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Diverse voices, dynamic classrooms: Exploring changing demographics, pedagogical shifts, and training perspectives in Maltese multilingual primary classrooms.

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ABSTRACT

EN Malta is a small island in the Mediterranean Sea with a history of foreign occupation and British colonisation. Although bilingualism is a quintessential feature of being Maltese, recent, rapid, and unprecedented demographic shifts are altering the country's linguistic landscape from a bilingual to a multilingual one. This situation is mirrored in Maltese schools, with classrooms becoming more linguistically and culturally diverse. This paper explores how 145 Maltese primary school educators perceive and approach teaching students with diverse language and cultural backgrounds by examining their attitudes toward employing flexible language strategies, such as code-switching. The results of this research highlight the evolving dynamics of language use in Malta and the resulting impact on its educational system. This requires the reassessment of professional development initiatives in light of the current migration patterns. The aim of this study is to ultimately develop guidance and customize practical training and consultation sessions focused on culturally and linguistically responsive teaching.

Key words: MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION, MULTILINGUAL TEACHING PRACTICES, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, FLUID LANGUAGE PRACTICES

ES Malta es una pequeña isla en el Mediterráneo con una historia de ocupación extranjera y colonización británica. El bilingüismo es una característica esencial de la identidad maltesa; sin embargo, los recientes y rápidos cambios demográficos están transformando el panorama lingüístico del país, pasando de ser bilingüe a multilingüe. Esta situación se refleja en las escuelas maltesas, donde las aulas son cada vez más diversas desde el punto de vista lingüístico y cultural. Este artículo explora cómo 145 docentes de educación primaria en Malta perciben y abordan la enseñanza a estudiantes con diversos antecedentes lingüísticos y culturales, analizando sus actitudes hacia el uso de estrategias lingüísticas flexibles, como el cambio de código. Los resultados de esta investigación arrojan luz sobre la dinámica evolutiva del uso del lenguaje en Malta y el impacto resultante en su sistema educativo. Esto exige una revisión de las iniciativas de desarrollo profesional a la luz de los patrones migratorios actuales. El objetivo de este estudio es, en última instancia, desarrollar orientación y sesiones de formación práctica y consulta personalizadas, centradas en una enseñanza cultural y lingüísticamente receptiva.

Palabras clave: EDUCACIÓN MULTILINGÜE, PRÁCTICAS DE ENSEÑANZA MULTILINGÜES, DESARROLLO PROFESIONAL, PRÁCTICAS LINGÜÍSTICAS FLUIDAS

IT Malta è una piccola isola nel Mediterraneo con una storia di occupazioni straniere e colonizzazione britannica. Il bilinguismo è un elemento essenziale dell'identità maltese; tuttavia, recenti e rapidi cambiamenti demografici stanno trasformando il panorama linguistico del paese da bilingue a multilingue. Questa situazione si riflette anche nelle scuole maltesi, dove le classi stanno diventando sempre più linguisticamente e culturalmente diversificate. Questo articolo esplora come 145 educatori della scuola primaria maltese percepiscono e affrontano l'insegnamento a studenti con diversi background linguistici e culturali, esaminando i loro atteggiamenti verso l'uso di strategie linguistiche flessibili, come il code-switching. I risultati di questa ricerca evidenziano le dinamiche in evoluzione dell'uso linguistico a Malta e il conseguente impatto sul sistema educativo. Questa situazione richiede una rivalutazione delle iniziative di sviluppo professionale alla luce dei modelli migratori attuali. L'obiettivo di questo studio è infine sviluppare linee guida e sessioni di formazione pratica e consulenza su misura, incentrate su un insegnamento culturalmente e linguisticamente responsivo.

Parole chiave: EDUCAZIONE MULTILINGUE, PRATICHE DIDATTICHE MULTILINGUI, FORMAZIONE DOCENTI, PRATICHE LINGUISTICHE FLUIDE

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1. Introduction

The past few decades have seen a significant global increase in human mobility and migration flows, leading to widespread linguistic and cultural diversity across Europe and beyond. This has resulted in the prevalence of multilingual classrooms, with students speaking a variety of native languages, and some not using the school's language(s) of instruction within their home environments (Dockrell, Papadopoulos, Mifsud et al., 2023; Duarte & Günther-van der Meijb, 2022; Van Laere, Rosiers, Van Avermaet et al., 2017). Migrant children are among the most vulnerable in society, making their protection and support a critical humanitarian and policy issue in many European countries. These students often face the challenge of learning and being evaluated in the official language(s) of education, which can lead to them underachieving when compared to their native-born peers (Eurydice, 2019). Additionally, children who lack support for their native language in educational settings often experience social and academic disadvantages (OECD, 2012). In today's educational landscape, it is imperative for educators to receive proper training to leverage the advantages of multilingualism and multiculturalism (Duarte & Günther-van der Meijb, 2022). This training should be designed in ways that equip educators to meet the diverse needs of all students and to support the development of children's cultural identities and linguistic heritage while preparing them for a globalised world. This can be accomplished through teaching methods that incorporate flexible language strategies like code-switching and translanguaging (García, Johnson, Seltzer & Valdés, 2017), programs that emphasise the global value of English (Cenoz, 2019), and initiatives that support the preservation of the host country's language(s) (Panzavecchia & Little, 2019, 2020). Creating effective and equitable learning environments is crucial for the success of these children and requires pedagogical approaches that are responsive to the local multilingual context. A pivotal starting point for understanding education in these settings is to examine the perspectives and practices of educators themselves (Dockrell et al., 2023; Michala, Manoli, Lavidas & Koustourakis, 2024; Wagner, 2021).

This paper is a follow-up to a doctoral study focusing on bilingual Maltese teachers' identities and the ways in which their backgrounds impact their perceptions and pedagogical practices (See Panzavecchia, 2020). The present research is a continuation of the original study, with a much larger sample size and additional insights related to teaching within multilingual environments. The first original qualitative study focused on the views of nine Maltese teachers in relation to their bilingual identities and their experiences related to bilingual and multilingual classrooms. This follow-up study was deemed necessary due to the rapidly occurring demographic changes on the island of Malta and its experience of the global trend of linguistic diversity, within the context of its unique bilingual situation which forms part of its historical legacy. It explores teaching within multilingual classrooms due to the island's current transformation from a bilingual to multilingual society as a result of ongoing demographic shifts (Ariza, Calleja,Vassallo Gauci, 2019; Bonello, 2020; Caruana, Scaglione, Vassallo Gauci, 2019; Farrugia, 2017; Panzavecchia, 2023; Paris & Farrugia, 2019). This state of affairs is mirrored in our schools through the arrival of a number of non-Maltese children speaking a variety of languages (Camenzuli, Lundberg, Gauci, 2023). This has inevitably impacted our schools both culturally and linguistically, and is the source of both enrichment and challenges. One such challenge sees Maltese teachers increasingly faced with teaching young students who do not speak either English or Maltese. Language is one obstacle which prevents students from ethnic minorities from fully benefiting from education. However, it is often argued that the primary challenge lies in schools that fail to effectively address student diversity. Educators play a critical role in overcoming these barriers, as they possess significant potential to foster the holistic inclusion of diverse students. Nevertheless, it has been observed that achieving positive change requires appropriate support systems to be in place (Parnis & Schembri, 2023).

The current study is an attempt to address such challenges by gathering data from educators in relation to their experience of multilingual classrooms, and their perceived needs in this respect. This study was conducted through a mixed-methods approach, which included the dissemination of an online questionnaire to all primary state-school teachers in Malta. The questions are related to the ways in which Maltese primary school teachers are supporting multilingual students, together with their viewpoints regarding the use of fluid language practices such as code-switching. The aim of this study is to shed more light on the current situation, and to eventually offer schools guidance and practical training and consultation sessions that are tailor-made to specific needs on how to mitigate challenges related to linguistically diverse classrooms. The results of this research illuminate the changing aspects of language use that Malta is currently experiencing, together with the resulting impact on its educational system. This necessitates the revisiting of professional practice and professional development, in light of the current migration trends which are resulting in classrooms becoming more linguistically and culturally diverse. Multilingual education and cross-linguistic pedagogies are the way forward within ever-increasing globalised societies (Baker, 2011; Beres, 2015; García, 2009; García et al., 2017; García and Wei, 2014; Milton, 2011, 2016; ; Milton & Panzavecchia, 2019a). The results of this study are indicative of the rapidly

changing demographic makeup of the Maltese primary classroom, marked by an unprecedented linguistically diverse environment. In this respect, the need for customised professional development training sessions was expressed by the large majority of the participants. Maltese teachers are open to employing innovative linguistic pedagogies as required by the island's changing demographic composition; however, they feel the need to be equipped with the necessary skills to legitimise organically occurring fluid language practices, and to provide a socially just and equitable education for all.

2. The Maltese context

The island of Malta is situated in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea. Maltese is the national language of Malta, whilst the Constitution of Malta states that both Maltese and English are official languages on the island. When Malta joined the European Union (EU) in 2004, Maltese also became an official language of the EU. While the majority of Maltese people are considered bilingual, there exists significant variation in proficiency levels among speakers (Vella, 2012). The Maltese language is Semitic in its foundations; however, it is written in a Latin script and in a left-to-right direction (Francesconi, 2010; Paris & Farrugia, 2019). It also merges elements of English and Romance languages owing to its strategic position and history of foreign occupation. The prevalent use of the English language is linked to the island's colonial heritage, which lasted until 1964 (see Panzavecchia & Little, 2019). The sociolinguistic situation in Malta is one of a widespread societal bilingualism without diglossia since neither of the two languages is assigned a High or Low function and both are used in most domains (Camilleri Grima, 2013). Malta is, however, currently experiencing unprecedented and rapid demographic shifts, which are resulting in an inevitable linguistic shift from bilingualism to multilingualism.

3. Recent demographic shifts on the island

Ever since 2002, Malta has been perceived to be a symbolic gateway into Europe, resulting in an influx of asylum seekers and refugees due to shifting migration patterns and globalisation. Malta joined the EU in 2004, which further increased transnational migration, as more EU citizens are choosing to make Malta their home (International Organisation for Migration, 2016). Additionally, Malta's 2021 national census reveals that Malta's demographic makeup has also been impacted by the importation of foreign labour by the government to sustain economic growth over the past few years. Currently, one fifth of Malta's population and over a quarter of Malta's workforce is made up of foreign nationals. The past decade has seen an increase of over 95,000 non-Maltese nationals on the island (Borg, 2023). The population of Malta stood at just over half a million in 2021, making it the most densely populated country in the EU with 1,649 residents per square kilometre (Malta is 27 km long and 14.5 km wide). Italians make up the large majority of non-Maltese living on the islands, followed by British residents. Other common nationalities residing in Malta include Indian, Filipino, Serbian, Bulgarian and Libyan populations. In the 2012/2013 school year, the number of migrant pupils in Maltese schools stood at 1,890. In 2021/22, this number increased to 6,819, hence in 9 years the number has more than tripled (National Statistics Office, 2024). At the same time, the number of Maltese births is steadily decreasing since Malta has the lowest fertility rate in Europe (Eurostat, 2021). Maltese primary schools host the largest percentage of non-Maltese children, standing at 15% of the schools' population in 2020/21 (National Statistics Office, 2023). This state of affairs is inevitably impacting schools both culturally and linguistically.

4. The present study

The current paper is a follow-up of a doctoral study conducted in 2020, with the aim of reaching a larger sample size, capturing new insights pertinent to the evolving scenario, and gathering data related to the way educators are supporting the ever-increasing number of multilingual students in their classrooms. This encompassed an exploration of their current practices and perceptions of implementing fluid language pedagogies, and an assessment of their perceived training requirements on this topic. This study aimed to paint a more comprehensive picture of the situation, ultimately paving the way for the development and provision of customised consultation sessions, tailor-made professional development, and comprehensive support in addressing these educational challenges.

4.1. The participants

The total population for this study comprised 145 participants, encompassing a diverse range of roles within the educational sector, including teachers, supply teachers, activity teachers, Learning Support Educators (LSEs), Kindergarten Educators (KGEs), and members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). It is worth noting that Kindergarten Educators have been included in this study because of an overlap between kindergarten and the initial phase of primary education in Malta, as the first two years of primary education

are considered an extension of the two-year kindergarten period (Eurydice, 2023). In Maltese state schools, kindergarten classes are in fact generally located within primary schools and the Head of Primary School is also responsible for this cohort.

The majority of respondents were teachers, followed by Learning Support Educators. Teaching experience among the participants ranged between 0 – 20 years, with most participants having over 20 years of school practice. The majority of respondents hold a bachelor's degree, followed by those holding a Diploma and a Master's degree respectively. There was an even distribution of educators in the Early years and Junior years, with approximately half of the participants teaching in each sector.

Table 1
Participants' employment status

Employment status	%
Teacher	62.33%
Learning Support Educator	22.6%
Senior Leadership member	9.59%
Kindergarten Educator	4.79%
Total	99.32%
Invalid	0.68%
Total	100%

Table 2
Participants' teaching experience

Teaching experience	%
5 – 10 years	24.66%
10 – 20 years	22.6%
0 – 5 years	22.6%
Total	97.95%
Invalid	2.05%
Total	100%

Table 3
Level of education distribution among participants

Highest academic qualification	%
Bachelor's degree	47.26%
Diploma	28.08%
Master's degree	17.81%
A' Levels	4.11%
O' Levels	1.37%
Total	98.63%
Invalid	1.37%
Total	100%

4.2. Methods

For this study, a mixed methods approach was employed, administering a comprehensive questionnaire that incorporated both quantitative and qualitative elements. The multiple-choice question responses were subjected to statistical analysis. Initially, the data was cleaned and subsequently analysed using descriptive statistical methods. Quantitative data analysis was performed with DataTAB software, from which percentage responses were extracted. The data derived from the open-ended questions underwent thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), providing a qualitative exploration of participants' perspectives and insights. The gathered data was categorised based on similarities, differences, and other

relevant factors, and was colour-coded for organisation. Overlapping themes were examined and refined, while newly emerging themes were further subdivided into sub-themes. This dual-method strategy facilitated a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the research topic, combining the strengths of numerical precision with the richness of qualitative insights.

An online questionnaire was developed for the purpose of this study, with the aim of gathering data from educators in relation to their experiences of multilingual classrooms and their perceived needs in this respect. The questionnaire included an information section related to the scope and nature of the study, highlighting the fact that participation was completely voluntary, whilst guaranteeing the respondents' privacy since all data is anonymous and therefore cannot be traced back to the participant as an individual. Additionally, the participants were advised that the questionnaire would take approximately 10–15 minutes to complete. The questionnaire consisted of 27 questions, out of which 17 were multiple-choice questions, and 10 were open-ended questions where the participants were free to voice their personal opinions on the subject. Some of the multiple-choice questions also provided participants with the opportunity to express their own views and provide additional comments, ensuring a comprehensive exploration of their perspectives. The questions focused on their linguistic backgrounds and bilingual identities, their experience related to teaching children with diverse language backgrounds, the benefits and challenges related to multilingual classrooms, the strategies employed for effective communication and teaching within linguistically diverse classrooms, their viewpoints on monolingual approaches and on fluid language practices, and the level and type of support they feel both educators and students require within multilingual teaching and learning environments. This questionnaire, together with an explanatory email, were systematically distributed to all heads of primary state schools in Malta, who were then responsible for disseminating the survey to their respective staff members for voluntary participation in the project. Prior to initiating this process, ethical approval was obtained from both the researcher's institution and the Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research, and Innovation. A copy of this questionnaire can be found in the Appendix of this article.

145 participants responded to the online questionnaire. The National Statistics Office (2023) reports 3651 educators working in the primary sector in Malta; this sample is 3.97% of the total population, which gave the researcher a margin of error of 3.57% with a confidence interval of 95%.

5. Results

The results of this research indicate that the participating educators are fluent in both Maltese and English and use both languages equally and interchangeably in their daily communication. Most of the respondents are also fluent in the Italian language. Code-switching is a typical feature of bilingual and multilingual speakers (Baker, 2011; Paradis, Genesee, Crago, 2011; Wei, 2007), and the findings show that fluid language practices, such as code-switching and translanguaging, are organically employed by the large majority of the respondents; however, the participating educators are paradoxically unsure of their benefits and how to use them strategically in the classroom (Panzavecchia, 2020, 2023).

The findings show that the large majority of participants are currently teaching in multilingual classrooms, without being given appropriate support, guidance, and training. Educators appear to be striving to reach out to all the children in their care; however, this is mainly done out of their own initiative, and not linked to professional training (Scaglione & Caruana, 2018). The participating educators seem to be open and willing to improve practice given the appropriate training, for which the large majority reported a dire need. In this respect, educators need to be offered professional development and training programs which would enable them to legitimately implement bilingual and multilingual pedagogies advantageously (Beres, 2015; García et al., 2017; García & Wei, 2014; Milton, 2011, 2016; Milton & Panzavecchia, 2019a), which would in turn guarantee inclusion and social justice within linguistically diverse classrooms (Wei, 2023).

The rest of the findings have been split up into sections pertinent to the scope of this study. Verbatim quotes are also included in the data, which was analysed thematically. This approach serves to enhance the validation of this study, providing participants with a "voice", and allowing readers to comprehensively grasp the interviewees' expressed views and sentiments regarding their experiences related to teaching within multilingual environments.

5.1. Participants' linguistic background

93.8% of the respondents consider Maltese to be their mother tongue, or the language they feel most comfortable communicating in, whilst the same percentage consider English to be their second language. A small number of participants mentioned other languages, notably Italian as either their L1 or L2 (first or second language respectively). All participants feel they are very, or quite proficient, in the second language. 80% of participants speak other languages apart from their L1 and L2, with Italian also

being spoken by the large majority of educators, including those who listed multiple languages (three or more languages) as forming part of their repertoire.

This linguistic scenario is depictive of the sociolinguistic situation in Malta, which is one of a widespread societal bilingualism without diglossia. It also evidences the prominence of the Italian language, which is at times spoken as a third language in Malta (Ariza et al., 2019), as a result of the countries' geographical proximity, historical and commercial ties, and Italian media exposure (Caruana, 2007; Caruana, Cremona, & Vella, 2013).

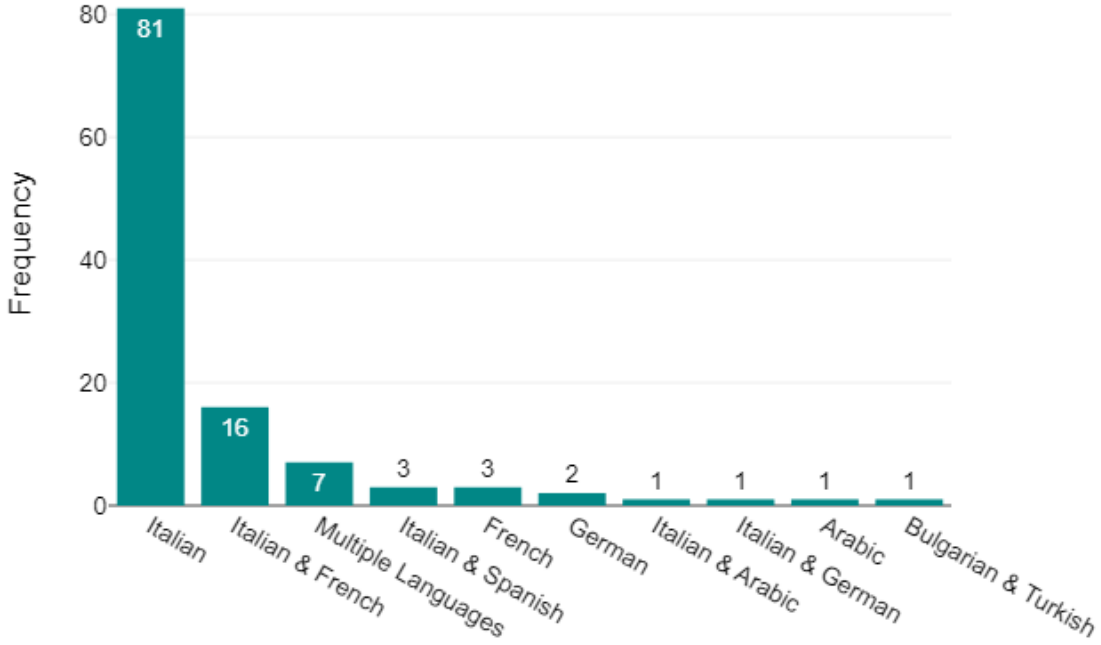

Figure 1. Other languages spoken by participants (not including Maltese and English)

5.2. Linguistic and cultural demographics in Maltese classrooms

80.3% of the participants stated that they were teaching children with diverse language backgrounds (other than Maltese and English), whilst 83.3% claimed that they had never received training related to teaching in multilingual classroom environments. In contrast, the participants who had received some form of training credited this to specific modules in their academic studies or self-sought professional development. Only one respondent claimed to have received school-based professional development on the topic. This is indicative of an educator workforce which is not being adequately supported and trained to navigate the shifting linguistic and cultural dynamics of Maltese classrooms (Milton & Panzavecchia, 2019b; Panzavecchia, 2020; Panzavecchia, 2023; Panzavecchia & Little, 2019; Scaglione & Caruana, 2018).

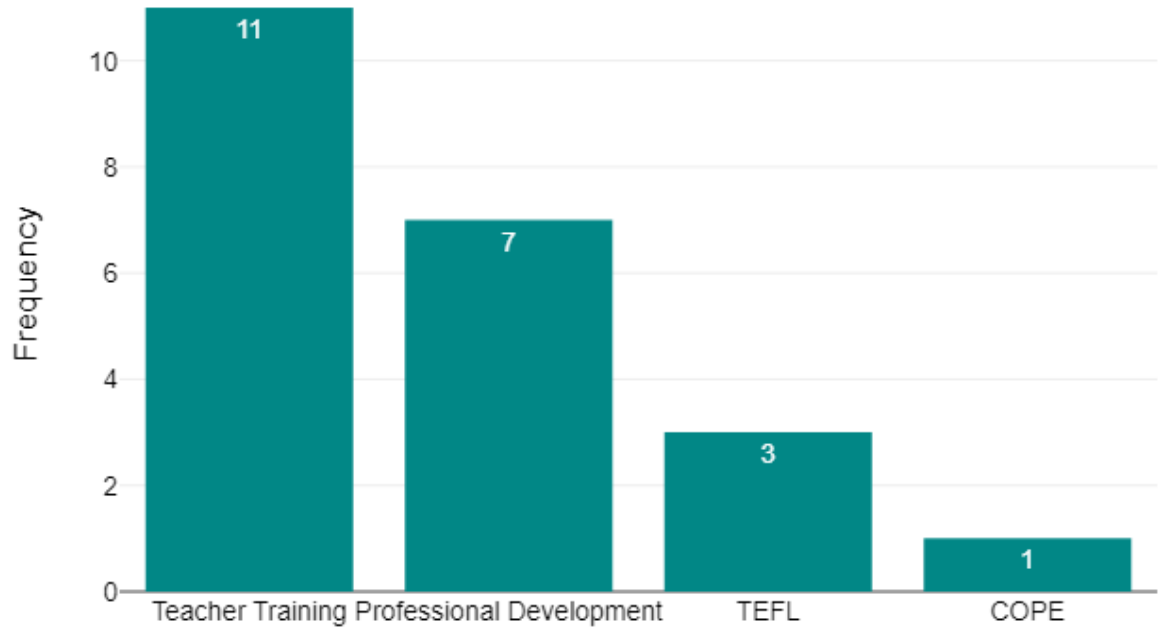

Figure 2. Training related to teaching in multilingual classroom environments received by participants

90% of the participants had a classroom of 20 or over children in class, which is indicative of largely populated classrooms in Malta. 34% of the participants claimed to have between 0-10% of their class consisting of non-Maltese/migrant children, whilst 17% had between 11%-20%. The study revealed a diverse linguistic landscape in the classrooms, with participants reporting the presence of children speaking a wide array of languages. Notably, some teachers mentioned children conversing in categories such as 'Indian,' 'African,' 'Syrian,' 'Pakistani,' or 'Egyptian,' unwittingly attributing these labels to languages, when, in fact, they do not represent distinct linguistic entities.

Table 4
Percentage of non-Maltese/migrant children in participants' classes

Non-Maltese/Migrant Students	**%**
0 – 10%	33.56%
11 – 20%	17.12%
21 – 40%	15.07%
61 -80%	11.64%
41 – 60%	10.27%
81 – 100%	8.9%
Total	96.58%
Invalid	3.42%
Total	100%

Table 5
Languages spoken by children in participants' classrooms.

Category	Language
Local	Maltese, English
European	Italian, French, German, Portuguese, Romanian, Spanish, Dutch, Polish, Slovak, Croatian, Czech, Ukrainian, Serbian, Russian, Hungarian, Swedish, Macedonian, Bulgarian, Estonian, Lithuanian, Latvian, Albanian, Greek, Irish, Armenian, Slavic
Asian	Chinese, Japanese, Cantonese, Turkish, Urdu, Filipino, Hindi, Tamil, Sinhala, Malayalam, Thai
African	Arabic, Somali, Tigrinya, Nigerian language, Afrikaan
Other	Sign Language

5.3. Multilingual Strategies employed by Maltese primary educators

When asked about the strategies employed to address language barriers and to promote effective communication among multilingual students, the participants were given a list of possible answers from which they could choose more than one option and/or add their own ideas. The majority of respondents stated that they were using scaffolded instruction for different proficiency levels in class (Durán & Palmer, 2014), thus breaking down complex tasks or concepts into more manageable steps. Participants also claimed that they were striving to provide clear instructions, offering support as students progressed through each step. Respondents further mentioned incorporating diverse and culturally relevant content, reflecting the background and experience of the students (Wagner, 2021). Additionally, they also used a language buddy system (Sclafani, 2017), pairing students for language brokering and to support each other in learning the target language, whilst sharing their mother tongue. Other notable responses encompassed encouraging language use (Gort & Sembiante, 2015), where some educators created opportunities for students to use their native languages during certain parts of the day with technology integration by using language learning apps and online translation tools to facilitate communication and language development. Paradoxically, the selection of self-sought professional development emerged on the lower end of the response spectrum. This might be indicative of a teacher workforce which does not generally pursue independent learning unless it reaps tangible rewards, such as promotion or a salary increase, and where training is usually provided by third parties. This mentality could also be linked to Malta's culture of competitive achievement, where the educational system is heavily reliant on examinations, and therefore based on extrinsic, rather than intrinsic motivation (Panzavecchia, 2020). These findings confirm the analysis conducted by the European Commission in 2019, which indicates that over half of all service teachers in Malta are either unmotivated to attend Continuing Professional Development (CPD) courses or face challenges in doing so due to additional responsibilities. The promotion of more self-directed learning for personal and professional growth is therefore crucial in today's evolving classroom demographics (Back, 2020; Gorter & Arocena, 2020; Menken & Sanchez, 2019; Panzavecchia, 2020).

When asked about the strategies employed to teach the children in class, respondents were once again provided with a list of options, allowing them to choose multiple responses and/or contribute with their own ideas. The use of visual aids was mentioned by the large majority of participants, followed by code-switching, translating and revoicing (Gort & Sembiante, 2015), language buddies (Sclafani, 2017), and technology integration (Van Laere et al., 2017). The use of flexible assessment methods appeared at the lower end of the response spectrum.

When enquired about their level of confidence when employing these strategies, nearly half of the participants expressed confidence, a substantial 36% felt uncertain, and 14% did not feel confident. The participating educators exhibited initiatives, creativity, and proactiveness related to teaching within multilingual environments. However, the results of this study indicate that this is done out of their own free will, without a clear association with professional guidance and training (Panzavecchia & Little, 2019; Scaglione & Caruana, 2018). In this respect, although it appears that Maltese educators are willing to

address the realities of their linguistically and culturally diverse classrooms, half of the participants are either unsure or do not feel confident about the strategies they are employing (Ariza et al., 2019; Farrugia, 2017; Scaglione & Caruana, 2018;). This indicates that teachers need to be "explicitly taught ways to incorporate heteroglossic ideologies" into their pedagogy (Goodman & Tastanbek, 2020, p. 1). It also underscores the necessity for systemic structural support to facilitate the incorporation of multilingual pedagogies into both education and teacher training programs (Szelei, Pinho, Tinoca, 2021).

Table 6
Confidence in applying multilingual strategies in class

Confidence	%
Yes	47.95%
Not sure	35.62%
No	13.7%
Total	97.26%
Invalid	2.74%
Total	100%

5.4. *Incorporating culturally and linguistically relevant material*

Participants were also asked whether they try to incorporate culturally and linguistically relevant material into their classes. Responses were varied, but it appears that the majority of educators do endeavour to incorporate such resources in order to make their classrooms more inclusive. However, for a substantial number of participants, the extent of using such material is mainly limited to labelling items around the classroom in different languages. Other mentioned material was related to games, stories in reading comprehensions, books, flashcards, word banks, and video clips. A few participants stated that they organised multicultural days and involved students in multicultural projects throughout the year. They also endeavoured to include children's cultural backgrounds, especially during Christmas and Easter activities. One participant stated that their school's Christmas concert has now moved away from religious themes or associations and is merely a celebration of love and kindness.

Excerpt 1. *Representative resources*

I make sure my resources are representative. I make sure I know greeting words in their languages. I strive to learn about their countries and mention things in passing. I have the Crayola skin tone set that has every possible skin tone in class (not just 'peach'). I celebrate their feasts and try to increase awareness of them within the school.

Excerpt 2. *Cultural exchange*

I have students engage in projects that involve communication with peers from different language backgrounds, fostering cultural exchange.

Although these responses are very encouraging, highlighting an educator workforce that is attempting to provide inclusive education for all, there were also several other teachers who stated that they do not manage to incorporate culturally and linguistically relevant material in class. This was attributed to a lack of available resources, together with time constraints and uncooperative students.

Excerpt 3. *Loaded curricula*

Curriculum and assessment and students' academic level don't allow for much flexibility.

Excerpt 4. *Time constraints and student resistance*

As an Ethics teacher, the syllabus allows me to draw from different cultures. When I was a class teacher it was much harder, as there were time constraints, syllabus and more resistance from students to learn Maltese and English.

5.5. Participants' understanding of code-switching

The large majority of participants has a clear understanding of what code-switching entails and described it as alternating between two or more languages in conversation or switching between languages during lessons to ensure mutual understanding. Two participants believed that it was similar to

translanguaging. Both code-switching and translanguaging refer to an organic switching between languages for various communicative purposes, and both can occur spontaneously or be used intentionally for pedagogical reasons. Translanguaging is a broader term that includes a range of language practices, possibly encompassing code-switching (García, 2009), reflecting a different understanding of bilingual cognition (Otheguy et al., 2015, 2019), with overlapping aspects between the two (Baker & Wright, 2017; Goodman & Tastanbek, 2020). The key distinction is that code-switching involves switching between two separate, distinct languages, while translanguaging views language as a unified, fluid system from which speakers draw according to their particular requirements at any given time (Goodman & Tastanbek, 2020; Otheguy et al., 2019). It is also interesting to note that some respondents appeared to draw parallels between code-switching and translation, potentially reflecting a perceived overlap in their features (See Pintado Gutiérrez, 2021).

5.6. Participants' views on code-switching in the classroom

There was a clear division of opinions related to participants' views on the use of code-switching in the classroom. The general feeling is that although teachers wish to maintain distinct languages, they also believe that this could inevitably create related complexities, particularly for children who are not fluent in either English or Maltese.

What emerged strongly was the fact that almost half of the respondents were not in favour of this practice, stating that it is 'inappropriate', 'tiresome' or 'problematic'. Most of these respondents used the word 'confusing' to justify their aversion to this practice. Some participants voiced their concerns that students would not learn much this way. One participant also claimed that it was school policy to discourage children from using their own languages in class. This is very concerning since it evidences a deficit model of education, where the focus is on Maltese and English, thus disregarding the heritage language and often resulting in social challenges and academic setbacks associated with home languages not being adequately celebrated and valued (Micallef Cann & Spiteri, 2014; Panzavecchia & Little, 2019, 2020; Scaglione & Caruana, 2018). However, the majority of these educators was still using fluid language practices in class because they felt they had no other option, stating that this practice was 'inevitable', and 'having no other way', or doing it 'only because it is absolutely necessary', 'as a last resort' and because it is 'the only way', or 'unavoidable'.

Excerpt 5. *It is a must*

There is no other way, otherwise children will not understand. In state schools we try our best to give instructions and explanations in Maltese, but when having more than half the students who do not speak Maltese, code-switching is a must.

Excerpt 6. *Splitting oneself in two*

Mhux sew li għalliem wieħed jinqsam fi tnejn. Bilfors trid tagħmilha għax hemm min jifhem bil-Malti aktar milli bl-Ingliż, u viċi-versa. (Translation from Maltese to English): It is not right that a teacher is required to split themselves in two! You have to do it because there are those who understand Maltese better than English and vice-versa.

Excerpt 7. *Maltese, Maltese – English, English*

I encourage learners to speak in Maltese if they are using this language. Whilst when speaking in English they should speak this language properly too. Code-switching can cause language confusion. My motto is Maltese, Maltese – English, English!

Excerpt 8. *I do not encourage it*

Yes, as most of my students switch. Even from dialectical Arabic to modern, standard Arabic. I have to use it but I do not encourage it as Maltese students find it easier to talk in English rather than using the Maltese language.

5.7. Potential language endangerment

As observed above, the fact that native Maltese children are encountering problems with communicating in Maltese was also mentioned by some of the participants. Other participants argued that English was rapidly becoming the main instructional language in Maltese schools to enable better communication. One participant commented that they believe they had recently increased their use of English in order to maximise understanding, whilst another stated that they were now using mostly English in class. This is indicative of a shift to 'an English-only medium of instruction' in Maltese classrooms, since teachers are finding it easier to use the English language predominantly and sometimes exclusively in order

to reach out to the migrant, non-Maltese-speaking children in their care (Camilleri Grima, 2018, p. 38). This also corresponds with the results documented in the most recent national census, indicating that 23.4% of Maltese children under 10 years old grew up speaking English as their main language (National Statistics Office, 2023). The fact that Maltese would no longer be a required form of communication within an increasingly globalised society may also equate to language endangerment. For some participants, the maintenance of the Maltese language is indeed a problem in itself, as they voiced their concerns about the possible, eventual extinction of the language as a result of the increasing numbers of non-Maltese children in class.

5.8. Language islands within multilingual environments

One participant stated that they discourage code-switching and speaking in different languages, because some children tend to say 'bad words' in their language during these instances. Another related concern was linked to migrant learners who speak a common language and sometimes tended to form language groups. This often hinders integration with the rest of the class since it excludes other students from joining in, and because the groups themselves do not feel the need to further integrate. The creation of these language islands is also problematic for teachers who may feel isolated and experience a lack of class control within multilingual environments (Panzavecchia, 2020; Ticheloven, Blom, Leseman et al., 2019).

5.9. Participants' views on the benefits of code-switching.

Half of the participants were conversely keen on using fluid language practices in class, recognising the benefits of this practice within linguistically diverse classrooms. In this respect, the fact that this practice is 'helpful', 'beneficial', 'effective', 'motivational' and that it 'encourages better communication' and 'maximises understanding' emerged strongly.

Excerpt 9. *Use of non-verbal communication*

> Yes, especially with foreigners to help them integrate and learn more certain things. I tend to switch from Maltese to English in order to translate what I say, so that I make sure that everyone is understood. At times translating into English is not good enough as I have children who barely understand English. So, I use hand gestures and pointing and use of visual aids so that I make sure they are understanding.

Excerpt 10. *A normal way to communicate*

> It is normal for a child to code-switch when exposed to multiple languages. When a child code-switches, I show him/her that I understood and then I repeat the whole sentence in one language, it could be L1 or L2. It is important not to correct the child continuously as you may hinder him from speaking. By showing that you understand him, even by gestures in the beginning and using single words will encourage language development.

Excerpt 11. *A natural and valid linguistic behaviour*

> I recognise code-switching as a natural and valid linguistic behaviour, often influenced by cultural background and social context. By encouraging code-switching, it contributes to an inclusive and culturally rich environment where students feel comfortable expressing themselves.

Plurilingual pedagogies are currently being promoted in Malta through initiatives such as the National Literacy Strategy, which acknowledges the fact that code-switching is an important element of bilingual societies and endorses access to different languages in schools (Ministry of Education and Employment, Malta, 2014). The Language Education Policy Profile for Malta (Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 2015) also promotes the idea of a plurilingual society where competence in multiple languages may naturally lead to switching between languages when and as the situation demands. Other local policies and documents have also recently been changing guidelines on the use of code-switching as a learning tool (See The Malta Ministry for Education and Employment's A Language Policy for the Early Years in Malta and Gozo, 2016; A Language Policy for the Junior Years in Malta and Gozo, 2023). Code-switching is in fact now considered a widely shared and valid practice within bilingual and multilingual environments, and therefore embracing the concept of language mixing as a pedagogical tool may effectively be the way forward for language education in Malta.

5.10. The use of multiple languages versus monolingual approaches in class

Participants were asked their opinion about the use of multiple languages and monolingual strategies in class. The findings show that the vast majority of participants perceive multiple language approaches as challenging to implement, describing plurilingual approaches as 'stressful', 'uncomfortable', 'confusing', 'time-consuming', and 'not easy'. What emerged strongly was the fact that since these educators cannot speak the different languages spoken by the students in class, they feel that using multiple languages is not a possibility. Other participants claimed that they did not feel confident employing these strategies, attributing this once more to a lack of training in the area. Once again, the fear of language loss was voiced by some participants. There was also talk of potential discrimination towards Maltese students when multiple languages are used as a way to accommodate all students. There were also a number of respondents who believe that using multiple languages in class may lead to problems related to classroom dynamics and classroom management.

Excerpt 12. *Challenging classroom dynamics*

I think there is a lack of training and when used incorrectly this approach may cause classroom dynamics which can be quite challenging, especially when students start to insult each other instead.

Excerpt 13. *More stress for educators*

We already have Maltese and English, the command both of which leaves much to be desired in some cases. I do not think that more languages than these two are a good idea. Moreover, including a third or more languages in class would most likely imply less time on task and more stress for the educators.

Excerpt 14. *I am not a walking encyclopaedia*

I am not a walking encyclopaedia and the limited time to my lessons forbids me to translate everything into the children's mother tongue (5 different languages!).

These findings indicate that this section of Maltese educators, despite seemingly acknowledging that linguistically diverse students are on the increase and that this warrants a potential reconsideration of pedagogy, are somewhat still traditional in their perceptions of how language should be used in class. These ideas stem from uncertainty, lack of confidence, lack of knowledge, and concern, especially about their lack of mastery in the different languages spoken in class. There is also the misguided perception that utilising multilingual strategies requires a teacher to be proficient in all the languages represented in class. Wei (2023, p. 6) contends that including the use of multiple languages and fluid linguistic practices such as translanguaging as pedagogy requires 'a different mindset' on the part of educators, which shifts the role of a classroom teacher into that of a co-learner. Wei believes that a diverse student community provides rich 'funds of knowledge' through which there could be a wealth of opportunities for mutual gain. In this scenario not only is the focus on an inclusive classroom, 'but also to engage in real-world meaning making and identity exploration, which are crucial yet often neglected aspects of learning'.

Educators are often viewed as a solution to a perceived 'language problem' brought about by demographic changes; however, they are still provided with 'tools' which were developed prior to the current influx of migrants in alignment with Vertovec's (2007) concept of superdiversity. Hence, the concept of categorising languages as L1 or L2, together with the prevailing perceptions of bilingualism needing to be revisited and reassessed (García, 2017, p. 15). Some participants believe that encouraging the children to communicate in Maltese and English is imperative for effective integration into our society, advocating minimising the use of the students' heritage language. This points once again towards a misguided deficit model of education. Maltese schools do not fully capitalise on the "extent and value of immigrant children's language repertoires and of the potential benefits that could result if children's languages of origin were adequately exploited" (Scaglione & Caruana, 2018, p. 141). Mother tongue support programs are practically non-existent within the Maltese educational system, for a variety of pragmatic reasons, mainly related to a lack of financial and human resources. It is impractical to anticipate teachers mastering proficiency in every home language spoken by their students; however, they can endeavour to create learning settings that incorporate students' native languages, implement initiatives which encourage parental participation at various levels, and establish particular moments during their lessons for linguistically diverse students to use their mother tongue. This approach aims to counteract the 'linguistic hierarchies that exist in school' (García & Seltzer, 2016, p.24). In this scenario, students would be organically linking the multiple languages present in class, 'fulfilling a scaffolding function offering temporary bridges between languages' (Duarte, 2020, p. 12), whilst aiming 'to acknowledge and safeguard the linguistic rights of migrants, including TCNs' (Caruana & Santipolo, 2021, p. 148).

Excerpt 15. *The importance of communicating in our national languages*

While it is important for students to feel like they belong, and I allow students to translate where needed. I do insist that they try to communicate in the national languages – I see it as part of their entitlement to acquire these languages in order to better function in society. For example, good mornings might be exchanged in any language, however, discussions are in English or Maltese.

Conversely, another section of participants does believe that multilingual, as opposed to monolingual, practices should be the way forward within our evolving classrooms. These educators argue that monolingual practices within linguistically diverse classrooms evidence a 'selfish' and 'unfair' way of teaching, lacking inclusivity, which in turn adds to disruption in the classroom due to student disengagement and lack of interest. They also mention the fact that learning multiple languages helps with language transfer (Brooks & Kempe, 2014). One participant also believes that monolingual approaches may hinder speech and cognitive development, whilst another commented that multilingual children outperform monolingual students in areas beyond language skills (Bialystok, Craik & Luk, 2008; Bialystok, 2011).

Excerpt 16. *Children feel unaccepted*

The child may feel foreign and not accepted. Sometimes I look up words in the child's language and their face lights up when they hear their mother tongue at school.

Excerpt 17. *Language transfer*

Language development needs other languages to develop. Example in Maltese it is beneficial to connotate certain words to other words from another language, as the words may be similar, and students may be able to relate to the new words more. Example wieħed in Maltese is similar to Arabic wahid [واحد].

5.11. Support needed by educators and non-Maltese children within multilingual classrooms.

Educators were asked to give their views on the kind of support required by both educators and non-Maltese children to enhance teaching and learning within multilingual classrooms. In this respect, training for educators was once again high on the list of responses. Educators voiced their need for 'mentoring with follow up', 'professional development sessions', 'specialised courses', 'workshops', and 'demonstration lessons'. One participant also stated that when training was provided, this was usually done by lecturers who do not have any experience in multilingual classrooms, whilst another suggested sharing experiences with other educators as a means of mutual support (See Panzavecchia, 2020).

Excerpt 18. *More training for educators*

Training! I have had foreign students in my class for multiple years, and I was not given any training when it came to adopting an MFL (Maltese as a foreign language) program. I did this through my own volition and because I felt that these children needed the opportunity to learn at their own pace and not be involved in the mainstream classes at once.

Excerpt 19. *Training on how to reach various parents*

More help in how to reach parents better. We currently have help at school to target parents from Arabic speaking families, but we have no support to reach learners from Chinese families.

Additionally, a substantial number of participants hold that children who cannot communicate in the two national languages require more time outside the classroom, be it during pull-out classes, or during induction courses which are held specifically for non-Maltese children before they are integrated into class. The prevailing sentiment among these educators is a need to fully or partially shift responsibility for these students, advocating induction classes, or their segregation in specialised schools, as a way to resolve the challenges related to linguistic diversity. This scenario presents concerns linked to integration, with students separated from their peers sometimes struggling to access the main curriculum, if too much emphasis is placed on language acquisition above content acquisition (Nilsson & Bunar, 2016).

Excerpt 20. *Pull-out programs*

Pull-out programs for Maltese and/or English. All other lessons in mainstream classrooms. I think that support is being given and non-English speaking students are attending induction classes, which is giving a lot of benefits to these students as they are then able to integrate in the mainstream after a few months.

Excerpt 21. *Grouping children in a special school*

They need to be grouped in an international school for a long period of time, that is … more than a year, before attending mainstream schooling. They need to be grouped depending on the level attained after sitting for a formal assessment at national level. All educators teaching in this school need to attend a degree in teaching Maltese and English to multilingual students.

Educators also mentioned the need for peer preparation programs for students in order to foster inclusion and to understand and welcome diversity in class. Another point that emerged strongly was the need for in-class support. Educators believe that the employment of specialised teachers or classroom assistants, trained in culturally and linguistically responsive teaching, would significantly contribute to improving the teaching and learning experience. Other important themes that arose are linked to the need for reduced class sizes and more investment in resources.

One theme which emerged clearly was related to the need for programs which would encourage more parental involvement, since this is believed to be pivotal for academic success (Ariza, 2000; Attard Tonna, Calleja, Galea et al.2017). Respondents also remarked that some parents seem to disregard the host country's languages, focusing solely on their mother tongue when communicating with their offspring.

Excerpt 22. *Acquisition of Maltese as a prerequisite*

Motivation on a larger scale, even parents are demotivated to speak the language. There should be pressure from the state to enforce the acquisition of Maltese as a prerequisite to working and living here.

A language barrier for migrant learners can arise as a result of a lack of parental involvement. The achievement of this involvement is challenging due to language and cultural barriers, coupled with 'entitlement gaps'. Maltese parents may feel entitled to actively participate in their children's education, while migrant parents may not 'feel empowered enough to do so' (Attard Tonna et al., 2017, pp. 86-87). Ariza (2000) warns against attributing behaviour solely to linguistic or cultural differences. Migrant parents may seem disengaged from their children's education due to unawareness or discomfort with cultural expectations, contrary to typical practices in westernised societies. Additionally, migrants often view language as a crucial connection to their lives and identities (Mazzaferro, 2018) and this connection may carry varied significance across different generations (Little, 2017; Wilson, 2020). Teacher training related to immigrant children's parental involvement is therefore warranted in this situation (Ariza et al., 2019). Parental involvement initiatives should include educational programs focusing on current pedagogy, migrant learner inclusion, eliminating racial intolerance, and promoting diversity.

5.12. Concluding insights from participants

At the end of the questionnaire, participants were asked to include some final reflections on the situation. 62 participants added their own ideas on their experiences of teaching within multilingual environments. The large majority of these responses was emotionally charged, where it was very evident that participants were feeling 'overwhelmed', 'exhausted', and 'unprepared' in class. Their responses were akin to a cry for help, with some comments containing subtle racial and xenophobic undertones, reflecting an 'us' and 'them' sentiment. These perceptions may be linked to the general feeling which might be prevailing on the Maltese islands related to the large influx of non-Maltese nationals, which has contributed to the country being densely populated, bringing about challenges within the country's infrastructure, education, and healthcare.

Excerpt 23. *Inclusion detrimental to Maltese students*

This culture of including foreign students within our educational system comes to the detriment of certain Maltese students. One must keep in mind the reality that when a Maltese student goes abroad to a foreign country, the foreign educational facility will not cater for our Maltese speaking student to the detriment of their local student. The Maltese student is left to find private and expensive paid education where the English language is used, while foreign students in Malta receive free education, which comes with parents' expectations, not normally found in their originating countries.

Excerpt 24. *Focus on integration*

Unless the country makes it mandatory for all workers to have working use of Maltese and English (as seen in countries such as Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Austria etc.), things will never improve. The working class, Maltese included, will continue to be exploited and systemic injustices will persist. Teaching is a political act but unfortunately most teachers I know do not consider it as such. A multilingual classroom should not focus only on inclusion but also on integration. The two aspects work

together. It should be give and take – wherein one is free to express their culture and beliefs but in an informed manner within this context. We must teach upon the context of a pluralistic society.

Excerpt 25. *Cultural clashes*

I am sorry to say that some cultures do not fit in our traditional classrooms and children from these countries just run away from class and cause trouble.

Excerpt 26. *Unrealistic expectations*

It is not fair for us, as Maltese citizens, to be pushed aside to accommodate and include people from different countries and this by no means suggests in any way whatsoever any form of racism on my part. But even as a language, Maltese is losing its value: even Maltese families talk to their children in English, then they come to school not knowing their mother tongue which to me is just disgraceful. We need to support foreign students by all means, but not at the expense of exhausting teachers in trying to figure out how to communicate with them, given the ridiculous workload and pressure and unrealistic expectations coming from those who are in authority that teachers face.

Excerpt 27. *Taking a huge toll on teachers*

It is taking a huge toll on us teachers, apart from the situation being what it is nowadays, we have to deal with language barriers, adapted work for students who eventually end up doing the same exam paper at the end of the year, code-switching and not being able to do proper Maltese lessons, while it is our native language. We need the situation to change for the better, not everyone keeps closing their eyes in regards to this.

However, notwithstanding perceived challenges, it is important to acknowledge that the situation is not viewed as entirely negative by the participants. A substantial number of educators also voiced their strong beliefs about the benefits of multilingualism and multiculturalism, stating that there is a need to 'embrace diversity' since 'multicultural and multilingual education is beneficial for all'.

Excerpt 28. *They learn from each other*

The best thing about having multilingual students is that they learn from each other. Moreover, I believe that it helps children to learn to become more diversity-friendly as they grow up.

Excerpt 29. *An opportunity for growth*

This phenomenon brings many challenges, but it is also an opportunity for growth, and we should support each other to focus on what can be gained from this situation, while supporting our educators who are feeling overwhelmed and helpless at times.

5.13. Implications, recommendations, and limitations

Owing to its geographical position, Malta's diverse heritage has been shaped significantly by influences from Europe and North Africa. Paradoxically, however, the Maltese exhibit a surprisingly homogeneous identity that has demonstrated a notable resistance to foreign influences and multiculturalism, making a potential shift to a multicultural society 'slow and difficult' (Debono, 2021, p. 9). In the words of Fsadni and Pisani (2012, p. 24),

> a critical look at Maltese history not only makes a mockery of any notion of some pure 'natural' identity or culture, but also draws attention to the transformative nature of Maltese society and the diversity therein. Indeed, 7000 years of emigration, immigration and colonial rule renders any essentialist discourse on what it means to be 'Maltese' as nonsense and the 'threat to the Maltese way of life' as somewhat ambiguous.

Demographic shifts on the island are happening rapidly, and it is clear that not all people are willing to welcome migrants. Even when they do, they may not be equipped to meet all the needs of the migrants and their families, be they cultural or linguistic (Bezzina & Vassallo, 2019; Scaglione & Caruana, 2018). As a result of the sharp influx of migrants flocking to our islands, the general Maltese perception of multicultural education and multiculturalism is tainted with feelings of 'mistrust, deep concern and anxiety' (Bezzina & Vassallo, 2019, p. 214). Maltese people feel that the island is too small to accommodate the present dense population brought about by immigration (Debono, 2021). They also believe that migrants contribute to the strain on the country's welfare system and exacerbate issues related to crime (European Commission, 2017).

Attitudes towards Third-Country Nationals (TCNs) seem to be more negative compared to those towards migrants from the EU (Debono, 2021). 63% of respondents in a 2017 Eurobarometer survey feel that immigration from outside the EU is a problem rather than an opportunity for the island. In a general opinion survey of the Maltese population conducted by The Faculty of Social Wellbeing at the University of Malta, nearly half of Maltese surveyed (48%) stated that immigrants are more of a burden to the country, while only 16% think that immigrants do more to strengthen the country (Azzopardi, Bonnici, Marmara, 2021).

The Human Rights Directorate 'Turning the Tables' 2021 report finds that barriers encountered in education stem from wider social and attitudinal challenges, in particular 'a lack of cultural knowledge and education, especially among older teachers not used to teaching in a multicultural context and for whom the increased number of migrant learners is a cause for distress and resistance rather than a welcome opportunity for learning and interaction that can ultimately benefit all students' (p. 18). As a result of the lack of support for both students and teachers, educators often perceive the inclusion of migrant students as problematic (Chircop, 2022)

The addition of several other languages in Maltese classrooms 'has put Maltese-English bilingualism out of balance' (Camenzuli et al., 2023, p. 3), as teachers are now finding themselves faced with a situation where being fluent in Maltese and English, and to a lesser extent Italian, is simply not sufficient to meet the requirement of all students in class. The quality of education students receive is significantly influenced by the attitudes of teachers towards diversity (Chircop, 2022). These ideas towards migrant students appear to be 'framed in an "us" and "them" paradigm' (Chircop, 2022, p. 156). Chircop contends that

> educators rarely questioned the dominant culture, which positions those who fall within its range of acceptable qualities as insiders, while those deemed different and undesirable as being outsiders, and thus comprehending and embracing diversity within the school context can only be achieved once educators grasp these constructions. (Chircop, 2022, p. 156)

This aligns with the idea that schools, and the country in general, must eradicate discrimination, xenophobia, exclusion, and racism, fostering integration beyond ethnic, cultural, and religious differences (Attard Tonna et al., 2017; European Commission, 2017).

Teachers' views may also point to a lack of adequate training on the subject, especially at a CPD level. Pedagogical training tailored to the needs of migrant students is not offered to educators, except for occasional two-hour sessions of continuing professional development that some schools may have organised. As a result, schools are predominantly left to their own devices, and formulate their own policies based on what they believe works best for their specific context (Chircop, 2022). The participating educators believe that teachers should be taught about current research on language practices, which would in turn legitimise their naturally occurring plurilingual practices in class. However, the results of this study also contradictorily indicate a lack of actively pursued self-sought professional development.

A large number of participating educators believe that pull-out classes and well-organised induction hubs may offer the best solution to the problem, arguing that migrant children and their families should be obligated to learn Maltese and English before being allowed to join regular classes. This indicates that notwithstanding the fact that a number of respondents seem to understand the need to shift towards plurilingual pedagogies, they still advocate monolingual approaches which align with a subtractive bilingualism/multilingualism model (Baker, 2011).

The findings highlight the need for innovative pedagogies, including cross-linguistic strategies such as García's (2009) concept of transglossia, based on the interrelation of languages within a globalised society, with an emphasis on more authentic opportunities to apply concepts learned, and where children can actually put language to use. Ironically, Maltese teachers are still hesitant about how and when to use naturally occurring, fluid language practices legitimately in their classrooms, and how they can judiciously utilise these strategies as pedagogical tools for the benefit of all the students in their care. In this respect, the participants recognise the need for formal guidelines and training on how to support students struggling with Malta's two official languages.

6.1. Pedagogical implications

The main findings of this research focus on educators' experiences and challenges related to linguistic diversity within their multilingual classrooms. The participants voiced their concerns related to communication difficulties and a lack of training programs for educators. These concerns may stimulate change in Maltese education systems, with the aim of improving the experience of both educators and students. This can be accomplished through innovative teaching approaches, such as cross-linguistic

strategies, programs promoting the preservation of the Maltese language, and initiatives highlighting the global significance of the English language. It also involves creating school environments that support, value, and celebrate children's cultural identities and linguistic heritage. Additionally, the findings indicate that educators should have greater authority in decision-making related to professional training, curricula, syllabi, and teaching methods to cater for the needs of all students under their care.

In this respect, following the results of this study, professional development and consultation sessions will be developed and offered to educators within Maltese state schools in an attempt to address these issues and to improve aspects of bilingual and multilingual primary education in Malta, and possibly beyond. The proposed training sessions have been driven by the views of the participants and are by no means all encompassing. It is therefore important to point out that training would merely be a starting point and hopefully a catalyst for change, and that therefore, additional research on the topic, together with the development of further professional development sessions, is highly recommended.

6.2. Limitations

Research focusing on multilingual classrooms and fluid language practices is on the increase: however, it is interesting to note that there are few studies which specifically relate to teachers' perspectives and views on language pedagogy. The aim of this study is also to bridge this gap in the literature, particularly at a local level. This is being done within the limitations of the study, keeping in mind that, owing to time constraints and the number of participants, the drawn conclusions are not representative of all Maltese educators. However, notwithstanding the limitations of this research, the results are indicative of some of the challenges that educators in Malta are currently facing. Additionally, the participants' viewpoints may be used as a valid and significant resource to recommend further studies and make suggestions for future implications. This research may also serve as a means of supporting educators who may be going through the same experiences, as they realise they share common challenges related to bilingual and multilingual settings. Ultimately, the insights gleaned from this study can be selectively implemented to offer recommendations to educational institutions, policy-making bodies, and programs for initial teacher training and professional development, aiming to enhance practice in culturally and linguistically responsive teaching.

6.3. *Conclusion*

This research focuses on the experiences of Maltese educators in view of increasingly diverse student populations as a result of demographic shifts on the island. The results of the study present implications related to the Maltese educational system, pedagogy in multilingual classrooms, and teacher training. Fluid language practices are naturally and spontaneously occurring within bilingual and multilingual environments; however, educators need to be supported in ways which would enable them to legitimately harness cross-linguistic practices as pedagogy. This requires training programs and clear recommendations that would empower them to employ multilingual pedagogies advantageously, as opposed to viewing them as a last resort (Beres, 2015; Chircop, 2022; García et al., 2017; García & Wei, 2014; Milton, 2011, 2016; Milton & Panzavecchia 2019a).

The participating educators share common concerns related to challenges faced by the teaching profession and educational system as a result of changing populations on the island. These unprecedented demands are being addressed by the Maltese education authorities, and as a result, the island is currently undergoing a paradigm shift in education (Panzavecchia & Little, 2019; 2020). This is highlighted by the redesigning of policies and documents focusing on mitigating challenges brought about by increasingly superdiverse classrooms (Vertovec, 2007), and through initiatives that support the integration of learners into mainstream education. However, the results of this study also highlight the fact that educators are reluctant and do not feel adequately trained and guided to support all the children in their care (Ariza, et al., 2019; Farrugia, 2017; Scaglione & Caruana, 2018). The findings presented in this study evidence a teacher workforce which is open and willing to improve practices if given appropriate support and training. Such upskilling may ease any ambivalence educators may feel when implementing multilingual language strategies in a natural and effective manner (Panzavecchia, 2023).

The participants also expressed concerns on potential language loss, advocating for an increased focus on preserving the Maltese language within a continuously expanding multilingual community. Furthermore, there is a demand for additional investment in human resources and culturally inclusive, multilingual material, which would ensure that every child's linguistic and cultural identity is not only acknowledged but also celebrated. Additionally, this research shows that there is no one-size-fits-all solution, and the particular context of each specific school, together with the classroom intake and population of each individual year, needs to be taken into consideration when designing programs.

These proposals should serve as a point of departure, but require adaptations based on the individual requirements of each educator and on further research in the area. The proposed professional development sessions would be developed based on the educators' feedback together with the most recent research on the subject. However, they are not aimed at providing a general solution for all, but to suggest ways by which educators and students may be equitably supported. In addition, teachers should be trusted with more agency, given opportunities to share examples of good practice and be encouraged and supported to carry out further research related to linguistically diverse classrooms. Finally, the results of this study hold salient implications for training at Initial Teacher and Continuous Professional Development levels, which needs to focus on shifting demographics on the island, thus requiring the development of a teacher workforce that is more culturally and linguistically responsive to meet the demands of Malta's increasingly diverse classrooms.

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Appendix A

Teaching within multilingual environments questionnaire

Dear Educator,

Owing to unparalleled and rapidly changing demographics on the island, Malta finds itself shifting from bilingualism to multilingualism, effectively becoming a cultural and linguistic melting pot of sorts. This state of affairs is also mirrored in our schools through the arrival of a number of non-Maltese children speaking a variety of different languages. This has inevitably impacted our schools both culturally and linguistically and is the source of both enrichment and challenge. One such challenge sees Maltese teachers increasingly faced with having to teach young students who do not speak either English or Maltese.

The Institute for Education is attempting to address such challenges through gathering data from educators related to their experiences of multilingual classrooms, and their perceived needs in this respect. The aim of this study is to shed more light on the current situation, and to eventually offer schools guidance and practical training and consultation sessions tailor-made to specific individual needs on how to mitigate challenges related to linguistically diverse classrooms.

In order for this process to run smoothly, and for the project to succeed, we would require the input of educators themselves, therefore we would appreciate if you could kindly take the time to complete this questionnaire. All data in the questionnaire is anonymous and cannot be trailed back to you as an individual. This questionnaire will take you about 10 - 15 minutes to complete.

Please answer the following questions based on your experiences and perspectives.

1. Please state your current employment status.
   - Class Teacher
   - Supply Teacher
   - Learning Support Educator
   - Senior Leadership member

2. Teaching experience
   - 0 - 5 years
   - 5 - 10 years
   - 10 - 20 years
   - over 20 years

3. What is the year group you are currently teaching?
   - Early years
   - Junior years

4. Please state your highest academic qualification
   - O' Levels
   - A' Levels
   - Diploma
   - Bachelor's degree
   - Master's degree
   - Doctoral degree

5. What do you consider to be your first language (mother tongue)? (The language you feel most comfortable communicating in).
   - Maltese
   - English

6. What do you consider to be your second language?
   - Maltese
   - English

7. How do you feel about your proficiency in the second language?
   - Very proficient
   - Quite proficient
   - Not proficient

8. Do you speak any other languages apart from Maltese/English?
   - Yes
   - No

9. If yes, which other language/s do you speak?

10. Are you presently teaching children with diverse language backgrounds (children having different first languages/mother tongues, other than English and Maltese)?
    - Yes
    - No

11. Have you ever received training related to teaching in multilingual classroom environments?
    - Yes
    - No

12. If yes, please specify what kind of training was received.

13. What are the main benefits of teaching in multilingual classroom environments? (You may choose more than one answer).
    - Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity: In a multilingual classroom, students and teachers are exposed to diverse cultures and backgrounds. This exposure fosters cultural awareness, empathy, and sensitivity, promoting a more inclusive and respectful learning environment.
    - Enhanced Language Skills: Exposure to multiple languages in the classroom can significantly improve students' language skills.
    - Improved Communication Skills: In a multilingual classroom, students often need to find creative ways to communicate effectively, especially if they share limited language proficiency.
    - Global Perspective: Exposure to multiple languages and cultures in the classroom helps students develop a more global perspective. They can understand global issues, appreciate diversity, and collaborate with people from different linguistic backgrounds more effectively.
    - Increased Empathy and Inclusivity: Students in a multilingual classroom learn to be more empathetic towards their peers, especially those who are learning a new language.
    - Positive Teacher Development: Teaching in a multilingual classroom challenges educators to develop innovative teaching strategies and cater for diverse learning needs. It can lead to professional growth and improve the overall quality of teaching.

14. What are the greatest challenges related to teaching in multilingual classroom environments? (You may choose more than one answer).
    - Communication Barriers: Language barriers can hinder effective communication between students and teachers.
    - Language Proficiency Variability: Students in a multilingual classroom may have varying levels of proficiency in different languages. It can be challenging for teachers to cater for individual needs and ensure that all students are appropriately challenged and supported.
    - Curriculum Adaptation: Creating a curriculum that accommodates students from diverse linguistic backgrounds can be complex.
    - Limited Teaching Resources: Finding appropriate teaching materials and resources for each language represented in the classroom can be a daunting task. The availability of textbooks, educational materials, and language-specific resources may be limited.
    - Teacher Training and Professional Development: Not all teachers may be adequately prepared to teach in multilingual classrooms. Training and professional development programs focused on strategies for teaching in diverse linguistic settings are essential but not always readily available.
    - Classroom Management: Multilingual classrooms can be dynamic and diverse, which may require different approaches to classroom management. Teachers need to establish an inclusive and respectful environment where all students feel valued and engaged.
    - Parent and Community Involvement: Involving parents and the community in a multilingual classroom can be challenging if language barriers exist.

15. How many children are there in your class?
    - Less than 10
    - 10 - 20
    - Over 20

16. What is the percentage of non-Maltese/migrant children in your class?
    - 0 - 10%
    - 11 - 20%
    - 21 - 40%
    - 41 - 60%
    - 61 - 80%
    - 81 - 100%

17. What are the languages spoken by the children in your class?

18. What strategies do you employ to address language barriers and promote effective communication among multilingual students? (You may choose more than one answer).
    - Multilingual Resources: Providing instructional materials, handouts, and resources in multiple languages spoken by students in the classroom.
    - Culturally Relevant Content: Incorporating diverse and culturally relevant content that reflects the backgrounds and experiences of the students.
    - Multilingual Support: Utilising multilingual support, such as parents, other students, and/or colleagues to act as interpreters to help facilitate communication between teachers and students who speak different languages
    - Scaffolded Instruction: Breaking down complex tasks or concepts into smaller, manageable steps. Providing clear instructions and offering support as students progress through each step.
    - Language Buddies: Pairing students who speak different languages as language buddies to support each other in learning the target language and share their respective languages.
    - Technology Integration: Utilising language learning apps, online translation tools, and language-specific software to facilitate communication and language development.
    - Flexible Assessment Methods: Offering a variety of assessment methods that allow students to demonstrate their understanding in different ways, such as presentations, projects, or written assignments.
    - Culturally Responsive Teaching: Developing lessons and activities that integrate students' cultural backgrounds and experiences, creating a more inclusive and familiar learning environment.
    - Professional Development: Engaging in self-sought research and seeking professional development for teachers to enhance skills in addressing linguistic diversity, cultural responsiveness, and effective communication strategies.
    - Encouraging Language Use: Creating opportunities for students to use their native languages (including code-switching) in classroom discussions and activities, fostering a sense of identity and belonging.

19. What strategies do you employ to teach the children in your class? (You may choose more than one option).
    - Translation
    - Code-switching
    - Language groups
    - Visual aids
    - Multilingual resources
    - Culturally relevant content
    - Language buddies
    - Multilingual support (colleagues, students, parents)
    - Technology integration
    - Flexible assessment methods

20. Do you feel confident about employing these strategies?
    - Yes
    - No
    - Not sure

21. Do you incorporate culturally and linguistically relevant materials and resources in your teaching? If yes, please provide examples.

22. What is your understanding of code switching, and do you encourage it in your classroom? Why or why not?

23. How do you feel about the use of multiple languages to support learning among your multilingual students?

24. What are your thoughts on using monolingual approaches (strictly using the target language/one language) for teaching multilingual students?

25. What kind of support do you feel that non-Maltese children require to help them learn within a multilingual environment?

26. What kind of support do you feel you require to help you teach within a multilingual environment?

27. Are there any additional comments or insights you would like to share regarding teaching multilingual students?

Thank you for participating in this questionnaire!

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Enhancing teachers' multilingual language awareness through a course on language learning strategies and multilingual education

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ABSTRACT

EN Several studies have explored the effects, on teacher cognition, of language teacher education regarding multilingual approaches. However, research on the impact of teacher training in multilingual education and language learning strategies in and across two or more third languages is limited. This study aims to understand the impact of a university course regarding the use of multilingual approaches to develop language learning strategies in both Italian and Spanish as third languages. It focuses on the development of multilingual language awareness in a group of pre- and in-service teachers, with particular attention to their collaboration. To achieve this, the article examines the changes in their beliefs and teaching practices during the course. Data were collected through teachers' diaries and the teaching materials they produced. Results confirm the efficacy of teacher training in using multilingual approaches to develop learning strategies in and across languages by stimulating teachers' reflections, engaging them in operative tasks, and promoting their collaboration.

Key words: MULTILINGUAL LANGUAGE AWARENESS, LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES, MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION, PRE- AND IN-SERVICE TEACHERS, IMPACT EVALUATION

ES Varios estudios han explorado los efectos, en la cognición docente, de la formación del profesorado de idiomas sobre los enfoques multilingües. Sin embargo, la investigación sobre el impacto de la formación en la educación multilingüe y las estrategias de aprendizaje de idiomas en y entre dos o más terceras lenguas es limitada. El objetivo de este estudio es entender el impacto de un curso universitario sobre el uso de enfoques multilingües para desarrollar estrategias de aprendizaje de idiomas en italiano y español como terceras lenguas. El enfoque está en el desarrollo de la conciencia lingüística multilingüe en un grupo de profesores en formación y en servicio, con especial atención a su colaboración. Para ello, el artículo explora los cambios en sus creencias y prácticas didácticas durante el curso. Los datos se recogieron a través de los diarios de los profesores y los materiales didácticos que produjeron. Los resultados confirman la eficacia de la formación docente en el uso de la educación multilingüe para desarrollar estrategias de aprendizaje en y entre más idiomas al estimular la reflexión de los profesores, proponer tareas operativas y promover su colaboración.

Palabras clave: CONCIENCIA LINGÜÍSTICA MULTILINGÜE, ESTRATEGIAS DE APRENDIZAJE DE IDIOMAS, EDUCACIÓN MULTILINGÜE, DOCENTES EN FORMACIÓN Y EN SERVICIO, EVALUACIÓN DEL IMPACTO

IT Diversi studi hanno esplorato gli effetti sulla cognizione docente della formazione relativa agli approcci plurilingui. Tuttavia, l'impatto della formazione inerente alla didattica plurilingue e alle strategie di apprendimento linguistico in e tra due o più lingue terze è stato scarsamente studiato. Questo studio mira a comprendere l'impatto di un corso universitario riguardante l'uso degli approcci plurilingui per sviluppare le strategie di apprendimento linguistico in italiano e spagnolo come lingue terze. Il focus è sullo sviluppo della consapevolezza linguistica plurilingue in un gruppo di docenti in formazione e in servizio, con particolare attenzione alla loro collaborazione. A tal fine, l'articolo esplora i cambiamenti nelle loro convinzioni e pratiche didattiche avvenuti durante il corso. I dati sono stati raccolti attraverso i diari tenuti dagli insegnanti e i materiali didattici da loro prodotti. I risultati confermano l'efficacia della formazione dei docenti sull'uso della didattica plurilingue per sviluppare le strategie di apprendimento in e tra più lingue attraverso lo stimolo alla riflessione, lo svolgimento di compiti operativi e la promozione della loro collaborazione.

Parole chiave: CONSAPEVOLEZZA LINGUISTICA PLURILINGUE, STRATEGIE DI APPRENDIMENTO LINGUISTICO, DIDATTICA PLURILINGUE, DOCENTI IN FORMAZIONE E IN SERVIZIO, VALUTAZIONE DELL'IMPATTO

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1. Introduction

In response to the increased linguistic and cultural heterogeneity of postmodern societies, the development of the younger generation's multilingual and intercultural competences has become a central issue in European Union policy initiatives (Byram, Fleming, & Sheils, 2023; Le Pichon-Vorstman, Siarova, & Szőny, 2020; Little, 2019). Teachers play a pivotal role in the *multilingual turn* in language education, since their beliefs and teaching practices influence students' learning outcomes and beliefs regarding both the value and the use of all linguistic resources in the classroom (Conteh & Meier, 2014; Duarte & Günther-van der Meij, 2018; Guarda, & Hofer, 2021; May, 2014).

The relationship between language teachers' beliefs and teaching practices, as well as the impact of language teacher education (LTE) on the same, have attracted considerable research interest (e.g. Barcelos & Kalaja, 2013; Barnard & Burns, 2012; Borg, 2003, 2006, 2012, 2018a, 2018b; Guskey, 2002a; Kubanyiova, 2012; Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015). In the course of the last decades, several investigations have focused on teachers' ideologies and actions in relation to multilingual education (e.g. Alisaari, Heikkola, Commins & Acquah, 2019; Arocena, Cenoz & Gorter, 2015; Burner & Carlsen, 2022, 2023; Calafato, 2020; De Angelis, 2011; Goltsev, Olfert & Putjata, 2022; Haukås, 2016; Lundberg, 2019; Michala, Manoli, Lavidas, & Koustourakis, 2024; Otwinowska, 2014, 2017; Sundqvist, Gyllstad, Källkvist & Sandlund, 2021). Overall, despite teachers' positive beliefs regarding multilingualism, findings revealed that the implementation of multilingual approaches remains challenging due to a persistent lack of guidance perceived by the teachers. Therefore, the topic of teacher professionalization in multilingual education, involving both pre- and in-service teachers' biographical experiences and reflections, requires urgent attention (García & Kleyn, 2013; Putjata, Brizić, Goltsev, & Olfert, 2022; Vetter, & Slavkov, 2022).

Recently, an increased number of studies have examined teachers' perceived impact of LTE regarding multilingual education (e.g. Barros, Domke, Symons, & Ponzio, 2021; Duarte, & Günther-van der Meij, 2018, 2022; Gorter, & Arocena, 2020; Hinger, Hirzinger-Unterrainer, & Schmiderer, 2020; Lorenz, Krulatz, & Torgersen, 2021; Pohlmann-Rother, Lange, Zapfe, & Then, 2023; Portolés & Martí, 2020; Schroedler & Fisher, 2020). Nevertheless, little is known about the effects of LTE in multilingual education and language learning strategies in and across two or more third languages (L3s), also related to teachers' collaboration (Haukås, 2016; Li, 2020).

On this basis, the present study aims to explore the impact of a course, taught at an Austrian university, regarding the use of multilingual approaches to develop language learning strategies in both Italian and Spanish as L3s. It focuses on the development of multilingual language awareness as perceived by a group of pre- and in-service teachers, with particular attention to their collaboration. To address this, the study investigates two main aspects:

1) the extent to which the course influenced teachers' beliefs about using multilingual approaches to enhance language learning strategies in and across languages;
2) how the course affected their teaching practices in applying these multilingual strategies.

The article will first present the theoretical underpinnings of the impact of professional development on teachers' beliefs and teaching practices, as well as teachers' multilingual language awareness. Second, it will describe the main features of the course and the study's research methodology. Third, it will present the analysis and discussion of the data, which was gathered through teachers' diaries and the teaching materials they produced. The reduced sample size, the single-course study, and the short period of data collection limit the generalizability of the conclusions, but the promising findings encourage further research on the topic.

2. The impact of professional development on language teacher cognition

Teacher cognition (TC) corresponds to "the unobservable cognitive dimension of teaching" (Borg, 2003, p. 81). It deals with teachers' mental sphere (beliefs, knowledge, attitudes, emotions, identity etc.), and refers to all components of the teaching and learning process (teachers, students, subjects, materials, methods etc.) (Borg, 2012). TC exerts a profound impact on teachers' professional lives. On the one hand, it is influenced by teachers' prior experiences (schooling and professional coursework), other elements of their inner worlds (values, feelings, motivation etc.), and the specific features of their own teaching contexts (psychological, social, environmental etc.). On the other hand, TC shapes classroom practice and is transformed in turn by the experiences that teachers accumulate throughout their careers (Borg, 2006; Kubanyiova, & Feryok, 2015).

Research on language TC has considered both teachers' beliefs and their relationship with teaching practices (Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015). Beliefs can be defined as "specific views about what is considered to be true" (Borg, 2018b, p. 202). Teachers' beliefs are dynamic and divided into clusters, of which the earlier ones are more resistant to change. They therefore provide a basis for action and are related to teachers' development throughout the process they undergo when learning how to teach (Barcelos & Kalaja, 2013). The mutual relationship between teachers' beliefs and teaching practices has been demonstrated by numerous studies (e.g. Borg, 2003; Buehl & Beck, 2014; Sercu & St. John, 2007; Tamimy, 2015). Nevertheless, discrepancies have been detected due to cognitive and contextual factors, such as teachers' prior knowledge and sociocultural settings (Barcelos & Kalaja, 2013; Barnard & Burns, 2012; Borg, 2018a).

Investigating the design, implementation, and effects of professional development interventions (PDIs), involving both pre- and in-service teachers, contributes to enhancing the understanding of TC (Borg, 2006; Guskey, 2002b; Johnson, 2018; Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015). Research into the impact of PDIs reveals the extent to which new inputs produce meaningful changes regarding teachers' perceptions of the training content and implementation of new teaching practices, with respect to both their specific educational contexts and students' needs (Borg, 2018a; Kubanyiova, 2012). However, PDIs can affect TC as long as teachers' beliefs are taken into appropriate consideration through explicit reflective practices (Barcelos & Kalaja, 2013; Borg, 2003; Farrell, 2007). Moreover, changes in TC proved to be more effective when PDIs foster social interaction, including teachers' exchange of experiences and expertise (Barnard & Burns, 2012; Darling-Hammond, Hyler, & Gardner, 2017). Teachers' collaboration can be promoted through various strategies, such as working in groups to analyze pre-existing teaching materials and design new ones. Despite its relevance in LTE, this socio-cultural feature of TC has been underexplored. As Li (2020) reported, "there is often a lack of detail on how teachers' knowledge, understandings and beliefs are evident in their interactional work. … there is a need to examine how cognition is displayed in social interaction as an object in and through talk" (p. 51).

Due to the complex nature of teacher change, the way in which PDIs impact on teachers' beliefs and teaching practices can vary according to external and internal factors (teachers' profiles, the content of PDIs, teacher educators' competences etc.), as well as to the direction of their reciprocal influence (teachers either first change their beliefs and then implement new teaching practices, or vice versa) (Guskey, 2002a). It is also essential to distinguish between the impact that teachers perceive PDIs would have on their teaching practices and a direct verification as to whether their actions have actually changed (Borg 2018b; Farrell, 2007). In any case, including an operative-based component in PDIs supports teachers' understanding of the innovation of content and methodological proposals (Borg, 2018a).

To date, studies regarding the impact of PDIs on language TC have especially involved pre-service teachers and scarcely focused on teachers' interaction (Borg, 2015; Kubanyiova, 2012). The present study intends to contribute to this research field by considering the teacher professionalization of both current and future teachers, as well as by exploring their collaboration during a PDI. The research focuses on both teachers' beliefs and their instructional skills, regarding the ability of designing new teaching materials, and includes reported changes in their teaching practices (Borg, 2018b).

3. Teachers' multilingual language awareness

To educate students in today's superdiverse classroom, LTE programs must foster the "multilingual turn" in teacher professionalization (Conteh & Meier, 2014; May, 2014; Putjata et al., 2022). Both pre- and in-service teachers must be trained to teach learners with heterogeneous home language practices, as well as to enhance the multilingual competences of all students (García & Kleyn, 2013; Vetter & Slavkov, 2022).

As reported by several authors (e.g. De Angelis, 2011; Haukås, 2016; Jessner, 2018; Otwinowska, 2014, 2017), to become competent in the field of multilingual education, language teachers must have the following traits:

- Be multilingual themselves.
- Have developed Metalinguistic Language Awareness (MLA) and Cross-linguistic Language Awareness (XLA).
- Be familiar with multilingual theories.
- Be able to implement multilingual approaches.
- Be sensitive to students' individual differences.
- Be interested in collaborating with other teachers to promote multilingual education.

Traditionally, teachers' language awareness included their own language proficiency, MLA, and ability to transmit linguistic and intercultural knowledge to students (Andrews, 2007; Andrews & Lin, 2018; Haukås, 2018; Hiver & Whitehead, 2018; Wright, 2002). In line with the growing heterogeneity of globalized societies, this umbrella term has recently been expanded (Hélot, Frijns, van Gorp, & Sierens, 2018; Svalberg, 2016). Today, teachers' multilingual language awareness includes teachers' XLA, knowledge of multilingualism, ability to implement multilingual approaches, and psycholinguistic knowledge of students' differences (Cenoz, Gorter, & May, 2017; García, 2008; Hufeisen & Neuner, 2004; Jessner, 2006; Otwinowska, 2014). Teachers must therefore not only be able to guide students to reflect on a single language by identifying its specific system, structures, and patterns, but also train learners to relate their previously known languages with the target language(s) by consciously using language learning strategies in and across languages (Otwinowska, 2017; Vetter & Jessner, 2019). Indeed, teachers' XLA is closely related to their own multilingualism and responsive to the awareness of similarities and differences between students' linguistic repertoires and the taught language(s) (Ellis, 2016).

To promote a successful implementation of multilingual education, teachers need to be trained by playing the dual role of students and teachers, in that order. As Otwinowska (2014) points out, "teachers' own plurilingual awareness *must be developed first* [emphasis added], so that they can help their students to take advantage of their previous learning experiences and the knowledge of languages they already possess" (p. 100). Since teachers' perceptions of multilingualism and multilingual education deal especially with their personal and professional experiences, they must be made aware of their monolingual mindsets and practices through both reflexive and operative tasks in order to deconstruct them (Putjata et al., 2022; Vetter & Slavkov, 2022). Only if teachers understand how to learn multilingually, will they be able to teach effectively in a multilingual context. As Jessner (2018) states, the development of multilingual awareness requires "teacher training that focuses on developing language and language learning awareness among the teachers, students, and *teachers as learners, since language learning is a life-time process* [emphasis added]" (p. 269).

Moreover, research has demonstrated the positive effects of teachers' collaboration across language subjects to support linguistic diversity, but it has also revealed its poor implementation due to institutional and interpersonal reasons that are related to school policies and teachers' beliefs (Creese, 2005; Jessner, 2018). As a result, new PDIs fostering language teachers' interaction are required, so that participants can become aware the benefits of such interaction and start applying it in their practice (e.g. Aalto & Tarnanen, 2017; Davison, 2006; Giles, 2022; Haukås, 2016; Yoon, 2023).

Considerable literature about teachers' beliefs and teaching practices regarding multilingual education has shown that teachers in fact tend to display a more positive attitude towards students' linguistic and cultural diversity compared to what they actually practice in their classroom, due to their restricted knowledge of multilingual approaches (Burner & Carlsen, 2023). Among the latest studies, Alisaari et al. (2019) examined 820 teachers' ideologies and actions in different school levels and subjects in Finland. Their beliefs about multilingualism were mainly positive, but most of them were implementing monolingual teaching practices without considering students' linguistic repertoires as learning resources. Similarly, Sundqvist et al. (2021) investigated 139 English teachers' beliefs and teaching practices at Swedish secondary schools. Although almost all had a positive opinion of multilingualism and half had often discussed the idea of teaching in a multilingual classroom, 22% considered multilingualism a problem within the school context, and only 15% had been trained in multilingual education. Equally, Burner and Carlsen (2022) explored 21 teachers' qualifications, perceptions, and teaching practices at a secondary school for newly arrived students in Norway. Despite having some basic knowledge of multilingual approaches, these teachers believed that language learning occurs stepwise and focused on Norwegian rather than valuing students' previously known languages.

At the same time, recent investigations have shown the benefits of PDIs regarding multilingual education in teachers' beliefs and teaching practices, whilst confirming the complexities of teacher change. For example, Gorter and Arocena (2020) showed the positive evolution of 124 in-service teachers' ideologies regarding separating languages, mixing languages, and languages supporting each other in the Basque Country, after attending a PDI on multilingual approaches that they intended to implement in the near future. Likewise, Schroedler and Fisher (2020) demonstrated the interdependence between positive beliefs and structured opportunities to engage with topics related to multilingualism and linguistic diversity provided to 296 pre-service teachers who participated in a teacher training course on multilingualism at the University of Hamburg. Conversely, Portolés and Martí (2020) investigated 121 pre-service teachers' beliefs about the teaching of English in the Valencian Community and found that, although they became more favorable towards multilingualism after being trained in multilingual education, monolingual bias still persisted in their

ideologies. Lorenz et al. (2021) researched the impact of a monthly PDI on multilingual education on 3 English teachers at a Norwegian primary school, and discovered that, despite developing positive beliefs about multilingualism, teachers still failed to employ multilingual education systematically. To sum up, teachers could have positive views on multilingualism, also thanks to PDIs, but seem to possess limited knowledge of how to implement multilingual approaches, which makes them reluctant to apply such approaches regularly. Therefore, it is essential to build teachers' multilingual language awareness by developing innovative PDIs and exploring their impact (García, 2008).

However, too few studies have investigated the effects of PDIs regarding multilingual education that engage teachers as both learners and practitioners, while fostering collaboration among them (Haukås, 2016; Jessner, 2018; Otwinowska, 2014). Little is known about teachers' multilingual language awareness, and to what extent they implement multilingual approaches to support the cross-linguistic transfer of language learning strategies (Haukås, 2018; Hiver & Whitehead, 2018). Moreover, research regarding teacher training in multilingual education and language learning strategies in and across two or more L3s is scarce (Hinger et al., 2020). To the best of my knowledge, no investigation has explored the impact of a PDI regarding the use of multilingual approaches to develop language learning strategies in Italian and Spanish as L3s. This study aims to fill this gap.

4. The research context

The study was carried out during a course regarding the use of multilingual approaches to foster the simultaneous acquisition of two L3s (Italian and Spanish), as well as the cross-linguistic transfer of language learning strategies. The course was held by the researcher at an Austrian university in A. Y. 2021-22.

Austria aligns with European language policies that encourage learning multiple languages at school. The Austrian education system supports language learning from an early age, starting with the study of the first foreign language (typically English) in primary education. In secondary education, students introduce a second foreign language among a wide range of options (typically French, Italian, and Spanish). Both Italian and Spanish are usually offered as optional subjects in the Gymnasium (the grammar school branch), where a second modern foreign language or Latin becomes compulsory from the third grade onwards (Council of Europe, 2008a, 2008b)[1]. Recent statistics show that, although French is still the second most commonly learned foreign language, the percentage of students studying it has slightly fallen over the past decade. In contrast, Spanish has gained increasing popularity and is now learned by more than 20% of students. Italian is primarily taught in regions with historical ties and geographical proximity to Italy, such as Tyrol and Carinthia, and is studied by 15% of students (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2023).

The course was developed throughout nine lessons, which took place over eight weeks, for a total of 27 hours. Preliminary knowledge of both Italian and Spanish was required (an A2 level at least). Oxford's (1990) taxonomy of language learning strategies was adopted due to its widespread employment in third language acquisition (TLA) (Jessner, 2018). Although all multilingual approaches were introduced in accordance with the purposes of the course, Integrated Didactic Approach (IDA) to the studied languages and Pedagogical Translanguaging (PT) were mainly implemented (Candelier & Manno, 2023; Cenoz & Gorter, 2021).

During the course, teachers both experimented and created multilingual activities while collaborating. After a short theoretical introduction (lessons 1-2), they focused on four teaching units (TUs) created by the researcher in both L3s (lessons 3-6). Each TU developed different language skills and language learning strategies through IDA and PT, adhered to the goals of quality education, gender equality, and reduced inequalities of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (United Nations, 2015), dealt with multilingual and intercultural topics (the connection between language, culture, and identity, the relationship between standard language and language varieties, inclusive language etc.), and included authentic materials (excerpts of literary texts, TED Talks, articles etc.) and social mediation methods (peer education, cooperative learning). Then, working in groups, teachers created and presented new TUs, aimed at developing language learning

[1] For further information on the Austrian education system, see https://www.bmbwf.gv.at/en/Topics/school/school_syst.html, https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-education-systems/austria/teaching-and-learning-general-lower-secondary-education, https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-education-systems/austria/teaching-and-learning-general-upper-secondary-education.

strategies in the same L3s and through the multilingual approaches, content, and resources they had experimented (lessons 7-8). Finally, teachers wrote individual reflection papers on the course (lesson 9).

5. The study

The study explored the impact of course participation on the development of teachers' multilingual language awareness. It investigated changes in language TC related to the enhancement of language learning strategies in both Italian and Spanish as L3s through the implementation of multilingual education. Two research questions (RQs) were formulated:

- RQ1: To what extent did the course impact on teachers' beliefs regarding the use of multilingual approaches to develop language learning strategies in and across languages?
- RQ2: To what extent did the course impact on teachers' teaching practices regarding the use of multilingual approaches to develop language learning strategies in and across languages?

By examining teaching practices, teachers' perceptions regarding their collaboration were also investigated.

6. Method

The research adopted a qualitative approach, followed a constructivist paradigm, and consisted of a single, instrumental, and longitudinal case study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Hatch, 2002; Yin, 2018). Research into the impact of LTE on TC has traditionally followed qualitative approaches by focusing on individual or small groups and examining their cognitive, affective, and behavioral development throughout a prolonged period (Borg, 2012, 2015; Kubanyiova, 2012). Prospective impact evaluations should be preferred to retrospective ones, since they ensure the wide distribution of more reliable information during PDIs through multi-stage data collection (Borg, 2018b). Moreover, qualitative approaches are recommended for researching multilingual education within multilingual contexts, since they foster participants' reflection on teaching and learning languages against the backdrop of discrepancy between the linguistic diversity of today's societies and the persistence of monolingual norms (Dooly & Moore, 2017).

In this study, primarily textual data were collected to investigate how teachers interacted with multilingual approaches to develop language learning strategies in a natural setting and throughout the entire course. The objective was to provide a detailed description of the training process, as well as to investigate the change in teachers' beliefs and teaching practices by examining their subjective multiple interpretations and co-constructed understandings of the course content (Borg, 2018b; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2017; Creswell, 2014).

6.1. Participants

The study involved a multilingual group of six teachers (n=5 female, n=1 male), aged 20-50+ (n=2 aged 20-30, n=1 aged 31-40, n=2 aged 41-50, n=1 aged 50+), of Austrian (n=5) and Spanish (n=1) nationality. Half had Spanish-speaking backgrounds (Venezuelan, Peruvian, and Cuban). Their mother tongues were Spanish (n=4) and German (n=3) (one teacher indicated both, having been born in Austria and spent their teenage years in Spain). They spoke between four and eleven further languages and language varieties (German/Spanish, English, Italian, French, Slovenian, Portuguese, Latin, Catalan, Galician, Basque, and Leonese). Their self-assessed language level in Spanish (n=1 level A2-B1, n=5 level C2) was higher than in Italian (n=2 level B1-B2, n=4 level B2-C1). Half were already working as teachers (n=1 of Italian, n=1 of Spanish, n=1 of both English and Italian), whereas the other half were still training. More than half (n=4) were already familiar with language learning strategies, whereas the others had no prior knowledge of them. All teachers were enrolled in the university and attended the course on a voluntary basis.

This background information was collected at the beginning of the course through a preliminary questionnaire. On that occasion, the objectives and procedures of the study were introduced, and informed consent was obtained. Data confidentiality and anonymity were promised and secured by pseudonyms (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2017; Dörnyei, 2007).

6.2. Procedure

Changes in TC as a result of PDIs can be detected by introspective and ethnographic instruments that allow teachers' beliefs to emerge through their own words, show the interplay between teachers' thinking and actions, and refer to contextual factors (Borg, 2019). In this study, data were gathered from teachers' diaries and the analysis of the teaching materials they had produced.

6.2.1. Teachers' diaries

Teachers were asked to keep two types of diaries (see Appendix). All questions aimed at investigating teachers' beliefs and teaching practices indirectly, an approach that was more likely to produce a clear and sincere response than directly asking for opinions on a specific topic (Borg, 2018b). The questions were written in both Italian and Spanish. Teachers could choose to answer in either language to give full rein to their in-depth reflections. One teacher chose Italian, while the others preferred Spanish. The diaries followed an interval-contingent design (Bolger, Davis, & Rafaeli, 2003) since teachers were expected to provide their impressions on a lesson-by-lesson basis. The aim was to stimulate retrospective, well thought-out, and accurate reflections to increase teachers' awareness of their TC, as well as their multilingual language awareness, throughout the training process (Dörnyei, 2007; Moon, 2006).

Diary 1 was administered in lessons 3-8. It included three reflective questions, presented separately, exploring teachers' training in language learning strategies (lessons 3-6), working in groups (lesson 7), and sharing ideas among colleagues (lesson 8). Teachers were required to share their perceptions of the TUs by answer these questions in public forum posts on the platform of the course within a week (after the end of a lesson and before the beginning of the next one). Diary 2 was administered in lesson 9. It consisted of three reflective questions, submitted together, examining teachers' overall perceptions of the course (questions 2-3 were inspired by Davies & Dart, 2005; Borg, 2018b). To encourage the elaboration of personal and detailed ideas, teachers were asked to answer by writing individual reflections at the end of the lesson.

All teachers succeeded in keeping regular records of the investigated aspects. The teachers' diaries included a total of 8,791 words, with an average of 1,465 words per teacher.

6.2.2. Teaching materials

The teaching materials, gathered in lesson 8, consisted of two TUs produced by two groups of three teachers. Data collection was based on three criteria that were connected with the competences that the teachers were expected to develop by means of the course:

- The enhancement of language competences and MLA: whether the activities fostered the improvement of reading, listening, writing, or speaking skills, as well as the ability to reflect on languages.
- The development of XLA: whether the activities promoted the training of a variety of language learning strategies to foster the cross-linguistic transfer.
- The use of multilingual approaches: whether the activities supported the development of multilingual competences through IDA and PT.

6.3. Analysis

An interpretive content analysis procedure was adopted for a detailed and contextualized understanding of TC (Borg, 2012; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Dörnyei, 2007). Data from teachers' diaries were transcribed in Word documents, and transferred to *NVivo 12* together with the teaching materials. All were read thoroughly, divided into separate codes (initial coding), clustered, and compressed into broader and significant categories (second-level coding) (Creswell, 2014). The codes were both predetermined and emerging: predetermined codes were identified deductively from the reference literature (e.g. "developing multilingual and intercultural competences" referred to an effective L3 course) and from the three above-mentioned criteria; emerging codes materialized inductively from data analysis (e.g. "demanding" referred to collaboration among colleagues). The iterative process of data analysis made it possible to verify preliminary interpretations and include new themes. To support claims, extensive references to teachers' primary data were provided through relevant quotes and a detailed description of the teaching materials.

7. Results

Results are presented according to the RQs, concerning teachers' beliefs (RQ1) and teaching practices (RQ2).

7.1. Teachers' beliefs

To answer RQ1, data from diary 1 (question 1: "Which multilingual language learning strategies are useful to you, as a teacher?") and diary 2 (question 2: "In your opinion, which characteristics should an effective L3 course have today?") were considered.

7.1.1. Diary 1

Each TU focused on a specific language skill (reading, listening, writing, or speaking), and aimed to develop all language learning strategies (metacognitive, affective, social, compensation, memory, and cognitive) through both IDA and PT. This connection is shown in Table 1, which presents a list of all TUs (first column), as well as the lists of all strategies and approaches (second and third columns) used in each TU. To reflect on each TU, teachers considered all the developed language learning strategies through the two multilingual approaches.

Table 1

Teaching units, language learning strategies, and multilingual approaches

Teaching Units	Language learning strategies	Multilingual approaches
	Metacognitive strategies	
TU1: Reading skills and strategies	Affective strategies	Integrated Didactic Approaches
TU2: Listening skills and strategies	Social strategies	Pedagogical Translanguaging
TU3: Writing skills and strategies	Compensation strategies	
TU4: Speaking skills and strategies	Memory strategies	
	Cognitive strategies	

As far as reading strategies are concerned (TU1), teachers observed that metacognitive strategies can be fostered by dividing the lesson into *before*, *during*, and *after* reading activities, as well as by including final self-assessment exercises. Although affective strategies concern students' individual characteristics, teachers recognized that they can be used to encourage students to express their opinions, fight their fears of being penalized because of mistakes, and express their satisfaction with their language progress. Teachers noted that social strategies allow students to gain confidence in sharing their ideas and in verifying the comprehension of a text through pair and group work, which stimulates the exchange of questions and reflections. They also considered that compensation strategies are essential to gain a global understanding of a text through activities to be carried out both before reading and while examining the text from different points of view. Finally, teachers noted that involving students' entire linguistic repertoires contributed to training memory and cognitive strategies. This can be seen in Excerpt 1 and Excerpt 2:

Excerpt 1.

> "Teachers should create links between the languages known by students and the target language to facilitate memorizing the content they have just learned. One way to create such links is to tell anecdotes. I personally will not forget that "Ma chi ti è?" [a dialect expression from an Italian text in TU1] is not used by all Italians, or even by the professor. Cognitive strategies are relevant too, since comparing languages makes similarities and differences visible. This is also possible by reflecting on translations and revisions in order to understand whether the original essence of the text has been preserved or lost." (Ana)

Excerpt 2.

> "I would love to implement cognitive strategies in my language class, dealing especially with interlingual comparison, but it is very difficult, as they are an unknown concepts for many of the students. I am interested in understanding how to apply them and I hope to find new ideas during the course." (Lilli)

Ana's reflection (Excerpt 1) highlights giving value to students' prior linguistic knowledge to enhance their understanding and retention of new content. The anecdote she provided underscores the effectiveness of such connections in clarifying linguistic and cultural nuances. Lilli's comment (Excerpt 2) emphasizes the challenges teachers face when introducing cognitive strategies to students who are unfamiliar with them. Her interest in finding practical ways to implement these strategies shows the need for teacher training to bridge this gap.

As concerns listening strategies (TU2), teachers recognized the relevance of metacognitive strategies to plan, organize, and self-assess the acquisition of oral competences. By referring to the K-L-W Chart, teachers observed the utility of metacognitive strategies throughout the TU. At the beginning, it activates students' previous knowledge, interests, and motivation. During the TU, it allows the teacher to adapt activities according to students' preferences and needs. At the end, it stimulates students' reflections on their own progress and difficulties, which teachers should take into account when planning the following lessons. Teachers noted that the promotion of social strategies through peer education and cooperative learning stimulates interaction both before and after the listening activities. These procedures also contribute to training affective strategies in order to reduce the anxiety that students may experience while listening to the foreign language. Teachers considered that compensation strategies, which are promoted through images, synonyms, and periphrases, are fundamental to both introduce and accompany listening activities. They also observed that memory strategies can be enhanced by including multilingual and intercultural activities, such as matching untranslatable words and expressions to the corresponding languages and identifying the most interesting concept in a listening practice and later discussing them in groups. Teachers realized that cognitive strategies can be trained through a variety of activities aimed at practicing communicative content with different purposes, such as revising listening comprehension through debates, summaries, and comparisons between languages. As regards translation, teachers claimed that comparing Anglicisms and English loan words in Italian, Spanish, and other languages to explore word origins can serve as a valuable tool for promoting reflection on language functioning and providing practical applications in multilingual classrooms. This can be observed in Excerpt 3 and Excerpt 4:

Excerpt 3.

> "I thought translation was not always an adequate technique to promote cognitive strategies, since the target language should be used as much as possible. Instead, I realized that it is useful to reflect on the functioning of languages." (Jan)

Excerpt 4.

> "The activities focused on comparing both Anglicisms and English loan words in Italian, Spanish, and other languages showed me how to apply cognitive strategies within the multilingual classroom. The training of cognitive strategies gave me new ideas for future activities, so that students can become more and more autonomous in using them." (Lilli)

Jan's observation (Excerpt 3) illustrates the initial hesitation some teachers may feel about using translation to promote cognitive strategies. However, its usefulness in fostering a deeper understanding of language functioning demonstrates that translation is a powerful tool in the multilingual classroom, as it balances target language use with the comparison of structures across languages. Lilli's reflection (Excerpt 4) reveals the practical advantages of integrating cognitive strategies into multilingual teaching. Her positive experience with linguistic comparisons inspired innovative activities and demonstrated the potential of cognitive strategies to empower learners to take ownership of their language development.

During TU2, teachers' reflections moved from considering one single strategy to analyzing multiple strategies within the same multilingual exercise. This can be noticed in Excerpt 5:

Excerpt 5.

> "Listening to a language and then discussing the same topic in another language involves a simultaneous use of social, compensation, memory, and cognitive strategies, and thus supports multiple language acquisition at many levels. It is like a strategy bombardment!" (Ana)

Ana's comment (Excerpt 5) emphasizes the dynamic and multifaceted nature of multilingual activities, which support a holistic approach to language learning by integrating multiple strategies. Her description of this process as a "strategy bombardment" highlights the required intense engagement.

As for writing strategies (TU3), teachers observed that metacognitive strategies can be effectively taught by dividing the written process into several steps, such as building a semantic map to organize ideas, employing labels in bilingual word walls, and encouraging peer correction. Despite reaffirming the subjective components of affective strategies, teachers acknowledged the importance of choosing a motivating topic to promote students' writing. Furthermore, teachers realized how different strategies can be combined within the same multilingual exercise, and are therefore "difficult to circumscribe" (Vega). Teachers stated that pre-writing activities play a crucial role in engaging students, fostering their motivation, and preparing them for written production by actively involving multiple strategies. This can be seen in Excerpt 6 and Excerpt 7:

Excerpt 6.

> "Brainstorming, applied at both individual and group levels and including more than one language, is an infallible strategy to motivate students to speak freely. At the same time, students train affective, social, and compensation strategies while being introduced to the topic of the lesson." (Inés)

Excerpt 7.

> "We spent a lot of time on preparatory activities, in which all strategies were somehow involved. In my opinion, this aimed at enhancing multilingual skills, considering students' individual differences, and involving them actively in written production, which is more difficult than passive reception." (Ana)

Inés's observation (Excerpt 6) demonstrates the effectiveness of brainstorming as a pre-writing activity in multilingual contexts. By engaging students in more than one language, it fosters the simultaneous use of multiple strategies, setting the stage for more structured writing tasks. Ana's reflection (Excerpt 7) highlights the importance of dedicating time to preparatory activities that integrate various strategies and languages, thus creating an inclusive learning environment and facilitating successful written production.

By reflecting on writing exercises, teachers emphasized the effectiveness of collaboratively constructing a bilingual text, reading each other's writing, and discussing revisions in multiple languages. These activities helped integrate various strategies, support peer interaction, and encourage the development of multilingual skills. This can be noticed in Excerpt 8:

Excerpt 8.

> "These activities are very complete because they combine all the strategies we have studied. The cooperative activity fosters peer interaction in both Italian and Spanish, as well as peer learning of new strategies. As regards the compensation, memory, and cognitive strategies, by writing an argumentative text, students seek favorable and contrary theses, revise their previous knowledge of the topic, consider what they have just read and discussed with their peers, elaborate their ideas, and practice both Italian and Spanish. By doing multilingual activities, students are also encouraged to compare further languages by translating, using synonyms etc." (Vega)

Vega's comment (Excerpt 8) reveals the comprehensive nature of multilingual writing activities. Her detailed account illustrates how cooperative activities can foster peer interaction in multiple languages by promoting mutual learning and the simultaneous use of several strategies. These activities help students develop critical thinking skills and deepen their understanding across languages.

As regards speaking strategies (TU4), teachers realized the importance of training all strategies through cooperative exercises like Jot Thoughts, the observation of posters and leaflets, the reading of articles in both Italian and Spanish, and the revision of either grammar or vocabulary content in the two L3s. They understood that social and affective strategies can be promoted through pair and group discussions, which activate students' previous knowledge, support the exchange of opinions and, by doing so, reduce their anxiety about discussing complex and challenging topics. Teachers noted that compensation, memory, and cognitive strategies can be fostered by using multilingual sources, as well as bilingual word walls regarding the most

relevant content and vocabulary connected to the topic of the lesson. Teachers concluded that the whole set of strategies should be developed, especially through cooperative activities such as the debate, where students subsequently support opposing theses using the two L3s. This can be observed in Excerpt 9 and Excerpt 10:

Excerpt 9.

> "During speaking activities, students should regulate their own emotions and focus on the content, since they must argue both for and against a thesis. In this way, they use various strategies: besides affective and cognitive strategies, they collect information to support their ideas (metacognitive strategies), share the opinions of their group and interact with those who defend an opposite position (social strategies), speak fluently in both Italian and Spanish although they do not know all the terms that they would otherwise use in their mother tongue (compensation strategies), use key words and concepts dealing with the topic of discussion (memory strategies)." (Jan)

Excerpt 10.

> "The speaking activities involve all strategies. Looking for vocabulary and arguments to support an idea you disagree with and in various languages is a double challenge, which requires the use of compensation, memory, and cognitive strategies. Students train all the aspects of social strategies, too: cooperation, interaction, empathy." (Inés)

Jan's reflection (Excerpt 9) demonstrates the multifaceted demands of speaking activities, which require students to use several strategies to manage emotions, articulate ideas in multiple languages, and collaborate effectively. Inés's observation (Excerpt 10) reinforces the complexity of such activities and emphasizes their role in strengthening meaningful communication and building confidence in a multilingual setting.

Teachers also agreed on the importance of carefully choosing the topic of discussion, which should be appropriate and challenging in terms of students' age, language skills, and interests in order to foster their participation and contribute to developing affective and social strategies. Teachers recognized that oral production can be facilitated by introducing similar topics and grammar and/or vocabulary content in previous lessons, as experienced in TU3, dealing with inclusive language focused on Italian and Spanish connectives, and TU4, regarding family systems in Italy and Spain, with the revision of Italian and Spanish connectives. This can be observed in Excerpt 11:

Excerpt 11.

> "Choosing a topic that is closely linked to the previous written activities is of the utmost importance. In this way, students already have a general knowledge of the vocabulary related to the theme and of how to support their ideas in multiple languages. This is useful not just to train affective and social strategies, since speaking about a completely new topic would be more difficult and counter-productive, but also to enhance metacognitive, compensation, memory, and cognitive strategies. The oral activities probed the issue more deeply and fostered information retrieval, repetition, and integration." (Ana)

Ana's comment (Excerpt 11) underscores the value of continuity in topic selection by emphasizing how linking oral activities to prior written exercises can create a smoother transition for students. It not only reduces anxiety by building on familiar vocabulary and content across languages, but also engages various strategies, promotes meaningful participation in discussions, and improves multilingual competences.

7.1.2. Diary 2

According to teachers, today an effective L3 course should aim to:

- Train mediation skills.
- Develop multilingual and intercultural competences.
- Teach all language learning strategies through multilingual approaches.

As regards the training of communicative competence by paying attention to mediation skills, teachers referred to the Austrian school system, which has changed in recent decades due to globalization. They also mentioned the classes where they were either teaching or doing university internships, which included many foreign students and Austrian learners with migrant backgrounds. Teachers highlighted the close relationship between language and culture, and stressed the importance of teaching students not just to express their own ideas but also to consider their interlocutors' needs, opinions, and emotions. They considered that students should be trained to become more empathetic and flexible, while facilitating and managing interaction in and across languages, to recognize and overcome risks of misunderstanding. This can be noticed in Excerpt 12:

Excerpt 12.

> "An effective L3 course should include a balanced mix of all language learning strategies considering the context of a globalized world in which many languages and cultures interact. Students should learn to develop their emotional intelligence, which does not mean losing their roots or the denial/replacement of their own culture and convictions. They should learn effective communication skills, be aware if these are not working, adapt their language and communicative style, listen actively, and try to solve possible conflicts." (Inés)

Inés's reflection (Excerpt 12) highlights the importance of teaching students to cultivate adaptability and manage communication flexibly in a multilingual and multicultural world. Her emphasis on balancing language learning strategies with the development of empathy and active listening underscores the need for students to mediate across languages and cultures while maintaining their own cultural identity.

Concerning the development of multilingual and intercultural competences, teachers stressed the importance of acknowledging and giving value to students' linguistic and cultural diversity. Students should be guided to consciously employ their previously known languages and past language learning experiences in order to connect them with the target language(s). To this end, they agreed on the essential contribution of multilingual approaches, especially IDA and PT. This can be seen in Excerpt 13, Excerpt 14, and Excerpt 15:

Excerpt 13.

> "Today an effective L3 course should be communication-oriented and open to individual differences, as we perceive them in our classes. Students' pre-existing knowledge must be considered when planning the lessons. Teachers must finally move away from 'medieval' methods based only on grammar and vocabulary learning. Instead, they should exploit the characteristics of the school context and reinforce students' learning strategies." (Lilli)

Excerpt 14.

> "Teachers should promote students' participation in the L3 classroom by focusing on the comprehension and transmission of ideas, collaborating with peers, and exploiting entire linguistic repertoires, instead of considering only grammatical and lexical correctness, and error correction. This would give value to students' individual differences and reduce anxiety about speaking a foreign language." (Layla)

Excerpt 15.

> "The course should draw on all students' previous linguistic and cultural knowledge to foster the interaction between languages. No matter how good students' level of proficiency is, if they ignore the sociocultural, geographical, and historical framework related to the target language, they will never understand its pragmatic dimension and will encounter misunderstandings. According to the types of course, teachers can employ a variety of multilingual approaches. The integrated didactic approach and pedagogical translanguaging are particularly suitable for transferring language learning strategies across languages." (Vega)

Lilli's reflection (Excerpt 13) underscores the need for modern L3 courses to prioritize meaningful communication. Her comment advocates for more dynamic and inclusive teaching methods that develop

language learning strategies while valuing students' entire linguistic repertoires. Layla's observation (Excerpt 14) reinforces the need to move beyond traditional teaching methods to embrace the uniqueness of each student, promote diversity, and support a multilingual learning environment. Vega's comment (Excerpt 15) highlights the role of multilingual and intercultural approaches, such as IDA and PT, in drawing on students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds and fostering deeper language understanding and exchange. As regards teaching all language learning strategies, teachers considered the benefits of using multilingual education to facilitate transfer across L3s. For example, Ana explained that she had already started to successfully implement multilingual approaches with a Mexican student. This can be noted in Excerpt 16:

Excerpt 16.

> "An effective L3 course should take advantage of students' multilingual repertoires. Communicating does not simply mean translating a sentence from one language to another or using prefabricated expressions. Students must learn to exploit all their linguistic resources and manipulate information in different languages by interacting in multilingual contexts. During my current university internship, I have been flanking a Mexican student and have realized the usefulness of implementing language learning strategies through multilingual approaches to support his acquisition and keep him engaged. This student has worked in collaboration with an Austrian classmate to develop the same task using both Spanish and German. As a result, they have exchanged their knowledge and learned from each other. Mediation strategies as well as multilingual and intercultural competences are useful for the whole class, since they foster students' participation and give value to individual differences." (Ana)

Ana's comment (Excerpt 16) highlights the many advantages of using multilingual approaches. Her experience with a Mexican student and an Austrian classmate exemplifies how mediation strategies not only support individual learners but also create a more collaborative environment, fostering peer learning and helping all students develop multilingual and intercultural competences.

7.2. Teachers' teaching practices

RQ2 was answered using data gathered from diary 1 (question 2: "How was creating multilingual activities by working in group?", question 3: "How was observing your colleagues' multilingual activities and receiving feedback about yours?"), diary 2 (question 1: "Consider your initial expectations: did the course meet them? Why?", question 3: "Which is the most significant change that the course will bring to your teaching practices?"), and the teaching materials.

7.2.1. Diary 1

Teachers viewed collaboration with their colleagues as an enriching experience at the cognitive, emotional, and social level. They believed that the creation of new TUs by working in groups was:

- Motivating: Teachers discovered new opinions and different perspectives regarding the development of the same task, felt stimulated to provide ideas, and learned from their colleagues' teaching experiences.
- Collaborative: Teachers realized that working in groups allowed them to plan lessons faster, strengthen their proposals, learn to reach compromises and agreements, as well as respect and value everyone's skills. Lilli claimed as follows: "Each of us has unique capacities. One is fastest at writing, the other is good at finding vocabulary… We divided the activity so that each participant could do what she/he does best".
- Demanding: Teachers found it complicated to consider many different elements, such as choosing the topic, defining students' language proficiency level, planning preparatory activities. Jan wrote: "Adapting the resources for a B1 level was difficult. However, having been given many concrete examples beforehand, and having learned both the strategies and the use of multilingual approaches, it was easier than it would have been without this preparation during the course".

- Engaging: Teachers enjoyed producing new materials, exchanging ideas, and listening to their colleagues' viewpoints. Inés sustained the following: "I always like working in groups. Collecting different ideas and not just focusing on oneself is much more fun for me".
- Affective: teachers helped each other to overcome difficulties, got to know their colleagues better, established emotional ties.

Teachers also appreciated the mutual presentation of TUs and the ensuing debate. Each teacher described a part of the group's activities, highlighting the multilingual approaches on which they were based and the language learning strategies they intended to develop. The other group asked questions, made observations and comments, as did the researcher, who moderated the discussion. Teachers considered such tasks:

- Stimulating: Teachers improved their critical skills by analysing their colleagues' activities and discovered alternative exercises aimed at developing the same skills through IDA and PT. Layla stated as follows: "It was fascinating to me that my focus in observing presentations regarded these questions: Does the other group have activities in common with us? What ideas justify their choices?".
- Constructive: Teachers reinforced their knowledge and competences in both language learning strategies and multilingual approaches by explaining their application in the TUs, as well as by listening to the other group doing the same. This enabled them to expand their repertoire of activities and receive constructive feedback. Vega wrote: "I have collected new ideas and exercises that I can add to what my group has already produced. It will all be useful in my future classes".
- Varied: Teachers appreciated the diversity of the tasks, the opportunity to get actively involved, and the chance to apply what they had learned during the course.
- Supporting: Thanks to the exchange with their colleagues, teachers felt more confident with their own ideas, better understood the strengths and the weaknesses of their activities, and found confirmation of the competences they had developed during the course. They claimed as follows: "Through the debate I felt more convinced of both the exercises and my ideas on language learning strategies and multilingual approaches" (Ana); "Thanks to the other group's feedback it is easier to evaluate effective proposals, as well as the aspects that should be improved or included" (Vega); "The inclusion of multilingualism in all our activities and at different levels (cognitive, social, metacognitive etc.) demonstrates that at the end of the course we all agree on the fact that students' linguistic background must be considered in every language lesson" (Lilli).

7.2.2. Diary 2

With respect to their initial expectations about the course, teachers:

- Learned new language learning strategies.
- Enhanced their multilingual competences.
- Innovated their teaching practices.

All teachers learned new language learning strategies to simultaneously teach two L3s through multilingual approaches by both reflecting on the language learning strategies used in the four TUs, and designing their own activities. Teachers recognized that discussing the topics of the course was beneficial at both learning and teaching levels, since they learned how to transfer the use of multilingual approaches from students' to teachers' perspectives. This can be seen in Excerpt 17 and Excerpt 18:

Excerpt 17.

> "We reflected on language learning strategies and multilingual approaches by playing both the students' and the teachers' roles. By doing so, I understood how these strategies and approaches can help me while learning, and how I could implement them while teaching." (Ana)

Excerpt 18.

> "Reflecting on my own learning preferences, learning styles, and types of intelligences allowed me to better understand students, as well as to be more aware of these factors

> when planning a lesson. Observing and creating activities permitted me to recognize the variety of strategies and the reasons for their use, in order to design well-balanced activities that could be appropriate for every student." (Jan)

Ana's observation (Excerpt 17) illustrates how teachers can benefit from adopting the dual perspective of both students and teachers. By reflecting on her own experience, Ana felt she had enhanced her overall approach to multilingual education. Jan's comment (Excerpt 18) underscores the importance of self-awareness in teaching, which enabled him to design more effective activities tailored to the diverse needs of his students. The pre-service teachers felt that designing their own TU enhanced their multilingual competences. This can be observed in Excerpt 19:

Excerpt 19.

> "While creating the activities in groups, we were required to use Italian and Spanish and it is also in this way that you learn, isn't it?". (Layla)

Layla's comment (Excerpt 19) emphasizes how the process of creating activities in multiple languages directly contributed to fostering her multilingualism. By engaging in group work and using several languages, she gained hands-on experience that reinforced her multilingual competences in a practical context.

For in-service teachers, both the reflections on and the design of activities modernized their teaching practices. This can be noticed in Excerpt 20:

Excerpt 20.

> "I learned new approaches and rediscovered strategies. After more than twenty years at school, one might end up doing similar activities and preparing them without considering the theories on which they are based. Now I feel that my toolbox has been renovated. It is also clearer to me why I am using certain activities, so I can design a lesson with greater awareness." (Lilli)

Lilli's observation (Excerpt 20) underscores the transformative impact of the PDI in making her lesson design more intentional and informed. After years of teaching, Lilli felt she had reconnected with the theoretical foundations of her practices and refreshed her teaching toolbox.

The most significant change that the course brought to teachers' teaching practices was a greater awareness of:

- The need for a balanced use of all language learning strategies.
- The benefits of using multilingual education to foster the cross-linguistic transfer of language learning strategies.

Teachers realized the importance of mastering and applying all the language learning strategies they intend to use in their future lessons in a balanced way. By carrying out the four TUs and reflecting from students' perspectives, they experienced the benefits of developing not just direct, but also indirect, strategies, something that had been neglected by both their former language teachers and themselves (the in-service ones) due to lack of knowledge. As a result, teachers understood the importance of valuing students' individual differences, exploiting their previous knowledge, fostering peer education and cooperative learning, and stimulating self-assessment. This is necessary to implement more inclusive teaching practices and promote autonomy in language learning, as can be seen in Excerpt 21, Excerpt 22, and Excerpt 23:

Excerpt 21.

> "The course started an awareness-raising process regarding the reasons why I use certain strategies and how I design a lesson. I have learned that affective strategies are extremely varied, and I should therefore pay more attention to students' individual differences, which is not always easy when classes are numerous." (Lilli)

Excerpt 22.

> "This course had a profound impact on the planning of my lessons. I am currently teaching Italian to a small but heterogeneous group of adult learners. Therefore, strategies play a key role. The aspect that I want to put more into practice is self-assessment, since I have noticed its usefulness in supporting autonomous learning. I also intend to employ more social strategies, which I have not done so much due to my own learning preferences – now I am aware of that!" (Jan)

Excerpt 23.

> "Compared to the foreign languages courses that I attended at school, this course showed me the importance of investigating students' previous knowledge and experience, including many preparatory and retrospective exercises, such as the K-W-L Chart, and providing students with the best conditions in which to carry out activities, also using multiple languages." (Layla)

Lilli's observation (Excerpt 21) highlights her growing awareness of the importance of affective strategies in language learning, despite the challenge of accommodating diverse individual needs, particularly in large classes. Jan's comment (Excerpt 22) reveals how the PDI increased his self-awareness, which in turn positively influenced his lesson planning, especially in incorporating self-assessment and social strategies. Layla's reflection (Excerpt 23) underscores the significance of building on students' prior knowledge in multiple languages to create better conditions for carrying out language activities. Teachers also agreed on the potential of using multilingual approaches to promote the cross-linguistic transfer of language learning strategies, considering the multilingual context in which they were living, training (pre-service teachers), and working (in-service teachers). This can be observed in Excerpt 24, Excerpt 25, Excerpt 26, and Excerpt 27:

Excerpt 24.

> "This course really changed the way I learn, and I intend to teach. The most significant change was realizing that multilingual education has many benefits, whereas monolingual education has become obsolete. We live in a complex multicultural society, where students' multilingual backgrounds should be leveraged instead of overlooked. Students' resources have the potential to enhance language learning, besides representing personal and interpersonal enrichment. Multilingual education gives value to students' diversity and can be adapted according to their motivations, types of intelligence, cognitive styles etc." (Ana)

Excerpt 25.

> "Within the European context, with many languages in regular contact, multilingual education is essential. The course showed me that students' previous linguistic and cultural knowledge should be used as a 'bridge' to teach a new language, strengthen memory, promote creativity, and enhance cognitive flexibility." (Inés)

Excerpt 26.

> "I have learned how to include all students' languages, which I have not always done. We did discuss their experiences with other cultures, but I have never implemented exercises using, for example, the strategy of interlinguistic comparison. I would very much like to implement it in my classes and now I have some ideas about how it will work." (Lilli)

Excerpt 27.

> "I will include more activities based on the multilingual approaches I experienced during the course. I have seen that there is no danger for students in mixing languages. On the contrary, these approaches facilitate their delimitation and differentiation, although the languages are very similar. Moreover, using various languages at the same time enhances students' linguistic repertoires." (Vega)

Ana's observation (Excerpt 24) highlights the transformative impact of multilingual education by emphasizing its advantages over monolingual approaches. Her comment reflects her intention to implement multilingual approaches to promote students' multilingualism while addressing their communicative needs in a globalized society. Inés's reflection (Excerpt 25) reinforces the pivotal role of multilingual education in contexts where several languages and cultures are in regular contact. Lilli's comment (Excerpt 26) reveals her growing understanding of how to integrate students' linguistic and cultural experiences into language teaching, as well as her eagerness to apply these insights in her future lessons. Vega's observation (Excerpt 27) demonstrates a change in her approach towards multilingual education, particularly her newfound confidence in mixing languages in the classroom.

7.2.3. Teaching materials

The two TUs that were produced by the teachers presented both common and different features concerning the enhancement of students' language competences and MLA, the development of their XLA, and the use of multilingual approaches.

All activities were designed for Austrian secondary schools with German as a first/second language. Target students attended L3 Italian classes at a B1 level. Both TUs focused on the training of spoken interaction and production, and included writing activities. Only one contained reading exercises, and none comprised listening tasks. The first group's TU concerned poverty eradication. It aimed at raising awareness as to the great extent of poverty across continents, stimulating reflections on individual contributions to change the situation, expanding vocabulary in the semantic field of poverty, debating the causes and possible solutions of poverty, and using connectors to justify personal opinions. The second group's TU dealt with independence movements in Scotland, the Veneto region, and Carinthia. It aimed at increasing students' historical, political, social, and cultural knowledge of European movements for autonomy, expanding vocabulary in the semantic field of independence, debating the advantages and disadvantages of autonomy, and comparing the three case studies.

Both TUs included activities fostering reflection on languages, as well as the cross-linguistic transfer of language learning strategies:

- Metacognitive strategies were developed throughout the TUs, such as in preparatory speaking activities, the planning of the task, and final self-assessment exercises. For example, in the second group's TU, teachers included the K-L-W Chart to activate students' previous knowledge, interests, and motivation at the beginning of the TU, adapt the activities to students' preferences and needs during the TU, and stimulate students' reflections on their own progress and difficulties at the end of the TU.
- Affective strategies were enhanced by alternating different types of activities to meet individual variables. Teachers introduced exercises to be carried out individually, in pairs and in groups; in addition to speaking skills, these aimed at developing writing and reading competences. For example, in the first group's TU, teachers combined the plenary discussion of the causes and possible solutions of poverty with the writing of the main ideas in pairs.
- Social strategies were implemented through peer education and cooperative learning activities such as Jot Thoughts and Debate. For example, in the second group's TU, teachers designed a group work asking students to observe the images of Scottish and Venetian geography and flags, individually write their ideas about the regions using sheets of two different colors, discuss their answers, and choose the three most representative pieces of information for each region to share with the whole class.
- Compensation strategies were fostered by stimulating students to determine the meaning of words in context, paraphrase and use synonyms, drawing on their mother tongue. For example, in the first group's TU, teachers introduced a brainstorming activity regarding the definition of poverty connected to the observation of a graph on poverty rates in Europe, Germany, and Austria, written in German.
- Memory strategies were promoted by drawing on students' previous knowledge of the topic of the lesson through initial brainstorming exercises. For example, in the first group's TU, teachers

introduced a second brainstorming exercise concerning the main characteristics of poverty in four continents, asking students to work in four main groups and discuss their previous knowledge on the assigned continent.

- Cognitive strategies were supported by encouraging interlinguistic comparisons of vocabulary. For example, in the second group's TU, teachers highlighted the same key words in two different articles, written in English and Italian, regarding Scottish and Venetian independence movements respectively. Students were asked to decorate a multilingual word wall with such key words, including a full column in German and two empty columns to be completed in English and Italian.

Both TUs also aimed at developing students' multilingual competences through IDA and PT. All teachers adapted the activities they had experienced, such as the multilingual cooperative brainstorming (Jot Thoughts), multilingual primary sources (graphs in German, articles in Italian and English, Quino's comics in Spanish etc.), multilingual word wall, multilingual cooperative speaking groups (Debate), and self-assessment activities of the skills and strategies that were being trained to the new teaching context.

The main differences between the two TUs regarded the materials that were used, and the involved languages. The first group's TU included photos of people living in poverty, graphs in German regarding percentage data on poverty in Europe, and Quino's comics written in Spanish. Teachers introduced activities in Italian, German, and the other languages known to the students. For example, students were asked to carry out a brainstorming activity in German regarding the main characteristics of poverty in four continents, write the main ideas developed throughout the discussion in Italian, and decorate in a multilingual word wall with the key words of the debate, including a full column in Italian and two empty columns to be completed in German and other languages. The second group's TU included photos of political demonstrations, images of pro-independence slogans, timelines, and articles written both in Italian and English. Teachers added activities in Italian, German, and English. For example, students were asked to work in groups and identify the political message conveyed in a set of images of pro-independence slogans, write their opinions in German, Italian, and English, and present their main ideas to the entire class by speaking in Italian about the Veneto region and in English about Scotland.

8. Discussion

The data collected from this study provided a clear picture of the impact of a course regarding multilingual approaches and language learning strategies in both Italian and Spanish as L3s on the development of teachers' multilingual language awareness. Despite the small number of participants, the data analysis has highlighted some interesting aspects concerning changes on language TC that deserve further discussion.

Regarding the effects of course participation on teachers' beliefs (RQ1), by implementing the four TUs all teachers acknowledged the potential of using a variety of language learning strategies to train different language skills, particularly in a multilingual learning environment. However, there were significant differences in their initial understanding of the strategies. Some teachers readily identified their interplay within the same multilingual activity. Conversely, other teachers initially linked each strategy to specific activities and struggled to understand how strategies could be transferred across L3s given their previous learning and teaching experiences. Over time, all teachers realized the impossibility of isolating strategies and became aware of their powerful combination through multilingual education. These findings prove the influence of both internal and external factors on language TC, including teachers' biographical experiences, personal beliefs, and teaching contexts (Borg, 2006; Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015).

Although there was general agreement on the need to teach all language learning strategies, teachers' perceptions of their importance evolved differently. For some, the focus was on fostering social and affective strategies to build students' confidence, reduce anxiety, and motivate language learning. Others were more concerned with applying cognitive strategies effectively in multilingual classrooms. Nevertheless, through discussions with colleagues during in-person lessons and on the course's platform, teachers developed a broader awareness of students' diversity, especially in multilingual settings. As a result, they recognized the importance of distributing all language learning strategies carefully to engage the entire classroom while taking into consideration students' individual differences. These findings confirm the potential of exploring the impact of PDIs to broaden the understanding of language TC (Borg, 2006; Guskey, 2002b; Johnson, 2018; Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015). They also demonstrate the relevance of stimulating teachers' reflections during LTE to encourage their beliefs to emerge and possibly change (Barcelos & Kalaja, 2013; Borg, 2003; Farrell, 2007). In

addition, they show the contribution of teachers' interactions in stimulating changes in language TC, starting with the analysis of pre-existing teaching materials through group work (Barnard & Burns, 2012; Darling-Hammond, Hyler, & Gardner, 2017).

Teachers agreed on the positive impact of multilingual education on the improvement of their multilingual skills, MLA, and XLA across multiple L3s by carrying out the four TUs from students' perspectives. Some teachers reported feeling empowered by the process. Their reflections from teachers' perspectives allowed them to increase their knowledge of multilingual theories, become more aware of their own individual differences, and empathize with students' linguistic and cultural diversity. Some teachers mentioned that they changed their minds about the potential of using specific techniques to train language learning strategies and, overall, about multilingual education. Therefore, teachers considered that today an effective L3 course should aim to develop mediation skills, multilingual and intercultural competences, and language learning strategies in and across languages through multilingual approaches. To justify their ideas, they referred not only to their professional backgrounds and the multilingual Austrian education system, but also to their personal reactions to the four TUs. These findings are consistent with the existing literature on the benefits of making teachers play the role of students during LTE to develop their multilingual language awareness (Jessner, 2018; Otwinowska, 2014; Putjata et al., 2022; Vetter & Slavkov, 2022).

As far as the impact of course participation on teachers' teaching practices (RQ2) is concerned, by designing their own TUs, teachers learned how to promote the training of all language learning strategies through IDA and PT within the L3 classroom. Besides enhancing their multilingual competences, teachers recognized that this task contributed to expanding their knowledge of language learning strategies and innovating their teaching practices. Teachers felt that they became more aware of both the importance of balanced inclusion of all language learning strategies, and the advantages of implementing multilingual approaches to foster their cross-linguistic transfer. Pre-service teachers felt that the course significantly broadened their pedagogical toolkit, and expressed excitement about using the new teaching approaches they had learned in their future classes. In-service teachers realized that they had been only partially implementing multilingual education to train students' language learning strategies due to their previous language learning experiences, teaching preferences, and lack of knowledge. They also deconstructed and overcame their prejudices about the negative effects of involving multiple languages in the L3 classroom. Therefore, they found it easier to envision integrating multilingual approaches into their current teaching practices. These findings are consistent with the discrepancies between teachers' positive beliefs about multilingualism and their monolingual teaching practices (Alisaari et al., 2019; Burner & Carlsen, 2022, 2023; Sundqvist et al., 2021). Results also demonstrate the positive effects of PDIs on multilingual education on teachers' beliefs and teaching practices, especially when interaction is promoted (Barnard & Burns, 2012; Borg, 2003, 2018a; Buehl & Beck, 2014; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Gorter & Arocena, 2020; Guskey, 2002b; Johnson, 2018; Kubanyiova, 2012; Schroedler & Fisher, 2020; Sercu & St. John, 2007).

As concerns teachers' collaboration, they experienced the benefits of both working in groups to design their own TUs, and critically discussing their activities in plenary sessions to support multilingual education. Teachers approached the task of creating multilingual activities differently. Some embraced the challenge as an opportunity for creativity and collaboration, enjoying the process of tailoring activities to their students' multilingual contexts. Others initially found it difficult due to the need to balance diverse students' needs and language proficiencies. However, while working together, all teachers found the task instructive, enjoyable, and emotional, thanks to the heterogeneous composition of the groups. Although their TUs presented both common and different features, all adapted the course content and approaches to the multilingual Austrian education system. All teachers were satisfied with the debate that followed the presentation of their TUs and found it inspiring, enriching, interesting, and encouraging. They felt that these discussions enhanced their ability to examine their colleagues' TUs, revise their own activities, and explain their instructional choices regarding the use of IDA and PT to train language learning strategies in and across languages. As a result, teachers strengthened their knowledge of multilingual theories, improved their abilities in applying multilingual approaches, and experienced the advantages of collaborating with colleagues. In accordance with the reference literature, results show the efficacy of developing teachers' multilingual language awareness through PDIs that focus on recognizing and overcoming monolingual teaching practices by engaging teachers in multilingual and collaborative tasks, such as creating new teaching materials through group work (Creese, 2005; Haukås, 2016; Jessner, 2018; Li, 2020; Putjata et al., 2022; Vetter & Slavkov, 2022; Yoon, 2023).

The course promoted significant changes in language TC, but the extent and nature of these changes will depend on each teacher's unique school context and readiness to integrate new teaching approaches into

their classroom practices. In fact, despite the encouraging results, some significant limitations in the data collection process can be identified. First, the sample size was modest in scale, although it was diverse in terms of linguistic repertoires, prior knowledge, and work experiences. Second, the study was highly context-specific, as it was confined to teachers attending an Austrian university and focusing on two L3s within the same family of Romance languages. Third, the research focused on teachers' change over a period of two and a half months, which was relatively short, despite being consistent with the longitudinal study design (Borg, 2012). Data regarding teaching practices were based either on teachers' future intentions or their self-reported implementation of the course content in their current practices (university internship and school lessons). The long-term effects of the course on teachers' beliefs and teaching practices were not investigated (Guskey, 2002b).

9. Conclusion

Due to the rapidly changing linguistic and cultural education systems, it is essential to investigate changes in language TC in relation to LTE programs (Conteh & Meier, 2014; May, 2014; Putjata et al., 2022), and more specifically those regarding multilingual education and language learning strategies in and across two or more L3s. This study examined the impact of a course regarding the use of IDA and PT to develop language learning strategies in Italian and Spanish as L3s on the development of teachers' multilingual language awareness. It focused on the changes in the beliefs and teaching practices of a group of both pre- and in-service teachers, with special attention to their dual role of students and teachers, as well as their collaboration.

Although findings are limited in terms of their broader applicability, they show that teachers' multilingual language awareness was strengthened on many levels. By playing the dual role of students and teachers, reflecting explicitly on their beliefs and teaching practices, and working together, participants acquired the qualities that a competent language teacher in multilingual education should possess (De Angelis, 2011; Haukås, 2016; Jessner, 2018; Otwinowska, 2014, 2017). By implementing the four TUs, they enhanced their multilingual skills, MLA, and XLA, discovered IDA and PT, and became more sensitive towards students' individual differences. By designing their own TUs, they applied their knowledge of multilingual theories, integrated multilingual approaches in their lesson planning, and experienced the benefits of collaboration. Consequently, teachers felt more prepared to both value students' linguistic repertoires and develop the multilingual competences of the entire classroom (García & Kleyn, 2013; Vetter & Jessner, 2019; Vetter & Slavkov, 2022). Therefore, they expressed their intention to foster inclusive and autonomous TLA by developing students' language learning strategies in and across languages using IDA and PT.

Based on these results, future PDIs on multilingual education should include more extensive opportunities for teachers to adopt students' perspectives, engage in reflective practice, and collaborate. Incorporating a variety of multilingual approaches and providing ongoing support for reflecting on and implementing language learning strategies in and across languages could further help teachers adapt to dynamic multilingual school contexts.

To extend the impact of this study, future research should involve a larger sample of both pre- and in-service teachers to enhance the generalizability of findings. Including additional data collection instruments, such as classroom observations and follow-up interviews after the PDIs, would provide deeper insights into the long-term effects of teachers' professional development on language TC (Burner & Carlsen, 2023; Guskey, 2002b). The continued use of qualitative instruments like teachers' diaries could offer richer data on the nuanced changes in teachers' beliefs and teaching practices over time. Comparative studies across different languages and educational contexts, both in Austria and internationally, would also provide a broader understanding of the impact of PDIs on multilingual education and language learning strategies in and across languages, thus highlighting differences and similarities in teachers' experiences. Addressing these suggestions could enhance the understanding of how to effectively support language teachers in leveraging multilingual educational environments, while promoting the development of their multilingual language awareness.

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Appendix

Teachers' diary 1
1) Which multilingual language learning strategies are useful to you, as a teacher? (Lessons 3-6)
2) How was creating multilingual activities by working in group? (Lesson 7)
3) How was observing your colleagues' multilingual activities and receiving feedback about yours? (Lesson 8)

Teachers' diary 2
1) Consider your initial expectations: did the course meet them? Why? (Lesson 9)
2) In your opinion, which characteristics should an effective L3 course have today? (Lesson 9)
3) Which is the most significant change that the course will bring to your teaching practices? (Lesson 9)

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Research-based projects and reflective journals to promote student engagement in a remote online English Linguistics course for Professional Business Communication

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ABSTRACT

EN The Covid-19 pandemic spurred research on the strategies and tools used in remote online teaching to support student engagement. The present study aims to contribute to this research strand by illustrating how two tools that were implemented for this purpose, i.e. research-based projects and reflective journals, were integrated in a remote online English Linguistics course for Professional Business Communication during the pandemic. A content analysis of students' perceptions was conducted through the N-Vivo software programme and feedback on the course was examined. Results indicated that projects and journals positively impacted on students' skills, knowledge and attitudes by enhancing interest and reducing the sense of isolation resulting from the lockdowns. It is therefore suggested that research-based projects and journals potentially support student engagement in learning settings which may negatively affect engagement, such as remote online courses.

Key words: TEACHING OF ENGLISH LINGUISTICS; RESEARCH-BASED LEARNING; REFLECTIVE JOURNALS; REMOTE ONLINE LEARNING; STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

ES La pandemia del Covid-19 impulsó la investigación sobre las estrategias y herramientas que se utilizan en la enseñanza virtual a distancia para apoyar la participación de los estudiantes. El presente estudio fue llevado a cabo durante la pandemia y tiene como objetivo contribuir a esta línea de investigación ilustrando cómo se integraron en un curso virtual a distancia de lingüística inglesa para la comunicación profesional empresarial dos herramientas que fueron implementadas con este propósito, proyectos basados en investigación y diarios de reflexión. Se llevó a cabo un análisis de contenido de las percepciones de los estudiantes a través del programa de software N-Vivo, y se examinó la valoración sobre el curso. Los resultados mostraron que los proyectos y diarios tuvieron un impacto positivo en las habilidades, conocimientos y actitudes de los estudiantes al mejorar su interés y reducir la sensación de aislamiento que resultaba de los confinamientos. Por tanto, se sugiere que los proyectos y diarios basados en investigación apoyan de forma potencial la participación de los estudiantes en entornos de aprendizaje que pueden afectar de forma negativa dicha participación, como son los cursos a distancia impartidos de manera virtual.

Palabras clave: ENSEÑANZA DE LINGÜÍSTICA INGLESA; APRENDIZAJE BASADO EN INVESTIGACIÓN; DIARIOS DE REFLEXIÓN; APRENDIZAJE REMOTO EN LÍNEA; PARTICIPACIÓN ESTUDIANTIL

IT L'avvento della pandemia di Covid-19 ha dato origine a un filone di ricerca sulle strategie e sugli strumenti utilizzati per l'apprendimento da remoto, a supporto del coinvolgimento dello studente a distanza. Questo studio si pone lo scopo di contribuire a tale filone, illustrando il modo in cui i progetti basati sulla ricerca e i diari di riflessione sono stati integrati nell'insegnamento da remoto di Linguistica inglese, per il corso di Comunicazione Professionale per l'impresa. Facendo uso del programma software N-Vivo, è stata condotta un'analisi delle impressioni degli/delle apprendenti e dei feedback in merito al corso. I risultati mostrano come questi progetti e diari abbiano un impatto positivo sulle abilità, atteggiamenti e conoscenze degli e delle apprendenti, rafforzando l'interesse e riducendo la sensazione di isolamento indotta dal lockdown. Lo studio suggerisce, quindi che i progetti basati sulla ricerca e i diari di riflessione possano essere di supporto per il coinvolgimento dell'apprendente, in circostanze di apprendimento che potrebbero invece incidere in negativo, come nel caso dei corsi online da remoto.

Parole chiave: INSEGNAMENTO DELLA LINGUISTICA INGLESE; APPRENDIMENTO BASATO SULLA RICERCA; DIARI DI RIFLESSIONE; APPRENDIMENTO ONLINE DA REMOTO; COINVOLGIMENTO DELL'APPRENDENTE

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1. Introduction

As is well known, following the outbreak of Covid-19, in-person teaching was suddenly replaced by remote online teaching, i.e. teaching accessible exclusively through the Internet (Radić et al., 2021), which involved major changes in higher education (hereafter HE) courses. In addition to illustrating these changes, research on the teaching of languages, translation and linguistics in HE stimulated reflection on contents, as well as on teaching strategies and tools. In various cases, learner-centred strategies promoting student engagement (e.g. Collaço, 2017; Kuh, 2009; Tight, 2020; Trowler & Trowler, 2010) were used, for example, the flipped-classroom (Atabekova et al., 2021; Luporini, 2020; Radić, 2021; Schmied, 2021; Zhang & Chen, 2021) and project-based learning (Freddi, 2021; Zhang & Chen, 2021), thus showing how these strategies may be adapted to remote online teaching.

In in-person teaching, research-based projects (hereafter RBPs) and reflective journals (hereafter RJs) were used to support engagement in various disciplines, including the teaching of linguistics (e.g. Chisholm & Godley, 2011; Erlinda, 2018; Filimonova, 2020; Wyatt & Pasamar Márquez, 2015; Voorhees & Vorobel, 2021 on RBPs; Ghaouar, 2012; Fang & Reng, 2018 on RJ). However, to the best of my knowledge, the implementation of these tools has not yet been investigated in remote online linguistics courses, which could negatively affect student engagement. During the Covid-19 pandemic, student engagement was further threatened because not only were courses taught remotely, but opportunities to socialise were drastically reduced due to the lockdowns.

The present study aims to illustrate how RBPs and RJs were integrated in a remote online course of English Linguistics for Professional Business Communication which was held during the Covid-19 pandemic and targeted third year bachelor students of the faculty of *Linguistic Sciences and Foreign Literatures* at the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milan, as will be further described in Section 5.1. To investigate whether RBPs and RJs were effective in supporting learning in terms of student engagement at a time characterised by markedly reduced socialisation, a content analysis of the students' RBPs and RJs was conducted using the *N-Vivo* software programme. The students' preferences regarding the course topics were examined to obtain feedback on the course.

The paper is organised as follows. Section 2 focuses on RBPs, while Section 3 addresses RJs. The research questions and the methodology are presented in Section 4 and 5, respectively. Section 6 illustrates the organisation of the course of English Linguistics which is the object of the present study and explains how RBPs and RJs were integrated in the course. Section 7 analyses the advantages and difficulties of writing a RBP or keeping a RJ as perceived by the students and Section 8 examines students' preferences in terms of course topics. Section 9 concludes the study.

2. Research-based projects

The present section addresses the teaching/research nexus, i.e. the rationale which underlies RBPs and related approaches (Sub-section 2.1), and illustrates how the nexus may be implemented in teaching practice (Sub-section 2.2). Sub-section 3 deals with RBLs with specific regard to the teaching of linguistics.

2.1. The teaching/research nexus

The teaching/research nexus, which shapes much of the identity of HE teachers, should be integrated in students' HE. According to Healey's (2005) framework, which is expounded in many of his works (e.g. Healey & Jenkins, 2009a, 2009b, 2021; Jenkins & Healey, 2005, 2009; Jenkins et al., 2007), there are four approaches through which the teaching/research nexus may be implemented and which differ with respect to content and degree of students' involvement. Regarding content, *research-led* teaching and *research-tutored* teaching emphasise content disciplinary knowledge rather than the research methodologies through which disciplinary knowledge is gained. While *research-led* teaching generally consists in the traditional, teacher-focused transmission of knowledge, *research-tutored* teaching is student-focused: students are therefore guided through published research and engage in critical discussion of the findings (Healey, 2005; Healey & Jenkins, 2021). On the contrary, *research-oriented* teaching and *research-based* teaching emphasise the methodologies by which knowledge is produced. While *research-oriented* teaching is teacher-focused, *research-based* teaching is student-focused. In Healey and Jenkins' words: "[*Research-based* teaching] require[s] students to undertake research and inquiry. [...]. This means that students become producers of knowledge not just consumers". (Healey & Jenkins, 2021, p. 6)

Various terms are interchangeably used to refer to the *research-based* teaching approach: *research-based learning (RBL)* (Zeschel, 2010), *inquiry-based learning (IBL)*, *guided inquiry*, *teaching research links/nexus*, *discovery learning*, *inductive teaching and learning* (Spronken-Smith et al. 2007), *inquiry* and *undergraduate research* (Healey & Jenkins 2021, p. 12; Spronken-Smith et al. 2007). *Problem-based learning (PBL)*, which refers to investigating "complex, real-world problems with more than one solution" (Filimonova, 2020, p. e2), is related to *inquiry-based learning (IBL)* in a way that Spronken-Smith et al. (2007, p. 3) call "contentious". Indeed, *IBL* and *PBL* are generally regarded as overlapping terms. However, unlike *IBL*, the term *PBL* is often applied to questions to which answers already exist, usually takes place in collaborative groups, and covers a shorter span of time, ranging from a class to a few weeks (Dale et al., 2003).

As the terms suggest, in all the above approaches students take some responsibility for establishing contents, identifying and using resources, as well as assessing their learning, while the teacher acts as a facilitator (Spronken-Smith et al., 2007). Thus, students will understand the subject matter more deeply (Healey, 2005, p. 1) and develop their research skills.

The benefits of *RBL* for students were effectively summed up by Erlinda (2018, p. 1220):

> having clear ideas how learning, teaching and research might be more meaningfully integrated; learning how to conduct literature searches, collecting and analyzing data, starting thinking like a specialist or scientist, achieving more sophisticated level of intellectual development, promoting the acquisition of research knowledge and skills, understanding scientific findings, analysing literature critically, speaking effectively and acting as a leader with clear career goal.

Filimonova (2020, pp. e3-e4) reported that, as compared to lecture instruction, *PBL* results in enhanced motivation, better retention and application of knowledge, as well as improved mastery of transferable skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving and collaboration. Other benefits are increased ability to design a product, preparation for real work, sense of accomplishment and overall satisfaction (Filimonova, 2020, pp. e3-e4).

Despite their differences, there is agreement that *RBL, IBL* and *PBL* are all forms of active learning (e.g. Healey, 2005; Healey & Jenkins, 2009b; Erlinda, 2018; Filimonova, 2020), grounded in constructivism, where students build their learning in interaction with others and with the environment. The benefits of active learning are, among others, improved academic achievement and better interpersonal relationships among the students. Learners generally also perceive greater social support and increased self-esteem (Filimonova, 2020).

2.2. The teaching/research nexus in teaching practice

In teaching practice, the difference between *research-led*, *research-tutored*, *research-oriented* and *research-based* teaching is generally not clear-cut. As claimed by Zeschel (2010, p. 5), "[a]ctual teaching [...] often combines elements of more than one of these idealised types". Similarly, Jenkins and Healey (2005, p. 21) stated that "[m]any teaching and learning activities may involve a mixture of the four approaches". However, at least to some extent, it is important for university students to experience research-based activities (Healey & Jenkins, 2009b) so as to develop skills such as critical thinking and problem-solving. One of the strategies for linking teaching and research in courses and curricula consists in progressively developing students' understanding of research processes, by incorporating *research-based teaching* – or *inquiry-based-learning* – to various extents in activities and courses (Jenkins et al., 2007). As explained by Spronken-Smith et al. (2007, p. 3),

> [i]nquiry-based learning can go from a rather structured and guided activity, particularly at lower levels (where the teacher may pose the questions and give guidance in how to solve the problem) through to independent research where the students generate the questions and determine how to research them.

Since, as shown in Section 2.1, *RBL* is a form of active learning, some of the activities indicated in Healey and Jenkins (2021) as building the teaching/research nexus unsurprisingly coincide with those which promote student engagement, e.g. instructor-guided discussions (Williams & Villaneuva, 2011), Team-Based Learning (Marss, 2011), undergraduate research (Holmes & Beins, 2011) and reflective journaling (Fritson et al., 2011).

2.3. Research-based learning in teaching linguistics

In a recent study, Filimonova (2020) claimed that, because of its scientific rigour, linguistics is ideal for implementing research-based learning. In her words:

> Because linguistics is a data-driven, research-based, and highly analytical discipline, it offers many opportunities for development of higher-order thinking skills, including critical thinking, scientific reasoning, and interdisciplinary research and reporting. (Filimonova, 2020, p. e1)

Research shows how *RBL* and related approaches were implemented in various courses in linguistics. For example, Chisholm and Godley (2013) reported on inquiry-based activities aimed to raise awareness of dialect, prejudice and power in a high school. In HE, Wyatt and Pasamar Márquez (2015) dealt with qualitative research in a 'Starting Language Research' course, while Voorhees and Vorobel (2021) showed how undergraduate research was integrated in a 'Language and Culture' course serving as an introduction to linguistics, with a focus on ethnographic and case studies research methods. Erlinda (2018) illustrated the research-based activities in a pragmatics course, while Filimonova (2020) illustrated the *PBL* component of an 'Introduction to Linguistics' course. Surprisingly, although spanning across several disciplines as diverse as Engineering, Medicine, Business, Sport and Tourism, Education, Geography, Archeology, Arts and English as native language, Healey and Jenkins (2021) did not contain any case-study in linguistics.

Besides illustrating the course contents and organisation, some studies also provided an insight into the students' perceptions of *RBL* and related approaches. For example, Wyatt and Pasamar Márquez (2015) relied on student RJs and student interviews to obtain general feedback on the proposed activities. Instead, Erlinda (2018) and Filimonova (2020) conducted a content analysis, respectively of open-ended questionnaires, and of student end-of-year reflections and self-evaluations, by coding and counting the emergent themes.

Students reported better understanding of research methods (Wyatt & Pasamar Márquez, 2015), enhanced research skills and critical thinking skills, as well as increased responsibility and motivation (Erlinda, 2018). Filimonova (2020) found other benefits, such as application of knowledge gained in the course to real life, increased motivation and attention to detail. Issues regarded time management (Erlinda, 2018; Wyatt & Pasamar Márquez, 2015) and the difficulty of the assignments (Filimonova, 2020). For a few students, group work was also an issue: they reported, for example, lack of organisation and lack of leadership in the groups (Wyatt & Pasamar Márquez, 2015).

3. Reflective journals

According to Rivera and colleagues (2020, p.1), reflection supports self-directed learning and is "crucial" for learning from experience. Grounded in students' discovery (Kessler & Lund, 2004, p. 20), reflective learning is the opposite of assimilative learning, which implies accepting beliefs as true without challenging them (Hubbs & Brand, 2005). Although reflective practice can take an "infinite number" of forms (Rivera et al., 2020, p. 2), the most popular one is the RJ (Rivera et al. 2020, p. 1). In journals, students are offered stimuli and are asked to link them to their pre-existing knowledge or experience by recording their thoughts and feelings about their academic and professional achievements (Muncy, 2014; Park, 2003). Reflection may consist in mere observation, in integrating theory with practice or in connecting experiences (Rivera et al., 2020, p. 4). As a genre, the journal "falls roughly between the diary and the log" (Park, 2003, p. 184). A journal may be written by an individual student and is referred to as a *learning journal*, *personal journal*, *student journal*, *learning log*, or simply a *journal* (Park, 2003, p. 184). However, a journal may also be written by multiple authors and, in that case, it is called *collaborative* (Liuoliene & Metiūniene, 2009, p. 33) or *team journal* (Hubbs & Brand, 2005: 66).

Research on RJ regards disciplines which are strongly practice-oriented and require self-reflection, such as clinical education (e.g. Fortson & Sisk, 2007; Jarvis & Baloyi, 2020; Lasater & Nielsen, 2009; Ruiz-López et al., 2015;) and language teaching. In the latter field, RJs were used, for example, with student teachers (e.g. Biria & Haghighi Irani, 2015; Matsuda & Matsuda, 2001; Munalim, 2017; Schulze & Ittner, 2021) and with learners of English (e.g. Jafarigohar & Mortazavi, 2013), also to support reflection on cultural diversity while abroad (e.g. Mynard, 2008; Prikhodko, 2014). Applications of journaling to the teaching of linguistics appear scant. Ghaouar (2012) reported on using journals during lessons to enhance content understanding, while Fang

and Reng (2018) showed how journals were incorporated into a university optional course of Global Englishes to help students reflect on their attitudes to the type of English spoken by non-natives.

The benefits of journaling consist in encouraging independent learning, learning from experience, supporting the integration of new and old information, helping students identify what they do not understand and understand their learning processes (Liuolienė & Metiūnienė, 2009; Park, 2003). Journaling also enhances students' transferable skills, such as problem-solving, creativity and group interaction. Students reported that journaling increased memorisation of concepts (Bouldin et al., 2006), ability to link theory with practice (Bouldin et al., 2006; Watson, 2010) and enhanced critical thinking skills (Kessler & Lund, 2004, p. 20). Students transitioning to work were also helped to reflect on their behaviour (Edgar et al., 2013; Lutz & Paretti, 2019). Research also showed that learners got better marks when keeping a journal (Fritson et. al., 2016).

4. Research questions

The present study focuses on the use of RBPs and RJs in a course of English Linguistics for Professional Business Communication held during the Covid-19 pandemic and aims to answer the following research questions:

RQ 1) How were the RBPs and RJs integrated into the remote online course of English Linguistics for Professional Business Communication?
RQ 2) What were the advantages and difficulties of doing a RBP / keeping a RJ as perceived by students?
RQ 3) What were the students' preferred topics?

The answer to RQ 1 intends to contribute to the literature on RBPs and RJs by showing an example of use of these tools in a course of English linguistics. The answer to the RQ 2 aims to examine whether students perceived RBPs and RJs as useful tools for supporting their engagement in a remote online course, an aspect that is currently unexplored in the literature. The answer to RQ 3 may provide useful indications for future editions of the course while, more generally, revealing topics and areas that deserve more attention in similar courses.

5. Methodology

Sub-section 5.1 provides background information about the course which is the object of the present study, while Sub-section 5.2 outlines the instruments and procedures adopted to answer the research questions illustrated in Section 4.

5.1. Context and participants

The course in English Linguistics for Professional Business Communication, which has been taught by the Author of the present study since the academic year 2007/08, targets third year bachelor students of the *Languages for Companies* degree programme of the faculty of *Linguistic Sciences and Foreign Literatures* at Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milan. The degree programme aims to train students to become professionals who can manage business relations in different countries and includes a compulsory internship in a company or other organisation, e.g. an embassy or a hotel. The study of two languages for three years – which the students choose among English, French, German, Russian, Spanish, Arabic and Chinese – and the study of business disciplines such as business economics, marketing and business finance lie at the core of the students' curriculum.

The study of all languages is organised as follows. Each year, students attend practical language classes (120 hours in each language) taught by language instructors (Collaboratori Esperti Linguistici). At the end of the year, the students' communicative competence is tested through an oral and a written exam. The practical language classes are complemented by a 30-hour institutional linguistics course in each language. The focus is on phonological features (first year), lexico-grammatical features (second year) and professional business communication (third year). Given their large number, students of English in each year are divided into two groups (A-K and L-Z), respectively attending the course in October-December and February-May.

The present study deals with the two editions of the course held in the academic year 2020/21. In that year, a total of 360 students took the final exam. Due to the spread of Covid-19, staff were allowed to opt for online synchronous teaching or dual-mode teaching – i.e. with some of the students in class and others

attending the online synchronous classes from home. Since in dual-mode teaching the teacher is supposed to interact with the students in class as well as with those attending from home, who may intervene live or via chat, managing dual-mode courses is particularly difficult. Therefore, it was decided to hold the two editions of the course remotely. Incidentally, due to governmental regulations prohibiting in-person teaching, dual-mode classes had to be changed into remote online ones twice during the academic year. All remote online courses at Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore took place via Blackboard[1], the university learning platform.

5.2. Instruments and procedures of analysis

The contents and teaching methods of the English Linguistics course for Professional Business Communication (Section 6) result from the Author's reflective account of the activities performed in the academic year 2020/21 and provide an answer to RQ 1. To answer RQ 2 (Section 7), a content analysis was performed on the students' perceptions of the advantages and difficulties in doing a RBP or keeping a RJ in time of lockdown or restricted mobility. Content analysis was chosen since it was adopted in previous studies regarding students' perceptions on the use of journals, in order to identify emergent themes (e.g. Biria & Haghighi Irani, 2015; Craig et el., 2016; Mynard, 2008; Ruiz-López et al., 2015; Sage & Sele, 2015), and offer the students' experience "in [...] [their] words and voices" (Craig at al., 2016, p. 181). To answer RQ 3 (Section 8), all the submitted RBPs and RJs were manually scanned for students' content preferences and responses to the topics were qualitatively investigated.

6. The English Linguistics course for Professional Business Communication: an outline

The present Section answers RQ 1, i.e. How were the RBPs and RJs integrated into the remote online course of English Linguistics for Professional Business Communication? Sub-section 6.1 illustrates the teaching approach and the contents of the course, while Sub-section 6.2 shows how RBPs and RJs were related to course. Sub-section 6.3 addresses how the students' knowledge and skills were assessed at the end of the course. Sub-section 6.4 details the number of RBPs and RJs produced by the students and analysed in Sections 7 and 8.

6.1. Teaching approach and disciplinary contents

With reference to Section 2.2, the approach adopted in the remote online course is *research-oriented* (Healey, 2005), i.e. it is teacher-focused and has an emphasis on research methodologies, as well as on course contents. In the specific case, the teacher emphasised the research methods and models used in English linguistics. However, the course had some *research-oriented* (Healey, 2005) elements, i.e. the emphasis on research methodologies was, at least in part, student-focused, since students were invited to consider texts from a researcher's perspective. For example, Blackboard wikis, which enable students to collaboratively write texts, were set up for students to analyse texts, which were later discussed and corrected in the remote online sessions.

The aim of the course was to provide students with the knowledge and skills needed to interact effectively and write appropriate texts in professional situations. To reach this aim, selected constructs and methodologies for the analysis of spoken and written discourse were illustrated and students were guided in their application to different business genres. In terms of course contents, the BELF (Business English as a Lingua Franca) paradigm was introduced at the beginning of the course (Kankaanranta, 2008; Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2013; Kankaaranta & Planken, 2010; Louhiala-Salminen et al., 2005) and it was stressed that the paradigm was formulated on the basis of surveys and the analysis of authentic texts. These revealed that business texts written by non-native speakers often contain grammatical and lexical inaccuracies which do not hinder communication. Therefore, effectiveness is considered more important than correctness within the BELF paradigm.

Students were then guided to reflect on some of the features which make texts effective: appropriateness to the situational and cultural context, politeness and conformity to generic norms. More specifically, students were guided to identify the elements which affect the degree of formality of texts and were then introduced to Halliday and Hasan's (1989) model, which enables one to analyse the environment in which a text is set with reference to the purpose of the text, the participants, and the role played by language. The context of culture was tackled with reference to Hall and Reed Hall (1990) and Hofstede (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010), who devised models for comparing national differences across countries. In

[1] https://www.anthology.com/products/teaching-and-learning/learning-effectiveness/blackboard.

linguistics, the two cultural models may be used for cross-cultural comparison. Hofstede's model was applied to illustrate an example of cross-cultural analysis of website texts, drawing on (Cucchi (2010). Since appropriateness also implies conformity to generic norms, reference was made to Bhatia's (1993) genre analysis.

Since contextual parameters may affect the degree of (in)formality and (in)directness which is perceived as appropriate, the main features of spoken discourse (Carter & McCarthy, 2006) and the basics of politeness theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987) were studied within a sample of authentic texts, taken for example from the meetings and negotiations offered in Koester (2004). The basics of conversation analysis (Sacks et al., 1974) were also introduced, so that students may use the conventions which conversationalists rely on as yardsticks against which to compare workplace communication. The textbooks used in the course were Cucchi (2016) and Cucchi and Murphy (2011).

6.2. Research-based project and reflective journals

Students could choose whether they wanted to produce a written assignment, which they would submit for assessment at the end of the course. If they decided to produce the assignment, they could choose either a RBP or a RJ. Both assignments could be written individually or in pairs. Some students asked for permission to write the assignments in groups of three. Given the sense of isolation which characterised the lockdowns during the Covid-19 pandemic, the permission was granted. No specific word limit was indicated for the assignments, and students were asked to write about ten pages.

The RBP consisted in a written paper in which the students were asked to apply the methodological tools which they had acquired in the course to texts/experiences of their own choice. Figure 1 shows an outline of the instructions given to the students and explained in a remote online session.

Analyse TWO topics of your choice with reference to the content of the course.

Which aspects shall I analyse?
Examples are:
features of English as Business English as a Lingua Franca;
cultural differences;
relation between text and context;
informal features;
politeness strategies;
generic moves.

What type of data shall I collect?
authentic written texts (e.g. job application letters, sales promotion letters, for your information letters, e-mails, ads, signs, pictures, sections from corporate websites);
transcriptions of oral authentic texts or of oral texts in films (e.g. job interviews, phone calls, meetings, presentations);
interviews to people;
personal experiences, reported in writing.

Where can I take the data from?
your internship (e.g. company, hotel, language school, embassy);
other companies or organisations (e.g. language school, embassy);
your travels, relations with foreigners, texts in English in your city/town;
the Internet - the least interesting option.

How shall I analyse the data?
This depends on the type of data and on what you want to find out.

Your analysis may be focused on:
a single text;
more texts of the same type (e.g. job application letters).

Your analysis may be cross-cultural

you can compare:
a text in English with its Italian counterpart;
a text in native English with an equivalent in non-native English.

Figure 1. Instructions for RBPs.

RBPs had been introduced as an obligatory requirement in the course in the academic year 2017/18. After the outbreak of Covid-19 in February 2020, RBPs were made optional. At the same time, RJs were introduced as an alternative to RBPs, since it was thought that students might find it difficult, in time of lockdown or restricted mobility, to collect the authentic texts and experiences which were at the core of RBPs. In their RJs, students were asked to record the activities which they were requested to perform (Figure 2).

In your RJ, please record:

- when you did the activity;
- your partner (colleague) in the activity, if any;
- the title of the activity;
- your doubts about the information you collected, if any.
- your achievements;
- your impressions.

Figure 2. Instructions for RJs.

RJs aimed to enhance the students' motivation, by keeping them engaged in the course, and to help them critically reflect on the topics and on their own learning by keeping a written account of their tasks as well as of their doubts and their learning preferences.

6.3. Assessment of the research-based projects and of the reflective journals

At the end of the course, students' knowledge of the course contents and their ability to apply them to short texts was assessed through a Blackboard test (20 items), which consisted of 18 or 19 fill-in-the blanks items, with one or two multiple choice or true-or-false items[2]. The test was administered remotely, with randomised questions and no possibility of backtracking. The set time to complete the test was 25 minutes. A raw score of 8 was fixed to correspond to 18/30, while 20 corresponded to 30/30[3].

In optional RBPs and RJs students had the opportunity to further demonstrate their understanding of the course topics and their skill in applying them. RBPs and RJs were collected through the 'Assignment' Blackboard facility, which enables the examiner to download all the assignments with a single click. Assignments were worth a maximum of three points, which were added to the mark which the students obtained in the test. The assignment score was based on detailed assessment of one topic chosen by the students, following the indications in Figure 3.

In your RBP/RJ, choose the topic you think you dealt with best and explain the reasons why you chose it.

Explain advantages and difficulties in doing a RBP / keeping a RJ in time of lockdown or restricted mobility.

If you worked in pairs, state your impressions about your collaboration.

Figure 3. Instructions for the submission of RBPs and RJs.

[2] The 'Test' Blackboard function enables the instructor to choose among various formats. It was decided to include mainly fill-in the-blank items in the test because, in this format, students were required to understand what type of word is needed, instead of recognising it, and write the word correctly.

[3] Since Blackboard provides scores on the basis of the answers fed into the system by the examiner, the answers considered wrong by the system were manually checked. When considered correct, points were added to the test score.

6.4. Research-based projects and reflective journals as data for analysis

A total of 85 assignments, comprising 60 RBPs and 25 RJs, were submitted for assessment and analysed in the present study. Tables 1 and 2 detail whether the assignments were written individually, in pairs, or in threes.

Table 1.
Composition of the RBP data set

Research-Based-Projects	N.
individual	17
in pairs	32
in threes	11
Total	60

Table 2.
Composition of the RJ data set

Reflective Journals	N.
individual	10
in pairs	9
in threes	6
Total	25

7. Advantages and difficulties in research-based projects and reflective journals

The present section answers RQ 2, i.e. What were the advantages and difficulties of doing a RBP / keeping a RJ as perceived by students? Sub-section 7.1 explains the nature of the coding procedures followed to guarantee a rigorous analysis of the data. The students' perceptions of the advantages and difficulties in writing a RBP or a RJ are examined in Section 7.2.

7.1. Coding and data analysis

Coding is "a major approach to qualitative data analysis" (Cohen et al. 2018, p. 668) which consists in "the ascription of a category label to a piece of data, decided in advance or in response to the data that have been collected". Like all qualitative research, the coding process is inherently subjective. Dörnyei (2007, p. 38), for example, pointed out that qualitative research is "essentially interpretive", i.e. "the research outcome is ultimately the product of a researcher's subjective interpretation of the data". In addition, "qualitative research is concerned with the subjective opinions, experiences and feelings of individuals" (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 38). For these reasons, the quality criteria of validity and reliability, which originated in quantitative research, were substituted, in the qualitative research paradigm, by alternative notions such as 'trustworthiness', 'authenticity', and 'rigour' (Dörnyei 2007, p. 49). It is therefore crucial that the researcher provides a detailed account of the procedures s/he followed and presents the findings in "rich-contextualised detail" (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 49).

To answer RQ 2), a *Word* document which contained the students' observations on the advantages and difficulties in doing a RBP or keeping a RJ was created for analysis and elicited through the instructions provided in Figure 3. The students' observations were coded by the Author following the rigorous procedures suggested in Cohen et al. (2018). As explained by the Authors, to perform coding "the researcher goes through the text, marking it with codes (labels) that describe that text" (Cohen et al., p. 668). To decide the codes of analysis, two opposite procedures may be used. According to the original Grounded Theory model (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), qualitative research should be entirely based on data observation and should not start with literature reviews, since these may bias the researcher's observation of the data (Cohen et al., 2018, pp. 714-16). On the contrary, the revised model (Strauss and Corbin 1990, 2014), which was adopted in the present

study, includes deduction and the testing of hypotheses. Consequently, in the present study literature reviews were considered as important sources of hypothesis generation for the creation of codes.

To decide the codes of analysis, students' observations were read multiple times to familiarise with the contents and decide the labels to identify the themes mentioned by the students. First, the sentences in the document, which represented the coding units, were annotated using open-coding[4]. The codes were in part derived from the data and in part from the literature reviews, in a fruitful interplay between inductive and deductive processes, which ensured that "the complexity and comprehensiveness of the data" (Cohen et al., p. 669) was retained. Axial codes[5] were later identified. To code the texts, the content analysis software programme *N-Vivo*[6], which also counts the number of mentions of the identified themes, was used. At times, the same unit was coded using more than one category, which is considered "desirable since it maintains the richness of the data" (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 677)[7].

7.2. Findings: The students' perceptions

The present section illustrates the results of the qualitative analysis of the emergent themes in the students' perceptions, by providing excerpts from their assignments. The excerpts are in their original form and may contain lexico-grammatical mistakes. Permission was granted by students to use their assignments for research purposes. Table 3 supports the qualitative analysis, showing the emergent themes and the number of their mentions in the students' assignments. The themes were identified in the students' RBPs and RJs, in response to the stimulus "Explain advantages and difficulties in doing a RBP / keeping a RJ in this time of lockdown or restricted mobility. If you worked in pairs, state your impressions about your collaboration"[8]. In the examples, *RBP* and *RJ* indicate the type of assignment. Initials of the students who completed the assignment are provided in parentheses, thus also indicating whether the assignment was carried out individually, in pairs, or in threes.

Table 3.
Advantages and difficulties in doing a RBP/keeping a RJ in time of lockdown/restricted mobility.

Themes	N. of mentions
skills	84
learning	50
feelings of well-being	39
means of communication	36
pandemic	35
internship	9
lessons	3

Regarding the 'skills' they acquired, students mentioned collaboration (N=37), organisation and time management (N=26) and research skills (N=21). Regarding collaboration, which was mentioned in the wording of the assignment, the students positively regarded various aspects linked to teamwork, such as the greater chances of interacting, finding new ideas, comparing multiple perspectives, linking ideas, learning from each other, increasing creativity, solving problems and completing tasks. Some of these aspects are represented in

[4] An open code is "simply a new label that the researcher attaches to a piece of text to describe and categorise that piece of text" (Cohen et al. 2018, p. 671).
[5] An axial code is "a category label ascribed to a group of codes whose referents (the phenomena being described) are similar in meaning. (e.g. concern the same concept)" (Cohen et al. 2018, p. 671).
[6] https://lumivero.com/products/nvivo/
[7] Dörnyei (2007, p. 61) mentions peer checking as a possible strategy to obtain feedback on coding, but stresses that "it is often difficult to find someone who is both competent and ready to engage in this time-consuming activity".
[8] The type of assignment chosen by the students, as well as their decision to work individually or in collaboration, may have impacted on the emergent themes. However, the present analysis does not intend to quantitatively investigate the distribution of these themes across the two variables, also considering that the size of the RBP and of the RJ data sets is markedly different.

(1). Students who focused on the difficulties involved in collaboration stated that they successfully dealt with them (2).

1) We decided to do this assignment together because working in team increases collaboration and allows brainstorming. [...] [O]thers in a team can help you to see things from a different point of view. Three people are always better than one for solving problems, finishing off difficult tasks, and increasing creativity. (*RBP* - A.L., G.M., S.M.)

2) The fact that we had to work in three, at first has been kind of difficult, only because at first we had to compare our answers trying to reach a common point of view. After a while though, we managed to work very well together and we are satisfied of what we had achieved. (*RJ* - F.F., G.G., G.M.)

The students reported positive feelings of well-being: enjoyment and interest (N=17), sense of achievement (N=14) and social support (N=8). For some students, interest (3), sense of achievement (4) and increased social support (5) derived from their collaboration.

3) it was interesting to create a project together because we had the possibility to discuss our ideas and compare the final results. (RBP - M.M., M.S.)

4) we were able to collaborate, supporting each other in case of doubts, and we couldn't be more satisfied of the final result! (RBP - S.B., M.G.B.)

5) Despite all the difficulties we faced for the realization of this project caused by the measures of social distancing, we felt closer than ever in writing the project because we felt really involved in our assignment. (RBP - A.C., N.M.F.)

However, interest (6), sense of achievement (7) and even increased social support (8) were also reported by students who wrote their assignments individually

6) It was a really good activity for me, very stimulating. I worked alone because due to the Corona virus pandemic I couldn't meet with my friends, so I decided to do it by myself. Again, this decision made it more stimulating and interesting. (RJ - C.F.)

7) if I had to find a downside, I would say that keeping a RJ is not as easy as it seems to be, because it took me time to do all the task. But it was worth it! (RJ - C.L.)

8) I believe that writing a RJ gave me the opportunity to explain what I had learned, and which were the most difficult parts to understand. In a way the RJ was a kind of "friend", studying the same subject, to whom I could explain all my doubts and certainty about this subject. (RJ - L.G.)

While some students perceived collaborating in distant mode as difficult (9), others did not mention problems and, on the contrary, appreciated the role of technology (10). As illustrated in Tables 1 and 2 (Section 6.4), some students decided to work on their own. In this case, there were very few mentions of the reasons (11).

9) It was very difficult to get together to do this project. In fact we had to do everything via chat and video calls, we adapted to this tough time of the pandemic. (RBP - I.D., E.F.)

10) Working together was not demanding, and organising work from home was quite feasible. (RBP - S.B., M.G.B.)

11) I decided to do it alone and I would probably do the same choice even if I was at university. Indeed, I do not like working in team very much, even if I know that it is important to share ideas and opinions. (RJ - C.L.)

The second most frequently mentioned skill after 'collaboration' was 'organisation'. Students very frequently mentioned the means of communication which enabled them to work collaboratively in distant mode (12). In this respect, there were mentions of the fact that that working from home helped students save time (13). Occasionally, reference was made to work management, in particular to task distribution (14). However, organisation skills were also required when working individually (15).

12) We used apps such as Skype, Teams and Facetime to make video-calls, in order to interact live and coordinate the job. (RBP – M.M., E.S.)

13) the pro of working with technology is that we waste less time because we don't need to use public transport to get to our destination, for this reason we have more time to study since we go back to what we were doing as soon as we close the call. Other than this we can also organize things last minute because we only need to turn on our computers. (*RBP* – D.A., S.A.)

14) We divided the found materials and we discussed them together. (RBP – N.C., A.R., F.S.)

15) the only disadvantage I could find in keeping a RJ is that it needs to be completed constantly and therefore it requires much time and effort. However, I believe that to reach every goal time and effort need to be invested. (RJ – L.G.)

A few mentions regarded research stages – data collection (N=8), deciding content of the assignment (N=6), data analysis (N=4), organisation of the findings (N=3) – which pointed to the fact that some students realised that they were practising their research skills. At times, students specified how they chose the topics and organised the findings (16) or how they managed to collect the authentic texts to be analysed (17). There were very few mentions of the process of analysis: one student, however, made an interesting comment on the enhancement of her analytical skills (18).

16) Based on our internships and experiences, we decided the structure of the project and defined the most relevant aspects to be analysed. (RBP - S.B., M.G.B.)

17) This project was really interesting, because gave me the opportunity to discover and analyze the communication in the work field. I did not find it difficult, because I collected the material by asking my family and friends. (RBP – C.C.)

18) In composing the RJ, the hardest part for me was to observe every little detail and then write them out. At the very same time, this is also an advantage, because after practicing all along, I became more attentive, so that's also why I put it in one of my most precious achievements. (RJ – S.L.)

Regarding 'learning', mentions mainly regarded 'enhancing knowledge' (N=40). (19) shows a mention of enlarging knowledge (N=15) and (20) of deepening knowledge (N=11).

19) When I started writing this project I had no idea how many things could be learned through conversation analysis. (RJ – A.C.)

20) we particularly enjoyed doing the RJ since it has enabled us to better understand the topics and to get interested into the subject. (RJ – V.A., M.G.B.)

There were a few mentions (N=9) of the chance to link theory and practice, labelled 'application of knowledge' (21), and of the chance to observe the type of communication used in the workplace (N=5), labelled as 'workplace' (22).

21) doing a task every week helped me better understand topics and it also made me realize that studying theoretical concepts does not mean knowing how to put them into practice. (RJ – E.B.)

22) we really enjoyed working on actual emails and challenging ourselves getting into the real professional world. (RBP – S.M.R., V.T., B.V.)

Another category which emerged from the data was 'revising' (N=10): it was felt that assignments were a chance to revise content, test skills and correct mistakes (23).

23) I believe that writing a RJ gave me the opportunity to explain what I had learned, and which were the most difficult parts to understand. (RJ – L.G.)

The 'pandemic' category revealed how the students felt during the lockdown. Generally, working remotely was perceived as more difficult (24) and students wished they could have worked in-person (25).

24) Working during a pandemic was challenging, because the restrictions didn't allow us to meet freely. (RBP – G.B., M.C., V.E.)

25) since we are facing a difficult time of our lives with various restrictions, it was not possible to meet as much as we desired despite living close to each other. (RBP – B.M., G.F.)

However, a few students reported that technological devices enabled them to work in a way which they were already familiar with (26). The 'means of communication' category gave an insight into the wide variety of tools which students who worked collaboratively used to replace face-to-face meetings: e-mails, WhatsApp, Skype, Teams, Zoom and Facetime.

26) Working together during this quarantine has not been so difficult as one might think. I was able to video call my partner and, as we already had done this before during normal classes at university (we both are far from XXX [city name]), we didn't have much difficulties. (*RJ* – C.P., C.L.)

The 'internship' category revealed that, at least for some students, it had a key role for the choice of the topics in their research-based projects (27). Few mentions regarded the lessons (28).

27) after doing my first internship in a firm, I decided to write down my impressions and integrate what I have studied to what I was doing. The best way to do so was to write this project. (RBP – F.O.)

28) in this course I had the chance to interact with other people and with [...] [the professor], who allowed us to take the floor many times in order to express our opinions about some topics we dealt with during our lessons. I really appreciated the fact of talking and having some kind of debates with our professor, because in such a way the lessons were very productive. Moreover, [...] [the professor] offered us another means of communication, the so-called wikis, which are collaborative papers that we can use to work together on a given topic. These wikis have been the main source for the writing of my essay. (RJ – A.B.)

8. The students' preferred topics

The present section answers RQ 3, i.e. What were the students' preferred topics? A *Word* document which contained a list of the topics which students had chosen for assessment in their RBPs and RJs and their comments on their choice was created for analysis in response to the instructions provided in Figure 3 (Section 6.4). This prompted the students to think critically about their work. Table 4 shows the number of students' assignments in which each topic or methodology was mentioned.

Table 4.
Topics chosen by students in RBPs and RJs.

Topic	N. of students' assignments in which the topic is mentioned
e-mails	17
spoken feature	15
websites	15
culture	13
sales promotion letters/e-mails	4
BELF	3
job application letters	3
context of situation	2
interview on the use of English in companies	2
genre analysis	1
meetings	1
negotiations	1
phone calls	1
politeness theory	1
Total	79

A few assignments contained no indications regarding the students' preferred topic, while in other cases more than one topic was mentioned; for this reason the total number of mentions in Table 4 (i.e. 79) does not match the total number of assignments in Tables 1 and 2 in Section 6.4 (i.e. 85). In addition, some assignments contained no explanation of the reasons why specific topics were chosen. Further, in a few cases students mentioned more than one topic, explaining that they had analysed specific texts from multiple perspectives (29). The mention of more than one topic generally pointed to high awareness of the methodologies, as well as of the genres tackled in the course.

29) I decided to analyze […] BELF and the features of informality in email communication. This choice was guided by my personal interest of the topics. I chose […] BELF […] for a funny reason. I don't even remember how many times, I made fun of my father because of the weird English he speaks and during the second lesson of the course, I discovered that it was, somehow, a recognized language. As soon as he got home, I told him about the existence of BELF and he was surprised just like me that the language that he and his clients use in emails is not so wrong as we thought it was. And for this reason, I decided to put it first, because it reminds me of my father and something that we've always joked about, but, unfortunately, I can no longer do because it is a language in its own right. (RJ – A.B.)

As shown in Table 2, the students' favourite genres were e-mails and websites. The students' choices were based on the perceived centrality of these genres in their everyday lives and in the business domain (30). Moreover, students felt that the importance of both genres had increased during the Covid-19 pandemic (31-32).

30) I think that studying how to write an appropriate and correct business email will help me in the future, when working in a company and having to relate with colleagues, employers, clients, and suppliers. (RBP – S.B., M.G.B.)

31) since the beginning of our university experience we have been sending emails very frequently in order to communicate with professors and companies (above all now thanks to our curricular internship experience). Such email exchanges with companies and professors started to be even more frequent since the outbreak of the pandemic. (RBP – M.B.)

32) during this pandemic, corporate websites have become very important to present companies and sell their products and services online. (RBP – G.L., I.M.)

Other topics which attracted the students' attention were the features of spoken discourse and culture. The analysis of spoken features was seen as a chance to reflect about what is generally taken for granted in conversation (33), as well as of closely examining the language used in films and TV series (34), one of the main sources of informal contact with English (Pavesi & Ghia, 2020).

33) The topic I liked the most during the course is the analysis of spoken features. I found it very interesting, since I have never thought about the fact that a simple telephone conversation with a friend could have so many technical aspects that we are used to using, even if we are not aware of them. In fact, I had already studied the features of written texts before, during other courses, but none of my teachers focused on the importance of spoken discourse in our life. (RJ – C.L.)

34) We decided to analyze a portion of a script from one of our favorite TV series: 'How to get away with murder'. Our decision is purely based on the fact that we find it very interesting to be able to closely analyze the sentences spoken by the characters. (*RBP* – L.F., B.C.)

Students felt that cultural models could contribute to their understanding of the cultures of the people who use English as a lingua franca (35), of their native culture (36), of the cultures linked to the languages they study and of the cultures which they got to know during their internship (37).

35) [Culture] is an essential issue [...] regarding the business field, because the world is more and more globalized and, even if the language used to communicate is English (BELF), in most cases, culture influences how English is spoken. (RJ – A.B.)

36) The topic analyzed is Romanian and Italian cultures. The reasons why I chose Romanian culture and Italian culture are: for first I was born in Romania, and I grew up there studying, so I understood the differences between these two cultures. (RBP – B.C.)

37) I had the opportunity to work for two months for XXX, an Italian company operating in the industrial sector. [...] decided to focus my analysis on three countries that are considered to be the most important for the company in terms of turnover and number of orders: these are the Netherlands, Germany, and Czech Republic. (RBP – G.G.)

Albeit much less frequent, comments on other topics were found. (38) refers to the context of situation, while (39) is related to politeness.

38) [The context of situation] [...] should be considered fundamental as it is mirrored in the language we use (and vice versa) [...]. [...] the context is necessary for both translation and comprehension. We were amazed by its significance since it is something that we usually do not even notice [...]. [...] [O]nce we have studied it, we could not do without it. [...] we decided to examine in depth this topic and to consider it as one of the most valuable learnings acquired during our studies. (RJ – M.Q., S.Z.)

39) The concept of positive and negative face was a new topic for us: in studying positive and negative politeness strategies we learnt how to express ourselves and to mitigate the so called "face threatening acts" during everyday and business conversations. (RJ – C.M., C.V., D.V.)

9. Discussion and conclusions

The present study has shown how RBPs and RJs were integrated into a remote online university course grounded in linguistics, a topic which was given limited attention in the literature. The use of these pedagogic tools may be adapted to similar HE courses, both in-person and online. This study has also explored whether RBPs and RJs were successful in supporting student engagement in a remote online course, which is an aspect which had not been investigated in previous literature. The content analysis of the students' perceptions has shown that RBPs and RJs supported student engagement during the Covid-19 pandemic, at a time when opportunities to socialise were drastically reduced. Overall, the positive results mentioned in the literature regarding in-person teaching have been confirmed. In particular, students stated that RBPs and RJs had a major influence on the skill of collaborating, thus confirming Filimonova's findings (2020) regarding the teaching of linguistics. Many other aspects mentioned in the literature emerged from the students' writings. With respect to skills, beside collaboration, the students mentioned organisation and time management (Filimonova, 2020) as well as research skills (Erlinda, 2018; Filimonova, 2020). Moreover, the students perceived that their learning was positively affected in terms of breadth and depth (Healey, 2005) and considered the assignment as a chance to apply acquired knowledge (Bouldin et al., 2006; Filimonova, 2020: pp. e3-e4; Park, 2003: p. 185; Rivera et al., 2020, p. 4; Watson, 2010) and to link theory and practice (Bouldin et al., 2006; Watson, 2010). Thus, it was confirmed that "the act of writing is associated with learning or the enhancement of learning" (Liuolienė & Metiūnienė, 2009: 33). Finally, students reported that completing the assignment improved their well-being by enhancing their interest (Erlinda, 2018; Filimonova, 2020) and their sense of achievement, as well as their perception of greater social support (Filimonova, 2020). These positive results suggest that RBPs and RJs may be used to support engagement even in remote online learning.

Given the positive effects of RBPs and RJs on students' skills, knowledge and attitudes, an issue to be considered when using them is whether to make assignments, which were optional in the present case, an obligatory part of the final assessment, so that all the students are required to engage in RBPs or RJs and may benefit from them. A further issue to be considered is whether to use the assignments for formative assessment, therefore providing feedback to the students during the course, since the feedback provided in this form was found to lead to better outcomes (Jafarigohar & Mortazavi, 2013). In the course that was illustrated in this study, time constraints linked to the high number of students unfortunately make these solutions unviable.

The study also aimed to analyse the students' preferred topics, in order to obtain possible indications about future editions of the course as well as, more generally, about students' interests. E-mails and websites were shown to be the favourite course topics, i.e. students preferred the genres which are closer to their everyday experience and whose importance grew during the pandemic. These were followed by spoken features and culture. Research methodologies, such as genre analysis and politeness, were very rarely mentioned. This may point to the greater interest, on the students' part, in research outcomes rather than in research methodologies. This result also suggests that methodological aspects are probably harder for students to grasp and should be paid special attention.

The study also has a documentary character: it provided insights into the difficulties experienced by students while learning remotely during the Covid-19 pandemic and showed the key role played by various means of communication – e-mails, WhatsApp, Skype, Teams, Zoom and Facetime – which enabled students to quickly adapt to the new circumstances, thus collaborating and breaking the isolation characterising the lockdowns.

Regarding the limitations of the study, it should be considered that comments on collaboration were invited in the wording of the assignments, and this may have affected the indication of this skill as the most positively affected by RBPs and RJs. In addition, a desire to please the teacher may have led the students to focus on positive results. However, this latter limitation is shared by previous studies based on the students' views (e.g. Biria & Haghighi Irani, 2015; Bouldin et al., 2006; Craig et el., 2016; Mynard, 2008; Ruiz-López et al., 2015; Sage & Sele, 2015). Future studies may provide accounts of other pedagogic tools for enhancing student engagement in courses grounded in linguistics and illustrate the students' responses, in in-person, blended or remote online learning. Studies may also contrast the use of the tools investigated in the present paper or other tools promoting engagement across two or more different learning settings, i.e. in-person, blended and remote online.

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Human capital, social mobility, and TESOL: An interview with Peter Sayer

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INTERVIEW

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ABSTRACT

EN This interview explores the intersection of social mobility and inequalities in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) through an interview with Peter Sayer. His research focuses on the complexities of TESOL within multilingual contexts, particularly in Mexico and the United States. He challenges the myth of international English as a force in alleviating poverty and promoting social change. Peter Sayer discusses the implications of Human Capital Theory on English education, critiquing its focus on skills acquisition. He advocates for a plurilingual approach through translanguaging by emphasizing the importance of leveraging students' linguistic repertoires in the classroom. Peter Sayer envisions the directions of his future research in TESOL in practice and aims to bridge theory and practice while addressing the challenge of making English education more relevant and accessible to students from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds.

Keywords: HUMAN CAPITAL THEORY, POVERTY, SOCIAL MOBILITY, TESOL

ES Esta entrevista explora la intersección entre la movilidad social y las desigualdades en TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) a través de una entrevista con Peter Sayer. Su investigación se centra en las complejidades de TESOL en contextos multilingües, particularmente en México y EE.UU. Peter Sayer cuestiona el mito del inglés internacional, poniendo en duda su papel en la reducción de la pobreza y la promoción del cambio social. Discute las implicaciones de la Teoría del Capital Humano en la enseñanza del inglés, criticando su enfoque en la adquisición de habilidades. Aboga por un enfoque plurilingüe a través del translanguaging, destacando la importancia de aprovechar los repertorios lingüísticos de los estudiantes en el aula. Peter Sayer imagina que las futuras líneas de investigación en TESOL deben estar arraigadas en la práctica, con el objetivo de cerrar la brecha entre la teoría y la práctica, y hacer que la educación en inglés sea más relevante y accesible para estudiantes de diversos contextos socioeconómicos.

Palabras clave: MOVILIDAD SOCIAL, POBREZA, TEORÍA DEL CAPITAL HUMANO, TESOL

IT Questa intervista esplora l'intersezione tra mobilità sociale e disuguaglianze nell'ambito di TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) attraverso un'intervista con Peter Sayer. La sua ricerca si concentra sulle complessità del TESOL in contesti multilingue, in particolare in Messico e negli Stati Uniti. Peter Sayer mette in discussione il mito dell'inglese internazionale, interrogandosi sul suo ruolo nell'alleviare la povertà e nel promuovere il cambiamento sociale. Discute le implicazioni della Teoria del Capitale Umano nell'istruzione in lingua inglese, criticandone l'accento sull'acquisizione di competenze. Promuove un approccio plurilingue tramite il translanguaging, sottolineando l'importanza di sfruttare i repertori linguistici degli studenti in aula. Peter Sayer immagina che le future direzioni di ricerca nel TESOL debbano essere radicate nella pratica, con l'obiettivo di colmare il divario tra teoria e pratica, affrontando al contempo la sfida di rendere l'istruzione in inglese più rilevante e accessibile agli studenti provenienti da diversi contesti socioeconomici.

Parole chiave: MOBILITÀ SOCIALE, POVERTÀ, TEORIA DEL CAPITALE UMANO, TESOL

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1. Introduction

On December 21, 2023, Huseyin Uysal interviewed Peter Sayer via Zoom to explore the intersection of social mobility and inequalities faced by language learners. The aim of the current interview is to delve into the complexities of these topics and their implications for Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) and social change. The conversation touches on issues such as social class, TESOL, and translanguaging, aiming to disclose insights into the role English language education plays in facilitating socioeconomic mobility and addressing existing inequalities. Peter Sayer discusses his research in teaching English in Mexico and the Philippines, examining the myth of international English as a neutral and universal medium that provides equal opportunities. He highlights how this perception often masks the power dynamics and inequalities inherent in the spread of English, particularly its role in perpetuating poverty and limiting access to economic and social resources for marginalized communities. He explores hidden curricula in working-class schools and advocates for a plurilingual approach through translanguaging in TESOL.

Peter Sayer serves as a Professor in the Department of Teaching and Learning at The Ohio State University. He started his career as an ESL instructor in Oregon, and concurrently engaged in activism and community work supporting immigrant communities. After moving to Mexico, he spent eight years teaching at the *Universidad Autónoma Benito Juárez de Oaxaca and* earned an MA in applied linguistics. Then, he completed his PhD in language and literacy at Arizona State University and then joined the faculty at the University of Texas at San Antonio.

His academic focus lies in applied linguistics and educational sociolinguistics, particularly concerning language learners in bilingual and ESOL programs. He has worked in partnership with the *Mexican Secretaria de Educación Pública* on multiple projects in Mexico, conducted workshops and facilitated study abroad programs in Colombia, Peru, and Saudi Arabia.

2. The interview

Huseyin Uysal:

Thank you for accepting to participate in this interview and sharing your insights with us. I want to start by asking about your recent research interests. What are you working on right now? And how did your past research and teaching experience shape your current research agenda?

Peter Sayer:

Thanks for the opportunity to talk to you. You have seen that a lot of my work has come from working as an English teacher in Mexico back in the day, so that is where I got my start. As a researcher, I am particularly interested in the context of teaching English in Mexico. I see that Mexico is a very multilingual country, that is a post-colonial setting where there is a national language, Spanish. There are lots of local, indigenous languages, and then, of course, there is English as the preeminent international language. As a sociolinguist, I think that a context with that dynamic is really interesting for giving us insights into how TESOL happens in lots of other different contexts. I just got back from the Philippines a couple of days ago, which is sociolinguistically very different and has a historical relationship with English that is quite different from Mexico, but still, there are some of those same tensions and certainly the colonial history of the United States and Spain, in the Philippines. Those things are really interesting for me because I tend to conduct my research through the lens of language ideologies, which is a critical lens for looking at how something like the act of a teacher in a classroom teaching English happens in these very contested ideological spaces (see Sayer, 2012). That is my broader research agenda. Now I am based here in the United States, in Ohio. I was in Texas before. Wherever I am, I do ethnographic work. I am really interested in how a particular context and the dynamics of languages and multilingualism in that space shape the ways that we as teachers in class interact with students. That in a nutshell is my research agenda. In my position here at Ohio State, I have the opportunity to work with a lot of doctoral students. A lot of my research is collaborative with my doctoral students. More recently, our students in classrooms in Turkey, Indonesia, and in Chinese language classrooms particularly, are looking at issues of multilingual approaches, translanguaging and things like that. We find that there are a lot of connections across international TESOL contexts. For example, ideologies of native speakerism affect language teachers in many places. The specific dynamics are different maybe in Turkey or Indonesia than in Mexico, but by using an ethnographic approach and with a shared theoretical lens, we can examine how multilingual education is shaped by broader ideologies across different contexts.

Huseyin Uysal:

In what ways does the myth of international English challenge the belief that learning English can alleviate poverty? How is this myth connected to broader social change?

Peter Sayer:

At least in the sense that I think of the myth of international English, it goes back to the work of Alastair Pennycook (see Pennycook, 2006, 2017). It pushed us to think about questioning some of the assumptions we have about English as an international language. The idea that giving more people access to English and the spread of global English, at least in terms of how it reaches across countries and races across the socio-economic spectrum, was automatically a good thing, especially for poor people. If you want to help poor people, you should give them more English. That is not just a myth or an idea, but it has been a policy that has been pushed by particularly the World Bank when they talked about modernizing the education system of many so-called developing countries. A lot of that is going to push them to think about getting English further and further down the basic education curriculum. Within this idea, the solution is to teach them English, make their education system better or more modern. It has been a policy that has been pushed on various levels and has been actively taken up as part of the curriculum now in various places. So, that is what I see and understand about the myth of English. In my work, Mexico is a case study about how that happens. The costs associated with implementing these massive expansions of English education, especially for developing countries, is very high. I think the idea and myth that more English is automatically better is worth questioning (see Sayer, 2015a, 2015b).

Huseyin Uysal:

How does the hidden curriculum of work manifest in English lessons in working-class schools, and what skills and dispositions does it aim to inculcate in students?

Peter Sayer:

The idea of a hidden curriculum is not particular to language education. It comes from Marxist educational theorists like Paul Willis, and particularly Jean Anyon. The hidden curriculum does not just happen in working-class schools, it happens across the socioeconomic spectrum. What I was trying to show there was inspired by Jean Anyon's work (e.g., Anyon, 1981, 2014). It is about the idea of how English opens doors, and how English is automatically going to help and give more opportunities to working-class kids or kids further down on the socioeconomic spectrum. If you are interrogating that myth, as you asked me in the previous question, what I want is to see what actually happens at the classroom level. I am interested in connecting across macro, meso or micro levels and understanding what happens. If you are talking about this at a policy level, like the World Bank and these kinds of broader neoliberal forces, then I am interested in understanding what that means when you are looking at the relationship and the interaction between students and teachers. How those broader forces translate to how we as individuals in our everyday lives go about things, and to what extent we have agency backed upon the world versus all the various often invisible or unconscious ways that the structures impose themselves on. I had the opportunity to collaborate with the Mexican Ministry of Education on their program, which was the expansion and implementation of English in their elementary or primary level schools. I had the chance to visit and observe about 100 different English classes in public schools in 12 different states and across a range of neighborhoods with different socioeconomic levels. When you walk into a school, you know right away what kind of neighborhood you are in and what resources are there. You get to know the demographics of the school, like where that school falls on the socioeconomic spectrum. The question that the ministry tasked us with was how well the English program was being implemented. I understood it later while looking at this whole giant database of all these videos. I would consider it to be very well-implemented in some ways in some schools, but in other schools, maybe not so much, in terms of what I consider effective pedagogy for teaching English. In some places, kids were actively engaged in meaningful tasks that built their communicative competence in English, but in other schools they spent the whole class copying sentences and grammar rules from the board. The key is, though, is that these differences were not random. It was not just based on the years of experience of the teacher, but many more variables that they gave us to look at in terms of how things were being implemented. I had the chance to interview the teachers who taught at multiple schools. Some were teaching at a more well-off school and some at a much less-resourced school. You hear it literally in the way that they would explain what they thought they were doing in their classes, particularly across the different types of classes. For example, as I explained in the *AILA Review* article (Sayer, 2019), it was really about the very rote activity of copying very accurately things from the board. If you do not have resources, the teacher will not be doing creative things, like small-group role plays and things that we consider more

effective, at least based on the principles of Commutative Language Teaching. Often, you see students spending hours and hours on copying things, and when you think about why the teacher would do that, their rationale for it would be that they need to make sure they can master the basics first, the most basic elements down there, like repeat that mantra again. This is what Anyon argues about what Paul Willis said, that is for working-class kids, who are getting working-class jobs. The kind of skill that you are trying to inculcate is having the stamina to be able to copy something for hours and hours, doing something very dull and repetitious, but doing it very efficiently and very accurately. If you think about particularly the working class having this idea of being in a factory and doing a very repetitive job over and over again, but with a lot of stamina, that makes sense. They would think they are doing it quickly, efficiently, and accurately. It makes sense if you are thinking about how the work and the hidden curriculum is shaping the ways that the teachers are thinking about what they are supposed to be doing, even the expectations that they have for students versus when you compare that to what more well-off students were doing. They were doing these role plays and mostly using English in a way that focuses on them expressing their own meanings and using it for communicative purposes beyond just the copying and repetition. It is not just this random thing. It just happens that some teachers teach this way. You can see within this dataset a clear pattern that seems to match up with that idea of how the hidden curriculum operates across socioeconomic levels.

Huseyin Uysal:
How does Human Capital Theory view education as an investment in individuals? What implications does this theory have for the role English education plays in promoting socioeconomic mobility?
Peter Sayer:
I do not have an economics background. I am an applied linguist and work in education. That is my training. I do not claim to be an expert on understanding economic theories like Human Capital Theory, but as I said I am interested in connecting and explaining what's happening in language classrooms to larger forces. My rather rudimentary understanding of Human Capital Theory, as an educational linguist, is that the goal of a country's education system is to give students—its future workforce—the skills that the country's companies and businesses need them to have. In terms of language, they need them to have certain linguistic skills, like English, because that is what will be needed to be competitive in the global marketplace. It is a neoliberal idea of, as you said, education as an investment in developing the individual's skills with an aim to train them with what the future workforce will require. So, as a researcher when I was trying to understand this pattern I was seeing in the classroom, some students developing communicative skills in English, others copying grammar rules or doing rote learning. I was trying to understand why I see these kids practicing English or learning English in a particular way versus those other kids. There is a social class issue going on here. As a researcher, trying to understand your data there and analyzing and seeing these patterns, the next bit is, "How do I explain that now?". If I have a theoretical framework coming into it of language ideologies and an awareness of social class, that is where I had to do a lot of background reading honestly to figure out how I make sense of this. Language ideologies, based largely on the work of linguistic anthropologists like Irvine and Gal (1995), are basically the ways that our personal thinking about languages is shaped by broader beliefs. I was doing background reading and looking at particularly applied linguists who were connecting the spread of global English to theories of neoliberalism, trying to understand what exactly neoliberalism is and how it works[1]. I was reading on the context of Mexico and tracing the history of how Mexico as a member of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), which sets certain priorities for member states,, decided to invest 10's of millions of pesos in English. They had to train about 100,000 English teachers now to be able to implement this program of English at the elementary school level. It is a huge investment, and why did they do that? It turned out there was this report that is connected to the international achievement standards of Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), where they compare all the countries. This 2022 PISA report (OECD, 2023) just came out last week. If we rewind to 15 years ago, the PISA report came out and put Mexico at the very bottom of the OECD countries. They freaked out. They commissioned this report essentially by economists, and the economists said something about their education system being bad at producing human capital. I think that is bizarre. I did not think of our education system as trying turn children into human capital. I am not an economist, and I do not think about it that way. Again, if you are seeing it through a very neoliberal lens, that is

[1] For a collection of papers on this topic covering Brazil, Puerto Rico, and the United States, see Alonso and Villa Galán's (2023) special issue on raciolinguistic perspectives of labor in the Americas.

how you frame it. In a nutshell, Human Capital Theory is the idea that you are training your workers to have the right skills in order to essentially maximize the profits of companies and corporations. That is what makes your country globally competitive in this global marketplace. When you read it like that, you are thinking about English as inculcating this certain set of skills. We are teaching kids English, but for working-class kids, teaching English is less about intercultural communication, or all the things that we as educators think of as the reasons for teaching English. In terms of Human Capital Theory, giving them this very particular set of skills. It is less about teaching the linguistic stuff that we as English teachers would think of, and more about this idea of being able to do these sorts of rote jobs very efficiently. So when you are looking at education through the lens of Human Capital Theory, we see it's a very efficient way to train your working-class kids to do working-class jobs or middle-class kids to do middle-class jobs. As Bourdieu says (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990), that is how social class reproduction happens, and how inequities are passed down to the next generation. So rather than disrupting it – this myth of English is somehow automatically alleviating poverty (Pennycook, 2006) – it ends up sort of feeding into that same cycle of reproduction rather than seeing English as this magic wand that helps social mobility, at least at certain level when you see it through that line. I want to believe, like the promise of English and this program in Mexico, for example, that investing in helping kids learn English actually will open doors for them. I want to see how that can actually work and how we fulfill that promise to actually provide opportunities for social mobility for kids through the teaching of English.

Huseyin Uysal:
Considering the rapid expansion of English language education in public schools in Latin America, how can TESOL educators balance the goal of providing greater access to English with the risk of perpetuating existing social inequalities? Drawing on critical theorists' examinations of class, education, and social reproduction, how can TESOL educators address the challenge of social stratification in language classrooms?
Peter Sayer:
That is a really good question. When you start talking about Human Capital Theory and social reflection, we are all pawns of the neoliberal system. You get depressed, like that negative way of seeing it, which I think is the reality of things. On the other hand, I am an eternal optimist. As a critical applied linguist, I think that it is not enough just to critique and say, "Look at all these bad things and these are all the terrible ways that the system reproduces itself." We should try to offer something positive and have our work help illuminate those sorts of situations in a way that other scholars and the teachers themselves can then say, "Actually that does help me to think about my work a little differently." Through the Mexico project, we are trying to turn that into a series of professional development workshops and materials that would get teachers to reflect on the reality of it and think about approaching their teaching in a way that is not race-blind or social class blind. If you are approaching it from that way like "we are all equal," then you do end up reproducing those social inequities. So, if you want to disrupt the system, and think about the extent that you have agency as a teacher in your classroom, even working within the curriculum, the materials and textbooks, you have a lot of what Nancy Hornberger (Hornberger et al., 2018) would call "implementational space" for your particular view of the world and language policy to help them see that they are empowered to do certain things. If you can, help them come at it with that critical consciousness. This is my teaching philosophy and greater goal. I do not have to go back to thinking of it like, "I need these poor kids to have the basics and therefore I am going to have them copy off the board." If we can raise that awareness, that is part of the critical consciousness that we as educators can have and get them to think about how they teach in their particular context to their particular group of students, in a way that responds to what I consider social justice issues. In the Mexico project I was doing, we were observing dozens and dozens of classrooms. Also, we were doing these focus group interviews with parents. I talked to lots of parents to get their sense of the idea of multiple stakeholders. I was trying to understand it not only from the students', teachers', and administrators' views, but also from the parents' views because I think that is what gets left out a lot in that work. It was interesting to hear the parents talking about how they thought of English, why they thought it was important, and what they wanted from the English program. So, that phrase, "*Inglés abre puertas*" meaning "English opens doors," just came up again. As the researcher, when you hear the exact same phrase being said through multiple interviews, there is your code, that is the pattern. So, "English opens doors" was just an obvious pattern, a thing to focus on just again, because I was hearing literally the same expression being used (see Sayer, 2018). Getting back to connecting that to the myth of international English and what I thought of it, it is that very particular expression that they are using that articulates the myth of international English. The myth that English is going to open doors for you, the myth of English automatically

leading to social mobility. That is where I went with that idea of "English opens doors." But when people are sometimes giving me examples like, "So and so, they learned English and now look they have got this great job," it is not always a myth. For some people, that becomes a reality, and people were giving me these examples of the exception that proves the rule, but it was something that people latched on to. At least for them, it is proof that English does have the possibility of opening doors for you. So, then that reaches the question of when it actually works, for whom it works, and under what conditions. As educators, how do we try to facilitate that to the extent that we have agency and can control things in the classroom? I think it is very important for this kind of research to figure out how to translate that into something that is like professional development that is, in a practical sense, helpful for teachers. So, I would say in a general sense, critical consciousness is an important thing to try to do in your workshops. But if you are doing a professional development workshop with teachers or teaching a course or something with either pre-service or in-service teachers, you should think that it is going to be very context-specific and think again about what that means in a particular classroom or a particular context.

Huseyin Uysal:
I want to change the direction of our conversation a bit. How does the concept of translanguaging challenge and transform traditional perspectives on TESOL, moving from a monolingual to a plurilingual orientation? Why is this shift significant in recognizing and leveraging students' linguistic repertoires?
Peter Sayer:
I approach things as a sociolinguist who is interested in questions of languages, ideologies, and things like that, so I naturally came to translanguaging through that approach. I was not trained in translanguaging, which has been around since the 90s. Everybody cites the Williams (1994) thing, but it was Ofelia García who brought it to our attention and theorized it more. It was late 2010 or 2011 and I had not read Ofelia's work yet. I did not even know the concept of translanguaging. I had just moved to San Antonio, Texas, and I was doing a project and ethnographic work in classrooms in a neighborhood in San Antonio. I was interested in those sorts of multilingual approaches. I had been trained to analyze language mixing as code-switching, a very linguistic approach. I was in a bilingual classroom, lots of Spanish and English were being mixed. All of this is a good place to look at code-switching, because of course kids are code-switching a lot and the teacher code-switches, and English is going on and all that good stuff. I want to acknowledge that the work that sociolinguists did on code-switching was critical at the time and laid the foundation for what we now think of as translanguaging. I was analyzing it as a code-switch. I had my data, millions of examples, lots of observations, and recorded stuff. When I was working through my data, thinking of it through my orientation towards language ideologies, trying to think of what was going on as a pedagogical problem here in this classroom, I picked up Ofelia García's book (García, 2009) and started re-thinking my approach to my data, which became the Sayer (2013) piece. I came to this idea of translanguaging and saw how she was defining it as bilingual meaning-making and things like that. That was my light bulb moment. When you find a concept that you did not know existed, but it fits your data as a researcher, that I guess is the light bulb moment. So that is where I came to this idea of translanguaging, and her way of explaining things through the students' full multilingual repertoire was such a good fit for what I was seeing. It helped me understand the data in a new way. We have tried more and more to articulate this multilingual turn in TESOL and understand what that means beyond the role of L1, which is also important. That is not to say that it is not something on a practical level that we want to worry about, but we have been theorizing and developing this more. Ofelia García was working within bilingual education context, and lots of different international TESOL contexts. That is how I have been understanding more and more what the plurilingual turn in TESOL is about. I think translanguaging is a way of connecting things like ideologies and funds of knowledge. Even now, I am rethinking funds of knowledge through this translanguaging lens. It allows me to theorize and make these different connections in a way that helps me understand more what that idea of a multilingual turn should be about.

Huseyin Uysal:

Can you give us a specific example of how García's work helps you look at your data in a new way?

Peter Sayer:

For example, during a science lesson I was observing, there was a group of second graders working on a diagram, labelling the parts of a spider. The diagram showed the spider carrying an egg sac, and one of the girls seemed confused about what it was and how to label it, since it did not appear in the picture of the spider in the book, and she says to her classmates: "*No entiendo porque la araña carga arriba* this little puffy thing." ["I do not understand why the spider is carrying…"]. So, when I was initially analyzing my data, I coded that as an intrasentential code-switch, because she switched from Spanish to English in the same sentence. That code-switching lens helped me count up and organize my data neatly, but when I came across García's work on translanguaging, I realized that it gave me a way to ask the questions that were, to me at least, more important about what was going on there, why and how the girl was using her linguistic resources to make meaning and solve this particular problem she had of making sense of the diagram. The shift from code-switching to translanguaging for me was a shift from looking at the language students used as the object of study to moving to understanding the students' multilingual language practices as the main focus.

Huseyin Uysal:

How does this connect to the multilingual turn in TESOL?

Peter Sayer:

I think it is part of the same phenomenon. Probably the concept of translanguaging has really exploded among academics in applied linguistics in the last 10 years because it fits so well with the direction the field was already moving. I remember Lourdes Ortega gave a plenary talk at AAAL (American Association of Applied Linguistics) in 2010. I think it was on the "bilingual turn in SLA" (Second Language Acquisition). Then, a special issue in *TESOL Quarterly* on multilingual approaches in TESOL (see Taylor & Snoddon, 2013), and then Stephen May's (2014) book *The Multilingual Turn* came out after that. So, there was already an impetus for scholars thinking and working in that direction, and translanguaging further called into question the strong English monolingual bias that has unconsciously influenced work in TESOL and second language acquisition.

Huseyin Uysal:

What are some new research directions that you would like to see in TESOL? How do you envision the new scholarship contributing to the advancement of the field and addressing existing challenges?

Peter Sayer:

Another area that I have worked on is the idea of linguistic landscape, which is a social semiotic approach to looking at how languages are represented in public spaces on signs or even graffiti (Gorter, 2006; Shohamy & Gorter, 2009). My interest in linguistic landscape is looking at it as a pedagogical resource for students (see Sayer, 2010). I have written and done ethnographic language learning projects through linguistic landscape (see Sayer, 2020). As a sociolinguist, when you are interested in the language that is happening around you, the linguistic landscape obviously fits into that way of looking at things. As I am thinking about it more, taking interest and sort of seeing, I remember years and years ago, in an interview with a teacher, they were talking about the difficulty of teaching English to their students in Mexico. As they described it, English is very distant to them. They used this metaphor of English being close to you and therefore relevant to your everyday life, versus English being very far away or very distant from you. I thought that was an interesting metaphor to capture why some students seem to like English. They saw it as something that they wanted. It was relevant to them because it is something they can do. On the other hand, for other students, it is a compulsory subject that they really do not care about. Thinking of it as a challenge for him, he said something in an interview at least 15 years ago, and it has stuck with me. For the teacher, the key is to take English and bring it close to the students. Teachers somehow need to relate it to their everyday lives. To me, that was the main takeaway there. For my research, I think about not just theorizing it on an abstract level, which is again helpful for us as scholars to understand that the problems are theorized from them, but the praxis part of it, and the theory to practice. So, I theorize from the practices and what is happening in classrooms, but also have my work be relevant to the practice itself. As far as your question about research directions, I like having that research praxis happen and keep it grounded in practice. I theorize from practice, and then also help form practice in a very direct and practical way. Then, I also help teachers with the challenge of what it means for them to make the language closer to the student, referring to that teacher's metaphor, and closer to use in ways that make it more relevant.

Linguistic landscape, funds of knowledge, and translanguaging… For me, these are a part of where I want to go with things.

Huseyin Uysal:
It was truly a great pleasure to chat with you, Peter.
Peter Sayer:
Thanks for the opportunity.

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Book review

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ABSTRACT

ES *La enseñanza de español mediada por tecnología: de la justicia social a la inteligencia artificial* es un libro que presenta, desde un abordaje muy amplio, la enseñanza del español en entornos tecnológicos. Esta obra, editada por Javier Muñoz-Basols (Universidad de Sevilla y Oxford University), Mara Fuertes Gutiérrez (Open University) y Luis Cerezo (American University), fue publicada por la editorial Routledge que forma parte del grupo Taylor & Francis. Es importante destacar el gran aporte que significa esta obra tanto para personas que se dedican a la investigación como para docentes que componen la comunidad científica a cargo de enseñar y diseminar el español en el mundo, ya que es de acceso abierto (Open Access), hecho que se hace posible gracias al apoyo del programa HISPANEX y de otras instituciones mencionadas por los editores. El libro está explícitamente dirigido a profesorado y futuro profesorado, a investigadores y a quienes dirigen centros de enseñanza de lenguas segundas y extranjeras en general y de español en particular.

Palabras clave: ENSEÑANZA DE ESPAÑOL, LENGUAS EXTRANJERAS, TECNOLOGÍA, INTELIGENCIA ARTIFICIAL

EN *La enseñanza de español mediada por tecnología: de la justicia social a la inteligencia artificial* is a book that explores, from a broad perspective, the teaching of Spanish in technological environments. Edited by Javier Muñoz-Basols (University of Seville and Oxford University), Mara Fuertes Gutiérrez (Open University), and Luis Cerezo (American University), it is published by Routledge, part of the Taylor & Francis group. This work represents a significant contribution to both researchers and educators within the scientific community dedicated to teaching and promoting Spanish worldwide. Notably, it is available as Open Access, made possible through the support of the HISPANEX program and other institutions acknowledged by the editors. The book is specifically aimed at teachers and prospective teachers, researchers, and directors of second and foreign language teaching centers in general, and Spanish language teaching centers in particular.

Keywords: SPANISH LANGUAGE TEACHING, FOREIGN LANGUAGES, TECHNOLOGY, ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

IT La enseñanza de español mediada por tecnología: de la justicia social a la inteligencia artificial è un libro che presenta, tramite un approccio molto ampio, l'insegnamento dello spagnolo in ambienti tecnologici. Questa opera, editata da Javier Muñoz-Basols (Università di Siviglia e Università di Oxford), Mara Fuertes Gutiérrez (Open University) e Luis Cerezo (American University), è stato pubblicato da Routledge, parte del gruppo Taylor & Francis. È importante evidenziare il grande contributo di questo lavoro sia per i ricercatori che per gli insegnanti che fanno parte della comunità scientifica che si occupa di insegnare e diffondere lo spagnolo nel mondo, visto che si trova in Open Access, grazie al supporto del programma HISPANEX e di altre istituzioni menzionate dagli editori. Il libro è indirizzato esplicitamente agli insegnanti e ai futuri insegnanti, ai ricercatori, a coloro che sono a capo di centri di insegnamento di lingue seconde e straniere in generale e di centri di insegnamento dello spagnolo nello specifico.

Parole chiave: INSEGNAMENTO DELLO SPAGNOLO, LINGUE STRANIERE, TECNOLOGIA, INTELLIGENZA ARTIFICIALE

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Como se expresa en la introducción al volumen, es la intención ofrecer en esta serie, *Routledge Advances in Spanish Language Teaching*, publicaciones de gran calidad con autores de prestigio indiscutido que hayan abordado métodos y teorías innovadoras. Asimismo, la serie busca, y este volumen lo logra, ofrecer abordajes en las áreas de lingüística aplicada y aspectos sociales y culturales en la adquisición de lenguas segundas y extranjeras.

Por su parte, los editores dejan en claro en el artículo que cumple las veces de prólogo que el propósito del libro es tanto compartir experiencias y técnicas utilizadas durante la pandemia en el contexto de enseñanza y aprendizaje de lenguas como anticipar la enseñanza de lenguas mediada por el uso de inteligencia artificial (Muñoz-Basols et al. 2023; Muñoz-Basols y Fuertes Gutiérrez 2024b). Por otro lado, se propone introducir el modelo PPI (Planificar, Personalizar e Implementar) en la capacitación a docentes para el uso de tecnologías con la intención de que la enseñanza de lenguas mediada por tecnología sea exitosa. Sin lugar a duda, se trata de una obra de un indiscutido valor académico y muy amigable para la comprensión y aplicación en situación de aula presencial, híbrida o virtual. A mi entender esta obra es la primera gran contribución de relevancia sobre el tema dentro del ámbito de la enseñanza del español como lengua segunda o extranjera de acceso abierto.

La organización general se encuadra dentro de tres partes (I. Planificar las necesidades tecnológicas; II. Personalizar la enseñanza y el aprendizaje; III. Implementar recursos tecnológicos), un artículo inicial y un epílogo. Dentro de esta estructura, el volumen está compuesto por doce capítulos de autores y autoras pertenecientes a instituciones de distintas procedencias, tales como Egipto, Estados Unidos, Irlanda, Italia y Reino Unido. Cada capítulo va marcando distintos momentos en el proceso de la enseñanza de español en contextos virtuales. Se contemplan aspectos vinculados al acceso a la tecnología y la justicia social, a la motivación y al manejo de la ansiedad, así como a la evaluación, y se concluye con el epílogo en el que se expone la realidad que se nos presenta frente a la irrupción de la inteligencia artificial (IA).

En el artículo inicial o prólogo, los editores presentan el modelo PPI (Planificar, Personalizar e Implementar), el cual propone el manejo de herramientas y recursos que permitan un "empoderamiento tecnológico" tanto del profesorado como del alumnado en la enseñanza y aprendizaje de la lengua. Este abordaje contempla tres momentos fundamentales en la sistematización de la tarea docente: 1) Planificar las necesidades tecnológicas; 2) Personalizar la enseñanza y el aprendizaje; y 3) Implementar recursos tecnológicos. Le siguen a este primer artículo tres partes que se corresponden con los tres momentos del modelo presentado (Planificar, Personalizar e Implementar), y la obra cierra con un epílogo que aborda la temática de los nuevos escenarios mediados por la tecnología y más específicamente la IA.

La primera sección se enfoca en la planificación de necesidades tecnológicas y ofrece un marco metodológico y práctico. El capítulo inicial, de Melinda Dooly y Anna Comas-Quinn, presenta el tema de la brecha digital en la que se reflejan las desigualdades socioeconómicas. Las autoras analizan cómo la tecnología puede operar como una valiosa herramienta para lograr una educación más equitativa, accesible y justa en la enseñanza de idiomas. El segundo artículo, de Marta González-Lloret, aborda el diseño de programas y currículos en entornos virtuales utilizando el modelo ADDIE (Análisis, Diseño, Desarrollo, Integración, Evaluación), que considera la metodología, los materiales, la formación docente y la incorporación de la tecnología para lograr una enseñanza de idiomas efectiva. El tercer capítulo, escrito por Inmaculada Gómez Soler y Marta Tecedor, se centra en el análisis de las creencias, actitudes y competencias del profesorado respecto del aula virtual. Los resultados de una encuesta hecha a docentes de español muestran que la formación en competencias digitales es relevante a la hora de utilizar herramientas tecnológicas en la educación virtual. Cierra esta primera parte de esta obra el cuarto artículo en el que Daria Mizza y Fernando Rubio presentan perspectivas prácticas basadas en las directrices propuestas por el Diseño Universal para la Instrucción (DUI), con el fin de lograr un Entorno Participativo para el Aprendizaje de Lenguas (EPAL) en el aula de español. El fin último es lograr el "efecto de redundancia", vale decir, una enseñanza más clara y comprensible donde se presta especial atención a la diversidad de aprendientes.

La segunda parte, que aborda la personalización de la enseñanza y el aprendizaje, está encabezada por la investigación de Luis Cerezo e Íñigo Yanguas, quienes investigan el impacto de la tecnología sobre la motivación del alumnado y ofrecen recomendaciones pedagógicas para lograr resultados positivos. El capítulo sexto de este volumen, redactado por Zsuzsanna Bárkányi, se centra en aspectos afectivos en entornos de clases virtuales. Se aborda la ansiedad y se destaca que esta variable afectiva impide la participación activa de muchos aprendientes, razón por la cual el profesorado debe saber cómo gestionarla en todos los niveles y contextos de enseñanza. En el séptimo capítulo, escrito por Javier Muñoz-Basols y Mara Fuertes Gutiérrez, se trata, en primer lugar, el modo de gestionar y fomentar la interacción según el entorno virtual en el que se desarrolle, sea este

síncrono o asíncrono, presencial, híbrido o virtual. Luego, se hace una revisión crítica de las habilidades necesarias para ejercer una labor facilitadora de la interacción, se presenta un estudio de caso y finalmente se hacen recomendaciones para fomentar la interacción y optimizar la competencia comunicativa del alumnado. Cierra este bloque Sonia Bailini con su aporte sobre evaluación y *feedback* en entornos virtuales de aprendizaje. Esta autora realiza una revisión de los tipos de evaluación (diagnóstica, del aprovechamiento o del rendimiento, certificativa, formativa y sumativa, entre otros) y ofrece algunas recomendaciones para la elaboración y gestión de evaluaciones en línea mediante el aprovechamiento de las TICs.

El siguiente bloque, muestra cómo Implementar recursos tecnológicos. Robert Blake, Lillian Jones y Cory Osburn presentan el capítulo *Enseñanza híbrida*, *en línea y aula invertida.* Se busca que el aprendiente se convierta en un ser multilingüe en un mundo real y digital. Se aborda también la enseñanza en línea desde una visión interaccionista para finalmente ofrecer pautas prácticas para el diseño de un curso de lengua extranjera en línea. Asimismo, se busca fomentar la capacidad humana de ser *homo fabulans*, o narrador nato en los aprendientes para que puedan trazar su propia ruta de aprendizaje.

En el décimo capítulo sobre *Inmersión Lingüística Digital* (ILD) e intercambios virtuales, Carlos Soler Montes y Olga Juan-Lázaro explican cómo aplicar la ILD de manera efectiva en el aula virtual. Durante este proceso, el alumnado desarrolla tanto competencias sociolingüísticas como interculturales además de la capacidad de incrementar su motivación debido a la mejora de las habilidades digitales. Siguiendo con la utilización de recursos tecnológicos en la enseñanza de lenguas, Ana Oskoz presenta en el siguiente capítulo la efectividad de de la Inmersión Lingüística Digital (ILD), cuyos materiales (los pódcasts e historias digitales) permiten practicar la comprensión y expresión orales, además de potenciar la motivación y la competencia digital del alumnado. Con el duodécimo capítulo se cierra la tercera parte del libro en el que se afianza el modelo PPI. Luis Cerezo y Joan-Tomàs Pujolà nos proponen la *Pedagogía Lúdica Digital* (PLD) que consiste en el uso de videojuegos, minijuegos, realidades extendidas y robots para mejorar la experiencia del aprendizaje. Asimismo, los autores profundizan en los principales marcos teóricos relacionados con este enfoque. Además, aportan indicaciones para aprender contenidos léxicos o gramaticales con estos medios digitales.

El volumen se cierra con el capítulo 13 que, a modo de epílogo, presenta las oportunidades de la inteligencia artificial (IA) en la enseñanza y el aprendizaje de lenguas. Javier Muñoz- Basols y Mara Fuertes Gutiérrez hacen hincapié en la capacidad transformadora de la enseñanza mediante el uso de la IA generativa como aliada para mejorar la planificación curricular, la personalización del proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje, y la implementación de recursos y actividades. Asimismo, se presenta el *Marco IMI+* (*Integración, Multimodalidad e Interacción + Literacidad Digital y Pensamiento Crítico*) cuyo objetivo es incorporar la traducción aplicada en la enseñanza de una L2 teniendo en cuenta su naturaleza multimodal e interactiva en la comunicación. Este marco también contempla la necesidad imperiosa de fomentar un espíritu crítico para poder valorar de manera analítica y reflexiva el material proporcionado por la tecnología.

En suma, como dije al principio de esta reseña, esta obra viene a cubrir un vacío que se venía sintiendo en el ámbito de la enseñanza del español pero que tranquilamente puede aplicarse a la enseñanza del lenguas segundas y extranjeras en su totalidad. Asimismo, la generosa decisión de ofrecer este volumen con acceso abierto es y será de gran ayuda puesto que permite que el valioso aporte de esta obra pueda llegar a todos los puntos del planeta y muy especialmente a quienes nos encontramos en la "periferia", donde acceder a conocimiento de calidad puede complicarse debido a la falta de recursos. Mi más sentido agradecimiento a todas las personas que han participado en esta obra por su generoso aporte. En cuanto a la procedencia de los autores y las autoras de esta obra, me atrevo a sugerir que, debido al país de donde escribo (Argentina), sería muy enriquecedor el intercambio con profesorado y con investigadores e investigadoras de Latinoamérica en futuros trabajos, incorporando también aspectos de la glotopolítica de estas latitudes.

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ABSTRACT

EN Foreign language educators are constantly on the lookout for innovative ways to engage students and improve learning outcomes. Didactic Audiovisual Translation and Foreign Language Education by Noa Talaván, Jennifer Lertola, and Alberto Fernández-Costales (2024) promises to be a valuable resource in this quest, championing the use of Didactic Audiovisual Translation (DAT) as a powerful pedagogical tool.

Key words: FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION, ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE, AUDIOVISUAL TRANSLATION, DIDACTIC AUDIOVISUAL TRANSLATION, COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT

ES Los docentes de lenguas extranjeras buscan constantemente metodologías innovadoras para involucrar a los estudiantes y mejorar los resultados en el proceso de aprendizaje. *Didactic Audiovisual Translation and Foreign Language Education* de Noa Talaván, Jennifer Lertola y Alberto Fernández-Costales (2024) se revela como un recurso valioso a la luz de este objetivo, abogando por el uso de la Didáctica de la Traducción Audiovisual (DAT por su sigla en inglés) como poderosa herramienta pedagógica.

Palabras clave: ENSEÑANZA DE IDIOMAS, INGLÉS COMO LENGUA EXTRANJERA, TRADUCCIÓN AUDIOVISUAL, DIDÁCTICA DE LA TRADUCCIÓN AUDIOVISUAL, DESARROLLO DE COMPETENCIAS

IT Gli insegnanti di lingue straniere ricercano costantemente metodi innovativi per coinvolgere gli studenti e migliorare i risultati nel processo di apprendimento. *Didactic Audiovisual Translation and Foreign Language Education* di Noa Talaván, Jennifer Lertola e Alberto Fernández-Costales (2024) si rivela una risorsa preziosa alla luce di questo obiettivo, sostenendo che l'uso della Didattica della traduzione audiovisiva (DAT nella sua sigla inglese) sia un potente strumento pedagogico.

Parole chiave: INSEGNAMENTO DELLE LINGUE STRANIERE, INGLESE COME LINGUA STRANIERA, TRADUZIONE AUDIOVISIVA, DIDATTICA DELLA TRADUZIONE AUDIOVISIVA, SVILUPPO DELLE COMPETENZE

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In the rapidly evolving context of foreign language education, there is a constant need for cutting edge approaches that engage students and improve learning outcomes. The recent publication *Didactic Audiovisual Translation and Foreign Language Education* by Noa Talaván, Jennifer Lertola, and Alberto Fernández-Costales (Routledge, 2024) makes a significant contribution to this search, by presenting Didactic Audiovisual Translation (DAT) as a powerful and valuable pedagogical tool. Recent years have witnessed a significant increase in DAT research, as evidenced by the work of Hornero-Corisco and Gonzalez Vera (2020) and Bianchi (2015). A pioneering contribution to DAT came from Talaván (2013; 2019), who demonstrated the benefits of active subtitling in EFL classrooms. DAT is an emerging area of research, traditionally linked to FLL (Foreign Language Learning) and connected with neighbouring fields. The interest in this line of enquiry has been increasing and has called for an updated monograph to "set the bases of DAT as a discipline in its own right, providing the necessary methodological ground […] to specify all possibilities, combinations and potential benefits of the various didactic AVT modes" (Talavàn et al., 2024, p. 5).

Didactic Audiovisual Translation and Foreign Language Education shows the countless benefits of employing DAT as a language teaching tool. These benefits include fostering motivation through engagement with affective factors, promoting autonomous learning, stimulating cognitive development, encouraging social and oral interaction through teamwork and pair-work, developing literacy, language and cultural awareness and competence, promoting students' mediation skills, and offering structured learning through scaffolding activities (pp. 55-63).

The positive impact of DAT is also acknowledged by European institutions, which have actively supported its development through funded projects, such as Le-ViS (Learning via Subtitling, 2006-2008) – the first project to set the basis for international collaboration in DAT – and its follow-up project ClipFlair (Foreign language learning through interactive revoicing and captioning of clips, 2011-2014), which offered task-based and ready-to-use DAT activities for several target languages on a user-friendly platform, making it accessible for teachers and learners alike (p. 13).

The structure of the volume effectively guides readers through the theoretical background and practical applications of DAT. To this end, the first part of the book is devoted to an updated review of the literature arranged based on the various sub-branches of DAT. However, going beyond a mere exploration of DAT's theoretical discourses, the book also explores its practical application. It guides educators in preparing lesson plans for each DAT modality, including didactic subtitling, dubbing, and audio description. Accompanying assessment models provide valuable tools for assessing student progress. Importantly, this thought-provoking book emphasizes the broader pedagogical potential of DAT in Language Education (LE) by demonstrating its effectiveness not only in foreign language (FL) learning but also in teaching learners' first language (L1), minority languages, and even bilingual education programs (p. 1).

This book contains six chapters. The opening chapter introduces DAT as a discipline and offers a well-curated review of key publications since the early 2000s, including seminal monographs by Lertola (2019) and Talaván (2013), and several Ph.D. theses (from Talaván's 2009 dissertation to Bayern's in 2023). The strong foundation for understanding the theoretical framework of DAT is followed by Chapter 2, which explores the educational benefits of different AVT modes. Research demonstrates how dubbing, subtitling, audio description (AD), and voice over (VO) all contribute to successful language learning. In fact, they not only appeal to affective factors, such as motivation and engagement, but also reduce stress and anxiety. In addition to this, AVT promotes autonomous learning and interaction, thus developing the CEFR's 4 "Cs" (Communication, Collaboration, Critical Thinking, and Creativity) across education levels and types, from infancy to higher education. Teacher training programs, CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning), and EMI (English Medium Instruction) approaches are also highlighted as potential areas for AVT implementation.

Chapters 3, 4, and 5 delve into didactic subtitling (DS) and didactic SDH (subtitles for the deaf and hard of hearing), didactic dubbing (DD) and didactic voice over (DVO), and didactic audio description (DAD) and didactic free commentary (DFC), respectively. Since DAT is not meant to train students as possible audiovisual translators, general guidelines accompany each task, as students might be tackling with AVT tasks for the first time.

Subtitling, to start with, can occur either interlingually, i.e., between two distinct languages, or intralingually, when the source and target languages coincide. An example of the latter can be found in productions specifically tailored for the deaf and hard-of-hearing (SDH). Also didactic subtitling (DS; see Chapter 3) also takes on multiple forms based on translation type and direction. The main types are:

a) intralingual (that is, subtitling within L2, thus rephrasing the source text by resorting to condensation and reformulation strategies, such as the omission of unnecessary elements), more suited for intermediate to advanced proficiency levels (B1 to C2);
b) interlingual (meaning, subtitling from or into students' L1/L2, also known as direct/standard and reverse subtitling, respectively), recommended for A1 to B1 levels;
c) creative DS, in other words either didactic keyword captions or pre-spotted subtitling: the former simulates a fill-in-the-gaps exercise, while the latter can be used as a final scaffolded step where spotting is done, and students only insert linguistic content. Creative DS involves recreating the source text by reproducing a different version of the original dialogues, either intra- or inter-lingually (direct/standard or reverse).

Didactic subtitling allows learners to enhance a series of integrated skills, including listening and written comprehension, mediation, and writing skills, in addition to oral production, vocabulary acquisition, grammar content, and cultural awareness.

Didactic dubbing (DD) and didactic voice over (DVO) also include three types (see Chapter 4): intralingual, interlingual, and creative. Didactic dubbing and didactic voice over ask students to produce a script and, subsequently, an L1/L2 audio from a video in L2. These tasks enhance oral comprehension (audiovisual receptive skills), writing/spelling and speaking/pronunciation skills (audiovisual productive skills) in a contextualized, structured, guided, thorough, and authentic way (Talavàn et al., 2024, p. 107). They also promote audiovisual mediation skills, in the same manner as DS and didactic SDH, as learners are supposed to provide a service by ensuring access to the original audiovisual message for a receiver who cannot access it otherwise. Each dubbing or voice-over type and direction (standard, reverse, or creative) can be used for any proficiency level, but the selected video needs to be pondered appropriately.

In contrast, both didactic audio description (DAD) and didactic free commentary (DFC; Chapter 5) might be either intersemiotic or creative. These two AVT modes entail revoicing techniques: the former translates the visual content into words during the silent intervals between utterances. Originally developed for the sake of accessibility, it provides visually impaired audiences with the visual information they could not access otherwise. DFC translates and adapts the original dialogues into an L2 by adding clarifications (if necessary) or comments on intercultural elements. In both modes, learners need to revoice – to record – a previously-prepared script. DAD and DFC can enhance all language skills, plus mediation, in an integrated manner.

Moving beyond theory, the book provides practical resources for educators. Each category of DAT techniques explored in Chapters 3-5 is accompanied by practical examples and lesson plan samples as developed by the TRADILEX project. TRADILEX (Audiovisual Translation as a Didactic Resource in Foreign Language Education) is an ongoing national research project sponsored by the Ministry of Science and Innovation in Spain. It has developed and designed a total of 60 lesson plans, 5 short-term didactic sequences on one AVT mode each, and a long-term didactic sequence which combines five different modes (p. 5). The main outcomes are illustrated in the first chapter of this book.

The intended audience for this volume includes academics, practitioners, and postgraduate students interested in DAT, who have been previously introduced to the pedagogical applications of AVT in language education (p. 6). In this sense, teacher training is crucial for introducing re-writing and re-voicing AVT modes into language classes, primary and secondary education not excluded. Unfortunately, DAT has so far been primarily employed in higher education and degrees in translation and modern languages (p. 147).

The book acknowledges the need for continued exploration in DAT. The conclusions offer insights into several areas for future research endeavours. One focus is the long-term impact of DAT on learners' language competence, thus aiming to understand the lasting effects of this innovative approach. The limited number of participants involved in the mentioned projects so far calls for more intensive and extensive analyses, which need to employ a combination of both qualitative and quantitative assessment methods and tools, such as interviews, focus groups, questionnaires, and classroom observations. In addition, this work encourages investigating DAT scope by exploring further AVT modes e.g., videogame localization and respeaking. The use of DAT for accessible and inclusive language education is another area requiring further exploration.

While future research could explore the long-term impact of DAT on learners, the book's contribution to the field is undeniable, as it empowers educators with a versatile and engaging tool to turn classrooms into dynamic spaces for language acquisition.

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Review: Lillie Padilla & Rosti Vana (Eds.) (2024). *Representation, Inclusion and Social Justice in World Language Teaching: Research and Pedagogy for Inclusive Classrooms.* Routledge

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Book review

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ABSTRACT

EN Scholars in World Language continue to underscore a critical need to center social justice in all language classrooms. Despite the extensive data illustrating this need, relatively limited resources assist instructors in implementing social justice-oriented initiatives in their classrooms. *Representation, Inclusion and Social Justice in World Language Teaching: Research and Pedagogy for Inclusive Classrooms*, edited by Lillie Padilla and Rosti Vana, fills this gap by serving as a comprehensive resource offering both theoretical and practical suggestions for individuals wishing to promote equity in their language learning spaces. The thirteen chapters offer stakeholders working in language departments or dual language programs perspectives that can be implemented in language classrooms, teacher preparation programs, and at the department level.

Keywords: CRITICAL PEDAGOGY, WORLD LANGUAGE TEACHING, SOCIAL JUSTICE, EQUITY

ES La investigación en la enseñanza de lenguas del mundo continúa subrayando la necesidad crítica de colocar la justicia social en el centro de todas las aulas de idiomas. A pesar de la abundante información que ilustra esta necesidad, existen relativamente pocos recursos que ayuden al profesorado de idiomas a implementar de manera práctica iniciativas orientadas a la justicia social en sus aulas. *Representation, Inclusion and Social Justice in World Language Teaching: Research and Pedagogy for Inclusive Classrooms*, editado por Lillie Padilla y Rosti Vana, llena este vacío al servir como un recurso integral que ofrece sugerencias tanto teóricas como prácticas para quienes deseen promover la equidad en su espacio de aprendizaje de idiomas. Los trece capítulos proponen a quienes trabajan en departamentos de idiomas o programas de doble inmersión perspectivas que se pueden implementar en las aulas, en programas de formación docente y a nivel departamental.

Palabras clave: PEDAGOGÍA CRÍTICA, ENSEÑANZA DE LENGUAS DEL MUNDO, JUSTICIA SOCIAL, EQUIDAD

IT La ricerca nella didattica delle lingue del mondo continua a sottolineare l'esigenza critica di porre la giustizia sociale al centro di tutti i corsi di lingua. Nonostante i numerosi dati che illustrano tale necessità, sono relativamente poche le risorse che aiutino i docenti a implementare iniziative orientate alla giustizia sociale nelle proprie classi. *Representation, Inclusion and Social Justice in World Language Teaching: Research and Pedagogy for Inclusive Classrooms*, curato da Lillie Padilla e Rosti Vana, colma tale lacuna offrendo una risorsa esauriente, con proposte sia teoriche che pratiche per coloro che desiderino promuovere l'equità nei propri spazi di insegnamento linguistico. I tredici capitoli propongono a chi lavora nei dipartimenti o in programmi di lingua o doppia lingua, delle prospettive da implementare nelle classi, nei programmi di formazione docenti e a livello dipartimentale.

Parole chiave: PEDAGOGIA CRITICA, DIDATTICA DELLE LINGUE DEL MONDO, GIUSTIZIA SOCIALE, EQUITÀ

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Recently, scholars in World Language (WL) have underscored a critical need for centering social justice in all language classrooms (see, e.g., Anya & Randolph, 2019). Furthermore, researchers continue to point to numerous reasons why the language classroom is a particularly appropriate space to implement critical pedagogies that encourage students to engage with social justice-oriented themes such as race, power, and language ideologies (Anya, 2021; Leeman, 2015; Padilla & Vana, 2022; *inter alia*). Despite this emerging research outlining the need to emphasize teaching and learning strategies that are inclusive of the experiences of historically marginalized groups, there remains a gap in the scholarly literature regarding how to ensure that a social justice lens is included in WL curricula. *Representation, Inclusion and Social Justice in World Language Teaching: Research and Pedagogy for Inclusive Classrooms* fills this gap and serves as a road map for how stakeholders across a range of language teaching contexts (from Heritage Language to World Language to TESOL) can promote diversity, inclusion, and social justice in the classroom.

Following a brief introduction from the editors that outlines the need for WL classrooms to address social justice as a response to an increasingly diverse student body as well as to rectify WL curricula's historical failure to include diverse speakers or topics of marginalization, the volume is then divided into three sections. Section 1, titled "Challenging Hegemonic Discourse through Representation, Criticality and Inclusivity" features seven chapters. Chapter 1, by Hamza R'boul and Benachour Saidi, focuses on critically analyzing Native Speakerism and raciolinguistic ideologies (Flores & Rosa, 2015) in TESOL and EFL contexts. Using a Critical Race Theory framework, the author reveals how using the White native speaker as the norm in TESOL classrooms perpetuates historical global power imbalances that privilege Western perspectives while marginalizing many of the students who populate English classrooms. The reader is encouraged to think about how TESOL can be reimagined in a post-colonial context. Though the chapter is largely theoretical, the authors suggest that educators take steps towards dismantling Whiteness as the norm in their classrooms by facilitating conversations about positionality and race. They also advocate for TESOL instructors to encourage their students to take ownership of and pride in their identities, cultures, and English(es).

In Chapter 2, Angélica Amezcua and Ana Sánchez-Muñoz explore Spanish as a Heritage Language classes (SHL) as a space to promote Critical Language Awareness (CLA) among students who grew up hearing or speaking Spanish at home. The chapter analyzes data from unique SHL classes at a large university that are housed within an Ethnic Studies department rather than a World Language department. Interview data revealed that students in these courses gained pride and confidence in being bilingual, built agency to resist and challenge discriminatory language ideologies, and they felt empowered to maintain their Heritage Languages. The chapter closes by encouraging all heritage classes to adopt an interdisciplinary approach as a way to support minoritized languages and cultures. To promote this interdisciplinary perspective, the authors suggest more collaboration between ethnic studies and language departments at universities.

Chapter 3 is written by three scholars of Portuguese pedagogy: Gláucia V. Silva, Cristiane Soares, and Eduardo Viana da Silva. It offers tangible suggestions on how instructors of Portuguese can support students of all identities in their classrooms by teaching inclusive language. The authors begin by pointing out an inherent problem that learners may face when they realize the genders already established in a language do not reflect their own identities. By choosing to incorporate inclusive and nonbinary forms, all students can fully participate in the learning community, regardless of their gender identity. The chapter provides ample resources that instructors can easily incorporate into their courses, including a nonbinary and inclusive language statement to add to course syllabi, examples of e-textbooks that provide input on inclusive and nonbinary language, and additional online resources. The authors contend that when students are able to express their identities, it positively impacts the learning acquisition process. This makes the classroom a more equitable space for all learners.

Chapter 4 provides another perspective on including nonbinary language, though this time, in the Spanish context. Having identified the need to teach inclusive forms to rectify the historical exclusion of nonbinary language in curricula, the two authors of this chapter, Liana Stepanyan and Maria Mercedes Fages Agudo, created a grammar guide featuring inclusive forms. The chapter analyzes data from students of Spanish at the University of Southern California to underscore the need for the grammar guide while understanding students' attitudes towards the use of nonbinary language in intermediate-level university Spanish classes. Overall, the majority of students favorably viewed the inclusion of nonbinary forms and found them easier to use than they had anticipated. To support current Spanish instructors wanting to incorporate inclusive language into their classrooms, the authors provide examples of how to use the nonbinary *-e* ending and the article *le* along with examples of numerous class activities to introduce students to nonbinary language in Spanish and familiarize them with LGBTQ history in Spanish-speaking communities.

In Chapter 5, Lillie Padilla discusses the historical exclusion of Afro-Latinxs in Spanish curricula and its ramifications. After explaining who Afro-Latinxs are and the history of Afro-Latinxs in Latin America, the author connects the invisibility of Afro-Latinxs to the formation of Latinx identity and mestizaje. The author contends that mestizaje has contributed to the invisibility of Afro-descended Spanish speakers (cf. Wade, 1993; Bonilla Silva, 2023), and that by excluding the representation of Afro-Latinxs in teaching materials, Spanish classrooms perpetuate this invisibility. To rectify this injustice, the author encourages leveraging a Critical Race Teaching Curriculum (Anya, 2020) with a focus on intersectionality, and offers numerous resources for Spanish educators seeking to center Afro-Latinxs in their classrooms. She also underscores the importance of forming partnerships between WL departments and African Studies departments, as well as community organizations serving Afro-descended communities.

Chapter 6 is written by Ofelia García, María Cioè-Peña, and Brittany L. Frieson. It focuses on inequities promoted in Dual Language (DL) programs and the critiques of modern-day bilingual education programs. After providing an overview of the history of bilingual education programs in the US and their origins in the civil rights movement, the authors note that bilingual education programs have substituted their focus on inclusion, cultural pride, and linguistic support with a more commodified view of bilingualism that is marketed to middle-class families. Using the frames of critical race and disability studies, the authors contend that modern-day DL programs lack representation of racialized speakers as well as students labeled as disabled (Cioè-Peña, 2021). They promote implementing a critical race-informed translanguaging pedagogy wherein programs adopt a multiracial and heteroglossic space which offers *all* speakers, including racialized and dis/abled students, the same opportunities for meaning-making. The authors provide ten suggestions on how to enact this pedagogy in a DL classroom.

In Chapter 7, the connection between language and race is explored by L.J. Randolph and Aris M. Clemons. Clemons' framework of Hemispheric Black Language Pedagogies is invoked to understand that the curricular erasure experienced by Black varieties of English is also prevalent in Black varieties of world languages. Thus, the authors underscore the importance of implementing anti-racist pedagogies in the WL classroom. They offer centering Black language practices across WL contexts as a necessary practice to destabilize colonial frames and challenge language ideologies that discriminate against Black language. The authors used Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) as a framework to incorporate Black language practices. The chapter provides three example lesson plans demonstrating how to incorporate Blackness into TBLT. Two lessons are specific to Spanish, and one can be used in any WL context.

Section II of the volume is titled "New Directions in World Language Teaching: Tools for Researchers and Educators" and opens with Chapter 8, which focuses on study away as a tool to promote equity for Heritage Learners of Spanish (HLs). The authors, Leslie Del Carpio and Rosti Vana, open their chapter with a critical exploration of the notion that the "ideal" Spanish can only be studied abroad. This perspective ultimately denigrates speakers of US Spanish and their cultural identity. Furthermore, the authors contend that study abroad programs cater to the needs of White, middle-class L2 learners, which excludes the participation of heritage learners and racialized learners. The authors use study-away programs (domestic programs outside of a student's home institution) as a tool to resist negative discourses around US Spanish as well as to sustain US Spanish and its speakers. The chapter provides an overview of one successful university study-away program that is already in place and offers a road map for how other institutions could design and gain support for their own study-away programs.

In Chapter 9, Sergio Loza focuses on increasing equity in SHL classrooms by highlighting the need to increase support for receptive HLs. Receptive speakers understand language when heard, but generally have limited productive abilities. These students are often not admitted into SHL classes. The author argues that, in addition to the challenges faced by other HLs, receptive Latinxs face specific issues relating to deficit and monolingual ideologies, and that the CLA framework utilized in SHL classes would be particularly beneficial to this community of learners. Indeed, qualitative data from receptive HLs analyzed by the author showed that these students had a high degree of motivation to learn their HL and were not adequately served by L2/FL classes that focused on grammar and largely ignored US Latinx culture. The author argues that all HLs, regardless of their degree of bilingualism, deserve access to CLA and that including receptive HLs in SHL classes fosters more equitable opportunities for all Latinx people. Suggestions are given for how to differentiate SHL curricula for receptive HLs.

In Chapter 10, Xiaodi Zhou and Xiaochen Du begin by critiquing historical approaches to teaching language that promote strict language separation, a practice that ignores the sociolinguistic realities of being a bilingual speaker (Kramsch, 2014). The authors contend that students' bilingualism should be viewed as an

asset to instruction and encourage educators to utilize translingual and multilingual approaches. In the authors' analysis of two Mandarin case study classrooms, one of which utilized a strict target language-only policy and the other a flexible translanguaging policy, the authors noticed how the strict policy stifled student learning and made differentiation challenging. Students in the translanguaging classroom were more engaged both with content and each other. The authors close by advocating for a reconceptualization of the WL space as a heteroglossic context accepting all languages. Numerous tangible examples of how to employ translanguaging in the language classroom are provided throughout the chapter.

The last section of the book, titled "Critically Rethinking Language Teacher Training and Language Program Direction", also contains three chapters. Chapter 11 advocates for the need to infuse WL teacher training programs (TTPs) with preparation in Critical Language Awareness (CLA). Cynthia Ducar frames her argument by noting that WL classrooms often strive to prepare students to study a standardized, monolingual variety of the target language rather than focus on the local, bilingual communities (e.g., Spanish speakers in the US) where students will likely live and work. As a response to this historical monolingual bias, the author suggests that TTPs teach CLA so that educators have the framework to think critically about language, power, and race, and how focusing on standard language ultimately hurts both L2 and heritage learners by erasing the sociolinguistic realities of target language speakers and communities. The chapter offers numerous options on how to center bilingual and local language practices in the classroom ranging from Integrative Performance Assessments, to pen pals, to incorporating service learning with community organizations. The author also recommends that WL teachers at all levels incorporate CLA and conversations about linguistic variation into their classes.

Chapter 12 continues to examine TTPs, placing attention on how they can prepare candidates to foster diversity, inclusion, and representation in their classrooms, particularly in early learning contexts. The author, Kelly Frances Davidson, contends that Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy (CSP) should be a cornerstone of WL TTPs as it promotes linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism and views the WL classroom as a space for positive transformation (Paris, 2012). The chapter analyzes data gathered from teacher candidates in WL education and ESOL programs in a Georgia university TTP. Interview data reveal that all educators believe in a strong connection between language and identity, and that all had a desire to utilize CSP in their classroom. However, teacher candidates felt their method courses lacked guidance on how to practically apply theories in their classrooms. In order to help develop critically engaged teacher candidates who will make their future classrooms a space for positive change, the author advocates for the inclusion of justice-oriented critical pedagogies like CSP and to include early language learning in TTP curriculum.

The last chapter of the edited volume draws on research from the field of monitoring, evaluation, and learning to provide a roadmap for enacting and sustaining diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives at the department level. Written by Alexis Vollmer Rivera and Sandra Williams, the chapter begins by noting that WL departments have historically promoted standard language ideologies and idealized native speakers to the detriment of bilingual and heritage speakers. In order for transformative change to occur in department culture that will impact both students and staff, the authors walk the reader through an evaluation framework that outlines how to (a) define the problem to be addressed, (b) identify the causes of said problem, (c) select changes to implement, and (d) create processes to monitor if the changes are leading to the desired outcome. Thus, this chapter provides tangible resources for how WL departments can define and plan how to address inequities, as well as assess whether their action steps have the desired impact.

The call to incorporate social justice themes into World Language curriculum and policies has been getting increasingly louder in recent years (see, e.g., Wassell, Wesely, & Glynn, 2019). Nevertheless, the onus to create and implement such initiatives can often fall squarely on the shoulders of instructors or other individuals seeking to make those changes, which can be justifiably overwhelming. *Representation, Inclusion and Social Justice in World Language Teaching* serves as a practical guide to support a wide range of constituents in promoting equity across contexts. Though much of the content in the edited volume is geared towards providing instructional strategies to be used in individual classrooms, various chapters also present strategies for promoting justice at the language department level and in teacher preparation programs.

One potential drawback to instructors picking up this text is that it centers largely around Spanish (either taught as a World Language or Heritage Language). While there *are* chapters dedicated to presenting resources for Portuguese and Mandarin classes, other major languages such as French, German, and Arabic are unfortunately absent. Furthermore, decisions around providing translations also make the text feel more marketed toward a Spanish-speaking audience. While translations into English are provided for original text

that appears in Portuguese and Mandarin, Spanish is never translated. In subsequent editions, it may be of value to provide English translations of Spanish text in order to increase accessibility among a wider readership.

Despite many chapters focusing on Spanish, much of the theoretical framing and practical applications presented in this volume could certainly be adapted to fit other World Language contexts. These include increasing the representation of afro-descended target language speakers, promoting Critical Language Awareness, and incorporating inclusive and nonbinary language practices. Furthermore, chapters focusing on teacher preparation programs and departmental equity initiatives can be applied universally to interested programs and departments. Thus, the volume is apt for both instructors looking for specific strategies in the languages they may teach, as well as for educators seeking to learn more about particular frameworks or approaches that can be mapped onto their classrooms or departments.

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