of the Postmigrant Condition as a Critical Perspective on Literature

Following the attempt to de-essentialise the concepts of ethnicity and cultural identity, in recent years there has been a veritable 'reshuffling' in research about *invandrarlitteratur*, where concepts such as culture and ethnicity, traditionally considered neutral and non-ambiguous, are profoundly questioned. This shift takes place within the postmigrant perspective. In accordance with this strand, with regard to the topics of *invandrarlitteratur* and its typical literary multilingualism, we avoid reading the texts with a documentary lens, which risks relating the texts to the authors' biographies as 'ethnographic testimonies' on multiculturalism. In this sense, there is an urgent need to take on the awareness that literary texts, in their fictional dimension, reflect the transformations of Swedish society as a whole (Schramm, Ring Petersen 2016). As Sten Pultz Moslund notes, the postmigrant perspective involves a "significant shift" (2019, 100)

---

34 Leonard introduced the term 'Ethnic turn' in the article *Det etniske gennembrud – Multicultural Literature in Denmark*, in which the expression *det etniske gennembrud* (the ethnic breakthrough) seems to give continuity to the term coined by the Danish literary critic Georg Brandes (1842-1927), namely *det moderne gennembrud* (the modern breakthrough). By this, Brandes referred to a cultural-historical cosmopolitan turn in the Nordic landscape of arts during the second half of the nineteenth century. Similarly, with *det etniske gennembrud*, Leonard points to a new turning point against the backdrop of the historical-demographic changes of recent decades, in which young voices of foreign origin represent the profound changes that identity and linguistic paradigms are undergoing.

from externally attributed identity markers (nationality, ethnicity, etc.) to inner processes of subjectification.

Postmigration works as a theoretical-methodological approach that emerged in the German theatre scene around 2008, and later expanded into sociology, cultural studies and the performing, figurative and literary arts with the aim "to reframe the discourses on migration and diversity in contemporary societies and to reclaim the agency of the arts as an important resource" (Schramm, Ring Petersen, Wiegand 2019, 8). According to the historian Kijan Espahangizi (2021), the rise of a specific integration discourse, framing participation and inclusion as structured societal processes, is a key marker of Europe's shift to postmigrant societies, a perspective well-suited to Sweden's historical context (see Ch. 2). In contrast, sociologist Naika Foroutan (2019) argues that a postmigrant society emerges not (only) from demographic shifts or integration debates, but from formal political recognition.

More specifically, Postmigration sets a fundamental shift in migration research towards a perspective that critically engages with the previously unexplored 'majority society' and its institutions, making migration more visible within broader societal developments and cultural debates (Ring Petersen 2024, 31). The term 'Postmigration' was proposed by Shermin Langhoff, who between 2008 and 2012 directed the *Ballhaus Naunynstraße* theatre in Kreuzberg, Berlin. Langhoff's postmigrant theatre stages stories where the concepts of identity, belonging and society are constantly questioned (Langhoff 2009). Her plays focus on figures who have not experienced migration but carry it somehow as 'cultural capital'. Thus, the term Postmigration refers to a condition that is consequent to the experience of migration, both temporally (*after*) and ontologically (*beyond*), concerning "the retelling and reinterpretation of the phenomenon 'migration' and its consequences'" (Yildiz 2013, 177).

Given its wide scope, the concept can apply to different aspects of reality. People and groups can define themselves as Postmigrants, insofar as they experience that the legacy of migration has some kind of importance in the way they (and their families) define themselves from a cultural point of view. In this sense, we refer to people who grew up (and often were born) in a country shaped by migration, where migration not necessarily has been an experience lived in first person. Postmigration is also a concept associated with a precise analytical perspective to different fields of knowledge, such as literature. In literary studies, the concept works as a tool of textual critical-analytical meta-analysis (Schramm 2018, 89), observing how literary texts are influenced by migration, revealing how literature reflects and engages with societal struggles.

However, ever since the appearance of this new perspective, several scholars have raised doubts about the efficiency of the

postmigrant perspective in both social sciences and literary studies. For instance, Paul Mecheril points out that the prefix *post* – evidences a distancing from the object of study, and that therefore Postmigration erroneously suggests that migration as a cultural phenomenon is either overcome or believed to be over (2014, 111). In other words, for Mecheril the prefix *post* – reifies "paradoxerweise das Bild der Schmuddeligkeit des Migrantischen" (111),[35] as it does not suggest that migration is over, but rather that it is an ongoing process which not only brings people into contact, but also societies into change. This is why the prefix *post* – criticises a discourse that frames migration as a negligible part of the present which must be overcome (Frontino 2012). For instance, if postmodernism does not mean an overcoming of modernity but a new way of conceptualising it, and if postcolonialism does not mean the overcoming or the erasure of the colonial past (and of colonial power mechanisms), but different ways in which imperialism manifests itself after the formal end of colonial empires (Bhabha 1994, 1), in much the same way by postmigration we mean a profound questioning of the meaning and implications associated with migration. Therefore, it does not mean that migration has come to an end, but rather it needs to be placed under a new critical lens.

1.4   Research Questions and Aims of the Study

Given this premise on socio-demographic, linguistic and literary developments, it is time to move on to the research question that animates the present study, i.e. how literary multilingualism manifests itself in *invandrarlitteratur*. This question takes into account the need to contextualise aspects of fundamental importance, such as how immigration flows have shaped Swedish society between the twentieth and twenty-first century, as well as an adequate reflection on what image of Sweden is derived from the narratives of second-generation *invandrarlitteratur*.

This approach assumes that it is important to understand how, rather than *migration* itself, its *effects* are changing Swedish society. Answers are no longer found by analysing the consequences of exile, but by reading and analysing literature, in order to formulate a critique of Sweden as a postmigrant and 'postmonolingual' country, to use a term coined by Yasemin Yıldız in 2012 in her volume *Beyond the Mother Tongue – The Postmonolingual Condition*. Before discussing the arguments of this theory in detail, it should be pointed out that setting up an investigation of Sweden as a postmonolingual

---

35   "Paradoxically the dirty image of the migrant".

and postmigrant society means investigating a reality in which old paradigms that associate one nation, one culture, one ethnicity and one language with *one* identity keep playing a hegemonic role in public discourse, which is strongly based on an institutionalised focus on ethno-cultural homogenisation to a single language model (Johansson 2013, 133). Within this framework, it is relevant to problematise the iconicity of migration-related writers' styles and to deconstruct the alleged inadequacy of MS as a medium of literary expression (Källström 2010; Gokieli 2015). In this respect, it will be crucial to carefully analyse the phenomena characterising literary multilingualism and, in particular, MS vocabulary, in order to understand where foreign linguistic items come from and what meaning these elements, coming into contact with Swedish, take on, radically transforming the experience of reading a literary text in Swedish.

Given these issues, the present study has two main aims: the first is to provide a detailed analysis of multilingualism in the selected works, in an attempt to define the relationship between literary language and the context it draws on; the second is to demonstrate how multilingualism is a central textual element, where certain stylistic usages are part of a critique of the monolingual paradigm in which Swedish, from being the dominant language, becomes minor and deterritorialised.

Another aim of this study is to demonstrate how the use of specific styles works as a conscious act of opposition to a social and linguistic norm with which an ideal of high-quality literature in Sweden is generally identified. As Ellen Bijvoet summarises in her research,

> [a]tt tala rinkebysvenska kan också vara ett sätt att protestera mot det etablerade majoritetssamhället. […] [U]ngdomarna upplever utanförskap och en stark marginalisering; de upplever att det är omöjligt för dem att komma in i det etablerade majoritetssamhället. (2003, 17)

> [s]peaking *Rinkebysvenska* can also be a way to protest against the established majority society. […] [Y]oung people experience exclusion and strong marginalisation; they feel that it is impossible for them to get into the established majority society

The writers considered in this study perform a *writing back* to such constructions, emphasising how in conjunction with political, social and cultural changes, boundaries between languages, cultures, literatures and genres are continually negotiated, and (re)drawn (Kauranen, Huss, Grönstrand 2020, 4).

The analysis and the aims of the present study are not entirely novel, as recent investigations carried out by various scholars have already

explored, or are currently exploring, the presence of multilingualism in migration-related literature in Sweden. Just to provide an example, Nathalia Ganuza and Maria Rydell from Stockholm University have investigated the relationship between language and Swedishness through the analysis of "65 Swedish books, published between 2000 and 2020, which depict protagonists with multilingual and migrant backgrounds" (Ganuza, Rydell 2023, 94).

1.5 Materials of Analysis and Selection Criteria

This study will examine the debut works of four second and 1.5-generation authors. Following a chronological order, the first is Alejandro Leiva Wenger, born in 1976 in Chile and emigrated to Sweden when he was nine years old, who made his debut with the short story collection *Till vår ära* (In Our Honour) in 2001; the second author is Jonas Hassen Khemiri, born in 1978 in Stockholm to a Swedish mother and a Tunisian father, who made his debut with the novel *Ett öga rött* (One Eye Red) in 2003;[36] the third author is Marjaneh Bakhtiari, born in 1980 in Iran and emigrated at the age of seven to Sweden, who made her debut with the novel *Kalla det vad fan du vill* (Call It What The Hell You Like) in 2005; the fourth author is Hassan Loo Sattarvandi, born in 1975 in Iran and emigrated at the age of three to Sweden, who made his debut with the novel *Still* (Still) in 2008.

Comparing these authors and their debut works displays shared issues and linguistic features that are relevant to highlight:

1. Firstly, the four texts share a multilingual dimension strongly related to MS, both in indirect discourse (i.e. the narrators' voice style) and in dialogues. The authors employ a rich repertoire of code-switching, loanwords, new-words, omographic strategies as well as morpho-syntactic constructions (such as missing V2-inversion) which is qualitatively more frequent than what sociolinguistic surveys suggest (Källström 2005; Ganuza 2008; 2011).
2. The literary debuts of these authors are concentrated in a specific time span, i.e. between 2001 and 2008. All these works meet the pattern of the (post-)ethnic turn theorised by Leonard (2008, 2022) (cf. § 1.3) and constitute the best known and most thought-provoking examples of this literary and aesthetic breakthrough. Following this criterion, this

---

36 Although syntactically questionable, this translation of the title of Khemiri's novel is faithful to the original *Ett-öga-rött* (One-eye-red) in which the typical Swedish adjective-noun structure is reversed. The correct version reads *Ett rött öga* (One red eye).

study could have included many authors who played an important role in the ethnic turn, such as Johannes Anyuru, Athena Farrokhzad, Nora Khalil, Neftali Milfuegos, Andrzej Tichý, Sami Said, Pooneh Rohi, etc., who in recent times have continued in the footsteps of the literary aesthetics pioneered by Leiva Wenger, Khemiri, Bakhtiari and Sattarvandi. However, the analytical choice has tended to focus on these four authors not only because of both their pioneering role and editorial success, but also because their texts contain a rich variety of linguistic phenomena (typical MS vocabulary, loanwords, lexical creativity with new-words and graphic peculiarities) that only scarcely compare to the variety of phenomena that deserve investigation in other contemporary or more recent texts.

3. The four selected books are all debut works. At a very young age (not yet or just in their early thirties), Leiva Wenger, Khemiri, Bakhtiari and Sattarvandi published their first texts with prestigious publishing houses: Leiva Wenger and Sattarvandi with Bonniers, Khemiri with Norstedts and Bakhtiari with Ordfront.

4. The texts account for the lives of teenagers or young adults from extra-European countries, often from the authors' culture of origin.[37] They are usually 1.5 generation immigrants (as in *Till vår ära*, *Kalla det vad fan du vill* and probably in *Still*) or second generation immigrants (as in *Ett öga rött*).[38] Discrepancies in generational belonging, however, do not represent particular obstacles to the selection criteria of the works, as age boundaries are not interpreted in a strict way.

5. By sharing a focus on teenagers and young adults, identity, coming of age and the search for a position beyond ethno-social and residential categories become key topics, as well as an opportunity to re-conceptualise the idea of *Bildungsroman* (coming-of-age novel). As suggested by Nathalia Ganuza and Maria Rydell, a common feature of migration-related literature is that "they center on the lives and experiences of fictional

---

37 There are a few exceptions: in *Till vår ära* not all characters share Chilean origins. Regarding *Ett öga rött*, Khemiri has Tunisian origins but 'assigns' Moroccan parents to his Swedish-born main character Halim.

38 Alternatively, there is a new term in Swedish, *förstagenerationssvensk* (first-generation Swedish), which defines an individual born in Sweden to one or both immigrant parents (Agazzi 2015, 95). The term 'First-Generation-Swede' implies that one was born in Sweden and, compared to one's parents, has no experience of their country of origin, making it impossible to apply the label *invandrare*. For comparison, see the concept "First-generation mixed persons" coined by Sayaka Osanami Törngren (2022, 130).

characters with multilingual and migrant backgrounds, and they take place mainly in Sweden in the present" (Ganuza, Rydell 2023, 95). Within the context of *invandrarlitteratur*, the concept of *Bildung* is not to understand in its traditional term, but rather as a voltage field within construction of the self (subjectivation) vis-à-vis societal norms and prejudices (Hoffarth, Mecheril 2021, 44).

6. The four selected works share a suburban and decentralised setting, identified with immigrant-dense areas. This does not mean that all the writers (and their characters) have lived in the suburbs or that they employ MS or multilingualism in general as a result of their background. As Natia Gokieli notes, there has been a strong tendency to link biography and geography (2017, 274), even though we know that only Leiva Wenger and Sattarvandi grew up in suburbs (Vårberg and Hagalund respectively), while Khemiri lived in Södermalm, central Stockholm. Concerning Bakhtiari, there is no certain information about her location in Malmö.

1.6 The Necessity to Criticise and to Keep Using the Concept *Invandrarlitteratur*

Based on the six points discussed, we can assume that, at the turn of the millennium, a new generation emerges for whom the label invandrare is no longer applicable. According to Hans Hauge, in fact, the concept of *invandrarlitteratur* was abolished in Sweden as early as 2003, right after Leiva Wenger's, Khemiri's and Anyuru's debuts: "I Sverige blev indvandrerlitteratur som begreb afskaffet samtidig med, at der endelig kom en slags indvandrerroman i 2003" (Hauge 2014).[39]

As is well known, the concept *invandrarlitteratur* has retained a certain centrality in public debate well after 2003 and has never really disappeared from public and academic discourse.[40] According to the German scholar Wilhelm Beschnitt, *invandrarlitteratur* is a hegemonic discursive categorisation (Behschnitt 2006, 144) that serves as a "semiotic frame" to mark an inferior status in the literary field. Despite these quite negative implications, Behschnitt maintains that it is still possible to use the concept *invandrarlitteratur*, as it is not only to understand in discriminating manner, but rather "it is used at a meta-level to signify a category within Swedish literary discourse

---

39 "In Sweden, the concept of immigrant literature was abolished at the same time as a type of immigrant novel was finally published in 2003". The "type of immigrant novel" Hauge refers to is of course Khemiri's *Ett öga rött*.

40 Mohnike 2006; Kongslien 2007; Nilsson 2010; Jagne-Soreau 2021.

and literary practice" (2010, 81). In other words, *invandrarlitteratur* is a concept used to assert that this phenomenon actually exists and has a specific role in the cultural debate. Drawing on this perspective, in this study we also employ the term *invandrarlitteratur*, as it is useful to shed light on a phenomenon that not only exists, but also "transforms national literature by introducing new perspectives, themes and modes of writing" (Heith, Gröndahl, Rantonen 2018, 15) on issues concerning today's society, identity, belonging and language.

Identifying thematic motifs related to the six points listed above, the scholar Maïmouna Jagne-Soreau has redefined *invandrarlitteratur* as *postinvandringslitteratur* (postmigration literature), describing it as "litteratur som har postinvandringsgenerationen som centralt tema, oberoende av författarens bakgrund" (2021b, 70).[41] Concerning research on migration-related literature, Jagne-Soreau is not alone in pursuing this new conceptual proposal, as over the past decade the homologous concept of *Literatur der Postmigration* (Literature of Postmigration) has also emerged in Germany (Peters 2011; Geiser 2015). Although this concept will be comprehensively investigated later, it should be premised that Postmigration is intended to mark a new conception of the contemporary literary text, shifting attention from the origin of the writer towards the stories of people "who have not had any direct migration experience but who are still marked as migrants, sometimes for generations" (Bojadžijev, Römhild 2014, 18). Moreover, as noted by Wiebke Sievers, literary works analysed from a postmigrant perspective serve as "Mittel des Kampfes um Anerkennung" (2024, 53),[42] challenging rigid notions of identity, culture, and nationhood, even when they do not explicitly address migration.

1.7 Theoretical and Methodological Background

The theoretical and methodological approach pursued to investigate how language is used in the four selected texts is based on literary multilingualism. Literary multilingualism is a theoretical domain that studies how "fler än ett språk är närvarande i romankontexten, dvs. talas i någon eller några av de miljöer som nämns i texten och/eller av någon eller några av romankaraktärerna" (Eriksson,

---

41 "Literature that has the post-migrantgeneration as its central theme, regardless of the author's background".

42 "A means of struggle for recognition".

Haapamäki 2010, 43).[43] By this, we mean an interdisciplinary field that investigates literature in combination with different linguistic codes[44] and registers (Kauranen, Huss, Grönstrand 2020, 5). As stated by Asif Agha, a register,

> is a linguistic repertoire that is associated, culture-internally, with particular social practices and with persons who engage in such practices. [...] Since the collection of individuals that we call a society is constantly changing in demographic composition (due to births, deaths, and migrations, for example) the continuous historical existence of a register depends upon mechanisms for the replication of its forms and values over changing populations (e.g., from generation to generation). [...] The existence of registers therefore results in the creation of social boundaries within society, partitioning off language users into groups distinguished by differential access to particular registers, and to the social practices. (2004, 24-9)

A register can be easily related to a particular social group, or to a single person, as it holds a "characterological figure" (Agha 2003). Codes and registers are, thus, "linked to value-laden ways of being and acting" (Rydell, Ganuza, 2024, 6). Therefore, this study draws on a theoretical and methodological background which combines both linguistic and literary studies (Kellman, Lvovich 2015, 3), without, however, losing sight of the social and cultural factors.

The investigation will focus on an interpretation of multilingualism as a literary motif (Tidigs, Bodin 2020, 144), i.e. an element that contributes to the definition of a text's content. In this sense, the multilingual features of a text highlight the relationships between different languages and identity representations (Behschnitt, Nilsson 2013, 14), investigating how they coexist and what boundaries they establish in the same text. It is therefore important to point out that literary multilingualism intends to investigate linguistic phenomena that were originally not typically literary, but rather transposed "out of real life into written fiction" (Fowler 1989, 114).

When Alejandro Leiva Wenger made his debut in 2001 with the short story collection *Till vår ära*, the language of his first two stories *Borta i tankar* and *Elixir* was judged to be unliterary, as it reported typical phenomena of orality (loanwords, interjections and code-switching)

---

43 "More than one language is present in the context of the novel, i.e. spoken in one or more of the settings mentioned in the text and/or by one or more of the characters in the novel".

44 As stated by Paul Garrett, "[c]ode is used here as a maximally value-neutral cover term that comprises languages as well as language varieties, dialects, registers, etc." (2004, 67).

in prose. After *Till vär åra*, a multilingual turn has taken place, which had a very strong impact on the Swedish literary field during the latest two decades, involving Swedish-speaking authors both in – and outside Sweden, such as Ann-Helén Laestadius, Jens Lapidus, Mikael Niemi, Zinaida Lindén and others who have also experimented with multilingualism. The widespread use of multilingualism in literature thus refutes the idea that such aesthetics are exclusively performed by authors with extra-European origins (Grönstrand, Malmio 2011; Behschnit, De Mul, Minnaard 2013). On the contrary, multilingualism is now structured – albeit in some cases stereotypically – as an acknowledged linguistic reality in Swedish-speaking literature (Björklund 2016).

One important theoretical and methodological delimitation needs to be done. This study does not intend to frame literature as a phenomenon that accurately reflects a given historical and social period. Far from conceiving the chosen corpus solely and exclusively as a source for a sociological analysis, it must, however, be acknowledged that a postmigrant interpretation suggests an undeniable tie between the texts and the extra-textual dimension. The literary production of Leiva Wenger, Khemiri, Bakhtiari and Sattarvandi provides significant reflections on the twenty-first century Sweden. Elements such as life conditions in the suburbs, the psycho-social legacy of *Miljonprogram*, the *folkhem* crisis, identity conflicts and a multilingual ethno-proletariat relegated to the spatial margins of the urban areas combine social settings and the temporal specificity in which the action is situated.

In detail, the analytic chapters of this study will follow a methodological procedure based on the need to show the lexical peculiarities of each work, examined in a synoptic way. The analysis will take into account the grammatical categories in which multilingualism is most frequent, the origin of the words and their domain of use in present-day Swedish. The data collected will be organised in tables, subdivided into:

1.   lexical items typical of MS;
2.   multilingual items not typical of MS;
3.   new-words or creative compounds.

Should the lexical material collected in a specific section be limited, a table-based analysis could be replaced by more discursive paragraphs in which a few significant examples will be considered.

The methodological procedure for the attribution of a term to the respective section in each table is the following: first, each term is attributed the respective part of speech (noun, verb, adjective, adverb, interjection); then, the term is consulted in the Swedish

Academy dictionaries and glossaries (SAOL, SO, SAOB),[45] as well as in the annual ISOF neologism lists. As known, since 2000 only three MS words are collected in these official sources, namely *keff*, *guss* and *benim*. Elements attested in these lexicographic sources will be marked with an (a). Terms that are not attested in these sources will be looked up in scholarly contributions on multilingualism in Sweden, including the slang glossaries available to date: *Norstedts Svenska Slangordbok* (1998) by Ulla-Britt Kotsinas, *Förortsslang* (2004) by Dogge Doggelito and Kotsinas, *Nyord i svenskan* (2015) by Birgitta Agazzi and *O som i Ordbok* (2017) by Maria Sjödin.[46] Terms found in these sources will be marked by (b). If no references are found in these sources, the terms will be searched in unofficial lexicographic resources, such as newspapers articles about MS, online platforms managed by common users such as Slangopedia, Urban Dictionary, Folkmun, etc., which will be marked by (c). In case there were no references in any of the above-mentioned sources, the terms will be searched in the other literary works of the corpus; should the searched terms occur in one of these, they will be marked with a (d). Should a term be found in more than one source, it will be marked by the corresponding letters in order: (a), (b), (c), (d). Lastly, if terms are found neither in official sources (SAOB, SAOL and ISOF neologisms, scientific articles, volumes and glossaries), in unofficial sources (online slang glossaries) nor in other literary texts, they will be categorised separately as either multilingual elements non-typical of MS or new-words/creative compounds. The former includes terms attested in other sources or derived from foreign words, most of which are loanwords from English (including morphologically adapted Anglisms) and other languages. New-words, on the other hand, include compounds created by the authors or elaborated from already existing lexical items. The notion of new-word in this analysis is significantly expanded, encompassing a dimension of creativity in the formation of compounds which are outside the linguistic routine.

Terms not belonging to the typical MS elements will be subdivided by grammatical class (*A.* for adjectives, *Adv.* for adverbs, *E.* for exclamations (and interjections), *S.* for nouns (substantives) and *V.* for verb). Based on the results of this research, the elements found will be placed in the respective tables, each dealt with in sub-sections chapter by chapter (each one for each work analysed). Regardless of the lexical category with which they are associated, almost all terms require an in-depth explanation, which will be discussed in appropriate footnotes. The tables and associated

---

45   All three sources can be consulted at the following link: https://svenska.se/.

46   The latter two glossaries are published by the *Språkrådet*-related publishing house Morfem.

footnotes are intended not only to provide an ordered presentation of the linguistic elements collected and analysed, but also to give adequate background, explanation and contextualisation on their origin, semantic shifts, and current use.Concerning the investigation, it should be pointed out that a predilection for the collection and analysis of lexical items does not imply that morpho-syntactic or orthographic aspects will be ignored: in fact, the main phenomena concerning these categories will also be discussed, as they also highlight stylistic aspects related to multilingualism.

It is important to clarify that compiling data in tables is not meant for a purely quantitative analysis. Instead, this approach serves to accentuate the aesthetic characteristics and creative strategies of the texts (Östman 2015, 9) by offering insights into the historical background and evolving usage of each term included. The analysed lexical resources, in fact, do not allow to extend the discussion to an entire literary and aesthetic category. Rather, the present work is aware that the proposed reflections are limited to a restricted corpus.

1.7.1   Strategies for Recognising Literary Multilingualism

In addition to the data collection in tables, lexical items of particular interest will be examined, comprehensively discussed and categorised according to specific methodologies. Since one of the aims of this study is to examine the way one or more languages come into contact with Swedish, the investigation cannot be limited to a collection of individual words or expressions in tables, but it must analyse how interlinguistic encounters actually occur.

In recent years, literary multilingualism has garnered growing scholarly interest. A key reference for this study is Meir Sternberg, who in his work "Polylingualism as Reality and Translation as Mimesis" (1981) introduced the term 'polylingualism' to describe the field. Although his methodology is somewhat dated, it remains relevant for analysing how multiple languages coexist within a single text. Sternberg highlights that authors employ various strategies to integrate foreign languages, demonstrating that literary multilingualism is not merely a mimetic reflection of linguistic diversity but an active means of representing it, whether explicitly or implicitly.

In detail, Sternberg defines four strategies: The first is known as 'selective reproduction', i.e. the insertion of sporadic elements of one language in a dialogue reported in the matrix language of

the text:[47] these include linguistic clichés such as *Parbleu!* from French or *Donnerwetter!* from German, functioning as 'mimetic synecdoche' (Sternberg 1981, 225), revealing which language(s) is (or are) actually used in dialogues. In this case, only stereotypical or idiomatic elements of one specific language are reported.

The second strategy is called 'verbal transposition' (Sternberg 1981, 229), i.e. the manifestation of a language in a text by means of spelling, grammatical and syntactic devices typical of that language, but written in the matrix language of the text. One example is a quote from *Lord Jim* (1899) by Joseph Conrad, where a German-speaking figure says: "One thing alone can us from being ourselves cure", in which English is structured following the German word-order, which in subordinate clauses places infinitive verbs at the end. In this case, multilingualism does not occur at a lexical level, but rather through phonetic, orthographic, or syntactic devices that reproduce (some features of) the language actually spoken by a character.

The third strategy is called 'conceptual reflection' (Sternberg 1981, 230), which identifies different socio-cultural norms and semantic shades from other languages in the matrix language. Objects of interest are the so-called *Realia*, words and expressions for culture-specific elements which are difficult, if not impossible, to translate from one language to another. As Valentina Fulginiti argues, through this strategy, "la superficie eterolinguistica viene meno, ma si riproducono il sistema di valori e la semantica soggiacente alla lingua" (2014, 145).[48]

The fourth strategy is called 'explicit attribution' or 'translational mimesis' (Sternberg 1981, 231), a strategy similar to selective reproduction in which the narrator, through appropriate metalinguistic comments, reveals that a dialogue is taking place in one language, although it is rendered in another. In Sternberg's words, translational mimesis reproduces "the reality of polylingual discourse through a communicative medium which is normally unilingual" (Sternberg 1981, 231). An example posed by Sternberg is the sentence "He spoke French" in *Pnin* (1957) by Vladimir Nabokov, which precedes an utterance in English. Explicit attribution consists, in other words, in 'asking' the reader to believe that what is written in a language (English) is actually spoken in another language (French). The difference between selective reproduction and explicit attribution (or translational mimesis) is that while the former reveals the presence of a foreign language by using one or more words of the foreign language in question, the latter requires the narrator or

---

47　By *matrix* is intended the dominant language of a text (Myers-Scotton 1993).

48　"The heterolinguistic surface disappears, but the value system and semantics underlying the language are reproduced".

a character to make the presence of a language explicit through one (or more) metalinguistic remark(s). This phenomenon is extensively investigated, such as in Thomas O. Beebee's study from 2012, where he calls it 'transmesis':

> Transmesis is thus the mimesis of the interrelated phenomena of translation, multilingualism, and code-switching. Transmesis includes the following types of literary texts: […] Texts that mime a language reality such that the medium does not match the object depicted (e.g., when conversations taking place in Cuba between Cubans are given in English). (2012, 6)

It could be argued that texts in which the presence of other languages is only 'suggested' through metalinguistic comments or only partially shown through sporadic elements are not, in fact, multilingual texts. However, as Julia Tidigs notes, texts that depict multilingualism without being written in several languages are also multilingual (2020, 144), as they convey the idea that communication is taking place through linguistic means other than the language of narration.

1.7.2 Postmonolingualism or The Motherless Tongue

Literary multilingualism looks beyond the dichotomies between 'correct' and 'deviant' language, highlighting not only the co-presence of multiple languages in a text, but also the effects that this co-presence, when manifested, entails. This area of study encompasses various theoretical approaches, including the so-called *Postmonolingual Condition*, posited by Yasemin Yıldız (2012). This condition implies a new analytic paradigm, in which multilingualism asserts itself not anymore as an exceptional phenomenon, but rather as a structural one. Overcoming old paradigms according to which each modern nation would have a homogeneous people speaking only one language, critically, Yıldız identifies her main critical object in the romantic paradigm of *Muttersprache* (mother tongue) (2012, 4). Following André Lefevere's words:

> The reason why many scholars of literature still want to confine literature to a language or a political entity is to be found in a development in the functional component of Euramerican poetics which occurred a hundred and fifty years ago: Romanticism. Itself a brilliant example of the way in which a poetics transcends languages, ethnic and political entities, Romanticism nevertheless insisted that language does indeed represent the main component of a work of literature, or that a literature is circumscribed by the language in which it is produced. The Romantic concept of

the primacy of the mother tongue, the national language has, moreover, all but succeeded in obliterating the fact that from at least the eighth to the eighteenth century all so-called "national" literatures of Europe were not monolingual, but at least bilingual, operating between the two poles of Latin, on the one hand, and "the vernacular" on the other. The subsequent monolingualization of literary history has left us with less than half of the picture in most cases. (Lefevere 1987, 28)

The consideration quoted here is intended to emphasise the fact that European societies have the coexistence of at least two languages as a fundamental feature of their cultural identity. Therefore, politicising attempts to induce nation-states to identify with one language is not only unfounded, but anachronistic, especially in the literary sphere. Considering the strong normative impact of the mother tongue paradigm, according to which "a writer can become the origin of creative works only with an origin in a mother tongue, itself imagined to originate in a mother" (Yıldız 2012, 10), Yıldız suggests moving beyond the concept of multilingualism, using the term 'Postmonolingualism', a condition in which multilingualism is so widespread that the territorial and ethnic anchorage to a dominant language is now overcome, as for instance in Sweden, which according to research is strongly bound to monolingual norms (Aktürk-Drake et al. 2021, 5).

Yıldız theorises postmonolinguism starting from the literary language of German-speaking authors such as Franz Kafka, Theodor Adorno, Emine Sevgi Özdamar, Feridun Zaimoğlu, Yoko Tawada and others, focusing on how the concept of language today has become a globalised and mobile 'linguascape'.[49] She discusses postmonolinguism by examining everyday communicative practices (such as code-switching) in literary texts. According to her, the speakers who are able to see postmonolinguism as a structured phenomenon today belong to the generations that "do not so much mark the phenomenon of migration as that of the aftermath of migration. [Those who] [s]ome cultural agents in Germany thus refer to […] as 'postmigrants'" (Yıldız 2012, 170). Joining the theoretical

---

49 Yıldız does not provide an exact definition of linguascape. However, the suffix – *scape* seems to come from Arjun Appadurai's studies in *Modernity at Large* from 1996, by which the scholar indicates the fluid and irregular forms of different social landscapes (ethnoscape, mediascape, technoscape, etc.). This suffix indicates that these terms are to be understood as constructions influenced by historical, linguistic and political contingencies (Appadurai 1996, 33). By *linguascape* Yıldız means a perspective on language that takes into account its character related to power dynamics and political contingencies.

framework of postmigration, Yıldız considers Sweden a suitable example of postmonolinguism:

> young postmigrants tend to make creative use of these often socially unequally situated languages. In the process, they create new collective codes, such as the much-studied Rinkeby Swedish, the multilingual youth language drawing on Swedish, Turkish, Arabic, and other sources that emerged in the suburbs of Stockholm and spread to other urban settings in Sweden. Postmigrants' hybridized, novel ways of mixing linguistic material make the complex flows of the linguascape palpable. (Yıldız 2012, 171)

As quoted, Yıldız reconciles the postmigrant perspective with the postmonolingual one as two sides of the same coin. Both concepts share the use of the prefix *post-*, by which is meant the persistence of old cultural, ideological and power paradigms over the present, for which there does not seem to be an actual overcoming, but rather a continuous questioning of the phenomena to which the prefix *post* – refers. Moreover, as also mentioned in the above-quoted excerpt, the so-called Rinkeby Swedish is a striking example of how young postmigrants create hybridised group codes (which works as a suitable synonym to 'Multilingual Styles'). Yıldız argues that such varieties are often subject to harsh discrimination,[50] pointing out that a writer cannot consider him – or herself a member of a national literature if he or she uses several languages at the same time, or a variety that deviates from what is generally considered as standard Swedish.[51]

In literature, as well as in everyday life, the creative use of MS among young postmigrants lays the foundation for a new linguistic condition, which Yıldız calls 'motherless'. In their essay *Mille plateaux* (1980), Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari postulated the non-existence of the mother tongue, which Yıldız follows up, recognising how it is constructed around power nodes. Thus, by 'motherless language' is meant a language that escapes the constraints and the hegemony of mother tongue as a concept (Gardner-Chloros, Weston 2015, 185).

---

50 In fact, MS have often been delegitimised/invalidated in the media through stigmatising labels such as *Blattesvenska*.

51 Concerning the notion of 'standard', it is important to point out that this label has been problematised more and more often over the last years (see Johansson 2013), underlining that it does not actually correspond to any form of language usage, considering that every linguistic act presents some specific characteristics.

1.7.3 A Widespread Practice in Literary Multilingualism: Code-Switching

As mentioned above, the presence of code-switching is a major element of literary multilingualism. By code-switching (henceforth CS), we mean a phenomenon of interference by contact through the choice of two or more codes in one and the same discourse for semantic-pragmatic reasons (Otheguy 1995).[52] As also argued by Kathryn Woolard, CS can be defined as "an individual's use of two or more language varieties in the same speech event or exchange" (2004, 73-4). The grammatical systems or codes that come into contact have usually an asymmetrical relationship, determined by the presence of a matrix language that dominates the discourse, and an embedded language (Myers-Scotton 1993, 7) interfering with the matrix. Code-switching can occur between different ways of speaking, i.e. "between forms recognized as distinct languages, or between dialects, registers, levels [...] or styles of a single language" (Woolard 2004, 74).

In the literary texts examined in this study, the matrix language is identified with Swedish, while the embedded languages are all those that interfere with it, i.e. the main immigration languages in Sweden. In CS, interference is mainly generated between *open* lexical classes (nouns, verbs and adjectives), and this can occur both within one and the same syntagm (intraphrasal/intrasentential CS) and between one syntagm and another (interphrasal/intersentential CS) (Poplack 1980).

One of the main questions about the nature of CS is whether it is a phenomenon with no specific function and devoid of specific cultural, aesthetic and political implications,[53] i.e. whether codes can intertwine without complying with specific communicative intentions. In fact, in one of his recent studies, Ben Rampton defined CS as a phenomenon involving alternations that are no longer strictly regulated but rather represent a new communicative normality that is often free of formal delimitations and precise motivations (2020, 21).

However, we have to consider whether CS is a regulated system with a specific purpose. The main theories maintain that this phenomenon does not come from nowhere, but is defined as an instrument of (partly) controlled action between speakers with a

---

52 For more details, see the contributions of John Gumperz, one of the leading scholars of contact linguistics, who defines CS as the overlapping in the same conversation of linguistic passages belonging to two grammatical systems or subsystems (1982).

53 For CS's specific functions, see Gumperz 1982.

(partly) shared linguistic background, which is (partly) not motivated by needs to 'cover' lexical shortcomings.[54]

Since CS is a phenomenon explained and theoretically framed primarily within the domain of contact linguistics, operationalising this phenomenon in the investigation of literary multilingualism appears problematic, as literary language sometimes seems to escape the parameters of sociolinguistic analysis (Tidigs 2014, 48). In this regard, as stated by Maria Rydell and Nathalia Ganuza, "analyses of language variation in fiction need to consider not only the linguistic features that are employed, but also the available linguistic options that the authors choose not to exploit, and the possible reasons why this is so" (2024, 6). However, the methodological approach employed to the investigation of CS as a literary phenomenon conceptualises interlinguistic relations as regulated by boundaries that are never well separated, but rather porous and negotiable (Kauranen, Huss, Grönstrand 2020, 6). Hans Landqvist proposes a different term for literary CS, i.e. "litterär språkväxling" (literary language-switching) (2012, 13), emphasising the artistic and identity-related purposes of CS in fiction.

1.7.4 Literary Stylistics

Connecting to the descriptive concept of Multilingual Styles, it is necessary to turn our attention to stylistics as applied to literature. As stated by Satu Gröndahl in her work *Litteraturens gränsland* (*Literature's Boundaries*), a "hittills outforskat fält är de stilistiska och språkliga särdragen i svenskspråkig *invandrarlitteratur*",[55] where "behandlingen av svenskan inte alla gånger är normenlig" (Gröndahl 2002, 55-6).[56]

Among the leading scholars in stylistics, Dennis Freeborn defines style as a set of "features of literary composition which belong to form and expression rather than to the substance of the thought or matter expressed; A manner of discourse, or tone of speaking, adopted in addressing others or in ordinary conversation" (1996, 1). This attention to the form, expression and tone of a text is linked, according to Freeborn, to both a human and a communicative dimension: the human dimension concerns the choice of stylistic elements according to one's way of conceiving oneself in the world, while the

---

54 Poplack 1980; Gumperz 1982; Gumperz, Cook-Gumperz 1982, 6-7; Grosjean 2010; Blommaert, Rampton 2011, 6.

55 "Hitherto unexplored field is the stylistic and linguistic characteristics of Swedish – language immigrant literature".

56 "The use of Swedish is not always consistent with the norm".

communicative (or social) dimension concerns language as a vehicle for collectively understood thoughts and feelings (Freeborn 1996, 4). An author's style contains both a personal and a social aspect.

Style, as mentioned, is a matter of choice (Verdonk 2002, 6). Using a multiple vocabulary, one can express the same concept using several words, which are synonymically related to each other, but diaphasically connoted. Some examples are the Swedish nouns *flicka* and *tjej* as opposed to the typical MS lower-register-term *guss* (girl), the Swedish *dålig* and the MS term *keff* (bad), or the Swedish *kille*, *grabb*, *snubbe* and the MS term *shunno* (guy, dude). These words have the same meaning, but – as Freeborn says – "we use them in different contexts, to speak or write formally or informally, and this affects the style or defines the register of our language in use" (1996, 13). What changes between the two varieties is not only the origin of the words, but also their use depending on the degree of formality or informality of the contexts.

1.7.5 Minor Literature and Deterritorialisation

A literary work is said to be multilingual when it reveals the presence of two or more languages, when a writer does not entirely use only one language (or 'invents' a third one), marking out a new linguistic territory within the context of the dominant language. To reframe a term employed by Deleuze and Guattari in *Kafka. Pour une littérature mineure* (Kafka. Toward a Minor Literature) (1986), such a choice is inevitably considered 'minor' in relation to canonical norms, as it does not include the complete use of a monolingual form of writing, usually identified with the national standard language, and its norms (1986).

The style of an author who belongs to such a literature has as its source one or more languages that are often politically discriminated, unprotected and weak, compared to the standard language of the host country. The presence of one or more of these languages makes the literature somewhat 'minor', a term by which is not meant literature produced in a minor language, but rather literature produced by a minority, or by a person who belongs to a minority in a given territory or in a given literary field. The example proposed by Deleuze and Guattari is the Czech author Franz Kafka, a German-speaking author who lived in Prague. Minor literature is thus characterised by a non-ordinary and experimental use of the dominant language. For example, Leiva Wenger, Khemiri, Bakhtiari and Sattarvandi manage to question established identity discourses, by resorting to unprotected minor languages, such as Arabic, Farsi, Spanish, Turkish, etc., which are not typically associated with Sweden and the Swedish language. As Tidigs states, in fact,

> Minor here means not only small in terms of numbers or range of territory. It also means 'underaged': not being the one who sets the (language) rules. Minor literature is characterized both by a coefficient of deterritorialization (i.e. a centrifugal, anti-structuralizing tendency) and by its collective and political nature. (Tidigs 2009, 366)

Another significant term is 'deterritorialisation'. By this term we define various strategies deployed to include foreign linguistic items that are not translated into the dominant language of the literary text in which they occur. As stated by Elizabeth Gordon and Mark Williams, untranslated linguistic items "discomfort the reader by *confronting* him or her with an apparently uncrossable boundary" (Gordon, Williams 1998, 80). Thus, deterritorialisation is a movement out of habitual, linguistic territories, referring to a process in which the cultural dynamics of territories (cities, regions, states) change due to a destabilisation in the relationship between culture, language and place, as a result of the coexistence of different cultural groups (Møhring Reestorff, Stage 2012, 19). As a literature with minority traits, *invandrarlitteratur* causes a deterritorialisation of language, understood as a foreign and minor use of the dominant language, a liberation in the act of writing from the boundaries of monolingualism. A deterritorialised entity in this context is, for example, the reader, who is confronted with texts in which language use makes him/her a stranger in his/her own language (Deleuze, Guattari 1996, 36).

1.8 Layout of the Study

The next chapter is entitled "How Sweden Became a Multilingual and Multicultural Country", and considers the historical events that, from 1945 to the early 2000s, laid the foundations for Sweden's transformation into a postmigrant country, as well as to the birth of *invandrarlitteratur* and the development of MS. In the analytical section, embracing Chapters 3 (on Leiva Wenger's *Till vår ära*), Chapter 4 (on Khemiri's *Ett öga rött*), Chapter 5 (on Bakhtiari's *Kalla det vad fan du vill*) and Chapter 6 (on Sattarvandi's *Still*), this work will investigate how literary multilingualism, and MS in particular, manifest themselves in the works analysed. Chaper 7 contains a comparative discussion of the analysed data and some concluding remarks about MS as the expression of a new way to frame Swedishness.