[R]Evolution in Foreign Language Teaching - Giving Voice to International Teachers

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Abstract

In the last few decades, foreign language instruction in Higher Education institutions (HEIs) has changed from its traditional teaching mode (transmission of knowledge) to a more modern teaching mode (development of competences); however, this change has been implemented in disparate ways in different contexts around the globe.

In terms of foreign language teaching (FLT) methodology in an international context, these changes may be seen to represent an **Evolution**, in certain contexts or a **Revolution**, in others. This study aims to give voice to FLT practitioners from just such different educational settings: professionals who are concerned with developing better FLT methodology. How difficult are the ideas of **[R]evolution** in education to describe? How easy or how hard is to put the new educative practices in place?

The conclusion is that nowadays teachers' interpretations of what is 'modern' is based on modifying students' learning behaviours through the use of effective, cognitive methods based on social-cultural interaction. The paper suggests that further methodological change has the potential to help make significant progress towards strategic development in 21st century society, particularly with issues related to interculturality, global citizenship education and the implementation of glocally (**Glo**bal and Lo**cal**) appropriate approaches to FL teaching and learning.

Keywords: Revolution, Evolution, Glocal, Culture, Foreign Language Teaching.

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INTRODUCTION

Social change is inevitable and if we reflect on the changes of the last one hundred years, we can cite several crucial domains: personal communications (the smart phone), mass transportation (high speed trains or low cost airlines) or even medicine (organ transplants, stem cell research). Foreign language education has also changed radically: these changes may have been less dramatic (more gradual) or less obvious (within the 'closed' world of classrooms) but they have certainly taken place: it would nowadays be virtually impossible to find an FLT practitioner who advocates a methodology based on the translation of large passages of literary texts or the memorization of extensive bilingual vocabulary lists. In addition to this, as Campo, Negro and Núñez point out:

> The current method of teaching has succumbed to some tremendous changes in the past 100 years, which makes us reconsider the model of teaching and the typology of the classroom, among others, as well as how to reproduce and display the information to the student (1).

However, there are also teaching contexts where we may doubt if there have really been any changes; for example, referencing 2017 data from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, we see that the physical teaching/learning environment of many classrooms has remained typically the same: seats in rows facing the board, teacher at the front: students facing their teacher and 'admiring' their peers' backs; this does not show any huge change in education. Of course, some new features may have been added: white boards, colour markers, the hardware for Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) but can we be certain that these 'educative ingredients' have had a 'strong effect on learning? Are the students able to speak or write more efficiently (with all these extra teaching tools)? Furthermore, when we speak about the skill of reading, there is a belief held by some older generation teachers that students nowadays do not like reading: 'they love to hate reading'. This may (or, more likely, may not) be true since young people nowadays tend to read in screen-mediated, digital environments (Eshet-Alkaai) rather than hard copy materials, but it serves to illustrate that FLT must deal with change and innovation in society if it is to be able to perform its primary function: to deliver learning. Bransford et al. with respect to learning, claim that if students understand then it improves their memory. i.e. they will remember it for a longer time. However, the longer and more complex things are to remember, the more the need to emphasise meaning. This is because our

society may be characterised by its diversity, complexity and interconnectedness; educational contexts must embrace this fact and adjust to 21st century societies' needs.

In general, when speaking about education, specifically about FLT/English language teaching, we consider it (English), as a system that contributes to general societal areas. That is, it helps its users to 'open more doors' and to be able to progress in every field of societal inquiry. Harmer, in his description about English language, points out that "English is currently a lingua franca for many people in the world… and it continues to march over the globe" (Harmer 5). FLT functions as an open social cognitive system interacting with its surroundings (through social media, through mass entertainment, through personal and commercial relationships and so on), trying to maximize the input and output in relation to these surroundings and to minimize learning pressure. Modern society involves much diversity and many competences and skills: FLT has to respond the learner needs that are resultant. Learners desired learning outcomes must be addressed through multiple teaching formats to accommodate the diverse rhythms of today's foreign language learning classrooms (Brookfield). Guidance must be provided (by the textbooks, the teachers, and the students themselves) shifting from what is already known to new learning; new specific knowledge to complement existing general knowledge: networks of understanding connected for the purpose of better learning. This ongoing challenge in teaching includes deeper and wider learning which demands locally-adjusted, modern teaching approaches:

> Today's language classroom is vastly different from that of the mid-to-late twentieth century. The focus is no longer on grammar, memorization and learning from rote, but rather using language and cultural knowledge as a means to connect to others around the globe. (Eaton 16).

Considering the points mentioned above, all educational systems have probably been 'guilty' of using different solutions. A problem appears if a student who wants to study, or continue their studies in another country becomes muddled, especially when it comes to comparing two countries that may be very 'distant' from each other, i.e. in culture, in language, let alone in different courses or subjects (as is the case with international mobility students who cannot find equivalent subjects in their host institutions). Individual, national systems need to treat this as a serious issue which requires immediate correction when discussing the need for further change. Teachers need to stop and think what the educational system in that country needs to change in

order to increase learners' education in an international context, i.e. deeper and wider learning, as well as their unique, local learning experiences.

Traditional FLT that uses traditional methods was fairly widespread in many contexts, as mentioned by Richards and Rodgers, Larsen-Freeman and Harmer, but questions may be raised about the efficiency and about efficacy of consequent learning: these are the main issues when dealing with the 21st century FL learning. Scrivener succinctly describes traditional teaching as: "jug and mug - the knowledge being poured from one receptacle into an empty one", (Scrivener 15); where the teacher is the 'knower' who passes on the knowledge. The same author also warns about the risk if only these approaches are being used. Thus, 'deep' and 'wide' approaches to learning are a 'must' in modern education. Watkins explains that these deep approaches to learning are associated with specific learning environments, features of which include the role of the teacher, his/her involvement and support, and student collaboration, all of which should be taken into consideration in a modern teaching context, i.e. at both levels, local and global. Given that increasing numbers of HEI students are seeking to vary the location of their study, it seems that there are strong reasons for having systemic similarities in education, reasoning that:

- A common system of education will allow learners less complicated mobility periods in other counties.

- A common system of education would imply similar institutional frameworks which would ease the mobility administrators' burden - readymade teaching plans, control over the range of subjects on offer, i.e. within the Bologna Process.

- A common system of education would make it easier to demonstrate and deliver content within already overloaded curricula.

Based on the above, we can invoke the need for revolution or evolution within all-embracing educative systems: "[...] over the next generation, the kind of education our young people receive may prove to be more important than how much education they receive" (Blinder 10). If in some countries there is a need for some kind of evolution in education, just light adjustments or changes in education, other countries might need a genuine revolution. This means that: if in one country, the system of education does not have anything in common with other countries' education system, the 'model' of revolution (radical methodological change) should be applied. Changing the mentalities in operation in a local environment should have its main focus on an 'open' holistic educative approach, which might help the students

(as a part of modern society) to become aware of different opportunities for learning. That is, different opportunities for the student to integrate into broader, global society. The 21st century FLT curriculum should provide students with opportunities to develop their knowledge, skills and attitudes within an open and diverse learning community (Halinen).

Cashia *et al* affirm that "there is a growing need for action at both national, and European level to bring about the necessary changes required for an open and innovative European educational culture based on the creative and innovative potential of its future generations" (Cashia *et al* 11). Based on that, this paper is interested in finding out HEI teachers' opinions about **[R]evolution** in education, their teaching philosophy and their views on the 21st century teaching challenges. To this end, the questions below were addressed to a group of HEI teachers drawn from countries in Europe and beyond:

- What is the 21st century teaching philosophy of these university FL teachers?
- What are the main challenges these teachers identify in FLT?
- Should there be **evolution or revolution** in education, in general?

The foundation to these questions lies in foreign language education, in our case of the English language, being considered as a global social representation of values, as also mentioned by Harmer.

Additionally, with respect to FLT, as a vehicle of global representations of social values, teachers do also play a role. This is also supported by Scrivener, who states that "teachers are learners who learn about language, methodology, peoples' life" (Scrivener 393), that is, if students learn a foreign language they learn about a foreign language, a foreign culture and help deliver universal social values. Thus the students will have more knowledge about those global social values. This only shows that the importance of knowing a FL in the 21st century naturally entails the importance of developing, spreading and balancing FLT in each country. This could also contribute to harmonizing glocal teaching/learning standards, helping teachers and learners to make fully informed teaching/learning choices. It is also based on the well-known perspective of Piaget (1971), who supports cognitive constructivism as meaningful learning that requires the learners to construct knowledge, not to receive it. This is precisely what our society, including the FL students of the 21st century need: to be actively involved in the learning process, to actively experience and take responsibility for their own learning. No teacher can learn for a student.

The study supports the concept of 'life-long learning' being applied to teachers' careers as does Scrivener who has doubts about teachers who stop learning, claiming that they also stop being involved in education (21-3). He also reasons that part of the enthusiasm that teachers should have for their profession should include taking on the role of learner, both in relation to teaching practices and to being an active learner alongside the students. All the teachers interviewed for this paper have many years of experience, and, hopefully, demonstrate they conform to this model.

This study was conducted in 2016 in Portugal with ten university EL teachers of different nationalities. The teachers in question were from Portugal (three teachers; T1, T2, T3), Serbia (two teachers T1, T2), while one teacher from Kosovo, one from Macedonia, one from the Maldives, one from Ukraine, and one from Zambia.

The questionnaire included questions about their teaching experience, teaching methods that teachers use mostly nowadays in their classes, their opinion about the teaching methods that work best, their challenges as teachers, what is their opinion about general education, and changes that are needed, in local and global contexts.

RESULTS

One important point of this paper is that if the educational systems are going to embrace change, it is necessary to look at the values and beliefs that constitute the teachers' working philosophy, i.e. a teacher's potential to generate progressive learning and satisfy students' needs within these changes.

Additionally, any teaching philosophy and the enhancement of education, both locally and globally, should take into consideration teachers' opinions about changeovers and/or slight modifications in education (with or without 'modern teaching ingredients', such as completely new subjects, or modification of the curricula, the use of ICTs, the involvement of politics, students' needs analysis, etc.), taking everything into account, to create more 'generalisable' or harmonised approaches to teaching.

Following Harmer's advice about 'unedited' responses, this paper continues by adding a selection of the international teachers' responses about the questions mentioned above. i.e. the teachers' responses are presented as they responded (*).

1. What is the 21st century teaching philosophy of these university FL teachers?

*Zambia: *My ideal classroom is one where there is mutual participation and interaction, among students and with the teacher. A teacher being one who always*

looks for new challenges with a special lens of the eye, initiating probing minds in the learners where yes or no cannot be answers without enriching them, a facilitator of learning. A student in my ideal class is one who takes the lead in driving their own learning, who can learn and re-learn autonomously or otherwise.

*Kosovo: General education has undergone many challenges nowadays. Course content planning that fits students' age and students' wishes, the development of teaching methodology and the application of those methods that students feel comfortable to exploit and benefit out of them, definition of learning objectives and the selection of evaluation methods that show fairness towards teachers' responsibility and students' knowledge, are all factors that I find valuable in education.

*Ukraine: Teacher can open the door but a student must enter by himself.

*Portugal (T1): Students nowadays have too many subjects to learn. Teachers should apply any method that engages all students. Lectures, note taking can sometimes work but students need opportunities to practice their learning. The only effective way of teaching and learning is smaller groups in which all students can make extended contribution, otherwise not all students are involved in real learning.

*Macedonia: The idea that the student is a multitasker is becoming an issue, as students do not try to learn more, they do not concentrate/focus. In order to study, the students nowadays need to 'sacrifice' something of technology. Thus it is teacher's responsibility to move from his/her comfort zone (safer zone of teaching) to more 'action' teaching approaches which can motivate students to learn and gain more knowledge.

*Portugal (T2): I have been teaching for many years, trying to streamline the teaching across different levels. i.e. trying to make the teaching material and testing much more uniform, which is obviously, definitely difficult. It would be much better if we had more teaching staff, if we could have smaller groups and devote more time to students who need more help.

*Serbia (T1): I believe that there should be more STT (students' talking time) than TTT (teacher's talking time) in class because in that way students will be more active, they will participate more and will learn more efficiently, especially English as a foreign language. Then, motivating students is also very important and I prepare my classes in that away that I pay very much attention to increase students' motivation to learn English and to communicate in the class, always bearing in mind

the teaching material that needs to be used, and how to be used. Another important thing in teaching philosophy is that students should not be afraid to make mistakes in the class because mistakes are part of the practice and learning process.

***Serbia (T2):** My teaching philosophy is based on the combination of recognized teaching methodology applied to the target group and years of experience in the teaching community.*

***Portugal (T3):** Teachers need to help people grow, become better citizens, better people, to take part in their communities in a more responsible way. This is also connected with challenge, as teachers they do their best by getting the students to produce something in English. Every class should produce something. It is supposed, so that has implications of about how we approach methods and teaching and everything that deals with students.*

***Maldives:** My teaching philosophy has evolved over the years. I strongly believe that it is vital to maintain a strong rapport with the students. As none of the students would love to learn from a teacher that they dislike. Also, I believe that classroom is a learning environment, where everyone learns from each other, student – teacher, teacher – students, thus it is important to maintain a positive ambience in the classroom. As a teacher, it is also very crucial to take into account the different learning styles of the students and try and cater their needs when teaching. Teachers do not only act as a facilitator, but also as mentor, judge, supervisor and friend. Lastly, I feel that every teacher needs to be well prepared for the lesson. They need to be very up to date and conduct dynamic lessons that go beyond the content and challenges the students.*

2. What are the main challenges these teachers identify in FLT?

***Zambia:** In this 21st century we deal with learners with a lot of access to online media and publication, hence the need to make use of technology a use tool for their learning. Unfortunately, these are available to carter for this challenge.*

***Kosovo:** … These also relate to professional competencies that teachers perform in class, aiming that the results would be applied even out of class. Classroom management and objective evaluation are considered as challenges in education. The best teaching is always considered teaching that employs various challenging teaching methods, of course, with various teaching materials and teaching techniques, all aiming that national level of teaching would contribute to students' international educative competence.*

Ukraine: Lack of motivation and interest, loss of community respect to teaching professions

Portugal (T1): The biggest challenge is a large class and the effort to try to get everybody involved. i.e. opportunities to practice learning by being involved. Another challenge is to know students' names, which is very difficult based on the big number of students.

Macedonia: The students know more than we knew, because of resources, possibilities they have: interaction, technology. They are more skilful, have other skills that we could not imagine. Students nowadays know what is happening on the other side of the world. However, they do not try to develop their thinking skills and concentration.

Portugal (T2): Student population has changed ever since we started getting mobility students (considerably in the last five years). We have started to open our classes to other students from other faculties and other countries which is a huge challenge: differences in learning skills between European students and non-European students, for example, show more problematic classes. What seems pretty easy to understand for one group of students is a bit more difficult for other group because this particular group of students is not equipped with the skills that we apply in our teaching. This only shows the risk of oversimplifying things. Teaching material is another issue to be discussed. Mixed ability classes cause problems when you have to cater for the students who may find the material boring: some students are so much beyond the topic level and other things, some are struggling, and in the middle you have this sort of nondescript sort of students that find it OK, challenging enough.

Serbia (T1): The biggest challenge in my teaching is to motivate students to learn and to reflect on their learning. Also, I struggle with very heterogeneous classes and different level of students' knowledge. This means that I have to adapt my teaching to many different groups of students in one class. Further, in my class, I have 45 students in (tutorial) practice classes and 100 students lecture classes. It is not possible to control all students in such huge language classes, which I consider as the biggest challenge.

Serbia (T2): The greatest challenge in teaching is developing motivation to learn in students.

Portugal (T3): What I do in classroom is not at all based on the old learning experience. I reject experience that is dull and flat. I do not use any particular

method in isolation. I just try to get them produce and they come to university usually with quite a good level and they have been in learning experience perhaps they didn't emphasize production. So I see it as our job to change that. So more emphasis is on production: speaking and writing although it's quite difficult with such large classes. It's a challenge: How to control all of them in large classes? I have to be always on the move. One of my jobs is to make the students comfortable of using English and talk about things they are interested in. Of course, teaching material is important and we try to move away from more standardized approach of what is going in class. We find topics that are challenging enough for the majority of students and always supplement teaching with something new. Another challenge is diversity in classes-mobility students that have different learning styles. Coming from different societies, they have different learning approach. There are some mobility students who are taught in that way that they were not allowed to speak in an English class, or have never been asked to speak, actually they speak English very well. But, this heterogenic   group is viewed as a big bonus, a big advantage. I don't think in any way as a disadvantage.

Maldives: One of the biggest challenges that I face today in the classroom is trying to keep up with the latest technology and information. Students are more engrossed in technology that they find it difficult to spend 45 minutes in the class away from their electronic gadgets such a mobile phone, tablets etc. So, in order to grab their attention, it takes a lot of energy and time for lesson preparation.

3. Should there be *evolution or revolution* in education, in general?

Zambia: Revolution and evolution are both happening in education. In their conflicting ideas they help to shape the education system as well meeting the personal and societal needs. For centuries, education cannot be the same. Early writers projected many developments like communication system, transport system which are now at play but changes in education sometimes may not be very vivid as evolution is a slow but sure process. Revolutionary changes may just be there as reflective practices.

Kosovo: I think that traditional system of education has undergone changes, which may be considered as revolution in education, but then again, the establishment of a contemporary education system and its 'flow' in education might be considered as evolution.

Ukraine: Old does not mean bad innovations are good but to a certain extent.

*Portugal (T1): The biggest challenge is a large class and the effort to try to get everybody involved. i.e. opportunities to practice learning by being involved. Another challenge is to know students' names, which is very difficult based on the big number of students. Things in education do get changed. If something does not work, we can change it with something else more effective.

Comparing the traditional teaching and modern teaching, the traditional teaching which was all lectures and no opportunities to express yourself, there were teachers who made the lectures quite interesting, and even then we were involved in conscious learning. But nowadays, modern teaching involves students who can get more than specific subject. They are pretty good and have opportunities to link completely different subjects.

Education should not be completely changed. I do not believe in revolution. Politics dictates everything. A new government implements new policy. How to implement new curriculum, new syllabuses within 3-4 years and then again changed? What happens if there are too many revolutions? Revolution in education cannot happen, however, teachers and students would do better if aspects of teaching would change. So I am for evolution.

*Macedonia: When analysing previous teaching methods, traditional ones, TTT methods, education needs changes, however not completely. It could be much better. Today students have too much input, and then they get it superficially. They do not engage themselves in learning. It is not deep learning. Students' attention span is very short as everything goes very fast. In order to have a much better educative system, many things need to be changed. It should be a top down thing: from the government level. Teachers should be empowered to make changes. Everything is centralized in schools. Each school says they have their autonomy but it is still not enough. Teachers' training is very important; they need in-service training. Modern education plan is that nobody should be left behind-neither teachers, nor students. Everybody should be accommodated.

*Portugal (T2): Education needs changes. We have to change our teaching according to our students' needs. However, I agree that we expect less since it is more superficial learning. Whatever method we use nowadays, is not going to work if there is no prior motivation. The group dynamic is extremely important. The use of different approaches to teaching should involve students to feel at ease where they can express themselves, express their minds. They should be exposed to different

varieties of teaching and learning, it should fit in terms of cultural aspects and fit in learning skills aspect.

Serbia (T1): I think that both revolution and evolution in education depend on the economic and political situation in a specific country. In Serbia, in my teaching context, lots of things changed in past 20 years or so but not all of them contributed to better education, I mean, some school subjects were excluded (such as Serbian tradition and Household) and many new subjects were introduced (such as English from the first grade, Religious education, Civil education, second foreign language, Researching nature, Informatics). This brought more working hours for teachers and more learning hours for students. Teachers are not satisfied with lots of paper work to do, students are not satisfied with lots of learning hours and parents complain that they have to help their children with learning tasks every day and that these tasks are very difficult to solve. In addition, after the primary school, and before entering secondary school, students have to pass both graduation tests from 5 school subjects and to pass entrance exam. Before, we had only entrance exam. In my opinion, graduation tests are not necessary because students pass all those subjects while going to school and I do not see the point to test them again. Students were tested upon this many times during the 8 years of schooling.

Serbia (T2): When thinking about revolution or evolution in education, the answer is somewhere in-between. Revolution implies complete change in teaching approach and, although society has been changing rapidly, teachers should also take in consideration some great benefits of teaching methodologies developed so far. So, I vote for evolution.

Portugal (T3): Changes in education are either emotionally or politically motivated, but still there are changes. We have a massive change with Bologna system and we are still a kind of dealing with that. The Bologna system is an improvement, just for the fact that it introduced mobility students.

I am not revolutionary. We need to step back and settle down, but I think that in ELT clearly evolution should follow next revolution. We can describe the advent of the communicative approach in the late 70s as revolution. We are now in the phase of evolution, taking the communicative approach into something hopefully more locally appropriate approach, more locally effective. Since I consider that revolution in ELT was in the late 70s and 80s, now it is the phase of evolution until the next revolution.

Maldives: Due to the advancement in technology and the vast knowledge available at our finger tips, there's a huge shift in "teacher's role" and on other

*aspects in education system. Hence, emphasis on "content" is outdated and becomes absurd. Thus, we are in a state where we need to sit and reflect on how we could educate our students. I feel that education needs to be revisited and refashioned; otherwise "we will embrace the 21st century with a 19th century mindset. And the result would be a failure" (Dasgupta, 2015). (**Reference**: Dasgupta, A. (2015) Why we need a revolution, not just evolution, in education. Available online from* http://www.huffingtonpost.in/amit-dasgupta/why-we-need-a-revolution-not-just-evolution-in-education/ *[Accessed 12 December 2016].)*

As can be seen, different teachers from different countries responded to the questionnaire, showing that although from very distant countries, their responses were somewhat similar, as will be discussed immediately below.

DISCUSSION

The FL teachers' responses show that they are all aware of their great responsibility they have towards their students: trying to teach in the best way, in order that their students learn more. Although from distant and different areas of the globe (Portugal, Maldives, Serbia, or Ukraine, Zambia, Kosovo, or Macedonia), teachers, as one of the main agents in education, show that they contend with both vastly diverse points of view and teaching issues (such as, some teachers favour revolution, while some evolution) and similar points of view and teaching issues (such as large number of students in classes, the use of ICTs). Nevertheless, all of the teachers have one thing in common: the key is being decisive and knowing how to deliver teaching, aimed only one thing: learning.

Cashia *et al* claim that teachers are key figures in constructing a creative teaching-learning climate, but policy makers and institutions should support them (9). Here teachers have indicated that innovation requires both top-down and bottom-up perspectives. As Scrivener mentions, the traditional role of teacher as an 'explainer' (17) may sometimes be efficient but one consequence is that it results in far greater proportions of teacher talking time (TTT), thus it can become problematic from a Social Constructivist point of view. The position here is that FLT needs to be built on the basis of those approaches that embrace teachers as facilitators, not as people who talk and tell students what to do, but guide them as to how to do it.

Frequent comparisons between educational systems, such as past and present, with traditional methodologies or revolutionary ones, were put forward by these international teachers. However, it should be noted that the teacher's responses (our paper is based on only ten international participants) reflect on a narrow set of

factors; a more comprehensive and large scale of assessment of further issues would need to be conducted before any more wide-reaching, global and local claims could be made. Comprehensive positions need to be established, assessed and decided upon before introducing changes into systems. The scheme should be: define the problem, plan a solution for this educative problem, test that solution and, if the planning and the changes were successful, share with others (in our case, share it with other institutions nationally and internationally). In relation specifically to FLT, a guide of 'where to start' is provided by Ellis (2005) who outlines 12 principles, based on a thorough review of the research and theory available, on which to found successful, instructed foreign language acquisition.

Surprisingly, not all of the teachers mentioned technology, which perhaps indicates a preference for a 'back-to-basics' approach which relies more on the relationships and interaction established between student and teacher rather than unnecessary technology, materials and aids. This is in line with the ideas set out in 'Teaching Unplugged' (2009) by Meddings and Thornbury which proposes a conversation driven, materials light framework focussing on the students' emergent language as a progressive, productive alternative approach to ELT. With respect to the use of technology (or not) as a teaching tool, these teachers' responses indicate that they are in step with the conclusions of Cashia *et al* who state: "replacing traditional tools with technologies does not automatically lead to creativity or innovation. The combination of traditional teaching tools with technology allows more space for experimentation, for both the teachers and the students" (40). Our respondents appreciate that modern FLT considers the involvement of ICTs is important, but not necessarily too often. There needs to be a balanced use of ICT teaching tools, just as there should be a balanced use and application of other teaching instruments, strategies and materials.

In broad terms, the paper examines 21st century ELT based on teachers' responses and it gives pride of place to the adaptation of teaching approaches based on students' needs. What the teachers mentioned, is that they try to adopt and adapt new ways of delivering teaching, which would enable substantial understanding of their contexts. This is followed by the replacement of Teacher Talking Time (TTT) with Student Talking Time (STT), that students may become more confident in learning, more open towards diversity in teaching /learning and more flexible with respect to global societal principles. As we are dealing with the 21st century students, they demand 'novelty' and teachers are in charge of offering different opportunities to achieve learning, which can be conducted through shared participation and varied

interaction. And this reciprocal involvement not only includes teacher-student and student-student collaboration, but also the management of teaching/learning, teacher-student-technology relationships; as such, there are many occasions in which the teachers' role is more of a guide/facilitator. Thus, these teachers claim to have moved from their 'comfort zone' to something more akin to an 'action zone'. The paper suggests that teachers do try to encourage learning and engage themselves more in qualitative learning. They are looking forward to new teaching techniques/materials that will help their students learn not only in class; they are eager for continuous professional teaching development: fostering new teaching techniques that enable the students move out of class and into the world. As discussed, all these are elements of the 21st century FL teachers' philosophy which can be considered (and should be considered) more as global aspects than local ones.

On the other hand, given the task of specifying the challenges they face, teachers reported their principle concerns to be sustaining motivation, followed by the large size of classes, how to encourage students' autonomy and boosting students' cognitive processes. These were all significant challenges. Also mentioned was the use of technology as a worthwhile teaching/learning tool, mixed ability classes and poor quality teaching materials. Even in this matter, the teachers' responses show similarities although they hail from very distant countries.

The responses about [R]evolution and its effect on education and society today have much in common and significantly favour progressive educative aims. Introducing suitable changes within local and global teaching contexts proved highly positive: there is a need to move towards much wider and much deeper learning. However, the teachers' responses show that while these changes are only being carried out slowly, students are offered opportunities to adapt their style of learning and aim to achieve positive performance in class (and out of the class). Teaching-learning is conducted within local, appropriate and applicable frameworks with the aim of fitting into globally-accepted, appropriate and applicable norms. This kind of balance in teaching and learning, helps students not to be overloaded, since as Bransford *et al* point out, students' memory functions better if they understand what are they learning (245), and "teaching for in-depth learning" (Bransford *et al* 239) which becomes more difficult if more and more input is given to them. Our position, based on these teachers' responses, is that in current and future systems of education, effective teaching-learning, requires well-paced, yet complex input that is consistent with the current needs of the local society.

Changes in FLT, and the role of teachers in determining the need for changes in education, means changes in the kind of students that the system 'produces'. No matter if these changes are to do with the curricula (more globalized curricula) or changes in the learning environment (virtual classrooms), or in the teaching methods and materials, they all lead towards beneficial social changes. This determination to promote change in FLT needs to be especially focussed when it comes to teaching materials and especially so when it comes to the choosing of appropriate textbooks – still the main working 'tool' of most FL teachers in most contexts. Teachers' responses show that textbooks are an important factor and that they may hinder progressive learning. The publishing industry and textbook writers need to re-focus and embrace a more [r]**e**volutionary perspective: to provide support for competent teachers, and not restrict and de-skill them, so they can make evident beneficial teaching-learning. The teachers also reflect on the need for institutional support, reinforcement and revision of old and current teaching methods (see Campo, Negro & Núñez, Harmer, Richards and Rodgers, Ellis, and Larsen-Freeman). In general, FLT within a country should contain common characteristics that fit general, global, 21st century education, emphasizing citizenship education which promotes concepts related to social welfare and improving the quality of life for people in an inclusive, knowledgeable society. This means development by making use of innovative and [r]evolutionary ideas, implementing the combined best of the traditional and the modern; and combining the best of local and global educational features.

The globalization of FLT by using locally appropriate approaches to teaching has an impact at three different stages:

- in the precise teaching context (those teachers, those schools, those books)
- in the broader local and national context (regional-state educational systems)
- in international education (as in the **E**uropean **H**igher **E**ducation **A**rea, launched in 2010))

It is apparent that improved rates of success in FLT have an important impact, having a bearing on one of the most crucial social issues in the modern world, i.e. improved levels of pluri-lingual competence and mutual comprehension. Harmer points out that "education should speak to the 'whole person', in other words, not just to a small language learning facility. In a humanist classroom, students are emotionally involved in learning, they are encouraged to reflect on how learning happens and their creativity is fostered […]" (74). In addition to 'humanist' teaching and learning, all these teachers stated that innovative approaches are being used for the purpose of

promoting inclusive learning. Experienced teachers are usually open to innovation and changing pedagogical methods, as these teachers are. In this way, 'future' education can be passed on socially and shared cross-culturally. Here may be included changes (from the spectrum of (R)evolution) in teaching strategies and techniques, classroom management skills and teacher attitudes to do with tolerance and flexibility within the teaching environment.

The social processes and educational changes of the 21st century create current opportunities for relationship building and mutually compatible social benefit. Analysis of past and present practices in education should shape future educational policy. Success should be measured by academic achievement but also "include areas such as student engagement, participation and self-concept and community social capital (that is, to areas that have greater predictive validity for later life successes)" (Mulford 45). Above all, the challenge for teachers (and students) is to examine their local practices in the light of global tendencies, to seek locally appropriate elements of innovation, in essence, to glocalise their approach to FLT.

CONCLUSION

[R]evolution perhaps needs to become a buzz word in FLT: universal acceptance of innovation in education can only be achieved through action in the classroom. This means that the way of making the concept clearer is through peer classroom observations and personal reflections on what is needed for teachers (methodology) and what is valuable for students to learn (content), these are two sides to the same objective: effective teaching leading to efficient learning.

Concerning the first question dealing with teaching philosophy (values, beliefs, and goals): all teachers' responses were related to approximately the same priorities: appropriate teaching methods, the effort how to make students talk, i.e. increasing student talking time (STT) and reducing teacher talking time (TTT), locally appropriate and culturally inclusive teaching materials, a positive, achievement-driven teaching-learning atmosphere and varied and appropriate evaluation. These teachers all believe that teaching can be better and teachers could do better if appropriate approaches are being used. Regarding the challenges that are faced by these teachers' today, responses were rather vaguer: the teachers responded across a wide range of variables: large numbers of students in classes (class size), the effective use ICTs, developing empathy with the students, heterogeneous classes, students' different levels of knowledge, varying levels of student motivation, and crucially, how to put more effort into differentiating students' needs and identify students' learning

problems. All these are part of these teachers' doubts and their daily struggle of how to best meet these challenges. When discussing the third question, [R]evolution in education, these teachers consider it to be a matter of choice based on the teachers' work experience and teacher's point of view within and of an educational system. Both revolution and evolution in education are primary parts of our teaching at all levels and from time to time they can interchange if the net result aims at a positive impact in education and society. However, if we regard [R]evolution as essential, it has to be taken on by experienced teachers acting as instigators. The concept of **[R]evolution** generated a range of opinions described by the acronym below. This paper introduces the best description of the current teachers' opinions about education:

R-Recognize societal needs in order to apply appropriate teaching

E-Evaluate societal needs and deficiencies in relation to learning

V-Value change and harmonize teaching-learning

O-Organize variety in teaching-learning experiences

L-Life Long Learning applies to teachers too

U-Uniqueness but also unity in education

T-Timeliness: up-to-date teaching and learning based on societal needs

I-Independence in decision-making on classroom matters

O-Omniscience; make society want to know everything that can be known

N-Non-functioning education??? Try to change it immediately.

In conclusion, [R]evolution in education is a good framework to examine whether current FLT at a local level is aligned with current FLT at a global level. The challenge is to ensure that teaching-learning objectives are linked with broader social needs and trends. In this case, current teaching should aim to assure an international perspective to education and international opportunities (for teachers and students) that include challenging the presuppositions of local educational practices and local knowledge by increasing the value of those same things from the global context. Adopting a model of education (with all its generalizations and limitations) might really make [R]evolution in FLT possible. Any future ELT model will, almost by definition, be a 'mixture' that captures the general, global trends and combines them with the specific-local dynamics of a society (which are subject to growth and change); this process should be designed or redesigned and left to chance. In this

scenario, one crucial factor will remain constant: the need to hear the voices of our teachers.

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