

Chapter 3

Current Perspectives in the Multilingual EFL Classroom: A Portuguese Case Study



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Abstract Following the trend that has emerged in most European educational contexts, Portugal is no exception and has witnessed an increasing number of multilingual/multicultural classrooms. According to the Ministry of Education, students from over 180 nationalities were enrolled in Portuguese schools in 2017. Consequently, English language teachers have had to adapt to this by acknowledging a gradual shift from the notion of correctness to appropriateness and intelligibility, reassessing the traditional learning target that focuses on native speaker norms. Thus, the scope of this chapter stems from Kirkpatrick (2007, p. 194), which advocates that “in aiming to teach and learn English in ways that would allow for effective communication across linguistic and cultural boundaries the focus of the classroom moves from the acquisition of the norms associated with a standard model to a focus on learning linguistic features, cultural information, and communication strategies that will facilitate communication.” This study reports the findings of two questionnaires distributed to Basic and Secondary teachers (N = 133) and students (N = 100), as well as interviews with Basic Education students (N = 15), to ascertain their awareness of and attitudes towards English language teaching, learning and use in multilingual classrooms. Findings indicate the need for promoting teacher and learner competences that are crucial for responding to and building upon the diversity found in today’s multilingual English language classrooms.

Keywords Multilingualism · Basic education · Secondary education · Teachers’ attitudes · Learners’ attitudes

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Introduction

Following the trend that has emerged in most European educational contexts, Portugal has witnessed an increasing number of multilingual/multicultural classrooms. According to the Ministry of Education, in the 2018/2019 school year, students from over 170 nationalities were enrolled in Portuguese state schools from primary, basic, and secondary education (Oliveira 2020). The ten most represented countries were Brazil, Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Ukraine, Romania, São Tomé and Príncipe, China, Moldova, and France. That same year the representation of other countries also increased exponentially in comparison to the previous year, which was the case with students from Venezuela (+56.8%), Italy (+50.3%), other South American countries (+29.7%), and Nepal (+17.4%). In line with these percentages, there has been an increasing trend in the number of foreign students enrolled in Portugal. In 2018/2019 there were 52,641 foreign students enrolled in the state school system, an 18.5% increase in comparison to the previous school year, and a 44% increase in comparison to the last three years. These students were spread throughout Portugal, however, the main regions where they were integrated in were the Lisbon metropolitan area (54.4%), the north (15.3%), and the center (14.4%) regions.

As a result of this panorama, many teachers have had to adapt to the challenges of this new reality, and the English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom is no exception. In fact, when many (im)migrant students arrive in their host country they do not know the local language, however, more often than not they have already started learning English in their home countries, making it often the only shared language with their teachers and classmates. Consequently, English and the EFL classroom may play a vital role in the integration of these students in the host community. In the case of Portugal, many (im)migrant students come from Portuguese-speaking countries in South America and Africa, however, this does not mean their integration is necessarily easy, as these countries are culturally very different speaking another variety of Portuguese. Regardless of the learners' backgrounds, students can benefit from the EFL classroom which may function not only as a space of social and cultural integration, but also as a setting where real intercultural interactions may be explored, hence reflecting the global use of English as an international *lingua franca*.

Consequently, this chapter proposes to analyze and discuss EFL teachers', teen learners', and young learners' awareness of and attitudes towards English language teaching, learning and use in multilingual classrooms in Portugal. This analysis stems from a larger study part of the 'English as a Lingua Franca Practices for Inclusive Multilingual Classrooms (ENRICH)' Erasmus+ project (2018–1-EL01-KA201-047894), of which the University of Lisbon, Hellenic Open University, Roma Tre University, Boğaziçi University, Oslo Metropolitan University, and the Computer Technology Institute and Press "Diophantus" are a part. The aim of ENRICH is essentially to promote teacher competences that are crucial for responding to and building upon the diversity found in today's multilingual classrooms across Europe, as well

as to develop a high-quality Continuous Professional Development (CPD) infrastructure which will empower EFL teachers to integrate the current role of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) in multilingual classrooms. The analysis of the teachers' and learners' attitudes towards English language teaching/learning in this chapter is a result of the initial needs analysis phase, which contributed to the development of the CPD infrastructure.

Theoretical Framework

The scope of this study stems from Kirkpatrick's work (2007, p. 194), which advocates that:

“in aiming to teach and learn English in ways that would allow for effective communication across linguistic and cultural boundaries the focus of the classroom moves from the acquisition of the norms associated with a standard model to a focus on learning linguistic features, cultural information, and communication strategies that will facilitate communication”.

Although English has taken on an international role, and the educational context in Portugal has become increasingly multilingual/multicultural, the traditional EFL paradigms are still centered on standard British and American English as well as on the British and American cultures. Consequently, it is ever more pressing that English Language Teaching (ELT) reflect real language use with both native and non-native speakers of the language, where several communicative strategies are applied, and cultures are negotiated. To illustrate, this may be done by means of diverse authentic teaching materials, either face-to-face or over the Internet via a range of different applications, as most interactions nowadays take place online, even more so after the COVID-19 pandemic.

In essence, this study evolved from the current debate on key theoretical concepts such as the development of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), multilingualism/multiculturalism in foreign language learning, the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), and the production of language learning materials. ICC may be defined as someone's ability to understand cultures, including their own, and be able to employ that understanding to communicate with people from different cultures. Put differently, it is “the appropriate and effective management of interaction between people who, to some degree or another, represent different or divergent cognitive, affective, and behavioral orientations to the world” (Spitzberg and Changnon 2009, p. 7). According to Byram (1997, p. 71), ICC considers language teaching and focuses on “the ability to interact with people from another country and culture in a foreign language”, so a language learner who has developed ICC is capable of building relationships while using the foreign language, communicating effectively, taking into consideration their and the other's needs and points of view. In essence, research on ICC has aimed to construct models based on attitudes, beliefs and skills to measure successful intercultural communication (Byram and Morgan 1994; Fritz, Möllenberg and Cheng 2002; Lies 2004; Spitzberg and Changnon 2009).

One major feature of current processes of globalization is the emergence and impact of multilingualism, and the associated phenomenon of multiculturalism. Once the language classroom becomes a meaningful multilingual context by witnessing various modes and settings of language development, learners should use a variety of discourse practices and linguistic strategies to communicate more effectively (Bonnet and Siemund 2018). One such strategy is translanguaging, in the sense that it allows multilingual speakers “flexible use of their linguistic resources to make meaning of their lives and their complex worlds” (Garcia 2011, p. 1). According to Wei (2011, p. 1223), the act of translanguaging “creates a social space for the multilingual language user by bringing together different dimensions of their personal history, experience and environment”. Canagarajah (2011, p. 401) further adds that translanguaging is “the ability of multilingual speakers to shuttle between languages, treating the diverse languages that form their repertoire as an integrated system.”

In view of this, teachers should move towards a more flexible model of education for multilingualism and multiculturalism which necessarily implies moving beyond the classroom for the sources of language learning. Learners engage in language practices informally: playing games, watching films, listening to music, using the Internet, communicating electronically, and in the streets of our multilingual cities. Educators should, then, treat this reality as a major source of knowledge and incorporate what learners bring with them into the classroom.

In addition, in this digital age, children have had the Internet as their constant companion and, as a result, technology has become mainstream and is increasingly integrated into learning environments. Technology-enhanced classes are largely stimulating and effective ways of promoting interest in topics that students might otherwise disregard. Although language teachers have been avid users of technology for a very long time, current research has shown that innovative Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) can improve and enhance students’ language acquisition, thus motivating them to continue their learning. However, Blake (2008, p. 11) cautions that:

“Teachers inexperienced in using technology often harbour the belief that merely transforming an activity into a web or CALL Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) format will guarantee its success for students. Again, any activity without adequate pedagogical planning—technologically enhanced or not—will produce unsatisfactory results with students, even if it’s attractive from a multimedia point of view”.

This means using ICT without careful planning and well-defined objectives will more likely be a waste of time and effort and undermine the use of ICT in the EFL classroom. For this reason, EFL teachers should be able to keep an updated perspective of ICT use in the language classroom.

Ultimately, ELT materials have traditionally been circumscribed to standard monolithic representations of language, focusing mainly on the standard British and American paradigms. Consequently, they have largely neglected ‘to acknowledge the increased use of English among NNSs [non-native speakers] of English’ (Matsuda, 2012, p. 171), hence overlooking the plurality learners encounter outside the classroom. Research has also indicated that the role of ELF—as the most often

used means in international and intercultural exchanges—has been largely underrepresented in textbooks and web-based teaching materials (Matsuda 2012; Vettorel and Lopriore 2013; Guerra et al. 2020), as well as in ELF-aware teaching materials (Seidlhofer 2011). In order to bridge this gap, teachers may create their own materials, by resorting to authentic resources (e.g., television shows, movies, YouTube videos, newspapers/magazines) which reflect the current global use of English in which native and non-native speakers are represented in terms of different varieties and cultures (e.g., Guerra and Cavalheiro 2019). By doing so, learners are engaged in effective real-life language use in which different communicative strategies are employed.

Research Questions

This study focuses on the Portuguese ELT context, more specifically on Primary Education (1st cycle, Years 1–4; 2nd cycle, Years 5–6; 3rd cycle, Years 7–9) and Secondary Education (Years 10–12). English is a compulsory subject from Year 3 to Year 11, so students will have completed at least 9 years of English before they conclude their secondary education. This, however, does not mean they may not have more years of English instruction, as it is an optional subject in pre-school, Years 1, 2, and 12.

According to the Essential Learnings document put forth by the Ministry of Education in 2018, the aim of EFL classes across all levels is to contribute to the development of a global citizen's own identity in relation to others based on attitudes and values, such as the respect for others, for the Anglo-Saxon culture, as well as for other cultures in the world. In addition, the notions of responsibility and cooperation between peoples, with individual and collective repercussions, are promoted. These objectives clearly point out that English language classes should go beyond the traditional notions of Standard British and American English as well as the cultures associated with these countries.

Considering these national guidelines put forth by the Ministry of Education and the fact that the number of foreign students enrolled in the Portuguese state school system has increased significantly these last few years, it has become crucial to focus on multilingual EFL classrooms, where both teachers and students interact with other languages and cultures on a regular basis. Therefore, the following research questions were put forth:

1. What are EFL teachers' and learners' multilingual and multicultural classroom and school contexts like?
2. What are EFL teachers' experiences, attitudes and awareness regarding language teaching policies, use of classroom materials, teaching strategies and their learners' contact with the language?

3. What are EFL teen and young learners' attitudes towards their English language learning experience, learning preferences and use of English in and outside the classroom?

Methodology

The data collected and analyzed were based on both quantitative and qualitative methods. In the former case, two questionnaires were applied. One questionnaire was disseminated online via Google forms between the months of December 2018 and January 2019 and collected nationwide data from 133 Basic and Secondary EFL teachers (from Years 1–12). The other questionnaire was conducted with 100 teen learners (TLs), Portuguese as well as first or second-generation immigrant students, attending upper basic and secondary education (ages 14–18). This questionnaire was applied during the month of December 2018 in state schools in Lisbon and other cities in the center and south of Portugal, areas where there was a higher number of (im)migrant students.

In terms of the qualitative data, three focus groups with five young learners (YLS) each (ages 11–13) from state schools were conducted. Each group was comprised of Portuguese nationals as well as first and second-generation immigrants. This took place in January 2019, and the discussion was conducted in Portuguese as it was easier to obtain information with children this age rather than using questionnaires.

Results and Discussion

Research Question 1: EFL Teachers' and Learners' Multilingual and Multicultural Classroom and School Contexts

This section presents the demographics of the participants in this study (teachers, TLs and YLS) as well as their multilingual/multicultural contexts and school practices.

The 133 EFL teachers who participated in this study were overwhelmingly older than 36 years of age (91%, $n = 121$). More specifically, almost half of them (42.9%, $n = 57$) were between 46 and 55, while 21.8% ($n = 29$) were older than 55. Moreover, the vast majority of the respondents was female (93.2%, $n = 124$). These features of the participant teachers accurately reflect the current teacher demographics in Portugal. According to the OECD (2019, p. 1), "Portugal's teaching workforce has been ageing over the past decade and is among the oldest of all OECD countries." This document adds that "over 40% of teachers from primary to upper secondary education are 50 years or older (OECD average: 36%), and only 1% are under 30 (OECD average: 10%)" (p. 4).

More than half of these teachers (53.4%, $n = 71$) were teaching multilingual classes at the time they replied to the questionnaire. Regarding the age range of their students, 20.3% ($n = 27$) of the teachers were only teaching YLs, 38.3% ($n = 51$) were only teaching TLs, and 41.4% ($n = 55$) were teaching both YLs and TLs. As for the average percentage of multilingual learners in their classrooms, 87.2% of the teachers ($n = 116$) referred that these learners consisted of up to 25% of the students in class, while only 9.8% ($n = 13$) stated that multilingual learners comprised 26–50% of the total number of students in class. Teachers also reinforced the opinion that Portugal has become a multilingual and multicultural country as 86.5% ($n = 115$) believed that people with different language backgrounds lived in Portugal. These results corroborate the evolving student demographics in Portugal in the twenty-first century due to the increasing flow of migrants from a diversity of cultural and linguistic backgrounds (see Introduction).

However, when asked about the educational policies and practices aiming at the integration of learners of migrant backgrounds in their schools, in general, and in their English classes teachers displayed somewhat contrasting viewpoints. While 71.5% ($n = 95$) agreed/strongly agreed (as opposed to 6.8% of teachers who disagreed/strongly disagreed) that their schools supported the integration of migrant learners with special programmes and/or events, 54.1% of them ($n = 72$) disagreed/strongly disagreed (against 16.5% of teachers who agreed/strongly agreed) with the proposal that they had received adequate training regarding the integration of migrant learners in their English class. These results clearly point to the need for further teacher training focusing on the essential pedagogical adaptations and developments when teaching and learning English takes place in a multilingual and multicultural environment.

The second group of participants in this study was comprised of 100 TLs attending upper basic and secondary education, 60% ($n = 60$) of which were female and 40% ($n = 40$) were male. Half of these respondents were 14 years of age, 19% ($n = 19$) were 15, and 22% ($n = 22$) were 16. Older students were fewer in number as only 4% ($n = 4$) were aged, 17.4% ($n = 4$) were 18 years old, and only 1 (1%) student was over 18.

When asked if they spoke another language/dialect at home, 38% ($n = 38$) responded affirmatively, identifying such languages as Chinese, Creole, French, Nepali, Punjabi, Russian, Ukrainian, Urdu, and Uzbek. A multilingual environment was in all respects perceptible in the classroom as well since 36.3% ($n = 33$) of TLs revealed there were 6–10 multilingual students in their class. Another 35.2% ($n = 32$) reported an even higher number seeing that they had more than 10 fellow students who were multilingual. 24.2% ($n = 22$) indicated there were between 3 and 5 such students in their class whereas only 4% ($n = 4$) said they had either 1 or 2 multilingual classmates.

In light of the increasing number of multilingual/multicultural classrooms in Portuguese state schools, TLs were asked whether their own school offered specific activities (e.g., social events, cultural festivals) to integrate students with different linguacultural backgrounds. While 41.4% ($n = 41$) referred this was sometimes true, 39.4% ($n = 39$) shared a contrasting view and stated this was rarely the case in their context. In fact, 14% (14) of TLs revealed that their schools never provided

such activities while 5% (n = 5) argued that this often or always happened in their context.

As regards their English language education, 36% (n = 36) of TLs indicated they had studied English for 8–10 years whereas 32% (n = 32) had done so for 5–7 years. Overall, these figures show that over one third (68%, n = 64) of the respondents had been learning English for at least 5 years. An additional 9% (n = 9) revealed they had been studying English for 11–13 years and 7% (n = 7) stated they had done so for over that extent of time. On the opposite side of the spectrum, only 9% (n = 9) claimed to have studied English for 2–4 years or as little as 1 year or less (7%, n = 7).

As for the YLs who participated in this study, a total of 15 students (11 boys and 4 girls) were considered, of which six were first or second-generation immigrants and eight were local Portuguese students. They were between the ages of 11 and 13 and attended years 5, 6, and 7 in school. These students came from the Lisbon metropolitan area and the center region of Portugal, and all were integrated in multi-lingual/multicultural classrooms. In view of this, they were accustomed to interacting with classmates from diverse linguacultural backgrounds.

Research Question 2: EFL Teachers' Experiences, Attitudes and Awareness of Language Teaching Policies, Use of Classroom Materials, Teaching Strategies and their Learners' Contact with the Language

Teachers were asked about their knowledge of Portuguese language education policies, the domains in which they needed the most training, the development of their own teaching materials as well as the use of authentic materials, providing students with language use tasks which reflected the type of English learners used outside the classroom, and using the Internet in class.

The overwhelming majority of teachers (96.3%, n = 128) agreed/strongly agreed that they knew about the Portuguese language education policies. Although teachers demonstrated increased awareness of and interest in English language teaching policies, it is vital to look into their perceptions of their in-service training needs considering the characteristics of the present-day English classroom in Portugal.

Therefore, teachers were also inquired about the areas they believed they needed the most training. They were given a choice of five areas of training, identifying the least needed (1) to the most needed (5). Results showed that teachers regarded 'making learners confident non-native users of English' the most relevant domain in English language teaching in which they required more training. Such preference might indicate a tendency to move away from a pedagogical model which emphasizes the native speaker and standard English. Teachers seemed to acknowledge the diversity of language users and contexts in the classroom as representative of the current role of English as an international language.

Table 3.1 Teachers' choice of most needed areas of training

Rank	Area of training	Mean
1st	Making learners confident non-native users of English	3.50
2nd	Developing relevant and appropriate teacher-made assessments for learners	3.41
3rd	Integrating ICT (e.g., interactive digital whiteboard, smartphones, apps, tablets, etc.)	3.20
4th	Raising language awareness	3.05
5th	Raising learners' intercultural communication skills	2.61

Table 3.1 shows the order of the teachers' needs of training areas:

Regarding the multilingual and multicultural context of the English classes, teachers were prompted to react to the production of teaching materials which supported befitting pedagogical practices and the use of authentic pedagogic materials in class. Two-thirds of the teachers (66.9%, $n = 89$) revealed that they often/always developed their own additional teaching materials to address the needs and wants of their multilingual students, followed closely by those who stated they sometimes did that (22.6%, $n = 30$). Interestingly, a higher percentage of teachers (85.7%, $n = 114$) referred that they agreed/strongly agreed with the use of authentic materials in teaching. Essentially, teachers seemed to rely on the use of authentic materials to support their language teaching meanwhile there was a growing concern with adapting and producing materials that catered for the diversity of learners' language interests and use.

With regard to language use, most teachers (72.2%, $n = 96$) admitted that they often/always exposed their learners to uses of English similar to those they might be exposed to outside the classroom. It is important to note that another 25.6% ($n = 34$) of the teachers referred that they sometimes did that as well. These results indicate that there is a broad consensus among teachers about the significance of bringing a diversity of contexts of language use into the classroom.

This study also attempts to identify teachers' beliefs and classroom procedures related to their learners' use of English, namely classroom opportunities to interact in English, the use of other languages in the classroom, and the use of English outside the classroom.

Almost every teacher who responded to the questionnaire (97.8%, $n = 130$) claimed that they gave their learners several opportunities to interact in English. Regarding the use of other languages in the English class, teachers demonstrated divergent points of view. 37.6% ($n = 50$) indicated they sometimes allowed their learners to use languages other than English during their English classes. However, while 24.8% of the teachers ($n = 33$) referred that they often did the same, a similar percentage of teachers (24.1%, $n = 32$) pointed out that they rarely let students use another language besides English. It is interesting to note, though, that only 9.8% ($n = 13$) always allowed their learners to use other languages, while 3.8% ($n = 5$) of the teachers never did so. In essence, while teachers did attach extreme importance to classroom interaction, there was no agreement among them about the

use of languages other than English. Although Portuguese classrooms have become highly multilingual and multicultural over the past years, some teachers seem to persist in fostering the traditional notion which emphasizes the use of English only in the classroom as the most effective means to promote language learning and development.

It is possible that the relevance given to the use of English only in the classroom might be related to the teachers' perception of their students' use of English outside the classroom as slightly more than half of them (56.4%, $n = 75$) referred their learners sometimes used English outside class, together with 24.1% ($n = 32$) who said learners rarely did so (only 15.8%, $n = 21$ claimed their learners often used English outside the classroom).

As a rule, teachers' opinions about and use of the Internet in the English classroom might be a significant indicator of a language pedagogy which attempts to provide learners with a variety of contexts of language use outside the classroom. Therefore, teachers were asked about the engagement of students in tasks using the Internet, such as through interactive applications or social media. Results showed that 65.5% ($n = 87$) agreed/strongly agreed with such use of the Internet in the classroom, confirming that teachers were willing to develop tasks which expose learners to the types of uses of English they might encounter outside the classroom.

Research Question 3: EFL Teen and Young Learners' Attitudes Towards their English Language Learning Experience, Learning Preferences and Use of English in and Outside the Classroom

Firstly, TLs were asked if their teacher made use of any activities that showed what students could do in English, and the feedback was noticeably positive. 51% ($n = 51$) acknowledged that this was often true and an additional 25% ($n = 25$) confirmed that the teacher always employed the aforesaid activities. To a smaller extent, 20% ($n = 20$) of TLs mentioned that their teacher sometimes did so and interestingly only a minimal number of students (2%, $n = 2$) claimed this rarely happened in their EFL classroom. These results seem to indicate that Portuguese EFL teachers exploit their TLs' competences purposefully with the aim of benefiting teaching and learning practices.

Considering these results, it was critical to determine the nature of the teaching materials provided to students. Thus, TL respondents were inquired whether their teacher used authentic materials, such as television series, films, and songs in the English class. Although 35% ($n = 35$) of students stated their teachers sometimes used authentic materials, 22% ($n = 22$) argued that this was rarely the case in their classes, while 16% ($n = 16$) actually claimed this was never true. However, a quarter of all students surveyed admitted that their teachers often or always put authentic material to use (21%, $n = 21$ and 6%, $n = 6$, respectively). Overall, findings indicated

that learners were largely divided in their views on whether teachers drew on the use of these materials in the EFL classroom. Curiously, results seem to contradict what schoolteachers expressed in the previous section: while the vast majority approved of the use of authentic materials to support their language teaching, over a third (38%, $n = 38$) of the TLs have yet to experience this strategy on a regular basis.

Having focused on language teaching, this analysis of the multilingual EFL classroom then addressed TLs' impressions on English language learning. To begin with, participants were asked if they enjoyed learning English at school. Results were predominantly reassuring as 80% ($n = 80$) of TLs said they always/often enjoyed learning English. Only 11% ($n = 11$) found the activity was sometimes enjoyable whereas 8% ($n = 8$) rarely/never appreciated doing so.

It is noteworthy, however, that when inquired if they learnt more English outside of school than in the class, over half (54%, $n = 54$) of the participants agreed/strongly agreed as opposed to the 20% ($n = 20$) who disagreed/strongly agreed. 26% ($n = 26$) of them did not share strong thoughts on the matter and avoided forming an opinion.

Hence, in an attempt to uncover TLs' English learning preferences, the questionnaire provided respondents with a rank order question, namely a list of different activities involving the use of English and typically carried out by teenagers: watching YouTube videos; using social media, such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter; playing on-line games; watching movies and television series; attending private English lessons; reading books, comics, etc.; using English with friends or family members; listening to music; and attending English classes at school. TLs were then asked to rank the three most preferred activities to learn English among those listed, and results showed that adolescents most enjoyed learning English from playing on-line games, whereas watching movies and television series ranked second. Despite the obvious screen time predisposition, the third most preferred activity was in fact attending English classes at school. Undoubtedly, television, interactive video games, and the Internet can be excellent sources of education and entertainment for English language learners, and teachers seemed aware of the preferences indicated above, which is clearly why integrating ICT in the EFL classroom was one of the areas in which teachers admitted to needing more training opportunities (see Table 3.1).

So far, this research has highlighted TLs' perceptions concerning English language teaching and learning. However, it is pressing to understand how TLs commonly use English not only inside but especially outside the classroom. TLs shared the same divergent points of view as teachers (see above) concerning the use of other languages in the English class. Although 33% ($n = 33$) of the students were often or always allowed to resort to another language besides English in the classroom, almost an identical number (31%, $n = 31$) was rarely/never allowed to do so. Similarly, 35% ($n = 35$) of the TLs surveyed explained that they could often use another language besides English. Fundamentally, what these results clearly emphasize is the abovementioned perception that there is no set agreement among teachers regarding the use of languages in the EFL classroom other than English.

TLs' use of English outside the classroom is an additional concern of this study and as such it is important to establish how frequently these learners communicate in English when they are not in a formal learning environment. Consequently, TLs were

Table 3.2 TLs' ranking of most common activities involving the use of English

Rank	Activity	Mean
1st	I watch TV/series in English	4.17
2nd	I use English outside the classroom	3.60
3rd	I play video/online games that use English	3.41
4th	I engage in online talk	3.29

asked to describe how often—from *never* (1) to *always* (5)—they carry out a set of different activities. Findings indicated that most students would often or even always watch series in English, which is in line with the data presented above concerning TLs most preferred activities to learn English. Remarkably, the broader option 'I use English outside the classroom' ranked second on the list seeing as most respondents claimed to sometimes or often doing so even if they failed to specify how this was carried out. This is significant, more so considering it ranked higher than the playing video/online games that use English, or engaging in online talk, which were special interests for teens as was demonstrated above. Table 3.2 ranks the activities TLs engaged in when using English outside their classroom.

Considering TLs make use of the English language in numerous ways in their everyday lives, it would be interesting to understand how successful they are when interacting with other people. When asked if they could communicate in English with others, 38% (n = 38) agreed this was true and an additional 21% (n = 21) went further and strongly agreed. Only 7% (n = 7) disagreed, while 3% (n = 3) admitted to having trouble using English successfully with others and actually strongly disagreed. Although these numbers appear to be satisfactory, it is the relatively high number (29%, n = 29) of students who neither agreed nor disagreed that poses a challenge to this study. This midpoint on satisfaction shows respondents were less inclined to share their opinion quite possibly because they were unsure about or unhappy with their proficiency in English. It stands to reason that students who have high level of anxiety and low level of self-confidence in foreign language classes may have difficulties in developing their speaking ability and this might conceivably be the case.

As explained earlier, students within the Portuguese school system will have completed at least 9 years of English before they conclude their secondary education. It is a significant investment of students' time and effort, so this study finally inquires learners about the ways they expect to use English in the future: when travelling abroad, working in another country, or any other alternative scenario. Numbers were very similar for the first two options as 68.3% (N = 67) of the respondents saw themselves using English when travelling to another country while 64.2% (N = 63) expected to do so should they choose to work abroad. When asked to provide additional possibilities for using English in the future, answers were varied but the two most common choices indicated that students would use English to study abroad or to further employment opportunities in Portugal. This carries a special meaning as it highlights TLs' awareness of the importance of and benefits that learning English may individually bring about.

Lastly, the aim of the focus groups conducted with the YLs was to explore their awareness and attitudes towards English language learning and use, both inside and outside the EFL classroom. Several questions were, therefore, put forth regarding a variety of issues. In terms of learning, the following topics were touched upon: contact with a variety of English-speaking cultures as well as the learners' own culture in school; learners' preference for English as a school subject and what they consider is the most and least appealing in the EFL classroom; and the importance of practising English beyond the classroom. As for YLs' use of the language, they were inquired about: their use of English outside school and in what situations, and how they overcome communicative difficulties that may arise.

Considering the YLs' learning experience, most mentioned the main cultures discussed in English class were the American and British cultures, which is not surprising, as the majority of the teaching materials, especially course books, tend to be UK- and US-based. Several participants pointed out, however, that some references were made to Ireland, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, all of which also belong to Kachru's inner circle (Kachru 1985). Only one student stated that other cultures had been discussed in the English class such as the cultures of India, Nepal, and Bangladesh. This seems to be the exception, rather than the norm in many EFL classes. In this particular case, the YL was integrated in a class with a large number of students from South Asia, which explains the presence of those cultures.

When inquired whether they ever talked about the local culture in the English class, in this case the Portuguese culture, only one YL mentioned that it was rarely referred to, while the remaining participants stated that it was never mentioned. According to the YLs, discussions about the Portuguese culture were usually circumscribed to their Geography, History, Portuguese and Moral and Religious Education (MRE) lessons. The latter example was mentioned by YLs who were in classes with many (im)migrant students. Since MRE seeks to promote values like living together, community, love, fraternity, and similar values, it plays an important role in the social integration of foreigners in the Portuguese context.

Considering English is a compulsory subject for learners from years 3–11, this study also seeks to see if it is one of the YLs' favorite subjects at school. The responses in this case were divided, eight said that it was not their favorite subject, while six said it was. Out of the six who stated it was their favorite subject, curiously, the majority were immigrant students. This may be the case since English is the only common shared language they had with the rest of their classmates, and it was, therefore, the easiest subject to follow (even though they attended Portuguese as a foreign language classes). Regardless of the responses received, none of the YLs manifested a particularly negative attitude towards English.

To have a better understanding of what is done in their EFL classes, YLs were asked what they liked most and least about their lessons. Their responses in this case diverged greatly, which is not surprising, as learning preferences vary from one student to another. For instance, in terms of what they liked most, some mentioned that they enjoyed listening to songs, reading stories, watching movies, playing games, doing cultural activities, speaking in English and even doing exercises. As for what they enjoyed least about their English lessons, they mentioned issues such as writing,

reading course book texts, doing exercises that were many of the times repetitive and giving oral presentations. Bearing in mind their responses, it is evident that students not only have different learning preferences, but there also seems to be a tendency to dislike activities that involve more active productive skills (e.g., speaking, writing). This may perhaps reflect learners' lack of linguistic confidence or shyness regarding language production in front of their classmates. Passive receptive skills (e.g., listening, watching), on the other hand, along with ludic activities (e.g., games, cultural activities) seem to be aspects that they enjoy more, especially since English lessons at lower levels are many of the times associated with these types of activities.

YLs were additionally inquired about whether they thought they needed to practise English beyond their English classes, and if so, how. The great majority of the YLs believed they needed to practise their English outside of school, however, how they went about this varied from one learner to another. Responses ranged from looking for words in a dictionary and doing exercises, to playing games, going to social networking sites, making videos, and watching films. Many actually mentioned they had learnt English through games which they played on their smartphones on a regular basis.

When considering YLs' use of English, they were asked if they used English outside school and in what situations they were able to communicate effectively. Out of the 15 students who participated in the focus groups, only three claimed they did not use English outside school. The remaining YLs used English in a variety of situations, either face-to-face when travelling abroad, speaking with relatives or foreign classmates, and communicating with others on a daily basis (especially in the case of recently arrived immigrants who do not yet know Portuguese), or virtually when playing online video games or on social networks (e.g., Instagram). Achieving effective (face-to-face or virtual) interactions is not always clear cut, therefore, being able to apply a variety of communicative strategies is crucial to overcome any linguistic barriers that may arise. In view of this, YLs were asked about how they dealt with these issues when they did not understand something when talking with other people in English, or when someone did not fully understand what they were saying. One YL mentioned that when they did not understand something, they did nothing and let the conversation continue, hoping they would be able to understand from further context. However, the great majority applied other strategies, such as using gestures (which was the most commonly applied), repeating/asking for repetition, or translating.

Implications of the Findings for the Context

The aim of this study is to take into consideration teachers' and learners' (teen and young) awareness and attitudes towards English language teaching, learning and use, within a growing multilingual and multicultural educational context in Portuguese state schools. Based on the findings discussed above, several fundamental implications involving the three groups of participants should be explored.

Firstly, although teachers affirmed to be aware of the Portuguese English language education policies, there is a need for further teacher training, both in-service and pre-service, focusing on the essential pedagogical implications of teaching English in multicultural and multilingual contexts. Moreover, the findings present direct relevance to materials writers as they indicate it is necessary to reassess and adapt textbooks to meet the needs and wants of multilingual learners, as most teachers said they often or always developed their own materials. Finally, researchers and academics should promote investigation which clearly identify and examine learners' use of English outside of classroom, as teachers acknowledged the importance of employing a diversity of contexts of language use in classroom tasks.

Secondly, regarding data obtained from TLs, although most teachers claimed to regularly develop their own materials, TLs disputed this assertion or were not entirely aware of the materials worked with in the classroom. If this is the case, awareness must be fostered so that students may reap the benefits from teachers' work. Findings also point out that learning English is not restricted to the classroom as many TLs stated they improved their English skills away from formal learning environments. Therefore, it is critical that teachers capitalize on these circumstances so that both sides may profit. Furthermore, in view of the extensive use TLs make of technology to use and improve their English language skills, it is paramount that teachers consider ICT integration as an indispensable tool in the multilingual/multicultural classroom. The unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, for instance, confirmed how beneficial ICT knowledge is for students and teachers. Nevertheless, a recent study (Aşık et al. 2019) shows that language teacher education programmes in Portugal seem to implement teacher education strategies so as to prepare future teachers for educational technology use *only* at a moderate level. This study also indicates limited access to resources, lack of institutional support, and qualified TEs who can successfully use and integrate technology into their teaching.

Finally, when considering which cultures are developed in the EFL classroom, YLs identified the British and American cultures as the two main ones referred to in class. Some allusions were also made to other inner circle countries; however, expanding circle countries or the local Portuguese are largely neglected. Bearing in mind that English belongs to all those who speak it, it would make sense that the EFL classroom be a space where learners can also explore and discuss their own cultures. This is even more pressing in multilingual/multicultural groups where (im)migrant students can bring their own cultures into the classroom, consequently helping break stereotypes and barriers that may exist towards what is considered "different".

Also, as far as YLs English language use outside the classroom and how they practised English outside their lessons, the common denominator in these two situations was the use of the Internet, either through social networking sites or online games. It is evident that this is a generation that uses the Internet widely, either on their computers and smartphones; hence, EFL teachers may take advantage of these circumstances and design their lessons accordingly. However, as it has been stated in this study, an overwhelming percentage of EFL teachers were above the age of 45 and believed they needed more training in terms of how ICT may be implemented in class. In view of this, it is vital that teachers receive more adequate and frequent

training regarding the use of technology in the classroom, so as to accompany not only TLs' and YLs' interests, but also their technological needs.

Fundamentally, findings indicate the need for the promotion of teacher and learner competences that are crucial for responding to and building upon the diversity found in today's multilingual/multicultural English language classrooms.

Conclusion

Due to increasing international mobility and intra-European migration, multilingual classrooms are becoming more commonplace in Portugal. Learners from migrant backgrounds have more than one language at their disposal and the use of English as a lingua franca or an international language is key in helping to effectively establish communication in such contexts.

Therefore, this study aims to identify Portuguese EFL teachers', TLs' and YLs' awareness of and attitudes towards English language teaching, learning and use in the multilingual classroom. Overall, findings demonstrate that even if English language teachers in Portuguese schools are aware of this change, adequate teacher training is yet required so they may fully embrace this linguistic diversity given that it is crucial in promoting cultural diversity as well as achieving equality and integration. It is likewise important to develop language teaching course books and materials that adequately represent the current multilingual and multicultural use of English rather than persisting primarily on standard British and American English and cultures. Further research into learners' use of English outside of classroom is also needed so as to diversify classroom tasks. In addition to this, the study has demonstrated that teachers' knowledge of ICT integration and CALL is still a shortcoming, which is critical since learners of all ages are avid users of technology in its many forms.

In essence, there is an unequivocal need for a language education policy that improves the quality of curriculum, teaching, and learning in Portuguese state education so we may provide learners/students with the language skills and necessary sensitivity they need for an ever-growing multilingual and multicultural society.

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