

5 Marjaneh Bakhtiari, *Kalla det vad fan du vill*

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The third novel examined, Bakhtiari's *Kalla det vad fan du vill*, differs from the two previous works, both in the quantity of typical MS elements and in the frequency of deviant morpho-syntactic constructions. In fact, Bakhtiari's novel can be said to be less close to MS, although there are significant phenomena of literary multilingualism.

5.1 Marjaneh Bakhtiari: A Short Profile

Marjaneh Bakhtiari was born in 1980 in Tehran and moved to Malmö, Sweden, at the age of 7, where she currently lives as a professional novelist and dramatist. Bakhtiari has worked for the Swedish daily *Svenska Dagbladet* and for *Sveriges Radio* (Radio Sweden). In 2005 she published her debut novel *Kalla det vad fan du vill* for the publishing house Ordfront, followed by *Kan du säga Schibbolet?* (Can You Say Shibbolet?) (2008), *Godnattsagor För Barn Som Dricker*



(*Bedtime Stories for Children Who Drink*) (2013), and her latest novel *Oändligt Underbart* (Infinitely Wonderful) (2022). In her first three novels, Bakhtiari narrates the diasporic intertwining between Iran and Sweden, and the reverberations of the first generation's sense of uprooting on their children. Bakhtiari is very close to typical postmigrant topics, such as memory, the negotiation of identity beyond binarisms and intergenerational dialogue, which can also be found in her short stories *Farväl till dem på land* (Farewell to Them in the Country) (2016) and *Födelsedagen* (The Birthday) (2018), as well as in her radio plays *Salongen* (The Saloon) (2016), and *Ballongen* (The Balloon) (2017).

5.2 *Kalla det vad fan du vill*

Kalla det vad fan du vill is a multifocal novel narrated in third person by an external narrator, and it is composed as a mosaic of episodes where the reader encounters a myriad of characters in a sequence of separate and (only apparently) unconnected life scenes (Jankowska, 2010, 39). The novel was translated into Danish and Norwegian, and was reprinted in 2012.¹ The plot does not follow a central linear thread, but it focuses on the integration process of the Irandoust family into Swedish society from the late 1980s to the early 2000s, paying particular attention to the coming-of-age process of Bahar, the novel's main character, whom we follow from the end of her childhood to adulthood. Bahar displays a critical attitude towards both cultural-religious stereotypes and attachment to national affiliations. Since she carries migration as part of her cultural capital, but considers herself as a person capable of defining herself in a coherent manner regardless of her Iranian origin, Bahar adopts a postmigrant perspective, embracing the condition of *mellanförskap* (between-ship).² She is engaged to a Swedish boy, Markus, whose parents are very curious about the origin and traditions of Bahar's family, often generating comic episodes in which misunderstanding and prejudice dominate.

As discussed in Chapter 2, the period during which the novel is set was characterised by mass migration flows and vehement political debates, in which far-right movements gained more public attention, while prejudice and suspicion characterised the relationship between

¹ The reprinted version from 2012 is the one we employ in this study.

² Defined as a bi-radical condition arising from dichotomies (e.g. Swedish vs. non-Swedish, white vs. non-white, inside vs. outside the normative ethnocultural framework). Living in *mellanförskap* means to occupy a position between two negativities, neither foreigner nor Swedish.

Swedes and immigrants. In this framework, *Kalla det vad fan du vill* represents a polemical title, motivated by Bakhtiari in an interview as a reaction to the excessive and all-encompassing use of the prefix *invandrar*- (immigrant): “Därför att hur mycket jag än tjar om att det är en roman vill en del klämma in ‘invandrar-’ före” (Bakhtiari in Neuman 2005).³ In this sense, the title, in English *Call It What The Hell You Like*, is interpreted as a cry for emancipation from stereotyped conceptual cages, such as *invandrare*, *nysvensk* (neo-Swedish) and *mångfald* (diversity), questioning their often superficial employment as tools to define otherness as an element that, in Swedish society, is hopelessly irreconcilable with Swedish identity.

Kalla det vad fan du vill can be defined as an urban realist novel, i.e. a narrative genre featuring a “socially aware novel in which contemporary communities are made up of complicated families, friends and strangers” (Tew 2015, 249), mainly in a (sub)urban setting. Indeed, Bakhtiari’s novel draws a composite geography of Malmö, placing the characters with multicultural backgrounds and events between the areas of Triangeln, Möllevång, Södra Förstadsgatan and Lundavägen.

Bakhtiari’s criticism is characterised by an ironic style, even though there is no lack of serious moments, and more reflective tones provided by an omniscient and heterodiegetic narrator. Themes such as nostalgia, racism, exile and suicide are sometimes dealt with through a comic filter, which lightens serious tones by prompting the reader to reflect on everyday life’s small misunderstandings, linguistic ambiguities and everyday intercultural ‘clashes’ between people of different backgrounds and languages.

5.3 Linguistic Features in *Kalla det vad fan du vill*

Although narrated in a mainly monolingual, and grammatically correct register, some dialogues between specific characters show a much more complex linguistic scenario, where literary multilingualism clearly emerges.

5.3.1 Explicit Attributions of Exclusive Multilingualism

Not unlike the dialogues in Arabic Halim entertains with both Dalanda and Otman in *Ett öga rött*, communication within the Irandoust

³ “Because, no matter how much I say that it’s a novel, some people want to put ‘immigrant’ before it”.

family takes place in Farsi, but is textually realised in Swedish.⁴ The dialogues in Farsi often include expressions pronounced in Swedish, marked by italics to distinguish the Swedish words in translational mimesis from the actual Swedish words: “‘Men det hör du ju. *Tusen tack*, det betyder att man alltså tackar tusen gånger. Det är som *tack så mycket*’. ‘När säger man *tack shelv*?’” (2012, 40).⁵ In this dialogue, in which Bahar explains to her mother Panthea different ways to thank someone in Swedish, the expressions *tusen tack*, *tack så mycket* and *tack shelv* (phonographic mimesis of *tack själv*) are marked in italics to underline a case of CS from Farsi to Swedish.⁶ While, on the one hand, the application of italics helps the reader to understand that there are segments in Swedish in the Farsi dialogues, on the other hand, a pact between reader and narrator is made: in order for the reader to accept that Swedish is only spoken when marked in italics, while the rest is in Farsi, a suspension of critical faculties is required. Although the whole text is mediated by Swedish, it must be kept in mind that the language of conversation is Farsi.

Another strategy Bakhtiari almost systematically applies is explicit attribution (Sternberg 1981, 231), through which the narrator indicates that a dialogue is taking place in Farsi, while it is actually written in Swedish: “Bahar [...] såg sig omkring för att se om någon överhuvudtaget hade lagt märke till dom och det främmande språk dom pratade. [...] Alla samtal inom familjen skulle föras på farsi” (Bakhtiari 2012, 30).⁷

Swedish works here as a language of translation, through which the dialogues are read in a context where metalinguistic comments, such as “[a]lla samtal inom familjen skulle föras på farsi” (All conversations in the family were to be in Farsi), provide the reader with the idea that Farsi flows ‘latently’ in another language.⁸ Through such a strategy, Bakhtiari shows her own literary creation as partly constructed from a ‘pseudo-translation’, i.e. a “fictitious representation of linguistic otherness” (Fulginiti 2014, 141). As a matter of fact, literary multilingualism, as it is displayed in Bakhtiari’s novel, also

⁴ Rydell and Ganuza define the textual representation of a foreign language by Swedish as “a commonly used strategy for representing multilingualism in literature” (2024, 15).

⁵ “‘But you hear that. *Tusen tack*, that means thank you a thousand times. It’s like *tack så mycket*’. ‘When do you say *tack shelv*?’”. Translation note: *tusen tack* and *tack så mycket* translate ‘many thanks’, while *tack själv* is a way of returning a word of thanks (‘my pleasure’).

⁶ See the concept of ‘explicit multilingualism’ theorised by Johanna Laakso (2012) and the concept of *manifest commutation* theorised by Eriksson and Haapamäki (2011, 46).

⁷ “Bahar [...] looked around to see if anyone had even noticed them and the foreign language they spoke. [...] All conversations within the family would be in Farsi”.

⁸ See, for instance, the concept of ‘latent multilingualism’ (Eriksson, Haapamäki 2011).

includes texts “som tematiserar och gestaltar flerspråkighet utan att för den skull vara skrivna på flera språk” (Tidigs 2020, 144).⁹ There are some situations in the novel where the mediation of Swedish does not contribute to comprehension or does not occur at all. In fact, the presence of other languages is sometimes made explicit, as in one scene with Bahar, Panthea and Moses, a Jamaican immigrant: Panthea tries to speak Swedish, but her pronunciation is strongly influenced by her mother tongue. At some point, Bahar and Panthea speak to each other in Farsi, while Moses answers Panthea’s questions in Patois:

“Min filicka, hon har varit hos dig. Do har inte varit esnell”, sa hon och släppte försiktigt dörrhandtaget. “A who dat?” “Chi?” “Cho!” “Ferstår do vad sejer jag? Do har inte varit esnell mot min filicka” “Ok, dat is yuh dawta. Why yuh choble me?” “Chi mige?”, vad säger han, frågade Panthea nervöst sin dotter. [...] “Her i Esverige vi peratar svenska! I Esverige om do inte kan lesa tidning, do inte behåva eslenga ot ferom fånster. Har do inte... Satle ashghal chi mishe?”. “Papperskorg”, svarade Bahar. (2012, 91-2)

My daughter was at your place. You were not kind”, she said and carefully released the door handle. “Awho dat?”.

“Chi?”.

“Cho!”.

“Do you understand what I say? You were not kind to my daughter”.

“Ok, dat is yuh dawta. Why yuh choble me?”.

“Chi mige?”, what is he saying, asked Panthea nervously to her daughter. [...]

“Here in Sweden we speak Swedish! In Sweden, if you cannot read a newspaper you don’t need to throw it out the window. Don’t you have a... Satle ashghal chi mishe?”. “Trash can”, answered Bahar.

In this excerpt, Panthea asks Moses for an explanation about his impolite behaviour towards her daughter. The reader finds several instances of misspelt Swedish words, CS between Swedish (matrix language), Farsi and Jamaican Patois. Panthea’s low proficiency in Swedish makes the dialogue hard to read, as she is strongly influenced by Persian phonetics and, in particular, by the presence of epenthetic vowels in words like *filicka* for *flicka* (girl), and *peratar* for *pratar* (speak), or prosthetic vowels in *esnell* for *snäll* (kind, polite), *Esverige* for *Sverige* (Sweden), and *eslenga* for *slänga* (throw). Moses is only able to interact by reproducing the shibboleths of his Jamaican patois,

⁹ “Which thematise and portray multilingualism without being written in several languages”.

such as the expression *cho*, and the features contained in the following sentence: “Ok, dat is yuh dawta. Why yuh choble me?”, which in correct English spelling reads as follows: “Ok, that is your daughter, why do you trouble me?”. In her broken Swedish, Panthea reproaches Moses, but she can’t understand his reply, so she switches to Farsi to ask Bahar “Chi mige?” (What is he saying?). Then, when Panthea asks Moses if he has a trash can at home, she forgets the Swedish word for the object, so she switches to Farsi again asking Bahar for help: “Satle ashghal chi mishe?”. Her daughter promptly replies “papperskorg” (trash can), switching back to Swedish.¹⁰ These instances of (re) switching are sporadic in the novel, but have a powerful estranging effect on the monolingual reader: indeed, if the cue “chi mige?” is made clear by a translation into Swedish placed immediately after “vad säger han?” (what is he saying?), the meaning of “Satle ashghal chi mishe?” is left unclear. Bahar sheds light on this cue by replying “papperskorg”, confronting the reader with a constant contamination between different linguistic strands, making full text comprehension never attainable, but only conceivable through the communicative context. In general, no explanations for single words or sentences in Farsi are given, pointing out that Bakhtiari’s intention is to make the reader follow the story even though he/she does not understand it completely. The fact that, except for a few isolated instances, expressions in Farsi are neither explained nor translated is a sign that the text makes multilingualism one of its main assets, leaving the multilingual *dilemma* intentionally unresolved.¹¹ The presence of multilingualism may generate incomprehension, as it could be argued that such linguistic choices complicate the understanding and the readability of Bakhtiari’s work. However, as explained by Julia Tidigs and Markus Huss, in the multilingual aesthetics of the literary text,

[i]ncomprehension [...] is not a sign of failure, at least not if the readers notice that they have missed something. An initial sense of exclusion on the part of the monolingual reader can be transformed into participation. [...] Surprise or a sense of irritation can lead to a struggle that results in new perspectives. (Tidigs, Huss 2017, 213)

By giving voice to Farsi, Bakhtiari shows that, while the centrality of Swedish as a vehicular language seems to assert itself undisturbed, ‘textual interstices’ inhabited by other languages are created in

10 Bakhtiari’s peculiarity of putting sentences or verses in Farsi is also common to other Iranian writers who have emigrated to Europe. Two emblematic cases are Kader Abdolah, who writes in Dutch, and Bijan Zarmandili, author of novels in Italian who used to resort to Farsi terms or sentences in his Italian prose.

11 Jonsson 2012; Tidigs 2014; Nittve 2015; Björklund, Lönnröth 2016.

which Swedish is deterritorialised and the reader is estranged from his own language. In combination with Leiva Wenger's reflections on language as a means of inclusion and exclusion, the reader is invited to reposition him-/herself, to see things from a provisional and incomplete perspective. Although belonging to the linguistic majority of society, in fact, the reader is the object of what Johanna Laakso calls "exclusive multilingualism" (2012), a use that alienates the monolingual reader from the text (cf. Busch 2017, 341). The effect of this type of multilingualism is defined by Tidigs as a strategy that results from the inclusion of one or more foreign words in the text, which the reader is not familiar with as he/she "sets off an exploration of a *Verfremdung* from the mother tongue, or, rather, the mother tongue's distance from the lyrical self, and not least a sense of inner exile" (Tidigs 2009, 363). On the other hand, the presence of "främmandegörande drag" (estranging features) (Tidigs, Bodin 2020, 145) makes the reader aware of two things: that linguistic boundaries are crossable, and that these are often boundaries of power, in which the subordination to a traditionally more prestigious language (Swedish) to a less prestigious one (Farsi), generates estrangement (145). The reader, then, is first urged to critically note the fact that the narration unfolds as linguistic boundaries are regularly broken, alternating in a transitional relationship (Helgesson, Kullberg 2018, 147), in which the dominant language is minorised.¹²

5.3.2 Phonographic Mimesis of a Deterritorialised Swedish

A multilingual novel requires multilingual characters, and Bahar is a prototypical one. The following quote describes the creation of her linguistic repertoire along her biographical trajectory:

Hon lärde sig flytande svenska samt hackig serbiska, ett par turkiska fraser och lite urdu, några vardagliga svordomar som var bra att känna till ifall hon skulle känna sig orättvist behandlad i respektive land. [...] Språket [...] kryddades med en blandning av Ricki-Lake citat samt mer eller mindre smickrande internationella ord. (2012, 32)

¹² In contemporary Swedish literature, Bakhtiari is not alone in including foreign terms without translation. For instance, in the collection *Lugna favouriter. Berättelser i urval 1989-2004* (Quite Favourites. Selected Stories 1989-2004) from 2005, the Swedish-speaking Finnish writer Kjell Westö makes use of numerous Finnish words without providing translations. The same is verified in Ann-Helén Laestadius' novel *Stöld* (Stolen) from 2021, where Sámi words are present.

She learnt fluent Swedish as well as broken Serbian, a few Turkish phrases and some Urdu, some everyday swear words that were good to know in case she felt unfairly treated in the respective countries. [...] The language [...] was spiced up with a mixture of Ricki-Lake quotes and more or less flavoursome international words.

Bahar's (and other young characters') repertoire is partly rooted in African-American hip-hop culture. The text mentions Queen Latifah, Tupac, Ice Cube, Bob Marley, TLK and many others from whom Bakhtiari often quotes verses. In addition to international artists, the novel establishes an intertextual dialogue with other works of contemporary mass culture. The repertoire of Shervin (Bahar's brother) and his friends, for instance, borrows entire quotations from the movie *Scarface* (1983), which works as an intra-group source of linguistic and aesthetic inspiration. Along with Leiva Wenger, Bakhtiari also gives importance to local varieties, taking up and phonographically imitating the features of skånska (Scanian) through a process known as *respelling* (Freeborn 1996, 228), i.e. the detailed rendering of the characters' pronunciation, which was also Panthea's and Moses' case analysed above (cf. § 5.3.1). Just to provide an example, Bahar's pronunciation of the first-person pronoun *mig* (me) is written *maj*, which is the way people pronounce *mig* in Scania. Another example is the way Bertil, Markus' grandfather, pronounces the following sentence: "Lärarna har snaort inget åo saj till om. Naj, annat va de när en annan gick i skoulän. Då va de mer åordning åo reda. Man fick sidda i bänkar åo saj: Goddao åo Ajöu" (2012, 174).¹³

As can be seen, Bakhtiari conveys words pronounced with local strong inflexions, not limiting herself to characters with foreign origins who speak broken Swedish, but displaying phonographic mimesis in native-speaking characters too. The effect is achieved, for instance, by taking certain Scanian features to their extremes, by adapting long vowels to diphthongs: *snart* becomes *snaort* (soon), *skolan* becomes *skoulän* (the school), *goddag* becomes *goddao* (good morning). Furthermore, by rendering *sitta* with *sidda* (to sit), Bakhtiari reproduces the typical consonant weakening, which is a feature of Danish heritage. On a lexical level, both the characters and the narrator use regionalisms such as *tös* (girl) (2012, 77, 290), *sär* (stupid), a typical insult spread in southern Swedish dialects, as well as typical Scanian terms, such as *brillor* for *glasögon* (glasses) and *lide*

¹³ "Soon the teachers will have nothing to say. No, it was different when one went to school. Back then there was more order and decency. People sat at their desks and said: Good morning and goodbye". A transcription of this sentence sounds as follows: "Lärarna har snart inget att säga till om. Nej, annat var det när en annan gick i skolan. Då var det mer ordning och reda. Man fick sitta i bänkar och säga: Goddag och Adjö". For reflections on the use of Scanian and other varieties in Bakhtiari, see Leonard 2022, 200.

for *riktigt* (really) (2012, 77, 121). Bakhtiari implements phonographic mimesis not only in relation to dialect and regionalisms, but she also concentrates on Swedish words written in deviant spellings in order to faithfully reproduce the phonetic influence of foreign languages, especially Farsi, on Swedish. This is evident not only in Panthea, but also in his father Amir. One interesting example is a linguistic play caused by the spelling of *nåjda* instead of *nöjda* (satisfied) (2012, 20), where the reader could risk confusing it with the Sámi shamanic figure of the *nåjde* (or *nåide/noaide*) (Sjodin 2017, 132). Furthermore, Amir often replaces long - *u* by - *o*, as in the case of *hor* in place of *hur* (how), which creates an ambiguous play with the word *hora* (prostitute). As noted above, Panthea often places an epenthetic *e* - before words beginning with -*s* + consonant or in inter-consonantic context. This is found in Amir too, as in *estolta* for *stolta* (proud), *ferom* for *från* (from) and *pelåtslit* for *plötsligt* (suddenly). As for consonants, Amir and Panthea struggle to articulate the Swedish palatal fricative *sj*-, which does not belong to their phonetic repertoire. Therefore, the word *sjukhuset* (hospital) is rendered as *khokhosen* (2012, 65), in which, moreover, the noun's gender shifts from neuter to common. In their dialogues, Amir and his friends Ahmed, Said and Sharif show syntactical inconsistencies typical of MS, such as in Sharif's following sentence: "I detta jävla land man måste alltid vara snäll" (2012, 185),¹⁴ where the verb-subject inversion between the impersonal pronoun *man* and the verb *måste* is missing. In lexical terms, however, Amir and his friend Ahmed possess a vocabulary rich in interjections and exclamations from Arabic, which is also a common trait of MS:

Om en mannikha är khok, man kan hämta doktor. Inshallah han kan hjälpa. Men om en mannikha är dom då man inte kan göra nåt" [...] "Amir, do är som min kompis, min bror. Do vet vi jobba micke, micke. Wallah, jog vet inte om jog en mannikha eller åsena ibland. Jog jobba och köpa för mina barn. Mashallah dom är tre killar och en tjej. Men sejer dom tack? Hjalber dom mig? Dom bara titta på tv och sepela computer! (2012, 197)

If a person is ill, one can call a doctor. Inshallah he can help. But if a person is one of them then nothing can be done". [...] "Amir, you are my friend, my brother. You know we work a lot, a lot. Wallah, I don't know if I a man or a donkey sometimes. I work and buy for my children. Mashallah they are three boys and a girl. But do they say thank you? Do they help me? They only watch TV and play computer!

14 "In this fucking country you always have to be nice".

In this quotation, we find similar cases to those analysed above: the missing palatal fricative – *sj* – in words such as *mannikha* (*människa*, person) and *khok* (*sjuk*, sick); the unpronounced long – *u* – (*do* instead of *du*, you; *dom* instead of *dum*, stupid); the epenthetic – *e* – (*åsena* instead of *åsna*, mule). But we also find instances such as *micke* for *mycket* (very), *jog* for *jag* (I), *hjalber* for *hjalper* (help). Ahmed's vocabulary contains several Arabicisms, which are reported in Table 5 below.

From these examples emerges a link between language and nationality in an ironic and stereotypical key: while, on the one hand, phonographic interference risks anchoring a person to a specific place by the way he/she speaks, on the other hand it allows us to reflect on the possibilities of understanding Swedish language despite various interferences. Apart from Leiva Wenger's *Elixir*, in the four literary texts analysed spelling is rarely used to characterise the language of the speakers who are portrayed as having grown up in Sweden in a multilingual context or in contact with MS.¹⁵

5.3.3 Morphological Features in *Kalla det vad fan du vill*

Concerning morphology, Bahar and other characters recall several MS-like phenomena. One such feature is the lack of inflectional variation in personal pronouns: “Vad ska du göra? Släppa han och komma hit?” (2012, 44);¹⁶ “Och de e helt fattit för man kan inte gå nånstans me hon heller” (2012, 264).¹⁷ In both examples, the object pronoun *honom* (him) in place of *han* (he), and *henne* (her) in place of *hon* (she) are absent. We also find curious verb conjugations: “Som om du verkligen skulle slått han” (2012, 264),¹⁸ with the past participle *slått* from *slå* (to hit) instead of *slagit*.

¹⁵ A study on the graphic rendering of MS in more recent literary works was conducted by Maria Rydell and Natalia Ganuza (2024). Both show that phonographic attention to pronunciation is not present, except for the novel *Spelet är spelet* (The game is the game), written in 2017 by Cyril Hellman, and Leo Carmona. Therefore, it is deduced that Bakhtiari and Leiva Wenger still constitute a more unique than rare case of phonographic stylisation of pronunciation-related peculiarities in MS in contemporary Swedish literature.

¹⁶ “What are you going to do? Let him go and come here?”. Literally, “What are you going to do? Let *he* go and come here?”.

¹⁷ “And it's a shame because you can't go anywhere with her either?”. Literally, “And it's a shame because you can't go anywhere with *she* either”.

¹⁸ “As if you would really beat him”.

5.3.4 Typical Elements of MS in *Kalla det vad fan du vill*

The novel displays less typical MS elements than the other three texts analysed. This is due to the fact that Bakhtiari's novel involves figures of different ages and backgrounds, extending its multilingual nature far beyond the almost exclusively youth-oriented MS. Part of the multilingualism in the novel is unrelated to MS. Thus, nouns such as *bira* (beer), verbs such as *dilla* (to babble), *palla* (to stand) and *sno* (to steal), adjectives such as *flummig* (strange) and *klyschig* (trivial) do not appear in Table 5, as they are attested in SAOL and Swedish slang sources (Kotsinas 1998, 56, 103) and not attested in MS sources.

Table 5 Typical Elements of MS in *Kalla det vad fan du vill*

Nouns	Verbs	Adjectives/Adverbs	Interjections
<i>gus</i> (3)	<i>banga</i> (p. 204) (b, c, d); ²	<i>bull</i> (4) (b, c); ⁵	<i>ey</i> (2) (b, c, d); ¹²
(a, b, c, d); ¹	<i>chilla</i> (p. 168) (a, b, c); ³	<i>cp</i> (2) (b, c, d); ⁶	<i>inshallah</i> (2); ¹³
	<i>flippa</i> (p. 147) (a, b, c); ⁴	<i>fett</i> (p. 130) (b, c, d); ⁷	<i>mashallah</i>
		<i>lack</i> (3) (b, c, d); ⁸	(4) (b, c); ¹⁴
		<i>shii</i> (3) (a, b, c); ⁹	<i>wallah</i> (4)
		<i>skum</i> (p. 91) (a, b, d); ¹	(b, c, d) ¹⁵
		<i>värsta</i> + noun (2) (b, d); ¹¹	
¹ Cf. Leiva Wenger 2015; Khemiri 2003.			
² Cf. Leiva Wenger 2015; Khemiri 2003; Sattarvandi 2008.			
³ From English <i>to chill</i> . Today lexicalised into Swedish, and used in MS as 'to chill', 'to relax'. Cf. https://svenska.se/tre/?sok=chilla&pz=8 ; Kotsinas 1998, 27; Doggelito, Kotsinas 2004, 57; Agazzi 2015, 59; Sjödin 2017, 34.			
⁴ Attested in SAOB followed by prepositions <i>ut</i> and <i>ur</i> (out) with the meaning 'to lose control', or 'to joke'. Cf. Kotsinas 1998, 55; Doggelito, Kotsinas 2004, 74; http://www.slangopedia.se/ordlista/?ord=Flippa .			
⁵ Adjective with negative nuances, meaning 'bad' (Kotsinas 1998, 22; Doggelito, Kotsinas 2004, 51).			
⁶ Cf. Khemiri 2003; Sattarvandi 2008.			
⁷ Cf. Leiva Wenger 2015; Khemiri 2003; Sattarvandi 2008.			
⁸ Cf. Leiva Wenger 2015; Khemiri 2003.			
⁹ From Romani to express negation. Attested in SAOB as <i>tji</i> from the nineteenth century (https://www.saob.se/artikel/?seek=tji&pz=2). Cf. Kotsinas 1998, 220; Doggelito, Kotsinas 2004, 150.			
¹⁰ Cf. Leiva Wenger 2015; Khemiri 2003.			
¹¹ Cf. Leiva Wenger 2015; Khemiri 2003.			
¹² Cf. Leiva Wenger 2015; Khemiri 2003; Sattarvandi 2008.			
¹³ Also attested in the novel in the form <i>Insha Allah</i> (2012, 256).			
¹⁴ Arabism meaning 'as God desires'. Cf. Doggelito, Kotsinas 2004, 113; http://www.slangopedia.se/ordlista/?ord=mashalla .			
¹⁵ Cf. Leiva Wenger 2015; Khemiri 2003.			

As can be seen, the novel shares with the other works a common vocabulary including nouns such as *gus*, verbs such as *banga* and *chilla*, adjectives with strengthening functions such as *fett* and *värsta*, and interjections such as *ey* and *wallah*. Most of these come from the dialogues between young, male figures Shervin, Soroush, Cezar and Mirza, while the interjections *inshallah*, *mashallah* and *wallah* are uttered by adult characters of Arabic origin (above all Ahmed). Concerning adjectives and adverbs, we notice both already analysed elements such as *fett*, *lack* and *skum*, and new elements such as *bull*, which although not originating in MS is often used in these styles. The use of the negation *shi/tji*, on the other hand, is unique in the corpus, since it occurs only in *Kalla det vad fan du vill*: “Man fattar shii när hon läser den” (2012, 63);¹⁹ “saj att du försökte få maj å saj nåt, Men shiii fick du!” (94).²⁰ Similarly to Leiva Wenger and Khemiri, the use of the superlative *värsta* + noun is also attested in Bakhtiari as in the case of “värsta maffiatypen” (the nastiest mafioso) (133), and “värsta adrenalinkicken” (huge adrenalin rush) (204).²¹

Concerning interjections, Bakhtiari’s novel displays a pool of expressions common to the other texts analysed, particularly in relation to the use of *ey* and *wallah*.

5.3.5 Foreign Influences not Typical of MS in *Kalla det vad fan du vill*

This section will discuss and analyse foreign elements which are not typical of MS. These are mainly loanwords or elements occurring in CS. However, everyday and generally known words recurring in the novel, such as *apartheid*, *cool*, *hejab*, *hiphop*, *ramadan*, *talkshows*, *touché* and *underground* are not considered in this section. Similarly, entire quotations and direct speech in English and Spanish are excluded, such as cues uttered by Moses (Jamaican) and Rosa (Chilean), who actually never express themselves in Swedish.

This section also excludes lexical items occurring in a business call between Bengt and his associate Mr. Kanyuang, where the so-called Swenglish (English with a strong Swedish accent and idioms) is spoken. To give a brief example, in the conversation between Bengt and Mr. Kanyuang, the former takes his leave saying “Aj kan hit jo a signal ven aj nå de exakt date. But aj think it vill be in veek fartyfår”

¹⁹ “You do not understand anything when she reads”.

²⁰ “Say you tried to make me talk. But you got nothing out of it!”.

²¹ The way adolescents create adjectives is also distinguished by the use of superlative prefixes such as *över* - (ultra/above: *överbra*, *övergott*, very good. Bakhtiari 2012, 201, 207). However, unlike *värsta*, *över* - does not seem specific to MS.

(2012, 84), which, correctly transcribed into English, sounds as follows: “I can hit you a signal when I know the exact date. But I think it will be in week fourty-four”. Here, we are faced with the transposition of expressions typical of Swedish culture and language into a dialogue held in English. Indeed, on a cultural level, we note that Bengt uses the formula ‘I can hit you a signal’ to express what in English commonly goes as ‘I’ll give you a buzz’. The problem is that Bengt’s expression sounds ambiguous as it accurately replicates the Swedish expression *slå en signal*, i.e. ‘to give a call/buzz’. Coming to final greetings, Bengt uses another expression typical of Swedish culture: “Vi sej dat den. Havv it good” (We say that then. Have it good) (2012, 84). In this case, Bengt draws on the classic Swedish form of leave-taking, *Vi säger så. Ha det bra*, which approximately means ‘let’s do that. Take care’.

Bengt employs a form of communication that, according to the terminology adopted by Sternberg, is called “conceptual reflection” (1981, 230), i.e. a very complex strategy concerned with identifying (reflecting) the presence of different socio-cultural norms, semantic conceptions of reality and semantic nuances of one’s mother tongue (Swedish) into the language of communication used (English). Conceptual reflection lies, as Sternberg puts it, at the intersection between language and reality (1981, 230). This strategy explains the verbal idiosyncrasy within utterances produced in a code that appears monolingual but is strongly influenced by the linguistic and cultural background of the speaker and, therefore, as a result of ‘crossing’, is to be considered a case of multilingualism. Although part of Moses, Rosa and Bengt’s dialogues will not be part of Table 6, it is important to point out that they make an important contribution to the novel’s multilingualism (cf. Leonard 2022, 200). As discussed, although the dialogues in Farsi are conveyed in Swedish, there are also moments in which the Irandoust’s mother-tongue is revealed, not only in the episode in which Panthea asks Bahar how to say *papperskorg*, but also through selective reproductions such as *hichi* (nothing), *tarof* (good manners),²² and nouns for typical dishes such as *zaboon*, *noghl*, *hallvaa*, *zereshkpolo*, *ghormezabsi*, *khoreshte gheyme*. Farsi also emerges in short sentences, as in the case of Bijan who, in a letter to his friend Amir, quotes an old Persian saying: “boro ghavi sho gar rahatie jahan ra talabi | chon zaif paye mal hast” (2012, 102).²³ In this passage, the reader is, once again, excluded from

²² *Tarof* is a kind of *bon ton*, a ritual of hospitality, courtesies and precedence widespread in Iranian culture. The term is a *realia* reflecting socio-cultural norms.

²³ This is a verse by the poet Ali Akbar Golshan, better known as Golshan Azadi (1901-1974), the meaning of which is: “Make yourself strong and if you have the ease conquer the world | because the weak are annihilated”. I’m indebted to Professor Natalia Tornosello for her kind linguistic advice concerning translations from Farsi.

understanding: Bakhtiari does not provide a translation into Swedish, hence the meaning of these lines cannot be guessed. The only clue to unravelling this passage comes from a subsequent, metalinguistic comment provided by Bijan, who notes that these words carry a “smärtsam sanning” (painful truth) (2012, 102), hinting at the need to be strong in a world where the powerless are overwhelmed. Other instances in which a part or a whole sentence in Farsi has no translation is when Amir asks Markus how he is doing: “Chetori Markos?” (2012, 139), and when he tries to soothe his son Shervin after fainting: “Chizi nist. Khoubam” (2012, 248).²⁴ Moreover, in a passage in which Amir projects himself into the future, he imagines a supposed 12-year-old nephew Amir Junior telling him: “Mikham esmamo avaz konam” (2012, 298).²⁵ While in other contexts it may not be relevant to know the exact meaning of sentences in Farsi, the saying quoted in Farsi by Bijan prevents us from knowing the secret and wisdom of those poetic lines. Table 6 shows foreignisms in the form of loanwords and CS, divided into two main categories: loanwords from English, whole cues in English, Anglisms adapted to Swedish morphology; elements from other languages.

Table 6 Foreign Influences not Typical of MS in *Kalla det vad fan du vill*

Linguistic elements from / related to English	Linguistic elements from other languages
<i>Back in the days, way back in the days</i> (p. 210) E; <i>battla</i> (p. 30) V; <i>bitch</i> (3) S; ¹ <i>bullshit</i> (p. 164) S; <i>busted</i> (p. 202) V; <i>computer</i> (p. 197) S; <i>dawg</i> (3) S; ² <i>date</i> (2) S; <i>digga</i> (2) V; ³ <i>dissa</i> (8) V; ⁴ <i>girlpower</i> (p. 47) S; <i>fajtas</i> (p. 203) V; ⁵ <i>fuck</i> (p. 163) S; <i>fuck da polis</i> (p. 133) E; <i>fuck that</i> (p. 276) E; <i>g-ride</i> (p. 132) S; <i>here we go again!</i> (p. 298) E; <i>homeboys</i> (p. 124) S; <i>I'm a G</i> (p. 220); E; <i>imagen</i> (p. 221) S; ⁶ <i>in your face-attityd</i> (p. 76) S; <i>kick</i> (p. 24) S; <i>kicka</i> (p. 203) V; <i>no</i> (p. 165) Adv.; ⁷ <i>no matter what</i> (p. 206) E; <i>payback-time</i> (p. 48) S; <i>pissa ner</i> (p. 123) V; <i>please</i> (p. 241) E; <i>punchline</i> (p. 76) S; <i>pussy</i> (p. 164) S; <i>shit</i> (5) S; <i>slowmotionscen</i> (p. 110) S; ⁸	<i>allahu akbar</i> (2) E; <i>allhamdullillah</i> (p. 208) E; <i>astaferallah</i> (4) E; <i>consiglieri</i> (p. 97) S; <i>et voilà</i> (p. 25) E; <i>haji</i> (8) (b) S; ¹² <i>hichi</i> (5) Adv.; <i>la Allah al il Allah</i> (2) E; <i>imparfait</i> (p. 111) A; <i>mal educado</i> (p. 229) A; <i>mamita</i> (p. 230) S; <i>mano a mano-blick</i> (p. 41) S; <i>menage à quatre</i> (p. 122) S; <i>nada</i> (5) Adv.; <i>salamati</i> (3) E; <i>shukrallah</i> (p. 208) E; <i>sura</i> (p. 190) S; <i>tarof</i> (6) S; <i>vive la Reine</i> (p. 11) E;

24 “It’s nothing. I’m fine”.

25 “I want to change my name”.

smooth criminal (p. 132) S; *tajming* (p. 293) S;⁹ *take five* (p. 208) E; *tarzan-approach* (p. 20) S; *thug* (p. 135) A; *thug for-life-plansch* (p. 268) S; *you talkin' to me?* (p. 200) E; *what's up* (p. 121) E;¹⁰ *what's up dawgs?* (p. 202) E; *whatch this!* (p. 274) E; *why oh why-min* (p. 192) S;¹¹

1 It also occurs adapted to Swedish morphology in the determinative form *bitchen* (the whore).

2 Phonographic rendering of 'dog'. Morphologically adapted into *dawgsen* (lit. the dog) (Bakhtiari 2012, 203).

3 A Morphological adaptation of 'to dig', meaning 'to appreciate'; 'to like'. Cf. Kotsinas 1998, 34.

4 Cf. Khemiri 2003.

5 Phonographic rendering of 'to fight', with the deponent suffix – s (cf. *brottas*, 'to fight').

6 Attested in Kotsinas as 'attitude', 'style', 'profile' (1998, 89).

7 Used by Ahmed in place of *nej* in his broken speech.

8 Multilingual compound composed of *slowmotion*, and the Swedish noun *scen* (scene).

9 Phonographic adaptation from *timing*.

10 Also attested in *wazup* and *sup* (Bakhtiari 2012, 121).

11 Multilingual compound composed of *why-oh-why*, and the Swedish noun *min* (look, face).

12 *Haji*, *Hadji* o *hajji* is in Islamic cultures a title obtained after completing the pilgrimage to Mecca (called *hajji*). In MS it stands for 'friend' and 'brother'. Cf. Doggelito, Kotsinas 2004, 84.

Among CS cases there is a high number of intersentential constructions in which Swedish is combined with English, which is typical in dialogues between Shervin and his friends: "My ass att ni bryr er" (2012, 165);²⁶ "Hur fan vet du att det är acetone? Haha, Busted. Jag visste du va bög" (202);²⁷ "Du vet att man asså... no matter what, ska försvara dom" (206).²⁸ Apart from the dialogues between Shervin and his friends, even the narrator's voice frequently resorts to both inter- and intrasentential CS, highlighted by italicising foreign words or expressions: "Det hade blivit hög tid för lite *girlpower* och *independent woman shit*" (47);²⁹ "Hon visste att *the revolution will not*

26 "My ass that you care". Here, as in the following translations in footnote, CS into English are italicised.

27 "How the hell do you know it's acetone? Haha, Busted. I knew you were gay".

28 "You know that *no matter what*, you have to defend them".

29 "It was about time for some *girl power* and *independent woman shit*".

be televised. Hon var redo att *fight the power*" (75);³⁰ "Mirza ryckte på axlarna och gav ärligt talat inte ett *fuck*" (163).³¹

As stated in the first chapter (cf. § 1.7.3), we notice how literary CS involves alternations that are not strictly regulated but rather manifest itself free from formal delimitations or precise sociolinguistic motivations. Further examples are the expressions "in your face-attityd" (2012, 76) and "why oh why-min" (2012, 192), whereby the Swedish words *attityd* (attitude) and *min* (look, face) are combined with English replacing the final part of fixed expressions.³² These instances of individual borrowings or CS display the rise of a postmonolingual paradigm, in which the characters manifest a very extensive linguistic competence, ranging from MS to Malmö dialect. The fact that Shervin and friends express themselves in the ways mentioned above brings reflection on a new postmonolingual paradigm in terms of what Ann-Carita Evaldsson calls "flerspråkig ordning" (multilingual order), i.e. "situationer där deltagarna inte uppmärksammar användandet av flera språk och låter kodväxlingen ske obemärkt" (Evaldsson 2007, 263),³³ In other words, readjusting a key concept of the postmigrant theoretical framework, Bakhtiari's characters are in a multilingual 'ease of presence'. As can be deduced from the text, Shervin, Soroush and Mirza share Iranian origins, while Cezar, most likely, has South American origins. Despite their heterogeneity, what they have in common is that they belong to a "community of practice" (Eckert 2004, 44), i.e. a community in which identity is constructed in interaction, through resources for sharing common knowledge, impressions and experiences, adopting a style in which they recognise each other. Although Shervin and friends employ other languages, dialectal elements and slang terms in their communication, this does not mean that Swedish disappears. Although it becomes 'minor' through a multilingual repertoire, Swedish still remains the matrix language of the group. Concerning Arabic words and expressions, we find *allahu akbar*, *allhamdullillah*, *astaferallah* and *shukrallah*, which mainly belong to the domain of Islam. Almost all of these terms are pronounced by Ahmed and Mandana (Soroush's grandmother) and allow us to note how a foreign language is rendered in Swedish according to the already discussed

30 "She knew that *the revolution will not be televised*. She was ready to *fight the power*".

31 "Mirza simply shrugged and honestly didn't give a *fuck*".

32 These examples of intra-sentential CS are not only limited to migration-related literature but characterise contemporary Swedish literature in general. Similar phenomena are typical of Jens Lapidus' style, a native Swedish-speaking writer who resorts to the same strategies in his noir novels (Enell-Nilsson, Hjort 2016).

33 "Situations where participants do not recognise the use of multiple languages and let code-switching go unnoticed".

procedure of selective reproduction. Just to provide one example, we analyse how Mandana's speech in Farsi is mediated by Swedish: "ALI?! Må Gud ta mitt liv, är det du Ali? Astaferallah! [...] Må Gud ge honom hälsa. Så det var Ali! Vad han har blivit... vuxen, Mashallah" (2012, 257-8).³⁴ These short cues exemplify selective reproduction by using code-switching, reflecting Mandana's cultural, linguistic and religious background. Expressions like *Astaferallah* and *Mashallah* retain an emotional charge too, as she has just arrived in Sweden and met her grandson again after several years. Obviously, Mandana does not speak Swedish, as she has spent her entire life in Iran, so Swedish is used to convey her speech. This creates instances of linguistic blending where not only multilingual environment of Mandana's family is reproduced, but also deeper cultural meanings that would otherwise be lost in translation.

Among the Arabic words listed in table 6 it is worth to discuss the case of the title *haji*, pronounced no less than eight times by Ahmed. As described in footnote 334, *haji* is a title obtained after completing the pilgrimage to Mecca. However, Ahmed addresses Amir by using the title *haji* understanding it as 'friend', not least because Amir has never been on a pilgrimage to Mecca:

Även om Amir aldrig varit på pilgrimsfärd envisades Ahmed med att kalla honom haji. Det var lättare att umgås med Amir om han lurade sig själv att Amir gjort den heliga vallfärden till Mecka som alla rättroga. (2012, 179-80)

Although Amir had never been on pilgrimage, Ahmed insisted on calling him *haji*. It was easier to socialise with Amir if he deluded himself that Amir had made the holy pilgrimage to Mecca like all the faithful.

In fact, upon careful analysis of the novel, there is much irony in this appellation, given not only Amir's laicism, but also his critical stance towards religion, which probably leads his acquaintances to 'provoke' him by calling him that title. This semantic shift proposed by Ahmed demonstrates how, over time and for geographical dislocation, a term pertaining to the religious realm loses its spiritual meaning once imported into Sweden, taking on a more 'secular' connotation. In a cultural context where the dominant ideological framework is that of a close relationship between people, territory and language, the interfering presence of minor languages, patois and multi-ethnolects, mixed with *passe-partout* languages such as English and French,

34 "ALI? May God take my life, is that you Ali? Astaferallah! [...] May God give him health. So that's Ali! Look how he has grown up, Mashallah".

distinguishes *Kalla det vad fan du vill* as a text that no longer follows the reassuring uniformity to a single language (Walkowitz 2015, 30). Indeed, Bakhtiari's novel fully represents new expressive possibilities within Swedish literature, reflecting the complexities of a postmigrant society.

5.3.6 Creative Derivations and Compounds in *Kalla det vad fan du vill*

Unlike other authors examined in this study, Bakhtiari's style is not particularly inclined to lexical creativity, as new-words and creative compounds are quite scarce in the novel. Therefore, it is not considered necessary to present a dedicated table for the following few terms: *spagettiben* (spaghetti legs) (2012, 21), *imparfaitmänniskor* (imperfect people) (71), *blattetid* (immigrant time) (129), *hobbymuslim* (hobby Muslim) (271), and the derivation *falafelisering* (falafelisation) (293). The peculiarity of these five terms is that they are all nominal compounds and derivations constituted by very common, bilingual lemmas (*spaghetti*, *imparfait*, *hobby*, *falafel*, *blatte*). Among the most interesting ones we discuss *imparfaitmänniskor*, which Bakhtiari borrows from the French adjective *imparfait* to create the concept 'imperfect people', with which she describes an attitude characterised by the tendency of first-generation Iranian immigrants to hide problems, pains and imperfections from the others:

Man konfronterade aldrig varandra. Det pratades istället om vädret. [...] Men aldrig, aldrig sa dom att det skulle vara några problem just nu. För det har inte *imparfaitmänniskor*. Så just nu var allt perfekt även om det också skulle ändras med tiden. (2012, 71)
They never confronted each other. They talked about the weather instead. [...] But never, never they said that there would be any problems at the moment. Because imperfect people don't have that. So right now everything was perfect although that would also change with time.

This compound condenses the deep implications of diaspora, where immigrants hide each other's problems and nostalgia behind a silent veil of fake perfection, happiness, satisfaction and gratitude.

Through the appropriation and hybridisation of the Swedish language, Bakhtiari forges a patchwork term that allows her not only to transform Bahar's family condition into a universal story, but also to create a lingua franca that transcends idiomatic and experiential boundaries. Therefore, *imparfaitmänniskor* is to understand as an attempt to frame Persian diaspora as the result of a process of deterritorialisation, characterised by the impossibility of living in

a world of simulated harmony, and well-being. Another compound worth discussing is *hobbymuslim*, a patchwork through which Bakhtiari describes how Bahar freely combines aesthetic codes of Islam – such as the decision to wear the veil – with her typically Western habits, such as clubbing, applying make-up and dating a non-Muslim boyfriend (Markus):

Hon hade blivit en hobbymuslim. [...] Hon hade en svensk icke-muslimsk kille som hon inte var gift med [...]. Till slut lyckades Bahar reducera religionen till en accessoar. (271)

She had become a hobby Muslim. [...] She had a Swedish non-Muslim boyfriend to whom she was not married [...]. In the end, Bahar managed to reduce religion to an accessory.

Falafelisering is a derivation referring to the process of Middle Eastern culinary influence on Swedish culture. Obviously, the noun is derived from falafel, a deep-fried fritter featuring in Middle Eastern cuisine. This meal has had a very positive impact in Sweden and, given its popularity, it can easily stand as a pars pro toto of today's multicultural Sweden. The analysis of the structure and inner meaning of these compounds and derivations allows for some reflections on the novel's content. Through linguistic creativity, Bakhtiari manages to delineate Bahar and her family as the prototype of the postmigrant subject who overcomes the perceptual barriers between 'migrant' and 'Swede', 'Muslim' and 'non-Muslim'. More specifically, the words presented above shed light on feelings related to exchange, but also dislocation, (im)possibility to feel at home, (un)ease of presence in the new country, and, last but not least, freedom to perform and transform one's own identity.

