

Laboratório Aberto para a Aprendizagem de Línguas Estrangeiras

Cadernos do LALE
Série Reflexões

Educação em Línguas em contexto escolar:
da intervenção à reflexão

Coordenação:

Ana Isabel Andrade

Maria Helena de Araújo e Sá

Universidade de Aveiro

Cadernos do LALE Série Reflexões, N° 1
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Prefácio

Este primeiro volume da **Série Reflexões** dos **Cadernos do LALE** (Laboratório Aberto para a Aprendizagem de Línguas Estrangeiras) surge na sequência da participação de membros da equipa deste Laboratório, em Julho de 2003, no *21st World Congress of the World Federation of Modern Language Associations/Fédération Internationale des Professeurs de Langues Vivantes (FIPLV)*, subordinado ao tema “*Identity and Creativity in Language Education*” que decorreu na Rand Afrikaans University (Joanesburgo).

Neste encontro, a equipa do LALE constituiu-se em painel e começou por apresentar o Laboratório, suas finalidades e linhas de orientação, e enunciar os principais projectos desenvolvidos em cada uma delas. Em seguida foram explicitados com maior pormenor cinco dos projectos em curso, de forma a ilustrar como têm vindo a ser concretizados os objectivos desta estrutura de investigação e acção.

Compilados neste volume encontram-se os textos que serviram de base a esta apresentação, em versão mais desenvolvida do que a que foi possível publicar nas Actas do referido Congresso.¹

Na Introdução surge esquematizada a informação mais relevante sobre o nosso Laboratório, que serve de enquadramento a diversos projectos de investigação, concluídos e em curso.

¹ Os textos são apresentados na língua em que foram originalmente escritos pelos seus autores. No caso do texto "Entre romanofilia e romanofobia: um estudo com universitários portugueses", a versão inicial foi reformulada com a colaboração de Susana Pinto, que aparece aqui como autora, ao contrário do que aconteceu no texto inicial.

Resumos

Students' representations of different languages and cultures: a project with a 9th grade class

Ana Raquel Simões & Maria Helena de Araújo e Sá

Na comunicação **Students' representations of different languages and cultures: a project with a 9th grade class** pretendemos apresentar parte de um projecto, *Os alunos face à diversidade linguística e cultural*, desenvolvido de forma interdisciplinar durante um ano lectivo com uma turma de 21 alunos do 9º ano de escolaridade (14/15 anos de idade). O projecto tinha como principais objectivos: (i) facilitar o contacto dos alunos com situações que pudessem influenciar positivamente as suas convicções face ao Diverso e (ii) conceber estratégias e criar materiais potenciadores de desenvolvimento da cultura linguística dos aprendentes.

Neste texto apresentaremos de forma breve o projecto e alguns dos resultados obtidos a partir da análise dos dados recolhidos, especialmente no que concerne a cultura linguística dos alunos, mais concretamente, os seus futuros projectos linguísticos e as suas imagens/representações acerca de outras línguas e culturas. Esperamos que este texto ilustre e sirva como exemplo de uma das inúmeras formas de trabalhar criativamente a língua e a identidade dentro da escola.

Intercomprehension: developing student's ability to "dialogue" with languages

Leonor Santos & Ana Isabel Andrade

Neste texto apresentaremos um projecto de investigação que tem vindo a ser desenvolvido na área da Didáctica de Línguas, intitulado: *A Intercompreensão no ensino-aprendizagem de línguas – uma estratégia para desenvolver a competência plurilingue de aprendentes escolares portugueses*.

Este projecto, integrado na Linha 2 de pesquisa do LALE (Laboratório Aberto para a Aprendizagem de Línguas Estrangeiras): *desenvolvimento de atitudes e competências na*

aprendizagem de línguas estrangeiras, foi inicialmente construído com base em dois conceitos fundamentais: Intercompreensão e Competência Plurilingue. Com o desenrolar do trabalho, um novo conceito foi emergindo e assumindo papel de destaque: o conceito de Diálogo.

Assim, num primeiro momento procuraremos explicitar o que entendemos por Competência Plurilingue e as nossas concepções iniciais de Intercompreensão.

De seguida, faremos uma breve descrição do projecto (objectivos, metodologia e desenvolvimento).

Finalmente discutiremos alguns dos dados recolhidos e procuraremos clarificar o conceito de Intercompreensão, em relação com o de Diálogo, e o seu potencial papel no processo de ensino-aprendizagem de línguas.

Entre romanofilia e romanofobia: um estudo com universitários portugueses

Sílvia Melo, Maria Helena de Araújo e Sá & Susana Pinto

Neste texto analisaremos as atitudes e representações de estudantes universitários portugueses acerca das Línguas Românicas (LR) e dos seus locutores. Estes dados foram recolhidos através de um questionário² organizado em quatro secções: “Eu e as Línguas Estrangeiras”, “Eu e as Línguas Românicas”, “Eu e a aprendizagem das Línguas” e “à descoberta das Línguas Românicas”. Basear-nos-emos sobretudo nas duas primeiras secções do questionário, através das quais pretendíamos conhecer a biografia e os projectos linguísticos dos sujeitos, o grau de conhecimentos que pensavam possuir acerca das diferentes línguas, ao nível da compreensão oral e escrita e da interacção verbal, bem como verificar as representações, atitudes e estereótipos acerca da romanofonia.

Tentaremos, nesta sequência, evidenciar movimentos de aproximação (romanofilia) e de afastamento (romanofobia) deste público em relação a uma identidade romanófona.

² Este questionário foi realizado no âmbito dos projectos “A competência de intercompreensão em Língua Românica: estratégias de intervenção junto de um público universitário” e “Galanet (site pour le développement de l’intercompréhension en Langues Romanes)”.

Do histórico linguístico-comunicativo a uma teoria pessoal de ensino de línguas: um estudo sobre futuros professores de línguas.

Ana Sofia Pinho & Ana Isabel Andrade

No âmbito de uma das linhas de investigação do LALE – Concepção e Análise de Programas de Formação de Professores, foi concebido um projecto de investigação intitulado *Intercompreensão em contextos de formação inicial. Um estudo sobre práticas e diálogos de professores de línguas*, que procura compreender a contribuição da *intercompreensão* para a construção da identidade e do conhecimento profissional dos futuros professores de línguas.

A componente interventiva deste projecto consiste num *Programa de Formação acerca da Intercompreensão*, organizado em duas fases principais: i) sessões baseadas em módulos de formação, que procuram alargar o conhecimento conceptual dos futuros professores acerca da temática; ii) um projecto de investigação-acção, onde se espera que os professores conceptualizem, implementem e avaliem actividades didácticas acerca da intercompreensão.

No nosso projecto, consideramos que o *curriculum* linguístico e comunicativo que o professor é capaz de construir está fortemente dependente da teoria pessoal de ensino e aprendizagem de línguas (Brumfit, 2001). Para sermos mais precisas, o trabalho dentro da sala de aula será o espelho das experiências e do repertório linguístico-comunicativos do professor, bem como da concepção que o professor tem da educação em línguas e suas finalidades. Isto leva-nos a considerar a centralidade do eu no processo individual de construção do conhecimento, o que implica conceber o professor como um construtor activo do seu conhecimento profissional (Sousa Santos, 2002; Alarcão, 2001).

Nesta perspectiva, este artigo foca a história linguística e comunicativa pessoal dos futuros professores de línguas, mais especificamente, as suas atitudes e crenças face às línguas, culturas e situações de comunicação, como meio para compreender o valor que estes professores atribuem à intercompreensão num trabalho mais criativo como educadores em línguas.

Verbal Interaction in the Language Classroom: communicating to shape characters and choices**Teresa Cardoso & Isabel Alarcão**

A comunicação é um tema importante no mundo globalizante em que vivemos hoje. Como tal, não é surpreendente que tantos trabalhos a elejam enquanto objecto de estudo. No nosso caso, interessa-nos estudar um aspecto específico da comunicação que tem sido abordado de diferentes perspectivas. O nosso olhar situa-se na área da Didáctica de Línguas e, neste contexto, a interacção verbal em sala de aula visa a co-construção de conhecimento, experiências, identidade, sentidos, através de trocas que se processam oralmente ou por escrito.

A partir da análise de alguns dos estudos portugueses sobre esta temática, pretendemos aludir não só aos aspectos mais criativos da interacção verbal na educação em línguas, mas também aos aspectos mais importantes da construção da identidade, quer dos alunos quer do professor, cuja função social é definida nos e pelos papéis que desempenham, e sobre os quais actuam, entre outros, constrangimentos culturais e institucionais.

Introduction: L.A.L.E. - Open Laboratory for Foreign Language Learning

At the University of Aveiro, Portugal, namely at the Department of Didactics and Educational Technology, it has been created, within the Centre for Didactics and Technology Research in Teacher Teaching, a language learning research structure: LALE (Laboratório de Aprendizagem de Línguas Estrangeiras). It hosts three scientific coordinators, three teachers from our department and five Phd Students (full time researchers).

The Lab's aims are:

1. To develop the interest / curiosity towards different languages and cultures, within different contexts, promoting the contact with such situations.
2. To develop knowledge about important concepts for language learning in today's European context.
3. To observe and describe (pluri)linguistic and communicative learning processes.
4. To conceive, experiment and evaluate foreign language learning materials and strategies for different learning levels.
5. To conceive, implement and evaluate modules of language teacher education focused on intercomprehension and interaction in learning contexts.

These goals have been put into practice through the theoretical and practical development of the concept of plurilingual competence, perceived as a competence which allows the individual to (re)equiate, systematic and continuously, the various linguistic and cultural knowledge he/she possesses, acquired both in school and in other contexts.

This has been the key concept of the different fields of action of the LALE:

- a) Plurilingual workshops, in which the individuals have the opportunity to deal with the linguistic and cultural diversity (aimed at: students and teachers, mainly from elementary and secondary schools);
- b) Collection of materials to be used by teachers at schools, capable of awakening the interest for linguistic and cultural diversity and promoting the acquisition of different kinds of knowledge (aimed at: students and teachers, mainly from elementary and secondary schools);
- c) Research projects, according to the different LALE's interrelated research lines:

Line 1 - Early Foreign Language Learning

- *Development of Linguistic Diversity Awareness in the Primary School: observation and teacher education* (Filomena Martins & Ana Isabel Andrade);
- *Development of Linguistic Diversity Awareness in the Primary School: from the children's languages to the languages of the world* (coord. Ana Isabel Andrade)
- *JALING (Janua Linguarum reserata)* (coord. nacional Ana Isabel Andrade) - COMENIUS

Line 2: Development of Attitudes and Competences in Foreign Language Learning

- *Learners' attitudes towards linguistic and cultural diversity: a study for the third cycle of the Basic School* (Ana Raquel Simões & Helena Araújo e Sá);
- *The intercomprehension in language teaching and learning: a strategy for the development of Portuguese learners' plurilingual competence* (Leonor Santos & Ana Isabel Andrade)
- *The intercomprehension competence in romanic languages: intervention strategies for a Universitarian public* (Sílvia Melo & Helena Araújo e Sá)
- *The Development of the Plurilingual Competence: Suggestions for a flexible Management of the Curriculum: from the third Cycle of the Basic School to Secondary School* (coord. Maria Helena Araújo e Sá) - IIE

Line 3: Development of validated didactic materials following the two previous research lines

- *Galatea: CD-Rom "Apprendre à lire en français"* (coord. nacional Helena Araújo e Sá) – SOCRATES
- *Galanet: site para o desenvolvimento da intercompreensão em línguas românicas* (coord. Christian Degache) – SOCRATES

Line 4: Conception and Analysis of Teacher Education Programmes

- *I.L.T.E. - Intercomprehension in Language Teaching Education* (coord. Ana Isabel Andrade) – SOCRATES
- *The Intercomprehension in Initial Teacher Education Contexts: a Study on Language Teachers' Practices and Interactions* (Ana Sofia Pinho & Ana Isabel Andrade)
- *Verbal Interaction in Languages Didactics: meta-analysis of the studies developed in Portugal between 1982 and 2002 – contributions for the learning of languages and teacher education* (Teresa Cardoso & Isabel Alarcão)

Students' representations of different languages and cultures: a project with a 9th grade class

Ana Raquel Simões – anaraquel@dte.ua.pt

Maria Helena Araújo e Sá – helenasa@dte.ua.pt

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Introduction

Within LALE's³ research line - Development of Attitudes and Competences in Foreign Language Learning (Line 2) – the project we intend to present is entitled *Students' attitudes towards linguistic and cultural diversity*.⁴ Having in mind today's society and the demands of tomorrow's world for individuals, we may consider that only with a critical language and culture awareness can students understand the multi/intercultural world around them, and can challenge and fight against all kinds of discrimination, building their own identity.

The development of the linguistic and cultural awareness is one of the paths towards plurilingual competence, for we believe that plurilingual competence may lead to a greater understanding of the plurilingual repertoires of self and others and to the respect for language rights.

In order to analyse one's plurilingual competence, we must take into account and to develop their *linguistic culture*, in its three dimensions: cognitive, affective and behavioural component. This was one of the intents of the project we developed, namely in the characterization stage. In this paper we will present some of the results concerning students' linguistic culture in its three dimensions, which were obtained by the analysis of a questionnaire filled in by them.

³ LALE – Open Laboratory for Foreign Language Learning, created in 1999 at the Department of Didactics and Educational Technology, University of Aveiro, Portugal

⁴ PhD project of Ana Raquel Simões, coordinated by Professor Dr. Maria Helena Araújo e Sá.

The importance of the development of plurilingual competence

Plurilingual competence allows the individual to (re) equate, systematic and continuously, the various linguistic and cultural knowledge he/she possesses, acquired both in school and in other contexts. It is unique, dynamic, heterogeneous, composed of unequal elements (adapted from Coste & Zarate, 1996 and Andrade & Araújo e Sá, in printing stage). Some studies have come to the possibility that plurilingual competence may be composed of four interrelated dimensions: management of social and affective dimension; management of linguistic and communicative repertoires; management of learning repertoires and management of interaction.

The development of plurilingual competence has to undertake the knowledge of students' representations and attitudes towards linguistic and cultural diversity, as Byram states: "...*plurilingualism is not only a matter of competence but also an attitude of interest in and openness towards languages and language varieties of all kinds*" (Byram, 2002: 7). This is one of the ideologies of the project we undertook, which concerns (although not exclusively) two of the dimensions of plurilingual competence - management of social and affective dimension and management of linguistic and communicative repertoires. The first refers to students' attitudes concerning different languages and its learning; the wish and will they feel (or not) to know more about languages and their functioning and about cultures; the availability to learn and deal with otherness; the motivation and initiative to contact with languages and with the diverse in its possible various forms. This social and affective dimension also undertakes students' curiosity (or not) as far as languages and cultures are concerned, as well as their confidence (or insecurity) when they use other languages or when they contact with others. Thus, we may conclude that this dimension is mostly related to affection and to the relationship students establish with languages and cultures.

Students' relationship with languages

One of the reasons that arose our interest for the management of social and affective dimension was the empirical awareness that the relationship students establish with languages is influenced by stereotypes and prejudices concerning languages themselves and the aims for their learning. The fact is that "*These highly stereotyped images have the power either to enhance or to inhibit learning itself. They emerge, and are perpetuated, in society through various channels.*" (Castelloti, 2002: 10)

We intended to analyse students' relationship with languages and peoples, helping them to perceive these images and to find out their origin, as well as trying to promote a spirit of

openness towards the Other, for we believe that this is one of the roles of today's school: "... *l'enseignement devrait prendre sérieusement en compte les représentations, au risque sinon de buter sur elles, et qu'elles constituent alors un obstacle invisible à l'apprentissage – comme c'est parfois le cas au niveau linguistique des interférences de la langue maternelle sur la langue cible. Une telle prise en compte devrait porter d'une part (...) sur les représentations et les attitudes envers les autres pays et cultures*" (Cain & De Pietro, 1997: 306)

Living in a changing society

We intended to help the students to be prepared for today's plurilingual and pluricultural society, "where it is desired that Europeans live in and with different languages, and where linguistic education is understood to be a condition for the development of a transnational identity that values cultural and linguistic diversity" (SAPIENS project)⁵. In fact, the growing mobility amongst peoples can facilitate the contact between different languages and cultures throughout the world. According to SEF (Foreign Affairs Office - <http://www.sef.pt/estatisticas.htm>), the growth on the number of legal immigrants in Portugal from 1981 to 2001 was of about 69%.

Taking these data into account, it is easy to understand the need to prepare students and teachers for this new reality in Portuguese schools and in society in general, so that when individuals face difference they reflect about themselves and understand that they can not evaluate others' behaviour according to his/her own patterns, showing attitudes of openness, comprehension and respect, as Byram refers to: "*there also needs to be a willingness to suspend belief in one's own meanings and behaviours, and to analyse them from the viewpoint of the others with whom one is engaging*". (Byram, 1997: 34)

In the preparation of individuals for the growing globalisation in our societies, we can understand the power of languages and the importance of plurilingual competence, also in the formation of identity, multidimensional by nature⁶: "*Language is one of the most important social and cultural markers of identity and the international community in its essence is*

⁵ Quotation from a SAPIENS project –Images of languages in intercultural communication: contributes for the development of plurilingual competence – which is coordinated by a team from the Department of Didactic and Educational Technology from University of Aveiro, Portugal, and counts with the participation of researchers from other institutions.

⁶ "A identidade funciona, por assim dizer, como as bonecas russas, encaixadas umas nas outras [Simon, 1979, 31]. Mas, apesar de ser multidimensional, a identidade não perde sua unidade." (Cucho: 1999, 189) Our translation: "Identity works, so to speak, as Russian dolls, fitting into each other [Simon: 1979, 31]. However, although being multidimensional, identity does not lose its unity."

multilingual”. (Starkey, 2002: 9). There are those who even say that those who know only one language are illiterate: “*Celui ou celle qui ni pourra s’exprimer que dans sa seule langue maternelle verra ses capacités de communication, d’étude, et de travail drastiquement limitées. Ce type de situation pourrait même être considéré comme une forme nouvelle d’illettrisme*». (Comblain & Rondal, 2001: 10)

Despite the demands in terms of the linguistic biography of individuals, there are some studies that show that there is still a lot to be done concerning Europeans’ education as far as language learning is concerned. According to the Eurobarometer, 47% of the Europeans still assume that they do not use other language besides their Mother Tongue and 74% does not use a Second Foreign Language. Thus, a didactical project which intends to help students develop their plurilingual competence, has probably to start by analysing the way in which students relate to languages and cultures, i.e., to develop their linguistic culture.

The promotion of a positive linguistic culture

With this project we intended to promote the development of the students’ *linguistic culture* and the deconstruction of possible negative stereotypes and prejudices towards languages and its learning and towards different peoples. The concept of culture was recently introduced in semantic fields where it had never been before. It is commonly used in religion, politics and science, where there are the concepts of religious culture, political culture or scientific culture.

We see here the linguistic culture as the amount of knowledge the individual possesses concerning languages and the attitudes he/she demonstrates towards them. It is acquired and not innate, stable and long lasting, but at the same time flexible, for it may suffer changes and adaptations, being thus dynamic and so, evolutive. We believe that linguistic culture may be composed of different components, which are inter-related and inter-dependent. These components refer to a set of knowledge about languages and cultures (cognitive dimension), the emotional relationship students establish with languages and cultures (affective dimension) and the behaviours individual undertake concerning the contact with languages and cultures (behavioural dimension). These three components are intimately co-related.

The **cognitive dimension** refers to the scientific knowledge the students have concerning the object in study, i.e., languages and cultures. In this dimension we would include, for instance, themes like: linguistic families; the recognition of some concepts (e.g.: language, dialect; language varieties; Mother Tongue, Foreign Tongue; Minority Language). The **affective dimension** is related to more affective and emotional aspects, i.e., the relationship students establish with languages and cultures. This includes aspects like the will/interest to know more

or to contact with; the confidence in themselves as language speakers or the openness towards linguistic and cultural diversity. The **behavioural dimension** refers to the individuals' behaviours and reactions in relation to the object in question, which means it can be a behaviour of indifference, curiosity, closeness, and so on. We understand that "*Language is one of the most important forms of human symbolic behaviour and is a key component of many groups' social identities.*" (Coupland, 1997: 323)

To develop students' linguistic culture it is important to analyse these three dimensions and work them in an appropriate way. It is necessary to promote intercultural contact and to create situations where students may experience linguistic and cultural diversity, which are essential elements to make students value this diversity and curiosity for the Other and for the diverse in its most varied forms. Candelier mentions that "... *si le contact organisé avec la pluralité linguistique et culturelle réussit à développer chez l'enfant la curiosité – et pourquoi pas l'amour des langues, toutes celles qui seront apprises ultérieurement pourront en principe profiter (...) chaque langue étudiée servira d'appui aux autres*". (Candelier & Hermann-Brenneck, 1993: 205)

Thinking about languages' role in students' formation as individuals, and according to the Council of Europe proposals, we must consider that there is still a lot to be done in terms of linguistic policies in our country, especially as far as the articulation of different language teaching is concerned. This was one of the concerns of the project we here present: to analyse the way students perceive languages and what do they want their "linguistic future" to be like.

Case study: the intervention plan

We conceived, implemented and evaluated a didactical intervention project, which was implemented with a class of 21 students from the 9th grade (14/15 years old), having also as participants the teachers of all the subjects. At the time the project was developed, the 9th grade was the last compulsory year at Portuguese schools, which was the main reason why we chose to work with these students. At this time, the government decided to change the last compulsory study year from the 9th to the 12th grade.

The project aimed at: (i) facilitating the contact with situations which could positively influence students' convictions towards the diverse (because we understand that "*a interiorização de uma atitude não se faz de maneira definitiva sem passar pela experiência directa, sem que o próprio aluno experimente as emoções e os sentimentos ligados à realização de acções concretas, de experiências pessoais*") and (ii) conceiving strategies and creating materials as far as language awareness is concerned.

The first step was to characterize students at the beginning of the school year. In this

characterization phase we wanted to gather some personal information about the students (age, social and cultural background,...), as well as their school history and some aspects of their linguistic culture. Then we implemented four didactical modules: *Diversity in Portuguese language and in Portugal's geographical areas*; *Linguistic and cultural diversity around the world*; *Contact with different languages and cultures*; and *3 linguistic workshops* with native speakers (Chinese, Dutch and Arabic).

During the four modules, the activities developed focused on competences concerning not only the affective domain, but also linguistic, meta-linguistic and meta-communicative aspects. In these modules of the project the students had the possibility to contact with different languages, first in the written form, then by the use of verbal enunciates and finally with the direct contact/interaction with native speakers of three languages (in language workshops).

The students, organised in four groups, also developed a project work during the entire school year. They were the ones to choose the themes of those projects, which had to be related to linguistic and cultural diversity and they were also responsible for the organisation and “time schedule” of their projects (with the help of their teachers when needed). The students also organised a portfolio during the school year and this portfolio contained the following chapters: Contacts with languages; Discoveries about languages and cultures; Diary; Group work and Material of the project work.

During the entire intervention plan the activities were centred in the **three dimensions of linguistic culture**. As the contents of the work developed were always part of the school curriculum of the different subjects, we could always focus on the **cognitive dimension**. Several concepts were worked on, like for instance, Mother Tongue, Foreign Language, and minority languages. The activities also were of a meta-linguistic and meta-communicative nature, where the abilities of observation and analysis, thinking and transfer were tested and where several issues related to linguistic and cultural diversity were brought to discussion, like for instance, the importance (or not) of a lingua franca. The activities were also centred in the **affective dimension**, where students were free to express their emotions in relation to the target object – languages and cultures –, as well as their wish (or not) to contact with other languages and to learn more about them; their confidence or insecurity in dealing with new enunciates in different languages. This dimension is very important, for as Catherine Pétilion states, before the learning of any language, all individuals already have an emotional image of that same language, sometimes in the form of stereotypes: *“Stereotypes identify stable, decontextualised, simplified, abbreviated images that operate in the common memory and are accepted by certain groups. The degree to which particular groups of speakers or individuals accept them as valid may depend on linguistic and learning behaviour and practices”*. (Castelloti, 2002: 8)

This image may have several origin, since literature, advertising, school books, the images of landscapes and social interactions broadcasted by the media and social, familiar or even national prejudices (either positive or negative) towards different languages and countries.

Students' linguistic culture: a reflexion from a questionnaire

As we said, in the characterization stage we wanted to identify students' linguistic biography, their linguistic projects for the future, to get an idea of their emotional relationships with languages and cultures and some of their knowledge concerning languages. Thus, in this characterization stage we used different resources: a questionnaire, cartoons and drawings. In the subjects of Portuguese, French and English we used three different cartoons concerning important subjects, for instance: the use of English as lingua franca, stereotypes and prejudices (of different nature, from social to racial or religious). In the art class the students were asked to elaborate 2 drawings: one of a French or English person (the choice of these nationalities has to do with the 2 languages they are studying) and the other of themselves learning a language (whatever it would be).

Here we will look at the questionnaire the students filled in at the beginning of the school year, which contained some aspects of the three dimensions of linguistic culture.

In the **cognitive dimension** we have the questions that refer to the knowledge the students have (or not) about some issues related to languages. One example of one question from this dimension is the one related to romance languages, more specifically when students are asked about four languages that are closer to Portuguese language, having to order them. We could see in their answers that they have some difficulties to name the languages that are varieties of the Portuguese language, like Brazilian Portuguese, and they also identify the language spoken in Mozambique as "Mozambican". However, despite these confusions, they also identify Latin and several romance languages, like Spanish, Italian or French (in this same order). There is only one student that refers to English.

In this cognitive dimension we also include students' opinion as far as some issues related to languages in the school curriculum are concerned. One of the questions was about students' opinion on the variety of languages offered in the school curriculum and the need to increase that variety. Most of the students said that the school did not have to increase the variety of languages offered in the curriculum, but those who agree with this measure say that these languages should be Spanish, Italian and/or Chinese.

They were also asked about the number of foreign languages that was important to study and most of them answered that it was important to study two foreign languages.

In the **affective dimension** the students were asked about their emotional opinions on

different languages and cultures, for instance about which language they would choose as their mother tongue if they were born again. With this question we wanted the students to show, in some way, their relationship with their mother tongue and we realised that most of the students answered they would choose other languages than Portuguese (chosen only by three of the students), like for instance English, Spanish or French. This may lead us to conclude that the students justify their answers mainly due to practical and utilitarian reasons either than affective ones.

In another section of the questionnaire the students were asked to show their emotional position concerning seven languages and seven peoples (of their choice). This because we would like to see some of the stereotypes and representations students revealed concerning others, for there is *“A tendência à não-identificação, à identidade exclusiva, ganha terreno em muitas sociedades contemporâneas. colectiva é apresentada no singular, seja para si ou para os outros. Quando se trata dos outros, isto permite todas as generalizações abusivas. O artigo definido identificar permite reduzir um conjunto colectivo a uma personalidade cultural única, apresentada geralmente de forma depreciativa: O árabe é assim...” “Os Africanos são assim...” (Cucho, 1999: 189)*

In order to identify some of the students' images of languages we created a semantic differential with 5 opposite polls: beautiful/ ugly; easy/ difficult; necessary/ not necessary; culturally rich/ poorly rich; with/ without political importance.

As far as languages are concerned (see table 1 and 2), the students chose Portuguese, English, Italian and “African languages” (as the students refer to) as the most beautiful, while Dutch, Chinese, Arabic and Russian were considered ugly. The choice of Portuguese, Italian and Spanish as the easiest languages shows that the students consider the closest languages as the easiest to learn, while they consider Dutch, Chinese, Japanese and German the most difficult to learn. Their opinion about the utility of languages is that English is the most useful one, followed by Portuguese, Italian and French (these three in the same position). The less useful language for these students is Dutch, followed by Chinese and Arabic. The Dutch and Chinese are also considered the less culturally rich languages, while on the opposite position is English, French, Spanish, German and Japanese. The students believe that the languages with more political importance are English, Spanish, German, Chinese and Russian, while Dutch, Arabic and Latin are seen as having less political importance.

Table 1: Languages seen in the positive pole

Beautiful	Easy	Useful	Culturally rich	Politically important
English		English	English	English
Italian	Italian	Italian		
“African languages”				
Portuguese	Portuguese	Portuguese		
	Spanish		Spanish	Spanish
		French	French	
			German	German
			Japanese	
				Chinese
				Russian

Table 2: Languages seen in the negative pole

Less Beautiful	Most difficult	Less Useful	Culturally poor	Less Politically important
Dutch	Dutch	Dutch	Dutch	Dutch
Chinese	Chinese	Chinese	Chinese	
Arabic		Arabic		Arabic
Russian				
	Japanese			
	German			
				Latin

Looking at students' answers we understand that they have a very good image of their mother tongue, especially as far as beauty, easiness and usefulness are concerned. They show a neutral position in the cultural and political components of Portuguese language. Students' position concerning the Italian language is exactly the same as their opinion about Portuguese. In fact, we can see that students have more difficulty to decide what their position is as far as cultural and political dimensions of languages are concerned than on the other presented components. In these two they reveal a more neutral position and their opinions are more divided amongst different languages.

We can also see that Dutch language appears in the opposite position, being pointed out in the most negative position in all dimensions. The Arabic and Chinese languages are also chosen to be in the extreme negative pole in four and three (in this same order) of the given dimensions. This is very interesting to notice, for in the last didactic module – language workshops – which occurred almost at the end of the school year, when the students were asked to choose three languages for the workshops they choose exactly these three which at the beginning of the school year have the most negative image. This change of opinion is for us very important and can perhaps be linked with the fact that before the modules the students did not contact these languages very often and during the second and third module they interacted with enunciates in these languages. We here understand the importance of the contact with languages in the formation of individuals' image of that language, as we also see in Papaloizos

words: *"L'image qu'on se fait d'une langue varie, parfois beaucoup (...) selon notre degré d'intimité avec elle, selon qu'on déjà entendu parler ou qu'on la comprenne ou non, selon qu'on en a déjà prononcé des phrases, selon qu'on peut lire ou non. Ainsi se développent des hétérostéréotypes, qui généralisent certaines des représentations partagées par ceux qui ne parlent pas la langue, et des autostéréotypes, qui rassemblent des représentations partagées par les locuteurs de la langue"* (Papaloizos in Matthey, 1997: 146)

In students' answers we can also see that they have a very good image of English language, which is chosen to be in the extreme positive pole in four of the dimensions. English is only excluded when the students are asked about the easiness of languages, like it happens to French language in this component, which may be related to the fact that the class is learning these two foreign languages at the moment and thus consider them difficult to learn, whereas Spanish and Italian are seen as easy languages. The fact that they consider these as easy languages may also be one of the reasons why many students confess they would like to learn them.

In order to identify some of the students' images of peoples we created a differential semantic with 7 opposite polls: sad/joyful; organised/disorganised; nice/not nice; beautiful/ugly; clean/dirty; noisy/ silent; solitary/selfish; racists/ open to others.

As far as the peoples' joyfulness, the students considered the Brazilians and the inhabitants of Cape-Verde the most joyful (see tables 3 and 4), pointing out the Mozambicans and Russians as the saddest. These last two peoples as well as Gipsies were also considered the most disorganised, while the Chinese, Japanese, Greeks and the people from Cape-Verde were seen as the most organised. Gipsies and Mozambicans were once again chosen as the least nice groups, while the Brazilians, Chinese and Dutch were seen as the nicest ones. The Brazilians and the Dutch were also considered the most beautiful, while the Chinese, Japanese and Gipsies seen as the ugliest peoples. The Gipsies and Mozambicans were seen as the dirtiest, while the Chinese and Greeks are the cleanest. The students chose the Gipsies and Brazilians as noisiest, while the most silent were the Chinese and Cape-Verde's inhabitants. Concerning this dimension, the students had some difficulty to formulate their opinion, which can be seen by the neutral position they showed towards eleven peoples. The natives from Cape-Verde were also seen as the most solitary, followed by the Brazilians, Spanish, Greek and Dutch, while the Mozambicans and Chinese are the most selfish. One also has to stress the fact that students expressed a neutral position as far as seven peoples were concerned. The Chinese were also seen as the most racist, as well as the Russians, Gipsies, German and Dutch, while the Mozambicans, Venezuelans and inhabitants from Cape-Verde are seen as the people most open to others. We can thus see that the students do not include any European group in those most open to others. However, we can also notice that students see that the

Portuguese are a solidary people, which is opposite to the idea in Hill's book: "*Infelizmente esta atitude tolerante não se estende aos marginais da sociedade – homossexuais, judeus, muçulmanos e emocionalmente instáveis – que os portugueses são, a este respeito, o povo mais intolerante da Europa*". (Hill, 2001: 261)

Table 3: Peoples seen in the positive pole

Joyful	Organised	Nice	Beautiful	Clean	Silent	Open to other
Brazilians		Brazilians	Brazilians			Brazilians
Cape-Verdians	Cape-Verdians				Cape-Verdians	Cape-Verdians
	Chinese	Chinese		Chinese	Chinese	
	Japanese					
	Greeks			Greeks		Greeks
		Dutch	Dutch			Dutch
						Spanish

Table 4: Peoples seen in the negative pole

Sad	Disorganised	Less Nice	Less Beautiful	Dirty	Noisy	Racists
Mozambicans	Mozambicans	Mozambicans		Mozambicans		Mozambicans
Russians	Russians					
	Gipsies	Gipsies	Gipsies	Gipsies	Gipsies	
			Chinese			Chinese
			Japanese			
					Brazilians	

One interesting fact we noticed in students' answers was the fact that they always point out the Portuguese in the positive poll of the semantic differential, but never on an extreme position. This shows that students' opinion concerning their mother tongue is more "extreme" than their image of Portuguese nationality, although the language itself plays an important role in the way people see themselves as individuals and as social actors: «*Le point essentiel de notre argumentation est que l'identité sociale et l'ethnicité sont en grande partie produites et reproduites par le langage*». (Gumperz, 1989: 14, quoted in Güllich, 1997: 37)

The peoples the students most mentioned in the extreme positive position were the natives from Cape-Verde (in five dimensions), followed by the Brazilians and Chinese (in four components). On the other hand, the Gipsies were pointed out in the negative extreme poll in 6 of the 7 dimensions, followed by the Mozambicans (in 5 dimensions), the Russians and Chinese in three components.

In the **behavioural dimension** there are the questions that refer to students' behaviours concerning languages, either in the past, in the present situation or those they predict for the future.

Concerning their linguistic projects, the students reveal that the languages they would mostly like to learn are (in the same order of reference): German, Spanish, Italian, Latin and Greek, having only one student referred that she/he would not like to learn any more languages. However, there are four students who say they would like to learn other languages but they do not list them. Looking at the number of languages listed by each student, only one refers three, 6 refer two languages and most students refer one language.

When we compare the languages they would like to learn to the languages they really intend to attend in the next school year, we understand that only in seven cases there was a coincidence. 5 students will not fulfil their dream of learning Spanish, 4 will not be able to learn Italian, one Latin and the other to learn Greek. We can thus see that 15 “linguistic dreams” will not be fulfilled. When asked about the languages they are going to study the following year, we conclude that 11 of them are “obliged” to study other languages than the ones they would in fact like to study.

One thus identifies curriculum constraints, which can be of great importance in these students’ linguistic culture, for it influences their behaviours, and consequently their emotional beliefs of other languages.

When asked if they would abandon the study of a language if they had the possibility to do so, 8 of the students confess they would, one does not answer and another does not know, while 10 say they would not do such a thing.

Some conclusions

With this project we intend to identify and develop students’ linguistic culture, trying to experience different ways of working in the school towards the increasing of linguistic and cultural awareness: *“Therefore the addition of a new area to the syllabus is suggested: education which explicitly deals with linguistic and cultural complexity as such – no matter which language is learned or spoken”*. (Gogolin, 2002: 21)

Having this in mind, we offered students the possibility to experience moments of contact with diversity, which also allowed us to evaluate their reaction in order to (re)think about possible effective ways to develop their linguistic culture and, consequently, their plurilingual and pluricultural competence. We hope that this kind of work gives some clues about possible strategies to work on the affective and attitudinal dimensions of language teaching and learning and also serves as an example for the promotion of a school philosophy that defends plurilingualism and goes against linguistic homogenisation: *“Plurilinguism needs to be actively promoted to counter-balance the market forces which tend to lead to linguistic homogenisation”*. (Byram, 2002: 7)

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Intercomprehension: developing student's ability to “dialogue” with languages

Leonor SANTOS - leonor@dte.ua.pt

Ana Isabel ANDRADE - aisabel@dte.ua.pt

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Introduction

“Intercomprehension” and “Dialogue”: these are the structural key-concepts of the research project we have been developing and that we will talk about in this presentation. To these concepts we add another one, crucial not only to the theoretical framing of our work but also to the building of a coherent whole that includes the concepts we assumed as keys: we are referring to the Plurilingual Competence (PC). In fact, because we believe that: (i) the development of this competence may be one of the most important aims of language teaching and learning today; (ii) the phenomenon of intercomprehension, which has been already studied in several European research projects, plays an important role in the process of building such a competence; we conceived and developed the project “Intercomprehension in language teaching and learning: a strategy to develop Portuguese learner’s plurilingual competence”. This project is integrated in the 2nd Research Line of LALE (Open Laboratory for Foreign Language Learning): *development of attitudes and competences in foreign language learning*.

Thus, we will begin this presentation by clarifying what we understand to be the Plurilingual Competence and why we think it is essential in today’s linguistic education. We will also explain some assumptions that led us to this line of work.

On a second part, we will make a brief description of our research project: its aims, methodology and development.

At the end, we will discuss some of the collected data and, supported by all the reasoning done so far, we will attempt to clarify the concept of Intercomprehension and to evidence its importance in the process of language teaching and learning.

Plurilingual Competence: the starting point

«the ability to use languages for the purposes of communication and to take part in intercultural interaction, where a social agent has proficiency, on varying degrees, in several languages and experience of several cultures»(Council of Europe, 1998)

As we said before, the concept assumed as background of our research is the one of “Plurilingual Competence”, which has been studied mostly in Europe, namely by Coste, Moore & Zarate (1997) and the European Council (European Framework of Reference to the language teaching) and that, in Portugal, was recently further developed by LALE’s research team.

According to the coordinators of LALE, Andrade e Araújo e Sá (2003), the PC is a competence that allows the individuals to build discursive and interactive situations with the Other and it is particular to a certain individual, dynamic, plural, composed and uneven, where the relationship between linguistic and cultural knowledge is systematic and constantly re-equated. These characteristics result from the fact that this is a competence the individual builds throughout life, as he contacts with the linguistic and cultural diversity, acquiring knowledge (declarative or processual) and building or increasing several communicative competences. All this information will then be available to the individual when he gets involved in new linguistic-communicative situations.

Also these authors identified four constitutive dimensions of PC:

- *social-affective dimension*, related mainly to attitudes and pre-dispositions towards the Other, towards languages, cultures and intercultural communication;
- *dimension of linguistic and communicative repertoires management*, that has to do with the individual’s ability to make use of his linguistic and communicative history, where different languages and cultures acquire different functions, status and roles, in order to successfully take part in a certain communicative situation;
- *dimension of learning repertoires management*, which is rendered concrete in the subject’s ability to learn with the different communicative situations he gets involved into;
- *dimension of interaction management*, related to the interactive processes characteristic of the situations of contact with languages, such as interpreting, translation or codeswitching.

Why then have we chosen the concept of PC as the starting point of our work?

The main reason has to do with the fact that this is an almost unavoidable concept every time we talk about languages and their role in the life of modern societies, when we discuss educational policies (particularly in Europe), in short, always and when we think about matters

that are critical and permanently on agenda, such as globalisation and the apparent inevitability of a *lingua franca*.

We will not discuss here if a *lingua franca* is necessary or not, whether it's inevitable or not, even because we think this is a matter that History as given us many lessons about and, because of that, even if it seems to us today that English rules, probably this won't last forever, just like other dominant languages of the past didn't. Therefore, we think that the main question to be answered is: how can we prepare the individuals to deal successfully with languages, with plurilingualism, which is and will probably remain a characteristic of our world for a long time?

Another reason why we became interested in this concept (PC) had to do with our own language teaching experience, where we saw that the "compartmentalised" work we did at school, where in each language classroom there was only place for one language (two, in the maximum, if it was a foreign language lesson and we allowed the student's mother tongue to show up), did not favoured student's ability to deal with languages and to autonomously build knowledge about them. On the contrary, maybe our way of work prevented this.

It is within this framework that we believe to be necessary to (re)think the individual's relationship with languages, by stressing their contribution to his constitution, not only at an individual level but also, and mainly, on a social and cultural one. And it is precisely here where we think PC may have a distinguished role, since, as a young girl of our study's public-target pointed out, «*we live in a world of cultural exchanges where everybody communicates with everybody*». So, it is unavoidable that languages come out as a plural raw material at the building of the identity of this world's citizens (at least those who actually have the chance to establish that communication!).

Intercomprehension: a contribution to the development of the PC

The notion of Intercomprehension has been following a path almost parallel to the notion of PC, paths that have crossed each other a number of times, mainly in the conception and justification of several European projects that have been using them as object, such as: EuroComRom /Ger /Slav; IGLO (Intercomprehension on Germanic Languages Online); Galatea (Intercomprehension in Romanic Languages); Galanet (Site for the development of Intercomprehension in Romanic Languages); ILTE (Intercomprehension in Language Teacher Education).

In these works, intercomprehension has been understood globally as the subject's ability to "move" between two or more languages, particularly if they are tipologically closed, by appealing to different strategies, competences and knowledge that he previously possesses

and that he puts into work accordingly to a specific communicative situation, specially in order to understand some verbal data.

But let us look, though briefly, to the way the concept arose and was built, in order to better understand the matrix that framed the beginning of our project.

Being a relatively new concept, “Intercomprehension” only began to appear regularly and with a central place in publications and conference’ titles around the 2nd half of the nineties. Even in 2000, an Internet research of the term would present a very short number of results. However, in spite of this still short lifetime, the concept suffered striking evolutions and was conceptualised in three different ways.

We found the first definition of Intercomprehension in Dubois’ Dictionary of Linguistic and Language Ciencias, 1994, where it’s said that it is *«la capacité pour des sujets parlants de comprendre énoncés émis par d’autres sujets parlants appartenant à la même communauté linguistique. L’intercompréhension définit l’aire d’extension d’une langue, d’un dialect, d’un parler»* (p.252), which means intercomprehension is seen as an inter-personal ability that allows communication between speakers of a common language.

With the divulging of the first results of some of the European projects previously mentioned, mainly Galatea and EuRom4, the field of the concept is enlarged and it starts to be related to the communication between speakers of languages with the same origin, belonging to the same linguistic family. This is in the year of 1997 and this is the point of view presented at a seminar about French teaching occurred in Lyon and at a special number of the review “Le Français dans le Monde” entitled “*L’intercompréhension: le cas des langues romanes*”. What might have led to the adoption of the concept presented at Dubois but apparently not the corresponding definition? We think this was due to the belief that motivated the two mentioned projects, that is: the relationship of proximity/familiarity between languages allows speakers of different languages to understand each other up to a certain point, each speaking in their own tongue and without having studied the other’s one.

Therefore, we think there isn’t really a rejection of Dubois’ definition, but an enlarged understanding of the notion of “linguistic community”, where monolingual becomes plurilingual and where intercomprehension, still inter-personal, it is possible thanks to the existence “*d’une zone linguistique et culturelle où la compréhension mutuelle entre natifs de langues diverses est facilité par la proximité des langues due à une commune origine latine*” (Degache, 1997).

In order to develop this ability in the target-public, the projects were built on methodologies of discovery of interlinguistic similarities based on rendering rentable linguistic transparencies and motivating individuals to compare languages, to infer, to generalise and to transfer.

The awareness of the didactical implications and possibilities of this kind of approach,

namely to the development of the *ability the subject possesses to go from one language to another by making rentable its own linguistic and communicative repertoire in a comprehension situation, on a contrastive approach that doesn't lose from sight the learner's perspective* (Andrade & Araújo e Sá, 1998: 64), motivated the appearance of another European project related to intercomprehension, but now in the context of teacher training: ILTE (*Intercomprehension in Language Teacher Education*). This also brought new contributions to the understanding of the concept.

ILTE project presents as it's main aim to *train language teachers that are capable of explore intercomprehension between languages in the process of teaching and learning of a new language, developing in them the awareness of the importance of exploring their student's linguistic, communicative and learning potential.* (ILTE, 1999: 2). In order to achieve this, it proposes activities in different languages, belonging to different linguistic families (which is what happens in our school system, where romanic languages – Portuguese, French and Spanish – and Germanic ones – English and German - are studied). Now the focus point is no longer exclusively the relationship between subjects somehow related through linguistic proximity, but it is displaced to the individual and its ability to manage his own linguistic and communicative repertoire in order to understand specific linguistic data, which may be presented in a language he studied or not, a language that may belong to the same family of his mother tongue or not. This means that intercomprehension, although without losing its inter-personal trace (that repertoire is built throughout the interactions the subject establishes with others), assumes also an intra-personal dimension: it becomes a competence that allows the individual to *access new meanings in a foreign language through the resort to linguistic and or cultural data known or studied* (Veiga, 1999: 94). It is then accepted the possibility subject has to appeal to its more or less developed collection of knowledge and competences in order to discover lexical, morphological and syntactical transparencies, which are as more frequent as the languages in the process are genealogically close (subject's mother tongue, other languages he studied or he contacted with and target language).

We would like to point out another important principle that this project emphasizes besides intercomprehension: it recognizes in the previous knowledge and competences the individual/learner possesses and uses, not only those that were acquired at school and in a formal language learning context, but also those that he went acquiring outside the school when he contacted, through different media, with other languages and cultures or even with other aspects of his own language and culture.

At this point, and in spite of all the evolution and the thinking done around the concept, there wasn't yet a clear and solid definition of intercomprehension, at least within didactics field of action (the one that we work on), fact that is revealed in the statement of one of the

members of ILTE project:

«*Intercomprehension includes diversification, plurilingualism, multiculturalism, language transfer, codeswitching, language comparisons, comprehension strategies, language learning strategies and much more besides.*» (Pomphrey, 1999: 84)

It was approximately around this time that our research project was conceived and, since we became aware that the imprecision around Intercomprehension made it too vague to allow us to think of concrete ways to profit from it in a school context we decided to focus our work in this phenomenon and established as first main theoretical aim of our project the attempt to clarify and define the concept.

But because we needed an initial working hypothesis, a theoretical starting point that framed our research, based on the evolution of the concept at the time we assumed the Intercomprehension mainly in its intra-personal side and regarded it as a competence that would allow the individual to manage the different and previous knowledge and competences he possessed (whether linguistic, cultural, referential, communicative, interactional, of verbal learning, etc) when faced with a specific communicative situation, permitting him to solve communicational problems without having to depend exclusively on a more or less profound knowledge of the language(s) at stake.

With the course of the project, we came back several times to this definition problem and debated ourselves with several dilemma:

. wasn't our theoretical basis of work still too wide and therefore imprecise?

. what would distinguish or give specificity to the intercomprehension competence when confronted with what was already theorised about the plurilingual competence? (we could feel there were differences, but we were having trouble on clarifying them)

. at a certain point we reached this statement: *intercomprehension is a partial competence, crucial to the plurilingual, that allows the individual to manage several competences and previous knowledge, mainly linguistic and cultural, he possesses and to which he appeals, in a specific communicative situation, in order to understand the verbal data he's faced with* (Santos & Andrade, 2002a: 122). We were placing intercomprehension competence inside one of the dimensions of the PC, management of linguistic and communicative repertoires, but also added that this whole process was closely connected to the management of learning repertoires. Weren't we confusing different levels of action? If it was a partial competence, constitutive of wider one, how could it be used to manage different competences (including some not directly related with the plurilingual but nevertheless existing in a verbal interaction)?

. in short, would intercomprehension be a competence at all?

In a text we wrote to the 7th *International Congress of the Spanish Society of Language and Literature Didactics* (VII Congreso Internacional de la Sociedad Española de Didáctica de la Lengua e la Literatura), that occurred in Santiago de Compostela in November 2002, we gave a clearly positive answer to this last question:

Intercomprehension seems to be, by excellence, the competence that allows the individual to circulate between linguistic data, belonging or not to the same language. That is, intercomprehension is the competence that permits him to deal with the linguistically unknown through the creation of connections between this unknown and other data he knows better, whether these are already acquired (and, therefore, belonging already to the individual's previous frame of knowledge, of cultural and linguistic references) or are other new data, maybe even in presence of those he's dealing with, but which are, for some reason, more accessible to him in that moment. (Santos & Andrade, 2002b)

We also said that intercomprehension would mainly be a mediator competence between the Plurilingual and the Self-Learning ones, since it would help the autonomous subject to know, in a certain communicative situation, not only to what (and how) appeal to comprehend but also how to extract from that experience new knowledge, which he would add to the mental frames he already possessed.

Today we feel again that this isn't yet the most adequate answer to the question of "What is Intercomprehension?", for most of the doubts we raised earlier can still apply to it.

Then, where to turn to in search for a more satisfactory answer?

Why not look into the data we collected on the field during the development of our research project?

Intercomprehension in a school context: implementing a Plurilingual Program

When we inscribed our project in the field of language didactics, in a way because we wanted some answers to our own worries as a language teacher, we defined a second main aim to it:

- to analyse intercomprehension strategies mobilised by Portuguese learners when contacting with new verbal data (How do they manage their linguistic, communicative and cultural repertoires? When previous knowledge do they activate? Which competences do they put into action?)

By trying to fulfil this aim we thought we would find, on one hand, indicia which would help us in the theoretical definition of our key-concept and, on the other hand, information to confirm, or not, our assumed hypothesis about intercomprehension: a strategy able to

contribute to the development of the learner's PC.

Thus, we conceived an intervention plan to be put into practice in a school and we built it around the initial understanding we had of the concept of intercomprehension. This fact led us to some other assumptions:

- . if we want to develop PC in a school context we have to give learners (i) the possibility to make contact with the linguistic and cultural diversity and (ii) the opportunity to think about and mentally organize the information they acquire through the contacts they establish outside the school;

- . this can only happen if we stop conceiving the language classroom as the place of exclusively one or two languages (foreign and mother tongue); this is an attitude that causes the way our students face languages -as "compartmentalised" and closed:

«The customary approach is to present learning a foreign language as an addition, in a compartmentalised way, of a competence to communicate in a foreign language to the competence to communicate in the mother tongue»(European Framework of Reference);

- . therefore, the activities we were to propose to be developed in classroom should include several languages (even those not formally studied by the learners or not included in the Portuguese curriculum) and they should be of different kinds, in order to incite learners to make associations and build bridges between languages and thus give meaning to unknown linguistic forms" (Andrade, 1999), through comparison, transfer, inference and eventually etymology;

- . the individual and group reasoning/thinking about languages and about the strategies used in the processes of interaction and comprehension of verbal data would be essential, not only to achieve the mental organization of knowledge we have referred but also to develop learner's awareness – something we foresaw as crucial to the effective enlargement of the PC and available repertoires;

- . the activities should be oriented by the discipline teacher, so that we could have a more realistic vision of the way knowledge in this field can be co-constructed inside the one relationship that is more common in the teaching-learning process (teacher-students);

- . the activities should appear fully integrated in the discipline's Programming, so that we could see whether or not is possible to give a plurilingual dimension to classes that are traditionally bilingual, without this having to appear as an exceptional and aside phenomenon, introduced "by force" into the "normal" course of the classes. We must take notice that because this is why the activities were somehow sporadic, that is, the discipline's programming wasn't conceived around the project but, on the contrary, the basis was the program already created according to the usual work done in the discipline, where the activities related to the project

were integrated whenever possible and justifiable.

Given these assumptions we then conceived a “Plurilingual Program”, one possible way to concretise our thoughts, which was developed in a class of Latin students from the Secondary Level (11th grade).

One short explanation about the choice of the target-public.

Our option for the Secondary Level was primarily based on the desire to work with learners that would have already studied at least two foreign languages – this fact probably meaning that they would have available to themselves a larger and more varied collection of strategies and knowledge ready to be used when they were doing the tasks we proposed. We chose this level also because we wanted to have some idea of the competences they had, or not, developed after finishing the Basic Level. The choice of the 11th grade opened the possibility for students to have started the study of yet another foreign language in the previous year (which happened).

The option for the Latin discipline happened: (i) because that is our area as language teacher and (ii) because we agree with the key-assumption of some of the European projects already mentioned: it is possible to profit from the common basis that unites several European languages, Latin, which we believe may contribute to the development of intercomprehension. We can not forget either that this basis’ influence extended itself, for historical reasons, much beyond the area where we find romance languages today and that it was itself the privileged vehicle of another culture and language with a decisive role in the construction of Europe and occidental world: the Greek. As was said by Henriette Walter (1996), *we can have an idea of the common international vocabulary by taking as a starting point a small multilingual dictionary of 8000 words (...) (French, English, German, Spanish, Italian and Portuguese). Amongst the dictionary’s 8000 words, more than 1200 (which corresponds to 15%) are homographs in the six languages and most of them (80%) have a Greco-Latin origin.* After all, if there is something we have no doubt about is the fact that intercomprehension, as we see it, it is only possible if there is a reasonable field of contact and proximity between the languages at stake.

Program’s Description

The Plurilingual Program was developed in two phases: the 1st one corresponding to the 11th grade and the 2nd one to the 12th grade.

First phase happened in three main moments:

- introduction, where was used the presentation text of the Asterix’s books in several languages (Basque, Rumanian, Catalan, Asturian, Swedish, Flemish, Afrikaans, Breton, Reto-romance and Norwegian). We asked for the identification of key-words and

languages, for the grouping of these languages in families and for the explanation of the strategies used;

- activity about Julius Cesar, using one text in Italian and another in German, where we solicited the discovery of the theme, a summary (of the Italian text), the gather of information (German text), the translation of a small sentence (German text) and self-reasoning on the reading and comprehension strategies mobilised;
- activity about the Thermae, where students worked in groups with one text (one in Dutch, one in German and one in Italian), trying to translate it, comparing it afterwards with another version of the same text in a language more familiar to them (French, English and Spanish, respectively) and perfecting the previous translation; students also indicated the elements that allowed them to understand the texts and tried to infer morfossintactic traces of the languages

The 2nd phase was about Cicero and comprised two major moments:

- reading, morfossintactic and semantic analysis and posterior translation of a text with data about Cicero's bio-bibliography, as well as comparison of some words with their correspondents in other languages, through etymology;
- work with a plurilingual version of the "Pro. A. Licinio poeta oratio", containing excerpts in English, Portuguese, Spanish and Latin, with which were made morfossintactic analysis, summaries and comparisons between the original in Latin and today's translations.

Data collected for analysis

We collected for further analysis different kinds of data:

- *worksheets* filled by students;
- written questionnaires and interviews (one intermediate and one final);
- audio registration of the work in groups and video registration of the lessons.

In this presentation we will now take a necessarily brief and somewhat superficial look at these data and make an attempt to draw an answer to the question we left pending in the last chapter:

Didactically, what is Intercomprehension?

Searching for clues...

When reading the data collected, our attention was particularly caught by the transcriptions of the lessons related to the Plurilingual Program, because these allow us to take a closer look at what happened when the students were confronted with the texts. And again we had a confirmation of the validity of Pomphrey's statement: we became even more aware than before of the complexity of the phenomenon we are studying. Thus, again we questioned: to consider intercomprehension a competence would not be a misleading reduction?

Let us see, then, the main occurrences that took place in the several moments where the students interacted with the texts.

In fact, we only need to look at the dialogues occurred during the works in group to realise that that process of building comprehension of the texts given, whether partial or global (depending on the task proposed): (i) is different from group to group and (ii) relies on a complex series of elements, inter-connected but distinct, whose utilization seems impossible to reduce to the profitableness of a competence to manage them (possibly the intercomprehension competence, as we hypothetically considered).

Therefore, we may begin by taking a look on the attitudinal component, which has also in this whole process a role of relieve.

One of the things that posed right from the beginning certain problems to the comprehension was the identification of the texts' languages. In fact, this being a more "psychological" than real difficulty (more related to the learners belief that they only understand a language they had already studied, than to the actual ability they had to understand the texts), it is however something to take in account because it can create insecurity, which may even lead to choose to abandon a task, rather than try to overcome the difficulties.

Like one of the subjects said (when answering this question: in a certain discipline you were asked to do a research about a certain theme; during that research you find a text in Catalan. Say what would you do and justify your decision):

I would look for other texts; if I didn't understand it I would ask the teacher.

Attitude towards the place of knowledge acquired outside the school inside the classroom also led to some discussions and hesitations: it is common for the subjects to think that they can not use to justify their conclusions "excuses" like the movies they have seen, the musics they heard, the labels they read or people they met or contacted with and who spoke other languages. This applies particularly to the identification of the languages (Italian and German, for instance) and to the comprehension of the themes themselves (e.g.: remember a

movie to understand, in the text, who murdered Cesar).

Nevertheless (and this is one of the most curious fact we realised), faced with the lack of other resources to solve the tasks, or better said, faced with the lack of “valid knowledge” (which, according to them, is the one acquired in a context of formal learning – at school), what the subjects appeal to is precisely that extra-curricular knowledge, which they possess in a degree they don’t recognize themselves.

Thus, they reveal previous linguistic knowledge about languages not learned at school (e.g.: pronunciation of the Italian; German’s syntax – the existence of declensions; vocabulary, either Italian and Spanish, either German) as well as an epilinguistic competence, which results in the capacity to observe certain characteristics of the languages in their presence, although without being able to use the Linguistic and scientific names form them (e.g.: diacritical marks used in German; phonetic aspects of the Italian).

The metalinguistic competence, however, doesn’t stand aside, though less frequently evidenced than the last one mentioned, mainly when they compare specific syntactical structures of the texts in analysis with structures of the languages they study (e.g.: comparison of Italian and German prepositions and circumstantial complements with those from Latin – “ad altri”; “in Rom”).

Also the learning competence plays an important role, revealed for instance when the students resort to the previous worksheets (like the ones about Asterix, which presented several languages) in search for information that might help them in the subsequent tasks. This competence is still displayed, from our point of view, when learners seek to use strategies, which they believe are more adjusted to the aims settled for the task, although sometimes not knowing exactly how to do it (e.g.: infer the meaning of an Italian word by comparing it not only with words in Portuguese, their mother tongue, but also with those in English or French, which they study at school, or even Spanish, about which they have some knowledge, in spite of not studying it). Notice that these examples make clear that we are talking about a learning competence closely related to the school context, its aims and its way of working.

As far as the comprehension strategies used by our learners, these were the most frequent and relevant:

- comparison of similar words in different languages, recognizing the existence of common radicals (etymological awareness);
- transfer, particularly of syntax rules from Portuguese or Latin to the non studied languages;
- identification of proper names (of people or places) and dates, whose morphology they now it is alike in the languages presented, which makes them easily perceptible; besides, they also recognize that locating the theme in space and time is essential to

the comprehension.

As we can see from this quite short list, the students focus on the recognition of isolated words, using comprehension strategies accordingly, and then they try to “sew” the meanings found in order to build one coherent sense to the text.

From all that was said, we may conclude that, in the process of comprehension of the texts presented during the Plurilingual Program, learners revealed to have a strategic competence rather developed, placed mainly at the service of the discovery of vocabulary transparencies.

Therefore, we think that if there is, like we said before, a competence that allows the individual to manage several other competences, knowledge and strategies, which come into action in a task of comprehension of a text, such a competence would be precisely this strategic competence – a concept that is not new but we think applies perfectly in this case. After all, it possibly is this strategic competence that allows us to know what to use, when to use it and how.

But then, what is the place of Intercomprehension in all this process?

Conclusion

We began this presentation by saying that the two key-concepts of our work are “Intercomprehension” and “Dialogue”. We only mentioned, so far, the first one; it is time, now, to recall the second.

We came to the belief that Intercomprehension is not a competence: it involves too many things, as we saw, to be able to be reduced to that. We think the word “Intercomprehension” designates the whole comprehension process of a message, in which two parts came into a dialogue: on one hand we have the message itself, with its characteristics and rules; on the other hand we have a subject, with a more or less large background of previous knowledge, competences and strategies that puts into action in order to build hypothesis of meanings for the message. These two parts then interact, one asking the other if the hypothesis are correct, the other confirming or infirming them and giving clues that allow the first part to reformulate his thoughts.

But this dialogue goes further: it implies a “conversation” between the subject and his own linguistic, communicative and cultural data, which he calls during the comprehension task and which he also enriches and enlarges due to that same task.

What are then the didactical implications of this idea?

First of all, we always consider as an important part of the previous knowledge

possessed by the subject the things he learned outside the school, eventually in non-formal environments. More than that, we defend that the use of this knowledge in classroom should be encouraged because like that we are helping our students to become aware of the wide range of resources they can use to understand a given message, whether it is in a foreign language or even in their own mother tongue.

We saw that the quantity, and sometimes quality, of strategies, competences and knowledge mobilised by the students during the development of the Plurilingual Program was reduced and had little variety. Maybe if this kind of work was done more often, maybe if the process of intercomprehension took place regularly in the language classroom, accompanied by the necessary exchange of thoughts and reflections between teachers and learners, the situation would have been different and we might have found richer data. And there is no need for “strange languages” to appear: this line of work can be followed when teaching and learning the languages of the curriculum. It is a question of paying more attention to the processes instead of only being worried about the products. Our research showed us that it was important for the students to “see” how their colleagues or their teacher reasoned in order to solve the comprehension problems; it was useful for them to confront the strategies they used, which sometimes led them to mistakes, with the ones used by others and which allowed to reach a correct answer. How often do we, language teachers, take time to “think aloud” with our pupils and pay attention to the way they do that thinking as to understand why they make mistakes or simply give up the tasks we propose them?

This is why we believe Intercomprehension is important and innovative within the context of the language didactics. The process of intercomprehension stresses the need for a deeper understanding, by those who practice it (and our students have to do that every time they are faced with linguistic data in a foreign language), of the way comprehension functions or can be built. The practice of Intercomprehension in class allows the learners to realise how much formal and informal knowledge they have, makes them more confident and, thus, turns them into more autonomous individuals. Like some of our pupils said by the end of the project: *now, when I see a text in a language that I don't now very well, or at all, instead of just giving up I try to find out if there is something, in the languages I know that can help me to understand that one.*

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Entre romanofilia e romanofobia: um estudo com universitários portugueses

Sílvia MELO⁷ - smelo@dte.ua.pt

Maria Helena de ARAÚJO e SÁ - helenasa@dte.ua.pt

Susana PINTO - spinto@dte.ua.pt

Introdução

Este trabalho enquadra-se no âmbito de dois projectos: Galanet⁸ e "A competência de intercompreensão em Línguas Românicas: estratégias de intervenção junto de um público universitário"⁹, projectos que têm como enquadramento didactológico os conceitos de competência plurilingue e intercompreensão em Línguas Vizinhas (LV). Tais conceitos parecem ter um lugar próprio e de destaque na construção de uma Europa plurilingue, que se exprime a múltiplas vozes, uma Europa polifónica onde "as international communication is increasingly intense and complex, and as Europe tends to adopt English as a common tool for linguistic exchanges, it is crucial to promote other means of linguistic integration, in particular through cross-comprehension in various families of languages" (DEGACHE; 2003: 1). Paralelamente, cruza-se, metodológica e conceptualmente, com o projecto "Imagens das línguas na comunicação intercultural: contributos para o desenvolvimento da competência plurilingue"¹⁰, que pretende analisar as imagens das línguas enquanto objectos semióticos que são transmitidos e transformados através da comunicação, processo social dinâmico. Estas imagens são construídas e reconstruídas, expressas e negociadas na interacção e são, muitas vezes, tematizadas na comunicação, servindo, por vezes, como factor de afastamento ou de aproximação entre os locutores. A abordagem que aqui privilegiamos é do tipo objectivante, pretendendo-se diagnosticar e descrever as imagens que circulam e são verbalizadas acerca

⁷ Financiada por Programa Operacional Ciência, Tecnologia e Inovação (POCTI) do Quadro Comunitário de Apoio III e Programa Socrates/Língua-Ação D da Comunidade Europeia.

⁸ GALANET (plataforma para o desenvolvimento da intercompreensão em línguas românicas) é um projecto Socrates/Lingua, coordenado pela Université Stendhal Grenoble 3 (França), que conta com 6 outras instituições parceiras: Universidade de Aveiro (Portugal), Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (Espanha), Universidad Complutense de Madrid (Espanha), Università de Cassino (Italia), Université Lumière Lyon 2 (França), e Université de Mons-Hainault (Belgica). Para mais informações consultar www.galanet.be.

⁹ Projecto de doutoramento de S. Melo, "A competência de intercompreensão em Línguas Românicas: estratégias de intervenção junto de um público universitário", coordenado por Maria Helena Araújo e Sá, Universidade de Aveiro e financiado pela FCT.

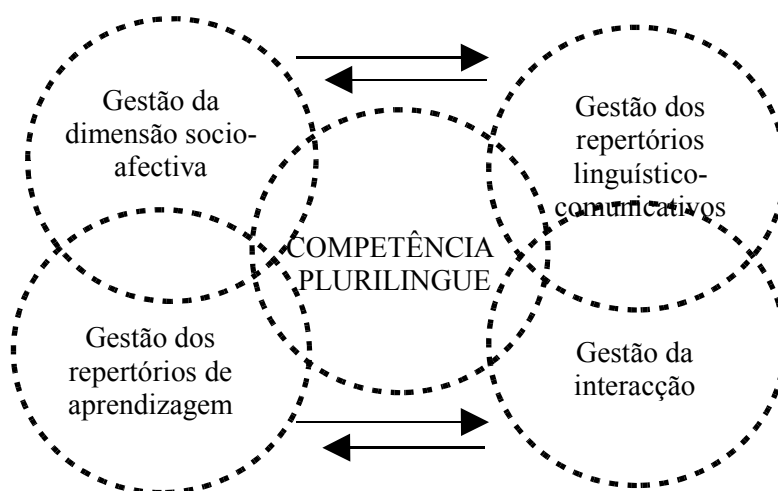
¹⁰ Projecto Sapiens, coordenado por Maria Helena de Araújo e Sá, atribuído através dos fundos FEDER, no âmbito Eixo 2, Medida 2.3 do Pocti – Programa Operacional "Ciência, Tecnologia, Inovação", do QCA III.

das línguas e dos seus falantes - no nosso caso, da família românica. Entendemos que a intercompreensão, enquanto finalidade comunicativa, passará, antes de mais, pela mobilização de "reportórios" afectivos que aproximem os interlocutores e os comprometam no êxito da interacção, o que, em situações de contacto de línguas, passará pela identificação e desconstrução de estereótipos e de representações bloqueadores da felicidade e do sucesso interactivos com a alteridade.

Tentaremos, aqui, evidenciar alguns aspectos da dimensão sócio-afectiva da competência plurilingue, nomeadamente as imagens, representações e estereótipos que um público universitário português veicula em relação às línguas e locutores de origem românica, para assim tentar identificar as eventuais resistências (fobias) ou impulsos (filias) à intercompreensão entre romanófonos.

Representações e estereótipos na comunicação intercultural

A dimensão sócio-afectiva no contacto plurilingue e intercultural tem sido colocada em relevo em abordagens recentes que tomam o contacto de línguas e culturas como objecto de estudo. Na verdade, os locutores, quando se exprimem, são impelidos por motivações, sentimentos e pulsões que influenciam a interacção e determinam o seu sucesso, mais ainda em situações de contacto de línguas, em que os interlocutores dominam, em diferentes graus e com diferentes objectivos, as línguas que utilizam para comunicar. é por este motivo que modelos de análise deste tipo de situações distinguem uma dimensão afectiva e atitudinal que se relaciona com outras dimensões mais processuais, cognitivas, discursivo-verbais e interactivas, tal como fica evidenciado nos dois modelos de análise que a seguir se esquematizam: o da Competência Plurilingue (ANDRADE & ARAÚJO e Sá *et al*; 2003) e o da Competência de Comunicação Intercultural (BYRAM; 1997):



(ANDRADE & ARAÚJO e SÁ *et al*; 2003, 494)

	SKILLS interpret and relate (savoir comprendre)	
KNOWLEDGE of self and other; of interaction: individual and societal (les savoirs)	EDUCATION political education critical cultural awareness (savoir s'engager)	ATTITUDES relativising self valuing others (savoir être)
	SKILLS discover and/or interact (savoir apprendre/faire)	

(adaptado de BYRAM, 1997)

Em ambos os modelos se destaca o papel das atitudes e das predisposições afectivas no sucesso da comunicação, entendidas, por nós, como propulsora e potenciadora do encontro com a diversidade e, por conseguinte, de uma gestão mais efectiva e eficaz dos repertórios de aprendizagem e linguístico-comunicativos em situações de contacto de línguas.

Esta dimensão sócio-afectiva em relação à alteridade integra, "um conjunto de vontades, predisposições, motivações e qualidades que o sujeito é capaz de criar em interacção, bem como atitudes para com as línguas, as culturas, os interlocutores e a comunicação" (ANDRADE & ARAÚJO e SÁ *et al*; 2003, 494), indissociáveis do processo de interacção. Neste sentido, pensamos que é impossível abordar inteiramente esta dimensão sem ter em conta o papel das representações e dos estereótipos na construção da relação afectiva, uma vez que "les représentations stéréotypées de l'Autre traversent inévitablement le vécu de la rencontre" (AMOSSY & HERSHBERG PIERROT; 1997: 42). Significa isto que as representações e os estereótipos, entendidos como elementos pré-existentes à interacção, constitutivos do imaginário do "eu" e como construções socialmente elaboradas, são inalienáveis da dimensão sócio-afectiva e, por conseguinte, da comunicação plurilingue e intercultural e da co-construção da intercompreensão.

Com efeito, como afirma Zarate, a sensação de pertença a um grupo social e ao seu capital simbólico está na base das representações acerca do Outro (1995). Este sentimento, como se tenta evidenciar no projecto "Imagens das línguas na comunicação intercultural: contributos para o desenvolvimento da competência plurilingue", é desenhado e redesenhado na interacção com diferentes parceiros comunicativos, interacção que se institui como lugar

privilegiado de partilha e de mediação de auto e hetero-imagens e fruto da influência de múltiplos lugares de mediação entre "eu" e o "outro" (escola, cinema, literatura, ...). Nas palavras de Moore, consideramos que "ce n'est pas la véracité des stéréotypes qui est importante, puisque celle-ci va dépendre de la psychosociologie du groupe de référence et de certaines circonstances qui peuvent en modifier le contenu, mais plutôt leurs effets sociaux, la manière dont ils affectent les relations entre les groupes et corollairement, par exemple, l'apprentissage des langues pratiquées par ces groupes" (s/d: 14).

Do ponto de vista da aprendizagem de LE, sabendo que as imagens influenciam a forma como os sujeitos se relacionam com os objectos que elas simplificam, parece-nos oportuno reiterar o papel que essas imagens/ representações e os estereótipos desempenham nas escolhas linguísticas escolares, no grau de comprometimento dos alunos para com a sua aprendizagem e, conseqüentemente, no sucesso educativo. Na verdade "research, especially that conducted in the school environment, established a link some time ago between attitudes and representations on the one hand and the desire to learn languages and the success or failure of such learning on the other (...). Indeed, it is precisely because representations and images of languages play a central role in language learning process, and because they are malleable, that they are relevant to linguistic and educational policy" (CASTELLOTTI & MOORE; 2002: 7). Neste sentido, convém também lembrar os objectivos e políticas linguísticas que enformam o sistema educativo e que, por isso, têm uma última palavra na construção das imagens relativas aos estatutos, funções e papéis das LE (disponibilizadas ou não pela escola). Para além disso, pareceríamos ingênuos se não evocássemos as relações de poder que se jogam dentro das escolas entre professores de diferentes LE, que, sendo sinal também das imagens que circulam acerca dos objectivos das aprendizagens linguísticas, são pouco favorecedoras do desenvolvimento de uma competência que se quer plurilingue, nomeadamente ao nível do desenvolvimento de uma dimensão afectiva em relação à diversidade linguística e cultural. E, neste sentido, parece-nos claro que a própria escola e os seus agentes são instrumentos ao serviço da criação de "fobias" e "filias" linguísticas...

Pretendemos, neste estudo, diagnosticar e estudar imagens e estereótipos de um grupo de estudantes universitários portugueses acerca das línguas, culturas e locutores românicos, tentando identificar eventuais lugares de mediação, criadores de movimentos de afastamento e de aproximação em relação às línguas e à comunicação inter-romanófona. Trata-se, na verdade, de um primeiro trabalho de desocultação dessas imagens, que pretende, na sequência, explicitar os elementos que as configuram, bem como os factores (sociais, económicos, ideológicos, emocionais, educativos, etc) que entram em campo na dialéctica da sua construção (cf ARAÚJO e SÁ & PINTO; 2004).

Metodologia: público e descrição do questionário

Conforme já foi dito, e de forma a privilegiar uma metodologia mais descritiva que permitisse recolher e categorizar as imagens recolhidas, foi elaborado um inquérito por questionário organizado em quatro partes. Pretendia-se, de uma forma global, caracterizar o público-alvo do ponto de vista romanófono, identificando as suas representações, expectativas e conhecimentos em relação às Línguas Estrangeiras (LE), em geral, e às LR, em particular. Queríamos ainda desvendar as circunstâncias e os tipos de contacto com as línguas, bem como o perfil de aprendente de línguas destes estudantes. As quatro partes do questionário foram desenvolvidas tematicamente, como ilustram os títulos e os resumos que a seguir apresentamos:

- “Eu e as Línguas Estrangeiras”, através da qual pretendíamos descobrir a biografia e os projectos linguísticos dos aprendentes e o grau de conhecimentos que pensavam possuir nas diferentes línguas, do ponto de vista da compreensão oral e escrita e da interacção verbal.
- “Eu e as Línguas Românicas”, destinada a verificar os seus conhecimentos, representações, atitudes e estereótipos em relação a esta família linguística. Os aprendentes poderiam classificar as LR ao nível da proximidade em relação ao Português e ao grau de facilidade ao nível da compreensão oral e escrita e da interacção verbal. Além disso, os estudantes poderiam caracterizar quer as LR, quer os seus locutores, e dar a sua opinião acerca das vantagens/desvantagens da aprendizagem de línguas vizinhas.
- “Eu e a aprendizagem das línguas”, destinada a desvendar os perfis de aprendizagem dos estudantes, particularmente ao nível dos métodos de aprendizagem e do trabalho com as línguas. Algumas questões prendiam-se com os hábitos de recurso à comparação entre a LM e as outras LE e entre LE entre si.
- “À descoberta das Línguas Românicas”, através da qual os aprendentes poderiam identificar as diferentes LR, baseados em textos escritos e orais, assinalando os indícios que seguiram durante a realização deste actividade.

Apresentaremos, de seguida, alguns resultados obtidos junto de 106 alunos pertencentes ao primeiro ano de quatro licenciaturas da Universidade de Aveiro, no ano lectivo de 2001/2002: Licenciatura em Ensino Português, Latim e Grego; Licenciatura em Ensino de Inglês e Alemão; Licenciatura em Gestão, Planeamento e Turismo; e Licenciatura em Línguas

e Relações Empresariais.

Como dito anteriormente, apresentaremos sobretudo os dados relativos às imagens, representações e atitudes destes sujeitos acerca das LR e dos seus locutores, de forma a ilustrar a incidência temática do nosso texto.

Os resultados, reveladores da importância da dimensão sócio-afectiva da competência plurilingue deste público e dos aspectos constitutivos dos seus reportórios linguísticos e comunicativos, poder-nos-ão ajudar a melhor perceber os movimentos de aproximação e de afastamento em relação a determinadas línguas, culturas e locutores românicos, nomeadamente em eventuais situações de intercompreensão e de intercomunicação entre romanófonos.

Entre a romanofilia e a romanofobia

Como já referimos, tentaremos apresentar algumas marcas de filia e de fobia em relação a algumas línguas, culturas e locutores romanófonos, a partir dos dados recolhidos através do questionário apresentado.

Durante a realização deste estudo, observámos a existência de movimentos de aproximação e de afastamento em relação a esta família linguística. Tratando-se de ideias pré-concebidas, de estereótipos, de imagens/representações, decidimos chamar-lhes filia e fobia. Não se trata de utilizar aqui o sentido de "fobia" na sua total acepção no campo da Psicologia, onde se define como "peur non raisonné et continu d'un objet, d'un être vivant ou d'une situation déterminée qui, en eux-mêmes, ne présentent aucun danger" (BLOCH & CHEMAMA; 1993: 574), mas antes tentar compreender, com a ajuda deste termo, como é que se constroem os afastamentos (inconscientemente e sem razões aparentes) em relação a situações e pessoas acerca das quais os sujeitos não possuem referências objectivas. De facto, as representações sociais são construções que se traduzem, diariamente, na nossa percepção do mundo, em geral, e na nossa relação com o Outro, em particular, concretizando-se em tudo o que se revela influenciável pelos domínios da subjectividade (cf ZARATE; 1995: 29). Na verdade, como já tinha sido expresso por Moscovici no âmbito da Psicologia Social, as representações, enquanto construções, são "um conjunto de conceitos, proposições e explicações criados na vida quotidiana no decurso da comunicação interindividual. São o equivalente na nossa sociedade, dos mitos e sistemas de crenças das sociedades tradicionais: podem ainda ser vistas como a versão contemporânea de senso comum" (1981:181).

Por outro lado, se definirmos atitude como "predisposition to react favourably or otherwise to a class of objet in a certain way" (KOLDE; 1981 citado por CASTELLOTTI & MOORE; 2002: 7), predisposições guiadas pelas crenças e conhecimentos mais ou menos

objectivos de cada pessoa, isso implicará a impossibilidade de a observar e gravar/registar, uma vez que se manifesta através de comportamentos e, de forma mais ou menos explícita, de discursos, lugares observáveis e passíveis do registo das filias e das fobias. Todavia, se os comportamentos nem sempre são explicáveis, as filias e as fobias também não o serão: assim, tal como elas, as ideias pré-concebidas, os estereótipos e as representações (que enformam as atitudes e, então, os comportamentos, o pensamento e os sentimentos) manifestam-se em opiniões e julgamentos mal fundados e, por conseguinte, subjectivos: são sobretudo sintomas de crenças de um grupo social sobre si mesmo e sobre os outros grupos. Sintomas de mal e de bem-estar, de desconhecimento, assim como de desejo de aproximação. Deste modo, "on peut se demander si ces phobies simples ne sont pas transmises culturellement ou si elles n'ont pas un rôle de protection pour l'individu" (BLOCH & CHEMAMA; 1993: 574)¹¹. Poder-nos-íamos perguntar o mesmo a propósito das filias e responder favoravelmente às duas questões levantadas, uma vez que, pelos autores citados, "le stéréotype serait principalement le fait d'apprentissage social" (AMOSSY & HERSHBERG PIERROT; 1997: 37) e que, quer as fobias, quer as filias, enquanto produtos dessa aprendizagem, seriam o espelho das construções e representações sociais em circulação num determinado grupo social, temporal e geograficamente localizável.

Veremos, de seguida, como é que esses sentimentos - reveladores de distâncias e proximidades culturais, linguísticas e sócio-afectivas - se manifestaram no discurso dos aprendentes, sabendo que "les représentations sociales construisent les limites entre le groupe d'appartenance et les autres, définissent 'des proximités et des affinités, des éloignements et des incompatibilités'" (BOURDIEU; 1987: 73)

"Eu e as Línguas Estrangeiras"

De acordo com os dados recolhidos na primeira parte do questionário, 92% dos aprendentes são portugueses, na maioria raparigas (80%), com menos de 20 anos (74,5%), tendo o Português como Língua Materna (84%)¹². Estes sujeitos aprenderam, sobretudo na escola¹³ (isto é, em contexto formal), Inglês (99%), Francês (97%), Latim (43%), Alemão (35%), Espanhol (23,5%), Chinês (21%) e Grego (10%). A quase totalidade (90%) está a prosseguir a aprendizagem de uma ou mais LE ou a iniciar a aprendizagem de uma nova

¹¹ Estes autores definem as fobias simples como as que têm uma natureza diversa e que não incomodam muito os sujeitos, como a fobia de objectos ou de situações (ex: fobia a facas, fobia a andar de avião, ...).

¹² As outras LM mencionadas pelos sujeitos foram: Francês (9), Espanhol (4), Inglês (3) e Crioulo (1).

¹³ Com excepção do Espanhol, a propósito do qual os aprendentes apenas mencionam situações de aprendizagem informal (viagens ao estrangeiro e outras situações de contacto com a língua, como os filmes e a música).

língua, como é o caso do Chinês (por razões curriculares). Além disso, a propósito dos projectos linguísticos dos aprendentes, 67% quer aprender outras LE (50% o Italiano, 37% o Espanhol e 32% o Alemão). Estas percentagens são indícios de atracção por essas línguas, uma vez que "apprendre une langue, c'est d'abord avoir une image de cette langue, de son statut, de ses locuteurs, de son histoire, de son utilité" (TSCHOUMY; 1997: 11).

Em relação à utilização de LE em situações do quotidiano, constatamos que o Inglês é a LE mais utilizada, sobretudo em situações de contacto com a Internet. O Francês aparece como a LE mais utilizada em meios familiares, o que nos permite recordar movimentos emigratórios em Portugal. O Português é a LM, preenchendo todas as necessidades e funções quotidianas, sendo a língua vernacular, a língua de referência na escola e a língua de pertença a uma comunidade (DABÈNE; 1994: 19-25).

Podemos também recolher algumas evidências acerca dos constrangimentos curriculares universitários e das especificidades de cada curso: o Alemão, por exemplo, é citado sobretudo pelos alunos da Licenciatura em ensino de Inglês e Alemão e o Francês pelos alunos da Licenciatura em Línguas e Relações Empresariais, cujo currículo inclui o estudo desta língua. O Português aparece, previsivelmente, como língua presente em todas as situações do quotidiano, sendo a língua vernacular destes aprendentes.

Acerca das línguas de contacto, verificamos que as LE com as quais os sujeitos mais contactam correspondem às línguas por eles mais utilizadas. Deste modo, o Francês, o Inglês e o Alemão (26, 63 e 25 respostas, respectivamente) são línguas incluídas nos currículos universitários, aparecendo ainda o Inglês como preferencial ao nível dos contactos culturais (filmes, televisão, literatura e música) e o Francês novamente ao nível dos contactos familiares. As outras LE apontadas fora do domínio escolar, Espanhol, Italiano, Sueco, Crioulo e Ucraniano, obtêm resultados muito reduzidos.

Se nos debruçarmos agora sobre as representações acerca das competências que os aprendentes julgam possuir em diferentes línguas, aos níveis da compreensão oral e escrita e da interacção verbal, constatamos que a maioria deles se classifica como "nulo" em Alemão¹⁴ (52%), em Catalão (56%), em Crioulo de base portuguesa (63%), em Grego (83%), em Latim¹⁵ (53%), em Neerlandês (93%) e em Romeno (96%). Consideram-se "fracos" em Italiano (38%), oscilando entre "nulo" e "fraco" ao nível da interacção verbal (38% cada); classificam-se como "razoáveis" em Francês (42%), língua da escola, e em Espanhol (40%), língua próxima, tipológica e geograficamente; consideram-se "bons" em Inglês, sobretudo ao nível da

¹⁴ Com excepção dos alunos da Licenciatura em Ensino de Inglês e Alemão.

¹⁵ Com excepção dos alunos da Licenciatura em Ensino de Português, Latim e Grego, que se consideram maioritariamente "Razoáveis" ou "Bons". Os alunos das restantes licenciaturas oscilam entre o "Nulo" e o "Fraco".

compreensão escrita e oral; e "muito bons" em Português (77%), a LM. Na nossa opinião, a falta de um contacto mais frequente, diversificado e sistemático com as línguas e a falta de confiança em relação aos conhecimentos adquiridos em contextos informais podem justificar as representações dos aprendentes acerca das competências em LE, inclusive em línguas da mesma família linguística, como o Catalão e o Romeno.

A seguir apresentamos os resultados obtidos através de um exercício de reconstituição das famílias linguísticas Eslava, Germânica e Românica. Podemos constatar, de acordo com os dados obtidos, que a família eslava foi a mais fácil de organizar (58% dos inquiridos identificou todas as línguas desta família), seguida da germânica (37,5) e, final e ironicamente, da família românica (28%). Os maiores obstáculos foram a identificação do Romeno enquanto LR (apenas 30% o classificou correctamente) e do Islandês e do Neerlandês enquanto línguas germânicas: a maioria dos aprendentes tomou-as por línguas eslavas, o que nos leva a concluir que os aprendentes classificam como eslavas as línguas que são percebidas como "esquisitas" ou exóticas.

Os dados obtidos nesta secção do questionário revelam já alguns indícios de fobias e de filias: em relação às primeiras, a falta de contacto com algumas das línguas românicas (o Catalão e o Romeno) e a sensação de estranheza que essa lacuna poderá provocar; ao nível das filias, evidenciam-se os projectos linguísticos dos aprendentes que passam pela aprendizagem do Italiano e do Espanhol, mostrando desejo de aproximação e empatia em relação a estas línguas. Denotamos também algum desconhecimento em relação à família de línguas sobre a qual nos debruçamos, o que se poderá tornar um factor de resistência ou de impulso ao contacto com ela. Vejamos de que forma os dados recolhidos na segunda parte do questionário, alusiva às línguas românicas, corroboram ou desmentem estes primeiros sintomas de filias e de fobias.

"Eu e as Línguas Românicas"

Questionados acerca da LR cuja aprendizagem seria mais importante em Portugal, a maioria dos aprendentes (64%) manifestou-se acerca do Francês, sobretudo devido ao seu estatuto de língua internacional e, por isso, por razões de utilidade e de eficácia pragmática. Os 33% que advogam o ensino do Espanhol fazem-no por razões de ordem geográfica (é a "língua do país vizinho") e, por extensão, pela utilidade no aumento dos contactos económicos (aos níveis do mercado de trabalho e das importações/exportações) e turísticos. Por outro lado, apenas 6% dos aprendentes indica o Italiano, por razões de facilidade e de inclinação afectiva. Estas percentagens dão-nos uma visão mercantilista e pragmática das línguas na sociedade actual, dos objectivos dos aprendentes e dos objectivos perseguidos em sala de

aula: línguas para um mundo de competições e de competências em vez de línguas para a construção do "eu" e das relações com o Outro; línguas de acesso ao trabalho em vez de línguas de acesso ao prazer; línguas de transacção em vez de línguas de cultura. Se é verdade que esta dimensão pragmática do ensino das línguas é uma dimensão essencial e compreensível, não deixa de ser uma visão redutora e simplista das potencialidades que o seu ensino-aprendizagem recobre.

No que diz respeito às representações dos aprendentes em relação às LR, o anexo I dá-nos uma visão completa das suas respostas, obtidas através de um exercício de associação de palavras. Comentaremos, desde já, alguns traços mais visíveis, sabendo que "la langue n'est pas neutre, les langues ne sont pas neutres, elles véhiculent des images, souvent fortes, et souvent contradictoires" (TSCHOUMY; 1997: 14).

Notamos, desde já, a desigualdade e o desequilíbrio entre o que é dito acerca do Catalão e do Romeno e o que é dito acerca das outras LR, quer ao nível das associações temáticas e das características linguísticas (o "folklore lingüístico", acerca do qual falam RICHARDS & LOCKHART; 1994: 54), quer ao nível lexical. Para além desse desequilíbrio, encontramos, ao nível destas línguas, associações incorrectas: a primeira com os bascos e o terrorismo; a segunda com a Rússia e algumas personagens russas. Em oposição, a proximidade linguística com a Espanha favorece quer o maior número de alusões à geografia quer às tradições culturais. Por seu turno, o Francês limita-se aos estereótipos "Paris" e "Tour Eiffel" e o Italiano à língua da cozinha: "pizza", "pasta", "spaghetti" e "lasagne".

No que diz respeito ao léxico associado a cada língua (excepto ao Catalão e ao Romeno), o Francês, sendo a língua da escola e aquela com a qual os aprendentes mais contactam, é a língua que recobre o maior número de palavras, sobretudo relacionadas com a cordialidade das relações sociais: "bonjour", "merci", "au revoir" e "salut" (e, com menos respostas, "bonsoir" e "de rien"). Além disso, notamos uma forte alusão a um romantismo ainda associado à França e aos franceses, o que se coaduna com a ideia de que "French is the language of love and stuff" (WILLIAMS, BURDEN & KANVERS; 2002): "amour", "je t'aime", "coeur", "mon amour" e "la vie en rose". O léxico evocado a propósito do Italiano e do Espanhol, sendo mais variado e até disperso, reenvia para uma grande multiplicidade de temas, como a família ("hermanos", "padre"), as normas nas relações sociais ("bienvenidos", "buenos días", "hola", "buenas noches", "gracias", "muy bueno", "ciao", "arrivederci", "per favore", "bonjorno", "prego", "grazie") e as formas de hetero-referenciação ("cariño", "guapo/a", "muchacho", "hombre", "chico", "ragazza", "amore", "bambino").

Podemos ainda encontrar, nesta amálgama de palavras, alguns estereótipos relativos a um imaginário comunicativo que nos dá conta de contactos linguísticos e de ecos de interações, reais ou não, com interlocutores romanófonos: "vale", "olé", "mi dio", "belissimo",

"bravo", "per qué?", "capische", "vero", "bene" e "che sara?". Este conjunto de palavras indica-nos um "dicionário básico plurilingue" - quase de sobrevivência - em construção ("buenos dias", "bonjour" e "bonjorno"; "hola", "salut" e "ciao"; "gracias", "merci" e "grazzie"), produto de um repertório de aprendizagem verbal em acção e indicador de um repertório linguístico-comunicativo que se actualiza e se enriquece através das experiências quotidianas.

Interessante é também verificar que as referências às línguas enquanto objecto de ensino-aprendizagem não são exclusivas da língua estrangeira da escola, o Francês, mas aparecem também associadas às restantes línguas, revelando frequentemente a percepção sonora (real ou apenas pressentida) das línguas catalã, castelhana, italiana e romena e o seu eventual grau de facilidade ou dificuldade de aprendizagem, nomeadamente, do que poderia ser a sua aprendizagem em contexto escolar.

Verifica-se também que a categoria que obtém um maior número de associações é a de língua enquanto objecto sócio-afectivo, de teor predominantemente positivo no caso do Francês, do Italiano e do Espanhol e predominantemente negativo no caso do Catalão e do Romeno, línguas mais desconhecidas, de menor contacto e sobre as quais os alunos pensam possuir menos competências, de acordo com os dados obtidos na primeira parte do questionário.

De um ponto de vista globalizante e algo simplificado, o maior número de palavras relativas ao Espanhol remete para a sua proximidade em relação ao Português: "fácil de compreender", "acessível", "claro", "familiar", "compreensível" e "conhecida". O Francês e o Italiano partilham o estatuto de línguas do romantismo e das emoções, mas o Francês é tido como mais "chique", enquanto que o Italiano é considerado mais "sensual", "sexy" e "sedutor". Já as línguas menos conhecidas provocam uma profusão de termos depreciativos. Assim, o Catalão e o Romeno são consideradas as línguas mais "difíceis" e "incompreensíveis", sendo estas características mais defendidas no caso do romeno, considerado "afastado", "bárbaro", "rude", "estranho", "confuso", "nunca visto", "desagradável" e "desajeitado". Note-se também que apenas estas duas línguas foram consideradas "pouco atraentes".

O quadro 1 mostra as representações que estes aprendentes evidenciam em relação à língua portuguesa.

Categorias¹⁶		O Português é...¹⁷
Léxico		Adeus (2), obrigado (3), saudade (9), fala, bem haja, solidão, só, felizardo, felicidade, óptimo, com muito gosto, bom dia (6), boa tarde, água, tudo/nada, sim/não, amigos (2), hoje, amanhã, depois, então, porquê, talvez, agora, nota-se, fixe, bué, calão, casa, carro, mesa (2), turma, estudantes, cadeira, cão, olá (4), bem vindo (2), tudo bem?, caro, beleza, amor, pai, mãe, dia, noite, família (3)
Objecto de ensino-aprendizagem		Fácil (3), Difícil (20), complicada (8), traiçoeira (3), trabalhosa, gramática, mãe
Objecto sócio-afectivo		Materna (4), bonita (4), tradição, divertida, rica (5), bom, lindo (2), bela (3), variável, única, interessante (4), expressiva (3), sentimental, sóbria, séria, suave, fixe, maravilhosa, completa, cultura, agradável, simpática, romântica, demorada, monótona, rápida, confusa, brusca, grave, País Natal
Objecto de poder		Mundial, forte (3), útil (2), pouco conhecida, não muito falada
Objecto cultural	geografia	Portugal (8), Algarve (3), Lisboa (7), Porto (4), Aveiro (3), Europa, Coimbra
	história	Nação
	personalidades	Fernando Pessoa, Camões
	sociedade	-----
	turismo	Monumentos, paisagens (2), campo, mar (2), praias (2), Belém, sol (2), praias, férias (3), potencial turístico, calor
	manifestações culturais	Fado (7), rancho, futebol, desporto, livros, Expo 98, tradição
	economia	Subdesenvolvimento, pobres (2)
	gastronomia	Comida (2), bacalhau (3), Vinho do Porto (3), cozido à portuguesa (3), boa comida, vinho, sardinha, ovos-moles
Instrumento de construção da relação interpessoal		Comunicável
Instrumento de construção e afirmação de identidades individuais e colectivas		Nossa (4), familiar, identidade
Relação com outras LE		Românica

Quadro 1: representações acerca do Português

¹⁶ As categorias aqui apresentadas estão actualmente em análise no âmbito do projecto "Imagens das línguas na comunicação intercultural: contributos para o desenvolvimento da competência plurilingue". Trata-se de um projecto Sapiens coordenado cientificamente por Maria Helena de Araújo e Sá, atribuído através dos fundos FEDER, no âmbito Eixo 2, Medida 2.3 do Pocti - Programa Operacional "Ciência, Tecnologia, Inovação", do QCA III.

¹⁷ Os números dentro de parêntesis referem-se ao número de vezes que o item foi referido.

De acordo com este quadro, acedemos a uma imagem do Português como língua do "fado" e da "saudade", uma língua considerada "difícil" e "complicada" (um dos estereótipos mais disseminadas acerca do Português e que, na nossa opinião, remete, entre outras coisas, para práticas de ensino e de aprendizagem da LM), mas a propósito da qual se sente uma proximidade mais afectiva: "rica", "maternal", "única", "nossa". O Português parece, então, despertar sentimentos de amor e de "desamor", de atracção e de afastamento, situando-se entre o interesse ao nível sócio-afectivo e a complexidade da língua enquanto objecto de ensino-aprendizagem.

Considerando agora as representações acerca dos locutores romanófonos (Anexo II), retomamos a falta de contacto e de referências em relação aos catalães e aos romenos, como se evidencia, por exemplo, acerca dos últimos, na falta de expressões relacionadas com o perfil linguístico-comunicativo e na incapacidade de os descrever em termos de estilo. Podemos *grosso modo* classificar os Espanhóis, os Franceses e os Italianos em três categorias, elas também estereotipadas, capazes de transmitir as características mais favoráveis: consideram os espanhóis como os mais alegres e divertidos (pensamos que é uma referência ao estereótipo "las fiestas"); os franceses são o símbolo do charme e da boa-educação; e os italianos alimentam os romantismos, são considerados os mais belos, os mais simpáticos e os mais atraentes (são os verdadeiros "machos latinos" do imaginário feminino). Por outro lado, os franceses são os mais visados quando se trata de apontar os traços negativos: são considerados os mais "frios" e os mais "snobs", características que se multiplicam em diferentes adjectivos: "autoritários", "arrogantes", "desagradáveis", "orgulhosos", "afastados", "fechados", "antipáticos" e "com muitas manias". O diminuto número de associações acerca dos catalães remete para o campo semântico da hostilidade: "premeditados", "rudes", "hostis", "terroristas", "agressivos", "revoltados", "autoritários", "teimosos". Os espanhóis são considerados os mais antipáticos e preguiçosos (ecos da "siesta"???) e, por seu lado, os italianos (não as italianas!) são machistas, falsos e vaidosos (alguma inveja devido ao seu sucesso junto do público feminino?).

De referir, com Boguslaw Bierwiazzonek (2003), que os traços supracitados a propósito de competências são geralmente positivos enquanto que a maior parte dos traços negativos estão relacionados com características de teor moral, tal como os valores de referência. Sabemos que estas imagens e representações acerca dos romanófonos, baseadas em contactos mais ou menos directos com eles, embora correspondendo a estereótipos, influenciam o desejo de se relacionar com eles e, então, são fortes indícios de filia e de fobia, sendo construídas sobre modelos pré-adquiridos/pré-estabelecidos através da LM e do sentimento de pertença a um grupo social. Vejamos agora as imagens e estereótipos destes aprendentes em relação aos portugueses:

		Os portugueses são...
Características ¹⁸	Baseadas em competências	Trabalhadores (3), inteligentes (2), sérios (2), excelentes, criativos, musicais, observadores, competitivos, receptivos, versáteis, sabem comer, saber curtir, pouco cultos (2), desorganizados, mandriões (2), não pontuais, passivos, pouco modernos, incompetentes, preguiçosos, atrasados
	Baseadas em traços morais	Independentes, simpáticos (34), acolhedores (20), alegres (2), sociáveis (2), românticos, boas pessoas (4), carinhosos (3), pacifistas, simples, atenciosos, divertidos (6), amigos, Nostálgicos (2), fixes, pacatos, porreiros, extrovertidos, amigáveis (10), festivos, calorosos, hospitaleiros (11), patriotas (2), bons, aventureiros, destemidos, sedutores, corajosos, humildes (2), solidários, amáveis, compreensivos (2), brincalhões, companheiros, à vontade, assíduos, directos, amorosos, interessantes, prestáveis (2), bem dispostos, abertos, caseiros, agradáveis, religiosos, conformados, orgulhosos, complicados, melancólicos (2), mal-educados (2), malandros, machos (2), paradoxais, pessimistas, machistas (2), despreocupados, Zé-Povinho, comilões (5), saudosos, tradicionalistas, materialistas, tristes, abrutalhados, borgas, pouco sorridentes, comodistas, rudes, mesquinhos, pouco patriotas, malucos (2), alcoólicos, desmazelados, grosseiros, vanguardistas
	Sócio-económicas	Pobres
Perfil linguístico-comunicativo		Comunicativos, conversadores, "fala-barato", tagarelas, gritam muito
Impacto visual		Bonitos (6), belos (2), sãos, atléticos, fortes, resistentes, baixinhos (2), latinos, quentes
Outras		Conhecidos

Quadro 2: representações acerca dos portugueses

Estes dados evidenciam indícios de um visão dos portugueses ainda enraizada nos Descobrimentos Marítimos, para o bem ("aventureiros", "destemidos", "fortes", "resistentes", ...) e para o mal ("pouco modernos", "retrógrados", "melancólicos", ...), isto é, a visão de um povo ainda marcado pelo peso da sua história. Associada a esta visão historicizada, encontramos outra, desta vez turística, de Portugal e dos portugueses: estes aparecem sobretudo como "simpáticos", "acolhedores" e "amigáveis". Podemos, deste modo, considerar que estes aprendentes, apesar da sua perspectiva crítica em relação aos portugueses, possuem uma boa imagem do seu povo e, nesse sentido, uma boa auto-imagem. Para além disso, observamos, nas palavras de Boguslaw Bierwiazzonek (2003) a propósito dos auto-estereótipos, que "the favourable components are represented in maximally general terms, eg, responsible, while the unfavourable components are represented in more specific terms (unpunctual)".

Quanto à classificação das LR de acordo com a sua proximidade em relação ao

¹⁸ Esta tabela foi adaptada das categorias apresentadas por B. Bierwiazzonek (2003) e por Ana Raquel Simões (2003).

Português, existe um consenso acerca das línguas mais próxima e mais longínqua: o Espanhol e o Romeno, respectivamente. Os outros lugares não são distribuídos com a mesma certeza: o Catalão aparece frequentemente em segundo lugar, o Italiano em terceiro e o Francês em quarto. Parece-nos que esta classificação tem como base as distâncias objectiva e subjectiva em relação às línguas porque, se é verdade que os aprendentes encaram o Catalão como a segunda língua mais próxima da sua LM, a verdade é que consideram não possuir qualquer competência ou competências reduzidas nessa língua. Por outro lado, as competências que dizem possuir acerca da língua francesa parecem advir do "efeito escolarização" que, como vimos, ultrapassa a confiança que o factor "proximidade linguística" desenvolveu em relação ao Espanhol.

Se considerarmos agora a questão "como pensa que comunicaria por escrito com esses interlocutores, em situação de chat?", retomamos a desconfiança dos aprendentes em relação ao Catalão e ao Romeno: a maioria responde, de acordo com a escala apresentada, "muito mal" (existem mesmo os que afirmam que a comunicação seria impossível) e aponta, como estratégias de comunicação, o recurso a uma outra língua, um língua partilhada - o Inglês - ou uma língua mais próxima (por exemplo, o Espanhol ou o Português como línguas de comunicação com os catalães). Estes resultados mostram que os aprendentes confiam pouco nas possibilidades de intercompreensão quando a distância entre as línguas e os seus locutores lhes parece maior. Pelo contrário, parecem dispostos ao contacto linguístico-comunicativo em LR quando essa distância diminui e, neste caso, dispõem-se mesmo a misturar diversas LR (na maior parte dos casos, o Português, o Francês e o Espanhol), ou estas com o Inglês.

De acordo com estes resultados, podemos dizer que os estereótipos apresentados são, simultaneamente, o resultado das ideias presentes na sociedade portuguesa e um meio de as disseminar, isto porque, por exemplo, "les notions de 'valeur' ou de 'prestige' relèvent autant de représentations que des réalités, mais que ces représentations nourrissent les réalités, les renforcent" (CALVET; 1999: 11). Além disso, "les représentations déterminent les pratiques et ont une influence sur les réalités" (idem): pudemos constatar que os estereótipos e as representações acerca das línguas objecto deste estudo influenciam as predisposições dos aprendentes em relação à aprendizagem de algumas LR e ao contacto linguístico com elas, assim como as suas representações a propósito das competências possuídas/desenvolvidas. Isto é tanto mais verdade se lembrarmos que os estereótipos acerca do Italiano parecem evidenciar uma predisposição para o contacto com os seus interlocutores e um desejo de aprender essa língua (repare-se nos dados acerca dos projectos linguísticos dos estudantes). Neste sentido, torna-se bastante importante definir a natureza, a dinâmica e a influência das imagens e das representações, das distâncias e das proximidades (objectivas e subjectivas) no

contacto formal e informal com as LR, ou na predisposição para ele, no caso deste estudo, com as LR.

Síntese dos resultados: "Romanofilia?? Sim, mas..."

Os resultados obtidos apontam para o desequilíbrio entre o que conhecemos e o que não conhecemos, entre o que compreendemos e o (aparentemente) incompreensível. Parece-nos, pois, que os movimentos de afastamento em relação a algumas LR, às suas culturas e aos seus locutores (falamos claramente do Catalão e do Romeno) são o resultado do desconhecimento evidenciado ao longo deste estudo e, por isso, da incompreensão do seu carácter mais "estranho" e mais "estrangeiro". Este facto parece-nos explicável através de razões de ordem histórica e política (mais do que económica): o estatuto de língua e comunidade minoritária e, por isso, menos "prestigiosa", no caso do Catalão; o estatuto de língua e comunidade saída da União Soviética, considerada "fora da Europa", de carácter ambíguo e, por isso, difícil de determinar e de compreender, no caso do Romeno. Por outro lado, compreendemos que os percursos escolares linguísticos dos aprendentes são em tudo parecidos, tal como as situações e os objectivos de contacto com as LE: isso permitir-nos-á explicar também o carácter quase homogéneo das representações e dos estereótipos recolhidos. Na verdade, pensamos que uma diversificação de experiências, escolares e extra-escolares, com estas línguas e povos pode favorecer a diversificação das imagens aqui diagnosticadas e a relativização/desconstrução dos estereótipos evidenciados.

Ora, consideramos que é necessário conhecer e compreender as diferenças para as aceitar e que só se ama aquilo que se conhece (ou que se julga conhecer). Com efeito, se é verdade que a maioria de alusões às línguas, culturas e locutores italo-fónos, por exemplo, correspondem apenas a estereótipos, representações (à falta de um contacto directo) e esquematizações mais ou menos ingénuas, também é verdade que o seu carácter favorável propicia um movimento de aproximação em relação à italo-fonia (entendida aqui como língua e cultura italianas), pouco presente na sociedade portuguesa mas favoravelmente representada (recordamos aqui o peso dos media na construção de uma imagem positiva da Itália e do seu modo de vida). Assim, expressamos, com AMOSSI & HERSHBERG PIERROT, a convicção de que "dans la société contemporaine, les constructions imaginaires dont l'adéquation au réel est douteuse sinon inexistante sont favorisées par les médias, la presse et la littérature de masse. Souvent le public se forge par la télévision ou la publicité une idée d'un groupe national avec lequel il n'a aucun contact" (1997: 37).

Para além disso, dispomos, em Portugal, de raras ocasiões de contacto com as línguas romena e catalã (não existem, a título de exemplo, canais nestas línguas nos serviços de

televisão por cabo), o que aumenta a distância em relação a elas, assim como o sentimento de se tratarem de línguas inúteis e longínquas, aumentando a centração e atracção pelas restantes línguas. De acordo com o nosso ponto de vista, o empobrecimento das experiências linguísticas, quer do ponto de vista da frequência, quer da homogeneidade, conduziu os aprendentes a uma visão estereotipada e esquematizada das LR, dos seus locutores e das suas culturas. Conduziu a fobias e a filias.

Pensamos que um estudo como o que aqui apresentámos aponta para a necessidade de desenvolver um trabalho com as línguas que permita, por um lado, a consciencialização das imagens acerca delas e, por outro, a compreensão de como essas imagens interferem e influenciam a aproximação ou afastamento dos sujeitos em relação às línguas e à (inter) comunicação e, concomitantemente, o seu comprometimento na construção da intercompreensão e de episódios felizes de comunicação intercultural.

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Anexos

Anexo I: Representações sobre as línguas românicas¹⁹

Categorias	Línguas				
	Catalão	Castelhano	Francês	Italiano	Romeno
Léxico	-----	Bueno, Bienvenidos, Buenos dias, Perro, Coche, Pasta, Vale, cariño, hola (2), buenas noches, hermanos, olvidar, gracias (3), mariposa, guapa/o (7), muy, bueno (2), muchacho, hombre, chico, olé (2), si, y (2), chico (3), padre, mi dio, nuestros hermanos, hablo, muy bueno, poquito	Merci (8), bonjour (16), langage, salut (7), fille, Sophie, tu es, mère, père, garçon, joli (2), bonsoir, langue, parole, vie, bonne, "déjà vu" (3), soir, mercredi, rouge, amour (2), au revoir (8), adieu, "la vie en rose", ça va (4), ballet, oui/non (2), je, pourquoi, comment tu t'appelles, glamour, arrete, oui, chien (2), très (3), aussi, voiture, soleil, plage, de rien, beauté, jour, comment, réveillon, chat, je t'aime, apétit, coeur, poche, aujourd'hui, moi, table, chaise, mon dieu, mon amour,	Ragazza (13), principessa (2), ciao (8), arrivederci (2), lunedì, per favore, amore, pasta, bambino (7), baccio, vita, pizza (6), bellissimo (2), bonjorno (2), bravo, parlato, sei, cosa nostra, per qué? (2), piccolo (2), corso, capische, arrivata, questa, mio, vero, maré, nona, calcio, bene, prego, grazzie, che sara?,	-----
Objecto de ensino-aprendizagem	Fácil, difícil (4), compreensível, incompreensível, complicada (4), -és, -i	Pronúncia, fácil de entender (5), clareza, fácil (3), sonora, compreensível, complicada (2), difícil,	Acentuada, fácil (3), compreensível (2), sonora, verbos, difícil, nasal, complicada (2)	Fácil (4), sonora (3), percebe-se bem, muito complicada (2),	Complicada (14), difícil (6), incompreensível (3),

¹⁹ Foi mantida a ortografia utilizada pelos aprendentes inquiridos.

Objecto sócio-afectivo	Cantante, interessante (2), bonita (2), feia, rápida, fria, esquisita (5), stressante, cansativa, rude, desinteressante, agressiva, enrolada, chata, monótona, não muito cuidada, pouco atraente, interrogação, diferente	Linda (2), viva, interessante (3), alegre, bonita (2), engraçada, gira, harmonia, conhecida, quente, feia (4), fria (2), rápida (15), desinteressante (2), confusa (2), enrolada (2), mal falada, irritante, estranha, chata, monótona, pouco interessante, desordenada	Romântica (10), rimática, meiga, cantada, bonita (9), calma, alegre, sensual, suave, melodiosa (2), amor, harmoniosa (2), elegante, agradável, charmosa, interessante (2), completa, não gosto, irritante, pirosa, rápida (4), horrível, pouco bonita, rude, feia, chata,	Romântica (19), bela (7), bonita, emotiva, interessante (8), cantada (3), alegre (3), sensual (3), agradável, meiga, sexy (2), sedutora, cativante (2), engraçada, viva, colorida, dócil, completa, chamativa, amor, na boa, harmoniosa, engraçada (3), musicalidade, diferente, suave, agradável, cômica, brincalhona, lua de mel, peculiar, rápida (2), esquisita, chata, incompleta, desinteressante	Interessante (4), emotiva, diferente, misteriosa, esquisita (7), fria, distante, bárbara, rude, estranha, ruptura, confusa (4), atrapalhada, nunca visto, desagradável, desinteressante, pouco atraente
Objecto de poder	Desconhecida, forte	Muito falada, acessível, mundial, útil, pouco falada,	Conquistadora singular, útil (4), forte, conhecida, acessível, importante		Desconhecida (4), pouco falada (2).

Objecto cultural	geo	Barcelona (8), Norte, Espanha (8), Região, Catalunha (4), bascos, Castela, castelhanos,	Santiago, Espanha (13), Península (3), Tejo, Barcelona (5), Madrid (5), Benidorm, Oviedo, Valência, Galiza, América do Sul	Paris (14), França (7), Europa	Roma (8), Veneza (2), Milão, Itália (2), Praga, bota	Rússia (3), Leste (4), Roménia (4)
	hist	História, conquista, ETA, Terrorismo, Território autónomo	ETA, rei, reinado	Bastille	Máfia (2), história,	História
	per	Figo		Zidane	Cícero, Papa (2), Maximiliano,	Nicolae, Boloni, Kostadinov, Balakov, Iordanov
	soc	Popular,	Popular, ciganos	Chic, altiva, snobs, vaidade	-----	Estrangeiros, bêbedos, Zé-Ninguém
	tur	férias	Praias, férias, sol, viagens	Tour Eiffel (11), neve, museus, Disneyland, Champs Elisées (2), viajar, Louvre, Arco do Triunfo	Torre de Pisa (2)	frio
	man cult	Futebol (2)	Merengue (2), Sevilhanas, Touradas (5), Dança, Música, Futebol (2), Real Madrid, Castanholas	Acordeão,	Cultura, arte, pintores, futebol	Futebol, folklore, vampiros
	eco		Peseta (2)	Moda (2), TGV, perfumes, Lancôme	Pesca, moda (4), Lira	Pobreza (3), emigrantes,
	gast		Paella (2)	Champagne, baguette (2), croissant (2), fromage (2),	Spaghetti (6), pasta (9), Pizza (22), lasagna (3), comida, panettoni,	-----
Instrumento de construção da relação interpessoal				Expressiva, gestualização muitos gestos	embaraçadora	
Objecto ético e político	Independente					
Relação com outras línguas	Latim, Espanhol, parecido com o Espanhol, dialecto,	Parecido com o Italiano, vizinha, familiar, diferente,	Parecido com o português, familiar	Familiar	Parecida com o Português, foneticamente parecida com o Latim.	

Anexo II: Representações acerca dos falantes de LR

		Os catalães são...
Características	Baseadas em competências	Bons futebolistas, trabalhadores (2), metódicos, rápidos (2), empreendedores, interessantes
	Baseadas em traços psicológicos e morais	Independentes, simpáticos (5), bem-dispostos, amigos, valentes, porreiros, diferentes, gosto, vizinhos, sérios, honestos, independentistas, divertidos, amigáveis, acolhedores, patrióticos, frios (3), antipáticos (4), convencidos (2), calculistas (3), orgulhosos, esquisitos (3), rudes (2), insensíveis, hostis, terroristas, desconhecidos (2), histéricos, confusos (2), provincianos, agressivos, chatos, revoltados, ferrenhos, poucos, indiferentes (2), egoístas, prepotentes, autoritários, mesquinhos, estúpidos, anormais, forretas
	Sócio-económicas	
Perfil linguístico-comunicativo		Comunicativos, conversadores
Impacto visual		Fortes, morenos, altos
Outras		Antiquados

		Os espanhóis são...
Características	Baseadas em competências	Ordenados, trabalhadores (3), metódicos, inteligentes (2), artísticos, despachados, rápidos (6), empreendedores, bons dançarinos, desenrascados, maus falantes de LEs, preguiçosos(5), apressados,
	Baseadas em traços psicológicos e morais	Vivos (3), ricos (2), emotivos, divertidos (11), alegres (11), correctos, nuestros hermanos (4), atenciosos, festeiros (4), simpáticos (16), espontâneos, porreiros, amigos (3), valentes, firmes, corajosos, vizinhos, impulsivos, vivaços, bons (2), engraçados (2), acolhedores, brincalhões, humorados, extrovertidos, sociáveis, solidários, interessantes, calorosos, amistosos, objectivos, controversos, adeptos de futebol, noctívagos, tradicionais, antipáticos (9), frios (2), mimados, egocêntricos (2), invejosos, manientos, egoístas, rudes (2), autoritários (2), estúpidos, nacionalistas (2), arrogantes, malucos, antipáticos, atrevidos, desconfiados, exagerados, infiéis, interesseiros, bêbedos, agressivos (2), vaidosos, orgulhosos, confusos, irrequietos, estranhos, esquisitos (2)
	Sócio-económicas	
Perfil linguístico-comunicativo		Comunicativos, faladores (3), fala barato (2), gritam alto
Impacto visual		guapos, bonitos, lindos (2), olhos escuros, feios, bom gosto, excêntricos, sedutores, charmosos, sensuais
Outras		

		Os franceses são...
Características	Baseadas em competências	Cultos (6), inteligentes (3), ordenados, com genica, artistas, rápidos, trabalhadores (4), modernos, responsáveis, musicais, bons no teatro, criativos, pragmáticos (2), formais, inovadores, astutos, diplomatas
	Baseadas em traços psicológicos e morais	Românticos (8), respeitadores, correctos, gentis (2), meigos, bondosos, interessantes, simpáticos (7), amigos, calmos, hospitaleiros, normais, reservados, educados (4), porreiros (2), doces, delicados, bons (2), sérios, simples, divertidos (2), extrovertidos, conquistadores, apreciadores, honestos, complicados, rudes, frios (7), snobs (6), distraídos, autoritários, vaidosos (6), invejosos, manientos, arrogantes (2), desconfiados, convencidos (2), complexos, labregos, desagradáveis, comem mal, porcos, chatos, pessimistas, ambiciosos, despreocupados, altivos, melancólicos, hipócritas, egocêntricos, pouco sociáveis, orgulhosos, rígidos, altivos, gananciosos, malucos, tarados, pouco amistosos, não muito calorosos, apressados, distantes, xenófobos, enrolados, indiferentes (2), estranhos, antipáticos, fechados, introvertidos
	Sócio-económicas	Económicos, pobres
Perfil linguístico-comunicativo		Sotaque giro, comunicativos
Impacto visual		Bonitos (4), loiros, jeitosos, altos, pequenos, pálidos, magros, elegantes (3), bem vestidos (2), chiques (3), bom gosto, estilosos, de gosto duvidoso, parolos, pirosos, charmosos (2), sensuais, maricas,
Outras		história interessante

		Os italianos são...
Características	Baseadas em competências	Inteligentes, cultos (4), trabalhadores (3), comem bem (3), rápidos, criativos, cantores, bons cozinheiros, bons artistas, práticos, músicos (2)
	Baseadas em traços psicológicos e morais	Românticos (15), alegres (5), emotivos, acolhedores (3), simpáticos (27), cavalheiros, engraçados (4), alegres (3), festivos, doces, espontâneos, simples, meigos, educados (2), vivos, acolhedores, calorosos (3), porreiros, atiradiços, gentis, interessantes (3), desinibidos, calmos, na boa, sociáveis (2), comilões, divertidos (3), religiosos (2), diferentes, machos latinos (2), encantadores (2), prestáveis, bem dispostos, amistosos, racistas, antipáticos, machistas, fúteis, engatões, falsos, ganhões, convencidos, exigentes, confusos, vaidosos, mafiosos, mulherengos, metediços, impulsivos
	Sócio-económicas	
Perfil linguístico-comunicativo		Faladores, comunicativos, muitos gestos, falam rápido
Impacto visual		Bonitos (12), boas (3), lindos (18), jeitosos, fortes, saudáveis, chiques, estilo, extravagantes, sofisticados, sapatos caros, sedutores (3), charmosos (12), atraentes (5), sensuais (3), latinos (2)
Outras		

		Os romenos são...
Características	Baseadas em competências	Trabalhadores (9), organizados, boas pessoas, humildes (2), aprendem Português com facilidade, inteligentes, bons futebolistas, pouco cultos
	Baseadas em traços psicológicos e morais	Simpáticos, aberto, interessantes, educados, hospitaleiros, simples, amáveis, interessados, corajosos, francos, reservados, calmos, aprazíveis, patriotas, interessantes (2), frios (2), desconfiados, desconhecidos (2), distantes, esquisitos (3), melancólicos, bêbedos, snobs, rudes, antipáticos, egoístas, indiferentes (2), tristes, desagradáveis, sem interesse
	Sócio-económicas	Pobres (3), sub-desenvolvidos, ganham pouco
Perfil linguístico-comunicativo		
Impacto visual		Fortes, loiros (4), altos (3), pouco bonitos, feios
Outras		

From the personal linguistic and communicative history to a language teaching theory: a study on future language teachers.

Ana Sofia PINHO - anapinho@dte.ua.pt

Ana Isabel ANDRADE - aisabel@dte.ua.pt

Support: *Programa Operacional Ciência, Tecnologia e Inovação (POCTI) do Quadro Comunitário de Apoio III*

Introduction

LALE - Open Laboratory for Foreign Language Learning is a structure of the Department of Didactics and Educational Technology of the University of Aveiro, Portugal. One of its research lines, *Conception and Analysis of Teacher Education Programmes*, aims to conceive, implement and evaluate modules of language teacher education focused on intercomprehension and interaction in language contexts.

Within this context a project entitled *Intercomprehension in Initial Teacher Education Contexts: a Study on Language Teachers' Practices and Interactions*²⁰ was conceived, which aims to understand the contribution of *intercomprehension* to the construction of the professional identity of future language teachers.

A main theoretical assumption is the importance to consider the personal dimension of being teacher in order to understand the value teachers give to intercomprehension within languages education. Thus, we will give a picture of eight future language teachers' personal linguistic and communicative history, in our opinion, the building block of a language teaching theory.

A Project based on the notion of Intercomprehension: assumptions

A plurilingual approach in language teaching brings new challenges and demands for language teachers, who can no longer be engaged in traditional teaching methodologies, and

²⁰ PhD project of Ana Sofia Pinho, coordinated by Professor Ana Isabel Andrade. Financing: Programa Operacional Ciência, Tecnologia, Inovação (POCTI) do Quadro Comunitário de Apoio III.

above all are expected to develop a new mentality and way of facing language education. In the context of our project, the teacher of languages has been understood as a **languages educator**, one that is sensitive to plurilingual and intercultural issues and is engaged in *“helping young people to establish appropriate relationships with Others”* (Byram & Zarate, 1995: 7). This means facing the language teacher as a global teacher or educator, with a global educational competence, once *“the reflective global teacher [...] has a clear sense of the ends of education, ends which have social and moral implications”* (Steiner, 1996b: 22).

It is important that language teachers understand the role of languages in the construction of spaces of understanding and in the solving of cultural and political conflicts and misunderstandings, that is, to have a clear sense of languages as an individual, social and political value. From this perspective, being a languages teacher implies to adhere to certain political and social-linguistic principles, to critically enact those principles in his/her professional practice and educational actions, and to feel attached to global communication and relational concerns. We consider this way the teacher will be able to more easily answer to the needs and demands of the social context s/he lives in, i.e., to endorse an education for citizenship, by promoting values of acceptance, tolerance, respect, and a curiosity for all cultures, languages and peoples (Byram & Zarate, 1995). As Willems accentuates, the *“teacher should develop a global frame of mind”, “characterised by an awareness of the importance of responsible and competent intercultural communication and of preparing learners for it”* (2002: 18).

In this sense, we see the languages educator as a **curriculum planner**, someone that has the responsibility to construct a curriculum in languages that meets the demands and ends of languages teaching, where the collaborative and interdisciplinary work should be a reality (Roldão, 2000). In the words of Willems, *“Teachers will have to be educated to be real professionals, who do not slavishly follow what others have designed for them, but are able to anticipate their learners’ needs and professionally cater for them”* (2002: 13).

It is in this context that **intercomprehension** acquires a significant importance, as the work for

[...] intercomprehension may provide a solution for intercultural encounters between speakers of different languages, demanding of language teachers (mother tongue and foreign languages) collaborative work to develop in learners a broader communicative competence. This competence will enable participation in a process of construction of a [...] world more open to dialogue and more respectful of different forms of expression and of culture (Andrade & Moreira, eds.2002).

In our opinion, a teacher with didactic knowledge on intercomprehension will be more able to develop a flexible language curriculum management (Roldão, 2000), where all

languages and cultures are valued, thus transforming the language classroom into a space of intercultural encounter and developing a positive global view of the diversity. Moreover, that teacher will be more conscious of the linguistic and communicative diversity, both at social and individual levels, as well as more capable of exploiting that diversity in concrete didactic situations, in order to develop the learners' global communicative competence, which is expected to be plurilingual and intercultural (Trim, 1997).

Taking into consideration what we have stated above, we believe one can affirm that the linguistic and communicative *curriculum* a teacher is able to construct is strongly dependent on the teacher's personal language learning and teaching theory. In fact, as Nóvoa states, "*The way each one of us teaches is directly dependent on what we are as person when we teach*" (1992: 17, our translation). This emphasizes the centrality of the *self* in the process of knowledge construction, and thus implies considering the teacher as an active constructor of his/her own professional identity.

As our main concern is to understand the meaning eight future language teachers – (two languages' combinations within the teacher education degree courses of the University of Aveiro, i.e. Portuguese/French and Portuguese/English) give to intercomprehension in the construction of their professional identity, we believe we could not reach our purpose, if we did not consider the future teachers' personal linguistic and communicative history, more specifically, their attitudes and beliefs towards languages, cultures and communication situations.

The Importance of the Personal Linguistic and Communicative History

In the last years, studies on teacher education have given a great importance to the personal dimension within the construction of the professional identity. As Jennifer Nias says: "The teacher is a person; and an important part of the person is the teacher" (cited in Nóvoa, 1992a: 7, our translation). Becoming a languages educator implies a personal awareness of the topics mentioned before, and a personal effort and motivation to perform that role. It is a matter of attitude and positioning towards teaching and the role of the languages teacher within a complex, plural and diverse global society. One should not forget that the choices we make when teaching are not independent from our thinking, our experiences, and our identity as persons and as professionals. In other words, "*Teachers are not just professionals but also human beings with their own experiences and histories through which they have acquired prejudices and stereotypes about other cultures and peoples just like any other human being*" (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey, 2002: 35). Thus we should not forget that the personal educational choices are not separate from the teacher's individuality, i.e., from the teacher's

representations and attitudes, which shape teaching strategies and decisions, and consequently learning processes (Castellotti & Moore, 2002: 21).

This accentuates the importance of the personal linguistic and communicative history to the development of a language teaching theory²¹. Thus, the work within the language classroom is the mirror of the teacher's conception of language teaching and its educational purposes, which is informed by the teacher's linguistic and communicative experiences and repertoire. As Kelchtermans accentuates, "*we assume that the professional [and personal life] experiences of teachers result in a sense of self and a subjective educational theory*" (1993: 199). In other words, the teaching of languages is idiosyncratic, as well as the work with intercomprehension, as "*it depends on the knowledge the teacher as speaker has built and still builds about the way language works in general, on what the teacher knows about the languages, on what s/he considers education in languages is, and of the linguistic and communicative work s/he is able to fulfil*" (Pinho & Andrade, in press, our translation).

Moreover, we should not forget that the curriculum contributes to the construction of certain social identities. As Moreira & Macedo affirm, "*One can say that the curricular theorization proposes ways of selection and of organization of learning experiences, in which knowledge is taught and learnt, in order to produce certain social and cultural identities*" (2002: 8, our translation). Bearing this in mind, we believe the understanding of the linguistic ideologies of future language teachers will enable us to realize their commitment to a broader education in languages, and to understand the value they give to intercomprehension within a more creative work as language educators and curriculum planners.

The Voice of Future Language Teachers

In the context of our project, we seek to understand the relationship between the personal linguistic and communicative history of the future language teachers and the emergence of a personal language teaching theory that may leave room to a creative work with intercomprehension. We will focus our interest on the discourse of the future teachers, once that to have into account the future language teachers' discourse is to consider their individuality, their thought, their time-situated subjective constructions, which inform their actions and attitudes (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Thus, we tried to understand the future teachers' teaching theory from an evolutional and constructivist perspective.

We centred our analysis in the experiences and reflections present in the future teachers' *learning journals* (LJ), written during the attendance at two disciplines of Curricular

²¹ This relationship has been established by a member of Project ILTE (team of UK) Cathy Pumphrey.

Didactics (Education in Languages and Foreign Languages Didactics) of the Languages Degree Courses of our University, during the school year 2001/2002; their personal opinions given in a *questionnaire* (Q) and in an *interview* (I), both made at the beginning of the future teachers' Pedagogical Practice, i.e. October 2002.

The content analysis essentially consisted in identifying main categories as they emerged from our reading the data, a reading that was clarified by already acquired theoretical knowledge, which allowed us to have some initial, but not definite, understanding of the future language teachers' teaching theory.

Our analysis allows us to perceive that our future language teachers show **willingness and pleasure to contact with other languages and cultures**. This attitude is a result of the intercultural encounters they have had, of personal and affective reasons, of an effort to dialogue in the language of the other and create proximity, of an interest in the language itself, or of its prestige. Telling about a journey, Teresa says: *"I had never been with so many people of different origins, and I believe that was what impressed me the most. met an Indian boy, and we are friends now. [...] This journey made me curious about India; it must be a country full of interesting things. I also became more attentive to the people that surrounded me"*(LJ).

They consider themselves open communicators, which make an effort to create understanding – *"I think I am a communicator with a great spirit of openness"* (Rosa – Q); *"Someone that does not give up towards linguistic and cultural incomprehension"* (Estrela – Q). Yet, they seem conscious of their limitations as speakers of languages, as they say, *"I cannot say that I am a competent communicator, but I try to give my best"* (Cláudia – Q). Our future teachers demonstrate that intercultural experiences are also characterised by feelings such as concern, anxiety, or shame, which they identify as obstacles to the success of communication. However, they recognise that the regularity of these encounters has developed the confidence and easiness necessary to make them feel more fulfilled.

Some of them demonstrate somewhat negative stereotyped views towards certain cultures. They appear to be conscious of that, and understand it to be an obstacle to create community with the Other. They recognise that the direct contact with the culture seems to fight back those preconceptions, and to give way to attitudes of understanding: *"We have to be careful with prejudices against and with preconceptions about others. I had never gone to Germany and I really didn't like that country, without ever knowing it, its language or any other thing. I took it for granted that I didn't like it and that was it... and I think that we have to be careful about our groundless opinions"* (Sílvia – I).

The future teachers are **aware of the role of languages and cultures in the world**. They value languages beyond their functional-pragmatic function, and are aware of the languages as a personal and national identity: – *“Language almost reveals a people’s character. It is the reflex of a history, of a set of events that have determinately influenced the existence of a people. Thus, when we speak of language, we also speak of culture. [...] To sum up, language is inseparable of culture; it is the expression of feeling, of will and of a people’s identity”* (Cláudia – LJ); *“...language is the vehicle of the history of a nation”* (Joana – LJ). Our future teachers reveal to understand languages as a means of expressing our inner feelings, our emotions and sensations, as well as a means of getting to know us: *“To know a language goes beyond the mastery of the grammar, as knowing it [language] is knowing ourselves, our routes and the limits of our knowledge of the world, [...] to understand the importance of the language, as a mirror of our past, present and, in some cases, future”* (Joana – LJ).

Languages are also identified as a means of constructing and apprehending reality, *“... it is through language that we get acquainted with what happens around us, in relation to either the society we live in, or what happens in the world, which is intimately related to the need to have a closeness towards the other. In this sense, it is this living with the other, and with everything that surrounds us, that will enable us to get to the Language itself”* (Estrela – LJ). The student teachers disclose that languages are a means of knowing other people, of interacting with them and of better knowing their cultures and ways of being: *“Language translates a way of knowing, being, thinking of a people, their habits and traditions”, “... we are not all equal and language is one of the characteristics that distinguishes us from each other”* (Joana – LJ).

The future teachers value the capacity of *being other* in communication, as a way to understand the others’ perspectives. Thus, languages are seen as important enhancing factors of tolerance and acceptance towards Otherness: *“...it is in this sense that it becomes imperative the knowledge of foreign languages, once that it [...] makes of us enriched persons, more conscious and capable of understanding the diversity and the heterogeneity not as a barrier or wall that sets us apart, but as something to which we also belong (and that positively characterises our planet)”*; *“the learning of foreign languages should be directed to a much more ambitious purpose: the understanding of the dimension of the Other”* (Ana – LJ), as this way the individual constructs and understands him/herself better.

The future teachers value the linguistic and cultural diversity and understand the importance of preserving it. Though they reflect upon the importance of existing a *lingua franca*, they are also aware of the implications and threats that may bring about, namely, the undervaluing of other languages or even their death. This way, they affirm that the domain of a

single language would impoverish communication, and would produce the loss of cultural, linguistic, social, personal aspects in intercultural encounters. As Joana (LJ) points out: *“The sensitisation to the linguistic and cultural diversity is an unavoidable need, as without it we cannot survive in a society that promotes the contact between cultures, traditions and ways of life completely different from one another”*.

They realize the relevance of knowing languages in the promotion of understanding and cooperation in intercultural encounters: *“After a century of so much violence, as the 20th Century, there seems to be now an urgent need of understanding ourselves. Here is the main question, in the UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN PEOPLES, or as we would didactically say, in the INTERCOMPREHENSION. But how is this intercomprehension promoted? It is clear that behind all this there are simply economic and political interests, but for that to come true, there will have to be an open and tolerant understanding, by respecting the other with the legitimacy of wishing that very same respect to ourselves”* (Cláudia – LJ).

Final Comments

The future teachers' discourse illustrates the dynamics of the construction of a personal languages learning and teaching theory. We could find some hints that allow us to affirm that, in general, these teachers seem to show a more open conception of the role of the languages teacher. They appear to realise that teaching languages is teaching communication: *“As I am going deeply into the **question of the linguistic and cultural intercomprehension**, I begin to realise that it will not be easy to be a languages teacher. [...] If we look at our schools, we clearly perceive the heterogeneity inside the classroom. [...] The process of learning and teaching, as it seems, will become more delicate. In order to answer to the demand of educating the intercultural communicator, the languages teacher should embark on **interdisciplinarity**. To demonstrate that **all languages are necessarily connected**, [...]; to **promote an environment of interaction between languages**”* (Cláudia – LJ, our bold).

In general, the future teachers appear to have a commitment to an education for a global citizenship, and indicate a predisposition to develop a more creative work as language teachers. The linguistic and communicative history of the future languages teachers allows us to affirm that they seem to be prepared to didactically work for intercomprehension, as they recognise the political, social and individual value of it. Thus, we consider important to understand how these future teachers are able to incorporate in their teaching practice the intercomprehension principles their discourse illustrates.

As a final point, it seems important to reflect upon how language teacher education contexts can sustain this willingness to develop a didactic work for intercomprehension, i.e. how to prepare future language teachers to be active agents of their own development as global teachers and language educators. In Nóvoa's words, "The construction of identities is always a complex process, through which each one gets hold of the meaning of his/her personal and professional history (Diamond, 1991). It is a process that requires *time*. A time to reconstruct identities, to accommodate innovations, and to assimilate changes" (1992b: 16, our translation).

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Verbal interaction in the language classroom: communicating to shape characters and choices

Teresa CARDOSO - tcardoso@dte.ua.pt

Isabel ALARCÃO - ialarcao@dte.ua.pt

Support: *Programa Operacional Ciência, Tecnologia e Inovação (POCTI) do Quadro Comunitário de Apoio III*

Introduction

Communication is a highly important issue in the global world we live in today. Therefore, it is not surprising that so much work is dedicated to it. In our case, we are interested in finding out more about one specific area of communication: verbal interaction in the classroom. Indeed, this theme has been a line of research at the University of Aveiro (Portugal), namely at the Department of Didactics and Educational Technology. Moreover, a research project is currently being undertaken, entitled *Verbal Interaction in Languages Didactics: meta-analysis of the studies developed in Portugal between 1982 and 2002 – contributions for the learning of languages and teacher education*²², which is included in LALE's (Laboratório Aberto para a Aprendizagem de Línguas Estrangeiras / Open Laboratory for Foreign Language Learning) fourth research line: Conception and Analysis of Teacher Education Programmes.

Verbal interaction in languages

The research project

Within the Languages Didactics' framework, verbal interaction has often been selected as an object of study, especially in academic settings. However, we feel that, in the Portuguese context, this knowledge remains diffuse and confined to its productive source. Actually, so far, we have only encountered one example of a master thesis in which the starting point was a suggestion from a previous academic work. And this was achieved within the same School, that

²² Teresa Cardoso's PhD project, supervised by Professor Dr. Isabel Alarcão.

is within the same line of knowledge and thought.

So, a “lack of theorization, systematisation and dissemination effort” (Nóvoa, 2002: 12) subsists. “On manque de mots, de représentations partagées” (Perrenoud, 2002: 219). We lack a common background: “language, concepts, and ... a minimum number of guidelines for research” (Nóvoa, 2002: 257). Our ambition is to contribute for the narrowing of this gap, to which many other authors refer to, and, thus, our research project objectives are:

- to synthesise meta-analytically the knowledge produced in the Portuguese studies, as far as verbal interaction in the didactical context of languages classroom is concerned;
- to relate it to the knowledge produced in the same field at the international level;
- to analyse and correlate the suggestions that emerge from these studies, and which are important to the further development of the didactical theory and practice;
- to disseminate the scientific contributions to this area of knowledge.

In a word, we intend to analyse the knowledge applicability and transferability, which means to take into account the three poles of the didactical action – the professional, the curricular and the investigative dimensions, i.e. what Alarcão (1997) has called “the didactical triptych” –, as well as to answer to the “*teleological question*, that is, the relationship between the researcher and the use to be given to the generated knowledge or the answers to the questions ‘what and who is it for?’” (Alarcão, 2001: 137).

Since one is confronted with the need to find “ways of cutting the real” (Moore, 1993), we have set as our temporal boundaries 1982 – from this year on, didactics, our reference point, has been recognized as an autonomous discipline in Portugal, becoming, thus, a PhD research area, at the Portuguese universities (cf. Alarcão, 1997) – and 2002 – the year our project set off.

Our corpus, the result of several library and Internet searches, as well as other personal and institutional contacts, comprises two PhD theses, eleven master theses and a number of publications. All these elements are being subjected to an analysis grid we created, which consists of ten categories – 1. Identification of the study; 2. Motivations for the study; 3. Object of study; 4. Objectives; 5. Assumptions; 6. Main theoretical frameworks; 7. Interconnected theoretical frameworks²³; 8. Methodology; 9. Contributions for the knowledge construction; 10. Rapport to didactics. Some of these categories are further divided into subcategories.

Focusing now our attention on methodology, we are implementing a documental analysis on

²³ The importance of this category is corroborated, for instance, by the following quote: “the didactical look is compulsorily interdisciplinary, instigating a ‘non-hierarchical relation with other disciplines, establishing itself in the fact of being transversal’ (Andrade & Araújo e Sá, 1989: 133), with an interface dimension, integrating the knowledge produced in other fields (Alarcão, 1991a: 306), but capable of answering essentially didactical questions, that is, related with the process of teaching and learning of a given subject matter” (Andrade, 1997: 9).

the developed studies, which is being systematized by the definition of the above-mentioned categories and the interconnection of themes. Eventually, this methodology will be complemented with a content analysis of the authors' interviews, in an attempt to improve the interpretation of their didactical conceptions and justifications. Methodologically speaking, then, "the perspective, today, is already dramatically different. Without being rigorous, the objectivity is more subjective, the measurability, the measure is less quantitative and more qualitative and, therefore, the methods will have to adjust to this reality, that is, they will have to be mixed or of multiple approach. In other words, they get closer to a conception that seems to fit better to the complex reality of the individuals, the objects, the relationships and the events, in a spiral quantitative and qualitatively movement" (Tavares & Brzezinki, 1999: 25). Bearing in mind two other significant facts – the composite nature of the theme (verbal interaction in the language classroom), and its contributions from other fields – our study adopts a trans-disciplinary approach.

Contributions for the language education

Verbal interaction, a broad area of study, like communication, has been studied from different points of view; as it has been stated, our perspective is that of languages didactics. In this context, and especially in that of languages classroom, verbal interaction aims at the co-construction of identity, experiences, knowledge, and meanings, through oral or written exchanges that organize the pedagogical communication according to rules, routines and rituals, shared and accepted by the engaged social actors (students and teachers). It also reveals the students' learning path, as well as the teachers' strategies to achieve their aims. Hence, it is fundamental as a language observation and experimentation ground, and also as a conceptualising factor of what it means to know, to teach and to learn a language.

Yet, it is interesting to find that none of the seven studies analysed so far²⁴ advances a definition of their key concept. In fact, for the majority of them, verbal interaction is indeed the object of study; for the rest²⁵ (including some of the studies still to be analysed in detail), verbal interaction is a helpful methodological tool used to investigate other themes, such as collaborative writing. This idea is corroborated by Andrade (1997), when she writes: "Thus, in a didactical perspective, verbal interaction is means or instrument and target or objective, since

²⁴ Two PhD theses, from the University of Aveiro (Portugal): Araújo e Sá, M. H. (1996) and Andrade, A. I. (1997); four master theses: Castro, R. V. (1987 – University of Lisbon, Portugal); Vieira, F. (1988), Moreira, G. (1990) and Gonçalves R. E. (1996) – these last three also from the University of Aveiro. We have also analysed the pioneer work of Emília Ribeiro Pedro, her PhD thesis, entitled *The classroom discourse. A socio-linguistic analysis of the schooling practice in Portugal* (University of Stockholm, Sweden), in some way inspiring to all of the other studies.

²⁵ e.g. Gonçalves' study.

having a communicative competence in a given language is to have an interactive competence in multiple situations or, in other words, interaction is simultaneously the framework of the educational and interactive process which occurs in the classroom, and the object of this same process” (p. 123). This might be the reason why we observe a lack of consensus as far as the terminology is concerned. Although the following expressions do not correspond to the same reality, they are often used, sometimes indistinctly: social interaction, verbal interaction, pedagogical interaction, or simply interaction.

In search of a possible definition

In his work “Le marxisme et la philosophie du langage”, Bakhtine puts forward a dialogical conception of language and man, emphasizing his capacity to dialogue and, consequently, to practice interaction, the most important verbal manifestation. To dialogue with others, or with oneself, is a vital process both for the construction of language and of one’s own identity. Our identity is shaped according to one’s language, through which one sees and builds the world (cf. for instance, Martuccelli, 2002). Also, according to choices and decisions one makes during one’s life, through verbal interactions, again with others or oneself. In the words of Bakhtine (1977): “L’interaction verbale constitue ainsi la réalité fondamentale de la langue [...] on peut comprendre le mot ‘dialogue’ dans un sens élargi, c’est-à-dire non seulement comme l’échange à haute voix et impliquant des individus placés face à face, mais tout échange verbal, de quelque type qu’il soit” (p. 136). More recently, Geraldi (1991), a Brazilian linguist, in the line of Bakhtine, states that “comprehension itself is an active process, productive, in which former meanings, resulting from previous processes, resulting from previous interlocutive processes, are being modified by a continuous process in which the bigger diversity of interactions, implies bigger constructions of meanings, and larger numbers of categories with which their interpretations of the reality are being built ” (p.39; see also Vieira, 1988).

Then, for Bakhtine, dialogue is the most important form of verbal interaction, and it is through it that teacher and students perform their functions. In particular, their social function is defined at and by the roles they play, upon which cultural, institutional and other constraints²⁶ may act. It is legitimate to distinguish social roles among individuals who interact in the pedagogical context of communication. As Castro (one of the researchers under study) stresses “this distinction lays in the verification that the individuals exert a differentiated control over the verbal interaction process” (1987: 65).

²⁶ Castro (1987) refers to “a rather aprioristic attribution of the statements” (p.110), in view of the fact that, at the end of statements uttered by certain speakers, there are individuals who have, preferentially, the right to assume the speaker’s function.

Each individual plays dissimilar roles, which are in turn different from other individuals' roles. In the language classroom, not only the teacher but also the students perform diverse roles. These roles are significant, as it becomes evident, for example, when we read Araújo e Sá's words, another Portuguese researcher interested in the study of verbal interaction: "This conception of *role* (*rapport de rôles*) and *relations of place* (*rappports de places*), which includes components simultaneously sociologic and interactive, prospects, in a constructivist way, the individuals' verbal actions. In other words, it highlights the fact that the individual is able to simultaneously speak of several places (social and verbal), building a 'personal and modular interactive space': «Par '*espace interactif*' nous désignons (...) une image de l'interaction construite par l'activité des sujets engagés dans la gestion de cette interaction. (...) La construction, par chaque sujet, d'un espace interactif fait (...) l'objet d'une négociation constante» (Vion, 1991: 9-13). It is then of great interest in the understanding of verbal interaction, namely of certain specific phenomena linked to the definition of *interactive roles* which emerge in the communication, aiding to realize, in a socio-relational perspective, how the 'characters' who play each verbal stage organize themselves" (1996: 41).

Although the roles are asymmetric, and, as a result, the positions in verbal interaction are unequal – e.g. the distribution of turn taking between teacher and students is not balanced –, "everything is co-constructed through the interaction" (Jacoby & Ochs, 1995: 177). According to these authors, this means that the interlocutors (teacher and students, in the case of the language classroom) share a responsibility for the creation of identities, meanings and events. Through teaching and learning tasks and activities, attitudes, contents, processes, values, etc. are implemented in the classroom. This action and its outcomes are possible because language exists; these are visible, inside and outside the classroom, because language exists.

Some characteristics and principles

The most general interactional structure is the threefold scheme: 1) teacher's question, 2) student's answer, and 3) teacher's evaluation of the student's answer. One of the characteristics "that seems to differentiate verbal interaction in pedagogical context and other modalities is the fact that, often enough, the movements organization basic structure comprises not two but three movements; the transmitters [teachers], who are those who make a higher number of opening moves, frequently, make, over the reply movement, a closing movement ('follow-up'), which function is to let the previous speaker know about the adequacy of his move" (Castro, 1987: 100-101). The essential interaction movements are: opening, reply, closing, framework and focus. They are ordered in higher units, the exchanges, which Sinclair *et al* (1982) consider to be "the verbal interaction primary unit" (pp. 48-49). The verbal

interaction constituent factors are: the Speaker, the Allocutory, Space, Time, the Previous Speech and the Universe of Reference; they regulate the uttered statements and its use value (cf. Mateus *et al*, 1983: 162-164). The form of the factors that constitute the interaction context and the form of its articulation regulate the statements' communicative value, in such a way that the alteration of the factors and its relation might entail the fact that statements bearing the same propositional value have, in use, different values. Castro (1987) adds that "the specificity of the classroom Discourse, as a verbal interaction practice, lays in the specificity of the pedagogical context; it is the particular way in which its factors take shape and are related that establishes the significance of the produced statements" (p. 64).

One of the principles which regulates the classroom verbal interaction is, as it was previously mentioned, that of asymmetric communication: the teacher takes the highest position, whereas the students keep the lowest; needless to point that, in the classroom, the teacher speaks for a much longer time. According to Andrade²⁷ (1997), "the participants recognize that" the teacher "occupies the highest position, because he controls the knowledge, because he is more competent, and represents the institution, the language or the knowledge" (p. 132). The same author indicates us that "the constant motivation for the verbal interaction in a foreign language is related to the capacity of creating a positive affective relationship with the learners, to the capacity of staging communicative formats that are able to catch the audience's attention, through processes of seduction (...), of which the evaluation instruments, the reformulation, the repair, the amplification, the summary, the paraphrase, and the continuity of the learners' verbal interventions are an example" (1997: 621). This researcher also highlights that the resort to mother tongue, a situation of cognitive and interaction participation, in which the communicative and didactical intentions are more evident, is one of the communicative strategies available to the participants (cf. Andrade, 1997: 9-10 and 635). Nevertheless, the classroom verbal interaction prefers to focus on the verbal products to be attained in the foreign language (cf. Andrade, 1997: 382).

Other features the portuguese studies reveal

The classroom (verbal) interaction, having a specific objective, is determined by it. The classroom (verbal) interaction, produced by people (teachers and students) during the performance of formative tasks, reveals the students' learning path in the cognitive, affective and volitive dimensions, as well as the strategies set in action by the teachers to achieve the

²⁷ One of the other authors under analysis.

formative objectives they are committed to. Depending on the degree of commitment²⁸ in the communicative cooperation of the interlocutors, of their objectives and communicative strategies, the infractions – alteration or maintenance of topic, and creation of simultaneous or isolated discourses – may condition the interaction organization, course, rhythm and form (cf. Castro, 1987: 27-30). Moreover, as Vieira²⁹ writes, “it seems that it is mostly through verbal interaction that the knowledge negotiation is processed” (1988: 1-2).

In a word, “to interact in the classroom is, both for the teacher and the students, a task which involves a constant negotiation to solve the problems that emerge” (Vieira, 1988: 116-117). Since it is not possible to predict the direction in which the verbal interaction evolves, the teacher is faced with some instability and vulnerability. But, he can convert these very same weaknesses into strong points. Hence, the teacher is not requested to follow his class plan *ipsis verbis*. Instead, he is asked to improvise; at these moments, more than ever, he is invited to exercise and show his creativity.

Some of the Portuguese studies have dealt with a few difficulties, namely temporal and spatial limitations (such as the pre-defined and strict classroom space organization), or the restricted scope of some analysis categories. Thus, the researchers have spotted some aspects for further consideration. For example, it is worth reflecting upon the divergence which might still occur between theory and practice, as Castro does: “The fulfilments of objectives like ‘to provide for the acquisition of autonomous attitudes’, to create ‘relationship and cooperation positive attitudes and customs’ and the creation of ‘conditions of promoting the schooling and educational success’ of the students, objectives defined in the Educational System Basic Laws, do not seem to be in compliance with the verbal interaction practices that we have identified” (Castro, 1991: 153). This conclusion alludes to one of our initial questions, that of the weak spreading of knowledge and its seldom-effective use. In fact, even these objectives, which are defined in the Portuguese Educational System Basic Laws, a reference and common work tool for the Portuguese teachers, are, amazingly, not put into practice.

That is perhaps why the researchers advance with modular generalizations that emerge within the specific context of each research.

Maybe that is also why all of them underline and draw our attention to didactical interventions, to future possible researches, and to teacher training actions.

²⁸ For Andrade (1997), the students’ commitment in the construction of the classroom verbal interaction is only possible if they clearly understand, through the produced discourse, what the teacher’s communicative and didactical intentions are (cf. p.169).

²⁹ Another author under study.

A few didactical suggestions for the future

At the end of his book (1991), the publication of his master thesis³⁰, Castro adds the description of two needs, which can still be read as proposals to be taken in the Portuguese panorama. We have chosen them to summarize what we consider to be most relevant; they are the following:

1. “the need to rethink the conditions of pedagogical actions accomplishment, in particular at the level of the regulations that are exerted upon the classroom context, by other contexts (from the school to the educational system in general), which, through the explicit and/or implicit definition of its organization contents and ways of transmitting, significantly determine what happens in the classroom; it is also imperative to redefine, even if in a limitative way, due to external constraints, verbal interaction strategies activated in the classroom, in order to ensure a quantitative and qualitatively significant participation³¹ of the students in the learning process; the characteristics of the materials to be used and the selected activities will have, in this context, a vital role” (p.153);
2. “the need for the teachers training programs to consider, in some way and in disciplinary fields more designed for it, moments of analysis and practice of verbal interaction processes so that a better compatibility between the verbal behaviours, and the ends and objectives becomes possible. The pedagogical practice observation by the teachers who direct it may, to this respect, constitute a fundamental means of training, by the identification of the most frequent behaviours, by the analysis of its adequacy to knowledge, values and attitudes which are meant to be conveyed, by the experimentation and consequent evaluation of alternative practices that may be understood as more suitable.” (p.154).

Final brief reflection

To conclude, let us quote Andrade once more. In 1997, she was “sure of the urgency to deepen the knowledge on the modalities of change from one language to another”; she believed that “the deepening of relations between people, or the nations, the sharing of

³⁰ The publication of Castro’s master thesis is slightly different from the original text – e.g. the author included a glossary in his work’s printed version.

³¹ Or, in the words of Andrade (1997), “the person who is able to produce a verbal discourse or positively participate in a verbal interaction means that s/he has acquired the intended knowledge or that s/he has understand how it works” (p.121).

knowledge or the discovery of solutions to the world problems” would “be attained through verbal interaction, in a communicative process which will, undoubtedly, be bilingual” (p.649). At this moment, and sustained, especially, by all the work that has been developed (and still is) within LALE’ structure and context, we can say that this communicative process will, certainly, be plurilingual. Besides, this interactive process is inevitable because it is a constitutive one: we are always producing language and negotiating meanings. Verbal interaction is the production *locus* of the individuals (therefore, of their identities), and of the language itself.

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