Introduction

Due to the **COVID-19 crisis**, there was a generalized suspension of face-to-face instruction in Portugal during 2020. In order to ensure continuity of education among the different educational levels, an emergency transition to remote teaching practices took place (Hodges et al., 2020; Ferri et al., 2020).

Teachers and students increased their **use of digital technologies**, rapidly adapting their teaching and learning process to this new online learning situation. However, it is also very relevant to report on the **experiences lived hands-on** during this period, particularly in the higher education context.

At this level, we have witnessed and experienced firsthand how writing has become the basis of most communicative acts in which we participate today. In this context, a preliminary case study was conducted to explore which digital linguistic resources do students use when writing in Spanish as a foreign language at a Portuguese university.

Methodology

Preliminary Case study: five participants who were part of **Spanish as a foreign language Course** (C1-CEFR - Level) was conducted between March and June 2020.

Collected data: the data were collected online through an online platform (Zoom), an online questionnaire (closed questions and few open-ended ones) and the LMS platform, Moodle.

The **researcher** observed the writing sessions in Moodle through Zoom. The **Writing Task** consisted on the production of a short essay and it was allowed to consult and use digital resources while writing the text.

Preliminary Results

Preferences of Students

to look up unfamiliar words in a search engine (Google, Safari), online dictionaries and online automatic translators. Some also use image search engines.

- Comparing the use of the online dictionaries with that of the corrector from the word processor, students prefer the latter.

- However, they acknowledge to have some favorite online dictionaries (Deepl, Linguee, Reverso) where they look for words or phrases.

- The line between **translator and dictionary** is very thin.

- **Preferences for write** (online or traditionally, that is with paper and pencil), the majority prefers to write in the foreign language in a digital context, because it makes them feel more confident when writing.

Contrasting Questionnaire with Writing Task

- Students **use the digital linguistic resources** and the proportion of use also seems to match: according to the observed behavior, the starting point of most searches is Google.

- each student **adapted the use of digital linguistic resources** to their own needs. Some seem to have mastered their own work sequences, which can be noticed in the way the organize the screen to work, the favorite sites and apps they have ready when writing online, and the way in which they use tools, such as the corrector of the processor: some accept immediately the suggestions of the processor, while others analyze the results and "doble check" them online.

Preliminary Conclusions

Based on the results, it can be suggested that a thorough analysis of the linguistic resources students use when writing in Spanish as a foreign language must include both types of data:

- the **student´s perceptions** and opinions collected by a questionnaire, as well as the observation and close analysis of the student's screen activity during the writing sessions.

- **Previous studies** in this field (Fredholm, 2019; Vásquez-Calvo,2016).

However, in light of the **emergency remote instruction** situation teachers and students around the world have experienced during the last months, such approaches to the writing process of foreign language students gain even more importance, since they might shed some light in the process of writing and also might be useful to design and explore innovative assessment forms, which could focus more on the writing process *per se* and the way in which students solve writing tasks, rather than on the invigilation or control of the exam situation.

References: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1vbDK3O536Ghflc8_RRrIpYg-bi9O3OTTX32_ehkBie8/edit?usp=sharing

How university students use Digital Resources in Written Production in Spanish Foreign Language Courses : A case study at a Portuguese university

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