



TEACUP: Teaching Languages and Cultures Jointly

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Abstract

Teaching second languages across most European educational systems does not always entail teaching the culture that they convey due to several reasons, among which the followings can be identified: The materialization of the relationship between language and culture in specific educational contexts; ii. The pedagogical constructs to enhance intercultural communicative competence; and iii. The many goals that intercultural education must accomplish through bilingual education (Gómez-Parra, 2020, pp. 44–45) [1]. The TEACUP consortium consists of seven institutions from five European and non-European countries (Spain, Germany, Poland, Hungary and the USA). TEACUP steers away from the notion that an individual's languages and cultures are kept in strictly separated mental compartments. The primary target group of TEACUP are FL teacher educators, who can use these modules in the teaching of FL pre- and in-service teachers. TEACUP has already designed and piloted the first set of modules during the academic year 2020-2021. This research will analyze the data from the implementation of one of the language modules with two groups of participants: i. A group of 4th year language teacher students from the University of Córdoba (n = 42) as face-to-face during the months of October and November 2020; and ii. A group of in-service teachers (n = 19) of Córdoba, among which the same module was implemented during the month of February 2021. A validated questionnaire through the Delphi method has been used as the instrument for the analysis of data, which are both quantitative and qualitative. A mixed methods research will be conducted, whose results indicate that teachers (both in- and pre-service) highly value as positive both the contents and the competences obtained through TEACUP modules, and they mostly find it innovative and revealing. Discussion will be focused on the fact that teacher educators together with pre- and in-service teachers need to be equipped with this kind of innovative tools in order to promote a more integrative approach to foreign language learning, which can support the provision of a wide range of languages and cultures and help students value and make use of joint linguistic and cultural competences of citizens.

Keywords: *Second Language Teaching, International European Project KA203, Culture, Joint Approach.*

1. Theoretical Background

The current dominant paradigm in language education is teaching languages and cultures in isolation, i.e., as separate subjects. Such a compartmentalized approach has been understood as far from optimal by the TEACUP research members because, according to Candelier (2010) [2], it can lead to certain limitations, especially when aiming at increasing the number of languages taught realizing the Barcelona Summit's "mother tongue + 2" objective. Moreover, the European labour market shows a growing demand for multi- and plurilingual communication skills and pluricultural awareness (Adiyaman et al., 2020) [3]. The TEACUP project (2019-1-ES01-KA203-064412) set the objective of designing and testing educational modules which can merge the synergies of teaching languages and cultures jointly, thereby integrating the notions of plurilingualism and pluriculturalism into international programmes for foreign language (FL) teachers. TEACUP meets the recommendations of the European Union regarding 'language policy': "As part of its efforts to promote mobility and intercultural understanding, the European Union (EU) has designated language learning as an important priority, and funds numerous programmes and projects in this area. Multilingualism, in the EU's view, is an important element in Europe's competitiveness. One of the objectives of the EU's language policy is therefore that every European citizen should master two other languages in addition to their mother tongue." (European Parliament, 2021) [4]. The primary target group of TEACUP are foreign language (FL) educators who will use these modules in the teaching of FL pre- and in-service teachers. These two target groups are natural multipliers who have the capacity of transferring knowledge and competences to a secondary target group of TEACUP: FL language learners. The OECD (2005) [5]



points to a link between the quality of teaching/teacher education and student attainment. Therefore, in order to promote a more integrative and effective approach to FL learning, to support the provision of a wide range of languages and cultures, and to value and make use of linguistic and cultural competences of citizens, teacher educators and pre- and in-service teachers need to be equipped with innovative tools for teaching.

2. Methodology

The methodological procedure of this study has followed the next steps: (i) Design of TEACUP language and culture modules by the research members of the project. (ii) Peer-review of the modules (3 rounds). (iii) Implementation of the modules for two groups of Spanish undergraduate and in-service teachers. (iv) Distribution of the survey (instrument of this research) to collect data on participants' opinion on the contents acquired and the competences obtained through TEACUP modules. (v). Analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data.

2.1. Description of the Context and the Participants

TEACUP has been specifically designed to help the teaching of culture and languages in a joint and complementary way.

The population of this research belongs to two groups of teachers: i. A group of Undergraduate 4th year language teacher students from the University of Córdoba (n = 42). Implementation was carried out as face-to-face during the months of October and November 2020; and ii. A group of in-service teachers (n = 19) of Córdoba. The same module was implemented during the month of February 2021. In terms of gender, 77,04% were women (n = 47) and 22,96% were men (n = 14).

2.2. Instrument

The questionnaire of TEACUP consists of 7 questions, out of which 3 (i.e., questions no. 2, 3 and 4) contain both quantitative and qualitative data on the content of the modules, and the other 4 (i.e., questions 1, 5, 6 and 7) contain only qualitative data on the skills obtained by participants and their opinions on what and how can be improved. Quantitative data were ranged in a 1-5 Likert scale, where 1 means 'Not at all' and 5 means 'Very much'. This research will analyse quantitative and qualitative data from questions 2 and 3.

This instrument obtained a Cronbach alpha of 0.871, showing high reliability according to Oviedo and Campo-Arias (2005) [6].

Scale Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's α	
scale	0.871

Table 1. Cronbach's Alpha of the TEACUP instrument.

2.3. Procedure

An exhaustive scrutiny of the data has been carried out through Jamovi (v. 1.2.5.) for quantitative data and through content analysis for qualitative data.

3. Results

Our analysis yields the following results, which can be found herein into two different sets for quantitative and qualitative data.

3.1. Quantitative data

Data on participants' answers to the two quantitative questions of the questionnaire can be found at Table 2:



Questions	1 Not at all	2	3	4	5 Very much
Q2. How interesting was this set of activities for you?	-	1,63%	18,03%	52,45%	27,86%
Q3. How informative/helpful was this set of activities?	-	-	13,11%	70,49%	16,39%

Table 2. Quantitative data of TEACUP first implementation in Spain.

3.2. Qualitative data

The qualitative answers of TEACUP participants can be summarized in the following two sets of content:

3.2.1. Interest and understanding of the content: Participants showed high level of interest in TEACUP as they mostly declared not to be familiar with the contents delivered by these modules before this implementation. These are some representative quotations:

P. 14: *“Throughout this unit, I have been impressed by the different ways of approaching foreign language learning in the classroom.”*

P. 39: *“I believe that the concepts discussed in this unit are very useful for future bilingual teachers, in addition to being very well organized and not exceeding in terms of quantity.”*

P. 42: *“It is an interesting content that, having not seen it before, makes me reflect.”*

3.2.2. Helpful and informative activities:

P. 9: *“I honestly did not know about these concepts from the beginning. The fact of knowing them and learning them has made me perceive this unit as a source of knowledge and useful ideas for my future work as a foreign language teacher.”*

P. 19: *“In the future I will know how to work in a multilingual way, since I will take into account the other approaches to learning the language.”*

P. 53: *“I think that this unit is important to understand that we don't have separate spaces for the languages in our brain. Everything is connected and everything we teach is going to be helpful for our students.”*

4. Discussion and Conclusions

The first implementation of TEACUP among Spanish participants (both undergraduate teacher students and in-service teachers) can be regarded as very satisfactory in some different and complementary ways.

On the one hand, the hot topic contents of TEACUP modules on both language teaching - such as *translanguaging* and their classroom applications - and on intercultural education delivered across this first implementation have been valued by participants as very interesting (values 4 and 5 of the Likert scale for question no. 2 are 80,31%). The qualitative data of this analysis confirms the quantitative results, as participants have mostly stated their satisfaction with the contents regarding the interest and the possible future use of the activities practised. On the other hand, the future (or envisaged) usefulness of TEACUP modules has also been highly rated by participants, as the quantitative data yields 86,88% for values 4 and 5 for question no. 3.

TEACUP, as stated above, seeks to design and implement innovative modules for teacher education at both stages: pre- and in-service teaching. The undeniable relationship between languages and cultures should be present in the classroom for both pre- and in-service teacher education. Yazan & Rudolph (2018, p. v) [7] state: “In a world characterized by divisions and essentialization, it would be naïve to think that the ‘field’ of English language teaching (ELT) would be immune to, and unaffected by, these patterns with global significance”. The outstanding results of the implementation of the TEACUP modules allow to state that teachers can and seek to educate the intercultural and



plurilingual citizen of the 21st century society, who can negotiate today's complexities of the world (Byram & Wagner, 2018) [8]. University teacher educators together with pre- and in-service teachers need to be equipped with innovative and comprehensive tools in order to promote a more integrative approach to foreign language learning, which can support the provision of a wide range of languages and cultures and help students value and make use of joint linguistic and cultural competences of citizens. Language and culture education in the 21st century should no longer be isolated because becoming a world citizen includes promoting and maintaining necessary knowledge, developing skills, and creating attitudes to prepare learners for interacting effectively with people of other languages and cultures. Liddicoat (2020, p. 224) [9] summarizes: "The movement towards an intercultural understanding of languages education has had many consequences for how languages are taught that involve more than an attempt to introduce additional elements in language education and involves a true integration of language, culture and the intercultural in language pedagogy".

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