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An e-journal of Teacher Education and Applied Language Studies

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New Technologies, Multiple Literacies and Teaching English as a Foreign Language

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| University of Lisbon (CEAUL)

Abstract | This article presents and briefly discusses the results from a survey conducted with English teachers of the third cycle and secondary education in Portugal as part of a study on multiple literacies and Web 2.0 in English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom (Cardoso). Based on the answers provided, it can be assumed that among this group of teachers, new technologies tend to be part of their professional practice. However, it is unclear if digital tools have been used to actually promote more innovative ways of teaching or just as a different way to approach more traditional methods. Moreover, it seems that suitable guidance, training and further development of appropriate materials are required to facilitate and better integrate new technologies in the EFL classroom.

Key words | Technology and Web 2.0, multiliteracies, digital literacies, multimodal literacy, English language teaching

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INTRODUCTION

This article is based on a study on multiple literacies and Web 2.0 in English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom (Cardoso). The study involved a survey conducted with English teachers of the third cycle and secondary education in Portugal through an online questionnaire which was made available from February 7th to March 31st, 2017. The aim of this article is to present the most relevant data collected along with a brief discussion on the results.

The article is organized into four main parts. In the first part, a brief theoretical background on multimodality, multiple literacies and the Web 2.0 and its implications for learning are presented. The second part is dedicated to describing the methodology of the study. In the third part, the most general data from the study are presented and discussed. The last part presents additional comments along with a brief presentation of some documents and initiatives concerning the use of technology for learning, and more specifically for language learning, in the European Union and Portugal as a way to further support the meaningful and effective use of digital tools in language learning.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Communication, Society, and Learning

Discourse and social interactions have been greatly impacted by new technologies, especially the Web 2.0. Since the onset of the Internet and the increasing levels of globalization, language and meaning-making have also undergone significant changes. In the face of such transformations it is possible to identify two types of 'revolution' (Kress, "Gains and Losses" 6): one that is related to the modes of representation, in which it is possible to observe a change from the central role of writing to the increasing significance of the image; and a second one which concerns the media of dissemination, in which the medium of the screen has been gaining a central role in relation to the medium of the book. These two major changes, or

revolutions, have had a great impact not only on social interactions but also on the way knowledge is shaped. Therefore, one way of understanding the impact of new technologies on social interactions and on discourse is to analyze the relationship between these modes of representation and the media of dissemination (Jewitt, "Multimodality" 184).

Multimodality is related to how meaning is made across communication processes and how we choose to make it through different modes. It is an approach through which communication and representation are understood to involve something more than language, and in which those modes are always being shaped and reshaped by social practices. As explained by Kress, "[m]ode is a socially shaped and culturally given resource for making meaning. *Image, writing, layout, music, gesture, speech, moving image, soundtrack* are examples of mode used in representation and communication." ("What is Mode?" 54).

From this point of view, it is possible to state that communication is always multimodal (Kress, "Gains and Losses" 5). As language is not the only way people communicate, it is essential to look at and analyze beyond language to understand communication and interaction in contemporary societies. Moreover, as signs and modes are culturally and socially motivated, it is also important to bear in mind that different cultures create different semiotic representations for making meaning.

The shift in the dominance of the medium of the page to the medium of the screen has also intensified the transformations in the reading path[1] and in the role of the author. Additionally, as pointed out by Kress, the new media not only make the use of different modes easier, especially images and sounds but also promote interaction among their users (interactivity) and the relation of users with other texts (hypertextuality) (*Literacy* 4).

In other words, the medium has a profound impact on meaning-making and, in this case, the change from the page to the screen has intensified the spread of multimodal texts. Once new technologies facilitate the use of different modes, and each mode has its own potentials and constraints in meaning-making, it is crucial to learn how to use the available modes

by understanding their potentials for meaning. From this perspective, understanding how those modes work on the screen poses a central issue of discussion to learning (Jewitt, *Technology* 12).

The development of new technologies, and especially the advances in Web 2.0 technologies, has created not only new discourses or forms of interaction and other forms of integration, or opportunities, but also further divisions (Cope and Kalantzis, *New Learning* 18). Therefore, education and literacy have to be rethought in order to address the new forms of discourses and the wide range of multimodal texts that are mainly supported by new technologies. Furthermore, as pointed out by Cope and Kalantzis, "[education] is also expected to provide solutions for inequality, poverty, and prejudice, as well as to enable social justice, cohesive sociality, job skills, scientific discoveries, wealth creation, personal fulfillment and self-realisation" (19).

It is clear, however, that literacy cannot be understood as, nor limited to, learning how to read and write as it has been usually considered. Thus, concepts such as 'visual literacy', 'new literacies', 'digital literacies', and 'multimodal literacies', which have been used to describe and point the way towards new practices of discourse impacted by technology, need to be addressed in education.

Digital literacy, for example, refers to the ability to perform some competences in digital environments. In the past, the concept was related more to technical competences (e.g. computer literacy); however, as it cannot be restricted to technical use only, and since nowadays it involves different competences, it is also possible (and maybe more relevant) to talk about digital *literacies* (Buckingham 77). Besides learning how to understand and use different modes in the medium of the screen, it is also necessary to develop other skills, such as, but not limited to: Internet searching; hypertext navigation; knowledge assembly (that is, knowing how to gather and compare information from diverse sources); content evaluation; online safety; and online etiquette. Mastering the technical aspects of the new technologies, therefore, is not so essential – especially considering the increasing number of user-friendly technologies available – in comparison to other competences mentioned, which seem of primary importance.

As explained by Rojo, schools need to create practical opportunities for students to become effective meaning-makers by critically analyzing and reinterpreting the different discourses and meanings they receive or produce (29). In this sense, the concept of critical literacy seems more important than ever, since being a critical thinker is essential in our contemporary knowledge society. Critical literacy[2] (Freire, 1987; Luke, 2000; Luke & Dooley, 2011) basically refers to the competences through which cultural and social relations and political power can be transformed, by analyzing and using text (Luke & Dooley, 2011). This is not a new concept and has been applied in many educational contexts, including second language learning environments. The relevance of critical thinking (and problem-solving) has also been emphasized on the *Partnership for 21st Century Skills*, co-funded by the National Educational Association (USA) as one of the most important skills to be developed along with communication, collaboration, creativity and innovation, known as the 4 Cs (NEA 2). Therefore, the role of the school and education is to prepare the learners to engage in the communication, as critical producers and consumers, considering the increasing mediation of technology. Communication is at the core of the society and, as aforementioned, learning how to critically communicate using technology seems increasingly important.

In this scenario, the importance of the English language in the world is unquestionable. English has become more than ever the common language of the media, commerce, politics, the film industry, science, academia, and, undoubtedly, of the Internet, being used by different people around the globe. Crystal has estimated that there are currently in the world around five non-native speakers of English to one native speaker ("English" 37). In this sense, the role of the EFL teacher is to guide learners in the processes of communicating effectively using the different modes and media available to them. Additionally, since an increasing emergence of new Englishes has been seen (Cope and Kalantzis, "Introduction"; Crystal, *English as a Global Language*; Jenkins), linguistic and cultural issues are central in contemporary societies, which require the use of multiple languages and multiple Englishes for interactions in an increasingly technological world.

Web 2.0 and Education

Technological resources in English language classrooms have been used for some time; and some of them, such as audio and video materials, for a quite long time. However, what seems necessary to be analyzed and discussed is the way new technological resources, especially the ones supported by Web 2.0 have been used and how they can foster multiple literacies and help learners actually engage in contemporary communication.

More than technical tools and market-oriented principles, the second generation of the World Wide Web generates important social implications. Web technologies currently in use have the fundamental feature of facilitating interaction among people by making it easier to add, edit, and share information on different platforms. At the conception of the Internet (that is, the traditional web, called Web 1.0), the creation and editing of content were mainly restricted to professionals who mastered the tools and had the necessary equipment to create and provide information online. In comparison, Web 2.0 brought about the possibility for almost everyone to become an author and/or an editor in digital environments. Therefore, whereas the great majority of users of the first generation were consumers of information, many have now become creators and developers. Interaction, mobility, and collaboration are important features of Web 2.0 and, as its social aspect can be considered its core, it certainly has crucial implications for education, and especially for language learning and teaching.

In this sense, many researchers have been investigating the influence of Web 2.0 in learning and how important is to integrate and get the best of it to enhance learning processes. It is argued, for instance, that it is pertinent for educators to understand the types of Web 2.0 tools available, as well as the resources and possibilities it provides (Bower; Redecker et al.). Bower, for example, conducted a study in which more than two thousand links have been analyzed and reviewed from online archive sites, educational technology texts, online searches, and other papers on Web 2.0. The author identified a total of 212 Web 2.0 technologies for learning and teaching purposes and organized them in thirty-seven types, grouped into fourteen clusters.

Additionally, another possible way to classify Web 2.0 tools and applications which might be useful to teachers and educators is using the revised taxonomy of the framework for categorizing educational goals, published by the educational psychologist Benjamin Bloom and his collaborators, which became known as Bloom's Taxonomy[3]. The revised version of Bloom's taxonomy was published in 2001 by a group of researchers (Anderson et al.) whose aim was to convey the dynamic conception of the cognitive processes by which thinkers encounter and work with knowledge. Therefore, the authors chose to use verbs and gerunds to label the categories and subcategories. This revised taxonomy is more closely related to the use of technology to promote certain learning processes and to achieve learning objectives.

There are different tools that can be used to integrate the Bloom's revised taxonomy with technology. In 2007, Churches revised the taxonomy again to include other descriptors, in order to relate the taxonomy with new digital tools, which would account for "new behaviours, actions, and learning opportunities as technology advances and becomes more ubiquitous" (3). Figure 1 below shows an infographic describing Bloom's Digital Taxonomy.

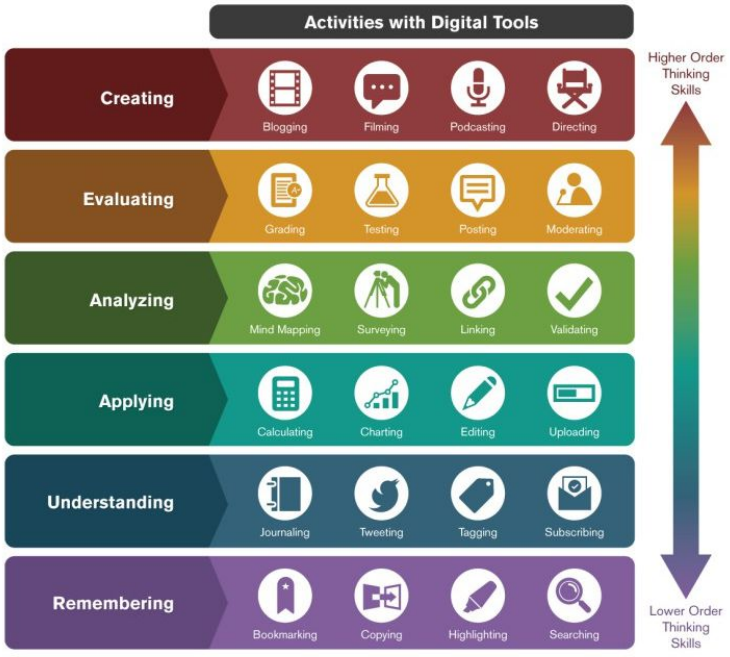

Figure 1 Bloom's Digital Taxonomy

(Infographic Credit: Ron Carranza, as cited in Sneed)

Bustamante et al. further explain that the Web 2.0 offers students a great opportunity to become producers and not only consumers of information. In fact, the Internet promotes meaningful contexts which are essential for developing language skills, amongst many other abilities, by offering new ways of interaction and enhanced contact with authentic (and multimodal) texts. In this sense, it provides innovative ways to produce language and to make meaning (109).

Considering the role of the learner, it is relevant to mention that there is a general assumption that digital natives[4] (Prensky 1) are highly skilled in all new technologies. However, many studies on the subject have shown a predominant use, almost an addiction, to smartphones for social interactions. This means that learners have, in fact, rarely been using different digital platforms to promote and support their learning. Although many young students may come to the classroom already largely familiar with at least some new technologies, they are likely to lack the knowledge on how to not only make the most of online resources to improve their learning, but also on how to find reliable information on the Internet, how to fully and critically interpret the information they find, and how to successfully make meaning online. Therefore, the digitally literate person, as explained by Dudeney and Hockly, should know:

> [H]ow to accomplish goals, but also understands why these goals are important, and what relationship they have with the wider world around them. Knowing how to use Facebook is a skill; knowing how to use it to build a community of like-minded individuals and to use that community for professional and personal development is a literacy. (117)

It is possible to add, however, that building a community within social media that actually raises awareness of cultural and social aspects through the promotion of inclusion, democracy, and respect for diversity, is a type of literacy that is absolutely necessary nowadays and should be encouraged in schools.

It seems relevant to highlight that “understanding the role of culture within the language

being learned; and becoming part of a supportive learning community" (Healey 21) are also key factors. In this sense, it is likely that language teachers will need to be able to support the development of those elements (21). Therefore, educators should "assist in the transformation from practical, social use of technology to a more rigorous, pedagogical use" (Sansone qtd. in Dudeney and Hockly 116). Additionally, as explained by Bustamante et al. "[t]he role of the teacher is to find ways to capitalize on these skills and channel them into learning experiences that are real and engage the learners in problem-solving tasks that maximize critical thinking and creativity" (109).

New technologies in general, and the Web 2.0 in particular, offer a great opportunity to enhance foreign language competences. In this sense, in order to better integrate the use of technologies with foreign language learning objectives, some studies (e.g. Bustamante et al.; Riepel; Yang) suggest a way to integrate the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning*[5], issued by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), with Web 2.0 tools. The standards are based on five goal areas, commonly known as the 5 Cs: communication, cultures, connections, comparisons, communities.

The communicative goal as described in the document issued by the ACTFL emphasizes three standards that are translated into three modes[6] of communication and that students are required to master in a foreign language:

- Standard 1.1 – interpersonal mode (focus on interaction made via oral or written communication);
- Standard 1.2 – interpretative mode (focus on reading and listening);
- Standard 1.3 – presentational mode (focus on one-way speaking and writing) (National).

By its own nature and purpose, the Web 2.0 focuses on social interactions and seems to provide significant tools and insights for both teachers and students, so that they can successfully

achieve the interpersonal goal of communication. Text and voice messages, tweets, as well as instant messages are some examples of how to promote interactivity among students.

At the same time, there are undoubtedly many options on the Internet to develop and work on interpretative communication, from widely-known online newspapers, encyclopedias, and blogs, to videos and podcasts. The challenge faced by teachers in general, though, is in adapting and preparing tasks relevant to their classroom. In this respect, the Web 2.0 seems to offer tools that aim to facilitate the teacher's job. Some applications (e.g. Screenflow and Camtasia) make it possible to create and edit videos by cutting them and adding text, sounds, and images to make them suitable for classroom use. Other tools, such as Snagit, can be used to capture screenshots, of any size, and add content as necessary. Therefore, audio and video sharing tools, multimodal tools, and file sharing tools (Bower) seem to offer many possibilities for teachers and students to promote this standard in the foreign language classroom.

Regarding presentational communication, new technologies are widely recognized for providing many different ways of presenting information, using not only verbal language, but also images, graphs, songs, and sounds. Therefore, it is essential to know how to articulate all these semiotic modes in order to make meaning. Additionally, interactivity is another fundamental aspect that students should take into consideration when creating and presenting messages. Feedback occurs almost instantly when posting on social media or when writing a blog, for example. Therefore, the roles of author and reader have changed a great deal, and in an educational setting, the Web 2.0 may offer a variety of options, especially for teachers to provide more efficient feedback, and for students to work collaboratively with other students from a variety of grades, schools, or geographical regions. Wikispaces, for instance, is a platform that promotes collaborative writing and allows students to keep track of their work. Another example is Storyboard That, as described in Bower's typology (8), which allows for the creation of comic-like stories, providing scenes, characters, images, and text.

Summing up, based on the descriptions and discussions provided, it is possible to say that it is clear the Web 2.0 offers great opportunities and tools to enhance foreign language learning when wisely chosen and used.

METHODOLOGY

The aim of the study was to outline a general view of the use of new technologies in English classrooms of the third cycle and secondary education in Portugal, by taking into consideration a quantitative analysis with data gathered from an online questionnaire sent to a group of EFL teachers of the educational levels previously mentioned. Bearing in mind that the use of an online questionnaire may pose some limitations, after considering all the pros and cons, this method of data collection has been considered useful and optimal for the aim of this research. The platform used for the survey was *www.freeonlinesurveys.com*, which provides for the inclusion of different types of questions, namely: checklists; multiple-choice responses; ranking questions; and Likert scales. The questionnaire was designed so all the questions required an answer; thus, it was not possible for any question to be skipped. A link to the survey was sent by email to schools, directly to English teachers, and posted on social media websites, such as Facebook and LinkedIn. The Portuguese Association of Teachers of English (*Associação Portuguesa de Professores de Inglês* – APPI) was also contacted, and they kindly sent the link to other associates, which was of great help in the data collection.

The questionnaire was organized into three main parts: a) ethnographic information about the participants and also about the schools and the facilities where they teach; b) materials and resources teachers usually use in their lessons and their approach, and c) teachers' impressions and experiences of using technology in their lessons. In the following section, a discussion and an analysis of the data gathered from the questionnaire are provided.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

During the period the questionnaire was available, 132 valid responses[7] were received. The data collected were treated anonymously and through quantitative analysis, and any potentially identifying information was not associated with the responses. As expected, the vast majority of teachers responded that they use technology in their lessons. Only 2 out of the 132 respondents indicated that they do not use technology to teach English. The discussion of the main points of the data is provided below, according to each part of the questionnaire presented in the methodology section.

a) Profile of the Respondents and Resources Available

The data collected reveal that the age group most represented in the survey consists of middle--aged teachers over forty years old, who account for more than 50% of the respondents. On the other hand, the least represented age group is of teachers younger than 30 years old, who account for only 3% of the respondents.

As per their teacher training, the majority of them (61%) concluded the *Ramo de Formação Educacional*[8]. These data seem to be consistent not only with the predominant age group in the survey but also with the laws governing the qualifications and training required for teaching: before 1988 teachers should complete the *Profissionalização em Serviço*; from 1988 to 2007 they were required to do *Ramo de Formação Educacional*; and from 2007 onwards, the requirement changed to *Mestrado em Ensino*, with the first course being offered in the 2007-2008 academic school year. These results may indicate, for example, that not only might it be necessary to develop pre-service training on technologies for education, but also that continuing in-service training is relevant in order to effectively include technology in the classroom.

Although it has been possible to collect responses from different parts of the country, respondents from Lisboa and Setúbal represent the main population of the study (27%), followed by teachers who work between the Douro and Minho regions (20%), Beira Litoral

(14%), and the Islands (13%). In contrast, the Trás-os-Montes and Alto Douro region has the least number of representatives – only four respondents teach in this area, accounting for 3% of the total population in the study. Other regions have 10 or fewer respondents, corresponding to the following percentages: Alentejo (8%), Estremadura e Ribatejo (7%), Beira interior (5%), Algarve (5%).

Aiming to investigate which resources are available at the schools where those teachers work, a list of the most relevant items was provided, and the respondents were asked to choose the ones that applied. Additionally, they could include other elements, if necessary. The results indicate that the overwhelming majority of schools (80-93%) have projectors (93% – the most common tool of all), Internet connection (89%), and computers in their classrooms (80%). Similarly, 72% of the respondents say their schools have a computer room. Interactive boards, although available in 57% of the schools, do not seem to be as accessible as computers. On the other hand, tablets are by far the least available items in schools, mentioned by only 16% of the teachers.

Therefore, as expected, in the great majority of schools where the respondents teach there are some digital resources available (namely, Internet connection, computers in the classrooms and/or computer room) which make it possible the use of technology in the EFL lessons.

b) Materials, Resources, and Approaches

Teachers were asked to indicate, from a list provided, which materials and resources they use in their lessons, as well as the frequency these items are used. In addition to more traditional materials – such as textbooks, audio, and video – other digital items – namely the internet for different purposes, digital textbooks and their resources, and electronic games – were also included. Additionally, teachers were able to add other items they would find relevant.

As expected, more traditional materials as textbooks, audio, and videos are the most frequently used resources by those teachers. Almost fifty percent of the respondents also indicate that they usually use the Internet for different purposes (e.g. to check dictionaries,

encyclopedias, newspapers, magazines etc.). Digital textbooks and their resources seem to be gaining ground and slightly over fifty percent of the teachers point out that they always or usually use them. On the other hand, electronic games are at the bottom of the list as the item least frequently used in classrooms; 50% of the respondents claim to never use them. Traditional games and role-play seem to be the favorite play-like activities in comparison to electronic games; 20% of the respondents point out that those activities are usually included in their lessons, while 56% of them indicated that these activities are sometimes used.

The use of electronic games could be effectively included during or after the lessons to stimulate learning in a more meaningful and playful way for learners. In addition to motivation, some studies (e.g. Dourda et al.; Ya-Hui, Yi-Chun, and Huei-Tse; Wu and Huang) have demonstrated that digital game-based learning can improve linguistic competences. In order to further investigate how these resources have been used, teachers were asked whether they believe they adopt a multimodal and critical approach to texts. In this sense, they were asked to indicate which semiotic modes they usually tend to explore with their students besides verbal language. As expected, in addition to verbal language, the semiotic mode most explored by teachers is *images* (92%), followed by *gestures* (64%), and *sounds* (58%). Less than half of the teachers indicate that they also explore *layout and fonts* (44%), and *colors* (45%). Based on the answers provided, it is possible to say that these teachers seem to be concerned with developing different perspectives about language and communication and that they acknowledge that a multimodal approach is fundamental in language learning.

In respect to critically approach texts, as expected, these teachers believe that it is of great importance to explore critical thinking in EFL classes. However, it is also possible to highlight two major obstacles indicated by the majority of them: students' confidence in expressing themselves in English and time constraints. Teachers' confidence in dealing with certain themes with their students was also pointed out by 20% of the respondents and should be taken into consideration as well.

The data about critical and multimodal literacies demonstrate teachers do acknowledge the importance of these aspects, which are essential when dealing with digital texts in language learning.

c) Use of Technology

In this part of the questionnaire, the aim was to verify the use of technology in the classroom in relation to different aspects: communicative objectives, development of linguistic skills, and development of digital competences.

In order to verify the communicative objective teachers usually have in mind when using technology with their students, they were asked to rank, in order of importance to them, the statements numbered below. Those statements are related to the communication standards set by ACTFL, indicated in parentheses.

1. To make students engage in conversations, exchange opinions, and express feelings (interpersonal mode) (57%);
2. To make students understand and interpret written and spoken language on a variety of topics (interpretative mode) (47%);
3. To make students present information, concepts, and ideas on a variety of topics (presentational mode) (68%).

The majority of the respondents choose the order presented above. These results reinforce the emphasis placed on the development of oral communication and interaction, as expected. Unsurprisingly, the least important objective pointed out by those teachers (presentational communication) seems to be related to a more effective use of technology, where students would be required to know how to manipulate certain digital tools in order to successfully present their information in written or oral forms.

Additionally, in relation to the technological tools these teachers tend to use in their lessons, the results show that YouTube is the most popular tool, having been indicated as such by 88% of the respondents, followed by emails (78%); Google Docs (54%); Prezi (46%); Google Drive (43%); Blogs (42%); and text messages (39%). It is relevant to mention that YouTube would be more closely associated with the development of the interpretative mode of communication, whereas the other most popular tools indicated by the respondents would be more useful to develop writing skills, a presentational mode of communication, which is pointed out as the least objective those teachers have in mind when using technology.

Considering that teachers' responses indicate that technology is primarily used with the aim of making students engage in conversations, it would be possible to assume that YouTube would be used in the first place to perform a listening activity, that is, to develop the interpretative mode of communication and, on a second moment, to make learners engage in face-to-face conversations about the topic of the video. Therefore, although the primary objective these teachers have in mind is to develop speaking skills, technological tools might not be used as means to make students actually interact and talk. This first assumption can be further supported by the fact that Skype and WhatsApp, for example, which are tools that would more likely be used to further promote interpersonal communication, are indicated only by 12% and 10% of the teachers, respectively.

Additionally, the respondents were asked to indicate which ones of these skills: *reading*, *listening*, *writing*, *speaking*, and *critical thinking and cultural awareness* – they believe to be the most developed ones through the use of technology. Most of them point out *listening* as the most developed skill when using new technologies, followed by *speaking*. These figures seem to be in line with YouTube being identified as the most popular technological tool among those teachers. The indication of listening as the most developed skill may also support the assumption that YouTube videos are used for listening activities first, then, to make students engage in speaking activities.

Furthermore, and also in accordance with the results related to the learning objectives for using technology, *writing* is pointed out as the skill teachers believe to be the least improved when using new technologies. This fact is particularly interesting, especially because, although online communication often occurs via written texts, the different writing possibilities that emerge with the Internet do not seem to be emphasized in these particular educational settings.

Aiming to further verify teachers' views concerning other specific elements related to language learning, they were asked to indicate, from among five statements, which ones best reflect their opinion. The purpose of each statement was to specifically verify the relationship between technology and vocabulary expansion, technology and grammar consolidation and learning, technology and interdisciplinarity, technology and character education, and technology and cultural aspects. The answers provided indicate that 40% of the respondents believe that technology may have a positive impact on all the areas mentioned. Vocabulary expansion and cultural aspects are the areas that most teachers (65% and 64%, respectively) believe to be better developed with the use of new technologies. Interdisciplinarity is indicated by 48% of the teachers as being positively impacted by digital tools, and only 32% of the respondents believe that grammar is better learned through technology. The area which respondents believe is less improved by technology is character education. This fact may suggest that an effective development of digital literacy could possibly also help develop some aspects of character education in the EFL classroom, as some issues related to Internet etiquette (also named 'netiquette'), online safety, and copyright are related to character education as well.

In order to verify if some general aspects of digital literacies tend to be addressed in the EFL classrooms analyzed, the respondents were asked to indicate how often they focus on the following aspects with their students: *Internet etiquette*; *Internet safety*; *cultural and ideological issues*; and *characteristics of different digital texts*. According to the results, *Internet safety* issues seem to be the most important item for this group of teachers; 45% of them indicate that they always explore safety aspects with their students. Unsurprisingly, *cultural and ideological*

items are also a relevant element; they are indicated as usually explored by 51% of participants, while 32% indicate *Internet etiquette* as usually explored, and 35% indicate that *characteristics of digital texts* are sometimes explored. Therefore, exploring the characteristics of different digital texts seems to be the item least explored, with only 16% of teachers pointing out that they always explore such features, and 33% as usually doing so.

Finally, in relation to a general view of technology these teachers have, the data collected demonstrate that in addition to increasing students' motivation, the respondents believe that technology may help their pedagogical work and help improve students' language skills. Furthermore, although they recognize that digital tools require extra work and time, the benefits of integrating technology into the EFL classroom seem to compensate for the effort.

Final Comments

Various initiatives and standardization documents in the European Union and in Portugal have been emphasizing the need for developing digital competences in education. In this sense, including an effective use of technology in English language classrooms seems of great and immediate importance.

However, as above mentioned, this integration should be done in a consistent and meaningful way in order to achieve learning and communicative objectives, promote inclusion and critical thinking and develop linguistic skills. A multimodal approach, for example, is crucial for the development of multiple literacies, especially concerning critical and digital literacies. In this sense, it is not surprising that the adoption of the concept of a multiliteracies approach is listed as an action to be taken so as to meet the objectives of INCoDe.2030 – an initiative launched in March 2017 by the Portuguese government that describes the digital competence goals to be achieved in Portugal between 2017 and 2030 (INCoDe.2030 11).

Furthermore, the importance of developing digital literacies is also highlighted in the reports entitled *Digital Competence Framework for Citizens* (DigComp) and the *Digitally Competent*

Educational Organizations Framework (DigComp Org) issued by the European Commission with the aim to provide some clarification and guidance on digital competences that European citizens should develop.

The use of technologies specifically for language learning, and an emphasis on critical thinking are also essential aspects and they are closely related to the promotion of multiple and digital literacies, as it is outlined in the document entitled *Improving the Effectiveness of Language Learning: CLIL and Computer Assisted Language Learning* (Scott and Beadle), issued by the European Commission; as well as in the INCoDe.2030.

Additionally, it is worth mentioning that the European Commission issued a provisional update of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR), in September 2017, in which online interaction has been emphasized. Among other justifications, the framework states that some properties in online interaction cannot be captured in the traditional competence scales, as it is pointed out "[f]or instance, there is an availability of resources shared in real time. On the other hand, there may be misunderstandings which are not spotted (and corrected) immediately, as is often easier with face-to-face communication." (CEFR 93). It also states that "*[o]nline conversation and discussion* focuses on conversation and discussion online as a multi-modal phenomenon, with an emphasis on how interlocutors communicate online to handle both serious issues and social exchanges in an open-ended way" (93). Therefore, the effective and meaningful inclusion of technology in EFL classroom is essential. In this regard, since the English syllabi for the third cycle and secondary education in Portugal do not include any specific guidance on the use of technology, an update to provide teachers with clarification seems extremely urgent.

Although it has been possible to verify, based on the data collected, that teachers who participated in this survey seem to use the Web 2.0 and new technologies in their lessons, further research is necessary to establish a more detailed picture in order to verify if technology has been actually used in more innovative ways or just as a different way to apply a more

traditional pedagogy. For instance, further studies are required to understand how technology has actually been used to make students engage in conversation. In order to confirm or not the assumptions made herein, it would be relevant to verify if digital tools have been employed as input to stimulate conversations, or if they have also been employed to actually communicate. This would mean using tools like Skype or Hangouts to chat, instead of just presenting an online video or a website article with a topic of discussion to encourage students to engage in face-to-face interactions. Additionally, it seems that local studies, especially in the areas with least representatives, would be necessary to establish more accurate data about the resources available in schools in different parts of the country.

Furthermore, it is relevant to mention that as a descriptive study, the data collected and the comments discussed herein do not intend to represent the total English teacher population working in the third cycle and secondary education. However, it is expected that the results and conclusions drawn from this survey may indicate some tendencies towards the use of technology in EFL classrooms in Portugal and may contribute to developing further studies in the future. It is expected, however, that the study conducted (Cardoso) may be viewed as a stepping-stone for future research on technology use and how a multiple literacies approach could be applied in the EFL classroom.

Summing up, as technology is a part of contemporary society and an indispensable resource for communication, it is impossible to ignore its function in educational settings in general, and in language and EFL classrooms, in particular. In this regard, it seems of crucial relevance to provide teachers with suitable guidance, training, and materials, so that they can benefit from digital resources and be able to better integrate them into their pedagogical practice, focusing on easily achieving the learning objectives.

CONCLUSION

This article was based on a study on multiple literacies and Web 2.0 in English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom (Cardoso). The research involved a survey conducted with English teachers of the third cycle and secondary education in Portugal through an online questionnaire. The aim of this article, therefore, was to present the most relevant data collected from the survey along with a brief discussion on the results.

The article has been organized into four main parts: a brief theoretical background on multimodality, multiple literacies and the Web 2.0 and its implications for learning; a description on the methodology of the study; a discussion of the data gathered from the survey; and finally, additional comments along with a brief presentation of some documents and initiatives supporting the use of technology for learning in European Union and Portugal.

It has been concluded that although it is evident that the group of teachers who participated in the survey tends to use at least some Web 2.0 tools and, even though most of them stated that they usually adopt a multimodal and multiliteracies approach to texts, it is not clear how they actually do that.

Notes

[1] Reading path refers to the order that is necessary to follow in a text when we read it (Kress, *Literacy* 3). The reading path of a written text is usually rigid, and the reader does not have much freedom against this order. As pointed out by the author, it is also possible to create a reading path in images; however, it is more open than the one set by writing, and it is possible to adopt different "paths" when reading an image.

[2] Critical literacy and critical thinking are closely related terms but are not exactly the same. Considering critical thinking, it is more related to the attempt to read a text considering different views and without being biased and prejudiced. Critical literacy, on other hand, is based on the fact that all texts convey knowledge and power-related ideas, therefore, questions related to the author, the audience, the purpose and the 'hidden' messages should be approached when reading a text (McInulty 2013). In this study, however, these terms have been used interchangeably, since in the questionnaire sent to the English teachers the term 'critical thinking' has been used for simplicity reasons and because no further theoretical information was provided.

[3] The original framework (Bloom) consisted of six major categories: Knowledge; Comprehension; Application; Analysis; Synthesis; and Evaluation, and has been widely used by educators in their approaches to teaching-learning.

[4] A term used to refer to people who were born into a society full of new technologies and connectivity, as opposed to digital immigrants, a term used to describe those who were born before the spread of new technologies.

[5] The Standards were first published in 1996, and a revised version was recently issued entitled *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages* (The National Standards Collaborative Board) and it is based on teachers' practices over the years. The goal areas and standards have been kept, however, this revised version provides further clarification on how to guide the implementation of the Standards.

[6] It is important to clarify that the term 'mode' here does not refer to the concept of semiotic mode as developed by Kress ("What is Mode?"). Instead, it describes how communication occurs among individuals, and what to encourage and expect from language learners.

[7] The total number of the responses was 143, but 11 were incomplete and were not considered in the results.

[8] *Profissionalização em serviço* refers to an in-service professional training granted to teachers with at least six consecutive years of practice and who have completed their licensed teaching course and the in-service professional training course; *Ramo de Formação Educacional* is a pre-service professional training course following an initial undergraduate degree; and *Mestrado em Ensino* is a pre-service professional training course corresponding to a master's degree.

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Foreign Language Education in Portuguese Higher Education Institutions: The State of Play

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Abstract | Over the last 15 to 20 years, changes in foreign language teaching policies in Portuguese higher education institutions (HEIs) have been subject to little discussion and less inter-institutional dialogue. Each institution has absorbed different European directives, and more specifically adapted its context in response to the Bologna Process, according to its own interpretation leading to widespread 'distortion' across foreign language teaching curricula. While demand for foreign language courses remains high in Portuguese HEIs there has been little formal research and scarce funding available for projects related to introducing innovative practices and materials. This paper provides a critical reading of the current state of play in this crucial sphere of higher education in Portugal.

Key words | Foreign language teaching, Portugal, higher education, recommendations

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1. Introduction

Since the turn of the century, Portugal has witnessed various institutional and curricular restructuring processes which have introduced profound changes into the Higher Education system; there is what amounts to a new legal framework for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) based on Decree-Law Nº 62/2007 of 10 September and with regard to which degrees and diplomas are on offer in HEIs (Decree-Law Nº 74/2006)[1] and the introduction of accreditation of professional qualifications (by INAFOP – The National Institute for Accreditation of Teacher Education) and the legislative review of teacher training degrees (Decree-Law Nº 43/2007, which was replaced on May 14th, 2014 with Decree-Law Nº 79/2014). In addition, there are now regular institutional and curriculum assessments (by CNAVES – The National Council for Higher Education Assessment) as well as by The Agency for Assessment and Accreditation of Higher Education (known locally as: A3ES), created by Decree-Law no. 369/2007 of 5th November, with the purpose of promoting and ensuring the quality of higher education. The assessment and accreditation regime to be developed by the Agency is defined in Decree-Law no. 38/2007 of 16th August.

These national reforms all have to be contemplated within the broad context of the whole Bologna Process which created a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and a framework of qualifications adopted in 2005 which defines learning outcomes and describes three cycles within HEIs making use of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). A web-based survey of European HEIs revealed, however, that there is great latitude in the definition of what the student workload should be in relation to each ECTS; furthermore, this is true specifically for the ECTS attributed to English language teaching (ELT) in Portuguese HEIs. The whole process of adaptation to Bologna guidelines was conducted under intense political and time pressure which resulted in a good deal of 'copy-paste' from the old to the new (Trigo). In fact, uniformity in the application of the Bologna Process in Portuguese HEIs was always unlikely to be achieved given that some of the people charged with bringing it to fruition

actually held negative or sceptical attitudes towards it. It should also be acknowledged that this Bologna Process has also had its more 'philosophical' critics who point out that it has introduced a predominantly economic set of values into HEIs with its focus on cost-cutting and 'competitiveness' (Lorenz) or even as a threat to intellectual independence and creativity through its insistence on 'harmonization' or 'standardisation' (see Tomusk; or Hejj). Specifically, with respect to foreign language courses in HEIs, the creation by the Council of Europe (1989-1996) of a Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) has had profound consequences in defining curricula that co-exist with a change to a two semester format and the less widespread use of 'major' and 'minor' distinctions within courses. Ultimately, The Bologna Process represents an ongoing opportunity to revive and renew, "it is a new paradigm, culture and conception of teaching and learning, student and teacher, where competences and learning outcomes, allied to ECTS play an important role in all the modifications" (Baptista et al. n. pag.).

2. The Portuguese Higher Education Context

All these reforms have taken place in little more than a decade and all have influenced the curricula of foreign language based courses that are offered in Portuguese HEIs under the broad banner of 'Humanities'. Local students who graduated before 2001, when they return today to their university to undertake some kind of professional development course (*formação contínua*) or to take a post-graduate course find a totally different world. Portuguese HEIs now operate within European and global networks of interest and have opened their doors to literally thousands of mobility students from other countries as well as visiting scholars/staff and administrative personnel. For example, in 2015/2016, the Faculty of Letters, University of Porto (FLUP) received some 586 students resulting from international mobility 'in' schemes (almost 20% of total student population of this faculty) and the provision for the whole of the University of Porto envisages a total of 4,200 students. A further example worthy of mention, and not

without a controversial aspect to it, would be the use of the English language as the medium of instruction (EMI) for various subjects, on various courses at several HEIs within Portugal; here we can cite, for example, the case of the Lisbon School of Economics & Management (part of Lisbon University) where an entire first cycle/undergraduate course in Economics is delivered through the medium of English. As such, these changes have led to a 'quiet revolution', which has not been widely researched or reported on, in mentalities, practices, routines and even in the academic posture of those who are asked to carry out these reforms: HEI teaching staff.

3. The Common European Framework of Reference and Local Research

Today, we are certainly very different foreign language (FL) teachers than we were before 2001. FL teachers now have to take into account a much more broadly-based definition/philosophy of 'language teaching': issues related to the construction of identity, interpersonal structures and our relationship with 'The Other' (see Bizarro). In addition, teachers have had to take on ever--increasing responsibilities with regard to the definition and description of course content, teaching methodology and assessment procedures: every subject (curricular unit) should be defined and described online (in both Portuguese and English) and these 'files' then become the subject of periodic external reviews (through the A3ES procedures mentioned above). FL courses have undergone deeper changes compared to other courses because they were not only subject to accreditation changes and the compression of content and objectives, but were also forced to take on board a new model of curriculum development and description after 2001: the already referred to Common European Framework Reference for Languages (CEFR). While appearing somewhat belatedly in the history of language teaching in the twentieth and twenty--first century, the CEFR aims to give credibility and clarity to the teaching of very particular foreign language competences and skills, even though its implementation has been achieved in a very disparate and somewhat disorganized way.

To date there has been little in-depth research conducted into or reporting on the 'state of play' in the organization and delivery of FL courses in Portuguese HEIs[2]. Alongside the changes in law mentioned above, Portuguese HEIs have been granted increasing autonomy over the same time period. However, while such autonomy undoubtedly serves to increase administrative and pedagogical responsibility at the local-regional level, it also correlates to a lack of curricula consistency from institution to institution. Different European and national initiatives have been adjusted according to local institutional interpretations, sometimes to the extent of losing sight of the original directive. There remains a certain degree of confusion among Portuguese HEIs over how curricula should be constructed (design principles) and what kind of information needs to be included (content principles). There is not really any organised debate about FL education policy or any official body which takes responsibility for promoting discussion in Portugal (Pinto). This despite the fact there has been widespread theorising of these issues in the appropriate literature, to cite just one example: Biggs, J. and Tang, K. (2011) *Teaching for Quality Education*, a publication of fundamental importance, now in its fourth edition, dealing with exactly these issues in the context of HEIs.

Currently, the Portuguese Minister of Education is conducting a major review of the national curriculum for all subjects in Basic and Secondary Education. This includes the building of a core curriculum for all disciplines. Oddly enough, we did not have one until now and the general trend was always writing a long (and not rarely, too long) curriculum that was and is almost impossible to teach in a single academic year. This unique opportunity for all institutions where foreign languages are offered has not been understood by all policy makers and educators as perhaps the only chance we will have to build a stable and effective national curriculum for the first 12 years of education. If we manage to do so, if the core curricula to be designed for all foreign languages follow the standards made explicit in the CEFR, HEIs will have to readjust once more their curricula as well. If we also take into consideration the fact that the Portuguese government has recently introduced English as a compulsory subject in the

national curriculum for Primary Education (Years 3 and 4), Portuguese HEIs have here a great challenge for the next two decades since they will receive students with better skills in English and no longer will have to expect that all students admitted to do a first degree in English, for example, will start with a B2 level. A decade from now, all HEI courses with English as a major will have to start with C1 level; this proposed change will impact on FL delivery in terms of curriculum design and content and have a clear knock-on effect in the area of FL teacher education.

4. Portuguese Curricula and FL Teacher Education

The specificities of the Portuguese context of FL delivery in HEIs do indeed need to be given due consideration. For example, in the UK, HEIs have been experiencing a clear decline in demand for foreign language courses, which is not the case in Portugal or many other European countries. The UK government reacted by commissioning a special report: *The Worten Report* (2009) which sought to address the challenge faced by British HEIs in this respect. There are clear economic benefits to developing a competence in more than one language. The European norm nowadays is seen by many as: your mother tongue, plus English plus one further additional language. Europe itself is a multilingual space (more than 80% of primary school children in the EU were studying a foreign language in 2013, according to Eurostat) and Portugal has not been slow in recognising the need to expand FL instruction, for example, in the case of English to the first cycle of basic education in state schools (an action which will imply a complete overhaul of the FL curricula in the state school system). But economic interests should not override a recognition of the cultural, intellectual, societal and individual benefits that arise from greater understanding promoted through pluri-lingual education policies (Beacco & Byram). This perspective is also enshrined at the level of European policy by the European Commission and the Council of Europe through instruments such as The European Language Portfolio (launched in 2001) and at world level through multiple publications in support of intercultural education from UNESCO. Yet, despite all this

'background' very few HEIs in Europe actually explicitly state what their language policy is (Ritz). Some language policies can barely be described as 'partial', usually involving only additional use of English: employing top-down strategies (institutions encouraging their staff to become proficient enough to lecture in an FL, i.e. non-monolingual teachers) or bottom-up strategies making FL competence part of new job descriptions (Pinto).

The foreign languages constituted in the curricula of most Portuguese HEIs present little variation since the implementation of the Bologna process until now. English, French, German and Spanish usually dominate the choices made available to undergraduate students as 'core' curriculum choices. In most cases, these language options are framed within courses that follow the established model of *Languages, Literatures and Cultures* (with some variations in denomination). Other courses on offer with a strong FL presence may be described as *International Relations* or *European Studies* or in some cases, courses which lead to qualifications related to translation or interpretation, *Applied Language Studies*. Whatever the course, FL students are customarily grouped together for their FL instruction, a phenomenon that is administratively convenient but allows for little specification in curriculum design or content; for example, at FLUP, students from four different first degree courses take their FL subjects together. In other, more isolated cases, additional languages such as Catalan, Italian or Mandarin are offered but usually as a 'minor' in conjunction with one of the 'majors' mentioned above. At the same time the number of non-Humanities students of foreign languages has grown annually in other faculties; at the *Universidade Nova de Lisboa* (UNL), for example, the Faculty of Economics (now renamed Nova School of Business and Economics), requires mastery of English and Spanish in its 1st and 2nd cycle courses, or the Faculty of Medical Sciences, which, from 2011-12, has included a foreign language option in the 1st year of its Medicine course. While this kind of demand-supply is understandable in the context of European HEIs, it would also be worthwhile to also engage with other non-European languages, particularly as mobility programmes for (thousands of) students and teachers alike, such as

Erasmus Mundus or *Erasmus Plus* or *Mobile+2* have now also embraced a wider, global standpoint. Portugal should be in the front line of respecting ethnic and linguistic diversity, promoting social justice, by providing opportunities for accredited language development in as wide a range of languages as possible. Indeed, Portuguese HEIs have in recent years expanded the range of FL courses they offer as extra-curricular subjects, many operating as evening classes to external students and also members of the general public.

5. Language Centres and Portuguese HEIs

The existence of and consistent demand for extra-curricular FL courses, as described above, has prompted some Portuguese HEIs to formalise the provision of these courses through the formal constitution of 'Language Centres'. In 2006, for example, UNL created an institute of languages (ILNOVA), integrated in the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, which quickly became a national reference, for the way it reinvented human resources management and the receptivity it has had among the general public, with hundreds of students from outside the University looking for one or more of its 25 offered languages. These autonomous Language Centres co-exist with modern languages Departments in a sometimes uneasy relationship; for example, teachers may be delivering similar courses under different physical and contractual conditions. In addition, as Worten pointed out there is a "need to challenge the 'false dichotomy' which exists between Language Centres (erroneously perceived as teaching only language skills) and academic departments (who define themselves as teaching language through content and culture)" (4). This recent expansion did not result from any concerted ministerial or national initiative but could rather be characterised as 'ad hoc'. However, in 2009, these (fourteen) centres came together in an inter-institutional association, The Association of Higher Education Language Centres in Portugal (ReCLes). The association is also a member of the European Confederation of Language Centres in Higher Education (CercLesS). Some resistance still exists to the establishment of such centres in parallel with the traditional departmental

structures; for example, the University of Porto has no such 'Language Centre'. While the common goal is the delivery of FL course there is much that distinguishes the two entities; again, to cite just one example: the definition of learning objectives and the best means by which to achieve those objectives. However, there is much to be gained from a more harmonised relationship here, not least, working towards greater academic and non-academic recognition for the importance of FL teaching-learning. There may also be benefits with respect to confronting the 'power' of the STEMM fields (Science, Technology, Engineering, Medicine and Mathematics) when it comes to funding proposals and research grants.

6. Being 'International' and 'Intercultural'

'Internationalization' has been a watchword in much of what has changed in Portuguese HEIs during the last 15 years. Aspects of academic life have changed as a result of various factors, such those already mentioned above: increasing numbers of mobility students and increasing use of English as the medium of instruction. Obviously, FL instruction should play a significant role in internationalization: no institution can hope for a favourable assessment unless it establishes dialogue with international partners, without international partnerships for research projects, without organizing international conferences and without large-scale academic output being published in international journals. FL instruction plays an evident role in the creation of circumstances under which there is an institutional openness to internationalization. Portuguese HEIs have a good record with respect to FL provision (at least 'on paper') but today's academic environment (and business and political environments) demand more than a multiple foreign language courses being made available to the student body; the emphasis in the 21st century has shifted to an intercultural approach. Here, the demand is for transcultural interaction: a multi-way flow of cultural meanings. In this context, learning a foreign language means adopting new socio-cultural roles in the construction of a new identity. Much has been written in relation to this issue within ELT, to cite just one major writer: Kramsch posits and discusses the

important notion of 'thirdness'; a globalized learning space where FL learners come to terms with their previous and future identities:

> Our students' ability to 'operate between languages' will not be so much a matter of bringing their message across accurately and appropriately, but of creating affordances, i.e. 'relationships of possibility' (van Lier, 2004: 105) among and between symbolic systems, whether these are verbal, visual, filmic, electronic or gestural. These relations will be created if they learn to see themselves both through their own embodied history and subjectivity and through the history and subjectivity of others. (249)

In 2005, The Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies (LLAS) of the University of Southampton identified some 700 reasons, in alphabetical order, for learning a foreign language. Among these many, referenced and researched, reasons the standout notion is that that intercultural communicative competence developed through foreign language learning is vital for better understanding and cooperation with other countries and that communication barriers lead to missed opportunities. Ultimately a monolingual person is in a weaker psychological position, relying on others and needing to be accommodated (is disadvantaged and deprived) whereas a plurilingual individual is by definition willing and able to adopt varying relationships. By its nature, FL learning obliges members of communities to confront their own and others' values, beliefs and attitudes; this is the key when considering how to ensure full participation in the democratic processes and the development of a sense of global citizenship. FL courses in Portuguese HEIs should be the locus for the growth of students as potential intercultural agents and contribute to the development of their skills in observation, analysis, interpretation and understanding, without implying the loss of cultural or ideological roots (Guilherme). In addition, FL provision in Portuguese HEIs needs to be explicit in its commitment to making clear to FL students that there are issues of power, domination and subordination related to language status that are of particular importance in relation to the teaching-learning of English (see, for example, Phillipson; or Canagarajah among many).

7. Methodologies and Approaches to FL Delivery

If surveyed, FL teachers at Portuguese HEIs would be likely to identify several changes to the way in which FL courses are delivered (methodology) in recent times. They would likely itemize two key aspects: the gradual domination of a more communicative approach and an emphasis on increasing learner autonomy. Neither concept is new. 'The Communicative Approach' dates back to 1979 with Morrow & Johnson or perhaps to 1980 with Breen & Candlin and has been debated extensively in the relevant literature (see recent articles by Waters or Ur). With regard to learner-centredness, we can cite here the early work of Oller and Richards (1973) or, slightly later, and more extensively by Nunan (1988). However, how much Portuguese HEIs have taken on the essential notion of putting the learner at the centre of the educational process through identifying their needs and how much these same HEIs have allowed/encouraged their students to exercise their own responsibility in learning is open to doubt. Veiga and Amaral in their survey of Bologna implementation in Portuguese HEIs report:

> [T]he Bologna goal in the perspective of Portuguese higher education institutions was linked much more to the paradigm shift, rather than to the Bologna goals of promoting employability and mobility. The results suggested an optimistic perception about the paradigm shift from teaching to learning, although it remained to be seen if academics and students would confirm the perception voiced by the leadership of the surveyed schools. (61)

FL teachers (and curriculum designers) at Portuguese HEIs need to be clear about what a full implementation of a learner-centred approach implies: "Drawing on the constructivist notion that learners must make sense of new language and experiences in the context of their unique world view, teaching should create and sustain personally meaningful connections between language content and the lived experience and world of each learner" (White 323).

Learners need to be treated as individuals, a complete break from the traditional (17th century?) view of magisterial transmission of knowledge to the students as a single body is required. Teachers need to be responsive, flexible and adaptable in their options concerning methodologies, materials and learning activities (Tudor) and view the teaching-learning process as an ongoing negotiation that involves interaction, experimentation and a shared commitment by both parties to both sides of the equation.

8. Concluding Remarks

Our perception of the current state of affairs in FL provision in Portuguese HEIs remains grounded in the belief that our FL students need to develop their foreign language proficiency within the framework of an intercultural communicative approach (Byram, *Teaching and Assessing*; or Matos). Skills in this area are at the heart of the both personal and professional foreign language encounters and should be stressed. We also recognise that analysis and knowledge of the social, historical, institutional, literary and political background of communities representing the target languages is similarly essential, even at the level of everyday, 'mundane' encounters (Byram, *Cultural Studies*); indeed, it is here that we find the 'cultural content' that so fundamental in FL learning (Hurst). Indeed, HEIs should make more of being in a unique position, equipped with qualified staff with the necessary expertise to develop this kind of approach. Modern language departments are populated with 'experts' in cultural studies, literature, linguistics and so on; but, rarely is this expertise unified in the service of improving the FL proficiency of Portuguese HEI students. It is exactly within this context that Alarcão appeals for a multi-disciplinary approach that echoes the macro-objective of language teaching: the reinforcement of mutual understanding among different linguistic communities based on tolerance, inclusion and shared societal values. This is an appeal which finds an echo in this brief, co-authored survey of the 'state of play' in FL provision in Portuguese HEIs. Our local HEIs (as well as professional associations and other stakeholders) should work together to

formulate and disseminate a clear message about the strategic importance FL teaching-learning in Portuguese HEIs.

Notes

[1] Readers may also wish to consult the different diplomas related to foreign language teacher education issued more recently: Decree-Law No. 139/2012, of 5 July, Decree-Law No. 91/2013, of 10 July and the grid attached to Decree-Law No. 91 / 2013 of 10 July.

[2] With the exception of work undertaken at the University of Aveiro by Susana Almeida Pinto who has authored and/or co-authored several papers on foreign language education policy and provision in Portuguese HEIs.

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Implementing CLIL in Schools: The Case of the GoCLIL Project in Portugal

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Abstract | Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), an educational approach in which an additional language is used to teach school subjects, has become increasingly widespread within state schools across Europe since the acronym was coined in the mid-nineties. This now includes Portugal where CLIL activity across educational levels has been growing in recent years. Like other national contexts in Europe, this has also been through the grassroots initiatives of individual schools keen to influence positive change in educational practices and reap the benefits which CLIL is purported to bring about. One such case is the GoCLIL project at Escola Secundária Dr. Joaquim Gomes Ferreira Alves in Valadares, Vila Nova de Gaia, which has been operating a CLIL programme through English since the academic year 2013-2014. This article outlines fundamentals of implementing CLIL in schools and provides an overview of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) of the case. It uses data collected from questionnaires administered to teachers, pupils and parents, lesson observations, pupil focus groups, and teacher reflections obtained during the ongoing monitoring process led by the Faculty of Arts and Humanities of the University of Porto. The data contribute to the rich description of the project from which it has been possible to identify and compare findings across years, as well as factors which have contributed to its sustainability. Insights gained from this case study will be interesting and potentially useful for schools which are considering setting up a project of this kind.

Key words | Implementing CLIL, CLIL in Portugal, case study, SWOT analysis, monitoring CLIL

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1. Introduction

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is an educational approach in which an additional language, for example, a foreign, regional, minority, territorial or other state language ("Eurydice 2017" 55) is used to enhance the simultaneous development of both subject and language learning. This dual focus is believed to bring about a range of benefits to learners' linguistic ability, meta-linguistic awareness, motivation, risk-taking, active participation, problem--solving, levels of concentration, capacity to think, meta-cognitive ability, study-skills and autonomy, as well as fostering social awareness and intercultural understanding. CLIL is a highly flexible approach which exists in various guises around the world owing to the socio-political, economic and educational needs of contexts. There is variation in educational objectives, amount and type of CLIL, and human resources available to plan, administer and monitor it. It is particularly prolific within state schools across educational levels in Europe as evidenced in the latest Eurydice Survey, *Key Data on Teaching Languages at School in Europe* 2017 which states that in "nearly all European countries some schools offer CLIL" (Eurydice 55). In a few of these, it is an obligatory part of schooling (e.g., Italy and Austria). Variation in CLIL programmes within and across contexts has made the phenomenon complex and somewhat difficult to monitor and compare the results of research (Bonnet 66; Coyle et al. "CLIL" 165). Thus, the case study is an oft-preferred means of examining and reporting on newly emergent activity. Such studies include multiple cases (of schools) across national contexts, examples of which are those of the British Council with the Spanish and Portuguese Ministries of Education (Dobson, Murillo & Johnstone, and Almeida et al. respectively) or single cases representing an individual school.

The purpose of this paper is to outline the fundamentals of implementing CLIL as the backdrop to the GoCLIL project, a case study in a state secondary school in Portugal. It describes how the project was implemented and highlights the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats from data gathered from questionnaires administered to teachers, pupils and parents, lesson observations, and teacher reflections obtained during the ongoing monitoring process led

by the Faculty of Arts and Humanities of the University of Porto. The data contribute to the rich description of the case from which it has been possible to identify and compare findings across years, as well as factors which have enabled the sustainability of the project.

2. Implementing CLIL

As a flexible educational approach, CLIL has morphed itself according to the contexts in which it has been implemented. As such, it lacks, as Kiely states a "policy and practice perspective"(155). This has given rise to many varieties of the approach which have made a one-size-fits all template practically impossible to develop. This flexibility has allowed it to triumph as well as threaten its very existence (see Cenoz et al.; Dalton-Puffer et al.; Perez Cañado for discussions on this). However, in order for quality CLIL, in whatever shape or form, to take place, certain factors must be aligned which may help to safeguard against "disjuncture" (Mehisto 3). Recommendations and key-characteristics of programmes point to actual and future contextual and operational factors incorporating curriculum objectives, planning and evaluation, and human resources (Soler et al.; Pavon & Ellison; Coyle et al. "CLIL"; Naves; Marsh). The 'fundamentals' hereto considered essential by the author of this paper are the identification and development of: aims for the project; model or type of CLIL including percentage of curricular time allocated, which subjects and assessment procedures; teacher competences and collaboration; learner competences and needs; project coordination; CLIL tools and materials; the role of stakeholders; monitoring and project evaluation; and dialogue within and between communities of practice.

These are now briefly explained and used in the analysis and interpretation of SWOT findings in the case study described later.

2.1. *Aims for the Project*

These should be clear, realistic and depict a coherent vision of the project in the school which is accessible to all stakeholders. Aims commonly referred to relate to improving proficiency in the

additional language (usually a foreign language), developing intercultural understanding through the use of materials from other contexts and dialogue which CLIL affords as it has the potential to connect teachers and learners from schools in different national contexts (Sudhoff). Increasingly aims relate to 'internationalisation' as schools feel they need to be more accessible to engaging in European partnerships. In addition, in contexts where there is foreign language medium instruction (usually English Medium Instruction (EMI)) in institutions of higher education, CLIL at school level is seen as preparation for this in the national context as well as abroad.

2.2. *Model or Type of CLIL*

CLIL can be anything from a single lesson to a whole subject taught through the additional language over an academic year (Mehisto, Marsh & Frigols 13). Modular CLIL is common across contexts and also preferable when starting out in CLIL. Here CLIL is applied to the teaching of part or parts of the subject (a particular topic/s) over the year which allows for recycling of content and language in the mother tongue which helps to allay parental fears of children missing out on these. Importantly, modular CLIL also allows teachers and learners time to acclimatise to the new way of working. It would also allow for regular contact with CLIL if more than one subject is involved and CLIL lessons in these subjects are alternated. Any subject can be taught using the CLIL approach though in most cases the national curriculum must be followed. CLIL is not a substitute for lessons in the additional language (e.g., it does not substitute English as a foreign language lessons). Rather, these run parallel to CLIL and may serve to support language in CLIL, for example through preparation or consolidation of key language structures and subject terminology. Assessment should be considered at all stages of the planning process. What to assess – content, language or both and how to do this will depend on the aims of the project. If these are mainly language-oriented, then there will necessarily be a firm focus on this. Both language and content teachers should be jointly involved in assessing learners in CLIL.

2.3. *Teacher Competences and Collaboration*

So much of a CLIL project will depend on the human resources available at the school, namely the teachers – their competences, drive and motivation. A CLIL teacher may be a foreign language teacher or subject content teacher (e.g., a geography teacher). Whoever they are, they will need to develop "multiple types of expertise" (Marsh et al.) owing to the fusion of language and content subject knowledge bases (Ellison “CLIL as a Catalyst”) which make CLIL methodology complex. A consequence of this is that they will need to adjust their regular practice accordingly and adopt an "inter-disciplinary mindset" (Marsh 66) as opposed to a subject specific one, and the necessary complementary 'sensitivity', of language or content teacher. Thus, a language teacher will need to also think and act like a content teacher and vice versa. In CLIL therefore, it is not just a matter of changing the medium of instruction (Pavon & Rubio 51), but of mindsets and methods. Both demand that teachers adopt a highly reflexive attitude as they proceed through their CLIL practice (Ellison “CLIL as a Catalyst”). A particular challenge for some content teachers is the additional language itself. Language proficiency levels differ across contexts. Ideally, they should not be lower than C1 level on the Common European Framework of Reference (Council of Europe). That does not necessarily mean that a language teacher is best placed to be the CLIL teacher because it is unlikely that they will know the specific language of the discipline, not to mention have the in--depth understanding of the subject content. CLIL, therefore, necessitates collaboration between language and content teachers where each pools their expertise and practical theory of their respective knowledge bases (Pavon & Ellison). Teacher collaboration can include: observation of each other teaching regular lessons in order to gain awareness of subject literacy, methodology, cognitive challenge, language use and classroom management; planning CLIL lessons together where both content and language are accounted for, and tasks and materials are designed and appropriately scaffolded; and team teaching or observation of CLIL lessons.

2.4. *Learner Competences and Needs*

It is said that CLIL is for learners of all abilities, and learners who are considered less able in languages are found to cope well with CLIL as the focus is not solely on language learning (Marsh 73). However, CLIL is demanding for learners as it requires more concentration, cognitive agility in processing content concepts through another language code, and active knowledge construction and demonstration of understanding through peer interaction. These are also where benefits are derived. When a school is beginning a CLIL programme, it is advisable to start implementation with one class at the beginning of an educational cycle and monitor this class against others at the same educational level within the school if that is possible. This will allow for comparisons to be made between CLIL classes and non-CLIL (control) classes in terms of progress in language and content areas. Pupils' opinions should also be heard regarding how they feel about CLIL and their perception of learning.

2.5. *Project Coordination*

Project coordination is essential in ensuring coherence and the smooth running of a CLIL programme. This will involve a number of stakeholders and liaison with school director, content and language teachers, learners, parents and an external monitoring body. Coordination may be the responsibility of an individual or delegated, what Stoler et al. term "distributed leadership" (478). For example, there may be a different coordinator for the various groups: one for language teachers, another for content teachers or one for each year group of content and language teachers, and another for parents. Each group should meet regularly to coordinate when CLIL lessons will take place, exchange ideas and materials, diagnose strengths and weaknesses and discuss how evidence of progress will be obtained. These are fed back to the main project coordinator who should have prior training in CLIL. Coordination involves ensuring that teachers determine which areas will be covered in CLIL and when, in other words, the timetabling of CLIL lessons into coherent sequences if modular CLIL is undertaken. In addition, it involves ensuring

that appropriate frameworks are used for planning e.g., the 4Cs model (Coyle et al. "CLIL" 53-56) which involves consideration of content, communication (language), cognition, and culture. Other channels of communication could be developed such as a virtual environment for uploading and storing materials, as well as forums for discussion and links to other communities of practice within and beyond the local/national context.

2.6. *CLIL Tools and Materials*

Ready-made materials for CLIL lessons are rare, given the highly contextualised nature of CLIL. For this reason, and more often than not, teachers find themselves adapting or designing their own pedagogical materials to suit the needs of their learners and the subject curriculum of their national context. This is a time-consuming process, to say the least. Materials must be chosen or designed to adequately convey the key concepts of the subject area as well as highlighting the language needed to do so. Thus, teachers need to be attuned to useful criteria for adapting and developing quality CLIL materials (Mehisto) as well as techniques for scaffolding both content and language through multimodal means using a range of resources which account for different learning styles (Massler et al. 66-95).

2.7. *Role of Stakeholders – Parents and other Schools in the Community*

Parental support for initiating innovative projects is vital. Often it is pressure from parents which ignites the flame for action. Parents can be allies when all is going well or indeed foes if projects do not yield the predicted positive results. With a CLIL project new to a community, parents will need to be informed of a school's intentions for implementation and briefed about CLIL, its benefits and challenges, and how they can support the project and their child. Parents will see this as an investment and may well seek out a school which is offering something which they envisage as having long-term consequences to their child's education and future employment possibilities. Common parental concerns regarding CLIL tend to relate to their child missing out on key

concepts and language in the mother tongue, their child's and their own aptitude for languages (Baetens Beardsmore 24; Mehisto et al. 20), and assessment, especially in national exams. Modular CLIL in particular helps support recycling of key concepts and language in the mother tongue. Parents may be encouraged to engage in post-CLIL lesson reflection with their child at home in the mother tongue, thus encouraging articulations of their understanding in the mother tongue. This may also be done with other older pupils at school as in peer tutoring conferences and study groups in non-lesson time.

Parents should also be involved as informants in ongoing monitoring of CLIL programmes via questionnaires, interviews or focus groups. Parents are usually keen to maintain educational practices which they see as having positive effects on their child's schooling. This may involve them in searching for a school which may allow their child to continue with CLIL in another educational cycle. Thus, it is vitally important that provision for CLIL beyond the immediate cycle catered for by the school is factored into the long-term vision of the project within a given community. Discontinuing CLIL education after one level may well lead to a decrease in motivation and a missed opportunity to capitalise on learner achievement in CLIL. The CLIL experience may even cause problems for teachers of foreign languages who receive mixed classes of children who have experienced CLIL and others who have not, as a common consequence of CLIL is improved proficiency in the additional language. Thus, schools which learners go on to attend must consider provision for them whether through implementing CLIL or creating extra-curricular language clubs where the CLIL language is used for other learning.

2.8. *Monitoring and Project Evaluation*

This may be done on two intersecting levels involving participants internal to the process through school project coordinator(s) and through an external body with expertise in the field. The role of the latter is to ensure internal coordination is appropriate and effective, can provide teacher education if necessary, and monitoring through regular meetings and observation of practice. All

of this should be drawn up as a protocol in the planning stages of the project to ensure professional accountability. Observation may be general or structured to focus on specific incidents of teaching or learning. Standardised tools for observation of CLIL lessons exist such as the Planning and Observation Checklist (Mehisto et al. 232-35) or others specific to the context and dependent on the aims for CLIL. Observation by external advisors may provide for more neutral feedback. Triangulated data collection procedures should be employed at regular intervals to ensure close monitoring of the projects strengths and challenges.

2.9. *Dialogue within and between Communities of Practice*

Engaging in dialogue about new pedagogic interventions is an essential part of professional practice. Where there are other similar institutions within the same local/national context, coordinators should actively engage in sharing experience of practice, ideas and materials. Not only will this provide an important supporting network, but also potentially help to save time spent on materials production where materials are produced with national curricula in mind. Equally important is dialogue with communities of practice beyond the national contexts. These may provide interesting perspectives on CLIL practice which lead to further reflection on one's own. Although lesson plans and materials will not be in accord with the same national curricula, there may be similarities, and materials may be adapted. Sharing such resources, links to useful sites and knowledge of updated use of technology will always be welcomed. Aside from this, the opportunities it affords intercultural dialogue, not only among teachers, but learners too, is potentially very enriching.

There needs to be careful consideration of the above prior to project implementation as well as synergy between all elements as it progresses for there to be quality CLIL provision, and for it to stand a chance of working effectively. This is because CLIL is an integrated, whole school approach which inevitably extends beyond its immediate boundaries to affect schooling within the broader community (Ellison “The Added Value”).

3. CLIL Activity in Portuguese State Schools[1]

There is as yet little documented evidence of CLIL in state schools in Portugal despite acknowledgement by the recent Eurydice survey ("Eurydice 2017") of CLIL through French and English. The first project to gain recognition by Eurydice ("Eurydice 2012") in the country was the *Secções Europeus de Língua Francesa* (SELF) project – a collaboration between the Portuguese Ministry of Education and the French Embassy which began in the academic year 2006-2007 and involved the use of French as a medium of instruction in over 20 lower and upper secondary schools across Portugal. Since then CLIL through English has been acknowledged with the Bilingual Schools Project (Ensino Bilingue Precoce no 1.º ciclo), a pilot project and joint initiative of the British Council and Portuguese Ministry of Education (2011-2015) involving the teaching of curricular content through English in primary schools from 6 school clusters[2] across the country (Almeida et al.). Owing to the success of the project, the Ministry of Education extended applications to pre-, middle, and more recently lower secondary schools. At the time of writing, there are currently 19 school clusters engaged in CLIL activity in Portugal.

Grassroots projects in state schools involving English as the CLIL language include: Support for Teaching English in Primary Schools – University of Porto (STEPS-UP) 2005-2009 involving 56 schools and over 5000 children each year in which the many primary English language teachers recruited to teach English in schools within the city of Porto were encouraged to experiment with CLIL (Ellison "(De)Constructing CLIL"). A major contributory factor to this project being awarded the European Language Label and Label of Label awards was teachers' involvement in CLIL activity; Benchmarking CLIL (BECLIL) (Costa & Lopes 83-86) which involved two secondary schools in the teaching of Civic Studies and Information Technology through English as part of a European multilateral project; Project English Plus 2010-2011 (Simões et al.) in which History was taught through English for 45 minutes per week to one 7th year class in a lower secondary school. More recently, this project has been developing CLIL practice in Science

(Piacentini et al.); the doctoral study of Ellison (Ellison "CLIL as a Catalyst") involved the implementation of CLIL by English language teachers in three state primary schools in the north of Portugal.

There is another factor that is currently contributing to interest in CLIL in the Portuguese context. This is the recent policy of curricular 'flexibility' which schools have seen as an opportunity to foster more interdisciplinary programmes. Curriculum flexibility was introduced by the Ministry of Education in September 2017 and allows for up to 25% autonomous curriculum management. This flexibility programme is expected to expand gradually in each school involved in it and to be generalised to every Portuguese school by 2018-2019.[3]

Although CLIL is not widespread in compulsory state schooling in Portugal, there are increasing numbers of institutions of higher education which offer under and post-graduate programmes, wholly or partially taught in English to keep pace with internationalisation. Thus, CLIL provision in lower cycles of compulsory education may well be seen as preparation for future study in the home context.

4. Case Study: the GoCLIL Project

4.1. *Design and Methodology of Study*

The purpose of this section is to provide a summary of the GoCLIL project which is ongoing. It is beyond the scope of this article to provide the full, rich description of the project which covers almost 5 academic years. The methodology selected is a case study with one school (Escola Secundária Dr. Joaquim Gomes Ferreira Alves) as the single case and unit of analysis within which are embedded other sub-units (teachers, pupils, parents, external monitor/researcher who were also providers of evidence (Yin 39-41). This type of methodology allows for in-depth study of real-life events (Yin 3; Duff & Anderson 112) where flexibility in design is an advantage as "it often changes as the study unfolds" allowing us "to address timely questions" (Duff 95) particularly in longitudinal studies such as this, allowing for the emergence of new factors which afford opportunities for further exploration of the phenomenon (Friedman 182) contributing to the

richness of the study which may "yield insights of potentially wider relevance and theoretical significance" (Duff 96).

The boundaries of the study relate specifically to the single case (the school) and study of the phenomenon of CLIL over the years in which it has been in operation at the school. The objective of the study is to analyse the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) in each academic year allowing us to identify key factors which have influenced this project across years. This has enabled us to determine how the school has responded to circumstances which have both challenged the project and helped it to thrive. These are set against the fundamentals of implementation previously outlined. The SWOT analysis used data gathered from questionnaires administered to teachers, pupils and parents, teachers' written and spoken reflections, pupil focus groups, and lesson observations which have provided multiple perspectives and sources of evidence, both emic and etic, from various informants internal and external to the case study. This also allowed for triangulation of methods and sources. Teachers were involved in data collection and feedback on results as often happens in case study research.

The study is framed by the following research questions related to implementing and sustaining the project:

1. What are the main strengths of the project?
2. What are its main weaknesses?
3. What opportunities arise?
4. What threatens the project and how does the school respond to this?

4.2. *The School Context*

Escola Secundária Dr. Joaquim Gomes Ferreira Alves is a secondary School (7th to 12th year) situated in the municipality of Vila Nova de Gaia in the southern suburbs of Porto, a socially and culturally heterogeneous area, which has been gradually changing, through progressive conurbation,

from a typically suburban region to a more urban one. The number of pupils has increased steadily in recent years from 1430 in 2013-2014, 1624 in 2016-2017 to 1705 in 2017-2018. There are currently 129 teachers, of whom 83% have at least ten years of teaching experience in the school. A variety of courses are offered from general secondary studies aimed at preparing pupils for higher education to vocational/professional courses aimed at offering suitable training and qualifications for the job market in line with local and regional economic demand.

The tradition of early school leaving and low interest in educational attainment, as a social (and family) established culture, was one of the central problems to be tackled in a sustained and effective way. In fact, the school managed to reduce numbers of early school leavers from 42% in 2001 to 15% in 2013, and to below 3% in 2016-2017. 21 % of pupils benefit from free school meals and 40% of those in upper secondary courses are entitled to financial support (bolsa de mérito) for very good academic achievement. Pupils' English language results are consistently good. The school works hard to maintain a healthy and collaborative social environment among pupils, staff, parents, and other stakeholders.

In October 2013, the school signed an Autonomy Contract with the Ministry of Education and Science. Conditions for the granting of an autonomy contract include school self-evaluation and positive external evaluation. The school's autonomy contract focused on three very important dimensions:

1. improving Portuguese Language and Mathematics results by reinforcing human resources for the mentoring programme;
2. being allowed to implement innovative pedagogical approaches, mainly CLIL in lower secondary years;
3. avoiding cluster inclusion in order to maintain and develop its strategic plan.

In general, the contract has allowed for greater autonomy in areas such as pedagogy and curriculum, human resources, school social support and financial management.

4.3. *The GoCLIL Project*

The GoCLIL project began in 2013 as a grassroots initiative at the school. At this time there was very little information available about CLIL projects in Portugal and no *modus operandi* which could serve as a benchmark or broad template. A protocol with the Faculty of Arts and Humanities of the University of Porto ensured the external monitoring of the CLIL project by a specialist with a doctoral thesis in this area. This consisted of:

1. Advising: developing a shared understanding/vision of CLIL; determining aims and a model; ensuring within-school coordination and teacher collaboration.
2. Providing pedagogic support in key areas: CLIL methodology; framework for planning lessons; scaffolding teaching and learning.
3. Monitoring: observation of lessons; filming of lessons; encouraging self-monitoring through reflective practice; encouraging teacher-led data collection of learners' perceptions and learning outcomes.

Specific aims were developed for the project which were in keeping with the school's ethos and strategic plan to create opportunities for social and academic mobility as well as success in English language. These were:

- To develop pupils' general proficiency and cognitive academic linguistic competence in English;
- To promote an integrated, inter-disciplinary approach to learning the English language as opposed to language learning in isolation;
- To promote inclusivity in education;
- To equip pupils with the skills to meet the challenges of the 21st Century.

An English language teacher who had undertaken a CLIL course and was familiar with the core principles of CLIL was nominated to coordinate the project. It was decided that implementation would be gradual starting with one 7th year class and that this would increase to the involvement of more classes in subsequent years. English language lessons ran alongside CLIL lessons. A modular approach was adopted which would consist of short lesson sequences of CLIL within content subjects negotiated by subject content teachers and English language teachers at the beginning of the school year and further negotiated at the start of each school term. A grid for long and medium term planning was developed by the external coordinator as well as a lesson planning template based on the 4Cs framework (Coyle et al "CLIL" 53 - 56) with both content and language teachers planning together. A virtual space was created to facilitate the exchange and storage of relevant articles about CLIL, materials, plans and links to useful sites. Teachers were instructed to collect data which would provide evidence of learner progress within the project through diagnostic tests of English language proficiency at the beginning of academic years, questionnaires to learners about their perception of CLIL, and end of term test results in content and English language which could be compared with non-CLIL 'control' classes. Filming of CLIL lessons was also encouraged to stimulate teacher reflection on practice as well as evidence that could be presented to parents. Meetings were planned with the external advisor as well as lesson observations and post-lesson discussions.

Data have been collected over the five years of the project which provide evidence of the perspectives of pupils, teachers and parents as well as an indication of academic results of pupils involved in the CLIL programme compared to those who were not. A summary of data collection procedures and analysis for monitoring and evaluating the project can be found in Table 1 below.

Year	Data collection tools and procedures	Analysis
2013-2014	**Pupils** • Diagnostic tests of language proficiency (beginning of year) • Questionnaires • Final end of year results (CLIL and Non-CLIL) • Lesson observation **Teachers** • Teacher spoken reflections on practice with external advisor	• Quantitative analysis of questionnaire data • Comparative analysis of test results of CLIL and non-CLIL classes (language and content) • Qualitative analysis of spoken reflections
2014-2015	**Pupils - as for previous year plus:** • Results (end of 2nd and 3rd term) CLIL and non-CLIL in English and content subject. Global average results. • Filmed interviews with pupils • Focus groups **Teachers - as for previous year plus:** • General language proficiency tests • Questionnaires • Lesson plans • Observation and films of lessons • Teacher spoken reflections during post-observation feedback with external advisor	**As for previous year plus:** • Content analysis of filmed interviews with pupils • Content analysis of focus group data • Analysis of language proficiency test results • Quantitative and qualitative analysis of questionnaires • Analysis of lesson plans for 4Cs, coherence of procedures and compatibility with actual learning outcomes • Analysis of excerpts of filmed lessons for 'critical incidents' in teaching and learning • Content analysis of teachers' reflections

2015-2016	**Pupils (as for previous year)** **Teachers - as for previous year plus:** • Written reflections **Parents** • End of year Questionnaire	**As for previous year plus:** • Content analysis of teachers' written reflections • Quantitative analysis of parents' satisfaction questionnaire
2016-2017	**Pupils (as for previous year)** **Teachers - as for previous year plus:** • Teachers' reports on their teacher education practices. **Parents (as for previous year)**	**As for previous year plus:** • Content analysis of teachers' reports
2017-2018	**As for previous year**	**As for previous year**

Table 1. Data Collection and Analysis

4.4. *Findings and Discussion*

In general terms, there was significant growth in numbers of pupils involved in the project from 30 in 2013-2014 to 206 in 2015-2016 (Table 2 below). Numbers remained stable the following year and are currently at 177 pupils. Reasons for these changes in pupil numbers relate to parental demand for CLIL and teacher availability. An example of this is the extension of the school to 2nd cycle (5th and 6th years) in 2015-2016, a cycle of education it had previously not offered and was granted authorisation to do so by the Ministry of Education. The oscillation in the number of pupils involved is attributed to distribution of human resources, which is related to non--permanent teaching staff mobility. The number of teachers involved has grown from an initial five, two of whom were English language teachers acting as CLIL teachers in history, geography and natural science lessons in 2013-2014 to the current 16 teachers (six English language and

eight content teachers) in the same subject areas, but including educational technology and of the project by English language teachers in the presence of their content teacher colleagues served as a catalyst for the involvement of the latter in teaching in subsequent years. The amount of CLIL has increased over the years from 20% in 2013-2014 to between 25-40% currently.

	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018
Total no. pupils	30	120	206	206	177
Curricular time	20%	20-30%	25-40%	25-40%	25-40%
Classes **Beg = beginning** **Cont. = continuation**	7th year (1)	7th year (3) beg. 8th year (1) cont	5th year (1) beg. 7th year (2) beg. 8th year (3) cont. 9th year (1) cont.	6th year (1) cont. 7th year (1) beg. 8th year (2) cont. 9th year (3) cont.	7th year (2) beg./ cont. 8th year (1) cont. 9th year (2) cont. 10th year (2) beg.
Teachers	2 English language	2 English language 3 Content	6 English language 8 Content	7 English language 7 Content	7 English language 9 Content
Subjects **No. in brackets relate to teachers**	History Geography Science	History (1) Geography (1) Science (1)	History and History and Geography of Portugal HGP (1) Educational technology (1) Geography (3) Science (3)	History and History and Geography of Portugal (2) Educational Technology (1) Geography (2) Science (2)	History (2) Visual arts (1) Geography (2) Science (2) ICT(1) Philosophy (1)

Table 2. Project Growth from 2013-2014 to 2017-2018

4.5. *SWOT Analysis and Interpretation*

The implementation of the GoCLIL project over the academic years from 2013-2014 to the current year 2017-2018 reveals recurrent factors in terms of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats, as well as factors unique to each year. These are outlined and discussed below in light of the fundamentals of CLIL projects previously mentioned.

4.5.1. *Strengths*

The project aims are realistic, achievable and consistent with the ethos of the school in terms of inclusivity, the long-term vision for the CLIL programme and its reach to all pupils. These also capitalise on the school's reputation for high achievement in general proficiency in English language and the opportunities this affords to the development of pupils' academic language. Equipping pupils with skills to meet the challenges of the 21st century relates to critical thinking and intercultural education as well as preparation for entry to higher education in Portugal and elsewhere in the world where internationalisation is a key objective, and EMI a reality. The constant project monitoring by the school director, CLIL coordinator, external advisor has helped to keep the project on track. As it has grown, year group coordination (e.g., independent coordinators for the 7th, 8th, 9th years) has also been adopted, thus ensuring closer supervision and collaboration at year level. These coordinators are English language teachers who are part of the CLIL project and work with different content teachers within the year groups. Parental interest in and continued support for the GoCLIL project has been ongoing. They have been kept informed of the project each academic year and have been invited to give their opinions through questionnaires in 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 which revealed overwhelming support for the project. They were highly satisfied with their child's motivation, understanding of subject content, and performance, satisfied that it was not interfering with their understanding of content given in Portuguese and were convinced of its contribution to their child's current and future academic success. Parents were influential in the expansion of the project to include the 2nd cycle of basic education at the school in 2015-2016.

The modular approach adopted from the outset was an appropriate choice given the initial experimental nature of the project and inexperience of both teachers and pupils. This approach allows both teachers and pupils to get to grips with new ways of working and using the English language, and gives teachers some respite to prepare for future CLIL modules. The continuity of CLIL in the subject areas (history, geography, natural sciences) and the increase in the amount

of CLIL over the years has ensured that pupils have had CLIL classes every week and gained familiarity and deepened awareness of subject literacies in English in these areas. The fact that the majority of content teachers working within the project have B2/C1 level in English language, are permanent members of staff and have been teaching CLIL in one or more school year groups year after year has helped nurture effective ways of working as well as positive attitudes, enthusiasm and motivation in pupils during CLIL lessons. This is reflected in the academic results of pupils which are consistently better overall in English language and the other CLIL subjects than their non-CLIL counterparts. The majority of pupils say they are generally satisfied with CLIL lessons. Teachers have embraced CLIL and the hard work that it entails. As experienced teachers, they have stepped out of their comfort zones and have taken risks as exemplified in the teachers' comments below from open-ended questionnaire data (QD) in 2014-2015, and written reflections (WR) in 2015-2016:

- It obliges me to have a different approach – to be more attentive to the needs of each child. (QD)
- It is a big challenge, but I am sure it will contribute to my personal and professional development. (QD)
- It keeps me on my toes – it challenges me. (QD)
- Evidently, we are not in a bed of roses, as some students are weaker and need more scaffolding strategies, but it seems to me that we are connecting to most of the students and to real life through language and content and the four C's – communication, culture, content and cognition – have been present in CLIL lessons. (WR)
- It's difficult to engage all the students, but by looking at the impact of the CLIL lessons we can rethink strategies and, step by step, try to involve more students in the activities. (WR)

The teacher partnerships have undoubtedly been crucial to the success of the project. These have involved an English language teacher and content teacher (e.g., history teacher)

collaborating during the planning stages for CLIL lessons incorporating task and materials design or adaptation as well as during the delivery in class. This has helped ensure more language sensitivity – teachers' own and their pupils' need for and use of language. English language teachers help content teachers determine key language of and for learning, linguistic accuracy in materials and tasks designed to provide opportunities for pupils to interact with one another in class. As CLIL does not follow grammatical hierarchies of language input like English language teaching, but uses language to express meaning of subject content, this requires English language teachers to help content teachers consider appropriate ways of scaffolding content concepts and language. The 4Cs framework (Coyle et al. "CLIL" 53-56) which focuses planning for content, communication, cognition and culture has been an essential guide for planning. Sample lesson plans provided by the external advisor helped teachers in the initial phase to construct plans which had a clear logical thread and progression in terms of cognitive and linguistic challenge. The creation of lesson plans and materials has improved year on year with teachers investing time in formulating aims and learning outcomes which focus on both content and language, as well as multi-modal tasks and activities. Lesson plans and materials are stored virtually enabling teachers to share them with each other. Where possible English language teachers have been present in CLIL lessons to provide linguistic support to teachers and pupils where necessary as well as monitor language used by both. The filming of lessons from the second year of the project, initially by a teacher from the IT department using specialized equipment and thereafter by English language teachers and the external advisor using smartphones, has greatly facilitated the internal monitoring process as teachers have been able to view both their own and each other's practice and identify critical incidents in teaching and learning. English language teachers who accompany content teachers in CLIL lessons are more adept at capturing incidents in the classroom which serve to illustrate progress/development. Pupils have also viewed the filmed excerpts which has helped improve participation and motivation. In addition, it has provided evidence of the project in practice which has been made accessible to parents and other communities of practice including

pre-service teachers studying CLIL at FLUP who have been able to analyse and interpret CLIL in practice in the Portuguese context. Observation of lessons and post-lesson feedback by the external advisor with experience of CLIL has helped to keep this on track and provide objective feedback.

4.5.2. *Weaknesses*

The main weakness across the years of the project is time to plan for CLIL within teaching partnerships which necessitates that both English language teacher and content teacher meet to discuss and prepare lessons. This is problematic on two levels, namely teachers' timetabling commitments, which may not be compatible or allow them enough time to work together, and the amount of time needed to prepare for CLIL. This includes linguistic revision of materials prepared by the content teacher (e.g., powerpoint presentations, texts, worksheets for students) as well as teacher and pupil language. Time to prepare for CLIL is a commonly cited cause for concern for teachers (Coyle et al. "Towards an integrated curriculum" 16; Kiely 165; Ludbrook 21-22; Mehisto "CLIL Counterweights" 22). The fact that it is noted over the five years of the project is due to new content and language teachers entering the project each academic year. Even though there is a bank of plans and materials from which these teachers can draw upon, they will still have to adapt them to suit *their* learners as noted in the teachers' written reflections below:

- Looking for and producing materials which help to get the message across contributed to my difficulty in planning – takes more time and requires more forward planning.
- We need time and support to study and work collaboratively, in order to activate knowledge and follow the right path: quality.

Experienced CLIL practitioners within the project also find they want fresh materials and to design new activities.

In the first year of the project, the focus was predominantly on operationalising CLIL lessons. Less attention was paid to assessment procedures although this has progressively

improved in terms of focus, means, and teacher joint assessment procedures. Although data have been collected which provide evidence of pupil satisfaction with CLIL and their academic performance (largely through questionnaires, interviews and focus groups in 2014-2015 and test results) which have been necessary and sufficient to prove that CLIL is being effectively operationalised, there needs to be more structured analysis and interpretation of the extent and quality of pupil activity, in for example, spoken interaction and written work.

The challenges faced by teachers were initially highlighted in data collected from questionnaires in 2014-2015 and lesson observations over the years. These mainly relate to teacher 'ease' or lack of in giving CLIL lessons, balancing cognitive and linguistic demands, and their language use and ability to handle pupils' language errors. Problems of teacher language use is mainly related to non-technical language such as occasional lapses in subject-verb agreement, verb tenses, false friends and pronunciation. It should be emphasised that this is not the case for all content teachers, and where inaccuracies have been pointed out to teachers in lessons and during post-observation feedback discussions with the external coordinator, they have been able to self-correct these mistakes.

4.5.3. *Opportunities*

Over the years, the project has responded to opportunities for dissemination of its findings at conferences in the national context and best practices at an event which the school itself hosted. It has also responded to opportunities for the development of teacher education for its own staff through applications for KA1 Erasmus + programmes for CLIL and English language, and job shadowing, and KA2 for CLIL implementation and practice. These, in turn, have provided further opportunities for the development of teacher education practices at the school which is now used as a centre for a European CLIL course. The growth in confidence which courses of this nature provided teachers led to an inservice CLIL teacher development course being given by the main coordinator in 2016-2017 and one to develop the language abilities of content teachers in 2017-

2018. Furthermore, the initiative to extend networking was taken to another level with the application to be lead partners in a European project and subsequent granting of this in 2016-2017. The project, aptly named 'GoCLIL Europe' has enabled best practices to be shared and developed with partners from Greece, Italy and Romania, thus reaching out to other communities of practice. The extension of the project into the first year of upper secondary level (10th year) within the subject of philosophy is an opportunity to provide continuity of CLIL for students who choose this subject option. It is hoped that this will lead to further content areas being involved across the secondary levels (10th, 11th, 12th), thus allowing for continuity until the end of schooling.

4.5.4. *Threats*

It is fair to say that the most consistent threat to the project is teacher availability. Where there is a shortage of permanent members of staff, there is a reliance on short-term contract teachers. Teacher availability has had a direct consequence on the number of pupils involved in the project. A further consequence of this was the need to introduce a selection procedure for pupils' entry into the project at the beginning of the lower secondary cycle (7th year) in 2016-2017. It was decided that this would be based on pupils' personal motivation and a diagnostic written test to determine English language proficiency and subject content awareness in English. Although a controversial measure (Bruton), it is hoped that it is temporary until further teacher stability is guaranteed. Teacher mobility is challenging for the permanent members of staff who may take on board more CLIL in different year groups or spend more of their time working with new teachers (from within the project or new to it). The fact that the average age of permanent members of staff involved is early 50s also poses a threat to the longevity of the project. Teacher mobility could be counteracted if the stay of non-permanent staff could be extended from the statutory two, to a further four, thus allowing both teacher and school to reap more benefits from teacher development and continuity. In addition, in-service teacher education for permanent members of

staff may instill confidence and motivation to join the project, thus eliminating reliance on non--permanent members.

Other threats have been specific to each year. An example was the rapid growth of the project in its second year, which the school responded to with more language and content teachers. This was further added to in 2015-2016 with the exceptional opening of a second educational cycle and the need for teachers involved to adapt to the demands of working with younger learners coming to the school with different levels of ability in the English language. It is notable that threats are fewer and predictable each year which means the school can adequately prepare for them. The school's capacity to respond to threats is also testament to its flexibility and committed, dynamic staff who have invested in the project and truly believe in it, thus guaranteeing its continuity and success.

5. Conclusions

It has been beyond the scope of this article to provide the rich description which befits a case study report of the GoCLIL project. Therefore, the main strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats over its near five-year existence have merely been outlined. From the backdrop of fundamentals for implementing CLIL in schools, it is clear that the project has adhered to these, but not without a fair degree of challenge. It has managed to be sustainable by responding to threats, namely teacher availability, through the provision of teacher education in CLIL both at school and abroad which have helped develop competences and quality practice, as well as boosted teachers' motivation, confidence and belief in the project. Change in education rarely comes easily. It is even more difficult if it involves an educational approach little practiced within a national context and is a grassroots project initiated by a single institution. However, with determination and conviction the risk that drives change can provide the energy that brings about positive results in one context which unites others with a similar need for change. Such has been the reach of GoCLIL since it expanded into a European Erasmus + project involving partners with

varied experience of CLIL, but united in the need to develop quality education within their diverse contexts. With no identifiable detriment to learners' academic performance and a predominantly positive attitude to the approach, the project is set to continue with more in-depth investigation of the phenomenon of CLIL in practice.

Notes

[1] Foreign language learning in Portugal officially begins in the third year of primary school with English which is taught through middle (5^{th} and 6^{th} years) and lower (7^{th}, 8^{th}, 9^{th}) and upper secondary school (10^{th}, 11^{th}, 12^{th}), at least until the penultimate (11^{th}) year. A second foreign language, usually Spanish, French or German is introduced in lower secondary school.

[2] A school cluster may consist of one or more primary, middle and secondary schools within close proximity of each other which are controlled by a single directive.

[3] For more information, see http://www.dge.mec.pt/autonomia-e-flexibilidade-curricular

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Exploitation of the Didactic Potential of the COCA in Task-Based Language Teaching Involving Cultural References

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Abstract | The Corpus of Contemporary American English (Davies) on the Brigham Young University website has been used in the English as Foreign Language (EFL) classroom to help learners better understand how language works at different levels of analysis and also to develop their writing skills. However, it also allows learners to explore culture-related content, by giving them access to invaluable information about social, ideological, political and historical contexts. Moreover, it provides the means to examine the ways in which such aspects intersect with language and condition its use. The understanding of this cultural and discursive dimension of language is pivotal in the training of undergraduate students in the areas of humanities and social sciences. To determine how far the COCA can contribute to increase this awareness, a series of task-based activities involving writing was drawn up and carried out in an EFL class of undergraduate students. They were first introduced to this corpus analysis tool and encouraged to explore it further. Later on, in order to complete a writing task, they were prompted to resort to a series of strategies to collect information about relevant events, personalities and social or cultural phenomena, to analyse and interpret data, and to draw conclusions about the modes in which culture and language can interact. This paper provides (a) the rationale and a brief literature review on this topic, (b) a description of the task-based activities, the implementation process, the students' strategies and the evaluation procedures, and (c) a critical reflection on this study that may open the path for further developments in this area.

Key words | Corpus analysis tools, culture-related content, discourse, english as foreign language, higher education, task-based language teaching

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1. Introduction

There is a whole range of online corpus analysis tools (British National Corpus, the Sketch Engine, Compleat Lexical Tutor, Wmatrix, SACODEYL, IntelliText, etc.) which provide interfaces to corpus linguistic methodologies. Several authors have called our attention to the potential of corpus analysis in language teaching and learning (Chun; Frankenberg-Garcia; Keck; Meunier; Viana and Tagnin). McEnery and Xiao have listed some of its uses, ranging from reference publishing, syllabus design, materials development, language testing and teacher development (where corpora are believed to have an indirect impact on language pedagogy), to LSP and professional communication, learner corpora and interlanguage analysis – providing students with "hands-on know how", where "they can exploit corpora for their own purposes" (370).

The Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) (Davies) has been used in the EFL classroom to help learners better understand how language works at different levels of analysis (Wang, Davies and Liu) – for example, through collocation tables, KWIC lists, word frequency lists, etc. (Bennett; Boulton; Callies; Dutra and Silero; Jones; Liu 2010, 2011; Orenha--Ottaiano; Umesaki; Viana). It has also been used to enhance their text production and develop their writing skills (Chang 2010, 2011 and 2013; Karaata, Cepik and Cetin; Kim; Nurmukhamedov and Olinger; Wagner), by helping them to fine-tune grammatical points and by putting them in contact with different genres and styles. However, it can also offer the opportunity to explore culture-related content by shedding light on a huge variety of social, ideological, cultural and historical issues, and on the ways in which these issues intersect with language (Rebechi 336). Culture-related approaches based on corpus analysis can increase our awareness of the discursive practices within institutions, groups and society at large.

1.1. *The Importance of Culture in Language Learning*

The close relationship between culture and language has been long acknowledged and has prompted a series of different reflections and approaches. This goes back as early as Wilhelm

von Humboldt's idea that "each language draws a circle around the nation to which it belongs" (224), to Benjamin Whorf's "principle of linguistic relativity" (27 and 29) and Bronislaw Malinowski's concept of "context-of-situation" (37, 69 and 223), not to mention the anthropological projects of Franz Boas (1940, 1974) and Edward Sapir (1963). But it was with Dell Hymes's project of an "ethnography of speaking" in the 1960s that a systematic methodology emerged in linguistics, which provided the tools for an understanding of the modes in which language, speech, communication and culture are interconnected (Hinnenkamp 185-6).

In *Language and Culture*, Claire Kramsch discusses the ways in which language and culture are bound up with each other. She argues that (a) "*language expresses cultural reality*" – insofar as people share not only a common experience and a common stock of knowledge about the world, but also their attitudes and beliefs –, that (b) "*language embodies cultural reality*" – people use language to create experience and to convey meanings –, and finally that (c) "*language symbolizes cultural reality*" – since people consider their language to be a symbol of their social identity (3).

The cultural dimension of language is pivotal in Foreign Language Learning (Andersen, Lund and Risager; Byram and Grundy; Corbett; Diaz-Vera and Caballero; Elsness; Kramsch; Lange and Paige; Risager). Learning a language presupposes learning a culture, since, as Risager argues, "linguistic practice is always cultural, in the sense that it is in itself a form of cultural (meaningful) practice, and because it is imbedded in a larger cultural (meaningful) context on which it leaves its mark" (6). This is particularly visible in certain neologisms that are representative of a period (Bushism, Bushspeak, or Nobama) and that are virtually impossible to decipher without knowledge of the proper context. Learners of a FL must be encouraged to explore the cultural contexts in which that language is the natural means of communication, if only to be able to understand how their own language and culture interfere with – or intersect with – their learning process and enter into dialogue with the language and culture of the other. As Kramsch reminds us:

> Culture in language learning is not an expendable fifth skill, tacked on, so to speak, to the teaching of speaking, listening, reading and writing. It is always in the background, right from day one, ready to unsettle the good language learners when they expect it least, making evident the limitations of their hard-won communicative competence, challenging their ability to make sense of the world around them. (1)

1.2. *Why the COCA*

The COCA was chosen for this research for several reasons. To start with, it is one of the largest online corpora of English (American variety). It contains more than 560 million words in as many as 220, 225 texts, covering the period from 1990 to 2017, with an average of 20 million words added each year. It is updated on a regular basis with new texts and it seeks to provide a balanced view of the language as it seeks to evenly cover five distinct registers, namely spoken, fiction, popular magazines, newspapers and academic journals. As far as the spoken texts are concerned, there as many as 118 million words in transcripts from unscripted TV and radio shows. Fiction includes excerpts from chapters of books, short stories, plays and movie scripts. The almost one hundred popular magazines and ten newspapers found in the corpus comprise specific domains, such as news, health, home, financial, women, opinion, etc. The almost one hundred academic journals, on the other hand, were chosen to evenly cover the Library of Congress classification system, and that includes B (philosophy, psychology, religion), D (world history), K (education), T (technology), and so on (Davies).

Another reason why COCA was chosen for this study was its versatility. The web interface allows the user to search for words, phrases, lemmas, wildcards, and collocates. Users may also conduct semantically-oriented searches, including the frequency and distribution of synonyms of a given word, which can be further refined in terms of competing registers. Information about genre or the period can be included in the query. The searches can be displayed as a list of all matching strings, or as a chart display.

Finally, another plus is the fact that it can be used free of charge and students can access it simply by registering their names. To facilitate the use of the tool, a series of video tutorials have been made available on YouTube (COCA 1; COCA 2; COCA 3).

1.3. *The Intention behind this Study*

In order to determine how far the COCA can contribute to heighten not only the learners' linguistic and metalinguistic awareness in the writing process, but also their comprehension of the linguistic treatment accorded to cultural referents, a series of task-based activities involving writing was drawn up and carried out in an EFL class of undergraduate students. These students were attending the first year of a media and communication studies programme. Task- based language teaching (TBLT) is believed to promote successful second language acquisition. The *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR) points out that tasks not only compel the learner to draw on his communicative language competences (namely linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic), but also to activate several "appropriate general competences". The competences range from "knowledge and experience of the world", to "sociocultural knowledge (concerning life in the target community and essential differences between practices, values and beliefs in that community and the learner's own society)", not to mention intercultural skills, learning skills, and everyday practical skills (158).

Robinson, drawing on series of studies, lists the most significant claims that have been made about the benefits of TBLT, of which I would foreground the following three as particularly relevant for this project:

- Tasks provide opportunities for *noticing the gap* between a participant's production and input provided and for *metalinguistic reflection* on the form of output;
- Task demands can focus attention on specific concepts required for expression in the second language (L2) and prompt effort to *grammaticize* them in ways that the L2 formally encodes them, with consequences for improvements in accuracy.

- "Following attempts to perform simpler versions, complex tasks can prompt learners to attempt a more ambitious, complex language to resolve the demands they make on communicative success, thereby stretching interlanguage and promoting *syntactization*, with consequences for improved complexity of production" (2).

These three processes are essential in tasks centred on writing, especially at those levels where learners can already rely on their wealth of linguistic knowledge and skills acquired over the years.

2. Objectives and Pedagogical Goals

The objectives of this study were:

1. to determine whether the use of the COCA can improve the learners' writing skills;
2. to verify their ability to use its functionalities;
3. to determine if the learners were able to focus their attention on grammatical concepts and engage in metalinguistic reflection, in such ways that might enable them to improve their accuracy;
4. to ascertain whether the learners could interpret data displayed by the COCA concerning cultural references and integrate them in the elaboration of a text.

On the other hand, given the fact that this study was conducted in the context of the classroom, it was also important that the students should derive some benefits from the activity. Therefore, the following pedagogical goals were set:

1. to encourage learners to use relevant cultural information in their writing;
2. to make them acquainted with tools that help them to understand how language works;
3. to improve their writing skills in those genres that they are expected to produce as professionals.

3. Implementation

Mostly composed of students within the 18-21 age bracket, this group of 18 learners were required to take a placement test at the beginning of the academic year. It showed that the

majority were at B2 level of the CEFR in some skills, namely speaking, listening and reading. However, in writing their proficiency was less satisfactory, an assessment further corroborated by a series of written assignments prior to this study. Besides the linguistic limitations typical of this level, those assignments revealed an inability to incorporate cultural references, overgeneralizations, poor organization of ideas, lack of focus and inability to quote or paraphrase adequately, all of this falling typically under band 5 of the IELTS writing evaluation criteria.

Two examiners analysed and assessed a writing assignment prior to the task and produced the following table:

Table 1: Pre-Task Writing Assessment of the Class according to the IELTS Writing Criteria

PRE-TASK WRITING ASSESSMENT					
Student no.	Task Achievement	Coherence and Cohesion	Lexical Resource	Grammatical Range and Accuracy	Score per student
1	4.50	4.00	4.00	3.50	4.00
2	4.00	4.50	3.50	3.50	3.88
3	7.50	6.50	6.50	7.00	6.88
4	4.50	5.00	5.50	4.50	4.88
5	4.00	4.00	3.50	3.50	3.75
6	5.00	4.50	4.50	4.00	4.50
7	7.00	6.50	6.50	7.00	6.75
8	4.50	5.00	4.50	5.00	4.75
9	5.00	4.50	5.00	4.50	4.75
10	6.50	6.50	6.00	6.00	6.25
11	5.00	5.50	5.00	4.50	5.00
12	4.50	4.50	4.00	4.00	4.25
13	5.50	5.00	4.00	3.50	4.50
14	4.50	4.50	4.00	4.00	4.25
15	4.50	5.50	5.00	4.50	4.88
16	6.00	6.50	6.00	5.50	6.00
17	6.50	6.00	5.50	5.50	5.88
18	7.50	6.50	7.50	7.00	7.13
Average score per criterium	5.36	5.28	5.03	4.83	5.13
Overall average score	5.13				

In order to prepare the students for the task, they were first introduced to this corpus analysis tool and encouraged to explore it. The class teacher dedicated two three-hour lessons to this introduction, in the course of which the students watched the video tutorials and took notes. In the first lesson, emphasis was laid on the explanation of the modes of display and the search string. Examples of how to search for exact words or phrases, wildcards, lemmas, parts of speech, etc., were also provided. Afterwards, they were taught a series of strategies to help them to extract information about cultural referents including individuals, social movements, political events, social and cultural phenomena, etc. In the second lesson, they were also taught the basics of how to analyse the linguistic context of the tokens, and to draw conclusions about the modes in which culture and language can interact. Attention was paid to the way in which perceptions and judgments of political events find expression, for example, through lexical choices, subjective descriptive modifiers, or the ways in which one single cultural referent may be worded differently in sources and genres. At the end of both introductory lessons, homework was assigned to make the students more familiar with the system and the procedures (drills that compelled them to go through each mode of search). The results of the homework were then analysed, corrected and/or discussed at the beginning of the following lesson.

The taxonomy of strategies and modes recommended was as follows:

- **Strategy A:** Finding out how an influential individual, social group, country or organization was judged/ evaluated in a particular type of publication/spoken language resorting to collocates. Modes advised: KWIC and LIST (see table 1).

Table 2: Example of the Result for Superlatives within Eight Words of the Proper Noun Clinton

	FREQ	Tokens	ALL	%	MI
1	DIREST	2	50	4.00	4.76
2	LESS-THAN-FINEST	1	1	100.00	9.40
3	BEST-PLACED	1	5	20.00	7.08
4	LONGEST-SURVIVING	1	7	14.29	6.59
5	PHONIEST	1	8	12.50	6.40

6	GLOSSIEST	1	8	12.50	6.40
7	BEST-FUNDED	1	23	4.35	4.88
8	HIGHEST-PAYING	1	36	2.78	4.23
9	FLIMSIEST	1	39	2.56	4.12
10	VILEST	1	39	2.56	4.12
11	SHREWDEST	1	54	1.85	3.65
12	STEADIEST	1	65	1.54	3.38
	TOTAL	13			

- **Strategy B:** Comparing two public figures. Mode of display advised: COMPARE (see table 2).

Table 3: Example of the Result for the Comparison of the Adjectives within Eight Words of the Proper Nouns: Luther King and Malcolm X.

WORD 1 (W1): **LUTHER KING** (3.38)

	WORD	W1	W2	W1/W2	SCORE
1	ANNUAL	20	0	40.0	11.9
2	NATIONAL	19	0	38.0	11.3
3	FREE	16	1	16.0	4.7
4	CIVIL	127	9	14.1	4.2
5	LATE	28	4	7.0	2.1
6	SLAIN	19	3	6.3	1.9
7	NEW	23	4	5.8	1.7
8	HIGH	11	2	5.5	1.6
9	CIVIL-RIGHTS	11	2	5.5	1.6
10	SOCIAL	14	3	4.7	1.4
11	GREAT	17	5	3.4	1.0
12	YOUNG	12	6	2.0	0.6
13	AMERICAN	13	7	1.9	0.6
14	WHITE	15	11	1.4	0.4
15	BLACK	33	29	1.1	0.3

WORD 2 (W2): **MALCOLM X** (0.30)

	WORD	W2	W1	W2/W1	SCORE
1	MUSLIM	14	0	28.0	94.5
2	BLACK	29	33	0.9	3.0
3	WHITE	11	15	0.7	2.5

- **Strategy C:** Following and collecting as much information as possible about individuals, events, movements, sound bites, etc. Different modes of display advised (see table 3).

Figure 1: Partial List of the Contexts where the Phrase War on Terror Occurs

1	2012	SPOK	ABC_ThisWeek	Afghanistan. In fact, the policy changed from the Bush administration's **war on terror** to nation-building. And it changed without any kind of conversation with the American people.
2	2012	SPOK	ABC_ThisWeek	of Republicans who were very strongly for Afghanistan if the target was the **war on terror**, who are very strongly against nation building in a place where that's not
3	2012	SPOK	ABC_ThisWeek	kill Obama and has in his mind that Obama's successfully re-branded the **war on terror**, calling it the war on Al Qaeda, and that that was hurting them
4	2012	SPOK	Fox_Baier	two 13-foot crosses. Erected by marines grieving over lives lost in the **war on terror**, this site established for reaction has become grounds for controversy. KAREN-MENDOZA-MAR: It's
5	2012	SPOK	CBS_NewsMorn	White House leaked the information to make the President look tough in the **war on terror**. The administration has appointed two U.S. attorneys to investigate the source of the leaks
6	2012	SPOK	CNN_Situation	thank you. Thanks very much. There's classified information about the **war on terror** that has just been declassified. Our chief White House correspondent, Jessica Yellin has
7	2012	SPOK	CNN_Situation	White House and they're offering up a little more information about the **war on terror** in both Yemen and Somalia. What's different is now they're formerly declassifying
8	2012	SPOK	CNN_Situation	you know, critics say the White House has been talking up their **war on terror** to look tough in an election year. And this could give them more ammunition
9	2012	SPOK	PBS_NewsHour	Beast special correspondent and the author of "Kill or Capture: The **War on Terror** and the Soul of the Obama Presidency." And we thank you both for
10	2012	SPOK	Fox_Kilmeade	United States had a stimulus package, had Obama care, has his **war on terror** and he doesn't really want to talk about almost anything. KLEIN: Well,

- **Strategy D:** Frequency data analysis to determine how influential or significant an individual or cultural phenomenon was over a period of time, and in what type of publication. Mode of display advised: CHART (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Example of a Bar Chart Showing the Results for the Word Feminism.

Section	All	Spoken	Fiction	Magazine	Newspaper	Academic	1990-1994	1995-1999	2000-2004	2005-2009	2010-2012
FREQ	2746	210	139	981	299	1117	946	626	560	450	164
PER MIL	5.91	2.20	1.54	10.27	3.26	12.27	9.10	6.05	5.44	4.41	3.16

The above strategies had to be applied in the completion of the following tasks:

1. writing a news story (to provide objective information);
2. writing an editorial (to express an opinion);
3. preparing an interview (to elicit information);
4. setting up a quiz (to produce closed-ended questions).

It should be noted that this type of work is not to be regarded as a mere activity. Each of the four types of text to be produced are closely related to the professional field of the students' study programme, and are the kind of assignment they would do in the real world (Ellis 9ff). On the other hand, it involves planning, phasing, research and the use of different resources, entailing the integration of different skills and abilities (including knowing how to use the corpus, how to extract information and how interpret it) in trying to achieve a goal (Skehan 268). The texts produced are therefore the outcome of a series of activities that form the task.

Students were asked to make reference to the source of information taken from the COCA through footnotes. The purpose was twofold: on the one hand, it served to quantify how

much of the content of the text produced had its origin in the COCA; on the other, it was intended to make students understand the ways in which texts can be embedded inside other texts without committing plagiarism. The completion of the task was mandatory for the students' final evaluation.

The students were free to choose their own topics, as long as they were related to the culture of an English-speaking country. The themes that they chose ranged from the biographies of film directors (Disney, Spielberg, Tarantino), actors (Marilyn Monroe, Chris Smith, Zach Galifianakis) and music bands (Pink Floyd) to politics (9/11, the Iraq War), ethnic minorities (the Chiricahua Apaches) and ideals (the American Dream). Texts contained an average of 437.5 words (SD 44.9) and 7.5 footnotes (SD 1.11), which means one footnote every 58.3 words. Texts were then assessed according to the IELTS writing assessment criteria (GT version), namely task response, coherence and cohesion, lexical resource, grammatical range and accuracy. These criteria have been consistently used by the teaching staff in the department where the researcher works and have been regularly applied in the assessment of advanced learners. Separate assessments were carried out by the two members of the academic staff of the department who had previously assessed the pre-task writing activity. The scores were later discussed before an agreement was reached for each of the texts produced.

At the end, students were handed out a paper questionnaire (Appendix 1), comprising of 19 questions to explain how they were able to cope with the tool, and, on the other hand, to express their views on the whole teaching and learning process. The questionnaire addressed the following topics: usefulness of the tool in the writing process; usefulness of the tool in the learning of English grammar; usefulness of the tool in providing relevant information about cultural referents; usefulness of the activity in their learning. All 18 students completed the questionnaire.

4. Examples of the Ways in Which the COCA Was Used in the Texts Produced

The examples below are excerpts taken from the texts produced by the students, without any corrections or changes. These excerpts are immediately followed by the source information and

expanded context as displayed in the COCA and from which the textual elements were taken. The analysis of the compositions shows that the uses that they made of the COCA generally fall under three broad headings: (1) quotation; (2) neutralization; (3) incorporation.

(1) In most cases, students preferred to *quote* directly from the source without making any changes to the original text, as illustrated in Examples 1 and 2 (quotations in italics). Most of them also failed to identify the source in the running text, despite having been specifically instructed to do so. In addition, notwithstanding the advice that they were given, they never attempted to formally introduce the quotation, nor did they ever endeavor to explain the role played by the quotation in their argument.

Example 1 (Chosen genre: Quiz)

Today I shall challenge you in ways in which you have never been challenged before!

Following these simple words, a test shall be issued about the greatest movie director that ever lived: Stanley Kubrick.

In order to guarantee the faithfulness of the questions you are about to answer, I will present the quotations and authors of the information from which I will draw the questions: if you fail, "it can only be attributable to "your" error".

So, my fair reader, without further ado, "HERE'S THE QUIZZ"!

Question 1

Complete the sentence: *At the opening of Stanley Kubrick's 1968 film _____a group of apes hovers around an object that has suddenly appeared in the desert.*

a) THX 1138

b) Planet of the Apes

c) Flash Gordon

d) *2001: A Space Odissey*

_____

Source information

Date: 2006 (Sep2)

Publication information: Vol. 170 Issue 10, p154-156, 3p, 3c

Title: MENTAL LEAP. (cover story)

Author: Jaffe, Eric

Source: *Science News*

Expanded context:

… in the upper region. Normally, tentacles are striped, spear-like protrusions. # 36971 What apes can teach us about the human mind # *At the opening of Stanley Kubrick's 1968 film 2001: A Space Odyssey, a group of apes hovers around an object that has suddenly appeared in the desert.* The sleek, black, rectangular object is five times as tall as the apes and clearly crafted by intelligent beings. The apes approach it with caution, and one animal runs a timid hand along the clean edges that glimmer in the sunlight. # Suddenly, something clicks in the ape's mind. The sight of a sophisticated innovation has launched dormant aptitudes, and the …

(2) In the following example, the student, while still quoting directly from the source text, decided to *neutralize* the features of the delivery of talk, that is, their distinctive features were eliminated and the text adapted to the specific context. The term was borrowed from the field of lexicology where it is used to refer to changes made in texts where "the original alias or even the translation of its semantic content is in some way inappropriate or inadequate to the target culture" (Mehren 166). No information is provided about the context in which the original text was produced. As in the previous case, she did not name the source in the running text, using instead a footnote.

Example 2 (Chosen genre: Editorial)

… Photographers, cameramen captured flames, billowing smoke, and the most sadly, bodies of people falling or jumping to their deaths. They chose to die rather than remaining stuck in the towers. New York, the largest city of America, is a too tough target, where these terrorist attacks are very likely to happen: *"we're the number one target in this country. That's the consensus of the intelligence community. We're the communications capital. We're the financial capital. We're a city that's been attacked twice successfully. We've had thirteen terrorist plots against the city since September 11. No other city has had that".* [4]

[4] **Source information:**

Date: 2011 (11.09.25)

Title: For September 25, 2011, CBS

Source: CBS_Sixty

Expanded context:

… America's largest city. One thousand officers, many of them armed like soldiers, are part of a presence that is meant to send a message – New York City is too tough a target. NYPD counterterrorism is the creation of police Commissioner Ray Kelly. RAY-KELLY: *We're the number one target in the – in this country. That's the consensus of the intelligence community. We're the communications capital. We're the financial capital. We're a city that's been attacked twice successfully. We've had thirteen terrorist plots against the city since September 11. No other city has had that.* SCOTT-PELLEY-1voi: Kelly is a classic cop. He started as an NYPD cadet and rose all the way to commissioner. He left the force before 9/11. But within four months of the attack, the mayor asked him to come back. RAY-KELLY: I jumped at the chance. SCOTT-PELLEY: You knew you needed to do what? RAY-KELLY: I knew that we had to supplement, buttress our defenses of this city. We couldn't rely on the federal government alone …

(3) The following case illustrates a whole different approach. The student was more concerned with constructing his own line of thought and mastering his ideas, rather than simply quoting whole sentences. As we can see below, there are parts of the text where he *incorporated* small phrases taken from the sources, but they barely qualify as quotations. Therefore, the absence of quotation marks or any indication that the writer is not the original author is not a critical issue. If anything, sources serve to enrich his arguments or corroborate his positions. However, this incorporation of textual elements from other sources into the text presents at least two problems: it can turn the text into a collage of ideas that do not necessarily go together and it can compromise textual coherence and cohesion as the student struggles to incorporate the phrases that he selected into the text. As stated above, although in general terms most students were at B2 level of the CEFR, the fact is that there may be considerable variation among the

students in the command of the language, especially as far as the writing skills are concerned. In this particular case, the student found it difficult to articulate in the text that he produced the elements taken from the corpus.

Example 3 (Chosen genre: Editorial)

… Practically the entire America supported the president, but nowadays it has been more "comfortable" put only Bush on the gallows pole, and not to admit their fault. Americans always said that Bush convinced them to desire the war using a speech full of *ideology and religious belief*, including some words of "heavy" sense like "God" *and "evil" to justify the war*. It has been noted that this is not a totally lie, but it is not the enough to adopt an ideal and killed thousands of civilians.

Source information:

Date: 2004 (2004.10.27)

Publication information: USA

Title: Social Issues Stir Passions

Author: By Linda Feldmann Staff writer of *The Christian Science Monitor*

Source: *Christian Science Monitor*

Expanded context:

… what he calls Bush's stubbornness – and a willingness to put *ideology and religious belief* ahead of human progress. # "President Bush just doesn't get it," Kerry said in an Oct. 4 speech on stem cells. "Faced with the facts, he turns away. Time and time again, he's proven that he's stubborn, he's out of touch, he's unwilling to change, he's unwilling to change course." # It was a line of attack that Kerry has used against the president on a variety of issues, including the Iraq war and the economy. # How gay marriage figures in # With less than a week until the election, there is anecdotal evidence that these culture-war issues are giving some Americans pause, if not swaying votes. #

Source information:

Date: 2007 (2007.07.16)

Publication Information USA; p. 1

Title: Barack Obama: Putting Faith out Front;

Author: Ariel Sabar Staff writer of *The Christian Science Monitor*

Source: *Christian Science Monitor*

Expanded context:

… the 2004 Democratic National Convention, Obama, then running for US Senate, made no secret of his spiritual bent. "We worship an awesome God in the blue states," he said in a keynote address credited with launching his stardom. # But for a liberal Democrat and former constitutional law instructor, the plea for a broader public role for religion has at times required some fancy footwork. # He has called for both "a politics of conscience" based on ecumenical religious values and a clear line between church and state. He has both invoked God in his denunciations of the Iraq war and criticized President Bush for using religious terms like "good" *and "evil" to justify it.* # "The danger of using good versus evil in the context of war is it may lead us to be not as critical as we should be about our own actions …

5. Results and Discussion

In the texts produced by the students, no significant progression was detected at the level of grammatical range and accuracy in relation to their previous production (see tables 1 and 6). Students failed to use the COCA to avoid frequent errors, either because of a limited perception of their own linguistic difficulties, lack of commitment or habit, or simply inability to take the best advantage of the tool, in spite of the preparatory work done in the classroom.

In the assessment made by the two academic staff, it was agreed that in general most of these texts come closer to the IELTS band 6 criteria, as in the pre-task writing assessment the overall average score was 5.13, whereas in the task assessment that figure rose to 5.53. Examiners concluded that this time students had resorted to a mix of simple and complex sentence forms, and there were now fewer errors in grammar and punctuation impeding communication. Concerning their lexical resources, students also scored an average of 5.33, having revealed an adequate range of vocabulary for the task, despite some inaccuracy in less common vocabulary. Regarding coherence and cohesion, students progressed from 5.28 to

5.75, in that they sought to avoid repetitions and arrange their ideas more coherently. The same happened at the level of task response, where the overall average score was 6.00, as opposed to 5.36 of the pre-task assessment. Instead of an inappropriate format, unclear development of ideas or lack of detail, the texts showed that, despite some inadequately developed ideas, students were still able to address all parts of the task, to focus more clearly on the main ideas, and to present a relevant position throughout the text. This progress was made visible when the examiners compared the texts with the ones these very same students had produced before the study was conducted. Students now appeared to be more concerned about structuring their ideas and more focused on development of the main topic. Then again, this progress may have resulted more from the set of instructions they were given to carry out the task and from what they believed they were expected to produce, rather than from the use of COCA.

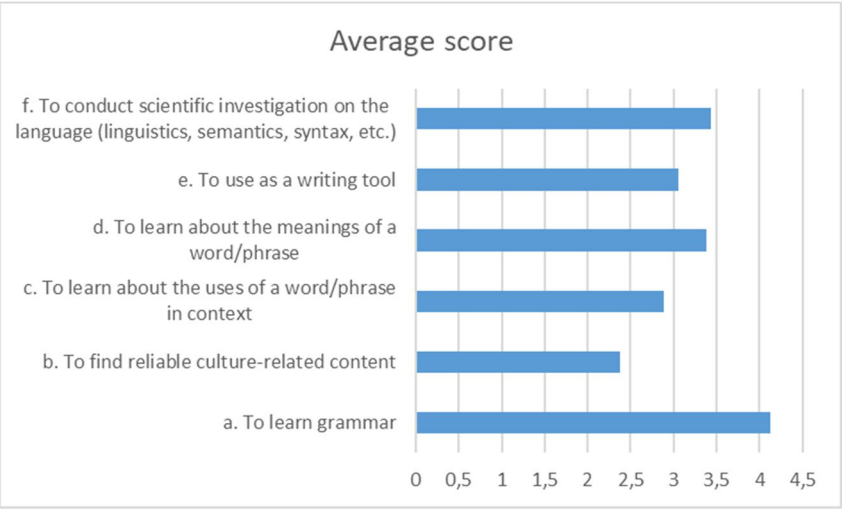
Table 6: Task Assessment of the Class According to the IELTS Writing Criteria

TASK ASSESSMENT					
Student no.	Task Achievement	Coherence and Cohesion	Lexical Resource	Grammatical Range and Accuracy	Score per Student
1	5.00	5.00	4.00	4.00	4.50
2	5.00	4.00	4.00	3.50	4.13
3	7.50	6.50	6.50	7.50	7.00
4	5.00	5.50	5.50	4.50	5.13
5	5.00	4.50	5.00	4.00	4.25
6	6.00	5.50	4.50	4.00	5.00
7	7.50	7.00	6.50	7.50	7.13
8	5.50	5.50	4.50	5.00	5.13
9	6.00	5.00	5.00	4.50	5.13
10	6.50	7.00	6.00	6.00	6.38
11	6.00	6.00	5.00	4.50	5.38
12	5.00	5.00	4.50	4.00	4.63
13	6.00	6.00	5.00	4.00	5.13
14	5.50	4.50	4.50	4.00	4.63
15	6.00	6.00	6.00	5.00	5.75
16	6.00	6.50	6.00	5.50	6.00
17	7.00	6.50	6.00	5.50	6.25
18	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50
Average Score per Criterium	6.00	5.75	5.33	5.03	5.53
Overall Average Score	5.53				

It should be pointed out that none of the compositions indicated that the students were engaged in exploring the interpretive potential of the tool – either through inductive or inferential reasoning –, based on the results yielded by the strategies and modes recommended above. In spite of having been given examples of how to develop their ideas resorting to such strategies, they were unable to put those suggestions to use and limited themselves to resorting to quotations either as a means to corroborate their positions (especially in editorials) or as a source of factual information (as in the quizzes and news stories).

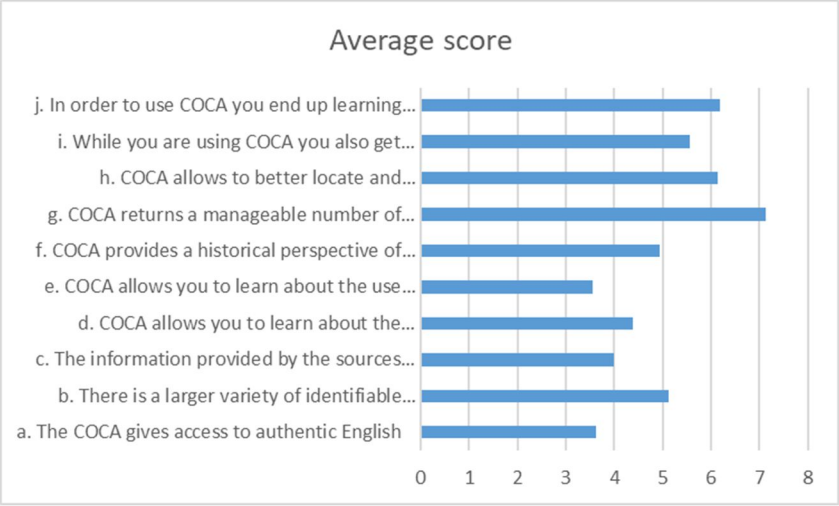
The students' answers to the questionnaire indicate an overall positive response to the learning potential of the tool. Concerning the use of the COCA as an aid in the writing process, two thirds of the respondents ranked it as the third most useful aspect of the interface. When asked if they would continue to use the COCA as a writing tool of reference, 50% stated it was probable, whereas 19% said that it was almost certain. In relation to the learning of English grammar through the COCA, students ranked it as the least important aspect out of six. Paradoxically, in the same question they ranked the learning of the uses of a word/phrase in context as the second most important aspect. For this question ("The COCA is more useful to…"), students were asked to rank the answers from 1, the most important, to 7, the least important. The results can be seen below. Given the nature of the task, their answers were the following (Figure 2; see also Appendix 2 for ranking according to score and standard variation):

Figure 2: Graph Displaying the Results of the Average Score of the Answers to Question no. 15 ("COCA more useful to…").



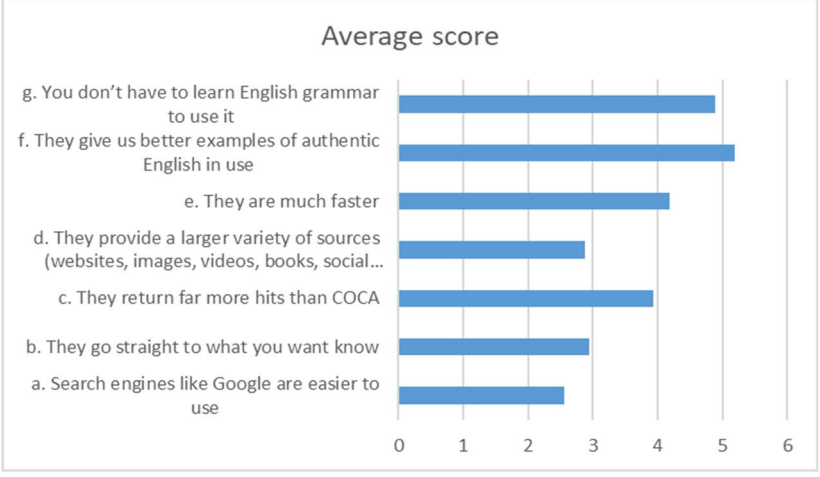
They were also asked to compare the information provided by the COCA with that of a search engine like Google and rank the answers in terms of relevance (answers were ranked from 1, the most important, to 10, the least important). Figure 3 displays the average score per answer (see also Appendix 2 for ranking according to score and standard variation):

Figure 3: Graph Displaying the Results of the Average Score of the Answers to Question no. 7 ("In What Way is COCA Better than a Search Engine like Google?").



However, according to the students, search engines like Google offer the following advantages. Figure 4 displays the average score per answer (see also Appendix 2 for ranking according to score and standard variation).

Figure 4: Graph Displaying the Results of the Average Score of the Answers to Question no. 8 ("In What Way is COCA Worse than a Search Engine like Google?")



It should be noted that no similar study with search engines was carried out with these students, and therefore their evaluation is based on their own empirical experience in using such engines. In this case, students were asked to compare COCA with Google (Question no. 8: In what way is COCA worse than a search engine like Google?).

With regard to usefulness of the tool in providing relevant information about cultural referents, 43% stated that it was relevant and 31% that it was very relevant.

Finally, in an overall appreciation, 93% agreed that the COCA met their needs as learners of EFL.

6. Conclusions

For the first time, students explored a tool that gave them a clear view of the grammatical workings of real-life language (research objective 3.). To use it efficiently, they were compelled to revisit grammatical concepts and adopt a more analytical perspective. And yet, despite the preparatory work carried out in class and out of class, students still offered substantial resistance to metalinguistic reflection and to the use of grammatical categories. They also revealed some difficulty in coping with some technical aspects of the tool (research objective 2.), especially when confronted with choices that involved some knowledge of grammar. Nevertheless, one must take into account the fact that this task served mainly as an introduction to the COCA and its potential application as a grammatical resource and writing aid. The fact that the students did not always seek to apply the strategies suggested by the teacher indicates that more work should have been done to prepare students to take full advantage of the tool.

These shortcomings notwithstanding, the tasks gave the students the opportunity to see the way in which language is used at an ideational level to prompt judgments, corroborate or challenge ways of thinking regarding specific cultural referents, since the tool allowed them to easily identify evaluative elements (research objective 4.).

As far as the tasks were concerned, both the deliverables and the questionnaire showed that the COCA was useful insofar as it provided ideas that were integrated in the compositions.

True, the conventions governing quotation and paraphrasing were not always respected, but at least the students were compelled to reflect on how to interrelate and integrate texts from different sources in their own writing. As a consequence, they revealed – as far as research objective 1. is concerned – some progress in terms of consolidation of the textual coherence and cohesion in their compositions and in addressing the requirements of the task, although in some particular cases, there were students who still failed to show any improvement, especially in terms of lexical resource and grammatical range and accuracy. It was furthermore difficult to ascertain whether the work done in class had a lasting effect on the students' learning habits, as this kind of tasks using this sort of tools was not part of their classroom routines. In order to achieve the pedagogical goals that were set for this study, it would have been necessary to go on implementing this type of activity for a longer period of time. This shows that further research is necessary to shed light on the pedagogical potential of these tools in vocational training, if possible under other conditions, namely over longer periods, with students from other study programmes, at other levels of proficiency (C1 or C2) and/or in other national contexts. In the meantime, COCA has been used by other teachers in the department as a teaching and learning resource for purposes other than writing, and that includes language testing, teacher development, LSP and professional communication.

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APPENDIX 1

Questionnaire

Please, fill in this questionnaire on the COCA assignment

Did you do the assignment? Yes ☐ No ☐

If not, why?

☐ a. I did not know I had to do it.

☐ b. I did not have enough time to do it.

☐ c. I wasn't interested.

If you did the assignment, please answer the following questions:

1. How would you classify the usefulness of the COCA interface in terms of your needs as a learner of English? (Tick the most adequate answer)

Indispensable	very useful	Useful	slightly useful	Useless
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2. Has this assignment helped you to cope with information in sources of different genres in the process of composition of a text in English?

a lot	Quite	just enough	slightly	not a bit
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3. How relevant was the information gathered through COCA for the topic that you were exploring?

a lot	Quite	just enough	slightly	not a bit
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

4. How well did you learn to use the information gathered through COCA in the text that you were writing?

a lot	Quite	just enough	slightly	not a bit
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

5. How would you use the information gathered through COCA? (rank your answers from 1, the most important, to 4 or 5, the least important)

   a. ☐ quotations, as in direct speech;
   b. ☐ paraphrases, as when you restate a text in other words;
   c. ☐ collect raw data (facts and figures, statistics) to process, interpret or ask questions;
   d. ☐ relate data from different sources;
   e. ☐ other uses: please specify_____.

6. Did you also try to clear doubts about the English language (collocations, idioms, prepositions, word order, etc.) through COCA?

all the time	quite often	sometimes	seldom	Never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

7. In what way is COCA better than a search engine like Google? (rank your answers from 1, the most important, to 10 or 11, the least important)

   a. ☐ The COCA gives access to authentic English;
   b. ☐ There is a larger variety of identifiable genres (spoken, fiction, popular magazines, newspapers, and academic), or even sub-genres (or domains, such as movie scripts, sports magazines, newspaper editorial, or scientific journals) that can be used in academic or other professional contexts;
   c. ☐ The information provided by the sources is more reliable;
   d. ☐ COCA allows you to learn about the meaning of words and phrases;
   e. ☐ COCA allows you to learn about the use of a word or phrase;
   f. ☐ COCA provides a historical perspective of the evolution of the use of a word, concept or reference;
   g. ☐ COCA returns a manageable number of hits (a number of hits that you can go through);
   h. ☐ COCA allows to better locate and scrutinize the word, phrase or reference

that you are looking for;

i. ☐ While you are using COCA you also get the chance to learn English;

j. ☐ In order to use COCA you end up learning some grammatical aspects of the language;

k. ☐ Other: please specify_____.

8. In what way is COCA worse than a search engine like Google? (rank your answers from 1, the most important, to 7 or 8, the least important)

a. ☐ Search engines like Google are easier to use;

b. ☐ They go straight to what you want know;

c. ☐ They return far more hits than COCA;

d. ☐ They provide a larger variety of sources (websites, images, videos, books, social networking, etc.);

e. ☐ They are much faster;

f. ☐ They give us better examples of authentic English in use;

g. ☐ You don't have to learn English grammar to use it;

h. ☐ Other: please specify_____.

9. How much training and know-how does COCA require for you to be able to use it efficiently?

a lot	Quite	just enough	little	None
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

10. How useful were the teacher's explanations as he introduced you to COCA?

Indispensable	very useful	Useful	slightly useful	Useless
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

11. Did the teacher show you the difference between the list, chart, KWIC and compare modes of display?

Yes ☐ No ☐

12. How well did the teacher supervise the work that you did in class during this activity?

a lot	Quite	just enough	slightly	not a bit
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

13. How clear were the instructions for the activity posted in the Moodle?

totally clear	very clear	clear	somewhat confusing	totally confusing
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

14. How much did you learn from this assignment?

a lot	Quite	just enough	slightly	not a bit
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

15. COCA is more useful (rank your answers from 1, the most important, to 6 or 7, the least important):

a. ☐ To learn grammar;
b. ☐ To find reliable culture-related content;
c. ☐ To learn about the uses of a word/phrase in context;
d. ☐ To learn about the meanings of a word/phrase;
e. ☐ To use as a writing tool;
f. ☐ To conduct scientific investigation on the language (linguistics, semantics, syntax, etc.);
g. ☐ Other: please specify_____.

16. What type of text did you choose to write for this assignment?

a. ☐ a news story (to provide objective information);
b. ☐ an editorial (to prove a point or express an opinion);
c. ☐ an interview (to elicit information from someone);
d. ☐ a quiz (challenging readers' perceptions).

17. What were the strategies that you adopted?

a. ☐ Finding out how an influential individual (Bill Clinton), social group (feminists, hippies), country (Portugal, the UK, Russia, China) or organization (the GOP, the EU, the New York Times) was judged/evaluated (through subjective descriptive modifiers, for example) in a particular type of publication/ spoken language resorting to the collocates (KWIC and LIST);
b. ☐ Comparing two public figures (Bill Clinton and Barack Obama) resorting to the COMPARE mode of display (other names associated; adjectives and or adverbs associated);
c. ☐ Search string: following and gathering as much information as possible about an individual, event or movement in different modes of display (LIST+adj.ALL);
d. ☐ Frequency data analysis to determine how influential/significant was an individual or cultural phenomenon through the years or in what type of publication using the CHART mode of display.

18. Will you continue to use COCA in the future as a writing tool of reference?

Definitely	almost certain	Maybe	unlikely	No
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

19. Would you recommend COCA for other people to use as a writing tool?

Definitely	almost certain	Maybe	unlikely	No
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

APPENDIX 2

Average results are shown in brackets and are followed by standard deviation values; simplified ranking takes into account the interval resulting from SD and average. The same principle applies to all the other ranking questions.

Ranking of answers to question no. 7 ("In what way is COCA better than a search engine like Google?") according to score and standard variation:

1 The COCA allows you to learn about the use of a word or phrase (3.56; SD 2.12);
2 The COCA gives access to authentic English (3.63; SD 3.11);
2 The information provided by the sources is more reliable (4; SD 2.73);
2 The COCA allows you to learn about the meaning of a word and phrase (4.38; SD 2.79);
3 The COCA provides a historical perspective of the evolution of the use of a word, a concept or reference (4.94; SD 3.09);
4 There is a larger variety of identifiable genres (spoken, fiction, popular magazines, newspapers, and academic), or sub-genres that can be used in academic or other professional contexts (5.13; SD 3.26);
4 While you are using COCA, you are also learning English (5.56; SD 2.67);
4 The COCA allows to better locate and scrutinize the word, phrase or reference that you are looking for (6.13; SD 2.46);
4 In order to use COCA you end up learning some grammatical aspects of the language (6.19; SD 2.20);
5 The COCA returns a manageable number of hits (a number of hits that you can go through) (7.13; SD 1.74).

Ranking of answers to question no. 8 ("In what way is COCA worse than a search engine like Google?") according to score and standard variation:

1 They are easier to use (2.56; SD 1.65);
2 They provide a larger variety of sources (websites, images, videos, books, social networking, etc.) (2.88; SD 1.64);

2 They go straight to what you want know (2.94; SD 1.34);

3 They return far more hits than the COCA (3.94; SD 2.14);

3 They are much faster (4.19; SD 2.06);

4 You don't have to learn grammar to use it (4.88; SD 1.74);

4 They give us better examples of authentic English in use (5.19; SD 1.90).

Ranking of answers to question no. 15 ("COCA is more useful…") according to score and standard variation:

1 To find reliable culture-related content (2.38; SD 2.69);

1 To learn about the uses of a word/phrase in context (2.88; SD 1.40);

2 To use as a writing tool (3.06; SD 1.72);

2 To learn about the meanings of a word/phrase (3.38; SD 1.55);

2 To conduct scientific investigation on the language (linguistics, semantics, syntax, etc.) (3.44; SD 1.5);

3 To learn grammar (4.13; SD 1.73).

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Interculturality in English Language Teaching – A Small Study with Portuguese Teachers

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| CETAPS

Abstract | UNESCO and many other organisations worldwide have been working on approaches in education to develop tolerance, respect for cultural diversity, and intercultural dialogue. Particularly, the Council of Europe has laid out guiding principles in several documents to promote intercultural competence, following Byram's and Zarate's efforts in integrating this important component in language education. The commitment to developing the notion of intercultural competence has been so influential that many countries, e.g., Portugal, have established the intercultural domain as a goal in the foreign language curricula. However, this commitment has been questioned by researchers worldwide who consider that action is needed to effectively promote intercultural competence. The research coordinated by Sercu, for example, suggests that, although foreign language teachers are willing to comply with an intercultural dimension, their profile is more compatible with that of a traditional foreign language teacher, rather than with a foreign language teacher, who promotes intercultural communicative competence. In this study, I propose to examine teachers' perceptions and beliefs about intercultural communicative competence in a cluster of schools in Portugal and compare these findings with Sercu's study. Despite a twelve-year gap, the present study draws similar conclusions.

Key words | *Common European Framework Reference for Languages* (CEFR), Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), intercultural domain, *Metas Curriculares*, English Language Teaching (ELT), teachers' perceptions and beliefs

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> *I had never been able to understand where I was meant to be placed, because anyone who comes from the north, and has lived opposite a mountain cannot understand a mountain in a picture in the south.*
>
> (Laxness 38)

1. Introduction

To cope with today's paradigm, UNESCO and other organisations around the world have been working on approaches in education to develop tolerance, respect for cultural diversity, and intercultural dialogue. Particularly, the Council of Europe has laid out guiding principles in several documents, namely the 2001 *Common European Framework of Reference*, and, more clearly, in the September 2017 *Companion Volume* to promote an intercultural stance, drawing on a taxonomy of *savoirs* proposed by Byram and Zarate.

The intercultural dimension aims to develop awareness about the 'other' so as to prevent stereotyping and xenophobic behaviours and to promote dialogue across cultures. With regard to language education, the Council of Europe advocates that the intercultural dimension is a central objective "to promote the favourable development of the learner's whole personality and sense of identity in response to the enriching experience of otherness in language and culture" (*CEFR* 1). Since it has been established in language teaching, Byram, Gribkova and Starkey postulate that it is, thus, necessary to provide learners not only with "knowledge and skill in the grammar of a language, but also the ability to use the language in socially and culturally appropriate ways" (*Developing the Intercultural Dimension in Language Teaching* 4). Language teaching must enhance distinct opportunities so that learners can become successful intercultural speakers, as Byram explains, "in communicating information, but also in developing a human relationship with people of other languages and cultures" (*From Foreign Language Education for Intercultural Citizenship* 29).

Following this paradigm shift, the Ministry of Education and Science in Portugal laid out the intercultural domain goals in *Metas Curriculares*, for all cycles of foreign language education

in 2015. Therefore, the intercultural domain in English Language Teaching needs to gain prominence and become a common practice in the foreign language classroom in the first, second, and third cycles in Portugal and, consequently, this paper aims to examine whether it has been promoted in the classroom.

2. Literature Review

The following section will highlight some important principles that foreign language teachers have to take in consideration to develop an intercultural stance in the classroom.

A report to UNESCO postulates that education, as the main means to promote Human Rights, is an "ongoing process of improving knowledge and skills" (Delors et al. 11) as well as "an exceptional means of bringing about personal development and building relationships among individuals, groups and nations" (12). Their contention is supported by four closely connected learning pillars: learning to live together, learning to know, learning to do, and learning to be (20- 21). Among these, *learning to live together* has been given great emphasis and underpins intercultural education, which the Council of Europe envisions as the foundation of a world "where human rights are respected and where democratic participation and the rule of law is guaranteed to all" (*Intercultural Competence* 14).

Many organizational and research developments have discussed the definition of intercultural competence and it has been object of various attempts at theorization, from different fields of research since Gudykunst's work on Intercultural Communication in the United States (Byram and Guilherme 5). Even though Gudykunst was amongst the first communication experts to define interpersonal competence, Byram and Guilherme highlight two general definitions that complement each other: "the ability to interact effectively with people from a culture that we recognize as being different from our own" (Guilherme qtd in Byram and Guilherme 6) and "the appropriate and effective management of interaction between people who, to some degree or another, represent different or divergent affective, cognitive, and behavioural orietations to the world" (Spitzberg and Changnon qtd in Byram and Guilherme 6).

These definitions are in line with the definition of intercultural communicative competence as defined by Byram in the context of foreign language learning, whereby ICC is the ability to interact with people from another country and culture in a foreign language and, therefore, foreign language teaching must focus on negotiation, on producing meanings (*Teaching and Assessing* 83), and on developing skills and attitudes as much as knowledge (Byram et al. 12). Foreign language teaching should then prepare learners to become intercultural speakers who "manage the relationships between themselves and their own cultural beliefs, behaviours and meanings . . . and those of their interlocutors" (*Teaching and Assessing* 12) expressed in a foreign language. For this effect, Byram designed a model of intercultural communicative competence which consists of five *savoirs* (table 1):

Table 1 – Five *Savoirs* (Source: Byram from *Foreign Language Education* 69)

Savoirs	*Knowledge of self and other and interaction*
Savoir être	*Attitudes of relativizing self and valuing others*
Savoir comprendre	*Skills of interpreting and relating*
Savoir apprendre/faire	*Skills of discovery*
Savoir s'engager	*Skills of interaction and critical cultural awareness/ political education*

Despite the fact that Byram's researches has been on language education, this scholar believes that an intercultural stance should be extended to other schooling subjects, such as history which "can confront learners with otherness" (*Teaching and Assessing* 3). Likewise, the Council of Europe ("Intercultural Competence" 41) states that all curricular subjects can contribute to develop intercultural competence. However, there are "some school subjects that lend themselves more readily to adaptation of intercultural education, such history, geography, political/social sciences and languages" (43), which means that intercultural education might imply an extension to the teacher's role and tasks. Teachers are expected not only to be

experts in their respective subjects, but also to have deeper qualifications in general pedagogy, and also to act as guides and aids to self-development and successful interaction (43).

According to Sercu, a foreign language and intercultural competence teacher (FL & IC) should have the following profile (table 2):

Table 2 – FL & IC Teacher Profile (Source: "The Foreign Language" 57-8)

Knowledge	• *be sufficiently familiar with the foreign cultures associated with the foreign language they teach;* • *the contacts they have with these cultures should be both varied and frequent;* • *know their own culture well and possess culture-general knowledge that can help them explain similarities and differences between cultures to learners;* • *know both what stereotypes pupils have and how to address these in the foreign language classroom;* • *know how to select appropriate content, learning tasks and materials that can help learners become interculturally competent.*
Skills	• *employ teaching techniques that promote the acquisition of savoirs, savoir--apprendre, savoir-compreendre, savoir-faire and savoir-être ;* • *help pupils relate their own culture to foreign cultures;* • *compare cultures and to emphasise with foreign cultures' points of view;* • *be able to select appropriate teaching materials and to adjust these materials should they not allow achieving the aims of intercultural competence teaching;* • *be able to use experiential approaches to language-and-culture teaching.*
Attitudes	• *be favourably disposed towards the integration of intercultural competence teaching in foreign language education and willing to actually work towards achieving that goal;* • *define the objectives of foreign language education in terms of both language learning and intercultural competence acquisition.*

Given the knowledge, skills, and attitudes mentioned above, and as intercultural competence implementation in the classroom must be an extension of the role of the teacher, the Council of Europe recommends training to all teachers in both pre-service and in-service ("Intercultural Competence" 44), focusing "on intercultural sensitivity, communication skills and

cultural awareness training, as well as learning how to provide a democratic and unbiased learning environment for students" [ibid.].

Studies on the status of intercultural competence teaching have been carried out all over the world. The present study replicates a study on intercultural competence in Belgium, Greece, Mexico, Poland, Spain, and Sweden coordinated by Sercu, based on Byram's intercultural communicative competence model. From this definition of ICC, Sercu sets forth a Foreign Language (FL) and ICC teacher profile which demonstrated that, despite the different contexts in which the research was carried out, there are two different teacher profiles: the teacher who is favourably disposed to the integration of ICC in the classroom and the teacher who is unfavourably disposed. Despite a positive disposition, these educators are not yet developing ICC in the classroom (11), which leads to the recommendation for teacher training in this intercultural stance (68-69).

3. The Design of the Project Work and the Research Questions

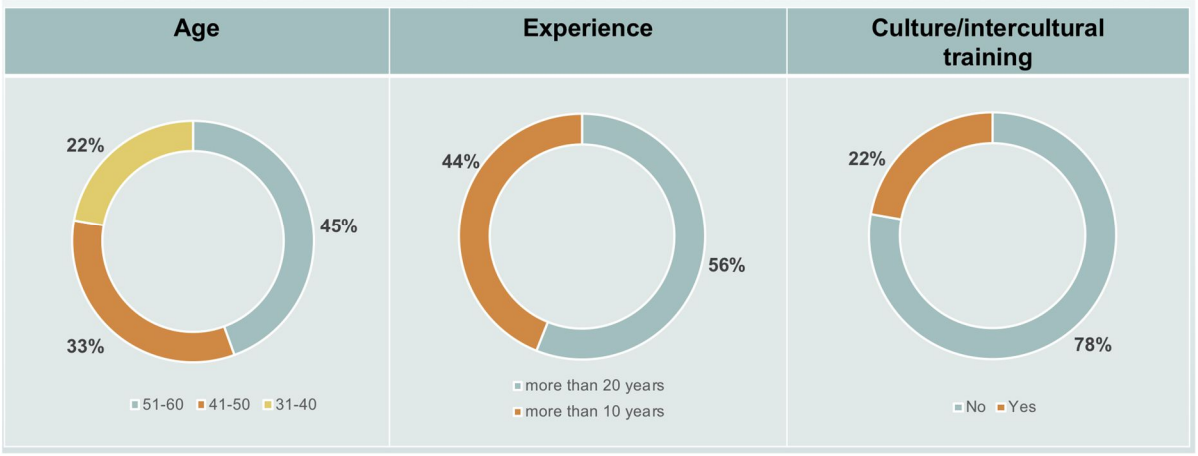
This study was generally designed as a project assignment, combining theory about interculturality in ELT with the analysis of empirical data about current teachers' perceptions and beliefs on this topic collected from a cluster of schools in Portugal. Following Allwright's adapted loop of the three propositions from Friends of the Earth to "think globally, act locally, think locally" (115), the current study aims to explore beliefs and practices of English teachers who work at a specific cluster of schools. This study was designed to explore this topic using data collected from semi-structured interviews via an online video chat software application and from a questionnaire online, replicated from a questionnaire used in similar research coordinated by Sercu in 2005 (186-215). Of the fifteen English teachers who work at this cluster of compulsory education, nine teachers responded to the questionnaire: two teach in the first cycle; five teach in the second cycle, and two teach in the third cycle. Two of these respondents also volunteered for the semi--structured interviews, so as to complete or/and triangulate the data.

The present study aims to answer the following key questions: What are the teachers' perceptions of their current language and culture teaching practice? What are the teachers' beliefs about intercultural competence? Is the profile of these teachers similar, in any way, to Sercu's study's profile?

4. Discussion of the Findings

In this section, the discussion will be provided under each research question, linking the findings of this study to some principles that foreign language teachers should take into consideration to develop an intercultural stance in the classroom. Before proceeding to the discussion, there will be, firstly, a characterisation of the teachers who were surveyed (figure 1).

Figure 1 - Teachers' Age, Experience, and Training



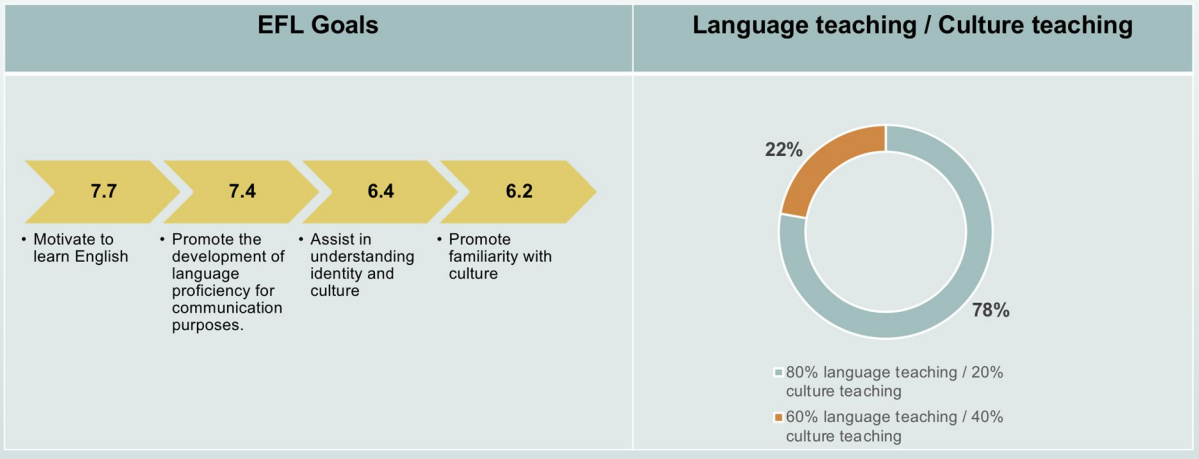
From the data, the age of these teachers, all identified as having more than ten years of experience, ranges between 31 and 60. Only two teachers of the second cycle claimed they had had some training in culture/intercultural competence at university. The teachers of the first cycle, very recently, had to undergo special training to teach English in the third and fourth years of the mandatory education in Portugal, and so were more likely to mention this training. The findings reported may serve to demonstrate that the implementation of an intercultural

stance in this cluster might be compromised, unless the survey on teachers' beliefs and practice shows evidence otherwise.

4.1. *What are the Teachers' Perceptions of their Current Language and Culture Teaching Practice?*

This section will focus on five different aspects of the question in the title: teachers' perceptions of their language and culture teaching; teachers' beliefs on their learners' perceptions; teachers' engagement in experiential activities; teachers' views on pedagogical materials, and teachers' practice on intercultural domain assessment.

Figure 2 – Language Teaching / Culture Teaching and English as a Foreign Language Goals



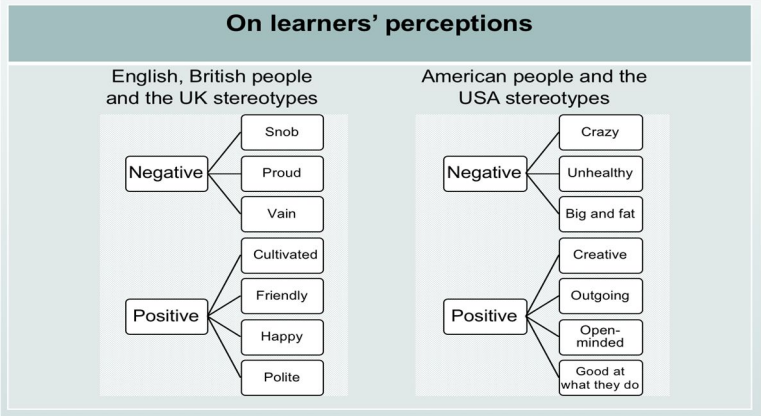
Regarding teachers' perceptions of their language and culture teaching, the findings of this research (figure 2) show that teachers at this cluster of schools strongly believe that English teaching should comply with the following main goals: motivating to learn English and promoting the development of language proficiency for communication purposes. Furthermore, most of the respondents spend more time teaching language than teaching culture because they claim that complying with the syllabus and the four skills takes nearly all of their time. Unfortunately, these findings show that teachers are not accomplishing all the curricular goals, nor are they fully motivating their learners, as they aim to do, because motivation is a "multifaceted construct",

which "has a pronounced sociocultural angle" (Byram 425-26). Teachers believe that culture/ intercultural domain are optional topics which can be overlooked.

On the contrary, culture and intercultural domain should be addressed in regular EFL classrooms intertwined with the other domains and should not be seen "as hermetic compartments, independent of one another" (*Caderno de Apoio* 3). One of the suggestions in the literature to get around this situation is to contextualise teaching to reflect that "language is always cultural is some respects" (Risager 185). This view is maintained in research areas of linguistic anthropology, translation studies, and studies of intercultural communication since "linguistic practice is always embedded in, and in interaction with, some cultural meaningful context" [Ibid.]. Therefore, culture should not be seen as a separate content in language teaching, and language-and-culture teaching should not be strictly related to one or two nations like the UK and the USA, as the findings of this study show (figure 3). Language and culture teaching should transcend "the national paradigm" and set forth "a dynamic transnational and global perspective . . . centering on the study of meaning" (Risager 195).

As for teachers' views on their learners' perceptions, the findings shown in figure 3 indicate that most teachers perceive that their learners hold more positive than negative traditional stereotypes of peoples and cultures related to the English language. These findings may imply that teachers are conveying unrealistic depictions of culture through materials and teaching practice.

Figure 3 – Learners' Perceptions of People(s) and Culture(s) Related to the English Language



Teachers might cultivate less stereotypical results in their learners by engaging in an interpretative analysis in search of meanings (Geertz 5), instead of the prevailing definite and hermetic analysis of culture revealed through this study. Since schools are places of "identity work and identity making" (Reay 2) and to avoid stereotyping, even with a positive categorisation, teachers ought to develop opportunities in the classroom for learners to understand their own identities, how others see them, how to relate to others, and how the process of categorising people functions. Conveying a realistic depiction of culture(s) when teaching a foreign language and culture(s) provides opportunities for learners to recognise the distinctive characteristics of culture(s). These opportunities should include experiential tasks not only in the classroom, but also outside the classroom.

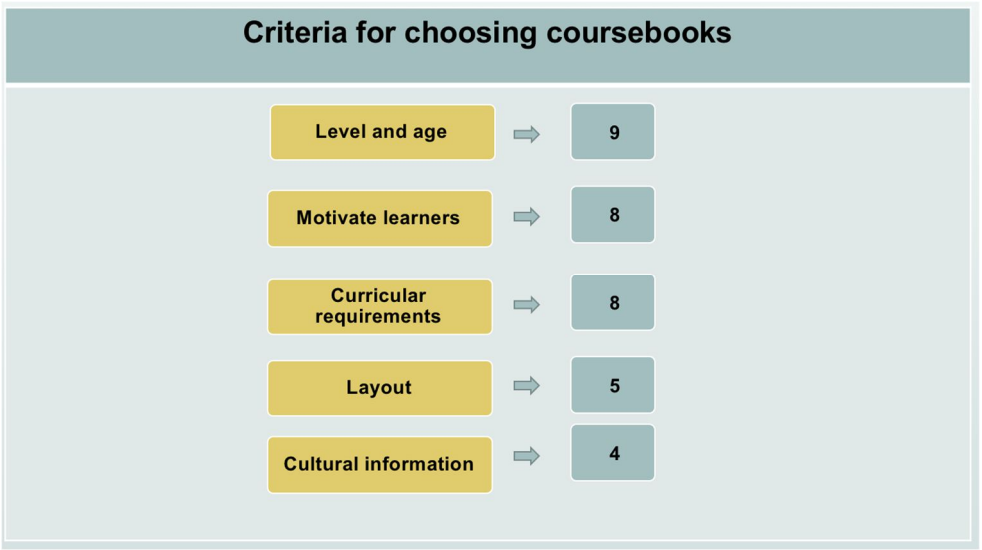
Figure 4 – Experiential Activities

In terms of experiential activities, figure 4 shows, however, that teachers at this cluster of schools were not involved in school trips or exchange programmes in the 2016-2017 school year Although they recognise that experiential activities develop the learners' sense of otherness, teachers claim that experiential activities are risky and a great responsibility, which may show that opportunities to develop ICC are very limited in this cluster of schools.

The literature suggests that experiential activities are "powerful in developing self--awareness as well as perceptions of other countries" (Byram, Gribkova and Starkey 10) and that study visits or exchange programmes are a holistic experience which provide the means of using, on the one hand, language-culture knowledge and, on the other hand, "intercultural skills and acquiring new attitudes and values" (15).

As for teachers' views on pedagogical materials, 89% of teachers rely on coursebooks to comply with the syllabus. While one of the skills teachers should possess is the ability to critically review and evaluate the materials they use, the following figure (figure 5) indicates that teachers may be lacking this skill, with only four teachers mentioning culture information as criteria for choosing coursebooks.

Figure 5 – Criteria for Choosing Coursebooks



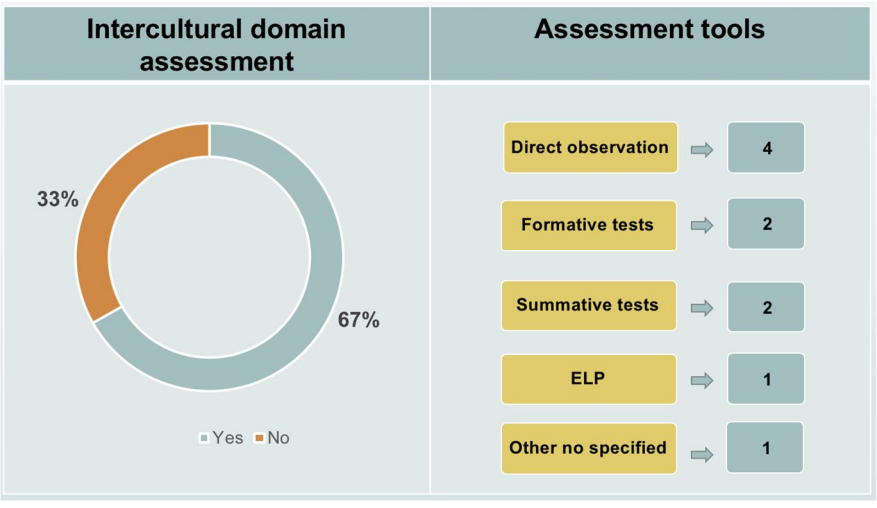
Teachers follow the coursebooks, and, obviously, the topics the coursebooks deal with. This may suggest that teachers convey a fragmented picture of foreign people and cultures not only because, in general, Portuguese coursebooks, "still reflect a simplistic view of culture limited to a few facts and cultural trivia to do with fame, food or festivals" (Hurst 26), but also

because teachers have not considered the intercultural domain, as one of the criteria when they adopted the current coursebooks.

Foreign language teachers should be trained to critically review and evaluate pedagogical materials, since the majority of the teachers resort to other materials to complement the prescribed coursebooks. Choosing the appropriate coursebook or other teaching materials aligned with an intercultural stance is one of skills required in Sercu's profile of the foreign language and intercultural communicative competence teacher (Sercu et al. 5-6).

The intercultural stance seems to presuppose the acquisition of specific professional characteristics to provide learners with intercultural experience and develop intercultural understanding. Teachers should help learners transcend a monocultural stage through their teaching and materials because younger generations are already in contact with the "other" through new technologies, travelling, and migration and, as a result, they feel this influence. The exposure to the Other could imply a transitional stage "between the culture of the learner and another culture" (Kordes 301) which would serve as the threshold that could lead to intercultural understanding. For this to take place, the current teaching practice at this cluster of schools has to teach more than the knowledge of language as a system, beyond the notion of *Landskunde* and beyond communication skills.

Figure 6 – Intercultural Domain Assessment and Assessment Tools



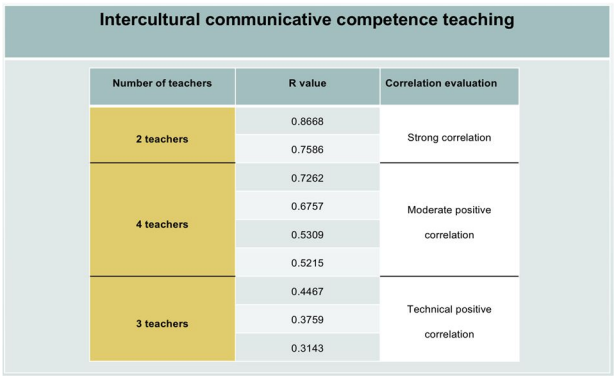
Last but not least, the findings in figure 6 may provide some information about the teachers' practice in assessing the intercultural domain. Although 67% of the participating teachers assess the intercultural domain, the findings indicate that they may be acting differently in this respect because of one (or more) of the following justifications: they do not consider the intercultural domain to be as important as the four skills; they might not know how to undertake assessment of the intercultural domain; and/or the intercultural domain is not a topic discussed at meetings among teachers to coordinate assessment activities.

Given that the intercultural domain has been an explicit goal of the Portuguese *Metas Curriculares* since 2013, teachers should undertake its assessment in spite of its complexity. Byram, for example, suggests portfolios and profiles as assessment tools because these favour reflection and analysis. The European-funded ICCinTE project of the European Council of Modern Languages (ECML) recommends "ongoing collations of information in the classroom" (29), such as "anecdotal records, observation checklists, observation rating scales . . . portfolios, journals, self-evaluation reports . . . ." [Ibid.]. Corbett (202) postulates that ICC assessment should involve both formative and summative assessment tools. Despite this divergence of opinions, teachers at state schools should decide in-group on the forms of assessment to be used to measure the intercultural domain to guarantee accountability cross--classes and lessen its ambiguity (Byram 220).

4.2. *What Are the Teachers' Beliefs about Intercultural Communicative Competence?*

Regarding the second question, although teachers recognise the importance of intercultural education and are willing to take action in their classroom, their practice is not aligned with the requirements of the foreign language and ICC teacher profile.

Figure 7 – Intercultural Communicative Competence Teaching



Regarding the teaching of intercultural communicative competence, the positive correlation between teachers' opinions and their willingness (figure 7) show that only two teachers are confident about teaching intercultural competence in English language classes. All the others indicate some contradictions: on the one hand, they state that they wish to promote intercultural skills through their teaching; on the other hand, they are not sure if intercultural skills can be acquired at school. These findings might also suggest that teachers, in general, do not hold a clear idea of what intercultural communicative competence implies over the course of English language education. Although the interviewees indicate a positive opinion of ICC in the foreign classroom, their teaching is limited to teaching culture and language, which they consider to be linked in everyday topics. Only one of the interviewees recognizes she had not been aware of its importance before she did her training on intercultural communicative competence, and states that her teaching must be adjusted in order to incorporate intercultural communicative competence on a regular basis.

In fact, these interviewees' teaching practices show that "the focus should be on defining and teaching the cultural dimension of language itself, or of discourse" (Sercu et al. vii). Nevertheless, a step forward is needed to develop intercultural communicative competence in the foreign language classroom. Whereas a *language-culture practice* involves "knowledge, skills and attitudes concerning a specific cultural area" [Ibid.] associated with the target countries, the developmental process of ICC involves starting from the students' own

knowledge, skills, attitudes, and cultural backgrounds so that they reflect on their own assumptions, contrasting these with the acknowledgement of the premises of others, understanding how categorisation works, and critically reviewing social constructions. In sum, foreign language teachers should engage in a pedagogical approach towards an "educational process" (Byram 110) in which educational values such as human rights and peace should be pursued in other subjects as well, and be the basis for "cross-curricular co-operation" (44).

4.3. *Is the Profile of These Teachers Similar to Sercu's Study?*

There seems to be a profile of a language and culture teacher in this cluster of schools which might be similar to the teacher that is favourably disposed towards the integration of ICC in foreign language education in the study coordinated by Sercu.

Like in Sercu's study, the teachers seem to be suitably "skilled to teach within the foreign culture approach" (64) although they may lack "the skills necessary to teach towards the full attainment of intercultural competence" [Ibid.]. For example, demonstrating further similarities with Sercu's results (65), teachers still define the goals of English language education exclusively in terms of linguistic competence. Although they recognize that their learners hold traditional stereotypes of peoples and cultures related to the English language, they do not consider these perceptions and attitudes to design an alternative plan of activities to develop intercultural communicative competence. The present findings may suggest that teachers are favourably disposed towards teaching ICC in foreign language education because they believe that intercultural communicative competence has a positive effect on students' attitudes towards foreign cultures. Moreover, teachers seem to be favourably disposed to providing opportunities for all learners to develop ICC, even when there are no children of an ethnic minority community in classes because they understand that acquiring ICC helps learners become more tolerant.

However, in contrast to Sercu's study, this replication study may not have found a profile reflecting teachers who are unfavourably disposed towards ICC integration. In essence, the

findings of the present study show that, while teachers are willing to develop the intercultural domain, their actions do not promote ICC in the classroom.

5. Conclusion

Today's global world challenges citizens to take action in order to promote peace and understanding among peoples and cultures. This study has shown the main principles established globally and locally to guide education and to promote *learning to live together*, the relevant aspects to provide an optimal approach to develop intercultural communicative competence, mainly in language education; and the required profile for teachers to facilitate its development in their classrooms.

This study purported to explore whether teachers at a specific cluster of schools in Portugal are implementing ICC in foreign language education. One may conclude that these teachers believe that motivating their pupils to learn English and promoting the development of language proficiency as teaching goals are more important than assisting in understanding identity and culture. Teachers' beliefs may tend to persevere when they are solid and steady (Sercu 68), and these may compromise the development of ICC. Secondly, the nationally prescribed course programme for teacher education and training may not have covered the strategies for facing this new educational paradigm. Thirdly, teachers may take decisions individually on including (or not) intercultural teaching and assessment. A possible conclusion is that teachers do in fact recognise the importance of intercultural communicative competence and are willing to take action in their classroom although their teaching practice is not aligned with the requirements of the foreign language and ICC teacher.

Finally, the present replication study supports the findings of Sercu's study as this cluster of schools has a similar profile of language and culture teachers. While teachers in both studies enable learners to appropriately use knowledge and skill in the grammar of the English language, their profile does not fully match the knowledge, skills and attitudes of a foreign

language and ICC teacher so that learners may learn to use the English language "in socially and culturally appropriate ways" (Byram et al. 4).

As pointed out, the findings of this study also corroborated the hypothesis that the development of ICC in this cluster of schools has been compromised since teachers in general do not receive training on cultural/intercultural issues. The implications for foreign language education can be justified from two perspectives: first, the need for developing an educational and training programme in ICC for teachers in this cluster of schools was identified, which could represent the situation of other school clusters across the country; and second, the output of this study clearly demonstrated that teachers need to collaborate and coordinate actions in-group regarding the intercultural domain. As a result, the researcher, as an EFL teacher in this cluster of schools, has been developing a virtual space, in this case a blog about intercultural communicative competence[1], to be shared with colleagues in this cluster to create opportunities for discussion and collaboration. This strategy may provide support for these teachers as they design an umbrella project to develop ICC using experiential approaches inside and outside the classroom.

As a replication of Sercu's study, this research on teachers' beliefs and perceptions is limited at least in three ways: first, since it only investigates English teachers' beliefs and perceptions in a cluster of schools, it cannot be generalized for other clusters of schools in Portugal to hold more comparability with Sercu's study; secondly, although this study explores the teachers' beliefs and perceptions of all English teachers of the three levels of compulsory education, it could have explored the reasons behind these beliefs and perceptions more deeply if the research had focused separately on each cycle; thirdly, it did not investigate how preparation in intercultural communicative competence, recommended by the Council of Europe, has been implemented in universities and other polytechnic institutes in Portugal for all teachers in both their pre-service and in-service training.

Note

[1] http://interculturalityefl.blogspot.pt

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English Medium-Instruction as a Way to Internationalization of Higher Education in Kazakhstan: An Opinion Survey in the Innovative University of Eurasia

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Abstract | This article presents the results of a survey conducted in the Innovative University of Eurasia (InEU) about the necessity of implementing English as a medium of instruction (EMI) at the baccalaureate and master's degree levels. It describes the findings obtained through semi open-ended questionnaires and interviews with two focus groups: InEU administration members and faculty representatives. The data collected suggest a rather positive general attitude of the respondents of both groups to English-medium instruction at the university, a special emphasis being made on the global status of English and internationalization of education. However, the majority of respondents raised concern about the impact of English-medium teaching on the quality of subject learning since it depends on an English proficiency level of both students and teachers and their motivation to study/teach in English. The survey data also indicate other important issues connected with teaching-in-English implementation at the university, such as finance, the pace of implementation, preparedness of students and teachers, support structures and incentives.

Key words | English-medium instruction, higher education, internationalization, opinion survey, Kazakhstan

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1. Introduction

Nowadays, English has become "a global language" galloping fast all over the world. It has spread into such spheres as business, the media, science and technology, education, politics, advertising, tourism. Marsh considers that "English is viewed as the language which will be increasingly used to serve the demands of the globalizing economies" (29).

English-medium instruction in higher education is a growing trend in countries where English is a foreign language. Coleman labelled English as "the language of higher education in Europe" (1). He enumerated seven reasons why higher institutions adopt English-medium teaching, among them CLIL, internationalization, student exchanges, teaching and research materials, staff mobility, graduate employability and the market in international students, stating that "this rainbow of motives ranges from ethical and pedagogical through pragmatic to the commercial" (Coleman 4). Additionally, numerous academic researches show that English is increasingly used as a language of instruction in higher education in countries other than European (Kılıçkaya; Wu; Wong; Yen; Shahzad, Sajjad, Ahmed and Asghar, etc.). These researches generally find that universities strive to internationalize and have to adopt English as a medium of instruction to escape from marginalization at the global market.

A number of studies exploring the implementation of English as a teaching medium for non-native speaking students reveal various findings concerning the motives of its rapid expansion (Montgomery 1333; Graddol 9; Coleman 4), the language demands on stakeholders (Vu and Burns 21), language-sensitive methodologies, such as CLIL (Marsh 33), the impact of CLIL/EMI on the education process (Marsh 35; Parveen, Rafiq and Siddique 53; Manakul 61; Wong 126; Manh 265), and the attitudes of students and teaching staff to the change of the medium of instruction (Splunder; Kirkpatrick, "Internationalization or Englishization" 5; Shahzad et al. 42).

Opinion survey studies suggest diverse attitudes towards EMI phenomenon in different cultural contexts, the perspectives of both students and teachers being examined. Jensen and

Trøgersen, for example, examine the attitudes of the teaching staff of Denmark's largest university to increasing use of English in higher education and find out that "younger lecturers and lecturers with a higher teaching load in English are more positive towards the increase in English medium instruction" (13). Dietmar Tatzl through questionnaire and interview reveals a favorable attitude of students and lecturers of an Austrian university of applied sciences to EMI, however, identifies the existing challenges, such as a larger student workload, different levels of students' prior knowledge and a reduction in the amount of content that can be taught via English (257). A survey of the attitudes of 100 instructors of non-language subjects in Ankara universities towards the use of EMI in the classroom where the language of a great majority of students is Turkish, shows that instructors support Turkish as an instructional medium rather than English based on their concerns about students' performance, language proficiency, resources and student participation in class (Kılıçkaya sec. 2).

Shahzad et al. examine the effects of EMI on students' learning in a Pakistani classroom and realize that almost half of the targeted respondents have a positive attitude to studying in English and are highly motivated to do so (40). The rest of the pool shows either a neutral attitude to EMI or are absolutely against it, the latter not having "a supportive home environment and English medium educational background" and as a result being demotivated (Shahzad et al. 42). Another Pakistani experience is described by Parveen et al. concerning the impact of English as a medium of instruction on research thesis writing. Based on interviews, the authors analyze the difficulties graduate students face in writing their theses in English and come to the conclusion that students want to write their theses in native or regional language; a suggestion has been made that the English language as a medium of instruction should be removed from their educational process (Parveen et al. 53).

A mixed-view perspective of EMI is shown in a survey by Doiz, Lasagabaster and Sierra about English-medium teaching at the University of the Basque Country, Spain. On the one hand, all interested bodies, such as students, teaching staff and administration, are quite

positive about EMI, since it has opened a way to internationalization and widened their minds (Doiz et al., *English-Medium Instruction* 86). On the other hand, many survey respondents fear losing local languages (Spanish and Basque), Englishization and acquiring an inferior position associated with their low English proficiency (Doiz et al., *English-Medium Instruction* 99).

Morell et al. in their study explore both teachers and students attitudes, needs and motivations in the implementation and promotion of EMI courses at the university of Alicante, Spain. Thus, according to the findings obtained, the majority of lecturers admit that EMI implementation is important for the academic and professional opportunities it creates, however, there is a need in "further linguistic training and enough competence to feel sufficiently prepared to teach EMI courses with the required quality" (Morell et al. sec. 3.2.2). Similarly, students' responses show concerns about their English mastery necessary to take EMI courses as well as their worry about their level of academic performance that could be hindered by the use of a foreign language (Morell et al. sec. 4). Both students and teachers raise the belief that there should be more courses and a greater support system for EMI at the university (Morell et al. sec. 4).

Andy Kirkpatrick examining the development of EMI programs in universities in selected Asian countries emphasizes that by providing EMI courses the universities want to raise their international profile but alongside with this, they need to establish language education policies to find a compromise between English and a local language medium education ("English as a Medium of Instruction" 24).

A Vietnamese context EMI implementation study is conducted by Vu and Burns where the authors discuss the findings from interviews with stakeholders identifying the challenges that EMI lecturers are facing such as lecturers' language proficiency, student diversity in terms of language ability and learning styles, pedagogical issues and resource availability (22). Highlighting a national idea of expanding EMI courses in tertiary education in Vietnam Vu and Burns give recommendations to promote lecturers' agency and improve the implementation of EMI policies (23).

Kazakhstan, alongside with other countries striving to internationalize their education systems, found itself 'in the trend' of globalization and during the latest 20 years has undergone tremendous change and growth in the educational sphere. The government's trilingual policy of 2007 proclaimed the idea of multilingual education; a specific mission was entrusted to English as a means to enter the global stage.

According to the State Program of Education Development for 2011-2020 adopted in 2010, 15 % of instructors who teach science and mathematics should do this in English by 2020 (State Program of Education Development for 2011-2020).

In 2011 the State Program of Languages Development and Functioning in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2011-2020 which aimed at introducing a harmonious language policy in the republic set to achieve the following goals in the sphere of the English language development: an increase in the share of the population who speak English by 15% in 2017 and by 20% in 2020; an increase in the share of the population who speak Kazakh, Russian and English by 12% in 2017 and by 15% in 2020 (State Program of Languages Development and Functioning in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2011-2020).

In 2012 the Ministry of Education and Science devised the academic mobility strategy in Kazakhstan for 2012-2020, which sets aims and priorities of academic and cultural internationalization of higher education in the republic through the development of tools of Bologna Process. Among other priorities for academic mobility development the implementation of the principles of multilingual education – teaching in equal proportion Kazakh, Russian, English and other foreign languages, training courses and training programs based on language and culture co-teaching – was proclaimed (Academic Mobility Strategy in Kazakhstan for 2012-2020). Consequently, more and more universities are starting to design and implement programs with a language of instruction other than native, mainly English. Today 42 universities, to any extent, offer courses or programs where English is used as a medium of instruction (Zamit).

As we see, Kazakhstan has set specific goals that are not easy to achieve. Many

questions arise when we look upon EMI implementation in the Kazakhstani context; the majority of them do not ask 'Do we need EMI?' rather 'What do we need to do to succeed in EMI implementation?'

In this paper we set out to explore the opinions of stakeholders and policy-makers of the Innovative University of Eurasia, one of 66 non-state universities in Kazakhstan, about the use of English as a medium of instruction. Particularly, we intend to find out people's attitudes to EMI, needs and potential of the university to implement it as well as its positive and negative impact on students, teachers and the university as a whole. Thus, our opinion survey is guided by the following research questions:

1. Does the university need EMI? Why?
2. What are the benefits that EMI implementation might bring to students/ teachers/ university?
3. What challenges might students/ teachers/ university face during the process of EMI implementation and development?
4. What are students' and teachers' levels of English proficiency? What should these levels be like?
5. What should be the pace of EMI implementation? What academic subjects should be EMI shifted first?
6. Does the university possess enough potential (finance, resources, materials, qualified staff, methodologies) necessary for successful EMI implementation?

2. Methods

2.1. *Participants*

The research was realized in the form of a survey exploring the opinions of two focus groups of respondents: the university administration representatives and the faculty members. The first focus group (Group 1) included 10 university administration representatives (rector, 3 vice-rectors,

2 deans, 4 department directors). From the pool of instructors who agreed to participate in the survey 20 lecturers were selected to represent the second focus group (Group 2) based on various teaching contexts and backgrounds such as discipline, overall teaching experience, experience of teaching in English, age and sex. Our assumption in grouping the respondents this way was that we might get a bi-focused view on the problem investigated. The opinion of InEU administration representatives about EMI project realization was most important as they are the university policy-makers holding key positions in academic, organizational and financial spheres and will have to finance and administer the implementation if any. Faculty members give nearly as a valuable point of view since they are the ones who will implement the changes in the classroom and provide the expected result.

Among the participants of Group 2, 13 are female and 1 is male; their age range varies between 27 and 46. The sampled lecturers teach the following subjects to undergraduates and graduates: mathematics, economics, finance, ecology, philosophy, architecture, journalism, electrical engineering, and psychology. The participation in the study was voluntary. During the interview the participants of the survey were informed of its aims, structure, procedures and duration. The research was conducted by the members of the department of theory and practice of foreign languages and translation studies of the Innovative University of Eurasia, Kazakhstan.

2.2. *Data Collection and Analysis*

The research was conducted by means of two methods: 1. an opinion survey through written semi open-ended questionnaires, and 2. a follow-up interview.

In September 2014, written questionnaire responses were collected via e-mail from 20 university lecturers and 10 administration representatives. The survey questions aimed at identifying people's opinions as to the benefits, potential and challenges of implementing EMI in the Innovative University of Eurasia. Later the respondents from both groups were interviewed in person to discuss their questionnaire answers in detail. The language of the questionnaire as

well as that of the interview was Russian.

Data analysis was carried out to see the general trend in the participants' responses to open-ended and closed questions of the questionnaire. The responses to closed questions were analyzed quantitatively (percentages and frequencies) and open-ended question responses were analyzed qualitatively (categorized into rubrics and interpreted).

The information obtained during the interview was reduced to a number of categories for easier analysis and interpretation. Each category was given a name. To verify the accuracy of data analyses member checking was used. Interview participants were given a written draft of the 'results and their interpretation' section of the study report (in Russian) so that they could check the content and correct any misunderstandings related to their responses in the questionnaire and interview.

3. Results and Discussion

The opinion survey through questionnaire and interview made it possible for us to identify the attitudes of the respondents to the implementation of EMI program and its impact on educational, cultural and economic situation at the Innovative University of Eurasia. The targeted respondents were asked questions about their awareness of EMI/CLIL, the benefits, potential and challenges of its possible implementation at the university, academic disciplines which should be taught in English first and foremost, the needed English proficiency level of both teachers and students and the degree of EMI implementation in the educational process.

3.1. *Administration Representatives' Opinion about Implementing EMI in the Innovative University of Eurasia*

Data analysis shows that the informants' awareness of EMI and CLIL is low: only 3 out of 10 people reported they heard about CLIL, but two of them found it difficult to explain what it is; not any of the informants heard about EMI. However, it is worth mentioning here that the majority of the respondents (8 out of 10) are aware of teaching an academic subject through English that

occurs in Kazakhstani context (e.g., Nazarbayev University, Nazarbayev intellectual schools) but they do not know a specific term or name for it; one person associated the terms EMI and CLIL as synonyms of ESP (English for Specific Purposes). Two persons reported they have a rather obscure understanding of using English as an instruction medium for non-English speaking students at home universities. The table below shows the results of the respondents' awareness of using English as a means of an academic subject instruction.

Table 1: InEU Administration Representatives' Awareness of Using English as a Means of an Academic Subject Instruction

	Number of respondents	Percentage
CLIL (Content and language integrated learning)	3	30%
EMI (English-medium instruction)	0	0%
Academic subject instruction in English (with no specific name)	8	80%

The respondents also made comments about the sources of information regarding teaching an academic subject through English which was mainly the Internet; one person mentioned a colleague from another university, still one more person explained that she came across the idea of using English as an instruction medium while familiarizing herself with the program of multilingual education.

As a matter of fact, English as a medium of instruction is employed in a number of educational institutions in Kazakhstan. These are predominantly specialized schools for gifted children and Kazakh-Turkish lyceums, on a secondary level (ages 11-17), and several universities, on a tertiary level. On the initiative of the country's Ministry of Education a CLIL program as an innovation has been introduced in 50 to 60 schools on an experimental basis in 2007 (Decree of the Ministry of Education 387, 2007). Later, in 2008-2011, Nazarbayev intellectual schools were founded – a network of schools for training gifted children in the spheres of science, economics and politics where instruction is given in three languages: Kazakh, Russian and English.

As to the university level education, instruction through the medium of English, though not introduced officially except for a small number of universities, is strongly encouraged in the framework of multilingual education by both the Ministry and the universities themselves, mostly private ones, which look at teaching in EMI as a hallmark of quality education and prestige. Among them mention should be made of Nazarbayev University, Kazakhstan Institute of Management, Economics and Strategic Research (KIMEP), Kazakh University of International Relations and World Languages named after Ablai-Khan, University of International Business, International Academy of Business, Kazakh-American University, Kazakhstan-British Technical University, Suleyman Demirel University, where instruction is conducted fully or predominantly in English.

The present study also revealed the benefits which EMI introduction might bring for students, instructors, and the university in general. Thus, among the most frequently mentioned responses of the target group about students' benefits were (in decreasing order): participation in various international programs (Bolashak, master's degree in a foreign university, international study placement) and international projects (both academic and research); an opportunity to get further (second) education abroad (including online study mode); competitiveness of the university graduates on the labour market and wide opportunities in employment (e.g., a prestigious job in foreign and transnational companies). Some informants admitted that EMI practice will widen students' horizons and promote their personal growth as well as improve their professional English language proficiency. One person stressed that studying a major subject in English is a chance for a student to become multilingual; another person was convinced that studying in English is a marker of prestigious education. At the same time two informants raised doubt about a beneficial impact of EMI on the students on account of the extremely low English proficiency level and conservative mentality of the latter. Another reason against EMI was verbalized as follows: "The language of instruction at the university now is mostly Russian. Kazakh is used far less frequently. Using English as the only means of instruction would mean neglecting the Kazakh language." The opinion of the informants as to

the benefits students might get from EMI implementation at InEU is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: The Benefits to the Students from EMI Implementation at InEU

	Number of respondents	Percentage
Participation in international programs and projects	8	80%
An opportunity to get further (second) education abroad	8	80%
Competitiveness and wide opportunities in employment	7	70%
Personal growth	3	30%
High professional English language proficiency	3	30%
Multilingualism	1	10%
Prestigious education	1	10%
No benefit	2	20%

Furthermore, nine out of ten respondents are convinced that teaching their subjects in English will have a positive impact. They reported that lecturing in English would have a beneficial influence on instructors' careers, mainly it would raise a teacher's ranking and provide an opportunity for external academic mobility and labor migration to developed countries. It was also emphasized that for English-medium teaching, instructors would have to use specialist literature written in English to prepare for their lectures that, in turn, would raise their professional competencies and the quality of teaching materials. It would also raise the teaching staff motivation to participate in various foreign programs, including grant programs and internships, as well as motivation for writing scientific articles in publications with a high impact factor. Several survey participants admitted that the practice of English-medium teaching would make instructors more confident, since it would increase the level of their English language proficiency and, thus, improve the quality of their professional communication with foreign colleagues. One person, however, spoke against EMI introduction at the university at this point because of a low English

proficiency level and traditionally conservative mentality of instructors that would deteriorate the quality of education. The survey data analyzing the benefits for the academic staff of the university are given in Table 3.

Table 3: The Benefits to the Academic Staff from EMI Implementation at InEU

	Number of respondents	Percentage
International academic mobility	9	90%
High ranking among the teaching staff	9	90%
Participation in international academic and research programs and projects	9	90%
Ability to read specialist literature written in English and increase own professional competencies	8	80%
Ability to write scientific articles and publications in foreign research journals with high impact factor	4	40%
Increase in English proficiency	3	30%
Better quality of professional communication with foreign colleagues	3	30%
No benefit	1	10%

As to the benefits the university as a whole might get with EMI introduction, the respondents were almost unanimous in voicing the following: a high ranking in various rating agencies and an international status; incoming external academic mobility (with international students from Africa, Japan, India, China, etc.); international (outgoing) academic mobility of the faculty members and students; diversified international cooperation (in the spheres of education, science and culture); multilingualism policy realization on the university level; increase in income. Table 4 shows the data obtained from the respondents about the benefits the university

in general can obtain from EMI implementation at InEU.

Table 4: The Benefits to the Innovative University of Eurasia from EMI Implementation

	Number of respondents	Percentage
High ranking in rating agencies	9	90%
Incoming external academic mobility	9	90%
International academic mobility of teaching staff and students	9	90%
Enhanced international cooperation in the spheres of education, science and culture	9	90%
Contribution to multilingualism policy realization	6	60%
University's increased financial resources	4	40%
No benefit	1	10%

The data show that the university administration representatives predominantly agree that teaching in EMI should have a beneficial impact on students, faculty and the university in general. The idea of internationalization seems an important consideration since it will give the university a leadership status in the region as well as provide membership in the global educational scene. Besides, EMI, looked at locally, can be regarded as a potential means to realize the goal set by President Nazarbayev (Message to the people of Kazakhstan "New Kazakhstan in the New World," 2007) stating that each citizen of the Republic of Kazakhstan has to be competent at least in three languages: Kazakh as the state language, Russian as the language of interethnic communication and English as the language of successful integration in global economy.

The university administration would obviously like to see their faculty highly professional on an international scale and students competitive on the labour market which is also emphasized in other studies (Soren 3; Brown 51); EMI policy might be considered as a tool for it. Furthermore, since universities today are viewed as businesses governed by market laws

(Coleman 3) the economic reasons of EMI programs with fee-paying foreign students are quite obvious. However, as we see from the data analysis, the attitude to teaching in EMI is not unanimously positive. One of the reasons why people question a positive impact of the English medium on subject learning concerns the insufficient command of the target language of both students and instructors which would inevitably deteriorate the quality of teaching and learning (See also Marsh 31; Doiz, Lasagabaster, and Sierra, "Internationalization" 347; Manh 265). Another important reason is the opinion that using English as a means of instruction is a threat that might impact negatively on the vitality of the native language (in our case – Kazakh), which provides support for the views voiced in previous studies (Coleman 2; Kirkpatrick, "Internationalization or Englishization" 13; Phillipson 6; Doiz et al., *English-Medium Instruction* 99).

By contrast, alongside with the benefits the university, teachers and students might get from EMI project, the participants of the survey noted the challenges the university would have to face. These were: instructors' and students' insufficient English proficiency; low students' learning motivation as well as low teachers' motivation arising from their conservative mentality and psychological resistance to methodological innovation; faculty unpreparedness for EMI; absence of appropriate teaching materials and resources; insufficient knowledge of appropriate teaching methodology. The challenges arising from EMI program introduction as reported by the informants are given in Table 5.

Table 5: The Challenges Arising from EMI Implementation at the Innovative University of Eurasia

	Number of respondents	Percentage
Insufficient English proficiency of students and faculty	10	100%
Low motivation of students and faculty	10	100%
Conservative mentality and psychological resistance to methodological innovation of students and faculty	6	60%
Absence of appropriate teaching materials and resources	6	60%
Low faculty awareness of EMI methodology	6	60%
Faculty unpreparedness for EMI	3	30%

As we see from Table 5, a serious barrier to a successful EMI program realization is a poor English proficiency of both students and faculty. Respondents in this study showed concern that taking courses in English – a language to be still mastered – as well as the instructors' insufficient command of English would have a negative effect on students' subject knowledge acquisition. Another worry of the university policy-makers deals with the psychological unpreparedness of the teaching staff to adapt and their lack of motivation which was also pointed out by other researchers (Parveen et al. 51; Yen 223; Vu and Burns 20). Judging by the responses, the administration is concerned with the lack of interest of a great part of the faculty for opening EMI programs at the university; their slow professional interaction with foreign colleagues; a low rate of publishing in English in foreign research journals. Some also stated the university's weak employment policy as to the trilingual competence of employees.

Alongside with psychological and ethical factors, the study also highlighted 'technical' challenges of EMI introduction such as absence or low quality of specific teaching and learning materials, resources and methodologies which were previously revealed by other researchers (Marsh 33; Vu & Burns 23; Dearden 2). Teaching in English will surely require a greater workload on instructors than teaching in a native language; teachers will have to develop, adapt or buy content materials and switch to a new methodology that is more learner-centered than teacher-centered. All these demand enormous physical, psychological and financial resources.

However, the majority of respondents (7 out of 10) voiced an opinion that the university possesses a considerable potential for EMI program implementation, which should be realized gradually. First, it was stated that the university has enough facilities, resources and financial means to implement the project. Second, there is a growing number of instructors whose motivation for teaching in English (and using English in their career development, in general) is increasing due to a new administration policy of financial reward as well as due to the needs professors face today in our global world, such as attending and presenting at international conferences; participating in international projects and programs (including exchange programs);

publishing articles in foreign research journals; communicating professionally with foreign colleagues; amongst other aspects. One person also emphasized that in the framework of the government's trilingual policy "in a couple of years the majority of the faculty will not be in demand on the labour market without the knowledge of three languages". Additionally, it was noted that motivation of students who want to have English as a means of instruction in their major increases too, which is conditioned by students' desire to be competitive in the global world through internationalized specialist knowledge. Third, there appears a number (though quite small) of foreign undergraduate and graduate students from China, India, Poland, Germany, who are potentially able to learn in English but have to learn in Russian (which they have to learn at pre-courses) because there are no English courses in their specialist subjects at InEU. Finally, several informants noted that at the university there are already support structures functioning such as the department of foreign languages and the language center, which could assist both students and lecturers in the transition to EMI. Table 6 shows the administration representatives' responses concerning EMI implementation opportunities at InEU.

Table 6: InEU Potential Opportunities of EMI Introduction from the Perspective of Administration

	Number of respondents	Percentage
Good facilities and material resources	10	100%
Enough financial resources	7	70%
Growing number of motivated teachers and students	6	60%
Forthcoming foreign student programs	3	30%
Department of foreign languages and Language center as support structures	3	30%

The representatives of the University administration made special comments on the degree of EMI implementation at InEU. All respondents stated that EMI should be implemented gradually. Seven people remarked that 10-15% of subjects should be presented in English at the beginning; this number might be brought up to 50% later on. One person believed that we should begin with training in English foreign students only. As to domestic students, in his opinion, the degree of English as a medium of instruction should not be more than 10-15% (combined with enhanced training in EFL) at the 1st year, up to 30% at the 2nd year and 75% at the 3rd and 4th years. Another person stressed the fact that EMI should be looked at as part of the government's trilingual policy, thus, the correlation of lecturing in Kazakh, Russian and English should be 35%, 35% and 30% respectively. Still one more person was convinced that instead of EMI program implementation the university should increase the quality of professional training at the classes of English for specific purposes. A general trend in the administration's opinion is evident EMI support which should be introduced very carefully, irrespective of the challenges the university faces in this respect. As one of the Vice-rectors noted: "Of course, there are problems and fear that we'll be doomed to failure to start the project [EMI] right now. But we should start to do something! Otherwise we'll never know. And we should learn how to solve the problems if we don't want to find ourselves on the outskirts of the global society."

In terms of the course types which should be taught in English first and foremost, the respondents produced various points of view. Two people thought that these should be the disciplines which train basic competences in a particular specialty (major subjects) so that students could deal with concepts challenging to learn from the start. Alternatively, seven people believed that those should be elective courses where students could evaluate their learning potential first. One person considered that there should be a general English course. Overall, most respondents agreed that these should be the disciplines where lecturers as well as their students are ready for teaching and learning in English, e.g. enough level of English proficiency, an experience of lecturing in English, after CLIL, ESP or other courses.

The final issue of the opinion survey was the English proficiency level both teachers and students should possess. The proficiency level of lecturers, in InEU administration representatives' view, was formulated as "high enough". The respondents explained what they meant by this definition differently. Some, who obviously have taken/passed IELTS, TOEFL or some other English proficiency examinations, attended English courses or are familiar with the CEFR (*Common European Framework of Reference*), specified it like "IELTS 4.5 and higher", "Upper-intermediate", "B2", "C2". Others verbalized the requirements such as "can communicate with foreign colleagues", "the level of a native speaker", "can explain, read, write, listen and understand, translate".

The desired English proficiency level of the students was described as "medium" and "high enough". The first response was specified as "A2", "IELTS 3.5 and higher", "Intermediate", "can listen, understand, retell and give feedback". The second response implied "Upper--intermediate", "can speak freely", "knows and can speak about basic concepts of a particular field of knowledge", "near to foreign English-speaking students".

It is interesting to note that the university policy-makers while expressing their opinions about the English proficiency levels of both teachers and students evaluated their own target language levels. With several exceptions, the respondents admitted a "rather low" English command, although remarked that they would like to improve their reading specialist literature and communication skills.

The university administration opinion survey identified the general trend of a positive but cautious attitude to a global phenomenon of EMI. Obvious benefits of EMI introduction at InEU testify to the administration's support of the project and encouragement of the faculty to engage in it. However, problems and barriers associated with it provoke the administrative staff to take a balanced approach to its realization. A general feeling is a pilot project which would involve joint efforts of the university selected teachers and the English language instructors who would collaborate to probe how well EMI could be implemented (if it ever can) in the InEU educational setting.

3.2. *The University Instructors' Perspectives on Implementing EMI in the Innovative University of Eurasia*

The study indicated that all targeted respondents were aware of today's tendency of using English as the language of instruction at schools and universities. However, only 6 people showed their awareness of terminology: 5 lecturers (out of 20) admitted they heard about CLIL from ELT teachers of InEU; one person reported she had come across with the term EMI on the British Council website. The table that follows shows the lecturers' awareness of using English as a means of instruction.

Table 7: InEU Instructors' Awareness of Using English as a Means of an Academic Subject Instruction

	Number of respondents	Percentage
CLIL (Content and language integrated learning)	5	25%
EMI (English-medium instruction)	1	5%
Academic subject instruction in English (with no specific name)	20	100%

During a follow-up interview the respondents explained their understanding of CLIL and EMI in the following ways:

- "CLIL is an approach when a foreign language is used as a tool for a subject learning in an interactive mode";
- "I hear it [CLIL] uses a specific methodology which is different from a traditional methodology of teaching a language. It makes it easier to learn professional English";
- "[CLIL is] learning English through specialist subjects";
- "CLIL means teaching a subject such as physics, geography, psychology, etc. in English";
- "EMI? It comes from Oxford. I think it means that English is an instrument for mastering a subject. It is for those whose mother tongue is not English".

The responses show that there is no clear understanding of what CLIL and EMI mean. As Dearden says:

> It [EMI] is sometimes used as synonymous with CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning). However CLIL has a dual education objective built into its title (the enhancement of both content and language) whereas EMI does not. Taken at 'face value' EMI simply describes the practice of teaching an academic subject through English which is not the first language of the majority population. (7)

The data analysis revealed the lecturers' perspective as to the benefits of implementing English as a medium of instruction at InEU. All respondents admitted a positive impact of EMI introduction for students and teachers as well as the university as a whole. Thus, students' benefits might be as follows: integration into a global educational environment by way of participating in student exchange programs; master's degree study abroad; academic mobility; competitiveness at an international labour market; better employment opportunities at home; increased motivation to learn the subject; language practice; increased language proficiency level; deeper understanding of specialist terminology used internationally; improved critical thinking and communication skills; expanded horizons; developed self-esteem for better professional and personal results (Table 8).

Table 8: The Benefits for the Students from EMI Implementation at InEU: Instructors' Perspective

	Number of respondents	Percentage
Integration into a global educational environment	20	100%
Competitiveness at an international labour market	20	100%
Better employment opportunities at home	14	70%
Increased motivation to learn the subject	10	50%
Language practice	10	50%
Increased language proficiency level	10	50%
Deeper understanding of specialist terminology	7	35%
Improved critical thinking and communication skills	2	10%
Expanded horizons	2	10%
Developed self-esteem	1	5%

The lecturers also made comments about the benefits for instructors that might arouse from English instruction in their subjects. All 20 respondents agree that teaching their subjects in English is a powerful means of professional development. It may provide a deeper understanding of one's subject via accessing new knowledge and innovation presented in English. As one of the participants remarked, "Using English as an instrument of teaching will motivate me to self--education and professional growth".

The majority of the lecturers also spoke about the improvements of the teaching-learning process through the usage of a new methodology (many mentioned CLIL methodology) that incorporates the development of students' communication and cognitive skills. Furthermore, the respondents stated that teaching in English could provide them an opportunity "to communicate internationally on a higher level," particularly more confidence while presenting at international conferences, collaborative ties with foreign colleagues, academic mobility, participation in various international projects and programs.

Additionally, the faculty members noted that regular practising English in their lessons would improve their language proficiency which might be looked upon as not just a personal gain but a professional gain as well: "A foreign language mastering should be an indispensable component of one's professionalism".

The questionnaire and interview results are presented in Table 9.

Table 9: The Benefits to the Faculty from EMI Implementation at InEU: Instructors' Perspective

	Number of respondents	Percentage
Professional development	20	100%
Educational process improvement through a new methodology	17	85%
Improved communication at the international level	14	70%
Improved language proficiency	10	50%
Personal growth	4	20%

And finally, questionnaire and interview data analysis revealed the faculty opinion as to what benefits the university might get in case EMI program is to be implemented there. The overwhelming majority thought that courses in English may provide a higher ranking of the university at the international level as well as strengthen its leading position in the region. Besides, it would also mean "a step nearer to internationalization of domestic education," "joining the international market of educational services". This could ensure a better quality education which, in its turn, may lead to a greater student enrollment, on the one hand, and an increased number of recruiters who will want employ the university's graduates. Additionally, EMI implementation might help realize the government's multilingualism policy at the university level. Moreover, as one of the respondents stated, "A university should educate successful people and English today seems to be one of the key factors that can make it possible". The data obtained from the lecturers concerning a positive impact of EMI introduction at InEU are presented in table 10.

Table 10: The Benefits to InEU from EMI Implementation: Instructors' Perspective

	Number of respondents	Percentage
High ranking at the international level	19	95%
Leading position in the region	17	85%
Internationalization of domestic education	16	80%
Better quality education	15	90%
Greater student enrollment	9	45%
Favourable position at the labour market	5	25%
Contribution to multilingualism policy realization	2	10%
"Successful people" training	1	5%

As we see, the instructors' perspective of using English to train students is rather favourable. The faculty members questioned and interviewed are optimistic about the benefits the university might get. Those benefits include both personal gains of students and instructors and organizational gains in the academic, professional and image-building spheres.

However, a worry was voiced by the respondents as to the challenges they will have to face in case EMI is introduced. Two most difficult problems all instructors identified were the low language proficiency level of instructors and students as well as a huge amount of extra-work instructors would have to prepare for classes. In terms of their English proficiency level most of the respondents believed they did not have "level enough" to provide a quality service. However, many people admitted they needed training and were ready to improve their language ability and skills through courses and self-education.

As to the second difficult problem, the biggest concern turned out to be a weak support of department heads who reluctantly provide favourable working conditions to those engaged in EMI programs. One of the professors remarked during an interview: "This is a great pressure. It requires more preparation. We need to develop new syllabuses and other documentation, new materials. And there are extra-curricular activities and community work we still need to do. What we need are incentives."

The respondents also raised doubt about the students' readiness to learn in English because of an insufficient language ability of the latter: "Students will have learning problems because of the low English level. It means I'll have to use a simplified language which will require simplifying the content. And this is low quality education!"

Among other challenges the faculty members mentioned the lack or insufficiency of authentic teaching materials, resources and facilities, poor knowledge of relevant methodology, the faculty's inactivity and low motivation, and administration pressure. Additionally, as experience shows, a group of students who enroll in a subject taught in English very often includes mixed-ability students as well as students who learned a foreign language other than

English at school which also makes a problem. Table 11 shows the challenges identified by the faculty members in case EMI program is implemented at InEU.

Table 11: The Challenges Arising from EMI Implementation at InEU: Instructors' Perspective

	Number of respondents	Percentage
Insufficient English proficiency of students and faculty	20	100%
Weak administration support and few incentives	20	100%
Low quality education as a result of simplified language and content	17	85%
Lack of appropriate teaching materials and resources	16	80%
Low faculty awareness of EMI methodology	16	80%
Faculty's low motivation and inactivity	13	65%
Mixed-ability student grouping	8	40%

An issue concerning the university potential to incorporate EMI identified a rather cautious attitude from the respondents. None of them were quite sure whether the university possesses sufficient finance and material resources for that. However, many lecturers admitted there was a strong will of the university administration "to start up the teaching in English project" that will definitely promote the necessary conditions for that.

Though saying that instruction in English was a difficult task, the majority of respondents were positive about its introduction at the university. Some of the comments the lecturers made included the following:

- "At our department at least a half of the teaching staff participated in international programs. So, we have a good experience of using English at a professional level".
- "I'm not confident to speak English freely but when I have to present at

conferences I try to overcome my fear . . . . I think I will get used to using English with my students. Besides, I take English courses".

- "I try to teach electrical engineering in English to my students from time to time. They like such lessons. It's fun".
- "Yes, I have an experience of teaching in English though a limited one . . . . Students like lessons in English [smiles]".

So we can see that the participants refer to communication in English in a meaningful context (conferences, international programs, correspondence with colleagues), a growing number of motivated faculty teachers and a positive attitude of students as potential strengths of EMI implementation at InEU. The instructors' responses concerning potentially strong issues of introducing EMI are given in Table 12.

Table 12: InEU Potential Opportunities of EMI Implementation: Instructors' Perspective

	Number of respondents	Percentage
Experience of communicating in an international context (conference presentations, participation in international programs, correspondence with foreign colleagues)	20	100%
Growing number of motivated teachers and students	20	100%
"A rule of thumb" administration decision	16	80%
Experience of teaching in English	5	25%
Completed language courses	5	25%

The study also demonstrated the instructors' opinion about the degree of EMI implementation at the institutional level. A general opinion was: the innovation should not be introduced "too quickly". The so-called "soft" form of the project is preferable to start with. One of the instructors said during the interview: "We have to be flexible. A slow start, maybe with

some pilot group of students . . . . Giving the material in portions, a gradual switch from Russian into English so that students become accustomed to a new language of instruction are important".

The participants reported on the percentage of implementing English as a medium of instruction. The majority of respondents (11) consider it to be 50-60% of the curriculum; 3 people believed this degree should be higher – 70-80 %. Two people supported a radical shift to English usage in class (100%), however, stating that such a revolutionary change should be realized with a limited audience of students whose language mastery is high. Another two people argued the implementation degree should not exceed 5-10% because, as they stated, "we have to realize multilingualism policy 'The Trinity of Languages'. So we have to implement two languages – English and Kazakh, and this is a hard job". One lecturer noted that 10% was a reasonable start; gradually it could be increased up to 30%. Still one more admitted "hard to say". However, all respondents were unanimous in two things; on the one hand, EMI implementation should not be thoughtless and, on the other hand, a delay until there are ideal conditions would mean a rather long wait.

The issue about which subjects should be taught in English revealed two opposing opinions. Half of the instructors (10) said those should be major subjects when students from the very beginning acquire through English most important skills and knowledge necessary in their future professional activity. Seven people argued that it was logical to begin with non--major/elective subjects to minimize the losses because of inevitable simplification of content which is fatal in major subject acquisition. One person was convinced the only factor that conditions the choice of an English-medium course is the language proficiency level of the instructor and students; the remaining two respondents voiced the opinion that each student should have at least one subject taught in English per semester.

The English proficiency level of both instructors and students was identified as a key factor that could hinder EMI implementation at the university (See Table 11 above). The respondents made comments about language proficiency of instructors who would teach in

English such as “Upper-Intermediate”, “Intermediate and higher”, “Advanced”, “IELTS 6,5”. As to the students level, in the respondents’ opinion, it should be “B1”, “B2”, “Intermediate”, “Intermediate and higher”, “IELTS 4,5”. As we see, the general English level of the faculty, as perceived by most respondents, is required to be higher than that of students. When asked to identify one’s own level of English proficiency, 15 people reported it as “Intermediate”, 2 people as “Upper-Intermediate” and 3 people as “Low”. All instructors admitted they needed special language training; 8 people remarked they were currently taking an English training course.

The instructors’ opinion survey suggests the faculty’s overall positive perception of the English language instruction implementation at InEU. They pointed out various motivations for EMI courses at personal and institutional levels emphasizing internationalization of education, personal and professional growth, status and higher university ranking. Unlike administration representatives who look at EMI globally, as “a political issue”, the faculty members presented, as it were, “an outward glance” and their concerns were mostly connected with “ways and techniques” of EMI implementation directly in class.

Questionnaire and interview data analysis allowed us to identify the overall attitude of the university administration and the faculty to English-medium instruction implementation at the institutional level which we can specify as “rather encouraging but cautious.” The administration is positive about EMI and is ready to give support to its implementation due to various reasons, although understanding that a number of challenges would hamper its implementation at the university. The targeted teaching staff, in its turn, welcomes the innovation emphasizing the benefits it gives them and students. However, instructors expect from the university administration a balanced approach to EMI introduction which should be gradual since it might have a detrimental effect on subject content learning and education quality.

Data analysis also made it possible for us to evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats involved in EMI implementation at InEU.

The strengths might be identified as follows:

- Overall positive public opinion of EMI at InEU;
- Corporate culture of innovation value;
- Administration support policy;
- Available academic facilities and financial resources;
- Growing number of motivated teachers and students;
- Growing number of staff with experience of communicating in an international context and teaching in English;
- Department of foreign languages and a language center as support structures.

However, there are certain weaknesses among which mention should be made of:

- Low English proficiency of the teaching staff and students;
- Lack of appropriate authentic teaching materials and resources;
- Low faculty awareness of EMI methodology;
- People's conservative mentality and psychological resistance to methodological innovation; low motivation and inactivity of a great number of students and faculty;
- Mixed-ability student grouping;
- Few incentives for English-medium instruction teachers.

It is worth mentioning that EMI implementation at the institutional level might bring certain opportunities, for example:

- Economic opportunities: greater student enrollment (both domestic and foreign students), university's increased financial resources;
- Political opportunities: the government's trilingual policy "The Trinity of Languages" implementation;
- Market opportunities: leadership in education (EMI programs, foreign students, better quality education, varied education opportunities for students), higher

university ranking, better employment opportunities for graduates;

- Technological opportunities: distance education;
- International opportunities: integration into a global educational environment, international scholarships, participation in international programs/projects, international cooperation in the spheres of education, science and culture;
- Social opportunities: traditional ('soviet') attitude to education as a society value and a target audience as a consequence.

On the contrary, it might pose external threats, such as:

- Economic threats: decreasing social standard of living and at the same time increasing tuition fee;
- Political threats: government's supportive policy in relation to state universities exclusively;
- Market threats: strong competition among universities;
- Social threats: unfavourable demographic situation (low birth rate within the period of 1990-2000s and as a result few university applicants today), potential applicant loss due to their departure to Russia, applicants (school leavers) with a low English proficiency, psychological factors connected with instability and uncertainty.

4. Conclusion

This study was a preliminary opinion survey to explore the viewpoints of the Innovative University of Eurasia faculty and administration as to English-medium instruction implementation at the institutional level. The opinion survey made through questionnaire and personal interview with respondents identified both benefits and challenges of such implementation as well as a general perception of this innovation in the university context. The survey also showed there is acceptance of EMI and recognition of its value by the university administration staff who intend

to start an EMI pilot project and motivate the faculty to develop it. The administration's decision found support among a number of instructors and students. The targeted respondents reported various positive factors for offering EMI courses, among them education internationalization; leadership opportunities and higher ranking; competitiveness; better quality education; greater student enrollment; better employment opportunities; multilingualism policy realization; professional development and personal growth.

However, a deeper look at the problem generated an awareness of factors that may become dominant in the implementation and development of English-medium teaching. The following factors might have a serious antagonistic effect on the project's success: inadequate English competence of instructors and students; lack of relevant authentic teaching materials and resources; lecturers' ignorance of EMI methodology; low motivation and inertness; lack of support structures; mixed-ability classes; extra work-load and teaching hours. An implication of this result is that EMI implementation at InEU should be seriously considered in terms of students' and instructors' preparedness to it, additional general English training programs; specific materials development or acquisition; specific EMI pedagogy training programs; available support structures and incentives.

Looking ahead, a further extensive investigation of the instructors' views and experiences, the students' perceptions as well as pilot project results analysis are required for successful planning, implementation and development of English-medium instruction at the Innovative University of Eurasia.

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