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## TEACHERS' COMPUTER-ASSISTED LANGUAGE LEARNING (CALL) LITERACY: A COMPARATIVE STUDY IN SPAIN AND IRAN

### ALFABETIZACIÓN DEL PROFESORADO EN APRENDIZAJE DE IDIOMAS ASISTIDO POR ORDENADOR: UN ESTUDIO COMPARATIVO EN ESPAÑA E IRÁN

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#### ABSTRACT

The application of technology in teacher education has received significant attention recently. It would be, somehow, impossible to deny the necessity of integrating technology in language education. The deficiency and illiteracy in delivering technology-based practices into instruction are assumed as key challenges of teachers in 21st-century education. This study aimed to explore the current level of Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) literacy of language teachers in Iran and Spain. Moreover, the relationships between CALL literacy and their nationality are investigated. The study was based on a sample of 318 language teachers in Iran and Spain. Data collection was carried out through an online questionnaire. To make a sound decision, the researchers agreed to utilize the Delphi method so that appropriate experts were chosen in order to ensure a valid study. In the data analysis phase, descriptive, t-test, and one-way ANOVA analyses were performed to answer the research questions. The findings of the study revealed that there is no difference between the participants' CALL literacy of language teachers in terms of their nationality. Finally, pedagogical implications and recommendations for further research are presented.

**Keywords:** Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) literacy, language teachers, Delphi methodology, Spain, Iran.

#### RESUMEN

La aplicación de la tecnología en la formación del profesorado ha recibido una gran atención en los últimos tiempos. Sería de todo punto imposible negar la necesidad de integrar la tecnología en la enseñanza de idiomas. La deficiencia y la falta de formación a la hora de aplicar prácticas basadas en la tecnología en la enseñanza se asumen como retos clave para el profesorado en la educación del siglo XXI. El objetivo de este estudio es explorar el nivel actual de alfabetización en aprendizaje de idiomas asistido por ordenador (CALL – *Computer Assisted Language Learning* – para sus siglas en inglés) de los profesores de idiomas en Irán y España. Además, se investigan las relaciones entre la alfabetización en el aprendizaje de idiomas asistido por ordenador y su nacionalidad. El estudio se basó en una muestra de 318 profesores de idiomas de Irán y España. La recogida de datos se llevó a cabo mediante un

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cuestionario en línea. El método Delphi fue utilizado para validar el instrumento diseñado ad hoc, para lo que se eligieron los expertos adecuados que garantizaran la validez de este trabajo. En la fase de análisis de datos, se realizaron análisis descriptivos, pruebas t y ANOVA para responder a las preguntas de investigación planteadas. Los resultados del estudio revelaron que no hay diferencias entre la alfabetización CALL de los profesores de idiomas en función de su nacionalidad. Por último, se presentan las implicaciones pedagógicas de este estudio y recomendaciones para futuras investigaciones.

**Palabras clave:** Alfabetización en el Aprendizaje de Lenguas Asistido por Ordenador (CALL), Profesores de Idiomas, Metodología Delphi, España, Irán.

## 1. Introduction

Technology has effectively altered our personal and professional lives. In such a revolutionary digitalized world, both teachers and learners are urged to build up their knowledge in nonlinear settings hindered by different digital tools and devices. These new learning settings lead scholars to revise the concept of “literacy” from “the ability to read and write in a predominantly printed context” (Goodfellow, 2011, p. 131) to the new literacies (see Table 1). Tafazoli and Gómez-Parra (2017) believed that none of the mentioned literacies could not fulfil all the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century language teachers and learners. None of the new literacies such as ‘cyberliteracy’ (Gurak, 2001), ‘digital literacy’ (European Commission, 2003), ‘electracy’ (Ulmer, 2003), ‘electronic literacies’ (Warschauer, 1999), ‘eLiteracy’ (Martin, 2003), ‘ICT literacy’ (Educational Testing System, 2007), ‘media literacy’ (Aufderheide, 1993), ‘technoliteracy’ (Kimber et al., 2007), etc. deals with the nature of language teaching and learning.

Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) as an approach to language learning and teaching is defined as any application of technology to language teaching and learning (Tafazoli, 2015), which could be assumed as a paradigm shift in order to meet teachers’ and students’ needs in our digital world. Although there is a considerable amount of research that tackles to appraise CALL and its programs from a variety of aspects (e.g., Hsie et al., 2017; Ma, 2017; Mei et al., 2017; Rienties et al., 2018; Shadiev et al., 2017; Xu & Peng, 2017), the literature shows that most of the studies which investigate the role of literacy in CALL concentrate on the basic computer literacy (e.g., Son et al., 2011). Meanwhile, only two paper presentations (Tafazoli, 2014; Tafazoli et al., 2017), and one workshop (Tafazoli, 2017) dealt with the critical concept of CALL literacy. The researchers believed the focus of the CALL programs and courses should be on empowering language teachers and student by considering the product end-users’ CALL literacy.

Rooted in CALL, Tafazoli (2017) proposed a new literacy called ‘CALL literacy’, which is particularly applicable for language learning and teaching. He defined ‘CALL literacy’ as “the ability to use technology at an adequate level for teaching or learning a language” including three main core components of language literacy, language teaching/learning literacy, and computer literacy” (Tafazoli, 2017, n. p.).

As the very first study on CALL literacy, this study attempted to respond to the need by exploring the current level of CALL literacy of language teachers in two different countries: Iran (as an exemplar of a developing country) and Spain (as an exemplar of a developed country). Moreover, the study investigated the relationship between the nationality and the CALL literacy of the participants.

Therefore, this research seeks to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: What is the overall status of Spanish and Iranian language teachers’ CALL literacy?

RQ2: Is there any significant difference among the language teachers’ CALL literacy in terms of nationality?

## 2. New Literacies in Language Learning and Teaching

An appeal for new literacies called 'computer literacy', 'IT literacy', 'ICT literacy', etc. has been aroused since the late 1960s. The importance of students' and teachers' computer literacy has been investigated in many studies (e.g., Atkins & Vasu, 2000; Cunningham, 2000; Johnson, 2002; Lam, 2000; Oh & French, 2007; Park & Son, 2009; Shin & Son, 2007).

Table 1.  
Views of literacy (Tafazoli et al., 2017, p. 717)

Type	Literature
computer literacy	Corbel, 1997
Cyberliteracy	Gurak, 2001
digital literacy	European Commission, 2003
Electracy	Ulmer, 2003
electronic literacies	Warschauer, 1999
eLiteracy	Martin, 2003
ICT literacy	Educational Testing Service, 2005
media literacy	Kubey, 1997; Livingstone, 2003; Potter, 2004
Multiliteracies	Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Unsworth, 2001
multimedia literacy	New London Group, 1996
multiple literacies	Kellner, 2002
new literacies	Lankshear & Knobel, 2003
online literacy	Tuman, 1996
silicon literacies	Snyder, 2002
Technoliteracy	Lankshear & Synder, 2000; Luke, 1997
visual literacy	Curtis, 2004; Moore & Dwyer, 1994

Undoubtedly, complying with new literacies in the second and foreign language classrooms is a demanding task for both language teachers and learners (Tan & McWilliam, 2009; Valdés, 2004; Warschauer, 2008b). Even in developed countries with fully furnished technological infrastructures, second and foreign language learning and teaching contexts have been shown to be depreciating the benefits of educational technologies (Ware, 2008).

Rilling et al. (2005) assert that, in consideration of successful integration of technology into language classrooms, teachers necessitate to shape their working knowledge and skills in online environments. Moreover, teachers should improve their technical skills to employ different computer applications for educational purposes (Cunningham, 2000). Thus, in CALL, one of the most critical aspects in language teacher education is the enhancement of their computer literacy (Hong, 2010) and acknowledging the demand for technology-competent language teachers (Hubbard, 2008). In other words, there will be greater professions for computer-literate teachers than those who lack this literacy (Tafazoli et al., 2017).

As Hall (2001) states "How well we prepare learners of additional languages to meet the social, political, and economic challenges of the next several decades will depend in part on our success in integrating technology into the foreign language curriculum" (p. 60). However, we should care about the issue that the only integration of technology is not an important issue but integrating suitable technology-based tools and devices which are important for language learning and teaching are the crucial factors in successful integration of technology in language education. To explain more, the technology itself cannot enhance language learning and teaching; the knowledge of how to use technology in language learning and teaching contexts is the case (Kern & Warschauer, 2000).

In the U.S., Warschauer's (2008a) 2-year multi-site case study was to qualitatively explore literacy practices of teachers, students, school staff members and parents based on a 'sociocultural framework of literacy' (Gee, 1996). Three different techniques of observation (650 hours), interviews (with 61 teachers, 32 school staff members, 67 students, and 31 parents), surveys (from 35 teachers and 877 students), and document reviews (teaching materials, student assignments, and student test scores) were applied in order to collect data. In the ICT literacy phase of the study, the findings revealed that continual and regular access to the Internet led both teachers and students to go beyond mechanical facets of ICT literacy, and allowed more in-depth skills and proficiencies such as: a) more "just-in-time" learning, b) more individualized learning, c) greater ease in conducting research, and d) more empirical investigation (Warschauer, 2008a, p. 61).

In Turkey, Konan (2010) conducted a study on 506 teachers in order to specify their levels of computer literacy. The researchers collected data through a questionnaire and analyzed them applying t-test and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The results of the study showed significant differences between the levels computer literacy in terms of teachers' gender, experience, and education level. In general, computer literacy of teachers was medium. Nonetheless, computer literacy was higher in favor of male, novice, highly educated, and subject teachers than female, experienced, low educated, and class teachers.

In Indonesia, Son et al.'s (2011) study was to explore the computer literacy level of 73 in-service teachers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and investigate variables influencing on their use of computers in classrooms. In order to collect data, a questionnaire including participants' background, use of computer applications, computer-related questions, computer knowledge test, and factors affecting the use of computers was used. The findings showed that in self-evaluation, most teachers believed that their level of computer literacy, Internet literacy and typing skills were adequate or higher. However, in-depth assessment revealed great individual differences in the level of computer literacy. Son et al. (2011) concluded that "these differences bring about a need for a different approach to teacher training for a different background group of teachers, which allows teachers to improve their personal level of computer literacy and competency and gain online experience contextually relevant to their teaching situations" (p. 34).

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Participants

The participants of this study were 318 language teachers in Iran and Spain. As illustrated in Table 2, 50.94% of the teachers were Iranian. Spanish teachers were 49.06% of the sample. Moreover, female was the dominant gender in the sample with over half of the teacher participants (64.46 %).

Table 2.  
Distribution of participants based on their gender

Country	Gender	Teacher
Iran	Male	69
	Female	93
	Total	162
Spain	Male	44
	Female	112
	Total	156

Total	Male	113
	Female	205
	Total	318

It could be observed in Table 3 that the distribution of BA, MA and PhD teachers was almost equal in the sample.

Table 3.  
Distribution of participants based on their educational level

Country	Educational Level	Teacher
Iran	BA	25
	MA	92
	PhD	45
Spain	BA	25
	MA	85
	PhD	46
Total	BA	50
	MA	177
	PhD	91

As far as the age was concerned, as depicted in Table 4, the largest category of teacher participants (N=170) fell within the age range of 36 and above. On the other hand, the smallest groups in teacher participants were the category of 18 to 23 (2.51%).

Table 4.  
Distribution of participants based on their age groups

Country	Age group	Teacher
Iran	18-23	8
	24-29	30
	30-35	61
	36 and above	63
Spain	18-23	0
	24-29	15
	30-35	34
	36 and above	107
Total	18-23	8
	24-29	45
	30-35	95
	36 and above	170

### 3.2 Instrumentation

A CALL literacy online questionnaire was used to collect data on the Iranian and Spanish language teachers' CALL literacy. The questionnaire consists of 6 sections: Section I (background information), Section II (CALL courses), Section III (CALL tools), Section IV (CALL in



action), Section V (Computer software/applications/programs), and Section VI (CALL and language skills and components). To meet the end of the study, all of the sections and items in the questionnaire were designed in order to find out the answers to the following questions: 1) Have teachers ever undertaken professional courses? 2) How well do they cope with using different technologies for language teaching and learning? 3) How well do they use technology for teaching and learning purposes? 4) How well do they use different software/applications/programs?, and 5) To what extent are they able to improve their language skills and components with technology?

Table 5.  
Distribution of items on the questionnaire

Construct	Section I	Section II	Section III	Section IV	Section V	Section VI
Question type	Background information	CALL courses	CALL tools	CALL in action	Computer software/applications/programs	CALL and language skills and components
Total	14	10	14	12	12	8

### 3.3 Measurement analysis

To make a sound decision, the researchers utilized the Delphi method, so that appropriate experts were chosen in order to ensure a valid study. Due to the multidisciplinary nature of CALL, the researchers decided to arrange the panel of experts based on their expertise. The first draft of the questionnaire for this research was designed and emailed to 20 PhD experts in the fields of Applied Linguistics, Computer Sciences, English Language Teaching, and Computer-Assisted Language Learning, and from different parts of the world such as Iran, Spain, the USA and the UK, among others.

The data collection and analysis phase of the Delphi method was guided by three issues: discovering the experts' opinions; determining the most important issues; and managing opinions (Keeney et al., 2000). First, the lead researcher tried to discover the opinions to reach consensus on the content of the questionnaire. After gathering experts' opinions, data were analyzed through content analysis technique. At the end of three rounds, the researchers agreed on a questionnaire for language teachers.

The questionnaire contained 56 items, which measured CALL literacy of language teachers. After administering this questionnaire to the teachers' sample, the researchers first checked the validity of the case processing. All the 318 cases of the sample were valid, and SPSS did not exclude the scores of any of the participants from the processing. Then, the researchers used SPSS to calculate the Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient, which was .948 for 56 quantitative items of CALL literacy construct. This indicated that this construct enjoyed ample internal consistency.

## 4. Results and Discussion

RQ1: What is the overall status of Spanish and Iranian language teachers' CALL literacy?

As depicted from Table 6, among the participants, 44.3% of them has participated in introductory courses on internet use and general application. Also, 198 teachers (62.3%) have not participated in online communities for educational discussions with other language teachers. On the other hand, only 120 out of 318 teachers (37.7%) have attended such communities.



Table 6.  
Descriptive statistics of CALL courses

Have you ever undertaken the following courses?	Response	Freq. (%)
1. Introductory courses on internet use and general applications (basic word-processing, spreadsheets, presentations, databases, etc.)	Yes	141 (44.3%)
	No	177 (55.7)
2. Advanced courses on applications (advanced word-processing, complex relational databases, Virtual Learning Environment, etc.)	Yes	185 (58.2%)
	No	133 (41.8%)
3. Advanced courses on internet use (creating websites/home page, video conferencing, etc.)	Yes	186 (58.5%)
	No	132 (41.5%)
4. Equipment-specific training (interactive whiteboard, laptop, tablet, etc.)	Yes	158 (49.7)
	No	160 (50.3)
5. Courses on the pedagogical use of technologies in learning	Yes	133 (41.8)
	No	185 (58.2%)
6. Subject-specific training on learning applications (tutorials, simulations, etc.)	Yes	172 (54.1%)
	No	146 (45.9%)
7. Course on multimedia (using digital video, audio equipment, etc.)	Yes	168 (52.8%)
	No	150 (47.2%)
8. Participate in online communities (e.g., mailing lists, groups, blogs) for educational discussions with other language learners/teachers.	Yes	120 (37.7%)
	No	198 (62.3%)
9. CALL training provided by school staff Personal learning about technology in your own time	Yes	173 (54.4%)
	No	145 (45.6%)
10. Other professional courses related to CALL	Yes	166 (52.2%)
	No	152 (47.8%)

Based on the self-evaluation of competency in terms of the use of CALL tools, Table 7 indicated that teachers were more competent in computers, PowerPoint software, mobile phones, CD/DVD players, video projectors, social networking sites and applications, Google Docs, tape-recorders/ videocassette recorders and discussion forums, respectively. Moreover, teachers' self-evaluation reported that they are less proficient in Excel software, image-editing software, weblogs, overheads, and interactive whiteboards. The findings are consistent with Golshan and Tafazoli's (2014) study that computer and video projector are among the most applied CALL tools in teaching English. These researchers indicated that out of all the participants (N=32), 50.99% used computer and video projectors, 18.18% applied websites, and 12.65% utilized mobile phones for teaching EFL to Iranian students.

Table 7.  
Descriptive statistics of CALL tools

How well do you cope with using the following technologies for language learning/teaching?	Response	Freq. (%)
	Tape-recorder/ Videocassette recorder	Not used
Poorly		18 (5.7%)
Moderately well		36 (11.3%)
Well		52 (16.4%)
Very well		123 (38.7%)
CD/DVD player	Not used	42 (13.2%)
	Poorly	13 (4.1%)
	Moderately well	22 (6.9%)

	Well	66 (20.8%)
	Very well	175 (55%)
	Not used	2 (0.6%)
	Poorly	10 (3.1%)
Computer	Moderately well	16 (5%)
	Well	70 (22%)
	Very well	220 (69.2%)
	Not used	53 (16.7%)
Image-editing software (Photoshop, Paint, etc.)	Poorly	53 (16.7%)
	Moderately well	78 (24.5%)
	Well	82 (25.8%)
	Very well	52 (16.4%)
	Not used	95 (29.9%)
	Poorly	34 (10.7%)
Overheads	Moderately well	38 (11.9%)
	Well	63 (19.8%)
	Very well	88 (27.7%)
	Not used	37 (11.6%)
	Poorly	21 (6.6%)
Video projector	Moderately well	35 (11%)
	Well	89 (28%)
	Very well	136 (42.8%)
	Not used	88 (27.7%)
	Poorly	40 (12.6%)
Weblogs	Moderately well	63 (19.8%)
	Well	57 (17.9%)
	Very well	70 (22%)
	Not used	13 (4.1%)
	Poorly	21 (6.6%)
PowerPoint Software	Moderately well	28 (8.8%)
	Well	67 (21.1%)
	Very well	189 (59.4%)
	Not used	72 (22.6%)
	Poorly	38 (11.9%)
Excel Software	Moderately well	68 (21.4%)
	Well	64 (20.1%)
	Very well	76 (23.9%)
	Not used	51 (16%)
	Poorly	28 (8.8%)
Google Docs	Moderately well	46 (14.5%)
	Well	70 (22%)
	Very well	123 (38.7%)
	Not used	60 (18.9%)
	Poorly	31 (9.7%)
Discussion forums	Moderately well	47 (14.8%)
	Well	75 (23.6%)
	Very well	105 (33%)
	Not used	41 (12.9%)
	Poorly	25 (7.9%)
Social Networking Sites and Applications	Moderately well	45 (14.2%)
	Well	78 (24.5%)
	Very well	129 (40.6%)
	Not used	121 (38.1%)

Interactive whiteboards	Poorly	41 (12.9%)
	Moderately well	37 (11.6%)
	Well	58 (18.2%)
	Very well	61 (19.2%)
Mobile phones	Not used	20 (6.3%)
	Poorly	20 (6.3%)
	Moderately well	34 (10.7%)
	Well	71 (22.3%)
	Very well	173 (54.4%)

The ability of teachers in using CALL was quite different in comparison to students. As indicated in Table 8, more than 90% of the teachers were capable of browsing/searching the Internet to collect information and resources to prepare lessons. In addition, about 90% of them were able to use applications to prepare presentations for lessons. A little above 80% of the teachers were competent in looking for online professional development opportunities and participating in social networks. However, around 70% of the teachers demonstrated that they are not proficient in programming.

Table 8.  
Descriptive statistics of CALL in action

How well do you do the followings?	Response	Freq. (%)
Browse/search the Internet to collect information and resources to prepare lessons	Not used	3 (0.9%)
	Poorly	7 (2.2%)
	Moderately well	24 (7.5%)
	Well	52 (16.4%)
	Very well	232 (73%)
Use applications to prepare presentations for lessons	Not used	14 (4.4%)
	Poorly	15 (4.7%)
	Moderately well	50 (15.7%)
	Well	75 (23.6%)
	Very well	164 (51.6%)
Create your own digital learning materials for students	Not used	31 (9.7%)
	Poorly	37 (11.6%)
	Moderately well	78 (24.5%)
	Well	65 (20.4%)
	Very well	107 (33.6%)
Post homework for students on the school website	Not used	95 (29.9%)
	Poorly	29 (9.1%)
	Moderately well	34 (10.7%)
	Well	61 (19.2%)
	Very well	99 (31.1%)
Use ICTs to provide feedback and/or assess students' learning	Not used	103 (32.4%)
	Poorly	31 (9.7%)
	Moderately well	58 (18.2%)
	Well	55 (17.3%)
	Very well	71 (22.3%)
Evaluate digital learning resources in the subject(s) you teach	Not used	82 (25.8%)
	Poorly	29 (9.1%)
	Moderately well	64 (20.1%)
	Well	68 (21.4%)
	Very well	75 (23.6%)

Communicate online with parents and students	Not used	59 (18.6%)
	Poorly	17 (5.3%)
	Moderately well	49 (15.4%)
	Well	60 (18.9%)
	Very well	133 (41.8%)
Look for online professional development opportunities	Not used	27 (8.5%)
	Poorly	21 (6.6%)
	Moderately well	47 (14.8%)
	Well	75 (23.6%)
	Very well	148 (46.5%)
Participate in social networks	Not used	21 (6.6%)
	Poorly	20 (6.3%)
	Moderately well	63 (19.8%)
	Well	69 (21.7%)
	Very well	145 (45.6%)
Teach students how to behave safely and ethically online	Not used	59 (18.6%)
	Poorly	32 (10.1%)
	Moderately well	59 (18.6%)
	Well	80 (25.2%)
	Very well	88 (27.7%)
Programming	Not used	159 (50%)
	Poorly	57 (17.9%)
	Moderately well	49 (15.4%)
	Well	27 (8.5%)
	Very well	26 (8.2%)

The next section of the CALL literacy questionnaires asked participants to what extent teachers are proficient in using different software, applications and programs for language teaching. As depicted in Table 9, teachers reported their competency in using word processors. Moreover, they should be more competent in utilizing programs for special needs.

Table 9.  
Descriptive statistics of software/applications/programs

How well do you use the following software/ applications/ programs?	Response	Freq. (%)
Word-processors	Not used	33 (10.4%)
	Poorly	21 (6.6%)
	Moderately well	35 (11%)
	Well	56 (17.6%)
	Very well	173 (54.4%)
Story writing programs	Not used	152 (47.8%)
	Poorly	32 (10.1%)
	Moderately well	59 (18.6%)
	Well	34 (10.7%)
	Very well	41 (12.9%)
Electronic dictionaries	Not used	15 (4.7%)
	Poorly	11 (3.5%)
	Moderately well	28 (8.8%)
	Well	57 (17.9%)
	Very well	207 (65.1%)
	Not used	58 (18.2%)
	Poorly	30 (9.4%)

Educational games	Moderately well	62 (19.5%)
	Well	79 (24.8%)
	Very well	89 (28%)
Talking books	Not used	126 (39.6%)
	Poorly	29 (9.1%)
	Moderately well	55 (17.3%)
	Well	55 (17.3%)
	Very well	53 (16.7%)
Programs for special needs	Not used	143 (45%)
	Poorly	48 (15.1%)
	Moderately well	65 (20.4%)
	Well	37 (11.6%)
	Very well	25 (7.9%)
Grammar exercise programs	Not used	46 (14.5)
	Poorly	23 (7.2%)
	Moderately well	63 (19.8%)
	Well	79 (24.8%)
	Very well	107 (33.6%)
Pronunciation programs	Not used	46 (14.5)
	Poorly	19 (6%)
	Moderately well	82 (25.8%)
	Well	74 (23.3%)
	Very well	97 (30.5%)
Vocabulary programs	Not used	37 (11.6%)
	Poorly	14 (4.4%)
	Moderately well	65 (20.4%)
	Well	89 (28%)
	Very well	113 (35.5%)
Spelling programs	Not used	72 (22.6%)
	Poorly	23 (7.2%)
	Moderately well	61 (19.2%)
	Well	72 (22.6%)
	Very well	90 (28.3%)
Cross-curricular programs	Not used	120 (37.7%)
	Poorly	28 (8.8%)
	Moderately well	70 (22%)
	Well	47 (14.8%)
	Very well	53 (16.7%)
Language testing programs	Not used	71 (22.3%)
	Poorly	21 (6.6%)
	Moderately well	73 (23%)
	Well	68 (21.4%)
	Very well	85 (26.7%)

Son et al. (2011) reported that approximate half of the teachers assessed themselves as a basic or an intermediate user of general computer applications while over 46% of them disclose that they do not have skills for using spreadsheet, database or Web design applications, Web search engines and communication applications. Moreover, in terms of the use of computer applications, Son et al. (2011) stated that the use of word processors, email, Web and multimedia programs are more tendentious among English language teachers, while the integration of other types of applications such as databases, graphics, concordancers, blogs, wikis, online discussion groups, voice chatting and video conferencing programs are infrequent.

In the final section, eight items of the questionnaires dealt with teachers' competency in applying different technologies in order to improve their language skills and components. In items regarding language skills (Table 10), teachers claimed that they are most proficient in improving students' listening via CALL. Moreover, teachers were least competent in boosting students' writing skill through technology.

Table 10.

Descriptive statistics of CALL and language skills and components

To what extent are you able to improve the followings with technology?	Response	Freq. (%)
Reading	Very poor	6 (1.9%)
	Poor	18 (5.7%)
	Fair	85 (26.7%)
	Good	112 (35.2%)
	Very good	97 (30.5%)
Writing	Very poor	14 (4.4%)
	Poor	34 (10.7%)
	Fair	89 (28%)
	Good	93 (29.2%)
	Very good	88 (27.7%)
Speaking	Very poor	6 (1.9%)
	Poor	25 (7.9%)
	Fair	70 (22%)
	Good	111 (34.9%)
	Very good	106 (33.3%)
Listening	Very poor	2 (0.6%)
	Poor	9 (2.8%)
	Fair	51 (16%)
	Good	94 (29.6%)
	Very good	162 (50.9%)
Grammar	Very poor	7 (2.2%)
	Poor	19 (6%)
	Fair	85 (26.7%)
	Good	112 (35.2%)
	Very good	95 (29.9%)
Vocabulary	Very poor	4 (1.3%)
	Poor	13 (4.1%)
	Fair	58 (18.2%)
	Good	116 (36.5%)
	Very good	127 (39.9%)
Pronunciation	Very poor	5 (1.6%)
	Poor	25 (7.9%)
	Fair	73 (23%)
	Good	98 (30.8%)
	Very good	117 (36.8%)
Cross-cultural awareness	Very poor	20 (6.3%)
	Poor	23 (7.2%)
	Fair	70 (22%)
	Good	106 (33.3%)
	Very good	99 (31.1%)

RQ2: Is there any significant difference among the language teachers' CALL literacy in terms of nationality?

An independent sample of t-test was carried out to investigate if there is any statistical significant difference among Spanish and Iranian language teachers' CALL literacy in terms of nationality.

Table 11.  
Differences among teachers' CALL literacy in terms of their nationality

	Country	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig.	t	df
CALL literacy	Iran	162	171.2222	37.9289	.001	-2.657	79
	Spain	156	181.5576	30.9280			

As depicted in Table 11, the results outline significant differences between Iranian and Spanish teachers' CALL literacy in terms of their nationality in favor of language teachers in Spain. The calculated value of the significance level is ( $p = 0.01$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).

## 5. Conclusion

Several issues might influence on the results of the study, which is based on a self-evaluation that is totally different from actual competency of the participants. Among them, unfamiliarity of the participants with technical vocabulary rooted in computer science like spreadsheet, vodcast, etc., the limited number of choices in the questionnaires (the participants might use robots and any other high-tech technologies not considered in the study), participants' attitudes towards CALL, and limitations in the size of the participants (the findings cannot be used to predict the CALL literacy of all language teachers in Iran and Spain). By considering these limitations, the findings showed that among teachers there is no significant difference between CALL literacy. However, the findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between CALL literacy and nationality of language teachers in favor of Spanish teachers.

This study provided useful results and findings for language teachers, material developers and decision makers. Regarding policy makers, using developed countries' CALL materials, such as Spain, in the curriculum of developing countries like Iran is not appropriate based on the teachers' CALL Literacy. As Tafazoli et al.'s (2018) study on the computer literacy of the Iranian and non-Iranian English language students confirmed that "it is not possible to apply all the CALL materials produced in other cultures and contexts in our [refers to Iran] context. Therefore, we [refers to Iranian decision makers] have to select the best CALL materials based on our students' computer literacy" (p. 60).

Once again, I would like to declare that it should be considered that self-evaluation CALL literacy might not be equivalent to actual levels of CALL literacy for using a wide range of applications in language teaching and learning. We have to take into account three main components - computer literacy, language teaching/learning literacy, and language literacy - which shape the main core of CALL literacy. These components, all together, will shape the CALL literacy of an individual (Tafazoli, 2017). To explain more, an expert in computer science or a competent user of technology cannot be a good language teacher or learner if s/he has no proficiency in language and language teaching/learning literacies. All of these components are interwoven, and they act as a unit and integrated literacy.

I would like to suggest further research on actual level of CALL literacy of language teachers and students. Moreover, although design and propose a new framework/model of CALL literacy could be a demanding task, this framework/model might add a new field of research interest



among scholars in applied linguistics, computer assisted language learning, language teaching and learning, education, and even computer sciences.

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## VISIBILIZACIÓN DE LA LITERATURA INTERCULTURAL DE AUTORAS MIGRANTES A TRAVÉS DE LA TRADUCCIÓN

### RAISING AWARENESS ON INTERCULTURAL LITERATURE BY MIGRANT WOMEN THROUGH TRANSLATION

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#### RESUMEN

La llamada literatura de migrantes o intercultural se ha consolidado especialmente en Europa en los últimos 70 años (Chiellino, 2015; Neelsen, 2018). Está conformada por escritores migrantes que publican en el idioma y el país de destino y, por ello, presentan una serie de particularidades transnacionales e interculturales tanto desde el punto de vista de los motivos como del lenguaje. En este conjunto, la literatura de mujeres migrantes está notablemente infraestudiada y sus traducciones son escasas (Quijada, 2019), a pesar del interés del enfoque de género en este ámbito (Von Flotow, 2000). Para paliar estas lagunas, los objetivos del presente trabajo son dar a conocer las novelas de autoras migrantes en inglés, francés y alemán y aplicarlas en el aula de traducción con un enfoque intercultural y de género. La metodología propuesta se basa en la traducción y el análisis de los textos al español, así como en el descubrimiento de las autoras a través de entrevistas y declaraciones por parte de los estudiantes de la asignatura Traducción Literaria en el Grado de Traducción e Interpretación de la Universidad de Córdoba. Como estudio de caso exponemos la aplicación didáctica de la novela *Kiffe kiffe demain* de Faïza Guène (2004), autora francesa de origen argelino. Para ello, partimos de las opiniones reales de escritoras y periodistas sobre diversidad cultural, de la reflexión sobre la búsqueda identitaria y los posicionamientos de protagonistas femeninas en la literatura contemporánea de autoras de segunda generación, así como de la doble segregación de la mujer francesa de origen magrebí, por su rol de mujer y su ascendencia africana. Asimismo, proponemos la traducción de una selección de capítulos de esta novela al español para facilitar la comprensión de la hibridez y la multiculturalidad expresada en una lengua mestiza que combina argot, préstamos árabes y registro de la periferia. La corrección de las traducciones y las opiniones de los alumnos recogidas en dos foros habilitados en Moodle desprenden que la traducción favorece la toma de conciencia del sentir de este colectivo, ayuda a la comprensión de su minoración y traslada sus reivindicaciones a otros espacios y otras culturas.

**Palabras clave:** literatura intercultural, traducción literaria, género, culturemas, educación.

#### ABSTRACT

The so-called migrant or intercultural literature has been consolidated in the last 70 years especially in Europe (Chiellino, 2015; Neelsen, 2018). It comprises the works by migrant writers publishing in the language and the country of destination. Therefore, they present a series of transnational and intercultural features both from the point of view of motives and of language. Inside this movement, literature written by migrant women is notably understudied and barely translated into Spanish (Quijada, 2019), despite the

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interest of a gender approach in the broader field of migration (Von Flotow, 2000). In order to bridge this gap, the present work aims to disseminate the novels of migrant women in English, French and German and to apply these to teaching translation from an intercultural and gender approach. The research method is based on translation and contrastive analysis, as well as the discovery of the authors through interviews and statements by the students of Literary Translation taught at the B.A. Translation and Interpreting at the Universidad de Córdoba. As a case study, we present a didactic proposal for the novel *Kiffe kiffe demain* by Faïza Guène (2004), a French woman writer of Algerian origin. Initial activities include real-life statements about cultural diversity given by women writers and journalists, a reflection on the search of the own identity and the stances taken by female protagonists in contemporary works written by second-generation authors, as well as the double segregation of French women of Maghrebi origin due to their role as women and to their African background. Furthermore, we propose the translation of selected chapters of the novel into Spanish in order to facilitate the understanding of hybridity and multiculturalism as expressed in a linguistic combination of slang, Arabic borrowings and the register of the suburbs. The revised translations and the opinions expressed by students in two Moodle forums demonstrate that translation enhances awareness raising about the feelings of this migrant community, helping to understand their condition as a minority and moving their claims to new spaces and cultures.

**Keywords:** intercultural literature, literary translation, gender, cultural words, education.

## 1. Introducción

La literatura intercultural es un fenómeno ampliamente conocido en Europa que se ha venido consolidando en los últimos 50-70 años especialmente en países como Francia o Alemania (Neelsen, 2018). No obstante, su escasa presencia en nuestro país hace que nos cuestionemos por qué el mercado editorial español no parece proclive a dar salida a este tipo de obras. Para comprender mejor este fenómeno, es necesario en primer lugar delimitar qué se entiende por literatura intercultural o migrante. Tal como señalan Fischer y McGowan (1996), ha recibido numerosos nombres a lo largo de su existencia, tales como “literatura de trabajadores invitados”, “literatura de migrantes”, “literatura de extranjeros” (que escriben en la lengua del país de destino), etc:

By the 1990s, it had attained a diversity contradicting all attempts to label it. *Gastarbeiterliteratur* (guest-worker literature), *Migrantenliteratur* (migrant literature), *Ausländerliteratur* (foreigner literature), *Literatur deutschschreibender Ausländer* (the literature of foreigners writing in German): all are either too narrow (...), potentially patronising or indeed racist (...). (Fischer y McGowan, 1996, p. 2)<sup>2</sup>

En efecto, muchas de las denominaciones mencionadas revisten connotaciones racistas o condescendientes, por lo que en este trabajo nos decantamos por el término “literatura intercultural”, que además subraya los aspectos esenciales que deseamos aplicar al aula de traducción. Las obras que estudiaremos deben cumplir las condiciones descritas por Chiellino (2015) para considerarse literatura intercultural; para este autor, no basta con que haya un cambio de lengua, sino que los autores deben asimismo ser migrantes que residen en otro país, inmersos en el espacio cultural y cotidiano de la lengua en la que escriben sus obras:

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<sup>2</sup> “En los años 1990, había alcanzado una diversidad que contravenía cualquier intento de asignarle una denominación. *Gastarbeiterliteratur* (literatura de los trabajadores invitados), *Migrantenliteratur* (literatura migrante), *Ausländerliteratur* (literatura de extranjeros), *Literatur deutschschreibender Ausländer* (literatura de extranjeros escrita en alemán): todas son demasiado restrictivas (...), potencialmente condescendientes o incluso racistas (...). La traducción de las citas es nuestra.



Für mein Verständnis von interkultureller Literatur in Europa reicht der Sprachwechsel allein nicht aus. Ebenso wichtig hierzu sind ein Landwechsel bzw. ein Leben in der Fremde, in dem betreffenden Kultur- und dem Alltagsraum der Sprache, in der die Werke geschrieben werden“. (Chiellino, 2015, p. 12).<sup>3</sup>

Por tanto, las autoras objeto de estudio del presente trabajo deben cumplir la triple condición de residir en un país diferente al de sus orígenes familiares, escribir en la lengua de dicho país y aun así, incorporar en sus obras elementos de su lengua materna y del país de origen, lo que da lugar al fenómeno de la interculturalidad literaria en su más amplia manifestación.

Por otro lado, no debe confundirse el aspecto de la migración y la condición de ser extranjero o perteneciente a una minoría con la posición social de los autores; aunque en efecto se la haya denominado “literatura de trabajadores extranjeros”, sucede con frecuencia que los máximos exponentes de este movimiento no pertenecen a la clase trabajadora como tal (esto es, trabajadores emigrados que ocupan puestos tradicionalmente ingratos en fábricas, construcción, etc.) y así lo expresa Neelsen (2018, p. 200):

Pourtant, il n'est pas tout à fait exact de privilégier la source autobiographique de la *Gastarbeiterliteratur*, à moins de l'entendre exclusivement comme littérature produite par les travailleurs migrants. Ceux qui, comme Rafik Schami, ont pu revendiquer cette étiquette n'étaient pas eux-mêmes ouvriers, et s'ils se disaient tels, c'était dans un geste politique visant à dénoncer le sort des immigrés et leur séparation systématique d'avec les Allemands.<sup>4</sup>

En definitiva, aquellos escritores que alcanzan un mayor renombre dentro de la literatura migrante, si bien surgen de estas comunidades y pueden incluso tener en su haber una primera fase de estancia en el país como obreros en su sentido más convencional, son normalmente aquellos que trascienden los límites de las comunidades migrantes hasta alcanzar una posición ciertamente diferente dentro de la sociedad del país de acogida, lo cual les permite alcanzar un dominio de la lengua y un acceso al mercado editorial que en principio les estaría vetado a los miembros de una comunidad *minorizada*. Del mismo modo, esta posición es la que les da la voz y la fuerza para reivindicar las condiciones de vida y la integración de sus comunidades en el conjunto de la sociedad del país de destino.

Los aspectos editoriales son asimismo de especial relevancia en el surgimiento y la consolidación de este tipo de literatura dentro del canon literario de un país concreto; Neelsen (2018) destaca que, en el caso de Alemania, hay una clara apuesta por la literatura intercultural como un verdadero pilar de la identidad alemana moderna en el sentido de la pluralidad de culturas, que se plasma en la mediatización de los autores, los premios, la investigación académica y el discurso político:

(...) il faut examiner la place de la littérature de la migration et sa forte promotion sur le marché du livre. Celle-ci englobe à la fois la médiatisation de ses auteurs (par le biais de prix littéraires), un soutien financier (par des programmes publics et des fondations privées), une théorisation par le milieu universitaire et un infléchissement du discours politique. (...) la redéfinition actuelle de l'identité allemande par la littérature cherche à

<sup>3</sup> “Para mi concepto de la literatura intercultural europea no es suficiente con que haya únicamente un cambio de lengua. Igual de importantes son para ello haberse mudado de país, vivir en el extranjero, en el ámbito cultural y cotidiano de la lengua en la que se escriben estas obras”.

<sup>4</sup> “Sin embargo, no es del todo exacto dar prioridad a la fuente autobiográfica de la *Gastarbeiterliteratur* [literatura de los trabajadores invitados], so pena de entenderla exclusivamente como literatura escrita por los trabajadores migrantes. Aquellos que, como Rafik Schami, han podido reivindicar esta etiqueta, no eran obreros en sí, y si se consideraban como tales era en un gesto político destinado a denunciar la suerte de los inmigrantes y su separación sistemática de los alemanes”.

faire de l'allemand « le symbole de la pluralité des cultures ». (Neelsen, 2018, pp. 212-213).<sup>5</sup>

Observando las características anteriormente descritas, parece evidente que no se ha producido un fenómeno literario equivalente en nuestro país. Ya sea porque la migración masiva con destino España es un fenómeno relativamente más reciente que en otros países europeos, o bien porque la integración de los migrantes en la vida social y cultural del país no se ha consolidado suficientemente, no contamos con una literatura migrante establecida y reconocida en el mercado editorial español. Algunos casos aislados como el de las autoras marroquíes-*imazighen* catalanas Najat El Hachmi o Laila Karrouch (Ricci, 2007 y 2011) vienen a confirmar este vacío en el conjunto del territorio de nuestro país.

En el caso concreto de las autoras, encontramos que no solamente son menos publicadas que los hombres, sino que también son menos traducidas. En Alemania, el estudio de Valero (2008) revela que únicamente dos autoras migrantes habían sido traducidas al español (Emine Sevgi Özdamar, de origen turco, y Libuše Moníková, de origen checo). Diez años más tarde, el estudio de Quijada (2019) parece indicar un ligero repunte: de los 88 autores interculturales analizados por la autora, 25 habían sido traducidos al español, entre ellos 11 eran mujeres y, sin embargo, la única autora de procedencia turca traducida al español seguía siendo Emine Sevgi Özdamar. Cabe señalar la importancia de la población migrante turca y la proliferación de autores migrantes en el mencionado país, por lo que sería de esperar que las cifras relativas a estas autoras fueran menos escasas. Estos datos parecen indicar que dentro de un colectivo ya de por sí situado en la periferia del canon literario como son los escritores interculturales, las autoras ocupan una posición más desfavorecida aún si cabe, y entre ellas ciertas nacionalidades podrían sufrir, incluso, una tercera discriminación.

Para paliar estas lagunas y dar a conocer la literatura intercultural de autoras migrantes en inglés, francés y alemán, se ha diseñado el proyecto que describimos a continuación, con un enfoque didáctico aplicado al aula de Traducción Literaria. Nuestra propuesta parte de la base de que el tratamiento de las obras interculturales escritas por autoras y su análisis traductológico revelan aspectos fundamentales de las comunidades migrantes y, en especial, de los aspectos de género propios de las mismas, tal como demuestra Von Flotow (2000) en su análisis de la novela *La vida es un caravasar* de Emine Sevgi Özdamar traducida al inglés. Por tanto, buscaremos aplicar esta metodología de análisis a las obras de diversas autoras migrantes y concienciar al alumnado de traducción de su importancia y su interés, no únicamente desde el punto de vista literario sino también social y cultural.

## 2. Objetivos e hipótesis

La hipótesis de partida de nuestro trabajo es que las autoras migrantes consolidadas en otros países europeos aportan un gran valor añadido tanto al mercado editorial como a la vida social y cultural de sus países de destino a la hora de promover la plena integración de las comunidades migrantes. Asimismo, el aula de traducción literaria ofrece una oportunidad inmejorable de aplicar este potencial a la toma de conciencia y el desarrollo de las competencias interculturales y traductoras, con especial atención al enfoque de género como competencia transversal.

En este contexto, nuestro trabajo se plantea los siguientes objetivos:

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<sup>5</sup> “(...) es necesario examinar el lugar que ocupa la literatura de migración y su fuerte promoción en el mercado del libro [alemán]. Esta engloba a la vez la mediatización de sus autores (mediante el otorgamiento de los premios literarios), un apoyo económico (a través de programas públicos y fundaciones privadas), una teorización por parte del ámbito universitario y una inflexión del discurso político. (...) la redefinición actual de la identidad alemana a través de la literatura ha hecho de lo alemán «el símbolo de la pluralidad de culturas»”.



- dar a conocer las novelas de autoras migrantes publicadas en inglés, francés y alemán
- aplicarlas al aula de traducción con un enfoque intercultural y de género

Por motivos de alcance, en el presente trabajo expondremos únicamente la aplicación de una autora francófona, Faïza Guène, al aula de Traducción Literaria B francés-español, de la mano de su novela *Kiffe kiffe demain* (2004), a modo de ejemplo de una metodología replicable en el caso de las novelas publicadas en lengua inglesa y alemana.

### 3. Metodología

La propuesta que aquí presentamos forma parte de un estudio más amplio en torno a las autoras interculturales en lengua inglesa, francesa y alemana y sus traducciones al español. Más concretamente, las autoras estudiadas hasta la fecha son:

- Autoras jamaicanas que escriben en inglés: Zadie Smith y Andrea Levy
- Autoras turco-alemanas publicadas en alemán: Emine Sevgi Özdamar y Renan Demirkan
- Autoras argelinas que escriben en francés: Faïza Guène y Tassadit Imache.

En lo sucesivo describiremos el tratamiento de la novela *Kiffe kiffe demain*, de la autora Faïza Guène, en clase de Traducción Literaria B francés-español. Esta asignatura se imparte en cuarto curso del Grado de Traducción e Interpretación de la Universidad de Córdoba y los datos que presentamos corresponden al curso académico 2019-2020, con un total de 40 alumnos/as participantes en la propuesta didáctica.

La aplicación didáctica de la literatura intercultural permite desarrollar las distintas subcompetencias que configuran la macrocompetencia traductora, a saber: la comunicativa y textual, con la redacción y expresión oral en dos lenguas; en segundo lugar, la competencia temática, al abordar temas centrales y periféricos relacionados con la doble *minorización* que supone la condición de ser migrante y mujer en las escritoras que se incorporan dentro de este proyecto. En tercer lugar, el desarrollo de la competencia interpersonal, gracias a la cual los estudiantes consiguen negociar, sintetizar, intercambiar opiniones e incluso realizar un examen de conciencia sobre su posicionamiento sobre determinados aspectos sociales; finalmente, y por supuesto, la competencia estratégica, que está en el corazón de esta propuesta didáctica.

Asimismo, la propuesta de innovación que vamos a desgranar con un estudio de caso en el aula de Traducción Literaria B francés-español supone una ocasión idónea para la inserción y el desarrollo de algunas de las competencias básicas y específicas propias del Grado de Traducción e Interpretación de la Universidad de Córdoba, entre las que se encuentran:

#### BÁSICAS

- Capacidad para reunir e interpretar datos relevantes y para emitir juicios que incluyan una reflexión sobre diversidad de género, multiculturalidad y valores democráticos, adoptando un compromiso ético en el desarrollo de la profesión. Estaríamos desarrollando de pleno la competencia cultural ya mencionada.

#### ESPECÍFICAS

- Conocimiento de los antecedentes históricos de la disciplina, las corrientes traductológicas actuales y otras aproximaciones interdisciplinares, por ejemplo, la Escuela de la Manipulación y la Teoría Polisistémica, el enfoque de traducción y género o el de traducción y poscolonialismo.
- Analizar funciones textuales, agentes y factores relevantes en el proceso de traducción e interpretación, como por ejemplo la restricción de la literatura según Lefevere (1992).

La metodología de esta propuesta de innovación se estructura en cuatro fases que desarrollamos a continuación.

- En la primera fase, determinamos los conocimientos previos de los alumnos a propósito de la diversidad cultural y su toma de posición respecto de la misma. Para ello, utilizamos la herramienta del foro de debate disponible en la plataforma Moodle. Creamos un primer foro en el que pedimos a los estudiantes que respondan libremente a la cuestión: ¿Qué es para ti la diversidad cultural? Sus respuestas son visibles para todos los participantes de esta asignatura. Posteriormente, visualizamos una serie de vídeos que son parte del proyecto *Convergences* de Yamina Benguigui (2003), que formulan esta misma pregunta a profesionales, escritoras, creativas, periodistas, etc. Cada vídeo tiene una duración de un minuto. Tras la visualización, creamos un segundo foro en el que preguntamos al alumnado si su concepto de diversidad cultural se ha visto modificado.

- En la segunda fase, nos acercamos ya de manera teórica a los conceptos de hibridez y mestizaje, a la concepción identitaria del *entre-deux*, es decir, estar entre dos culturas sin encontrar su ubicación, o al concepto *ni/ni* (ni francesas, ni magrebíes). También ahondamos en cómo la dualidad repercute negativamente en las mujeres migrantes. En primer lugar, la discriminación y minoración desde la perspectiva geográfica (dos países: uno colonizador y otro colonizado). La fuerza de la tradición norteafricana, que aun residiendo en Francia las familias procuran respetar, y que limita la libertad de la mujer. Su condición de mujer francesa de origen magrebí la estigmatiza en los entornos públicos, instituciones, organismos, incluso en la misma escuela, sin olvidar que en casa los derechos del varón prevalecen con la connivencia de las madres. Por tanto, la discriminación que sufre en el país de acogida se une a la discriminación en el seno familiar. Ante esta situación, las escritoras francesas de origen magrebí optan por la denuncia y la reivindicación a través de la escritura. En sus novelas, recogen las diferentes reacciones posibles a través de sus protagonistas; por ejemplo, el sentimiento de desarraigo (en *Georgette !* de Farida Belghoul), la huida (*Journal « Nationalité: immigré(e) »*, Sakina Boukhedenna), el sentimiento de fingimiento (*Garçon manqué*, Nina Bouraouie), la asimilación (*Anne ici, Sélima là-bas*, Marie Féraud), la aceptación (*Samira des quatre-routes*, Jeanne Benameur) y, por fin, la integración y liberación (*Tafami*, Fatima Nouri).

- En la tercera fase, realizamos un estudio de la novela *Kiffe kiffe demain*, de la autora Faïza Guène (2004). Comenzamos visualizando una entrevista a la autora sobre la publicación de su relato en la que nos habla sobre él, su concepción de la literatura y de la vida en general. Una vez concluido el vídeo, realizamos un cuestionario en línea sobre los contenidos del mismo, para poder evaluar su comprensión. La siguiente actividad es la lectura del resumen de la novela en el que se atisban algunos retos de traducción, como son el argot y los préstamos léxicos. Finalmente, llevamos a cabo la traducción al español del primer capítulo de esta obra, del que habremos analizado previamente algunos aspectos lingüístico-culturales como son: argot (lenguaje urbano); préstamos en árabe, inglés; apócope, siglas; títulos de programas de TV y revistas juveniles; ironías; humor. Después, determinamos cómo se evidencia en el texto el posicionamiento de la autora, y para concluir realizamos la traducción al español, de la que haremos una corrección colectiva.

- Toda vez que hemos corregido la traducción, comprendido los pasajes y ajustado las connotaciones y los matices, extrapolamos esta temática a nuestro propio contexto. Nos encontramos en la fase cuatro, en la que llevamos a cabo un debate sobre diversidad cultural y mujer migrante. Para ello, proponemos a los alumnos que se documenten sobre esta temática y conozcan la labor de las diversas asociaciones que trabajan con este colectivo para su dignificación, como por ejemplo Por ti mujer; Malen Etxea; Asociación Mujeres Saharais en España; Red Ormiga- Red de Organizaciones de Mujeres Migrantes; Asociación de Mujeres Africanas de Paterna; Proyecto Esperanza (Trata de mujeres), entre otras. Con ello culmina el

proceso de reflexión que parte de las concepciones propias del alumnado y concluye en la repercusión y el activismo social.

#### 4. Resultados

A partir de las acciones emprendidas en el aula y de las diversas actividades realizadas a lo largo de las cuatro fases metodológicas que se han descrito *ut supra*, presentamos a continuación algunos de los resultados extraídos de este proyecto. Para ello estructuramos los resultados en función de las etapas del proceso de aprendizaje. A saber, a los resultados extraídos de las fases 1 y 2 los hemos denominado *Resultados de foros*; los resultados de la fase 3, se corresponden con los *Resultados de Traducción*; y por último, los resultados de la fase 4 han sido designados como *Resultados de Debate*.

A continuación, describimos el contenido de los mismos.

Resultados de foros. Los dos foros creados tienen la posibilidad de respuesta libre y abierta. En el primero de ellos se les pregunta directamente a los alumnos sobre su opinión personal a propósito de la diversidad cultural. En las 32 respuestas resultantes se repetían conceptos como la coexistencia armónica, la necesidad de la diferencia y la importancia del respeto; se le asociaban asimismo criterios como la convivencia, la tolerancia y el enriquecimiento mutuo. Tan solo 4 respuestas expusieron una definición de carácter referencial: “La cohabitación, la convivencia y la relación de personas de distintas culturas en un mismo espacio”.



Figura 1. Representación gráfica de los conceptos más representativos y reiterados en el foro 1

En la siguiente imagen se muestra una selección de los argumentos esbozados por los alumnos a propósito de la diversidad cultural.

**Re: ¿Qué es para ti la diversidad cultural?**

2020/03/24 - Tuesday, 24 de March de 2020, 17:47

Existencia de diferentes grupos culturales dentro de una misma sociedad en armonía y respeto mutuo.

[Enlace permanente](#) | [Mostrar mensaje anterior](#) | [Editar](#) | [Dividir](#) | [Borrar](#) | [Responder](#)

**Re: ¿Qué es para ti la diversidad cultural?**

2020/03/24 - Tuesday, 24 de March de 2020, 17:47

La convivencia y tolerancia mutua de varias culuras en un mismo lugar

[Enlace permanente](#) | [Mostrar mensaje anterior](#) | [Editar](#) | [Dividir](#) | [Borrar](#) | [Responder](#)

**Re: ¿Qué es para ti la diversidad cultural?**

2020/03/24 - Tuesday, 24 de March de 2020, 17:48

La diversidad cultural es la constatación y respeto a las diferencias entre los colectivos humanos como partes con un valor equivalente del conjunto de la humanidad.

[Enlace permanente](#) | [Mostrar mensaje anterior](#) | [Editar](#) | [Dividir](#) | [Borrar](#) | [Responder](#)

**Re: ¿Qué es para ti la diversidad cultural?**

2020/03/24 - Tuesday, 24 de March de 2020, 17:48

Para mí, la diversidad cultural engloba todo el entorno creado gracias a la aportación que ofrecen las diferentes culturas y el enriquecimiento que supone para una sociedad.

[Enlace permanente](#) | [Mostrar mensaje anterior](#) | [Editar](#) | [Dividir](#) | [Borrar](#) | [Responder](#)

**Re: ¿Qué es para ti la diversidad cultural?**

2020/03/24 - Tuesday, 24 de March de 2020, 17:48

Por diversidad cultural, yo entiendo lo siguiente: la presencia de diferentes culturas en un mismo contexto.

[Enlace permanente](#) | [Mostrar mensaje anterior](#) | [Editar](#) | [Dividir](#) | [Borrar](#) | [Responder](#)

Figura 2. Selección de las definiciones de diversidad cultural expresadas en el foro 1

Si en el primer foro en el que los alumnos expresaban su opinión sobre la diversidad cultural, se repetían conceptos como la coexistencia armónica, diferencia y respeto, convivencia y tolerancia, y enriquecimiento mutuo, toda vez que se han visualizado los vídeos del proyecto de Yamina Benguigui (2003), *Convergences* en el que un nutrido número de escritoras y periodistas expresan su opinión sobre la diversidad cultural, su enfoque se amplía e incorporan ideas como:

- La necesidad de conocer al otro.
- Que todos, de un modo u otro, provenimos de otras culturas.
- La diversidad cultural es un concepto amplio que abarca el género o la discapacidad.
- Y que la creación artística se expresa en un lenguaje universal que todos deberíamos hablar.





La tercera fase de la metodología estaba diseñada para la realización de la traducción del francés al español del primer capítulo de la novela *Kiffe kiffe demain* de Faiza Guène (2004). Para llevarla a cabo se realizó un análisis del texto original atendiendo especialmente a la combinación de registros lingüísticos, la heteroglosia, elementos culturales, así como a connotaciones, ironías y humor. De los resultados que destacamos tras la realización y corrección de la traducción, señalamos:

- La narración en primera persona. Esta técnica tiene dos funciones predominantes: la función informativa (describir su situación y modo de vida) y la función terapéutica, que ayudaría a la protagonista en la búsqueda de su identidad. Del mismo modo, la narración en 1ª persona compromete al lector que vive de cerca la realidad de la doble discriminación, tanto la discriminación cultural por su doble origen como por su género.
- Mestizaje lingüístico. La lengua francesa constituye una herramienta que posibilita la lucha de este colectivo contra todas las formas de exclusión. Es un lenguaje híbrido, mestizo, enriquecido con la jerga, los diferentes *slangs*, expresiones y términos árabes, y una falsa oralidad que representa el lenguaje hablado. La combinación de estos elementos heterodoxos permite recrear la versátil expresión de la diversidad y enriquece la lengua base.
- La autora refuerza el mensaje optimista de que la mujer puede superar fronteras con ayuda.

En la última etapa de la metodología, la fase 4, llevamos a cabo un debate sobre la diversidad cultural y mujer migrante, para lo cual los alumnos se han documentado sobre las acciones de las diferentes asociaciones que, a día de hoy, velan y defienden los derechos de las mujeres migrantes y les procuran la ayuda y atención necesarias. Algunas de las asociaciones que se enumeran y de las que se exponen sus objetivos son las siguientes: Por ti mujer; MALEN ETXEA; Asociación Mujeres Saharauis en España; Red Ormiga- Red de Organizaciones de Mujeres Migrantes; Asociación de Mujeres Africanas de Paterna; Proyecto Esperanza (Trata de mujeres). Concluida esta actividad, los alumnos exponen y argumentan algunas de las acciones de estas asociaciones en pro de la defensa de los derechos de la mujer migrante y la denuncia de su marginación y discriminación, así como las actuaciones, talleres, etc. que llevan a cabo para su integración y adquisición de autonomía.

A modo de síntesis nos quedamos con algunas de las propuestas de los alumnos/as tales como que la sensibilización de la población con respecto a un colectivo poblacional doblemente marginado por su origen y su género es fundamental, así como la comprensión, el acercamiento y el conocimiento de su realidad, sin obviar el compromiso público/privado, social/individual con respecto a unos seres humanos a los que se repudia desde su nacimiento, sin que ellas hayan tenido opción de elegir sexo o lugar de origen.

Para concluir, consideramos que la traducción literaria, y en particular traducir a otras lenguas las creaciones artísticas de autoras que sufren de primera mano la represión, la sumisión y el racismo, favorece la transmisión y difusión de su lucha y de sus reivindicaciones, además aportan un imaginario diferente del representado por el canon literario y por tanto, enriquece la literatura francesa y la abre a entidades plurales.

## 5. Discusión y conclusiones

Tras aplicar la metodología indicada en sus distintas fases y recabar el *feedback* de los/as estudiantes que participaron en la propuesta didáctica que hemos presentado en este estudio extraemos las siguientes conclusiones:

1. Al emplear en el aula de traducción obras literarias menos canonizadas permitimos la visibilización de realidades propias de culturas *minorizadas* como la de género y la emigrante tal y como recogen las corrientes traductológicas de finales del siglo XX y principios del XXI.
2. Las subcompetencias temática e interpersonal de traducción se trabajan especialmente en las fases 1, 2 y 4. La primera de ellas se ha desarrollado abordando teóricamente aspectos relacionados con la diversidad cultural, la hibridez y el mestizaje, las concepciones identitarias (las *entre-deux* y *ni/ni*) y la dualidad negativa que afecta a las mujeres inmigrantes. La segunda se articula a través de la realización del debate grupal sobre los colectivos que realizan labores de apoyo y promoción a los grupos étnicos *minorizados* en Francia. Por otro lado, se han puesto en práctica las subcompetencias comunicativa-textual y la estratégica en la fase 3 en lo concerniente a la identificación de retos de traducción y a la resolución de los mismos, que, recordemos, es uno de los objetivos básicos de los estudios de Traducción e Interpretación en la Universidad de Córdoba. Respecto de la subcompetencia cultural, es transversal a todo el planteamiento docente desplegado en este trabajo dado que tanto las actividades preliminares como las exposiciones magistrales, los proyectos de traducción, las proyecciones y los debates han permitido el conocimiento y (re)conocimiento de los estudiantes sobre diversidad de género, multiculturalidad y valores democráticos.
3. En su conjunto, la metodología de innovación aplicada muestra resultados favorables sobre la apreciación de la diversidad cultural, la identificación de la hibridez y la valoración de realidades sociales ajenas y propias, por lo que podemos concluir que se ha dotado a los/as estudiantes no solo de contenidos sino de destrezas esenciales para abordar su futuro profesional como mediadores/as interculturales. En este sentido, Julve y Palomo (2005, p. 28) indicaban que el desarrollo de esas habilidades “favorece el reconocimiento de los individuos y los grupos, mejora la calidad de los servicios y potencia relaciones más democráticas; permite mejorar los procesos, resultados e impactos de las interacciones que los profesionales establecen con los usuarios, con los grupos, las organizaciones y la comunidad; conlleva la transformación de las prácticas sociales, a través de la movilización del conocimiento y los saberes basados en la experiencia y en la acción y facilita la transformación de las relaciones técnicas y sociales desde las personas e instituciones”.

En futuros trabajos, planteamos replicar y desarrollar la metodología expuesta con la francesa Tassadit Imache, las escritoras británicas con antecedentes jamaicanos Zadie Smith y Andrea Levy y las autoras turco-alemanas Emine Sevgi Özdamar y Renan Demirkan. Asimismo, cotejaremos los resultados de aprendizaje de estos estudios de caso con los recabados en el proyecto de Faïza Guène. Por último, a largo plazo, nos planteamos diseñar un estudio empírico que mida el grado de desarrollo de la competencia cultural y la repercusión que tiene sobre la práctica de la interpretación en los servicios públicos en los estudiantes del último curso del Grado de Traducción e Interpretación de la Universidad de Córdoba.

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## LA FORMACIÓN DE EDUCADORES COMPETENTES EN ATENCIÓN A LA DIVERSIDAD

### TRAINING SKILLED TEACHERS IN THE FIELD OF ATTENTION TO DIVERSITY

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#### RESUMEN

La antropología cultural ha probado la tesis de la reversibilidad del proceso más pertinaz de cuantos afectan al ser humano: la socialización. Según Boas y Mead, las pautas aprendidas culturalmente son modificables y los procesos de socialización reversibles. La razón de este estudio se halla en tal postulado, pues, pese a que existen evidencias científicas de que en las especies de reproducción sexual no hay dos individuos iguales y de que la diversidad intragrupal es mayor que la intergrupala, en los procesos de socialización los seres humanos aprenden a integrarse simbólicamente en grupos compactos en función de variables como la etnia, la religión, el género o la clase social y a construir y rechazar lo extraño, lo ajeno, lo otro. Instaladas y posicionadas en su cultura, las personas perciben el mundo desde un punto de vista etnocéntrico y, por tanto, sesgadamente. Según el Teorema de Thomas, si las situaciones se definen como reales son reales en sus consecuencias. Y es que las definiciones culturales de la realidad son asimiladas por los sujetos y condicionan su comportamiento. El objetivo de la investigación es descubrir los clichés culturales de los estudiantes del Máster en Educación Inclusiva de la Universidad de Córdoba (España) del curso 2018-2019. Se opta por una metodología de corte cualitativo y por la técnica de la interrogación, empleándose como herramienta la entrevista semiestructurada y abierta. El análisis de los datos revela que los participantes aprehenden el mundo desde su particular ángulo, desde su contingencia personal y cultural, desde su miopía, mostrando prejuicios etnocéntricos y juicios infundados, por lo que se plantea que los procesos formativos de los docentes se dirijan a hacerles reconocer, neutralizar y dismantelar tales percepciones cristalizadas y a ayudarles a construir una idea de diversidad basada en las diferencias individuales, no en las grupales.

**Palabras clave:** diversidad, cultura, formación docente, educación inclusiva.

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**ABSTRACT**

Cultural anthropology has confirmed the thesis of the reversibility of the most persistent process of all those that affect human beings: socialisation. According to Boas and Mead, culturally learned patterns are modifiable and socialisation processes are reversible. Such postulate is the reason for this study, since, despite the fact that there is scientific evidence that in species with sexual reproduction no two individuals are alike, and that intragroup diversity is greater than intergroup diversity, in socialisation processes human beings learn to symbolically integrate into compact groups according to variables such as ethnicity, religion, gender or social class and to construct and reject the strange, the foreign, the other. Well established and positioned in their culture, people perceive the world from an ethnocentric point of view and, therefore, in a biased way. According to the Thomas Theorem, if situations are defined as real, they are real in their consequences. Actually, cultural definitions of reality are assimilated by the subjects and condition their behaviour. The aim of this research is to find out the cultural clichés of the students enrolled in the Master's programme in Inclusive Education at the University of Córdoba (Spain) in the 2018-2019 academic year. We opted for a qualitative methodology and the interrogation technique, using the semi-structured and open interview as a tool. The analysis of the data reveals that the participants apprehend the world from their particular angle, from their personal and cultural contingency, from their myopia, showing ethnocentric prejudices and making unfounded judgments, which is why it is proposed that teachers' training processes be directed to make them acknowledge, neutralise and dismantle such crystallised perceptions and help them build an idea of diversity based on individual, not group, differences.

**Keywords:** diversity, culture, socialization, teacher training, inclusive education.

**1. Introducción***1.1. Estado de la cuestión*

La multiculturalidad se ha convertido en seña de identidad del mundo postmoderno, un mundo de la información, globalizado y en continuo cambio (Hargreaves, 2003). La idea de una sociedad compacta, estructurada en torno a un sistema de valores único y unos patrones de conducta socialmente compartidos carece hoy de fundamento. Lo uniforme y homogéneo ha dado paso a lo complejo, plural y mestizo. Ahora bien, aunque se admita la diversidad, la percepción de lo diverso repele. El hecho de que se reconozca algo no significa que se apruebe. Y es que "la apertura a lo ajeno, a lo distinto, tiene grados que van desde la simple tolerancia racional a la aceptación afectiva, desde el reconocimiento a la acogida; desde el admitir al aprobar" (Altarejos, 2004, p. 33). Así, una persona puede entender las diferencias y, a la par, rechazar al diferente; puede admitir la diversidad y no tolerar al diverso; puede, en suma, exclamar la siguiente paradójica frase: "Yo amo a la humanidad, lo que me molesta es la gente" (Altarejos, 2004, p. 41).

El otro es convertido en realidad secundaria y, por tanto, estigmatizado. Y es que el ser humano es un *ser en situación*, una situación dada por el mundo social e histórico en el que vive, que incrusta en su conciencia los valores y normas imperantes y le imprime el sello de autenticidad y el mandato sutil de rechazar al diferente. Sin embargo, "solo se educa desde la experiencia distinta de cada educando; este es un principio vertebrador de toda acción educativa" (Ortega Ruiz, 2020, p. 29).

## 1.2. Bases biológicas de la diversidad humana

Si padeciésemos un defecto fisiológico y todo lo viésemos en verde, este color carecería de sentido para nosotros. Ni siquiera apreciaríamos que nuestra visión es monocromática. Lo verde sería lo natural y, por tanto, no existiría como color, pues su existencia requiere la de los demás colores, al definirse por distinción y contraste con ellos.

Y del mismo modo que el color verde no existe sino en relación con otros, nosotros tampoco existimos sin los demás, porque nuestra identidad es precisamente distinción y relación, una relación triple: de nuestro ser consigo mismo (relación *ego-ego*), con la alteridad (relación *ego-alter*) y con el mundo (relación *ego-cosmos*). Y es que el ser humano está referido a otro y, además, inserto en un medio. No es, por tanto, un ser *en sí* ni *para sí* sino *en otro* y *para otro*; un ser, en definitiva, relacionado, relativo:

*Cuando Eddington, discutiendo la teoría de la relatividad escribía: «Una extensión que no es relativa a nada en sus alrededores no tiene significado. Imagínese a usted solo en medio de la nada, y luego trate de decirme cómo es de grande», podía haberse muy bien referido a la personalidad en vez de al tamaño físico.*

*Pues nosotros nos definimos, tanto psicológica como físicamente, por comparación y diferenciación. Un color no existe salvo en relación a otro color; la personalidad no tiene significado salvo en relación a otras personalidades. El «Yo» no puede funcionar sin el «Tú» (Storr, 1970, pp. 104-105).*

Ya en la década de los cincuenta del siglo XX, tras el descubrimiento de la estructura química de los cromosomas y de los genes, se pudo comprobar este extremo a nivel biológico. La reproducción es descrita y explicada ahora en términos semióticos de teoría de la información y la comunicación. Más que una esencia común inmutable (con base platónico-aristotélica) es una relación (de apareamiento) lo que caracteriza a partir de este momento a cualquier especie. Esta se entiende “como una *comunidad reproductora* definida por la posibilidad de interfecundación entre sus miembros” (Aranzadi, 2003, p. 397). La antigua concepción esencialista deja paso finalmente a otra relacional. Y es que el darwinismo había iniciado ya, un siglo antes, el tránsito de lo inmutable a lo cambiante y, en consecuencia, de la esencia a la relación, porque aceptar el cambio supone aceptar también el intercambio entre los seres. El siguiente texto de Ernst Mayr (en Aranzadi, 2003, pp. 380-381) lo expresa con mayor claridad:

*La teoría de la evolución de Charles Darwin solo fue posible porque fue capaz de pensar acerca de la especie de un modo nuevo. Aunque Lamarck había empezado a hacerlo cuando sugirió que las especies podían cambiar, Darwin completó la tarea. Si los organismos podían cambiar, entonces no tenían una esencia fija, de modo que el contraste entre esencia y accidente carecía de sentido. Lo cual, a su vez, significaba que la variación –o las diferencias– entre los miembros individuales de una especie podían ser extremadamente importantes.*

*Por consiguiente, Darwin puso cabeza abajo la definición esencialista de especie. Alegó que lo importante en lo que respecta a los miembros individuales que la componen no es lo que tienen en común sino cuán diferentes son. La teoría darwiniana de la evolución por selección natural alegaba que la variación, no la esencia unitaria, es la condición básica de la vida.*

No somos, pues, unidades calcadas e inalterables sino diversas y en flujo permanente, seres singulares que nos construimos y autoidentificamos en la relación con los demás, que son radicalmente distintos a nosotros e indispensables para nuestra existencia. “Los humanos somos seres para el otro, y nos ‘explicamos’ como humanos solo desde el otro” (Ortega Ruiz, 2020, p. 25).

### 1.3. De la 'nature' a la 'nurture', de la diversidad individual a la de bloques

De las consideraciones anteriores se desprende que la diversidad es una característica humana connatural, y ello implica admitir la singularidad y complejidad de la persona. Los filósofos lo han hecho desde la época clásica. “Así como resplandece hermosura un manto artísticamente trabajado y adornado con toda clase de flores, no otra cosa ocurre con un régimen en el que florecen toda clase de caracteres”, afirma Platón en *La República* (1990, p. 804). La educación debía contemplar, pues, y valorar como riqueza, las características individuales. Para Aristóteles (1994), el ser está constituido por dos principios: esencia (común) y potencia (proyecto genuino).

La idea de diversidad individual atraviesa el medievo y adquiere una perspectiva científica en el Renacimiento. El tratado más significativo es *Examen de Ingenios para las Ciencias*, escrito en 1575 por el doctor navarro Huarte de San Juan, considerado como el primer tratado de orientación profesional. En él se establecen, según los conocimientos médicos de la época, las relaciones existentes entre la constitución física y las capacidades intelectuales como el entendimiento, la memoria y la imaginación.

Por su parte, Juan Luis Vives, en el capítulo III de su obra *Las Disciplinas*, hace una penetrante descripción de los distintos tipos de ingenios o estilos intelectuales que presentan los escolares y en el IV aborda la manera de conocerlos y orientarlos. Y es que “en cada hombre hay, como decía Montaigne, un ser maravillosamente vario y ondulante” (Ortega y Gasset, 2004, p. 185). Sobre el haz de la historia ha flotado, pues, la antigua y acreditada idea de diversidad individual.

Ahora bien, en los procesos de socialización aprendemos a clasificar, a simplificar y a generalizar. La cultura nos sirve unos clichés que ha elaborado a lo largo de su desarrollo y nos enseña a encajar en ellos la riquísima diversidad humana. Inadvertidamente esta adquiere el carácter de atributo grupal. Así, predicamos uniformidades de los musulmanes, de los gitanos, de los homosexuales o de las mujeres que solo existen en nuestra ignorancia y hacemos generalizaciones sobre ellos sin base empírica alguna. He aquí el modo de constituirse la diversidad en bloque. Las culturas, etnias, religiones, clases sociales, géneros... se levantan en nuestra cabeza como potentes realidades escindidas, jerarquizadas y dotadas de atribuciones morales. Los tópicos con los que nos referimos a los “distintos” confirman ideas, costumbres y actitudes larvadas de repulsa hacia ellos que, elaboradas socialmente, políticamente, operan en nosotros fijándonos los límites de lo que es aceptable e inaceptable.

Son abundantes los estudios que han mostrado que poseemos limitaciones al procesar la información social, lo que nos lleva a hacer un análisis tendencioso de la misma dirigido a mostrar una visión de nosotros positiva (Tesser, 1988). Así, tendemos a pensar de una manera orientada, sesgada, que favorezca nuestra propia imagen (Leary, 2007; Taylor y Brown, 1988, 1994), no siendo conscientes de la influencia que estos sesgos tienen en nuestros juicios,

Decía genialmente Marx que, antes de ser construido, un edificio solo existe en la imaginación de su diseñador, pero una vez erigido se convierte en una auténtica realidad material, una cualidad objetiva en la que se vive. Pues bien, el colosal edificio de los clichés se ha erigido, firmemente, sobre formidables cimientos y, dado que las personas somos *todos integrales*, presenta tres estratos, uno de naturaleza cognitiva –estereotipos–, otro emocional –prejuicios– y el tercero conductual –*discriminación*–. Los estereotipos, que son convicciones profundas, creencias básicas a través de las que se interpreta a los otros, constituyen el estrato básico, el más profundo de la arquitectura de la vida, pues, como decía Ortega y Gasset (2004), más que tenerlas se está en ellas. Ahora bien, los tópicos en los que se vive se entremezclan con temores, intereses, proyecciones, actitudes hostiles... que, finalmente, se traducen en conductas de rechazo y discriminación. El antagonismo trasciende, pues, los límites del plano cognitivo y encadena el afectivo y el comportamental. O sea, que lo pautado culturalmente adquiere primero significación simbólica y después emotiva y fáctica. La creencia desemboca en

malestar y miedo y estos sentimientos acaban comprometiendo la actividad del sujeto. El “diferente” será indefectiblemente proscrito en función de los procesos políticos reguladores no solo explícitos en la normativa sino también implícitos en la práctica consuetudinaria.

Y el fenómeno no es reciente. En su libro *El desarrollo de la teoría antropológica*, Marvin Harris (2003, p. 116) describe magníficamente cómo los misioneros, mercaderes, industriales o administradores veían, durante la colonización, a los nativos:

*Como son más infantiles que los europeos, para los nativos resulta peligroso el tener libre acceso a las bebidas alcohólicas. Son gentes que si se les da la oportunidad prefieren andar a pie a trasladarse por algún medio de transporte; les gusta más dormir sobre el suelo frío que en un lecho abrigado; trabajan bajo la lluvia sin sentir la humedad y bajo el sol sin sentir calor; llevan cargas sobre sus cabezas sin fatigarse. La vida no les resulta a estos pueblos tan preciosa como a los europeos; cuando se mueren, los hijos no sufren un dolor tan profundo, y cuando se hieren ellos mismos no les hace tanto daño como a los hombres civilizados.*

En el texto anterior se evidencia también la capacidad de la mente de establecer contrastes binarios y enfrentar lo que simple y llanamente es distinto. Sirva como ejemplo el planteamiento de la antropología de que *ser macho* y *ser hembra* no son cosas opuestas. El humano básico es hembra, y es la presencia de un solo cromosoma Y lo que hace abortar lo que se conoce como *Plan Eva*. La relación entre sexos es una relación de complementariedad, de influencia recíproca, o, si se acepta el postulado anterior, inclusiva, mas nunca hostil. Pero es que, además, existen múltiples casos intermedios y ambiguos de hermafroditas (cromosómicos, genéticos, hormonales, gonadales y anatómicos) que no son ni machos ni hembras, casos que, o son silenciados, o forzados a encajar en una u otra de las dos únicas casillas clasificatorias concebidas por la cultura occidental, o arrojados a categorías residuales (enfermos, casos atípicos, fenómenos de la naturaleza...). Y el dimorfismo se mantiene también si se pasa del sexo al género: varón y mujer, sola y exclusivamente, saturado de masculinidad el primero y de feminidad la segunda, puros ambos, heterosexuales plenos y homofóbicos en su ser radical.

La situación requiere que los profesionales de la educación sean conscientes de que sus percepciones están condicionadas por moldes culturales, por imágenes no inocentes del otro que son producto de la comunidad y de la familia, y estén dispuestos a superar recelos y actitudes larvadas de rechazo y a llevar a término la prohibición de reducir lo múltiple a lo mismo. “Una de las capacidades más importantes conquistadas en la evolución animal es la habilidad para tomar decisiones desde nuestro interior en lugar de aceptar las que se imponen desde fuera” (Thomas, 2005, p. 27). Es por ello que se plantea la presente investigación, con la que se pretende dar respuesta a los siguientes interrogantes: ¿qué entienden por diversidad los futuros educadores?; ¿la conciben como un atributo individual o de grupo?; ¿qué tipos de experiencias escolares de atención a la diversidad conocen?

## 2. Objetivos

Se presentan a continuación los objetivos fundamentales que guían nuestro trabajo:

- a) Conocer las ideas previas de los futuros profesionales de la educación respecto a la diversidad
- b) Descubrir si obedecen a esquemas culturalmente construidos
- c) Recopilar experiencias sobre atención a la diversidad
- d) Promover la reflexión sobre el propio pensamiento habida cuenta de la imbricación de este con las emociones y la conducta.

## 3. Metodología



### 3.1. Participantes

En la investigación participaron 42 estudiantes (25 mujeres y 17 hombres) seleccionados por conveniencia de entre los 50 matriculados en el Máster en Educación Inclusiva de la Universidad de Córdoba en el curso 2018-2019. Sus edades estaban comprendidas entre los 22 y los 49 años y sus estudios de Grado se distribuían entre tres titulaciones: Educación Infantil (20), Educación Primaria (18) y Educación Social (4).

### 3.2. Procedimiento

El estudio se llevó a cabo en el curso académico 2018-2019 y estuvo compuesto por cuatro fases:

- a) Preparatoria: en esta etapa se delineó el trabajo; fue el momento de tomar una serie de decisiones sobre el método de investigación y de elaborar los instrumentos de acopio y análisis de información.
- b) Recogida productiva de datos: A comienzos del curso, y antes de iniciar la primera clase, se realizaron las entrevistas a los participantes prestándoles la máxima atención y generando en ellos un clima de confianza para que se pudiesen expresar con sinceridad y sin ningún tipo de recelo. Autorizaron el uso de una grabadora de audio.
- c) Fase analítica o de reducción de la información: se volcaron los textos producidos en una tabla. Si estas eran coincidentes se anotaba solo la frecuencia.
- d) Disposición y transformación de datos: se ajustó la masa de información obtenida en las entrevistas a los interrogantes planteados con la intención de sacarle todo el provecho posible.
- e) Obtención de resultados y establecimiento de conclusiones: se realizó una síntesis que permitiera presentar los hallazgos más destacados, extraer las pertinentes conclusiones y hacer propuestas de mejora.
- f) Fase informativa: con la publicación de este artículo se pretende cumplir el deber ético de todo investigador de entregar a la comunidad educativa en general y a los informantes en particular los frutos obtenidos en el estudio.

### 3.3. Método e instrumento

En lo que respecta a la metodología de investigación, se decide emplear una de naturaleza fenomenológica, etnográfica o cualitativa. Si la positivista o cuantitativa se caracteriza por aislar variables y analizar solo sus aspectos observables y medibles con objeto de *conocerlos*, la cualitativa, tal y como afirma Smith (1987), se adentra en la complejidad de las realidades de estudio desde una perspectiva subjetiva y permite no solo conocerlas sino también *comprenderlas y transformarlas*. Para Goetz y Le Compte (1988, p. 180), “el etnógrafo comprueba y genera sucesivamente explicaciones, tanto de sentido común como teóricas, del comportamiento y actitudes de los individuos y grupos que estudia”. La principal diferencia entre ambos modos de proceder radica en que el primero estudia variables simples y estáticas bajo riguroso control y el segundo estructurales y dinámicas (Pita Fernández y Pértegas Díaz, 2002) sin alteración alguna del curso de los acontecimientos sino en su fluir libre y natural.

Como alcanzar conocimiento sobre el objeto de interés no era suficiente porque se perseguía también su comprensión, es decir, entender los valores y pensamientos sobre atención a la diversidad de los sujetos participantes, se optó por el enfoque cualitativo. Ello implicaba realizar un examen minucioso de las respuestas, explorar el caos del objeto investigado, ahondar en él y hacerle preguntas hasta que arrojara sustancia sobrada para el examen y la deliberación, tareas que deberían adquirir finalmente una dimensión operativa y traducirse en cambio educativo y social. Conocer y comprender son solo el portal del objetivo



último que debe tener toda indagación científica aplicada, que, como dijimos antes, es transformar.

El instrumento que se elaboró fue una entrevista semiestructurada y abierta que contenía las seis preguntas siguientes:

- ¿Qué es diversidad?
- ¿Qué es lo contrario de diversidad?
- ¿Sociedades diversas o subjetividades diversas?
- ¿Qué clases de diversidad existen?
- ¿Podrías describir cuatro rasgos de la imagen que te viene a la cabeza si piensas en un chino?
- ¿Atiende la escuela la diversidad? ¿Cómo?

### 3.4. Análisis de los datos

El proceso analítico consistió en esencia en la búsqueda de vínculos y de relaciones significativas entre los datos. Aunque al recogerlos se realizó, inevitablemente, un análisis preliminar de estos llegó un momento en que fue necesario ahondar en los mismos, para lo cual lo primero que se hizo fue ordenar el cúmulo de información. Así, a cada entrevista se le adjudicó un código de identificación (SUJETO 1, SUJETO 2, SUJETO 3..., SUJETO 42). Seguidamente se reunieron las respuestas dadas por los participantes a cada una de las preguntas para, de este modo, leer de forma consecutiva las de todos y proceder a su exploración, buscando no solo las concordancias sino también las discordancias o rivalidades en los textos producidos.

## 4. Resultados

El análisis descriptivo de los datos ofrece generosos frutos cuyo valor pedagógico invita a una inaplazable e intensa revisión de los procesos formativos de los profesores y los educadores sociales. Y es que se han encontrado significativas contradicciones intrínsecas en la noción de diversidad construida por los estudiantes de postgrado que componían la muestra, discrepancias soterradas bajo el umbral de la conciencia tan firmes como desapercibidas.

En la primera pregunta - *¿Qué es diversidad?* - se encontró que para treinta y ocho alumnos es diferencia, distinción, particularidad, singularidad, variedad o heterogeneidad y para cuatro es, además, integración de cosas diferentes. Se aprecia, pues, una construcción teórica del concepto acorde con la de la comunidad científica, lo que hace pensar que en sus procesos de formación han elaborado una idea de diversidad bien fundamentada pedagógicamente.

Por lo que atañe a la segunda pregunta - *¿Qué es lo contrario de diversidad?* -, treinta y seis de los encuestados responden que es igualdad y normalidad, seis que es uniformidad u homogeneidad, uno contesta que "no hay nada contrario a la diversidad" (SUJETO 20) y otro que "lo opuesto a diversidad es discriminación" (SUJETO 34). En estas respuestas se constata que son muchos los estudiantes (85,76%) que contraponen al concepto de diversidad los de igualdad y normalidad. Aunque las relaciones que se pueden establecer entre estos conceptos son múltiples (inclusivas, complementarias, de alianza, de influencia mutua...), las de oposición han anidado en ellos por obra y gracia de la cultura, en la que han aprendido a enfrentar lo que simple y llanamente es distinto, lo cual es, además de erróneo, verdaderamente grave, máxime cuando se trata de futuros agentes educativos.

Respecto a la cuestión tercera - *¿Sociedades diversas o subjetividades diversas?* -, veintiún estudiantes optaron por sociedades diversas, ocho por subjetividades diversas y trece por ambas cosas, entendiendo que dichos conceptos están ligados, de modo que las

subjetividades diversas forman sociedades diversas. Nuevamente aparece un importante porcentaje de sujetos - 50% - que refleja una percepción en bloque de la diversidad cuyo origen es cultural. Así, impelidos y empujados por los contextos familiar, académico y social, los sujetos han ido formando conjuntos de creencias organizadas, cosmovisiones relativamente estables. Son las teorías implícitas, intuitivas o prácticas, teorías que se componen de un conocimiento conservador, inconsciente, simplista y falseado.

En la pregunta número 4 - *¿Cuántos tipos de diversidad conoces?* -, 37 sujetos (el 88%) se pronuncian sobre seis: religiosa, cultural, sexual, lingüística, económica y étnica. Con estas respuestas se remacha el clavo de que la diversidad que conciben es sobre todo diversidad cultural, no humana. Sus respuestas reflejaron, una vez más, la existencia de esquemas mentales culturalmente construidos y la no contemplación de la complejidad y pluridimensionalidad del ser humano. Claro que hemos encontrado también respuestas como la siguiente: "la diversidad es infinita" (SUJETOS 15 y 40).

En referencia a la quinta pregunta - *¿Qué cuatro rasgos se te vienen a la cabeza al pensar en un chino?* -, se obtiene un gran cúmulo de estereotipos, entre los que destacan ojos rasgados, piel pálida, estatura baja, cabello moreno y liso, inteligencia, laboriosidad e introversión. Se observa, pues, que en sus mentes está el grupo de los chinos perfectamente constituido, un grupo homogéneo, invariante y alejado del que integran ellos, que hablan como *sujetos posicionados*, es decir, como miembros de un *nosotros cultural* con una potencial carga etnocentrista. Hay base para afirmar que en sus mentes han forjado también un grupo compacto culturalmente, aunque con cierta variación física en el que se encuentran, pero no los chinos pese a que una alumna lo era. Esta queda rotunda e inconscientemente excluida del conjunto imaginario erigido. Valga como ejemplo la siguiente respuesta: "nosotros somos más diversos que ellos" (SUJETO 34).

En la sexta y última pregunta - *¿atiende la escuela a la diversidad?, ¿cómo?* -, hay trece estudiantes que creen que sí, diez que opinan que no y diecinueve que consideran que la atención a la diversidad está en proceso de mejora. De manera general, las respuestas giran en torno a la puesta en marcha de metodologías diversas como el trabajo por proyectos, la atención individualizada, las adaptaciones curriculares, el trabajo del profesorado de Pedagogía Terapéutica y Audición y Lenguaje y el de los equipos de orientación. Sirva el siguiente texto como apostilla de todo lo anterior: "Para alcanzar el éxito educativo necesitaremos una adecuada coordinación entre los diferentes agentes educativos" (SUJETO 40).

Si, como se desprende de los datos, los sujetos del estudio vislumbran nuevos horizontes en el tema de la atención a la diversidad, estos solo pueden alcanzarse si se plantean experiencias formativas que los capaciten para ejercer la sublime función que tienen encomendada: hacer desplegar el proyecto de vida de cada ser humano. Pero de ello se hablará en el epígrafe siguiente.

## 5. Discusión, conclusiones y propuestas

El estudio ha revelado con sobrada claridad que los sujetos de la muestra - estudiantes que inician el Máster en Educación Inclusiva de la Universidad de Córdoba - poseen dos linajes de saberes sobre atención a la diversidad, uno explícito de carácter teórico que han elaborado en su periplo académico y que está sustentado en la ciencia y otro implícito de carácter experiencial que han fraguado en los procesos de socialización y que carece de fundamento y veracidad. Son dos conocimientos dispares y aun antagónicos que conviven sin pugna ni estorbo.

Ciertamente, bajo el saber madurado y despierto de los participantes se ha destapado un estrato de ideas dormidas, un sistema de doctrinas que yace apaciguado en el fondo de su ser como fermento y simiente. Así, en sus distintos contextos de relación y a través de intercambios espontáneos han ido asimilando las cosmovisiones y tópicos de la sociedad, “las fórmulas de uso mostrenco que flotan en el aire público y que se van depositando sobre el haz de la personalidad como una costra de opiniones muertas y sin dinamismo” (Ortega y Gasset, 2004, p, 711). Lo llamativo de estos credos íntimos es que entran en contradicción con los aprendidos formalmente de modo que los estudiantes son capaces de aseverar, tal y como se ha comprobado, una cosa y su contraria. Definen la diversidad como la singularidad y particularidad de los seres humanos y a renglón seguido afirman que los chinos son todos iguales o que lo contrario de la diversidad es la normalidad. La razón no es otra que la condición de representaciones sepultadas en el subsuelo de la cognición que tienen estas teorías y su rutina de aflorar en forma de rebrotes espontáneos.

Los hallazgos del estudio se hallan en línea con los planteamientos de Núñez Ayala (2019, p- 215), para quien “todos los sujetos como agentes activos generan teorías implícitas [...] que reúnen un conjunto de contenidos culturales organizados sistémicamente y con cierta recurrencia en ideas típicas y representativas sobre determinado ámbito de la realidad”.

El mismo posicionamiento muestran Pérez Gómez, Soto y Serván (2015) al considerar que el conocimiento implícito es de carácter holístico, inconsciente, experiencial, situacional y contextualizado.

De lo anterior se desprende que los formadores en atención a la diversidad han de marcarse como objetivo prioritario la reconstrucción del conocimiento experiencial de sus estudiantes porque, al estar tan arraigado y ser inconsciente, no es posible su sustitución: “Flaco servicio se hace cuando, desde instancias académicas [...] se pretende desacreditar o sustituir de golpe tales plataformas cognitivas por extrañas, aunque correctas, explicaciones científicas (Pérez Gómez, 1998, p. 234). Así pues, o el profesorado de las Facultades de Educación conoce dichas ideas e intenta transformarlas con delicadeza y a torno muy lento o estas emergerán con cualquier pretexto a la hora del ejercicio profesional, tal y como han emergido en esta investigación. Ello requiere confrontarlas con el conocimiento científico y hacer que entren en conflicto y erupción.

Efectivamente, se hace indispensable provocar disonancias cognitivas en los estudiantes, pues el desasosiego que estas producen en ellos les empuja a la reflexión y al diálogo hasta instaurar el confortador y necesario equilibrio. En ellos no habrá ya dualidad sino unidad de conocimientos. Pérez Gómez (1998, pp. 234-235) expresa esta idea de la siguiente manera:

*Parece que el modo de provocar su transformación no es la sustitución por teorías epistemológicamente más elegantes sino su progresiva reconstrucción cuando al utilizarlas y explicitarlas profusamente [...] se manifiestan sus lagunas e insuficiencias, y el contraste o el conflicto cognitivo demuestra la superioridad teórica y práctica de otras formas o esquemas de interpretación y actuación. Así, en la práctica y mediante la vinculación afectiva con intereses y propósitos pragmáticos, se reconstruyen y transforman los esquemas de conocimiento que también surgieron en el transcurso de experiencias vitales afectivamente contaminadas.*

Ciertamente, se necesita un movimiento sísmico en la mente de los futuros educadores que derribe las lindes culturales y que les permita ver al *otro* como un sujeto único y no como un representante de un grupo culturalmente construido. “Vivir éticamente es remar contra corriente, con el viento en contra; es estar en permanente vigilia, nunca en reposo, porque el otro se nos presenta sin previo aviso” (Ortega Ruiz, 2019, p. 27). Nada es tan necesario, pues, como una

disciplina de liberación íntima que enseñe a emancipar el pensamiento propio de las ligaduras culturales. “La función de los profesionales de la educación supera los límites académicos y se adentra en los sociales y personales” (Cernadas Ríos, Lorenzo Moledo y Santos Rego, 2019, p. 21).

Como limitación importante del estudio cabe señalar el hecho de haber empleado solo la técnica de la entrevista. Hubiera sido muy interesante hacer una triangulación de métodos y haber podido confrontar el material obtenido con el derivado de grupos de discusión. Ello hubiera proporcionado, entre otros aspectos, discrepancias, contradicciones y omisiones significativas, lo que hubiera permitido realizar un análisis más completo y exhaustivo del asunto tratado.

En cuanto a la apertura de líneas de investigación, se plantea replicar el estudio con una muestra diferente tomada ahora de los profesionales en ejercicio. La perspectiva que estos pueden aportar podría arrojar mucha luz sobre el tema. Se sugiere, pues, una confrontación entre el discurso de los estudiantes y el de los docentes (triangulación de sujetos). Así se podría lograr un conocimiento de la realidad más amplio y acertado. También se podría emprender un estudio comparado, constituyendo una muestra de estudiantes de los distintos Grados en Educación y contrastando sus opiniones con las de los sujetos de la presente investigación. También sería conveniente ampliar el número de preguntas de la entrevista no solo para descubrir aspectos que hayan podido quedar ocultos sino también para hallar posibles contradicciones e inconsistencias, pues suele suceder que los sujetos contestan lo que aceptable y bien visto socialmente (deseabilidad social). En definitiva, con esta investigación se abre un campo amplio de estudio que podría multiplicar el conocimiento sobre la construcción y destrucción de los clichés culturales de los agentes educativos y sobre el valor de tomar caminos “equivocados” a juzgar por los agentes sociales y de emprender acciones contra las normas socialmente establecidas. “Todo está por construir, todo es provisional como la ‘circunstancia’ (situación) que envuelve la vida misma; no hay cánones prefijados que prescriban una conducta; la tenemos que realizar ‘a tientas’” (Ortega Ruiz, 2020, p. 27).

## Agradecimientos

No queremos terminar este trabajo sin expresar abiertamente nuestro agradecimiento a los estudiantes del Máster de Educación Inclusiva del curso 2018-2019 por su colaboración en el mismo.

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## THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE IMPROVEMENT OF TEACHING SKILLS ON PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING (PBL)

### IMPACTO DE LA COVID-19 EN LA MEJORA DE LAS COMPETENCIAS DOCENTES SOBRE EL APRENDIZAJE BASADO EN PROBLEMAS (ABP)

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#### ABSTRACT

Teaching problem solving skills is essential for the continuous training of university teachers. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a dramatic effect on the improvement of teachers' skills in problem-based teaching. The aim of the paper is to explore the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the enhancement of university teachers' skills in problem-based teaching underpinning the implementation of the empirical analysis carried out within an international project. The research is based on the methodology of the system of the external and internal perspectives. The exploratory research was employed in the empirical study. The survey was conducted in July-August 2020. The sample contained 18 respondents (3 females and 15 males). The age of the respondents ranged from 30 to 70 years old. The data were processed by making use of the content analysis. The content analysis of the data from the survey consists of the content structuring and summarizing. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the external perspective of the enhancement of university teachers' skills on problem-based teaching within the international project as the project participants consider the COVID-19 pandemic as a challenge. Another finding is that the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the enhancement of university teachers' skills in problem-based teaching within the international project prevails. The theoretical finding is the newly defined structural elements of problem solving, namely challenge, opportunities, gains and possibilities, analysed within the methodology of the development of the system of the external and internal perspectives. The empirical study shows that the COVID-19 pandemic has negatively impacted the enhancement of university teachers' skills in problem-based teaching within this international project.

**Keywords:** Higher Education, COVID-19, University Teachers, Problem Solving Skills, International Projects.

#### RESUMEN

La enseñanza de habilidades para la resolución de problemas se basa en el desarrollo profesional continuo de los profesores universitarios. Sin embargo, la pandemia de COVID-19 ha impactado enormemente en la mejora de las habilidades de los maestros en la enseñanza basada en problemas. El objetivo del trabajo es explorar el impacto de la pandemia COVID-19 en la mejora de las habilidades de la enseñanza basada en problemas de los profesores universitarios. La investigación se basa en la metodología del sistema de las perspectivas externa e interna. La investigación exploratoria se empleó en

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el estudio empírico. La encuesta se realizó en julio-agosto de 2020 y participaron 18 encuestados (tres mujeres y 15 hombres) de entre 30 y 70 años. Los datos se procesaron mediante análisis de contenido. El análisis de contenido incluyó el análisis de contenido estructurado y resumido. Resultados principales: La pandemia de COVID-19 impactó significativamente la perspectiva externa de la mejora de las habilidades de los profesores universitarios en la enseñanza basada en problemas dentro del proyecto internacional, ya que los participantes del proyecto consideran la pandemia de COVID-19 como un desafío. Otro hallazgo es que prevalece el impacto negativo de la pandemia COVID-19 en la mejora de las habilidades de los profesores universitarios en la enseñanza basada en problemas dentro del proyecto internacional. Conclusiones: El hallazgo teórico son los elementos estructurales de resolución de problemas recientemente definidos, a saber, desafío, oportunidades, ganancia y posibilidad, analizados dentro de la metodología del desarrollo del sistema de las perspectivas externa e interna. El estudio empírico muestra que la pandemia de COVID-19 afectó negativamente la mejora de las habilidades de los profesores universitarios en la enseñanza basada en problema

**Palabras clave:** Educación superior, COVID-19, Docentes universitarios, Habilidades para la resolución de problemas, Proyectos internacionales

## 1. Introduction

Problem solving skills are one of the Top 10 Skills of 2025 (World Economic Forum, 2020b). Further on, problem solving has stayed at the top of the agenda with year-on-year consistency (World Economic Forum, 2020b).

Higher education still plays the important role in delivering problem solving skills to prospective employees despite the initiated discussion on decisive tackling long delayed improvements to education (World Economic Forum, 2020b) including higher education. Moreover, Higher Education has been among the top 20 starter sectors for young people (World Economic Forum, 2020b).

The key actors in delivering problem solving skills to prospective employees within higher education are university teachers (Ahrens & Zaščerinska, 2014a). The development of a high-quality higher education and, consequently, teaching problem solving skills is based on the continuing professional development of university teachers (Zascerinska, 2010a). The professional development of university teachers includes their participation in informal and non-formal education, international projects and knowledge dissemination, i.e. scientific publications (Ahrens et al., 2019).

As the advancement of the internationalization of the higher education improves the quality of higher education and research (NIEA, 2020), university teachers' participation in international projects serves as a tool for the enhancement of their skills in problem-based teaching as depicted in Figure 1.

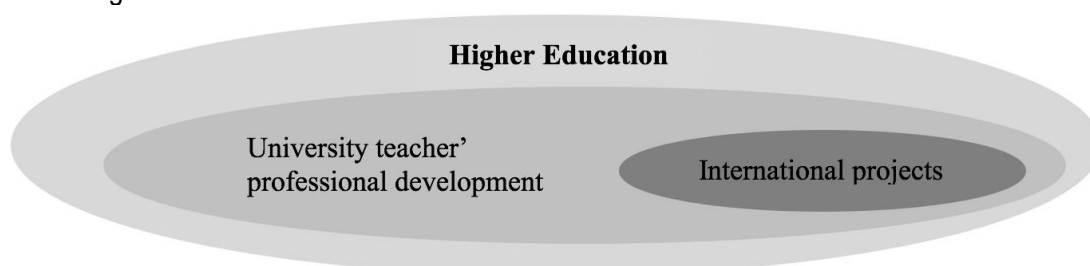


Figure 1. The relationship between the higher education, university teachers' professional development and international projects for the enhancement of university teachers' skills in problem-based teaching



It should be noted that university teachers' participation in international projects also implies university teachers' contribution to the project management.

However, as the article's authors have observed, the outbreak of the coronavirus ('COVID-19 crisis') to the scale of a global pandemic has tremendously impacted the higher education delivery, university teachers' participation in professional development activities, implementation of international projects and other aspects related to higher education. On the one hand, teachers had to shift from on-campus teaching to only online teaching and online learning that required them to use a variety of digital platforms, tools and resources to prepare educational materials and tasks based on the implementation of new approaches (Eickelmann & Gerick 2020). Beyond instructional goals, teachers had to communicate with their students, maintain the students' work in groups as well as ensure the students' inclusion into the educational process (König, Jäger-Biela, & Glutsch, 2020). On the other hand, since March 2020 teachers have been invited for a teacher training to acquire effective online teaching methods (Lieberman, 2020). The professional development was the focus of that effort. However, the involvement of the overloaded teachers into the training participation proceeded with many difficulties (Lieberman, 2020) as, according to the teachers' opinion, twice more time is required for remote teaching delivery (Ahrens, et al., 2015).

The development of the individual is in the focus of education (Maslo, 2007; Robbins, 2007), including higher education. The term "development" in pedagogy means qualitative changes of knowledge, skills and attitudes in the teacher growth and socialization while focusing on the enrichment of human potential and features in the human (Žogla, 2007).

The professional development is one of the aspects in development (Панов, 2007). Consequently, the professional development of the personality (i.e. university teachers) is identified as part of the individual development (Zascerinska, 2010a). In pedagogy, the professional development is defined as a qualitative change, that proceeds in the inclusive professional process, and efforts for sharpening teacher professional activity that is based on the professional conditions, opportunities, and circumstances, and aligned to the needs of society (Касара, 1999). The professional development is built on the professional learning (Zascerinska, 2010a). Consequently, the professional learning is determined as a possibility for one's continuing professional development (Zascerinska, 2010a). The professional learning is also regarded as lifelong learning (European Commission 2004).

The professional development and learning is a problem-situation (Zascerinska, 2010a). The development, including professional development, and learning is based on solving a contradiction (Čehlova 2002) as shown in Figure 2.

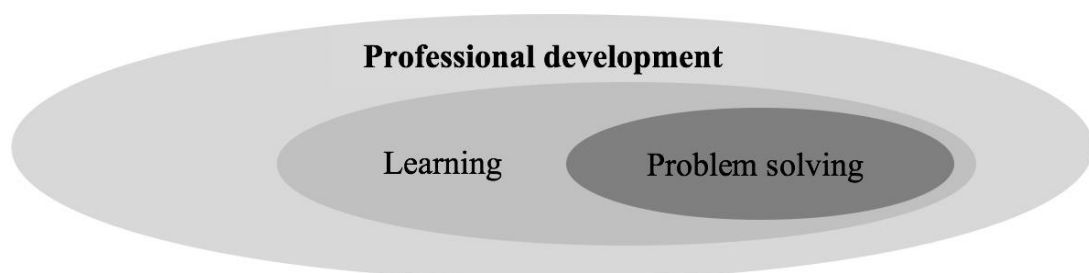


Figure 2. The relationship between professional development, learning and problem solving

A contradiction means two incompatible requirements set to one phenomenon or, in other words, element/subject/ etc (Sokol, 2002, p. 4). In regard to individuals, a contradiction creates contradictory individual needs, namely, the individual's necessity in change and stability (Grabovska 2006, p. 40). A contradiction is also observed as a problem situation (Sokol 2007, p. 70) and a problem (Сорокин 1977, p. 131).

A problem is defined to be a challenge and an opportunity (Sälsberg 2003, p. 35). However, in this definition, the external perspective prevails. As an alternative, from the internal perspective, a problem is identified as a hope and possibility (Zaščerinska & Zaščerinskis, 2012) based on the curriculum practice (Portelli 2010, p. 12). The curriculum implementation is centred on the process of teaching and learning (Zaščerinska, Zaščerinskis, 2012). Figure 3 illustrates the novel definition of the term “problem” from the external and internal perspectives.

<b>External Perspective</b>	<b>Internal Perspective</b>
Challenge and opportunity	Gain and possibility
The system of the external and internal perspectives	

Figure 3. The definition of the term “problem” from the external and internal perspectives

Individual’s development proceeds in the social-cultural environment, while the professional development takes place in the professional environment (Zaščerinska, 2010b). The professional environment is a part of the social-cultural environment (Zaščerinska, 2010a). The professional environment is aimed at preparing a teacher who is able to proceed in life and to make the life and the world better and more attractive (Maslo, 2006). A teacher develops in the professional environment that is conventionally built on the diverse open professional problem situations (Zaščerinska, 2010a). The professional environment is based on the principles of mutual sustainability, complementarity and reflexivity (Zaščerinska, 2010a). The professional environment proceeds within the object-regulation, other-regulation and self-regulation as disclosed in Table 1 (Zaščerinska, 2010a).

Table 1.

Conditions for the teacher professional development in the socio-cultural context (Zaščerinska, 2010a, p.24)

<b>Professional Environment</b>		
<b>External Perspective</b>		<b>Internal Perspective</b>
Interpersonal dialogue	Study cultural dialogue	Individual’s internal dialogue
Object-regulation	Other-regulation	Self-regulation
Establishing social purposes, social interaction planning and organizing	Establishing joint purposes, collaboration planning and organizing	Establishing personal purposes, individual planning and organizing
Social decision making	Joint decision making	Individual decision making
External evaluation	Mutual evaluation and self-evaluation	Self-evaluation

The conditions, namely developing the system of the external and internal perspectives, teacher interaction and reflection shape opportunities for the teacher professional development. These opportunities enable teachers to be mobile, to learn from the others’ experiences and to work qualitatively (Maslo, 2006).

The essence and sequence of the problem solving based on the Vygotsky’s zones of development (Vigotskis, 2002, p. 275) proceeds from teaching in Phase 1 through peer-learning in Phase 2 to learning in Phase 3 as depicted in Figure 4 (Zaščerinska & Ahrens 2010, p. 185). In other words, the teachers’ professional development/growth proceeds in the three phases, namely from Phase 1 Teachers’ professional training through Phase 2 Teachers’ professional peer-learning and to Phase 3 Teachers’ professional learning.

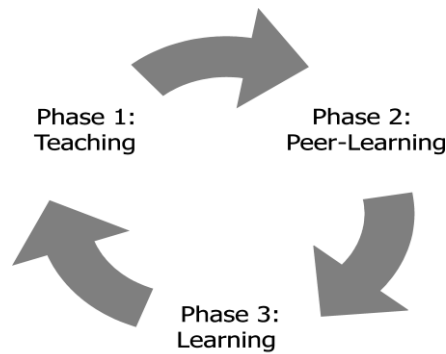


Figure 4. Three phases of the problem solving

Phase 1 is aimed at organizing a safe environment for all the participating students. This phase is implemented in a frontal way in order to involve the students to participate in the activity. Phase 2 is designed for the students' analysis of an open professional problem situation and their search for a solution (Zaščerinska & Ahrens 2010). This phase is based on the students' peer-learning (Zaščerinska & Ahrens 2010). Phase 3 focuses on the students' self-regulation. The self-regulation includes the assessment of the process and self-evaluation of the results. Students' self-evaluation is presented by the student and discussed with all the other students by the end of each class.

Table 2 presents the approaches and phases applied to the teaching and learning of problem solving in higher education (Zaščerinska & Zaščerinskis, 2012).

Table 2.

Approaches and phases used for the teaching and learning of problem solving in higher education

Number	Approach	Phases
1.	Learning cycle (Maslo, 2007, p. 59)	1. Formulating a question; 2. The analysis of experience of learning planning; 3. Drawing a conclusion.
2.	Research as a systematic process of inquiry consisting of three elements (Nunan, 1992, p. 3)	1. A question, problem, or hypothesis; 2. Data, and analysis; 3. Interpretation of data.
3.	Creative act (Мельникова, 2003, p. 234-235)	1. Formulating a question; 2. Solving a problem; 3. Choosing and examining the decision.
4.	Problem solving (Sokol, 2002, p. 12) in the interpersonal system, thereby developing the system of the external and internal perspectives	1. To recognize the contradiction underlying the given problem; and 2. To resolve the contradiction constructively.
5.	Systemic problem solving in the frame of the Theory of Inventive Problem Solving developed by Altsguller (Sokol, 2002, p. 9)	1. Problem as the system development in the past, present and future; 2. Problem as the sub-system development in the past, present and future; and 3. Problem as the above-system development in the past, present and future.
6.	Accepting and obtaining values	1. Value cognition;

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>defined as interiorization (Лобанов, 2004, p. 39)</p>  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Translation of the value information into one's own individual language;</li> <li>3. Subject activity that results in the value accepting or rejecting;</li> <li>4. Including the value into the individual's own system of values;</li> <li>5. A personality change as a result of the value acceptance or rejection.</li> </ol> |
| <p>7. Constructive process of the social-cultural learning experience (Tilla, 2003, p. 37; Žogla, 2007, p. 2)</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reconstruction: to call for a part of one's experience in the memory to be revealed and changed into the new;</li> <li>2. Deconstruction: to re-arrange one's experience, to supplement it with the new;</li> <li>3. New construction: to create and realize a part of the new experience.</li> </ol>                             |
| <p>8. Organizing social-cultural learning (Tilla, 2005, p. 83)</p>  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Preparing;</li> <li>2. Activity; and</li> <li>3. Evaluation.</li> </ol>   |

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The organization of the problem solving process as shown in Figure 4 is advantageous (Zaščerinska, 2010c). An advantage is the widening of the opportunities for every teacher or student to construct his/her social experience (the experience in social interaction and cognitive activity) (Zaščerinska, 2010c). The social experience is a significant aspect of learning (Zaščerinska, 2010c). Another advantage is the promotion of the opportunities for self-realization (Zaščerinska, 2010c).

The definition of the term "problem" from the external and internal perspectives shown in Figure 3 as well as the essence and sequence of the problem solving based on the Vygotsky's zones of development as illustrated in Figure 4 allow the authors to identify the logics and sequence of the process of the teacher professional development. The teachers' professional development/growth proceeds in the three phases, namely from Phase 1 Teachers' professional training through Phase 2 Teachers' professional peer-learning and to Phase 3 Teachers' professional learning. All the three phases of the process of the teachers' professional development are important (Ahrens et al., 2021). That means that, despite the growing popularity of peer-learning that prevails in the modern organization of the training process, all the three phases should be included in the process of the teachers' professional development (Ahrens et al., 2021). Teachers' participation only in Phase 1 Training and Phase 2 Peer-learning cannot be evaluated as teachers' professional development. Moreover, the training process should follow the indicated sequence of the phases of the process of teachers' professional development: from Phase 1 Teachers' professional training through Phase 2 Teachers' professional peer-learning and to Phase 3 Teachers' professional learning (Ahrens et al., 2021).

The authors also re-define university teachers' and students' problem solving skills as the ability and experience to turn a challenge or opportunity belonging to the external perspective into a gain and possibility related to the internal perspective, or, in other words, an individual solves a problem if s/he is able to transform a disadvantaged situation (the external perspective) into a favorable gain (the internal perspective). Further on, the external perspective in the problem solving is considered by the article authors as a negative phenomenon, while the internal perspective - as a positive one. This can be explained by the article authors as following: if university teachers and students only solve the external problems without turning them into gains and possibilities, then, their professional development is not enhanced and, consequently, can be negatively evaluated. If university teachers and students are able to turn challenges into gains,

then, their professional development is qualitatively changed and, accordingly, is positively evaluated.

## 2. Objectives and hypotheses

The enabling research question is put forward: What is the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the enhancement of university teachers' skills in problem-based teaching within international projects?

The aim of the paper is to explore the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the enhancement of university teachers' skills in problem-based teaching underpinning the implementation of the empirical analysis carried out within an international project.

The hypotheses (H) have been formulated as following:

H1: Teachers' professional development/growth proceeds in the three phases, namely from Phase 1 Teachers' professional training through Phase 2 Teachers' professional peer-learning to Phase 3 Teachers' professional learning.

H2: Teachers consider problem solving as the system of the external and internal perspectives, namely a challenge and opportunity (the external perspective) and a gain and possibility (the internal perspective).

H3: Teachers perceive problem solving positively.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1. Design

The present work is based on the methodology of the system of the external and internal perspectives as demonstrated in Figure 5 (Ahrens & Zaščerinska 2010, p. 181).

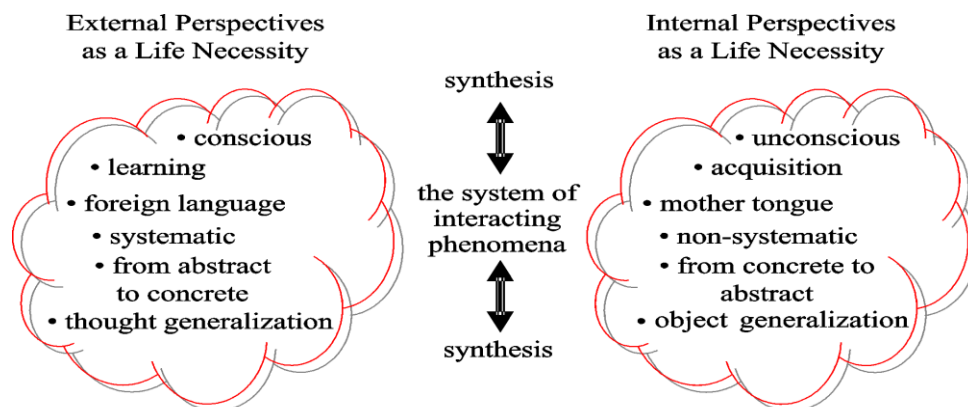


Figure 5. The development of the system of the external and internal perspectives

The methodology of the system of the external and internal perspectives proceeds from the external perspective through the interaction between the external and internal perspectives to the internal perspective (Zaščerinska, 2011). In education, the methodology of the system of the external and internal perspectives is interpreted as the individual's own system of the external and internal perspectives (Zaščerinska, 2010a). Moreover, the individual's own system of the external and internal perspectives is a complex open system (Zaščerinska, 2010a).

The design of the present empirical study is built on the purpose, question, sample, and methodology of the study (Bassus et al., 2014).

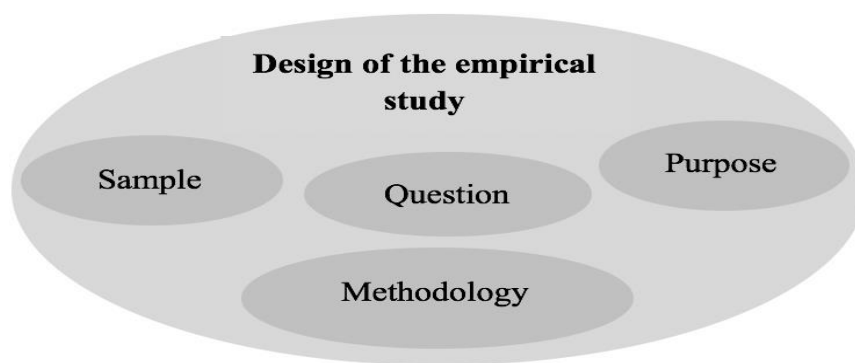


Figure 6. The elements of the design of the empirical study

The international project, used for the empirical study, intended to support the capacity building of the university teachers from the partner universities from both European and Third countries. In total, nine institutions in the field of higher education represented the partnership of the project. Five institutions were from different European countries, and four universities belonged to a Third country. The project was focused on the joint development of new Master programmes in the field of engineering (electrical, building, energy, etc). The professional development of the university teachers was organized in both European and Third countries, thereby teachers' mobilities were an important element for their professional learning.

The interpretive research paradigm was used in the study. The interpretive paradigm is featured by the researcher interest in a phenomenon. The interpretive paradigm is characterized by the researcher practical interest in the research question (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2003). The interpretive paradigm is aimed at analysing the social construction of the meaningful reality. Meanings emerge from the interpretation. The researcher is the interpreter (Ahrens et al., 2018).

The data were collected by the implementation of the survey method. The survey was part of the internal quality assurance process of the project management. In addition to the regular questions concerning the project progress, a number of additional questions relating to the project partners' experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic were addressed. The objective of this part of the survey was to gather information, about the consequences of health, work or travel restrictions in the context of the international project. The survey was hosted on the online portal of Lime Survey. The link was not open to all the project participants. The link was provided to the participants acting as the partner representatives during the past months. In total, 16 individuals received a link to the online portal of Lime Survey. These 16 individuals were invited to share the link with the other team members of their partner institution.

The survey was based on a questionnaire. The questionnaire was composed of the following questions:

1. Have you or your institution experienced restrictions in work life due to the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. Have the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic led to changes in your project budget calculation?
3. In how far has the work in general in the project been effective and efficient?
4. How do you consider the communication between the project partners?
5. Are you optimistic that the project will be concluded successfully in time?

The questionnaire respondents were expected to describe the situation, they experienced, in their own words. The questionnaire did not imply any use of the Likert scale.

The survey was distributed among all the project partners involved in order to obtain a complete overview and the broadest possible quantitative basis.



### 3.2. Participants

In total, 18 individuals participated in the survey, thus constituting a very sound quantitative basis to obtain a general impression on the project group's experience as a whole. Each of the nine partner institutions was represented by two respondents. The sample included 15 male respondents and three female respondents. According to the World Economic Forum (2020a), females are still under-presented in many professional areas including international projects. Table 3 and Table 4 show the selected sample sex and age, respectively.

Table 3.  
The selected sample sex

Respondents' gender	Number of respondents	Percentage (%)
Male	15	83.3 %
Female	3	16.6 %

Table 4.  
The selected sample age

Respondents' age	Number of respondents	Percentage (%)
36-50	6	33.3 %
51-65	7	38.8 %
66-...	5	27.7 %

Table 5 reveals the range, mean and standard deviation of the age of the selected sample.

Table 5.  
The range, mean and standard deviation of the age of the selected sample

Range of the respondents' age	Mean of the respondents' age	Standard Deviation
34	53	10

The analysis of the range of the respondents' age in the selected sample results in 34. The range of 34 in the selected sample indicates a greater dispersion in the data or, in other words, how far the values of the data set are spread out. The average age (the mean) of the selected sample is 53 years old. The standard deviation of the selected sample is 10. This large standard deviation means that the values in the data set are farther away from the mean.

Nevertheless, three participants did not complete the entire survey or did not answer all the questions, therefore the number of the respective total answers to the particular questions may deviate from the total.

### 3.3. Procedure

The present empirical study was carried out in July-August 2020 within an international project funded by Erasmus+. The university teachers' professional development included university teachers' participation in the project meetings composed of different activities: workshops, seminars, conferences, dissemination events, industry and business on-site visits, cultural programme in a host country, etc.

It should be noted that impact is defined as the influence on the decisions (regardless of outcome) that shape people's lives, communities, governance, the environment, and elsewhere (Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences, 2014, p. 9). Impact can be differentiated into positive, neutral or negative as illustrated in Figure 7 (Ahrens & Zaščerinska, 2014b).

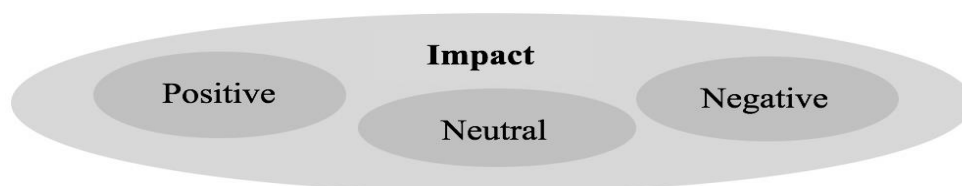


Figure 7. Differentiation of impact

The data were processed by making use of the content analysis (Ahrens et al., 2020). The content analysis was carried out in two phases. The first phase was devoted to the structuring content analysis, and the second phase focused on the summarizing content analysis (Mayring, 2000). The structuring content analysis intends to categorize the data. The structuring content analysis is based on the previously identified criteria (Budde, 2005). The summarizing content analysis is used for reducing the material (Mayring, 2004) for further analysis. The reduction of the material focuses on preserving the essential contents while producing a manageable short text (Mayring, 2004). The data from the carried out survey were categorized in accordance to two criteria. One criterion was the methodology of the present research, namely the development of the system of the external and internal perspectives. The second criterion was the newly elaborated definition of the term "problem" demonstrated in Figure 3.

#### 4. Results

In general, all the participants agreed, that they or their institutions experienced restrictions in work life due to the COVID-19 pandemic during the first half of the year 2020. These restrictions took different forms and degree of severity. Two thirds of the respondents (12 participants) suffered from the worldwide ban of travelling. 14 out of 15 experienced, at least temporary, worked from home. The COVID-19 pandemic created the necessity to home-school for the respondents' children: about 33% of the partners had to manage it. A minority of the respondents dealt with even more severe problems. Three out of 15 respondents had their work contracts or working time reduced due to the crisis, and one needed to quarantine for some time without any working option. Thus, the pandemic affected all the partners' personal and work life in different ways but definitely imposed unprecedented novelties to the management of an international project. The ban of travelling as a general restriction demanded for a significant project restructuring, and a large number of the participants needed to cope with additional tasks such as home-schooling or, as was specified by one person, additional workload due to the overnight switch from the presence to the online teaching formats. All such elements potentially affected the work dedicated to the project. Consequently, the survey revealed that the majority of the partners responding to the survey saw a delay in the progress of the project. While six respondents assumed that the project was delayed significantly, seven respondents saw some delay but were of the general impression that this was manageable. Only one person saw no delay. Being asked, whether the postponement of the presence meetings and the transfer of workshops/conferences into a virtual format affected the project outcome quality, six respondents answered that the outcome quality suffered as an event could not be held as planned. Another four respondents thought that the outcome quality was partially affected because the presence meetings had to be delayed. Nevertheless, online workshops and conferences actually turned out to be a good

alternative. But still, four respondents were of the opinion that there was no a reduction of quality at all since virtual meetings could equally replace presence activities.

The partners were further asked, whether the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic led to changes in their budget calculation. The question was answered by 10 of the 18 respondents. Among these, seven respondents confirmed no immediate changes although they proposed that there might be effects in the future. The other respondents pointed out that the COVID pandemic's effects together with the project extension until October 2021 did incite the project to serious difficulties. One respondent outlined that there were no means for the reimbursement of the project staff costs within the extended period of the project of 12 months: the partner budget remained non-changed while the period for the project implementation was extended. It meant that less budget for the staff costs would remain till the end of the project. Moreover, due to the continuation of the COVID-19 restrictions till Summer 2021, all the remaining activities had to be re-scheduled for the implementation in a shorter time period in 2021. These remarks, although only from the individual respondents, should be taken into account, especially as the pandemic is continuing through the second half of the year 2021.

In summary, it can be stated that the COVID-19 pandemic posed a significant burden on all the project partners and their work within the project. Especially the closure of the partner universities and administrations caused delays in the processes of the study programmes' accreditation and development. As the study programmes' accreditation and development are the main outcome of the project, the progress in the study programmes' accreditation and development has to be monitored closely in the upcoming time period.

Despite the respondents' sceptical outlook on the project performance in the COVID-pandemic, 11 out of 18 respondents were still of the opinion that the project was on a good way to achieve its envisaged objectives. While the granted project extension is understood by several respondents as fundamental in order to achieve the project goal in time, the others pointed out that the COVID-19 pandemic delayed the formal programme approval from the external accreditation agencies in the partner country located in a Third country. One participant revealed that it might lead to a penalty, namely a reduction of the project budget, by the funding organization as originally it was envisaged to have the accredited Master programmes running for at least 12 months period within the course of the project implementation. With the delayed approval, this period would most likely not be achievable. Furthermore, the respondents saw the return to the presence teaching and working on campus while the ongoing pandemic as still critical. That was an issue that might cause further delays and problems in the coming months.

In this line, the effectiveness and efficiency of the project during the first half of 2020 was identified as critical. Nine out of 18 respondents considered the effectiveness and efficiency as generally positive in the project but five respondents did not recognise much or even very limited progress during the past months. That might be due to individual circumstances. Exemplarily, one respondent explained that a project member resigned, leaving a significant gap behind. Further on, the gap could not be filled equivalently.

The communication within the project was considered as generally satisfactory, but certainly improvable. The majority of 10 respondents confirmed that the project partners did get into contact from time to time but only four respondents identified a constant exchange about the project progress. One even expressed the opinion that there seemed to be the partners that had not talked to each other at all, clearly expressing the desire for a more frequent exchange and communication. Nevertheless, almost all the respondents considered the project management to be great (six respondents) or at least good (seven respondents).

Doubts were expressed mostly concerning the timeline of the project. 11 out of 15 respondents admit to be lagging behind a bit. However, they were still confident that they would be able to implement the project on time. In the hindsight, this still optimistic perspective might certainly be questioned due to continuing severe restrictions in the COVID-19 pandemic times.

Apart from the time issue, 14 out of 15 respondents were still convinced that the project actively contributed to the further development of their institutions and degree programmes. The respondents identified a number of positive effects from the project such as developments in blended learning, partner university benchmarking compared to other institutions, and online opportunities for capacity building of staff members. One emphasized that especially in the light of the recent events, the development and adaptation of the degree programmes to a changing world was more relevant than ever. The bi-lateral cooperation agreements between European and Third Country's Universities were also highlighted as the positive outcomes of the project.

Concerning a helpful modification among the cooperation partners, four respondents identified the need to enhance communication with the partners as well as the need to invest more time into administrative tasks than before; otherwise, the invoicing of staff, material, and travel costs would not be completed in due time.

Table 6 presents the findings of the structuring content analysis carried out within the present empirical study.

Table 6.  
Findings of the present empirical study

Development of the system of the external and internal perspectives			
External Perspective		Internal Perspective	
Challenge	Opportunity	Gain	Possibility
Ban of travelling, Work from home, Home-school for the respondents' children, Work contracts or working time reduced, Quarantine without any working option, The project restructuring, Additional workload due to online teaching format, A delay in the progress of the project, The project outcome quality suffered, No extra budget for the extended period, Delays in the Master programme accreditation, Contact between the partners from time to time, Investing more time into administrative tasks	Online workshops and conferences, The granted project extension, Online opportunities for capacity building of staff members, Good project management	Developments in blended learning, Development and adaptation of the Master degree programmes to the online format	Benchmarking compared to other institutions, Bi-lateral cooperation agreements between European and Third Country's Universities

The summarizing content analysis allows finding that the teachers were mostly active in Phase 1 Teachers' professional training and Phase 2 Teachers' professional peer-learning as only a few respondents stressed the gains they obtained within the international project.

Consequently, Hypothesis 1 is not fully valid for the selected sample. A finding is that the COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted the external perspective of the enhancement of the university teachers' skills in problem-based teaching within the international project as the project participants consider the COVID-19 pandemic as a challenge. Hence, Hypothesis 2 is not valid for the selected sample. Another finding is that the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the enhancement of the university teachers' skills in problem-based teaching within the international project prevails. Thus, Hypothesis 3 is not valid for the selected sample, too.

## 5. Discussion and Conclusions

The formulated Hypotheses 1, 2 and 3 have not been valid for the selected sample. The assumption on the non-validated Hypothesis 1 is that the average age of the teachers is high (53 years old). This is the age when teachers have already established their professional networks, in comparison to younger teachers who start their careers. Being 53 years old is also the age when the professional development of the teachers conventionally reaches a high level. The teachers in the selected sample probably have learnt the basics of their profession, and now they are interested in the advancement of their professional growth. This is the reason why they focus on the external perspectives (training), in comparison to the external perspective (learning). This assumption serves as the explanation for the non-valid Hypothesis 2 as well. Another issue in regard to Hypothesis 1 is that the teachers' professional development was centred on the process of problem solving, in contrast to the focus on building modules (Lieberman, 2020) or, in other words, the content of the teachers' professional development. Regarding Hypothesis 3, the previous research results revealed that males have a higher level of positive evaluation in comparison to females (Ahrens & Zaščerinska, 2014b). Against this background, the respondents in the selected sample, being composed of 83.3% of the male respondents, negatively evaluated the problem solving within the international project. Further on, the previous research related to the relationship between human attitude and age has not been adequately addressed (Ahrens & Zaščerinska, 2014b). The assumption within the present research refers to the high average age of the respondents, too. The higher the age, the more criticism is conventionally demonstrated by the respondents.

Implications on the enhancement of teachers' skills in problem-based teaching propose to focus on the creation of proper modules of teacher professional development. Another proposal is the great emphasis on the extensive involvement of less experienced teachers into teacher professional development. An implication also is the broader engagement of more females in participation in international projects as part of their teachers' professional development. Widening the professional network of young female teachers could be a priority for the enhancement of teacher professional development, too.

The theoretical research results in the newly defined structural elements of problem solving, namely challenge, opportunities, gain and possibility, analysed within the methodology of the development of the system of the external and internal perspectives. Another theoretical finding is the established relationship between the negative and positive impact and the external and internal perspectives, respectively.

The empirical study results in the finding that the COVID-19 pandemic negatively impacted the enhancement of the university teachers' skills in problem-based teaching within the international project. Another finding is that the COVID-19 pandemic is regarded by the respondents as a challenge. Consequently, the COVID-19 pandemic is an external issue. A finding is that the teachers focus their professional development on Phase 1 Teachers' professional training and Phase 2 Teachers' professional peer-learning. The interpretive paradigm applied to the empirical study' analysis allows drawing a conclusion that the professional development of the participated



university teachers, being the key actors in teaching problem solving skills to students, has not been enhanced and can be negatively evaluated.

In conclusion, the survey demonstrated a generally positive impression of the project progress but clearly outlines that the pandemic has already had a certain impact on peoples' lives and project work. While the pandemic continues, and the situation may even get worse during 2021, effects may be more significant and could even result in the delay of some deliverables. The project managers should clearly monitor how far the Master programme accreditation and registration with the external accreditation agencies in the partner Third Country or the partner university internal bodies that do not work as supposed due to the pandemic. This might affect the project outcomes as well as time management. Similarly, the respondents clearly encourage the project managers to emphasize the internal communication and exchange in order to stay in contact while presence meetings are not an option.

Thereby, theoretical and empirical findings allow concluding that the paradigm of the professional development aimed at the enhancement of both university teachers' and students' problem solving skills has to be changed from the external problem solving only or regarding a problem as a challenge and opportunity to the problem solving cycle shown in Figure 4. The problem solving cycle proceeds from the external perspective (teaching/training) through the system of the external and internal perspectives (peer-learning) to the internal perspective (learning).

The research has some limitations. The limitation is the inter-connections between the problem solving and the methodology of the development of the system of the external and internal perspectives. Another limitation is the involvement of only one international project's university teachers in the empirical study.

Further research will tend to increase the number of respondents as well as the involvement of participants from different international projects. Enhancement of the proposed methodology and theoretical background will be carried out. Comparative studies of theoretical elaborations and empirical data will attract a lot of research interest in the scientific community, too.

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## SELECTED FACTORS AFFECTING THE EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY OF ADULTS

## FACTORES SELECCIONADOS QUE AFECTAN LA ACTIVIDAD EDUCATIVA DE LOS ADULTOS

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### ABSTRACT

The aim of the article is to show the importance of educational activity of adults in the process of intentional designing one's life: flexible actions depending on the needs and overcoming the deficits. The life-long education and the learning competences are essential in today's world, that is why a closer look was taken on educational activity of adults and to research their ability to perform a self-directed learning and diagnose their learning motivation. The problem was examined in the salutogenesis paradigm, which was first defined by Aaron Antonovsky. The key concept for Antonovsky's concept is the sense of coherence (SOC), which is a constant disposition of personality in adult life and determines the way we think, interpret, and make decisions and actions in our lives. The sense of coherence is characterized by a dimensional character (from weak to strong SOC) and is defined as a global orientation expressed in the sense of individual certainty that its external and internal environment is understandable and meaningful and life is worth the effort and commitment (Antonovsky 1979, 1986; Antonovsky &Sagy 2001). The ability of self-directed learning was correlated with the level of sense of coherence. In this article the results of the research are presented. The research was conducted on 427 persons in Poland. The research was focused on finding different factors influencing educational activity of adults, especially on the most significant activity: self-directed learning. The dependence of chosen variables was examined, in order to point out the features which might help adults to initiate their own learning activity.

**Keywords:** adult, education, lifelong learning, self-directed learning, salutogenesis, sense of coherence.

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## RESUMEN

El objetivo del artículo es mostrar la importancia de la actividad educativa de los adultos en el proceso de diseño intencional de la propia vida: acciones flexibles que dependen de las necesidades y superación de los déficits. La educación a lo largo de la vida y las competencias de aprendizaje son esenciales en el mundo de hoy, por eso se analizó de cerca la actividad educativa de los adultos y se investigó su capacidad para realizar un aprendizaje autodirigido y diagnosticar su motivación de aprendizaje. El problema se examinó en el paradigma de la salutogénesis, que fue definido por primera vez por Aaron Antonovsky. El concepto clave para el concepto de Antonovsky es el sentido de coherencia (SOC), que es una disposición constante de la personalidad en la vida adulta y determina la forma en que pensamos, interpretamos y tomamos decisiones y acciones en nuestras vidas. El sentido de coherencia se caracteriza por un carácter dimensional (de SOC débil a fuerte) y se define como una orientación global expresada en el sentido de certeza individual de que su entorno externo e interno es comprensible y significativo y que la vida vale la pena el esfuerzo y el compromiso (Antonovsky 1979, 1986; Antonovsky & Sagi 2001). La capacidad de aprendizaje autodirigido se correlacionó con el nivel de sentido de coherencia. En este artículo se presentan los resultados de la investigación. La investigación se realizó en 427 personas en Polonia. La investigación se centró en encontrar diferentes factores que influyen en la actividad educativa de los adultos, especialmente en la actividad más significativa: el aprendizaje autodirigido. Se examinó la dependencia de las variables elegidas para señalar las características que podrían ayudar a los adultos a iniciar su propia actividad de aprendizaje.

**Palabras clave:** adulto, educación, aprendizaje permanente, aprendizaje autodirigido, salutogénesis, sentido de coherencia

## 1. Introduction

The article focuses on the issues of educational activity, especially self-directed learning of adults in the context of their lifelong development. The ability of learning, especially the self-directed learning, nowadays is a very important issue. We must learn in order to develop, to have a job, to get employed or to keep the job. If we don't learn, we move quickly backwards. Any adult who educates, does so for a reason. Adults may seek to complete discontinued formal education or improve their qualifications in a particular area. Adults can learn for themselves, to improve their quality of life, out of curiosity, to better understand the surrounding reality, or for work-related reasons (for career advancement, job retention, or fear of losing a job). Therefore, when talking about adult education, we have to take into account its multifaceted, multidimensional nature (Delors, 1986; Lengrand, 1970; Kidd, 1975; also works published by European Commission concerning New Skills Agenda for Europe from 2016 - 2019<sup>2</sup>).

Modernity is marked by numerous unpredictable changes that take place in the economic, social or political spheres. These changes entail many consequences at the macro level (functioning of the whole society), meso- (life activities of particular social groups) and microstructural (personal perspective). Political and historical events, social phenomena and economic changes have a significant impact on how individuals behave in personal, social and

<sup>2</sup> All of the published work can be found: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1223>, the author refers to two papers published in 2016: Susanne Kraatz, Michaela Franke, Mellar Balazs Skills development and employment: New Skills Agenda for Europe, European Parliament, 2016

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2016/587318/IPOL\\_BRI%282016%29587318\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2016/587318/IPOL_BRI%282016%29587318_EN.pdf)  
European Commission, A NEW SKILLS AGENDA FOR EUROPE Working together to strengthen human capital, employability and competitiveness, Brussels, European Parliament, 2016

[file:///C:/Users/oem/Downloads/COM\\_2016\\_381\\_F1\\_COMMUNICATION\\_FROM\\_COMMISSION\\_TO\\_INST\\_EN\\_V6\\_P1\\_852322%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/oem/Downloads/COM_2016_381_F1_COMMUNICATION_FROM_COMMISSION_TO_INST_EN_V6_P1_852322%20(1).pdf)



employment dimensions. These changes may affect both travel directions, investment plans, and education/occupational orientation at both individual and global levels. New geopolitical and social trends can motivate an adult to take new action, and modify their aspirations and plans. Group processes are transformed and come to affect the way entire social groups function (Aronson, 2015).

The perception of phenomena and events at the level of entire societies is constantly changing. In this paper, educational activity will be analyzed in all these aspects, although the perspective of the person will be most emphasized. When analyzing the phenomenon of adult life activity, it is important to focus on its aspirational and incentive dimension of self-directed education: why do adults who have a job, family, stable life, constantly set new goals and tasks? Or we can narrow down the question to the professional and educational dimension: why do adults who have earned an education, diplomas, continue to learn, independently, by spending their own time, money and other resources? What drives them? We often have a situation where internal motivation (I learn, because I want) and external (I learn, because I have to) co-occur in the educational process (Maslow 1943; Vogt et al. 2016). Adults learn by completing courses, studies, training (formal education), self-directed learning (non-formal education) or investing in personal development (in-depth education). From the psychological and developmental point of view, it is interesting to analyze the educational activity of adults as a result of internal motives and therefore the phenomenon has become an inspiration for theoretical considerations and empirical research on the determinants of subjective educational activity connected with self-directed education processes (Kidd, 1975; Lengrand, 1970; Grow, 1996; Grover, 2014; Jarmużek 2018).

Self-directed education, for the purposes of this work, is defined as the ability of a person to plan self-directed education and implement this plan in a lifetime perspective. Self-directed education is defined as a subjective way of life, resulting from the aspirations, motivations and life goals of a person who actively seeks and implements development activities. It is a style of being in which a person consciously adopts a distinctive manner of being, individualized in scope and form, motivation, values, and goals of behavior. Adult self-directed education activities can be realized either by themselves or by incorporating various educational offerings in their own educational path. We can characterize the self-directed education as a combination of values and aspirations with the behavioral choices, that will determine how the adult will transform his or her own lifestyle, that is going to be internally consistent and fulfilling the life goals (Kidd 1975; Grow, 1996; Grover, 2014; Boyer 2014; Jarmużek 2018).

The issue of self-directed education can also be seen from the perspective of a person's competences and resources, which determine the quality of the adult's educational commitment (Grow, 1996; Hiemstra, 2002; Hoban, Hoban, 2004; Crowther, 2004; Boyer et al. 2014; Harkes et al. 2014). The work will analyze the selected subjective conditioning of various adult education forms. Each adult individually identifies his or her own life goals, defines life success, formulates expectations for themselves and others, and specifies and undertakes educational activities. This perspective shows that the adult's educational activity depends on many factors at macro- and microstructural level. The stability of the living and working situation, whether this assessment is objective or subjective, will determine the activity of an individual in various areas of life. Therefore, the needs and educational possibilities of a person cannot be seen only in the metric context of the level of formal education achieved, but also in terms of individual educational, professional and self-fulfillment needs, the type of motivation, and the life goals resulting from the individual concept of a successful and valuable life. The self-directed education of an adult will therefore be considered in the context of internal competences and personal dispositions as a self-designed and realized lifelong education process. In the context of modern educational and development concepts adults are perceived as being capable of being able to change, to realize something important in their lives (Delors 1986; Grover, 2014; Boyer 2014). However, in practice,

not everyone realizes their plans, dreams and develops their potential. The extent to which an adult's life becomes a source of deep satisfaction depends both on the external factors and the internal dispositions and competencies that enable the person to creative realization of the individual sense of life, and the ability to cope effectively with different adversities. In this paper, factors enabling us to realize our own plans and potentials, to skillfully create our lives in the context of educational activity, especially self-directed education will be analyzed (Antonovsky & Sagy, 2001; Hiemstra, 2002 ; Jarmužek, 2018).

The determinants of adult learning will be considered in the context of salutogenesis. The founder of the salutogenic approach was Aaron Antonovsky (1923–1994), professor of sociology. Born in Brooklyn, New York, in the United States, he initially he studied history and economics, then the sociology of medicine. After obtaining his doctorate in sociology in 1955, he emigrated to Israel in 1960. He worked in Jerusalem at the Israeli Institute for Applied Social Research Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Faculty of Medical Sociology at the University of Hebrew. He also co-founded the University of Ben Gurion, wrote and published 12 books and over a hundred scholarly articles. In 1972 he withdrew from professional and scientific life. At present, there are many research institutes working in salutogenic paradigm, many research centers, clinics and hospitals use the Sense of Coherence (SOC) concept as a tool to assess the level of coherence and its components in order to predict how people will cope with therapy, mourning or convalescence (Feldt et al. 2004; Hintermair, 2004; Eriksson, Lindstrom, 2006; Pisula, Kossakowska, 2010; Pillay, 2015; Ferejao, Oliviera, 2016; Chu et al. 2016). The key concept for Antonovsky's concept is the sense of coherence (SOC), which is a constant disposition of personality in adult life and determines the way we think, interpret, and make decisions and actions in our lives. The sense of coherence is characterized by a dimensional character (from weak to strong SOC) and is defined as a global orientation expressed in the sense of individual certainty that its external and internal environment is understandable and meaningful and life is worth the effort and commitment (Antonovsky 1979, 1986). It has been assumed that one of the important determinants of effective personal and professional development and the ability to fulfill one's own life plans and personal dreams is a high level of coherence. Antonovsky emphasized (and researched) that sense of coherence consists of three components: sense of comprehension, sense of resourcefulness and sense of sensibility. Sense of coherence is understood as the belief that an adult can make the world understandable (sense of comprehension and sense of resourcefulness) and that these are in life, things and people worth engaging (sense of feeling sensible) (Jarmužek, 2018). It was also assumed that the motives of education, educational plans and the intensity of educational activity, especially self-directed education, depend on both the level of coherence and the dynamics of individual components. Otherwise, one perceives the educational opportunity of a person with a high sense of coherence, and the opposite of the person at the opposite end of this personality disposition. In one case, the goal is long-distance education, self-directed education, aiming to fulfill one's own dreams and goals, the other being education solely for the purpose of obtaining a diploma, or pursuing an isolated short-term goal of gaining specific skills or knowledge.

## 2. Objectives and hypotheses

The main research problem was formulated as follows: How does the sense of coherence affect adult self-education? Nowadays, the role of education in the lives of adults is undeniable. This problem relates to the phenomenon widely analysed and verified on the basis of modern education sciences. It refers directly to the issue of the quality of adult education and internal and external conditions of this process. Thus, the main research question refers to both external and internal phenomena, as well as their interrelationships. The following specific problems were associated with this main problem:

1. What is the relationship between the level of sense of coherence and its components and self-education activity and self-education motivation in adults?
2. What is the relationship between activity and self-motivation in adults?
3. What are the barriers to educational activity in adults?
4. What is the relationship between the level of SOC and its components and educational barriers?
5. What is the relationship between barriers and self-learning activity and motivation in adults?
6. What is the relationship between employment and the level of sense of coherence and its components in adults?
7. What is the relationship between employment and self-education activity and motivation in adults?
8. What is the relationship between employer support and adult educational activity and motivation?

The research problems listed do not exhaust the wide range of the phenomena and processes related to adult education. The need to focus on selected aspects of the phenomena, has also a certain effect at the stage of constructing the tool - it forces the study and interpretation of only a specific section of the studied reality. Research subproblems, which are an extension of the research topic and at the same time constitute independent research issues, remain in this research in mutual relations and constitute the structure of research issues.

The level of sense of coherence and its components are an important factor conducive to self-education of adults. During theoretical considerations, referring to the theory of Aaron Antonovsky and the research carried out, a high level of SOC and its components was associated with activities focused on development and coping with life challenges. Adult education is a challenge or lifestyle - it involves devoting free time, reorganizing activities and interests, and allocating your resources (money, free time) to meet specific internal (lifestyle, interests) or external (professional requirements, threat of unemployment) (Antonovsky, 1986; Antonovsky & Sagy 2001; Strauser, Lustig, 2003; Hoban, Hoban, 2004; Vogt et al. 2016; Przychyżkowski et al. 2017).

The level of sense of coherence and its components has a significant impact on the self-learning activity of adults and the type of self-learning motivation of adults. The higher the level of SOC and its components, the more intense the self-learning activity is, the more subjective, intentional and independent educational methods are used. Also the respondents formulate their own educational plans and more often they have internal educational motivation (and depending on the situation supplemented by external motivation) (Hiemstra, 2002; Hoban, Hoban, 2004; Vogt et al. 2016).

There is a relationship between the intensity of learning activity and learning motivation. Based on the theory and research carried out by researchers dealing with the process of self-directed learning (SDL), it is clear that more willingness to act is shown by adults who have mastered the competences associated with self-education, their activity is focused on the goal, more intensive and directs internal motivation resulting from the vision of oneself, life goals and interests (Grow, 1996; Hiemstra, 2002; Hoban, Hoban, 2004; Crowther, 2004; Boyer et al. 2014; Harkes et al. 2014; Vogt et al. 2016)

The barriers hindering adult education include both internal factors (low self-esteem, lack of competence or knowledge) and external factors (lack of time, money, family and employer support). Respondents' responses will be dominated by external factors - often they are very difficult to compensate: the lack of money, time, support and acceptance from relatives or the employer is difficult to compensate. Lack of learning skills, lack of confidence in one's own abilities, low self-esteem are factors that are more difficult to realize, verbalize, but also easier to overcome using various coping mechanisms, which are associated with high level of sense of coherence (Grow, 1996; Hoban, Hoban, 2004; Vogt et al. 2016).

The level of sense of SOC coherence and its components have a significant impact on dealing with educational barriers. Antonovsky has repeatedly emphasized that every person is in a state of dynamic imbalance, entropy, because in our lives there are all sorts of requirements and events that require a reaction and reaching for internal and external resources (Antonovsky 1979, 1986; Antonovsky & Sagy 2001). The SOC level has a significant impact on individual, subjective life beliefs, which in turn translates into specific behaviors. It turns out that it is not only objective reality that affects the sense of quality of life - the SOC level is an important moderator. The sense of coherence affects primary assessment (whether challenge, threat or loss), coping styles (active-cognitive, active-behavioral, avoidance), thus affecting resources and level of health. A strong sense of coherence means that a given stimulus is perceived as a challenge, not a threat, and therefore triggers different reactions than those of a person with a low level of sense of coherence. People with a strong sense of coherence experience different emotions than people with a weak sense of feeling - emotions in the former are much easier to regulate. Man, responding to emerging requirements, assesses them in terms of the possibility of mobilizing the appropriate resources. If these resources are lacking, then the tension turns into stress, which is manifested by the intensification of physiological and emotional processes. A high sense of coherence gives a significant advantage in a new or crisis situation, because people with a high level of this variable more often assess stimuli as non-stressful, as such that they can cope with, so they do not experience tension in those situations where people with low the strength of the sense of coherence feel threat and tension. The question arises, however, why people with a strong sense of coherence more often than people with a weak sense of coherence include non-stressful stimuli or, having placed them as stressors, assess them as slightly threatening or harmful. This is because they believe that they will also be able to cope with the new requirement, that everything will work out well, that this problem can be solved and the world does not seem to make no sense to them immediately. Importantly - people with a strong sense of coherence choose a specific coping strategy (emotion or action oriented) that they think is best suited to the stressor. They always choose from the available repertoire of generalized and specific resources the set that they think best suits the situation (Feldt et al. 2004; Eriksson, Lindstrom, 2006;; Pillay, 2015; Strauser, Lustig, 2003; Chu et al. 2016; Jarmužek, 2018).

Educational barriers will only affect the level of learning activity, educational barriers should not affect learning motivation, which is an expression of the life goals and aspirations of a person, their own concept of a successful life. Persons with a high level of educational competences, especially self-education, actively and intensively participating in educational processes will effectively deal with educational barriers. This type of hypothesis is also confirmed by the research of Sheila Hoban and Gary Hoban (2004).

There is a relationship between low levels of sense of coherence and its components and unemployment. Antonovsky defines the sense of coherence as a lasting personality trait, which has been confirmed in studies that showed that the sense of coherence correlates more with personality traits than momentary emotional states and in many studies the connection between SOC and personality has been confirmed. The level of sense of coherence stabilizes around 30 years of age, which has been positively verified by many researchers over the years (Feldt et al. 2004). Therefore, it is unlikely that a person in certain areas of their life exhibits a strong sense of coherence, and in others a sense of coherence of a diametrically different intensity. The impact of life experiences on the SOC level was also examined - positive events affect the consolidation of the SOC level, they can be a resource in the process of intentional change. The same research showed that negative events do not affect the SOC level for people with a strong sense of coherence (Pillay et al. 2015; Strauser, Lustig 2003). In people with low SOC levels there was a significant decrease in the variable, especially the sensibility component (Antonovsky 1979, 1986; Jarmužek 2018).

There is no direct relationship between employment and the level of learning activity and the type of education motivation. There are many reasons why adults undertake self-directed learning - professional activity is just one of many. Individuals can undertake independent educational activities also for reasons of self-fulfillment, interests, and vision of themselves. Of course, the process of training or expanding one's own competences may also be caused by losing or threatening job loss. Research on educational activity shows that its intensity and permanence depend on the level of educational competence, not on the loss of a job. How a person reacts to the possibility of losing a job depends on personality and disposition, internal and external resources. It is unlikely that a person with low educational competences and little educational experience after losing a job will be very active in education or will be guided by internal motivation (Antonovsky 1987, Hoban, Hoban, 2004; Jarmużek 2018).

There is a relationship between employer support and educational activity and educational motivation. Support from employers can maximize and strengthen educational and self-education activities as well as educational and self-education motivation of adults. Forcing employers to conduct educational activities only leads to external motivation and a limited scope of educational activity (Vogt et al. 2016).

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Design

Solving research problems requires the use of appropriate methods, techniques and research tools, and their selection depends on the subject of research, the scope, but also on the researcher's capabilities. In the methodological literature, the most common quantitative strategies in pedagogical research are: a diagnostic survey, a pedagogical monograph, a method of individual cases and a pedagogical experiment. The diagnostic survey is a way of gathering knowledge about structural and functional attributes and the dynamics of social phenomena. It includes such techniques as: interview, questionnaire, analysis of personal documents, statistical techniques, observation and others. Analyses based on the diagnostic survey method were carried out using a questionnaire as a research technique. The following tools were used for the purposes of the study: The Sense of Coherence Questionnaire for Adults Aaron Antonovsky (SOC-29) and the Self-Education Questionnaire.

The Sense of Coherence Questionnaire for Adults (SOC-29) consists of 29 test items expressed in the form of interrogative sentences. Each item has a 7-point rating scale (the scoring range is 1 to 7) with its extremes labeled. In some items, reverse scoring was used. The Self-Education Questionnaire consisted of 15 open questions about self-education activity and self-education motivation of adults, experienced difficulties in education activity and educational barriers, received support from employers and other questions in order to obtain data such as age, gender, level of education, employment. Before the research stage, the tool was verified by 15 respondents. They were selected from among volunteers who declared to help with the verification of the tool. The respondents' task was to complete the questionnaire and provide feedback on the tool. At this stage, the ease and unambiguity of coding the answers of the respondents was also verified. The conclusions undoubtedly contributed to the final design of the tool, it helped to reformulate a few questions whose language probably seemed too academic to the subjects. After introducing the changes, the questions did not raise any doubts, which means that the introduced modifications contributed to the internal consistency of the tool. Next step was testing the tool by competent judges with the use of Lawshe's method, which helped to verify the content accuracy of the tool. Each element of the tool (question) was analyzed in terms of its relevance and necessity. For each question, the sum of answers proving its accuracy was counted. The final version of the tool eliminated questions that did not meet the required compliance. Among the competent judges were research workers (educators, psychologists and



sociologists) of the University of Adam Mickiewicz in Poznań, who rejected two questions about the variable "educational activity".

### 3.2. *Participants*

The study included adults who study extramural at the University of Adam Mickiewicz in Poznań: at the Faculty of Educational Studies major in Pedagogy; at the Faculty of Biology major in Biology; at the Faculty of Physics in the fields of Applied Computer Science and Physics with Computer Science and at a private university in Poznań at the Faculty of Social and Economics, major in Pedagogy. The research group was purposefully selected, i.e. adults studying extramural and assuming undergoing self directed learning were asked to fill the questionnaires in order to capture the nature of the interrelationships between the variables important for this research work. The participation in the research was voluntary and anonymous.

### 3.3. *Procedure and data analysis*

In order to develop empirical material and verify hypotheses, appropriate statistical techniques were used to determine the type and direction of relationships between variables. In the first stage of the analysis, descriptive statistics were used, such as the incidence and distribution of the analyzed variables in the studied group. Then the t-Student test was used, to verify the significance of differences, due to the distribution of dependent variables close to normal and the large size of the research group, despite the fact that the variables were measured on the ordinal scale. Pearson's Correlation Coefficient Test was used for data analysis.

The choice of these methods was dictated by the nature of the data obtained in the questionnaire, in accordance with the algorithm for selecting the significance test and the coefficient of strength relationship between variables. After collecting the researched data, raw results were recalculated, then the partial scores were obtained, answers from open questions were encoded and statistical analysis of all collected data was carried out. The strength of correlation between the results obtained by the study of a person in individual parts of the questionnaire was analyzed at a level of significance equal to or less than  $p \leq 0.05$ . Cluster analysis by agglomeration of selected variables allowed to identify certain groups of variables in a significant way related to each other.

The research group consisted of 439 people. Twelve adults returned incomplete questionnaires, therefore 427 questionnaires were further analyzed. Thus, the data acquisition efficiency ratio was as high as 97%. The study group was internally differentiated by age, sex, education, type of university and employment.

## 4. Results

The researched group was strongly represented by women, who constituted as much as 71% of the surveyed population (304 persons), and men only 29% (123 persons). The measures of descriptive statistics ( $s=0.64$ ;  $x=1.31$ ;  $Me=1.00$ )<sup>3</sup> and the structure of the group indicates that the obtained results of the arithmetic mean and median mean that very young people entering adulthood dominated among extramural students. The group age differed from 18 to 64 (see Table 1).

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<sup>3</sup> Where  $s$  is the standard deviation of the value of a given variable in the examined group,  $x$  - the arithmetic mean of the given variable, and  $Me$  - the median of the variable in the examined group.



Table 1.

The structure of age in the researched group

Age	Numerical distribution	Distribution of percentage [%]
18–25	327	76,58
26–35	73	17,10
36–45	20	4,68
46–64	7	1,64
Together	427	100,00

In the researched group dominated adults with upper high school education (37%). Other levels of education were represented at a similar level (~20% vocational, vocational high school<sup>4</sup> and bachelor), the MA level was obtained by 6 people in the population of respondents (1.40%).

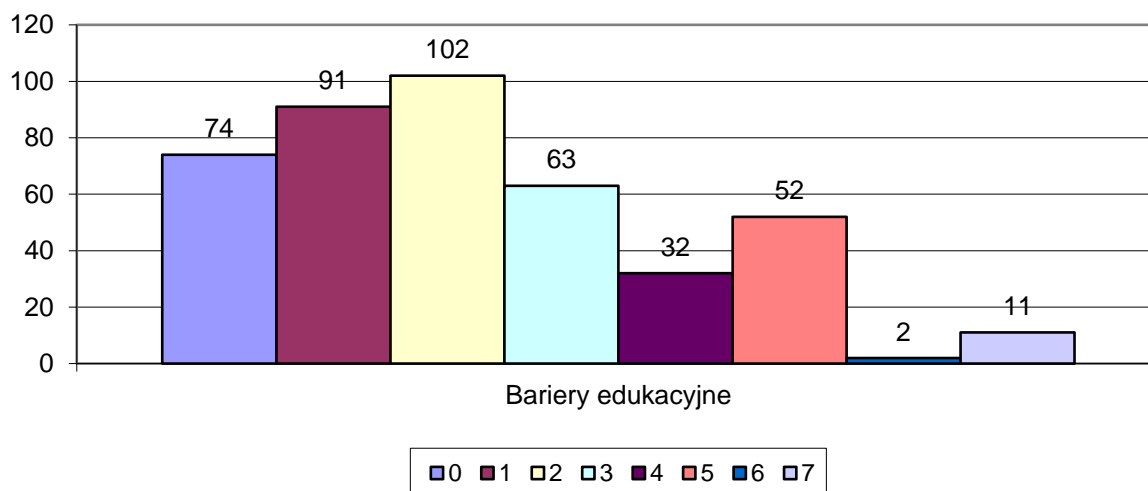
Employment is another variable that characterizes the studied population. The obtained arithmetic mean and median mean ( $s=0.45$ ;  $x=0.71$ ;  $Me=1.00$ ) indicate a clear dominance of people employed in the group. Among the respondents, 29% are unemployed and 71% are professionally active.

Educational barriers, which were defined as factors which influence the quality and intensity of adult's education, are another variable used to characterize the research group (see Table 2 and Figure1).

Table 2.

Educational barriers in the researched group

Types of barriers	Numerical distribution	Distribution of percentage [%]
Lack of barriers (0)	74	17,33
Lack of time (1)	91	21,31
Financial restrictions (2)	102	23,89
Employment duties (3)	63	14,75
House and family responsibilities (4)	32	7,49
Character (5)	52	12,18
Health condition (6)	2	0,47
Too high level of studies (7)	11	2,58
Sum	427	100,00



<sup>4</sup> In Polish educational system there are vocational high schools, which enable a person to get a vocation and finish high school.

Figure 1. Graphic distribution of the variable educational barriers in the studied group

Measures of descriptive statistics ( $s=1.76$ ;  $x=2.25$ ,  $Me=2.00$ ) indicate that the arithmetic mean of the results obtained suggests the dominance of the time and financial barrier. As many as 17% of the population of surveyed extramural students stated that they did not experience any educational barriers. The case of the barrier resulting from their own disability or illness was indicated by two students: one after cancer, the other in a wheelchair. Below is the percentage distribution of the variable, which clearly shows the number of indications of a specific educational barrier in the extramural student population.

Another variable that was included in the research concerns employer's support. Measures of descriptive statistics ( $x=0.50$ ;  $Me=0.50$ ) indicate that the distribution of the variable is perfectly proportional (50% of all employees surveyed qualified to one or the other group). The number of both groups receiving the employer's help and not receiving it is 152. The number of the employed group is 304. The respondents indicated that they received material support from their employers (financing or co-financing the education, accommodation, textbooks, days off) and immaterial (help, understanding, days off for learning flexibly adapted to the needs of the employee).

Self-directed learning of extramural students in the researched group, using descriptive statistics ( $s=8.17$ ;  $x=18.89$ ;  $Me=19.00$ ) clearly indicate that the studied population is dominated by a low level of self-directed learning (62%), only 37% of the population presents an average level of self-directed learning and less than a percentage manifests self-directed learning at a high level. The research group was also characterised by the type of motivation activating self-directed learning. Measures of descriptive statistics ( $s=1.89$ ;  $x=5.40$ ;  $Me=6.00$ ) indicate that 62% of the results (266 respondents) obtained a result showing that both of types of motivation are being used. 35% of the researched group (147 adults) are learning because of the external motives and only 3% (14 adults) indicated the inner motivation in the studied population of extramural students.

When presenting the results of the sense of coherence in the examined group of extramural students, the arithmetic mean ( $s=21.64$ ;  $x=132.55$ ;  $Me=133$ ) of the studied student population falls within the group of average test results. In the studied group, 34% of students have an average level of sense of coherence, 30% have lower than the average and as much as 36% have high variable level. The SOC is responsible for the way we cope with new challenges, use the inner and social resources and deal with rapid changes. The structure of the research group in terms of the characterized variable is presented in Table 3.

Table 3.

The structure of variable Sense of Coherence (SOC) in the researched group

Types of SOC	i = 7	Numerical distribution	Distribution of percentage [%]
Low SOC	64–100	27	6,33
Medium SOC	101–160	359	84,07
High SOC	161–187	41	9,6
	Razem	427	100,00

It is important to analyse the influence of the components of SOC on self-directed learning of adults. First one of them, sense of comprehensibility is responsible for the way we perceive the world around us, as coherent, explainable and we are able to relate various events of our lives to our own concept of the world and ourselves. It is worth emphasizing that the results of low sense

of comprehensibility is poorly represented in the population. The arithmetic mean ( $s=7.63$ ;  $x=43.48$ ;  $Me=43.00$ ) is in the group of average results. In the studied group of students, the average sense of comprehensibility dominates (78% of the population).

The sense of resourcefulness is another component of the sense of SOC coherence and is responsible for a person's sense that regardless of what the world and life will bring, they will be able to cope that they have important internal and/or external resources. The results of 67% of the extramural students are in the average range (285 adults), and the results of 23% of the population are high (96 adults). Low results also occur in the studied population, but it is worth emphasizing that they are least represented by the surveyed extramural students (45 adults). The arithmetic mean of the population ( $s=9.46$ ;  $x=53.00$ ,  $Me=53.00$ ) is in average results.

The last component of the sense of coherence (SOC) is the sense of meaningfulness, which is responsible for the fact that we have a sense that life is worth living, trying to obtain something that is worth striving for. The arithmetic mean ( $s=6.90$ ;  $x=35.65$ ;  $Me=36.31$ ) is within the average results for the sense of sense. Importantly, only 2% of the surveyed population has low results, and as much as 27% of the adults have high results. From a clinical point of view, these data can be a good predictor of the activity of adults - out of 427 students, only 9 people have a low sense of meaningfulness.

Importantly, the analysed data indicated several surprising and interesting elements:

The youngest group is the most numerous (77%), of which as many as 45% are unemployed! So we are dealing with a group of young people (18 – 25 aged), who do not have professional duties and have unlimited possibilities of educational activity, including self-education! Importantly, among students from early adulthood (25 do 35 aged) as many as 91% of people work, and among the respondents in the middle adulthood (age over 35) there are no unemployed!

Already at the stage of characterizing the researched group, there were preliminary relationships between master's degree, employment and a high level of self-directed learning activity. People who studied, knew their professional, educational and developmental needs and were able to use the resources of a given life situation. They studied because they needed knowledge and they spent their time and money on acquiring knowledge and competences. They also showed a high or medium level of self-directed learning activity, internal motivation and have a high level of sense of coherence! It is worth pointing out that the group of people studying at the Faculty of Physics of Adam Mickiewicz University are working people who have their own enterprises, already had MA degree, they had the highest level of sense of SOC coherence, self-education activity and self-education motivation.

Employment also turned out to be an interesting variable: the unemployed do not show high self-education activity and are not characterized by internal motivation. They are mostly young people, who see many educational barriers. These observations already indicate that conscious, independent self-directed learning activity is more associated with internal attributes of people than situational features, e.g. loss of job. Interestingly, the employed population was entirely male.

While analysing educational barriers, the study showed that women mainly pointed to financial and time barriers. The educational barrier defined by the respondents as character defects, was strongly associated with the lowest level of SOC and the lowest level of self-directed learning activity; while the barrier resulting from the chronic illness or disability was strongly associated with the highest average result of the sense of coherence and the high level of self-directed learning activity.

Again, surprising results were gained regarding self-directed learning activity and the given motives of pursuing self-directed learning. Analysing the interrelationship of both variables, it turned out that 62% of the respondents showed strictly external motivation and a low level of self-directed learning activity. The average level of self-directed learning and internal motivation present in 36% of researched adults. Only a small percentage of people had a high level of self-directed learning and internal motivation. This is a clear result that studying does not necessarily mean practicing independent forms of education, like self-directed learning. There are a lot of extramural (and not only) students, who just want to pass the test, exam or subject.

While analysing the strength of connections between SOC and educational activity of adults, the results obtained in the research suggest a high level of one of the components of SOC – sense of resourcefulness among adults studying extramural, and importantly only very few (2% of researched population) had a low sense of sense.

## 5. Discussion and Conclusions

An attempt to analyse selected determinants of adult self-education was made. Analysed data of the research results has revealed a number of relationships between the pointed variables. It is worth emphasizing the importance of the level of components of SOC – sense of meaningfulness and sense of resourcefulness as well as support obtained from the employer on the researched self-directed learning of extramural students. The purpose of this publication was to show the determinants of educational activity, with a particular emphasis on adult self-directed learning. The intensity of learning activity and the type of learning motivation were considered in the context of the level of sense of coherence of researched adults. In summary, the research showed the following relationships:

- the relationship between the level of sense of coherence and its components and the level of self-directed learning has been confirmed;
- the impact of the level of sense of coherence and its components on the type of self-education motivation was also confirmed;
- the impact of sense of meaningfulness was particularly significant on the level of intensity of self-directed learning and the type of motivation engaged in the self-directed learning. This may be of particular importance for practitioners and advisors in forecasting the success of self-learning processes in adults;
- it turned out that there is a very strong relationship between the sense of meaningfulness and employment of adults. The value of the third component of SOC depends on employment of researched people;
- strong interrelation of self-education activity and motivation has been confirmed, people with internal motivation are intensively learning,
- it turned out that self-directed learning activity and type of motivation are dependent on gender - women were more often driven by internal motivation and studied more intensively,
- the relationship between the level of self-directed learning activity and age was confirmed, a significant relationship was found to be directly proportional - the older the student, the more intense is her/his self-directed learning activity,
- the relationship between employer support and the level of self-directed learning activity and the type of motivation has been confirmed: employer support (both material and immaterial) strengthens self-directed learning activity and the internal motivation,

In an attempt to formulate practical guidelines based on the above conclusions from the summary of the research, the following suggestions were made:

- In adult education, teachers and educators should consider non-directive learning, strengthening the self-directed learning of adults as well as internal type of motivation.

- Employers should pay attention to the needs of employees studying extramural: granting leave for studies and exams, co-financing trainings, courses, strengthening self-education motivation by participating in creating a knowledge-based society.
- Research shows that adult students value both material and immaterial support from employers. Appreciating the employee's educational effort by the employer, and thus also the logistical effort, perseverance and commitment is very important for extramural students in the employment places.
- The most important factors shaping the processes of independent educational activity turned out to be the level of sense of coherence and its components.
- It is worth emphasizing the importance of the component of meaningfulness in forecasting self-learning activity and the type of self-learning motivation.
- Research had also shown that older people are more motivated to learn, more often they develop inner motivation, and young people more often deficit motivation and are more directive in different life situations.

Adult education is an extremely complex phenomenon, which, however, shows the importance of subjective and personality factors shaping the educational process, especially self-education. On the other hand, research has highlighted the role of education in shaping your own lifestyle and self-concept. The research process carried out also highlighted the importance of a sense of coherence - the development of this personality trait has a very significant impact on human functioning throughout life. Thinking about the future of the youngest, it is worth creating their everyday life in such a way as to strengthen the sense of coherence, comprehensibility, resourcefulness and meaningfulness by providing life experiences characterized by coherence, balance of overload and underload, and encouraging participation and commitment.

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