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AI-Assisted Multilingual
Narrative Practices
for Supporting Children's Resilience
after Trauma:

Theoretical Foundations, Research Perspectives and Educational Methodologies

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Educational and Methodological Handbook

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Preface

The rapid development of artificial intelligence has opened new possibilities for education, language learning, and creative expression. At the same time, educators around the world are facing unprecedented challenges associated with supporting children whose lives have been affected by war, forced migration, displacement, and prolonged uncertainty. In these circumstances, educational practice requires approaches that are not only pedagogically effective but also psychologically sensitive, linguistically inclusive, and ethically responsible.

This handbook emerged from the intersection of these two contemporary realities. It brings together recent developments in trauma-informed education, multilingual pedagogy, narrative studies, and artificial intelligence to propose an interdisciplinary framework for educational practice. Rather than viewing these fields separately, we consider them as complementary perspectives that together can support children's resilience, language development, identity reconstruction, and meaningful participation in learning.

The idea for this handbook grew from our research and practical work with multilingual educational communities, teachers, university students, and children living in different cultural and linguistic environments. Our experience demonstrated that storytelling remains one of the most powerful educational resources for helping children organise experience, express emotions, preserve cultural identity, and imagine future possibilities. The emergence of generative artificial intelligence offers new opportunities to enrich these narrative processes, provided that technology is used thoughtfully, ethically, and under the guidance of educators.

This publication does not present artificial intelligence as a substitute for teachers, psychologists, or human relationships. On the contrary, we view AI as an educational tool whose value depends entirely on the professional judgement, pedagogical competence, and ethical responsibility of those who use it. Throughout this handbook, technology is considered a means of supporting dialogue, creativity, multilingual communication, and reflective learning rather than replacing human interaction.

*Equally important, this handbook is **not** a manual for psychological or clinical treatment. It does not seek to diagnose trauma or provide therapeutic interventions. Its purpose is educational. The approaches presented here are designed to help teachers, teacher educators, university instructors, students, researchers, educational psychologists, and non-formal education practitioners create learning environments that recognise the possible effects of adversity*

while focusing on children's strengths, agency, creativity, and capacity for learning.

The structure of the handbook reflects this objective. The first chapter examines the historical, theoretical, and interdisciplinary foundations of trauma-informed multilingual narrative practices. The second chapter analyses contemporary scientific perspectives on narrative intervention, multilingual education, and artificial intelligence. The third chapter presents the empirical foundations of the proposed educational model, including its conceptual framework and methodological design. Finally, the fourth chapter offers practical methodologies, educational activities, AI-assisted narrative tools, and recommendations that can be adapted to diverse educational contexts.

Although the handbook was inspired by contemporary educational challenges, particularly those affecting children whose lives have been shaped by war and displacement, its ideas are intended for much broader application. Narrative practices, multilingual learning, and responsible use of artificial intelligence have relevance for inclusive education, intercultural dialogue, language teaching, teacher education, and the development of learners' creativity and critical thinking in many educational settings.

This work would not have been possible without the children, teachers, university students, colleagues, and educational communities whose experiences, questions, and commitment to learning have continually inspired our research. We are sincerely grateful to everyone who has contributed to the development of these ideas through collaboration, professional dialogue, and shared educational practice.

We hope that this handbook will encourage educators to view multilingualism as a resource, storytelling as a powerful educational practice, and artificial intelligence as a tool that can enrich, rather than replace, human learning. Above all, we hope it will contribute to creating educational environments in which every child has opportunities to learn, to create, to communicate, and to preserve their voice, language, and identity in an increasingly interconnected world.

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Chapter 1

Historical, Theoretical and Interdisciplinary Foundations of Trauma-Informed Multilingual Narrative Practices

Introduction

Trauma has become one of the defining concepts of twenty-first-century scholarship. While originally understood as a physical wound requiring medical intervention, trauma is now recognized as a complex psychological, social, cultural, and educational phenomenon that shapes individual development, collective memory, and identity. Armed conflicts, forced migration, terrorism, natural disasters, pandemics, and other global crises have substantially expanded scholarly interest in traumatic experiences and their long-term consequences. As a result, trauma studies have evolved into one of the most dynamic interdisciplinary fields connecting medicine, psychology, psychiatry, neuroscience, linguistics, education, sociology, literary studies, and cultural studies.

The growing prevalence of war-related trauma has significantly influenced contemporary research agendas. According to the World Health Organization, exposure to traumatic events substantially increases the risk of developing mental health conditions, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, anxiety disorders, and prolonged grief. At the same time, researchers increasingly emphasize that traumatic experiences cannot be understood solely through clinical symptoms; they also involve changes in cognition, language, interpersonal relationships, and personal identity. Consequently, trauma is now viewed as a multidimensional human experience requiring integrated theoretical and methodological approaches.

The concept of trauma has undergone a profound historical transformation. Derived from the Greek word τραῦμα (“wound”), the term was initially used in medicine to describe bodily injury. During the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, however, advances in neurology, psychiatry, and psychology gradually shifted scholarly attention toward psychological trauma. This transition fundamentally changed scientific understanding of

human responses to overwhelming events, leading to the recognition that emotional experiences may produce persistent psychological consequences comparable to physical injuries.

The second half of the twentieth century marked an important turning point in trauma research. Clinical observations of war veterans, survivors of genocide, victims of domestic violence, refugees, and survivors of childhood abuse demonstrated that traumatic experiences frequently resist ordinary processes of memory integration and verbal expression. These findings stimulated the emergence of trauma studies as an interdisciplinary research domain extending far beyond clinical psychiatry. Since the 1990s, scholars have increasingly investigated trauma from psychological, neurobiological, linguistic, educational, and cultural perspectives, highlighting the importance of narrative reconstruction, meaning-making, and social interaction in the recovery process.

Within this interdisciplinary framework, language has gradually become recognized not merely as a means of describing traumatic experiences but as an essential cognitive and social resource for their interpretation and integration. Narrative approaches have demonstrated that storytelling enables individuals to organize fragmented memories, reconstruct disrupted identities, and restore continuity between past, present, and future experiences. These developments have laid the theoretical foundations for trauma-informed educational practices and multilingual narrative interventions that are increasingly implemented in educational settings supporting children and adolescents affected by war, displacement, and other forms of adversity.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the historical development of trauma studies from their origins in nineteenth-century medicine to their contemporary interdisciplinary conceptualization. Particular attention is devoted to the gradual expansion of trauma research across medicine, psychology, neuroscience, linguistics, education, and narrative studies, thereby establishing the theoretical foundation for trauma-informed multilingual narrative practices discussed in the subsequent sections of this monograph.

1.1. Origins of Trauma Theory: Medical and Neurological Perspectives

1.1.1. Trauma as Physical Injury

The concept of trauma originated within medical discourse long before it acquired psychological or cultural significance. The English word *trauma* derives from the ancient Greek noun **τραῦμα**, meaning “wound” or “bodily injury.” Throughout much of medical history, trauma referred exclusively to visible physical damage caused by external force, including fractures, penetrating injuries, burns, and other forms of tissue destruction. Medical treatment therefore focused primarily on the anatomical consequences of injury rather than on its potential psychological effects.

During the nineteenth century, rapid industrialization fundamentally altered the nature of traumatic injuries. The expansion of railway transportation across Europe and North America led to a substantial increase in railway accidents, many of which produced persistent neurological symptoms despite the absence of detectable physical lesions. Physicians began documenting patients who reported chronic pain, dizziness, fatigue, sleep disturbances, anxiety, impaired concentration, and emotional instability following railway collisions. These observations challenged the prevailing assumption that all post-accident symptoms must correspond to identifiable anatomical damage.

One of the earliest systematic attempts to explain these conditions was made by the British surgeon **John Eric Erichsen**, whose influential monograph *On Railway and Other Injuries of the Nervous System* (1866) introduced the concept of **railway spine**. Erichsen proposed that violent mechanical shocks sustained during railway accidents produced microscopic injuries to the spinal cord that were not detectable by contemporary medical examination but nevertheless caused long-lasting neurological symptoms. Although later research questioned this purely organic explanation, the concept of railway spine represented a crucial step in recognizing that traumatic events could generate persistent functional disturbances even in the absence of visible physical injury.

The growing number of patients with unexplained neurological symptoms also stimulated the emergence of modern neurology as a distinct medical discipline. Among the most influential figures in this transformation was the French neurologist **Jean-Martin Charcot (1825–1893)**, whose clinical work at the Salpêtrière Hospital in Paris fundamentally reshaped nineteenth-century understandings of hysteria and nervous disorders. Contrary to prevailing assumptions that hysteria affected only women or resulted primarily from moral

weakness, Charcot argued that traumatic experiences could precipitate neurological symptoms through functional disturbances of the nervous system.

Charcot's clinical lectures emphasized careful observation and systematic classification of neurological disorders. His research demonstrated that traumatic events could produce symptoms such as paralysis, sensory disturbances, tremors, and amnesia without identifiable structural lesions of the nervous system. These findings challenged purely anatomical models of disease and opened new directions for investigating the relationship between physiological processes and psychological experience.

As Charcot famously observed:

“Theory is good, but it doesn't prevent things from existing.”

This frequently cited statement reflects his commitment to empirical clinical observation over rigid theoretical assumptions. Rather than forcing patients' symptoms into existing diagnostic frameworks, Charcot argued that scientific theory must be revised in response to carefully documented clinical evidence.

By the end of the nineteenth century, the medical understanding of trauma had begun to expand beyond the notion of bodily injury. Although trauma was still primarily conceptualized within neurology and pathology, increasing attention to functional neurological disorders laid the foundations for subsequent psychological theories developed by Pierre Janet, Sigmund Freud, and Josef Breuer. Their work would ultimately transform trauma from a medical diagnosis into one of the central concepts of modern psychology and psychiatry.

1.1.2. Early Psychological Interpretations

The transition from neurological to psychological explanations of trauma represents one of the most significant developments in the history of trauma studies. While nineteenth-century neurologists sought to identify physiological mechanisms underlying post-traumatic symptoms, psychologists and psychiatrists increasingly argued that many traumatic reactions originated not from structural damage to the nervous system but from disturbances in memory, consciousness, and emotional processing. This shift established the foundations of modern psychological theories of trauma and introduced concepts that continue to shape contemporary trauma research.

One of the earliest and most influential contributors to this transformation was the French psychologist and psychiatrist **Pierre Janet (1859–1947)**. Working under the intellectual influence of Jean-Martin Charcot, Janet investigated patients suffering from hysteria and other functional disorders characterized by amnesia, paralysis, somnambulism, and alterations of consciousness. Unlike

many of his contemporaries, he proposed that these symptoms reflected psychological rather than purely neurological processes.

Janet argued that overwhelming experiences could exceed an individual's capacity to integrate perception, emotion, and memory into a coherent consciousness. As a consequence, traumatic memories remained isolated from ordinary awareness, giving rise to involuntary symptoms and fragmented recollections. In his seminal work *L'Automatisme psychologique* (1889), he introduced the concept of **psychological dissociation**, suggesting that traumatic experiences become separated from the normal stream of consciousness instead of being integrated into autobiographical memory.

As Janet wrote:

“The memory of the trauma acts like a foreign body which long after its entry must continue to be regarded as an agent that is still at work.” (Janet, *The Major Symptoms of Hysteria*, 1907/1920)

Although this statement has often been associated with later psychoanalytic literature, it accurately reflects Janet's conception of traumatic memory as a persistent psychological force that continues to influence behaviour long after the traumatic event itself has ended.

Janet's theory of **dissociation** fundamentally challenged prevailing assumptions about memory. Rather than viewing forgetting as a passive loss of information, he argued that traumatic memories remain active but inaccessible to conscious awareness, re-emerging through intrusive images, bodily sensations, emotional reactions, and behavioural symptoms. Contemporary research on post-traumatic stress disorder continues to recognize dissociation as one of the central mechanisms underlying traumatic adaptation.

Another decisive contribution to early trauma theory emerged from the collaboration between the Austrian physician **Josef Breuer (1842–1925)** and **Sigmund Freud (1856–1939)**. Their joint publication, *Studies on Hysteria* (1895), marked a turning point in the psychological understanding of trauma by proposing that hysterical symptoms originated from emotionally charged experiences that had not been adequately processed or consciously expressed.

Breuer's clinical work with the famous patient Bertha Pappenheim (known under the pseudonym “Anna O.”) demonstrated that physical symptoms could diminish when previously suppressed emotional experiences were verbally recalled and expressed. This observation became the basis of the so-called **cathartic method**, according to which narration of traumatic experiences facilitated psychological relief.

Freud initially accepted this interpretation but gradually expanded it into a broader theory of unconscious mental processes. He argued that certain emotionally unacceptable experiences are excluded from conscious awareness through the mechanism of **repression** (*Verdrängung*), yet continue to exert influence on thoughts, emotions, dreams, and behaviour. According to Freud, repression functions as a psychological defence mechanism intended to protect the individual from overwhelming anxiety; however, unresolved traumatic experiences may subsequently reappear in disguised forms.

In *Studies on Hysteria*, Breuer and Freud famously stated:

“Hysterics suffer mainly from reminiscences.” (Breuer & Freud, 1895/1955, p. 7)

This concise formulation became one of the most influential statements in the history of trauma psychology. It suggested that psychological suffering often results not from the traumatic event itself but from the persistent influence of unresolved memories that remain emotionally active.

Freud’s later theoretical development increasingly emphasized unconscious conflict, infantile sexuality, and intrapsychic dynamics. Nevertheless, his early writings on trauma significantly contributed to understanding the relationship between memory, emotion, and psychopathology. In particular, the concept of repression profoundly influenced twentieth-century psychoanalysis and subsequent theories of traumatic memory.

Although Janet and Freud frequently addressed similar clinical phenomena, their interpretations differed considerably. Janet regarded trauma primarily as a failure of psychological integration caused by diminished mental capacity under overwhelming stress. Freud, by contrast, interpreted traumatic symptoms chiefly as consequences of unconscious repression and intrapsychic conflict. Modern trauma research generally considers Janet’s theory of dissociation to be more consistent with contemporary cognitive psychology and neuroscience, especially regarding fragmented memory, altered states of consciousness, and the neurobiological consequences of traumatic stress.

Despite these theoretical differences, the work of Janet, Breuer, and Freud established several enduring principles that continue to underpin contemporary trauma studies. First, traumatic experiences may persist in memory long after the original event. Second, psychological symptoms frequently reflect unresolved traumatic experiences rather than organic disease. Third, language and narrative play an essential role in processing traumatic memories, providing opportunities for emotional integration and psychological recovery. These ideas later became central to trauma-focused psychotherapy, narrative psychology, and trauma-

informed educational approaches, all of which emphasize the importance of constructing coherent personal narratives in the aftermath of adversity.

1.1.3. Trauma after the World Wars

The two World Wars fundamentally transformed scientific understanding of psychological trauma. Whereas nineteenth-century theories had largely focused on individual cases of hysteria and traumatic neuroses, the unprecedented scale of military conflict exposed millions of soldiers and civilians to prolonged, repeated, and extreme psychological stress. The enormous number of individuals who developed persistent psychological symptoms despite the absence of severe physical injury challenged existing medical paradigms and demonstrated that traumatic experiences could profoundly alter cognition, emotion, behaviour, and social functioning. Consequently, the study of trauma gradually shifted from isolated clinical observations to systematic investigation within military psychiatry, psychology, and later civilian mental health services.

The experiences of the World Wars also revealed important limitations of earlier theoretical models. Traumatic reactions were no longer viewed solely as manifestations of constitutional weakness or hysteria but increasingly recognized as natural psychological responses to overwhelming circumstances. Although this conceptual transition occurred gradually and was often accompanied by controversy, it laid the foundation for the modern understanding of trauma as a universal human response rather than an exceptional pathological condition.

Shell Shock: The First World War and the Transformation of Military Psychiatry

The First World War marked the first large-scale confrontation between modern industrial warfare and human psychological resilience. Trench warfare, continuous artillery bombardment, chemical weapons, prolonged uncertainty, and constant exposure to death created conditions of extreme and sustained stress unprecedented in previous military history. Physicians serving on the front increasingly encountered soldiers who exhibited tremors, paralysis, mutism, blindness, deafness, memory disturbances, nightmares, emotional instability, panic attacks, and severe anxiety without any detectable neurological injury.

In 1915, the British neurologist **Charles Samuel Myers** introduced the term **shell shock** in an article published in *The Lancet*. Myers initially used the concept to describe neurological symptoms observed in soldiers exposed to exploding artillery shells, suggesting that blast waves might produce subtle physical damage to the nervous system. However, clinical observations soon demonstrated that identical symptoms frequently developed among soldiers who had never experienced direct shell explosions. This evidence gradually undermined purely

neurological explanations and directed attention toward psychological mechanisms.

As Myers observed:

“The emotional shock may be sufficient to produce the condition independently of any physical concussion.” (Myers, 1915)

This statement represented an important departure from nineteenth-century medical models by acknowledging that intense emotional experiences alone could generate severe psychological symptoms.

The widespread occurrence of shell shock fundamentally challenged prevailing assumptions regarding courage, discipline, and mental illness. During the early years of the war, military authorities often interpreted affected soldiers as cowards, malingerers, or individuals lacking moral character. Many servicemen were subjected to disciplinary measures rather than medical treatment. As clinical evidence accumulated, however, psychiatrists increasingly recognized that traumatic symptoms reflected exposure to extraordinary environmental stress rather than personal weakness.

This shift contributed significantly to the emergence of **military psychiatry** as a specialized field. Physicians began developing systematic methods for diagnosing psychological trauma, distinguishing functional neurological disorders from organic brain injuries, and designing therapeutic interventions aimed at facilitating soldiers' recovery and, when possible, their return to military service. Although treatment approaches varied considerably among different countries and hospitals, the First World War established psychological trauma as a legitimate object of medical investigation.

The scientific significance of shell shock extended far beyond military medicine. It demonstrated that traumatic experiences could produce profound disturbances in memory, perception, emotion, and behaviour without visible physical injury. This realization strengthened psychological interpretations of trauma previously proposed by Pierre Janet and Sigmund Freud while stimulating new research into the relationships among stress, emotion, and nervous system functioning.

Combat Stress and War Neurosis: The Second World War and the Development of Military Psychiatry

The Second World War further transformed scientific understanding of trauma by demonstrating that psychological reactions to combat were neither rare nor exceptional but widespread consequences of prolonged exposure to life-threatening situations. Unlike the First World War, military psychiatry during the Second World War benefited from two decades of accumulated clinical

experience, enabling physicians to develop more systematic diagnostic procedures and therapeutic strategies.

The terminology also evolved. While the expression **shell shock** gradually disappeared because it incorrectly implied a purely physical mechanism of injury, clinicians increasingly employed broader concepts such as **combat stress**, **combat exhaustion**, **battle fatigue**, and **war neurosis**. These terms reflected growing recognition that psychological trauma resulted from cumulative exposure to extreme stress rather than from isolated battlefield events.

Research conducted during the war demonstrated that psychological breakdown could occur in previously healthy and psychologically stable individuals. This observation challenged long-standing assumptions that only predisposed or psychologically vulnerable persons developed traumatic disorders. Military psychiatrists increasingly concluded that the intensity, duration, and cumulative nature of combat exposure were decisive factors influencing psychological adaptation.

An influential contribution came from the American psychiatrist **Roy R. Grinker** and neurologist **John P. Spiegel**, whose book *Men Under Stress* (1945) examined the psychological responses of combat personnel during the Second World War. Their clinical observations emphasized that emotional collapse represented an understandable consequence of sustained exposure to overwhelming conditions rather than evidence of defective personality. They argued that successful treatment required understanding the interaction between environmental stressors and individual coping resources.

These developments substantially influenced the organization of military psychiatric services. Rather than evacuating all psychologically affected soldiers to distant hospitals, military medical systems increasingly adopted principles of **proximity**, **immediacy**, and **expectancy**—providing treatment close to the front line, initiating intervention as early as possible, and maintaining the expectation of recovery. Although originally designed to preserve military effectiveness, these principles later influenced civilian crisis intervention and early trauma care.

The Second World War also stimulated significant advances in psychotherapy. Clinical experience demonstrated that psychological recovery depended not only on symptom reduction but also on opportunities for emotional expression, social support, and reconstruction of traumatic experiences. Psychodynamic therapy, supportive psychotherapy, group interventions, and family-oriented approaches expanded considerably during the post-war period. These developments gradually shifted therapeutic attention from isolated symptoms toward broader processes of psychological adaptation, resilience, and reintegration into civilian life.

The psychological consequences of the Holocaust, mass displacement, civilian bombardment, concentration camps, and genocide further expanded the scope of trauma research beyond military populations. Scholars increasingly recognized that traumatic experiences affected not only combatants but also civilians, refugees, prisoners, children, and survivors of systematic violence. Consequently, trauma began to be understood as a complex human phenomenon extending across military, clinical, social, and cultural contexts.

Although no universally accepted diagnostic category for post-traumatic stress yet existed, the accumulated clinical evidence from the two World Wars fundamentally reshaped twentieth-century psychiatry. By demonstrating that severe psychological symptoms could arise as normal responses to extraordinary circumstances, wartime research challenged simplistic distinctions between health and illness, courage and weakness, or normality and pathology. These conceptual developments directly prepared the way for the formal recognition of **Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)** in the third edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-III) in 1980, which marked the beginning of the modern era of trauma studies.

1.1.4. The Emergence of Modern Trauma Studies (1970s–1990s)

The final decades of the twentieth century represent a watershed in the history of trauma studies. While earlier research had primarily focused on military psychiatry and individual clinical observations, the period from the 1970s to the 1990s witnessed the consolidation of trauma as an interdisciplinary field of inquiry. This transformation was driven by several interconnected developments: the psychological consequences of the Vietnam War, the emergence of feminist scholarship on interpersonal violence, advances in cognitive psychology and neuroscience, and the growing interest of literary and cultural scholars in memory, testimony, and representation. Together, these developments fundamentally redefined trauma from a narrowly clinical diagnosis into a complex psychological, social, cultural, and narrative phenomenon.

Rather than conceptualizing trauma solely as an immediate reaction to catastrophic events, researchers increasingly examined its long-term effects on identity, memory, language, interpersonal relationships, and social participation. This period also marked a decisive shift toward recognizing survivors' narratives as essential sources of knowledge, thereby establishing storytelling and narrative reconstruction as central components of both trauma theory and therapeutic practice.

PTSD and DSM-III

One of the most significant milestones in the development of modern trauma studies was the formal recognition of **Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)** in the third edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-III)* published by the **American Psychiatric Association** in 1980. The inclusion of PTSD represented a profound conceptual change in psychiatry because, for the first time, a psychiatric diagnosis explicitly identified exposure to an external traumatic event as the primary cause of psychological disorder rather than attributing symptoms primarily to individual vulnerability or pre-existing psychopathology.

The emergence of PTSD cannot be understood without considering the historical context of the **Vietnam War**. During and after the conflict, large numbers of returning veterans experienced persistent psychological difficulties, including intrusive memories, recurrent nightmares, emotional numbing, hypervigilance, irritability, avoidance of trauma-related reminders, and difficulties reintegrating into civilian life. Many veterans found that existing psychiatric diagnoses failed to capture the complexity of their experiences, prompting clinicians, researchers, and veterans' advocacy groups to argue for a new diagnostic framework.

The recognition of PTSD reflected decades of accumulated evidence from military psychiatry, disaster research, and clinical psychology. Rather than viewing traumatic reactions as temporary or exceptional, DSM-III acknowledged that exposure to life-threatening events could produce enduring psychological consequences in otherwise psychologically healthy individuals. This represented a decisive departure from earlier models that frequently interpreted trauma-related symptoms as manifestations of constitutional weakness or neurotic predisposition.

The DSM-III defined PTSD as a response to **“a recognizable stressor that would evoke significant symptoms of distress in almost everyone”** (American Psychiatric Association, 1980). Although later editions refined the diagnostic criteria, the inclusion of PTSD established a new paradigm in which traumatic events themselves became central to understanding psychological suffering.

The official recognition of PTSD had consequences extending far beyond clinical psychiatry. It stimulated extensive interdisciplinary research into traumatic memory, stress physiology, neurobiology, resilience, psychotherapy, and public health. Moreover, it contributed to broader social recognition of the experiences of war veterans, survivors of disasters, refugees, victims of violence, and individuals exposed to other forms of extreme adversity. Trauma was no longer regarded solely as an individual medical problem but increasingly understood as a significant social and humanitarian concern.

Judith Herman and the Concept of Complex Trauma

While PTSD provided an important diagnostic framework for understanding responses to acute traumatic events, clinicians soon recognized that it did not adequately explain the psychological consequences of prolonged, repeated, and interpersonal trauma. One of the most influential scholars addressing this limitation was the American psychiatrist **Judith Lewis Herman**, whose landmark book *Trauma and Recovery* (1992) fundamentally expanded contemporary trauma theory.

Drawing on extensive clinical work with survivors of domestic violence, childhood abuse, sexual assault, and political persecution, Herman argued that chronic interpersonal violence produces psychological consequences that differ substantially from those associated with single traumatic events. Survivors often experience profound disturbances in emotional regulation, self-perception, interpersonal relationships, identity, and systems of meaning—difficulties extending beyond the symptom profile described by PTSD.

Herman emphasized that psychological trauma cannot be separated from its social and political context. She argued that violence occurring within intimate relationships, families, or institutions often remains hidden because perpetrators exercise power over victims while society frequently fails to acknowledge or validate survivors' experiences. Consequently, recovery requires not only individual psychological healing but also social recognition, safety, and restoration of personal agency.

One of Herman's most frequently cited observations is:

"The ordinary response to atrocities is to banish them from consciousness."
(Herman, 1992, p. 1)

This statement captures a central paradox of trauma: although traumatic events demand acknowledgement, they often resist conscious integration because of their overwhelming emotional impact.

Herman further proposed that recovery from trauma proceeds through three interrelated stages: **establishing safety**, **remembrance and mourning**, and **reconnection with ordinary life**. This stage-oriented model remains highly influential in contemporary trauma-focused psychotherapy and trauma-informed care.

Although Herman did not formally introduce the diagnostic category **Complex PTSD**, her theoretical work provided its conceptual foundation. The notion of complex trauma later informed the inclusion of **Complex Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (CPTSD)** in the **International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11)**

published by the World Health Organization in 2018. CPTSD recognizes the enduring psychological consequences of sustained interpersonal trauma, particularly when escape is impossible or severely constrained.

Herman's work significantly broadened trauma studies by demonstrating that violence, abuse, coercive control, and prolonged victimization require theoretical approaches extending beyond traditional models of acute stress reactions. Her scholarship also contributed to the integration of psychology, psychiatry, feminist theory, human rights research, and social justice into contemporary trauma studies.

Cathy Caruth and the Emergence of Literary Trauma Studies

During the 1990s, trauma studies underwent another important transformation as scholars in literature, philosophy, and cultural studies began investigating trauma not only as a clinical condition but also as a problem of language, memory, and representation. One of the central figures in this intellectual movement was the American literary scholar **Cathy Caruth**, whose books *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (1995) and *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (1996) established literary trauma studies as a major interdisciplinary field.

Caruth drew upon psychoanalytic theory, deconstruction, and Holocaust testimony to argue that trauma is characterized by its resistance to immediate comprehension. According to her interpretation, traumatic events are often not fully experienced when they occur but return later through intrusive memories, flashbacks, dreams, and repetitive recollections. Trauma therefore challenges conventional assumptions about memory, temporality, and representation.

As Caruth writes:

“Trauma is not locatable in the simple violent or original event in an individual's past, but rather in the way that its very unassimilated nature—the way it was precisely not known in the first instance—returns to haunt the survivor later on.” (Caruth, 1996, p. 4)

This formulation became one of the defining statements of literary trauma theory because it emphasizes delayed experience rather than immediate psychological injury.

Caruth's work redirected scholarly attention from diagnosis toward **narrative**, **testimony**, and **memory**. Rather than treating language merely as a vehicle for describing trauma, she argued that narrative itself constitutes the space in which traumatic experience becomes partially accessible. Literature, autobiography, oral testimony, and artistic expression were therefore viewed as privileged forms

through which trauma could be communicated despite its inherent resistance to complete representation.

This **humanities turn** significantly expanded the scope of trauma studies. Scholars increasingly investigated collective memory, historical violence, genocide, displacement, colonialism, and cultural identity alongside individual psychological suffering. Trauma became understood not only as a clinical condition but also as a cultural and ethical phenomenon shaping historical consciousness and social memory.

Although some contemporary researchers have criticized early literary trauma theory for emphasizing the limits of representation at the expense of resilience and recovery, Caruth's work remains foundational in demonstrating that trauma cannot be adequately understood through psychological diagnosis alone. Its interpretation also requires attention to language, narrative structure, testimony, silence, and cultural memory.

The incorporation of literary and cultural perspectives fundamentally transformed trauma studies into a genuinely interdisciplinary field. By integrating psychology, psychiatry, literary studies, philosophy, history, and cultural theory, scholars established the conceptual framework that continues to inform contemporary research on trauma-informed education, multilingual storytelling, and narrative practices. These developments are particularly relevant for the present monograph, in which narrative is considered not only an object of analysis but also a pedagogical resource capable of supporting resilience, identity reconstruction, and psychological recovery in multilingual educational contexts.

1.2. Expansion into Interdisciplinary Trauma Studies (1990s–2020s)

Between the 1990s and the early 2010s, trauma studies underwent a remarkable process of disciplinary expansion. Having emerged from psychiatry and clinical psychology, trauma gradually became a shared object of inquiry across neuroscience, sociology, anthropology, literary studies, history, education, philosophy, and cultural studies. This interdisciplinary development reflected a growing recognition that traumatic experiences affect not only the human brain and individual mental health but also language, identity, interpersonal relationships, collective memory, and cultural practices.

Rather than replacing clinical approaches, these disciplines complemented one another by investigating different dimensions of trauma. Psychologists explored cognitive and emotional processes underlying adaptation and recovery; neuroscientists examined changes in brain functioning and memory; sociologists

analysed the social construction of collective trauma; cultural scholars investigated historical memory and intergenerational transmission; while literary critics examined the narrative representation of traumatic experience. Together, these perspectives transformed trauma studies into one of the most interdisciplinary fields within the contemporary humanities and social sciences.

1.2.1 Psychology

During this period, psychological research increasingly moved beyond symptom-oriented models toward broader investigations of adaptation, resilience, emotion regulation, and post-traumatic growth. Although Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) remained an important clinical construct, psychologists increasingly recognized that individuals respond to trauma in diverse ways and that exposure to adversity does not inevitably result in psychopathology.

Cognitive psychology made significant contributions by investigating how traumatic experiences influence attention, perception, autobiographical memory, and information processing. Researchers demonstrated that traumatic memories differ from ordinary autobiographical memories in their heightened emotional intensity, sensory vividness, and tendency to intrude involuntarily into consciousness. These findings contributed to cognitive models of PTSD, particularly those emphasizing the role of maladaptive memory integration and persistent threat perception.

At the same time, developmental psychology highlighted the importance of protective factors that support resilience following traumatic experiences. Secure attachment, supportive family relationships, social connectedness, emotional competence, and opportunities for narrative expression were identified as significant predictors of positive adaptation. This growing emphasis on resilience represented an important conceptual shift from deficit-oriented approaches toward strength-based perspectives that recognize survivors' capacities for recovery and meaning-making.

Narrative psychology further enriched trauma research by demonstrating that individuals construct personal identity through stories that organize life experiences into coherent patterns of meaning. Traumatic events often disrupt these narratives, creating fragmentation, uncertainty, and discontinuity. Consequently, psychological recovery increasingly came to be understood not only as symptom reduction but also as the reconstruction of coherent personal narratives capable of integrating traumatic experiences into broader life histories.

1.2.2. Neuroscience: The Neurobiology of Trauma

One of the most influential developments in contemporary trauma studies has been the integration of neuroscience into the investigation of traumatic stress. Advances in neuroimaging, cognitive neuroscience, and psychophysiology enabled researchers to examine how traumatic experiences influence brain functioning, stress regulation, and memory systems. These findings substantially deepened scientific understanding of the biological mechanisms underlying trauma while simultaneously reinforcing psychological and clinical theories.

Among the leading contributors to this field is the Dutch-American psychiatrist **Bessel van der Kolk**, whose research has profoundly influenced contemporary trauma theory. Drawing on decades of clinical practice and neuroscience research, van der Kolk argued that traumatic experiences alter multiple interconnected systems involving emotional regulation, memory processing, bodily awareness, and executive functioning.

One of his best-known observations states:

“The body keeps the score.” (van der Kolk, 2014)

This concise formulation encapsulates the central premise that trauma is not confined to conscious memory but is also encoded through physiological responses, sensorimotor patterns, autonomic nervous system functioning, and bodily sensations.

Neuroscientific research has demonstrated that traumatic stress affects several brain regions involved in emotion and memory. The **amygdala**, which plays a central role in detecting threat, often becomes hyperresponsive following trauma, contributing to persistent fear and hypervigilance. The **hippocampus**, responsible for contextual and autobiographical memory, may exhibit reduced functioning under conditions of chronic stress, impairing the integration of traumatic experiences into coherent narratives. The **prefrontal cortex**, associated with executive control and emotional regulation, frequently shows diminished activity during trauma-related states, reducing the capacity to regulate emotional responses and inhibit intrusive memories.

These findings have significantly advanced understanding of **memory systems** involved in traumatic experience. Rather than being stored as ordinary declarative memories, traumatic experiences often remain fragmented across sensory, emotional, procedural, and implicit memory systems. Such fragmentation helps explain why survivors may vividly re-experience sensory aspects of trauma while struggling to construct coherent verbal narratives.

Importantly, contemporary neuroscience does not support biological determinism. Instead, increasing evidence demonstrates the brain's capacity for **neuroplasticity**, indicating that psychotherapy, supportive relationships, mindfulness, creative expression, and narrative interventions can facilitate adaptive neural reorganization and psychological recovery.

1.2.3. Sociology: Collective Trauma

The expansion of trauma studies also transformed sociological research by shifting attention from individual suffering toward collective experiences of violence, war, terrorism, genocide, forced migration, and political repression. Sociologists increasingly argued that trauma should not be understood solely as a psychological reaction but also as a social process shaped by cultural interpretation, public discourse, political institutions, and collective memory.

One of the most influential contributors to this perspective is **Jeffrey C. Alexander**, whose theory of **cultural trauma** has become foundational in contemporary sociology. In *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity* (2004), Alexander argues that collective trauma is not an automatic consequence of catastrophic events but emerges through processes of social interpretation.

As Alexander writes:

“Events are not inherently traumatic. Trauma is a socially mediated attribution.” (Alexander et al., 2004, p. 8)

This perspective fundamentally distinguishes sociological approaches from purely clinical models. According to Alexander, communities construct collective trauma through public narratives, political debates, media representation, commemorative practices, and shared interpretations that define particular events as threatening collective identity.

This approach has proven particularly influential in studies of war, genocide, colonialism, forced displacement, and national memory. It demonstrates that collective recovery depends not only on individual psychological healing but also on social recognition, public acknowledgment, justice, and the reconstruction of shared narratives capable of restoring collective identity.

1.2.4. Cultural Studies: Cultural Memory and Postmemory

During the same period, trauma studies became increasingly integrated with cultural memory research. Scholars sought to understand how societies remember historical catastrophes, how traumatic experiences are transmitted across generations, and how literature, art, museums, and education contribute to preserving historical memory.

The concept of **cultural memory** emphasizes that memory extends beyond individual cognition and becomes embedded within cultural practices, institutions, rituals, archives, and symbolic representations. Traumatic pasts therefore continue to shape identities long after direct witnesses have disappeared.

A particularly influential contribution came from **Marianne Hirsch**, who introduced the concept of **postmemory** to describe the relationship between later generations and traumatic events experienced by their parents or grandparents, especially in the context of Holocaust studies.

According to Hirsch,

“Postmemory describes the relationship that the ‘generation after’ bears to the personal, collective, and cultural trauma of those who came before.” (Hirsch, 2008, p. 106)

Unlike direct memory, postmemory is mediated through stories, photographs, family narratives, cultural practices, and imaginative reconstruction. Nevertheless, these inherited memories may profoundly influence identity formation, emotional experience, and cultural belonging.

Hirsch’s theory has subsequently been applied to numerous contexts, including genocide, forced migration, political repression, colonial violence, and contemporary armed conflicts. It has become particularly relevant for research involving children displaced by war, whose understanding of family history often develops through narratives transmitted by parents and communities.

1.2.5. Literary Studies: Testimony, Witnessing, and Narrative Identity

Literary studies continued to play a central role in the interdisciplinary expansion of trauma research by examining how traumatic experiences are represented, communicated, and interpreted through narrative. Building upon earlier work by Cathy Caruth, scholars increasingly investigated testimony, witnessing, autobiography, life writing, and oral history as distinctive forms of traumatic representation.

Research on **testimony** emphasized that survivors’ narratives constitute not merely personal recollections but ethically significant acts of communication that preserve historical experience and resist denial or forgetting. Literary scholars argued that testimony creates opportunities for dialogue between survivors and audiences while simultaneously acknowledging the limitations of language in representing extreme suffering.

Closely related is the concept of **witnessing**, which extends beyond the act of speaking to include the ethical responsibility of listening. Trauma narratives therefore involve both narrators and audiences, making the process of testimony fundamentally relational. This perspective has influenced educational approaches that encourage empathetic engagement with historical narratives while fostering critical reflection on violence, memory, and human rights.

Another important development concerns **narrative identity**, particularly the work of psychologist **Dan P. McAdams**, whose theory has been widely adopted across psychology, literary studies, and trauma research. Narrative identity refers to the internalized life story through which individuals construct a sense of continuity, coherence, and purpose. Traumatic experiences frequently disrupt this narrative structure, creating fragmentation, uncertainty, and loss of meaning. Consequently, autobiographical storytelling has increasingly been recognized as an important mechanism through which survivors reconstruct identity and integrate traumatic experiences into broader life narratives.

By the early twenty-first century, literary studies had therefore become closely interconnected with psychology, education, cultural memory studies, and psychotherapy. Narrative was no longer regarded merely as an artistic form but as a cognitive, emotional, social, and educational process through which individuals and communities interpret traumatic experience, negotiate identity, and foster resilience. These interdisciplinary developments provide the conceptual basis for contemporary trauma-informed multilingual narrative practices, in which storytelling functions simultaneously as a pedagogical strategy, a cultural practice, and a resource for psychological recovery.

1.3. Contemporary Understandings of Trauma in the Context of the War in Ukraine

The contemporary understanding of trauma has been profoundly influenced by the study of prolonged armed conflicts, forced displacement, family separation, disruption of education, and sustained uncertainty. The war in Ukraine provides an important context in which trauma can be examined not as a single event with uniform consequences but as a multidimensional experience shaped by the interaction of individual, relational, social, cultural, linguistic, and educational factors.

For many people, war-related adversity does not consist of one isolated episode. It may involve repeated exposure to danger, displacement, bereavement, separation from family members, loss of home and community, interruption of education, economic insecurity, and prolonged uncertainty about the future. These experiences may accumulate over time and affect different areas of life

without necessarily producing the same psychological responses in every individual. International research indicates that exposure to war and forced displacement may increase the likelihood of immediate stress reactions and subsequent mental health difficulties, while outcomes depend substantially on age, previous experiences, the intensity and duration of exposure, family relationships, social support, and access to appropriate services. ([PubMed](#))

The Ukrainian context also illustrates why contemporary trauma studies must avoid both reductionism and overgeneralisation. Trauma cannot be reduced to physical injury, yet neither should all distress arising during war be automatically interpreted as psychiatric trauma. Fear, grief, anger, sadness, concentration difficulties, sleep disturbances, or temporary behavioural changes may represent understandable responses to threatening and destabilising circumstances. Some children and adults may develop clinically significant disorders and require specialised care; others may experience transient distress, demonstrate adaptive functioning, or recover with the support of families, schools, communities, and social services. Studies conducted during the war have identified increased mental health difficulties among some groups of Ukrainian children and adolescents, but they also demonstrate substantial variation in individual responses and underline the need to identify those requiring additional support rather than assuming universal psychopathology. ([PubMed](#))

Accordingly, a trauma-informed perspective in the Ukrainian context should be based on recognition of possible vulnerability without assigning a traumatic identity to every person exposed to war. Its purpose is not to define children through what they have endured but to create conditions in which different responses are respected, sources of support are strengthened, and professional assistance is available when required.

1.3.1. Trauma as a Multidimensional and Context-Dependent Experience

The history of trauma studies demonstrates a gradual movement from the notion of a visible bodily wound to the recognition of psychological, relational, social, and cultural consequences of overwhelming experience. Contemporary armed conflict makes this expanded understanding particularly relevant. Physical injury remains one possible dimension of war-related trauma, but the effects of war may also be expressed through emotional distress, changes in behaviour, disrupted relationships, altered perceptions of safety, difficulties in learning, and uncertainty concerning personal and collective identity.

War-related experiences are heterogeneous. A child who has remained in a region exposed to attacks, a child displaced within Ukraine, and a child living in another country may encounter different combinations of danger, loss, instability, adaptation, and support. Even children living under similar external

circumstances may interpret and respond to them differently. Developmental stage, temperament, family communication, previous adversity, disability, social position, cultural background, and the availability of trusted adults all influence how experience is processed.

It is therefore important to distinguish among several related but non-identical concepts. A potentially traumatic event is an occurrence involving actual or threatened death, serious injury, violence, or another form of overwhelming danger. A traumatic experience refers to the way such an event is experienced and processed by a particular person. A stress response may involve emotional, physiological, cognitive, or behavioural reactions that arise during or after adversity. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, by contrast, is a clinical condition defined by specific diagnostic criteria and should not be used as a general synonym for distress or exposure to war. The World Health Organization similarly notes that PTSD develops through the interaction of social, psychological, and biological factors and does not occur in everyone exposed to a potentially traumatic event. ([Всесвітня організація охорони здоров'я](#))

This differentiation is particularly important in education. Treating all war-affected children as psychologically damaged may reinforce stigma, reduce expectations, and obscure their competencies, aspirations, and agency. Conversely, ignoring the possible effects of prolonged danger and displacement may prevent educators from recognising genuine needs. A balanced trauma-informed position acknowledges both vulnerability and resilience, neither minimising suffering nor assuming inevitable pathology.

Contemporary approaches also recognise that the effects of war extend beyond individuals. Families may experience changes in roles, separation, bereavement, financial pressure, and caregiver distress. Communities may lose familiar institutions, cultural spaces, and networks of support. At the societal level, war influences collective memory, public narratives, language practices, and conceptions of belonging. Trauma in this sense is simultaneously embodied, psychological, relational, social, and cultural.

1.3.2. Childhood and Education under Conditions of Prolonged War

Childhood and adolescence are periods of continuous cognitive, emotional, linguistic, and social development. War-related adversity therefore interacts with developmental processes rather than affecting a fully formed psychological system. The consequences may concern not only mental health but also attention, memory, language development, school participation, peer relationships, identity formation, and expectations concerning the future.

For Ukrainian children, educational experiences during the war have been highly diverse. Some have continued studying in their local schools under conditions of recurring security threats. Others have changed schools after internal displacement, combined Ukrainian online education with attendance at a school abroad, or entered educational systems operating in unfamiliar languages. In many cases, children have had to adapt simultaneously to changes in residence, family circumstances, peer networks, language environment, curricula, and everyday routines.

Disruption of education should not be understood merely as a loss of instructional time. School ordinarily provides temporal structure, predictable routines, peer contact, adult guidance, recognition of achievement, and a sense of participation in a shared social world. When these functions are weakened, children may lose an important source of continuity. Conversely, when schools remain accessible and supportive, they can serve as stabilising environments in which children regain a degree of predictability, belonging, and competence.

This does not mean that schools should assume the functions of clinical institutions. Teachers are not expected to diagnose or treat trauma. Their role is to create conditions that support learning while remaining attentive to possible effects of adversity. Such conditions include clear routines, respectful communication, reasonable flexibility, opportunities for participation, protection from humiliation and discrimination, and access to referral pathways when specialised assistance is needed.

A trauma-informed school environment should also recognise that safety is more than the absence of immediate physical danger. Psychological safety involves knowing what to expect, being able to ask for help, having one's language and identity respected, and retaining an appropriate degree of choice. For children whose lives have been shaped by uncontrollable events, even modest opportunities to choose a topic, language, form of participation, or mode of expression may contribute to a restored sense of agency.

International organisations working in Ukraine have therefore combined education with mental health and psychosocial support, teacher preparation, rehabilitation of learning environments, and programmes intended to restore access to formal and non-formal education. These responses reflect the growing recognition that educational continuity and psychosocial well-being are interdependent rather than separate domains. ([IOHICEΦ](#))

1.3.3. The Development of Trauma Research and Support Practices in Ukraine

The development of trauma-related research and psychosocial support in Ukraine did not begin with the full-scale invasion of 2022. Ukrainian scholars and practitioners had previously examined the psychological consequences of historical violence, political repression, the Holodomor, the Chornobyl disaster, military conflict, migration, displacement, bereavement, and collective memory. Since the beginning of the Russian–Ukrainian war in 2014, research has increasingly addressed the experiences of military personnel, veterans, internally displaced persons, families, educators, and children affected by hostilities.

The escalation of the war in February 2022 substantially increased the scale, urgency, and interdisciplinary character of this work. Psychology, psychiatry, education, public health, social work, cultural studies, linguistics, and memory studies have become increasingly interconnected in attempts to understand the consequences of prolonged conflict and develop appropriate forms of support.

At the same time, Ukraine’s mental health reform and the development of community-based services pre-date the full-scale invasion. Ukraine joined the WHO Special Initiative for Mental Health in 2021, with priorities that included strengthening governance, expanding community-based services, developing the mental health workforce, protecting human rights, and improving mental health information systems. This chronology is significant because it demonstrates that the current response is not being constructed entirely from the beginning; it builds upon earlier reform processes while adapting them to the unprecedented demands created by war. ([Всесвітня організація охорони здоров’я](#))

Contemporary Ukrainian trauma research is developing through cooperation among universities, healthcare institutions, schools, civil society organisations, professional associations, state bodies, and international partners. Such cooperation has supported the introduction of mental health and psychosocial support programmes, professional training, school-based interventions, community services, and research involving war-affected populations.

Nevertheless, international models cannot simply be transferred to Ukraine without contextual adaptation. Approaches developed for single-event trauma, short-term displacement, or monolingual clinical environments may not adequately reflect prolonged exposure to danger, continuous social transformation, transnational family life, disrupted schooling, and multilingual education. Contextually appropriate models must account for Ukrainian cultural meanings, historical memory, linguistic identities, family and community resources, regional diversity, and the coexistence of life in Ukraine with experiences of temporary protection abroad.

A culturally responsive perspective also requires recognition that Ukrainian society should not be represented exclusively through suffering. The study of trauma should be complemented by attention to solidarity, volunteering, educational continuity, creativity, humour, cultural participation, mutual assistance, and collective agency. These processes do not erase loss or distress; rather, they demonstrate that communities respond to adversity through multiple forms of adaptation and meaning-making.

1.3.4. Language, Displacement, and Multilingual Experience

The war has made the relationship among language, identity, displacement, and education particularly visible. Ukrainian children living abroad may use Ukrainian within the family, the language of the host country at school, and English or other languages in digital and intercultural communication. Some continue studying parts of the Ukrainian curriculum while simultaneously participating in another national education system. Their linguistic experience is therefore not adequately described as a simple transition from one language to another.

Different languages may perform different psychological and social functions. The home language may sustain emotional closeness, autobiographical continuity, cultural memory, and family identity. The language of the host society may provide access to education, peer relationships, public institutions, and social participation. Additional languages may open spaces for intercultural communication or enable a degree of emotional distance from difficult experiences. These functions are not fixed and may change according to context, relationship, topic, and stage of adaptation.

Language can also become associated with tension, loss, belonging, safety, or political and cultural positioning. For this reason, educators should avoid imposing assumptions about which language a child ought to use when expressing emotions or constructing a personal narrative. The language chosen for telling a story may not be the language in which the original event occurred, the language most frequently used at school, or the language in which the child is most grammatically proficient.

Multilingual educational practices can respond to this complexity by allowing children to draw on their full linguistic repertoires. A story may be planned in one language, narrated in another, translated collaboratively, illustrated, dramatised, or supplemented by isolated words that carry particular personal or cultural meaning. Such practices recognise multilingualism as a resource for participation and meaning-making rather than as a deficiency requiring correction.

At the same time, multilingual education should not be romanticised. Learning in an unfamiliar language may intensify fatigue, isolation, or anxiety, particularly when a child is simultaneously coping with displacement and disrupted family life. UNESCO's documentation of national responses to the arrival of Ukrainian learners has repeatedly identified language support and culturally responsive educational mediation as central to school participation and integration. ([ЮНЕСКО](#))

Maintaining Ukrainian alongside acquiring the language of the host country need not represent competing goals. Supporting the home language may strengthen family communication, identity, and continuity, while competence in the host-country language enables fuller educational and social participation. Trauma-informed multilingual education should therefore seek additive rather than subtractive multilingualism: new linguistic resources should expand children's opportunities without requiring the abandonment or devaluation of existing ones.

1.3.5. From War-Related Experience to Trauma-Informed Multilingual Narrative Practices

The Ukrainian wartime context demonstrates the need for educational approaches that integrate sensitivity to adversity with respect for children's linguistic, cultural, developmental, and personal diversity. Trauma-informed multilingual narrative practices respond to this need by creating structured yet flexible opportunities for expression, imagination, communication, and meaning-making.

Such practices should not begin from the assumption that children must disclose personal experiences of war. Direct narration may be meaningful for some children but uncomfortable, unsafe, or developmentally inappropriate for others. Participation must therefore remain voluntary, and silence should be respected as a legitimate choice rather than interpreted as resistance or failure.

Narrative work may take indirect forms. Children can create fictional characters, fairy tales, imagined worlds, collective stories, symbolic journeys, dialogues, alternative endings, or narratives centred on resources and future possibilities. A fictional protagonist may face fear, separation, uncertainty, or change without requiring the child to identify the story as autobiographical. Metaphor and imaginative distance may enable engagement with emotionally significant themes while preserving psychological boundaries.

Narrative activities should likewise avoid directing children toward predetermined interpretations. The aim is not to extract a hidden traumatic account or produce a supposedly therapeutic confession. Instead, the educator offers a safe framework within which children may exercise authorship, make

linguistic and creative choices, explore perspectives, and construct meanings relevant to them.

The principle of authorship is especially important. War and displacement often involve loss of control over major areas of life. Story creation can restore a limited but meaningful form of agency: the child determines who speaks, what happens, which language is used, what remains untold, and how the narrative ends. This does not constitute clinical treatment, but it may support participation, competence, imagination, and continuity of self.

Multilingual narrative practices add further possibilities. Children may choose words from different languages, translate their own stories, work with peers, compare culturally specific images, or retain expressions that resist direct translation. Through such processes, multilingualism becomes part of narrative authorship rather than a barrier to it. Storytelling can simultaneously support literacy, language learning, cultural continuity, interpersonal communication, and reflective engagement with experience.

However, the educational value of narrative should not be exaggerated. Storytelling does not automatically resolve trauma, and narrative coherence should not be imposed as an indicator of psychological recovery. Some experiences remain difficult to narrate; some memories are uncertain or fragmented; and some children may prefer artistic, embodied, playful, or non-verbal forms of expression. Trauma-informed practice must therefore preserve multiplicity rather than privilege a single ideal form of recovery.

A further boundary concerns professional responsibility. Educators may facilitate supportive narrative activities, observe changes in participation, and provide appropriate referral information, but they should not diagnose children, conduct unqualified trauma processing, or position educational storytelling as a substitute for psychotherapy. Where a child displays persistent or severe distress, risk of harm, major functional impairment, or other signs requiring specialist assessment, professional mental health support is necessary.

The contemporary Ukrainian experience thus extends the historical development of trauma studies in several important directions. It demonstrates that trauma must be understood within prolonged, changing, and socially embedded conditions; that exposure does not produce uniform outcomes; that education is an essential protective environment; and that language, culture, and displacement shape the ways children interpret and communicate experience. It also confirms the need to combine sensitivity to vulnerability with recognition of competence, resilience, creativity, and agency.

Within this framework, trauma-informed multilingual narrative practices are not designed to make children repeatedly revisit suffering. Their purpose is to create educational spaces in which children can communicate on their own terms, use the languages available to them, preserve connections with culture and community, imagine possible futures, and participate as authors rather than being defined exclusively as victims of war. This contemporary perspective completes the historical trajectory from trauma as bodily injury to trauma as a complex human experience situated at the intersection of psychological development, social relationships, cultural memory, language, and education.

1.4. Trauma Studies in Education

The growing body of evidence from psychology, neuroscience, and developmental studies has profoundly influenced educational theory and practice over the past three decades. As researchers gained a deeper understanding of the effects of trauma on learning, behaviour, emotional regulation, and social development, education gradually moved beyond traditional academic models toward approaches that recognize the importance of psychological safety and emotional well-being. This transformation gave rise to **trauma-informed education**, an educational framework that seeks to create learning environments responsive to the needs of children and adolescents affected by adverse experiences.

Unlike clinical interventions, trauma-informed education does not aim to treat psychological disorders. Rather, it provides educational settings in which students feel physically and emotionally safe, relationships are characterized by trust and respect, and learning becomes compatible with recovery and resilience. This approach reflects a significant conceptual shift from asking “*What is wrong with this child?*” to asking “*What has happened to this child?*”—a change that emphasizes understanding rather than judgment.

The expansion of trauma-informed educational practices has become particularly important in contexts of armed conflict, forced displacement, migration, natural disasters, and other humanitarian crises. Schools increasingly serve not only as institutions of academic instruction but also as protective environments that promote emotional stability, social connectedness, and opportunities for meaning-making. Consequently, contemporary educational research recognizes that effective teaching requires attention to both cognitive development and psychological well-being.

1.4.1. Trauma-Informed Education

Trauma-informed education emerged through the integration of findings from developmental psychology, psychiatry, neuroscience, and educational sciences. Rather than representing a single instructional method, it constitutes a comprehensive framework for organizing school policies, classroom practices, interpersonal relationships, and institutional culture in ways that acknowledge the potential impact of trauma on learning and development.

One of the most influential definitions was proposed by the **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)**, which describes a trauma-informed approach as one that

“realizes the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery; recognizes the signs and symptoms of trauma; responds by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices; and seeks to actively resist re-traumatization.” (SAMHSA, 2014, p. 9)

Although originally developed within health and social services, these principles have been widely adopted in educational settings.

Contemporary trauma-informed education is generally organized around several interconnected principles. The first is **physical and emotional safety**, ensuring that students experience school as a predictable and supportive environment in which they are protected from humiliation, discrimination, intimidation, and unnecessary stress. Research consistently demonstrates that perceived safety constitutes a prerequisite for effective learning, particularly among children exposed to traumatic experiences.

A second principle concerns the establishment of **trustworthy and supportive relationships**. Positive interactions with teachers, peers, and other school staff provide children with stable relational experiences that may counterbalance previous exposure to unpredictability or adversity. Rather than relying primarily on behavioural control, trauma-informed classrooms emphasize empathy, consistency, and respectful communication.

Another essential principle is the promotion of **student empowerment and voice**. Children who have experienced trauma frequently report feelings of helplessness and loss of control. Educational practices that encourage participation, decision-making, self-expression, and collaborative problem-solving help restore agency and strengthen students’ confidence in their own abilities.

Trauma-informed schools also recognize the importance of **cultural responsiveness**, acknowledging that traumatic experiences are shaped by social,

linguistic, historical, and cultural contexts. Educational interventions should therefore respect students' cultural identities, languages, family traditions, and community experiences rather than applying uniform approaches across diverse populations.

These principles have important implications for the **school environment**. Contemporary research suggests that trauma-informed schools function not merely as educational institutions but also as communities of care characterized by predictable routines, supportive peer relationships, restorative disciplinary practices, and collaborative partnerships with families and mental health professionals. Such environments contribute to improved emotional regulation, school engagement, attendance, and academic achievement.

The implementation of trauma-informed education also requires substantial development of **teacher competencies**. Teachers are increasingly expected to recognize behavioural and emotional manifestations of traumatic stress, establish psychologically safe classrooms, communicate effectively with distressed students, and adapt instructional strategies to diverse learning needs. At the same time, educators must maintain clear professional boundaries and recognize that trauma-informed teaching does not replace specialized psychological treatment.

Research further emphasizes that effective trauma-informed education depends upon **teacher well-being**. Educators working with traumatized children may themselves experience secondary traumatic stress or compassion fatigue. Consequently, professional development increasingly includes strategies for self-care, reflective practice, peer support, and organizational well-being, recognizing that teachers' emotional health directly influences classroom climate and educational quality.

1.4.2. Children's Trauma: Developmental Perspectives, Resilience, and Protective Factors

Childhood represents a particularly sensitive period in human development, during which traumatic experiences may influence cognitive, emotional, behavioural, social, and neurobiological processes. Developmental psychology demonstrates that children's responses to trauma differ substantially from those of adults because psychological functioning continues to evolve throughout childhood and adolescence. Consequently, traumatic experiences interact with ongoing developmental processes rather than disrupting already established systems.

Children may experience trauma through direct exposure to violence, abuse, neglect, armed conflict, forced displacement, natural disasters, severe accidents, or the sudden loss of caregivers. They may also be affected indirectly through

witnessing violence, chronic family stress, or prolonged uncertainty associated with humanitarian crises. The developmental consequences of these experiences vary according to age, previous experiences, family relationships, available social support, and cultural context.

Trauma may influence multiple domains of child development. Young children often exhibit behavioural regression, separation anxiety, sleep disturbances, emotional dysregulation, or repetitive play related to traumatic experiences. School-age children may demonstrate difficulties with attention, memory, emotional regulation, peer relationships, and academic performance. Adolescents frequently experience identity confusion, increased emotional reactivity, social withdrawal, risk-taking behaviours, or persistent concerns about safety and the future.

Importantly, developmental psychology also demonstrates that traumatic experiences do not inevitably determine developmental outcomes. Over the past several decades, increasing scholarly attention has been devoted to **resilience**, understood not as an inborn personality trait but as a dynamic process of positive adaptation despite significant adversity.

As developmental psychologist **Ann S. Masten** famously observed:

“Resilience does not come from rare and special qualities, but from the everyday magic of ordinary human resources.” (Masten, 2001, p. 235)

This influential formulation challenged earlier assumptions that resilience characterizes only exceptional individuals. Instead, resilience emerges through ordinary developmental systems operating within supportive families, schools, and communities.

Research identifies numerous **protective factors** that reduce the negative effects of traumatic experiences. At the individual level, emotional regulation, problem-solving abilities, optimism, self-efficacy, and communication skills contribute to adaptive coping. At the interpersonal level, secure attachment relationships, parental support, caring teachers, positive peer interactions, and supportive communities provide essential emotional resources. At the institutional level, stable educational environments, access to mental health services, inclusive school cultures, and opportunities for meaningful participation strengthen children’s adaptive capacities.

Schools occupy a particularly important position among these protective systems because they provide continuity during periods of instability. Predictable daily routines, emotionally supportive classrooms, opportunities for creative expression, collaborative learning, and positive teacher-student relationships all contribute to children’s psychological adjustment following traumatic

experiences. Educational activities involving storytelling, art, play, and multilingual communication further support emotional expression and meaning-making while respecting children's developmental needs.

Recent research has increasingly emphasized that resilience should not be understood as the absence of distress. Children may continue to experience sadness, fear, grief, or anxiety while simultaneously demonstrating remarkable capacities for learning, adaptation, creativity, and social engagement. Accordingly, contemporary trauma-informed education seeks not only to reduce vulnerability but also to strengthen protective systems that enable healthy development despite adversity.

This developmental perspective provides an important theoretical foundation for the present monograph. By recognizing children's capacity for resilience and the central role of supportive educational environments, trauma-informed multilingual narrative practices become more than instructional techniques; they function as developmentally appropriate educational resources that facilitate emotional expression, identity reconstruction, language development, and psychological recovery through meaningful storytelling.

1.5. Language and the Narrative Turn in Trauma Research

The interdisciplinary expansion of trauma studies during the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries was accompanied by what many scholars describe as the **narrative turn**. While earlier approaches primarily investigated the psychological, neurological, and physiological consequences of trauma, increasing attention was devoted to the ways individuals understand, communicate, and reconstruct traumatic experiences through language and narrative. This shift reflected a broader transformation across the humanities and social sciences, where language came to be viewed not merely as a means of describing reality but as an active process through which human beings organize experience, construct identity, and negotiate meaning.

The narrative turn emerged from the convergence of psychology, linguistics, literary studies, philosophy, and educational research. Scholars increasingly argued that trauma cannot be fully understood solely through clinical observation or neurobiological measurement because traumatic experiences are also interpreted, remembered, and transmitted through stories. Consequently, narrative became recognized as both an object of scholarly inquiry and a practical

resource for psychological recovery, identity reconstruction, and educational intervention.

This perspective proved particularly significant in the context of war, forced migration, and childhood adversity. Traumatic experiences frequently disrupt ordinary language, fragment autobiographical memory, and challenge established systems of meaning. Storytelling therefore serves not only as a form of communication but also as a mechanism through which fragmented experiences may gradually become organized into coherent personal narratives. These developments established the theoretical foundations for contemporary trauma-informed narrative practices, including multilingual storytelling approaches that integrate psychological support with language learning and educational development.

1.5.1. Narrative as Meaning-Making

The recognition of narrative as a fundamental mechanism of **meaning-making** represents one of the most influential developments in contemporary trauma research. Rather than viewing stories as simple recollections of past events, researchers increasingly conceptualize narrative as a cognitive process through which individuals organize experiences, establish temporal continuity, interpret emotions, and construct coherent understandings of themselves and the world.

The theoretical foundations of this perspective were established by cognitive psychologist **Jerome Bruner**, who argued that human beings naturally organize experience through narrative rather than through abstract logical structures alone. According to Bruner, narratives provide culturally meaningful frameworks that enable individuals to interpret events and assign them significance within broader life histories.

As Bruner writes,

“We organize our experience and our memory of human happenings mainly in the form of narrative.” (Bruner, 1991, p. 4)

Within trauma studies, this insight acquired particular importance because traumatic experiences frequently resist immediate integration into autobiographical memory. Instead of becoming incorporated into coherent life stories, they often remain fragmented, emotionally overwhelming, or disconnected from ordinary systems of meaning. Narrative construction therefore becomes an essential process through which survivors gradually transform isolated traumatic memories into integrated autobiographical knowledge.

Narrative meaning-making does not imply changing historical facts or minimizing suffering. Rather, it involves constructing interpretive frameworks

that allow individuals to understand traumatic experiences within broader developmental, relational, and cultural contexts. Through storytelling, survivors establish temporal connections between past, present, and future, restore continuity disrupted by trauma, and reconstruct personal agency.

Research in narrative psychology further demonstrates that coherent narratives contribute to emotional regulation, identity development, and psychological adaptation. Individuals who are able to organize difficult experiences into meaningful life stories generally demonstrate greater psychological flexibility, improved emotional integration, and stronger capacities for resilience. Consequently, narrative has become an essential component of numerous trauma-focused psychotherapeutic and educational interventions.

1.5.2. Language and Identity after Trauma

The growing emphasis on language within trauma studies reflects the understanding that traumatic experiences influence not only psychological functioning but also communication, self-expression, and identity construction. Trauma may disrupt linguistic processes in multiple ways. Survivors often report difficulties finding words for overwhelming experiences, organizing coherent narratives, or communicating emotions that appear resistant to ordinary language. These phenomena have encouraged scholars to investigate the complex relationship between language, memory, and identity following traumatic events.

Language performs several interconnected functions in post-traumatic adaptation. At the cognitive level, it enables the organization of fragmented memories into structured narratives. At the emotional level, verbal expression facilitates the regulation and communication of difficult experiences. At the interpersonal level, language creates opportunities for social recognition, empathy, and supportive relationships. Finally, at the cultural level, language connects individuals with collective histories, traditions, and communities of belonging.

Narrative identity theory has significantly contributed to understanding these processes. According to **Dan P. McAdams**, identity is not a fixed psychological characteristic but an evolving internalized life story through which individuals integrate past experiences, present circumstances, and future aspirations.

As McAdams explains,

“Identity is a life story.” (McAdams, 2001, p. 101)

Traumatic experiences frequently interrupt this life story by challenging fundamental assumptions about safety, trust, justice, and personal continuity. Survivors may experience a loss of coherence between their pre-traumatic and

post-traumatic selves, leading to uncertainty regarding who they are and how their experiences should be interpreted. Language therefore becomes central to the reconstruction of identity, allowing individuals to reinterpret traumatic events without allowing those events to define their entire sense of self.

The importance of language becomes even more pronounced in multilingual contexts. Refugees, migrants, and displaced children often negotiate traumatic experiences across multiple languages that simultaneously represent family relationships, educational environments, cultural identities, and host societies. Contemporary psycholinguistic and educational research increasingly suggests that multilingual communication provides additional symbolic resources for emotional expression and identity reconstruction. Different languages may evoke different emotional associations, autobiographical memories, and cultural perspectives, thereby enriching opportunities for meaning-making and resilience.

Consequently, language should not be regarded merely as a medium for describing trauma but as an active psychological, social, and educational resource that supports cognitive integration, emotional regulation, and identity development following adverse experiences.

1.5.3. Storytelling as Recovery

One of the most significant implications of the narrative turn has been the recognition of **storytelling** as a powerful resource for psychological recovery, educational development, and social connection. Across psychology, psychotherapy, education, and literary studies, storytelling is increasingly understood not simply as an artistic activity but as a meaning-making practice that enables individuals to reconstruct fragmented experiences and restore continuity disrupted by trauma.

Narrative approaches to recovery are based on the premise that trauma often fragments autobiographical memory and weakens individuals' sense of agency. Storytelling provides opportunities to reorganize these fragmented experiences into coherent narratives while preserving the survivor's authorship of personal experience. Importantly, recovery does not require producing a single definitive account of trauma; rather, it involves the ongoing development of narratives that integrate difficult experiences into broader life trajectories.

Narrative therapy has substantially contributed to this perspective. **Michael White** and **David Epston** proposed that individuals understand their lives through stories and that therapeutic change involves reconstructing these stories in ways that strengthen personal agency and alternative identities.

As White and Epston write,

“The person is not the problem. The problem is the problem.” (White & Epston, 1990, p. 40)

Although developed within psychotherapy, this principle has had wide influence in educational contexts because it encourages teachers and practitioners to separate children’s identities from their traumatic experiences. Rather than defining children by victimhood or psychological symptoms, trauma-informed narrative practices emphasize strengths, competencies, creativity, relationships, and future possibilities.

Educational research increasingly demonstrates that storytelling supports multiple dimensions of children’s development simultaneously. Narrative activities facilitate language acquisition, literacy development, emotional expression, imagination, perspective-taking, intercultural dialogue, and social participation. Storytelling also promotes resilience by allowing children to reinterpret difficult experiences, imagine hopeful futures, and construct identities extending beyond trauma.

These functions become particularly valuable in multilingual educational environments. Children who have experienced war, forced migration, or displacement often draw upon multiple linguistic and cultural resources while telling their stories. Multilingual storytelling allows them to move flexibly between languages associated with family, homeland, host communities, and educational settings. Such flexibility expands opportunities for self-expression while simultaneously supporting multilingual competence and intercultural understanding.

The convergence of trauma psychology, narrative studies, linguistics, and education has therefore established storytelling as a multidimensional pedagogical practice. Within trauma-informed education, stories function not only as literary texts but also as cognitive tools, emotional resources, cultural artefacts, and educational strategies through which children reconstruct meaning, strengthen resilience, and develop multilingual communicative competence.

The narrative turn thus provides the immediate theoretical foundation for the following chapters of this monograph. Having established that language and storytelling are central mechanisms of meaning-making, identity reconstruction, and recovery, the discussion now turns to multilingual narrative practices that integrate psychological, linguistic, and educational perspectives in supporting children affected by trauma.

Conclusions

The historical development of trauma studies demonstrates a gradual yet profound transformation in the scientific understanding of trauma. Initially conceptualized as a physical injury within nineteenth-century medicine, trauma progressively evolved into a multidimensional phenomenon encompassing psychological, neurobiological, social, cultural, educational, and linguistic dimensions. This evolution reflects not only advances in scientific knowledge but also changing societal awareness of the long-term consequences of war, violence, abuse, forced displacement, and other adverse life experiences.

The emergence of modern trauma theory was shaped by several key historical milestones. Early neurological investigations by Jean-Martin Charcot and psychological interpretations developed by Pierre Janet, Josef Breuer, and Sigmund Freud established the conceptual foundations for understanding the relationship between traumatic experiences, memory, and human behaviour. The experiences of the First and Second World Wars further transformed trauma research by demonstrating that overwhelming psychological stress could produce persistent emotional and cognitive consequences even in the absence of physical injury. These developments ultimately culminated in the formal recognition of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-III) in 1980, marking the beginning of the modern era of trauma studies.

Since the late twentieth century, trauma studies have expanded into a genuinely interdisciplinary field integrating psychology, psychiatry, neuroscience, sociology, cultural studies, literary scholarship, linguistics, and education. Contributions from these disciplines have substantially enriched contemporary understanding of trauma by revealing the complex interactions among neurobiological processes, autobiographical memory, emotional regulation, identity formation, collective memory, and social relationships. This interdisciplinary perspective has shifted attention from viewing trauma exclusively as a clinical disorder toward recognizing it as a multifaceted human experience that influences cognitive, emotional, linguistic, cultural, and educational development.

Particular importance has been attached to educational contexts, where trauma-informed approaches emphasize psychological safety, supportive relationships, resilience, and inclusive learning environments. Contemporary educational research demonstrates that schools play a critical role not only in academic instruction but also in promoting children's emotional well-being, social participation, and positive developmental

trajectories. Consequently, trauma-informed education has become an essential framework for supporting children and adolescents affected by war, migration, displacement, family violence, and other forms of adversity.

An equally significant development has been the narrative turn in trauma research, which has established language as a central mechanism through which traumatic experiences are interpreted, communicated, and integrated into personal and collective identities. Narrative approaches demonstrate that storytelling contributes to meaning-making, autobiographical coherence, identity reconstruction, and resilience by enabling individuals to organize fragmented experiences into meaningful life narratives. These insights have significantly broadened the scope of trauma studies beyond clinical diagnosis, highlighting the educational and developmental potential of narrative practices.

Taken together, the historical, theoretical, and interdisciplinary perspectives discussed in this chapter provide the conceptual foundation for the present handbook. They demonstrate that trauma-informed approaches require the integration of psychological, educational, linguistic, and narrative perspectives in order to address the complex needs of children affected by adversity. Building upon this theoretical framework, the following chapters examine multilingual narrative practices, their pedagogical implementation, and their potential to support resilience, language development, and psychological recovery in contemporary educational settings.

Chapter 2

Scientific Perspectives on Trauma Recovery, Narrative Intervention and AI-Supported Learning

Introduction

The contemporary psychology of trauma has gradually shifted from an exclusive focus on pathology toward a more comprehensive understanding of human adaptation following adverse experiences. While early psychological models primarily sought to explain the origins and symptoms of trauma-related disorders, current research increasingly investigates the dynamic processes through which individuals regain emotional stability, reconstruct meaning, strengthen interpersonal relationships, and resume developmental trajectories despite exposure to significant adversity.

This conceptual shift reflects broader developments across clinical psychology, developmental psychology, psychiatry, neuroscience, and educational psychology. Contemporary trauma research no longer assumes that recovery consists solely of symptom reduction. Instead, psychological recovery is understood as a multidimensional process involving emotional regulation, restoration of perceived safety, reconstruction of personal meaning, strengthening of adaptive capacities, and re-engagement with family, educational, and community life.

Importantly, current approaches emphasize that recovery does not follow a universal sequence nor proceed at the same pace for all individuals. Responses to potentially traumatic experiences vary according to developmental stage, previous experiences, family relationships, cultural context, social support, and available educational resources. Consequently, trauma-informed interventions increasingly prioritize individualized, developmentally appropriate, and culturally responsive forms of support rather than standardized treatment models.

Another important development concerns the relationship between clinical intervention and educational practice. While evidence-based psychotherapies remain essential for individuals experiencing clinically significant trauma-related disorders, contemporary psychology also recognizes the importance of preventive, educational, and community-based

approaches that promote resilience before severe psychopathology develops. Schools, families, and community organizations therefore play an increasingly important role in creating environments that foster psychological safety, adaptive coping, and opportunities for positive development.

Within this framework, trauma recovery is understood not as a return to a previous psychological state but as an ongoing process of adaptation that may involve changes in identity, interpersonal relationships, values, and future aspirations. The following sections examine four interrelated components that have become central to contemporary psychological approaches to trauma recovery: the restoration of safety and emotional regulation; resilience and adaptive recovery; meaning-making following adversity; and narrative-based psychological interventions.

2.1. Contemporary Psychological Approaches to Trauma Recovery

2.1.1. Safety, Stabilisation and Emotional Regulation

Why Safety Comes First

Contemporary psychological approaches to trauma recovery increasingly converge on one fundamental principle: recovery cannot begin without the restoration of safety. Although different theoretical schools vary in their understanding of trauma, therapeutic techniques, and mechanisms of change, there is broad agreement that individuals affected by traumatic experiences require environments in which they perceive themselves as physically, psychologically, and socially safe before more demanding processes of emotional processing or narrative reconstruction can occur.

This principle represents one of the most significant conceptual shifts in trauma psychology over the past three decades. Earlier clinical models frequently focused on symptom reduction, diagnostic classification, or the direct processing of traumatic memories. Contemporary trauma-informed approaches, by contrast, recognise that attempts to revisit traumatic experiences before establishing sufficient safety may increase emotional dysregulation, reinforce defensive responses, or contribute to re-traumatisation. Consequently, trauma recovery is increasingly understood not as an immediate confrontation with traumatic memories but as a carefully structured process in which stabilisation precedes intensive therapeutic or educational intervention.

The centrality of safety is closely connected with current knowledge concerning the neurobiology of traumatic stress. Exposure to overwhelming or prolonged adversity activates biological survival systems designed to protect the individual from immediate danger. Under conditions of persistent threat, however, these adaptive responses may become chronically activated, affecting attention, emotional regulation, memory, executive functioning, and social interaction. Individuals may therefore continue to experience heightened vigilance, difficulties concentrating, emotional reactivity, or avoidance even after objective danger has diminished. From this perspective, recovery requires not only psychological insight but also the gradual re-establishment of conditions that allow the nervous system to differentiate between present safety and past threat.

Importantly, contemporary psychology distinguishes between **objective safety** and **perceived safety**. An environment may appear secure according to external criteria while remaining psychologically unsafe for an individual whose previous experiences have altered expectations about trust, predictability, or interpersonal relationships. Conversely, the presence of supportive adults, stable routines, respectful communication, and opportunities for personal choice may strengthen subjective feelings of safety even in contexts characterised by ongoing uncertainty. Trauma-informed approaches therefore emphasise the importance of understanding how safety is experienced rather than assuming that it can be guaranteed solely through environmental conditions.

The importance of safety extends beyond clinical settings. Schools, families, community organisations, and cultural institutions increasingly recognise that psychological recovery is influenced by everyday relational experiences rather than therapeutic intervention alone. Trauma-informed education, in particular, is grounded in the assumption that learning becomes possible when children experience predictable routines, emotionally supportive relationships, and environments in which mistakes, uncertainty, and emotional expression can be managed without fear of humiliation or rejection. Consequently, educational practice is now regarded as an important component of psychosocial recovery rather than merely a context in which recovery takes place.

Another important development concerns the understanding of recovery itself. Contemporary psychological literature no longer conceptualises recovery as a linear return to a pre-trauma condition. Instead, recovery is viewed as a dynamic and highly individual process involving adaptation to changed circumstances, restoration of functioning, reconstruction of meaning, and gradual strengthening of personal and social resources. Safety therefore constitutes not the final goal of recovery but the necessary foundation upon which subsequent processes—including emotional regulation, resilience, identity reconstruction, and narrative meaning-making—can develop.

This perspective is reflected in Judith Herman's influential phase-oriented model of trauma recovery. Herman argues that effective intervention begins not with detailed exploration of traumatic memories but with the establishment of safety:

“The first task of recovery is to establish the survivor's safety.” (Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 1992, p. 159)

Although numerous therapeutic models have subsequently been developed, this principle remains remarkably stable across contemporary trauma-informed practice. Recent international guidelines similarly recommend that interventions should prioritise stabilisation, strengthening of coping resources, supportive relationships, and restoration of everyday functioning before encouraging intensive processing of traumatic memories, particularly when working with children and adolescents.

The concept of safety has therefore evolved from a peripheral therapeutic consideration into one of the organising principles of contemporary trauma-informed psychology. It serves as the foundation upon which subsequent processes of emotional regulation, resilience, meaning-making, and narrative reconstruction are built. Understanding the multidimensional nature of safety is consequently essential for designing psychological, educational, and multilingual narrative interventions that are responsive to the diverse experiences of children and adults affected by adversity.

2.1.2. The Concept of Safety: Beyond Physical Protection

Within contemporary trauma psychology, safety is understood as a multidimensional construct encompassing physical, psychological, relational, cultural, and environmental dimensions. This broadened understanding reflects an important departure from earlier perspectives that primarily associated safety with the absence of immediate physical danger. While physical protection remains indispensable, contemporary research demonstrates that recovery also depends upon the restoration of trust, predictability, interpersonal security, and a sense of personal agency.

Physical safety constitutes the most fundamental dimension. It involves protection from ongoing violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation, and other threats to bodily integrity. For individuals living in contexts of armed conflict or humanitarian crises, establishing physical safety may remain an ongoing challenge rather than a completed stage of recovery. This reality has important implications for trauma-informed practice, particularly in educational settings, where psychological support often occurs alongside continuing uncertainty rather than after all danger has disappeared.

Psychological safety refers to the subjective experience of being able to think, communicate, learn, and express emotions without fear of humiliation, punishment, rejection, or coercion. Unlike physical safety, psychological safety is fundamentally relational. It emerges through consistent interactions characterised by empathy, respect, predictability, and emotional attunement. Research increasingly demonstrates that children who perceive adults as emotionally available and responsive are more likely to develop adaptive strategies for managing stress, regulating emotions, and engaging in learning despite adversity.

Closely connected with psychological safety is **relational safety**, which emphasises the importance of stable, trustworthy relationships. Attachment theory has profoundly influenced contemporary trauma research by demonstrating that supportive interpersonal relationships function not merely as sources of comfort but as biological regulators of stress. Children rarely regulate overwhelming emotions entirely independently; instead, emotional regulation initially develops through repeated experiences of **co-regulation**, in which sensitive caregivers, teachers, or other trusted adults help children recognise, tolerate, and gradually manage emotional states that would otherwise exceed their developmental capacities.

Contemporary trauma-informed practice also increasingly acknowledges the importance of **cultural safety**. Individuals interpret safety through cultural values, languages, identities, family traditions, and community practices. Experiences of displacement, migration, discrimination, or cultural marginalisation may therefore undermine recovery even when immediate physical protection has been achieved. Conversely, educational environments that recognise children's linguistic identities, cultural heritage, and family narratives may strengthen belonging, continuity, and psychological security. For multilingual learners, the opportunity to communicate through familiar languages often contributes not only to linguistic participation but also to emotional safety and identity continuity.

An equally important characteristic of safety concerns **predictability**. Traumatic experiences frequently disrupt expectations regarding the stability of everyday life. Consequently, contemporary trauma-informed environments seek to reintroduce predictable routines, transparent expectations, consistent responses, and opportunities for informed choice. Predictability should not be understood as rigid control but as the creation of environments in which individuals can anticipate what is likely to happen and understand the reasons underlying decisions that affect them. Such predictability reduces cognitive load, decreases anticipatory anxiety, and facilitates the gradual restoration of trust in both interpersonal relationships and institutional settings.

Finally, contemporary psychology increasingly emphasises that safety is inseparable from **agency**. Individuals who have experienced trauma often report diminished control over their lives and limited opportunities to influence important decisions. Restoring agency therefore becomes an essential component of psychological safety. In educational contexts, even seemingly modest opportunities—such as choosing the language of expression, selecting a narrative topic, deciding whether to participate individually or collaboratively, or determining the pace of an activity—may contribute to rebuilding confidence in one’s capacity to make meaningful choices.

These developments demonstrate that safety should not be understood as a static condition achieved once and for all. Rather, it is a dynamic process continuously negotiated through relationships, environments, communication, and participation. This multidimensional understanding provides the conceptual foundation for the second major component of contemporary trauma recovery: **stabilisation**, which seeks to transform experiences of safety into sustainable emotional and behavioural regulation.

2.1.3. Stabilisation as the Foundation of Trauma Recovery

Within contemporary psychology, stabilisation is understood not as a separate therapeutic technique but as a dynamic process through which individuals regain sufficient emotional, cognitive, physiological, and interpersonal functioning to engage safely with everyday life and, where appropriate, with subsequent therapeutic or educational interventions. Rather than eliminating distress, stabilisation seeks to reduce its intensity to a level at which adaptive functioning becomes possible.

Current psychological models emphasise that traumatic stress often disrupts multiple regulatory systems simultaneously. Difficulties may appear in emotional regulation, attention, sleep, executive functioning, interpersonal trust, behavioural flexibility, and physiological arousal. Consequently, effective recovery rarely begins with detailed exploration of traumatic memories. Instead, contemporary approaches prioritise strengthening the individual’s capacity to remain oriented to the present, tolerate emotional activation, and engage with supportive relationships without becoming overwhelmed.

This perspective reflects a broader movement away from symptom-centred intervention towards **capacity-building**. Stabilisation is increasingly conceptualised as the development of psychological resources rather than merely the reduction of psychological symptoms. These resources include emotional awareness, attentional flexibility, self-observation, problem-solving abilities, interpersonal communication, and confidence in one’s ability to manage distress without losing behavioural control.

Importantly, stabilisation should not be interpreted as emotional suppression. Contemporary trauma psychology distinguishes adaptive regulation from avoidance. Suppressing thoughts, emotions, or memories may provide temporary relief but often prevents long-term integration of experience. By contrast, stabilisation aims to increase an individual's capacity to experience emotional states without becoming completely dominated by them. Emotional discomfort is therefore recognised as compatible with recovery, provided that it remains within a manageable range.

For this reason, many contemporary researchers describe recovery in terms of expanding the individual's **window of tolerance**—a concept introduced by Daniel J. Siegel to describe the range of physiological and emotional arousal within which information can be processed effectively while maintaining cognitive flexibility and social engagement. When arousal remains within this range, individuals are generally able to think, communicate, learn, and reflect adaptively. When arousal exceeds these limits, functioning may shift toward hyperarousal or hypoarousal, reducing the capacity for reflective thinking and increasing reliance on survival-oriented responses.

Although the precise boundaries of the window of tolerance vary across individuals and situations, the concept has become particularly influential because it reframes recovery as the gradual expansion of regulatory capacity rather than the elimination of emotional reactions. From this perspective, stabilisation involves helping individuals spend increasing amounts of time within a physiological state that supports learning, communication, and interpersonal connection.

Contemporary evidence also demonstrates that stabilisation is fundamentally **context-dependent**. Emotional regulation cannot be understood exclusively as an individual skill independent of social environment. Family relationships, school climate, peer interactions, community support, socioeconomic conditions, and ongoing exposure to adversity all influence the extent to which regulatory capacities can develop and be maintained. Consequently, interventions directed solely at the individual while ignoring environmental conditions may produce only limited or temporary improvements.

This ecological understanding has important implications for educational settings. Trauma-informed schools increasingly recognise that predictable routines, transparent expectations, respectful communication, and emotionally responsive adults contribute directly to stabilisation. Such practices should not be viewed merely as supportive educational strategies; they represent psychologically informed conditions that reduce unnecessary cognitive and emotional demands, allowing students to allocate greater attentional resources to learning and social participation.

Another important feature of contemporary stabilisation models concerns **flexibility**. Recovery is no longer understood as a linear progression through fixed stages. Individuals frequently move between periods of relative stability and renewed distress in response to anniversaries, environmental changes, developmental transitions, or new stressors. Fluctuation therefore should not automatically be interpreted as therapeutic failure. Instead, psychological adaptation is increasingly viewed as a dynamic process characterised by continuous adjustment to changing internal and external conditions.

This perspective is particularly relevant in situations of prolonged adversity, including armed conflict, forced displacement, or chronic uncertainty. In such contexts, complete environmental safety may not yet be attainable. Stabilisation therefore focuses on strengthening adaptive functioning despite continuing external challenges. The objective is not to create ideal circumstances but to increase the individual's capacity to function, learn, maintain relationships, and preserve hope while living under imperfect conditions.

Contemporary psychology further emphasises that stabilisation extends beyond emotional functioning. It includes restoration of everyday rhythms and participation in ordinary life. Regular sleep, nutrition, physical activity, predictable daily routines, meaningful educational engagement, creative activities, and supportive social interaction all contribute to regulatory processes. These ordinary aspects of daily life should not be regarded as secondary to psychological intervention; rather, they constitute essential components of recovery itself.

From an educational perspective, this understanding significantly expands the role of schools. Educational institutions do not merely accommodate children who are recovering elsewhere; they actively participate in creating conditions that support stabilisation through consistent routines, emotionally attuned relationships, opportunities for successful participation, and experiences of competence. Consequently, educational practice becomes part of a broader psychosocial ecosystem that supports recovery without assuming the functions of psychotherapy.

For trauma-informed multilingual narrative practices, the implications are particularly important. Narrative activities should not be introduced with the expectation that children immediately explore highly distressing experiences. Instead, storytelling initially functions as a **low-risk space for communication, imagination, and agency**. Fictional narratives, collaborative stories, metaphorical characters, future-oriented scenarios, and culturally familiar story structures allow children to participate in meaning-making while remaining within emotionally manageable levels of activation. In this sense, narrative

becomes not the endpoint of recovery but one of the mechanisms through which stabilisation itself can be supported.

2.1.4. Emotional Regulation as a Developmental and Relational Process

One of the most significant developments in contemporary psychology concerns the changing understanding of emotional regulation. Earlier psychological traditions frequently interpreted emotional regulation as an individual capacity involving self-control, emotional restraint, or the conscious management of affective states. Current research, however, increasingly conceptualises emotional regulation as a dynamic developmental process emerging through continuous interaction among biological systems, interpersonal relationships, and environmental contexts.

Within trauma psychology, emotional regulation refers to the ability to recognise, tolerate, modulate, and express emotions in ways that remain compatible with adaptive functioning. Importantly, regulation should not be equated with emotional suppression. Contemporary psychological models consistently distinguish healthy regulation from the avoidance or inhibition of emotional experience. Recovery does not require the elimination of fear, sadness, grief, or anger; rather, it involves expanding an individual's capacity to experience these emotions without becoming overwhelmed by them or losing behavioural flexibility.

Current developmental research further demonstrates that emotional regulation is acquired progressively rather than emerging as an isolated individual competence. During childhood, regulatory capacities develop within relationships characterised by sensitivity, responsiveness, and emotional attunement. Consequently, children's ability to regulate distress cannot be understood independently of the interpersonal environments in which development occurs. This perspective has substantially influenced trauma-informed approaches by shifting attention from children's behaviour alone toward the quality of adult-child interactions that support adaptive emotional functioning.

Traumatic experiences may disrupt regulatory processes through multiple pathways. Persistent exposure to danger, unpredictability, or overwhelming stress may alter expectations regarding safety, reduce confidence in interpersonal relationships, and increase sensitivity to environmental cues associated with potential threat. Emotional responses that appear disproportionate within ordinary educational settings may therefore represent adaptive survival strategies developed under previous conditions of adversity rather than deliberate behavioural problems.

This interpretation has important implications for educational practice. Rather than asking why a child fails to regulate emotions appropriately, trauma-informed educators increasingly examine whether the learning environment provides sufficient external conditions to support regulation. Predictability, respectful communication, emotionally responsive adults, and opportunities for participation become part of the regulatory process itself rather than merely contextual factors surrounding it.

Contemporary psychology also emphasises that emotional regulation should not be regarded as a fixed personal characteristic. Regulatory capacities fluctuate according to developmental stage, physical health, fatigue, environmental demands, interpersonal relationships, and cumulative stress. Even individuals who generally demonstrate effective emotional regulation may temporarily lose this capacity during periods of prolonged uncertainty or significant life transitions. Consequently, trauma-informed practice seeks to strengthen flexible regulatory capacities rather than expecting constant emotional stability.

Another important contemporary insight concerns the close relationship between emotional regulation and learning. Cognitive psychology increasingly demonstrates that attention, working memory, problem-solving, language production, and executive functioning are influenced by emotional states. When emotional activation exceeds an individual's regulatory capacity, cognitive resources become increasingly directed toward monitoring potential threats rather than acquiring new knowledge or engaging in complex social interaction. Emotional regulation therefore supports educational participation not because emotionally expressive children learn less, but because effective regulation preserves cognitive resources necessary for sustained learning, communication, and reflective thinking.

For this reason, emotional regulation occupies a central position within trauma-informed multilingual narrative practices. Narrative activities are not designed primarily to reduce emotional intensity; rather, they provide structured opportunities through which emotions can be recognised, symbolically represented, communicated, and gradually integrated within personally meaningful stories. Storytelling thus contributes to regulation by supporting reflection, perspective-taking, and communicative engagement while preserving children's autonomy regarding the depth and form of self-expression

2.1.5. Co-regulation Before Self-regulation

One of the most influential developments in contemporary developmental psychology concerns the growing recognition that emotional regulation is fundamentally relational before it becomes individual. Rather than viewing self-regulation as an isolated personal competence, current theoretical models

emphasise that the capacity to regulate emotions develops through repeated interactions with responsive caregivers, educators, peers, and other significant adults. This relational perspective has become one of the cornerstones of trauma-informed practice because it reframes emotional difficulties not simply as deficits within the individual but as processes that are continuously shaped by interpersonal environments.

The concept of **co-regulation** refers to the interactive processes through which one person's emotional state is influenced, supported, or stabilised through the presence and behaviour of another. During early development, infants are unable to regulate physiological arousal independently. Emotional stability gradually emerges through thousands of everyday interactions in which caregivers respond to distress with sensitivity, consistency, and emotional attunement. These repeated experiences contribute to the development of increasingly autonomous regulatory capacities across childhood and adolescence.

Contemporary research indicates that co-regulation does not disappear once children become older. Although self-regulation gradually becomes more sophisticated, interpersonal regulation remains an essential component of emotional functioning throughout the lifespan. Under conditions of heightened stress, uncertainty, or traumatic exposure, individuals often rely more heavily on external regulatory resources, including supportive relationships, predictable social environments, and emotionally responsive communication. Consequently, trauma-informed interventions frequently seek to strengthen relational regulation rather than focusing exclusively on individual coping strategies.

This perspective represents a significant departure from educational traditions that have tended to interpret emotional self-control primarily as a matter of personal discipline or behavioural compliance. Trauma-informed psychology instead recognises that children experiencing chronic stress may temporarily require greater external regulatory support before independent self-regulation becomes possible. Emotional outbursts, withdrawal, or apparent disengagement are therefore increasingly interpreted within the broader context of regulatory capacity rather than solely as behavioural problems requiring correction.

Importantly, co-regulation should not be confused with overprotection or emotional dependency. Its purpose is not to remove all discomfort or solve children's problems on their behalf. Rather, co-regulation provides temporary external support that enables children gradually to internalise adaptive regulatory strategies. As developmental capacities strengthen, responsibility for regulation increasingly shifts from the adult toward the child, while supportive relationships remain available when additional assistance is required.

The educational implications of this perspective are substantial. Teachers influence emotional regulation not only through explicit instruction but also through their own communicative behaviour, emotional availability, consistency, and capacity to respond calmly during stressful situations. Research increasingly suggests that emotionally regulated adults contribute to emotionally regulated classrooms. Conversely, environments characterised by unpredictability, humiliation, excessive criticism, or inconsistent expectations may inadvertently intensify dysregulation among vulnerable learners.

For children affected by adversity, co-regulation often occurs through ordinary educational interactions rather than specialised psychological techniques. Greeting students by name, maintaining predictable classroom routines, acknowledging emotions without judgement, offering appropriate choices, modelling calm responses to frustration, and remaining emotionally available during moments of distress all contribute to regulatory processes. These practices require neither therapeutic expertise nor detailed knowledge of children's personal histories; they represent educational behaviours grounded in psychological evidence concerning human development and relational safety.

The importance of co-regulation becomes even more evident within multilingual educational contexts. Children adapting to unfamiliar linguistic and cultural environments frequently experience additional cognitive and emotional demands associated with communication, identity negotiation, and social participation. In such situations, emotionally supportive interactions may reduce anxiety sufficiently to enable active engagement in language learning and collaborative storytelling. Thus, emotional regulation and multilingual participation should not be viewed as separate educational objectives but as mutually reinforcing processes.

Recent psychological literature also emphasises that co-regulation is bidirectional rather than unidirectional. While adults influence children's emotional states, children's emotions simultaneously affect teachers, classmates, and the broader educational climate. Trauma-informed educational practice therefore requires attention to the emotional well-being of educators themselves. Teachers experiencing chronic stress, compassion fatigue, or emotional exhaustion may find it considerably more difficult to provide the calm, predictable, and responsive interactions that effective co-regulation requires. Consequently, contemporary trauma-informed education increasingly recognises teacher well-being as an integral component of supportive learning environments rather than a separate occupational concern.

From the perspective of trauma-informed multilingual narrative practices, co-regulation provides the relational foundation upon which meaningful storytelling becomes possible. Before children are invited to create, interpret, or share

narratives, they must experience the educational environment as sufficiently supportive to engage in imaginative exploration without fear of evaluation, coercion, or emotional exposure. Narrative activities therefore function most effectively when embedded within relationships characterised by trust, respect, curiosity, and emotional responsiveness. Under such conditions, storytelling becomes not merely a language-learning activity but a shared communicative process through which emotional regulation, social participation, and identity development can occur simultaneously.

2.1.6. Current Debates in Contemporary Trauma Psychology: Beyond Stabilisation and Emotional Regulation

Although the concepts of safety, stabilisation, and emotional regulation have become central to contemporary trauma-informed practice, their increasing popularity has also generated important theoretical and practical debates. Over the past decade, psychologists, psychiatrists, educational researchers, and public health scholars have questioned whether the rapid expansion of trauma-informed frameworks has occasionally been accompanied by conceptual overgeneralisation. These discussions do not challenge the importance of trauma-informed care; rather, they seek to clarify its appropriate scope, theoretical foundations, and practical application.

One of the most frequently discussed issues concerns the expanding use of the term *trauma* itself. Contemporary researchers increasingly distinguish between **potentially traumatic events**, **stressful experiences**, **adverse childhood experiences**, and **clinically significant traumatic disorders**. Although these concepts overlap, they should not be regarded as interchangeable. Exposure to adversity does not inevitably result in traumatic stress, just as psychological distress should not automatically be interpreted as evidence of trauma-related psychopathology. Maintaining these conceptual distinctions is essential for both scientific precision and ethical educational practice.

A related concern involves the potential **pathologisation of ordinary human responses** to adversity. Fear, sadness, grief, uncertainty, anger, and temporary difficulties with concentration are common reactions to major life disruptions, including armed conflict, forced migration, bereavement, or natural disasters. While such experiences undoubtedly deserve recognition and support, contemporary psychology cautions against interpreting every emotional response through a diagnostic lens. Overpathologisation may inadvertently reduce attention to individuals' adaptive capacities, resilience, and developmental strengths while encouraging unnecessary clinical interpretations of experiences that may resolve through supportive relationships and ordinary developmental processes.

These concerns are particularly relevant within educational settings. Schools increasingly adopt trauma-informed principles to improve children's well-being and learning; however, several scholars have warned against transforming educational environments into quasi-clinical settings. Trauma-informed education is not intended to convert teachers into therapists or classrooms into treatment spaces. Rather, its primary objective is to create conditions that support learning through psychologically informed educational practice. Maintaining this distinction protects both children's educational rights and teachers' professional responsibilities.

Another area of ongoing discussion concerns the relationship between **protection and autonomy**. Trauma-informed approaches rightly emphasise safety and emotional support, yet contemporary developmental psychology also recognises that excessive protection may unintentionally restrict opportunities for independence, competence, and self-efficacy. Children recover not only through receiving care but also through experiencing themselves as capable of making decisions, solving problems, contributing to communities, and influencing their own environments. Consequently, effective trauma-informed practice seeks to balance support with opportunities for participation, gradually strengthening children's confidence in their own abilities rather than reinforcing perceptions of vulnerability.

Current psychological research also challenges overly linear models of recovery. Earlier descriptions sometimes suggested that individuals progress through clearly defined stages culminating in complete psychological resolution. More recent evidence indicates that adaptation following adversity is considerably more dynamic. Emotional states, coping strategies, and perceived well-being fluctuate across time in response to developmental changes, environmental circumstances, social relationships, and new life experiences. Recovery therefore should not be evaluated according to the absence of distress but rather according to increasing flexibility, adaptive functioning, and participation in meaningful life activities.

This dynamic understanding is particularly important when considering children living under conditions of prolonged uncertainty, including armed conflict or displacement. For many of these children, recovery does not occur after all sources of stress have disappeared. Instead, adaptive functioning develops while uncertainty continues to exist. Contemporary trauma psychology therefore increasingly focuses on strengthening regulatory capacities, supportive relationships, educational engagement, and future orientation within ongoing adversity rather than postponing recovery until ideal external conditions become available.

These debates have significant implications for trauma-informed multilingual narrative practices. First, narrative activities should never assume that every participant has experienced trauma in the clinical sense or wishes to disclose personally significant events. Second, participation in storytelling should remain voluntary and flexible, allowing children to engage through fictional, metaphorical, future-oriented, or culturally shared narratives rather than direct autobiographical accounts. Third, educational storytelling should not be presented as psychotherapy. Its primary educational value lies in creating opportunities for communication, imagination, language development, perspective-taking, and collaborative meaning-making within emotionally supportive environments.

Finally, contemporary psychology increasingly emphasises that trauma-informed practice should be **strength-based rather than deficit-oriented**. Children affected by adversity should not be defined primarily through exposure to difficult experiences or potential psychological vulnerabilities. Alongside recognising distress where it exists, educators and practitioners are encouraged to identify curiosity, creativity, humour, empathy, persistence, linguistic abilities, cultural knowledge, social relationships, and other personal and community resources that contribute to adaptive development. This balanced perspective provides an important bridge to the next section of this chapter, which examines resilience not as an exceptional characteristic possessed by a few individuals but as a dynamic developmental process emerging through interactions among individuals, relationships, communities, and educational environments.

2.2. Language, Emotion and Traumatic Memory

Language occupies a unique position within contemporary trauma research because it simultaneously reflects, organises, and transforms human experience. Unlike earlier approaches that treated language primarily as a medium through which psychological states are expressed, current psycholinguistic and cognitive theories increasingly conceptualise language as an active participant in emotional processing itself. Speaking, writing, reading, and listening are therefore not merely communicative acts but cognitive activities through which emotions become differentiated, memories are organised, and personal experience acquires meaning.

This perspective has significantly altered scientific understanding of traumatic memory. Contemporary psychology no longer assumes that remembering consists simply of retrieving stored information. Instead, autobiographical memory is understood as a reconstructive process in which past experiences are continuously reorganised in relation to present knowledge, emotional states, social interaction, and future expectations. Language plays a central role in this

reconstruction because it provides symbolic structures that enable fragmented experiences to be organised into meaningful representations.

One of the defining characteristics of traumatic experience is that it often disrupts ordinary processes of linguistic organisation. Individuals may report that certain experiences are difficult to describe, that available words appear insufficient, or that emotional reactions emerge before coherent verbal explanations become possible. Rather than interpreting these phenomena as communicative deficits, contemporary psycholinguistics increasingly regards them as consequences of the distinctive ways in which overwhelming experiences are encoded, retrieved, and integrated within autobiographical memory.

Current research therefore emphasises that verbalisation should not be understood as the simple translation of internal experience into language. Instead, language itself contributes to emotional processing by structuring attention, differentiating affective states, establishing temporal relationships, and connecting isolated experiences with broader autobiographical narratives. From this perspective, describing an experience does not merely communicate an existing meaning; it also participates in the construction of that meaning.

This understanding has received considerable support from research on **emotion labelling**. Studies in affective science suggest that the process of identifying and naming emotional states may influence subsequent emotional regulation by increasing conceptual clarity and facilitating cognitive processing. Although naming emotions does not eliminate emotional distress, it appears to reduce uncertainty, improve self-awareness, and support more adaptive behavioural responses. Consequently, contemporary psychological interventions increasingly encourage individuals not simply to express emotions but to develop increasingly differentiated emotional vocabularies capable of capturing subtle distinctions among internal experiences.

For children, these processes are closely connected with language development itself. Emotional vocabulary expands gradually through interaction with caregivers, teachers, peers, literature, and educational activities. The ability to distinguish disappointment from grief, frustration from fear, or uncertainty from shame represents not merely linguistic growth but cognitive and emotional development. Trauma-informed educational environments therefore support emotional development not only by responding sensitively to children's feelings but also by providing linguistic resources through which increasingly complex emotional experiences can be recognised, discussed, and interpreted.

Another important contribution of language concerns the temporal organisation of memory. Traumatic experiences may initially be remembered through isolated sensory impressions, images, bodily sensations, or emotionally charged

fragments that remain only loosely connected to chronological autobiographical narratives. Language enables these elements gradually to be related to one another through temporal markers, causal relationships, perspective-taking, and reflective interpretation. The resulting narratives need not eliminate ambiguity or emotional pain; rather, they provide cognitive frameworks within which fragmented experiences become increasingly understandable.

Importantly, contemporary research cautions against assuming that greater verbal expression invariably indicates healthier psychological functioning. Individuals differ substantially in preferred modes of processing experience. Some communicate primarily through visual images, movement, music, symbolic play, or artistic creation before integrating these experiences into verbal narratives. Others may choose silence or indirect expression for extended periods without this necessarily indicating pathological avoidance. Trauma-informed educational practice therefore values language while simultaneously recognising the legitimacy of multiple pathways toward meaning-making.

From an educational perspective, these findings have important methodological implications. Narrative activities should not be designed primarily to encourage disclosure of traumatic experiences. Rather, they should expand children's opportunities to experiment with language, explore emotions symbolically, compare multiple perspectives, and construct meanings at their own pace. Fictional stories, metaphorical characters, imaginative worlds, collaborative storytelling, and future-oriented narratives may all support emotional processing without requiring direct autobiographical disclosure.

This perspective significantly broadens the educational role of language. Instead of functioning solely as a tool for literacy instruction or communication, language becomes a developmental resource that supports emotional differentiation, autobiographical organisation, social participation, and reflective thinking. These functions provide the foundation for the next section, which examines how individual memories become integrated into coherent narratives that contribute to the reconstruction of identity following adversity

2.2.1. Narrative Coherence and Identity Reconstruction

Narrative occupies a distinctive position among the many forms of human communication because it does more than describe isolated events. Contemporary research across psychology, psycholinguistics, educational sciences, and cognitive linguistics increasingly demonstrates that narrative enables individuals to organise experience into temporally, causally, and socially meaningful structures. Rather than functioning merely as a linguistic product, narrative operates as a cognitive framework through which people interpret

events, establish relationships among experiences, negotiate identity, and construct continuity across time.

Within trauma research, the concept of **narrative coherence** has become particularly influential. Coherence refers not to literary quality or grammatical correctness but to the extent to which experiences can be organised into narratives that are understandable both to the narrator and to others. Contemporary narrative psychology distinguishes several interconnected dimensions of coherence, including temporal coherence (placing events in a meaningful sequence), causal coherence (explaining relationships among events), thematic coherence (identifying recurring meanings and values), and autobiographical coherence (integrating particular experiences into broader life narratives).

These dimensions should not be interpreted as rigid structural requirements. Human narratives naturally contain uncertainty, ambiguity, contradiction, and revision. Nevertheless, research consistently suggests that greater narrative coherence is associated with improved autobiographical organisation, increased reflective capacity, and more adaptive identity development. Importantly, coherence should not be equated with complete psychological resolution. Individuals may construct coherent narratives while continuing to experience grief, loss, or uncertainty. The function of narrative is therefore not to eliminate emotional complexity but to provide a structure within which complexity becomes cognitively and socially manageable.

Traumatic experiences frequently challenge narrative coherence. Events characterised by overwhelming fear, prolonged uncertainty, or sudden disruption may resist integration into existing autobiographical frameworks. Individuals often describe such experiences as “difficult to explain,” “impossible to understand,” or “beyond words.” Contemporary psychology increasingly interprets these expressions not as failures of communication but as indications that previous systems of meaning are no longer sufficient to organise experience. Narrative reconstruction therefore involves more than remembering; it requires the gradual development of new interpretive frameworks capable of accommodating experiences that initially appeared incompatible with previously held assumptions about oneself and the world.

From a psycholinguistic perspective, narrative reconstruction is inherently dynamic. Narratives are not retrieved from memory as fixed representations but are reconstructed each time they are told, written, discussed, or reflected upon. Every act of narration is influenced by the communicative context, the intended audience, current emotional states, developmental changes, and newly acquired knowledge. Consequently, autobiographical narratives should not be understood as static records of the past but as evolving interpretations that continue to change throughout the lifespan.

This dynamic understanding has important educational implications. Learning environments provide repeated opportunities for narrative revision through dialogue, collaborative learning, reading, creative writing, and reflective discussion. Children are therefore not simply encouraged to recount experiences; they are supported in exploring alternative perspectives, identifying connections among events, recognising personal strengths, and imagining possible futures. Narrative coherence thus develops through participation in communicative communities rather than through solitary reflection alone.

Identity reconstruction represents another central function of narrative. Contemporary psychological theories increasingly conceptualise identity not as a stable collection of personality traits but as an ongoing interpretive process through which individuals integrate experiences into relatively coherent understandings of who they are, where they belong, and how they relate to others. Traumatic experiences may disrupt these processes by challenging fundamental assumptions concerning safety, trust, competence, belonging, or future possibilities. Narrative therefore contributes to recovery by supporting the gradual reorganisation of identity rather than by restoring an imagined pre-traumatic self.

Importantly, identity reconstruction should not be interpreted as returning individuals to their previous psychological state. Contemporary developmental psychology rejects the notion that recovery necessarily involves restoring an earlier version of the self. Instead, recovery frequently includes the construction of revised identities that acknowledge difficult experiences while simultaneously incorporating new competencies, relationships, values, and aspirations. Narrative provides the symbolic resources through which such developmental continuity becomes possible despite significant life disruption.

Current educational research also highlights the social character of narrative identity. Stories are rarely constructed in isolation. They emerge through conversations with parents, teachers, classmates, peers, and broader communities. Feedback from listeners influences how narratives are interpreted, expanded, questioned, or reformulated. Consequently, identity reconstruction should be understood as a collaborative rather than exclusively intrapsychic process. Educational environments that encourage respectful dialogue, multiple perspectives, and reciprocal listening therefore contribute not only to language development but also to healthy identity formation.

This collaborative perspective is particularly important in relation to children and adolescents. Developmental research indicates that young people's autobiographical narratives continue to evolve throughout adolescence as cognitive capacities, linguistic competence, social relationships, and self-understanding become increasingly sophisticated. Educational narrative activities

should therefore be viewed not as opportunities to produce definitive life stories but as developmental spaces in which evolving identities can be explored without pressure to achieve complete coherence or emotional closure.

At the same time, contemporary narrative research cautions against equating coherence with conformity. Individuals differ in cultural traditions of storytelling, communicative styles, and preferred forms of self-expression. Some narratives are highly chronological; others are episodic, metaphorical, circular, dialogic, or intentionally open-ended. Trauma-informed educational practice should therefore avoid imposing a single normative model of “good” narrative. Respect for narrative diversity is particularly important in multilingual and intercultural educational contexts, where different linguistic and cultural traditions may shape storytelling in distinctive ways.

For narrative intervention, these findings are highly significant. The educational objective is not to encourage children to produce increasingly detailed accounts of adversity but to expand their capacity to organise experience, communicate meanings, consider alternative perspectives, and construct identities that are not exclusively defined by difficult life events. Storytelling thus becomes an educational process of cognitive organisation, linguistic development, and identity negotiation rather than an instrument for eliciting traumatic disclosure.

Taken together, contemporary research suggests that narrative coherence should be understood not as the final outcome of recovery but as one of its ongoing developmental processes. As learners participate in storytelling, dialogue, creative writing, and collaborative interpretation, they gradually acquire increasingly sophisticated ways of connecting experiences, emotions, relationships, and aspirations within evolving autobiographical frameworks. These processes become even more complex—and potentially more resourceful—when individuals draw upon more than one linguistic system. The following section therefore examines multilingualism not merely as an educational challenge but as a distinctive psychological and communicative resource for narrative intervention

2.2.2. Multilingualism as a Psychological and Educational Resource

The growing linguistic diversity of contemporary educational environments has fundamentally transformed the ways in which narrative intervention is conceptualised and implemented. Increasing numbers of children develop, learn, and communicate across multiple languages as a result of migration, displacement, international mobility, intercultural families, or multilingual educational systems. Consequently, multilingualism should no longer be regarded solely as a linguistic characteristic of learners; it constitutes a cognitive,

emotional, social, and cultural resource that significantly influences how experiences are remembered, interpreted, and communicated.

For many years, educational research often approached multilingualism from a deficit perspective, emphasising linguistic gaps, delayed academic language development, or difficulties associated with learning through a second language. Contemporary psycholinguistics and multilingual education have increasingly challenged this view. Current scholarship demonstrates that multilingual individuals do not simply possess several independent language systems but draw flexibly upon integrated linguistic repertoires that support communication, problem-solving, creativity, and meaning-making across diverse contexts.

Within trauma-informed educational practice, this shift has particularly important implications. Experiences associated with war, displacement, migration, or cultural transition are frequently distributed across different linguistic environments. Children may remember family life primarily through one language, schooling through another, and intercultural communication through a third. Emotional experiences, autobiographical memories, and social relationships therefore become connected with different linguistic resources rather than being organised within a single language.

From this perspective, multilingualism should not be viewed as an obstacle to coherent narrative construction. On the contrary, the availability of multiple linguistic systems may expand opportunities for emotional expression, reflective thinking, and identity negotiation. Different languages provide access to different conceptual categories, communicative traditions, cultural metaphors, and interpersonal relationships. Narrative intervention therefore becomes richer when children are permitted to draw upon their complete linguistic repertoires rather than being restricted to one language of instruction.

Contemporary psycholinguistic research increasingly supports this interpretation. Emotional memories are influenced not only by the content of experience but also by the linguistic contexts in which those experiences are encoded and subsequently retrieved. Some multilingual speakers report that particular emotions are easier to express in one language, whereas other experiences appear more closely associated with another. These differences should not be interpreted as evidence that one language is inherently more emotional than another. Rather, emotional resonance develops through repeated interactions among language, personal history, family communication, cultural participation, and social context.

Educationally, this observation has important consequences. Trauma-informed narrative activities should avoid assuming that meaningful reflection must occur exclusively in the official language of schooling. Children may prefer to generate

ideas in one language, discuss them in another, and present their final narratives using several languages simultaneously. Such flexibility does not represent linguistic inconsistency; instead, it reflects the natural communicative practices of many multilingual learners.

This perspective aligns closely with the concept of **translanguaging**, which conceptualises multilingual communication as the strategic mobilisation of an individual's complete linguistic repertoire rather than the alternation between separate language systems. Within multilingual classrooms, translanguaging enables learners to move flexibly across languages while constructing knowledge, solving problems, negotiating meanings, and participating in collaborative dialogue. Rather than disrupting communication, such movement often facilitates deeper conceptual understanding and more authentic self-expression.

For trauma-informed narrative intervention, translanguaging offers several pedagogical advantages. First, it reduces unnecessary cognitive demands associated with maintaining strict language separation during emotionally or cognitively demanding tasks. Second, it allows learners to preserve culturally significant expressions, metaphors, and narrative forms that may lose important nuances when translated. Third, it supports more inclusive participation by recognising children's existing linguistic resources rather than evaluating them primarily according to proficiency in the language of instruction.

The educational value of multilingualism extends beyond communication. Contemporary developmental research increasingly recognises that multilingual experiences contribute to identity formation by enabling children to participate simultaneously in multiple cultural, familial, and educational communities. Rather than requiring learners to choose between linguistic identities, multilingual education acknowledges that belonging may legitimately extend across several languages, cultures, and social environments. This perspective is particularly relevant for children who continue to maintain strong connections with their country of origin while adapting to educational systems in other linguistic contexts.

At the same time, contemporary scholarship cautions against idealising multilingualism. Learning and communicating across several languages may also involve increased cognitive effort, uncertainty regarding linguistic competence, concerns about social acceptance, or fears of making mistakes in unfamiliar educational environments. Children affected by displacement frequently encounter these challenges while simultaneously adapting to new schools, peer groups, and cultural expectations. Trauma-informed multilingual education therefore seeks to reduce linguistic anxiety by creating environments in which communication is valued more highly than linguistic perfection.

An important implication concerns the role of the home language. Earlier educational models sometimes assumed that rapid transition to the language of the host society represented the most effective strategy for educational integration. Current international research increasingly suggests the opposite. Maintaining and developing children's home languages supports family communication, autobiographical continuity, cultural identity, and emotional well-being while simultaneously providing a strong linguistic foundation for additional language learning. Multilingual educational practice therefore promotes additive rather than subtractive multilingualism, recognising that new languages expand communicative opportunities without requiring the abandonment of existing linguistic identities.

Narrative intervention provides a particularly suitable context for implementing this principle. Children may choose the language that best supports a particular stage of narrative creation, combine linguistic resources during collaborative storytelling, preserve culturally meaningful expressions in their original form, or negotiate translations together with peers and teachers. Such practices transform multilingualism from a background characteristic of learners into an active pedagogical resource supporting creativity, participation, intercultural dialogue, and identity development.

These considerations also redefine the educator's role. Teachers are no longer expected to regulate every linguistic choice made during narrative activities. Instead, they facilitate communicative environments in which multilingual resources become available for learning, reflection, and collaboration. This requires openness to linguistic diversity, respect for children's communicative preferences, and recognition that meaning-making frequently occurs across languages rather than within a single linguistic code.

Ultimately, multilingualism enriches trauma-informed narrative intervention because it expands the symbolic resources through which learners interpret experience, negotiate belonging, and imagine future possibilities. The educational value of multilingual storytelling therefore lies not simply in increasing language proficiency but in supporting flexible participation within culturally and linguistically diverse communities of learning. These processes, however, depend not only on individual language use but also on the quality of interaction through which narratives are co-constructed. The following section therefore examines narrative pedagogy and dialogic learning as educational frameworks that enable multilingual storytelling to become a collaborative process of knowledge construction, communication, and identity development.

2.2.3. Narrative Pedagogy and Dialogic Learning

The educational value of narrative extends beyond its function as a means of self-expression. Contemporary educational theory increasingly conceptualises narrative as a pedagogical process through which learners construct knowledge, negotiate meanings, develop communicative competence, and participate in collaborative learning communities. Within trauma-informed education, this perspective is particularly significant because it shifts attention from stories as products to storytelling as an interactive process of learning, reflection, and dialogue.

Narrative pedagogy is grounded in the understanding that learning is fundamentally interpretative rather than merely reproductive. Students do not simply acquire information transmitted by teachers; they actively construct understanding by connecting new knowledge with prior experiences, cultural backgrounds, linguistic resources, and social interaction. Narratives facilitate this process because they organise information into meaningful structures that support comprehension, memory, empathy, and reflective thinking.

Jerome Bruner argued that narrative constitutes one of the fundamental modes through which human beings make sense of reality. Unlike paradigmatic reasoning, which seeks logical consistency and universal principles, narrative reasoning focuses on intentions, actions, relationships, and human experience. Educationally, this distinction is important because many issues related to identity, moral decision-making, intercultural understanding, and responses to adversity cannot be fully understood through abstract explanation alone. Narrative enables learners to examine complex situations from multiple perspectives while recognising ambiguity, context, and individual agency.

This understanding closely aligns with constructivist theories of learning, which emphasise that knowledge emerges through active participation rather than passive reception. Narrative activities encourage learners to interpret information, formulate hypotheses, compare perspectives, justify interpretations, and reflect upon their own assumptions. Consequently, storytelling becomes an educational methodology that integrates cognitive, linguistic, social, and emotional dimensions of learning within a single communicative activity.

An equally important development has been the growing influence of **dialogic learning**. Contemporary educational research increasingly recognises that understanding develops through interaction with others rather than through individual reflection alone. Dialogue allows learners to encounter alternative interpretations, negotiate meanings, question assumptions, and refine their own perspectives. Within narrative activities, dialogue transforms storytelling from an individual performance into a collaborative process of meaning construction.

The theoretical foundations of dialogic learning draw upon several complementary traditions. Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of dialogism emphasises that every utterance exists in relation to other voices and perspectives. Meaning is therefore not fixed within isolated texts but emerges through interaction, response, and interpretation. Applied to educational practice, this perspective encourages classrooms in which multiple viewpoints coexist and learners participate as active contributors rather than passive recipients of knowledge.

Similarly, Paulo Freire viewed dialogue as the foundation of emancipatory education. He argued that authentic learning requires reciprocal communication in which teachers and learners jointly investigate reality rather than reproducing predetermined answers. Although developed within the context of critical pedagogy, this principle has considerable relevance for trauma-informed education because it replaces hierarchical patterns of communication with relationships characterised by respect, participation, and shared inquiry.

More recent educational research has further demonstrated that dialogic interaction contributes to higher-order thinking, language development, and collaborative problem-solving. Productive classroom dialogue encourages learners to justify ideas, respond to alternative viewpoints, build upon previous contributions, and engage in sustained reasoning. These communicative practices strengthen not only academic achievement but also perspective-taking, empathy, and interpersonal understanding.

Within trauma-informed educational settings, dialogue serves additional functions. Children affected by adversity often experience disruptions in trust, belonging, or social participation. Carefully facilitated dialogic activities provide opportunities to rebuild these capacities through respectful communication rather than through direct discussion of traumatic experiences. The educational objective is not disclosure but participation. Learners are invited to contribute ideas, interpret narratives, ask questions, and collaborate with peers in ways that reinforce their sense of competence and inclusion.

Narrative pedagogy therefore differs substantially from approaches that encourage children simply to "tell their stories." Contemporary educational research suggests that storytelling becomes developmentally meaningful when embedded within structured pedagogical activities that promote curiosity, imagination, critical reflection, and collaborative interpretation. Fictional narratives, literary texts, folktales, historical narratives, digital stories, and collaboratively created stories all provide opportunities for discussing emotions, relationships, ethical dilemmas, and social issues without requiring autobiographical disclosure.

An important methodological implication concerns the role of the teacher. Within narrative pedagogy, educators do not function primarily as evaluators of narrative quality or interpreters of children's experiences. Instead, they facilitate communicative environments in which multiple interpretations can be explored respectfully and learners feel able to contribute according to their developmental level, linguistic repertoire, and personal preferences. Teachers guide discussion through questioning, modelling reflective thinking, encouraging perspective-taking, and supporting equitable participation while avoiding intrusive interpretation of learners' personal experiences.

Dialogic narrative activities are particularly valuable in multilingual classrooms. When learners communicate across different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, dialogue becomes a space in which diverse perspectives are shared and negotiated. Multilingual storytelling encourages participants to explain culturally specific concepts, compare linguistic expressions, translate meanings collaboratively, and develop intercultural understanding. In this way, multilingual dialogue supports both language learning and social inclusion by recognising linguistic diversity as a shared educational resource.

Current educational research also highlights the importance of **psychological safety** within dialogic learning environments. Effective dialogue requires that learners feel able to express uncertainty, revise their opinions, ask questions, and explore alternative interpretations without fear of ridicule or negative evaluation. Trauma-informed narrative pedagogy therefore combines intellectual challenge with emotional support, creating conditions in which learners can engage critically while maintaining a sense of security and belonging.

Finally, narrative pedagogy contributes to the development of learner agency. Through creating, interpreting, and discussing narratives, children become active participants in knowledge construction rather than passive recipients of information. They learn to organise ideas, justify interpretations, listen to others, negotiate meanings, and recognise the legitimacy of multiple perspectives. These capacities extend beyond language learning and literary education; they constitute essential components of democratic participation, intercultural communication, and lifelong learning.

Within the framework of trauma-informed multilingual narrative practices, narrative pedagogy and dialogic learning therefore provide the educational mechanisms through which psychological, linguistic, and social resources are integrated into meaningful learning experiences. Rather than positioning narrative as an end in itself, these approaches conceptualise storytelling as a collaborative educational practice that supports communication, reflection, identity development, and participation while respecting the diversity of learners' experiences and linguistic backgrounds.

2.2.4. Boundaries of Educational Narrative Intervention

The increasing use of narrative approaches in trauma-informed education has created new opportunities for supporting children's learning, communication, and well-being. At the same time, it has raised important questions concerning the professional and ethical boundaries of educational narrative intervention. While storytelling may facilitate emotional expression, identity development, and social participation, educational settings differ fundamentally from clinical environments in their aims, responsibilities, and professional competencies. Recognising these distinctions is essential for ensuring that narrative practices remain educational, ethically appropriate, and developmentally responsive.

The primary purpose of educational narrative intervention is to promote learning through language, dialogue, reflection, and creative participation. Unlike psychotherapy, it is not designed to diagnose psychological conditions, process traumatic memories, or achieve therapeutic outcomes. Although educational activities may produce positive psychosocial effects, these benefits should be regarded as complementary rather than as substitutes for professional psychological care. Maintaining this distinction protects both learners and educators by ensuring that educational practices remain within their legitimate professional scope.

One of the central ethical principles of narrative intervention is **voluntary participation**. Learners should never be required to disclose personal experiences, particularly those associated with loss, violence, displacement, or other potentially traumatic events. Compulsory autobiographical storytelling may increase emotional distress, undermine trust, or expose children to unwanted attention from peers. Contemporary trauma-informed education therefore emphasises choice, allowing learners to determine not only whether they wish to participate but also the form, depth, and focus of their narratives.

This principle extends to the selection of narrative genres. Educational activities should provide multiple possibilities for expression, including fictional stories, fairy tales, myths, historical narratives, imaginative scenarios, collaborative storytelling, and future-oriented narratives. Fiction often serves as a psychologically safe medium through which children explore complex emotions, interpersonal relationships, or moral dilemmas without directly referring to their own lives. Symbolic and metaphorical narratives similarly allow learners to engage with emotionally significant themes while preserving personal privacy and emotional distance.

Equally important is the principle of **non-interpretation**. Teachers should avoid treating children's stories as clinical evidence or attempting to infer psychological states from narrative content. Educational narratives are shaped by imagination,

literary conventions, cultural traditions, peer interaction, and communicative context, as well as by personal experience. Consequently, interpreting symbolic elements or fictional characters as direct indicators of psychological difficulties may lead to inaccurate conclusions and undermine children's trust. The educator's role is to facilitate learning and dialogue rather than to analyse hidden meanings or identify potential diagnoses.

Another important boundary concerns **psychological safety within group settings**. Narrative activities frequently take place in classrooms where stories are shared with peers. Teachers therefore bear responsibility for establishing clear expectations regarding respectful listening, confidentiality, and constructive feedback. Learners should feel confident that differing perspectives will be treated with respect and that participation will not result in ridicule, stigmatisation, or unwanted exposure. Creating such conditions is essential for sustaining both meaningful dialogue and equitable participation.

Educational narrative intervention also requires careful attention to developmental appropriateness. Children's cognitive, linguistic, and emotional capacities vary considerably across different stages of development. Narrative tasks should therefore be adapted to learners' age, language proficiency, educational experience, and sociocultural context. Younger children may benefit from visual storytelling, play-based narratives, or collaborative story creation, whereas adolescents are generally able to engage with more complex forms of reflective writing, literary interpretation, and dialogic discussion. Flexibility rather than standardisation remains a defining characteristic of effective trauma-informed educational practice.

An additional professional responsibility concerns recognising the limits of educational intervention. Teachers may occasionally observe behaviours or disclosures suggesting that a learner requires specialised psychological or social support. In such situations, educators should neither ignore these concerns nor attempt to assume therapeutic responsibilities beyond their competence. Instead, appropriate referral procedures, collaboration with school psychologists or counsellors, and communication consistent with institutional safeguarding policies become essential components of ethical practice. Narrative activities should never replace access to qualified mental health services when such support is required.

These considerations become even more important within multilingual and intercultural educational environments. Learners may express themselves differently depending on the language used, cultural norms of communication, or previous educational experiences. Educators should therefore avoid evaluating narratives according to a single linguistic or cultural standard. Respect for diverse narrative traditions, communicative styles, and multilingual practices contributes

to more inclusive educational environments while reducing the risk of misunderstanding or cultural bias.

Recent developments in educational technology introduce additional ethical considerations. Digital storytelling platforms, online collaboration, and artificial intelligence offer new opportunities for creative expression and multilingual participation. However, these technologies also require careful attention to issues of privacy, informed consent, data protection, authorship, and responsible use of digital tools. Within educational narrative intervention, technological innovation should always serve pedagogical objectives while protecting learners' rights, dignity, and personal information. More detailed discussion of these issues is presented in Chapter 2.3 and revisited in Chapter 4.

Taken together, these principles demonstrate that effective educational narrative intervention depends not only on the quality of storytelling activities but also on clearly defined professional boundaries. Trauma-informed narrative practices should create opportunities for communication, imagination, reflection, and collaborative learning without placing learners under pressure to disclose personal experiences or assigning teachers responsibilities that belong to mental health professionals. By maintaining this balance, educational narrative intervention can support language development, identity formation, intercultural dialogue, and learner participation while remaining ethically sound and educationally appropriate.

The perspectives discussed throughout this section demonstrate that contemporary narrative intervention cannot be understood solely as a pedagogical technique or a communicative activity. Rather, it represents the convergence of several complementary scientific traditions that together explain why language and storytelling occupy such a significant place in trauma-informed educational practice.

From a psycholinguistic perspective, language provides the symbolic resources through which experiences are differentiated, organised, and communicated. Emotional experiences do not become meaningful simply because they occur; they acquire meaning through processes of linguistic representation, conceptualisation, and social interaction. Narrative therefore functions not merely as a description of experience but as one of the principal mechanisms through which experience is cognitively organised and interpreted.

Educational research further demonstrates that narratives become developmentally significant when they are constructed within supportive learning environments. Storytelling, dialogue, collaborative interpretation, and reflective discussion enable learners to participate actively in meaning-making while simultaneously developing linguistic competence, critical thinking, and

interpersonal communication. The educational value of narrative consequently lies not only in the stories that learners produce but also in the social and cognitive processes through which those stories are created, shared, and discussed.

Within multilingual educational contexts, these processes acquire additional complexity. Contemporary research increasingly recognises that multilingual learners draw upon integrated linguistic repertoires when constructing narratives, negotiating identities, and participating in educational dialogue. Rather than representing a barrier to communication, multilingualism expands the range of symbolic, cultural, and communicative resources available for learning. Educational narrative intervention therefore benefits from recognising linguistic diversity as a pedagogical resource rather than as a constraint requiring reduction.

Equally important are the professional and ethical principles that define the boundaries of educational narrative intervention. The preceding discussion has emphasised that trauma-informed storytelling differs fundamentally from psychotherapy in its aims, methods, and professional responsibilities. Educational narrative practices are designed to support communication, reflection, creativity, participation, and language development rather than to elicit disclosure of traumatic experiences or provide psychological treatment. Maintaining these distinctions is essential for protecting learners' autonomy, preserving psychologically safe educational environments, and ensuring that narrative activities remain consistent with the professional role of educators.

Taken together, these linguistic and educational perspectives establish the theoretical foundations for the following section, which examines how digital technologies and artificial intelligence extend contemporary possibilities for narrative learning. Importantly, digital tools do not replace the psychological, linguistic, or pedagogical principles discussed above. Rather, they create new environments in which these principles can be implemented through multimodal communication, multilingual collaboration, adaptive learning, and human–AI interaction. Understanding these technological developments therefore requires a clear appreciation of the linguistic and educational foundations upon which effective narrative intervention continues to depend

2.3. Digital Humanities and AI-Supported Narrative Learning

2.3.1. Human-Centred AI in Trauma-Informed Narrative Education

The rapid development of digital technologies has substantially transformed contemporary educational research and practice, creating new possibilities for

communication, collaboration, creativity, and knowledge construction. Within the humanities, these developments have contributed to the emergence of **Digital Humanities**, an interdisciplinary field that integrates computational methods with the study of language, literature, culture, history, and human communication. More recently, advances in artificial intelligence have further expanded this landscape by introducing adaptive, interactive, and generative technologies capable of supporting increasingly complex forms of educational activity.

These transformations have important implications for narrative-based education. Traditionally, storytelling has been associated with oral communication, literary texts, and face-to-face interaction. Contemporary digital environments, however, allow narratives to be created, revised, illustrated, translated, shared, and collaboratively developed through multimodal platforms that combine written language, images, sound, animation, and interactive media. Narrative learning has therefore evolved from a predominantly textual activity into a multimodal educational process that accommodates diverse forms of communication and expression.

The emergence of generative artificial intelligence represents a further stage in this evolution. Unlike earlier educational technologies that primarily delivered information or supported administrative functions, contemporary AI systems are increasingly capable of participating in dialogue, generating texts, adapting explanations to individual learners, facilitating multilingual communication, and supporting creative production. These capabilities have stimulated growing interest in AI-assisted learning across psychology, linguistics, education, and learning sciences.

At the same time, the educational significance of artificial intelligence extends beyond technological innovation. Current research increasingly emphasises that AI should be understood as a cognitive and communicative tool rather than an autonomous educational agent. Learning continues to depend upon human interaction, pedagogical design, critical reflection, and meaningful participation. Artificial intelligence may facilitate these processes, but it does not replace the psychological, linguistic, or social mechanisms through which knowledge and identity are constructed.

This distinction is particularly important in relation to trauma-informed educational practice. Narrative activities involving children affected by adversity require sensitivity, ethical awareness, developmental appropriateness, and professional judgement that remain fundamentally human responsibilities. Consequently, contemporary scholarship increasingly advocates a **human-centred** approach to educational AI, in which digital technologies enhance rather

than substitute interpersonal relationships, dialogic learning, and pedagogical decision-making.

The following sections examine the principal scientific perspectives informing AI-supported narrative learning. Particular attention is devoted to multimodal narrative within Digital Humanities, the role of artificial intelligence as a cognitive and linguistic scaffold, multilingual participation in AI-supported environments, collaborative human–AI creativity, and the ethical and epistemological questions accompanying these developments.

2.3.2. Artificial Intelligence as a New Educational Paradigm

The rapid integration of artificial intelligence into educational practice has prompted scholars to reconsider several long-standing assumptions concerning knowledge, teaching, and learning. Rather than representing simply another educational technology, contemporary AI is increasingly viewed as a catalyst for broader conceptual changes affecting how learning is organised, how knowledge is produced, and how learners participate in educational processes.

One of the defining characteristics of current AI systems is their ability to engage in interactive language-based communication. Unlike earlier digital technologies that primarily delivered predetermined instructional content, generative AI systems respond dynamically to learners' questions, generate explanations, reformulate information, support brainstorming, and participate in extended dialogue. Consequently, interaction with AI increasingly resembles collaborative communication rather than traditional information retrieval.

This transformation has encouraged researchers to move beyond technology-centred perspectives toward **learning-centred frameworks**. Current educational research increasingly argues that the pedagogical value of artificial intelligence does not reside in automation itself but in its capacity to support learners' cognitive activity. AI therefore functions most effectively when it stimulates questioning, comparison, reflection, revision, and critical evaluation rather than simply producing answers.

Learning sciences have similarly shifted attention from the efficiency of information transmission toward the quality of learners' intellectual engagement. Within this perspective, knowledge is understood as something actively constructed through interaction rather than passively received from external sources. Artificial intelligence becomes educationally meaningful only when it contributes to these constructive processes by encouraging exploration, generating alternative perspectives, or facilitating deeper conceptual understanding.

This interpretation has important implications for narrative learning. Storytelling is increasingly viewed not merely as a literary product but as a complex process involving imagination, interpretation, perspective-taking, language production, and collaborative meaning-making. Artificial intelligence may contribute to these activities by extending opportunities for dialogue and creative experimentation; however, responsibility for interpretation, ethical judgement, and educational decision-making remains fundamentally human.

Contemporary scholarship therefore increasingly conceptualises artificial intelligence as part of a broader educational ecosystem rather than as an autonomous instructional agent. Teachers continue to determine educational aims, design learning environments, facilitate dialogue, and evaluate learning outcomes, while learners remain active participants responsible for interpreting, questioning, and transforming the ideas generated during interaction with AI. Within this framework, artificial intelligence functions not as a replacement for human learning but as one of several cognitive resources that may enrich educational experience when integrated thoughtfully into pedagogical practice

Conclusions

This chapter has examined the principal contemporary scientific perspectives that inform trauma-informed multilingual narrative practices in educational contexts. Building upon the historical and interdisciplinary foundations presented in Chapter 1, the discussion has focused on current psychological, linguistic, educational, and technological approaches that explain how narrative-based educational interventions may support learning, communication, resilience, and participation among children and adolescents affected by adversity.

Contemporary psychology increasingly conceptualises trauma recovery as a dynamic and multidimensional process extending beyond symptom reduction. Rather than concentrating exclusively on the treatment of psychological disorders, current research emphasises the importance of safety, stabilisation, emotional regulation, resilience, meaning-making, and supportive interpersonal relationships as fundamental conditions for adaptive development. These perspectives highlight that recovery is not a linear return to a previous state but an ongoing process through which individuals develop new capacities to interpret experience, regulate emotions, and participate meaningfully in everyday life. Within educational settings, these findings reinforce the importance of psychologically safe learning environments that promote participation, agency, and developmental growth without assuming therapeutic functions.

The chapter has also demonstrated that language occupies a central position within contemporary approaches to trauma-informed education. Psycholinguistic research increasingly recognises language as an active mechanism of cognitive organisation, emotional processing, and autobiographical meaning-making rather than merely a means of communication. Narrative enables learners to structure experiences, negotiate identity, and construct coherence across diverse life events, while dialogic educational practices create opportunities for collaborative interpretation, critical reflection, and social participation. These findings further suggest that multilingualism should be regarded not as a challenge to educational communication but as a valuable psychological, cognitive, and cultural resource that expands learners' opportunities for expression and identity development.

Particular attention has been devoted to the educational dimensions of narrative intervention. Contemporary narrative pedagogy demonstrates that storytelling acquires educational significance when embedded within dialogic learning environments characterised by respect, participation, and shared inquiry. At the same time, effective narrative intervention requires clearly defined ethical and professional boundaries. Educational storytelling differs fundamentally from psychotherapy in its aims, methods, and responsibilities; its primary purpose is to facilitate learning, communication, creativity, and reflective engagement while respecting learners' autonomy and avoiding unnecessary disclosure of personal experiences.

Finally, the chapter has considered the growing influence of artificial intelligence within contemporary educational research. Current scientific perspectives increasingly view AI not as a substitute for teachers or learners but as a cognitive and communicative resource whose educational value depends upon thoughtful pedagogical integration. Human judgement, dialogue, ethical responsibility, and meaningful social interaction remain indispensable foundations of learning, while digital technologies offer new opportunities for multilingual communication, collaborative knowledge construction, and creative narrative production. Consequently, the effectiveness of AI-supported educational practice depends less on technological sophistication than on its alignment with established psychological, linguistic, and pedagogical principles.

Taken together, the perspectives presented in this chapter provide the theoretical rationale for the empirical investigation reported in Chapter 3. They demonstrate that trauma-informed multilingual narrative practices are supported by converging evidence from psychology, psycholinguistics, educational sciences, and contemporary research on artificial intelligence. This interdisciplinary framework establishes the conceptual basis for

examining how AI-assisted multilingual narrative intervention may be designed, implemented, and evaluated within educational contexts while maintaining a human-centred, ethically responsible, and developmentally appropriate approach.

CHAPTER 3

Empirical Framework for AI-Assisted Multilingual Narrative Interventions: Research Design, Methodology and Analytical Perspectives

Introduction

The theoretical foundations presented in the previous chapters demonstrate that trauma-informed multilingual narrative practices emerge at the intersection of psychology, linguistics, education, and contemporary research on artificial intelligence. However, the educational value of these approaches depends not only on their theoretical coherence but also on the development of rigorous methodological frameworks capable of guiding empirical investigation and educational implementation.

This chapter presents the empirical framework underpinning AI-assisted multilingual narrative interventions. Rather than describing a single experimental study, it proposes an interdisciplinary research architecture that integrates educational sciences, developmental psychology, applied linguistics, narrative studies, and human-centred artificial intelligence. The framework is designed to investigate how multilingual storytelling, supported by ethically implemented AI technologies, may contribute to children's resilience, identity development, language learning, and educational participation.

Particular attention is devoted to the epistemological assumptions of the research, the conceptual model of AI-assisted multilingual narrative intervention, methodological principles of mixed-methods inquiry, ethical considerations, and analytical procedures. Together, these elements establish a coherent research framework that supports systematic investigation while preserving the complexity of children's multilingual experiences and ensuring that technological innovation remains grounded in educational and humanistic values.

3.1. Research Design and Epistemological Framework

3.1.1. Rethinking Empirical Research on Childhood Trauma in the Era of Artificial Intelligence

The rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI), coupled with increasing linguistic diversity across European societies, has fundamentally transformed the landscape of educational and psychosocial research. Traditional approaches to studying childhood trauma have primarily relied on clinical observations, standardized psychological assessments, and qualitative interviews. While these methods remain indispensable, they often provide only fragmented insights into the complex interplay between language, identity formation, emotional regulation, and resilience. Contemporary educational research increasingly recognizes that trauma cannot be understood solely through psychological constructs; rather, it emerges as a multidimensional phenomenon situated at the intersection of cognitive development, sociocultural experience, linguistic practices, and educational environments.

Within this context, multilingual narrative intervention has emerged as a promising interdisciplinary approach that integrates educational sciences, developmental psychology, applied linguistics, digital humanities, and artificial intelligence. Rather than positioning AI as a substitute for human expertise, the present methodological framework conceptualizes AI as an adaptive cognitive partner capable of facilitating reflective storytelling, multilingual communication, and scaffolded narrative construction under the guidance of educators and researchers.

The conceptual foundation of this chapter is grounded in the assumption that children's narratives are not merely linguistic products but dynamic cognitive ecosystems through which personal experiences are organized, interpreted, and reconstructed. Every narrative reflects ongoing processes of identity negotiation, emotional meaning-making, and social positioning. Consequently, AI-assisted multilingual storytelling should not be viewed exclusively as a technological innovation but as an emerging educational methodology designed to strengthen children's agency, communicative competence, and psychological resilience.

Unlike traditional intervention models that frequently prioritize symptom reduction, the framework proposed in this handbook adopts a developmental and educational perspective. The primary objective is not to diagnose trauma but to create pedagogically meaningful environments in which multilingual children can safely construct narratives, negotiate identities, and develop future-oriented perspectives.

3.1.2. Philosophical Foundations of the Research

The epistemological position adopted in this study is rooted in critical realism, complemented by principles of constructivist educational theory and human-centered artificial intelligence.

Critical realism acknowledges the existence of objective social realities—such as war, forced migration, and displacement—while recognizing that individual experiences of these realities are mediated through language, culture, and personal interpretation. Accordingly, children’s narratives are understood not as direct representations of objective events but as evolving interpretative constructions shaped by cognitive, emotional, and sociocultural processes.

Constructivist theory further assumes that knowledge is actively co-constructed through interaction. Learning, reflection, and emotional recovery are therefore viewed as dialogical processes involving children, educators, peers, families, and increasingly intelligent digital systems capable of facilitating reflective communication.

Human-centered AI provides the technological dimension of this framework. Rather than emphasizing automation or algorithmic efficiency, this perspective foregrounds ethical design, transparency, inclusiveness, and educational responsibility. Artificial intelligence functions as an assistive educational technology that enhances reflective thinking while preserving human autonomy, professional judgment, and emotional safety.

Together, these three perspectives form an integrated interdisciplinary research paradigm that recognizes trauma recovery as a socially mediated, linguistically embedded, and educationally supported developmental process.

3.1.3. Interdisciplinary Conceptual Model

The proposed empirical framework is based on the integration of five complementary scientific domains:

- * Educational Sciences;
- * Developmental and Educational Psychology;
- * Applied Linguistics and Multilingual Education;
- * Artificial Intelligence in Education (AIED);
- * Narrative and Identity Studies.

Each discipline contributes a distinct analytical perspective while simultaneously enriching the others.

Educational sciences provide the pedagogical principles governing instructional design, learning environments, and educational interventions.

Developmental psychology contributes theoretical explanations concerning emotional regulation, resilience, executive functioning, and adaptive coping mechanisms.

Applied linguistics explains how multilingual communication supports identity formation, intercultural competence, and cognitive flexibility.

Artificial intelligence introduces adaptive technologies capable of facilitating personalized narrative scaffolding, linguistic feedback, semantic analysis, and reflective dialogue.

Narrative studies conceptualize storytelling as a mechanism through which individuals organize experience, negotiate identity, reconstruct meaning, and imagine possible futures.

The convergence of these perspectives creates an innovative research architecture capable of addressing contemporary educational challenges associated with migration, multilingualism, digital transformation, and psychosocial well-being.

3.1.4. AI-Assisted Narrative Intervention as an Educational Ecosystem

Most existing intervention models conceptualize educational technologies as instructional tools designed to improve learning outcomes. The framework proposed in this handbook extends this perspective by introducing the notion of an AI-assisted narrative ecosystem.

Within such an ecosystem, artificial intelligence performs several complementary educational functions:

- * facilitating multilingual narrative production;
- * encouraging reflective dialogue through adaptive prompts;
- * supporting lexical diversification and expressive language development;
- * promoting metacognitive reflection;
- * assisting educators in identifying patterns of linguistic growth without replacing professional interpretation.

Importantly, AI is not conceptualized as a therapeutic agent. Emotional support remains fundamentally dependent upon human relationships characterized by empathy, trust, and ethical responsibility.

Instead, AI functions as an intelligent pedagogical mediator that expands opportunities for communication, creativity, and linguistic exploration while reducing cognitive barriers frequently experienced by multilingual learners.

This distinction is particularly important when working with children who have experienced displacement or prolonged educational disruption. For many multilingual learners, linguistic limitations rather than emotional unwillingness

constitute the primary obstacle to self-expression. AI-assisted language scaffolding may therefore increase opportunities for participation without imposing predetermined interpretations of children's experiences.

3.1.5. Educational Innovation Beyond Traditional Trauma Models

Conventional trauma-informed educational approaches frequently focus on recognizing symptoms, avoiding retraumatization, and establishing psychologically safe environments. While these principles remain essential, contemporary educational systems increasingly require methodologies that move beyond protection toward active development.

The present framework therefore introduces the concept of Narrative Resilience Pedagogy, defined as an educational approach that strengthens children's adaptive capacities through multilingual storytelling, collaborative reflection, digital creativity, and ethically designed AI-supported learning environments.

Narrative Resilience Pedagogy is guided by five foundational principles:

1. Psychological Safety – creating educational environments where children can participate voluntarily and without fear of evaluation.
 2. Linguistic Inclusion – recognizing multilingualism as a developmental resource rather than an educational deficit.
 3. Narrative Agency – empowering children to become authors of their own experiences rather than passive recipients of externally imposed narratives.
 4. Collaborative Meaning-Making – encouraging dialogue among peers, educators, families, and digital learning environments.
 5. Ethical Human–AI Partnership – ensuring that technological innovation remains subordinate to human dignity, educational values, and children's rights.
- Collectively, these principles establish an interdisciplinary methodological foundation for investigating how AI-assisted multilingual narrative interventions may contribute to children's resilience, educational participation, and identity reconstruction within increasingly diverse European societies.

3.2. Research Objectives, Questions and Conceptual Framework

3.2.1. Research Rationale and Objectives

The increasing number of multilingual children experiencing migration, displacement, and educational disruption has created an urgent demand for

innovative, ethically responsible, and culturally sensitive educational approaches. Contemporary European educational systems are challenged not only to provide access to learning but also to support children's identity development, linguistic inclusion, emotional well-being, and social participation.

The present research framework is based on the assumption that narrative practices represent a powerful educational mechanism through which children can organize personal experiences, construct meaning, strengthen linguistic competence, and develop resilience. When combined with carefully designed artificial intelligence tools, narrative practices may provide additional opportunities for multilingual children to engage in creative self-expression and reflective learning.

The central objective of this research framework is:

To develop and theoretically validate an interdisciplinary model of AI-assisted multilingual narrative intervention aimed at supporting children's resilience, linguistic development, and identity construction in European educational contexts.

To achieve this objective, the research framework focuses on the following specific objectives:

1. To analyze the theoretical foundations of trauma-informed multilingual education and narrative approaches.
2. To explore the relationship between multilingual storytelling practices and children's identity formation.
3. To conceptualize the role of artificial intelligence as an educational mediator in narrative-based learning environments.
4. To develop methodological principles for implementing AI-assisted narrative activities in multicultural classrooms.
5. To establish ethical guidelines for the responsible use of AI technologies when working with children.

3.2.2. Research Questions

The proposed research framework is guided by the following research questions:

RQ1.

How can multilingual narrative practices contribute to children's resilience development and identity reconstruction after experiences of displacement or disruption?

RQ2.

What linguistic and educational mechanisms support children's ability to express personal experiences through multilingual narratives?

RQ3.

How can artificial intelligence tools facilitate narrative creativity, language development, and reflective learning?

RQ4.

What are the pedagogical conditions necessary for implementing AI-assisted narrative interventions in multilingual educational environments?

RQ5.

What ethical principles should guide the application of AI technologies in educational contexts involving vulnerable groups of children?

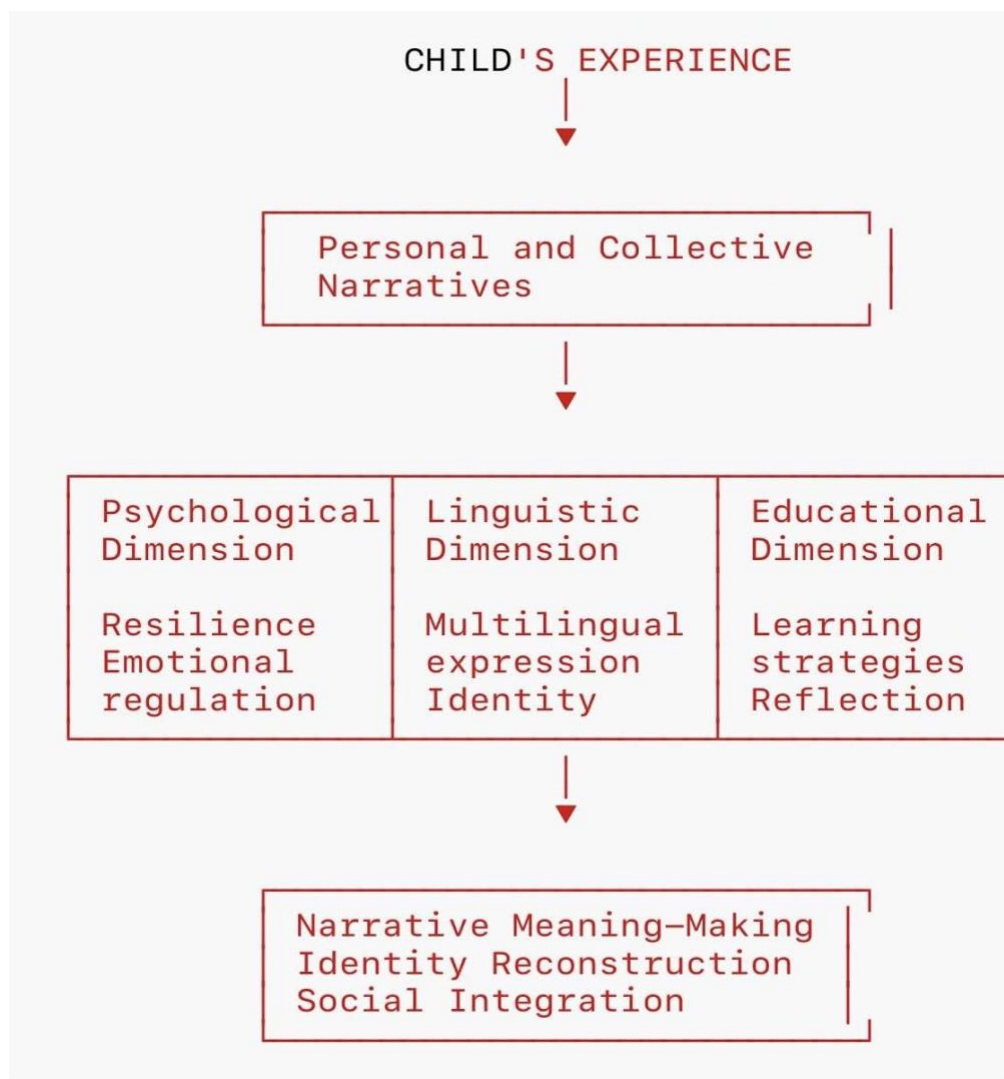
3.2.3. Conceptual Model of AI-Assisted Multilingual Narrative Intervention

The proposed model integrates five interconnected dimensions:

1. Psychological Dimension
2. Linguistic Dimension
3. Educational Dimension
4. Technological Dimension
5. Cultural and Identity Dimension

These dimensions interact dynamically, creating an educational ecosystem rather than a linear intervention process.

Figure 3.1



Conceptual Model of AI-Assisted Multilingual Narrative Intervention

Interpretation of the Model

The model demonstrates that children's narratives emerge from the interaction between individual experiences and broader sociocultural environments.

The psychological dimension emphasizes emotional safety, self-reflection, and resilience development. Narrative activities allow children to transform fragmented experiences into meaningful personal stories.

The linguistic dimension highlights the role of multilingual resources. The child's first language, additional languages, and emerging hybrid linguistic practices become instruments of communication, identity formation, and belonging.

The educational dimension focuses on teacher-mediated learning environments where storytelling becomes a structured pedagogical practice.

The technological dimension introduces artificial intelligence as a supportive mechanism that may provide:

- * language scaffolding;
- * creative prompts;
- * vocabulary expansion;
- * multimodal storytelling opportunities;
- * personalized learning pathways.

The cultural dimension recognizes that children's stories are embedded within histories, communities, and collective memories.

The proposed framework contributes to contemporary educational research by integrating areas that are traditionally studied separately.

First, it expands trauma-informed education by introducing a narrative and multilingual perspective. Instead of focusing exclusively on vulnerability, the framework emphasizes children's capacities for creativity, adaptation, and meaning-making.

Second, it contributes to artificial intelligence in education by proposing a human-centered approach where technology functions as a mediator of communication rather than an autonomous decision-maker.

Third, it advances multilingual education by conceptualizing linguistic diversity as a resource for resilience and identity development.

Finally, the framework provides a foundation for future empirical research investigating how innovative digital technologies can support inclusive education in culturally diverse European contexts.

3.3. Mixed-Methods Research Design

The complexity of childhood experiences in multilingual and multicultural European contexts requires research approaches capable of capturing both measurable educational changes and the subjective meanings constructed by children through language and storytelling. Traditional quantitative methodologies may provide valuable information regarding linguistic development, participation patterns, and educational outcomes; however, they cannot fully explain the personal meanings embedded within children's narratives. Conversely, qualitative approaches allow researchers to explore individual experiences in depth but may provide limited possibilities for identifying broader tendencies.

Therefore, this research framework adopts a mixed-methods methodology that integrates quantitative, qualitative, and computational approaches. Such integration corresponds with contemporary methodological developments in educational research, where complex human phenomena are increasingly examined through multiple complementary perspectives.

The mixed-methods approach is particularly appropriate for studying AI-assisted multilingual narrative interventions because it enables researchers to examine three interconnected dimensions:

1. The measurable dimension — changes in linguistic performance, narrative complexity, and educational engagement.
2. The interpretative dimension — children's experiences, perceptions, emotions, and identity-related reflections.
3. The technological dimension — the role of AI-supported tools in facilitating narrative construction and multilingual communication.

The proposed research focuses on multilingual children studying within European educational environments characterized by linguistic and cultural diversity.

The participant profile may include:

- * children with multilingual backgrounds;
- * children experiencing educational transition due to migration or displacement;
- * learners participating in multilingual educational programs;
- * teachers and educational professionals supporting culturally diverse classrooms.

The research context may include:

- * primary and secondary schools;
- * supplementary educational programs;
- * community-based educational initiatives;
- * language support programs.

A central principle of participant selection is not the identification of children exclusively through the category of vulnerability, but rather recognition of their multilingual competence, cultural resources, and developmental potential.

This approach corresponds with contemporary perspectives in inclusive education, which emphasize moving from deficit-oriented models toward strength-based educational frameworks.

A distinctive feature of this methodology is the understanding of children not merely as research objects but as active participants in knowledge construction. Within narrative research traditions, children's stories are considered meaningful forms of knowledge production. Through storytelling, children interpret experiences, negotiate identities, and establish connections between past experiences and future aspirations.

Therefore, the research framework adopts a participatory orientation based on three principles:

1. Voice

Children's perspectives are recognized as valuable sources of knowledge.

2. Agency

Children maintain control over the content and boundaries of their narratives.

3. Respect

Personal experiences are approached ethically, avoiding pressure to disclose traumatic memories.

The main methodological innovation of this framework lies in combining three traditionally separate research fields:

Narrative pedagogy + Multilingual education + Human-centered AI

This integration creates a new research perspective where technology does not replace human communication but expands possibilities for expression, reflection, and learning.

The framework proposes that future educational research should move toward AI-enhanced humanistic methodologies, where digital innovation serves fundamental educational values: inclusion, dignity, cultural diversity, and children's developmental potential.

3.4. Data Collection Procedures and Ethical Framework

Research involving children, multilingual communities, and experiences associated with displacement requires a particularly sensitive methodological approach. Data collection cannot be reduced to the extraction of information; rather, it should be understood as a dialogical process in which participants, researchers, and educational environments jointly construct meaning.

Within the proposed framework, data collection is based on three fundamental principles: ethical responsibility, cultural responsiveness, and participant agency. The principle of ethical responsibility requires researchers to recognize children as a potentially vulnerable population while simultaneously respecting their competence, creativity, and ability to contribute meaningful knowledge. Research procedures should therefore avoid any practices that may reproduce feelings of insecurity, exposure, or emotional pressure.

The principle of cultural responsiveness emphasizes that children's narratives are embedded within specific linguistic, historical, and cultural contexts. Multilingual narratives should not be interpreted exclusively through dominant-

language perspectives, as such approaches may overlook important elements of identity, memory, and belonging.

The principle of participant agency recognizes children's right to determine what they wish to communicate and how they wish to represent their experiences. Narrative activities should therefore provide opportunities for self-expression without requiring disclosure of personal traumatic events.

The proposed research methodology includes several interconnected stages.

Stage 1: Contextual Preparation

The first stage involves establishing cooperation with educational institutions, teachers, and relevant stakeholders. Researchers analyze the educational environment, linguistic diversity of participants, available technological resources, and institutional requirements.

At this stage, researchers also prepare ethical documentation, informed consent procedures, and guidelines for responsible AI usage.

Stage 2: Initial Narrative and Linguistic Exploration

The second stage focuses on understanding participants' existing narrative practices and multilingual resources.

Possible research activities include:

- * creative writing tasks;
- * oral storytelling activities;
- * multilingual self-presentation exercises;
- * reflective discussions;
- * observation of classroom communication.

The purpose of this stage is not assessment in a deficit-oriented sense, but identification of children's existing linguistic and cultural resources.

Stage 3: AI-Assisted Narrative Activities

During the third stage, participants engage in structured narrative activities supported by artificial intelligence tools.

AI may support the following processes:

- * brainstorming ideas for stories;
- * expanding vocabulary;
- * organizing narrative structures;
- * exploring alternative expressions;
- * supporting multilingual transformations.

However, AI-generated content should always remain under human supervision. The child's voice, intention, and personal interpretation must remain central.

Stage 4: Reflective Analysis and Feedback

The final stage involves reflection on the learning experience.

Participants may discuss:

- * how they experienced multilingual storytelling;
- * whether AI tools supported their creativity;
- * how language influenced their stories;
- * what they learned about themselves and others.

Such reflection provides valuable insight into the educational potential and limitations of AI-assisted narrative practices.

3.5. Analytical Approaches: Linguistic, Educational and Interpretative Perspectives

Narrative analysis represents one of the central methodological approaches within this research framework. Stories are examined not only as linguistic structures but as complex forms of meaning-making.

The analysis focuses on several dimensions:

Structural dimension

This dimension examines:

- * organization of narratives;
- * chronological structure;
- * coherence;
- * development of characters and events.

Emotional dimension

This dimension explores:

- * emotional vocabulary;
- * expressions of agency;
- * representations of challenges and opportunities;
- * future-oriented thinking.

Identity dimension

This dimension investigates:

- * representations of belonging;
- * cultural references;
- * multilingual identity construction;
- * relationships between past, present, and future.

Narrative analysis allows researchers to understand how children use language to interpret experiences and construct personal identities.

A central innovation of the proposed framework is the integration of applied linguistics into the analysis of children's narratives.

Multilingual narratives may demonstrate:

- * flexible movement between languages;
- * strategic use of culturally specific expressions;

- * development of hybrid linguistic identities;
- * different emotional meanings associated with different languages.

The analysis should therefore avoid evaluating multilingual texts according to monolingual standards. Instead, multilingual practices are interpreted as evidence of cognitive flexibility, cultural adaptation, and communicative creativity.

Important analytical categories include:

- * lexical diversity;
- * narrative complexity;
- * code-switching patterns;
- * metaphorical expressions;
- * emotional language resources.

Artificial intelligence provides new possibilities for analysing large volumes of linguistic data while supporting researchers in identifying patterns that may remain difficult to detect through manual analysis alone.

Potential AI-supported analytical functions include:

- * identification of recurring linguistic patterns;
- * semantic analysis of narratives;
- * comparison of multilingual versions of texts;
- * detection of changes in vocabulary complexity;
- * visualization of narrative development.

Nevertheless, AI-based analysis requires careful interpretation. Algorithms may identify linguistic patterns but cannot fully understand cultural meanings, emotional contexts, or individual experiences.

Therefore, the proposed approach follows the principle of human-guided AI analysis, where computational methods support rather than replace scholarly interpretation.

The integration of artificial intelligence into educational research creates new ethical challenges related to:

- * privacy protection;
- * data ownership;
- * algorithmic bias;
- * informed consent;
- * digital inequality.

These challenges become particularly significant when working with children whose narratives may contain sensitive personal or cultural information

Research involving children's narratives requires strict compliance with European data protection principles, including:

- * minimization of collected data;
- * secure storage procedures;
- * anonymization;
- * controlled access to research materials.

Children's narratives should be treated as personal expressions rather than merely research data.

The responsible use of AI requires adherence to several principles:

- * Transparency
- * Participants and educators should understand how AI tools function and what role they play.
- * Human Oversight
- * Educational decisions should always remain under human control.
- * Fairness
- * AI systems should not reproduce linguistic, cultural, or social biases.
- * Child-Centered Design
- * Technologies should be adapted to children's developmental needs and rights.

The proposed framework contributes to European educational research by addressing several contemporary challenges simultaneously:

- * increasing linguistic diversity;
- * migration and displacement;
- * digital transformation of education;
- * children's psychological well-being;
- * inclusive learning environments.

Rather than positioning multilingual children through the lens of vulnerability alone, this approach emphasizes their linguistic resources, creativity, and capacity for adaptation.

The integration of AI-assisted narrative practices offers a new direction for educational innovation, combining technological development with humanistic principles.

Although AI-assisted multilingual narrative intervention represents a promising research direction, several limitations should be acknowledged.

First, AI technologies continue to develop rapidly, requiring continuous evaluation of their educational effectiveness and ethical implications.

Second, children's narratives are highly contextual and influenced by cultural, family, and educational environments. Therefore, research findings should always consider local specificities.

Third, AI tools cannot replace professional psychological support or human relationships. Their role should remain supportive and educational.

Future research directions may include:

- * longitudinal studies examining the development of narrative competence over time;
- * comparative research across European countries;
- * investigation of AI-supported multilingual education among different age groups;

- * development of ethical standards for AI-assisted educational interventions.

Conclusions

This chapter has presented a comprehensive methodological framework for investigating AI-assisted multilingual narrative interventions in European educational contexts. By integrating perspectives from educational sciences, psychology, linguistics, narrative studies, and artificial intelligence research, the proposed framework provides a foundation for future empirical investigations.

The central argument of this chapter is that children's narratives represent powerful resources for learning, identity development, and resilience building. When supported by ethically designed artificial intelligence technologies, multilingual narrative practices may contribute to more inclusive, culturally responsive, and innovative educational environments. The future of education requires approaches that combine technological advancement with human values. AI-assisted multilingual narrative methodologies represent one possible pathway toward such integration, placing children's voices, languages, and experiences at the center of educational transformation.

CHAPTER 4

Educational Methodology and Practical Guidelines for AI-Assisted Multilingual Narrative Practices

Introduction: From Theoretical Understanding to Educational Implementation

The transformation of contemporary European education requires a movement from theoretical discussions about multilingualism, digitalization, and psychological well-being toward practical educational methodologies capable of addressing the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse learners. The increasing presence of children with migration and displacement experiences has demonstrated that educational institutions must provide not only academic knowledge but also opportunities for identity development, social participation, and meaningful communication.

In this context, AI-assisted multilingual narrative practices represent a promising methodological direction that combines three essential dimensions of modern education: linguistic development, intercultural understanding, and digital innovation.

The methodological approach proposed in this chapter is based on the understanding that language is not merely a communication instrument but a mechanism of cognition, identity formation, and social belonging. As Vygotsky (1978) emphasized, human development occurs through socially mediated interaction, while Bruner (1990, 2002) demonstrated that narratives represent fundamental structures through which individuals organize experience and construct meaning.

For multilingual children, storytelling becomes particularly significant because it creates opportunities to integrate different linguistic resources, cultural memories, and personal experiences. As García and Li Wei (2014) argue, multilingual speakers do not simply alternate between separate linguistic systems; rather, they employ their complete linguistic repertoire to create meaning. Therefore, multilingual narrative practices should be understood as a resource-oriented educational strategy.

The integration of artificial intelligence expands these possibilities by providing additional forms of linguistic support, creative stimulation, and personalized learning. However, AI should not replace human communication. Its educational value emerges only within a human-centered framework where teachers remain responsible for ethical decisions, emotional support, and pedagogical interpretation. Contemporary discussions of AI in education increasingly emphasize this balance between technological innovation and human agency.

4.1. Principles of Trauma-Informed Multilingual Educational Practice

The first methodological principle is the creation of a psychologically safe educational environment.

Children who have experienced significant life changes, migration, or displacement may require learning environments characterized by predictability, trust, and respect. However, trauma-informed education does not mean focusing exclusively on traumatic experiences. Instead, it emphasizes creating conditions where children can develop competence, confidence, and a sense of belonging.

Teachers should therefore avoid direct requests such as:

“Tell us about the worst experience you have had.”

Instead, narrative activities should use empowering prompts:

“Tell the story of a place that is important to you.”

“Describe a person who helped you become stronger.”

“Create a story about a future you would like to build.”

Such approaches correspond with resilience-oriented perspectives developed by researchers such as Masten (2014), who emphasizes that resilience is not an exceptional characteristic but a developmental process supported by appropriate environments.

4.1.1 Principle of Linguistic Inclusion

A central principle of this methodology is recognition of multilingualism as an educational resource.

Traditional educational systems have often interpreted multiple languages as obstacles requiring correction. Contemporary multilingual education challenges this assumption by demonstrating that children’s languages represent cognitive, cultural, and emotional resources.

Cummins (2000, 2021) highlights that maintaining and developing children's linguistic resources contributes positively to academic development and identity formation.

Therefore, teachers should encourage activities where children can:

- * create stories in their first language;
- * translate or adapt stories into another language;
- * compare expressions across languages;
- * discuss cultural meanings embedded in words.

For example:

A child may write:

“My grandmother's garden was my safe place.”

Then explore how the concept of “safe place” is expressed in Ukrainian, German, and English.

Such activities develop not only vocabulary but also intercultural awareness.

4.1.2. Principle of Narrative Agency

Narrative agency refers to children's ability to become authors of their own stories.

Many children experiencing migration are frequently described through external categories:

“refugee child”

“migrant learner”

“child with trauma”

Although these categories may describe social circumstances, they do not represent the whole person.

Narrative pedagogy allows children to move from passive descriptions toward active self-representation.

The teacher's role is therefore not to interpret children's stories but to create conditions where children can construct their own meanings.

A methodological example:

Instead of asking:

“What happened to you during migration?”

the teacher may ask:

“What experiences have shaped who you are today?”

The difference is fundamental: the first question positions the child through trauma; the second recognizes personal development and agency.

4.2. AI-Assisted Storytelling Methodology

4.2.1. Artificial Intelligence as an Educational Mediator

Artificial intelligence should be conceptualized as a supportive educational mediator rather than an autonomous teacher or psychological assistant.

Its functions may include:

- * generating creative prompts;
- * supporting vocabulary development;
- * assisting multilingual transformations;
- * providing alternative linguistic formulations;
- * encouraging reflection.

Recent research on AI and multilingual education emphasizes that generative AI can expand opportunities for multilingual content creation and translanguaging practices when used through a student-centered approach.

The teacher remains the key figure who:

- * selects appropriate tasks;

- * evaluates educational relevance;
- * ensures ethical use;
- * supports children's emotional needs.

4.2.2. Practical AI-Assisted Narrative Activities

Activity 1: “My Multilingual Identity Map”

Objective:

To develop awareness of linguistic identity.

Procedure:

Students create a personal narrative describing:

- * languages they know;
- * places connected with these languages;
- * people associated with each language;
- * emotions connected with linguistic experiences.

AI may assist by generating reflection questions:

“Which language feels closest to your childhood memories?”

“Are there words that cannot be translated completely into another language?”

Educational outcome:

Students recognize multilingualism as a component of personal identity.

Activity 2: “A Place That Lives in My Memory”

Objective:

To combine narrative competence with emotional reflection.

Students describe an important place.

Possible examples:

- * a childhood home;
- * a school;
- * a city;
- * a landscape.

AI may support:

- * vocabulary expansion;
- * metaphor creation;
- * narrative structure.

Example:

Original sentence:

“I remember my city.”

Expanded narrative:

“I remember my city not only through streets and buildings but through sounds, voices, and emotions connected with people who shaped my childhood.”

The educational focus is not linguistic perfection but deeper meaning construction.

Activity 3: “My Future Story”

Objective:

To develop future-oriented thinking and resilience.

Students create a narrative beginning with:

“Five years from now, I see myself...”

This activity supports:

- * imagination;
- * motivation;
- * identity continuity;
- * educational aspirations.

4.3. Teacher’s Methodological Role

The effectiveness of AI-assisted multilingual narrative practices depends primarily on teacher competence.

Teachers require:

- * digital competence;
- * intercultural competence;

- * linguistic sensitivity;
- * ethical awareness.

As **T. Symonenko's** research direction emphasizes, professional communicative competence represents an integrated phenomenon combining linguistic knowledge, communicative skills, and cultural awareness (Symonenko, 2011).

In AI-supported environments, this competence acquires a new dimension: teachers must become mediators between learners, languages, cultures, and technologies.

4.4. Assessment Methodology for AI-Assisted Multilingual Narrative Practices

Assessment within AI-assisted multilingual narrative education requires a transition from traditional models focused primarily on linguistic accuracy toward more comprehensive approaches that consider communication, creativity, identity development, and reflective capacity.

In conventional language education, learners are frequently evaluated according to grammatical correctness, vocabulary range, and structural organization. Although these aspects remain important, multilingual narrative practices require broader assessment perspectives because children's stories represent not only language production but also processes of meaning construction and personal development.

Therefore, assessment within this framework should be understood as a multidimensional process that examines:

- * narrative competence;
- * multilingual communication strategies;
- * creative expression;
- * intercultural awareness;
- * reflective thinking;
- * digital literacy.

This approach corresponds with contemporary educational theories emphasizing formative assessment and learner-centered evaluation. As Vygotsky (1978) demonstrated, learning occurs through development supported by interaction, while assessment should therefore identify not only current abilities but also potential growth.

Narrative competence represents a complex educational construct including several interconnected abilities:

1. Structural organization

Students demonstrate the ability to:

- * create coherent narratives;
- * organize events logically;
- * develop characters and contexts.

2. Emotional expression

Students demonstrate the ability to:

- * describe feelings;
- * express perspectives;
- * interpret experiences.

3. Linguistic creativity

Students demonstrate the ability to:

- * use diverse vocabulary;
- * employ metaphors and descriptions;
- * adapt language according to communicative purposes.

4. Cultural reflection

Students demonstrate the ability to:

- * recognize cultural meanings;
- * compare perspectives;
- * negotiate multilingual identities.

The integration of artificial intelligence requires the development of new assessment dimensions related to responsible digital participation.

Students should gradually develop the ability to:

- * understand the functions and limitations of AI systems;
- * critically evaluate AI-generated suggestions;
- * recognize possible biases;
- * use AI creatively rather than passively.

Similarly, teachers require professional AI literacy. Recent educational research increasingly emphasizes that successful AI integration depends not only on

technological availability but also on educators' ability to design meaningful pedagogical applications.

Your own research direction fits strongly here: the concept of the teacher as a professional who combines pedagogical expertise, communication competence, and digital transformation becomes particularly relevant in AI-supported education.

4.5. Guidelines for University Students and Future Educators

Universities play a crucial role in preparing educators capable of working within increasingly diverse European classrooms.

Future teachers should develop an integrated professional profile combining:

- * linguistic competence;
- * intercultural competence;
- * psychological awareness;
- * digital competence;
- * ethical responsibility.

Professional competence in contemporary education can no longer be limited to subject knowledge. The teacher becomes a mediator between cultures, languages, learners, and technologies.

In this context, communicative competence represents a fundamental professional quality. As emphasized in your scientific research tradition, effective professional communication integrates linguistic knowledge, cognitive processes, cultural understanding, and practical interaction skills (Symonenko).

The AI era does not reduce the importance of teachers; rather, it transforms their professional role from information transmitters into designers of meaningful learning environments.

A university course based on this methodology may include the following thematic blocks:

Module 1

Trauma-Informed and Inclusive Education

Students explore:

- * childhood experiences of migration and displacement;
- * principles of psychological safety;
- * resilience-oriented education.

Key question:

“How can education support children without defining them only through difficult experiences?”

Module 2

Multilingualism and Identity

Students analyze:

- * multilingual identity;
- * translanguaging practices;
- * language and belonging.

Practical task:

Create a multilingual autobiography demonstrating how different languages represent different aspects of personal identity.

Module 3

Artificial Intelligence in Educational Practice

Students study:

- * AI-assisted learning;
- * ethical use of generative AI;
- * opportunities and limitations of AI tools.

Practical task:

Design an AI-supported narrative activity for multilingual learners.

Module 4

Narrative Pedagogy

Students explore:

- * storytelling as a learning method;
- * reflective writing;
- * digital storytelling.

Practical task:

Develop a lesson plan based on personal storytelling and intercultural dialogue.

4.6. Practical Recommendations for Educators

Recommendation 1: Begin with Identity, Not Trauma

Teachers should avoid constructing educational activities around children's difficulties only.

A child is not merely:

- * a displaced learner;
- * a multilingual learner;
- * a child with challenging experiences.

A child is:

- * a language user;
- * a storyteller;
- * a creator;
- * a participant in cultural exchange.

Recommendation 2: Use AI as a Creative Partner

AI tools should stimulate creativity rather than replace thinking.

Effective prompts may include:

“Help me find different ways to describe this place.”

“Suggest questions that help me develop my story.”

“How can this story be expressed in another language?”

The purpose is not to allow AI to write children’s stories but to support children’s own creative processes.

Recommendation 3: Encourage Multilingual Storytelling

Teachers should create opportunities where multiple languages are welcomed.

Example activity:

A student writes a story about a family tradition.

The story includes:

- * original expressions from the home language;
- * explanations in another language;
- * cultural reflections.

Such practices strengthen both language competence and intercultural understanding.

Recommendation 4: Maintain Ethical Human Control

AI-generated content requires critical evaluation.

Teachers should discuss with students:

- Is this information correct?
- Does this represent my idea?
- Does this respect cultural differences?
- Does this sound like my own voice?

This develops critical digital literacy.

4.7. Future Perspectives of AI-Assisted Multilingual Narrative Education

The development of AI technologies creates new possibilities for inclusive education, but these possibilities require thoughtful pedagogical implementation.

Future research and practice should focus on:

- * personalized multilingual learning environments;
- * AI-supported intercultural communication;
- * ethical digital storytelling;
- * collaboration between educators, linguists, psychologists, and AI specialists.

The future classroom will not be defined simply by the presence of technology. Its quality will depend on how effectively technology supports human communication, creativity, and understanding.

AI-assisted multilingual narrative practices represent one possible model of such transformation. They combine technological innovation with fundamental educational values: respect for diversity, recognition of children's voices, and support for lifelong learning.

Conclusions

This chapter has presented a practical methodology for implementing AI-assisted multilingual narrative practices in contemporary educational environments. The proposed approach integrates trauma-informed education, multilingual pedagogy, narrative learning, intercultural communication, and responsible use of artificial intelligence within a coherent human-centred framework.

The methodology positions children as active authors and meaning-makers rather than passive recipients of educational or technological intervention. Multilingual resources are recognised as instruments of expression, identity, belonging, and learning, while narrative activities provide structured opportunities for creativity, reflection, dialogue, and future-oriented thinking. Artificial intelligence may support these processes through linguistic scaffolding, idea generation, translation, and revision, but it must remain subordinate to the learner's intentions and the educator's professional judgement.

The effectiveness of the approach therefore depends less on the availability of advanced technologies than on the quality of pedagogical design. Psychological safety, voluntary participation, linguistic inclusion, narrative agency, ethical oversight, and critical evaluation of AI-generated content constitute its essential conditions. Teachers require not only digital competence but also linguistic sensitivity, intercultural awareness, and a clear understanding of the professional boundaries separating educational support from psychological treatment.

Taken together, the principles and activities presented in this chapter demonstrate how AI-assisted multilingual storytelling can be incorporated into schools, universities, and community-based educational programmes without displacing human relationships or reducing children's narratives to technological products. When implemented responsibly, these practices can contribute to more inclusive learning environments in which linguistic diversity, personal experience, creativity, and intercultural dialogue become meaningful educational resources.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

AI-Assisted Multilingual Narrative Practices as a New Direction in Inclusive European Education

The rapid transformation of contemporary European societies, characterized by increasing linguistic diversity, migration processes, digitalization, and the growing role of artificial intelligence, requires the development of innovative educational approaches capable of responding to complex human and social challenges.

This handbook has explored the theoretical foundations, methodological principles, and practical applications of AI-assisted multilingual narrative practices as an interdisciplinary educational approach aimed at supporting children's resilience, linguistic development, identity construction, and social inclusion.

The central argument developed throughout the handbook is that language, narrative, and technology should not be considered separate educational domains. Instead, they represent interconnected dimensions of human development and learning. Children's narratives provide access to their cognitive, emotional, cultural, and linguistic worlds, while multilingual practices create opportunities for recognizing diversity as a resource rather than a limitation.

The integration of artificial intelligence introduces new possibilities for educational innovation. However, the value of AI does not lie in replacing human interaction but in enhancing opportunities for creativity, reflection, and communication. A human-centered approach remains fundamental, ensuring that technological development serves educational, ethical, and social purposes.

Theoretical Contribution

The handbook contributes to contemporary educational theory by proposing an integrated conceptual perspective that combines:

- * trauma-informed education;
- * multilingual pedagogy;
- * narrative approaches;
- * intercultural communication;
- * artificial intelligence in education.

Traditional approaches often examine these areas separately. However, children's experiences in contemporary Europe demonstrate that linguistic, psychological, cultural, and technological dimensions are deeply interconnected.

The proposed framework extends existing understandings of multilingual education by emphasizing that languages function not only as communication systems but also as resources for identity construction, emotional expression, and belonging.

Building upon the ideas of Vygotsky (1978), Bruner (1990, 2002), Cummins (2000, 2021), García and Li Wei (2014), and contemporary AI education research, this handbook conceptualizes multilingual narrative practice as a developmental environment where learners actively construct knowledge and meaning.

Author's Conceptual Contribution

Towards an AI-Enhanced Multilingual Narrative Education Model

The authors propose the concept of AI-Enhanced Multilingual Narrative Education (AEMNE) as an innovative interdisciplinary model for European educational contexts.

This model is based on four interconnected scientific pillars:

1. Multilingual Communication as a Resource

The first pillar recognizes linguistic diversity as a cognitive and cultural advantage.

Children's languages represent:

- * personal histories;
- * cultural memories;
- * emotional resources;
- * cognitive flexibility.

Within this perspective, multilingual learners are not viewed as students who lack sufficient competence in a dominant language but as individuals possessing complex linguistic repertoires.

This approach corresponds with translanguaging perspectives developed by García and Li Wei (2014), which emphasize the dynamic use of multiple linguistic resources in meaning-making processes.

2. Narrative Practices as Tools of Meaning Construction

The second pillar is based on the understanding that narratives represent fundamental mechanisms through which individuals interpret experiences and construct identity.

As Bruner (1990) emphasized, human beings understand reality through narrative structures. Stories allow learners to connect past experiences with present identities and future aspirations.

In educational contexts, narrative practices can support:

- * self-expression;

- * reflection;
- * intercultural dialogue;
- * resilience development.

The child becomes not an object of educational intervention but an active author of personal meaning.

3. Artificial Intelligence as a Human-Centered Educational Mediator

The third pillar introduces AI as a supportive partner in learning.

The proposed model rejects technological determinism. Artificial intelligence is not perceived as a replacement for teachers or human relationships.

Instead, AI functions as:

- * a creative assistant;
- * a linguistic support mechanism;
- * a reflective learning tool;
- * a resource for personalized education.

This perspective corresponds with responsible AI principles promoted by UNESCO (2023) and the European Commission, emphasizing transparency, human oversight, inclusion, and ethical responsibility.

4. Intercultural Competence as the Foundation of European Education

The fourth pillar emphasizes intercultural competence as a key educational outcome.

In increasingly diverse European societies, education must prepare learners not only to communicate in different languages but also to understand different cultural perspectives.

Intercultural competence includes:

- * openness toward diversity;
- * ability to negotiate meanings;
- * respect for different experiences;
- * readiness for dialogue.

This perspective directly connects with contemporary approaches to professional communication and intercultural education developed within Ukrainian and European educational research traditions.

The Proposed Research and Educational Paradigm

The authors introduce the following conceptual formula:

AI + Multilingual Communication + Narrative Practice + Intercultural Competence = Inclusive Educational Transformation

This formula reflects the main idea of the handbook:

Technology becomes meaningful only when it strengthens human communication, linguistic diversity, and personal development.

Implications for European Higher Education

The proposed model has particular relevance for universities preparing future teachers, researchers, and educational professionals.

Higher education institutions should increasingly develop programs that combine:

- * digital competence;
- * intercultural competence;
- * multilingual awareness;
- * ethical AI literacy;
- * reflective pedagogical practice.

Future educators should be prepared to work within classrooms where linguistic and cultural diversity is not an exception but a normal condition of European education.

Implications for Future Research

The framework presented in this handbook opens several directions for further investigation:

1. Longitudinal studies of AI-assisted narrative practices in multilingual classrooms.
2. Comparative European research examining different educational contexts.
3. Development of ethical standards for AI use with children.
4. Investigation of the relationship between multilingual storytelling and resilience development.
5. Creation of interdisciplinary research networks connecting linguists, educators, psychologists, and AI researchers.

Final Statement

The future of education will depend not only on technological progress but on the ability to preserve human values within digital transformation.

AI-assisted multilingual narrative practices represent an emerging educational paradigm in which technology, language, culture, and human experience interact in meaningful ways.

By placing children's voices, languages, and stories at the center of educational practice, this approach contributes to the development of more inclusive, resilient, and culturally responsive learning environments across Europe.

The authors believe that the integration of artificial intelligence with multilingual narrative education can become an important pathway toward an educational future where diversity is recognized as a source of creativity, dialogue, and innovation.

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Appendix A

Therapeutic Fairy-Tale Prompts for AI-Assisted Multilingual Narrative Education

How to Use These Storytelling Prompts

The following therapeutic storytelling prompts are designed for multilingual educational settings involving children and adolescents. They support narrative competence, emotional reflection, creativity, intercultural awareness, and language development within a trauma-informed educational framework.

These activities are **educational rather than therapeutic**. They do not encourage children to disclose personal traumatic experiences. Instead, they employ symbolic fairy-tale narratives that enable learners to explore universal human emotions through imagination, metaphor, and creative storytelling.

Each activity may be completed individually or collaboratively. Students may write in one language or combine several languages according to their linguistic repertoire. Artificial intelligence may be used to support idea generation, vocabulary expansion, multilingual translation, or illustration; however, the narrative itself should remain the learner's own creation.

After completing each story, learners may illustrate their fairy tale by drawing or by generating an image with an AI image-generation tool.

Activity 1

The Fairy Tale of Loneliness

Write a therapeutic fairy tale about a character who lives in a world where people gradually stop hearing and noticing one another. As a result, the main character begins to feel lonely and invisible.

During the story, the character should:

- * meet another person who also experiences loneliness;
- * overcome a challenge involving silence, isolation, or loss;

- * discover the importance of friendship, trust, and mutual support.

Required narrative elements

- * a symbolic representation of loneliness (e.g., an empty house, a cold star, an abandoned garden);
- * a magical helper;
- * a moment of inner transformation.

Illustration task: Draw or generate an illustration representing the symbolic world of your fairy tale.

Activity 2

The Shadow That Stole the Colours

Write a therapeutic fairy tale about a world where a mysterious Shadow begins stealing colours, music, dreams, or people's voices.

The main character should:

- * journey through fear and uncertainty;
- * discover a source of hope or inner light;
- * help restore hope to the community.

Required narrative elements

- * a symbolic representation of conflict;
- * a magical helper;
- * a motif of renewal and hope.

Illustration task: Create an illustration of the Shadow and the moment when hope begins to return.

Activity 3

The Fairy Tale of Fear of Failure

Write a fairy tale about a character who becomes so afraid of making mistakes that they stop acting and pursuing their dreams.

Throughout the story, the character should:

- * receive an important mission or dream;
- * experience several failures;
- * discover that mistakes are part of learning and growth.

Required narrative elements

- * a symbolic obstacle (for example, a broken mirror, an impossible mountain, or a dark labyrinth);
- * a wise mentor or loyal friend;
- * a final inner victory.

Illustration task: Depict the moment when the character overcomes fear.

Activity 4

The Journey to the City of Adults

Write a fairy tale about a child who learns that they must soon leave the Land of Childhood and travel to the mysterious City of Adults.

The character fears:

- * responsibility;
- * change;
- * losing dreams and sincerity.

The story should include:

- * a symbolic journey;
- * encounters with people who have already completed this path;
- * the discovery that growing up does not mean losing one's true self.

Required narrative elements

- * a symbolic border between childhood and adulthood;
- * a magical guide;
- * an emotionally meaningful transformation.

Illustration task: Show the bridge or gateway connecting the two worlds.

Activity 5

The Dark Forest

Write a fairy tale in which the main character must travel through a Dark Forest representing personal fears and anxieties.

During the journey, the character encounters:

- * personifications of their fears;
- * a magical companion;
- * three symbolic challenges leading to personal growth.

Required narrative elements

- * a symbolic landscape;
- * three trials;
- * personal transformation.

Illustration task: Illustrate the Dark Forest and its symbolic creatures.

Activity 6

The Person Who Feared Change

Write a fairy tale about a character living in a world where everything always remains exactly the same. One day, this perfect order suddenly disappears.

The character should:

- * experience the loss of the familiar world;

- * gradually accept change;
- * discover that change can create new opportunities.

Required narrative elements

- * symbols of the old and the new world;
- * a magical guide;
- * an inner conflict.

Illustration task: Show the meeting between the old world and the new one.

Activity 7

Meeting the Shadow Within

Write a fairy tale in which the main character meets their own Shadow—a mysterious being that feeds on fear, sadness, anger, or self-doubt.

The character's task is to:

- * understand the true nature of the Shadow;
- * stop running away from it;
- * transform it into an ally.

Required narrative elements

- * the Shadow;
- * an inner dialogue;
- * symbolic rebirth.

Illustration task: Create an image of the moment when the Shadow changes.

Activity 8

The Child Who Forgot How to Dream

Write a fairy tale about a child who has forgotten how to dream because of difficult life circumstances.

The story should include:

- * a mysterious guide;
- * a journey to the Land of Forgotten Dreams;
- * the return of hope.

Required narrative elements

- * a symbol of dreams;
- * a magical world;
- * an emotional climax.

Illustration task: Illustrate the Land of Forgotten Dreams.

Activity 9

The Stone Heart

Write a fairy tale about a person whose heart slowly turns to stone after experiencing sorrow, disappointment, or loss.

The character's journey should lead:

- * from emotional coldness;
- * through compassion and understanding;
- * toward the ability to love and trust again.

Required narrative elements

- * the symbolic heart;
- * a rescuer or helper;
- * a decisive emotional breakthrough.

Illustration task: Show the transformation of the stone heart.

Activity 10

The One Who Was Different

Write a fairy tale about a character who feels lonely because they are different from everyone else.

During the story, the character should:

- * accept their uniqueness;
- * find others who understand them;
- * transform their difference into a personal strength.

Required narrative elements

- * a symbol of uniqueness;
- * conflict with society;
- * positive transformation.

Illustration task: Create an image showing the character's uniqueness becoming a source of strength.

Activity 11

The Broken Compass

Write a fairy tale about a character who loses their way in life after a magical compass stops working.

To find the right path, the character must:

- * overcome uncertainty;
- * learn to trust their inner voice;
- * discover the true meaning of purpose.

Required narrative elements

- * the road as a symbol;
- * a magical object;
- * an inner revelation.

Illustration task: Illustrate the moment when the compass begins to work again.

Activity 12

Create Your Own Therapeutic Fairy Tale

Invent your own original therapeutic fairy tale exploring an important human emotion, challenge, or life transition.

Required narrative elements

- * traditional fairy-tale characters;
- * a magical object;
- * a series of symbolic challenges;
- * a magical helper;
- * an inner transformation leading to hope, wisdom, or resilience.

Illustration task: Draw or generate an illustration representing the central symbol of your story.

Appendix B

Ethical Guidelines for AI-Assisted Multilingual Narrative Practices

Purpose of the Guidelines

These guidelines provide practical recommendations for educators, researchers, and teacher educators implementing AI-assisted multilingual narrative activities with children and adolescents. Their purpose is to ensure that educational innovation remains consistent with children's rights, professional ethics, and contemporary principles of responsible artificial intelligence.

The recommendations are grounded in the principles of trauma-informed education, inclusive pedagogy, multilingual education, and human-centred AI.

1. Respect for Children's Dignity and Rights

Every child has the right to participate in educational activities with dignity, respect, and autonomy.

Narrative activities should strengthen children's confidence, creativity, and participation rather than define them through vulnerability, traumatic experiences, or social labels.

Educators should always recognize children as active authors of their own stories.

2. Voluntary Participation

Participation in narrative activities should always be voluntary.

Children should never be required to:

- * disclose personal traumatic experiences;

- * answer emotionally sensitive questions;
- * share stories publicly if they prefer not to.

Alternative narrative formats (fictional stories, fairy tales, fantasy narratives, symbolic storytelling) should always be available.

3. Psychological Safety

Educational storytelling should create emotionally safe learning environments.

Teachers should:

- * avoid judgmental responses;
- * encourage respectful listening;
- * prevent ridicule or negative comments;
- * support children's right to remain silent.

The primary educational goal is participation—not emotional disclosure.

4. Respect for Multilingual Identity

Every language used by the learner should be treated as an educational resource.

Teachers should encourage students to:

- * write in their preferred language;
- * combine languages naturally;
- * explain culturally specific words and expressions;
- * value linguistic diversity within the classroom.

Languages should never become a source of embarrassment or exclusion.

5. Human Oversight of Artificial Intelligence

Artificial intelligence should function only as an educational support tool.

Educational decisions remain the responsibility of the teacher.

AI should never:

- * interpret children's emotions;
- * diagnose psychological conditions;
- * evaluate children's well-being;
- * replace professional educational judgment.

Human supervision is required throughout every stage of AI-assisted activities.

6. Protection of Privacy

Children's stories may contain personal experiences, family memories, cultural references, or sensitive information.

Educators should:

- * avoid collecting unnecessary personal data;
- * anonymize materials used for research or publication;
- * store digital files securely;
- * comply with institutional and national data protection policies.

Children should understand how their stories will be used.

7. Transparency

Learners should know when artificial intelligence is being used.

Teachers should explain:

- * the purpose of AI;
- * what AI can and cannot do;
- * that AI-generated suggestions may contain errors;
- * that final decisions always belong to the learner.

Transparency strengthens digital literacy and critical thinking.

8. Fairness and Inclusion

AI systems may reflect linguistic or cultural biases.

Teachers should critically evaluate AI-generated content to ensure that it:

- * respects cultural diversity;
- * avoids stereotypes;
- * represents different linguistic backgrounds fairly;
- * promotes inclusive communication.

No learner should feel excluded because of language, culture, nationality, or personal experience.

9. Authentic Student Voice

Artificial intelligence should support—not replace—the learner’s own ideas.

Students should remain the authors of:

- * narratives;
- * reflections;
- * personal interpretations;
- * creative decisions.

AI may suggest vocabulary or alternative expressions, but it should never determine the meaning of the story.

10. Professional Boundaries

Narrative activities are educational rather than therapeutic.

Teachers are not expected to provide psychotherapy or interpret children’s narratives as psychological assessments.

If a child demonstrates signs of significant emotional distress, educators should follow institutional safeguarding procedures and, where appropriate, refer the child to qualified psychological or counselling services.

11. Responsible AI Literacy

Students should gradually develop the ability to:

- * evaluate AI-generated information critically;
- * recognize factual inaccuracies;
- * identify potential bias;
- * distinguish between human and AI-generated ideas;
- * use AI responsibly and creatively.

Developing critical AI literacy is an essential educational objective.

12. Reflection and Continuous Improvement

After each AI-assisted narrative activity, educators should reflect on questions such as:

- * Did all learners feel safe and included?
- * Were multilingual resources encouraged?
- * Did AI enhance learning without dominating it?
- * Were ethical principles respected?
- * What could be improved in future activities?

Ethical educational practice is an ongoing process of professional reflection and continuous development.

Core Ethical Principles

The methodology presented in this handbook is guided by the following principles:

- * Respect for children's dignity**
- * Voluntary participation**
- * Psychological safety**
- * Linguistic inclusion**
- * Narrative agency**
- * Human-centred artificial intelligence**
- * Privacy and confidentiality**
- * Transparency**
- * Fairness and non-discrimination**
- * Professional responsibility**
- * Critical AI literacy**
- * Educational purpose before technological innovation**