New Trends in Foreign Language Teaching

Methods, Evaluation and Innovation

Edited by

António Lopes and Raúl Ruiz Cecilia

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INTRODUCTION

ANTÓNIO LOPES AND RAÚL RUIZ CECILIA

Language teaching approaches, methods and procedures are constantly undergoing reassessment. New ideas keep emerging as the growing complexity of the means of communication and the opportunities created by technology put language skills to new uses. In addition, the political, social and economic impact of globalization, the new demands of the labour market that result from it, the pursuit of competitiveness, the challenges of intercultural communication and the diversification of culture are phenomena that have opened new perspectives on the role that foreign languages have come to play in the development of contemporary societies.

This has far-reaching consequences in terms of foreign language learning. Having become more aware of these changing circumstances, learners now seek practical solutions for their needs in real contexts, and this has entailed a radical departure from the school's traditional teacher-directed curriculum. On the other hand, the *Common European Framework for Reference* has helped teachers to rethink their strategies and attitudes, and has opened new research avenues.

Taking into account these contexts, the editors selected from contributions made at an international conference held in Granada in April 2016 those papers that, besides their scientific quality, best represent the approaches and strategies that more effectively address the actual needs of learners. Most proposals revolved around the notion that the teaching of language can no longer be exclusively language-centred, but should rather embrace more comprehensive and integrated approaches where learners are invited to use the language as a means not only of "acquiring information"[1], but also of producing content, in particular when exposed to "comprehensible input", that is "a comprehensible subject-matter"[2]. More than just entailing the development of language acquisition, this perspective on language learning helps learners move from reception to production, as Snow points out, in “the search for the right balance of language and content teaching”[3].

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[1] Jack C. Richards and Theodore S. Rodgers, *Approaches and methods in language teaching* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 207.

[2] Stephen Krashen, *Second language acquisition and second language learning*. (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1981), 62.

In sum, this book aims to provide an insight into the latest developments in the field and to discuss the new trends in foreign language teaching that result from the need to adapt to the new social, economic and educational contexts in four major areas, namely methods and approaches (with particular emphasis on Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT), Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) and the Flipped Classroom); teacher training; innovation in the classroom; evaluation and assessment. These topics correspond to those key areas in language teaching permanently subject to detailed scrutiny by researchers in the field, and are all closely intertwined. Innovation cannot be detached from a specific methodological orientation and can only be validated if the evaluation tools are applied in a consistent way. On the other hand, methods and approaches that fail to prompt innovative practices within their didactic framework are unable to keep up with the social, cultural and technological changes directly affecting the learners’ lives. In turn, teacher training plays a pivotal role in fostering a critical awareness of the potential, opportunities and challenges that all these aspects present to the practitioner.

The book comprises fifteen chapters. In ***part one***, priority is given to CLIL and TBLT. With the increase in the number of European countries where bilingual education is offered more extensively, CLIL has become a central issue, both in educational and political terms. On the other hand, TBLT has prompted a major change in language learning, shifting it from language-centred approaches to a learner-centred one, where the focus is on communication and the development of practical skills necessary for effective language use. This has redefined the way teachers develop their in-class activities and the roles both learners and teachers play in the learning process. Likewise, the concept of the “flipped classroom” has helped teachers to move away from the traditional model of classroom instruction and has diversified the ways in which content has been delivered. These approaches have been critical in improving the teaching of LSP, as the latter also entails the learning of specialised knowledge which requires greater attention to be paid to the contexts where language plays an instrumental and constitutive role.

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[3] Margaret A. Snow, “Content-based and immersion models for second and foreign language teaching.” In *Teaching English as a second or foreign language*, edited by Marianne Celce-Murcia (Boston: Heinle & Heinle, 2001), 315.

Part two looks into the new challenges facing teacher training and how teachers position themselves in relation to new methodological proposals. Since the approaches discussed in the first part rely heavily on social interacting and social representations, a reflection is required on the ways in which values are negotiated and agreed upon. One should bear in mind that the oral and written production of learners, as well as the very social dynamic of the class, are influenced by the dominant discourses in circulation in society. The discussion of sensitive matters such as gender discrimination in teacher training is a first step towards ensuring a healthy social environment within the learning group. The chapter that discusses this latter aspect is followed by another that examines the teachers' attitudes towards innovation and their training needs through the analysis of the results of a survey conducted both in Europe and the US on how teachers value the latest methods and approaches in language teaching and on the ways in which ICT has been used in the context of TBLT. This part of the book is rounded off by two studies targeting pre-service teacher students and concerning their prospects of professional development. One of them resorts to task-based learning and attempts to identify the concepts impacting teaching practices, while ascertaining how those concepts can be exploited in teacher training. The other one addresses the importance of the reflective approach and experimental learning not only in the development of teaching competencies, but also in the improvement of the quality of initial teacher training.

Part three is about innovation in the classroom and presents five studies on experimental teaching practices for the development of the language proficiency. The first two studies are focused on CLIL. The first one analyses the way in which teachers resort to code-switching as a teaching strategy and how learners react to it, while discussing at the same time the management of code choice in the CLIL classroom and its implication in the development of bilingualism. This study is followed by another one centred on the development of the mechanical aspects of the learners' writing. In turn, task-based learning is addressed in two chapters dedicated to the use of formulaic language in the development of the learner's proficiency while carrying out tasks of different sorts. One final study shows the potential that ICT has to offer in terms of increasing the learners' motivation and enhancing the teaching and learning process, by means of a data-driven corpus-based methodology for an inductive and learner-centred approach to foreign language teaching.

Evaluation and assessment, which constitute ***part four*** of the book, are critical components to enhance the quality of the teaching and learning processes. The two final chapters take on two different perspectives. The first one presents the results of an experimental research study to test the reliability of a self-evaluation tool based on the grid of descriptors of the European Language Portfolio and a syllabus structured around each of the six levels applied to the incoming students of a Higher Education institution. The second study seeks to build a methodological model for the certification of foreign language achievement in primary and lower secondary schools based on the "principle of authentic assessment", which takes into account personal language learning in different communicative situations.

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PART 1 –

METHODS AND APPROACHES

CHAPTER ONE

TEACHING CLIL IN A POST-GRADUATE PROGRAMME: SURVEY CONCLUSIONS ON TEACHER'S TRAINING NEEDS

MARÍA BOBADILLA-PÉREZ
AND PILAR COUTO-CANTERO

1. Introduction

This article discusses the results of a study carried out in a Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) subject of the Master's Degree in *Specific Didactics* offered by the School of Education at the University of Coruña (UDC). One of the main academic aims of this postgraduate programme is to present future educators with models for the interdisciplinary teaching and plurilingual approach promoted by current legislations. Upon the conclusion of the course, a survey was conducted among the students with a double aim: one was the recollection of information for future improvements of the course. The other aim, and more relevant to the purpose of this study, was to inquire into the students' opinion on the training needs in plurilingual education of the UDC undergraduate students. All of them had recently completed the degrees on Pre-Primary and Primary Education on offer at this institution and at the moment, the study was carried out, they had acquired enough knowledge about CLIL so they could have a formed judgment about the matter discussed.

The data collected in the survey, which was both quantitative and qualitative in nature, aimed to shed some light on the student's perception on three issues: their perception of CLIL as a practical approach to the promotion of plurilingualism; what was their opinion about how it was promoted in Galicia; and what training needs at UDC Pre-Primary and

Primary Education degrees they felt were necessary for the students' future exercise of their profession in plurilingual institutions in our autonomous community. We present here the analysis of such data and the preliminary conclusions arrived to, which triggered questions about the need to revisit undergraduate education programmes at the University of A Coruña contemplating the incorporation of a CLIL specific subject, which would better prepare students for their future profession.

In order to contextualize the study, it is necessary to define the concept of plurilingualism itself and to present the reasons that justify CLIL as the approach for its implementation following the guidelines provided by the Council of Europe. Since the object of study is a particular subject on offer at the UDC's Master's degree, the contents introduced in class are presented as required training needs for the formation of any teacher in a plurilingual system. Finally, with the aim of discussing the possibility of future modifications of UDC's study plan, we describe the current training offered in didactics of the foreign language and CLIL both in undergraduate and graduate programmes.

2. Plurilingualism and CLIL

In order to adopt the plurilingual educational model promoted at the continental level by European Linguistic Policies, in 2010 the Galician local government encouraged the plurilingual designation of 52 schools in our community and since then, the number has steadily been increasing so that by the year 2015 that number had reached the 274 mark. Several laws, some of them not exempt from public discussion, are regulating that implementation. That was the case of the controversy triggered by the highly criticised "Galician Decree on Plurilingualism (79/2010)"[1] for non-university teachings, which would directly affect the existing policy of having half the Primary and Secondary school subjects taught in Galician and the other half in Spanish, since now plurilingual institutions would have to bestow some of that L1 class time to subjects being taught in L2s through CLIL methodology. Following the guidelines provided by that decree, an Act was approved regulating plurilingual schools in the Galician autonomous community by establishing the linguistic requirements that the institutions must meet for the compulsory stages of

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[1] Decreto 79/2010, de 20 de mayo, para el plurilingüismo en la enseñanza no universitaria de Galicia.
http://www.xunta.gal/dog/Publicados/2010/20100525/Anuncio17BE6_es.html

Primary and Secondary Education[2]. Although there is no actual regulation in that sense for the non-compulsory stage of pre-school education, those institutions seeking to develop the plurilingual competence among their students should reinforce foreign languages in that stage. The Act also establishes a B2 level proficiency certificate as a requirement to teach CLIL sections.

In spite of the above-mentioned controversy caused by the implementation of plurilingual policies in the Galician bilingual community, more and more schools are choosing the linguistic designation promoted by guidelines presented in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*[3], from now referred to as CEFRL. In its introductory chapter, a section is devoted to defining the term “plurilingualism” as opposed to the term “multilingualism”:

> Plurilingualism differs from multilingualism, which is the knowledge of a number of languages, or the co-existence of different languages in a given society…Beyond this, the plurilingual approach emphasizes the fact that as an individual person’s experience of language in its cultural contexts expands, from the language of the home to that of society at large and then to the languages of other peoples (whether learnt at school or college, or by direct experience), he or she does not keep these languages and cultures in strictly separated mental compartments, but rather builds up a communicative competence to which all knowledge and experience of language contributes and in which languages interrelate and interact (CEFRL, 4)

That definition given by the CEFRL implies a dramatic change in the way schools should approach the treatment of foreign languages. With a multilingual approach, the use of the L2s at schools was only limited and used within the foreign language lesson. In fact, this multilingual approach to language teaching has been the only one used for decades in the Spanish educational institutions. During the 80s and 90s, foreign languages were taught at Spanish and Galician schools, but students did not have the chance to use the language outside the classroom or even outside the school. English or French were only learned and used within the specific linguistic subjects and students would not be encouraged to use them elsewhere. Furthermore, the methodology used in our language classrooms has been in general quite traditional: teacher-centred classrooms with a focus on learning grammar and vocabulary and hardly any time to put that knowledge into practice. The choice of such methodology might somehow be explained by the fact that during the last decades of the 20th century in Primary and Secondary school classrooms in our country there was an average of 40 students per class, due to the so-called “baby boom” of the sixties and seventies. If we compare this number of students with the situation nowadays (25-30), it is understandable that it would be difficult to give so many students the opportunity to properly use the language in such a limited time period (two or three weekly hours).

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[2] Orden de 12 de mayo de 2011 por la que se regulan los centros plurilingües en la Comunidad Autónoma de Galicia y se establece el procedimiento de incorporación de nuevos centros a la Red de Centros Plurilingües de Galicia.
https://www.xunta.gal/dog/Publicados/2011/20110520/AnuncioC3F1-160511-1748_es.html

[3] Council of Europe, *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

Making an allowance for that needed change, the last two educational laws passed during the 21st century have emphasised a plurilingual approach to the teaching and learning processes of foreign languages. Thus, following the guidelines provided by the CEFRL, the last two national educational laws in Spain, the Organic Law on Education-LOE (2006)[4] and the Organic Law of Improvement of Educational Quality-LOMCE (2013)[5], specifically establish the implementation of plurilingual policies. One of the final dispositions of the LOE (the seventh) instructs the establishment of plurilingual education to be done in coordination with the autonomous communities, paying particular attention to the linguistic reality of each of the regions. The LOMCE takes a step forward in the promotion of plurilingualism, addressing the insufficient promotion of foreign language acquisition by the Spanish educational system and establishes as one of its main priorities the construction of a European project as defined by the Council of Europe[6]:

> La Ley apoya decididamente el plurilingüismo, redoblando los esfuerzos para conseguir que los estudiantes se desenvuelvan con fluidez al menos en una primera lengua extranjera, cuyo nivel de comprensión oral y lectora y

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[4] Ley Orgánica de Educación: https://www.boe.es/buscar/pdf/2006/BOE-A-2006-7899-consolidado.pdf

[5] Ley Orgánica 8/2013, de 9 de diciembre, para la mejora de la calidad educativa (*LOMCE*):https://www.boe.es/buscar/pdf/2013/BOE-A-2013-12886-consolidado.pdf

[6] My translation: The LOMCE decidedly supports plurilingualism, strengthens its efforts towards achieving the students’ fluency in at least a first foreign language, whose level of oral and written comprehension and of oral and written expression results decisive to favour employability and professional ambitions, and for that it makes a decided commitment towards the curricular incorporation of a second language (LOMCE, 2013).

> de expresión oral y escrita resulta decisivo para favorecer la empleabilidad y las ambiciones profesionales, y por ello apuesta decididamente por la incorporación curricular de una segunda lengua extranjera (LOMCE, 2013).

In the Autonomous Community of Galicia where this study takes place several steps are being taken in the promotion of plurilingualism: the establishment of bilingual sections and plurilingual designation of schools; for students, grants are offered to take language courses in foreign countries; for teachers in general, the CUALE programme gives them the opportunity to improve their language skills, and the PALE programme is specifically designed for those teaching non-linguistic subjects in a foreign language. However, in spite of these efforts, there is still a lot of room for improvement, particularly in reference to teacher training in specific methodologies for the integration of language and content in the classrooms.

The plurilingual approach discussed here implies an extension of the use of the foreign language; in order to develop the plurilingual communicative competence, content and language teaching approaches should be implemented in non-linguistic subjects. *Content and Language Integrated Learning* (CLIL) is the methodology that practising teachers should be implementing and should be trained in; having a relatively good command of the foreign language does not by itself enable the professional to teach a non-linguistic subject in any language other than the mother tongue.

CLIL is an umbrella term coined by David Marsh and Anne Maljers in 1994 that covers many varieties of educational programmes and projects focused on the teaching and learning of academic content through a language other than the mother tongue. Coyle, Hood and Marsh[7] in their benchmark study on the subject, define the approach as:

> Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is a dual-focused educational approach in which a traditional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language. That is, in the teaching and learning process, there is a focus not only on content, and not only on language. Each is interwoven, even if the emphasis is greater on one or the other at a given time. (2010, p.1)

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[7] Do Coyle, Philip Hood, and David Marsh, *CLIL. Content and Language Integrated Learning* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

3. CLIL teacher training contents

Understanding the implementation of CLIL implies being familiar with the pedagogical theories that support the approach. It is not enough, as previously discussed, to have a certain proficiency in the foreign language to be able to teach a bilingual section. In the Master's degree, the theories of several key authors in pedagogy and bilingualism are discussed, Benjamin Bloom[8], Jim Cummins[9] or Lev Vygotsky[10]. Crucial in understanding cognition, thinking processes and their relationship with language is Bloom's suggestion of categorisation of the thinking skills, and its revised version presented by Anderson and Kratwohl[11]. This division between HOTs (Higher Order Thinking Skills) and LOTs (Lower Order Thinking Skills) enables the CLIL teacher to help their students develop their thinking skills and to link thinking and language. Therefore, he or she can properly prepare and plan for the "most crucial element for successful CLIL" (Coyle, Hood and Marsh, 2010, p. 62), i.e. "Language for Learning" within the CLIL language triptych composed of these three elements:

- Language of Learning: Content obligatory language related to the subject or topic.
- Language for Learning: Language needed to operate in a foreign language environment.
- Language through Learning: New language that cannot be planned.

Cummins's theories (1984), which differentiate between two types of language proficiency, are key in understanding linguistic immersion process in CLIL: BICs (Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills) and CALPs (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency). According to Cummins, within two years of immersion many children can develop native fluency in the foreign language (i.e. BICS), but take longer in achieving CALPs. In addition, Cummins's discussion on the existence of a

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[8] Benjamin S. Bloom ed., *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, Handbook I: Cognitive Domain* (New York, Longman, 1956).

[9] Jim Cummins, *Bilingualism and Special Education: Issues in Assessment and Pedagogy* (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1984).

[10] Lev S. Vygotsky, *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological processes* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978).

[11] Lorin W. Anderson and David Krathwohl (eds.), *A Taxonomy for Learning, Teaching and Assessing: A Revision of Bloom's Educational Objectives* (Longman: New York, 2001).

Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP) justifies the development of the above-mentioned “communicative competence to which all knowledge and experience of language contributes and in which languages interrelate and interact (CEFRL, 4)”. This CUP is a set of skills and metalinguistic knowledge acquired while learning one language that serve as the base for developing second languages. Also, Vygotsky’s (1978) concepts of “scaffolding” and “zone of proximal development” (ZPD) are fundamental concepts in CLIL. The concept of ZPD was introduced by the author to “describe the kind of learning which is always challenging yet potentially within the reach of individual learners on condition that appropriate support, scaffolding and guidance are provided” (Coyle, Hood and Marsh, 2010, pp. 29). Therefore, the CLIL teacher must be trained in the specific scaffolding strategies for CLIL (visuals, task design, use of dictionary, use of the L1, etc.).

The CLIL teacher must learn how to plan, prepare and assess a CLIL unit, taking into consideration the so-called 4Cs framework. *Content:* the curricular subject-progression in knowledge, skills and understanding; *Communication*: using language to learn while learning to use language; *Cognition*: developing cognitive and thinking skills; *Culture*: understanding ourselves and other cultures. According to the CEFRL, plurilingualism “has itself to be seen in the context of “pluriculturalism”. Language is not only a major aspect of culture, but also a means of access to cultural manifestations” (CEFRL, 2002, 5). The consideration of culture as one of the main elements of CLIL contributes to the development of the global citizenship promoted by the Council of Europe. In the subject good practices, resources and materials are presented and analysed in class.

4. Foreign Language and CLIL Training at the UDC School of Education: Undergraduate and Post-graduate programmes

The University of Coruña offers degrees in Pre-Primary and Primary education, but does not offer the specialisation in foreign languages, the so-called *Mención en Lenguas Extranjeras,* which would enable them to teach the foreign language class. Graduate students at UDC will, therefore, become Primary school generalists or Pre-school teachers. For several reasons, we acknowledge the fact that the amount of credits devoted to *Didactics of the Foreign Language* subject is very limited; actually, there is only a six ECTS compulsory course on offer for the degrees in Primary Education and Pre-Primary Education. Our students must take that class during their third year from the month of March to the middle of May;

during the month of February they are doing their internships at schools, and so we only have two and a half intensive months to achieve all the learning outcomes planned for our subject, which is, in fact, a challenge. But, in spite of that, during our lectures and seminars we introduce relevant contents in the area: European and national policies which define the foreign language curriculum (CEFRL, LOE and LOMCE Educational Laws, Local Decrees on Plurilingualism, etc.); teaching approaches and methods (Communicative Language Teaching, Total Physical Response, Project Based Learning, etc.); we also devote class time to presenting resources and good practices in the Foreign Language Classroom.

Although, as we mentioned before, these students will not become specialists in foreign language, they should be as familiar with principles of foreign language teaching as they are with any specific didactic areas (Physical Education, Music, Arts, Science…). We also consider that one of the aims of our subject is to promote among our students the sense of self-responsibility towards the development of their language proficiency. Therefore, with that in mind, as part of the individual working time observed within the European Credit System, we present the students with the resources to practice the presumed B1 level they should have on completing Upper Secondary School.

For the reasons discussed above, the future teaching practice of many of our UDC students will be defined by the plurilingual designation of the growing number of Galician Schools. That is why in our *Didactics of the Foreign Language* subject we are introducing some basic concepts of CLIL, but it is definitely insufficient. In order to complete that limited training that UDC undergraduate educational programmes have in CLIL methodologies, the university offers a Master's Degree in Specific Didactics, which trains postgraduate students in interdisciplinary approaches with CLIL being one of its major methodological vehicles. This subject has a practical approach, so at the end of the course students are required to make and present in class a CLIL project of their choice, either for Primary or for Pre-Primary. Teachers of areas of Didactics of Language and Literature have also presented the Dean's office the programme for a specific subject in CLIL to be offered as an optional 4.5 ECTS subject that students seeking a degree in Primary Education could take. At this moment, the inclusion of this subject in the study plan of that particular degree requires its modification, a difficult process due to the administrative steps that would need to be taken. Nevertheless, the School of Education is working on the proposal of a bilingual degree in Primary Education as a part of the internationalisation strategy of the University of A Coruña. If the implementation of this degree were successful, then the

CLIL subject discussed here would be included in its study plan. However, in spite of all the efforts taken it should be noted that any study plan in a Degree in Pre-primary and Primary Education in a plurilingual Europe should include, in our opinion, teacher training in the integration of content and language in the classroom.

5. Study, instruments and data collection

Within this context, it should be argued that the undergraduate teaching programmes at UDC should be revisited at some point in order to meet the demands of today's society. The students' point of view on that matter has to be taken into consideration. That is why, as a starting point in this ongoing discussion, we conducted a survey among the students registered on the Master's Degree in Specific Didactics once they had completed the course on content and language integrated learning. The intention was to inquire into their opinion on the training needs in the plurilingual education of UDC students.

This CLIL subject is one of the three compulsory subjects of the Module in Innovative Didactics of the Master's Degree. Most of the students had some very basic knowledge of the matter, as they came from the undergraduate programmes on offer at UDC. Nevertheless, the methodology here is further considered, both theoretical and practical components are presented, so that the contents in the teaching guide include a discussion on these CLIL essentials.

A total of 19 students participated in the study. They all came from the following undergraduate degrees on offer at the University of A Coruña: Primary Education (six students); Primary Education with Physical Education (PE) Specialisation (nine students); Pre-school Education (four students).

The data was elicited at the end of the term, once the students had completed all the tasks and assignments for the subject. They were asked to answer a survey with 45 questions, which were designed following the requirements of a Likert scale. They were also asked to give their personal opinion on the different areas of inquiry. Quantitative and qualitative information was analysed. Data collection took place during a 45 minutes session where all students answered in writing. All of the students entirely completed the survey and provided opinions on the matter showing that the focus of the study was of great concern for them.

6. Discussion

The survey presented questions organised into three areas of inquiry:

a) Student's perception of CLIL as a feasible methodology.
b) Student's perception of the promotion of plurilingualism in Galicia.
c) Teacher training in foreign languages in their undergraduate degree.

In the first part of the survey, students were asked about their perceptions of CLIL once they had completed this particular course. This part of the survey should serve as course assessment by providing the teacher with relevant information regarding the contents considered so it could be improved in subsequent editions of the Master's. Students were asked whether they saw CLIL as a feasible methodology to be implemented in Galician schools. 78% of the participants found that too much theoretical training in CLIL can confuse the teachers, but 81% thought it would be better to explore more good practices in CLIL. Therefore, the emphasis on teacher training programmes should fall less on reviewing the theoretical framework and more on observing and assessing effective CLIL practices. Also, 72% of the participants thought that, in spite of the benefits of CLIL, its application carries along with it some hitches: curricular adaptations, complications for the students and for the parents, or not enough reliable resources available.

Regarding the lack of resources, particularly interesting were the personal comments of those students who had designed a final project for the Pre-Primary classroom. Compared to those designing a CLIL project for Primary education, they did not find as many specific books, textbooks, previous projects or websites. In fact, most of the resources available for Pre-Primary are ESL materials. Current legislations, in theory, encourage the promotion of plurilingualism at all educational stages, but it seems that the efforts are mostly put on the compulsory stages. In that sense, the Organic Law of Education-LOE (2006), which still regulates the curricula for Pre-Primary[12], encourages the promotion of plurilingualism from the stage of Pre-Primary education: "El Gobierno establecerá las bases de la educación plurilingüe desde segundo ciclo de Educación Infantil hasta Bachillerato, previa consulta a las Comunidades

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[12] Pre-Primary is the only educational stage that has not been modified by the LOMCE (2013).

Autónomas”[13]. But, in spite of this, we argue here that Pre-Primary is the most overlooked stage in the promotion of plurilingualism, and we must not forget that early childhood is a critical age[14] in the acquisition of foreign languages. The concretion of the LOE curriculum for the autonomous community of Galicia for Pre-Primary Education, with respect to the treatment of second languages, only suggests three weekly periods of twenty minutes each and only in the second cycle, thus overlooking ages 0-3 and not giving enough presence to foreign languages during the ages 3-5. In addition, the norm that regulates bilingual sections and plurilingual schools for the local administration of Galicia only focuses on the compulsory educational stages, i.e. Primary and Secondary Education. All of this results in difficulties for pre-primary teachers to coordinate efforts and share resources for the promotion of plurilingualism during that stage. Furthermore, publishing companies do not show interest in developing specific CLIL materials for that stage.

The students were also asked about their perception on how plurilingualism was promoted in Galicia, and they were in fact very sceptical towards it. 80% were critical towards the Galician Decree on Plurilingualism. 87% of the students had the chance to observe plurilingual/bilingual practices during their internship and 89% of them were critical towards those practices: too much L1 spoken, traditional methodologies or the teachers’ language level proficiency were some of the arguments discussed. On the other hand, 86% of them acknowledged to some degree the fact that the designation on plurilingual institutions in Galicia is relatively new and that the process needs adaptation. A high 96% of them also confirmed that at the specific institutions where they had done their internships, the second language was almost absent in the Pre-Primary classrooms. Students observed, on their written remarks, that more resources should be given to active teachers to improve their proficiency, such as language refresher courses or grants to take courses in the foreign country. These resources are in fact available and funded by the educational administration of Galicia. Besides the above-mentioned programmes, the Council of Europe has the "Erasmus Plus Key Action 1 for School Staff Mobility" by which active teachers receive financial assistance from the European Union. Therefore, the resources are there. What is important here is that such programmes become even more visible so that more and more teachers participate in them. Sometimes it is not the lack of interest of the teachers in improving their foreign language, but that they are unaware of these programmes.

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[13] My translation: “The National government will define the grounds for plurilingual education from the Second cycle of Pre-Primary to Upper Secondary Education, following consultations with the Autonomous Communities.”

[14] Lennenberg (1967) in *Critical Period Hypothesis* defends the argument that, due to the plasticity of the child´s brain during growth, the period from early childhood to pre-puberty is key when it comes to L2 acquisition, particularly in the phonological sense. This is reason why for a very young learner it is easier to internalise and reproduce the sounds of the second language better than an adult learner.

Regarding the last areas of inquiry about the students' perception of teacher training in foreign languages at UDC, the results were not surprising. 76% of them considered insufficient just one subject of *Didactics of the Foreign Language* in their undergraduate program. But, interestingly, the 91% of them who considered it adequate were PE specialists, which makes us question whether they perceive CLIL as an additional specialisation as opposed to a vehicular methodology for the one they already have. Remarkable was the fact that only 42% of them considered it important to have had a subject which just focused on EFL. This opinion differs very much from the initial position of many of the undergraduate students, who at the beginning of the course in *Didactics of the Foreign Language* thought there should be a subject just devoted to developing their proficiency in English. Unavoidably, this puts on the table the question about the main role of the professors in teacher training programs: Are they language teachers or methodology teachers? That question does not have a clear-cut answer, but the conclusion we can draw is that UDC students, once they complete their degree, start to acknowledge their need to develop foreign language proficiency. Eleven of the students that participated in the study are in possession of an official certificate of a B2 level of the foreign language (all of them in English). Four of them were preparing to take the B2 exam at the end of the year and two already have a C1 in English. B2 is currently in Galicia the level required to teach a non-linguistic subject in English, and the fact that a great majority of them had recently completed that level shows their awareness of the importance of acquiring a proper language competence for their future profession. 90% of them, on the other hand, considered it very important to have had a subject, which just focused on CLIL.

The personal opinions expressed by the students in this area of inquiry also shed some light on future paths UDC teacher training degrees could take in order to better prepare them to exercise their profession. Seven of them expressed the need to have a certain percentage of the 240 ECTS credits that they have to complete in order to get the degree in a foreign language. The percentages discussed differed from 33.3% up to 50%. As discussed before, currently the vice-dean of international relations at

UDC's School of Education is working on a proposal of different subjects taught in English at the School of Education. University regulations require 40% of the subjects taught in a foreign language. The idea discussed by the students in our study does not, however, have that purpose. What they suggest here is quite interesting: in order for a teacher to exercise their practice on a plurilingual educational system, it would be a great idea to be trained with the same methodology they are going to be asked to use. Therefore, they would be learning non-linguistic subjects of their degrees in the foreign language in the same way many primary school students nowadays are learning, for example, Science in English. Nevertheless, it is actually quite difficult to put that into practice due to different factors: the nature of the different subjects, the foreign language proficiency level of the faculty or their lack of training in content and language integrated learning. Then again, we must also acknowledge the effort the University of A Coruña is putting towards training its faculty to teach in English, offering for them every semester free courses on English Medium Instruction which are actually in very high demand.

7. Conclusions

This study presents the results of a first approach in the analysis of the teacher training needs in CLIL at the University of A Coruña. This being the first edition of the Master's program, the number of participants in the study might not have been significant enough. However, their answers actually shed some light on the initial steps that should be taken in order to develop or improve the plurilingual competence of Galician students. The first one should be a revision of current Primary and Pre-Primary Education programmes offered at UDC, so they can prepare students for their future teaching practice in plurilingual institutions. However, that is not an easy task, since these Bologna plans are only five years old and have recently been reviewed. In addition, devoting some credits to CLIL training in these programmes would unavoidably require reconsidering some areas with more presence in the current system, so deciding which one should be difficult.

Another step that should be taken in order to improve programmes that foster foreign languages in Galicia is to raise awareness among future and serving teachers about the importance of continuous learning in innovative methodologies. Also relevant is the acquisition of a real communicative competence in the foreign language, which should not be limited to proving to have official certification on paper but not in practice. Besides showing real proof of a certain proficiency in the L2 – B2 in Galicia or C1 in other Spanish communities – teachers should be required to attend courses on Content and Language Integrated Learning, so they understand that teaching CLIL does not only mean teaching in English.

Finally, more real efforts and resources should be put towards the promotion of plurilingualism in the stage of Pre-Primary Education. Even though it is not a compulsory stage, the early childhood is a key age period in developing foreign language proficiency.

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CHAPTER TWO

TASK-BASED APPROACH TO TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES TO OLDER ADULTS: A NEUROBIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

MAGDALENA KALITA

1. Introduction

Numerous parallel social, economic and political changes that we have been observing over the last years have given rise to diverse challenges to foreign language education and pedagogy. First, demographic changes such as an increase in longevity and a downturn in birth rates have led to an increase in the percentage of the population aged 65 and above. In the meantime, the idea of life-long learning has been gaining popularity, all these factors altogether resulting in a growing interest in education, including foreign language education, at an older age. What is more, the recent years are linked to considerable advances in brain research. Consequently, our knowledge of what happens in the learning brain has never been greater than it is now. Today, brain research findings are used to draw conclusions for education, including foreign language teaching and learning. Last but not least, we have been observing the evolution of the communicative methods into the task-based approach to foreign language teaching and learning. Bearing all these changes in mind, we can come to a conclusion that foreign language education is facing numerous new challenges which may lead to a change in how the existing theories of foreign language teaching and learning are viewed.

This paper aims primarily to offer a closer look at the nature of learning and its neurobiological conditions, as well as to briefly present older adults as foreign language learners. The discussion should revolve around the task-based approach and what it can possibly offer to older learners of foreign languages. This will be followed by the presentation of a research project focusing on older learners and the emotional dimension in a language class.

2. The neurobiology of learning

The recent advances in neurobiological research have led to an exponential growth in the understanding of the most sophisticated and still mysterious structure of the human body: the brain. Technological progress has supplied researchers with tools such as imaging techniques, which allow for creating visual representations of the brain structure and its functions during information processing. The possibility of *spying* on our most valuable organ, which used to be virtually out of researchers' reach, provides us today with an even clearer picture of what occurs in the learning brain.

Thus, it shall come as no surprise that research in the neurosciences evokes the interest of educators, who seek to draw implications for the teaching-learning process and generate standards of brain-compatible and thus effective teaching. Some might argue that what results from neurobiological research findings is no different from our *common sense* and was already under debate since the 18th century.[1] Attempts to create educational theories labelled with relatively newly coined phrases such as *brain-based* or *brain-compatible* could, therefore, be seen as reinventing the wheel. As a matter of fact, the role of emotional arousal of the learner or the importance of practice and active implementation of new knowledge, just to name a few examples, have long pertained to the main tenets of pedagogical theories. What clearly signals the progress, however, is that neurobiological research findings enable educationalists and learners to understand what the learning process consists in and what its prerequisite is. Or, to put it in a different way: *why is effective what a good teacher does and why is ineffective what a bad teacher does*.[2] The increased awareness of the neurobiological foundations of learning may empower both sides of the teaching-learning process to mould the learning context actively and optimise the process of teaching and learning.

Because a complete presentation of the overall up-to-date neurobiological research is beyond the scope of this chapter, the aim is to focus on the most relevant aspects of the learning process, i.e. those which enable us to understand what the prerequisite of learning is and which are of particular importance for this research.

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[1] Ulrich Herrmann, "Neurodidaktik – neue Wege des Lehrens und Lerners." In *Neurodidaktik. Grundlagen für gehirngerechtes Lehren und Lernen*, edited by Ulrich Herrmann (Weinham & Basel: Beltz Verlag, 2009), 10.

[2] Gerhard Roth, "Warum sind Lehren und Lernen so schwierig?" In *Neurodidaktik. Grundlagen für gehirngerechtes Lehren und Lernen*, edited by Ulrich Herrmann (Weinham & Basel: Beltz Verlag, 2009), 58.

From the neurobiological perspective, learning can be seen as an individual and highly dynamic process that leaves its mark on the neural network in the cortex, the outer, highly developed brain layer composed of 19-23 billion neurons.[3] On the neural level, learning translates into restructuring the unique neural network of an individual and creating new connections between groups of neurons, which serve as the mental representation of the uniquely organised knowledge of an individual. Born into the world, an average human being is already equipped with as much as 100 billion neurons. This is approximately 80 million more than an average adult has at their disposal. What matters, however, is not the number of neurons, but the quality and complexity of neural connections, which allow for the transmission of sensory (external) information between neurons.[4] According to Friedrich, the human brain can be compared to a construction site where work never ceases: pieces of information are constantly transported and processed in order to be used as building blocks for establishing new connections, which translates into constructing new knowledge. Let us go further and compare an average child's neural structure to a mere germ of the buildings of structured knowledge to come. The more often a connection is used, the greater its strength and capacity, as well as the more likely it is to develop into more complex structures. Accordingly, unused neural connections gradually disappear just like unused muscles or paths that grow wild. The innate, genetically programmed ability of the brain to create new and dispose of unnecessary neural connections is known as *neuroplasticity*.

Brain researchers emphasise that neuroplasticity as the brain's response to the individual experience of the external world enables all learners, irrespective of their background and age, to learn throughout their whole lives. Just like the heart, the stomach and other organs, the brain fulfils its own main natural function. As aptly summarised by Renate N. Caine and Geoffrey Caine, "the brain learns because it is its job" and it is equipped with innate and infinite ability to do so.[5] Consequently, each human brain is programmed to function as a powerful data processor and knowledge constructor fuelled by curiosity, a drive with which each human being comes to the world.

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[3] Marion Grein, *Neurodidaktik. Grundlagen für Sprachlehrende* (München: Hueber Verlag, 2013), 8.

[4] Gerhard Friedrich, "Neurodidaktik – eine neue Didaktik? Zwei Praxisbereiche aus methodisch-didaktischem Neuland." In *Neurodidaktik. Grundlagen für gehirngerechtes Lehren und Lernen*, edited by Ulrich Herrmann (Weinham & Basel: Beltz Verlag, 2009), 272-285.

[5] Renate N. Caine and Geoffrey Caine, *Making Connections. Teaching and the Human Brain* (Boston: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1994), 3.

This brief consideration of the immense potential of the human brain leads us inevitably to the question of why people have to struggle so often to learn new content. One reason which seems to be plausible is that a lot of learners and teachers have not yet had a chance to understand what learning consists in and what the cognitive potential of the brain rests upon. According to Roth, the teaching-learning process should not be seen as the mere processing and memorising of the information offered by the teacher. It needs to be underlined that it is impossible for any teacher to simply transfer a piece of knowledge and place it in the brain of the student.[6] Emphasis shall be laid upon the fact that each individual creates their own knowledge from their individual experience of the world; hence, each and every one will select what is valuable for them and learn it in their own unique way.

Therefore, let us now briefly discuss what stages a new piece of information has to go through before it can be internalised and included into the neural structure and long-term memory. First and foremost, it shall be stressed that the human brain is a truly autonomous information processor and knowledge constructor; neither the teacher nor the learner can impose any rules on the way it functions.[7] Second, the brain is truly economical and does not intend to waste its valuable resources on learning worthless content, which hints at why we simply cannot learn everything at once. Which information or stimuli from the external world will be processed by the brain depends first on whether they attract our attention. If the stimulus is noticed and evaluated as intriguing, challenging what we have learned so far or valuable to us because of certain personal reasons, it is classified as meaningful and processed further. The evaluation process is conducted by the hippocampus, a structure in the limbic system which serves as a filter that compares a multitude of stimuli from our ultra-short-term memory with the prior knowledge of the individual so as to accept the (subjectively) valuable stimuli only. This is why what we know influences what and how we will learn. Should there be no specific prior knowledge and no meaningful context for certain content, the construction of new knowledge will not take place. If the stimulus passes the test, our brain releases neurotransmitters, i.e. chemical substances that facilitate the transmission of stimuli between neurons (specifically, between their ends, known as synapses). If the stimulus is recurrent and transferred repeatedly, new neural connections and groups of neurons, created as a consequence, become increasingly consolidated and can finally be integrated into the long-term memory, which supports the role of repetition in learning. For instance, a vocabulary unit needs to be repeated 80 times on average to be integrated into the long-term memory.[8] What is also important in this respect is the depth of information processing. Neurobiological research shows that the brain learns according to the “specific-to-general” principle. This means that the brain was created to observe examples and independently formulate hypothetical rules, which are subsequently confronted with new stimuli. The reversed process, whereby learners are offered ready rules by the teacher, goes against the way the brain functions and is, therefore, much less effective and usually discourages learners’ curiosity and creativity.[9]

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[6] Manfred Spitzer, *Lernen. Gehirnforschung und die Schule des Lebens.* (Heidelberg: Spektrum Akademischer Verlag, 2006); Gerhard Roth, “Warum sind Lehren und Lernen so schwierig?” In *Neurodidaktik. Grundlagen für gehirngerechtes Lehren und Lernen*, edited by Ulrich Herrmann (Weinham & Basel: Beltz Verlag, 2009), 58-68.

[7] Margret Arnold, “Brain-based Learning and Teaching – Prinzipien und Elemente.” In *Neurodidaktik. Grundlagen für gehirngerechtes Lehren und Lernen*, edited by Ulrich Herrmann (Weinham & Basel: Beltz Verlag, 2009), 184.

What needs to be underlined is that the limbic system must be emotionally activated for information processing to take place. Emotions constitute the central part of the learning process. As mentioned, the hippocampus assesses the value of stimuli from the surrounding world; the ones which are processed lead to the release of neurotransmitters. These chemical substances may have either inhibitory or excitatory effect. Each individual learns in a different way and requires a specific mixture of neurotransmitters to maintain the chemicals balanced. The number and ratio of neurotransmitters determine the way we feel (e.g. if we are stressed and scared or if we are joyful and excited), as well as our cognitive performance.[10] According to Renate N. Caine and Geoffrey Caine, the desired emotional state enabling complex learning is relaxed alertness. The state is associated with learning contexts when the threat experienced by the learner is low and the task is highly challenging.[11] Excessive stress, referred to as *distress*, in turn, inhibits learning. The greatest stressors in classrooms usually include time pressure, sensory overload or pressure to perform. As if it was not challenging enough for the teacher, it should also be borne in mind that each learner has their own vulnerability to stress-related neurotransmitters. To conclude, what becomes a stressor and what evokes relaxed alertness is a highly individual matter as each of us is a different neurobiological construct.[12]

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[8] Marion Grein, *Neurodidaktik. Grundlagen für Sprachlehrende* (München: Hueber Verlag, 2013), 17.

[9] Manfred Spitzer, *Lernen. Gehirnforschung und die Schule des Lebens* (Heidelberg: Spektrum Akademischer Verlag, 2006), 68.

[10] Marion Grein, *Neurodidaktik. Grundlagen für Sprachlehrende* (München: Hueber Verlag, 2013), 23.

[11] Renate N. Caine and Geoffrey Caine, *Making Connections. Teaching and the Human Brain* (Boston: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1994).

Taking everything into account, we shall now try to look at the role of the teacher. As Roth points out, the factor which to a large extent influences the assessment of the content (as valuable or invaluable) is the way it is presented by the teacher and the teacher's attitude to teaching the content. Each student subconsciously decides if they find the teacher motivated and trustworthy as a presenter of new information. Thus, the teacher can either *infect* their students with the willingness to make an effort to concentrate their attention or, often unintentionally, signal that he or she finds the topic dull, and, consequently, discourage the learners from taking up any activity.[13] It seems justified to claim that the teacher should also be aware of the heterogeneity of each class since every human being is unique. Every single learner has different life experiences and prior knowledge and perceives the world and learns in an individual, absolutely unique way. The most important conclusion is, however, that the teacher should be aware of neurobiological mechanisms of learning. The human brain is in constant search for meaningful experiences, looks for patterns, performs analyses, inexhaustibly creates hypotheses, checks and tests them. These capabilities should be taken into account when one is trying to create brain-compatible learning conditions, which should enable students to experience relaxed alertness, immerse into increasingly complex experiences, process information actively, analyse examples provided by the teacher and try to create and test rules autonomously.

3. Geragogy and its neurobiological foundations

Intensive demographic changes that we have been observing over the last decades have already left their imprint on the age structure of the European population. As a consequence of the continuous growth in the life expectancy and a decline in birth rates observed over past decades, the European continent has been "turning increasingly grey".[14] In 2013, the share of people aged 65 years old and above in Europe reached an unprecedented value of 18.4%. If we add to the equation projections of a sustainable rise in longevity and the rate of fertility still remaining below the natural replacement rate, population ageing seems not only to be irreversible in the foreseeable future, but also to gain momentum over the decades to come. The 2015 Ageing Report by the European Commission shed more light on the ageing of European populations and to what extent the demographic landscape of Europe is projected to change by the half of the 21st century. If we consider the fact that the number of older aged people will have reached 28.4% by 2060, we can claim that our continent continues to grow old and has already very much transformed.

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[12] Margret Arnold, "Brain-based Learning and Teaching – Prinzipien und Elemente." In *Neurodidaktik. Grundlagen für gehirngerechtes Lehren und Lernen*, edited by Ulrich Herrmann (Weinham & Basel: Beltz Verlag, 2009), 182-195.

[13] Gerhard Roth, "Warum sind Lehren und Lernen so schwierig?" In *Neurodidaktik. Grundlagen für gehirngerechtes Lehren und Lernen*, edited by Ulrich Herrmann (Weinham & Basel: Beltz Verlag, 2009), 62.

Taking the demographic changes into account, as well as the challenges they are accompanied by, it goes without saying that the issue of ageing population was bound to draw more attention to the elderly, ageing and what being old-aged means in everyday life. The development of gerontology and a raising awareness of a multifaceted (biological, psychological, cognitive, social, etc.) nature of ageing has led to a change in the perception of older adults and helped fight against the stigma associated with old age. Ageing appears to be no longer a taboo subject; debates on older adults' needs are increasingly gaining ground, becoming a substantial part of policy-making at the European and national levels. This can be exemplified by multiple strategies for active ageing, where the elderly are no longer considered as a social burden, but as valuable members of society instead.

According to gerontologists, it is the activity of the elderly that shall be considered as a means for successful ageing. The concept is defined as a balance between the lost (e.g. professional, family-related) roles and new social roles and activities. This balance manifests itself in turn as physical, mental and social well-being at an older age.[15] In this respect, life-long learning has come to the fore as a means for approaching successful ageing. As Adam Zych points out, ageing process is a set of changes at the biological, psychological and social level. Acting synergistically, they gradually lead to the violation of biological and psychological balance.[16] It is widely claimed that education at an old age cushions one from the effects of multiple ageing aspects. Not only can education provide the elderly with a training of the mind and help maintain cognitive functions, but it also facilitates social participation and prevents solitude, so typical of the later stage of life. What is more, education has a therapeutic effect from the psychological point of view: since it provides older adult learners with opportunities for testing and using their abilities as well as developing new skills, it can (re)create a context of achievement, experiencing satisfaction with their performance, a sense of empowerment and further development. Last but not least, educational events serve as a platform for intra- and intergenerational guidance, support in everyday issues, as well as the promotion of activity and healthy lifestyle. Providing diverse activity and substitutions for lost roles and possibilities, education thus helps older adults find balance and improve the quality of their lives.[17]

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[14] European Commission, *The 2015 Ageing Report. Economic and Budgetary projections for the 28 EU Member States (2013-2060).* Luxembourg: Publication Office of the European Union, http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/, 2015.

[15] Barbara Szatur-Jaworska, Piotr Błędowski and Małgorzata Dzięgielewska, *Podstawy gerontologii społecznej* (Warszawa: Aspra, 2012).

The growing interest in education at an older age has been parallel to the development of geragogy, a discipline that has its roots in pedagogy, and which argues that older adults have distinctive characteristics, specific needs and conditions for learning, which in turn shall justify the need for a separate educational theory. Educating and stimulating older adults, geragogy aims at meeting their age-related needs and expectations.

What seems to be of particular importance in this respect is that geragogy provides a new view on the educational potential of older adults. It was not until recently that old age ceased to be attributed merely to losses, deficits and deterioration, particularly in relation to the fitness of body and mind. Obviously, to some extent ageing does have adverse effects on the brain, psyche and body, which simply cannot facilitate learning: an increased rate of death of brain cells and the atrophy of the nervous system, weaker short-term memory performance, lower ability to multitask, particular vulnerability to stress or impeded sensory perception are just some of these effects.[18] It shall be emphasised, however, that ageing may in some aspects put older learners at an advantage over younger ones. Such aspects include above all strong intrinsic motivation to participate in class as a social and enriching experience, willingness to enter interactions, cooperate and share their experiences, greater knowledge collected over the course of life as a solid basis that can still be used to build on, reliable, ready-to-use strategies for problem solving, as well as increased amount of time to spend on education. Having collected various experiences and being exposed to a manifold problem and educational situations over the course of life, older adults tend to be experts on learning thanks to the awareness of their own characteristics (strengths and weaknesses) and a multitude of life experiences they could draw conclusions from.[19] This provides an indication of older learners' potential to learn in spite of age-related difficulties.

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[16] Adam A. Zych, *Słownik gerontologii społecznej* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Akademickie Żak, 2001).

[17] Barbara Szatur-Jaworska, Piotr Błędowski and Małgorzata Dzięgielewska, *Podstawy gerontologii społecznej* (Warszawa: Aspra, 2012).

[18] Anna Jaroszewska, *Nauczanie języków obcych seniorów w Polsce. Analiza potrzeb i możliwości w aspekcie* międzykulturowym (Kraków: Impuls, 2013);
Marion Grein, *Neurodidaktik. Grundlagen für Sprachlehrende* (München: Hueber Verlag, 2013).

Trying to obtain the comprehensive picture of older learner characteristics, geragogy draws also on numerous other disciplines such as medicine, psychology or sociology. The field which has shed more light on purely cognitive features and the way they are affected by ageing is neurobiology, which has apparently become one of the pillars of geragogy. As already stated above, older adults are characterised by numerous features which compensate for weaknesses resulting from an old age and which facilitate learning. It was not until recently, however, that the purely cognitive potential of older adults ceased to be underrated and neglected. In the light of the neurobiological research findings, neuroplasticity does not entirely vanish with age. Even older learning brains still possess the biological capacity to reshape the neural structure according to their new experiences. What is more, the question of whether ageing processes wreak havoc in the human brain depends very much on the individual, the quality of their life (e.g. lifestyle, health condition, psychological and social wellness) and their everyday experiences. An older adult with rich educational biography will differ in terms of neural structure and educational potential from an older person who did not have so many opportunities to learn over the course of life. The physical and the psychological condition of an individual also affect the power of their brain.

Bearing the above-mentioned considerations in mind, we can come to the conclusion that the primary task of the teacher is to be aware of specific characteristics of the older learner and to understand what their educational potential rests upon. Educating should be based on older adults' strengths to help them overcome the age-related difficulties and enable them to realise their potential. Berndt suggests implementing the model of "selective optimisation with compensation" proposed by Paul B. Baltes and Margret M. Baltes[20], according to whom ageing is to be understood as the process of channelling and increasing individualisation. Every ageing individual has to come to terms with declining performance in specific areas. This downturn is, however, accompanied by growing specialisation and rising performance in other fields, which results from specific life-long experiences of each older person. The teacher should be aware of these experiences in order to be able to build on older learners' strengths.[21]

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[19] Annette Berndt, *Sprachenlernen im Alter. Eine empirische Studie zur Fremdsprachengeragogik* (München: Iudicium Verlag, 2003), 138.

Two pieces of research conducted by Annette Berndt[22] and Anna Jaroszewska[23] studied the characteristics of older foreign language learners at selected Universities of the Third Age and focused mainly on motivations, language biographies, difficulties in language learning, social and emotional factors, as well as expectations people had of the language course. Questionnaires, diaries and interviews provided us with more information on older learners' needs and expectations participants had of language classes and the teacher's attitude and teaching methods. The main conclusions which offer a novelty value in regard to what has been discussed so far prove that older learners have strong motivation to attend classes, which is associated with their explicitly expressed wish for a personal, enriching experience in a positive atmosphere based on mutual trust. The results suggest that older learners want to participate in a social event, making it a part of their weekly routine, both to prevent themselves from cognitive stagnation, but also to pursue their new passions they did not have a chance to try earlier in their life. The teacher is expected to be the guide and motivator for the older adults, as well as someone who can demonstrate their empathy and understanding for age-related difficulties, patience and be supportive in the older learners' striving for development.

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[20] Paul B. Baltes, and Margret M. Baltes, "Optimierung durch Selektion und Kompensation," *Zeitschrift für Pädagogik* 35, (1989).

[21] Annette Berndt, *Sprachenlernen im Alter. Eine empirische Studie zur Fremdsprachengeragogik* (München: Iudicium Verlag, 2003), 121.

[22] Annette Berndt, *Sprachenlernen im Alter. Eine empirische Studie zur Fremdsprachengeragogik* (München: Iudicium Verlag, 2003).

[23] Anna Jaroszewska, *Nauczanie języków obcych seniorów w Polsce. Analiza potrzeb i możliwości w aspekcie międzykulturowym* (Kraków: Impuls, 2013).

4. A task-based approach to teaching older adults?

The task-based approach as a still relatively innovative methodological concept of teaching foreign languages has its roots in the communicative approach and is often presented as the next stage in the evolution of communicative methods.[24] Despite the fact that both approaches basically share the same theoretical foundations, they differ as to how they are put into practice in the context of language teaching. From this point of view, it is justified to say that this evolution let the new approach take a big step from *topics* to *tasks*.

Tasks have long been used to describe language activities of various kinds: from grammar exercises to role plays. In the task-based approach, however, tasks are always defined as activities where the learner uses the target language for a communicative purpose in order to achieve an outcome.[25] The aim of the task is to provide the learner with an authentic context and a real purpose for using the target language. The task reflects a change in understanding communication. In the communicative approach, the purpose of communication is to obtain and give information, while in the task-based approach it is the only means for achieving an outcome through the autonomous activity of the learner.

From the perspective of what has been said on learning from the neurobiological perspective, it seems to be justified to claim that the task-based approach supports brain-compatible teaching and learning. When tasks are performed, numerous preconditions for creating new neural connections in the brain are fulfilled. First and foremost, learning is based here on the activity of the learner, who has a decisive impact on the content that will be learned. Performing tasks allows learners to gradually immerse into a complex experience and to learn implicitly – being actively involved in a task, the brain looks for patterns and creates hypotheses, which are then tested in practice. Each learner is also provided with a perfect opportunity to construct knowledge according to their brain's own principles. What is more, the structure of a typical task-based unit, composed of the pre-task, task and post-task phases, encourages teachers to activate learners' prior knowledge first in the pre-task stage, this knowledge functioning as a kind of scaffolding for learners' performance.[26] The activation of prior knowledge is a prerequisite for finding a piece of information meaningful and consequently for learning. In particular in the case of problematic tasks, learners are faced with challenging situations that give rise to a cognitive dissonance, which fosters the brain's search for new meanings and knowledge accommodation. The structure of the task-based unit and performing tasks oriented at a specific goal support selective attention of learners, too. Focus placed on selected contents leads to higher activation of those brain areas where similar contents are represented. Consequently, more brain resources are involved in processing the stimuli to which we pay attention. Moreover, the fact that the task-based approach is oriented at completing specific tasks with a defined and measurable goal increases learners' motivation. A similar effect is warranted by group activities and interaction with other people, which entails higher emotional involvement of the learner. It can be predicted that such conditions of learning often encourage relaxed alertness, which is, as it has already been discussed, the optimal emotional state for the human brain to learn.

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[24] Iwona Janowska, *Podejście zadaniowe do nauczania i uczenia się języków obcych. Na przykładzie języka polskiego jako obcego* (Kraków: Universitas, 2011).

[25] Jane Willis, *A Framework for Task-Based Learning* (Harlow: Addison Wesley Longman Limited, 1996), 23.

[26] Rod Ellis, *Task-based Language Learning and Teaching* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

These considerations shall lead us to the question of whether the task-based approach can offer so many benefits for older learners, too. Having discussed how significant prior knowledge, social interactions, experience sharing and active use of language are for older learners, we rather lean towards the positive answer, at least in regard to these aspects of foreign language class. The task-based approach seems to prepare older learners for the task phase through a progression in difficulty, which should prevent them from sensory overload and excessive stress. The opportunity to interact and help each other seems to particularly meet the needs of older learners in this respect. Engaging in interactions also seems to cater for heterogeneity in class since each individual may have the opportunity to find their own niche and use their specific skills to help the group complete the task.

5. Research project: Task-based and communicative approaches to teaching foreign languages to older adults. Role of emotions in class

Neurobiological research findings prove that emotions constitute an indispensable condition for learning. Emotions are associated with hippocampal activation and the release of neurotransmitters, which foster information processing. It has also been claimed that positive emotions associated with a relatively low threat and high challenges (*relaxed alertness*) constitute ideal conditions for the brain to learn.

The two already mentioned pieces of research by Annette Berndt and by Anna Jaroszewska have indicated that positive emotions in class not only create favourable conditions for learning, but also belong to older adults' expectations of the course atmosphere and the attitude of the teacher.[27] Studying motivations of the elderly to participate in foreign language classes at an old age, both Annette Berndt and Anna Jaroszewska found out that the elderly make their wish for a social and cognitive experience in a positive atmosphere known explicitly. Taking everything into account, positive emotions in class appear to be not only a means for optimised learning, but also a goal itself.

These considerations inspired the idea of research which will be entirely devoted to older learners and the emotional dimension in language classes at a University of the Third Age.

The main objective of the research planned is to compare the communicative approach and the task-based approaches with special attention given to emotions experienced by older learners in classes based on the approaches in question. The research will aim to find answers to the following questions:

- Which approach is more likely to facilitate relaxed alertness and emotional arousal in class?
- Which approach has a more positive effect on older adults' motivation to learn?
- Which approach is generally preferred by older learners?

The research methodology is based on the fact that human heart responds not only to changes in physical activity, but also to slight changes in emotional arousal.[28] The idea was inspired by the study conducted by researchers in Freiburg who devised their own methodological procedure referred to as the Freiburg Monitoring System (FMS). The methodology is based on the use of electrocardiogram as an indicator of changes in the human heart rate. The innovative aspect of the research consists in the possibility of calculating changes in heart rate (HR) resulting from alterations in emotional arousal only. The researchers applied an equation according to which the overall heart rate is a sum of the heart rate induced by physical activity and the heart rate induced by emotional arousal (the latter referred to as AHR – additional heart rate). Thanks to the possibility of using accelerometers to measure physical activity and ECG to obtain online changes in HR, the researchers could observe AHR changes in the subjects.

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[27] Annette Berndt, *Sprachenlernen im Alter. Eine empirische Studie zur Fremdsprachengeragogik* (München: Iudicium Verlag, 2003); Anna Jaroszewska, *Nauczanie języków obcych seniorów w Polsce. Analiza potrzeb i możliwości w aspekcie międzykulturowym* (Kraków: Impuls, 2013).

[28] Michael Myrtek, *Heart and Emotion. Ambulatory Monitoring Studies in Everyday Life* (Göttingen: Hogrefe & Huber, 2004); Simone N. Löffler and Martin Peper, *Emotionen, Lernen und Gedächtnis im Lebensalltag. Interaktives psychophysiologisches Monitoring in Labor und Feld* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2010).

The research planned will refer to the theoretical assumptions of the FMS and will be based on the triangulation of research methods:

- Quantitative component: questionnaires aimed at finding out data on learners' language biography, expectations and motivations;
- Qualitative component: interviews that will investigate the subjects' opinions on the classes conducted, the methods adopted by teachers, as well as emotions experienced in class;
- Didactic experiment: ECG tests conducted online (in class) on the experimental (*task-based classes*) and the control group (*communicative classes*) aiming to observe AHR and its changes over the course of the class.

The research project is planned to consist of the following stages:

- designing series of classes in the communicative and the task-based approach for two groups of older learners respectively. Each group should be composed of subjects at the same language level;
- questionnaires;
- non-participant observation of classes conducted by teachers with the experience in the respective teaching approach; simultaneous online measurement of physiological reactions of the human heart by means of electrocardiogram during entire 60-minute classes;
- analysis of the data collected through ECG tests;
- interviews with representatives of the two research groups;
- analysis of the global data.

As for the equipment needed at the experimental stage, every subject will be provided with a small ambulatory electrocardiography devices (Holter monitors) so that online measurement of all subjects will be possible online in class. The monitors should be as small as possible so as not to distract the attention of the older adults. Since measurement will be taken in the series of 60-minute classes, the habituation effect towards the equipment is expected. The data will be collected and analysed with the assistance of the Department of Individual Differences, Faculty of Psychology, University of Warsaw, who are partners in the project.

The abovementioned measures will be used to verify the following research hypotheses:

- Despite the high level of heterogeneity in the group, the task-based approach is more likely to facilitate the state of relaxed alertness in the subjects than the communicative approach is.
- The task-based approach strengthens the subjects' motivation to learn more than the communicative approach does, thanks to higher involvement, social actions and clearly defined goals of the task to complete.
- The majority of the subjects will prefer the task-based approach as it satisfies considerably more of their age-related needs than the communicative approach does.

Since the nearest months will be devoted to the organisation and performance of a pilot study, the research plan presented will undergo a thorough review before its implementation. Over the course of the project, the author will be supported by her affiliation unit, the Department of Glottodidactics (Institute of Applied Linguistics, University of Warsaw) represented by Professor Przemysław E. Gębal. The project will be conducted in parallel to a similar piece of research by Sławomira Kołsut (MA), which focuses on the social and emotional aspects of the task-based and the communicative approach to teaching adolescents.

7. Conclusions

Recent decades have seen an enormous progress in brain research, which has already delivered a lot of information on prerequisites and conditions of learning. Even though there are still numerous uncertainties and questions concerning what happens in the learning brain, the research findings which are already at our disposal enable educationalists to draw conclusions and formulate hypotheses concerning the nature of learning and how the teaching-learning process can be optimised.

The discussion on the neurobiological view on learning and possible ways of implementing conclusions from brain research findings in the teaching-learning process has been parallel to far-reaching demographic changes which result in the so-called ageing societies. Since the percentage of older adults has substantially increased and the trend continues, more attention is now paid to the nature of ageing and the needs of older adults. Their essential needs include further development, cognitive activity and social contacts, all of which can be addressed by proper education opportunities, which now receive more attention form older people than ever before. Education, including language education, seems to give them a sense of purpose and participation, as well as to stimulate their activity, which has a positive impact on their life quality.

With this context in mind, a new view on the language education for older adults is needed. Neurobiological findings, upon which geragogy is based, prove that life-long learning is possible and desirable. The primary task of language educationalists who work with the elderly seems to be to become aware of neurobiological conditions of learning, of the needs and motivations of older people to learn, but also of age-related cognitive limitations and potential. It should also be stressed that the teacher has great responsibility for maintaining a high level of motivation and curiosity that older learners usually demonstrate at the beginning of a language course. Taking everything into account, teachers should seek opportunities to make use of older adults' strengths, such as rich experiences and vast prior knowledge, to surmount possible difficulties inevitable in the ageing process.

The research presented in this paper aims to compare two approaches to foreign language teaching, including the communicative approach, which is still widely adopted today, and the task-based approach, which seems to fulfil numerous conditions of brain-compatible language education, including an increased use of learners' prior knowledge and their individual strengths, emotional involvement in completing tasks and promoting higher autonomy in ways of learning and selecting content to be learned. One of the key questions in this respect is if the task-based approach will, in fact, provide for the needs and expectations of older learners and if older adults can possibly benefit from one of the approaches more than from the other.

In general, both this paper and the research project aim to support the idea of life-long learning and to strive for optimising the teaching-learning process, especially in language education for older adults.

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CHAPTER THREE

TASK-BASED APPROACH TO FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION: A NEUROBIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

SŁAWOMIRA KOŁSUT

1. Introduction

The task-bask approach, which is also referred to as “cooperative learning method”, “learning through activity” or “learning through experience”, has its roots in the communicative approach and it incorporates its basic theoretical principles. However, the task-based approach assumes a completely different form when it is implemented. Communication in the communicative approach is oriented towards obtaining and giving information, while communication in the task-based approach serves only to achieve a specific purpose through activity, e.g. prepare the learner to integrate with a community.[1] The task-based approach to foreign language teaching is often understood as a concept of language education, whose basic component is a task. From the perspective of the author of this paper, it is not only a concept, but also a philosophy of language education because the task-based approach is not limited to the development of language and communication skills, but also involves the development of social, personal, methodical and emotional skills. The factor which is deciding here is not role-play or language simulation, as it is the case in the communicative approach, but the construction of knowledge through cooperation between learners, all of whom contribute to the final result. The task-based classes provide learners with opportunities to experiment with both the spoken and written language, which is in line with the nature of the language, as well as it offers enormous potential and a large number of possibilities. These opportunities become visible when students are doing tasks oriented to authentic situations and practical language usage in accordance with their skills. Learning process occurs when the learner is involved in certain activities, and this is the case in the task-based classes. The activity of the student and his seizing the initiative belong to the most important elements of the task-based approach, which refers to the "learning by doing" process. When we watch these types of classes, we can quickly observe that their characteristic and striking feature is an increased activity of learners and a certain limitation of the activity of the teacher, who performs a very important, but still the secondary role. It is the learner who receives more attention and who is now in the centre of the teaching-learning process, not only in regard to their interests, but also to their cognitive and physical activity.

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[1] Iwona Janowska, *Podejście zadaniowe do nauczania i uczenia się języków obcych. Na przykładzie języka polskiego jako obcego* (Kraków: Universitas, 2010).

2. Constructivist assumptions of the task-based approach

The task-based approach is based on the tenets of constructivism, according to which there is no objective knowledge which could be transferred to another person. Cognition is not only a representation of the external reality and learning does not consist in passive acquisition and reproduction of the acquired content, as it was presented in the behavioural and cognitive theories.[2] Cognition is a process of assigning a meaning to an experience[3].The reality is a construction created by the human brain; therefore, it is a subjective creation. Ernst von Glasersfeld, who is viewed as the creator of radical constructivism, claimed that cognition and knowledge are not the mere expression of a passive reception, but also a result of an action of the subject.[4] Each subject lives in their own reality and creates their own construction of this world. An individual is assigned a substantial role as an *autopoietic*, i.e. a self-organizing unit. This means that an individual is a system that does not take over any elements of the reality; an individual shapes and constructs itself by itself. Every human being constructs their own reality through an active process of learning, which shall not be understood as a transfer of the content from the outside to the inside. Gofron claims that there is no "objective" knowledge, which exists beyond the individual. Just the opposite, knowledge always belongs to someone.[5] The knowledge acquisition is the result of an activity, which is inextricably linked to an experience. An individual person constructs this knowledge and their whole life through experiences and by processing and considering these experiences. Each individual creates structures of knowledge in their mind, using the knowledge they already possess: the so-called prior knowledge. This is a continuous and active process based on a conflict between the model of the world the individual has created and the external information. Varela claimed that cognition of the reality does not only consist in processing information or creating representations of an objective world in the brain, but it is also inextricably linked with the life experience of the person, just like "a road that does not exist on its own, but which gains significance when it is walked along".[6] Knowledge never comes from the outside; it is always an internal, subjective construction connected with an individual experience. Consequently, cognition consists in organising the internal world of the experience of the subject and does not provide for a better identification of an objective reality. Each person perceives the world differently and creates their own world; which is why each person keeps creating new constructions in their consciousness. This is an endless process which reflects the idea of life-long learning.

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[2] Horst Siebert, *Konstruktivismus: Konsequenzen für Bildungsmanagement und Seminargestaltung* (Frankfurt am Main: DIE, 1998), 37.

[3] Stanisław Dylak, *Konstruktywizm jako obiecująca perspektywa kształcenia nauczycieli.*

[4] Ernst von Glasersfeld, "Aspekte einer konstruktivistischen Didaktik." In *Lehren und Lernen als konstruktive Tätigkeit, hrsg. Landesinstitut für Schule und Weiterbildung*. Soest, 1995, 30.

However, the interaction with other participants in the process is a deciding factor of how the learning process of a person will unfold and how he or she will perceive the surrounding reality. Thus, knowledge is a construct created by an individual, but it is also constructed socially and determined by the culture.

The principles of the task-based approach reflect Jean Piaget's views, who believed that the basic mechanism of human development is the activity of the person, which encourages them to seek for explanations and construct their knowledge independently. The learner constructs the knowledge in their mind through their subjective experiences and independent problem-solving. Learning occurs under the influence of experiences and when we are confronted with other views or a different standpoint.[7] This idea is present in the task-based approach, according to which frontal classes and transferring knowledge are out of place. In the task-based classes, learners do communicate with each other in order to be able to do a given language task autonomously. In order to complete the task, each member of the group should contribute to the final effect, which results from the confrontation between the learners. The effort the learners make to complete the task is based on their own individual experiences, which enriched them intellectually and emotionally. This is the reason why a cognitive conflict, which is included for example in problem tasks, is such an important element of the constructivist didactics. Knowledge is a construct of the human brain and an individual is not the recipient of information, but a constructor of his or her own knowledge.[8] An individual does not necessarily hear what someone else says, but what he or she expects and wants to hear, i.e. what suits his or her scheme. Therefore, the processes of listening and understanding are not processes of reproduction of what has been said, but an adaptation of the information to the recipient's scheme. An individual receives this piece of information that he or she can associate with the knowledge they have already acquired, i.e. the prior knowledge.[9] According to Piaget, the construction of knowledge in the mind is an active interplay of the learner and their surroundings and it is subject to continuous transformation. Each learner who contributes to completion of the task perceives a piece of information in a unique way. The learner creates their understanding of the given problem basing on their prior knowledge in the brain. Next, the learner confronts their view with the other learners' views. Consequently, a solution for the given task is created and it is partially based on the views of all the learners. What occurs in the brains of the learners is assimilation, i.e. a development of the existing structures of knowledge, as well as accommodation, i.e. a modification of the existing structures by confronting all the ideas. The knowledge which is being born in the mind of each learner is influenced by social interactions, because it is through controversies and polemics that one can develop their own understanding of the problem given. It is an ongoing process which is based on constant formulating and verifying hypotheses, as well as on a continuous search for solutions. The constructivist education emphasises the concept of activity and considers the learner as someone who strives for a multilateral development and not just for a unilateral knowledge acquisition[10].This concept is reflected in the process of performing language tasks.

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[5] Beata Gofron, "Konstruktywistyczne ujęcie procesu uczenia się," *Periodyk naukowy akademii polonijnej* 1 (2013), 159-173.

[6] Francisco Varela, *Kognitionswissenschaft – Kognitionstechnik*, (Frankfurt am Main: suhrkamp taschenbuch, 1990), 110.

[7] Dorota Klus-Stańska, *Dydaktyka wobec chaosu pojęć i zdarzeń* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Akademickie Żak, 2010).

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[8] Beata Gofron, "Konstruktywistyczne ujęcie procesu uczenia się", 160.

[9] Horst Siebert, *Konstruktivismus: Konsequenzen für Bildungsmanagement und Seminargestaltung*, 11.

[10] Kersten Reich, "Konstruktivistische Didaktik", *Schulmagazin* 3 bis 5 (2005).

The task-based approach reflects also the principles of Lev Vygotsky's sociocultural constructivism. In his view, learners are not spontaneous minds, which they are according to Piaget, but products of the socio-cultural process. Cognitive skills the individual develops as a result of the social interaction, which enables them to construct meanings. Thus, the external world and the social context in particular play a more important role than the individual experience of the subject does. Human development occurs on three levels: cultural, interpersonal and individual[11], and it can be understood only in relation to the environment people live in and cultural processes they are embedded in. It is the parents, teachers or the people who one encounters that determine the process of their development.

Performing language tasks requires continuous social interactions and confrontations with the other people in class. The tasks are performed in pairs or groups, where the learners have to engage in numerous team activities, but completing the task will always be due to the ideas all the learners. Thus, learning results from social interactions and not only from the ones that occur in the given pair or group, but also the ones within the whole class. This is because the effects of the completed tasks are presented to all the students, who compare, evaluate and reflect upon the presentations delivered by all the groups. It is not only the teacher who presents a higher intellectual level, but the whole class is a group of people who differ in this respect. The confrontation of presentations may show that some solutions were developed by highly intelligent students; their ideas may inspire the others and encourage higher goals and possibilities. The discussion between learners who are at different intellectual levels may also contribute to broadening their horizons. From this viewpoint, each learner is an author of their own development. A good teacher that adopts the task-based approach will be pursuing the model where teaching is followed by development, i.e. they will present long-term goals and opportunities by formulating tasks and drawing learners' attention to the multitude and variety of perspectives that may be adopted when students perform language tasks.

3. Neurobiological foundations of the task-based approach

While social constructivism makes an explicit reference to the social reality, neurobiological constructivism is connected with the processes of the brain activity and neurobiological research in general. Thanks to the development of the ground-breaking research methods of cognitive neurobiology, a great amount of new information on the processes occurring in the brain was collected, which influenced the development of humanities. Gerhard Roth developed a constructivist concept based on the findings of brain research. He claims that the conscious "Self" is not the constructor, i.e. subject of the learned reality, as it was declared by representatives of radical constructivism. Roth came to the conclusion that the subject of learning is the human brain; the conscious "Self" is its mere construct. Thus, perceiving and learning the world is determined by the structure of the brain and it is the brain that is the centre and constructor of the reality created by an individual. The brain produces data which is later implemented by the conscious "Self".[12]

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[11] Beata Gofron, “Konstruktywistyczne ujęcie procesu uczenia się”.

The brain processes only the content which is of importance from the perspective of biological and social survival and only this content makes its way to the consciousness. The brain is not interested in striving for the truth and objectivity; it is oriented to receiving information that will ensure the organism its physical survival and adaptation to the surrounding world. The areas responsible for consciousness constitute only a small proportion of the brain as opposed to the ones associated with unconsciousness. The main activity of the brain is oriented to thinking and the activities related to the brain areas which lie beyond consciousness.[13] The conscious "Self" strives for continuous learning and processing this information in consciousness, while the brain makes an effort to limit this process as it absorbs a lot of energy. As soon as the thinking process has reached consciousness and an appropriate neural network has been embedded into the brain, the brain does not need consciousness to be involved anymore and strives to turn it off. Activities which required attention and consciousness can be now performed unconsciously and automatically, leading to the creation of routines. This clash of interests between the brain and the conscious "Self" explains Roth's thesis saying that the brain is the constructor of the reality while the conscious "Self" is a mere virtual actor constructed by the brain.[14] Despite the fact that consciousness and unconsciousness are seen as separate systems, conscious experiences result from the correlation of both the systems, i.e. in relation to the activity of the other brain areas typical of the unconscious processing (limbic system, hippocampus). From the perspective of neurobiological constructivism, it is the unconscious processes in the brain that provide the basis for human thinking and activity. Knowledge acquisition depends on the factors which occur unconsciously and are hardly influenced by any external factors. According to Roth's theory, sensory experiences do not come from the sensory organs; they result from being processed in the brain. In the process of perceiving the world, sensory stimuli are received and subsequently transferred to the brain. Being selective, the brain functions according to its own specific criteria, which are partially inborn and partially acquired. Each organ has its own criteria. The consciousness level is reached only by the sort of information which is of relevance to the individual; only this information will be processed by the brain, too. What plays the deciding role in this respect is the hippocampus, which decides on which information will be acquired; this occurs according to the principle: new-interesting-important. The hippocampus functions independently, out of our will, weighs information, builds representations and transfers them to the cortex, where they are stored. Thus, the perception of the world is an outcome of the information processing, which occurs perpetually since the brain continuously encounters new pieces of information. Therefore, the brain cannot stop learning. The learner has to create knowledge in their brain, attaching the information to the prior knowledge, which is already there. The individual lives in a world which is a construction of their brain. The task-based approach embraces these ideas because learners are not given any knowledge by the teacher, but they discover it by themselves or in collaboration with other learners. Transferring knowledge by means of instruction and frontal class are here out of place. The learner is not a passive recipient of knowledge, but an active individual, who has to demonstrate both physical and mental activity in order to complete a task or a set of tasks. The learner has to activate their language resources and demonstrate social, methodical and personal skills in order to enter interactions with other learners and achieve the goal of the task.

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[12] Elisabeth Stachura, *Der neurobiologische Konstruktivismus* (PhD diss., University of Bremen, 2010).

[13] *Idem*.

[14] *Idem*.

Information processing in the brain occurs through neural connections, the so-called synapses, and the neuron is viewed as the basic element of information processing. Neurons connect with each other and create neural networks. Learning means activating the existing neural networks; the more often they are activated, the thicker they are. As a consequence, the piece of information which has been embedded there is also longer lasting. Learning leads to visible changes, referred to as representations, which take the form of neural maps in the cortex. This means that they are sorted in a particular way. Neural networks are created according to the principle of similarity and frequency. Similar and frequent signals are located next to each other. If a connection is used frequently, it develops gradually into patterns and whole structures, which may continue to develop or start to disappear unless they are used. The maps are subject to continuous reorganisation based on experiences of the individual. This phenomenon is referred to as brain neuroplasticity and consists in ongoing creation and elimination of connections between neurons. Rules and patterns are not acquired, they are generated from numerous and recurrent examples. Researchers have shown that neural networks first learn examples; the appropriate rule is deduced later on. The quality of connections in the neural network is increasing, which results from the recurring examples; it is thanks to them that the network gets to know the rule. The rule does not have to be introduced into the system for the brain to know it. The brain will generate it, based on examples[15]. Thus, learning occurs in the brain according to the principle: from the specific to the general, and this reflects the process of constructing the neural network. The opposite direction of the cycle consumes a lot of energy and is less effective. With regard to the task-based approach, learners do particular tasks, which are then translated into patterns and schemes. In the task-based classes, there is no presentation of fixed patterns followed by putting them into practice; the sequence is reversed. Learners use the language, search for optimal ways of communication and, finally, they draw conclusions and seek for rules.

According to neurobiological constructivists, every human being is also a social creature thanks to their biological predisposition. As Roth points out, the social nature of human beings results from their neurobiological conditions. It was due to inborn mechanisms of men which related them to other people that societies could develop[16]. Cooperation in a community is possible through emotions, and from the neurobiological point of view, through the systems responsible for joy and reward or anger and punishment.[17] These mechanisms lead to the cooperation of one human being with another, even though this always entails relinquishment and sharing, i.e. behaviours which are not inborn and which have to be learned.[18] Children do not have these mechanisms because of the relatively slow development of the orbitofrontal cortex, which is fully matured only in adults. According to Spitzer, the brain structures responsible for delayed gratification and cooperation develop as the last ones in view of the global development of the brain. Therefore, cooperation is on the one hand biologically determined, but on the other hand, it belongs to the most important achievements of the culture.[19] The benefits resulting from cooperation vastly exceed the benefits of living lonely, even though cooperation has to be learned, which always means concessions and giving up egocentric goals. A group may not be a team, but regular application of the task-based approach offers learners a chance to build it; consequently, working in a well-organised team offers such advantages as joint resources of skills, abilities, experiences and creative ideas, because skills and abilities of particular members add up. Each member of the team may be responsible for a chosen part of the task, the one they are keen on doing; therefore, the satisfaction of doing a particular activity increases. Teamwork may to a large extent fulfil the need of being appreciated and admired. Doing certain tasks together often strengthens the bond between learners and may even give rise to new friendships. Therefore, teamwork triggers positive emotions. If communication between team members is appropriate, they have a similar understanding of their cooperation, they experience new social relations, which are accompanied by favourable atmosphere, good communication and mutual trust. When learners perform a simple task, their work may be more efficient and effective, which gives them a reason to be happy about the achievement of the whole team. A well-organised team offers also the opportunity for performing creative tasks, which require more workload, thanks to the so-called synergistic effect of teamwork.[20] This means that joint forces of a team enable them to achieve a result which is better than the one resulting from the sum of individual results. This explains why people who work as one team can achieve more than separate members could. Such team cooperation may give the members a feeling of meaningfulness and value of the task performed. Doing tasks in pairs or groups, learners acquire social skills and are obliged to cooperate and produce the result of this work. In order to achieve the joint aim, they have to act in the spirit of solidarity and show tolerance for the co-participants in learning. Over time, they are able to demonstrate more empathy for their partners. They have to stick to the laid down rules, which should be obeyed, identify different attitudes and opinions of other participants and react to them appropriately. Such interactions and task-based situations may lead to conflicts; therefore, they offer good opportunities for handling conflicts, negotiating and settling disputes.[21] These factors not only influence personality development, but are also of significant importance for cooperation in a community. Learners should be offered such situations which empower them to initiate certain processes of learning, shape them, come into interactions, evaluate and reflect upon them. Such situations encourage learners to act consciously and think rationally.

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[15] Manfred Spitzer, *Jak uczy się mózg* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2008), 67.

[16] Gerhard Roth Roth, *Fühlen, Denken, Handeln. Wie das Gehirn unser Verhalten steuert*, (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2003), 555; Elisabeth Stachura, *Der neurobiologische Konstruktivismus*, 68.

[17] Manfred Spitzer, *Jak uczy się mózg*, 225.

[18] *Id. ibid.*

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[19] *Idem,* 216.

[20] Ricky W. Griffin*, Podstawy Zarządzania Organizacjami* (Warszawa: PWN, 2013).

According to Antonio Damásio, emotions are not an enemy of the mind.[22] Emotional involvement leads to better acquisition of content and we tend to memorise content better when it is gained in a positive emotional context. Canli et al. showed that the stimuli reinforced by emotions were memorised better than the neutral ones. After three weeks, they were also retrieved more adequately.[23] The research also confirms the premise that events accompanied by emotional load have a positive impact on the attention. This finding is of great importance for learning. The more positive the stimulus, the better memorizing.[24] Dolcos et al. showed in their research that the emotionally charged stimuli were retrieved after one year, which did not apply to the neutral ones. They also proved that the process of memorising is more effective when the learner expects a positive feedback. Another conclusion was that social learning, i.e. learning in a group, fosters memorising.[25] This shows that emotional states have an enormous influence on cognitive processes, and this is because the limbic system, the part of the brain which is responsible for memorising new information is also the place where emotions arise. The structure which is of particular importance for acquiring information is the hippocampus, which is considered as the organizer of new information and the centre of intermediate memory. The hippocampus decides on where and how the information will be stored. It is the hippocampus that decides on the spatial, time and semantic code of the information to be stored.[26] As the organizer of the declarative memory, it is directly connected with the isocortex, where the declarative long-term memory is situated. According to Roth, this kind of memory consists of *drawers* and *modules*. The hippocampus interacts with cortical and subcortical limbic centres, both of which are in charge of emotions and motivation. Because of these limbic connections, emotions not only influence the hippocampal activity with regard to storing information in the declarative memory, but also, reversely, emotions affect the hippocampal activity as far as perceiving and recalling emotions are concerned.[27] The way the brain is built is in favour of emotions rather than cognitive processes. This means that the neural connections between the emotional systems (the limbic system) and the cognitive ones (the cortex) are stronger than the ones that go in the opposite direction. This means that taking a decision is preceded by an emotional verification. Emotional states are followed by cognitive ones; consequently, the emotional part of the brain has a higher impact on our behaviour that the rational part does. Emotions have thus a tremendous influence on the process of information memorising and processing.[28] Fear does not facilitate learning, it even impedes creative processes. It may lead to faster learning, but, in general, it does not foster cognitive processes and it does stop connecting the memorised information with the new content and implementing this content in real situations and examples. Chronic stress damages the hippocampus and leads to death of its cells, which considerably impedes learning and memorising.[29]

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[21] Gabriele Lehmann and Nieke Wolfgang, *Zum Kompetenz-Modell* (2000) http://sinus- transfer.uni-bayreuth.de/module/modul_10pruefen_von_kompetenzzuwachs/kompetenzmodell.html

[22] Antonio R. Damasio, *Ich fühle, also bin ich. Die Entschlüsselung des Bewusstseins* (München: Ullstein, 2002).

[23] Turhan Canli, J. E. Desmond, Z. Zhao, and J. D. E. Gabrieli, "Sex Differences in the Neutral Basis of Emotional Memories," *Neurobiology* 99, no. 16 (2002); Marion Grein, *Neurodidaktik. Grundlagen für Sprachlehrende* (Ismaning: Hueber Verlag, 2013), 72.

[24] Tobias Sommer, J. Gläscher, S. Moritz, and C. Büchel, "Emotional Enhancement Effect of Memory: Removing the influence of cognitive factors," *Learning & Memory* 15 (2008); Marion Grein, *Neurodidaktik. Grundlagen für Sprachlehrende* (Ismaning: Hueber Verlag, 2013), 72.

[25] Florin Dolcos, E. Denkova and S. Dolcos, "Neural Correlates of Emotional Memories: A review of evidence from brain imaging studies," *Psychologia* 55, (2012), 80-111; Marion Grein, *Neurodidaktik*, 73.

In the human brain, there is a reward system which is activated under certain circumstances; this gives rise to a positive mood. This happens usually when the result of an event is better than we expected. This leads to the release of dopamine, which is produced only when we are rewarded and is not secreted when it comes to punishment. This means that learning occurs always when we are experiencing something positive. This mechanism plays the key role in learning. Obviously, positive experiences are always connected with positive social contacts, too. The human being has always been learning in communities and group activities are very likely to be a strong learning facilitator.

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[26] Gerhard Roth, *Bildung braucht Persönlichkeit. Wie Lernen gelingt* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2011).

[27] Gerhard Roth, *Bildung braucht Persönlichkeit*, 110.

[28] Heinz Schirp, *Was können neurobiologische Forschungsergebnisse zur Weiterentwicklung von Lehr- und Lernprozessen beitragen?* (2003), http://www.schulinfos.de/i2f01/anla2/AAA_Neuro_und_Lernen__EE_Fassung__0503.pdf

[29] Manfred Spitzer, *Jak uczy się mózg*, 130.

From the neurobiological perspective, the task-based approach is a brain-compatible method, which means that a lot of conditions are fulfilled for constructing the neural network in the brain. Tasks are constructed with a view to using the prior knowledge of learners. Not only are language and communication skills required to do such tasks but also general skills and knowledge that the task-based approach rests on. Performing tasks in class usually takes place in small groups, where learners cooperate in order to achieve a certain result. This provides them with the opportunity to develop their social, methodical, personal and emotional skills. It is within a group that a human being learns social involvement, level playing field, respect for other players as well as their own possibilities within a team, where a mistake made by one player means failure of the whole team. These attitudes are learned implicitly, i.e. unconsciously, by playing the game, observing specific examples and models, and not by talking about the game. Implicit learning makes it possible for learners to acquire skills, and this takes place in the task-based classes. What is a particularly important element of effective learning is selective attention. The higher the attention, the more effectively we learn. Being attentive is not only a psychological process, but it has also a measurable neurobiological effect. The areas activated during processing the aspects the learner is paying attention to are activated to a higher extent. Thus, what occurs is the process of neural activation and extension of neural networks. This process is very likely to occur exactly in the task-based classes, because while performing tasks in groups, learners have an opportunity to conduct specific activities which lead to a defined and real goal. Learning through activity and active participation increases motivation, which is strictly connected with selective attention. Another factor present in the task-based classes is emotions, which control our nonverbal behaviours and accompany learners in interaction. While performing tasks in groups, learners enter interactions, which leads to an increase in emotional involvement.

4. The task-based approach and learning models

The traditional learning models usually refer to the cognitive dimension, i.e. the development of cognitive skills, which are related to the ability to learn, reason and memorise. Learners acquire this knowledge in the first place. These aspects lay the ground for the traditional school. The contemporary, complex world requires the learner to apply a multifaceted approach to the reality. The approach is based not only on their knowledge, but also on their skills. The process of learning is increasingly based not only on knowledge, but social, methodical, personal and emotional skills. The model below, created by the author of this article, includes not only the cognitive, but also the social and emotional dimension. The task-based approach adopted in language classes offers opportunities not only for gaining knowledge in a brain-friendly way, but also for developing the above-mentioned skills. Acquiring methodical skills means developing certain abilities, qualities and habits that are indispensable for planning and performing each activity step by step, working reasonably, developing strategies for working and learning. Methodical skills also refer to such skills as collecting information and evaluating them sensibly, identifying and analysing problems, as well as presenting and visualising information by applying IT-solutions.[30] Doing tasks in pairs or groups, learners acquire social skills and are supposed to cooperate and produce a result of this work. In order to achieve the joint aim, they have to act in the spirit of solidarity and show tolerance for co-participants in learning. Over time, they are able to demonstrate more empathy for their partners. They have to stick to a set of laid down rules which should be obeyed, identify different attitudes and opinions of other participants and react to them appropriately. Such interactions and task-based situations may lead to conflicts; therefore, they offer good opportunities for handling them, as well as for negotiating and settling disputes.[31] These features not only influence personality development, but are also of significant importance for cooperation in a community. Learners should be offered such situations which empower them to initiate certain processes of learning, shape them, come into interactions, evaluate and consider them. Such situations encourage learners to act consciously and think rationally.

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[30] Gabriele Lehmann and Nieke Wolfgang, *Zum Kompetenz-Modell* (2000) http://sinus- transfer.uni-bayreuth.de/module/modul_10pruefen_von_ kompetenzzuwachs/kompetenzmodell.html

[31] *Id. ibid.*

Today, we can talk about an increasing tendency to abandon the traditional model of teaching in favour of the modern, multifaceted and reflective approach to learning and teaching. Reflecting on the teaching process, one cannot omit the concept of learning since both processes are interrelated. The author's original model of learning presented below reflects the principles of the new culture of learning and is oriented towards constructivist education, as well as it is based on neurobiological research findings. As a result, the model involves not only the cognitive dimension, but also the social and emotional ones.

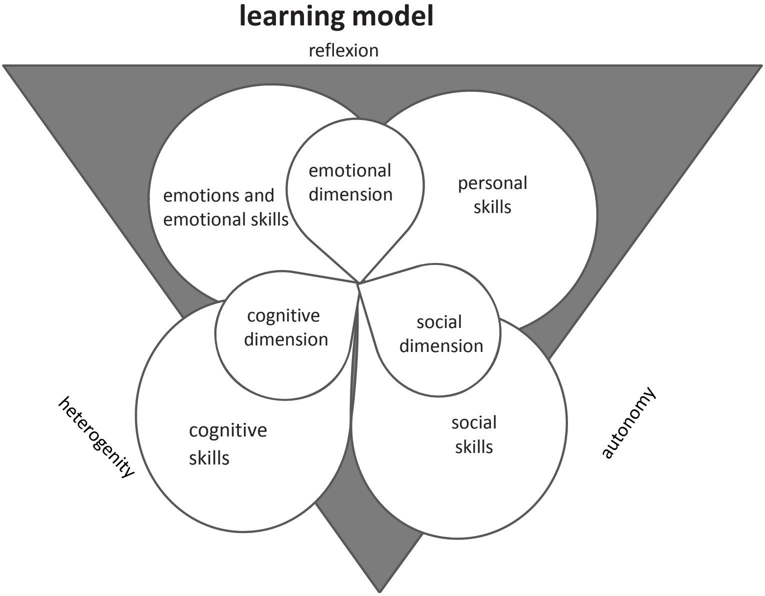
learning model
reflexion
emotions and emotional skills
emotional dimension
personal skills
cognitive dimension
social dimension
cognitive skills
social skills
heterogenity
autonomy

Fig. 4-1 The author's model of learning

Acquiring knowledge in the learning process, the learner also develops social skills such as the ability to cooperate in a team, problem-solving, ability to negotiate, leadership skills, as well as empathy. Because tasks are implemented through interaction in groups, the relations between learners are accompanied by emotions, which constitute a particularly important element of each class oriented to development of emotional skills. These skills include emotional awareness, i.e. the ability to recognize emotions and emotional states of themselves and others, the ability to control one's emotional states, the ability to cope with stress, as well as the ability to influence their own emotions according to values professed by the learner. The model assigns a particular role to *reflectiveness*, because the ability to reflect on learning constitutes the basis for life-long learning. In the process of reflection, the practice is under observation of the learner, which creates a distant perspective allowing for drawing conclusions, which should be next translated into future actions. These considerations raise the awareness of diversity and complexity of the problem learners are confronted with, as well as methods of reaching a solution. As a factor indispensable for developing reflectiveness of the learner, such discussion should be a part of the class at every educational level. Reflectiveness and a critical attitude are necessary in the contemporary world, where knowledge is easily available and omnipresent, but it is also of diverse quality. Thus, the lack of criticism and reflectiveness of people seem to be dangerous. Another important component is heterogeneity, which is becoming increasingly present not only in Polish schools. Today's reality, which is becoming increasingly complex, reveals an increase in citizens' awareness of the diversity of society, but also a growth in the perception of individuality and uniqueness of each human being. Being given the chance to experience diversity from childhood on is a precondition for an adult to be able to accept other people. Every group of people is heterogeneous because every individual member is different. The heterogeneity at schools results from the diversity of interests, talents, intelligence, learning styles, learning rate, motivation, biography, experiences, language skills, as well as different attitudes, values, religion and personality. The school reality proves that awareness of this problem should be raised, which poses a great challenge the teachers and requires them to take appropriate steps towards the democratisation of learning. This means individualisation of classes, diversification of teaching objectives, as well as teaching in cooperation. This is a necessity for the development of the so-called multidimensional didactics.[32] The necessity for autonomy is also being increasingly discussed by educationalists. The contemporary and diverse world with its excess of information requires us to be highly independent and flexible. The growth in the learner's autonomy enables them to present higher involvement and taking responsibility for the process of their own education.

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[32] Michael Eckhart, "Umgang mit Heterogenität – Notwendigkeit einer mehrdimensionalen Didaktik," In *Zum Umgang mit Heterognität in der Schule* 2 Vol., edited by Hans-Ulrich Grunder and Adolf Gut (Hohengehren: Baltmannsweiler, 2010), 133-150.

The task-based approach to foreign language teaching oriented to performing tasks to achieve a specific result includes all three dimensions: cognitive, social and emotional skills and allows for implementing the model to a higher extent that the communicative approach does. Searching for information in groups, making use of acquired knowledge to accomplish a specific undertaking, as well as using the language to communicate contributes to the development of cognitive skills. Learning through cooperation and interaction contributes to the development of social and emotional skills. Cooperation in the team always means raising the awareness of the diversity of attitudes and values, which is aligned with the acknowledgement and respecting these values, as well as with mutual understanding and tolerance. Acquiring knowledge and experiencing the reality is what all the members share, which is why the task-based learning is perceived as participation in a social process of constructing knowledge.[33] More than any other educational approach, the task-based teaching and learning is based on the development of the autonomy of the learner because the outcome of particular tasks depends entirely on the learner. The share of the teacher is relatively modest. Reflectiveness is also an inherent element of the task-based approach because evaluation at the *post-task* stage is an integral element of the task-based class. This evaluation contributes to the development of a reflective and exploratory attitude of the learner. Being based on the cognitive, social and emotional dimension of the learning process, the task-based approach also draws on the heterogeneity of the environment, as well as on reflectiveness and autonomy of the learner.

5. The author's research project

The research project refers to the social and emotional dimensions in class, which are involved in the communicative and the task-based approach. The research will use various methods of obtaining data in line with triangulation of quantitative and qualitative research methods. The empirical examination includes two research cycles. The aim of the first cycle is to measure social skills in classes in the communicative and the task-based approach over a specified period of time. The following social skills will be subject to examination: problem-solving, ability to cooperate in a team, development of empathy, development of leadership skills, ability to negotiate and ability to reach a compromise. The communicative and task-based classes will be observed and analysed over a longer period of time. The study will allow for answering the question of to what extent both approaches contribute to the development of the social skills of the learners.

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[33] Iwona Janowska, *Podejście zadaniowe do nauczania i uczenia się języków obcych. Na przykładzie języka polskiego jako obcego* (Kraków: Universitas, 2010), 155.

The next research cycle refers to the emotional dimension of the learning process. Emotional involvement of the learner is a precondition for effective memorisation of the learned content. The cycle includes not only quantitative and qualitative methods, but also an experiment, which introduces an innovative approach to research methodology in the field of humanities. In order to find out whether emotions accompany the learning process, observation and analysis of the classes based on the two approaches will be conducted. This cycle also includes quantitative and qualitative methods to find out about emotional states of the learners, as well as it includes performing ECG tests, which will illustrate the physiological response of the organism to emotional arousal. The test will also show to what extent emotions are present in classes based on both approaches. This part of the research will be conducted in cooperation with the Department of Individual Differences, Faculty of Psychology, University of Warsaw.

The results will be used to verify the hypothesis concerning how and to what extent the task-based approach in comparison to the communicative approach implements the social and emotional dimensions in the learning process.

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CHAPTER FOUR

A CASE FOR LSP

DAVID TUAL, TERESA GESLIN
AND JAMIE RINDER

1. Introduction

In a recent report, the British Academy (2016)[1] mentions the reluctance of employers to offer language training to their employees before concluding that the latter should “have those linguistics skills before they enter the workplace” (p. 15). It is precisely a desire to achieve the above that led three language teachers from three different countries to join forces and establish the Global Engineers Language Skills (GELS) project, with the shared objective to best prepare their engineering students to operate in an increasingly globalised market. Only a true Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) approach, where languages and other relevant skills are developed side by side, can put this goal within reach. This paper will expand on this definition and our understanding of this concept before explaining how the GELS project intends to apply its guiding principles. In the final part of the paper, we will share some of the observations and reflections that have emerged from the first few months of the project as well as explore some of the issues to consider and the challenges to be expected when setting up an LSP provision in the tertiary sector.

2. Towards a definition of LSP and its aims

The relevance of LSP to a general programme of engineering may be difficult to perceive in the first instance. In some cases, it might even seem irreconcilable with the breadth of its target audience. If one considers, for example, the case of the *Language Programme for Engineers* (LPE) offered by the Engineering Department at Cambridge University, its provision is common to engineering students regardless of their year of study or field(s) of specialisation, includes undergraduates and postgraduates and is open to postdoctoral students as well as members of staff. Despite the challenges this diversity presents, an LSP provision has been in place for over twenty years and regularly receives very positive feedback from the students. So, what is an LSP course for engineers? It is a course that engages a wide audience, ranging from first-year students, who explore very general topics to researchers who may be leaders in a very specialised field. Language teachers, curriculum designers and managers must, therefore, be aware of what constitutes transversal features in order to identify the smallest common denominator to the broad audience described above.

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[1] The British Academy, *Born global: Implications for higher education* (London: The British Academy, 2016).

Although it may appear counter-intuitive initially, a direct consequence of the above is that LSP courses cannot be solely driven by discipline-specific lexis, at least not in the sense that we should restrict our teaching to the vocabulary related to the students' field(s) of expertise. As Gollies-Kies, Hall and Moore (2015)[2] write it, “successful communication involves far more than establishing the meaning of individual lexical items and phrases” (p. 14). In order to successfully address the needs of all learners engaged on LSP courses, may they be students, researchers or other staff, we must look more carefully into the skills and competences they (will) need to apply regardless of their status, area of expertise or level of study. So we can state, therefore, that the language is neither specialised nor specific but that its purpose is – which is nothing more and nothing less than what the acronym LSP stands for. This purpose may be communication between engineers (who may share the same field of expertise – or may not), between engineers and technicians, or between engineers and any lay audience (general public, policy makers, interest groups, etc.) in order to successfully complete their tasks, whether it is building a bridge, obtaining a research grant or working on a collaborative project.

Finally, it should be noted that “general” language and LSP courses are not mutually exclusive. As Richer (2008)[3] writes, “providing a response [to students' language needs] limited to the professional sphere does not necessarily constitute a suitable solution” (p. 24, our translation). This means that if we are to fully prepare future engineers, our courses should also include a non-LSP component. This will facilitate the students' social interactions inside and outside their working environment, be it over the occasional business lunch or their daily interactions with lab colleagues during coffee breaks for instance. This should include promoting a good understanding of body language, time or space perception across different cultures, for instance, since they can be crucial for smooth and effective communication.

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[2] Sandra Gollies-Kies, David R. Hall, and Stephen H. Moore, *Language for specific purposes* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

[3] Jean Jacques Richer, “Le français sur objectifs spécifiques (F.O.S.): une didactique spécialisée?,” *Synergies Chine* 3 (2008), 15-30.

3. The GELS project's genesis and *raison d'être*

The GELS project aspires to be a truly European enterprise on several accounts. Its approach presented above clearly echoes that promoted by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) when it states that "it views users and learners of a language primarily as 'social agents', i.e. members of society who have tasks (not exclusively language-related) to accomplish in a given set of circumstances, in a specific environment and within a particular field of action" (Council of Europe, 2003, p. 9)[4]. The European dimension of the GELS project is not limited to the CEFR: it involves three European countries with very distinct traditions and attitudes towards language learning, and the GELS team met thanks to the Erasmus + programme (via their involvement with the student mobility programme or through staff mobility agreements). This has naturally led to an application for some European funds to pursue the project further (the outcome is as yet unknown).

The main purpose of the GELS project is to adapt the CEFR to the needs of engineering students. A particular emphasis will be on encouraging and supporting engineering schools to offer a language provision specific and relevant to their students starting from level A1 of the CEFR. The GELS team made this conscious decision in order to dismiss the misconception that LSP can only be taught from a certain level (often B1), a belief well illustrated by a quick browse through the rare textbooks that exist for engineers or scientists who want to learn French: they mainly address students who have already reached level B1 and we notice a similar target audience on the website www.e-filipe.org that aims to prepare engineering students to study in France. However, some practitioners such as Velkova (2012)[5] have already shown how LSP can be implemented at lower levels. Although designing courses and developing materials relevant to such a specific audience requires time and creativity, the motivational effect on students is worth the effort.

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[4] Council of Europe, *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

Increasingly, universities across Europe put the emphasis on "employability" and "internationalisation". These two priorities can be addressed by LSP courses as long as they focus on soft and hard skills: in their language classes, students will, for example, learn to summarise an experiment, analyse statistics or present some findings orally. These are tasks which they are likely to carry out in their career, whether in their mother tongue or in a foreign language. However, in order to equip tomorrow's engineers with the most suitable and comprehensive range of skills, it is essential to gather data from engineers in the field, which the GELS project team has started doing through a survey launched in November 2015. This needs analysis has been used as a tool to inform the content of the CEFR-based guide mentioned above. Although the initial work was mainly carried out by the project initiators, language teachers across Europe have been very involved through training days where they have been invited to fine-tune the document. In fact, the GELS project now includes eleven universities or schools from ten different countries. We are now working on the development of scenarios that will constitute the framework for task-based learning activities.

4. Reflexions and challenges

Although the survey mentioned above is "work in progress", an early finding is that engineers use a range of skills and that none of the five listed in the CEFR (reading, writing, listening, speaking, and interacting) seems to have significantly more importance than the others. Having said that, we feel there are micro-skills that will be particularly relevant to our students. The best example is probably that of presenting, describing and analysing a graphical representation or a table containing data. Whether as part of an oral presentation or a written report, it is a skill that any future engineer or scientist will need. Amongst other practical examples of relevant activities is the one that consists in "transferring information from illustration to text, and from text to illustration" (Dlaska, 1999[6]). Such tasks could cover labelling a picture, understanding a user's guide, or indeed writing one. These are only examples of what we plan to include and expand upon in the final product of the GELS project.

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[5] Antonia Velkova, "Les champs terminologiques visualisés dans l'enseignement du français aux étudiants-ingénieurs," *Actes du IIème forum mondial HERACLES* (2012), 171-180.

[6] Andrea Dlaska, "Suggestions for a subject-specific approach in teaching foreign languages to engineering and science students," *System* 27 (1999), 411.

The ambition of our project is also to address intercultural skills through the creation of a sixth column alongside the adapted CEFR grid in order to put the emphasis on the intercultural dimension and address relevant cross-cultural issues. We hope this will allow our students to develop an “Intercultural Interaction Competence” (ICIC), a term coined by Spencer-Oatey and Franklin (2009)[7] to refer to “the competence not only to communicate (verbally and nonverbally) and behave effectively and appropriately with people from other cultural groups, but also to handle the psychological demands and dynamic outcomes that result from such interchanges”. This will play a key role in helping students in their future professional and social settings, be it abroad or within any multicultural environment.

Finally, one of the main challenges facing LSP teachers and programme leaders is very often their isolation. This is something this project is also hoping to address by bringing in as many teachers and their managers together to exchange ideas and share good practice. This could include helping teachers to overcome the uneasy situation of facing students who are very knowledgeable in a field foreign to the teachers. We want to offer them an opportunity to share and improve practice, because many Language and communication teachers are poorly placed to recognize the learning needs of budding engineers. We have carried out a survey among teachers at our 11 partner institutions and found that 85% of the 60 respondents have a primary degree in languages. Only 10% have a specific qualification in engineering while 79% have no knowledge or experience of the world of engineering. Although challenging at first, this environment is also conducive to genuine communication between experts (students) and a lay audience (teaching staff). Managers should also be able to share arguments they can present to policy-makers in their institutions to remove obstacles to a better LSP provision. Encouraging better-integrated language skills and changing the perception of languages - often perceived as peripheral to the core engineering provision - may require putting forward a carefully crafted case in order to convince decision-makers at university level and this is – again - better achieved in a collaborative effort.

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[7] Spencer-Oatey, Helen and Peter Franklin, *Intercultural interaction: A multidisciplinary approach to intercultural communication* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 51.

5. Conclusion

The GELS project is only in its initial phase, which could be described as the needs analysis phase, although it is worth pointing out with Gollies-Kies & al.[8] that "now [as opposed to the early years of ESP/LSP], needs analysis is seen as potentially a continuous process, taking place before, during and even after a course delivery". Therefore, even if this project has already acquired momentum by engaging language practitioners across Europe, its outcomes will have to be carefully considered, trialled and evaluated before being disseminated and made freely available. Our belief is that it is only through a collaborative endeavour, which includes all stakeholders, that we will manage to design the best possible materials to enable students - at all levels - to benefit from LSP courses that will truly prepare them to engineer globally. We hope that the GELS project will go beyond benefiting hundreds of teachers - and their students - across Europe and that this scheme for engineers can find an echo in other domains where LSP has a crucial part to play (medicine, natural sciences, etc.).

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[8] Sandra Gollies-Kies, David R. Hall, and Stephen H. Moore, *Language for specific purposes* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 89.

PART 2 –

TEACHERS IN THE MAKING

CHAPTER FIVE

GENDER AS A GLOBAL ISSUE IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHER TRAINING

JUAN RAMÓN GUIJARRO-OJEDA

1. Introduction

This paper pursues to approach gender as a global issue through the lenses of ethnography as a qualitative method in the process of training of English as Foreign Language teachers. The foreign language area constitutes one of the most relevant areas within social sciences to address these topics since learning a foreign language necessarily requires acknowledging the patterns of a different culture and integrate them within our cognitive, affective, and behavioural schemata. First, we present the theoretical scaffolding concerning gender in Foreign Language teacher training with special focus on national and international references. Secondly, we settle the strengths and weaknesses of the ethnographic method to address gender issues in EFL teacher training. Finally, taking into account these premises, we design a task on ethnography-gender-EFL teacher training to be developed by the target group of student teachers referred to above.

The flow of History has led us to a liminal space that could be referred to as global-world. The unstoppable spread of new technologies and social media serves as the perfect cruise for the exchange of information at almost real time from any place of the world, at least, from those places reached by technology. From the “first world”, we always have the tendency to think that the whole population has the same access to ICTs as we have and that thought is to be revisited from anthropological and educational points of view.

It is in this new interwoven political, economic, social and axiological situation where we can contextualise what we understand as global issues in education. Snarr[1] (2008, in Díaz-Pérez[2], 2013) describes the term as:

> First, there are those issues that are transnational –that is, they cross political boundaries (country borders). These issues affect individuals in more than one country. A clear example is air pollution produced by a factory in the United States and blown into Canada. Second, there are problems and issues that do not necessarily cross borders but affect a large number of individuals throughout the world. Ethnic rivalries and human rights violations, for example, may occur within a single country but have a far wider impact.

As addressed in our paper, local and global issues related to gender are the focus of interest around the world. Abuses against women or homosexuals in any country can provoke reactions from Australia to Spain. We know on a daily basis about cases of women repression in China, gay condemnations in Iran, gender violence in Spain or homosexual marriage in the United States. Besides, gender is also an issue for debate in the Human Rights Declaration, which is one of the epitomes of global citizenship.

Considering all these premises, the main objective of this paper is to design a task-project for EFL teacher training focused on gender and the methodological opportunities offered by ethnography. This proposal offers student teachers the opportunity to query gender from multicultural and dialogical perspectives which are quite innovative in our context.

2. Gender

Gender is generally understood as a research category in social sciences, which permits us to study social phenomena considering people as sexed individuals. In this respect, Lorber (1994: 30-31)[3] designs a clear map of what she understands to be the social and personal components of gender as relating to gender status, labour, kinship, sexual orientation, character, social control or processes, ideology or personal and social exhibition of gender. The following table shows specifically the adaptation Fausto-Sterling (2000: 251)[4] has made of Lorber's subdivision of gender:

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[1] Michael Snarr, “Introducing globalisation and global issues.” In *Introducing Global Issues,* edited by Michael Snarr and Neil Snarr (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2008), 1-14.

[2] Francisco Javier Díaz-Pérez, “Introduction to global issues in the Teaching of Language, Literature and Linguistics.” In *Global Issues in the Teaching of Language, Literature and Linguistics,* edited by Francisco Javier Díaz Pérez et al. (Bern: Peter Lang, 2013), 7-14.

[3] Judith Lorber, *Paradoxes of Gender* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994).

Constituents of gender as a social institution	**Constituents of gender for an individual**
Gender statuses: socially recognised genders and expectations for their enactment behaviourally, gesturally, linguistically, emotionally, and physically	*Sex category:* individual assigned prenatally, at birth, or following reconstructive surgery
Gendered division of labour	*Gender identity:* the individual's sense of gendered self as a worker and family member
Gendered kinship: the family rights and responsibilities for each gender status	*Gendered marital and procreative status:* fulfilment or nonfulfillment of allowed or disallowed mating, impregnation, childbearing, and/or kinship roles
Gendered sexual scripts: the normative patterns of sexual desire and sexual behaviour as prescribed for different gender statuses	*Gendered sexual orientation:* socially and individually patterned sexual desires, feelings, practices, and identifications
Gendered personalities: combinations of traits patterned by gendered behavioural norms for different gender statuses	*Gendered personality:* internalised patterns of socially normative emotions as organised by family structure and parenting
Gendered social control: the formal and informal approval and reward of conforming behaviour and stigmatisation and medicalisation of non-conforming behaviour	*Gendered processes:* ''doing gender''- the social practices of learning and enacting gender-appropriate behaviours, i.e., of developing a gender identity
Gender ideology: the justification of gender statuses, often by invoking arguments about natural (biological) difference	*Gender beliefs:* incorporation of, or resistance to, gender ideology
Gender imagery: the cultural representations of gender in symbolic language and artistic productions	*Gender display:* presentation of self as a kind of gendered person through dress, cosmetics, adornments, and permanent and reversible body markers

Table 6-1. Judith Lorber's subdivision of gender

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[4] Anne Fausto-Sterling, *Sexing the Body. Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality* (New York: Basic Books, 2000).

Through this classification we can clearly map how the cultural construction of gender intertwines with almost every facet of a person's life from the economic sphere till such profound psychological devices like the gender beliefs may be, i.e., how a person adjusts to a given gender ideology through the incorporation or resistance to a set of sexual parameters. Special attention deserves also how a person displays publically his or her notion of gender through his or her material or symbolic attire, cosmetics or body markers.

As one of the last outposts of gender studies, Queer Theory opens new paths to explore sexual cultures and traditional perspectives on gender from critical positions. It mainly fights against gendered and cultural dual notions like woman vs. man or homosexual vs. heterosexual, among others. Judith Butler (1990)[5] or Michel Foucault (1978)[6] have grounded Queer Theory on the notion of performativity making clear that sexuality is mainly a cultural product and not an innate essence. Power plays an essential role in this process and sexuality is considered as the effect of it and not only its object. Being so, we can consider sexuality as a sort of cultural discourse where other areas of identity are also intertwined: class, gender, education, location, politics, income level, power, etc. It is this wheel of diversity which sets the melting pot where unbalanced relations may cause marginalisation and discrimination. In this respect, we can analyse and fight against heterocentrism, heterosexism, patriarchy, sexism, gender violence, homo(trans)phobia, and any other type of marginalization.

3. The queer perspective in education - ELT

Learning a foreign language implies a process of "identity changing" as stated in *The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (2001)[7], where general competences such as "existential competence" implie processes of identity, gender, culture, self-esteem, values, motivations, attitudes, etc. This complex idea provides us with a three-fold competence: cognition, attitudes, and procedures. This is an extension of the psychological concept of attitude described in the educational field as the learned positive or negative response to a given factor:

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[5] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

[6] Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality* (New York: Vintage Books Edition, 1978).

[7] Council of Europe, *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

> …an organised and consistent manner of thinking, feeling, and reacting to people, groups, social issues or more generally, to any event in the environment. (Lambert and Lambert, 1973: 72; in Gardner, 1985)[8].

Being so, attitudes are subjective to be developed during the process of personal adjustments to their cultural context, and once developed, experience organizes the process of learning, developing and organising attitudes. We consider this "changing process" of paramount importance in gender awareness acquisition. This is of valuable importance to follow a gender-consciousness approach to Foreign Languages considering the following approaches:

a) De-centring: Trying to relativize homophobia and heterocentrism which is not a natural and inherent feature of human beings.
b) Penetrating the Other's system: To develop an emphatic position of opening up to others (LGBIT people).
c) Negotiating: This implies compromise with, and understanding of, the values of the others (LGBIT people).

Within the Spanish educational context and according to educational regulations, foreign language teachers in Primary and Secondary education are encouraged to deal with sexual and gender diversity. This is mainly promoted through the cross-curricular topics intersecting the whole curriculum. But, unfortunately, the reality in schools is far different from the normative recommendations. A series of reasons may be attributed to this situation like: the backwash effect of national examinations at the end of middle school; the absence or scarcity of gender contents in teacher training programmes; the grammar-oriented syllabi; the lack of conscience about this kind of cultural contents or also, as suggested by some studies, homo(trans)phobic or sexist positions (Guijarro, 2013)[9]. Besides, there is also the general belief that addressing gender or sexuality may derive in speaking about sex in the class and this is always problematic due to the pressure exerted by parents on teachers. But, as suggested by Smith

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[8] Robert Gardner, *Social Psychology and Second Language Learning. The Role of Attitudes and Motivation* (Edward Arnold: Singapore, 1985).

[9] Juan Ramón Guijarro Ojeda and Raúl Ruiz Cecilia, "Perceptions of Spanish EFL trainee teachers on the introduction of queer issues in the classroom," *Onomázein* 27, no. 1 (2013), 193-206.

(1996)[10], the terms of ‘being’ and ‘identity’ are central to the complexity of the term ‘sexuality’ far beyond than ‘sex’ as an educational agenda.

Though not frequently, some authors like Summerhawk (1998)[11] or Guijarro and Ruiz (2011, 2013)[12] have suggested pedagogical routes to introduce gender or sexuality issues within the classroom practices:

a) Highlight the embedding of gender and sexuality as part of the Human Rights agenda;
b) The use of fiction (Literature, cinema, videogames, etc.) to contextualize gender in foreign language;
c) Raising consciousness through film reviews;
d) Analysing press news;
e) Inviting LGBIT people to our classes;
f) Providing our students with comfortable classroom atmosphere so that these topics may emerge naturally.

As stated above, our foreign language student teachers lack this kind of training what hinders their potential for fulfiling successfully their future careers. Issues related to gender and sexuality will appear continuously in their classes: homosexuality, homo(trans)phobia, gender violence, psychosocial problems/crises, heterocentrism, gender or sexual identity discrimination, etc.

When we come to address sexual identity issues within the field of English language teaching, we usually face a twofold perspective for them. On the one hand, we have the approach derived from the Gay & Lesbian framework of identity and, on the other, the pedagogical postulates of Queer Theory.

As for the first one, Nelson (2008)[13] classifies five main areas of work in the teaching of English, according to what Britzman (1995)[14] defines as

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[10] Robbie Smith, “Sexual constructions and lesbian identity.” In *Women, Power, and Resistance: An Introduction to Women's Studies,* edited by Tess Cosslett, Alison Easton and Penny Summerfields (Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1996).

[11] Barbara Summerhawk, “From closet to classroom: Gay issues in ESL/EFL,” *The Language Teacher* 22, no. 5 (1998). Accessed November 15, 2016. http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/articles/2299-closet-classroom-gay-issues-eslefl

[12] Juan Ramón Guijarro Ojeda and Raúl Ruiz Cecilia, “Los discursos del género en Español Lengua extranjera: A propósito de Pedro Almodóvar,” *Hispania. A Journal Devoted to the Teaching of Spanish and Portuguese* 94, no. 1 (2011), 13-24. Juan Ramón Guijarro Ojeda and Raúl Ruiz Cecilia, “Perceptions of Spanish EFL trainee teachers on the introduction of queer issues in the classroom,” *Onomázein* 27, no. 1 (2013), 193-206.

"pedagogies of inclusion" (p. 158): 1. Research on homophobia in educational institutions and among students and teachers; 2. Creation of inclusive curricula to integrate sexual diversity; 3. Educational support to people who identify as LGBIT; 4. Creation of secure educational contexts for LGBIT people; 5. Organizations of teaching English, like TESOL, have supported the research of sexuality issues within the field of Knowledge. This pedagogical position revolves around gaining Civil Rights, but Nelson (1999)[15] recognises the limits of 'pedagogies of inclusion' questioning about them:

> How is a 'lesbian' to be represented in curricula or materials? Which characters or characteristics will be included, which excluded? If these representations come only from the target culture, are they sufficiently inclusive? Will teachers, teacher educators, and material developers have the knowledge to be able to include sexual minorities? Will students consider such inclusions relevant to their own lives and to their needs as language learners? After inclusive references are made, what happens next? Who decides? (pp. 476-377).

Concerning Queer Theory, the greatest efforts to follow its assumptions within English Language Teaching belong to Cynthia Nelson (1993, 1999, 2008, 2009)[16]. She establishes four main reasons to support its defence of Queer Theory against (or complementary) to the Gay & Lesbian Framework of identity.

In ELT, queer issues can arise culturally and linguistically within diverse cultures (the Spanish and those of all the countries where English is the first language, as well as different cultures from the Spanish one, since many pupils nowadays are from non-Spanish parents). Nelson

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[13] Cynthia Nelson, "Why Queer Theory is useful in teaching: A perspective from English as a second language teaching," *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services* 14, no. 2 (2008), 43-53.

[14] Deborah Briztman, "Is there a queer pedagogy? Or, stop reading straight," *Educational Theory* 45, no. 2 (1995), 151-165.

[15] Cynthia Nelson, "Sexual identities in ESL: Queer Theory and classroom inquiry," *TESOL Quarterly* 33, no. 3 (1999), 371-391.

[16] Cynthia Nelson, "Heterosexism in ESL: Examining our attitudes," *TESOL Quarterly* 27, no. 1 (1993), 143-150; Cynthia Nelson, "Sexual identities in ESL: Queer Theory and classroom inquiry," *TESOL Quarterly* 33, no. 3 (1999), 371-391; Cynthia Nelson, "Why Queer Theory is useful in teaching: A perspective from English as a second language teaching," *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services* 14, no. 2 (2008), 43-53; Cynthia Nelson, *Sexual Identities in Language Education: Classroom Conversations* (New York: Routledge, 2009).

(2008)[17] or Guijarro (2004a, 2004b)[18] have found several ways to make curricula, resources and teaching practices more queer-inclusive, for example, through discussions on families, and homophobia within the field of social discriminations, which are topics normally discussed in education. A special interest resides in the wellbeing of teachers and learners, LGBIT or heterosexual, who may feel comfortable expressing and sharing overtly aspects of their sexual identities.

The fact of considering sexual identities as cultural constructions is of great relevance in education. This way we can discuss the performances they enact in society, the values and the social discourses displayed by people. On the contrary, if we envisaged gender and sexual identities as universal essences and as matters of being, the debate arena could not be so beneficial since there would not be room for discussion.

Within the field of English Language Teaching, where social interactions are of paramount importance for the promotion of communicative competence, the previous considerations may help construct knowledge in a very positive way since classes are usually integrated by students from diverse cultural settings. The way language and cultural patterns shape an identity is central to communication and performativity and, thus, depending on the context, they may be interpreted in different ways. In this respect, the most common example is the fact of two men walking down the street holding hands overtly: in Morocco they are normally interpreted to be relatives or friends whilst in Spain we would say that they are lovers. It is that cultural richness of multicultural societies what has to be exploited in teacher training.

Queer Theory might be useful for the teaching of a foreign language because it views sexual identities as limiting and at the same time liberating for they rely both on exclusion and inclusion. Affirming subordinate sexual identities may contribute to the hierarchical system that considers some (most likely only one) sexual identities as 'acceptable' and some not. In this sense, Queer Theory doubts the existence and need for sexual identities, and heterosexuality is also problematized. Problematizing does not mean conceptualizing identities as negative but bringing them to the debate arena:

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[17] Cynthia Nelson, "Why Queer Theory is useful in teaching: A perspective from English as a second language teaching," *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services* 14, no. 2 (2008), 43-53.

[18] Juan Ramón Guijarro Ojeda, "Addressing queer issues in the EFL classroom in the Spanish context," *The Grove. Working papers on English Studies* 11 (2004a), 59-70; Juan Ramón Guijarro Ojeda, "Cine y otredad en *ELT*: Educar a través de las voces silenciadas de *Billy Elliot*," *Odisea. Revista de Estudios Ingleses* 5 (2004b), 81-94.

> […] it makes it possible to explore how acts of identity are not necessarily straightforward or transparent but can be complex, changing, and contested. It also acknowledges that, for a myriad of reasons, not everyone relates to a clear-cut identity category. (p. 48).

Thus, teacher trainees and teacher trainers can discover the discourse purposes of identities analysing the way they work, how they interrelate and, even, related intra-contradictions or exocentric connections. The gay-lesbian classical tradition of making subordinate sexual identities legitimate is set apart and new paths are trodden in search of the pedagogical problematizing of all identities, which works, with no doubt, for the 'inclusion' purpose more effectively. Different perspectives and diverse experiences in this respect are subject to be brought to the debate arena, including heterosexual-straight identities, as 'central' in the cultural mainstream. Being so, our heterosexual students will learn that their sexual identity is also relevant within the general gender puzzle.

Moreover, teachers' main objective is not the transmission of theoretical knowledge but to encourage investigation and inquiry. Another aspect, already discussed, is that queer theorists deal with all types of sexualities, which is a universalising view, and not simply the binary 'heterosexual/homosexual'. As argued by Nelson (2008), sexual identity is attained:

> […] in particular class-, race-, or gender-mediated way, and only so; likewise, cultural identity is 'done' differently depending on one's sexual identity. When identities are understood to be not just multiple but mutually inflecting, it becomes clear that to understand the workings of any domain of identity (e.g. gender) it is necessary to consider that domain as part of, or in relation to, the domain of sexual identity. (p. 49).

Also, the binary hetero-homosexual has a great significance just like masculine-feminine or bourgeois-proletariat; this means that sexualities are especially related to living and thinking as cultural products. We should never forget that language and knowledge cohabitate within relations of power and, also, that social identities are not discovered but constructed and they are specific to time and space, and are changeable. In pedagogical contexts, it is of paramount importance to take into account the multiple identities a person may entitle, in most cases developed through a self-identifying process. As stated by Seidman (1993: 136-

137)[19], the formation of sexual identities is driven “in a particular class-, race, or gender-mediated way, and only so”. Unlikely, it is due to social pressure that certain identities are considered as natural and, subsequently, central; and those envisaged as non-natural will be prostrated to the margins of culture.

It is of core importance to make explicit that Queer Theory has contributed to the notion that teaching about sexual identities is not only relevant to LGBIT people, but also to heterosexual people as a means to promote discussion and confrontation of cultural ideas. This allows a step further in education than only discussing how tolerant people are or not usually resulting in revealing women as more tolerant than men towards sexual diversity. These traditional studies on tolerance presuppose intolerance and the solution to it would be working for inclusion, which could only reinforce that minority status. Cynthia Nelson advocates inquiring as a pedagogical method to address the cultural construction of sexual identities in educational settings: concepts like natural or normal are left aside and the focus is on naturalisation processes and their analysis.

In teaching a foreign language, it is important to stress that norms are not universal but they depend on a specific context, and they are also changing and often contested. Nelson (2009)[20] offers also suggestions about which queer contents can be discussed and can be normally arisen in ELT: cultural diversity, family, community, difference, body language, using pictures to describe ‘couples’, using literature, music, games, etc. She prefers to use the term sexual identity to sexual preference, which is related to choice, and to sexual orientation, which is considered innate. She also points out that queer studies in language teaching have not engaged yet in international contexts, namely in a globalised world investigation, at least not as much as expected. Most of these types of studies are undertaken in the United States. Yet it is important to mention Sears’ encyclopaedia (2005)[21] about sexual diversity issues in educational contexts around the world.

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[19] Steven Seidman, “Identity and politics in a ‘postmodern’ gay culture: Some historical and conceptual notes.” In *Fear of a Queer Planet: Queer Politics and Social Theory*, edited by Tess Cosslett, Alison Easton and Penny Summerfields, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 105-142.

[20] Cynthia Nelson, *Sexual Identities in Language Education: Classroom Conversations* (New York: Routledge, 2009).

[21] James Sears, ed. *Youth, Education, and Sexualities: An International Encyclopedia* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005).

In a nutshell, Queer Theory confronts the Gay and Lesbian Framework of identity opting for 'inquiry' (critical examination, questioning of systems of difference, the meaning of difference for us and others) as opposed to 'inclusion' (tolerance, the celebration of difference) (Britzman, 1995)[22].

4. The ethnographic method to research on gender-queer global issues

As stated by Ruiz and Guijarro (2016)[23], gender is a complex phenomenon, which must be approached scientifically from a holistic method that may guarantee that all the elements of discourse may be taken into account. Evidently, few methods like ethnography can provide us with the necessary tools to carry out this enterprise. When it comes to gender topics, politics, economics, religion, education, or health discourses integrate the cultural and social outcome known as "gender".

We strongly advocate for ethnography to research on gender-queer topics since they should be studied in their contexts following the works of Margaret Mead (2001)[24] or Clifford Geertz (2000)[25]. In order to understand gender relations in depth, participant observation is of core importance, which may be complemented with secondary sources: documents, civil registrations, photographs, videos, etc. Since gender patterns may not always be extrapolated to other contexts, these pedagogical practices must focus on restricted groups of persons and very delimited settings. Being so, it would not make sense to apply large scales or tests to demonstrate an average measure since this would distort reality. Finally, the integral study of gender requires that meanings and people's behaviour be interpreted through descriptions and explanations. In this case, statistical analysis and quantification would play a subordinate role at most.

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[22] Deborah Briztman, "Is there a queer pedagogy? Or, stop reading straight," *Educational Theory* 45, no. 2 (1995), 151-165.

[23] Martyn Hammersley and Paul Atkinson, *Ethnography: Principles in Practice* (London: Routledge, 1995).

[24] Margaret Mead, *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2000 (1935).

[25] Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

Hammersly and Atkinson (1995)[26] provide us with a clear definition of ethnography worldwide accepted by scholars:

> […] we shall interpret the term 'ethnography' in a liberal way, not worrying much about what does or does not count as examples of it. We see the term as referring primarily to a particular method or sets of methods. In its most characteristic form it involves the ethnographer participating, overtly or covertly, in people's lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions—in fact, collecting whatever data are available to throw light on the issues that are the focus of the research. (p.1)

Moving from local to global issues in gender can be meaningful and constructive for our students. This is also a source of motivation because of the fact that they begin researching on gender topics that are close to them, in their own city, is of high pedagogical value to make them aware that the 'other' is very close to them. In this case, the 'other' is not more an exotic person who lives so far that they will never disturb their lives, as prescribed in colonial and postcolonial times. He or she (the other) is so close that it can challenge our own cultural and axiological system.

4.1. Description of the task

To design this task, we follow the steps in the ethnographic research described by De Tezanos (1981)[27]; Wiersma (1986)[28]; Titone (1986)[29] and Goetz and LeCompte (1988)[30]. Evidently, we will follow an ethnographic approach to gender/queer in English as a Foreign Language teacher training, but not as strictly as if the students were to become anthropologists. We rather follow it as a guiding model to arise in our EFL teacher trainees' positive attitudes towards gender understanding. The project could last a whole semester while they are on their school practice period. In the case of our university, it could be from March to June. Below, we present the didactic guide with all the requirements to succeed in performing the task:

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[26] Raúl Ruiz Cecilia and Juan Ramón Guijarro Ojeda, "Lenguaje e ideología: a propósito de la nueva ley del aborto española," *Convergencia. Revista de Ciencias Sociales*, 71 (2016), 201-222.

[27] Aracel De Tezanos de Mañana, "La escuela primaria: Una perspectiva etnográfica," *Revista Colombiana de Educación* (1981), 63-90.

[28] William Wiersma, *Research Methods in Education: An Introduction* (USA: University of Toledo, 1986).

[29] Renzo Titone, *El lenguaje en la interacción didáctica: Teorías y métodos de análisis* (Madrid: Narcea, 1986).

[30] Judith Goetz and Margaret LeCompte, *Etnografía y diseño cualitativo en investigación educativa* (Madrid: Morata, 1988).

First stage:

This is an introduction to the topic of 'ethnography', which may not be familiar to our students. Ethnography has traditionally been related to the field of Anthropology, but it has also shed excellent results in the field of Educational Sciences and, more specifically, to research in the area of teaching and learning foreign languages.

1. Students will work in groups of 4, a number which has proven to work efficiently in previous experiences.
2. Theoretical bases:
    a. What do we understand by "ethnography"?
    b. What are the implications for EFL teacher training?
    c. An outline of the introduction of gender/queer issues in the English as Foreign Language classroom.

d. The concept of "otherness": Anthropological perspective, Post-colonialism, Postmodernism, and Literature.

3. Compulsory readings:
    a. Watson-Gegeo, Karen Ann. "Ethnography in ESL: Defining the essentials." *TESOL-Quarterly* 22.4 (1988). 575-592. (This article is one of the classic works for ELT researchers and practitioners who want to review the essentials of ethnography as relates to the field of foreign language education).
    b. Epps, Brad. "Retos y riesgos, pautas y promesas de la teoría queer." *Debate Feminista* 18.36 (2007): 219-272. (This article will provide students with a thorough and critical debate around how queer theory is perceived from other non-Anglosaxon contexts).

Second stage:

1. Identification of a phenomenon: Due to the multicultural richness of Granada, in this stage we suggested our students relate the concept of gender to that of culture. This is of great pedagogical richness since, as stated by Queer Theory, sexual identity is not given in isolation, but as the result of a multifaceted myriad of social labels: class, culture, ethnic origin, educational level, etc. For instance, students could focus on different cultural groups to analyse endocentric or exocentric gender

relations: Muslims, Latin Americans, Gypsies, or Anglo-Saxons (especially those students who participate in the Erasmus exchange programme among the students of the Universities of the European Union). Some of the following topics could be studied: gender diversity, professional integration, gender violence, sexism, homophobia, sexual diversity, education, learning experiences, etc. among others.

2. Identification of informants and participants: At this stage, students will have to choose four or five representative informants to conduct the research experience. The informants have to be heterogeneously chosen in order to get a richer view on the aspects studied.

3. Selection of the research design: This stage consists in underpinning theoretically the fieldwork practices. For example, if students decide to research on gender issues within the Islamic community, they will have to look for information related to gender issues in the Muslim world and to opt, for example, on which theory will inform their practical work, for instance, feminist perspective, Queer Theory perspective, etc.

4. Generation of hypotheses or “ethnographic questions”: By hypothesis we understand the assumption that a scientific truth is possible or impossible, so that we can elicit a scientific consequence of it. A sample of hypothesis for this project could be: “Queers of Latin American origin living in Granada are marginalised”.

5. Descriptive or initial questions which guide the first steps to know the object of study: In this step, questions may arise such as:

- What sort of “gender shocks” Erasmus students from Bulgaria experience in Granada?
- How is sexual life for guys from Morocco compared to their home countries one?
- How is professional integration for immigrant LGBITs from Colombia in Granada?
- Can two persons of the same sex express their love overtly in your home country?

These are just sample questions which may help students to start their research. No doubt, as far as the fieldwork begins, new questions emerge or previously stated questions are erased because they seem not to be appropriate for the successful development of the project.

6. Information gathering (fieldwork): We highly recommend our students to share long periods of time with the people they are investigating in order to gain confidence with them. At this stage, we consider of paramount importance two research techniques: participant observation

(verbal interaction among subjects; interaction with the researchers; and nonverbal behaviour) and the design and implementation of interviews. The interviews designed by the students will be supervised periodically with the supervisors of the course because they are of core relevance to succeed in the project. It is also very important to us that our students gather together audio-visual and photographic material when necessary and possible. This material will be part of a database that can be used for further research and profit future students to enrich their gender experiences. This material also helps us to better evaluate our students because, in this way, we have direct access to primary research resources.

7. Interpretation of information: This is a key stage in the research process. This step requires the students to analyse and check the information gathered several times taking into account the phenomenon as a whole and in its different parts. We could say that interpretation means to put into context a given particular categorisation so that it can be coherent.

Third stage:

1. Elaboration of conclusions and dissemination of a final report: students will have to explain their findings in two ways: 1) writing a final report of their findings; and, 2) preparing an oral presentation of the results to the rest of the class. The final report and presentation are to include the following information:

a. The focus and end of the study, to clarify the situation studied
b. The model of research and its justification of use
c. The participants in the study, the scenario, and the context of research
d. The experience of the researcher and his or her roles in the study process
e. Strategies to gather information
f. Techniques for information analysis
g. The findings of the study, the interpretation, and applications of the research

2. Evaluation of the experience individually, in groups, and of the whole group. Here, the most important is the detection of possible weaknesses of the project to be changed and improved for the next year.

5. Conclusions

As we have been able to read through this task development, the ethnographic method can be adapted as an innovative gender-based task to be performed by EFL trainee teachers. Different readings, group work, planning, and in-field contact with people from other cultures who speak English and Spanish are all educational strategies of paramount importance with intellectual and affective benefits for teachers; mainly those who will be in charge of educating future generations according to Human Rights standards.

Besides, this didactic proposal entails an innovative methodology, which is quite new for teacher trainers, especially within the Spanish university system, still mainly content-focused and where field contact and research is confined solely to the school practice period. Besides, the approach to gender we instil in our students is that proposed by queer theorists and practitioners who reveal that gender and sexuality are fundamentally context-bound, thus, non-essentialist. Thus, we provide our trainee teachers with relevant discursive tools to foster awareness towards difference or multiplicity of views in current multicultural societies.

This task is envisaged as a flexible didactic design allowing trainers and trainees from other contexts to adapt it to their own cultural and educational needs. We could even focus on other topics beyond gender and it would also prove to be beneficial for guided or a more autonomous teacher training. Being in the fieldwork, teachers will experience by themselves the problems women or queer persons must face in order not to be discriminated. As an autonomous project work, this experience will force them to follow a well-planned protocol and get used to scientific research methods.

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CHAPTER SIX

HOW BOLD ARE LANGUAGE TEACHERS? COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE DATA OF A TRANSATLANTIC SURVEY ON TECHNOLOGY-MEDIATED TASK-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING

ANTÓNIO LOPES

1. Introduction

In teacher training programmes all over the world, trainers have been struggling to provide their teacher students with a comprehensive view of the diversity of methods and approaches to language teaching that have been proposed over the past decades. Each has its own benefits and drawbacks and some of them are rooted more in beliefs handed down through the ages than in scientifically proven data gathered by rational inquiry[1]. This derives from the fact that these proposals are deeply embedded in the social, cultural and economic contexts from which they emerge, and seek to provide an answer to what is believed to be the needs, preferences and capabilities of the learners and, to a different degree, the demands of the markets or of society in general[2]. Some of them are more successful than others in becoming part of the teacher's routines in the classroom, which in itself, though empirically verifiable, does not constitute a form of scientific validation. What can be validated, instead, are the ways in which practitioners perceive these proposals, evaluate them, put them to practice, discard or simply ignore them. The trends in language teaching are themselves revealing of ideological biases, political inclinations and culturally ingrained attitudes not only of teachers, but also of other stakeholders and actors that condition the education system[3]. Gauging the teacher's commitment to (or interest in) this or that method, how much of this commitment is grounded on objective evaluation and valid knowledge, and how much of it based on preconceptions or misleading perceptions should not be confused with any form of vindication or refutation of the method, but should rather be seen as a way to understand the conditions that make it acceptable in the eyes of the practitioners.

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[1] Miguel Martin-Sánchez, "Historia de la metodología de enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras" / "History of Foreign Language Teaching Methodology," *Tejuelo: Didáctica de la Lengua y la Literatura* 5, no. 9 (2009), 54-70; Clara Miki Kondo, Claudia Fernández, and Marta Higueras García, *Historia de la Metodología de Lenguas Extranjeras* (Madrid: Fundación Antonio de Nebrija, 1997).

[2] Gjulnar Ajratovna Arslanova and Liliya Ildarovna Ajupova, "Students' professional competence formation in the process of foreign language learning in high school as a modern challenge," *Journal of Organizational Culture, Communications and Conflict* 20 (2016); Deborah Cameron, "Globalisation and the Teaching of 'Communication Skills." In *Globalisation and Language*

This is the main concern of the present study, which was carried out within the scope of a European-funded project aiming to promote technology-mediated Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT)[4]. This project, called Pan-European Task-based Activities in Language Learning (PETALL), ran from January 2013 to June 2016 and brought together teacher training institutions and practice schools from ten different countries[5]. As one of the purposes of the project was to offer training courses in this area, it was necessary to determine the teachers' main methodological points of reference and characterise their teaching practices, before the consortium could set up a training strategy sensitive

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Teaching, edited by David Block and Deborah Cameron (London: Routledge, 2002); Bonnie Urciuoli, "Neoliberal Education: Preparing the Student for the New Workplace." In *Ethnographies of Neoliberalism*, edited by Carol J. Greenhouse (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010); Hyunjung Shin, "Language 'skills' and the neoliberal English education industry," *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 37, no. 5 (2016).

[3] Norman Fairclough, *Language and Globalisation* (New York: Routledge, 2006); Monica Heller, "Globalization, the New Economy, and the Commodification of Language and Identity," *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 7 no. 4 (2003); Monica Heller, "The Commodification of Language," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 39 (2010).

[4] Michael Thomas and Hayo Reinders, eds., *Task-based language learning and teaching with technology* (London & New York: Continuum, 2010); Marta González-Lloret and Lourdes Ortega, eds., *Technology-mediated TBLT: researching technology and tasks* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2014).

[5] António Lopes, "Critical issues in the evaluation of an international project dedicated to technology-mediated TBLT (PETALL)," *TEwT - The Journal of Teaching English with Technology* 15, no. 2 (2015).

to their perceptions and meet their needs, while motivating them to use ICT-based tasks as a routine in the language classroom.

On the other hand, as the efforts of dissemination of the project brought members of the consortium into contact with teachers from the US, the opportunity arose to run the online survey across the Atlantic and to collect their responses, which would allow a comparative analysis to be made between the data from the EU and from the US.

The survey that was conducted sought to address the following questions:

1) What are the teachers' beliefs and attitudes regarding TBLT?
2) What are the teachers' beliefs and attitudes regarding the use of ICT in TBLT?
3) How do teachers rate the importance of TBLT in relation to other methods and approaches?
4) How often do teachers implement TBLT in the classroom?
5) How often do teachers implement technology-mediated tasks in the classroom?
6) What other approaches and methods do teachers use in the language classroom?
7) What differences in beliefs, attitudes and practices exist between EU and US practitioners regarding TBLT?
8) What differences in beliefs, attitudes and practices exist between EU and US practitioners regarding the use of ICT in TBLT?
9) What differences exist between EU and US practitioners regarding other approaches and methods?

2. Why the focus on TBLT and ICT

In both Europe and the United States teachers have been given the opportunity to experiment with an array of different language teaching methods and approaches through pre-service and in-service training courses. One approach that has come under the spotlight in recent years and has drawn the attention of an increasing number of academics, researchers and teachers is TBLT[6]. One of their main instrument, the

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[6] Ahmad Hadadi, Hamed Abbasi and Ahmad Goodarzi, "Developing Competencies for Using the Interactive Whiteboard to Implement Communicative Language Teaching in the English (Foreign Language) Classroom." *Proceedings of the International Conference on Current Trends in ELT, Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 98 (2014); Hetty Roessingh, "Teachers' Roles in Designing Meaningful Tasks for Mediating Language Learning through the Use of ICT: A

Common European Framework of Reference for Languages features a whole chapter on task-based learning, a distinction not accorded to other methods and approaches and that signals a call for an emphasis on language as a practical ability not only to communicate effectively, but also to produce effects in social contexts other than the classroom. Task is defined as "a feature of everyday life in the personal, public, educational or occupational domains" and to accomplish it is necessary to strategically activate "specific competences in order to carry out a set of purposeful actions in a particular domain with a clearly defined goal and a specific outcome"[7]. Consequently, the CEFR dismisses the notion of learners as passive recipients of information, and proposes instead to reinforce their status as social agents in need of acquiring communicative competences that will enable them to use the language in real-life situations with autonomy and discretionary power. Knowing how to use language in a socially appropriate way aiming to produce tangible results or outputs cannot be achieved solely through consolidated knowledge of grammar, syntax, vocabulary and idiom. TBLT is above all an action-oriented approach, which clearly differs from language learning paradigms focused on the language itself[8]. Tasks allow learners to perceive that language they are practicing is not merely an object of study confined to certain classroom activities or the textbooks, but can instead be used in a large

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Reflection on Authentic Learning for Young ELLs," *Canadian Journal of Learning and Technology* 40, no. 1 (2014); Euline C. Schmid and Shona Whyte, *Teaching Languages with Technology: Communicative Approaches to Interactive Whiteboard Use* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014); Maria de Lurdes Martins, "How to Effectively Integrate Technology in the Foreign Language Classroom for Learning and Collaboration," *International Conference on New Horizons in Education, Paris, France* Vol. 174 (2015); Malgorzata Kurek, "Designing Tasks for Complex Virtual Learning Environments," *Bellaterra: Journal of teaching and learning language and literature* 8, no. 2 (2015); Shu-chiao Tsai, "Implementing Courseware as the Primary Mode of Task-Based ESP Instruction: A Case Study of EFL Students," *Computer Assisted Language Learning* 28, no. 2 (2015); Chun Lai and Guofang Li, "Technology and Task-Based Language Teaching: A Critical Review," *CALICO Journal* 28, no. 2 (2011); Ali Shehadeh and Christine A. Coombe, eds., *Task-based language teaching in foreign language contexts: Research and implementation* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2012).

[7] Council of Europe, *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 157.

[8] Rod Ellis, *Task-based language learning and teaching* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); David Nunan, *Task-based language teaching* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

number of situations that, besides demanding adequate strategies and capacities, are likely to arise in daily life.

On the other hand, ICT has been playing an increasingly decisive role in shaping the ways in which most of us communicate in this new Digital Age, with all the implications that this phenomenon has had in language use. In fact, not only does ICT elicit new uses of language, but also most information exchanged is retrieved from ICT-based sources[9]. On the other hand, the youth are more and more dependent on ICT to communicate and to shape their lifestyle, namely in terms of construction of their social image and identity, of their social networking, and of their access to (and sharing of) cultural artefacts. These everyday practices alone amply justify the focus of the study on the technological dimension of the work done in class, especially when this work entails the execution of a task.

3. Description of the Study

3.1. Main aim and objectives

Since teachers are ultimately the ones responsible for implementing the different language teaching methods in the classroom, it is critical to analyse how they perceive those methods, in particular TBLT, so as to determine whether they hold positive beliefs and attitudes about them, in what way they adhere to the respective methodological principles and how they put them to practice. Equally important is to determine what other methods and strategies are used concomitantly and/or interchangeably with TBLT. Moreover, given the growing importance of ICT in the context of schools both in Europe and the US, this study also sought to understand its incidence on TBLT. Finally, given the teacher training goals of the project, the study aimed to gauge the teachers' most pressing training needs in these areas.

The seven objectives set for this study fall under four distinct categories (methodological, conceptual, practical and formative) and were distributed as follows:

As far as the *methodological* aspects are concerned, the objectives were:

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[9] Carol Chapelle, *Computer Applications in Second Language Acquisition: Foundations for teaching, testing and research* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Walter Schrooten, "Task-based language teaching and ICT: Developing and assessing interactive multimedia for task-based language teaching." In *Task-based language education: from theory to practice*, edited by Kris van den Branden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

1. Understand the role that the CEFR plays in their teaching practice;
2. Understand what methods and resources they most value;
3. Determine the importance they assign to TBLT.

From the *conceptual* point of view, the study sought to:

4. Determine how well teachers are acquainted with:
    4.1. the concept of Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT);
    4.2. the potential that ICT has to offer in TBLT.

In relation to the teachers' *practices*, the objectives that were set were:

5. Characterize the teaching practices used in the language classroom in terms of TBLT and ICT;
6. Identify the main difficulties teachers face when they implement TBLT.

Finally, in terms of the *formative* aspect, the objective was:

7. Determine the training needs of language teachers in TBLT.

3.2. Method

Since the intention of this study was to gather numerical data involving concepts and perceptions to generalize them across a group of practitioners in language teaching and learning, a descriptive quantitative design was adopted. The survey was designed in Google forms, which allows the returned data to be automatically transferred to a data analysis programme. The statistical analysis of data was performed using IBM SPSS 23. Non-parametrical tests (One-Sample Binomial Test and One-Sample Chi-Square Test) were performed and the statistical significance determined at ,05. The final version of the survey, which was based on a questionnaire originally proposed by the coordinator of the project and used in a previous project[10], resulted from the contributions of several members of the consortium, who provided a critical insight into some of the questions.

The instrument was made available online on the project website (http://petallproject.eu) and, as the purpose was to target a specific group, the consortium devised a promotion strategy[11] and it posted in mailing lists and newsgroups (professional and scientific associations, education authorities, school clusters, etc.), the main advantage being an increased awareness of the survey, and the main risk being a low response rate[12]. Nevertheless, as the website and its contents are readily available from major search engines, the survey is still gathering data to this date. However, for this particular study, the participants' responses were collected for a period of 5 months, from October 2015 to March 2016.

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[10] António Lopes, "Changing teachers' attitudes towards ICT-based language learning tasks: the ETALAGE Comenius project (the Portuguese case)," *The EUROCALL Review* 20, no. 1 (2012).

It should be pointed out that, as it was not possible to construct a consistent and reliable series of aggregate figures for the total numbers of language teachers working in primary and secondary schools, and in higher education institutions in all the countries that took part in this study, representativeness of the sample is debatable, all the more so because number of respondents vary significantly from country to country.

3.3. Survey instrument

The participants were requested to complete a survey that comprised 31 questions grouped into six sections. First, teachers were asked to provide demographic information (Section A) about their (A1) gender, (A2) age group and (A3) the country where they were currently working. Second, they were asked about their teaching qualifications (Section B) in terms of (B1) degree, (B2) date of conclusion and (B3) years of teaching practice. Third, nine items queried the teachers' awareness of task-based language teaching (Section C). Specifically, these questions addressed (C1) the teachers' acquaintance with TBLT (an either/or question), (C2) their definition of this approach (multiple choice), (C3) the requirements to implement a task (multiple choice), (C4) their level of confidence to implement it (on a five-point scale), (C5) the frequency of implementation of tasks in the classroom (on a five-point scale), (C6) the frequency of use of ICT in the implementation of tasks (on a six-point scale), (C7) the positive aspects of technology-mediated tasks (matrix, options to be ranked according to importance), (C8) the challenges that technology-mediated tasks pose to the teacher (matrix, options to be ranked according to importance), and (C9) the dimensions of ICT that teachers valued the most in TBLT (namely ICT as memory, communication, construction or process) (matrix, options to be ranked according to importance). Fourth, 5 items asked them about their awareness of the potential of ICT in language learning in general (Section D). The items addressed (D1) the teachers' exploitation of the potential of ICT in language learning (an either/or question), (D2) the way in which ICT resources in their school could affect their classroom activities (an either/or question), (D3) their assessment of the school's ICT resources for technology-mediated TBLT (on a five-point scale), (D4) the importance assigned to ICT in the classroom (matrix, options to be ranked according to importance), and (D5) the frequency of ICT-based activities in the classroom (on a five-point scale). Fifth, teachers were asked about their teaching practice and the methods used (Section E). This section comprised eight items, namely (E1) levels taught (multiple choice), (E2) acquaintance with the syllabus (on a four-point scale), (E3) acquaintance with the CEFR (on a five-point scale), (E4) the level of influence of the CEFR on their teaching practice (on a three-point scale), (E5) the level of dependence on the textbook (on a four-point scale), (E6) the preferred type of teaching approach (relying more on texts, audio-visual materials, or verbal interaction, or seeking to strike a balance between them) (multiple choice), (E7) the acquaintance with different methods (multiple choice) and (E8) use of these different methods (multiple choice). The final part of the survey centred on the teachers' training needs (Section F) and queried (F1) their need for training in technology-mediated TBLT (an either/or question), (F2) the reason for this sort of training (multiple choice) and (F3) the existence of training opportunities in language teaching where they live (on a four-point scale).

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[11] Wolfgang Bandilla and Peter Hauptmanns, "Internetbasierte Umfragen als Datenerhebungstechnik für die empirische Sozialforschung," *ZUMA-Nachrichten* 45, no. 22 (1999); Ross Coomber, "Using the Internet for Survey Research," *Sociological Research Online* 2, no. 2 (1997).

[12] Rita M. Walczuch and Katja Hofmaier, "Measuring Customer Satisfaction on the Internet," MARC Working Paper MARC-WP/3/2000-13 (1999).

3.4. Sample population (Sections A and B)

The data collected in Sections A and B of the survey helped to characterize the sample population. A total of 297 individuals participated in the survey, 79.12% of which female (question A1). The age groups (question A2) were distributed as follows: 14.14% were 30 years old or less; 30.30% were between 31 and 40; 35.69% between 41 and 50; 16.16% between 51 and 60; and only 3.70% were 61 or more. The participants represented language teachers working in all levels of education, from primary to higher education and were distributed as follows: primary schools, 25.7%; junior high, 37.2%; senior high, 44.1%, higher/tertiary, 25%; adult education, 17.1%; and other, 3.6% (question E1). Answers were collected from thirteen different countries, namely

France (2), Germany (1), Greece (50), Hungary (8), Italy (54), the Netherlands (6), Portugal (44), Serbia (17), Spain (40), Switzerland (1), Turkey (24), the United Kingdom (9), and the United States (41) (question A3). Nevertheless, the samples from each country varied significantly, as participation was on a voluntary basis and the dissemination of the survey was more effective in some countries than others. On the other hand, in countries like Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece and Turkey, most of the responses were collected as a pre-course survey applied to teacher trainees. In terms of geographical distribution, as far as Europe is concerned, most respondents are from Mediterranean countries and represent 71.3% of the total sample. Only 15.7% of the participants are from Northern or Central Europe (including Serbia), whereas the remaining 13% are from the United States. Their teaching qualifications (question B1) had been acquired either through a Master's Degree in language teaching (33.67%), a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (23.91%) or Initial Teacher Training (21.89%), whereas the remaining 20.54% responded "other". A quarter of the qualifications (24.91%) had been obtained 10 years ago or less, while 35.01% had been gained between 11 to 20 years ago and 21.21% between 21 to 30 years ago (question B2). These data differ slightly from the answers given when teachers were asked about their length of service (question B3): in fact, almost a third (31.99%) reported a length of 1-10 years, 37.04% of 11-20 years and 24.24% of 21-30 years. This indicates that, on average, in about 4% of the cases there was a gap of time between the completion of their qualifications and the moment when they started teaching. Sample sizes for individual statistical analysis were in some cases less than 297, as some respondents did not answer all the questions in the survey. In other cases, however, sample sizes were more than 297, as some respondents provided more than an answer to some of the multiple choice questions (for example, levels taught).

4. Data analysis

4.1. Section C – knowledge and practice of TBLT

When queried about their awareness of TBLT (question C1), 61.68% of the teachers answered that they knew what it was, while 27.95% stated they were somewhat acquainted with it. Only 4.38% answered negatively.

C1. Awareness of TBLT				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No.	13	4.4	4.4	4.4
Somewhat.	83	27.9	27.9	32.3
Yes.	201	67.7	67.7	100.0
Total	297	100.0	100.0	

Table 7-1: Frequency analysis of responses to question C1.

It is interesting to note that in the comparison between the EU and the US, the percentage of teachers more acquainted with the approach was higher in the EU, as detailed in the chart below.

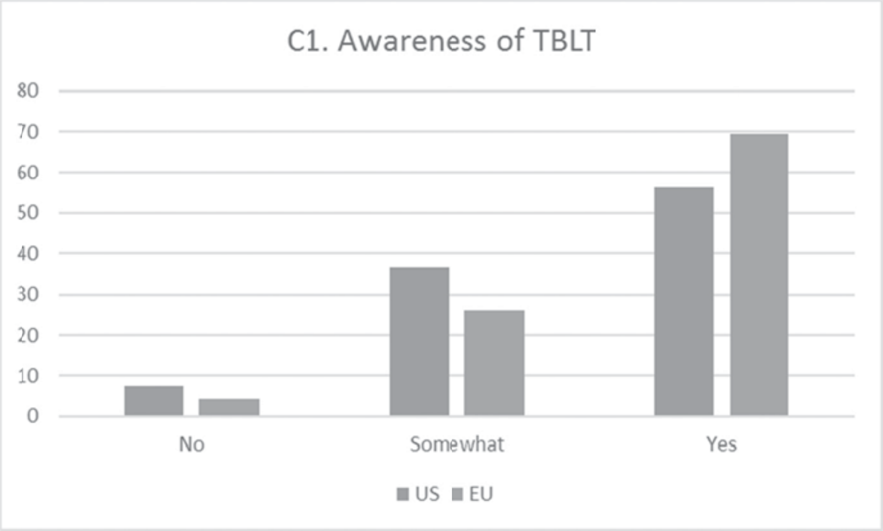

Fig. 7-1: Bar chart displaying the comparison of the percentages of teachers in the US and the EU who answered question C1.

Question C2 provided four definitions of “task” for teachers to choose from. The definitions were quoted from different sources and offered distinct perspectives of the concept:

- “A piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form."[13]

- "A task is a work plan that requires learners to process language pragmatically in order to achieve an outcome that can be evaluated in terms of whether the correct or appropriate propositional content has been conveyed."[14]
- "An activity which requires learners to arrive at an outcome from given information through some process of thought, and which allows teachers to control and regulate that process."[15]
- "A piece of work undertaken for oneself or for others, freely or for some reward." (Long, 1985)

It is clear that the vast majority of the teachers preferred Nunan's definition (144 respondents = 48.48%), followed by Ellis's (100 = 33.7%), and Prabhu (44 = 14.81%). Only 5 respondents (1.6%) subscribed to Long's concept.

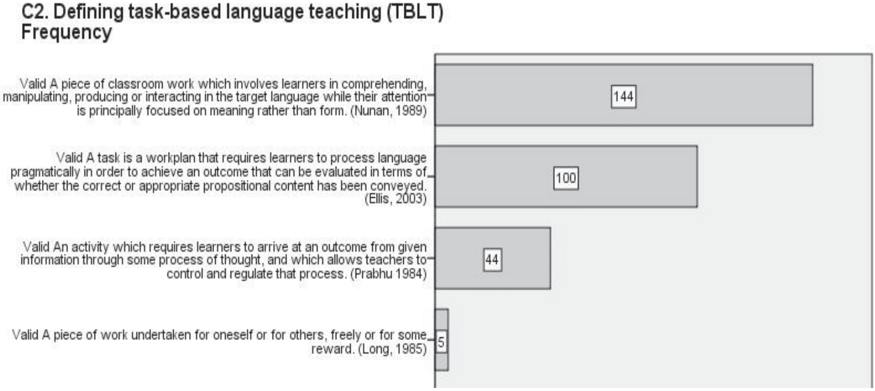

Fig. 7-2: Bar chart displaying the number of answers per definition of task (question C1).

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[13] David Nunan, *Designing Tasks for the Communicative Classroom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

[14] Rod Ellis, *Task-based language learning and teaching* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

[15] N. S. Prabhu, *Second Language Pedagogy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).

Comparing the percentages of the responses from the EU and the US, more American teachers subscribed to Nunan's definition (50.0%) than EU teachers (43.43%), while Prabhu's (which focuses on the teachers' control and regulation of the process) received 17.14% from the EU respondents and only 9.52% from the US. Concerning Ellis's definition, no significant difference exists between both groups (US = 33.3%; EU 35.7%).

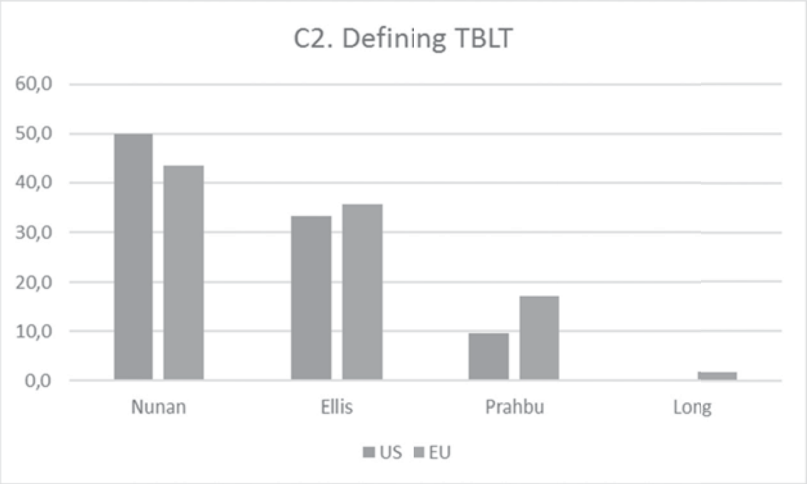

Fig. 7-3: Bar chart displaying the difference in the percentages of responses from the US and the EU to question C2.

Nonetheless, teachers were also given the chance to provide their own definition. Four concepts, two from the US, one from Spain, and another from France, were provided:

- "A piece of work that integrates the modes of communication, can be assessed with rubrics." (Respondent from the US)
- "A task is an activity with a specific goal and involves communicative language use in the process; it goes beyond the common classroom exercise because a task has a direct connection with the real world, and the kind of discourse that arises from a task

is intended to resemble that which occurs naturally in the real world[16]. The defining criteria of a task involve[17]:

  1. a primary focus on meaning;
  2. some kind of 'gap';
  3. a goal that needs to be worked towards;
  4. real-world processes of language use;
  5. outcome / evaluation." (Respondent from the US)

- "Ellis' definition + the outcome is something motivating for students and can be shown and shared with the learning community." (Respondent from Spain)
- "I would follow Claude Springer approach in his proposition with project based learning and consider TBLT to require tasks to be socially significant and meaningful even if all of the above are acceptable and accepted definitions of TBLT." (Respondent from France)

Again, although the number is very small, it is worth noting that while 2 respondents (one with a Ph.D. and the other one with an ME) correspond to 4% of the total US respondents, whereas the 2 EU respondents (both with a Ph.D.) correspond only to 0.86% of the total EU respondents.

Question C3 was about the antinomy classroom/real world. Teachers were given three options:

a) Tasks require the learner to perform a behaviour similar to the one he or she will carry out in the real world.
b) Tasks require the learner to do things that he or she will not do outside the classroom.
c) Tasks require both a) and b).

In this case, 71.38% went for item a), clearly indicating that their concept of task represents a departure from the traditional classroom activities and the role learners usually play in such a setting. A very residual number of teachers (1.01%) believed that the tasks could only be implemented in the classroom. Over a quarter of the respondents (27.61%) accepted that although a task would require a behaviour similar to that of the real world, it would have to be carried out inside the classroom. In this chapter, no major differences are to be found in the comparison between US and EU respondents.

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[16] Rod Ellis, "Task-based research and language pedagogy," *Language teaching research* 4, no. 3 (2000).

[17] Peter Skehan, "Task-based instruction," *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 18 (1998); Rod Ellis, "Task-based research and language pedagogy," *Language teaching research* 4, no. 3 (2000).

On the other hand, teachers are in general confident about their ability to implement TBLT (C4). In a five-point Likert scale, only 5.7% (17 respondents) claimed they knew nothing about the implementation of TBLT, whereas 53.2% rated their confidence 4 (124 respondents) ("I have a reasonably good idea of how to proceed") or 5 (33 respondents) ("I know exactly what it takes to implement TBLT"). Equally meaningful was the number of those (91 = 30.63%) who believed they had "grasped the basics of TBLT", although not feeling comfortable about putting it into practice.

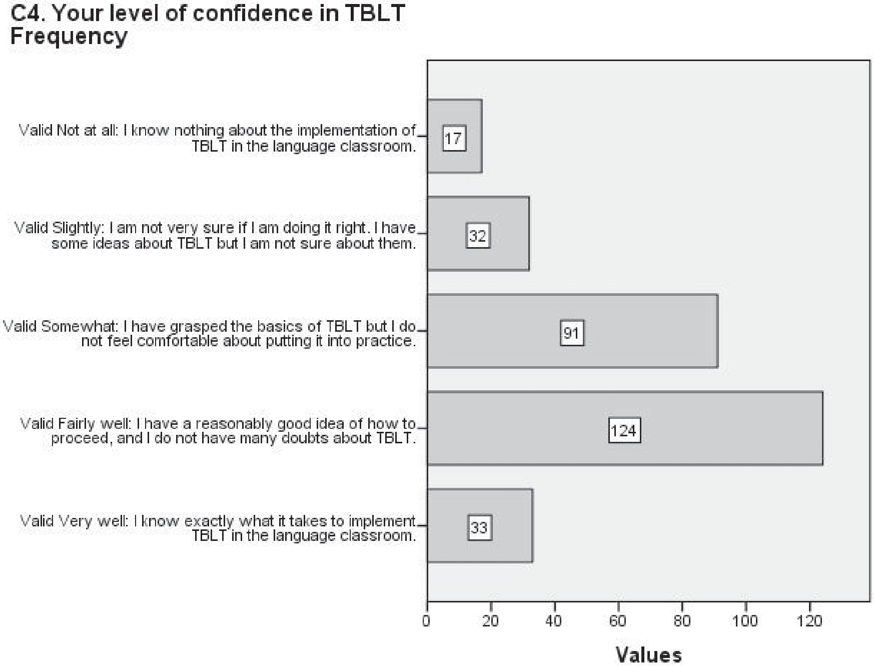

Fig. 7-4: Bar chart displaying the number of answers per level of confidence in the implementation of TBLT (question C4).

Here the differences between US and EU respondents are more marked. The level of confidence expressed by EU teachers is higher than

US teachers: 32.13% chose “Very well” and 42.08 “Fairly well”, as opposed to 16.67% and 33.33% respectively.

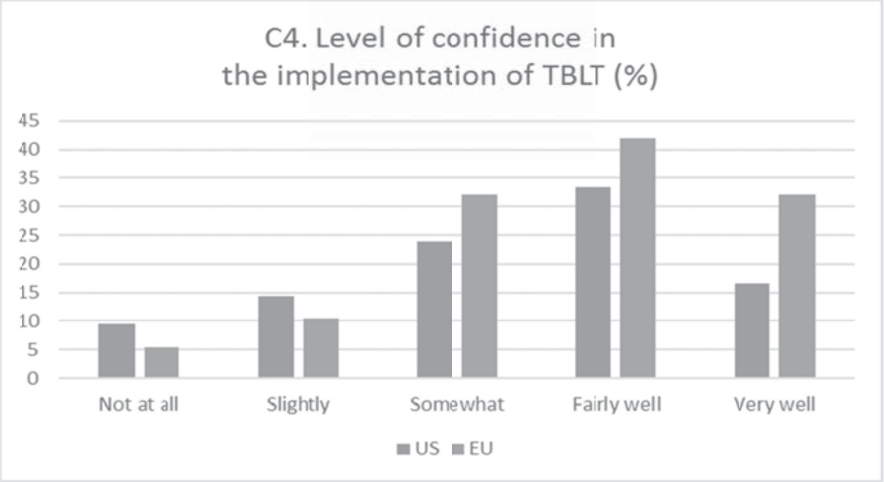

Fig. 7-5: Bar chart displaying the difference in the percentages of responses from the US and the EU to question C4.

When asked how often they carried task-based activities in the classroom (question C5), three quarters of the respondents claimed they did it more than once per school term. Within this group, 57 respondents (19.19%) stated that they did it once a week or more, 73 (24.58%) more than once a month and the remaining 95 (31.98%) once a month or less. Almost matching the above figure of those who claimed they knew nothing about how to implement TBLT (17), only 16 respondents (5.72%) declared that they never did it.

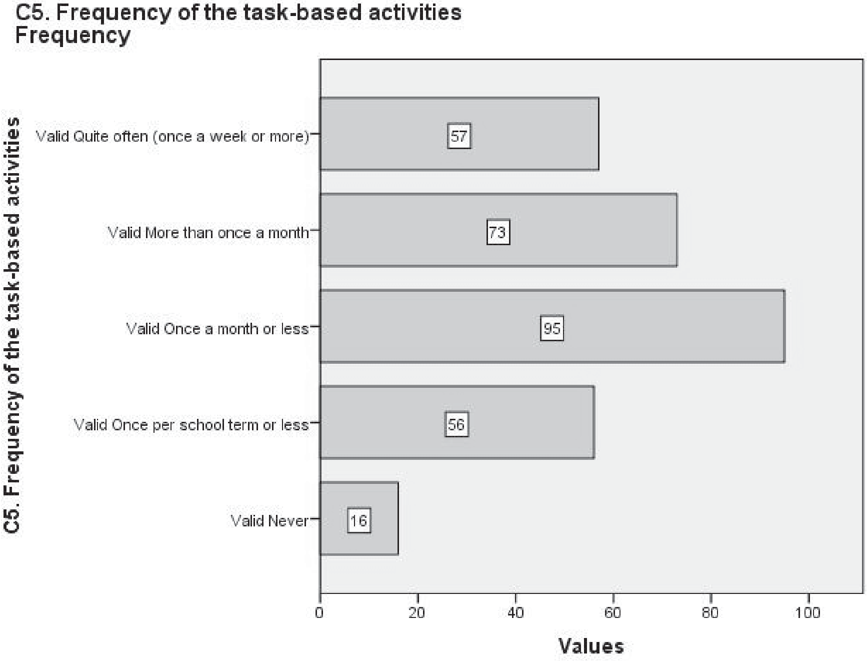

Fig. 7-6: Bar chart displaying the frequency of task-based activities in the classroom (question C5).

Although EU teachers claim to be more confident than their US colleagues about the implementation of TBLT, the fact is that the latter claim that when it comes to practice they carry out task-based activities in the classroom more often than European teachers (“More than once a month” received 26.19% from the US against 23.98% from the EU, and “Quite often” received 30.95% and 17.19%, respectively).

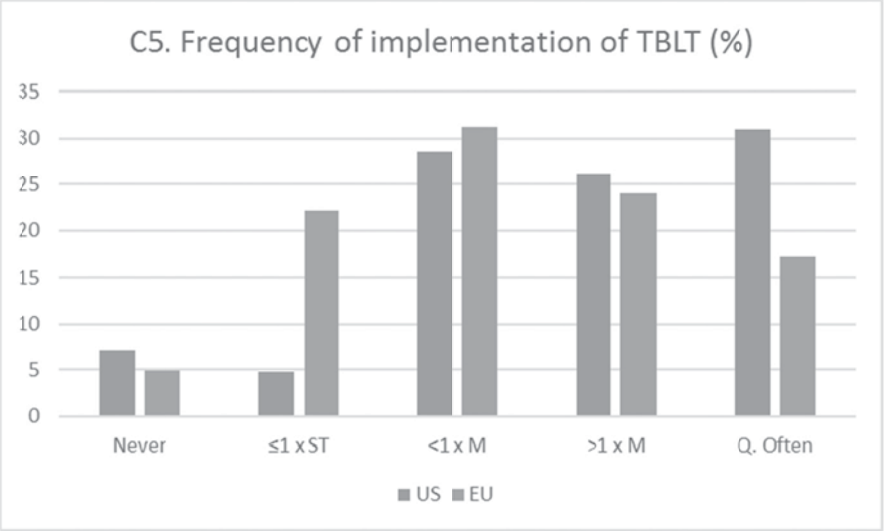

Fig. 7-7: Bar chart displaying the difference in the percentages of responses from the US and the EU to question C5.

Teachers were also queried about how often ICT was involved in the task-based activities carried out in the classroom (question C6). It is also clear that a significant part of the teachers resorts to ICT in TBLT. Those who answered "Always" (23) or "Often" (104) account for 42.7% of the universe, and those who answered "Sometimes" account for 38.3%. On the other hand, 34 (11.45%) replied "Rarely", 10 (3.37%) "Never" and 12 (4.04%) stated that they did not do TBLT in their classroom. In the latter case, it is possible that those who claimed in questions C4 and C5 that they never implemented TBLT in their classroom may have chosen to answer this question with "Never" instead.

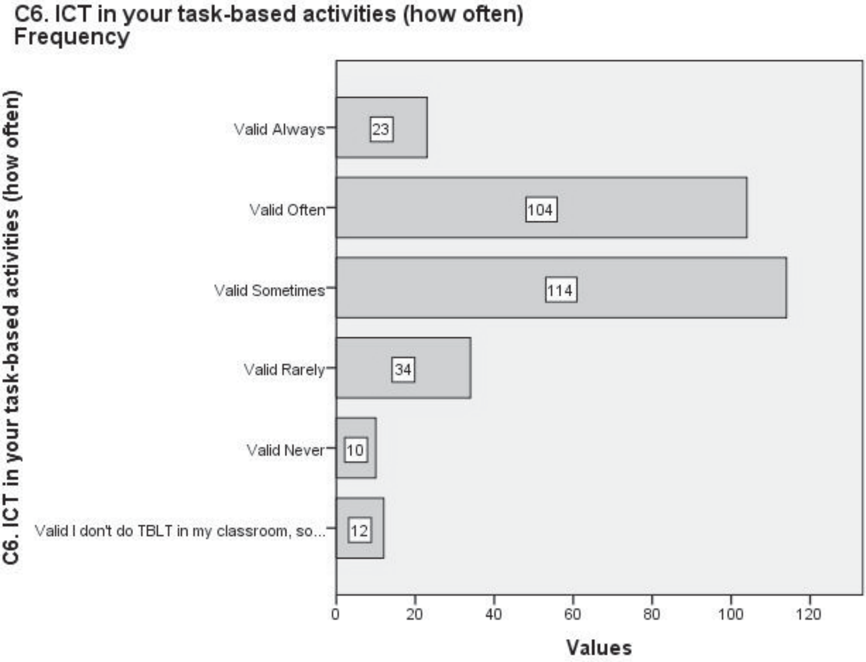

Fig. 7-8: Bar chart displaying the frequency of the use of ICT in task-based activities in the classroom (question C6).

As opposed to the responses to the previous question (C5), here EU teachers claim to be more prone to include ICT in the task-based activities in the language classroom, as those who stated that they do it often almost doubles the number of their US counterparts who also chose the same response (38.46% vs. 21.42%).

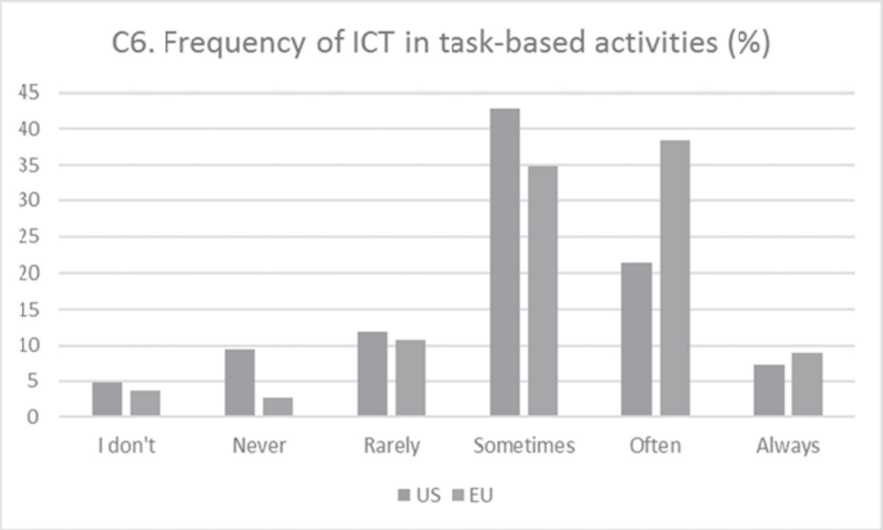

Fig. 7-9: Bar chart displaying the difference in the percentages of responses from the US and the EU to question C6.

Question C7 was about the advantages of technology-mediated tasks. Teachers were asked to rank the positive aspects of technology-mediated tasks from 1 (the most important) to 6 (the least relevant).

The options were as follows:

a) They lead to a greater more active involvement of the learners in the learning process.
b) They increase/promote the development of the learners' communicative skills.
c) They put learners in communication contexts closer to real life.
d) They give students autonomy and decision-making abilities.
e) They promote collaboration and mutual assistance.
f) ICT+TBLT fosters the teachers' creativity, adaptability and responsiveness to new challenges.

The option that was chosen as the most important by most respondents was item a), with 28.3%. Not far from this figure came option c), with 24,6%. Items b) and d) came out with a tie at 16.2%, and e) was chosen as the most important only by 5.1%. This means that teachers prioritise the learners' active involvement and real-life contexts over greater autonomy and collaboration. Interestingly enough, although Nunan’s definition was the one that scored higher in question C2, with its emphasis on interaction, comprehension and production in the target language, the promotion of the learners’ communicative skills does not appear as a priority, nor does collaboration and mutual assistance.

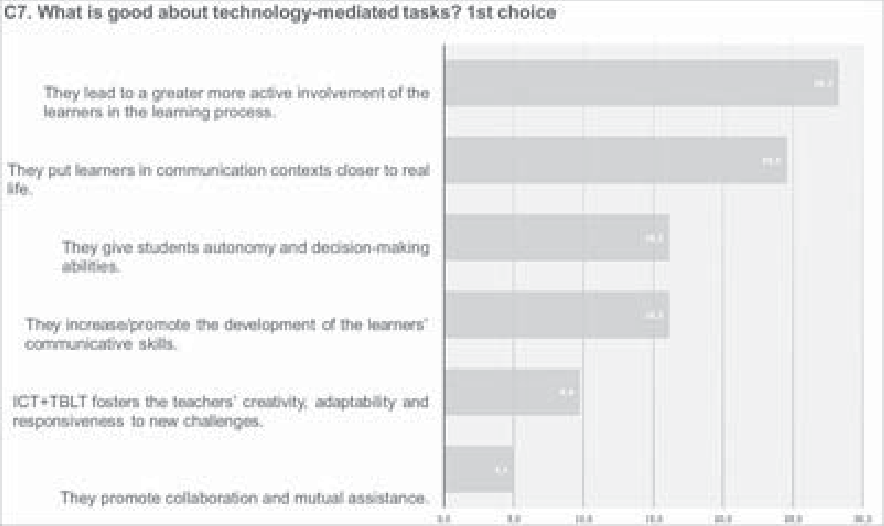

Fig. 7-10: Bar chart displaying the percentage of 1st choice per option regarding the advantages offered by technology-mediated tasks (question C7).

As this question asked teachers to rank the items in order of importance, it was possible to determine which item scored the highest based on a sum of points (where the one ranked first was worth 6 points down to the one ranked last worth 1 point only). Thus, item a) comes first with 1244 points, followed by c), with 1184, b) with 1102, d) with 1089, e) with 830 and f) with 788. If we consider the first four items, the Standard Deviation (SD) is 63.1006141 with a Mean (M) of 1154.75, thus the SD being only 5.46% of M. Therefore, all four items are relatively close in terms of the importance attached by the respondents. Items e) (promotion of the teachers’ creativity, adaptability and responsiveness), and f) (collaboration and mutual assistance) are markedly below the other items.

Here, too, a difference between US and EU respondents becomes apparent, especially in what concerns the idea that this type of tasks deals with communication contexts closer to real life and promotes the development of the learners' communicative skills, which was more frequently subscribed by US respondents (respectively 76.01% and 67.07%) than their European colleagues (61.17% and 56.28%).

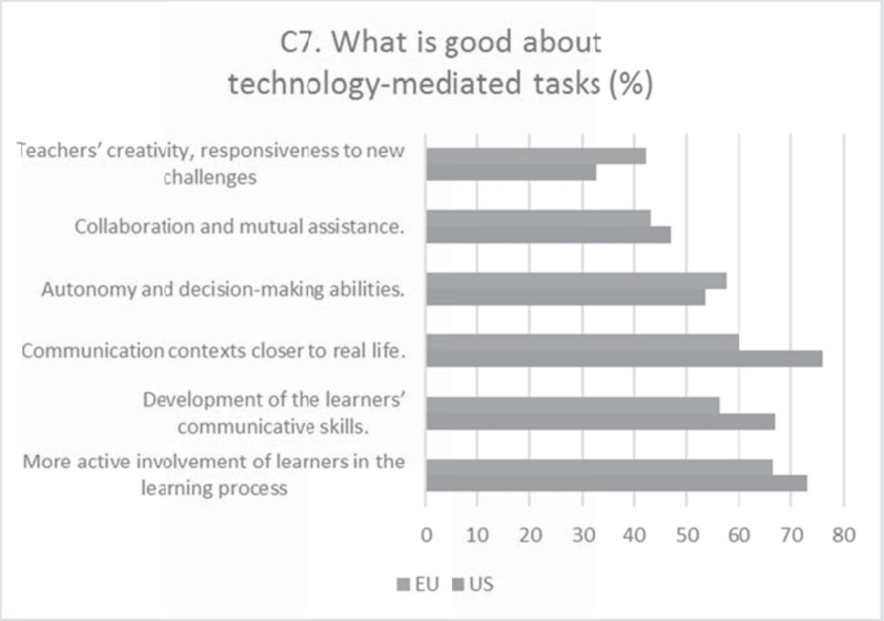

Fig. 7-11: Bar chart displaying the difference in the percentages of responses from the US and the EU to question C7.

Question C8 focused instead on the most challenging aspects of technology-mediated tasks. Again, they were asked to rank the options from 1 (the most important) to 7 (the least relevant).

The options were the following:

a) Lack of knowledge of what TBLT entails or how to implement it.
b) Difficulty in getting samples of good practice in ICT+TBLT that can meet my needs as a teacher.
c) Difficulty in simultaneously monitoring the work of several groups of learners during the ICT+TBLT activity.
d) The learners' resistance to using the foreign language in the course of the activity.

e) The learners' lack of language/linguistic resources (vocabulary and grammar) to apply to the activity.
f) Difficulty in designing and applying tools for evaluation that may enable the teacher to evaluate the learners' performance.
g) Difficulty in finding time to plan and prepare an ICT+TBLT activity.

Item g) was chosen as the most important aspect by as many as 22.9% of the respondents, at a distance of more than 8% from option c), with 14.5%. The variance of the remaining 5 items (a), b), d), e), and f)) is of 0.5096, with a standard variation of only 0.713862, which means that there is no significant difference between the percentages. So factors preventing teachers from implementing technology-mediated tasks have less to do with methodological issues (options a), b), and f)) or with the learners' limitations (options d) and e)), and more with pragmatic issues, such as time management and classroom management (options g) and c)).

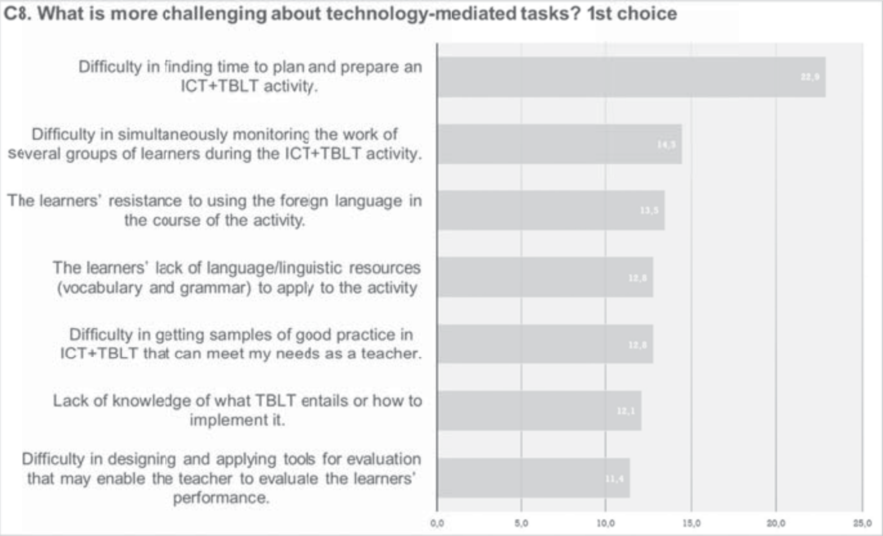

Fig. 7-12: Bar chart displaying the percentage of first choice per option regarding the challenges posed by technology-mediated tasks (question C8).

This question also implied ranking the items in accordance with the order of importance that teachers attached to each of them. Again, the sum of points (where the one ranked first was worth 7 points down to the one ranked last worth 1 point only) was calculated. Thus, item g) comes first with 1333 points, followed by b), with 1240, c) with 1216, f) with 1213, e) with 1191, d) with 1145 and a) with 978. If we exclude the latter, the Standard Deviation (SD) is 57.22 with a Mean (M) of 1223, thus the SD being only 4.68% of M. Therefore, the first six items are close in terms of the importance attached by the respondents. Items a) (lack of knowledge of what TBLT entails or how to implement it) is also markedly below the other items.

In comparing the EU and US responses, differences are more marked in items g) and f), where in terms of percentages more US teachers are worried about the management of time (84.96%) and the evaluation tools (72.36%), than the EU teachers (68.78% and 62.78%, respectively).

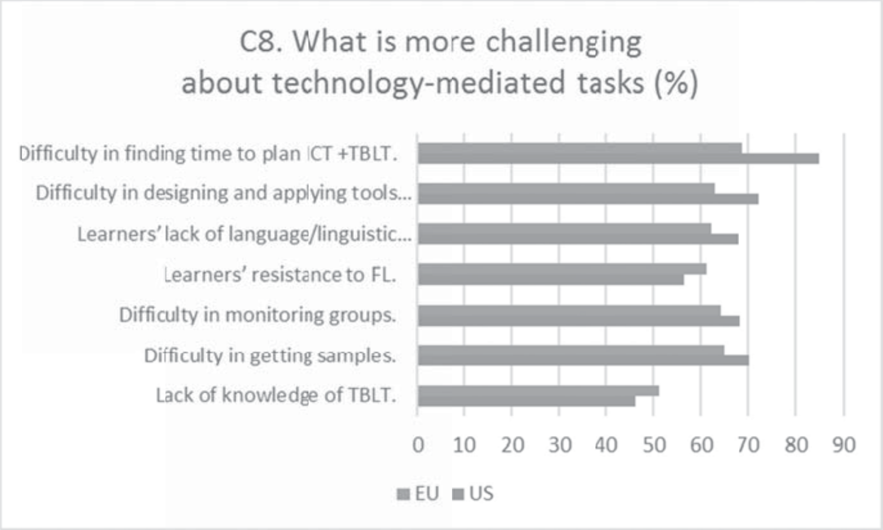

Fig. 7-13: Bar chart displaying the difference in the percentages of responses from the US and the EU to question C8.

The last question in Section C was about (C9) was related to the dimensions of ICT that teachers valued the most in TBLT activities, namely *Memory* (storing and organizing information, etc.), *Communication* (interaction with others, negotiation, exchange, sharing, litigation, etc.), *Construction* (of products, outputs, including written texts, videos, flyers, posters, etc.) and *Process* (of discovery, explanation, learning, evaluation, enquiry, etc.). While *Memory* only scored 3%, *Construction* achieved as much as 23% and *Process* 29%. The dimension that was the most valued was *Communication*, with 45%. This figure is in contrast with the answers to question C7, where only 16.4% of the teachers claimed that technology-mediated tasks promoted the development of the learners' communicative skills.

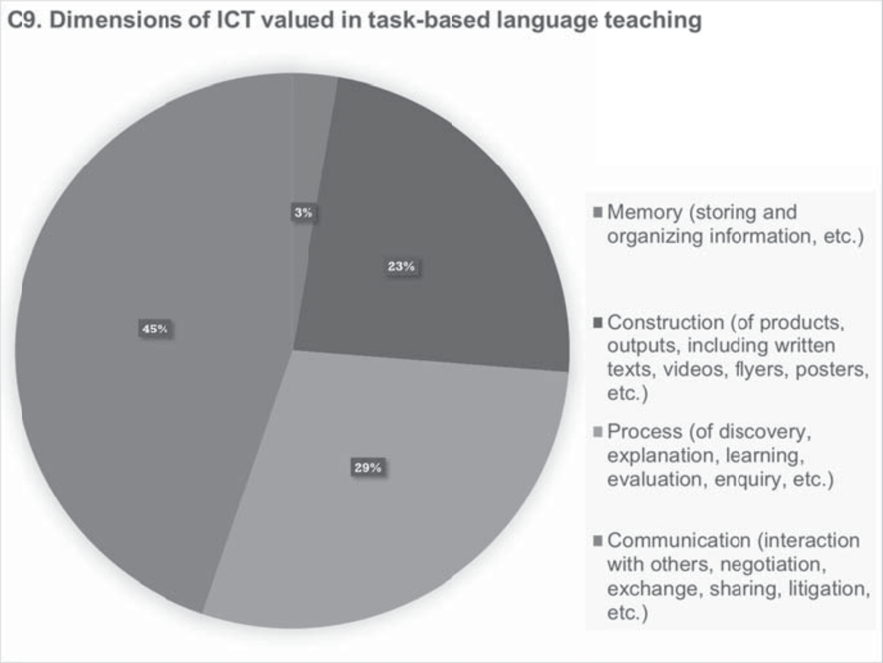

Fig. 7-14: Pie chart displaying the percentages of answers per dimensions of ICT most valued in TBLT (question C9).

As teachers ranked the items in order of importance, the sum of points was calculated (where the one ranked first was worth 4 points down to the one ranked last worth 1 point only) and the differences between *Communication* (930 points), *Process* (869) and *Construction* (788) are less marked. *Memory* (453) is still well off the mark. If we exclude the latter, the Standard Deviation (SD) is 58.16260731 with a Mean (M) of 862.333, thus the SD being 6.74% of M. Therefore, the first three items are relatively close.

No major differences exist between US and EU respondents. However, US teachers are more prone to prefer Communication than their EU counterparts (58.94% vs. 47.38%).

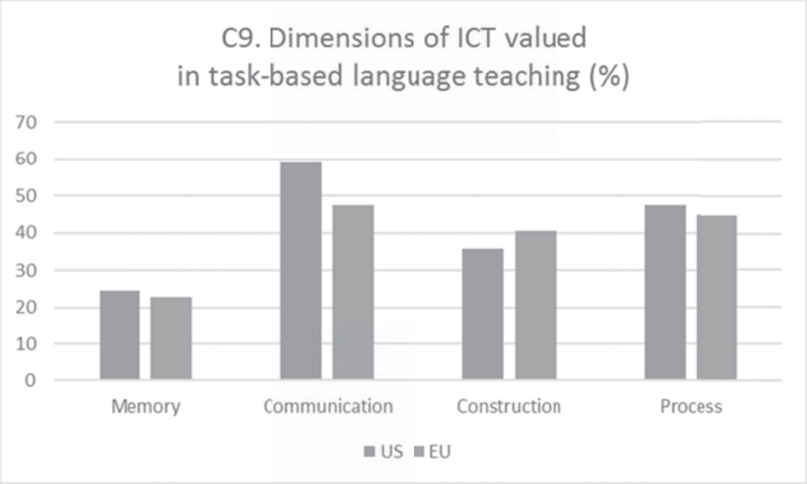

Fig. 7-15: Bar chart displaying the difference in the percentages of responses from the US and the EU to question C9.

4.2. Section D – Uses of ICT in the language classroom

In order to establish the importance that teachers attach to ICT in the classroom, regardless of the method or approach, Section D centred on the exploitation of the potential of technology in their teaching practice. Question D1 queried teachers about the use of ICT in the language classroom. The vast majority (90.24%, as opposed to the remaining 9.76%) unequivocally stated that they did. In this question EU teachers are slightly more positive about the use of ICT than their US peers:

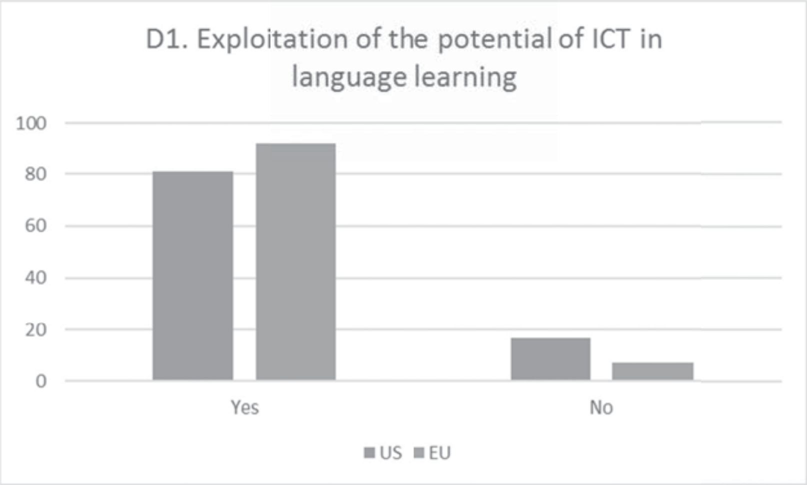

Fig. 7-16: Bar chart displaying the difference in the percentages of responses from the US and the EU to question D1.

The overall result matches that of question D2, where teachers were asked if they believed that it is possible to circumvent the lack of ICT resources at school. In this multiple-choice question, 63.30% of the respondents believed that even if the school's resources are very limited, there always is the chance to make use of ICT in the language classroom, although that might severely restrict their options. 28.62% were more optimistic and went for "Sure (it is always possible to learn about ICT-based activities that do not depend on the means available at school)". Only 8.08% did not believe it was possible to resort to ICT in the language classroom without the school's own resources, as there are no alternatives. Here US respondents were more positive than their EU colleagues, as seen in the bar chart below.

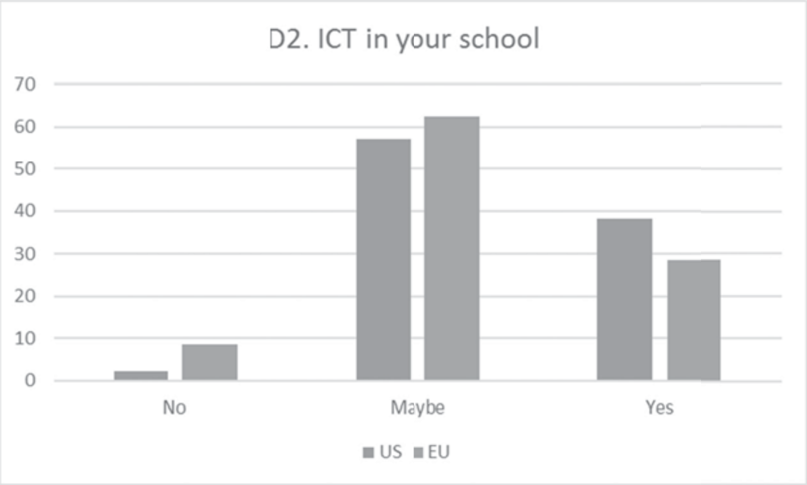

Fig. 7-17: Bar chart displaying the difference in the percentages of responses from the US and the EU to question D2.

As these answers also depended on the quality of the resources available at school, the next question (D3) asked teachers to rate them in a five point-scale, from Poor to Fair, Average, Good and Excellent. Very few considered them to be Excellent (16 respondents = 5.39%), much less than those who rated them as Poor (53 = 17.85%), who were almost as many as those who rated them as Fair (57 = 19.19%). However, 91 respondents (30.63%) chose Average and 80 (26.93%) classified them as Good.

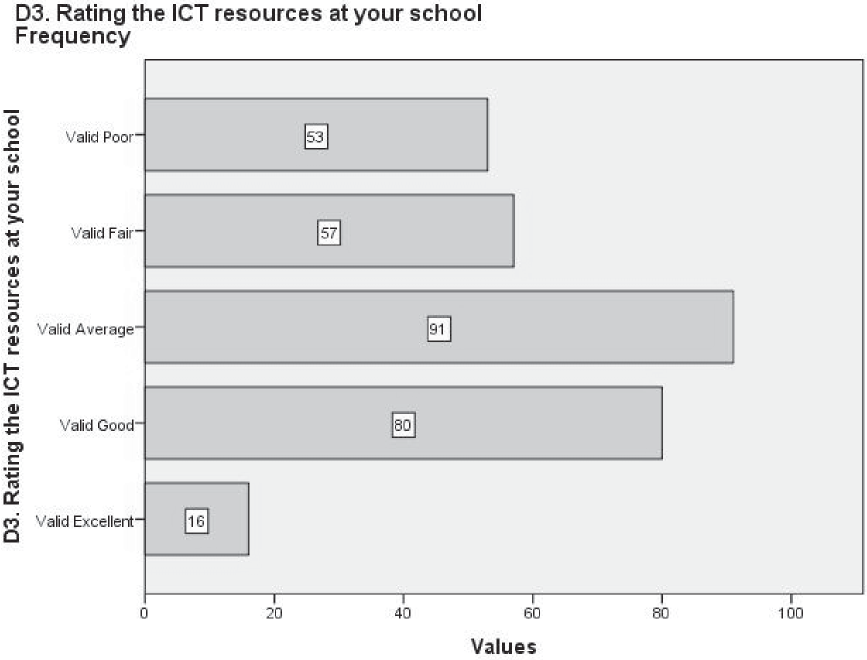

Fig. 7-18: Bar chart displaying the number of answers per level of quality of the ICT resources available at school (question D3).

In this respect, the main difference to be found between EU and US respondents lies in those who rated the resources as “Poor” and “Excellent”: 11.90% of US teachers rated them as “Poor”, which is almost half of EU teachers (19.00%); conversely, more US teachers classified the ICT resources as “Excellent” (9.52%), as opposed to 4.52% of the EU respondents.

These figures also depend on the uses that teachers make of ICT in the classroom. When asked why they thought ICT was important in their classes (question D4: options were to be ranked from 1 (the most important) to 8 (the least important)), they were presented with eight items, namely:

a) To facilitate communication with the students.
b) To share materials and other resources with the students.
c) To create and develop products.
d) To engage in learning activities.

e) To get in touch with colleagues from other institutions.
f) To assess students.
g) To make students more proficient in the use of ICT in the context of a foreign language.
h) To turn students into more proficient users of the foreign language.

Most teachers chose either “To engage in learning activities” (30.6%) or “To turn students into more proficient users of foreign languages” (27.3%). Less significant was the communicative dimension (“To facilitate communication with the students” (13.1%); “To share materials and resources with the students” (8.8%); and “To get in touch with colleagues from other institutions” (1.7%)), which does not match the importance attached to communication in question C9. However, the first option that was valued by most teachers is in line with the answers they gave in question C7.

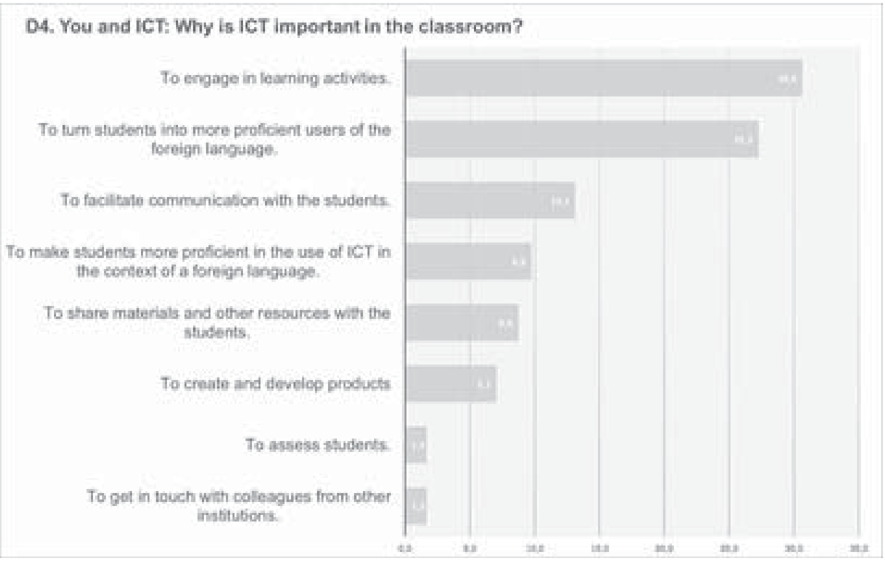

Fig. 7-19: Bar chart displaying the percentages of answers per reasons why ICT is used in the language classroom (question D4).

In this question were required to rank the items in order of importance. Once more, the sum of points (where the one ranked first was worth 8 points down to the one ranked last worth 1 point only) was calculated. Thus, item d) comes first with 1843 points, followed by h), with 1666, b) with 1484, a) with 1469, g) with 1408, c) with 1393, f) with 841, and e) with 840. Without taking into account the last two items, the Standard Deviation (SD) is 160.62732 with a Mean (M) of 1543.833, thus the SD being only 10.40% of M. Therefore, the first six items are relatively balanced in terms of the distribution of points. Items f) and e) are markedly below the other items. The difference between the responses of EU and US participants is not significant, although US teachers rated item h) higher (106.09 points) than their EU counterparts (84.74 points; both figures are weighted averages), as seen in the bar chart below.

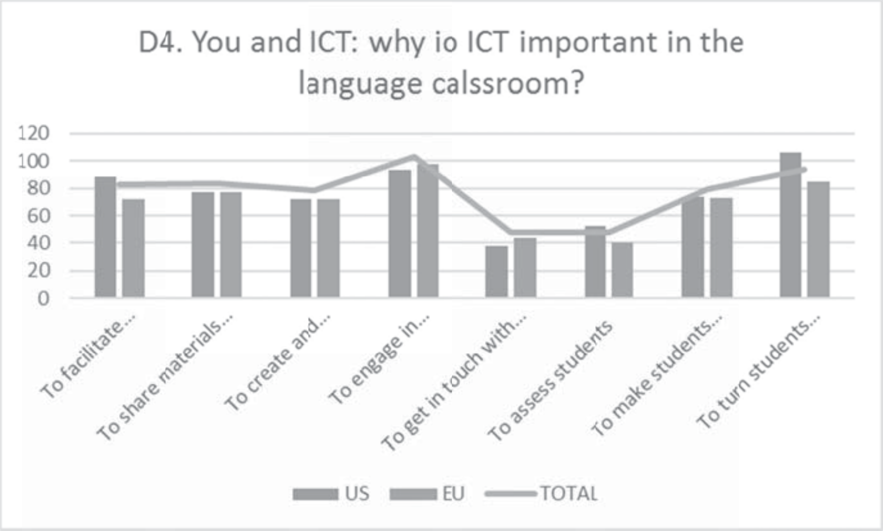

Fig. 7-20: Bar chart displaying the difference in the rating of items in terms of weighted average of question D4 by US and EU respondents.

In parallel to questions C5 and C6, teachers were queried about the frequency of ICT-based language learning activities—regardless of the approach or method—in the classroom (question D5). Again, those who answered “Quite often (once a week or more)” (79 respondents = 26.59%) and “More than once a month” (84 = 28.28%) outnumber the total of those who answered “Once a month or less” (77 = 25.92%), “Once per school term or less” (47 = 15.82%) and “Never” (10 = 3.36%).

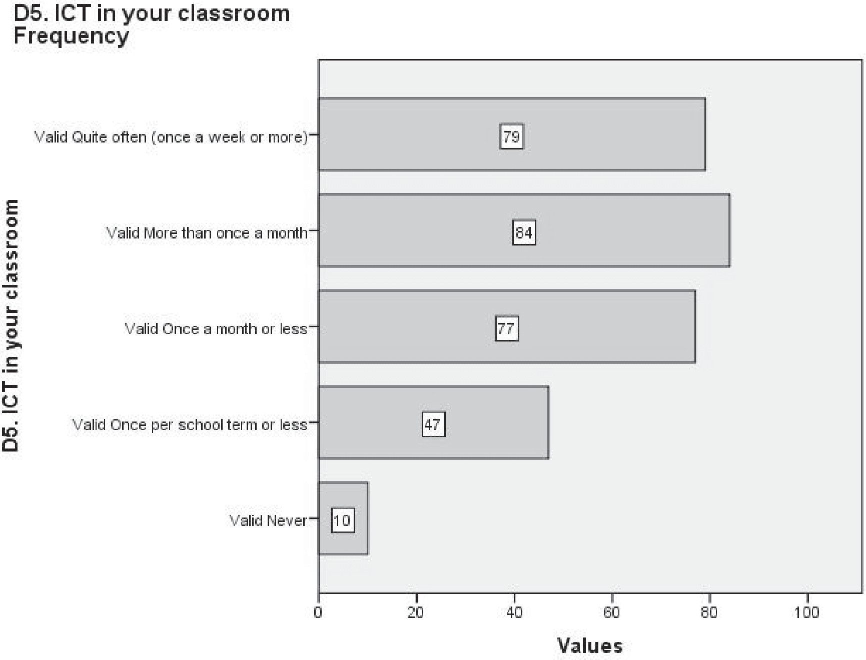

Fig. 7-21: Bar chart displaying the frequency of the use of ICT in language learning activities in the classroom (question D5).

In this respect, US and EU figures do not differ significantly, as illustrated by the bar chart below (Figure 21).

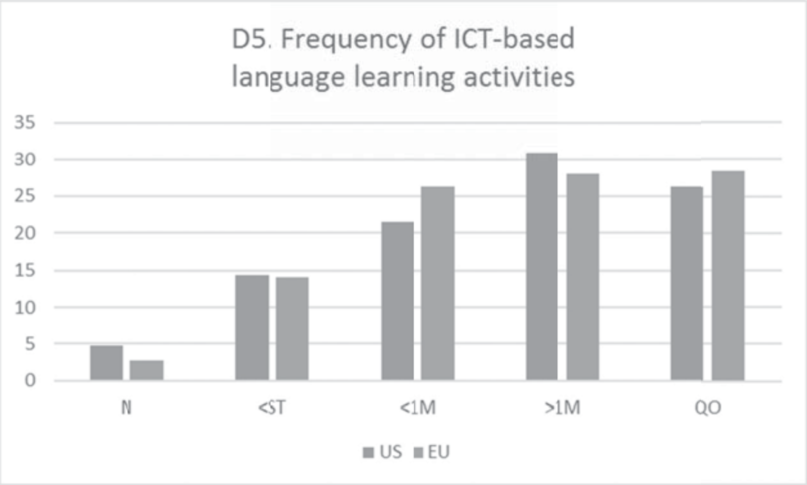

Fig. 7-22: Bar chart displaying the difference in the percentages of responses from the US and the EU to question D5.

4.3. Section E – Teaching practice, methods and approaches

This section of the questionnaire started asking teachers about how well acquainted they were with two methodological references: the official syllabus of the subject they teach, on the one hand, and the *Common European Framework of Reference*, on the other. These two instruments are important as both unambiguously recommend the adoption of TBLT (in the case of the former, this is particularly noticeable in secondary education in many countries). In the first case, when asked how often they consulted the syllabus of the subject they teach (question E2), 138 respondents chose “All the time (it helps me plan my lesson)”, which corresponds to 46.46% of the total respondents. “Occasionally (not indispensable to plan my lessons)” gathered 122 answers (41.07%). The number of those who responded “Never (I rely mostly on the decisions and planning of my department)” is residual (11 = 3.7%) and less significant than those who responded “Rarely (I prefer to rely on the way in which the textbook organises the contents throughout the school year)” (26 = 8.75%). Statistically speaking, the figures of the responses of the EU and US teachers do not vary significantly (“Often” + “Always” received 85.52% from the EU and 83.33% from the US).

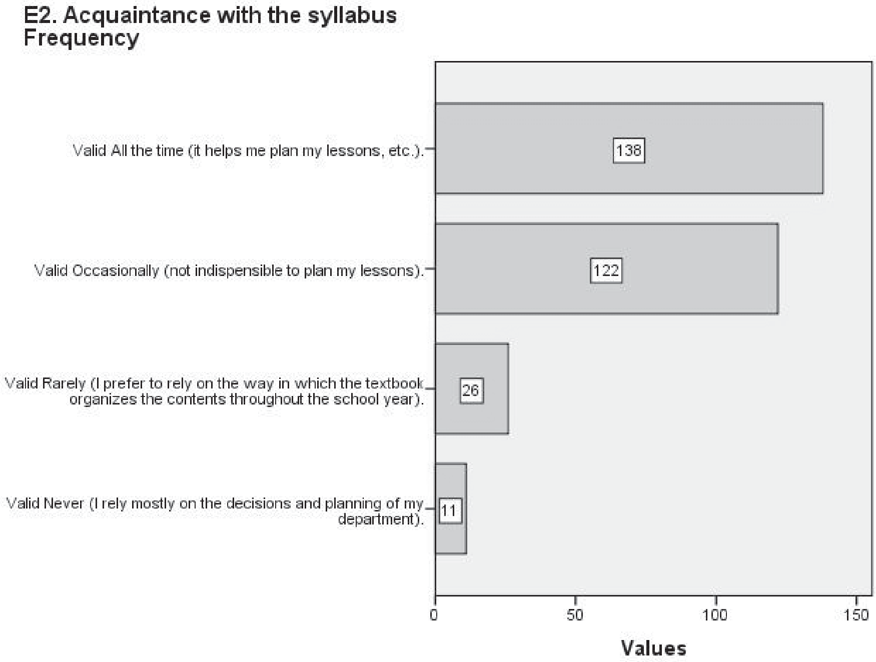

Fig. 7-23: Bar chart displaying the teachers' dependence on the syllabus (question E2).

Question E3 asked teachers about how well acquainted they were with the *Common European Framework of Reference*. The vast majority of the teachers declared that they had already read it (253 = 85.19%): 99 (33.33%) stated that they had read most of it and were well acquainted with its content; 107 (36.03%) had read parts of it and were familiar with its content; 47 (15.82%) had read parts but were not truly familiar with it. Only 24 (8.08%) declared that they had heard of it but were not familiar with its content.

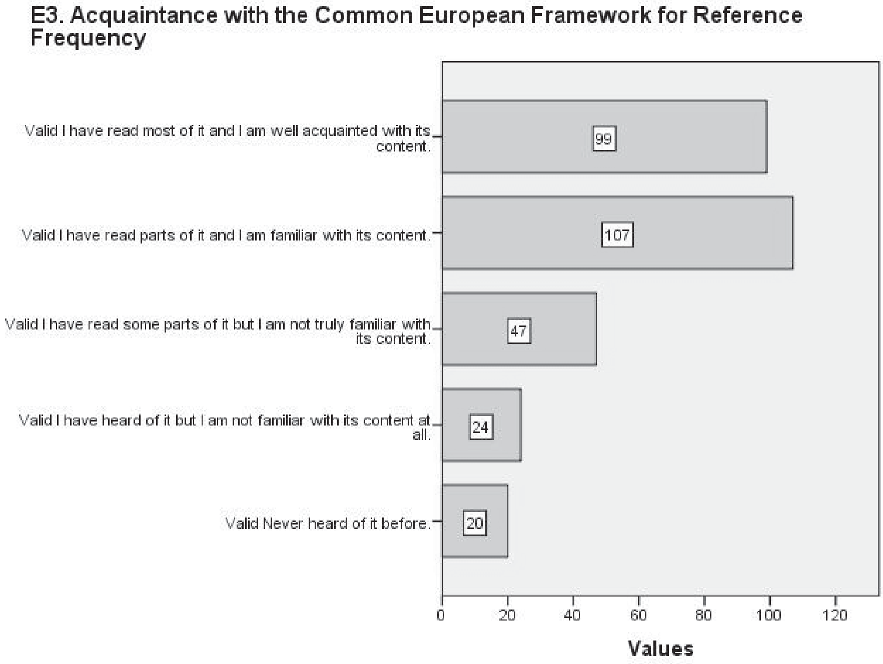

Fig. 7-24: Bar chart displaying the number of teachers acquainted with the CEFR per level of acquaintance (question E3).

The respondents who acknowledged that they had never heard of it before were only 20 (6.73%), almost all of them from the US (19) and one from the UK. Still, in terms of the total respondents from the US (41), they represent 46.34%, which indicates that the majority of the American teachers who participated in the survey have already heard of this European instrument, although in proportions different from those of the rest of the respondents ("I have heard of it but I am not familiar with its content": 9 respondents (21.95%); "I have read some parts of it but I am not truly familiar with its content": 5 (12.20%); "I have read parts of it and am familiar with its content": 3 (7.31%); "I have read most of it and I am well acquainted with its content": 5 (12.20%)).

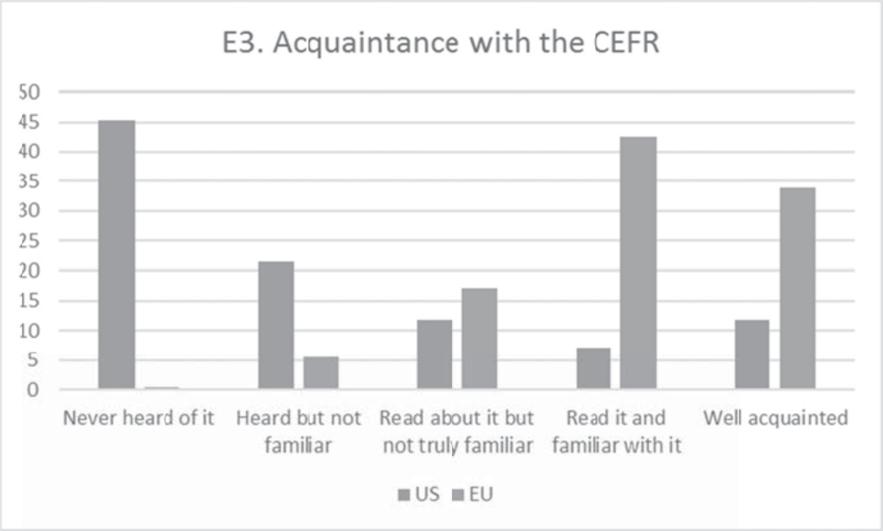

Fig. 7-25: Bar chart displaying the difference in the percentages of responses from the US and the EU to question E3.

The teachers' perception on the influence that the CEFR may have had in their teaching practice somehow mirrors their acquaintance with this instrument. Question E4 asked teachers if they believed that the *Common European Framework of Reference* had some bearing on their teaching practice. As many as 115 (38.72%) responded "Surely (it does have, because I use it myself as a source for my teaching strategies, my lesson planning and the assessment of my students)", while "Maybe (it may have, but mainly because it has been used as a source for the national curriculum and as a methodological framework for the textbooks)" got 157 responses. Only 25 claimed the CEFR had no bearing on their teaching practice.

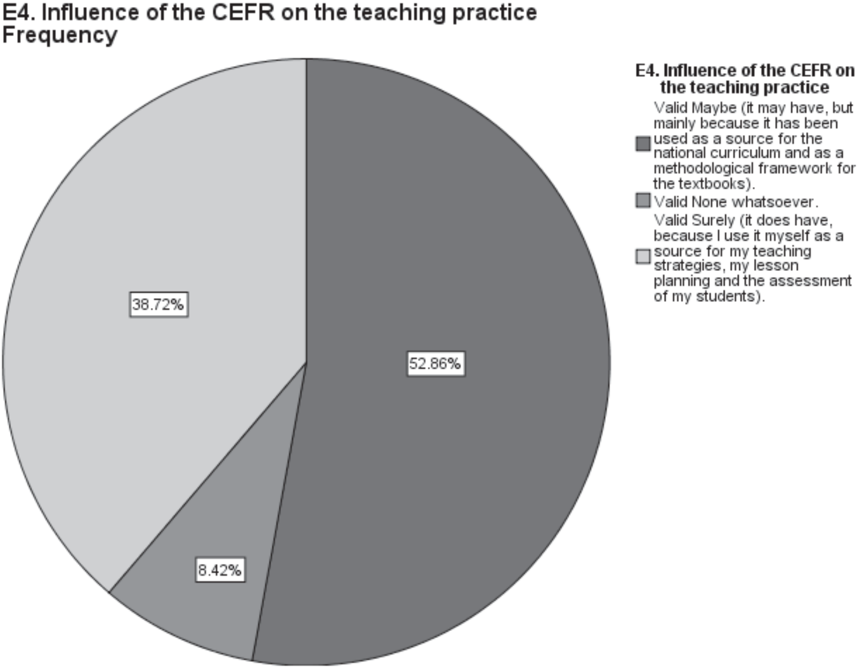

Fig. 7-26: Pie chart displaying the teachers' perception of the influence of the CEFR on the teaching practice (question E4).

Understandably, the difference between US and EU respondents is very marked, with 38.10% of US teachers stating that it has no influence on their teaching practice (EU = 2.71%). At the other end of the scale, 42.08% EU teachers claim that it does influence them (US = 11.90%).

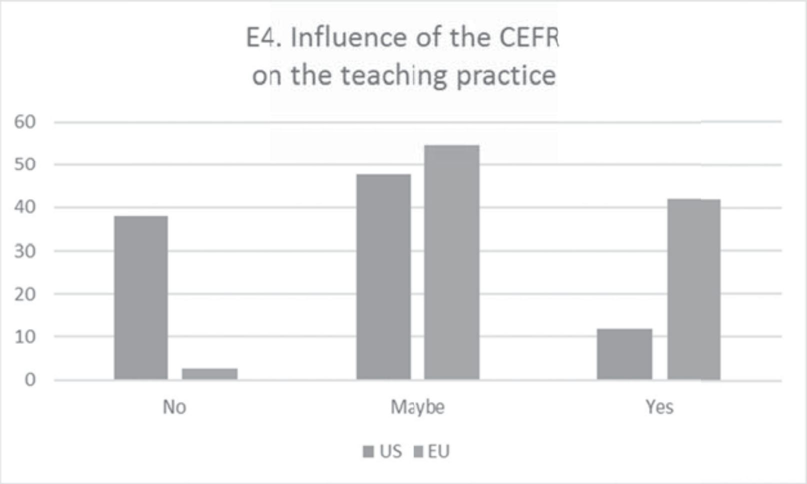

Fig. 7-27: Bar chart displaying the difference in the percentages of responses from the US and the EU to question E4.

Another relevant methodological issue is the use of textbook in the classroom, as it may compete with TBLT in many respects. The effects on the teachers' creativity and critical thinking have already been analysed and their quality has been under close scrutiny[18]. Ur listed some disputes against textbooks, three of them with negative impact on the promotion of TBLT, namely that textbooks are unsuitable for students with different needs, that they prevent teachers' creativity, and that they enslave teachers and stop them from considering which methods are more suitable for the students' level[19]. In this survey, the vast majority of the teachers (189 =

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[18] Azam Ahmadi and Ali Derakhshan, "EFL Teachers' Perceptions towards Textbook Evaluation," *Theory and Practice in Language Studies* 6, no. 2 (February 2016); Tom Hutchinson and Eunice Torres, "The textbook as agent of change," *ELT Journal* 48, no. 4 (1994); Ian McGrath, *Materials evaluation and design for language teaching* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2002); Leslie E. Sheldon, *ESL textbooks and materials: problems in evaluation and development* (Oxford University Press: Modern English Publications, 1987); Leslie E. Sheldon, "Evaluating ELT textbooks and materials," *ELT Journal,* 42, no. 2 (1988); Alexandra Skierso, "Textbook selection and evaluation." In *Teaching English as a second or foreign language*, edited by Marianne Celce-Murcia (Boston: Heinle & Heinle Publishers, 1991).

[19] Penny Ur, *A course in language teaching: Practice and theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

63.64%) acknowledged that they still often depend on the textbook, though also resorting to other strategies, approaches and materials. The number of those who claimed they entirely rely on it is less than one tenth (27 = 9.09%). The number of respondents who stated that they seldom use it and rely mostly on other strategies, approaches and materials is in sharp contrast with the first figure, with only 34 responses (11.45%). The remaining 47 respondents (15.82%) declared that they use it sometimes and prefer to resort to other strategies, approaches and materials.

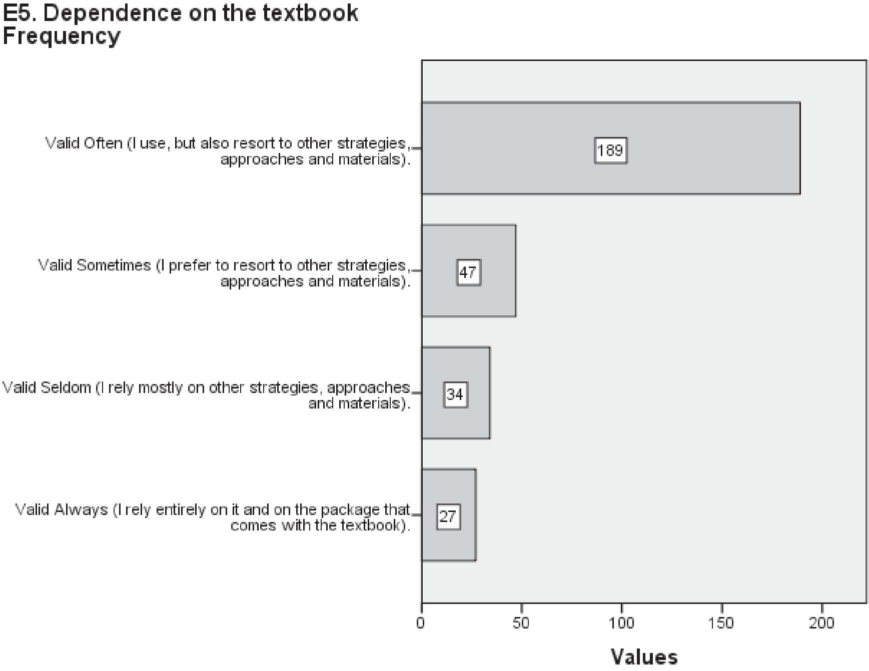

Fig. 7-28: Bar chart displaying the teachers' perception of their dependence on the textbook (question E5).

The difference between US and EU teachers is quite significant. One third of the US respondents (33.33%) claim that they seldom use it, which is in sharp contrast with the percentage of EU respondents (8.59%). Equally marked is the difference between the EU and the US in those who claim that the textbook is used quite often in their classes (69.23% versus 38.09%, respectively).

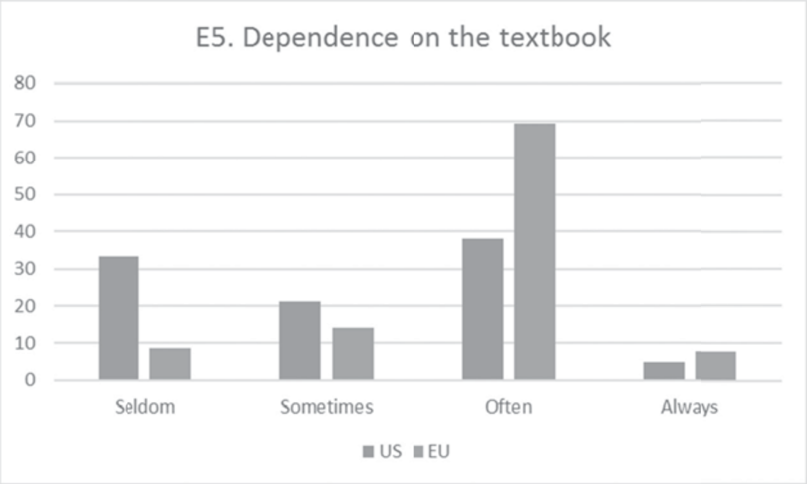

Fig. 7-29: Bar chart displaying the difference in the percentages of responses from the US and the EU to question E5.

Too much dependence on textbooks might lead us to believe that teachers are more concerned with the development of reading (and eventually writing) skills than with those related to oral production and comprehension. Nevertheless, in the following question about the skills they are trying to address (E6), only very few (16 = 5.38%) admitted that they rely mostly on texts and seek to develop skills related to the understanding and production of texts. In fact, respondents were almost unanimous (240 = 80.8%) in declaring that they seek to strike a balance between the different skills, relying on a diversity of materials and resources. Development of verbal interaction (which should be expected of the adoption of communicative approach) only got 22 responses (7.4%), while the use of audio-visual materials to the develop oral comprehension was the main focus of 19 respondents (6.39%).

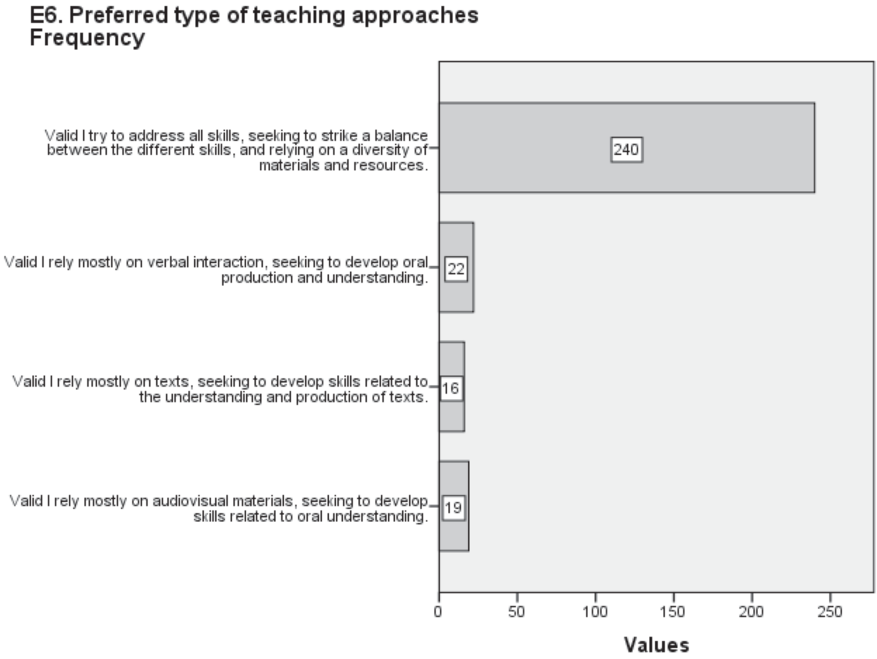

Fig. 7-30: Bar chart displaying the teachers' priority in terms of language skills to be developed (question E6).

There is a consensus between US and EU teachers in this respect, with very similar figures in all items, where "All skills addressed" received 78.57% (US) and 81.44% (EU).

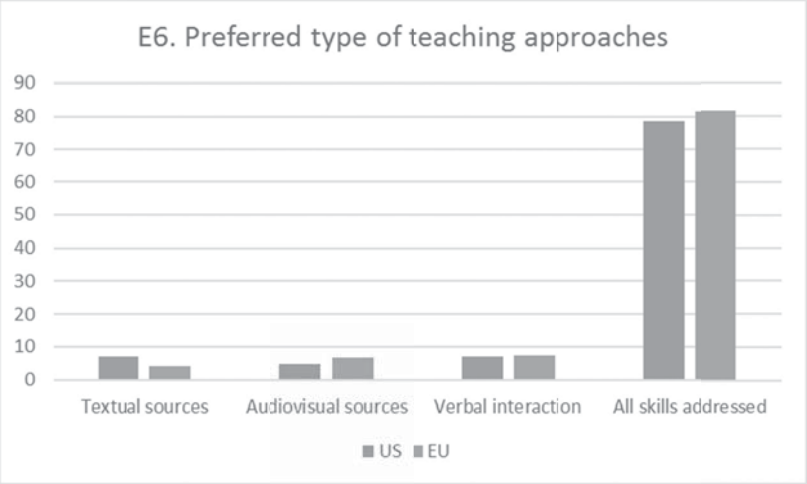

Fig. 7-31: Bar chart displaying the difference in the percentages of responses from the US and the EU to question E6.

The following two questions were about the diversity of language teaching methods they were acquainted with (question E7) and the methods they put to practice in the language classroom (question E8). The list of methods and respective definitions[20] teachers were presented with was as follows (in alphabetical order):

- Audio-lingual (learning a language means acquiring habits; practice of dialogues in a number of situations; the new language is first heard and extensively drilled before learners start writing it).
- Communicative language teaching (enables the learner to communicate effectively and appropriately in expected situations; the content focuses on functions [e.g. inviting, suggesting, complaining] or notions [e.g. expression of time, quantity, location]).
- Community Language Learning (attempts made to build strong personal links between the teacher and learner so that there are no

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[20] Adapted from Paul Shoebottom, *A Guide to Learning English* (Frankfurt International School), and partly based on Jack Richards and Theodore Rogers, *Approaches and methods in language teaching: A description and analysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

blocks to learning; talk in the mother tongue translated by the teacher for repetition by the learner).

- Direct Method (the teaching is done entirely in the target language; learners are not allowed to use their mother tongue; grammar rules avoided; emphasis on good pronunciation).
- Grammar-translation (learning largely by translation to and from the target language; grammar rules to be memorized; lists of vocabulary learned by heart; little or no emphasis on developing oral ability).
- Immersion (ESL learners are immersed in the target language for the whole of the school day and expected to learn math, science, humanities etc. through the medium of the target language; this is the case of immigrant students).
- Lexical Syllabus (based on a computer analysis of language which identifies the most common/useful words in the language and their uses; the syllabus teaches these words in the order of their frequency; emphasis on the use of authentic materials).
- Natural Approach (propounded by Stephen Krashen and Tracy Terrell[21]; stress on the similarities between learning the first and second languages; is no correction of mistakes; learning to take place by exposing learners to language that is comprehensible or made comprehensible to them).
- Silent way (the teacher is to say as little as possible in order that the learner can be in control of what s/he wants to say; no use of the mother tongue).
- Structural approach (language seen as a complex of grammatical rules to be learnt one at a time in a set order).
- Suggestopedia (a language can be acquired only when the learner is receptive and has no mental blocks; it is suggested to the learner that the language is easy, so as to remove the mental blocks to learning[22]).
- Task-based language learning (focus on the completion of a task the learners find interesting; they use the language they already have to complete the task; little correction of errors).

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[21] Stephen D. Krashen and Tracy D. Terrell, *The Natural Approach: Language Acquisition in the Classroom* (San Francisco: The Alemany Press, 1983).

[22] Georgi Lozanov, *Suggestology and Outlines of Suggestopedy* (New York: Gordon and Breach, 1978); Georgi Lozanov and Evalina Gateva, *The Foreign Language Teacher's Suggestopedic Manual* (New York: Gordon and Breach, 1988).

- Total Physical Response (works by having the learner respond to simple commands [e.g. "Stand up", "Close your book"]; stress on the importance of aural comprehension).

The distribution of the responses obtained is displayed in the following table:

Method	No. of respondents who recognize the method	%	No. of respondents who use the method	%	Difference between recognised and used	%
Audio-lingual	198	*66.7*	115	*38.7*	83	*28.0*
Communicative Language Teaching	253	*85.2*	251	*84.5*	2	*00.7*
Community Language Learning	104	*35.0*	67	*22.6*	37	*12.4*
Direct Method	199	*67.0*	113	*38.0*	86	*29.0*
Grammar-Translation	194	*65.3*	94	*31.6*	100	*33.7*
Immersion	120	*40.4*	26	*8.8*	94	*31.6*
Lexical Syllabus	75	*25.3*	35	*11.8*	40	*13.5*
Natural Approach	136	*45.8*	80	*26.9*	56	*18.9*
Silent Way	74	*24.9*	22	*7.4*	52	*17.5*
Structural Approach	151	*50.8*	72	*24.2*	79	*26.6*
Suggestopedia	94	*31.6*	37	*12.5*	57	*19.1*
Task-based Language Learning	237	*79.8*	216	*72.7*	21	*07.1*
Total Physical Response	154	*51.9*	104	*35.0*	50	*16.9*
Total	1989		1232		757	*00.0*
Average per respondent	6.7	*51.3*	4.1	*31.8*	2.5	*19.5*

Table 7-2: Distribution of the responses obtained per method recognised and used by the teachers.

On average, each teacher recognises 6.7 methods but only uses about two-thirds of them (4.1). The Silent Way method, Lexical Syllabus and Suggestopedia are the least known (between 24.9% and 31.6%) and also the least used (between 7.4% and 12.5%). An exception to this rule is the Immersion method, for although 40.4% of the respondents recognise it, only 8.8% put it to practice.

At the other end of the scale, Communicative Language Teaching and Task-based Language Teaching are by far the methods that are the most widely recognised—by 85.2% and 79.8% of the respondents, respectively—, as well as the most widely used—by 84.5% and 72.7%, respectively. Coincidently, both are the methods where the difference between recognised and used is the smallest amongst all the methods (only 0.7% in the first case and 7.1% in the second).

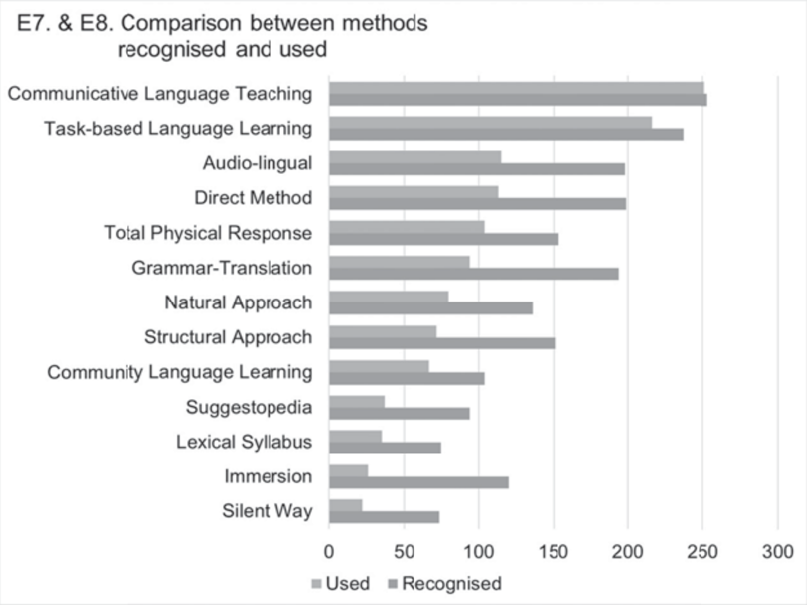

Fig. 7-32: Bar chart displaying the comparison between methods recognised and used (questions E7 and E8).

Method	**No. of US respondents who recognize the method**	**%**	**No. of EU respondents who recognize the method**	**%**	**No. of US respondents who use the method**	**%**	**No. of EU respondents who use the method**	%
Audio-lingual	32	78.0	144	65.4	18	43.9	85	38.6
Communicative Language Teaching	37	90.2	186	84.5	34	82.9	189	85.9
Community Language Learning	11	26.8	75	34.0	10	24.3	50	22.7
Direct Method	32	78.0	146	66.3	23	56.1	78	35.4
Grammar-Translation	31	75.6	142	64.5	15	36.5	65	29.5
Immersion	29	70.7	80	36.3	5	12.2	21	9.5
Lexical Syllabus	4	9.7	62	28.1	2	4.8	29	13.1
Natural Approach	25	60.9	93	42.2	15	36.5	52	23.6
Silent Way	11	26.8	49	22.2	2	4.8	15	6.8
Structural Approach	27	65.8	108	49.0	13	31.7	50	22.7
Suggestopedia	11	26.8	68	30.9	2	4.8	29	13.1
Task-based Language Learning	35	85.3	175	79.5	34	82.9	158	71.8
Total Physical Response	35	85.3	101	45.9	25	60.9	68	30.9
Total	320		1429		198		889	
Average (per respondent)	6.0	46.1	4.99	38.4	3.71	28.5	3.11	23.9

Table 7-3: Distribution of the responses obtained in the US and the EU.

The method usually most connoted with traditional language teaching, Grammar-Translation, in spite of being among the most widely recognised is used by less than one-third of the respondents (31.6%). A similar situation is that of the Structural Approach, since less than half of the respondents who recognise it put it to practice. Other methods more closely identified with the communicative paradigm, such as the Direct Method, the Natural Approach and Immersion are far less used than Communicative Language Teaching and thus appear to have been overhauled by the latter and TBLT.

A comparative analysis of the US and EU figures reveals important differences between the two groups. US teachers are on average acquainted with one more method (6) than the EU teachers (4.99), which represents almost half of the 13 methods presented in the questionnaire (46.1%, as opposed to 38.4% of the EU respondents). As far as the methods used in the classroom, US teachers are also inclined to use a greater variety of methods than the EU teachers (3.71 versus 3.11, which corresponds in terms of percentages to 28.5% and 23.9% of the total of the methods listed above).

As for individual differences in the methods recognised, the most striking dissimilarities lie in Total Physical Response (with a difference of 39.4% between the US and the EU), Immersion (34.4%), the Natural Approach (18.7), Lexical Syllabus (18.4%) and the Structural Approach (16.8%).

In line with the previous results, Total Physical Response is also the method where the difference between the US and the EU respondents is the most significant (30.0%). The Direct Method is also very marked (20.6%), followed by the Natural Approach (12.9%) and Task-based Language Learning (11.1%), which is an interesting figure when compared with the responses to question C4 (Level of confidence in the implementation of TBLT), where US teachers state they feel less confident than their EU colleagues in the implementation of this approach.

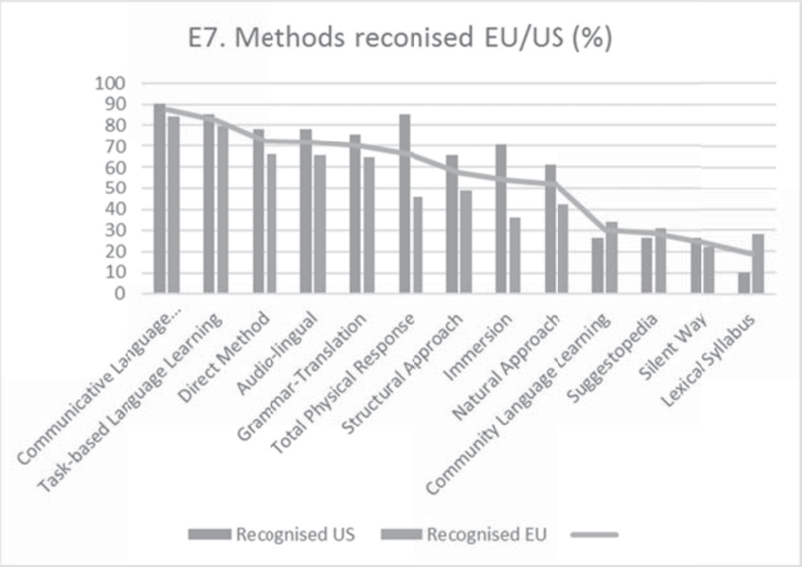

Fig. 7-33: Bar chart displaying the difference in the percentages of responses from the US and the EU to question E7.

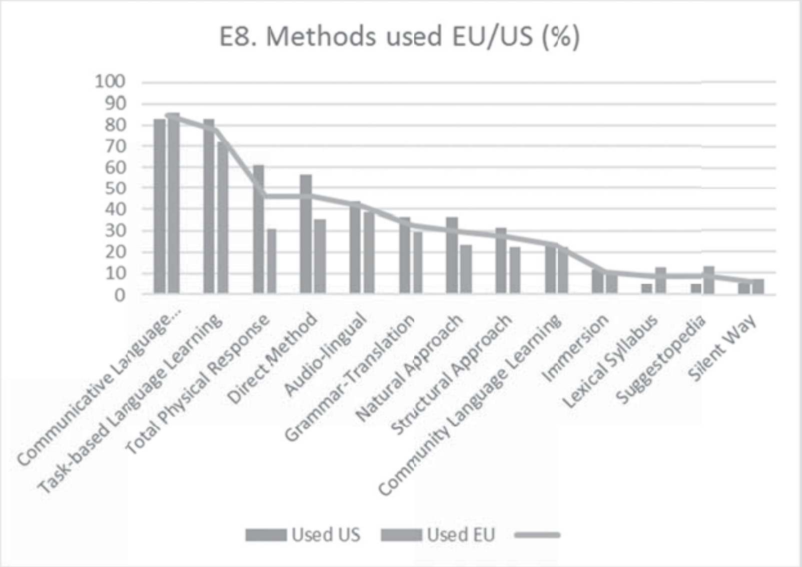

Fig. 7-34: Bar chart displaying the difference in the percentages of responses from the US and the EU to question E8.

4.4. Section F – Training needs

The final section of the questionnaire queried the teachers about their training needs in technology-mediated TBLT. They were asked if they felt the need for training in TBLT and ICT (question F1), and the vast majority (91.25%) responded positively. 26 of them responded negatively. Out of these 26, 6 hold a Ph.D. degree, 14 a Master's degree in Language Teaching and 5 a Postgraduate Certificate in Education. The countries most represented in the group of those who responded negatively are Greece and the US (with 6 respondents each).

Question F2 asked about the reasons that prompted such training needs. Again, there is a clear trend in the responses obtained. In fact, 66.7% stated that they felt the "Need for diversification of strategies and approaches". Equally significant was the number of those who were moved by "Curiosity about technology-mediated TBLT" (20.9%). Only 7 respondents claimed they needed some extra credits.

F2. Why the need for this sort of training		
	Frequency	Percent
Void	21	7.1
Other	9	2.7
Curiosity about technology-mediated TBLT	62	20.9
Need for diversification of strategies and approaches	198	66.7
Need for some extra credits	7	2.4

Table 7-4: Table displaying distribution of the number of responses to question F2.

Other reasons invoked included: "I could always learn more" (Serbia); "To keep up with the students" (Serbia); "To keep improving with new ideas" (Spain); "Learning is an ongoing process for all of us" (Greece); "There is always room for improvement and new ideas" (Italy); "Need to share ideas and reflect on strategies and approaches" (Italy); "To stay abreast of new developments" (US); and "To allow students to be college or career-ready" (US). As it can be seen, most of these respondents are moved by the need to update their knowledge in an area where new developments take place at a faster pace and where the learners' knowledge competes with that of the teacher's.

As for training opportunities in language teaching in the area where teachers live (question F3) most considered that there are not enough (198 = 63.63%), while 62 respondents (20.87%) believed there were enough and 11 (3.7%) claimed there were plenty. 26 (8.75%) said there were none whatsoever (US 7; Greece 4; Spain 4; Portugal 3; Turkey 3; Italy 2; UK 2; Serbia 1).

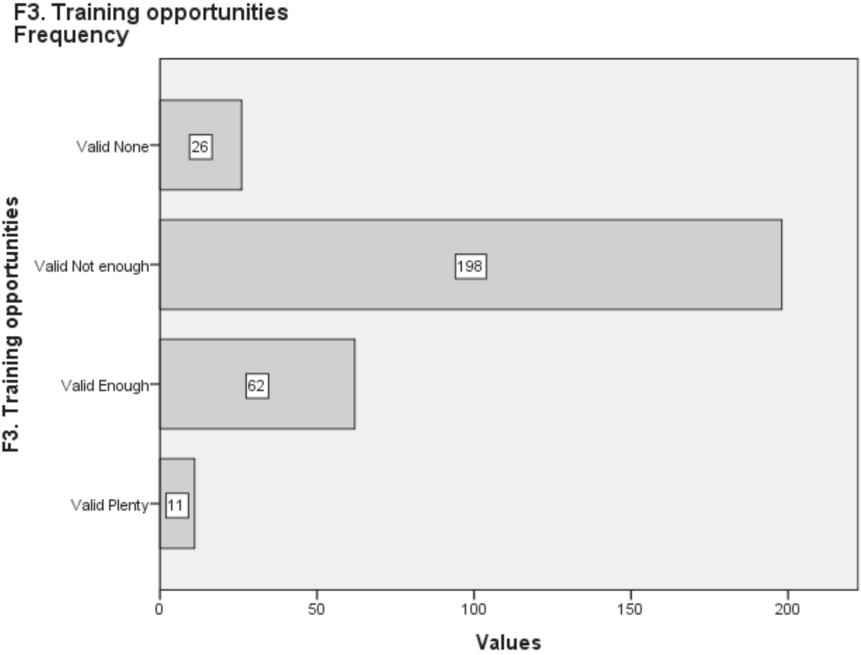

Fig. 7-35: Bar chart displaying the existence of training opportunities in the area where teachers live (questions F3).

5. Discussion

Only a very small minority of the respondents (4.38%) claims that they are not acquainted with TBLT, with a slight difference between the US and the EU. The prevailing notion that they have of TBLT is aligned with Nunan's concept of "*focus on meaning rather than form*" and the belief that the learners should behave as if they were out there *in the real world* (questions C1, C2 and C3).

One of the most conspicuous outcomes of this survey is that Task-based Language Teaching is, in fact, one of the most used methods among the respondents both in the EU and the US, along with Communicative Language Teaching – 72.7% (question E8), a figure that is consistent with the responses to question C5 (75%). Still, it is less used than the latter (84.5%) by almost 12 percent points. Despite its frequency of use, only 52% of the teachers claim they are confident about how to implement TBLT in the classroom (question C4). It comes as no surprise then that the need for training in technology-mediated TBLT is strongly felt (91.3%) (Question F1). According to the respondents, these needs cannot be properly met as they feel that training opportunities are in most cases hard to come by (67%) (Question F3). Still, there is a contrast between the EU/US figures presented in question C4 and the ones presented in question E8, since, although US teachers confess to being less confident in implementing TBLT in the classroom, the percentage of those who use it is higher than the percentage of EU teachers.

In spite of the training needs that were identified, ICT is used in TBLT on a regular basis (question C6) and the vast majority of teachers (90%; question D1) also frequently make other uses of ICT in the language classroom (question D5), all the more so because they claim that ICT-based activities can be carried out without having to rely heavily on the school's resources (92%) (Question D2).

It is believed that ICT-based tasks lead to a more active involvement of learners in the learning process and put them in real-life contexts (question C7). ICT in tasks is valued mostly in terms of *communication* (45%) and less in terms of *process* (29%) or *construction of products* (23%) (Question C9). It is practically ignored as *memory* (3%).

Despite the frequency of implementation of TBLT and Communicative Language Teaching, the respondents still often resort to the textbook (72%) (Question E5). Not too excessively though, as only 5% admit that texts are their exclusive source to develop the learners' skills (question E6). In this particular, US teachers have shown to be less dependent on the textbooks than their EU colleagues. Equally relevant are the data concerning the teachers' engagement with what might be called more traditional approaches, in particular the Structural Approach (with its focus on grammar rules) and Grammar-translation (focusing on memory, grammar and vocabulary), both of which leave the development of oral ability aside and totally lacking in communicative interaction activities. Although a significant number of respondents recognised them (50.8% and 65.3%, respectively; and comparatively more US than EU respondents) only about half of them implement these approaches in the classroom (26.6% and 33.7%, respectively; and again, in comparative terms, more respondents from the US than from the EU), which is in stark contrast with TBLT and Communicative Language Teaching, where the difference in the percentages of teachers who recognise and use them is the smallest in Table 2. It means, nonetheless, that about one fourth to one third of the respondents still rely—not exclusively, though—on these so-called traditional approaches.

Most respondents (85%) are familiar with the CEFR (question E3), a document that is very emphatic about the benefits of TBLT. Moreover, 91% of the total of respondents believe that it has had some influence on their teaching practice one way or another (question E4). Unsurprisingly, the European instrument is less known in the US and therefore American teachers do not see it as having a major influence on their teaching practice.

6. Conclusion

New empirical evidence of the teachers' belief, attitudes and practices concerning technology-mediated TBLT was provided. The results of the comparative analysis of the data yielded by the survey show that both the approach is not just gathering pace, but is on its way to establish itself as one of the most widely used approaches in foreign language teaching by practitioners on both sides of the Atlantic, despite the possibility of adverse or challenging circumstances. Likewise, practitioners in general see TBLT as something that already elicits the use of technological resources. However, as these resources keep evolving, the need for continuous training is strongly felt.

Nevertheless, one must always take into account the fact that the representativeness of the sample is debatable and remains unknown. This constitutes a major limitation of the study, as it prevents the generalizability of findings. Although it can be said that the evidence gathered through the survey has proven reliable and internally valid, more research should be conducted to establish the external validity of the results.

Still, on the basis of this analysis, it can be said that, besides the need for further research to consolidate these findings, future work is required in the development of materials and resources in technology-mediated TBLT, as well as in the creation of training opportunities in the field.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

TOP TEN KEYWORDS TO BECOME AN IMPACT TEACHER

PILAR COUTO-CANTERO
AND MARÍA BOBADILLA-PÉREZ

1. Introduction

Despite today's approaches in the Teaching and Learning Process being devoted to promoting Student-Centred Curriculum and Self-Learning Strategies, this chapter is aimed at two main different purposes. Firstly, it tries to upgrade the role of the teacher in that Teaching and Learning Process; and secondly, it is intended to provide a list of the top ten keywords to encourage our Pre-teachers to become In-service Impact Teachers. This research was focused on postgraduate students who were provided with training in order to allow them to become teachers at Secondary Compulsory Schools in Spain. Data has been collected by means of a Classroom-Action Research put into practice with the suggestions of participants applying for the: "Master universitario en profesorado de educación secundaria obligatoria y bachillerato, formación profesional y enseñanza de idiomas" Postgraduate Programme at UDC University. It is a one-year university-led teacher training course in which two placements are included.

Regarding professional development, participants' information seemed to be highly relevant from a qualitative point of view, taking into account that they were students preparing to become teachers in a not far away future. Thanks to the obtained results, on the one hand, it will be ascertained that our initial hypothesis has been accomplished and the role of the teacher seems to be still more important than expected in the Teaching and Learning Process. On the other hand, the top ten keywords obtained out of this research will help and serve as a guide for future teachers to reach a Master Teacher Qualification. Moreover, this research offers a large number of possibilities to be implemented at any other levels of education, and in other national or international contexts. It also offers the possibility to widen the top ten keywords out in order to explore and re-define what the ideal Impact Teacher should be.

According to Devine, Fahie and McGillicuddy[1], teachers, including those at pre-service level, hold beliefs not only about the teaching professional practice, but also about people, structures, systems and theoretical paradigms that underpin them. In addition, there is an interconnection between the professional and personal identities of teachers, which means that the way teachers understand and define themselves shapes the way they understand and define others. The role of teachers, however, has changed throughout history and this change also affects their beliefs. While traditional instruction used to require teachers to be content experts and teach as much information as possible, the new student-centred approach requires teachers to assume different roles (Rico & Ertmer[2]) and, therefore, different opinions arise.

2. Present Study

Over the last few years, the concepts of *student-centred* and *teacher as a facilitator* have been considered as determining and substantial. Meanwhile, other ideas such as *teacher-centred* and *teacher as an authority figure* have been understood as totally opposed and obsolete (Ha[3]). We do agree with McCabe and O`Connor[4] that the student-centred approach encompasses some beneficial results for students, such as active responsibility for learning, proactive management of learning experience, independent knowledge construction with teachers as facilitators.

However, some authors still doubt whether or not student-centred approaches are more effective than traditional teacher-centred approaches (Davis & Lung[5]). Jabbour[6] states that since learners are used to the teacher-centred approach, it is, therefore, a great hurdle for the teacher to get students to overcome the change of roles in the classroom and it also makes it difficult for the teacher to get them to assume increased responsibility for their own learning and development. According to some researchers, although the student-centred approach offers effective practices, this method is ineffective for around 30% of the students because they are not fully engaged in the Teaching and Learning Process (Hockings[7]; Knight and Collins[8]).

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[1] Dympna Devine, Declan Fahie and Deirdre McGillicuddy, “What is ‘good’ teaching? Teacher beliefs and practices about their teaching,” *Irish Educational Studies*, no. 32 (2013), 84.

[2] Rodolgo Rico and Peggy Ertmer, “Examining the Role of the Instructor in Problem centred Instruction,” *TechTrends* no. 59.4 (2015), 97.

[3] Phan Le Ha, “The politics of naming: critiquing “learner-centred” and “teacher as facilitator” in English language and humanities classrooms,” *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, no. 42.4 (2014), 392.

[4] Alan McCabe and Una O'Connor, “Student-centred learning: the role and responsibility of the lecturer,” *Teaching in Higher Education* no. 19.4 (2014), 351.

[5] Tara Davis and Hùng Lũ’, “Student and Instructorcentred Approaches to Teaching Precalculus,” *PRIMUS*, no. 25.6 (2015), 495.

Teachers, thus, are being challenged to rethink their underlying assumptions about teaching and learning to succeed in achieving useful practices and make all students feel comfortable with the system (Baran, Correia and Thompson[9]). According to Schroeder[10], the student-centred approach involves the balance between teacher and student, as teachers should not be positioned as the active agent and students as the passive one. In addition, the Teaching and Learning Process implies dialogue and interaction between both agents to create knowledge (Kahl and Venette[11]). Regarding this interaction between teachers and students, Neumann[12] recognised three possible relationships. In the first option, the student is at the forefront and teachers do not suggest what students should learn and they simply avoid disruptions. In the second option, the teacher is at the forefront and stays at a relational distance from students, and students creating learning objectives that they are expected to follow. In the third one, where both teacher and student share the forefront, a free human being encounters another free individual in a demanding way. This latter alternative implies measurable improvements in student performance but,

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[6] Khayrazad Jabbour, "Issues that restrain teachers from adapting student-centred instruction in Lebanese school," *Tejuelo*, no. 17 (2013), 87.

[7] Chistine Hockings, "Reaching the students that student centred learning cannot reach," *British Educational Research Journal* no. 35.1 (2009).

[8] Sue Knight and Carol Collins, "Opening Teachers' Minds to Philosophy: The crucial role of teacher education," *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, no 46.11 (2014).

[9] Evrim Barana, Ana-Paula Correia and Ann Thompson, "Transforming online teaching practice: critical analysis of the literature on the roles and competencies of online teachers," *Distance* Education, no. 32. 3 (November 2011), 421.

[10] Sara J. Schroeder, "Infusing Learner-Centred Strategies into the Classroom," *Occupational Therapy in Health Care*, no. 26.4 (2012), 219.

11 David Kahl and Steven Venette, "To lecture or let go: A comparative analysis of student speech outlines from teacher-centred and learner-centred classrooms," *Communication Teacher*, no. 24.3 (2010), 179.

[12] Jacob W. Neumann, "Developing a New Framework for Conceptualizing "Student-Centred Learning," *The Educational Forum*, no. 77.2 (2013), 163.

perhaps more significantly, effecting longer-term changes in teacher behaviour, reporting greater confidence and enhanced beliefs in their own self-efficacy (Bangs and MacBeath[13]).

Consequently, as Kelly, Dorf, Pratt and Hohmann[14] state, teacher roles are the visible outcomes of teacher mediations across many situated influences and wider educational discourses within a contested social arena, they respond to the roles adopted by students and they are enacted within a particular subject, classroom, school culture and so on. These new roles include those of content facilitator, meta-cognition facilitator, process facilitator, advisor, counsellor, assessor, resource provider, administrator, designer, co-learner, and researcher (Bawane and Spector[15]). Though these added responsibilities may be daunting, teachers have the knowledge, expertise and skills to meet the challenges to become the new teacher leaders for today's classroom settings (Mulrine and Huckvale[16]). Nevertheless, possibly the most pressing factor influencing the success of the teachers´ roles we have stated is the current commitment which measures the success of schools, educators, and students based on results from standardised assessments (Mangin and Stoelinga[17]) as teachers prefer actions where their individual decision-making power is present, rather than collective agreements (Mouraz, Leite & Fernandes[18]). Bearing in mind these standardised assessments, managing teachers´ authority role was often quite challenging as it might ease the achievement of desirable outcomes within the classroom (Tillapaugh and Haber-Curran[19]).

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[13] John Bangs and John MacBeath, "Collective leadership: the role of teacher unions in encouraging teachers to take the lead in their own learning and in teacher policy," *Professional Development in Education*, no. 38.2 (2012), 336.

[14] Peter Kelly, Hans Dorf, Nick Pratt, and Ulrike Hohmann, "Comparing teacher roles in Denmark and England," *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, no. 44.4 (2014), 570.

[15] Jyoti Bawane and Michael Spector, "Prioritisation of online instructor roles: implications for competency-based teacher education programs," *Distance Education*, no. 30.3 (2009), 388.

[16] Christopher F. Mulrine and Manina Urgolo Huckvale, "Secondary Special Education Teachers as Teacher Leaders: Redefining Their Role," *Kappa Delta Pi Record*, no. 50.2 (2014), 64.

[17] Melinda Mangin and Sara Stoelinga, "The Future of Instructional Teacher Leader Roles," *The Educational Forum*, no. 74.1 (2009), 55.

18 Ana Mouraz, Carlinda Leite, and Preciosa Fernandes, "Teachers' role in curriculum design in Portuguese schools," *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, no. 19.5 (2013), 487.

[19] Daniel Tillapaugh and Paige Haber-Curran, "At the intersection of leadership

In spite of that, teachers created an environment in which the students could engage in a real adaptive leadership challenge, creating a space for them to apply their learning. Students also develop, at the same time, psychological functions, such as paying attention, remembering, reasoning, and planning as well as interactional and pragmatic functions, like recognizing different roles, rights, and responsibilities in classroom activities (Feryok[20]). To conclude, inspiring and encouraging students to become active participants is not a simple and effortless task, but this is the new challenge (Reyes[21]). Teachers bring their experience, knowledge and values into the classroom and encourage students to better develop their language skills and attitudes, which means no doubt they make an important difference in the Teaching and Learning Process: making students gaining knowledge by themselves (Diaz, Alarcón & Ortiz[22]).

The authors believe that high-quality pre-service teachers´ training is a priority if we want to succeed in education. Therefore, we have decided the participants in this study to be pre-service teachers at our university. They often lack confidence in their teaching abilities, robust pedagogical content knowledge developed through experience and they may even harbour negative orientations (Biggers and Forbes[23]). According to Butler and Cuenca[24], for all sides involved in pre-service teacher preparation there exists a lack of clarity about the roles and responsibilities of their professors due, in part, to the perception of teacher training as an uncomplicated and self-evident activity. However, before teacher training strategies can be widely implemented and tested, professors must first become more aware of the specific modes of teacher commitment that

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and learning: a self-study of using student-centred pedagogies in the classroom," *Educational Action Research*, no. 21.4 (2013), 522.

[20] Anne Feyroc, "Teaching for learner autonomy: the teacher's role and sociocultural theory," *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, no. 7 (2013), 222.

[21] Agustín Reyes Torres, "Literature in the foreign language syllabus: Engaging the student through active learning," *Tejuelo*, no. 15 (2012), 14.

[22] Claudio Díaz Larenas, Paola Alarcón Hernández, and Mabel Ortiz Navarrete, "A Case Study on EFL: Teachers' Beliefs About the Teaching and Learning of English in Public Education," *Porta Linguarum*, no. 23.1 (2015), 176.

[23] Mandy Biggers and Corey Forbes, "Balancing Teacher and Student Roles in Elementary Classrooms: Preservice elementary teachers' learning about the inquiry continuum," *International Journal of Science Education*, no. 34.14 (2012), 2206.

[24] Brandon Butler and Alexander Cuenca, "Conceptualizing the Roles of Mentor Teachers During Student Teaching," *Action in Teacher Education*, no. 34.4 (2012), 297.

exist today and consider how these approaches may serve the needs of the students and faculty at their university (Mason[25]).

Pre-service teachers were traditionally exposed to a large number of theoretical knowledge foundations and then were expected to find ways to apply their learning in a classroom. More recently, this perspective has been reversed by asserting that experiential learning establishes the basis for understanding theory (Gut, Beam, Henning and Cochran[26]). Thus, pre-service teachers´ training courses must grapple with their role in terms of how their own coursework and pedagogical approaches support the development of teachers who are able to work in the current teaching profession (Margolis, Hodge and Alexandrou[27]). Kane and Francis (2013:366) identified five central tasks to be accomplished during the pre-service teachers´ training courses. These included: 1-getting to know students curriculum, and school, 2-designing responsive instructional programs, 3-creating a classroom learning community, 4-enacting a beginning repertoire, and 5-developing a professional identity. In addition, one of the essential conditions that enable pre-service teachers to learn is the availability of professors who afford effective guidance and have supervisory approaches compatible with their learning needs (Klieger and Oster-Levinz[28]).

We consider, indeed, that the leading requirement to be successful in training pre-service teachers is taking their beliefs into consideration. Rajuan, Beijaard and Verloop[29] pointed out five categories of orientations based on underlying beliefs and values. The academic orientation emphasises teachers' subject expertise and sees the quality of the teachers' own subject matter knowledge as their professional strength. Secondly, the practical orientation pays attention to the artistry and classroom technique of the pre-service teachers and attaches importance to the classroom experience and apprenticeship models of learning to teach. The technical orientation, on its behalf, underlines the knowledge and behavioural skills that pre-service teachers require and it is associated with micro-teaching and competency-based approaches. Then, the personal orientation stresses the importance of interpersonal relations in the classroom as well as taking the form of offering a safe environment that encourages exploration and discovery of personal strengths. Finally, the critical orientation emphasizes the role of schools in promoting democratic values and reducing social inequities and views schooling as a process of social reform, being the goal of pre-service teachers´ training to help teachers become critical and reflective. In short, as stated by Sjolie[30], an essential question underpinning research on pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning is the extent to which teacher education effects deep changes in pre-service teachers' rather than narrow conceptions of teaching and learning. Our motivation to carry out this study is the assumption that pre-service teachers' beliefs shape and influence their future performance in the classroom.

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[25] Kevin O. Mason, "Teacher involvement in pre-service teacher education," *Teachers and Teaching*, no. 19.5 (2013), 561.

[26] Dianne M Gut, Pamela C. Beam, John E. Henning, Deborah C. Cochran and Rhonda Talford Knight, "Teachers' Perceptions of their Mentoring Role in Three Different Clinical Settings: Student Teaching, Early Field Experiences, and Entry Year Teaching," *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning*, no. 22.3 (2014), 241.

[27] Jason Margolis, Ashley Hodge, and Alex Alexandrou, "The teacher educator's role in promoting institutional versus individual teacher well-being," *Journal of Education for Teaching*, no. 40.4 (2014), 392.

[28] Aviva Klieger and Anat Oster-Levinz, "The influence of teacher education on mentor teachers' role perception in professional development schools," *Journal of Education for Teaching*, no. 41.2 (2015), 115-127.

[29] Maureen Rajuan, Douwe Beijaard and Nico Verloop, "The role of the cooperating teacher: bridging the gap between the expectations of cooperating teachers and student teachers," *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning,* no. 15.3 (2007), 225.

Considering the influence of beliefs in the teachers´ performance and according to Friedrich and Hron[31], it is assumed that personal and pedagogical beliefs influence teachers´ classroom practices. Thus, they should always bear in mind the beliefs, knowledge, theories, attitudes, images, assumptions, metaphors, conceptions and perspectives related to teaching, teachers, learning, students, subject matter, curricula, materials, instructional activities and self (Fung[32]). Besides, some of the main goals for pre-service teachers to learn the building up of a professional identity are assigning a major role to the teachers' autonomy as well as assuming cooperation as a fundamental issue in teacher training methodology.

Roychoudhury and Rice[33] explained that teachers´ dispositions can tell them how they teach; intellectual dispositions deal with processing the knowledge of content and pedagogy and use them to achieve desired learning outcomes in their classrooms; cultural dispositions are related to be aware of cultural diversities of students and to meet the needs of all learners they teach. Finally, moral dispositions are essentially an awareness of one’s moral values and the inclination to think about the ramifications of these values in instruction. Therefore, teacher commitment, so closely associated with job satisfaction and its performance, might be enhanced or diminished by factors such as: student behaviour, administrative support, parental demands and national education policies. As a consequence, their behaviour includes characteristic features that emerge while they are performing certain tasks, like working in the classroom, preparing lessons or fulfilling administrative obligations (Uibu and Kikas[34]).

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[30] Ela Sjølie, "The role of theory in teacher education: reconsidered from a student teacher perspective," *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, no. 46.6 (2014), 730.

[31] Helmut F. Friedrich and Aemilian Hron, "Factors affecting teachers' student-centred classroom computer use," *Educational Media International*, no. 48.4 (2011), 274.

[32] Angela C. Fung Tam, "The role of a professional learning community in teacher change: a perspective from beliefs and practices," *Teachers and* Teaching, no. 21.1 (2015), 23.

[33] Anita Roychoudhury and Diana Rice, "Preservice Secondary Science Teachers'

As stated by Hobson and Morrison-Saunders (2013:778), good teaching cannot be reduced to technique, but it comes from the identity and integrity of the teachers and, in the same lines, teachers’ beliefs depict the tension that exists with being teachers as technicians versus intellectual, loving, and caring human beings (Afaro & Quezada[35]). In fact, students feel the teachers´ emotions and beliefs long before they feel the intellectual content offered by them (Xu and Huang, 2010:193). These beliefs, as a consequence, have an orientation towards the future and play a particular driving role for the students and also within the Teaching and Learning Process (Biesta, Priestley and Robinson[36]).

Teachers’ emotions and feelings can be positive, such as joy, satisfaction and pleasure, or negative, like frustration, anger and anxiety (Sadler, 2013; Arnaiz y Pérez-Luzardo, 2014). However, emotions usually remain unchangeable in terms of a person regardless of teaching experience, subject-matter and age of the students (Mevorach & Strauss[37]).

Teaching and Reflections During a Teacher Education Program,” *International Journal of Science Education*, no. 35.13 (2013), 2201.

[34] Krista Uibu and Eve Kikas, “The Roles of a Primary School Teacher in the Information Society,” *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, no. 52.5 (2008), 462. Alfaro, Cristina and Reyes Quezada, “International Teacher Professional Development: Teacher Reflections of Authentic Teaching and Learning Experiences,” *Teaching Education*, no. 21.1 (2010), 54.

[35] Cristina Alfaro and Reyes Quezada, “International Teacher Professional Development: Teacher Reflections of Authentic Teaching and Learning Experiences,” *Teaching* Education, no. 21.1 (2010), 54.

[36] Biesta Gert, Mark Priestley, and Sarah Robinson, “The Role of Beliefs in Teacher Agency,” *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, no. 21.6 (2015), 628.

[37] Miriam Mevorach, and Sidney Strauss, S., “Teacher educators’ in-action mental

As a result, teachers should consider their own goals as teachers in order to make them meaningful in the Teaching and Learning Process. When training pre-service teachers, professors have to make them reflect on the educational purposefulness of their future teaching career from different points of view. Purpose can be defined as a stable, long-term goal of contributing to the world beyond the self (Tirri & Ubani[38]). We do agree with Richards and Templin[39] on the fact that the role that pre-service teachers choose can often be predicted by the way in which they prioritise roles and, thus, roles are arranged in a loose hierarchy from most to least important to the teachers' identities. Melek[40] remarked that a significant quality of teachers is to display positive personal attributes, which involves being constructive, supportive and encouraging and so this study has been devoted to finding, among other aims, the top ten characteristics to become an impact teacher according to UDC pre-service teachers.

3. Method

Our research study was focused on a group of pre-service teachers who were asked about their beliefs and about the top ten keywords they thought they should have to become an impact teacher. The main objective was to select the most important qualities for a teacher to have in a student-centred classroom in order to be an outstanding future teacher. The Driving Question which started this research was as follows: Which attributes should an impact teacher have? Pre-service teachers considered the role of the teacher still very important in the student-centred classroom and they placed great importance on the attributes and beliefs an outstanding teacher would need in order to succeed in the Teaching and Learning Process.

Regarding participants, this study consisted of 23 Spanish university students at a Master´s Degree level in Teacher Training at University of A Coruña (UDC). All of them were studying within the Foreign Languages Teacher Training at Compulsory and Non-compulsory Secondary Levels Module. One of them was male (4.34%) and the other 22 female

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models in different teaching situations," *Teachers and* Teaching, no. 18.1 (2012), 26.

[38] Kirsi Tirri and Martin Ubani, "Education of Finnish student teachers for purposeful teaching," *Journal of Education for* Teaching, no. 39.1 (2013), 23.

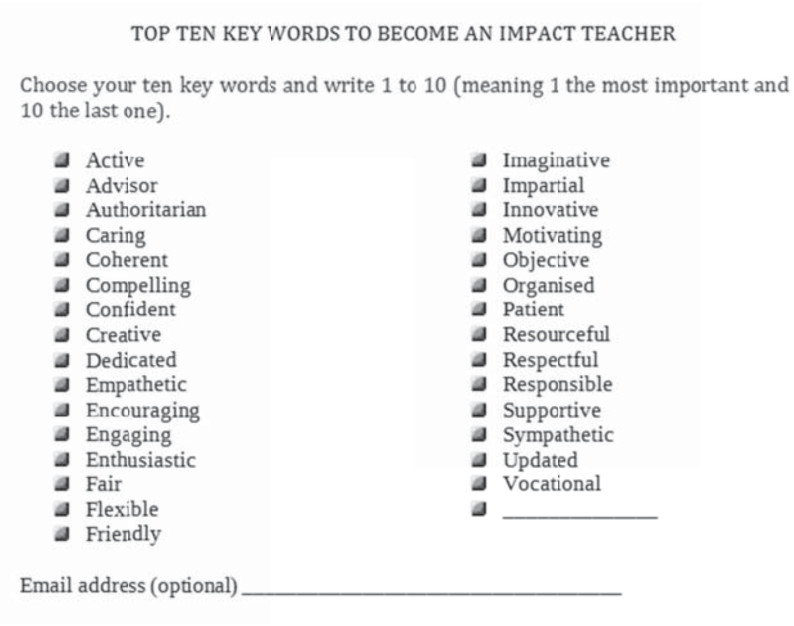
[39] Andrew K. Richards and Thomas J. Templin, "Toward a Multidimensional Perspective on Teacher-Coach Role Conflict," *Quest*, no. 64.3 (2012), 166.

[40] Ebru Melek Koç, "Development of mentor teacher role inventory," *European Journal of Teacher Education,* no. 34.2 (2011), 195.

(95.65%). Their ages ranged from 19 to 34. A group of 10 students came from the English Studies Faculty, 9 came from the Translation and Interpreting Faculty, 1 from the Modern Languages Faculty and 3 from the Teacher Training School of Education. Most of them came from University of A Coruña but they also came from University of Santiago de Compostela, University of Vigo and University of Salamanca. None of them had previous formal teaching experience apart from some modules related to learning languages or to general teaching practices, techniques and approaches. These individuals participated voluntarily and their written consent to participate was obtained.

Considering data elicitation tools, given that questionnaires used by other researchers for the specific purposes of the presented study could not be found, a questionnaire of our own creation was designed in order to obtain the answers needed to give a response to our research question. Over the last five years, the Research Group on Language and Culture Didactics (DILEC), coordinated by one of the present authors, has carried out different Research Projects with participants from previous years where students were asked to write down the top ten words they considered important to define a Master Teacher. As a result, a list of thirty words was collected and submitted to the judgements of external experts. Therefore, based on the aforementioned list of words collected from former students at this University (See fig. 8-1 below), our first research question aimed to determine, according to their criteria, the top ten keywords which, in their opinion, should define an impact teacher. They were asked to write from 1 to 10 next to the word they considered most to least important, meaning 1 the most important and 10 the least.

Furthermore, in the second part of the questionnaire free space was offered for them to write an open response in which to add other words not included, or any comments or suggestions to improve the aforementioned research.



TOP TEN KEY WORDS TO BECOME AN IMPACT TEACHER

Choose your ten key words and write 1 to 10 (meaning 1 the most important and 10 the last one).

- Active
- Advisor
- Authoritarian
- Caring
- Coherent
- Compelling
- Confident
- Creative
- Dedicated
- Empathetic
- Encouraging
- Engaging
- Enthusiastic
- Fair
- Flexible
- Friendly
- Imaginative
- Impartial
- Innovative
- Motivating
- Objective
- Organised
- Patient
- Resourceful
- Respectful
- Responsible
- Supportive
- Sympathetic
- Updated
- Vocational
- _______________

Email address (optional) ____________________________________

Fig. 8-1. Caption of the questionnaire.

If we consider hereinafter the procedure to develop this study, it is important to highlight that participants were given instructions and once the researchers had explained the purpose of the study, the questionnaire was prepared to be filled in individually. Researchers encouraged participants to ask for further information if required and once data was collected and analysed, an oral debate was organised to clear out doubts and check the findings. This oral debate was also needed to get to know what they had understood about the meaning of some items with the purpose of clarifying if a term had different meanings for each individual. As this activity was offered as an anonymous and voluntary action, participants were again informed that none of this data would be used for their academic records and they would be treated with confidentiality.

4. Data Analysis and Results

All participants came to an agreement in terms of the doubtless importance of the role of the teacher in nowadays' classroom despite the student-centred approach. They believed the student-centred curriculum has been promoted more and more throughout recent years and that this approach attempts to change the focus of instruction from the teacher to the students as well as to develop learners' autonomy and independence. However, our research assumption has been verified and every single participant thought that teachers still have a key role in the Teaching and Learning Process.

With reference to the attributes teachers should have, there is not such an agreement though. Most participants were aware that some of the qualities are unavoidable, but we have found a great assortment concerning the other options.

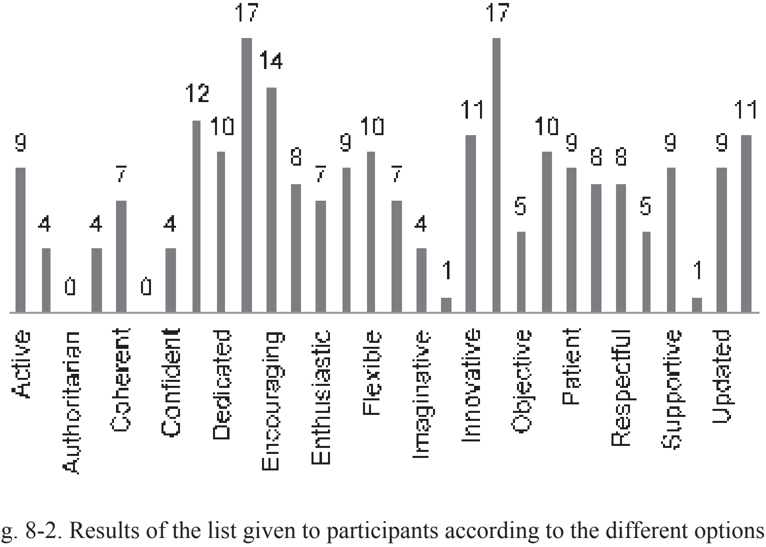


Fig. 8-2. Results of the list given to participants according to the different options. (Source: compiled by authors)

As one can perceive in the chart above, 73% of participants stated *empathetic* and *motivating* were the top attributes of an impact teacher. During the debate, they were asked whether they would have chosen *motivated* if it had been an option, as *motivating* means the act of encouraging students and *motivated* implies the teacher having a reason to teach. Every participant confirmed they would also choose it as both qualities are important in a different way.

In addition, 56% of students selected *encouraging*, *creative* and *innovative*. We believed *creative* and *innovative* had just one possible interpretation, but we wanted to know if they understood *encouraging* either as the quality of making students feel more confident, or as the quality of stimulating them by guidance. Interviewees, thus, expressed several opinions and, in the end, half and half meant either one or the other definition. Finally, around 43% of pre-service teachers believed *vocational, flexible, organised, dedicated* and *supportive* to be the remaining terms to make up the top ten keywords list. The rest of the qualities did not have enough support to be included although some of them reckon on several points.

During the debate, we also asked them why none of them had chosen neither *authoritarian* nor *compelling*. *Compelling* was defined as something captivating, absorbing and fascinating that evokes interest and attention in a powerful way, which we thought was a positive. However, most interviewees explained they considered it quite similar to *engaging* and they had other qualities to place first. Regarding *authoritarian,* all participants agreed on the fact that it only had a negative or very negative meaning. They explained that some of them selected *coherent,* with the meaning of following the laws and rules, and *patient,* when talking about respecting the time students need, and they even found these two terms quite negative in a way, so they would never choose *authoritarian* as a quality for a teacher to have.

To finish with, we analysed the priority order and observed that there exists a surprising contradiction between two main groups. On the one hand, those participants who had studied a degree in languages before this Master's and, on the other hand, the three students who had previous knowledge about teaching. The language group, formed by 20 students, gave priority to firstly *motivating*, secondly *encouraging* and thirdly *supportive*. On the contrary, the three pre-service teachers who had previously studied a degree in education, believed *vocational*, *creative* and *imaginative* to be the top three attributes. We do believe the reason for this difference is related to the experience they had from being undergraduates. Language degrees used to be mainly theoretical and, although practical activities are being more and more included, professors were not used to dealing with creative or imaginative situations. As we have said before, teaching methods such as grammar-translation are old fashioned and new dynamic techniques are flourishing. However, education studies have been traditionally much more active, inventive and original and students usually choose them as future careers due to vocation.

5. Discussion

The double purpose of this study was first aimed to demonstrate that the role of the teacher is still relevant in the Teaching and Learning Process and second, it was also aimed to provide a list of the Top Ten Key Words to define what an Impact Teacher should be, according to the participants' opinions. Although this study involved only twenty-three participants and the results are not, of course, generalizable, they can be useful to understand that all teachers have a different and personal opinion of what education means and the needed requirements to succeed. The results showed that teachers' roles remain important although students are now the focus of the classroom and that quality teacher training is paramount to improving the Teaching and Learning Process.

As we stated before, our motivation to carry out this study was the assumption that participants' beliefs influence and help to give shape to their future performance in the classroom. Thus, according to Fung[41] they gave their opinions bearing in mind their beliefs, attitudes and conceptions all related to the Teaching and Learning Process. Furthermore, regarding the influence of beliefs in the teaching styles, as Friedrich and Hron[42] pointed out, personal and pedagogical beliefs were directly related to the way in which participants decided to assume classroom practices, and consequently, influenced them when making decisions.

Butler and Cuenca[43] considered that lack of clarity about the roles and tasks of teacher trainers was the result of the generalised perception that the teacher training profession is a very simple and self-evident activity. Contrary to this perception, the authors of this study consider that if there exists a real teacher commitment with students and the Teaching and Learning Process, the tasks involved in pre-service teacher preparation are really tough and require a lot of hard work, instruction, self-assessment and lifelong learning. All these thoughts were translated to participants during fieldwork and they were entirely on the researchers' side, agreeing whole-heartedly that becoming a teacher is not an easy task to perform.

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[41] Angela Choi and Fung Tam, “The role of a professional learning community in teacher change: a perspective from beliefs and practices,” *Teachers and Teaching* no. 21.1 (2015), 22-43.

[42] Helmut F. Friedrich and Aemilian Hron. “Factors affecting teachers' student-centred classroom computer use,” *Educational Media International* no. 48.4 (2011), 274.

[43] Brandon Butler and Alexander Cuenca. “Conceptualizing the Roles of Mentor Teachers During Student Teaching,” *Action in Teacher Education* no. 34.4 (2012), 296-308.

Not only did the questionnaire help to find out what participants considered important to become an impact teacher, but also the interviews have broadened our knowledge and collection of information. As stated by Kahl & Venette[44] in their research, the Teaching and Learning Process implied dialogue and interaction in order to create knowledge, a fact that our participants supported one hundred per cent throughout their answers to the surveys and during debate and discussion about the top ten keywords in the fieldwork stage of this study. Moreover, taking into account the third of the three possible relationships recognised by Neumann[45], as previously explained in the present study chapter, where both the teacher and the student shared the forefront, measurable improvements in students' performance have been appreciated considering that participants shared a double role acting as students during lectures and seminars at this university and playing the role of (pre-)teachers when being at their placements.

As Sadler [46] stated, it is worth noting that in this research participants demonstrated that individuals are able and must show their emotions and feelings whether they are positive or negative such as anger, frustration and even anxiety (Arnaiz and Pérez-Luzardo[47]). As a consequence of all this data and considerations, they selected their top ten keywords which, in their opinion, defined the perfect teacher they would like to find in front of them and; at the same time, a big amount of self-reflection and critical thinking was originated among them to reflect about the perfect teacher they would like to become.

We do completely think this research project has made them reflect and ask themselves which qualities they should strengthen and put into practice if they want to be successful teachers once they finish their training period. Therefore, according to our research, the top ten key qualities an impact teacher should have are from one to ten: empathetic, motivating, encouraging, creative, innovative, vocational, flexible, organised, dedicated and supportive. Once these words have been highlighted, both pre-service teachers and experienced ones should work on them in order to improve the Teaching and Learning Process. There are still some aspects remaining for further research, like the beliefs of pre-service students who come from different backgrounds, such as purely scientific or technical degrees, or those opinions of future Master's students once the student-centred curriculum is fully implemented. In the meantime, studies like the present one reveal the key role of teachers and the attributes they consider ideal to become an impact teacher.

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[44] David Kahl and Steven Venette. "To lecture or let go: A comparative analysis of student speech outlines from teacher-centred and learner-centred classrooms," Communication Teacher, no. 24.3 (2010), 178–186

[45] Jacob W. Neumann, "Developing a New Framework for Conceptualizing "Student-Centred Learning"," *The Educational Forum* no. 77.2 (2013), 161-175.

[46] Sadler, Ian. "The role of self-confidence in learning to teach in higher education." *Innovations in Education and Teaching International 50.2* (2013): 157-166.

[47] Patricia Arnaiz and Jessica Pérez-Luzardo "Anxiety in Spanish EFL University Lessons: Causes, responsibility, attribution and coping," *Studia Anglica Posnaniensia* no. 49.1 (2014), 57-76.

6. Conclusions

Thanks to the obtained results and further discussion we are ready to shed some light and conclusions on this research and ascertain that both initial hypotheses have been accomplished. On the one hand, the role of the teacher seems to be still more important in the Teaching and Learning process than expected. All pre-service teachers tested throughout this study considered their future as professionals and their role in the educational process as a key and relevant point. They also considered that it is not an easy task to accomplish and that it needs a lot of time and constant effort to reach and maintain success.

On the other hand, the top ten keywords obtained out of this research will help our future teachers and could be used as a guide for them to reach a Master Teacher Qualification. Inviting them to reflect on these issues would enable researchers to give access and obtain interesting information for future investigation. Meanwhile, the top ten keywords list is offered below:

1. Empathetic
2. Motivating
3. Encouraging
4. Creative
5. Innovative
6. Vocational
7. Flexible
8. Organised
9. Dedicated
10. Supportive

It is worth noting that the short number of students tested implies an important limitation in this study and it must be acknowledged. Despite this limitation, this research was focused on PGCE students at UDC Faculty of Education and we consider that all data obtained provided a satisfactory amount of information because they were strictly based on their beliefs, opinions and self-reflections about the teachers' role within the Teaching and Learning Process in their specific language learning context.

In addition, this study offers the possibility to widen the top ten keywords out in order to explore and re-define what the ideal Impact Teacher should be. It also opens up a future line of research in the context of Spanish Universities and can also be extended to other Faculties of Education to share and compare results according to different variables and research projects.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

THE REFLECTIVE APPROACH IN PRE-SERVICE FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHER EDUCATION

SANDRA MARDEŠIĆ

1. Introduction

Quality of education has been one the major objectives of European policies on education in the last fifteen years. Human resources and social capital are considered to be the main basis of the European economic territory competitiveness[1]. In order to improve the quality of education, many EU member states have undertaken reforms of their educational systems on all levels: from primary schools to the university level. In order to improve the quality of education, in the last ten years, special attention in the reforms has been paid to the initial teacher education, through common European frameworks (Green Paper on Education[2]; Common European Principles for Teacher Competencies and Qualifications[3]; Tuning Educational Structures in Europe[4]).

Since educational policies are the matter of internal politics of each member-state, and a standard-based model (such as the one used in the United States) could not be implemented, but rather a pre-service teacher education competence model has been adopted at the common European level. In other words, teacher competences broadly defined at the EU level were further implemented in various ways within each national educational policy. The implementation of such competence-developing models of pre-service teacher education asked for changes in the traditional teacher education models, especially in language teacher education, such as the oldest "craft model" [5] of professional education and the most prevalent "applied science model"[6].

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[1] European Commission, *White Paper on Education and Training: Teaching and Learning - Towards the Learning Society,* 1995.
[2] European Commission, *Green Paper on Education*, 2002.
[3] European Commission, *Common European Principles for Teacher Competencies and Qualifications,* 2004.
[4] Tunning General Brochure. Croatian version, 2006.

In the craft model, pre-service teachers or apprentice teachers[7] often fail to internalize the knowledge of teaching by observing an expert teacher and his lessons, since they have a rather passive role, and their learning is based only on imitation, thus lacking creativity and deeper understanding of the teaching process. On the other hand, many studies[8] conducted with students involved in the applied science model have shown that pre-service teachers have difficulties in implementing the scientific knowledge or "subject content knowledge"[9] that they have gained in the university courses in the practical classroom teaching. In other words, they often lack[10] "pedagogical content knowledge", as Shulman called it[11].

Thus, since the 1970s, cognitive psychologists have been focusing their attention on teacher cognition, their beliefs, thinking, and implicit theories about teaching,[12] which are the basis of their everyday decision-making process.

The contemporary approach to language teacher education indicates that "learning how to teach" is not a bag of "tricks" to be used use in the classroom[13], but a significantly more complex process[14]. Professional development is seen as a transformation of the existing knowledge and skills as well as integration of new experiences and insights gained during the teacher education[15].

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[5] Michael J. Wallace, *Training Foreign Language Teachers* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 6.

[6] Ibid., 8

[7] In Croatian educational system, terms "pre-service teacher" and "students-future teachers" refer to students, while the term "apprentice teachers" refers to graduates working in public schools. Apprentice teachers are obliged to work in public schools for one year before taking the state exam.

[8] Nat Bartels, *Applied Linguistics and Language Teacher Education* (New York: Springer, 2005).

[9] Lee S. Shulman, "Knowledge and teaching: Foundations of the new reform," *Harvard Educational Review* 57 (1987).

[10] Rod Bolitho, "A place for second language acquisition in teacher development and in teacher education programme s." In *Language acquisition and the Second/foreign language classroom,* edited by Eugenius Sadtono (Anthology Series no. 28, 1991).

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The effect of prior foreign language learning experience on student teacher's perspective on language teaching has been confirmed by several studies[16] suggesting that the model of one's own language teacher often serves as the model in teaching practices.

Therefore, the modern pre-service teacher education in many countries is implementing a reflective practice, based on John Dewey's[17] and Donald Schön's[18] concepts of reflection as a way of linking theory and practice and developing a professional competence.

Wallace's[19] "reflective model" is very often used in foreign language teaching. In this model, previous language learning experiences and mental constructs, formal knowledge-theories, concepts, and skills acquired in foreign language methodology courses, in combination with experiential work, teaching practice and reflection, constitute the basis of professional competence. In other words, according to Freeman[20], two main purposes of teacher education programmes should provide opportunities for development of reflective skills and the appropriate type of discourse that will enable students to re-examine their own experiences.

Although the discussion of the appropriateness and ways of implementing reflective models in teacher education are still on-going, many countries

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David Nunan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 3-16; Jelena Mihaljević Djigunović and Lovorka Zergollern, "Što, kako i kada u obrazovanju nastavnika stranih jezika," *Metodika* 6 (2003).

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[15] Harm H. Tillema, "Belief change towards self-directed learning in student teachers: immersion in practice or reflection on action," *Teaching and Teacher Education* 16 (2000).

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[17] John Dewey, *How we think* (Danvers: General Books LLC, 1910).

[18] Donald A. Schön, *Il professionista riflessivo* (Bari: Dedalo, 1993).

[19] Michael J. Wallace, *Training Foreign Language Teachers* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 12

[20] Donald Freeman, "The Hidden Side of the Work: Teacher Knowledge and Learning to Teach," *Language Teaching* 35 (2002).

with diverse educational systems, like the United States[21] and some European countries, such as the Netherlands[22] and Italy[23], have confirmed that reflection stimulates more complex perceptions and deeper understanding of the teaching process by students-future teachers.

Within the context of the European study reform (also called "Bologna process"), which was established in 2005, Croatian universities have applied a competence-developing model introducing more teaching-oriented courses, and ensuring a broader pedagogical content knowledge through an increasing number of courses concerning didactics, psychology and pedagogy, as well as subject content knowledge by introducing more specific foreign language learning courses, such as Second Language Acquisition, Evaluation and Testing, Glotodidactics, etc. Furthermore, the number of contact hours spent in school practice was also increased. The effects of these changes on students' professional growth together with the implementation of reflective approach through a structured portfolio (European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages – EPOSTL,[24]) were examined by a research conducted with students - future teachers of Italian, English and French in three different universities in Croatia[25]. The results have shown that certain categories of teaching competencies were not sufficiently developed by the new programs, so, as a consequence, the changes of the university curricula were introduced. As in previously mentioned studies, the role of prior language learning experience was confirmed, but the results also pointed to two other important factors related to the Croatian context of foreign language teacher education: 1) the level of language proficiency and 2) the school-based mentors whose lessons the participants were observing.

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[21] Jennifer M. Gore and Kenneth Zeichner, "Action Research and Reflective Teaching In Preservice Teacher Education: A Case Study From the United States," *Teaching and Teacher Education* 7, no. 2 (1991); Rahima Wade and Donald Yarbrough "Portfolios: A Tool For Reflective Thinking In Teacher Education?," *Teaching and Teacher Education* 12, no.1 (1996).

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[23] Emanuela M. Torre, and Paola Ricchiardi, *Le competenze dell'insegnante. Strumenti e percorsi di autovalutazione* (Erickson: Gardolo, 2007).

[24] David Newby et al., *European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages – EPOSTL* (Graz: European Center for Modern Languages, 2007).

[25] Sandra Mardešić, *The role of the reflective approach in the initial foreign language teacher education* (PhD diss., University of Zagreb, 2011).

In a Croatian context of language teaching, almost all students are native speakers of Croatian, and languages that they teach in their practice lessons are their first, second or third foreign language, generally learnt in primary and/or secondary school or even only at the university. Thus, some of the students had difficulties in their interaction with pupils due to a low level of communicative competence. In addition, the school mentors penalized student's lack of communicative competence over their teaching competencies.

Based on the results of the research described[26] and on Schön's[27] terminology, a new reflective model of pre-service foreign language teacher education, adapted to a Croatian educational system, was made (Figure 9-1).

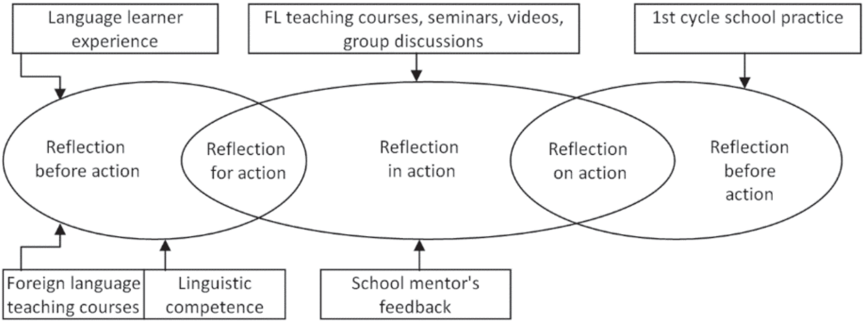
Language learner experience
FL teaching courses, seminars, videos, group discussions
1st cycle school practice
Reflection before action
Reflection for action
Reflection in action
Reflection on action
Reflection before action
Foreign language teaching courses
Linguistic competence
School mentor's feedback

Fig. 9-1. Reflective model of FL teacher education[28]

In this cyclical model, at the beginning of the first cycle of their two-year teacher education programmes students are invited to write a reflective essay on their own language learning experience as well as the effects and/or their expectations regarding the university language teaching course. Furthermore, during their school practice, students are encouraged to monitor their professional development through a self-evaluation according to descriptors in the above-mentioned structured portfolios, through feedback from their school mentors, and through group discussions with their foreign language university teachers. At the end of the first cycle, the students are expected to write a second essay in which they reflect on their experiences, and define their future goals. The same procedure is to be repeated in the second year, in the next cycle. Since this experimental model has been used only since 2012, its effectiveness, in terms of cognitive changes as a result of students' constructing knowledge, is yet to be determined.

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[26] Ibid.

[27] Donald A. Schön, *Il professionista riflessivo* (Bari: Dedalo, 1983).

[28] Sandra Mardešić, *The role of the reflective approach in the initial foreign language teacher education* (PhD diss., University of Zagreb, 2011).

2. Methods

2.1. Aim

The aim of this study was to determine whether a stimulated reflection would bring any cognitive changes within the participants, such as to raise awareness of multiple factors related to foreign language teaching, and help them determine their own strong and weak points in order to set goals for the future stages of their teaching practice.

2.2. Participants

The participants in this study were 48 students of the first year of the two-year graduate program in Italian language and literature with an emphasis on teaching. The age span of the participants varied between 22 and 24. None of them have had any prior teaching experience.

2.3. Instruments and procedure

In this study, the participants were asked to write two essays guided by open-ended questions. The first essay had been written at the beginning of the semester, before the participants started the first phase of their teaching practice in Croatian secondary schools and private schools for foreign languages. Teaching practice amounted to a total of 15 school hours which included 13 hours of classroom observations of their school mentors and two hours of teaching.

The first essay consisted of eight open-ended questions dealing with the participants' language learning experience. The questions asked them to state positive and negative aspects of FL teaching that they have experienced, their expectations of FL pre-service education, and also to complete an open-ended list of various aspects, which, in their opinion were important in FL teaching.

The second essay was written after the school-based practice and it consisted of five open-ended questions that aimed to elicit potential changes in their attitudes, the role of their language learning experience, and the role of their school mentors during the practice, as well as possible changes in the importance of certain aspects of language teaching and plans for the future phases of teacher education.

All the participants' answers were coded and analysed by methods of qualitative content analyses[29], categorised and thematically reduced according to common elements[30].

3. Results

3.1. Results of the 1st Essay – Before Teaching Practice

Participants' reflections on their own positive and negative experiences of FL learning could be summarised into the following categories (Table 9-1):

Positive experiences with participants' FL teachers (N=37):	Negative experiences with participants' FL teachers (N=37):
• Positive attitude, good student relationship, sociability: 14 • Competent teachers: 14 • Teacher who used a variety of activities and authentic materials: 12 • Enthusiasm and creativity: 10 • Objectivity: 6 • Discussions with students: 6	• Burn-out syndrome (unmotivated teachers, passive, monotonous: 13 • Just sticking to textbook and learning lessons by heart: 11 • Same lesson plan, learning by heart: 10 • Belittlement and arrogance: 9 • Subjectivity: 6 • Favouritism/teacher's pets: 5 • Permissiveness or lack of authority: 5

Table 9-1. Positive and negative experiences of FL learning

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[29] Vlado Andrilović, *Metode i tehnike istraživanja u psihologiji odgoja i obrazovanja*, 1986; Aleksandar Halmi, "Strategije istraživanja u primijenjenim društvenim znanostima", 2005.

[30] Alison Mackey, Susan M. Gass, *Second Language Research. Methodology and Design* (Mahwah, New Jersey, London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2005).

The statements regarding positive and negative aspects of their pre-service teacher education were summarised in the following categories (*N*=37) (Table 9-2):

Positive aspects	Negative (potentially problematic) aspects
• Interaction with students: 14 • Teacher centred knowledge transfer: 15 with typical comments as *"hoping they might learn something from me"; "I would like even the worst students to learn something during my classes"; "I would like to transmit to them my love for Italian"* • Creating own teaching style: 3	• Discipline: 12 • Unmotivated students: 9 • Anxiety of FL teaching: 6 • Evaluation: 6 • Teaching grammar: 5

Table 9-2. Positive and negative aspects of pre-service teacher education

When asked about their expectations of their pre-service teacher education the participants pointed to the following aspects:

- Competence development: 7
- Teacher centred knowledge transfer:7
- Overcoming FL anxiety: 6
- Basis for further development: 4 - with typical comments as: "*basics to continue*" – "*to learn the basics I will build upon later", "I hope that generations will talk positively about me"*.

Instead, when asked what their opinion about the university teachers' expectations was, most of them stated the teachers wanted them to learn how to apply theory to practice, write a good lesson plan and teach a lesson accordingly (*N*=17). Only eight participants mentioned teachers expected them to take responsibility for one's teaching, and only five participants stated the mere reproduction of theoretical knowledge studied in university courses.

Suggested aspects (scale 1-5)	Added aspects (scale 1-5)
• Cooperating with others: 4.6 • Good management skills: 4.6 • Being able to explain grammar: 4.4	• Communication skills: 4.8 • Motivating students: 5 • Positive atmosphere: 5 • Objectivity: 5 • Teaching vocabulary: 4.8 • Being flexible with error correction: 5

Table 9-3. Suggested and added aspects

In the last questions, the participants were offered some aspects of FL teaching and were asked to evaluate their importance on a scale from 1 (not important) to 5 (very important). They were also encouraged to add other aspects that they considered important and to assess their importance on the same scale (Table 9-3).

3.2. Results of the 2nd Essay – After Teaching Practice (N=48)

In answering the first question: "Did your attitude towards FL teaching change and how?", most students stated that they found it to be a positive experience (*N*=23); ten of them stated clearly that they found the first cycle of school practice motivating in terms of considering teaching as their future profession, while only four participants reported that they had a negative experience and had decided not to become teachers.

It is interesting to note that some of the participants reported that school practice actually gave them a realistic insight into FL teaching and made them realize that they underestimated the demands of the teaching profession. Typical comments were as follows: "*teachers actually work a lot", "teacher is also only human", "it's a demanding profession"*. Some of them even reported that they overestimated their skills and commented: "*I thought it would be a lot easier*", *"I realised it wasn't enough just to explain the grammar and the vocabulary"*. Eleven participants also stressed the importance of good lesson planning and the amount of time it takes for the preparation.

While in the first essays almost half of the answers described a teacher-centred orientation, in the second essay twelve participants' comments showed a change into a more learner-centred perspective and concerns about pupils' understanding, commenting as follows: *"I was worried whether everything was clear enough. Did they understand?", "pupil's feedback was important for me", "I worried whether the exercises had* *been too difficult", "I was wondering if I met their expectations", "I was trying to see if they left the classroom with smiles on their faces".*

The problems that some participants reported were classroom management, in terms of organizing activities and maintaining discipline, and their lack of Italy on an Erasmus programme proficiency in the Italian language (*N*=11) with plans to travel to for summer courses in order to improve it.

The question about which aspects they found important after the practice can be summarized under the following categories:

- Conversation rather than grammar: 13
- Motivation: 9
- Catering for students' needs discussions, teacher talk: 7
- Creativity: 4
- Teaching grammar: 4
- Frequent repetitions: 3

The influence of their own language learning was most obvious in trying to avoid practices of "bad" FL teachers they had (*N*= 12) and using good models ("*I have my own vision of the ideal FL teacher"*).

Seven participants reported that their language learner experience helped them to identify with the pupils and choose motivating and interesting materials.

It is interesting to note that even though all of the participants finished their compulsory education only four years prior to the study, some of them reported noticing a lot of changes "since their time". Their comments were as follows: "*A lot has changed since I was in school", "Everything has changed in last four years; there is no more frontal work; communication and interaction are more important now", "Everything has changed; it's all about communication".*

The role of their school mentors seems to have been evaluated as a very positive one; they were described as supportive, good advisers and the quality of their feedback was emphasized (*N*=29). This fact is not surprising, as all school mentors have been chosen by the university teachers as the best models, they are paid for their mentoring, and they all have had more than 10 years of experience in teaching Italian. However, five participants described their mentor as unsupportive and not providing enough feedback, commenting them like: "*she expected us to know everything right from the beginning"*

The last question referred to the participant's plans for the future and goals for the next cycle of their teacher education. Fifteen answers specified the teaching skills they would have to improve, such as:

overcoming the anxiety, time management, classroom management, tone of voice, and adjusting their teacher talk. Some of them also reported finding a classroom situation rather unpredictable and expressed a need for introducing more teaching practice hours and more micro-teaching in order to improve their time management skills.

A concept of teacher education as a life-learning process was clearly mentioned in four answers only: "*developing creativity", "finding new ways of motivating", "I'm looking forward to exploring different teaching methods*".

As mentioned before, one-third of the participants reported having difficulties with teaching lessons in Italian because of their insufficient proficiency and stressed the need for studying the language abroad (in a target language environment). A typical comment concerning that issue was "*I realised that one cannot learn a language only at the university, one has to stay in Italy for some time"*. This finding is not surprising for students of "less frequently studied languages in the Croatian educational system, in which many students have a lower proficiency of at the beginning of their university programmes.

4. Discussion

The above-presented results confirm the validity of our proposed reflective model of teacher education. A number of changes in the participants' attitudes were observed.

For example, in the first essay, the participants' attitudes were rather teacher-centred, and concerned a perspective of FL teaching as a "transfer of knowledge"[31], especially if we take into consideration the high importance that they put on teaching grammar and not making mistakes.

Teaching only grammar and vocabulary from a textbook seems to be rather persistent in Croatian education system, even though a communicative approach was introduced into the national programmes 30 years ago. The participants' statements describing negative experiences from their schools seem to corroborate that conclusion. Therefore, one could assume that young teachers would continue relying on that "old school model"[32]. Instead, a more communicative perspective of FL teaching was found in the second essay. Students pointed out the importance of interaction, communication, group discussions with pupils rather "teaching only grammar".

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[31] Jack C. Richards, "The dilemma of teacher education in second language teaching", 1990; Tillema, H. Harm, "Belief change towards self-directed learning in student teachers: immersion in practice or reflection on action", 2000.

[32] Kathleen M. Bailey et al., "The language learners' autobiography. Examining the apprenticeship of observation." In *Teacher Learning in Language Teaching,* edited

Furthermore, the results imply that eliciting the reflection on "good" and "bad" teacher models could have a significant role in changes of future teacher's beliefs not only on how to teach the subject content knowledge, but also, more importantly, to develop their pedagogical skills. The reported importance of positive classroom atmosphere and good relationship with pupils could be the result of rather frequently reported cases of belittlement and favouritism the participants experienced during their schooling. This could also explain why the need to be an objective teacher was mentioned by some.

A significant observation of this study is a shift in attitude from teacher-centred to learner-centred perspective. While most young teachers are usually teacher-centred and concerned only to "survive" in the classroom, in this sample, almost half of students reported the importance of adequate motivational skills and adjusting to the needs of pupils after their practice.

The participants' mentors seem to have had also a significant role as most of the participants indicated them as good models. This is in contrast to some previous studies where the situation was quite the opposite and mentors were described as passive, unmotivated, "stick to a textbook" teachers[33].

The most important finding of this study is the development of participants' understanding of the FL profession as being "very serious" and demanding. This was revealed when the second essay was compared to the first. Furthermore, FL teaching profession is perceived as benefitting from great experience and being a result of life-long learning, which has been noted through the monitoring of the participants.

5. Conclusion

Based on the results described above the answer to our initial assumption is affirmative: Stimulated reflection through writing essays before and after teaching practice stimulates cognitive changes in students (future teachers of Italian), making them change their attitude and beliefs, which

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by Donald Freeman and Jack C. Richards (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 15.

[33] Hafdís Ingvarsdóttir, "The EPOSTL in Iceland: Getting mentors on bord." In the *Using the European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages,* edited by David Newby, Annie B. Fenner, B. A., and Barry Jones (Graz: ECML, 2011).

is a goal of the modern concept of teacher education[34]. The proposed model appears to be effective in creating "reflective practitioners"[35]. One could hypothesize that if students practiced re-examining their own teaching and always set new goals while considering the teacher education as a lifelong learning process, the quality of FL teaching would increase. This also seems important if we consider that most participants are studying simultaneously to become teachers of another foreign language, so the constructed knowledge they gain through this process would be transferable also into teaching another language.

Reflections on *participants'* prior language learning experiences and on prior and post-practice attitudes show clear changes in the attitudes, increased awareness of areas of improvement, ability to set goals for future education, and changes in the perception of FL teacher profession. The reflective approach including essays appears to be an efficient way of linking theoretical, university-transmitted knowledge and a practical school experience knowledge.

Furthermore, the examination of student teachers' essays provided a good insight to university teachers in what and how the students learn; it ensured an adequate qualitative feedback on areas open for improvement and themes for group discussions.

However, numerous questions remain, such as, what are all the factors contributing to teacher competence and whether this model could be equally applied to other languages. Hence, further investigation of these topics is needed to confirm this approach universally.

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[34] Simon Borg, "Teacher cognition in language teaching: A review of research on what language teachers think, know, believe and do," *Language Teaching* 36 no. 2 (2003).

[35] Donald A. Schön, "Il professionista riflessivo," (Bari: Dedalo 1993).

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PART 3 –

INNOVATION IN THE CLASSROOM

CHAPTER NINE

CODESWITCHING AS A TEACHING STRATEGY: L2 LEARNERS' ASSESSMENT OF EXPERIMENTAL PRACTICE

ANNA FRANCA PLASTINA

1. Introduction

The quest for communicative language teaching methods has witnessed a longstanding debate over whether the learners' L1 should be used in the L2 classroom. 20th-century language teaching largely saw the monolingual principle of maximum target-language use/exposure as an effective alternative to the failure of the grammar-translation method. Nowadays, this principle still continues to influence both mainstream English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching and English for Specific Purposes (ESP). As McMillan and Rivers point out, "an English-only classroom policy is promoted as best practice."[1] At the turn of the 21st century, the role of the L1 was downplayed in two different ways. On one side, it was completely neglected as noted by Cook: "recent methods do not so much forbid the L1 as ignore its existence altogether"[2]; on the other, "unsolicited uses of L1"[3] were considered as errors and treated by means of corrective feedback. The drawbacks of maximum target-language use were, however, soon highlighted. Widdowson, for example, warned that…

> …this monolingual teaching is at odds with the bilingualisation process which learners necessarily engage in when they draw on the language they

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[1] Brian A. McMillan and Damian J. Rivers, "The Practice of Policy: Teacher Attitudes toward 'English only'," *System* 39, no.2 (2011), 252.

[2] Vivian Cook, "Using the first language in the classroom," *The Canadian Modern Language Review* 57, no. 3 (2001), 404.

[3] Roy Lyster, "Negotiation of Form, Recasts, and Explicit Correction in Relation to Error Types and Learner Repair in Immersion Classrooms," *Language Learning* 51, no.1 (2001), 265.

> know as a resource for learning the language they do not. One obvious way of dealing with this disparity is to devise a bilingual pedagogy.[4]

In this new perspective, the L2 learner was no longer seen as a weak monolingual communicator, but rather valued as a multi-competent L2 user, "who knows and uses a second language at any level"[5] and "has other uses for language than the monolingual."[6] This shift further contributed to revisiting learners' alternation between their L1 and L2, or codeswitching (CS). Traditionally considered as a sign of weak language proficiency, CS started to be valued as "a highly skilled activity"[7] and seen as the most evident expression of L2 user multi-competence. In the current globalised multilingual world, "code choice and codeswitching have become increasingly de-stigmatised beyond the classroom."[8] The reality of in-class CS has, however, not been as readily acknowledged, nor has CS been fully exploited as a teaching strategy. This is mainly due to the fact that many teachers are still anchored to the 20th-century belief that the exclusivity of L2 usage is paramount.[9] Yet, as Krulatz et al. note, "codeswitching has been acknowledged as an inescapable process in EFL environments, and the conviction that bilingual approaches can be detrimental to language learning has been reconsidered."[10] Along these lines, CS can be seen "as a communicative resource readily drawn upon by classroom participants (usually the teacher but sometimes also students)."[11] In this sense, classroom-based research has found that teachers actually do alternate between L1 and L2 in the FL classroom[12], and that the vast majority favour L1 inclusion as highlighted by Tian and Macaro.[13] This has led several researchers to coin the term 'teacher codeswitching' in order to indicate a principled rather than a random use of the L1.[14] In this regard, Levine points out that this involves…

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[4] Henry Widdowson, *Defining Issues in English Language Teaching* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 159.

[5] Vivian Cook, "Background to the L2 user." In *Portraits of the L2 User*, edited by Vivian Cook (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2002), 4.

[6] Vivian Cook, "Basing teaching on the L2 user." In *Non-native Language Teachers: Perceptions, Challenges and Contributions to the Profession*, edited by Enric Llurda (New York: Springer, 2005), 51.

[7] Vivian Cook, "Using the first language in the classroom," *The Canadian Modern Language Review* 57, no. 3 (2001), 408.

[8] Graham Hall and Guy Cook, "Own-Language Use in Language Teaching and Learning," *Language Teaching* 45, no. 3 (2012), 278.

[9] For further discussion on the exclusivity of L2 usage, see Andrew Sampson, "Learner Code-Switching versus English Only," *English Language Teachers Journal* 66, no. 3 (2012): 293-303; Said Imran and Mark Wyatt, "Pakistani University English Teachers' Cognitions and Classroom Practices regarding their Use of the Learners' First Languages," *Asian EFL Journal* 17, no. 1 (2015), 138-179.

[10] Anna Krulatz, Georgios Neokleousa and Frøydis Henningsen, "Towards an Understanding of Target Language Use in the EFL Classroom: A report from Norway," *International Journal for 21st Century Education* 3, special issue on *Language Learning and Teaching* (2016), 141.

> …*resignifying* the use of the L1, and the use of code-switching as conventional classroom language use, toward unmarking the L1 and toward optimizing L2 use (original emphasis).[15]

On these grounds, the present chapter argues for a strategic exploitation of teacher codeswitching (TCS) in the ESP classroom as an L2 user situation in its own right. The study is based on the assumptions that CS can be effective when teachers and students share the same L1 as advocated, for example, by Cook[16], and that "in classroom, discourse codeswitching occurs both for communication and for teaching/learning purposes"[17]. The importance of a principled use of TCS is specifically questioned by taking the learners' perspective. For this purpose, a survey was conducted among tertiary ESP learners at the University of Calabria in Italy following their exposure to TCS between English (L2) and Italian

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[11] Angel Lin, "Code-Switching in the Classroom: Research Paradigms and Approaches" in *Encyclopedia of Language and Education: Research Methods in Language and Education*, edited by Kendall King and Nancy Hornberger (New York: Springer Science, 2008), 278.

[12] See, for example, Yi-Chun Pan and Yi-Ching Pan, "The Use of L1 in the Foreign Language Classroom," *Colombian Applied Linguistics Journal* 12, no. 2 (2010), 87-96.

[13] Lili Tian and Ernesto Macaro, "Comparing the Effect of Teacher Codeswitching with English-only Explanations on the Vocabulary Acquisition of Chinese University Students: A Lexical Focus-on-form Study," *Language Teaching Research* 16, no. 3 (2012), 361-385.

[14] See, for example, Ferguson (2003); Üstünel and Seedhouse (2005); Tian and Macaro (2012).

[15] Glenn Levine, *Code Choice in the Language Classroom* (Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 2011), 146.

[16] Vivian Cook, *Second Language Learning and Language Teaching* (New York: Routledge, 2008).

[17] Lili Tian and Ernesto Macaro, "Comparing the Effect of Teacher Codeswitching with English-only Explanations on the Vocabulary Acquisition of Chinese University Students: A Lexical Focus-on-form Study," *Language Teaching Research* 16, no. 3 (2012), 369.

(L1). Scant research has been carried out on learners' views as studies in this area have mainly investigated teachers' use of the L1 through self-reports or based on their beliefs.[18] This study, instead, attempts to shed light on whether learners solicit a new balance between L2 only and L1 use, prompted by responsible TCS.

2. Teacher Codeswitching: Main Functions

Maximum target-language use is still seen as linguistic quality, although it does not necessarily ensure successful L2 acquisition.[19] It follows that CS is still viewed negatively in the L2 classroom, making teachers feel guilty about its use.[20] In dealing with this issue, Tian and Macaro identify three different groups of teachers:

> those that believe that it is perfectly possible to exclude [the L1] completely, and hold that it is detrimental to allow it or use it […]; those that believe it is highly desirable to exclude it, but who are unable to do so […]; those who believe it should not be excluded […].[21]

This subdivision clearly reflects a persisting continuum of perspectives on the use of L1 and L2[22], which have been summarised as "virtual", "maximal" and "optimal" positions.[23] Turnbull and Dailey-O'Cain clarify that the extreme "virtual position" mirrors the monolingual principle of maximum target-language use, while the more moderate "maximal position" assumes that the use of L1, where necessary, is inevitable to facilitate L2 processing.[24] The "optimal position" lies at the other end of the continuum, and is based on the presupposition that "there are a number of principled uses of the L1 that enhance L2 learning."[25]

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[18] See respectively Miles Turnbull and Katy Arnett (2002) and Lili Tian and Eernesto Macaro (2012).

[19] Sun Kim and Catherine Elder, "Language Choices and Pedagogic Functions in the Foreign Language Classroom: A Cross-Linguistic Functional Analysis of Teacher Talk," *Language Teaching Research* 9, no. 4 (2005), 355-380.

[20] Fiona Copland and Georgios Neokleous, "L1 to Teach L2: Complexities and Contradictions," *Modern Language Journal* 65, no. 3 (2011), 270-280.

[21] Lili Tian and Ernesto Macaro, "Comparing the Effect of Teacher Codeswitching with English-only Explanations on the Vocabulary Acquisition of Chinese University Students: A Lexical Focus-on-form Study," *Language Teaching Research* 16, no. 3 (2012), 270.

[22] Ernesto Macaro, "Codeswitching in the L2 Classroom: A Communication and Learning Strategy." In *Non-native Language Teachers: Perceptions, Challenges and Contributions to the Profession*, edited by Enric Llurda (New York: Springer, 2005), 63-84.

[23] Ernesto Macaro, "Teacher Use of Codeswitching in the L2 Classroom: Exploring 'Optimal' Use." In *First Language Use in Second and Foreign Language Learning*, edited by Miles Turnbull and Jennifer Dailey-O'Cain (Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 2009), 35-49.

This study is informed and guided by the "optimal use of L1", i.e., when "codeswitching in broadly communicative classrooms can enhance second language acquisition and/or proficiency better than second language exclusivity."[26] This use implies that the L1 needs to accomplish specific functional purposes. The following three broad purposes have been identified by Ferguson[27]:

1. *constructing and transmitting knowledge more effectively*, whereby TCS "facilitates comprehension of difficult topics";[28]
2. *classroom management*: in this case, TCS is employed "to motivate, discipline and praise [learners], to signal a change of footing […] to gain and focus [learners'] attention";[29]
3. *interpersonal relations*: the purpose of TCS here is "to humanize the affective climate of the classroom and to negotiate different identities"[30], which "ensures classroom interaction between the teacher and learners."[31]

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[24] Miles Turnbull and Jennifer Dailey-O'Cain, "Introduction." In *First Language Use in Second and Foreign Language Learning*, edited by Miles Turnbull and Jennifer Dailey-O'Cain (Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 2009), 3.

[25] Lili Tian and Ernesto Macaro, "Comparing the Effect of Teacher Codeswitching with English-only Explanations on the Vocabulary Acquisition of Chinese University Students: A Lexical Focus-on-form Study," *Language Teaching Research* 16, no. 3 (2012), 369.

[26] Ernesto Macaro, "Teacher Use of Codeswitching in the L2 Classroom: Exploring 'Optimal' Use." In *First Language Use in Second and Foreign Language Learning,* edited by Miles Turnbull and Jennifer Dailey-O'Cain (Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 2009), 38.

[27] Gibson Ferguson, "What next? Towards an agenda for classroom codeswitching research," *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* 12, no. 2 (2009), 231-241.

[28] Eda Üstünel, *EFL Classroom Code-Switching* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 94.

[29] Gibson Ferguson, "Classroom Codeswitching in Post-Colonial Contexts: Functions, Attitudes and Policies," *AILA Review* 16 (2003), 42.

[30] Ibid., 39.

[31] Eda Üstünel, *EFL Classroom Code-Switching* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 94.

More analytically, Flyman-Mattsson and Burenhult identify five main functional uses of TCS, which include *linguistic insecurity*, *topic switch*, *affective functions*, *socializing functions*, and *repetitive functions*.[32] In detail, the authors claim that linguistic insecurity should be avoided in the classroom as it is a compensatory function, which might affect "the students' confidence in the teacher's proficiency of the foreign language".[33] In a similar vein, Macaro argues that effective CS is only available to bilingual teachers.[34] As underlined by Poplack, these can be seen as intentionally performing fluent intrasentential shifts, which denote "[…] a smooth transition between L1 and L2 elements, unmarked by false starts, hesitation or lengthy pauses."[35] While learners may not be altogether familiar with the notion of intrasentential shifts, they are likely to notice their regular usage. For this reason, the variable of linguistic insecurity was introduced in the current survey to understand whether learners were aware of TCS practice as a purposeful pedagogical strategy.

The CS function of topic switch, instead, draws learners' attention to new L2 content in order to help them construct content more effectively. This phenomenon has been found to frequently relate to grammar instruction due to "the fact that the proficiency of the students is not developed enough to include terms necessary in grammar instruction."[36] In addition, TCS may also serve affective functions, such as reducing learner anxiety, building solidarity and good rapport with learners. Closely related to these functions are the socializing functions of TCS meant to create a more supportive L2 learning environment. Socializing functions are, in fact, "often directed to people with a lower proficiency in the second language."[37] Finally, CS repetitive functions are employed for the purpose of conveying the same L2 content in L1 in order to facilitate learners' understanding. As pointed out by Üstünel, "the repetition and elaboration of the same referent in the L1 are effective means to obtain accurate answers from the learners and ensure the assimilation of the task at hand."[38]

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[32] Anna Flyman-Mattsson and Niclas Burenhult, "Code Switching in Second Language Teaching of French," *Working Papers in Linguistics* 47 (1999), 61.

[33] Ibid., 63.

[34] Ernesto Macaro, "Codeswitching in the L2 Classroom: A Communication and Learning Strategy." In *Non-native Language Teachers: Perceptions, Challenges and Contributions to the Profession*, edited by Enric Llurda (New York: Springer, 2005), 64.

[35] Shana Poplack, "Contrasting Patterns of Codeswitching in Two Communities." In *Codeswitching: Anthropological and Sociolinguistic Perspectives*, edited by Monica Heller (Berlin: Mouton De Gruyter, 1988), 218.

[36] Anna Flyman-Mattsson and Niclas Burenhult, "Code Switching in Second Language Teaching of French," *Working Papers in Linguistics* 47 (1999), 63.

[37] Ibid., 66.

Drawing on these pedagogical functions, a sampling survey was carried out with the overall aim of gaining insights into learners' assessment of TCS practice.

3. Research Methodology

The survey was conducted among 150 tertiary students, who had been exposed to TCS during their ESP course attended as a core part of their first-year curriculum studies. Students were not made aware of the research purpose of the experimental practice to ensure that there would be no data interference. Four main research questions were addressed:

1. Which significant variables are at play in L2 learners' assessment of teacher codeswitching?
2. How do L2 learners evaluate L1 use in terms of pedagogical acceptability?
3. How do learners assess the effects of L1 use on L2 learning?
4. What is the amount of teacher L1/L2 use that L2 learners' desire?

A semi-structured 12-item questionnaire was designed and pilot tested prior to the actual survey. Inter-rater (k=0.76) and intra-rater (k=0.73) scores demonstrated instrument reliability. The questionnaire was structured into three sections: 1. biographical information (age, gender, L1, English language proficiency); 2. Learners' assessment of teacher use of CS (frequency, intentionality, strategy type, CS type and functional purposes); 3. learners' evaluation of L1 use in the L2 classroom (acceptability of uses, agreement on L1 effects on L2 learning, the desirability of the amount of teacher L1/L2 use). 5-point Likert-type scales for frequency, acceptability, agreement and desirability were used for finer data values. A mixed-methods design was introduced for data analysis of relative frequency distribution and to test the correlation between variables.

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[38] Eda Üstünel, *EFL Classroom Code-Switching* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 95.

4. Results and Discussion

The results discussed in the following sections refer respectively to learners' biographical background, their assessment of TCS, evaluation of L1 use, agreement regarding the effects of L1 use on L2 learning, and their desired amount of teacher L1/L2 use.

4.1. Learners' Biographical Background

The 150 learners who participated in the study were 74 males and 76 females with an approximate age of nineteen years (M =19.06). Italian was the L1 of 143 informants (95.4%) while Arabic, Albanian, Greek, Romanian or Spanish were the L1s of the remaining 4.6% made up of exchange students. These data revealed that the group was made up of multilingual learners who did not share the same first language and were thus likely to make different CS assessment choices accordingly.[39] In addition, data from informants' self-assessed English proficiency levels showed that participants formed a mixed-ability group with four different CEF levels, namely, A2 (30%), B1 (46.6%), B2 (20%), and C1 (3.4%). These data were used in the study to understand whether learners' language levels affected their choices of assessing different functional purposes of TCS, given that proficiency levels have been found to influence both learners' and teachers' use of codeswitching.[40] Moreover, biographical data were taken into account to shed light on the principled use of codeswitching to which learners were effectively exposed in the ESP classroom.

4.2. Learners' Assessment of Teacher Codeswitching

Learners were first asked to assess their experience of TCS based on four variables, namely, frequency, intentionality, strategy type and functional purposes. The frequency of TCS was rated by the majority of informants (69.3%) as "sometimes" and by a minority (27.4%) as "often" as shown in Figure 1.

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[39] See Gillian Wigglesworth and Neomy Storch, "Is there a Role for the Use of the L1 in an L2 Setting?", *TESOL Quarterly* 37, no. 4 (2003), 760-770.

[40] Blair E. Bateman, "Student Teachers' Attitudes and Beliefs About Using the Target Language in the Classroom," *Foreign Language Annals* 41, no. 1 (2008), 11-28.

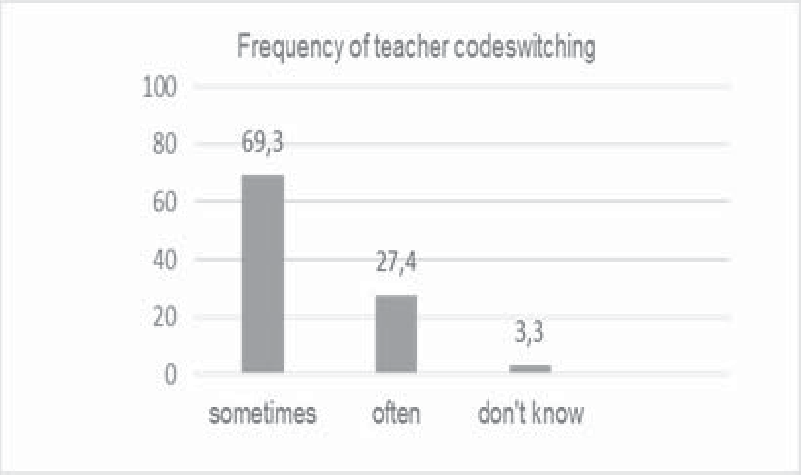

Fig. 10-1: Learners' Assessment of TCS Frequency.

First, these results suggest that 96.7% of the learners had a high level of awareness of being exposed to the practice of code choice. Second, ratings imply that only a more proficient minority of learners assessed L1 use as being too frequent. Third, it can be assumed that TCS frequency was likely to correlate with the type of learners in the ESP classroom.

Assessment of intentionality in Figure 2 shows that the vast majority of learners (91.4%) were able to discriminate between teacher's "linguistic insecurity" and CS intentionality. This suggests a high level of awareness among informants of the pedagogical function of CS as opposed to its use as a compensatory strategy. It also indirectly mirrors the teacher's aim of making CS "a systematic, principled and planned part of the L2 curriculum."[41]

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[41] Ernesto Macaro, "Codeswitching in the L2 Classroom: A Communication and Learning Strategy." In *Non-native Language Teachers: Perceptions, Challenges and Contributions to the Profession*, edited by Enric Llurda (New York: Springer, 2005), 64.

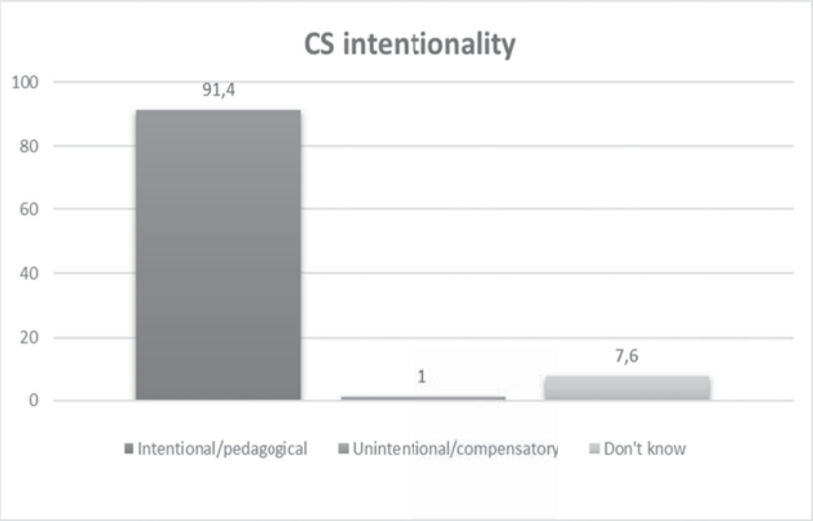

Fig. 10-2: Learners' Assessment of TCS Intentionality.

Learners were, however, less conscious when assessing CS strategy type. Only 44.6% of the informants, in fact, assessed the practice as "intersentential". This was probably due to the fact that the use of the technical term might have obscured their understanding of what they were required to assess, i.e., the use of "intersentential" shifts as smooth transitions between L1 and L2, typical of fluent bilinguals. These results were not found, however, to interfere in any way with learners' assessment of intentionality, nor for that matter, with their ratings of the functional purposes of TCS. Findings show, in fact, how informants identified a variety of functional purposes which were ranked with different frequency. Of these, the seven top purposes are reported in Figure 3.

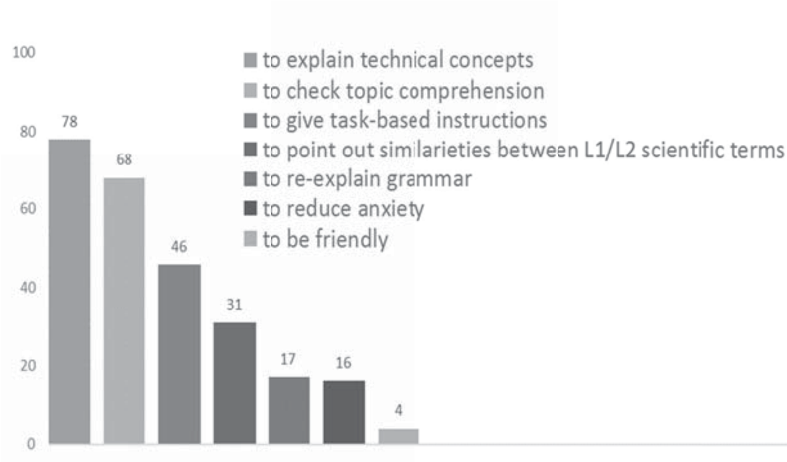

Fig. 10-3: Learners' Assessment of the Functional Purposes of TCS.

For a more detailed analysis, these data were coded by applying Flyman-Mattsson and Burenhult's and Ferguson's functional categories.[42] As shown in Table 1, results reveal a general pattern of assessment featured by the two dominant functional categories of "constructing and transmitting knowledge more effectively" and "classroom management". The former category, serving the purpose of content clarity, was found to rank higher (78%) than all the others assessed. This may be easily explained by the fact that ESP is content-based, and that learners are often faced with unfamiliar L2 technical jargon. The choice of CS, in this case, can be considered as a principled strategy to support learners' understanding of content matter both to avoid disruption in the learning process and to save classroom time.

A more careful analysis shows, however, that learners tended to focus more on the broad CS category of classroom management, assessing two of its functional purposes, namely, change in footing and learner attention. In particular, teacher change in footing for topic comprehension ranked higher (68%) than that for pointing out L1-L2 similarities between scientific terms (31%). Learners' preference for the former suggests that the purposeful use of footing as a change in code[43] was valued more likely by less proficient learners as it facilitated their comprehension. In other words, the teacher's strategic use of L1 footing can be seen as a type of "situational switching"[44] arising from a direct relation between the pedagogical situation, conditioned by the presence of weaker learners, and code choice.

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[42] See respectively notes 32 and 27.

[43] "A change in footing implies a change in the alignment we take up to ourselves and to others present as expressed in the way we manage the production or reception of an utterance" (Erving Goffman, 1981: 128).

Learners' assessment	Functional Category	Freq.
1. *to explain technical concepts*	Constructing and transmitting knowledge more effectively: content clarity	78%
2. *to check topic comprehension*	Classroom management: change in footing	68%
3. *to give task-based instructions*	Classroom management: learner attention	46%
4. *to point out L1-L2 similarities between scientific terms*	Classroom management: change in footing	31%
5. *to re-explain grammar*	Repetitive	17%
6. *to reduce anxiety*	Interpersonal relations: affective	16 %
7. *to be friendly*	Interpersonal relations: socializing	4%

Table 10-1: Coding of Learners' Assessment of CS functional categories.[45]

On the other hand, pointing out L1-L2 similarities between scientific terms can be seen as a change in footing of the explanatory type, i.e., to provide a proper explanation of the meaning of scientific words. Lower rankings for this function can be tentatively interpreted through the lens of the teacher's methodological preference for techniques (e.g. paraphrasing, providing definitions/synonyms) intended to privilege the L2. CS as classroom management was also assessed by 46% of the informants for the purpose of drawing learner attention to task-based instructions. Again, this strategy was probably directed to less proficient learners to increase instructional clarity, and therefore, operated as a "contextualisation cue", whereby “the content of what is said is decoded.”[46] Low CS rankings for its repetitive function (17%) can also be seen in the light of the teacher’s methodological approach to ESP, which is by nature more task-oriented than grammar-based.

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[44] John J. Gumperz, *Discourse Strategies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 98.

[45] Based on Anna Flyman-Mattsson and Niclas Burenhult (1999) and Gibson Ferguson (2009).

On a different note, low rankings for CS affective and socializing functions (respectively, 16% and 4%) suggest learners’ minor concern for the CS category of interpersonal relations compared to those of “classroom management” and “constructing and transmitting knowledge more effectively”. Nevertheless, the very low ranking (4%) of the CS socializing function was not completely underestimated as it might have been assessed by more proficient learners, who were probably less interested in other functional purposes.

Hence, these results point to L2 proficiency as the most significant variable at play in learners’ assessment of TCS. For this reason, correlations between main functional purposes and the independent variable of language proficiency were tested on the basis of biographical data.[47] Correlations between the two variables yielded the following results:

1. a positive correlation ($r = 0.7$; $p= 0.011$ at $p < 0.05$) between the CS function of content clarity and A2/B1 learners (respectively 30% and 46.6%);
2. a significantly positive correlation ($r = 0.8$; $p = 0.00$ at $p < 0.05$) between the CS affective function and B2 learners (20%);
3. a highly positive correlation ($r = 0.9$; $p = 0.037$ at $p < 0.05$) between the CS socializing function and C1 learners (3.4%).

4.3. Learners’ Evaluation of L1 use: Pedagogical Acceptability

In the following part of the survey, learners were asked to evaluate the teacher’s use of L1 Italian in terms of pedagogical acceptability. Likert-scale ratings of totally acceptable L1 uses were coded for frequency ranking (%). The five top pedagogical uses are reported in Figure 4.

Data analysis revealed that 132 informants (88%) totally accepted L1 use for the pedagogical purpose of improving *all students’ understanding* when necessary, regardless of their L2 proficiency. However, L1 uses for

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[46] John Gumperz, *Discourse Strategies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 98.
[47] See section 4.1.

content clarity and *for weaker students only* were found to relate more directly to learners with lower L2 proficiency levels.

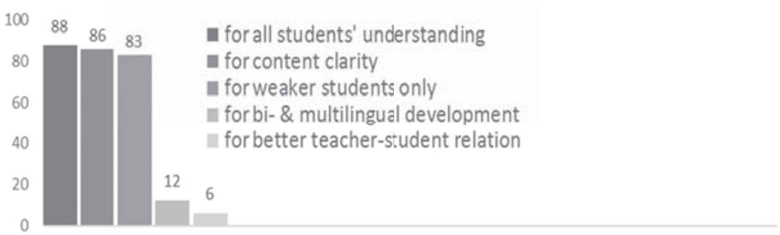

Fig. 10-4: Learners' Total Acceptability of L1 Use: Top Pedagogical Uses.

In particular, L1 use for content clarity was totally accepted by all A2/B1 informants (76.6%), but only by 9.4% of the B2 learners and no C1-level students; L1 use for weaker students only was totally accepted by 125 informants (83%), of which only 13.6% were more proficient in English. Total acceptance of L1 use *for better teacher-student relations*, instead, was indicated only by B2/C1 informants (6%). Overall, these findings confirmed the results of the correlations between learners' CEF levels and the various TCS functional purposes.

On a different note, L1 use *for bilingual and multilingual development* was rated as totally acceptable only by two subgroups of learners, namely, B2/C1 informants and by those with other L1s (12%). Interestingly, it can be envisaged that while bilingual Italian subjects accepted L1 use also to develop their metalinguistic awareness, exchange students as multilingual subjects (3-5 languages) rated L1 use to develop their multi-competence. In other words, exchange students were more likely to exploit the ESP classroom as a multilingual situation where "ample and creative openings for effective language learning"[48], including L2 Italian, were made possible. This appears to be in line with recent research findings which emphasize the usefulness of a principled use of the L1 to enhance its learning as an L2.[49]

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[48] Christine Hélot and Muiris Ó Laoire, "Introduction: From Language Education Policy to a Pedagogy of the Possible." In *Language Policy for the Multilingual Classroom: Pedagogy of the Possible*, edited by Christine Hélot and Muiris Ó Laoire (Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 2011), xi.

[49] See, for example, Brian A. McMillan and Damian J. Rivers, "The Practice of Policy: Teacher Attitudes toward 'English only'," *System* 39, no. 2 (2011), 251-263.

4.4. Learners' Assessment of the Effects of L1 use

Learners were further asked to express their levels of agreement on the possible effects of L1 use on L2 learning. Four effects of L1 use were rated on a 5-point Likert-scale (*strongly agree-strongly disagree*). Results in Figure 5 show a high level of agreement/strong agreement on L1 use to *help understand ESP content* (73%), and to *help clarify L2 doubts and mistakes* (69%). These findings appear to be consistent with learners' high ranking of TCS "to explain technical concepts" as in Figure 3, and with their total acceptability of L1 "for all students' understanding" and "for content clarity" as in Figure 4. The effect of L1 on *reducing learner anxiety* was rated positively by a much lower number of informants (29%) in line with rankings for CS affective functions as in Figure 3, and "for better teacher-learner relations" as in Figure 4. Finally, 94% of the informants disagreed/strongly disagreed that *L1 confuses L2 learning* while the remaining 6% agreed/strongly agreed on its negative effects. This is justified by the fact that these learners had a B2-C1 proficiency level, and possibly held the belief that the L1 could "deprive [them] of valuable input in the L2."[50]

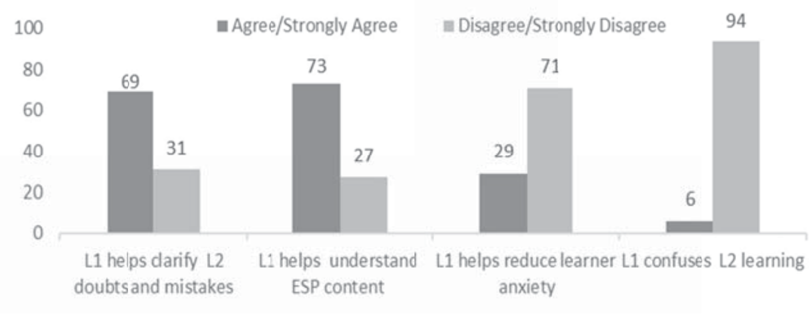

Fig. 10-5: Learners' Agreement on the L1 Effect on L2 Learning.

In addition, informants with other L1s (*N*=7) were also asked to express their level of agreement on the effect of Italian on L2 learning. Figure 6 shows how 4 informants agreed/strongly agreed that *the use of Italian impedes learning English*; 3 claimed that *it is also helpful to improve my*

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[50] Rod Ellis, *Classroom Second Language Development* (Oxford: Pergamon, 1984), 133.

knowledge of Italian and, interestingly, 5 out of 7 agreed/strongly agreed that *my L1 would be more helpful*.

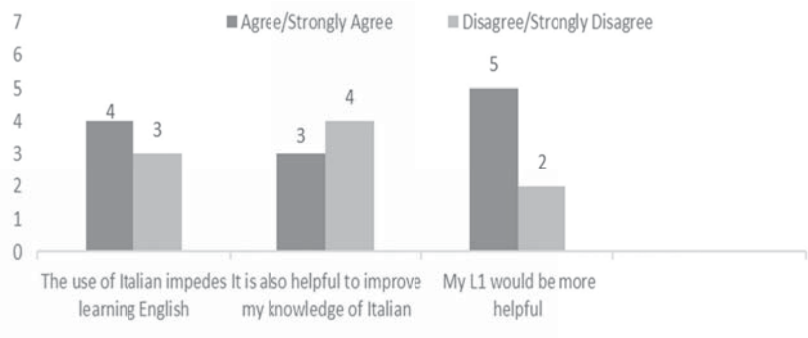

Fig. 10-6: Learners with other L1s: Agreement on the Effect of Italian on English Learning.

These data were matched against subjects' self-ratings for both English and Italian proficiency levels to gain a deeper understanding of their choices. Biographical data revealed that 2 informants had C1 English and A2 Italian; 2 B2 English and A2 Italian; 3 A2 levels for both English and Italian. These different proficiency levels of English and Italian were found to discriminate rates of agreement on Italian as hindering English learning and on its usefulness to improve knowledge of Italian as an additional language. Nevertheless, only the 2 informants with C1-level English strongly disagreed that their L1 would be more helpful, suggesting their inclination for maximum target-language use.

Overall, the vast majority of informants found that the use of L1 Italian did not impede ESP learning, regardless of their L1s. Although most multilingual learners also valued the support of their own L1s, this issue was difficult to manage due to the five different languages for which TCS would require adequate multilingual competence and more classroom time. Nonetheless, this constraint did not interfere with the pedagogical benefits gained from a principled use of L1 Italian. The four more proficient multilingual learners of English (B2-C1 levels) were among those who favoured L2 usage and, thus, needed TCS support much less than the majority of the weaker bilingual learners (A2-B1 levels; 76.6%). All the other three less proficient multilingual learners (A2 level) took advantage of the use of L1 Italian, thus suggesting that they acted as multi-competent L2 users.[51]

4.5. Learners' Desirability of Teacher L1/L2 Amount

Learners were finally asked to rate the amount of teacher L1/L2 use they considered desirable, based on their experience of the experimental practice. The notion of desirability was here used both to relate learner ratings to the continuum of perspectives on the use of L1 and L2, besides considering motivation and learning in terms of potential L1 overuse. Advocates of the monolingual principle of maximum target-language, in fact, claim that L1 overuse demotivates learners and does not allow conscious and subconscious learning to be maximised as suggested, for example by MacDonald.[52]

Results in Figure 7 show that desirability for *L2 only* (target-language maximum use in monolingual teaching) was rated only by a small number of proficient learners (5%). In contrast, *L2 with some L1 use* was indicated by 62% of the informants as *desirable/very desirable* and *balanced L1/L2 use* received the same rating by 26%. These findings are consistent with learners' assessment of TCS frequency as in Figure 1 and, implicitly, suggest that L1 was not overused. This means that the amount of TCS most probably did not affect motivation and learning. Very weak learners (7%), instead, desired *L2 with major L1 use*, thus further confirming that L1 was not overused. This also suggests their excessive dependency on L1, which commonly originates from the feeling "that they have not 'really' understood any item of language until it has been translated."[53]

Moreover, this level of desirability is consistent with frequency ratings which showed unawareness of TCS intentionality (*don't know*, 7.5 %) as indicated in Figure 2.

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[51] Vivian Cook, "Background to the L2 user." In *Portraits of the L2 User*, edited by Vivian Cook (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2002), 2.

[52] Carol MacDonald, *Using the Target Language* (Cheltenham, UK: Mary Glasgow Publications, 1993).

[53] David Atkinson, "The Mother Tongue in the Classroom: A Neglected Resource?," *ETL Journal* 41, no. 4 (1987), 246.

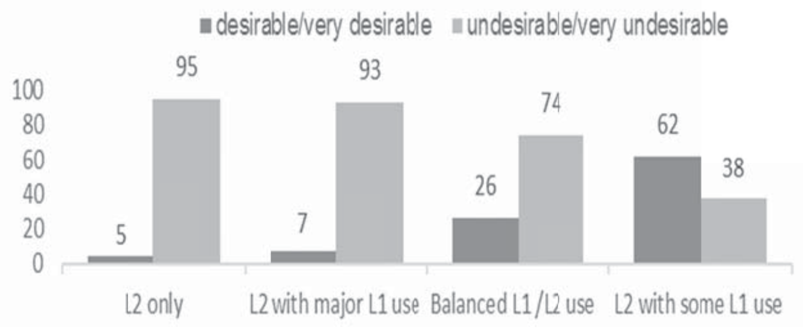

Fig. 10-7: Learners' Desirability of the Amount of Teacher L1/L2 Use.

On the whole, findings denote that the vast majority of informants (95%) had reservations about the desirability of *L2 only*. This substantiates the importance of an occasional and purposeful use of the L1. In this regard, Tang explains that:

> *limited and judicious* use of the mother tongue in the English classroom does not reduce students' exposure to English, but rather can assist in the teaching and learning processes. This is not to overstate the role of the L1 or advocate greater use of L1 in the EFL classroom, but rather to clarify some misconceptions that have troubled foreign language teachers for years [..] (my emphasis).[54]

5. Concluding Remarks

The current study has dealt with the issue of reconsidering CS from the learners' perspective, given that classroom research has mainly addressed the teachers' views. The survey has offered a group of ESP tertiary students the opportunity to assess key aspects of TCS following their experience of an experimental practice in class. In general, results highlight L2 learner awareness of code choice practices and their ability to assess the functional implications of CS in the classroom according to their learning needs. Learners were, in fact, able to assess the pedagogical intentionality of intersentential shifts and to discriminate between different TCS functional purposes. Given the mixed-ability group of informants, the variables of L2 proficiency and different TCS functional uses were found to have a strong correlation. A general pattern of assessment, governed by the two functional categories of “constructing and transmitting knowledge more effectively” and “classroom management, was identified. This was justified by the larger number of less proficient learners who mainly valued TCS for its facilitative effects. Conversely, the smaller group of more proficient learners tended to assess TCS positively for its affective and/or socializing functions. This reflects a responsible use of TCS targeted to cover heterogeneous learning needs. For example, L1 footing was used more as “situational switching” to check weaker learners’ comprehension and significantly less as an explanatory strategy. This, thus, suggests that the L2 remained the primary medium of instruction.

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[54] Jinlan Tang, "Using L1 in the English Classroom," *English Teaching Forum* 40, no. 1 (2002), 41.

In addition, the pedagogical purposes for which TCS was totally accepted confirmed the trend of assessment determined by the variable of L2 proficiency. Ratings “for bilingual and multilingual development” cast light on the usefulness of L1 Italian to foster its learning as an L2 in the case of the multilingual learners. Agreement on the effects of L1 use on L2 was also discriminated by L2 proficiency, further showing a coherent validity of learners’ overall assessment. Most multilingual learners also valued the support of their own L1s, thus raising the issue of managing TCS practice in monolingual classrooms as opposed to multilingual ones. In the former, TCS can more strategically address similar L2 problems as learners share the same L1 and cultural views; in the latter, instead, difficulties arise primarily due to the impracticality of coping with many L1s. This issue was moderately experienced in the present experimental practice, given the restricted number of exchange students who were mostly proficient in English. While it could be argued that the few remaining multilingual learners were likely to be marginalized, they were found to assess TCS positively, thus acting as multi-competent L2 users of Italian. All the same, this issue can be seen as the major limitation of replicating the current study beyond monolingual classrooms. In turn, this calls for future reflections on the constraints posed by multilingual learners on TCS practices and for new tentative approaches which capture the benefits of allowing learners to use their L1s.

As for learners’ desirability of the amount of teacher L1/L2 use, findings suggest that maximizing L2 should not preclude the use of L1 as a pedagogical strategy to facilitate learning when necessary. Results also suggest that motivation and learning are not affected when an overuse of L1 is not practised. Overuse can be seen, however, as a relative concept, given that no precise measures can be prescribed. On this matter, Hall and Cook rightly point out that:

> the extent to which own-language use occurs in a language classroom will in many ways depend on the teacher's and learners' perceptions of its legitimacy, value and appropriate classroom functions.[55]

A balanced use further subsumes that code choice is inextricably connected to pedagogical focus for a judicious use of the L1. In this light, new avenues for language learning can be opened up as already predicted by Cook more than a decade ago:

> bringing the L1 back from exile may lead not only to the improvement of the existing teaching methods but also to innovations in methodology.[56]

While it is still difficult to foresee how these innovations may evolve, it is crucial to underline that they need to spring from some basic premises, which are aptly summarised by Macaro:

> …teachers deprived of the codeswitching tool will find it harder to trigger a range of strategies in their learners […] learners deprived of codeswitching in the discourse cannot develop an important communication strategy.[57]

In this light, two types of TCS, namely, "teacher-initiated and teacher-induced"[58] represent fertile grounds for potential innovation. The present study has focussed on the teacher-initiated type, which has shown to privilege the dual pedagogical functions of content clarity and classroom management. Teacher-initiated CS and the results of the related survey contributed to developing learners' understanding of the pedagogical value rather than the avoidance of CS.[59] Ultimately, this allowed students to reflect on the potential offered by this practice as a core component of multicompetence development.

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[55] Graham Hall and Vivian Cook, "Own-Language Use in Language Teaching and Learning," *Language Teaching* 45, no. 3 (2012), 294.

[56] Vivian Cook, "Using the first language in the classroom," *The Canadian Modern Language Review* 57, no. 3 (2001), 419.

[57] Eduardo Macaro, "Codeswitching in the L2 Classroom: A Communication and Learning Strategy." In *Non-native Language Teachers: Perceptions, Challenges and Contributions to the Profession*, edited by Enric Llurda (New York: Springer, 2005), 80.

[58] Eda Üstünel and Paul Seedhouse, "Why That, in That Language, Right Now? Codeswitching and Pedagogical focus," *International Journal of Applied Linguistics* 15, no. 3 (2005), 302.

[59] Andrew Sampson, "Learner Code-Switching versus English Only," *English Language Teachers Journal* 66, no. 3 (2012).

Future research should also investigate teacher-induced CS "[..] as a type of CS in which the teacher encourages learners to take a turn in [their L1], while s/he uses English in his/her turn [..]."[60] This helps L2 learners "to develop awareness of when and why to code-switch as a normal creative aspect in a bilingual classroom."[61]

These practices, however, are grounded in the "optimal" view which presupposes a shift away from traditional teacher beliefs. Due to the number of endogenous and exogenous factors which influence teacher beliefs (e.g. own experience, policy makers, peer attitudes), this remains a complex issue to handle without proper training. Nonetheless, it can be argued in the wise words of Atkinson that:

> the potential of the mother tongue as a classroom resource is so great that its role should merit considerable attention and discussion in any attempt to develop a 'post-communicative' approach to TEFL for adolescents and adults.[62]

The present study has taken a step forward in this direction by allowing learners to voice their need for a "post-communicative approach", which moves far from the 20th-century monolingual principle of maximum target-language use.

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[60] Eda Üstünel, *EFL Classroom Code-Switching* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 14.

[61] Glenn Levine, *Code Choice in the Language Classroom* (Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 2011), 33.

[62] David Atkinson, "The Mother Tongue in the Classroom: A Neglected Resource?", *ELT Journal* 41, no. 4 (1987), 241.

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CHAPTER TEN

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF COMPOSITION SYMBOLS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF WRITING IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

REBEKAH RAST

1. Introduction

New trends often revive old trends, with a twist. Such is the case of the proposal presented in this article. The use of composition symbols (otherwise known as "code-marking") is an old trend revived in specific educational contexts to facilitate the assessment of written work in the language classroom. The twist lies in the innovative ways teachers think about this coding. In the present case, the twist is the application of Corder's perspective on learners' errors to corrective feedback (CF) in writing courses[1].

Language teaching programmes around the world utilize a variety of methods, many of which derive from communicative language teaching (CLT) approaches, such as Content-Based Instruction (CBI), Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT). While these innovative approaches to language teaching provide evidence that the communicative approach is "alive", resistance to them in many educational systems is a sign that much work still needs to be done to convince teachers, administrators and materials developers to use communicative techniques that inspire students to be active participants in the learning process and motivate them to go beyond learning merely for a degree or certificate. When studying a second or additional language, this learning may involve developing a deeper meta-cognitive/linguistic understanding of the interaction between one's own languages, a reflection that is often encouraged in CLT classrooms[2]. Yet, one contentious area in language teaching - and one that creates conflict between the communicative and traditional approaches - remains that of mechanics in student writing (e.g. grammar, spelling). A focus on mechanics regularly takes a back seat to interactive and content-based activities in CLT unlike in a traditional classroom. While instilling the values of plurilingualism[3] in our students and developing interactive and critical-thinking-based learning environments create an exciting and vigorous learning environment, we cannot ignore the importance of "correctness" and "professionalism" in their written work. It is this area that often meets resistance with CLT.

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[1] S. Pit Corder, "The significance of learner's errors," *International Review of Applied Linguistics* 5.4 (1967).

The current paper briefly reviews second language acquisition (SLA) research that addresses questions of form, meaning and written CF in the CLT classroom and reports on a small-scale empirical study conducted to test the use of a CF tool, namely composition symbols. The learner varieties (LV) framework of SLA will be used for the analysis[4]. The framework, a functionalist approach to analysing learner language, views linguistic input as the language of the learner's environment with which the learner must interact in order for language acquisition to occur. The basis of this approach is the work of Corder in which he distinguishes between *input* and *intake*, proposing that *intake* is what learners extract from the *input*, process and absorb or "take in" to be made available for future use[5]. Finally, following a report on the study's results, the reader will be directed to Corder's seminal paper, "The significance of learner's errors"[6], for a revived discussion of how to think about learners' errors in writing.

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[2] Georges Lüdi, "Complémentarités et/ou tensions entre la didactique des langues étrangères et la linguistique acquisitionnelle dans la formation des enseignants," in *Discours, acquisition et didactique des langues: Les termes d'un dialogue*, eds. P. Trévisiol-Okamura and G. Komur-Thilloy (Paris: Orizons, 2011), 53-70.

[3] The term is used here as defined in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*, p. 4
https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_EN.pdf.

[4] See Wolfgang Klein and Clive Perdue, *Utterance Structure: Developing Grammars Again* (Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1992); Christine Dimroth and Marianne Starren, eds., *Information Structure and the Dynamics of Language Acquisition* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2003); Henriette Hendriks, ed., *The Structure of Learner Varieties* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2005).

[5] Corder, *op. cit.*

[6] *Ibid*.

2. Background research

Researchers in the fields of SLA and Instructed SLA (ISLA)[7], regardless of theoretical perspective, confirm that linguistic input is required in the learning of a new language. The LV approach follows emergentist approaches[8] in the claim that in language acquisition, crucial information is present in the input, and learners use their knowledge and cognitive capacities to analyse this input. It follows that learners need regular exposure to the input, which contains the information needed to build a new linguistic system. Although the actual input to the learner in these approaches is generally viewed as the input of the ambient environment that learners see and/or hear, the interesting question about this input is one that Corder raised in 1967:

> The simple fact of presenting a certain linguistic form to a learner in the classroom does not necessarily qualify it for the status of input, for the reason that input is 'what goes in' not what is *available* for going in, and we may reasonably suppose that it is the learner who controls this input, or more properly his intake.[9]

From Corder's perspective, learner varieties are entities to be observed and studied in their own right, not as error-ridden, unsuccessful deviations of the target language (TL), and learners have what Corder refers to as a "built-in syllabus". The learner's internal syllabus is what likely controls how the learner "takes in" linguistic information, a process that, he hypothesizes, could be more efficient than an instructor-generated sequence. Learners' errors are also viewed as systematic and can, therefore, inform linguists and language teachers of their internal language system. Thus, the recommendation is to look at language from the learners' perspective, including examining the errors they produce, as these will inform us about "intake". Viewing learner language in this way also aligns with Selinker's work on "interlanguage"[10], the go-to term for SLA researchers investigating learner language as dynamic varieties that can be observed throughout the second language (L2) acquisition process[11].

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[7] Shawn Loewen, *Introduction to Instructed Second Language Acquisition* (New York: Routledge, 2015).

[8] See for example Nick C. Ellis, "Emergentism, Connectionism and Language Learning." *Language Learning* 48 (1998); Michael Tomasello, *Constructing a Language. A Usage-Based Theory of Language Acquisition* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2003).

[9] Corder, *op. cit.,* 167.

[10] Larry Selinker,, "Interlanguage." *IRAL* 10 (1972): 209-231.

Two of the most pressing questions in ISLA are how language acquisition research can contribute to helping language instructors teach their students most effectively and efficiently, and how methods used to teach and learn foreign languages can be enhanced[12]. As per Corder, the LV approach asks a slightly different question: How do adult learners work on their input in order to develop language? This question is what ultimately links SLA theorizing and empirical research to the practice of foreign language teaching. Essentially, what can teachers learn from findings about what their students actually do with the input, including the feedback that teachers address to them? This is the fundamental question to ask when investigating the influence of CF on learning in an instructed setting, a question that leads more specifically to a series of other questions found in the literature: *Should* learner errors be corrected? If so, *when* should learner errors be corrected? *Which* errors should be corrected? *How* should these errors be corrected?

Two primary types of instruction that consider CF, "Form-focused instruction" (FFI) and "Meaning-focused instruction" (MFI), have received much attention from researchers for several decades[13]. Both types of instruction allow for more or less focused work on formal features of the language. In FFI, a distinction is made between implicit FFI and explicit FFI, the explicit approach being the one that involves metalanguage and controlled practice of forms. In MFI, a distinction is made between "focus on forms" (FoFs) and "focus on form" (FoF)[14]. In FoFs, the instructor plans the formal work in advance and incorporates it into the lesson, whereas in the latter, the instructor takes advantage of students' incidental attempts at forms to intervene and focus on form[15]. Research on CF in these approaches has tended to focus on oral production.

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[11] See for example Zhao-Hong Han and Elaine Tarone, eds., *Interlanguage: Forty Years Later* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2014).

[12] See Shawn Loewen, *op. cit*., and Jessica Williams, "Classroom research." In *The Routledge Handbook of Second Language Acquisition*, eds. S. Gass and A. Mackey. (Oxon, UK: Routledge, 2012), 541-554.

[13] Catherine Doughty and Jessica Williams, eds., *Focus on Form in Classroom Second Language Acquisition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

[14] Michael Long, "Instructed interlanguage development," in *Issues in Second Language Acquisition: Multiple Perspectives*, ed., L. Beebe. (New York: Newbury House, 1988), 115-141; Catherine Doughty, "Does second language instruction make a difference: Evidence from empirical study of SL relativisation." *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 13 (1991): 431-469.

With regard to CF in writing, Ferris identified two types of written CF, *indirect* and *direct*[16]. In *direct* CF, the instructor provides a correct form. *Indirect* CF takes various forms, some of the most common being code marking or indicating the error by circling or underlining it. In an extensive study of CF (264 participants), Elicker & Fürstenberg found no difference in the effect of type of *indirect* CF on task performance following instruction with errors indicated either with or without code-marking[17]. Both forms of *indirect* feedback, however, led to better results than instruction in which errors were not indicated at all. Ferris suggests that *indirect* tends to be more effective than *direct* as it requires the student to attend to and process the information in the CF. Ferris also classifies lexical errors, such as *word choice* and *idioms*, as potentially "untreatable" in that no set of rules can help learners avoid or fix these errors[18]. In these cases, indicating the category through code marking may not help students correct these errors, and thus may require a different approach.

3. The Study

The objective of the current study was to experiment with and test the efficiency of composition symbols (coding) in the teaching of writing in a context where coding is an integral part of the writing course. Research questions asked were: Can learners recognize the code? Can learners match the code/concept to an example? How do learners respond to instructors' codes in their revisions? Do they try to correct? If so, do they produce the correct form? And finally, is coding efficient, effective, and useful? In other words, what do learners "take in" and learn from this coding experience?

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[15] Helen Basturkmen, Shawn Loewen, and Rod Ellis, "Metalanguage in Focus on Form in the Communicative Classroom," *Language Awareness* 11, no. 1 (2002): 1-13; Catherine Doughty and Jessica Williams, eds. *Focus on Form in Classroom Second Language Acquisition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Shawn Loewen, *op. cit.*

[16] Dana Ferris, "Does error feedback help student writers? New evidence on short- and long-term effects of written error correction," in *Feedback in Second Language Writing: Contexts and Issues*, eds. K. Hyland and F. Hyland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 81-104; Dana Ferris, "Second language writing research and written corrective feedback in SLA: Intersections and practical implications," *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 32 (2010): 181–201.

[17] Martina Elicker and Ulla Fürstenberg, "Feedback in student writing: A closer look at code-marking," in *Feedback Matters: Current Feedback Practices in the EFL Classroom*, ed., M. Reitbauer (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2013), 117-140.

[18] Dana Ferris, *op. cit.*

Data were collected from students in a level B2 (CEFR) intensive writing course for non-native speakers of English at the American University of Paris. The course, designed to prepare students for mainstream courses taught in English the following semester, met three days per week for a total of nine hours per week for 15 weeks. The class comprised 14 students, four of whom were selected for this study. The instructor used a process writing approach following Elbow's work[19], with a variety of writing types based on readings and discussion. Critical thinking was regularly encouraged through oral and written interactive activities. The instructor coded writing assignments with composition symbols and asked students to correct errors during the rewriting process. The symbols used were reviewed regularly throughout the semester on the whiteboard and through oral and written exercises. Although a total of 15 symbols were used in the class, only eight will be discussed here. Each is intended to signal a specific problem with a word, phrase or sentence:

Frag (fragment), *RO* (run-on sentence), *CS* (comma splice), *T* (tense), *S/V* (subject-verb agreement), *WW* (wrong word), *WF* (word form), *Ref* (reference).

The study included two end-of-semester experimental tasks: identification (Id) and matching (match). In the identification task, students were asked: What do the following symbols mean? An example was provided: RO ___ (correct response: run-on sentence). In the matching task, students were asked to match the editing term and symbol with the appropriate example. An example was provided: Wrong word form (WF) ___ (correct match: *She felt very happiness → happy*).

The four students whose data were analysed are referred to with respect to their first language (L1) and their gender (F or M): KhM (L1 Khmer, male), SpF (L1 Spanish, female), FrF (L1 French, female), FrM (L1 French, male).

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[19] Peter Elbow, *Writing Without Teachers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973).

3.1. Quantitative analysis

Quantitative data from both tasks can be seen in Table 11-1. In the identification task, incorrect responses ranged from 1-4 over a total of 8. No learner replied with 100% accuracy. Performance on the matching task was better. KhM confused *S/V* and *T*, which is not surprising given that both symbols code verbs. SpF reversed *ref* and *S/V*, both of which require attention to the agent/subject of the utterance. Given that this student's L1 Spanish is a pro-drop language and she showed consistent signs of difficulty with the obligatory explicit subject in her written English, this is also not a surprising result. FrF confounded *CS* and *RO*, two very similar sentence structure problems that are differentiated only by a comma. Finally, FrM replied with 100% accuracy to all the matching questions. These results support the research claiming that, despite the *regular* usage of composition symbols, students can have problems understanding the symbols and the categories on which the symbols are based[20]. They also support Corder's observation that learners' errors are systematic in that confusion between two codes appears not to be arbitrary.

Student	**KhM**		**SpF**		**FrF**		**FrM**	
Task/Code	*Id*	*match*	*Id*	*Match*	*Id*	*match*	*Id*	*match*
Frag	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
RO	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	CS	✓	✓
CS	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	RO	✓	✓
T	✓	S/V	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	✓
S/V	✓	T	✓	Ref	✓	✓	-	✓
WW	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
WF	✓	✓	-	✓	-	✓	✓	✓
ref	-	✓	-	S/V	-	✓	✓	✓

✓ = correct response; - = no response

Table 11-1. Student responses to the identification and matching tasks

3.2. Qualitative analysis

A high level of individual variability was observed in students' ability to correct the coded errors in their rewrites. Some error types were more difficult to correct than others, and some writing tasks appeared to pose more problems than others. This aspect of the study will require further analysis than space permits here to better understand the effect of coding on individual student performance.

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[20] See for example John Bitchener and Ute Knoch, "The relative effectiveness of different types of direct written corrective feedback," *System* 37, no. 2 (2009): 322–329.

The following examples, however, provide an indication of the difficulty students may have with processing symbols.

1) L1 Khmer (KhM)

KhM writes, “I was in loved with my imagination…”. The instructor underlined the word “loved” and coded it *WF*. Analysis of this error provides several insights. First, the final -d in the word “loved” marks a past tense or past participle verb form. Given the context, however, we imagine that KhM wanted to express the content of the idiom “in love with”, which requires the noun form of the word “love”, hence the coding *WF*. Secondly, his utterance begins in a past time, “I was…”. This conceptualisation of a past event could well have triggered the past tense English marker “-ed” on the word “love”. KhM corrected the error in his rewrite, but did he understand why he made the error in the first place and why the new form is the appropriate one? What did he learn, if anything, from this coding experience?

2) L1 Khmer (KhM)

This same learner produced the following sentence: “The user of the bionic limb think of moving…”. The instructor underlined “think” and coded the error as *S/V*. KhM corrected the form with “thinks” in his rewrite. The form “thinks” is the third person singular required by the singular subject of the sentence “the user”. For the analyst, the issue here is three-fold: 1) Did the learner simply forget to add the final –s on what he knew was a third person singular verb? 2) Did he not add the final –s because inflection, for him, was unnecessary here (we understand the sentence without it)? 3) Or did he mean to communicate a plural verb? Is it possible that for this learner two nouns (“the user” and “the bionic limb”) equals a plural and therefore the appropriate verb form for this syntactic subject is a plural verb? These types of questions are the challenges facing the linguist or language teacher when attempting to analyse learner productions. We cannot know the intention of the learner; we can only speculate. But decades of research on analysing learner productions (mostly oral) have shown that errors are systematic[21], suggesting that numerous processes are at work in the minds of learners when speaking or writing in the language being learned.

3) L1 French (FrF)

FrF wrote, “Learning a new language offer to get a different perspective”. The instructor underlined “offer” and coded this error as *S/V*. This example shows a typical error type in L2 written English. The form “offer” is the base form of the verb (i.e. infinitive without “to”) and the present tense form of all but the third person singular. In this example, the gerund “learning” requires the third person singular morpheme –s. The information “singular” is referred to as “number” in morphological studies conducted by linguists. From the learner’s perspective, however, does the form “offer” in this context carry “number”? Probably not. FrF corrected the form in her rewrite. But did she know that a gerund functioning as a subject requires explicit marking for “number”, that is, the third person singular form? Or did she add the *–s* because she knows that the final *–s* is the only other option on a present tense verb? FrF continued to make *S/V* errors in future writing. What did she learn, if anything, from this coding experience?

4) L1 French (FrF)

This same learner wrote the sentence “Children stopped to learn their language”. The instructor underlined “to learn” and coded the error as *WF*. The problematic form here is a complex one for learners. In English, the verb “stop” followed by a gerund indicates the end point of a current action or event. In contrast, the verb “stop” followed by an infinitive opens up to a new action, indicating that a person stops something in order to do something else. To illustrate, compare the sentences “She stopped singing” and “She stopped to sing”. The former means her singing ceased to continue, whereas the latter means she stopped something (reading for example) so that she could sing (her singing began). Returning to FrF’s sentence, the instructor understood from the context of the written paper that the children's language learning came to an end, a form that requires the gerund "learning" rather than the infinitive form. The change in form alters the meaning. One might wonder in this case whether coding is sufficient. How can the learner best understand the difference between these forms in order to use them properly in the future?

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[21] Christine Dimroth and Marianne Starren, eds., *Information Structure and the Dynamics of Language Acquisition* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2003); Henriette Hendriks, ed., *The Structure of Learner Varieties* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2005); Marzena Watorek, Sandra Benazzo, and Maya Hickmann, eds., *Comparative Perspectives to Language Acquisition: Tribute to Clive Perdue* (Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 2012).

5) L1 Spanish (SpF)

SpF wrote the following sentence: "The history of the Quechua is long and entertainment narrative about the Inca empire". The instructor underlined "entertainment" and coded it *WF*. The form "entertainment" is a noun derived from the verb "entertain". The context requires an adjectival that modifies the noun "narrative". SpF made the correction in her rewrite, changing the word form to "entertaining", a present participle functioning as an adjective. It is worth noting here that although English is not a highly inflected language, challenges with suffixes abound and the processes required for learners to be able to use such forms productively and appropriately are complex. Note also that the instructor did not point out the missing article "a" before the adjective "long", nor did the student add the article in her rewrite. The question here is whether bringing this error to the learner's attention would have been useful for her underlying processes of acquiring the –ing + N construction. In a future study, a follow-up to the use of these forms is envisaged in order to observe development over time.

4. Discussion

Research has shown that pointing out the error and/or using codes is useful because it draws the learner's attention to the error[22]. Rewriting is also useful because it provides an opportunity to analyse the error and/or use the correct form, as per Elbow's claim[23]. The examples and analyses provided above suggest that much more than coding and rewriting is needed for learners to "take in" formal information about languages. Following Corder's proposal and LV research findings that errors are systematic, we can assume that such errors as identified above are part of the learner's own idiosyncratic variety at any given time of language development. How can language instruction best intervene in this natural process of language learning to guide the learner in more efficient and effective learning? How can the instructor design the course and the feedback to be most effective? The examples given above show the complexities of learner errors, even those forms that many teachers would consider “simple” and errors that seem to be “silly mistakes” due to inattention. We often ask ourselves why it is that so many learners of English do not use the third person singular final –s in their writing or speaking. How can it be that this final –s is so problematic when it appears to be so simple?

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[22] Ellis, Rod and Natsuko Shintani, *Exploring Language Pedagogy through Second Language Acquisition Research* (Abingdon, Oxon, UK: Routledge, 2014).
[23] Elbow, *op. cit.*

One explanation is provided by VanPatten, who claims that learners process meaning before form[24]. The third person singular information is found on the subject NP (required in English), so why do we also need to mark it on the verb? This redundant information becomes less of a priority for learners when other - perhaps more essential - information must be attended to when speaking or writing. Research in the LV approach formulates this a bit differently by suggesting that access to the meaning of words and structures helps learners judge grammaticality and produce forms correctly[25]. In the case of example 4 above, for instance, it could very well be that if the learner had understood the structures that caused the problem, she would have had less trouble producing the appropriate form. Does this observation suggest that language teachers should spend time on the explicit teaching of forms and functions? Helping learners access meaning quickly and efficiently may indeed require plurilinguistic analysis and discussion about meaning and structure, making use of the variety of linguistic knowledge the teacher and students bring to class. While the answer to this question requires further investigation, current research findings are certainly unveiling the benefits of guiding learners in areas of difficulty with a view to making the language instruction as effective as possible.

5. Conclusion

The analyses reported here confirm, to a certain extent, the usefulness of highlighting errors, but they also beg the question as to why it is that instructors can repeatedly provide CF and, in response, their students often misunderstand coding and/or continue to make the same errors. For written CF to be effective, we need to rethink the process. Following Corder's example, we first need to analyse the errors from the students' perspective to better understand how they process or "take in" linguistic information and how that information interacts with their already acquired linguistic knowledge, including prior knowledge of the language being learned and knowledge of other languages. Secondly, we need to identify efficient yet productive ways to help learners move forward towards an accurate and professional level of writing. Selecting composition symbols carefully (e.g. *focused, indirect*) and considering how best to complement the symbols with additional useful information for the student will be important, as is recognizing that learners' errors provide important information about *input-intake* processes. Finally, it is crucial to keep in mind that errors are a natural part of the *interlanguage* developmental process and, in our role as language teachers, understanding errors is as important as correcting them.

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[24] Bill VanPatten, *Input Processing and Grammar Instruction: Theory and Research* (Norwood, NJ: Ablex, 1996).

[25] Johanna Hinz, Carina Krause, Rebekah Rast, Ellenor Shoemaker and Marzena Watorek, “Initial processing of morphological marking in nonnative language acquisition: Evidence from French and German learners of Polish,” *Eurosla Yearbook* 13 (2013): 39-175.

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CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE CAUSAL EFFECT OF PROFICIENCY AND GENDER ON FORMULAIC LANGUAGE USE IN DIFFERENT TASK TYPES

ÜMRAN ÜSTÜNBAŞ

1. Introduction

In recent years, the focus in language learning has been on a learner-centred language learning which boosts learners' interaction with each other to negotiate meaning. Thus, new methods, activities and tasks stimulating real-language use have been created and commonly used in language classes. These tasks have significant values especially for non-native language speakers who do not have many opportunities to interact and use the target language outside the class. To this end, in the literature, one of the qualities of real language use beneficial for language learners has been proposed to be the use of formulaic language which provides native-like fluency and idiomaticity to language users[1]. From a pragmatic point of view, the use of formulaic language has significant functions since it enables language users to deal with complex tasks and social situations as well as achieving a clear and smooth communication[2]. In addition, Schmitt and Carter[3] stated that “formulaic sequences are often tied to particular conditions of use” (p. 9). Therefore, it would be essential to investigate the relationship between the nature of a task and formulaic language use in detail. However, task type is not likely to be the only factor influencing formulaic language use because proficiency is another proposed factor affecting formulaic language use[4]. Gender might be another factor determining formulaic language use. In order to better understand this relationship, variables that are likely to have an effect on it could be investigated deeply. Thus, this study aims to support the related research area with new findings and suggestions.

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[1] Deniz Ortaçtepe, "Formulaic Language and Conceptual Socialization: The Route to Becoming Native-like in L2," *System* 41, no. 3 (2013), 852-865.

[2] Deniz Ortaçtepe, *The Development of Conceptual Socialisation in International students: A Language Socialisation Perspective on Conceptual Fluency and Social Identity* (UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012). Norbert Schmitt and Ronald Carter, "Formulaic Sequences in Action: An Introduction." In *Formulaic Sequences: Acquisition, Processing and Use*, edited by Norbert Schmitt (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2004), 9. Alison Wray and Michael R. Perkins, "The Functions of Formulaic Language: An Integrated Model," *Language & Communication* 20 (2000), 1-28. Wood, David, "Formulaic Language in

2. Theoretical Background

2.1. The nature of a task and task based language teaching (TBLT)

Even though it is assumed that there is no consensus on what constitutes a task and what the features of a task are[5], as Ellis[6] suggested “tasks are activities that call for primarily meaning-focused language use”, therefore, they need to promote real language use, which has been relatively suggested in the literature so far[7]. Yet, tasks are not exercises or in the

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Acquisition and Production: Implications for Teaching,” *TESL Canada Journal* 20, no. 1 (2002), 1-15.

[3] Norbert Schmitt and Ronald Carter, “Formulaic Sequences in Action: An Introduction.” In *Formulaic Sequences: Acquisition, Processing and Use*, edited by Norbert Schmitt (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2004), 9.

[4] Howarth, Peter, “Phraseology and Second Language Proficiency,” *Applied Linguistics* 19, no. 1 (1998), 24-44
Carlos A. Yorio, “Idiomaticity as an Indicator of Second Language Proficiency.” In *Bilingualism across the lifespan,* edited by Kenneth Hyltenstam and Loraine K. Obler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 55-72.

[5] James Lee, *Tasks and Communicating in Language* Classrooms (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2000); Martin Bygate, Peter Skehan, and Merrill Swain, *Researching Pedagogic Tasks, Second Language Learning, Teaching and Testing* (Harlow: Longman, 2001).

[6] Rod Ellis, *Task-based Language Learning and Teaching* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

[7] Rod Ellis, *Language Teaching Research and Language Pedagogy* (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012). Teresa Pica, “Task-Based Teaching and Learning.” *In The Handbook of Educational Linguistics,* edited by Bernard Spolsky and Francis M. Hult (Oxford: Willey-Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 525-538; Kris Van den Branden, “Task-based Language Teaching.” In *The Routledge Handbook of*

form of a test item. Considering the characteristics of an 'effective' task, Ellis[8] proposed that focusing on meaning rather than language form, gap-filling, resulting in communicative outcome are main characteristics of a task. Similarly, Pica[9] indicated that tasks are based on communication and completion. Authenticity, conforming to learners' language needs and purposes are other characteristics suggested by Pica. The tasks that have been commonly used in language classes as tools to promote real language use may be either on authentic real-life situations such as filling a form, buying tickets, buying clothes, ordering food in a restaurant or in language classes, or on made-up situations which are simulated from real-life tasks such as picture-drawing, telling a story based on a series of pictures or describing a picture. For the latter type of task, Skehan[10] indicated that they are also valuable tools as they demonstrate a connection to real life. Furthermore, Ellis[11] classified tasks as "unfocused" and "focused" tasks in which while the former promotes no particular language form, the latter aims to enable learners to learn a specific language structure. "Tasks as instructional units"[12] and "tasks as course activities"[13] were also considered in the categorisation of tasks.

Since tasks have been proposed to trigger interaction and communication, thus, be part of SLA research, a great number of studies have been conducted on their relation to various variables[14]. To start with, Doughty

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English Language Teaching, edited by Graham Hall (New York: Routledge, 2016), 238- 251.

[8] Rod Ellis, *Language Teaching Research and Language Pedagogy* (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012).

[9] Teresa Pica, "Task-Based Teaching and Learning." In *The Handbook of Educational Linguistics,* edited by Bernard Spolsky and Francis. M. Hult (Oxford: Willey-Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 525-538.

[10] Peter Skehan, "A Framework for the Implementation of Task-based Instruction," *Applied Linguistics* 17 (1996), 38-62.

[11] Rod Ellis, *Language Teaching Research and Language Pedagogy* (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012).

[12] Jane Willis, "A Flexible Framework for Task-based Learning," *Challenge and Change in Language Teaching* (1996), 52-62.

[13] N. S. Prabhu, *Second language pedagogy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).

[14] Catherine Doughty and Teresa Pica, "Information Gap" Tasks: Do They Facilitate Second Language Acquisition?," *TESOL Quarterly* 20, no. 2 (1986), 305–325.

Pauline Foster and Peter Skehan, "The Influence of Planning and Task Type on Second Language Performance," *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 18, no. 3 (1996), 299–323. Junya Fukuta, "Effects of Task Repetition on Learners' Attention and Pica[15] investigated the interaction in tasks promoting one-way and two-ways exchange of information and put forward findings in favour of the latter one. Moreover, Foster and Skehan[16] examined the effect of planning on task performance and asserted that planning has a positive effect on speakers' performance, particularly on fluency in any task. Fukuta[17] searched for the relationship between repetition of a task and learners' attention in L2 oral production. Other studies explored the connection between tasks and test scores[18]; tasks and comprehensibility[19]; task difficulty and fluency[20]; task type and learners' collaboration and interaction[21]; tasks and speech fluency[22]. These studies generally set forth that tasks are relatively effective on the related variables. Nevertheless, while the number of the studies on the relationship between tasks and various variables is to no less a degree, it has been suggested that the number of the studies on the connection between task type and learners'

Orientation in L2 Oral Production," *Language Teaching Research* 20, no. 3 (2016), 321-340. Michael Long, "Task, Group and Task-Group interactions," *University of Hawaii Working Papers in ESL* 8 (1989), 1-26. Jungmin Ko, Diana L. Schallert, and Keith Walters, "Rethinking Scaffolding: Examining Negotiation of Meaning in an ESL Storytelling Task," *TESOL Quarterly* 37, no. 2 (2003), 303-324.

[15] Catherine Doughty and Teresa Pica, "Information Gap Tasks: Do They Facilitate Second Language Acquisition," *TESOL Quarterly* 20, no. 2 (1986), 305–325.

[16] Pauline Foster and Peter Skehan, "The Influence of Planning and Task Type on Second Language Performance," *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 18, no. 3 (1996), 299–323.

[17] Junya Fukuta, "Effects of Task Repetition on Learners' Attention Orientation in L2 Oral Production," *Language Teaching Research* 20, no.3 (2016), 321-340.

[18] Lyle. F. Bachman and Adrian S. Palmer, *Language Testing in Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

[19] Dustin Crowther, Pavel Trofimovich, Talia Isaacs, and Kazuya Saito, "Does a Speaking Task Affect Second Language Comprehensibility?," *The Modern Language Journal* 99, no.1 (2015), 80–95.

[20] Yvonne Prèfontaine and Judit Kormos, "The Relationship between Task Difficulty and Second Language Fluency in French: A Mixed Methods Approach," *Modern Language Journal* 99, no.1 (2015), 96-112.

[21] Phung Dao and Kim McDonough, "The Effect of Task Role on Vietnamese EFL Learners' Collaboration in Mixed Proficiency Dyads," *System* 65 (2017), 15-24.

[22] Parvaneh Tavakoli and Pauline Foster, "Task Design and Second Language Performance: The Effect of Narrative Type on Learner Output," *Language Learning* 58, no. 2 (2008), 439-473. David Wood, *Formulaic Language and Second Language Speech Fluency: Background, Evidence and Classroom Applications* (London: Continuum, 2010).

proficiency is rather limited[23]. With this regard, Wei[24] analysed speech performance of advanced and intermediate Chinese learners of English and revealed that advanced learners used more comprehensive language in tasks than intermediate learners by suggesting proficiency is a determinant factor in spoken performance with different task types. In a similar vein, Neary-Sundquist[25] supported the previous findings through a study carried out with 47 non-native test-takers of an oral proficiency exam from different language levels and proposed that proficiency level and task type affected pragmatic marker use, which was the focus of the study. Considering what has been suggested about the number of studies on the relationship between task types and proficiency, one of the aims of the current study is to support the existing research by revealing new findings and suggestions.

In order to ground the tasks' use on a theory, task-based language teaching (TBLT) which is a way of implementing communicative language teaching and one of the new trends in language education came into existence. According to this approach, tasks are central to language teaching. As for the purpose of the approach, Bygate[26] declared that it is to provide opportunities for language learners to comprehend how language works and its relation to meaning and purpose. With respect to the principles and purposes of TBLT, it has been a primary focus in language programmes so far since pedagogies and courses have been designed in accordance with this approach. Furthermore, varied frameworks of TBLT focusing on the cognitive effects of tasks on speech parameters such as fluency and accuracy have been proposed by different scholars in the related literature[27]. Yet, Van den Branden[28] highlighted that even though tasks and task-based language teaching are highly common and they are the new trends in language programmes, it is difficult to implement the 'real' form of them in the classroom since "language teaching itself does not become task-based overnight simply by importing tasks into the classroom”. TBLT is a multi-dimensional issue that involves comprehensive and controversial matters. No matter how the notion of “task” and TBLT is complex, language teaching has centred on the tasks as a tool to provide learners’ interaction and communication through real language use, one component of which is formulaic language.

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[23] Colleen Neary-Sundquist, "Task Type Effects on Pragmatic Marker Use by Learners at Varying Proficiency Levels," *L2 Journal* 5, no. 2 (2013), 1-21.

[24] Naixing Wei, "Corpus-based Contrastive Studies of Phraseology," *Journal of Foreign Languages* 34, no. 4 (2011), 32–42.

[25] Colleen Neary-Sundquist, "Task Type Effects on Pragmatic Marker Use by Learners at Varying Proficiency Levels," *L2 Journal* 5, no. 2 (2013), 1-21.

[26] Martin Bygate, "Sources, Developments and Directions of Task-based Language Teaching," *Language Learning Journal* 44, no. 4 (2016), 381-400.

[27] David Nunan, *Task-Based Language Teaching* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

[28] Kris Van den Branden, "Task-based Language Teaching." In *The Routledge Handbook of English Language Teaching,* edited by Graham Hall (New York: Routledge, 2016), 238- 251.

2.2. Formulaic language use

Besides its profound effect on language development as it provides idiomaticity to language learners, fosters language acquisition and “facilitates further language learning”[29], formulaic language that constitutes all languages to a large extent[30] and is defined by Kecskes[31] as “multi-word collocations which are stored and retrieved holistically” has important functions such as maintaining communication and decreasing processing load in mind[32]. In terms of communicative function, the use of formulaic language augments interaction between individuals and provides a better understanding of the nature of contexts and pragmatic tasks used in those contexts[33]. Similarly, Widdowson[34] emphasised the significance of formulaic language use in social interaction decades ago by suggesting:

> Communicative competence is not a matter of knowing rules... It is much more a matter of knowing a stock of partially preassembled patterns, formulaic frameworks, and a kit of rules, so to speak, and being able to apply the rules to make whatever adjustments are necessary according to contextual demands.

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[29] Norbert Schmitt, “Formulaic Language and Collocation.” In *The Encyclopedia of Applied Linguistics,* edited by Carol A. Chapelle (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2013).

[30] Britt Erman and Beatrice Warren. “The idiom principle and the open choice principle,” *Text* 20, no. 1 (2000), 29-62.

[31] Istvan Kecskes, “Formulaic Language in English Lingua Franca.” In *Explorations in Pragmatics: Linguistic, Cognitive and Intercultural Aspects*, edited by Istvan Kecskes and Laurence Horn (Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 2007), 191-219.

[32] Regina Weinert, “The Role of Formulaic Language in Second Language Acquisition: A Review,” *Applied Linguistics* 16 (1995), 180-205.

[33] David Wood, “Formulaic Language in Acquisition and Production: Implications for Teaching,” *TESL Canada Journal* 20, no. 1 (2002), 1-15.

[34] Henry G. Widdowson, “Knowledge of Language and Ability for Use,” *Applied Linguistics* 10, no. 2 (1989), 128-137.

In this respect, the fact that various social situations require language use accordingly and therefore, task type affects language choice has been offered in the literature by scholars and researchers[35]. For instance, Ellis[36] suggested that the design of a task is likely to determine what language will be used. Likewise, Foster and Skehan[37] revealed that task type was a determinant of the language use through a study on post-task activities. Apart from the type of task, language proficiency level has been proposed as a factor affecting the use of formulaic language. In this sense, Yorio[38] suggested that "the higher the level of linguistics proficiency, the higher the level of idiomaticity". With regard to formulaic language use and proficiency, there is limited up-to-date research on the relationship between formulaic language use and proficiency as an effective factor on it.

Taking the studies aforementioned into account, it can be concluded that there has been a series of studies on formulaic language and task types. However, there is no study which focuses on the relationship between the formulaic language use and the task type in depth by regarding other possible factors such as language proficiency and gender in order to find out the best predictor of formulaic language use in these tasks to the knowledge of the researcher. Furthermore, Stengers, Boers,

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[35] Rod Ellis, "Task-based Research and Language Pedagogy," *Language Teaching Research* 4, no. 3 (2000), 193-220; Rod Ellis, "Taking the Critics to Task: The Case for Task-based Teaching," *Knowledge, Skills and Competencies in Foreign Language Education*, *Proceedings of CLaSIC* (2014), 103-177.
Lori. G. Diepenbroek and Tracey M. Derwing, "To What Extent do Popular ESL Textbooks Incorporate Oral Fluency and Pragmatic Development," *TESL Canada Journal* 30, no. 7 (2013), 1-20; Pauline Foster and Peter Skehan, "Anticipating a Post-Task Activity: The Effects on Accuracy, Complexity, and Fluency of Second Language Performance," *Canadian Modern Language Review* 69, no. 3 (2013), 249-273; Fangyuan Yuan and Rod Ellis, "The Effects of Pre-task Planning and on-Line Planning on Fluency, Complexity and Accuracy in L2 Monologic Oral Production," *Applied Linguistics* 24, no. 1 (2003), 1-27.

[36] Rod Ellis, "Task-based Research and Language Pedagogy," *Language Teaching Research* 4, no. 3 (2000), 193-220.

[37] Pauline Foster and Peter Skehan, "The Influence of Planning and Task Type on Second Language Performance," *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 18, no. 3 (1996), 299–323.

[38] Carlos A. Yorio, "Idiomaticity as an Indicator of Second Language Proficiency." In *Bilingualism Across the Lifespan,* edited by Kenneth Hyltenstam and Loraine K. Obler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 55-72.

Housen and Eyckmans[39] suggested that the nature of formulaic language use is needed to be examined in various task types particularly in speaking tasks. Thus, the aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between formulaic language use and task type by considering the effect of other possible factors, basically language proficiency in monologic and dialogic conversation. In addition, it would be appropriate to examine the connection between language proficiency and oral proficiency regarding proficiency as a potential determinant of the related variables. To this end, the following research questions will be addressed in the study:

1. How well does proficiency predict formulaic language use in different task types?
2. Is there a relationship between oral proficiency and overall proficiency?

3. The study

3.1. Participants and setting

The current study was carried out with 190 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners who have different proficiency levels at Bülent Ecevit University, School of Foreign Languages, Zonguldak, Turkey. The reason for selecting this particular setting is eligibility and convenience issues. Furthermore, as part of the language teaching program, oral proficiency interviews in which different task types are used to evaluate students' oral performance are organised and recorded at this school at predetermined intervals. Additionally, tasks are commonly used in teaching and testing. As for speaking assessment, students' performances are evaluated by employing various authentic tasks in exams and so their comprehension and interaction with another exam taker are taken into account in monologic and dialogic tasks. Bearing the principle that language teaching and testing are required to be in the same direction in mind, the tasks, the language forms and phrases in the textbook accompanied by social functions they fulfil are considered in the process of test design. Having obtained the required permission of the administrators, the participants were chosen randomly among the exam takers of proficiency exam and the procedures of the study were explained to them for their consent to be a part of the study. Following completing ethical issues, video recordings belonging to this exam and the participants were evaluated by the researcher in light of a target formulaic language list that was selected among the expressions presented in students' textbook. See Table 1 for the descriptive statistics of the participants in the study.

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[39] Helene Stengers, Frank Boers, Alex Housen, and June Eyckmans, "Formulaic Sequences and L2 Oral Proficiency: Does the Type of Target Language Influence the Association?," *International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching (IRAL)* 49, no. 4 (2011), 321-343.

Gender (*M*=1,48; *SD*=.501)		Language proficiency (*M*=1,74;*SD*=.612)		
Female	Male	High	Medium	Low
99	91	67	106	17
Total: 190		Total: 190		

Table 12-1. Participants in the study

As seen in Table 1, the number of the participants for each gender is considerably similar to each other, which makes it possible to examine gender as a potential background factor in the search for the relationship between formulaic language use and task type. With regard to language proficiency of the participants, it can be seen that the majority of them belonged to the group of medium (A2) that was constituted based on the language levels taught at the language program. In this respect, every year, the programme provides language education for A1 (Breakthrough), A2 (Waystage) and B1 (Threshold) according to Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)[40] for language descriptors. These learners get 26 hours of intensive language education for an academic year and since Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is adopted at the institution, learners are provided with various language tools, materials, tasks and textbooks to enhance their communication in different situations. For this purpose, one of the considerations during textbook selection is whether the book promotes real language use and presents phrases and structures that are used in daily conversation. Thus, the textbook used at the programme was evaluated so as to determine target expressions list as a data collection material. Other data collection procedures are as follows.

3.2. The design

In the current study, a quantitative research design was used to collect data addressing the research questions. To this end, first, a target expressions list was created among the formulaic expressions in the textbook by the researcher considering the number of their appearance since it is suggested in the literature that the number of appearance and learners' exposure to any vocabulary item is crucial in vocabulary learning[41]. Therefore, the target expressions list was created among the considerably appeared formulaic expressions in the textbook. In light of this list, video recordings of 190 participants with different language proficiency were analysed during their involvement in the tasks consisting of a monolog in which students described a picture and a dialog in which each student conducted a conversation with another exam taker on an administered topic. Considering the target expressions list, the words uttered by each student were noted down for each task by the researcher descriptively. The performances were also evaluated by an expert in the related research area; thus, the reliability analyses of the evaluation process were performed by comparing the analyses of the researcher and the expert and agreeing on the inconsistent results. Subsequently, the total number of formulaic language use by each student was associated with their gender, oral exam scores and their language proficiency through correlation and stepwise multiple regression analyses. Statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS) version 20 was used for the analyses.

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[40] Council of Europe, *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

4. Findings and discussion

4.1. The effect of proficiency as an indicator of formulaic language use in task types

In light of the first research question, participants' spoken performances were analysed considering the target expressions list, which included expressions such as *'I think', 'I suppose', 'I know', 'I don't know', 'I'm sorry', 'Thank you', 'You are welcome', 'Excuse me', and 'No problem'.* The total number of expressions used by the participants while performing the tasks was associated with the variables of gender and proficiency. Figures 1 and 2 illustrate language use of the participants with different gender and language proficiency in monologic and dialogic tasks. No correction was made in the process of transcribing their conversations.

Picture description- monolog

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[41] Stuart Webb, Jonathan Newton, and Anna Chang, "Incidental Learning of Collocation," *Language Learning*, 63 (2013), 91–120.

S17 (female/ low level): There are four people in the Picture. (long pause) There are two girls and two boys. They must be family. They must go for a picnic. I think mother and father. Er.. The mother is the woman with straight hair. The woman is the with jacket and trousers. Father, er.. do not is the white thirst and trousers. The girl is the with white T-shirt. The girl is the with straight hair. They must be on the weekend. They might seem happy and fun. I think they are going to spend good time.

S36 (male/high level): The Picture shows me around six people, four boys two women. They seem like worried and angry. I think they are very busy. She has blond hair. I bet she is very angry. If I were him, I'd be worried because I would start fight. They are fighting, but I do not know the problem. Maybe, she is jealous. (Pause) Although he has smart face, he is angry.

Role-play- dialog
S36: How is it going?
S17: I meeting new people on the internet.
S36: Really? What can I do for you?
S17: They are fun. I spend good time on the internet.
S 36: I wanna give advice. I think meeting new people on the internet dangerous. I think face-to-face talking better on the internet.
S 17: I think more than better-talking people there
S36: I know what you mean, but I bet meeting people on the internet is dangerous because ...
S 17: OK, I meet new people around here.

Excerpt 12-1. Formulaic language use in a dialog

As seen in the figures, formulaic language use and task performances of the two participants differ and gender or proficiency might be a factor for this difference. Thus, a stepwise multiple regression analysis was performed in order to explore whether the dependent variable (formulaic language use) in the study was predicted by any of the independent variables (gender and language proficiency) entered in the model. The model appeared to explain a significant amount of variables (R^2= .14, F(2,187)= 14.343, p=.000) for individual task and R^2 = .14, F(1,188)=28.761, p=.000) for the paired task). As for individual variables, while language proficiency explained formulaic language in both tasks well, (ß=.36, p=.000), gender was less effective in predicting formulaic language use in the paired task (ß=.01, p<.05 for the individual task). These results indicate that language proficiency is a strong predictor of formulaic language use in different task types, which has also been stated in previous research[42]. Therefore, the findings of the current study support the research in the field. As Yorio[43] stated, "the higher the level of linguistics proficiency, the higher the level of idiomaticity", which can be supported by the findings of the study that high-level language learners who were B1 level in this study used more formulaic expressions in the administered tasks. The findings of the study also suggested that gender may affect language use, but its effect is not as strong as the effect of proficiency. Therefore, the current study sets forth significant findings since it provides recent support for the effect of proficiency on formulaic language use in task types and reveals findings about gender as a potential factor determining language use, which is not common in the literature.

Furthermore, that the effect of task and proficiency was more obvious in the paired task might be explained by what Schmitt and Carter[44] stated: "formulaic sequences are often tied to particular conditions of use", which is in accordance with the emergent findings of the study that formulaic language use was not equal and in a similar manner since more expressions were used in the dialogic task (*N*= 971) than the monologic task (*N*=432). Thus, the current study provides support for the existing research[45] related to the effect of task type on language use.

4.2. The relationship between oral proficiency and overall proficiency

While the findings suggested that proficiency is a factor effective in the language used in various task types, another focus of the present study was on the potential relationship between proficiency level and oral proficiency, which could be inter-related issues. In other words, the study aimed to examine whether proficiency level is an indicator of high achievement in spoken performance. Thus, addressing the second research question, non-parametric Spearman rank order correlation test was conducted to relate speaking performance to language proficiency as the variables did not have a normal distribution (oral proficiency, *M*=19.1, *SE*=.27 with skewness of -1.11 (*SE*=.17) and kurtosis of 2.32 (*SE*=.17); overall proficiency, *M*= 70.4 (*SE*=.76) with skewness of -.48 (*SE*=.17) and kurtosis of .67 (*SE*=.35). Kolmorogov-Smirnov test also confirmed these significant values. Therefore, students' speaking scores were correlated with their overall proficiency scores. The findings suggest that there is a significant relationship between speaking performance and language proficiency (r(188)= .650, p<.01), which supports what Yorio stated concerning the level of linguistic proficiency and the level of idiomaticity[46]. To this end, it can be suggested that language choice and use may stem from language proficiency level of the learners. However, there is no definitely matching finding in the literature since proficiency level has been mostly associated with language use in a task, but it would be appropriate to suggest that oral proficiency is a broader discourse including a wide range of elements one of which is the use of formulaic language and the research on the overall and oral proficiency is limited. Therefore, more studies could be conducted to investigate this relationship and the factors influencing it. In order to reveal potential connections between the variables of the study, stepwise multiple regression, a comprehensive statistical test, was conducted. Thus, it is suggested that detailed analyses could be conducted to reveal new findings for existing research and highlight issues in language teaching. Overall, the study reveals findings which support the existing research about formulaic language and task relation.

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[42] Pauline Foster and Peter Skehan, "The Influence of Planning and Task Type on Second Language Performance," *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 18, no. 3 (1996), 299–323.

[43] Carlos A. Yorio, "Idiomaticity as an Indicator of Second Language Proficiency." In *Bilingualism Across the Lifespan,* edited by Kenneth Hyltenstam and Loraine K. Obler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

[44] Norbert Schmitt and Ronald Carter, "Formulaic Sequences in Action: An Introduction." In *Formulaic Sequences: Acquisition, Processing and Use*, edited by Norbert Schmitt (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2004), 9.

[45] Stengers et al., "Formulaic Sequences and L2 Oral Proficiency: Does the Type of Target Language Influence the Association?," *International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching (IRAL)* 49, no.4 (2011), 321-343.

5. Conclusion

This study which was carried out with 190 EFL learners in a communicative language teaching setting aimed to examine formulaic language use in different task types concerning proficiency and gender variables. In this respect, participants' spoken performances were analysed during their interaction in two different task types: a monolog and a dialog in light of a target formulaic language list which was designed considering the phrases presented in the learners' textbook. The number of formulaic expressions used by each participant was noted down and a number of statistical analyses were conducted in order to associate formulaic language use with the variables of proficiency, gender and task type. As a result, the findings suggested that formulaic language use is highly related to task type as participants' formulaic language use differed during monologic and dialogic tasks, and also language proficiency is a strong predictor of formulaic language use in both individual and paired tasks. Furthermore, it was found out that speaking performance is related to language proficiency, which supports the existing research that suggests the nature of a task influences the language used[47] and language proficiency is a factor affecting language use which was formulaic language in the current study[48]. In this sense, the current study provides support for the discussion of the effect of task type and proficiency on the use of formulaic language use and suggests that since the number of up-to-date studies on the relationship between the variables; formulaic language use, language proficiency, gender and task type and which use comprehensive analyses is limited, new studies could be conducted to contribute to the literature using detailed statistical analyses, one of which is stepwise multiple regression conducted for the analyses of the current study. In addition, formulaic language could be part of language education as they are included in the real language use; therefore, benefit to language learners who do not have as many opportunities to use the language as native speakers do.

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[46] Carlos A. Yorio, "Idiomaticity as an Indicator of Second Language Proficiency." In *Bilingualism Across the Lifespan,* edited by Kenneth Hyltenstam and Loraine K. Obler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 55-72.

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[47] Helene Stengers et al., "Formulaic Sequences and L2 Oral Proficiency: Does the Type of Target Language Influence the Association?," 2013; Michael Long, "Task, Group and Task-Group interactions," 1989.

[48] Carlos A. Yorio, "Idiomaticity as an Indicator of Second Language Proficiency." In *Bilingualism Across the Lifespan,* edited by Kenneth Hyltenstam and Loraine K. Obler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 55-72.

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CHAPTER TWELVE

EFFECTS OF EXPANDED 10-MINUTE WRITING ON L2 SPEAKING AND WRITING FLUENCY DEVELOPMENT

SAKAE ONODA

1. Introduction

In an increasingly globalised world, the importance of L2 proficiency, or more importantly, speaking and writing fluency, has been perceived and emphasised by the government and university administrators in Japan in recent years. As a result, many educational institutions (e.g., senior high schools and universities) encourage their students to study abroad, whether for a short period (e.g., two weeks) or a longer period (e.g., one year). They see English fluency as a critical skill and believe that high proficiency and fluency will lead students to succeed in life. In response, an increasing number of students have studied aboard in recent years, and administrators see this as a positive trend.

This trend has been encouraged by government policy aiming to foster the development of global citizens who can interact and negotiate effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds in Japan or overseas.[1] The policy set the English proficiency goal for senior high school graduates as B2 in the Common European Frame of Reference (CEFR)[2] and C1 for university graduates. The framework was developed to assess L2 proficiency levels in all language skills, including spoken interaction. It is important to note that in the CEFR descriptors, speaking fluency is considered one of the most important abilities for speakers to acquire in order to communicate well and manage discourse effectively. Thus, young people are expected to acquire high English proficiency, with speaking fluency occupying a critical place, as can be seen in many standardised English proficiency tests.[3]

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[1] *Yomiuri Shimbun* (May 25, 2014). “Japanese Students Studying Abroad on the Rise.”

[2] David Little, “The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Content, Purpose, Origin, Reception, and Impact,” *Language Teaching* 39, no. 3 (2006), 167–90.

However, speaking fluency development is a concern for educators. Students who learn English in formal education often have limited opportunities to practice speaking in class and virtually none in real-life settings. As a result, they do not develop adequate English fluency, which may cause them to encounter communication problems with English speakers at home or abroad. L2 research suggests that a lack of speaking fluency can cause interlocutors to misunderstand the speaker's intention, perceive it negatively, or interrupt the speaker for clarification.[4] Studies also indicate that while native English speakers are generally tolerant of dysfluent utterances, hesitations, and pauses, these may be perceived as annoying.[5] Thus, if the message is not delivered fluently, natural and effective communication may not occur, possibly causing communication breakdowns in extreme cases.[6]

Given the importance of developing L2 speaking and writing fluency, the teaching approaches used in many ESL and EFL contexts largely ignore tasks designed for enhancing fluency.[7] This holds true for the Japanese teaching context, in which communication activities such as discussions, debates, and short essay writing are being increasingly employed in classes. However, repeated oral practice for the automatisation of language items for speaking fluency development[8] and quick writing tasks for improving writing speed have often remained on the periphery of the curriculum.[9]

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[3] Norman Segalowitz, *The Cognitive Bases of Second Language Fluency* (New York: Routledge, 2010).

[4] Tracey M. Derwing, Munro Murray J., and Thomson Ron I., "A Longitudinal Study of ESL Learners' Fluency and Comprehensibility Development," Applied Linguistics 29, no. 3 (2007), 359–80.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Dell Hymes. "On Communicative Competence." In *Sociolinguistics,* edited by John B. Pride, and Janet Holmes (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1972), 269–93.

[7] Marian J. Rossiter, Tracey M. Derwing, and Linda G. Manimtim, "Oral Fluency: The Neglected Component in the Communicative Language Classroom," *Canadian Modern Language Review* 66, no. 4 (2010), 583–606; Paul Nation, *What Should Every EFL Teacher Know?* (Seoul: Compass Publishing, 2013); Sakae Onoda, "Effects of Repetition of Selected News Stories on Oral Fluency in Media English Learning," *Media, English, and Communication* 2 (2012), 89–113.

[8] Barbara F. Freed, Norman Segalowitz, and Dan P. Dewey, "Context of Learning and Second Language Fluency in French: Comparing Regular Classroom, Study

2. Significance of the Study

This study is valuable in that it examines the effects on L2 speaking and writing fluency development of expanded 10-minute writing tasks based on reading, the intention being that writing should be a springboard for speaking. In addition to L2 fluency being an important component of English proficiency,[10] it is well documented that L2 speaking and writing fluency motivates learners for further language learning and enhances self-confidence[11] and the willingness to communicate.[12] Finally, on a personal note, this study is meaningful for the researcher, a Japanese-speaker who initially improved his English speaking and writing fluency in an intensive summer English seminar for Japanese teachers at the US University he attended in his late twenties. If the results indicate that expanded 10-minute writing tasks are effective for English fluency development, it will lend strong support to the task of emphasizing in teaching practice the underlying values this researcher has long believed in and are expected to be applied by practicing English teachers at the secondary and university level because this writing task integrates the four language skills emphasised in the Course of Study prescribed by Japan's Ministry of Education, Science, Culture, Sports, and Technology.[13]

Abroad, and Intensive Domestic Immersion Programs," *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 26, no. 2 (2004), 275–301.

[9] Sakae Onoda, "Design and Teaching Techniques for Enhancing Student Learning in Media English Courses," *Media, English, and Communication* 1 (2001), 1–18.

[10] Norman Segalowitz, *The Cognitive Bases of Second Language Fluency* (New York: Routledge, 2010).

[11] Albert Bandura, *Social Foundations of Thought and Action: A Social Cognitive Theory* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1986).

[12] Tomoko Yashima, "Willingness to Communicate in a Second Language: The Japanese EFL context," *Modern Language Journal* 86, no. 1 (2002), 54–66.

[13] *Ministry of Education, Science, Culture, Sports, and Technology,* "The Course of Study for Upper Secondary Schools."
http://www.mext.go.jp/English/shotou/030301.htm (2009).

3. Literature review

3.1. L2 speech production as a critical factor in promoting L2 speaking fluency

L2 literature[14] indicates that the most important factor for enhancing speaking fluency is the automatisation of language items. This can be understood by examining the L2 speech production model developed by Judit Kormos,[15] which draws on and modifies Willem Levelt's L1 speech production model.[16] However, it is important to note that unlike L2 speech production, L1 speech production involves far more unconscious and complex processes as overt speech is being generated. As detailed explanations of L2 speech production is beyond the scope of this paper, this discussion will focus on processes that are key to fluency development.

As Figure 1 describes, after *the conceptualizer* generates a concept for a preverbal message, this concept is *lexico-grammatically* and *morpho-phonologically* encoded by drawing on the *mental lexicon,* which includes *L2 declarative rules* in *long-term memory*, which then becomes *internal speech*. Finally, *the articulator* overtly expresses *the internal speech* to the interlocutor. Since factors promoting speaking fluency are at play throughout this process, it is necessary to facilitate rapid, ideally unconscious and automatic access to a rich mental lexicon (i.e., semantic and syntactic resources and phonological resources in *long-term memory*.[17]

Thus, the model suggests that automatic and instantaneous access to long-term memory*,* in other words, the automatisation of language items, is an essential factor in enhancing L2 speaking fluency as it minimizes the time needed for speech production.

Of equal importance is the view that quick-writing can be effectively utilised for promoting automatisation. Research shows that L2 writing is generated through similar but more cognitively and meta-cognitively demanding processes than L2 speaking, which promotes the deep processing of the language items being used.[18]

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[14] See, for example: Francine Chambers, "What do you mean by fluency?" *System* 25 no. 4 (1998), 535–44.

[15] Judit Kormos, *Speech Production and Second Language Acquisition* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2006).

[16] Willem J. M. Levelt, *Speaking: From Intention to Articulation* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989).

[17] Norman Segalowitz, *The Cognitive Bases of Second Language Fluency* (New York: Routledge, 2010).

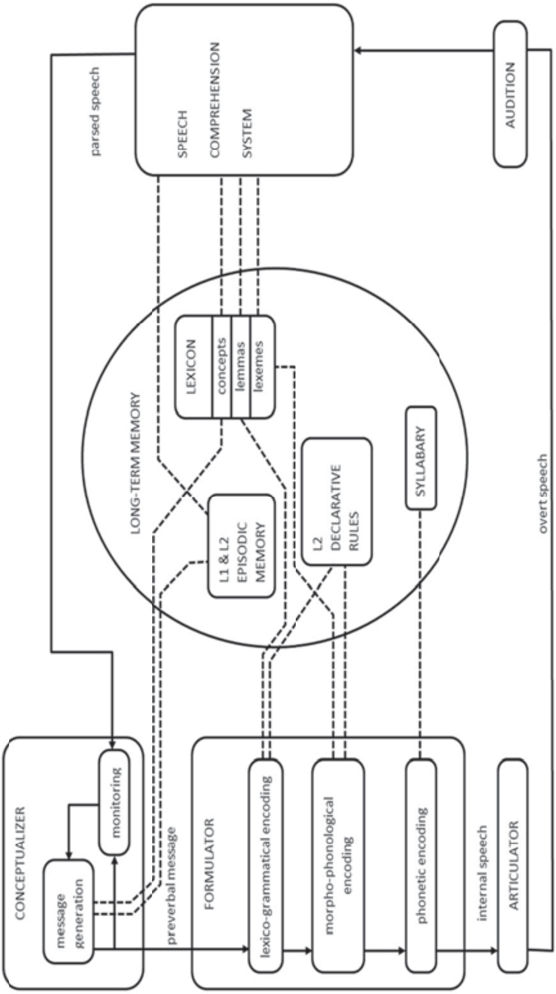
SPEECH
COMPREHENSION
SYSTEM
AUDITION
parsed speech
LONG-TERM MEMORY
LEXICON
concepts
lemmas
lexemes
L1 & L2
EPISODIC
MEMORY
L2
DECLARATIVE
RULES
SYLLABARY
overt speech
CONCEPTUALIZER
monitoring
message
generation
preverbal message
FORMULATOR
lexico-grammatical encoding
morpho-phonological
encoding
phonetic encoding
internal speech
ARTICULATOR

Fig. 13-1. Model of bilingual speech production[19]

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[18] Sakae Onoda, "Effects of Linked-skills Tasks on English Oral Fluency Development," *Global Science and Technology Forum* 3 (2013), 124–31.

[19] Judit Kormos, *Speech Production and Second Language Acquisition* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2006), 168.

To enhance L2 fluency, it is necessary to facilitate the unconscious and automatic processing of language through repeated practice[20] because automatisation is facilitated by multiple encounters and retrievals of language items,[21] which then actualize enhanced L2 fluency.[22] Automatic linguistic processing requires little working memory capacity when a particular language unit is retrieved in its entirety. Therefore, attentional resources allow for the processing of other information and enable the speaker to process larger pieces of information efficiently. Numerous studies of L2 speaking and writing fluency development support this mechanism.[23]

3.2. Teaching techniques for facilitating automatisation

Several teaching techniques have been advocated in the L2 literature, including the use of repetition and practice, formulaic sequences, easy materials, and pushed output (or time pressure).

(a) *Repetition / practice*

The importance of repetition and practice for skills development is validated by John Anderson's Adaptive Control of Thought (ACT) theory of skills development.[24] The theory postulates that repeated practice gradually leads from conscious, laborious endeavours to the unconscious, spontaneous, and automatic deployment of skills or responses. Repeated practice that strengthens those behaviours is the most effective. For example, in his study of speaking fluency development, Paul Nation used the 4/3/2 task with his participants, or a repeated story-telling task involving telling a story to a first partner for four minutes, a second partner for three minutes, and a third partner for two minutes, and demonstrated that it significantly improved speaking fluency as well as accuracy.[25] However, teachers need to use techniques designed to avoid boredom coming into play while students are engaged in tasks entailing repetition.[26] Task value, or meaningfulness and relevance, is thus a deciding factor in maintaining student motivation and self-regulated learning.[27]

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[20] Robert DeKeyser, *Practice in a Second Language: Perspectives from Applied Linguistics and Cognitive Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

[21] Paul I.S. Nation, *What Should Every EFL Teacher Know?* (Seoul: Compass Publishing, 2013); Norbert Schmitt and Ronald Carter, "Formulaic Sequences in Action: An Introduction." In *Formulaic Sequences: Acquisition, Processing, and Use,* edited by Norbert Schmitt (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2004), 1–22.

[22] Paul I.S. Nation and Jonathan Newton, *Teaching ESL/EFL Listening and Speaking* (New York: Routledge, 2009).

[23] See, for example: Micheline Favreau and Norman Segalowitz, "Automatic and Controlled Processes in the First and Second Language Reading of Fluent Bilinguals," 1983; Sakae Onoda, "Effects of Linked Skills on English Oral Fluency Development," 2013.

[24] John R. Anderson, "Acquisition of Cognitive Skills," *Psychological Review* 89, no. 4 (1982), 369–406.

(b) *Formulaic sequences*

L2 literature[28] shows that the use of formulaic sequences has profound effects on the development of L2 speaking and writing fluency. According to Norbert Schmitt and Geoffrey Underwood, formulaic sequences can be diverse lexically and functionally and range from simple fillers (*Well...*) and functions (*Sorry to interrupt you, but…*) to collocations (*observe silence*), idioms (*do me a favour*), proverbs (*practice makes perfect.*), and lengthy standardised phrases (*I would appreciate it if you could…*).[29] The essential property of formulaic sequences, as Alison Wray defines them, is that they “consist of a string of words or other elements that is (or appears to be) prefabricated and is stored and retrieved whole from memory at the time of use rather than being subject to generation or analysis.”[30]

The use of formulaic sequences has been found to be effective in a number of studies. For example, Frank Boers, June Eyckmans, and colleagues demonstrated that the automatisation of formulaic sequences helps learners become fluent and accurate L2 speakers and builds confidence in speaking the target language.[31] In their study, Wen-li Tsou and Yen-hua Huang showed that the mastery of formulaic sequences helped their participants improve fluency in their academic presentations, which were well-received.[32] These findings are corroborated by Peter Skehan's assertion that we rely on such chunks (i.e., formulaic sequences) to ease processing problems, using them to "buy" processing time while other computation proceeds, enabling us to plan ahead for the content of what we are going to say as well as the linguistic form.[33]

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[25] Paul I.S. Nation, “Improving Speaking Fluency,” *System* 17, no. 3 (1989), 377–84.

[26] Paul I.S. Nation, *What Should Every EFL Teacher Know?* (Seoul: Compass Publishing, 2013).

[27] Paul R. Pintrich and Akane Zusho, “The Development of Academic Self-regulation: The Role of Cognitive and Motivational Factors.” In *Development of Achievement Motivation*, edited by Allan Wigfield, and Jacquelynne S. Eccles (San Diego, CA: Academic Press, 2002).

[28] See, for example: Francine Chambers, “What do you mean by fluency?” *System* 25, no. 4 (1998), 535–44.

[29] Norbert Schmitt and Geoffrey Underwood, “Exploring the Processing of Formulaic Sequences through a Self-paced Reading Task.” In *Formulaic Sequences: Acquisition, Processing, and Use*, edited by Norbert Schmitt (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2004).

[30] Alison Wray, *Formulaic Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 39.

These results indicate that the automatisation of formulaic sequences does not consume much of the speaker's memory capacity or place additional cognitive demands on the speaker, thus increasing speech rate and fluency.[34]

Finally, I myself investigated the effects of a course designed to enhance the oral fluency of university English majors and found that automatisation enhanced by a number of tasks that included repeated practice and the use of formulaic sequences was effective in L2 speaking fluency development.[35]

(c) *Easy materials and tasks*

It is well known among practicing teachers and researchers that fine-tuned input and output are conducive to language acquisition. As Stephen Krashen's Input Hypothesis postulates,[36] being exposed to comprehensible input (i + 1) slightly beyond the learner's current level of proficiency facilitates language acquisition. Conceding the importance of easy input for language learning, many researchers contend that output is also crucial for language acquisition and even more so for L2 speaking and writing fluency development because L2 speaking and writing require motor skills that involve physical articulation and physical writing movements, respectively. These researchers, including Merrill Swain[37] and Yasuhiro Shirai,[38] argue for the critical function of output in language learning by drawing on numerous studies demonstrating that successful L2 users make fluent and automatic use of language in both speaking and writing tasks and that they do not consciously generate language based on their *declarative knowledge* (i.e., knowledge that helps the learner make rules and lexis explicit) but draw on their *procedural knowledge* (i.e., unconscious and automatized knowledge) to create a message. These postulations are in line with Merrill Swain's Comprehensible Output Hypothesis,[39] which suggests three important functions for output: (i) finding gaps in one's language use; (ii) hypothesis testing; and (iii) monitoring one's speaking performance. Analysing a host of studies of the effects of output, including speaking and writing, Rod Ellis argues that production, which engages learners in syntactic processing, helps them automatize their discourse and linguistic knowledge.[40]

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[31] Frank Boers, June Eyckmans, Jenny Kappel, Hélène Stengers, and Murielle Demecheleer, "Formulaic Sequences and Lexical Oral Proficiency: Putting a Lexical Approach to the Test," *Language Teaching Research* 10, no. 3 (2006), 245–61.

[32] Wen-li Tsou and Yen-hua Huang, "The Effects of Explicit Instruction in Formulaic Sequences on Academic Speech Fluency," *Taiwan International ESP Journal* 4, no. 2 (2012), 57–80.

[33] Peter Skehan, *A Cognitive Approach to Language Learning* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 40.

[34] Alison Wray, *Formulaic Language and the Lexicon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

[35] Sakae Onoda, "Effects of Repetition of Selected News Stories on Oral Fluency in Media English Learning," *Media, English, and Communication* 2 (2012), 89–113.

[36] Stephen D. Krashen, *The Input Hypothesis: Issues and Implications* (London: Longman, 1985).

(d) *Pushed output / Time pressure*

In a similar vein, Merrill Swain emphasizes the importance of output by suggesting that in order to develop fluency in speaking and writing, learners need to be pushed toward delivery of a message that is conveyed precisely, coherently, and appropriately.[41] Viewed from a different perspective, *pushed output* can be defined as learner output produced with effort, and is regarded as particularly effective because the practice expands the outer limits of the learner's competence.[42] This indicates that although pushed output is cognitively demanding in terms of information processing, the deep processing it entails can be beneficial for fluency development. However, in part because of the presence in classrooms of learners with diversified English proficiency, few practicing teachers have endeavoured to confront the challenge of pushed output,[43] and this pedagogy, therefore, remains worth experimenting with.

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[37] Merrill Swain, "Communicative Competence: Some Roles of Comprehensible Input and Comprehensible Output in its Development." In *Input in Second Language Acquisition,* edited by Susan M. Gass, and Carolyn G. Madden (Boston, MA: Newbury House, 1985); Yasuhiro Shirai, "*Gaikokugo gakushu no kagaku: Dainigengoshutokuron towa nanika* [Exploring foreign language learning]." Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2008.

[38] Yasuhiro Shirai, "*Gaikokugo gakushu no kagaku: Dainigengoshutokuron towa nanika* [Exploring foreign language learning]." Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2008.

[39] Merrill Swain, "Communicative Competence: Some Roles of Comprehensible Input and Comprehensible Output in its Development." In *Input in Second Language Acquisition,* edited by Susan M. Gass, and Carolyn G. Madden (Boston, MA: Newbury House, 1985).

[40] Rod Ellis, *The Study of Second Language Acquisition.* 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

[41] Merrill Swain, "Communicative Competence: Some Roles of Comprehensible Input and Comprehensible Output in its Development." In *Input in Second*

The use of pushed output is closely related to time pressure as pushed output tasks usually require that learners take part in activities slightly beyond their competence[44] within a given time frame. Thus, time pressure is used to encourage the leaners' active engagement in the task.

3.3. Pedagogical approach to developing fluency

Pedagogical approaches that incorporate these automatisation-enhancing teaching techniques to promote fluency in L2 speaking fluency are proposed by a number of researchers. Among them, Paul Nation[45] suggests three major principles for tasks and materials design: (i) the use of easy materials, because it is important "for learners to make use of known vocabulary and known grammatical constructions;" (ii) a mix of pressure, support, and encouragement for learners to "perform at a faster than usual speed," including the use of pushed output because "the goal is to encourage learners to use the language at a speed which approaches that of native speakers," or "at around 150 words per minute;" (iii) the use of message-focused tasks to encourage learners to focus on communicating information; and (iv) opportunities for learners to repeat the practice of the same or similar language items productively. Several activities fall into this fourth category. For example, reading and listening to easy materials,

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Language Acquisition, edited by Susan M. Gass, and Carolyn G. Madden (Boston, MA: Newbury House, 1985).

[42] Rod Ellis, *The Study of Second Language Acquisition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

[43] Sakae Onoda, "Effects of Repetition of Selected News Stories on Oral Fluency in Media English Learning," *Media, English, and Communication* 2 (2012), 89–113.

[44] Stephen D. Krashen, *The Input Hypothesis: Issues and Implications* (London: Longman, 1985).

[45] Paul I.S. Nation, *What Should Every EFL Teacher Know?* (Seoul: Compass Publishing, 2013), 36.

story-telling, story-retelling, 4/3/2 repeated story-telling, listening while reading, linked skills (i.e., the same material processed in at least three different language skills), issue logs (i.e., looking for newspaper articles on the same theme for an extended period, reporting the main points to three different partners, and discussing the issues), and 10-minute writing (i.e., students choose topics that are easy for them or they are well prepared for, with the students encouraged to write as many words as possible without worrying about errors).

Research Question

To what extent does the speaking and writing fluency of Japanese English Communication university majors with intermediate proficiency improve when an expanded 10-minute writing task is employed in a required English course over one entire academic year?

4. Method

This study examined the effects on L2 speaking fluency of an expanded 10-minute writing task combined with reading (for a sample of reading material, see Appendix A) followed by a discussion by comparing the achievements of a control group that engaged in an expanded *dictogloss* task (for a sample of dictogloss material, see Appendix B) over one entire academic year. A pre-test was administered to both groups using the criteria and tasks described below. In addition, to interpret the quantitative results, a questionnaire and interviews were administered to both groups following the post-test in order to elicit their perceptions of the two tasks used in the study.

Finally, as a teacher-researcher, I taught both groups and observed the participants' engagement in all the class sessions during the entire research period.

Thus, triangulation was undertaken in order to gain a better understanding of learner behaviours by collecting data from multiple sources.

5. Participants

The participants were two classes of first-year English Communication majors taking a required English course running from April 2014 through January 2015 at a women's university in Japan. Each course met once a week for 90 minutes. There were 28 class meetings during the academic year for each course. The last days of each semester were used for final exams.

There were 31 students in each class, and the participants were between 18 and 20 years old, including seven repeaters (i.e., students who failed the course in the previous year). The participants' English proficiency level was judged intermediate as measured by TOEFL-ITP, with scores ranged from 410 to 475 (*Mean* = 417.5*, SD* = 28.3).

Given that no statistically significant differences in L2 speaking and writing were observed between the two classes in the pre-test administered at the start (i.e., story-telling task and quick writing task: ($t(30) = 2.7$, p = n.s.; speaking task: $t(30) = 2.3$, p = n.s.; writing task: $t(30) = 3.2$, p = n.s.), the classes were judged to be equivalent and validated for research purposes.

One of the two classes was randomly assigned the role of control group, the other that of the experimental group. The control group was assigned a *dictogloss* task combined with a follow-up discussion. The experimental group engaged in an expanded 10-minute writing task based on reading and followed by a discussion.

6. Definition and measurement of fluency

Data regarding L2 speaking fluency gains in both groups were collected from two sources at the beginning and end of the academic year.

(1) Speech rate, or the number of words per minute produced by the participants after deletion of reformulations, replacements, false starts, and pauses[46] obtained from story-telling tasks (see Appendix C). This measure is known to be highly reliable.[47]

(2) Writing data collected by using a quick writing task (see Appendix D) followed by a measurement of the number of words and T-units written by the participants per minute. Please note that in L2 literature,[48] the T-unit (referring to the unit that composes a minimal sentence) has been used to measure writing fluency in addition to the number of words produced by the participants in order to measure their writing fluency development as accurately as possible.

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[46] Gavin X-y Bei, "Re-examining Relations among Fluency, Accuracy, Complexity, and Lexis in L2 Speaking," Paper presented at the American Association for Applied Linguistics, Atlanta, GA, March 2010.

[47] Paul Lennon, "Investigating Fluency in EFL: A Quantitative Approach," *Language Learning* 40, no. 3 (1990), 387–417.

[48] See, for example: Kellogg W. Hunt, "Recent Measures in Syntactic Development," *Elementary English* 43 (1966), 732–9.

This study administered an expanded 10-minute writing task with the experimental group. Students were given a newspaper article and asked to read it (5 minutes), summarize the main points without looking at it, write their opinion of the content (10 minutes), form pairs, and report the story and their reactions to it to their partner, repeating the process with three different partners. As discussed earlier, it has been argued that expanded 10-minute writing can enhance L2 speaking as well as writing fluency in learners.[49] Of equal importance is the reading activity that was included based on the rationale that: (i) provided it is easy and familiar, reading material provides input learners can draw on to summarize the story and write up their opinion about; (ii) the use of easy newspaper articles stimulates learners' intellectual curiosity, thereby maintaining their engagement with the task; and (iii) when reading and speaking activities are combined with the 10-minute writing task, the four skills will be integrated with the potentially fluency-enhancing effects the linked task entails,[50] namely: (i) a message focus; (ii) an easy task; (iii) pressure to go faster than normal; (iv) repeated practice; (v) deep processing; and (vi) use of formulaic sequences,[51] all of which are reported to promote automatisation.

Expanded 10-minute writing tasks generate optimal conditions for vocabulary learning. Speaking and writing fluency development in the discussion combined with pushed output based on the reading will therefore encourage learners to recycle the vocabulary and phrases encountered in the text, thus providing opportunities for promoting noticing and repeated retrieval and use, which in turn will promote deep processing of language items.

For its part, the control group took part in an expanded dictogloss task, in which the teacher read a summary of an easy newspaper article three times and the participants took notes, listened individually to the summary of the news story narrated by the teacher, and formed pairs to reconstruct the summary jointly. Control group members were allowed to use different expressions from those used in the original of the summary as long as they meant the same thing. Each pair then reported its work to the class while their peers evaluated it. Finally, they talked about the main theme of the news story in pairs and wrote an individual response paper. Research shows that this task is highly effective in promoting accuracy and fluency in language use.[52]

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[49] Paul I.S. Nation, *What Should Every EFL Teacher Know?* (Seoul: Compass Publishing, 2013).

[50] Ibid.; Onoda, "Effects of Linked-skills Tasks," 2012.

[51] Paul I.S. Nation, *What Should Every EFL Teacher Know?* (Seoul: Compass Publishing, 2013).

7. Tasks Employed on the Course

The teaching approach employed in this study with both the control group and the experimental group is based on Paul Nation and Jonathan Newton's four strands of teaching,[53] namely: (i) meaning-focused input; (ii) language-focused learning; (iii) meaning-focused output; and (iv) fluency development. This is based on their postulation that the balanced use of all four strands enables learners to communicate effectively. Therefore, it was expected that the integration of these four strands would also contribute to speaking and writing fluency development in the participants as well as accuracy development in their language use.

To accurately measure the effects of the two tasks on L2 speaking and writing fluency, the timing of the tasks was held equivalent across the two groups, and the same tasks were employed for the rest of class time for the two groups. These were newspaper article reading, comprehension checks with comprehension questions, viewing a TV news clip, comprehension checks with gap-filling exercises that included dictation, and teacher-led interactive story-retelling, as shown in Table 13-1.

Control group (N = 41)	*Experimental group (N = 41)*
• Newspaper article reading and answering comprehension questions (R & W) • TV news story viewing with gap-filling exercises (L & R) • Teacher-led story-retelling (L & S) • **Expanded 10-minute writing task based on reading (5 minutes) followed by discussion in pairs (R, W, S, & L)**	• Newspaper article reading and answering comprehension questions (R & W) • TV news story viewing with gap-filling exercises (L & R) • Teacher-led story-retelling (L & S) • **Dictogloss activity in pairs and response paper writing followed by discussion in pairs (L, S, & W)**

Note: L = Listening; S = Speaking; R = Reading; W = Writing

Table 13-1: Tasks employed in the study

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[52] See, for example: Paul I.S. Nation and Jonathan Newton, *Teaching ESL/EFL Listening and Speaking* (New York: Routledge, 2009); Paul I.S.P. Nation, *What Should Every EFL Teacher Know?* (Seoul: Compass Publishing, 2013).

[53] Paul I.S. Nation and Jonathan Newton, *Teaching ESL/EFL Listening and Speaking* (New York: Routledge, 2009).

8. Results

To determine the extent to which the experimental group developed greater L2 speaking and writing fluency over the year, the transcripts of the earlier and later renderings elicited by the story-telling tasks and the writing samples elicited by the writing task were compared for each participant, and three *t*-tests were conducted.

First, it was confirmed that the assumptions for running a *t*-test were satisfied since (i) the data were normally distributed, and (ii) no single participant contributed more than one score to the data.[54] To avoid a Type 1 error caused by making multiple comparisons (i.e., rejecting a null hypothesis when it is true), the alpha (α) level was adjusted for the pairwise comparisons using the Bonferroni method[55] and dividing it by the number of comparisons. In other words, a p value of less than .017 (.05/3 = .017) was required for significance.

A *t*-test was then conducted to evaluate the extent to which the experimental group improved in speaking fluency as measured by words per minute compared with the control group at the end of the course. The results indicated that the mean of the experimental group ($M = 74.5$, $SD = 8.7$) was significantly greater than the mean of the control group ($M = 65.0$, $SD = 9.4$), $t(30) = 5.1$, $p < .017$, $d = 0.87$.

Following this, a second *t*-test was administered to examine the extent to which the experimental group improved in writing fluency as measured by the number of words per minute compared with the control group. The results indicated that the mean of the experimental group ($M = 19.5$, $SD = 5.9$) was significantly greater than the mean of the control group ($M = 15.9$, $SD = 5.0$), $t(30) = 5.0$, $p < .017$, $d = 0.67$.

Finally, a third *t*-test was run to investigate the extent to which the experimental group improved in writing fluency as measured by the number of words per T-unit enhanced compared with the control group at the end of the course. The results indicated that the mean of the experimental group ($M = 16.6$, $SD = 1.8$) was significantly greater than the mean of the control group ($M = 5.5$, $SD = 1.3$), $t(30) = 6.5$, $p < .017$, $d = 1.23$.

These results suggest that L2 speaking fluency and writing fluency significantly improved thanks to the use of the expanded 10-minute writing task the experimental group was engaged in.

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[54] Samuel B. Green and Neil J. Salkind, *Using SPSS for Windows and Macintosh: Analyzing and Understanding Data.* 4th ed. (London: Pearson/Prentice Hall, 2005).

[55] Ibid.

9. Comments elicited in questionnaire and interviews

The questionnaire was administered and the interviews conducted in Japanese, and the participants' comments were later translated into English by the researcher. Numbers in parentheses indicate the number of respondents who offered each of the comment (in a variety of wordings).

(1) Expanded 10-minute writing task based on reading and followed by a discussion:

- While reading, I tried to look for the main points for the subsequent writing and discussion activities. (5)
- I read the news story a few times to get important information and to remember keywords for writing a summary and discussing my opinion. (11)
- While I was reading, I thought about how I would write a summary in an effective way using the set phrases we learned. (21)
- 10 minute-writing was a stimulating and intensive activity; given the time limit, I was forced to concentrate on the activity. (12)
- I like this kind of intensive learning with a time limit because I have to use many skills. (8)
- Learning this way, I can use the same words and phrases a few times and remember them effectively. (11)
- The 10-minute writing task helped me discuss the summary and opinions later because it was like a script for my talk. This task was effective for developing speaking skills. (17)

(2) Expanded dictogloss task:

- We discussed and helped each other while reconstructing the summary of the news story the teacher narrated, but it took time to complete it. (11)
- We briefly talked about the main points using keywords for a short time, and we mainly discussed what we could not really understand. (8)
- We spent a lot of time discussing grammar rules, such as the use of articles, tense, and prepositions, and plurals because we were weak on grammar. (22)
- After we completed the reformulation of the summary, we exchanged our opinions on the main theme. This was helpful for reaction paper writing and the discussion. (12)
- The teacher's summary was easy enough for us to reconstruct

by working together. (5)

- Sometimes, this activity [dictogloss] was not good because I depended on my partner too much. (8)
- It was good to do this pair summary task [dictogloss], but I thought it was more effective and efficient for one person to reconstruct the summary and then compare it to the teacher's correct version. (15)

10. Discussion

This study investigated the effects of the use of an expanded 10-minute writing task combined with reading and a discussion on L2 speaking fluency and writing fluency in comparison with an approach that used an expanded dictogloss task combined with reaction paper writing and a discussion. As discussed above, the results indicate that the expanded 10-minute writing task improved speaking and writing fluency to a greater extent than the expanded dictogloss task. The results pose a pedagogically intriguing question as both expanded 10-minute writing and dictogloss tasks include such fluency-enhancing elements as the use of easy and familiar materials, formulaic sequence use, repeated practice of language items, and pushed output, all of which are reported to promote automatisation.[56] These unexpected and surprising results are worthy of further inquiry and investigation.

Based on both the researcher's observations and the feedback, the experimental group appeared to process the information and lexis more thoughtfully and deeply than the control group. Given the time pressure (5 minutes for reading an easy newspaper article on a familiar topic and 10 minutes for writing a summary and opinion) as well as the pressure or encouragement to read, write, and speak while they were reading, a large number of participants were involved in selecting, organizing, and repeating (echoing) important information, keywords, and phrases in their mind. In other words, they were engaged in mental rehearsal (or pre-task planning) of the summary and opinion, which promoted the active use of formulaic sequences. In fact, the participants reported that this process helped create acoustic images of keywords and phrases, including formulaic sequences, which were strengthened and stored in their minds and could be retrieved when needed, as indicated by Frank Boers, Ana-

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[56] Paul I.S. Nation and Jonathan Newton, *Teaching ESL/EFL Listening and Speaking* (New York: Routledge, 2009).

María Piquer-Píriz, and colleagues.[57] They felt that this helped them internalize and automatize these items, a conclusion supported by Shuhei Kadota.[58] By the time they were engaged in the 10-minute writing phase of the task, they had their draft largely ready mentally and wrote it quickly. Thus, pushed output with time pressure encouraged them to concentrate on the sequence of subtasks, retrieve the keywords and formulaic sequences, and write quickly, which in turn became the rehearsal for their exchange of opinions at the discussion stage. In other words, the 10 minute-writing stage worked as a pre-speaking activity. It can be concluded that the participants spent a substantial amount of time engaging in deep thinking, which encouraged them to deeply process and actively use vocabulary and formulaic sequences in the writing and discussion stages.[59]

In addition, the expanded 10-minute writing task encouraged the learners to use the four language skills naturally in the same way as the repeated story-telling task.[60] Through the task, which integrated the four skills, vocabulary, multiword units, and formulaic sequences, all of which were processed multiple times, automatisation was promoted and the working memory load reduced, thus facilitating speaking and writing fluency. This interpretation was supported by the participants' feedback.

It should be noted that among the four skills, writing was utilised intensively, with this productive skill encouraging the students to organize their thoughts deeply and actively use the information and vocabulary. This may be another advantage of the approach, as Paul Nation and Jonathan Newton postulated.[61] This approach also has the advantage of providing multimodal input and output, as is well-documented in the L2 literature[62] and implied in skills development theories.[63] This interpretation is congruent with one of the assumptions for fluency development argued for by Paul Nation,[64] and it has been reported to be effective in a number of studies.[65]

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[57] Frank Boers, Ana-María Piquer-Píriz, Hélène Stengers, and June Eyckmans, "Does Pictorial Elucidation Foster Recollection of Idioms?" *Language Teaching Research* 14, no. 4 (2009), 367–82.

[58] Shuhei Kadota, "*Inputto wo autoputto ni ikani tsunaguka* [How can Input be Linked to Output Effectively]?" *The English Teachers' Magazine* 57, no. 12 (2009), 31–8.

[59] Paul I.S. Nation and Jonathan Newton, *Teaching ESL/EFL Listening and Speaking* (New York: Routledge, 2009).

[60] Nation, *What Should Every EFL Teacher Know?* 2013; Paul I.S. Nation and Jonathan Newton, *Teaching ESL/EFL Listening and Speaking*, 2009); Sakae Onoda, "Effects of Repetition of Selected News Stories on Oral Fluency in Media English Learning," 2001; Sakae Onoda, "Effects of Linked-skills Tasks on English Oral Fluency Development," 2012.

[61] Paul I.S. Nation and Jonathan Newton, *Teaching ESL/EFL Listening and Speaking* (New York: Routledge, 2009).

Of equal importance, a number of students (based on personal communications) reported that the expanded 10-minute writing task was effective for speaking skills development and intrinsically interesting, thus demonstrating the importance of perceived task value in active learning engagement fuelled by intrinsic motivation.[66]

On the other hand, the expanded dictogloss task combined with reaction paper writing and a discussion did not appear to promote the deep processing of keywords and phrases (including formulaic sequences) as effectively as had been expected. As the summary was provided orally by the teacher three times, it could in principle be processed and embedded in the students' mental lexicon[67] as a potential fluency strategy. However, as discussed earlier, a number of participants seemed to focus more on difficult words and grammar points they were not confident in using. In other words, contrary to the intended objective of the task, it is highly likely that the participants spent more time focusing on accuracy. As a result, it took some pairs a long time to complete the dictogloss task, which may have resulted in boredom, as implied in some of the feedback. Task repetition thus appears to entail a potential threat to motivation maintenance and perceived task value.

Another factor that emerged in the analysis was that some of the control group participants talked about the main points of the text briefly but did so more as a springboard to the reaction paper writing and the discussion, which to them seemed more important and valuable, and treated the dictogloss stage merely as input for them to draw on for more advanced and valuable activities. Thus, for a number of pairs, engagement with the task was not as deep as for those in the experimental group. As a result, deep processing of language items did not appear to occur.

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[62] See, for example: Rod Ellis, *The Study of Second Language Acquisition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

[63] John R. Anderson, *The Architecture of Cognition,* 1983; Robert DeKeyser, *Practice in a Second Language*, 2007.

[64] Paul I.S Nation, *What Should Every EFL Teacher Know?* Seoul: Compass Publishing, 2013.

[65] Robert DeKeyser, *Practice in a Second Language*, 2007; Sakae Onoda, "Effects of Linked-skills Tasks on English Oral Fluency Development," 2012.

[66] Paul P. Pintrich and Akane Zusho, "The Development of Academic Self-regulation." In *Development of Achievement Motivation*, edited by Allan Wigfield, and Jacquelynne S. Eccles, (San Diego, CA: Academic Press, 2002).

[67] Shuhei Kadota, "Inputto wo autoputto ni ikani tsunaguka [How can Input be Linked to Output Effectively]?" *The English Teachers' Magazine* 57, no. 12 (2009), 31–8.

As noted above, not all the learners were necessarily actively involved in thinking about the content of the story or retrieving keywords and phrases. This is because the story reproduction was mainly conducted by the teacher, and a substantial participant contribution was not necessarily required even though the students may have listened attentively and may have actively thought about answers to the questions that required the use of keywords and expressions. Thus, the contribution to automatisation did not appear to be as profound as with the 10-minute writing task. Finally, the writing task was shared and collaboratively reconstructed by two partners, which had the potential for learners to gain substantial knowledge through mutual support and scaffolding.[68] However, the observations and participant feedback did not always support the notion of collaborative learning.

The reaction paper writing stage may have promoted greater writing fluency, just as the 10-minute writing did, even if it was not as effective. One possible reason, as discussed earlier, may be that many students focused on difficult words and grammar points, thereby failing to process the keywords and phrases attentively and thoughtfully. In fact, it was observed that some students recognised the key information and words and quickly moved on to think about their opinions for the writing and discussion phases.

Thus, for the reasons discussed above, the expanded 10-minute writing task was more effective in improving speaking and writing fluency than the expanded dictogloss task.

11. Conclusion

This study showed the expanded 10-minute writing task to be effective for L2 speaking and writing fluency development with English Communication majors with intermediate English proficiency in a Japanese university. Its effects appear to derive from the fact that it effectively utilizes a number of fluency-enhancing factors, including formulaic sequences, practice, pre-task planning, repetition of lexis, pushed output, and deep processing, all of which strengthen automatisation, echoing the effects of both repeated story-telling tasks and linked-skills tasks.[69]

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[68] Lev S. Vygotsky, *Thought and Language.* First published 1934. Translated by A. Kozulin (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1986).

However, caution should be exercised because speaking fluency was measured based on only one criterion, namely speech rate per minute. Although the method is highly reliable,[70] the choice of measure may have influenced the results in unexpected ways. For example, it may have measured only one facet of speaking performance or fluency. If so, it would be worthwhile experimenting with other measures, as suggested by Parvaneh Tavakoli and Peter Skehan,[71] such as breakdown and repair fluency. Such an approach may yield further insights into the mechanisms behind speaking and writing fluency development. Finally, future replication with different speech elicitation tasks and measurement criteria, possibly conducted with different types of participants (i.e., non-English Communication majors and male English Communication majors), may lend more robust support to these findings because research shows that female students are more willing to communicate as well as more positive about L2 learning.[72]

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[69] Sakae Onoda, "Effects of Linked-skills Tasks on English Oral Fluency Development," *Global Science and Technology Forum* 3 (2013).

[70] Paul Lennon, "Investigating Fluency in EFL: A Quantitative Approach," *Language Learning* 40, no. 3 (1990).

[71] Parvaneh Tavakoli and Peter Skehan, "Strategic Planning, Task Structure, and Performance Testing." In *Planning and Task Performance in a Second Language,* edited by Rod Ellis (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2005).

[72] Zoltan Dörnyei, *Attitudes, Orientations, and Motivations in Language Learning: Advances in Theory, Research, and Applications* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003).

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Appendix A

News article read by the experimental group

The decline of Asian marriage
Asia's lonely hearts
Women are rejecting marriage in Asia. The social implications are serious.

The Economist (August 20, 2011)

Marriage is changing fast in East, South-East, and South Asia. What is happening in Asia is a flight from marriage.

Marriage rates are falling partly because people are postponing getting hitched. Marriage ages have risen all over the world, but the increase is particularly marked in Asia. People there now marry even later than they do in the West. The mean age of marriage in the richest places—Japan, Taiwan, South Korea and Hong Kong—has risen sharply in the past few decades, to reach 29-30 for women and 31-33 for men.

A lot of Asians are not marrying later. They are not marrying at all. Almost a third of Japanese women in their early 30s are unmarried; probably half of those will always be. Over one-fifth of Taiwanese women in their late 30s are single; most will never marry. In some places, rates of non-marriage are especially striking: in Bangkok, 20% of 40-44-year old women are not married; in Tokyo, 21%; among university graduates of that age in Singapore, 27%. So far, the trend has not affected Asia's two giants, China and India. But it is likely to, as the economic factors that have driven it elsewhere in Asia sweep through those two countries as well; and its consequences will be exacerbated by the sex-selective abortion practiced for a generation there. By 2050, there will be 60m more men of marriageable age than women in China and India.

The joy of staying single

Women are retreating from marriage as they go into the workplace. That's partly because, for a woman, being both employed and married is tough in Asia. Women there are the primary caregivers for husbands, children and, often, for aging parents; and even when in full-time employment, they are expected to continue to play this role. This is true elsewhere in the world, but the burden that Asian women carry is particularly heavy. Japanese women, who typically work 40 hours a week in the office, then do, on average, another 30 hours of housework. Their husbands, on average, do three hours. And Asian women who give up work to look after children find it hard to return when the offspring are grown. Not surprisingly, Asian women have an unusually pessimistic view of marriage. According to a survey carried out this year, many fewer Japanese women felt positive about their marriage than did Japanese men, or American women or men.

At the same time as employment makes marriage tougher for women, it offers them an alternative. More women are financially independent, so more of them can pursue a single life that may appeal more than the drudgery of a traditional marriage. More education has also contributed to the decline of marriage, because Asian women with the most education have always been the most reluctant to wed—and there are now many more highly educated women.

Appendix B

Dictogloss text: Summary of news story narrated by the teacher. The first two sentences were given to the students on a worksheet. The boldfaced parts indicate formulaic expressions embedded for promoting automatisation.

Marriage is changing fast in Asian countries and marriage rates have been decreasing in recent years. This trend is especially true of women.

One possible reason is that women **tend to** marry later in life. For example, in Japan, Taiwan, South Korea and Hong Kong, on average, women marry at the age of 29-30, and men at the age of 31-33.

Another reason is that a lot of women in Asian countries are not marrying at all. For example, about 30% of Japanese women in their early 30s are unmarried, and probably 50% of those will not marry. Non-marriage rates are especially striking in large cities such as in Tokyo, where 21% of 40-44-year old women are unmarried. **The same trend can be seen among** women in Taiwan.

A third reason for the non-marriage **trend** is women's hard life in Asia. **In recent years**, a lot of women have kept a job and continued to work after they marry. For a woman, doing both a job and household chores is a heavy burden. They **are expected to take care of** their husbands, children and old parents. **Statistics show that** Japanese women typically work 40 hours a week in the office, then do, on average, another 30 hours of housework, while their husbands do almost nothing.

Also, Asian women who give up work to look after children **find it hard to return to work** when their children are grown. **It is no wonder that** Asian women have a pessimistic view of marriage.

Having said that, there is another interesting factor related to women's employment for **the decline of marriag**e. **That is**, more women are **financially independent**, so more of them can **pursue a single life** that may appeal more than what a traditional marriage brings.

More education has also **contributed to** this trend because Asian women with the most education have always been the most reluctant to marry.

Appendix C

Story-telling task and sample narration by a participant

Participants were asked to read an easy short news story for three minutes and then talk about it in three minutes. The text below is a sample rendering of a news story about "English activities to be introduced in elementary schools." The boldfaced parts indicate formulaic expressions embedded for promoting automatisation.

This story is about English education in Japan. Uh … if you were child … do you want to study English? … Well ... **recently** … Japanese government decided to introduce English education … at elementary schools. **According to government** … English activities classes … will be give … to … fifth and sixth grades elementary schools … from ... er … 2011. Government … They introduce to teach English … uh … to … to develop … positive attitude … to … er… English communication ... and be interested … in English. Some people say ... er … **it is good idea … to teach English** … un ... **to elementary school students … because… earlier English education** … **will** … **bring** … **a lot of benefits to students**. For example … children can learn English … quickly … and … develop good pronunciation and … they can … **be** … **positive about** … uh …different cultures … and people from other countries. **In addition** … er … they have interests … in … learning new things … and … have confidence … in communication … **However, some critics say …** English activities classes will not be … good … because… **first** … er **…** students will be taught by not English teachers. Maybe … they can't speak English … good. **Second**, And … classes will … uh … only once a week … in large classes. **Second,** teachers will not use textbooks ... because they use game. Students learn not good English.

In my opinion, English education for elementary schools … will not be good … because teachers are not good. And… students learn incorrect English and teachers can't teach well ... **So** … uh … **I have concerns … English education idea.**

Appendix D

Quick-writing task: Write your ideas on what makes people happy (10 minutes).

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

LEARNING GRAMMAR USING CORPORA: A CASE STUDY

IVANO CELENTANO

1. Introduction

We live in a world where computer technology is influencing our lives, behaviour and lifestyle. In recent years language pedagogy has been trying to follow this trend, taking advantage of the new resources provided by the innovative tools in the field of linguistic studies including corpus linguistics. Many scholars agree that the use of corpora could ultimately improve students' motivation by engaging them in a personal challenging experience in the process of learning, giving space to opportunities of research which may improve Learners' Language Awareness as well as their critical thinking skills. Teachers, in turn, can see in the corpus a resource for improving their Teacher Language Awareness and therefore their teaching skills[1]. The holistic nature of corpora includes every aspect of language use, opening to numerous perspectives of language teaching pedagogy enhancing team work, cooperation, curiosity, etc.

The case study I am going to discuss in the present paper originated from these considerations[2]. The aim of this research was to find evidence of the benefit from the direct use of corpora, in the form of Data-Driven Learning tasks (DDL) in a high school class. A particular focus was on the investigation of the strategies and the abilities required by the students in order to benefit the most from Corpus-Driven DDL activities. In this respect, an important role is also played by the class teacher who assisted the data analysis.

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[1] Stephen Andrews, *Teacher language awareness* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

[2] The present study is originally part of my Master's thesis entitled "*Corpora in Language Learning and Teaching: a case study*" discussed in May 2015 at the University of Milan. The study has been revised for the present publication.
Ivano Celentano, "Corpora in Language learning and teaching: a Case Study," (Master's thesis, University of Milan, 2015). [unpublished Master's thesis]

The following two sections are aimed at presenting two important concepts in order to frame the present study in the EFL literature background.

1.1. The inductive approach to language pedagogy

Born as an exploratory model as well as a valuable alternative to the traditional pedagogical model, the so-called "Three I's scheme" includes three stages (Illustration, Interaction and Induction), where "illustration" means looking at real data, "interaction" provides discussion and observations and finally "induction" encourages rules for the creation of a particular feature which "will be refined and honed as more and more data is encountered".

With the term "inductive approach" we refer to a grammar instructing method in which…

> …the learner first studies examples in which the grammatical structure is used, without having met the rule, and from, these examples, he or she has to develop an understanding of the rule.[3]

This method is opposed to a *"deductive approach"* in which typically the grammar rule is first presented and followed by examples in which it is applied.

According to Thornbury:

> Inductive language learning is quite similar to the way native speakers acquire their language and thus the approach often is associated with the Direct Method and the Natural Approach […] These approaches are modelled on first language acquisition and their basic assumption is that "language data (or input) is best processed inductively and without recourse or translation"[4]

Inductive learning, contrary to what happens in the Direct Method and the Natural Approach, allows an explicit explanation of the rule, after having worked it out from a series of examples.

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[3] Scott Thornbury, *How to teach grammar* (Harlow: Longman, 1999), 49.

[4] *Id. ibid.*

The core principle of inductive language teaching is what is known as the "discovery learning principle"; Pascal best explained the logic that lies behind this term several centuries earlier:

> People are generally better persuaded by the reasons which they themselves have discovered than by those which have come into the minds of others.[5]

This approach to language learning is considered to highly improving learners' motivation as they become the protagonists of the lesson and do not have to stick to rules imposed by the teacher. Instead, they can take advantage of their personal knowledge in order to discover new features of the language with the supervision of a language instructor.

1.2. Data-Driven Learning tasks or the learner as a researcher

In order to briefly describe a Data-Driven Learning Task (DDL) Johns and King, considered among the major experts of this approach to language learning define them as…

> …the use in the classroom of computer-generated concordances to get students to explore regularities of patterning in the target language, and the development of activities and exercises based on concordance output.[6]

In this type of task, learners start from the analysis of corpus data in order to make possible hypotheses about the use of a particular language feature. These hypotheses are then tested through language use.

Data-Driven Learning (DDL) can be considered as an application of the *inductive method* for the use of corpora for pedagogical purposes.

As in the previous quotation by Johns, in order to enhance language learning, learners should be guided to discover the foreign language they are learning. Similarly, Leech affirms that:

> The critical and argumentative type of essay assignment […] should be balanced with the type of assignment […] which invites the student to obtain, organize and study real-language data according to the individual choice. This latter type of task gives the student the realistic expectation of breaking new grounds as a "researcher", doing something which is a

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[5] Scott Thornbury, *How to teach grammar* (Harlow: Longman, 1999), 51.

[6] Tim Johns and Philip King, *Classroom concordancing* (Birmingham: Centre for English Language Studies, the University of Birmingham, 1991).

> unique and individual contribution, rather than a reworking and evolution of the research of others.[7]

This brings the entire lesson to a drastic shift in emphasis from the traditional *deductive learning* classroom routine to *inductive learning* and determines a series of consequences for both learners and teachers: 1) the teacher becomes a guide, a coordinator or a supervisor for the research; 2) the learner experiences a different approach to learning, involving observation and interpretation of linguistic data; 3) traditional pedagogical grammar books are at this stage partially left aside, as DDL requires abstraction only at a later stage.

From this perspective, DDL can be seen as either a teacher-directed or a learner-led activity, even though Discovery Learning should be basically a learner-centred task. It is also important to remember that, the key to successful data-driven learning, even if it is centred on the single student, is the appropriate level of teacher guidance or pedagogical mediation which depends on the learners' age, experience and proficiency level, because "a corpus is not a simple object and it is just as easy to derive nonsensical conclusion from the evidence as insightful ones"[8].

The complexity of corpora as tools for DDL requires teachers to have an adequate ability and knowledge of linguistic software, as well as good general computer skills.

Lastly, it is crucial to point out that these tasks are not devised to replace the central role of grammar instruction on traditional textbooks, but they are designed to improve students learning rate and consequently their language awareness.

Before presenting the case study, another useful contribution was offered by Leech who described two different ways of working with corpora at school[9]: a soft and a hard version. In the soft version, only the teacher can access the corpus. As a consequence, the teacher prints out a sample of concordance lines from the corpus and uses them in an activity. Learners will then work on these corpus-based materials according to the teacher's guidelines. The hard version requires the learners to have direct access to a corpus. In this case, the task can be completed with or without the presence and the guidance of the teacher. The case study presented here is an example of both soft and hard approach to language analysis.

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[7] Geoffrey Leech, "Teaching and language corpora: a convergence." In *Teaching and Language Corpora*, edited by Anne Wichmann, Steven Fligelstone, Tony McEnery, and Gerry Knowles (London: Longman, 1997).

[8] John McHardy Sinclair, *How to use corpora in language teaching* (Philadelphia: J. Benjamins, 2004).

[9] Geoffrey Leech, "Teaching and language corpora: a convergence." In *Teaching and Language Corpora*, edited by Anne Wichmann, Steven Fligelstone, Tony McEnery, and Gerry Knowles (London: Longman, 1997), 10.

1.3 Language Awareness and other features for successful learning

The findings of this study brought out the need to develop a much relevant degree of *Language Awareness* in the learners[10], in order to achieve successful results. With the purpose of briefly presenting the complexity of Language Awareness, it is important to point out the crucial relationship between interrelated concepts such as *consciousness, awareness, attention* and *noticing.*

According to Schmidt, the notion of *attention* is a very elusive one[11]. Posner & Petersen[12] divide the notion of attention into three different elements: *alertness*, *detection,* and *orientation*. Everyone who pays attention to anything has to take alertness as a prerequisite, so to say the attitude to be actively involved in what he/she is doing. This conscious alertness is commonly defined as *Awareness*: *Attention* and *awareness* come together in the process of *noticing*. Schmidt defines noticing as "the registration of an occurrence of a stimulus event in conscious awareness and subsequent storage in long-term memory"[13].

Schmidt refers to a simple *registration* what is the detection without the necessary awareness, and argues that "noticing is the necessary and sufficient condition for converting input into intake"[14].

In addition, students are required to adopt an *inductive reasoning* which mainly lays on implicit inputs which are to be recognised and elaborated in autonomy, which was one of the main goals taken into consideration by the study.

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[10] Stephen Andrews, *Teacher language awareness* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

[11] Richard Schmidt, "Attention." In *Cognition and second language instruction,* edited by Peter Robinson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

[12] M. Posner, "The Attention System of the Human Brain," *Annual Review of Neuroscience* 13, no. 1 (1990).

[13] Richard Schmidt, "Implicit learning and the cognitive unconscious: Of artificial grammars and SLA." In *Implicit and explicit learning of languages*, edited by Nick C. Ellis (London: Academic Press, 1994).

[14] Richard Schmidt, "The role of consciousness in second language learning," *Applied Linguistics* (1990), 130.

2. Context and participants

The case study involved a 4th-year class made up of 17 pupils attending an Italian language high school (*liceo linguistico*). All the participants taking part in the study are Italian L1 speakers and have been learning English as a foreign language for several years at school. The majority of the class is also taking part in the *FIRST Certificate* Exam preparation programme.

The teacher described the class as a very positive one, both if we consider the average results and the level of interest. She highlighted the level of attention, motivation and stressed how her students are particularly willing to actively take part in different activities, it's also brought out thus how the class needed to become more autonomous and more reflective on the language (Learners' Language Awareness) and, more generally the need of a more in-depth learning emerged as an essential goal still to be achieved.

3. Research questions

This study is an attempt to evaluate the benefits of using corpus-generated concordance lines in an English language classroom. The main aim was to investigate the effect of the use of corpora as a tool for *inductive data-driven learning* of certain grammatical patterns.

The framework of the investigation can be summarised through the following research questions:

I. *What abilities are required for DDL activities which are unconventional for traditional teaching?*

II. *What strategies do students use in order to overcome major difficulties encountered in such tasks?*

III. *To what extent can learners' Language Awareness improve through corpus-driven DDL tasks?*

4. Methodology

The study was developed through three lessons. In the first two lessons of an hour each, preliminary practical and theoretical tasks about corpora and their use for linguistic analysis were carried out. In the third lesson, a test was administered to the students. Taking the advantage that all the learners had a personal tablet device to work on, in the first two lessons the students had the opportunity to become familiar with the Contemporary

American English Corpus (COCA)[15], which was chosen as the software for the tasks. The COCA provides useful charts and information to facilitate data analysis. In this first lesson, the students were led to discover the different possible applications of corpora for language analysis. Both individually and in a group, they carried out simple investigations trying to adopt an inductive approach to language analysis: the ability to notice language occurrences giving reasons for their intuitions. Students were involved in a discussion and were led to reach a meaningful conclusion.

In the third lesson, students took a fill the gap test to test the knowledge of the class before the DDL activity itself in which some concordance lines sheets were handed out. Each pair of students were asked to analyze the data and take notes about all the features of *form*, *meaning* and *use* of the prepositional verbs *consist in* and *consist of*.

After this activity, a similar test sheet was given to check learners' improvement. With this activity, the study was concluded. In the table below I summarize the activities for each session.

1st lesson	2nd lesson	3rd lesson
Introduction to the use of language corpora.	Register and genre analysis of business English words with the COCA corpus. Diachronic analysis using charts from the same corpus.	Check of simple individual corpus analyses assigned as homework.
Lexical corpus analysis with the Contemporary English Corpus (COCA) - ability to notice.	Analysis of prepositional verbs through DDL approach.	Final test: Data-Driven Learning analysis of the prepositional verbs *consist in* and *consist of*.

Table 14-1 Schedule of the lessons conducted in class.

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[15] Mark Davies, (2008-) *The Corpus of Contemporary American* English: 520 million words, 1990-present. Available online at http://corpus.byu.edu/coca/.

4.1. Materials

For the purpose of this study both conventional and unconventional tools have been adopted in order to investigate the subject of the research. Below are illustrated the materials and tools which have played an important role in the success of the study:

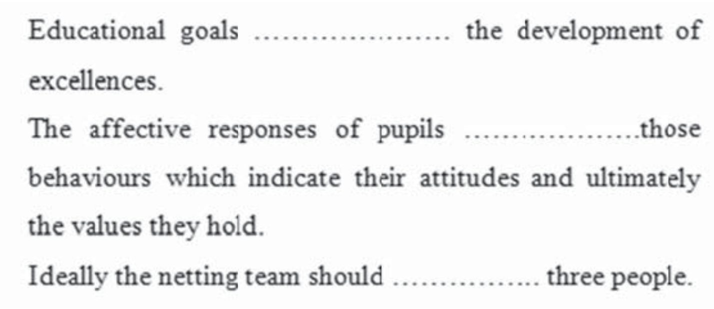
During the preliminary lessons:

a. The *Interactive blackboard*: more and more present in classes at any level, it was very useful both for the introductory presentation which was projected during the first session and for the later session when students were guided to use the critical language analysis using the corpus collocations to find answers to linguistic questions.
b. Several *tablet devices*: all the students had the chance to use their personal tablet device to complete the task required after registering to the COCA Corpus official website.

During the final case study:

c. Two similar "*fill the gap*" *tasks* (a pre-test and a post-test). Each test was made up of 10 gaps with only one correct answer each. The test targets the form, meaning and use of the prepositional verbs *consist in* and *consist of.*

Here I report some sentences from the test sheet:



Educational goals .... the development of excellences.

The affective responses of pupils ....those behaviours which indicate their attitudes and ultimately the values they hold.

Ideally the netting team should .... three people.

Fig. 14-1 Sample of the test sheet

d. Two *concordance lines* sheets taken from the British National Corpus (BNC)[16]. Because of the random nature of corpus data, the concordance list was manipulated in order to offer 15 sentences each, avoiding too many results reflecting the same example of use. The reason for the partial corruption of the data was the effort to facilitate inductive learning through authentic materials not devised with a pedagogical orientation.

4.2. Procedure

I was given the chance to teach three lessons of an hour each. The class teacher was present during the first and second lesson. Instead, she was not in class when the test was administered.

The first two lessons were aimed at making students familiar with the corpus and its tools, but most importantly to encourage students to adopt an inductive method in language analysis which is rarely used in classroom settings. The importance of using criteria such as form, meaning and use in the analysis was also stressed.

Here is a brief description of how each session was carried out:

Lesson one:

The first session was a pure introductory one. A PowerPoint presentation on the nature of a corpus and its use in linguistics was projected in class using the interactive whiteboard installed in the room. In the second part of the presentation the *COCA Corpus* was projected: its layout, aims and features.

The aim of this first lesson was two-fold: on the one hand to give students an insight into the nature of corpora, on the other to guide them inside the software, also presenting them how to read the results of a simple research.

Lesson two:

The second lesson designed to stress the importance of being aware of language register and genre awareness, an issue which was highlighted as critical by the class teacher. Issues concerning sociolinguistic aspects of the language as well as language change emerged during the lesson (i.e. language variation and change).

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[16] Mark Davis, “British National Corpus (BYU-BNC),” British National Corpus (BYU-BNC), http://corpus.byu.edu/bnc/

Object of investigation were the features of form, meaning and use of some business-related terms they already learnt during Business English lessons as well as, the prepositional verbs *responsible for* and *responsible to*. Particularly, this last prepositional verb was clearly meant to prepare the learner for the final test.

The class was divided into research groups, each of them focusing one item. Each group had to retrieve the main aspects of form, meaning and use as well as to underline possible critical issues pointing out divergences with common usage in Italian. The use of the charts provided in the corpus encouraged students to make hypotheses about social causes influencing linguistic change: shifting of meaning or register, increase or decrease in frequency of occurrence.

Lesson three:

The lesson was devoted to the study of the prepositional verbs *consist in* and *consist of.* Firstly, the pre-test sheet was given out and the learners took the preliminary test designed to check students' pre-knowledge.

After the test, the pre-test sheet was recollected and the concordance lines were handed out, then the students in pairs had to observe the data from the concordance lines they received. After a few minutes, the observations were shared and the discussion was started. At this stage of the test, the administrator of the study has been the moderator of the whole-class-discussion taking notes of what emerged from the discussion using as criteria the observation of "FORM", "MEANING" and "USE", reproducing a small chart on the blackboard similar to that reported below.

	FORM	**MEANING**	**USE**
CONSIST IN			
CONSIST OF			

Table 14-1: Chart used for the activity.

The reason for this chart was to help learners avoid repetitions in their observations.

After the discussion, a post-test was given and the learners were asked to complete a second "fill the gap" task.

Figure 14.2 exemplifies the different stages of the final test

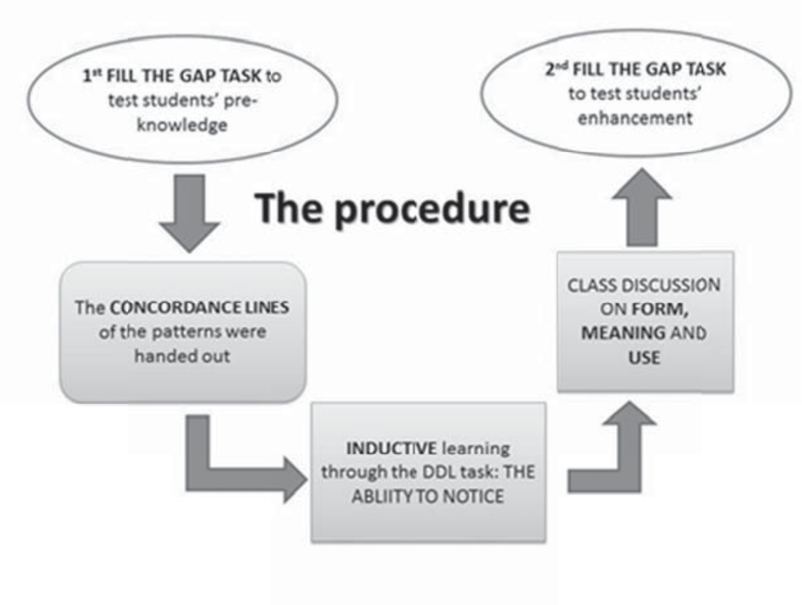
1st FILL THE GAP TASK to test students' pre-knowledge
The procedure
2nd FILL THE GAP TASK to test students' enhancement
The CONCORDANCE LINES of the patterns were handed out
CLASS DISCUSSION ON FORM, MEANING AND USE
INDUCTIVE learning through the DDL task: THE ABLIITY TO NOTICE

Fig. 14-2: Stages of the final test.

4.3 Teacher interviews

Although the class teacher was not directly involved in my case study she played an important role as an observer and interlocutor with whom I discussed teaching strategies and methods. She also provided some feedback about the DDL tasks carried out in her class.

For these reasons, two teacher interviews were conducted: the first, before the lesson in which she talked about herself, her teaching experience and strategies; a second one, after the lessons in which we discussed the result of the study. In order to focus on the important issues to discuss, the second conversation had the form of a semi-structured interview. Both the interview has been recorded for the purpose of this paper.

5. Data analysis

In this section, I will present and analyse the main results which emerged from the case study. The analysis will focus on the three research questions addressed by this paper.

5.1. Abilities for a successful Data-Driven Learning task

DDL is a quite unusual methodology if related to traditional classroom settings[17].

The present case study registered how pupils met some difficulties in order to leave the conventional milestones of traditional grammar learning methods i.e. those ascribable to a *grammar-translation model,* "according to which rules are explained, trained and tested under the leadership of the language instructor who declares what can be considered correct"[18].

Throughout the lessons, the level of interest and attention in the students was always very high. This was probably due to the innovative approach used (i.e. interactive lessons, individual use of new multimedia devices) compared to a more traditional lesson.

From the very beginning, the traditional *deductive approach* to EFL learning seemed to be unsuitable for solving such kind of tasks, as even the most successful students did not have the chance to formulate any consistent solution.

Consequently, the class had to struggle quite a lot when passing from their traditional deductive model consisting of rules, and strategies consolidated throughout many years at school to a more reflexive inductive approach, where more strict criteria need to be respected and taken into consideration.

Essential keys to the success of the case study lay in the adoption of a clear procedure which has been shared with the students prior to the test. Moreover, the group discussion and the formulation of the hypotheses using a clear frame of investigation consisting of form, meaning and use has been clearly successful on the pedagogical point of view, as the results confirm (see. section 5.3).

Some of them noticed aspects related to form, other to meaning or made hypotheses about its use. It seems reasonable to argue that *the ability to notice* is part of the pre-knowledge of all the learners, even if it is never explicitly conceptualised and trained in traditional teaching.

Still, it has inevitably taken the students to make more complex hypotheses concerning linguistic change, registers and genre, although in a very unsystematic way leaving a series of questions unanswered. Some students spontaneously chose to rely on their general knowledge and intuition in order to discover something more on the prepositional verbs taken into consideration, trying autonomously to rely on already known terms and structures present in the concordance lists: this raises the issue of the need of school language teaching to consider language beyond the conventional linguistic goals towards a more holistic model of teaching, which could adopt new approaches to learning (i.e. CLIL, flipped classes etc.). Through these lessons, students had been given the opportunity to better understand and deepen the mechanisms and functions of the language: in other words, the ability to read under the surface. From the observation of the activities as well as the hypotheses raised during the DDL tasks, it may be reasonable to argue that such tasks on a longer period may help learners to use their extra-linguistic knowledge as well as their reasoning in order to reach relevant conclusions on partial or still uncovered topics.

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[17] Jörg Roche, *Fremdsprachenerwerb, Fremdsprachendidaktik* (Tübingen: Francke, 2013); Gerhard Bach, *Englischunterricht: Grundlagen und Methoden einer handlungsorientierten Unterrichtspraxis* (Tübingen: Francke, 2013).

[18] Scott Thornbury, *An A-Z of ELT: a dictionary of terms and concepts used in English language teaching* (Oxford: Macmillan Education, 2006).

5.2. Students' strategies during Data-Driven Learning tasks

While monitoring the learners during the tasks, I noticed their general tendency to find a solution hastily and without an in-depth analysis of data. This attitude may be due to various reasons. It may be a sign of disorientation caused by the new kind of approach to language analysis. A frequent strategy was to try to find a solution using their pre-knowledge. Particularly during the final test, the preliminary discussion about *form* required learners to visualize the elements of the patterns using highlighters, pencils etc. This was made easier by the KWIC display provided by the corpus software.

The discussion in the final test inevitably confirmed the students' difficulty in explaining features of *form* from the given data. Only a few learners, provided evidence based on form by observing the elements which precede and come after the term queried.

Here is a brief passage of the class discussion occurred during the test which was recorded for the purpose of this paper.

> *Student: "We noticed that very often, consist in is followed by a verb with the –ing form or by a noun and it seems it could be used to state something"*[19]

The whole class discussion clearly highlighted the important role played in DDL tasks by *intuition* which is strengthened through the analysis of real corpus-based data *and* used as a strategy for learning.

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[19] The original statement was in Italian, the present citation was translated into English by the author.

Students went through a process which is typical of DDL activities: they checked their preliminary hypotheses against the analysis of data starting from what is peculiar; they then attempted to generalize applying it to a similar context. They finally also refer their findings to their L1 knowledge.

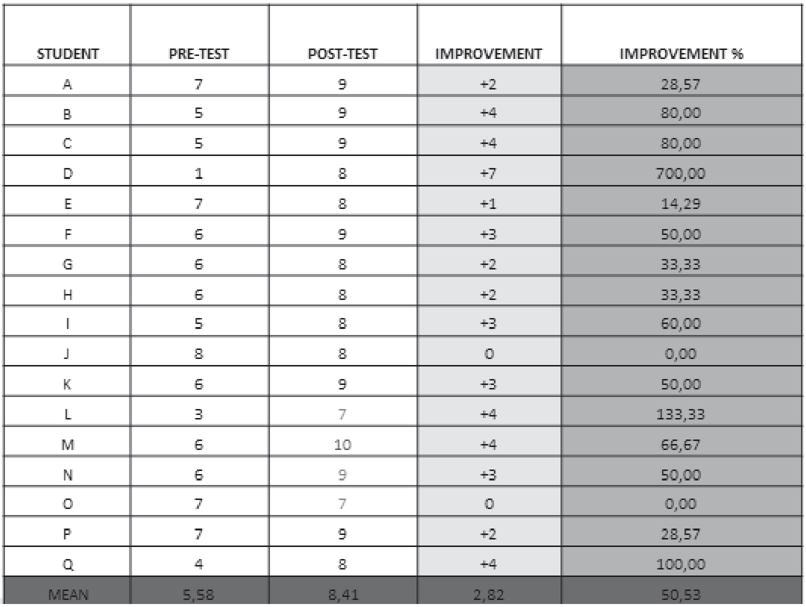
To avoid uncritical translations, students were asked to provide a suitable translation into Italian:

“I would use .... when I mean....”

In this way, learners were encouraged to critically work on *meaning* and *use* of a particular language feature.

Only as a final request, they were allowed to compare the translations provided with other resources, dictionaries included.

5.3. Improvement of learners’ language awareness in Data-Driven Learning tasks



STUDENT	PRE-TEST	POST-TEST	IMPROVEMENT	IMPROVEMENT %
A	7	9	+2	28,57
B	5	9	+4	80,00
C	5	9	+4	80,00
D	1	8	+7	700,00
E	7	8	+1	14,29
F	6	9	+3	50,00
G	6	8	+2	33,33
H	6	8	+2	33,33
I	5	8	+3	60,00
J	8	8	0	0,00
K	6	9	+3	50,00
L	3	7	+4	133,33
M	6	10	+4	66,67
N	6	9	+3	50,00
O	7	7	0	0,00
P	7	9	+2	28,57
Q	4	8	+4	100,00
MEAN	5,58	8,41	2,82	50,53

Fig. 14-2: Results and improvement for each student.

The students' scores were defined by the number of gaps that they filled correctly. The maximum score in each test was 10. The average percentage of improvement was worked out by comparing pre-test and post-test results of each student. The average learning improvement of the whole class group has been +50.53% and the highest individual *percentage increase* reached +700% (student D)[20].

Two of the learners (students J and O) did not make any improvement. Only one student filled 100% of the gaps correctly. Most importantly, all students (except two) improved their score.

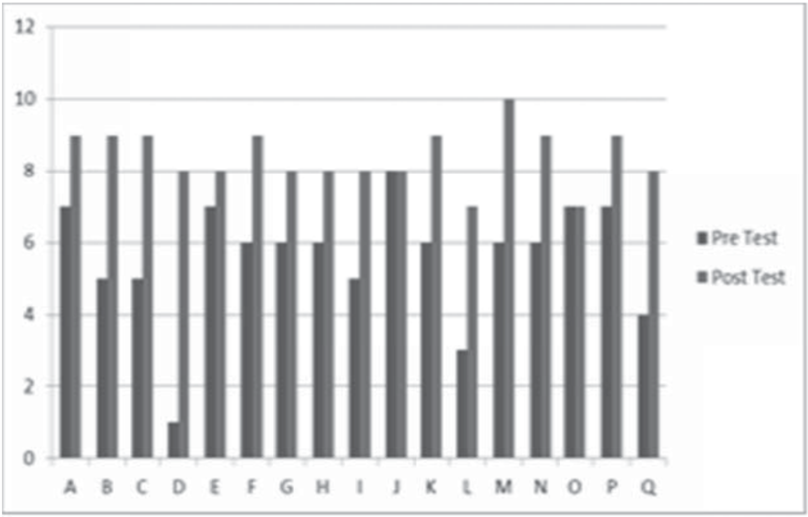


Fig. 14-4: Individual scores in each test

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[20] This percentage increase was calculated using the following computation: $\left[\left(\frac{xf}{xi} * 100\right) - 100\right]$ where xi is the pre-test value (i.e. 1) and xf is the post-test value (i.e. 8)

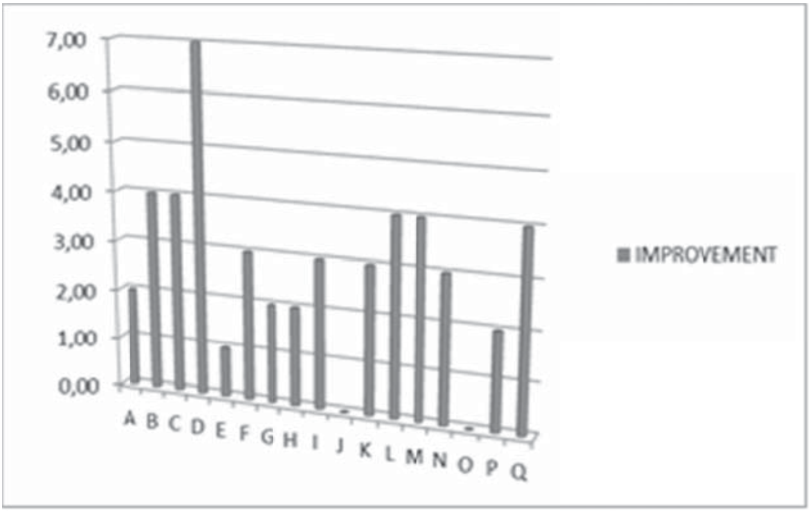

Fig. 14-5: Learners' improvement

The results provide the evidence that DDL corpus-driven tasks can enhance learners’ language awareness of some specific aspects of language if compared to other techniques.

The topic of learner language awareness was also discussed with the teacher in the post-test interview in which she pointed out an aspect, which in her opinion can be enhanced through DDL activities which are normally taught, to be acquired by students: register awareness.

She highlighted the difficulty for a 4th-grade class to identify different registers. According to her, a corpus may provide them with a selection of texts belonging to different registers and genres and can be used both in class in the form of a classroom activity or also as homework for small register analyses to present to the class. In a similar way, a corpus can be useful when dealing with the features of a single register or genre.

If on the one hand, the teacher agrees that corpora can be a good alternative to dictionaries in sorting out problems of language use and their adoption in the classroom should be definitely encouraged, on the other, she believes that the use of DDL tasks in the classroom is time-consuming. The teacher, therefore, suggests using DDL tasks as a final activity after the main contents of a unit have been already covered. Data-Driven Learning tasks may also be exploited to carry out small linguistic projects.

6. Conclusion

This experiment has highlighted how DDL activities can enhance learners' skills to tackle some language features which have proven to be challenging for them. This study has proved that an inductive approach to language learning can indeed be motivating for a wide range of learners and give them the opportunity to get more involved in language analysis activities and express their personal hypotheses. The awareness-raising process in the DDL tasks – activated through class debates, group discussions etc. – stimulates learners' self-evaluation of their own learning process. This skill defined as reflective feedback has played an important role in the motivation of the students taking part in the study. The teacher takes an unconventional role as he or she should monitor learners' progress and difficulties without interfering with the central role of the learner in these activities. The opportunity provided to learners by a self-discovery approach is essential for a DDL task.

From a *didactic perspective*, the case study claims the need of an action-oriented approach to language learning which would support learners throughout the analysis of authentic language samples aimed at highlighting features of form, meaning and use. DDL may improve learners' metalinguistic skills, leading them to work out reasons and rules. Autonomy of judgment, personal engagement, involvement in group discussions, not only help learners to become more familiar with the language, its structures and meanings but will also enhance the use of methods of analysis which are useful beyond the only linguistic context.

Pedagogically speaking, many possible educational goals may be related to this approach to language learning and teaching.

Firstly, *cooperation and team-working* are deemed the most important pedagogical skills required in corpus-based tasks. Students should learn to cooperate sharing their personal strengths.

Secondly, the *autonomy of judgment* plays an important pedagogical role. *Personal opinions, critical reasoning* should be recognised as a tool to support personal investigations. A major goal of secondary school education should be the promotion of an interdisciplinary approach to learning which would find an interesting application in DDL activities.

All this conclusion seems to corroborate Robinsons' conclusions when he affirms that…

> …the process of learning is more likely to occur when the learners themselves had worked out the rule, they verbalized, rather than when it had been provided as part of the instruction.[21]

This study has confirmed that learners' language awareness is perhaps the most important goal for DDL. It may involve the use of different language skills, from speaking to writing and be a useful tool to enhance personal engagement and critical judgment.

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PART 4 –

EVALUATING AND ASSESSING

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

INTEGRATED FORMS OF SELF-EVALUATION AND EVALUATION FOR INCOMING FOREIGN STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PADOVA

IVANA FRATTER AND LUISA MARIGO

1. Introduction

This article presents an experimental research study made during the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 academic years at the Language Centre of the University of Padova (CLA). The research aimed to experiment a new integrated system of assessment, including both assessment and self-assessment tools, because of the change in the flow of incoming students attending Italian L2 courses at the CLA over recent years. The number of students who attended the Italian courses has been in constant growth: from the academic year 2009-2010 to 2015-2016 the students increased from 700 to 1200[1].

The CLA database for 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 shows there has been a progressive increase in the numbers of incoming students with Italian language certification (between the two academic years the percentage rose by 5%) and from the first semester of the 2014-2015 academic year, the number of incoming foreign students with Italian language certification exceeded the number of students without certification[2]. These data demonstrate more interest in the language of the host country but also they raise the issue of converging the CLA system of assessment with that of external organizations and institutions. For several years, in fact, the Language Centre has used an online placement test to compose Italian L2 classes, but, due to the increasing number of foreign students with previous experience of Italian language study, in recent years the CLA has begun to accept external language certificates to assign class levels and recently also the Online Linguistic Support (OLS) has been added to these external claim certificates. By means of the OLS, the participants in Erasmus+ are asked to assess their skills in the foreign language they will use to study or work abroad. In addition, they may follow an online language course to improve their competence.

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[1] Ivana Fratter e Micol, Altinier, in press, “Il pubblico degli studenti internazionali e le loro abitudini tecnologiche nei CLA: quale offerta formativa di italiano L2 per loro?” *Atti del convegno AICLU* (Bari: University of Bari, 2015).

[2] Ivana Fratter and Luisa Marigo, “Integrated forms of self-assessment and placement testing for Italian L2 aimed at incoming foreign university exchange students at the University of Padua”, Paper presented at the XIV Cercles International Conference, Rende, University of Calabria, September 2016.

The growing number of internationally mobile students who present Italian L2 language certificates on entry has thus led the Language Centre to wonder whether to keep online placement testing as a means of placing students in the relevant classes[3].

In the following paper we will describe the steps of the research project, the tools used, information from a group of students who participated in the experimentation, and, finally, we will provide the results obtained from the research and possible future development of the research.

2. The Research Project

The research was initiated because there is a need to form homogeneous classes without checking-the different types of certificate claims. The main objective of the project was to find instruments for evaluation/self-evaluation and to be sufficiently capable of responding to these requirements. The research questions assessed: 1) if the university student is really able to evaluate their level of language proficiency; 2) if the self-assessment tools have a good degree of accuracy and reliability.

The research is based on a sample of six foreign students (see Tab. 1) with different mother tongues and different levels of linguistic competence. These students had requested to change class after one or two weeks of attendance (see Tab. 1, column 6).

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[3] Ivana Fratter, Luisa Marigo and Luigi Pescina, “L’evoluzione del test di piazzamento per i corsi di Italiano L2 al Centro Linguistico dell’Università di Padova: utilità e criticità delle TIC”, *Critical CALL – Proceedings of the 2015 EUROCALL Conference*, edited by Francesca Helm et al. (Dublin & Ireland: Research-publishing.net, 2015).

Student	Nationality	CLA Test	Other certificates	Level assigned	Level requested for the class change	Class change	Final test
P.J.Z.	Spanish	A1	(B2 OLS)	A2	B1	Yes	80/100
S.E.	Moldavian	No	No	B1	B2	No	66/100
H.L.	Chinese	No	B2	B2	C1	Yes	No
J.R.	Finnish	No	B1	B2	B1/B2	No	81/100
M.R.A.	Spanish	No	A2	A2	B1	Yes	No
S.S.	Latvian	No	B1	B2	B1/B2	No	81/100

Table 15-1. Student sample.

There were two tools used for the self-assessment: 1) the Syllabus of the course at the Language Centre; 2) the European Language Portfolio (ELP): "Self–evaluate your language skills"[4]. The first tool experimented is a synthesis of the larger Syllabus, "Sillabo di italiano per stranieri"[5], used at the Language Center of the University of Padova. This is a document that is divided into three parts: a) functions and communicative tasks, b) grammar, and c) topics and vocabulary.

In the first section, the student finds the main language functions and the communicative requirements that are used at the level indicated. In the second section, there are details indicating all the main elements of the level's grammar. And finally, in the third part, the student can find a short list of the main themes and an indication of the main semantic fields. Students could read the document and check if they knew the topics involved before deciding if they could reproduce the communicative functions of the level they chose. To do so, the student was required to have a significant ability of self-evaluation.

The second tool used is the ELP which offers an online questionnaire in the form of a game consisting of 10/20 questions of self-evaluation to help the student understand their level of linguistic competence. The questions were related to the following skills: listening, reading, oral interaction/production, and writing. This tool was developed by the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML)[6]. It is highly versatile because it is possible to select the language of the questions, and refers to all levels of language competence.

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[4] https://goo.gl/iE1Ed1

[5] Maria Giuseppa Lo Duca, *Sillabo di italiano L2,* (Roma: Carocci, 2006).

[6] European Centre for Modern Languages, "Self-evaluate your language skills", https://goo.gl/wazhPn For more information on the ECML visit http://www.ecml.at

The student can choose their mother tongue[7] or Italian. An example of a test question regarding listening was: "I can understand phrases and the highest vocabulary related to areas of the most personal relevance (i.e. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local area, and employment". There are two possible responses: a) "yes, I can" b) "not yet". The questions are intended to guide the student to determine the level of expertise for each skill. However, these are the only suggestions that the student receives. On the homepage of the ELP website, there is the sentence: "Only you can know what you can do really with the languages". Therefore, the student must have developed the skill of self-assessment.

At the end of the questionnaire, the student receives feedback in a chart (see Fig. 1) in which there are the five skills described above, with the level (from A1 to C2) that the student presumably possesses. The global evaluation of the language level is left to the students who are in a position to define their future learning objectives. The skills involved in self-assessment are highly complex.

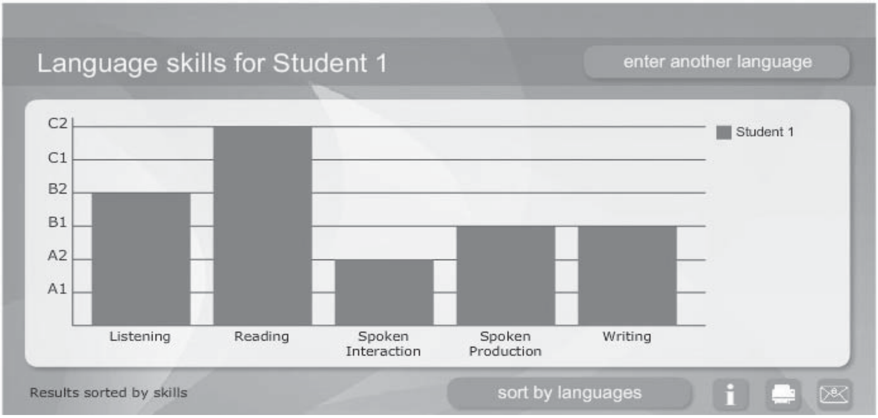
Language skills for Student 1
enter another language
C2
C1
B2
B1
A2
A1
Listening
Reading
Spoken Interaction
Spoken Production
Writing
Student 1
Results sorted by skills
sort by languages

Fig. 15-1. Example of self-evaluation for the English language

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[7] A total of 42 languages are available.

2.1. The phases of the project

The research took place during the first semester of 2015-2016 when the classes were being formed. The project is divided into two phases (see Tab. 2). Phase 1a: the first step is to check the reliability of the instruments of self-assessment (the course Syllabus, the ELP online) and to test the ability of the students to assess themselves. Phase 1b: using a new self-evaluation tool (Guided syllabus), the second step sets out to experiment which of the tools can guide the students more accurately.

Period	Phase	Tools	Students
I semester 2015-2016	**Phase 1a**	a. ELP online b. Course syllabus c. Interview	group 1: 6 requests for change of level
	Phase 1b	New "Guided syllabus" (Experimentation)	group 1 (of which one case study)

Table 15-2. Research phases.

In the first phase, six students were selected. After one or two weeks of class attendance, they requested to change class and to be placed in a higher level class. The students were invited to a meeting with their teachers to receive two self-evaluation tools, the Syllabus and the ELP, to test their interactional skills and to discuss the reasons for the change of class. The interview was recorded and transcribed for subsequent analysis.

First, the students used the online ELP questionnaire. They answered questions on the online tool which provided them with a graph that outlined and rated the 5 skills on the basis of their answers. Then the student and teacher discussed the results, especially focusing on whether they agreed or disagreed with the results of the assessment.

Then the students could review the syllabus of the level of the class and decide if it corresponded with their actual language skills. After analysis of the syllabus, the teachers interviewed the students. The interview was useful as it provided more detailed information on the language biography of the students, (see Tab. 2) as well as obtaining feedback on the two self-assessment tools adopted. During this phase, questions were asked about their previous knowledge of Italian, and about any experiences of Italian courses attended and Italian language certification obtained. The teacher questions were designed to elicit specific language structures in order to ensure the active linguistic competence of the student.

Looking at the table, (see Tab. 1) it is important to note that only one out of the six students (P.J.Z.) had taken the CLA's entrance test, and was subsequently taken as a case study (see Phase 1b). Two other students (J.R. and S.S.) had previously presented certification and had requested a change to the next level. One student (S.E.) hadn't produced any certification, and had chosen the desired level (B1) independently, and two students (H.L. and M.R.A) had presented certification, and had requested to be moved to the corresponding level.

Following the interview, it seemed that, in general, none of the six students had completely recognised themselves in the results of the ELP. The results obtained in some skills were considered to be higher than they had previously attributed to themselves. Frequently, in the ELP questionnaire, students would have difficulties saying whether they had a skill or not by answering "yes/no" so categorically, and for them it wasn't always possible to be so precise.

Once the two tools had been submitted (ELP and the Course Syllabus synthesis of the requested level), the students admitted that they had difficulties choosing a suitable level and expected more advice from the teacher. In two cases (J.R. and S.S.), the students were unable to position themselves accurately in a level, and requested to be placed in a lower level class than they had previously claimed to belong to.

Summing up, of the six students who had requested a different level, three changed class, but only one of these students actually completed the course (see Tab. 1, column 7-8) and was able to pass the final test. The three students who had not changed level took the final test with a rather high test result. Clearly, the interview was important for the students as it enabled them to reflect on their needs and on the skills they wanted to develop the most. Moreover, the interviews reveal that in some cases, students tended to underestimate themselves, an effect heightened by comparing themselves with the other students in their Italian class.

3. The case study

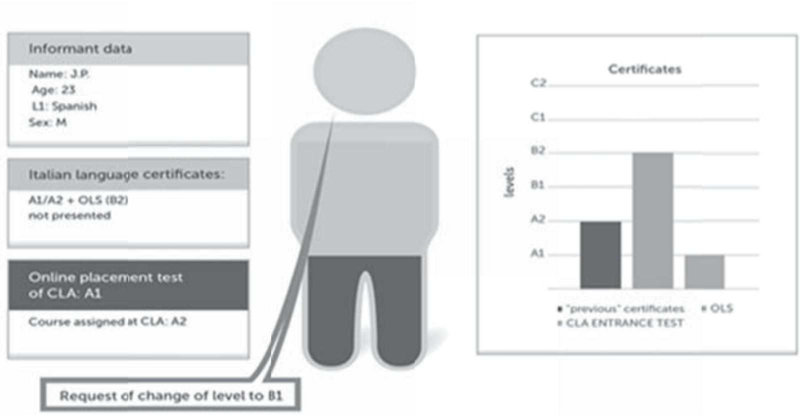
The current research includes a case study concerning a Spanish student, P.J.Z., who took our online placement test without presenting any certification.

Although P.J.Z. was initially assigned an A1 level, reflecting his overall score on the test - it is worth noting that the test is subdivided into oral, written comprehension, grammar in context and written production -

the student's composition revealed a previously acquired level of skill in writing, accompanied by competence in using narrative tenses (see 1).

> (1) [written] *Il mio migliore amico si chiama Néstor, è di Spagna come io. É un raggazzo lungo, capelli biondi, occhi azzurri e usa occhiali. É un raggazzo alegro, un po vergognoso, ma quando gli conoci è molto divertente. Lo conosco da dieci anni quando andiavamo alla scuola. La prima volta que lo ho conosciuto io sono stato nella lezione di inglese quando sua madre ci ha presentato. Nostro rapporto al inizio era compagni di classi, ma dopo ho trovato una buona relacioni con lui.*
>
> *[target structures] Il mio migliore amico si chiama Néstor, è della Spagna come me. É un ragazzo alto, (ha) capelli biondi, occhi azzurri e usa gli occhiali. É un ragazzo allegro, un po' timido/introverso, ma quando lo conosci è molto divertente. Lo conosco da dieci anni, (da) quando andavamo/eravamo a scuola. La prima volta che l'ho conosciuto io ero alla lezione di inglese quando sua madre ci ha presentato. Il nostro rapporto all'inizio era da compagni di classe, ma dopo ho trovato/instaurato una buona relazione con lui.*
>
> [translation]: *My best friend is called Néstor, he is from Spain like me. He's a tall guy, (he has) blonde hair, blue eyes and uses glasses. He is a cheerful boy, a bit shy / introverted, but when you get to know him, he is great fun. I've known him for ten years since we were at school. The first time I met him I was in the English class when his mother introduced us. Initially, we were simply classmates, but later I established a good relationship with him.* (P. J. Z.)

Storytelling using the imperfect and perfect tenses are among the main topics in the Italian A2 courses at the CLA. For this reason and because of the proximity of the student's native language with Italian, we decided to put P.J.Z. in an A2 class. At the beginning, P.J.Z. attended an A2 class, but after two weeks he asked for a change of level to B1. It was only on this occasion that P.J.Z. actually admitted to having previously obtained certificates at the A2 level, and also to have completed the OLS test (see para. 1) in which he had achieved a B2 level (see Fig. 2).



Informant data

Name: J.P.
Age: 23
L1: Spanish
Sex: M

Italian language certificates:

A1/A2 + OLS (B2)
not presented

Online placement test of CLA: A1

Course assigned at CLA: A2

Request of change of level to B1

Fig. 15-2. P.J.Z. profile.

In an attempt to integrate different data (his A2 course attendance certification, the B2 OLS test certificate and his request for level B1), as a first step, we arranged an interview during which we suggested he could try the online ELP (see para. 2) as a self-evaluation tool. He was also asked to read the descriptors of our Syllabus for the B1 level. In his feedback, he admitted to being disorientated by the results of the ELP which did not help him to choose his level since he couldn't match the results in some skills with his real profile. While doing the ELP chose the response "Yes, I can" to the question: "Can you do this, in Italian?" for most of the descriptors concerning listening and reading comprehension. Thus achieving level C1, but he later stated that this was an overestimation of his real skills (see Fig. 3).

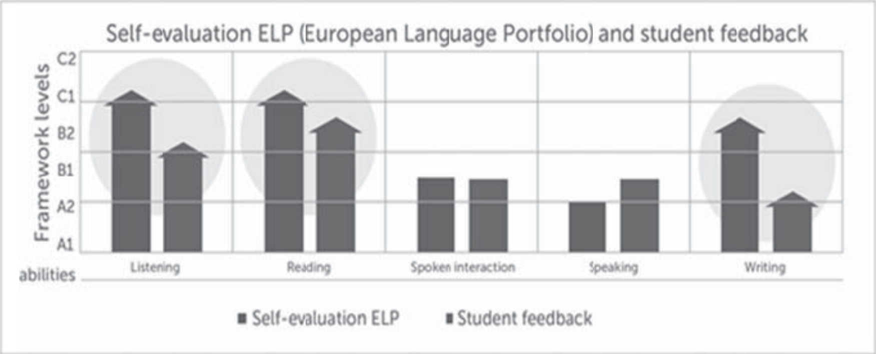


Fig. 15-3. Results of the ELP quiz and P.J.Z. feedback.

Concerning the Syllabus, he felt confused, stating that there were too many descriptors, and also that they were too general.

As a second step, we prepared and gave P.J.Z. a new version of the Syllabus with only a selection of the main descriptors for level A2 (his declared acquired level), supplied with interactive parts like open questions or "filling in the blank" tasks (see Tab. 3, part A).

A. Interview with the teacher: open questions to elicit the target structures of the level	
Elicited structure	**Student answers**
Narration tenses (level A2) (implicit request to use the past tenses) **Input:** parla dei corsi di italiano che hai fatto in Spagna **[**talk about the Italian classes you attended in Spain**]**	(1) "sono tre per una classe tutto il tempo parlando" target structure: "**eravamo** tre in una classe e **parlavamo** continuamente in italiano" (there was three of us in a class and we were talking in Italian all the time) (2) "ho fatto 2 corsi, primo è l'A1 ma è differente perché non posso parlare tante come il corso A2" *target structure*: "**ho fatto** 2 corsi, il primo **era** di livello A1 ma **era** differente perché non **potevo** parlare tanto come nel corso A2" (I attended 2 courses, the first one was an A1 level but it was different because I couldn't speak as much as in the A2 course). Results: he avoids the use of "imperfetto"

Table 15-3, part A. Results of the Guided Syllabus experimented by P.J.Z.

Finally, P.J.Z. experienced the Guided Syllabus exercises to identify the grammar and the communicative functions of the level. In some cases, it was to complete the missing parts of some sentences or short texts (see Tab. 3, part B).

B. Analysis of the A2 Guided Syllabus with the teacher and orientation quiz	
Target structures (I can do)	**Student answers**
I can use the temporal and modal functions of “imperfetto”	(1) “parla con te quando è suonato il mio cellulare” target structure: “**parlava** con te quando **è suonato** il mio cellulare” (he was talking with you when my mobile phone rang) (2) “volevo andare alla piazza, ti va?” target structure: “**volevo**/**vorrei** andare alla piazza, ti **va**?” (I’d like to go to the square, would you like to come?) Results: in (1) he avoids the use of “imperfetto”, in (2) he uses correctly the modal function.
I can use the “passato prossimo” and “imperfetto” in their temporal/past function	(1) “mentre mangiava hanno suonato alla porta” (while he was eating, somebody rang at the door) Result: correct
I can choose the auxiliary and the past participle in the compound tenses	(1) “Maria ha telefonato” (Maria phoned) (2) “Elena e Mario si sono decisi a partire” (Elena and Mario decided to leave) Result: correct
I can make the accordance between the direct personal pronouns and the past participle in the “passato prossimo”	(1) “- dov’è Sandra? - L’ho visto al piano terra-” target structure: “- dov’è Sandra? - **L’**ho vist**a** al piano terra-” (Where’s Sandra? - I saw her downstairs) (2) “-Hai invitato Anne ed Elena? - Sì le ho invitato” target structure: “-Hai invitato Anne ed Elena? - Sì **le** ho invitat**e**” (Did you invite Anne and Elena? - Yes, I invited them) Result: partially correct

Table 15-3: Part B. Results of the Guided Syllabus experimented by P.J.Z.

Thanks to the interview and the guided self-evaluation tools, P.J.Z. confirmed his acquired level A2 evidenced by the A2 certificates he had achieved, showing that he was sufficiently capable to attend the new B1 class. He attended the class successfully, was very active in the classroom and achieved an impressive 81/100 in his final test, demonstrating the usefulness of integrated tools for self-evaluation.

In the written production of the final test, a general improvement in lexical and syntactic ability can be observed. The text clearly revealed a development in the use of narrative tenses with the introduction of past perfect, which is, in fact, part of the B1 level program. From this, it can be concluded that P.J.Z. had put into practice verbal concordance in the past even if this requires further consolidation, as can be seen by the presence of four incorrect verb forms in the imperfect, present perfect and present indicative (see 2).

> (2) [written] La prima volta che ho sentito il italiano avevo quindici anni, in un viaggio di studio a Dublin. Ho conosciuto italiani di tutto il paese, però in quelle momento solo sapeva qualche parola. Quella è stata la mia prima esperienza con il italiano. Come avevo scelto il erasmus a Padova ho deciso cominciare a studiare la lingua prima di partire. Così ci ho cominciato queste estate e dopo in queste corso.
> Per me ha stato veramente difficile il inizio perché non avevo finito di fare gli esami di estate e lo dimenticava tutto. Quindi, quando sono arrivato a Padova ho trovato un sacco di amici che mi aiutano, soprattutto erasmus da mia università che conoscono il spagnolo. È vero che la lingua italiana per un spagnolo è più facile che altre come l'inglese oppure il francese. E anche per gli catalane è più facile capirlo.
>
> [target structures] *La prima volta che ho sentito l'italiano avevo quindici anni ed ero in un viaggio di studio a Dublino. Ho conosciuto italiani di tutto il paese (da tutta l'Italia?), però in quel momento sapevo solo qualche parola. Quella è stata la mia prima esperienza con l'italiano.*
> *Siccome avevo scelto l'Erasmus a Padova ho deciso di cominciare a studiare la lingua prima di partire. Così l'ho cominciata/ho cominciato lì (in Spagna) quest'estate e dopo (ho continuato) in questo corso.*
> *Per me è stato veramente difficile l'inizio perché non avevo finito di fare gli esami della sessione estiva e lo avevo dimenticato (del) tutto. Quindi, quando sono arrivato a Padova ho trovato un sacco di amici*

> *che mi hanno aiutato, soprattutto Erasmus dalla mia università che conoscono lo spagnolo. È vero che la lingua italiana per un spagnolo è più facile di altre come l'inglese oppure il francese. E anche per i catalani è più facile capirlo.*
>
> [translation]: *The first time I heard the Italian I was fifteen and I was on a study trip to Dublin. I met Italians from all over Italy, but at that time I only knew a few words. That was my first experience with Italian. Since I had chosen the Erasmus in Padova I decided to begin studying the language before leaving. So I started there (in Spain) this summer and then (I continued) in this course. For me it was really hard to start because I had not completed the summer session exams and I had forgotten everything. So, when I arrived in Padua I found a lot of friends who helped me, especially Erasmus students from my university who know Spanish. It is true that the Italian language for the Spanish is easier than others like English or French. And even for the Catalans, it is easier to understand] (P. J. Z.).*

Observation of the student's outcomes in the interview compared with those of the Guided Syllabus could lead to further research. When communicating with the teacher, the student showed that he had not acquired certain automatic structures because he did not use them or he might have used other structures. He adopted compensation strategies, for example, using a spatial indicator with a time function to refer to his past experience of an Italian course he attended in Spain the previous year: "Alla Spagna siamo tre per una classe tutto il tempo parlando" [translation: *To* Spain we are three to a class speaking all the time]. However, during the activities with the Guided Syllabus, he showed his explicit competence, by applying the language rules correctly.

3.1. Case study findings

To sum up, through the two different self-assessment tools P.J.Z. became more aware of his competence and of the objectives he wanted to reach in the near and distant future, fostering his own autonomy as he shows in his final decision to attend the B1 class. On the one hand, the tools contributed towards improving his linguistic awareness and, as a matter of fact, self-assessment can enable learners to see gaps in their learning and help them make linguistic decisions. On the other hand, in agreement with Engelhardt and Pfingsthorn: "it is up to the teacher to engage learners in the right type of activities that train and support the development of self-assessment skills”[8].

Our findings are that learners and teachers should consider assessment as a shared commitment. As regards the teacher, the validity and accuracy of self-assessment increases when self-assessment tools are designed on functional skills, in the form of what “I can do” descriptors. However, even though the CEFR descriptors provide good examples they need to be integrated with more concrete examples describing functional skills which facilitate the tasks of self-assessment, especially with learners who display low levels of competence. Looking to the learner, the validity and accuracy of self-assessment can be developed to the extent that learners' proficiency and experience of self-evaluation increases. In this case, advanced learners obtain better outcomes not only on traditional assessment but also on self-assessment performance. In addition, the more experience learners have in the self-assessment process, the more it influences their accuracy. To all intents and purposes, self-assessment should be viewed as an additional ability that can be reinforced through training and guidance. Nonetheless, the application of self-assessment as a tool in diagnostic contexts still appears to be largely unexplored and controversial[9]. Therefore, relying only on self-assessment would probably lead to validity problems, because we can’t prove if learners are able to measure their own abilities in accordance with the outcomes of traditional assessment. On the other hand, according to the results of our survey, it is clear that self-assessment may have a diagnostic function when combined with training or guidance.

Our study on self-assessment should also lead to enhancing the synergy between teaching and testing. Future research could examine the long-term effects of using self-assessment as a placement tool in our classes. A concrete proposal for the short-term future is the creation of the Guided Syllabus extended to all six CEFR levels (A1-C2), integrated possibly with interviews with the teacher on request.

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[8] Maike Engelhardt and Joanna Pfingsthorn, “Self-assessment and placement tests – a worthwhile combination?”, *Language Learning in Higher Education*, 2.1, (2013): 77, accessed December 21, 2016. https://goo.gl/SaiqO7

[9] Maike Engelhardt and Joanna Pfingsthorn, “Self-assessment and placement tests – a worthwhile combination?”, *Language Learning in Higher Education* 2.1, (2013), https://goo.gl/SaiqO7

4. Conclusions

Referring to the research questions assessed: 1) to examine if the university student is really able to evaluate their level of language proficiency; 2) to investigate if the self-assessment tools have a good degree of accuracy and reliability, the answer to the first one is that self-evaluation is critical since the student cannot match his/her profile with the results of the ELP and he/she cannot interpret the Syllabus.

The results of our research, which are in line with other studies in the field[10], show that, in general, these students do not possess good self-assessment skills, and often tend to overestimate their capabilities. Furthermore, they are unsure of their ability to determine their level of language competence and prefer to receive some form of external evaluation via a test, as well as to receive suggestions from the teacher.

Admittedly, the skill of self-evaluation is a quite complex competence. According to Mariani, self-evaluation means “to fulfill a metacognitive process: this means ‘to go beyond’ (meta), to keep at a distance from, to be objective towards your experience, your life, and look at it as if it wasn’t yours. This process is both cognitive and affective, because if you see yourself from the outside, you can call into question your self-centred subjective perception that you usually possess about yourself”[11]. In general, the skill of self-evaluation is a competence that can be enhanced through training as Ross claims: “The strengths of self-assessment can be enhanced through specific student training and each of the weaknesses of the approach (including inflation of grades) can be reduced through teacher action”[12].

In answer to question 2, the tools used in the first step of the research (ELP and Syllabus) are too general and still somewhat too rigid in terms of keeping within the guidelines of the “what I can do” model, requiring both a guide as well as concrete examples. According to Engelhardt and

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[10] Franca Poppi and Sara Radighieri, “The Role of ELP and self-assessment in Effective Language Learning”, *Il Portfolio Europeo delle Lingue nell’Università italiana: studenti e autonomia,* edited by Federica Gori (Trieste: EUT, 2009).

[11] Luciano Mariani, “Il portfolio delle Lingue a scuola: tra sfide e criticità”, *Il Portfolio Europeo delle Lingue nell’Università italiana: studenti e autonomia,* edited by Federica Gori (Trieste: EUT, 2009): 21.

[12] John Ross, *“The Reliability, Validity, and Utility of Self-Assessment”, Practical Assessment Research & Evaluation* 11.1 (2006): 77.

Pfingsthorn “More concrete items describing functional skills are likely to facilitate the task of self-assessment”[13].

In conclusion, this research may lead to a perspective of integrated self-assessment: a guided syllabus that can contain not only competence level descriptors, but also concrete examples that can help learners in the critical steps of self-assessment.

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Engelhardt, M., Pfingsthorn, J. 2013. Self-assessment and placement tests – a worthwhile combination? *Language Learning in Higher Education*, 2(1), 75–89. Retrieved from journal. URL: https://goo.gl/SaiqO7

Fratter, Ivana, Marigo, Luisa, Pescina, Luigi. 2015. L’evoluzione del test di piazzamento per i corsi di Italiano L2 al Centro Linguistico dell’Università di Padova: utilità e criticità delle TIC. In Francesca Helm, Linda Bradley, Marta Guarda, Sylvie Thouësny (eds.), *Critical CALL* – Proceedings of the 2015 EUROCALL Conference. 181-185. Dublin & Ireland: Research-publishing.net.

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Poppi, Franca, Radighieri, Sara. 2009. *The Role of ELP and self-assessment in Effective Language Learning.* In Federica Gori (eds.). *Il Portfolio Europeo delle Lingue nell’Università italiana: studenti e autonomia*, EUT: Trieste, 83-108.

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[13] Maike Engelhardt and Joanna Pfingsthorn, “Self-assessment and placement tests – a worthwhile combination?”, *Language Learning in Higher Education* 2.1, (2013): 77, https://goo.gl/SaiqO7

Ross, John A. 2006. *The Reliability, Validity, and Utility of Self-Assessment*. “Practical Assessment Research & Evaluation”. Vol 11, 1: 1-13.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

ASSESSMENT AND CERTIFICATION OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING THROUGH RUBRICS: A METHODOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

DAVIDE CAPPERUCCI

1. Introduction

Teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) in Primary and Secondary School is an important aspect which, in recent decades, has involved many EU countries[1]. Parallel to the development of European and national policies on foreign language learning and teaching, the pedagogical reflection on these themes has devoted increasing attention to Curriculum issues, as well as how to assess and certify foreign language learning effectively[2]. This requires upstream a specific expertise in teachers in the area of assessment, which must be treated carefully and with methodological rigour.

This paper focuses specifically on EFL–teacher development in Assessment and Certification competencies, which is considered as an essential aspect of teacher's professionalism[3].

After outlining a theoretical framework for Authentic Assessment, according to the international literature[4], the present paper addresses a methodological certification of achievement model, with particular reference to how this matter is dealt with in the Italian School System, although most of the reflections and methodological proposals that are here presented may be valid for any school system.

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[1] Marilyn Cochran-Smith and Kenneth M. Zeichner, eds., *Studying teacher education: The report of the AERA panel on research and teacher education* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2010).

[2] Jack C. Richards and Theodore S. Rodgers, *Approaches and methods in language teaching* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

[3] Michael Grenfell, Michael Kelly and Diana Jones, *The European Language Teacher: Recent Trends and Future Developments in Teacher Education* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2003); Adrienne L. Herrell and Michael L. Jordan, *50 strategies for teaching English language learners* (Boston, MA: Pearson, 2015).

2. From competence development to assessment

One common characteristic to the latest education system reforms in the majority of European countries is the attempt to redefine the purpose of education in the perspective of competence. The initial input that led to the passage from "fundamental knowledge” to the development of disciplinary and citizenship key competences was introduced, firstly, with the Lisbon Strategy of 2000 and more recently with the Europe 2020 strategy[5]. Both of these measures recognize the centrality of the "competence construct” as an element of innovation in education which can combat school dropout, and develop higher levels of competitiveness, employability and social inclusion within the member countries. This 'turn' from knowledge to competences marks a very delicate transition for the school system, since it sets new purposes for Education moving from the knowledge that all must firmly possess to the capacity to apply knowledge and skills acquired to solve problems in known and unknown situations. Competences were a sort "tsunami 'skills'", at least for Italy, given the 'disruptive' way they entered the school system, without adequate teacher preparation to deal with such a radical change.

From the instructional design point of view, competences require the rewriting of established practices which have focused on content transmission. In terms of the learning assessment, the change appears even greater, putting new questions about the methodologies and tools to be used in the assessment of results and the certification of achievement.

The attention that competences have today has developed over time as to offer a more complete definition of what was initially provided by Behaviourist theories. In the case of Behaviourism, competence is associated with the concept of performance. Based on the paradigm of technical rationality, competence is simplified into a series of performances empirically observable and measurable, whose sum demonstrates the mastery level achieved by the subject. Subsequently, thanks to the

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[4] Margaret E. Gredler, *Classroom Assessment and Learning* (Reading, MA: Longman, 1999).

[5] Fernando Hervás Soriano and Fulvio Mulatero, “Knowledge policy in the EU: From the Lisbon strategy to Europe 2020,” *Journal of the Knowledge Economy* 1, no. 4 (2010), 289–302.

contribution of Cognitivist and Constructivist learning theories, reflection about competences has shifted towards less reductionist approaches which considered the totality of the person and the intersection of multiple planes such as the cognitive, socio-emotional, and relational domains[6].

Even Perrenoud[7] claims that competence is something more than just a pattern of action, something which cannot be reduced to the simple repetition of previously acquired patterns, indeed it orchestrates a set of different components. A pattern consists in the underlying action or the single operation, while a competence implements schemes of perception, thinking, evaluation and action, which underlie inferences, anticipations, transpositions, generalizations, the estimation of the probability, the start of a diagnostic search from a set of clues, the search for information of a different nature, the construction of a decision etc.

To evaluate such a rich and multifaceted form of learning we should also rethink the assessment methods and tools (e.g., the traditional ones), designed to assess knowledge. Indeed, not always do they seem to be reliable and adequate to detect situated behaviours that go beyond the memory of notional information. Hence, the need to develop new theoretical and epistemological models of assessment, based on the evidence of empirical research, can also contribute to the development of new interpretive criteria and tools to be used in teaching.

3. Theoretical framework: authentic assessment and certification of achievement

The theoretical model that inspired this research is authentic assessment, which, as written by McClelland[8], Glaser and Resnick[9], aims to develop multidimensional methods of assessment which are able to overcome the rigidity that, sometimes, is attributed to assessment through testing. In this case, the task of assessment is not so much to measure learning, but to provide information on the processes that generate learning and how the knowledge acquired is put into practice through effective behaviours transferable both inside and outside the school. Authentic assessment focuses on how the student builds up personal learning by actively operating in different situations, rather than on limiting assessment to the standardisation of results. In this sense, it can promote, even in the school context, a new way of thinking about assessment by referring to direct forms of performance assessment: authentic assessment does not assume any predictive or projective function, but evaluates the action produced directly in the field for what it is, therefore, learning is seen as a product of contextualised knowledge, transferable in similar situations of use (*near transfer*)[10]. In this sense, authentic assessment is perceived as a form of assessment *for* learning[11].

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[6] Michele Pellerey, *Le competenze. Il ruolo delle competenze nei processi educativi scolastici e formativi* (Napoli: Tecnodid, 2010).

[7] Philippe Perrenoud, *Dix nouvelles compétences pour enseigner* (Paris: ESF éditeur, 1999); Philippe Perrenoud, *Développer la pratique réflexive dans le métier d'enseignant: professionnalisation et raison pédagogique* (Paris: ESF éditeur, 2010).

[8] David C. McClelland, "The knowledge testing-educational complex strikes back," *American Psychologist* 49, no. 1 (1994), 66–69.

[9] Robert Glaser and Lauren B. Resnick, eds. *Knowing, learning and instruction: Essays in honor of Robert Glaser* (Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, 1989).

According to this theoretical perspective[12], authentic assessment: 1. is based on real tasks and not on evidence which has a predictive value; 2. requires judgment and innovation, as it leads to the solution of problems that may have more than one right answer or multiple solutions; 3. asks the student to participate in the construction of knowledge, identifying, recognizing and processing the main structures of the school-subjects; 4. requires the effective use of a *repertoire* of knowledge and functional skills to deal with complex tasks; not just to show the amount and extent of knowledge, skills and competences acquired, but to highlight the plasticity, integration, connectivity of different kinds of knowledge among them and the surrounding reality; 5. gives the opportunity to select, repeat, test patterns of action, check resources, get feedback and improve performance by increasing levels of *mastery* (performance-feedback-revision-performance).

Hart[13] adds that the performance provided by the subject is authentic when it is connected to challenging tasks, applied to real contexts of action in which the pupil can interact. The "authentic tasks" stimulate the child's internal (cognitive and non-cognitive) skill development as well as validate the knowledge acquired at school or elsewhere. To solve a task in real settings pupils do not need all the knowledge related to the problem to be addressed, since much of that knowledge is acquired through the manipulation of the problem-situation, the use of available tools and the explorations made by the student. All this highlights the subject's ability to activate investigative processes in which (s)he is required to structure problem-solving and build itineraries (thanks to the teacher's guidance), through which to verify (or not) knowledge and know-how effectiveness.

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[10] Blaine R. Worthen, Walter R. Borg and Karl White, *Measurement and evaluation in the schools* (Reading, MA: Longman Publishing Group, 1993).

[11] Clinton I. Chase, *Contemporary Assessment for Educators* (Reading, MA: Longman, 1999).

[12] Richard J. Stiggins, *Student-centred classroom assessment* (New York: Macmillan, 1994); Grant P. Wiggins, *Assessing student performance: Exploring the purpose and limits of testing* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1993).

[13] Diane Hart, *Authentic assessment. A Handbook for Educators* (Menlo Park, CA: Addison-Wesley, 1994).

Authentic assessment aims to provide feedback on products and processes of learning. In this way it allows information related to the capacity of critical thinking, problem-solving, metacognition, working efficiency and reasoning to be collected[14]. To do this, "authentic tasks" or "real tasks" are used. An authentic task requires the use of internal capabilities and knowledge, skills and competences that students have learned at school or in other non-formal/informal educational contexts. Authentic assessment is, therefore, founded on the belief that academic achievement is reached by the accumulation of knowledge, rather, it is based on the ability to generalize, to model, to identify relationships, and to transfer acquired knowledge in real contexts. Thus, assessment and certification of achievement are closely related to highlighting how students' knowledge has generated competences that can be used effectively in multiple contexts and learning situations[15].

In an article published in the *Educational Leadership* Journal, Newmann and Wehlage[16] underline the importance of authentic tasks used both for teaching and for assessment. These tasks must be used in a coherent and effective manner and should be understood as both learning activities and tools which can guarantee the competences acquired by the pupil. Hence, they claim that a task is authentic and increases pupils' learning if it meets three conditions: 1. allows the construction of new meanings and the expansion of knowledge; 2. uses a heuristic approach which aims to implement pupil's learning; 3. points to the development of intellectual and operational products that have value and meaning beyond academic success.

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[14] Robert E. Blum and Arter Judith A., eds., *A handbook for student performance assessment in an era of restructuring* (Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1996).

[15] Linda Darling-Hammond, "Performance assessment and educational equity," *Harvard Educational Review* 64, no. 1 (1994), 5–31.

[16] Fred M. Newmann and Gary G. Wehlage, "Five standards of authentic instruction," *Educational leadership* 50, no. 7 (1993), 8–12.

Hipps[17], Reckase[18], Sackett, Borneman and Connelly[19] address the question of the significance of authentic assessment by linking the latter also to psychometric issues. On this front, the underlying assumptions of Classical Assessment Theory are based on the criteria of validity, reliability and objectivity of the evaluation. The above-mentioned authors argue that, in the case of authentic assessment, these criteria are difficult to apply and it is, therefore, necessary to rethink them, replacing them with others, such as the significance of the accrued learning, context and effectiveness of behaviour, transferability, adaptability, "*transformativity*", competence mastery of the degree of skills, and cognitive complexity.

In accordance with the epistemological and methodological issues mentioned above, the research question of this study, therefore, is how to develop methodological models that can support English teachers in the certification of achievement acquired by learners, so that they can be recognised in subsequent grades of schooling and in the world of professions.

4. Research context, design and methodology: the ARCA Model

Recently, the Italian Ministry of Education has developed a national experimental document of certification of achievement which is to be gradually extended to all primary and lower secondary schools[20]. The ministerial act states that the certificate of achievement is to be issued by the school at the end of the fifth grade of primary school and at the end of the third grade of lower secondary school. It is delivered to the student's family as well as to the subsequent chosen level of schooling or vocational training centre. In this way, the act wants to underline the ongoing process and the single-nature of the first cycle of education, and assign to the certification of achievement the function to (1) promote continuity between different levels of schooling and the vertical nature of the curriculum, and (2) support students' efforts towards the attainment of school or vocational qualifications.

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[17] Jerome A. Hipps, "Trustworthiness and Authenticity: Alternate Ways to Judge Authentic Assessments," Paper presented at the *Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association*, Atlanta, GA, April 12-16, 1993.

[18] Mark D. Reckase, "Statistical Test Specifications for Performance Assessments: Is This an Oxymoron?," Paper presented at the *Annual Meeting of the National Council on Measurement in Education*, Chicago, IL, March 25-27, 1997.

[19] Paul R. Sackett, Matthew J. Borneman and Brian S. Connelly, "High stakes testing in education and employment: Evaluating common criticisms regarding validity and fairness," *American Psychologist* 63, no. 4 (2008), 215–227.

[20] See Act no. 3, February, 13, 2015.

The achievement to be certified are those described in the student profile of the national core curriculum[21]. The *student profile (SP)* describes, in a basic manner general competences related to all subjects taught as well as those linked to citizenship education. These are competences that a pupil should possess at the end of the first cycle of education, which in the Italian school system ends with the lower secondary school (at age 14). The Ministry of Education Act no. 3/2015 related to the certification of achievement provides an overview of the student profile competences at the end of primary school, thus highlighting the extent to which those competences have to be developed in an eight-year period of education (*Table 1*).

Type of school	***Student profile* competence indicators**
Primary School	The pupil is able to express him/herself in English at an elementary level and to communicate in an essential way in simple everyday situations.
Lower Secondary School	Meeting people of different nationalities, the pupil is able to express him/herself in English at an elementary level and to communicate in an essential way in simple everyday situations, using a second European language. He/She uses English to work with Information and Communication Technologies (ICT).

Table 16-1: Student profile competence indicators related to EFL teaching.

Each competence indicator in the student profile must be certified using a scale articulated in 4 levels of mastery (*A*-Excellent; *B*-Intermediate; *C*-Elementary; *D*-Pre-Elementary). For each of these levels, there is a general description of the expected performances.

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[21] MIUR, "Indicazioni Nazionali per il curricolo della scuola dell'infanzia e del primo ciclo," *Annali dell'Istruzione* (Rome, IT: Le Monnier, 2012).

The *student profile* indicators are very broad. They are general references that cover quite a broad range of knowledge. The indicators referring to the English for example succinctly sum up all the different competences that a pupil should possess at the end of Primary and Lower Secondary Schools. The global assessment of these competences demands close attention to the performance that pupils are able to implement in the various sub-competences (or skills) which constitute broader language competences in English. Therefore, it is very important to design the teaching process keeping in mind the specific competence of the English language competences to be developed. In line with the structure of the *National Guidelines*[22], the EFL competences to be pursued are represented by the *Outcomes for Competence Development* (*OCD)*.

The *Outcomes for Competence Development*, which are prescriptive and common to all private and state schools within the Italian education system, are provided for the end of the fifth grade of primary school and the third grade of lower secondary school. These OCD constitute constant references for teachers, in so far as they indicate cultural and educational paths to be followed and help to give direction to the instructional action undertaken to enable pupils' integral development. In the first cycle of schooling (Primary and Lower Secondary Schools), the *Outcomes* represent criteria for assessing the expected competences and schools must work to ensure that every pupil can achieve them, to guarantee the unity of the national system and the quality of service. They correspond to the A1 level of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR) *(Table 2)*.

The pupil comprehends oral and written messages related to familiar areas.
The pupil describes orally and in written form aspects of life, the context where he lives, matters related to immediate needs.
The pupil plays an active role in group games, communicates in an understandable way, even using pre-structured phrases and sentences, in simple and routine information exchanges.
The pupil performs tasks following the instructions given by the teacher in a foreign language, makes requests and asks for explanations.
The pupil identifies some cultural elements and understands relationships between linguistic forms and foreign language uses.

Table 16-2: Outcomes for competence development at the end of primary school.

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[22] *Ibid.*

The most critical aspect that schools face in applying the national certification document is in clarifying the extent to which the competences promoted by all curriculum subjects *(OCD)* contribute to the achievement of the student competence profile *(SP)*. The ARCA Model was created to respond to this need as identified by schools.

From the methodological point of view, an action-research project was started and was carried out by researchers and EFL teachers. The ARCA Model was designed and tested by the University of Florence together with a sample of 25 Tuscan schools involved in the pilot project funded by the Regional School Office. In this pilot project, 25 teachers were involved as group-coordinators, as well as 275 EFL teachers. A total of 26 action-research groups were set up with the aim of building appropriate assessment rubrics for all the EFL competences of the national core curriculum.

The action-research work was articulated in four stages: 1. joint-work between university researchers and 25 group-coordinators to design a methodological model capable of supporting EFL teachers' activities aimed at the certification of achievement; 2. meetings with teachers to familiarize them with the model developed; 3. revision of the final preliminary version of the model taking teachers' recommendations into consideration; 4. experimentation of the final model through the construction of rubrics.

Assessment rubrics were used as instruments to accompany teachers towards the certification of achievement, since thanks to these it is possible to describe appropriate mastery levels to be certified. As indicated by several authors[23], rather than attribute a score or a final mark, the function of the rubrics is to describe through specific indicators and descriptors of competence what students are able to do in performance tasks. Goodrich[24] defines rubrics as a measuring tool that lists the criteria to analyse the work in its most significant aspects, it expresses clearly the quality levels for each criterion considered useful, starting from the minimum accepted levels. In our case we, used “analytic rubrics”[25]. The following steps were considered for their construction:

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[23] Charlotte Danielson and Pia Hansen, *A collection of performance tasks and rubrics* (Larchmont, NY: Eye on Education, 1999); Jay McTighe and Grant Wiggins, *Understanding by design. Professional development workbook* (Alexandria, VA: ASCD Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2004).

[24] Heidi Goodrich, "Understanding rubrics," *Educational Leadership* 54 no. 4 (1996), 14–17.

Phase 1. Selection of a competence belonging to one of the curriculum subjects for the first cycle (referred to the primary school or secondary school level);

Phase 2. Description of the competence selected in components or sub-competences or indicators (necessary for complex competences, referred to as "molecular", as opposed to 'atomic' competences which constitute those with a single competence);

Phase 3. Construction of an assessment rubric for each of the components or sub-competences or indicators related to the selected competence (the mastery descriptors related to each component are necessary because a pupil can develop said components or sub-competences or indicators based on different degrees of proficiency);

Phase 4. Matching of each mastery descriptor to the corresponding certification level. In this case, we applied the 4 levels of certification provided by the national document (*A*-Excellent; *B*-Intermediate; *C*-Elementary; *D*-Pre-Elementary).

Here is an example of an EFL assessment rubric designed using the ARCA Model.

EFL competence		
The pupil describes orally and in written form aspects of life, the context where he lives, matters related to immediate needs.		
Competence levels	**Mastery descriptors**	**Certification Levels**
Level 1	With the help of teachers, he/she uses and writes single words or very short pre-structured phases and sentences concerning himself and his family. With the help of images and flashcards, he describes where he lives, his school and the people with whom (s)he is more familiar.	***D* – Pre-Elementary** With the help of teachers, the pupil is able to solve simple tasks in familiar situations.

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[25] Deborah Allen and Kimberly Tanner, “Rubrics: tools for making learning goals and evaluation criteria explicit for both teachers and learners,” *CBE-Life Sciences Education* 5, no. 3 (2006), 197–203.

Level 2	(S)He uses and writes simple phases and sentences concerning one's self, family, other people and home. (S)He integrates different sources of information to describe everyday actions and situations. (S)He is able to imagine, write and talk about things not yet experienced, using sentences with a simple syntactic and lexical structure (subject, verb, object).	***C – Elementary*** The pupil is able to solve simple problems in new situations. (S)He demonstrates that (s)he has acquired fundamental knowledge and skills. (S)He is able to apply basic rules and procedures.
Level 3	(S)He can use and write a series of phases and sentences to describe one's self, family, other people and the context where (s)he lives. (S)He integrates different sources of information and media used at home or at school. (S)He is able to imagine, write and talk about things not yet experienced, using sentences with a simple syntactic and lexical structure. When (s)he talks about familiar things (s)he is aware of what (s)he says.	***B – Intermediate*** The pupil is able to solve tasks and problems in new situations. (S)He is aware of the decisions to be taken. (S)He is able to use knowledge and skills.
Level 4	(S)He can use and write a series of phases and sentences to describe one's self, family, other people and the context where (s)he lives. (S)He integrates different sources of information and media used	***A – Advanced*** The pupil is able to solve complex tasks and problems. (S)He demonstrates an appropriated use of knowledge and skills. (S)He exposes and justifies

	at home or at school. (S)He is able to imagine, write and talk about things not yet experienced, using sentences with a simple syntactic and lexical structure. When (s)he talks about familiar things (s)he is aware of what (s)he says, (s)he is able to communicate immediate needs and what (s)he likes or dislikes.	his opinions and is responsible and aware when making decisions.

Table 16-3. Example of an assessment rubric according to the ARCA model

5. Results

The most significant result of the present action-research is the ARCA Model aimed at the certification of school achievement. The strength of this research experience may be read both in terms of process and product. As regards the research process, it has emphasised the importance of the participatory approach adopted thanks to the direct involvement of EFL teachers. With reference to the product, it has led to the construction of specific descriptors, articulated on 4 levels of mastery, which are able to describe the quality of students' performances in EFL. In coherence with the research methodology adopted in the design phase, rubrics were used because of the suitability of these instruments to describe different levels of mastery.

The action-research has led to the identification of some guidelines for the certification of EFL achievement. Specific procedural criteria have been defined to support teachers' work: 1. linking the EFL competence indicators of the student profile and the EFL competences developed by the national curriculum; 2. articulation of the selected EFL competences in specific components (or sub-competences, or indicators); 3. description of the EFL competences (or their components) throughout the 4 mastery levels thanks to the construction of rubrics; 4. matching each mastery level descriptor to the corresponding certification level (stated by the Ministry). This methodology has led to the description of all the EFL competences provided by the national core curriculum and has promoted, among the teachers in the sample, a more conscious and transparent use of the certification of achievement.

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