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**An Exploratory Study into Teachers' Approaches  
to Technology-mediated Plurilingual Language Education**

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## 1.0 Abstract

Technology is playing an ever-increasing role in today's society, especially for the younger generation who are growing up using technology on a daily basis. Although educators seem to be embracing the rise of technology, the integration of technology in the classroom is lacklustre because of, in part, the lack of sufficient training. Additionally, plurilingualism is yet to be fully embraced in the classroom. There are many reasons for this ranging from the fact that the concept is relatively new to the insistence from schools of the use of only the target language in foreign language classrooms. How effective the combination of the two, to create technology-mediated plurilingual language education, is not well known since very little research is yet to be done.

In this paper, data has been taken from the TEMPLATE (Technology-Mediated Plurilingual Activities for (Language) Teacher Education) project, organised and funded by the European Union (EU). An initial survey was conducted to establish the existing knowledge and attitudes of teachers on the subjects mentioned above and, subsequently, focus groups were held in order to discuss the topics in further detail.

In general, participants seemed to have some kind of knowledge of the concept of plurilingualism but did not, however, use it very often in their foreign language classrooms. They seemed to feel comfortable using technology themselves and integrating into their lessons but not in the most effective way. For example, technology was being used during online classes in order to communicate but was not being integrated into the tasks. Furthermore, the participants seemed to have little to no experience of technology-mediated plurilingual language education.

Technologie spielt heutzutage eine zentrale Rolle in der Gesellschaft, vor allem für die jüngere Generation, welche mit dem täglichen Umgang mit neuen Technologien aufwächst. Obwohl Lehrkräfte diese neuen Technologien scheinbar annehmen, ist die Anwendung von Technologie im Klassenzimmer stumpf. Diese Tatsache lässt sich auf mangelnde Informationen diesbezüglich im Lehramtstudium zurückführen. Darüber hinaus spielt Mehrsprachigkeit aus vielfältigen Gründen noch keine große Rolle im Klassenzimmer. Beispielhaft lassen sich hier die Neuartigkeit des Konzepts an sich, oder die Tatsache, dass sich Lehrkräfte teilweise gezwungen sehen, im Fremdsprachenunterricht nur in der Zielsprache zu kommunizieren nennen. Die Wirksamkeit der Kombination von Mehrsprachigkeit und Technology ist noch nicht bekannt, da es bislang wenig Studien in diesem Bereich gibt.

In dieser Arbeit wurden die Daten von dem EU organisierten und gesponserten TEMPLATE (Technology-Mediated Plurilingual Activities for (Language) Teacher Education) Projekt genommen und ausgewertet. Eine erste Umfrage wurde durchgeführt, um das Wissen und die Einstellung der Lehrkräfte bezüglich Technologie und Mehrsprachigkeit zu erfassen. Daraufhin wurden Fokusgruppen durchgeführt, um diese Themen ausführlicher zu besprechen. Die Teilnehmer\*innen kannten teilweise das Konzept von Mehrsprachigkeit, aber setzen dieses im Fremdsprachenunterricht selten ein. Sie gaben an, Technologie selbst gut bedienen zu können und diese im Unterricht einzusetzen, doch teilweise nicht auf die effektivste Art und Weise. Zum Beispiel wurde Technologie während des Online-Unterrichts verwendet, um zu kommunizieren, aber wurde nicht in den Aufgaben integriert. Darüber hinaus hatten die Teilnehmer\*innen wenig bis keine Erfahrung mit durch Technologie vermittelte Mehrsprachigkeitserziehung.

## 2.0 Introduction

The data used in this thesis has been taken from the TEMPLATE (Technology-Mediated Plurilingual Activities for (language) Teacher Education) project. This is an international EU-funded project which is headed by several universities from countries within the EU, including Germany, Italy, Belgium, Spain, and Lithuania. One of the goals of the project is to gather information about the understanding, attitudes, and needs of teachers regarding plurilingualism and technology. In addition, the project will help to inform teachers of how to effectively use technology during lessons, especially in the foreign language classroom. In order to reach a wider audience of teachers, the final results of the project, including detailed lesson plans, will be published on the project's website.

The first stages of the project included an online survey, in which participants shared their understanding and attitudes towards technology and plurilingualism, and multiple focus groups, in which the participants discussed these topics in greater detail. Following on from this, a small number of in-service teachers will be chosen to work closely with project partners. During this stage, they will plan, organise, and carry out lessons in which they use task-based or project-based language learning integrated with technology. The data in this study relates to the first two stages: the survey and the focus groups.

One of the main topics in this project is extremely relevant in today's society. Technology has helped shaped the future we currently live in; for example, smartphones have changed the way people live, communicate, interact, learn, and generate new knowledge (Benali et al., 2018). It has become ubiquitous in contemporary society and is, therefore, a significant cultural tool in children's lives (Johnston et al., 2018). They experience technology daily, either using it themselves or observing others applying it as an everyday resource (Nikolopoulou & Gialamas, 2015). Because of this, technology will be of huge significance to the children of tomorrow, which is why it should not just be *used* in classrooms but *integrated* into classroom activities. Because of its importance, digital competence has become a major talking-point in recent years, some claiming that it belongs to key skills people should have in the "knowledge society". Thus, teachers' digital competence is becoming part of the key pedagogical knowledge for practice and improvement of students' learning (Benali et al., 2018).

In addition, UNESCO states that the digital competence of teachers means the ability to help students become collaborative, creative, and problem-solving learners through the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT). This will help them become effective citizens and members of the workforce (UNESCO, 2011).

Furthermore, helping future generations become more technologically competent, by increasing knowledge and proficiency with technology, can essentially empower them and forms a contemporary and continually developing type of cultural capital (Paino & Renzulli, 2013).

Plurilingualism, although a relatively new concept, is also growing in popularity and importance. It was coined in 1996 by the Council of Europe who drew a clear distinction between multilingualism and plurilingualism. Multilingualism is used to refer to the “coexistence of different languages at the social or individual level”, whereas plurilingualism is “the dynamic and developing linguist repertoire of an individual user/learner” (Council of Europe, 2001).

Many support the use of the term plurilingualism over the term multilingualism stating, for example, that it highlights the synthesis of language rather than just the idea of multiple coexisting, separate languages (Moore et al., 2020). Plurilingualism is a more realistic representation of how we use language. It is not a patchwork of multicoloured pieces, but rather a watercolour painting in which the colours merge into one another seamlessly to create something unique (Piccardo, 2019).

Furthermore, foreign language classrooms are increasingly being populated by pupils with eclectic backgrounds and for whom the environment language is their second language. Therefore, for these pupils, the target foreign language is being learnt as a second, third or even fourth language (Bonnet & Siemund, 2018). It is, therefore, important to recognise this and may also be beneficial to include these languages during language teaching.

In order to explore these subjects in greater detail, both separately and in combination with each other, this paper will describe and analyse the initial survey and subsequent focus groups from the TEMPLATE project.

## **3.0 Background**

### **3.1 Terminology**

*Technology* is the combination of any skills, methods, techniques, or processes that are used in order to accomplish an objective. In the context of teaching and education, multiple different devices can be considered technology.

*Multilingualism* is the use of more than one language by a speaker or a group of speakers. Multilingual speakers have acquired at least one first language (L1) as a child without formal education. Another language can be learnt as a foreign language in school (L2). Children who acquire two languages natively during the early years are known as simultaneous bilinguals. Multilingualism is usually connected to situations in which languages simultaneously coexist in a society but are utilised separately.

A person who switches with ease between multiple languages for ease of communication depending on the situation is practising *plurilingualism*. Plurilingualism derives from multilingualism and they are sometimes used synonymously but there are some big differences. Whereas multilingualism is the coexistence of separate languages, plurilingualism is seen as the interconnected knowledge of multiple languages. Plurilingualism highlights the dynamic integration of languages within an individual's linguistic repertoire (Stille & Cummins, 2013).

### **3.2 Technology**

The role of technology has steadily increased in the last century. In the 1930's, the first overhead projectors entered the classroom followed by hand-held calculators and photocopiers. In the 1980's, the first computers appeared and, more recently, other forms of technology have found their way into the classroom, being integrated into the teaching and learning processes. Devices such as projectors, interactive whiteboards (IWBs), laptops, tablets, and smartphones have changed the way in which information is conveyed in the classroom.

In addition, children are living in an increasingly digital world and, as a result, their preferences and needs as learners may be more connected to technology. Although educators are embracing the rise of technology (Ziegler, 2016), the pupils' task-based experiences and resources in their learning setting is not reflecting this (Johnston et al., 2018). Additionally, the teaching profession is having to acquire a broader and more sophisticated set of digital competences than before to combat growing challenges and demands (Benali et al., 2018). Unfortunately, this process is lagging: "Teachers have not yet become good enough at the kind of pedagogies that make the most of technology" (Schleicher, 2016). Teachers must evolve along with the curriculum to fit the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In order to do this, the training of

teachers must be modernised. Research from Hsu (2010) suggests that it is more likely that a teacher will be able to successfully integrate ICT into their lessons when that teacher is better trained in the use of this technology.

However, negative reactions to technology are often displayed by older generations that have different experiences with it. The information about technology has been acquired later in life, whereas the younger generation inherit these skills and therefore face different experiences (Aldhafeeri et al., 2016). Because of this, technology is not always seen as a priority for early learning and the understanding about digital technology in play-based learning is still emerging (Edwards et al., 2018).

Ebbeck & Waniganayake (2016) suggest that children learn best in play-based situations that reflect their home culture and experiences. This highlights the importance of social interactions and scaffolding to support early learning development. Even as a teacher, digital competence can be influenced by personal factors, such as attitudes towards the use of ICT, as well as context, such as curricula requirements, years of teaching, or infrastructure (Benali et al., 2018).

In addition, task-based language teaching (TBLT) has recently garnered increasing attention with a growing body of research demonstrating the efficacy of tasks to support foreign language learning (Ziegler, 2016). TBLT is a process-based approach to language learning where the task is the unit of focus, not decontextualised units in which the learner must first master the unit before applying it to real-world situations. During this process, emphasis is placed on the interaction, meaning, and what learners can do with language (Ziegler, 2016). TBLT offers an ideal environment for negotiation, feedback, and output and provides opportunities for L2 development to occur (Ziegler, 2016). In recent years, this has developed into technology-based TBLT.

In order to bring consistency to learning outcomes of technology-mediated tasks, a specific set of criteria was created for the classroom by González-Lloret and Ortega (2014).

1. The primary focus is on meaning. In other words, learners are focused on the content, including semantic and pragmatic meaning, rather than the form.
2. Goal orientation is necessary. The task must provide communicative purpose, stimulated by learners' need to impart information, solve a problem, or express an opinion, as well as a communicative or noncommunicative outcome resulting from task completion. That is, the learners' use of language is necessary to achieve the desired outcome and is not necessarily the goal in and of itself.



3. The task should be learner centred, requiring learners to draw mainly on their own linguistic and non-linguistic resources in addition to their digital skills.
4. Tasks are authentic and representative of the real world, drawing on real-world processes of language use and integrating form and function.
5. Opportunities for reflective learning are also provided. This offers learners the chance not only to learn by doing, but also to consider the process as well as the outcome, encouraging cyclical and reflective learning (González-Lloret & Ortega, 2014).

Recently, other approaches to technology-mediated language learning have also been developed, including computer-assisted language learning (CALL), reflecting the continuing increase of the integration of technology in the classroom (Ziegler, 2016).

To make the tasks more pedagogically effective, a push for a more empirically grounded approach to CALL was drawn attention to by Chapelle in the late 90's (Ziegler, 2016), resulting in the creation of guidelines like the aforementioned set of criteria. More recently, the need for a re-think of technology-mediated TBLT has been addressed, where technology is not only seen as a medium but also as an opportunity for providing students with the chance to experience learning-by-doing and improve their digital literacy and real-world technology skills (González-Lloret & Ortega, 2014).

### **3.3 Plurilingualism**

The idea that only the target language should be used during lessons is deeply rooted in society as a whole and in foreign language teaching. Within this concept, the use of L1 in second and foreign language learning is discouraged or even prohibited. This principle has been widely accepted for many years (Cummins, 2007). In fact, monolingualism has, in the past, been reinforced in Europe by the *one nation-one language* ideology (Lüdi & Py, 2009).

However, some claim that using plurilingual teaching practices not only allows for maximum exposure to the target language, but also draws on learners' metalinguistic awareness and experiences as plurilingual speakers (Cenoz & Gorter, 2013). A plurilingual approach can also encourage learners to compare the languages in their repertoire to each other when learning a new target language and when using their languages in a social context (Cenoz & Gorter, 2013). There is good reason to believe that plurilingualism is the norm for the majority of people as it is thought that 70% of the world's population is bilingual or multilingual (Trask, 1999). Additionally, it is believed that bilinguals learning a third language seem to have developed a sensitivity to language which helps them perform better on those activities associated with formal language learning than monolinguals (Thomas, 1988).

The concept of plurilingual and pluricultural competence (PPC) is considered as a holistic approach to language in a dual sense. Firstly, all language speakers are considered to be plurilingual due to the fact that, on a daily basis, every person speaks dialects, employs different registers, and uses words that are borrowed from other languages. Secondly, instead of viewing PPC as a sum of languages and cultures, it emphasises the notion of a sole, interrelated repertoire.

It is believed that the foundation for basic individual plurilingualism is laid when a child begins to learn their first foreign language (L2) (Hufeisen & Neuner, 2004). If the child then goes on to learn another foreign language (L3), their understanding of plurilingualism begins to unconsciously deepen: They can observe, among other things, that language mixture occasionally occurs and can begin to understand that learning, understanding, and using a new language can have active recourse to the foreign language already learnt (Hufeisen & Neuner, 2004). Using this knowledge to advantage and expressly including cognitive and emotional experiences in L3 teaching is a potential initial stage of a total language teaching curriculum, also referred to as integrated language didactics (Hufeisen & Neuner, 2004).

A linguistic repertoire is unique to an individual and is one of the key principles of a plurilingualism-inspired pedagogy. It is based on the individual's biography, encounters, and relationship with language and is therefore a dynamic, evolving process that adjusts with the broadening and changing of the individual's social contexts and circumstances. Therefore, plurilingualism for language education should focus attention on subjectivity, agency, and social context, where students' plurilingual identities are always altering and improving (Stille & Cummins, 2013).

Unfortunately, the research regarding technology-mediated pluralistic language learning is scarce which makes a project like *TEMPLATE* one of the first to combine these two topics.

## **4.0 The Study – Materials and Methods**

### **4.1 The Survey**

The original survey was a short questionnaire intended to measure teachers' understanding and attitudes towards plurilingualism and technology, as well as their own classroom practices. In order for the project to advance teachers' abilities regarding these topics, information needed to be gathered about teachers' needs and expectations of technology-mediated plurilingual activities.

#### *4.1.1 Survey information*

The survey consisted of 27 questions broken up into the following categories: personal information, professional information, technology, plurilingualism, technology in the classroom, and plurilingualism in the classroom. The sections were adapted and specially formulated to serve the research's objective and to gain a general insight. This would then be built upon during the focus group interviews.

The survey was first constructed in English and then translated into the native languages of the respondents (German, Italian, French, Spanish, and Lithuanian). Participants could choose in which language they preferred to complete the survey.

Both pre-service and in-service teachers were encouraged to fill in the questionnaire and it was distributed via e-mail and invitations were posted on social media platforms. The survey was conducted online via the Qualtrics tool.

#### *4.1.2 Survey questions*

The 4-point Likert-scale, with the omission of the "neutral" point, was used (1 = strongly agree, 2 = somewhat agree, 3 = somewhat disagree, 4 = strongly disagree) in order to force a response from participants. In fact, using a scale with a middle point may give rise to dilemmas or the rejection of some items (Baka et al., 2012) or decrease the variance of responses (Si & Cullen, 1998).

The Plurilingual and Pluricultural Competence (PPC) scale (Galante, 2020) is a device "validated by researchers, language teachers and learners" (Galante, 2020). It provided inspiration for the items measuring the teachers' attitudes towards plurilingualism, both in general and in their classroom specifically.

Teachers' attitudes towards technology were based on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis, 1989). Perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and attitudes towards use were all measured using the same 4-point Likert-scale ranging from strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (4). The section investigating teachers' use of technology was designed based

on Delforge et al.'s study (2019) and consisted of Likert-scale items and multiple choice questions.

## **4.2 The Focus Groups**

The focus groups were intended to be a follow-up to the survey. This way, certain topics could be delved into a little deeper and the participants' personal experiences could be shared. After collecting initial information from the survey, questions and organisational details for the focus groups were drafted and fine-tuned.

### *4.2.1 Focus group set-up*

One focus group took place in all five countries taking part in the project with the participants residing in that country. Within these focus groups, either the native language of that country or English was spoken in order for the participants to easily convey their views. In addition to this, two more plurilingual focus groups were organised. These groups had one participant from each country involved and the lingua franca used was English. This was made clear to the participants beforehand.

On the contrary to the survey, it was important that all participants of the focus groups were in-service teachers so that they had a wide range of information, knowledge, and experience about the subject at hand. There were participants involved that teach at both primary and secondary levels.

The size of the groups was also an important factor. If the size of the group is too big, some participants may abstain from sharing their views because of amount of people present. However, a group size that is too small would not yield enough data for the project. A group size of between five and six people was agreed upon.

In addition to this, the length of these meetings was critical. A satisfactory amount of relevant data needed to be extracted from these meeting. However, if the meetings were to go on for too long, participants would start to lose interest and the information gained may become irrelevant to the topic. A time of around 60 minutes for each focus group was agreed upon.

Because of the ongoing pandemic and the fact that in some cases, participants were situated in different countries, the meetings were held over Zoom. In order to properly document the meetings, a recording was taken and a transcript made of each focus group. Participants were made of clear of this prior to the meeting taking place.

### *4.2.2 Focus group questions*

The questions for the focus groups were split into two groups: technology and plurilingualism. Within these two groups, questions were asked in order to gain a better understanding of the

depth of knowledge of the participants regarding these two subjects and, additionally, to find out about their prior training and application of these aspects in their classroom. The questions asked during the focus groups were the following:

### *Technology*

1. What is technology for you? What do you understand under the term ‘technology’?
2. Have you ever received any training on the use of technology for teaching?
3. Do you have good access to technology in your teaching context?
  - a. Are you encouraged to use technology?
  - b. Does your school offer or organise any support or specific training?
  - c. Can students use smartphones or personal devices?
4. Is technology a regular part of your teaching practise? How and when do you use technology? Is this technology integrated into your lesson?
  - a. Is the ICT you are currently using a result of the pandemic?
  - b. If so, do you think these tools will continue to be a regular part of the teaching practice in the future? Which one(s)?
  - c. What is your personal opinion: Would you rather go back “to normal” or use these technologies further?
  - d. What do you perceive as the benefits and challenges of using ICT?
5. What kind of support would be best for you? If you could choose the kind training you receive, what would it look like?

### *Plurilingualism*

1. What is plurilingualism to you?
2. Do you use different languages in the language classroom? If so, which ones do you use? When and why do you use a different language?
3. Do your students use different languages in the language classroom?
4. What is the policy of plurilingual education in your school? For example, is the use of L1 or FL preferred?

In order to fully engage the participants, examples of plurilingual tasks were also used. One is presented below.

Example 1. Could you imagine using this task in your classroom? Would it be effective?

Task description Learners receive a card including a writing template which varies depending on the vocabulary the teacher wants the students to learn.

Task development: Learners are asked to fill in the blanks using English adjectives they have learnt or found using dictionaries.

Plurilingual elements: Learners can choose to include a sentence or a few words in another language.

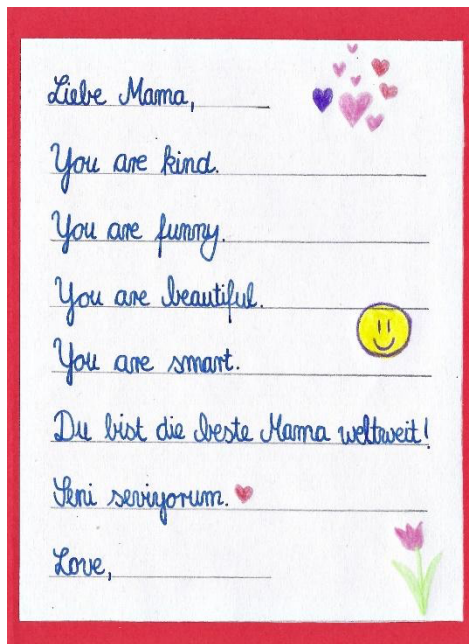


Photo 1: An example of a plurilingual activity: Mother's Day Card

The focus groups were, with the permission of the participants, recorded and subsequently transcribed and analysed.

## 5.0 Results

### 5.1 Survey

212 people from a range of countries, cultures, and backgrounds participated in the survey. Their answers to the questions relevant to this paper are displayed below.

#### 1. What is your country of residence?

<b>Country</b>	<b>No. of participants</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<i>Spain</i>	73	34
<i>Germany</i>	39	18
<i>Belgium</i>	32	15
<i>Italy</i>	30	14
<i>Lithuania</i>	27	12
<i>Ecuador</i>	2	1
<i>Netherlands</i>	2	1
<i>United States of America (USA)</i>	2	1
<i>Austria</i>	1	<1
<i>Bolivia</i>	1	<1
<i>China</i>	1	<1
<i>Colombia</i>	1	<1
<i>United Kingdom (UK)</i>	1	<1
	Total: 212	

Table 1: Country of residence of participants

#### 2. What is your gender?

<b>Gender</b>	<b>No. of participants</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<i>Female</i>	150	70
<i>Male</i>	61	29
<i>Non-binary</i>	1	1
	Total: 212	

Table 2: Gender of participants

3. What is your age?

<b>Age</b>	<b>No. of participants</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<i>21-25 years old</i>	48	23
<i>26-30 years old</i>	34	16
<i>31-40 years old</i>	34	16
<i>41-50 years old</i>	54	25
<i>51-60 years old</i>	34	16
<i>61-70 years old</i>	8	4
	Total: 212	

Table 3: Age of participants

4. Are you an in-service or pre-service teacher?

<b>Profile</b>	<b>No. of participants</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<i>Pre-service teacher</i>	61	29
<i>In-service teacher</i>	103	49
<i>In-service CLIL teacher</i>	24	11
<i>Other</i>	24	11
	Total: 212	

Table 4: Profile of participants

5. How many years of teaching experience do you have?

<b>Years of experience</b>	<b>No. of participants</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<i>None</i>	2	2
<i>0-3 years</i>	21	16
<i>4-6 years</i>	18	14
<i>7-9 years</i>	9	7
<i>10-15 years</i>	18	14
<i>16-20 years</i>	19	15
<i>Over 20 years</i>	40	32
	Total: 127	

Table 5: Years of teaching experience of participants



6. At which level do you teach?

<b>Target student population</b>	<b>No. of participants</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<i>Primary school</i>	25	15
<i>Lower secondary school</i>	53	33
<i>Upper secondary school</i>	67	42
<i>Tertiary education</i>	15	10
	Total: 160	

Table 6: Level of teaching of participants

7. In which languages do you teach?

Given languages: English, French, German, Italian, Dutch, Lithuanian, Spanish (Castilian Spanish, Valencian Spanish/Catalan).

8. At which level do you speak the languages you teach in?

<b>Level</b>	<b>A1</b>	<b>A2</b>	<b>B1</b>	<b>B2</b>	<b>C1</b>	<b>C2</b>	<b>Native Speaker</b>
<i>Language 1</i>	0	0	2	6	24	38	36
<i>Language 2</i>	0	0	1	9	27	11	28
<i>Language 3</i>	0	1	0	5	8	8	5
<i>Language 4</i>	3	1	2	1	0	0	0
<i>Language 5</i>	1	0	0	2	0	0	0

Table 7: Language ability of participants

9. What type of equipment do you use/have you used in class? (Multiple answers possible).

<b>Type of equipment</b>	<b>No. of participants</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<i>Smartphone</i>	119	21
<i>Laptop</i>	133	24
<i>Tablet</i>	78	14
<i>Desktop Computer</i>	107	19
<i>Interactive Whiteboard</i>	104	18
<i>Other</i>	20	4
	Total: 561	

Table 8: Type of equipment used by participants

Other equipment used included a projector, a video recorder, a CD player, and a smart TV.

10. What type of tools/applications do you use/have you used in class? Please list the key websites, programmes, or applications that you use. If you are not currently teaching, please refer to a time when you have taught.

Listed applications include Kahoot, Microsoft Office (Word, PowerPoint, Excel), iMovie, Google, Pingo, Youtube, Flipgrid, genial.ly, Moodle, Wordwall, Educaplay, Chatterpix, iStopMotion, Keynote, Zoom, Wooclap, and Rosetta Stone among others.

11. For the following statements, please choose one answer.

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Somewhat agree</b>	<b>Somewhat disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Total</b>
<i>I find it difficult to make adjustments in my communication if the person I am talking to comes from a different cultural background.</i>	10 5%	40 19%	90 42%	72 34%	212
<i>When talking to someone who knows the same languages as I do, we should communicate in only one language.</i>	18 8%	44 21%	89 42%	61 29%	212
<i>People from other cultural background should behave like me so we can communicate more easily.</i>	4 2%	30 14%	86 41%	92 43%	212
<i>I understand there are differences between cultures and that what can be considered 'strange' to one person may be considered 'normal' to another.</i>	177 83%	28 13%	4 2%	3 2%	212
<i>I do not feel comfortable discussing differences in cultural values when talking to people from different cultural backgrounds.</i>	12 6%	35 16%	78 37%	87 41%	212

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Somewhat agree</b>	<b>Somewhat disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Total</b>
<i>It's easy for me to accept different values and behaviours from people who come from other cultural backgrounds.</i>	98 46%	77 36%	22 10%	15 8%	212
<i>I prefer to have similar values and beliefs as a person from another cultural background so we can understand each other.</i>	17 8%	67 32%	92 43%	36 17%	212
<i>When communicating with people from other cultural backgrounds, I find it difficult to (re)explain something when people misunderstand what I mean(t).</i>	8 4%	40 19%	106 50%	58 27%	212
<i>If I am talking to someone who can speak the same languages as I do, we should both speak in one language only and not mix languages.</i>	13 6%	35 17%	83 39%	81 38%	212
<i>I don't mind adjusting my behaviour to avoid misinterpretations.</i>	98 46%	88 41%	17 8%	9 5%	212

Table 9: Participants' answers to general statements about plurilingualism

12. For the following statements, please choose one answer.

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Somewhat agree</b>	<b>Somewhat disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Total</b>
<i>I can understand some words and expressions in languages I don't speak.</i>	84 40%	109 51%	15 7%	4 2%	212
<i>I can identify common behaviours from my cultural background and explain them to someone from another cultural background.</i>	83 39%	118 55%	10 5%	1 1%	212
<i>I can use the knowledge I have in one language to understand the same topic in another language.</i>	92 43%	108 51%	10 5%	2 1%	212
<i>When learning/reading about a new topic, I don't use/read in more than one language.</i>	18 9%	41 19%	87 41%	66 31%	212
<i>Because I speak two languages (or more), I can learn a new language more easily.</i>	96 45%	89 42%	23 11%	4 2%	212
<i>I can recognise some languages if they are similar to the languages that I know.</i>	108 51%	89 42%	11 5%	4 2%	212

Table 10: Participants' answers to statements about their own plurilingualism

13. For the following statements, please choose one answer. If you are not currently teaching, please refer to a time when you have taught.

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Somewhat agree</b>	<b>Somewhat disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Total</b>
<i>When teaching, I feel comfortable switching between one language to another language.</i>	106 58%	65 35%	8 4%	5 3%	184
<i>When teaching in one language, I may use words of another language in the same sentence to make it easier to communicate.</i>	71 39%	66 36%	39 21%	8 4%	184
<i>I encourage my learners to use their knowledge in one language to understand the same topic in another language.</i>	100 55%	74 40%	8 4%	2 1%	184
<i>When teaching learners from different cultural backgrounds, I make adjustments in my communication (if necessary) when talking to them.</i>	75 41%	94 51%	11 6%	4 2%	184
<i>I encourage my learners to identify common behaviours from their cultural background and explain them to someone from another cultural background.</i>	72 39%	94 51%	16 9%	2 1%	184
<i>When teaching, I do not feel comfortable mixing two (or more) languages in conversation.</i>	12 6%	33 18%	55 30%	84 46%	184
<i>When teaching in one language, I may use a word or expression in another language to better explain a concept or idea.</i>	92 50%	75 41%	12 6%	5 3%	184

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Somewhat agree</b>	<b>Somewhat disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Total</b>
<i>When learning/reading about a new topic, I don't encourage my learners to use/read in another language other than the target language.</i>	6 3%	43 23%	57 31%	78 43%	184
<i>The learners in my class who speak two languages or more can learn the target language more easily.</i>	71 39%	90 49%	19 10%	4 2%	184

Table 11: Participants' answers to statements about plurilingualism in the classroom

14. For the following statements, choose one answer. If you are not currently teaching, please refer to a time when you have taught.

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Somewhat agree</b>	<b>Somewhat disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Total</b>
<i>I feel comfortable using technology from a technical point of view.</i>	76 41%	73 40%	28 15%	7 4%	184
<i>I feel capable of integrating technology in my class.</i>	92 50%	80 43%	11 6%	1 <1%	184

Table 11: Participants' answers to statements about their own technological capabilities

15. For the following statement, please choose one answer. In my classroom...

<b>Statement</b>	<b>No. of participants</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<i>...I don't/haven't used technology.</i>	2	1
<i>...I keep/have kept the traditional (paper or book-related) practice and complement it with a digital tool.</i>	53	29
<i>...I keep/have kept my usual practice and use technology to make it more effective.</i>	71	39
<i>I use/have used technology to make learners perform innovative tasks that would not be possible without technology.</i>	58	31
	Total: 184	

Table 12: Participants' answers to statements about their use of technology in the classroom

16. How often do your learners use/have your learners used technology in class?

<b>Statement</b>	<b>No. of participants</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<i>Never</i>	3	1
<i>Once a year</i>	4	2
<i>Once a month</i>	21	12
<i>Once a week</i>	65	35
<i>In every lesson</i>	91	50
	Total: 184	

Table 13: Participants' answers to statements about their learners use of technology in the classroom

17. Have you ever done a digital activity in class where your learners were encouraged to use several languages?

<b>Statement</b>	<b>No. of participants</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<i>Yes</i>	76	41
<i>No</i>	108	59
	Total: 184	

Table 12: Participants' answers to statements about their learners use of plurilingualism in the classroom

18. If so, for which skills? Multiple choice is allowed.

<b>Skill</b>	<b>No. of participants</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<i>Listening</i>	44	24
<i>Reading</i>	43	23
<i>Speaking</i>	55	30
<i>Writing</i>	42	23
	Total: 184	

Table 13: Participants' answers to statements about the skills in which their learners use multiple languages

19. For which type of activities? Multiple choice is allowed.

<b>Type of Activity</b>	<b>No. of participants</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<i>Individual</i>	36	36
<i>Collaborative</i>	63	64
	Total: 99	

Table 13: Participants' answers to statements about the skills in which their learners use multiple languages



20. For the following statements, please choose one answer.

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Somewhat agree</b>	<b>Somewhat disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Total</b>
<i>I am aware of the existence of plurilingual didactics and plurilingual tools/resources.</i>	67 32%	88 41%	41 19%	16 8%	212
<i>I know where to find information on plurilingual didactics and plurilingual tools/resources.</i>	25 12%	56 26%	96 45%	35 17%	212
<i>I would like to learn more about plurilingual didactics and plurilingual tools/resources.</i>	125 59%	68 32%	16 8%	3 1%	212
<i>I think there is a lack of information on plurilingual didactics and plurilingual tools/resources.</i>	101 48%	80 38%	22 10%	9 4%	212
<i>I would like to use technology more in my classes.</i>	91 43%	91 43%	28 13%	2 1%	212
<i>I would like to learn how to make my teaching more effective with the use of technology.</i>	124 59%	73 34%	15 7%	0 0%	212
<i>I would like to learn how to better integrate technology in my classes.</i>	126 59%	70 33%	15 7%	1 <1%	212

Table 14: Participants' answers to statements about their knowledge of plurilingualism and willingness to learn how to use technology

21. Would you accept being contacted for one additional 30-minute interview (focus group with people from different countries)?

<b>Statement</b>	<b>No. of participants</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<i>Yes</i>	68	32
<i>No</i>	144	68
	Total: 99	

Table 14: Participants' answer to the request of taking part in a focus group

22. Do you have previous experience in teaching? If yes, briefly specify the type of experience that you have. (This question was only for participants who are pre-service teachers).

Statement	No. of participants	Percentage (%)
<i>Yes</i>	57	67
<i>No</i>	28	33
	Total: 85	

Table 15: Pre-service teachers' experience

Types of experience included placements such as Orientierungspraktikum (OSP) and integriertes Semesterpraktikum (ISP), jobs at language schools such as Volkshochschule (VHS), and work in various stages of schools.

23. For the following statements, please choose one answer. (This question was only for participants who are pre-service teachers).

Statement	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
<i>My teacher-training provides me with theory on plurilingual didactics.</i>	7 11%	22 36%	25 41%	7 12%	61
<i>My teacher-training provides me with plurilingual tools/resources.</i>	2 3%	23 38%	30 49%	6 10%	61
<i>My teacher-training teaches me how to design plurilingual tasks.</i>	3 5%	22 36%	27 44%	9 15%	61
<i>My teacher-training teaches me how to integrate technology in the classroom.</i>	12 20%	28 46%	19 31%	2 3%	61
<i>In my teacher-training, I have the opportunity to implement and evaluate plurilingual tasks.</i>	2 3%	17 28%	32 53%	10 16%	61
<i>In my teacher-training, I have the opportunity to implement and evaluate technology-mediated activities.</i>	9 15%	27 44%	23 38%	2 3%	61

Table 14: Pre-service teachers' experience of plurilingualism and technology in their teacher-training

## **5.2 Focus Groups**

All focus groups were analysed and key points that were prevalent throughout all focus groups were noted. These are listed below, split into their relevant categories.

### *Technology*

The participants acknowledged the importance of using technology for (language) teaching. During the pandemic, the participants were able to gain experience in using technology. However, there were major differences regarding the amount of training they received and the self-reported expertise in this area.

The participants clearly stated that when it comes to their needs for training, they would prefer practical examples. They wish to try things out in their classroom and/or watch video recordings of other teachers.

Gaining insight from other teachers in different countries work, possibly coupled with an exchanging experience, was also expressed.

### *Plurilingualism*

The participants had a basic knowledge of plurilingualism but there is room for improvement. The participants had an appreciation of linguistic diversity in general but did not necessarily understand the rationale behind plurilingualism, nor did they know about the significance of integrating plurilingualism into (foreign) language teaching.

The role of the mother tongue had mixed reactions. Monolingual habits seem to prevail in the participants' lessons or, at the very least, it is in conflict with their willingness to include other languages. Usually, the mother tongue is reserved for grammar explanation only.

## 6.0 Discussion

There was an electric mix of participants for the survey. As expected, almost all of the participants came from the countries that are organising the project including Spain (34%), Germany (18%), Belgium (15%), Italy (14%), and Lithuania (12%), although some were situated in countries like China, Colombia, the UK, or the USA. Most participants were female (70%) and over half of the applicants (60%) currently work as in-service teachers, with a small number of those (11%) working as CLIL teachers. The age of the participants was varied and split reasonably evenly. Surprisingly, a high number of participants (32%) have over 20 years of experience in the field with the rest split relatively evenly between 0 and 20 years. As expected, a high percentage of the teachers (75%) work in secondary education and a smaller number (15%) in primary education. In general, the mix of participants was reasonably eclectic and, therefore, the survey gives a good idea of what the average teacher's views are on these topics in the countries in which they reside.

The participants speak a variety of languages including the official or co-official languages of the countries involved in the project, including German, Italian, Lithuanian, French, Spanish, and Catalan, but also languages like Dutch and English. Unsurprisingly, the language ability of the teachers is extremely high, with a big percentage speaking at a C1 level or higher for the first three languages that they teach in. Three participants, presumably from Catalonia, reported using up to five different languages in their lessons, two of which said that their fifth language ability was at a B2 level. However, not all participants (106 out of 212) answered this part of the survey. Therefore, when analysing the results of the rest of survey about, for example, plurilingualism, this has to be taken into account.

When it comes to the premise of plurilingualism, most participants seemed to be aware of the fact that, for example, in real life situations, people do not only speak in one language or communicate in one particular way. Most believed that multiple languages can be spoken even when the two people communicating know the same language (71%) or that languages can be mixed during communication (77%). However, some teachers said that the school they work at restricts their use of different languages, not only in the EFL classroom but in general.

[Referring to German lessons] "I can tell you how my school sees that. They just say, 'You have to speak German'. That's all they say. And I can always see the disappointment in the children's faces because they always force them to speak German, all the time. And even if children can't speak German that properly, they have to speak

German, they are not allowed to speak to their new friends in the language they've grown up with and they're safe with and it always makes me sad to see that.”

(German = school language; Teacher from Germany, focus group 1)

Participants also understand and respect the cultural aspects of language communication and learning. Most find it easy to adjust their communication style if the other person has a different cultural background (77%) and do not believe that people from different backgrounds should behave like them to make communication easier (84%). They also claim to be able to change their form of communication in order to be better understood (multiple questions), including switching to the mother tongue when needed, although this is sometimes not a preferred method.

[Regarding the use of German] “Only when it comes to French grammar because it's so tough. It's so difficult for the students to understand, but in teacher training we were taught not to use German because [...] we want the students to pay attention to what we say in English, and if we switched to German, then they would just pay attention to the German sentences.”

(Teacher from Germany, focus group 2)

“We use mother tongue for explaining the rules and for smaller classes sometimes at the beginning while it's really hard for them to focus on their English.”

(Teacher from Lithuania, focus group 2)

The participants also seemed to be aware of the existence of plurilingual didactics and resources (73%) but said they struggle to find information and resources on this topic (62%) due to the lack of information that is available (86%). However, they did show interest in learning more about this topic (91%).

This is an extremely important step for the next stage of the project, in which the teachers will be learning different techniques and methods in order to be able to successfully plan and execute a plurilingual-based lesson. During these kinds of lessons, communication is essential and can be done in a variety of different ways and in a variety of different languages. Even outside of the context of the project, these kinds of skills can be extremely helpful in the foreign language classroom. Even though it is the norm in Europe to use only the target language during foreign language lessons, it is sometimes necessary or, some may argue, beneficial to communicate in different ways and in different languages. The influence of the curriculum and the preferred use of the target language in the classroom was brought up multiple times during the focus groups.

“I try to avoid using French [during EFL teaching], but sometimes I compare with French, so some structures, for example to give somebody something, or to give something to somebody, so they can understand I, yeah, I compare them [...] I try to avoid French.”

(French = school language; Teacher from Belgium, focus group 1)

“In my French classes, I sometimes work with songs which are partly in English and partly in French. But in my English classes it’s a bit tricky to use. [...] I cannot do any songs in my English classes which have more than one language. But in my French classes I can do it.”

(Teacher from Germany, focus group 2)

This is reflected in the training that future teachers receive at universities. Over half of participants said that the teacher-training course provided them neither with theory on plurilingual didactics (53%) nor information on plurilingual tools or resources (59%).

Some participants even showed resistance to the example of a plurilingual task during the focus group, stating that it was futile. This shows how imbedded the belief of the use of the target language during foreign language teaching is and how distant the concept of plurilingualism is for some teachers.

“Actually, I don’t see the point of doing this kind of exercise, because my point is to make them use English or German and not a mix of both languages. But I know that some teachers use songs which mix languages to introduce their language lessons.”

(Teacher from Belgium, focus group 1)

On the other hand, most of the participants stated that they feel comfortable mixing two or more language in conversation when teaching (76%) while also stating that they use/read in more than one language when learning about a new topic (72%). Furthermore, they felt that they should be a role model for the pupils when it comes to language learning.

“I think that we usually ask our students to be open to new languages and to new experiences. So, we have to be an example, we have to do the same.”

(Teacher from Italy, focus group 2)

Some also expressed how important the role of the learner’s mother tongue is and how that can affect the motivation of the learners.

“The children love involving their languages in the lessons. They really get motivated, they are all interacting, they even go home and bring things written down, words written down to show so they really love to bring their languages and their cultures in the

classroom.”

(Teacher from Germany, focus group 1)

The motivation for learning goes further than the pupils in the classroom. According to the same teacher in this focus group, the pupils’ primary caregivers also want to be involved.

“My experience is that even the parents got excited because they started making an effort, writing things down, cutting out things from a newspaper, showing these things. So, even got the families get involved when you start doing these things.”

(Teacher from Germany, focus group 1)

However, some stated that the motivation to share their mother tongue with the class should come primarily from the pupils. This way, the tasks can start and develop organically and will not feel so forced.

“It has to come from the students and we have to be very open about it and interested. I love it when the students show me their Arabic, or Japanese or Chinese words [...] and it’s so great to see their eyes light up just by, you know, ‘Oh, that’s great, can you tell me more about it?’ and ‘Oh, can you also translate it in English so the others know what you’re talking about?’

(Teacher from Germany, focus group 1)

Not only can involving language in the EFL classroom improve the morale of the learners, it was also stated that it can improve the relationship between the teachers and the learners and the relationship the learners have to language in general. This is possibly because the children feel appreciated when their language is represented in the classroom and may feel more motivated to partake in the lessons.

“I feel a part of all the languages that are represented in the classroom. We can create a little bit of a unit to, you know, push their thinking in a certain way to make some connections between the languages we have in the classroom, but apart from that it all has to come from the language experts that we have in that very moment in the classroom so we can work all together.”

(Teacher from Germany, focus group 1)

A large majority of the participants also recognised that being able to speak more than one language can help them learn another language more easily (87%) and we can presume they think the same about their learners too. This shows that, intuitively, we believe that the knowledge of other foreign languages can help us learn a new one. With that being said, it would make sense to include these languages in the EFL classroom.

“Right now, in my English classroom, I have Italian, Polish, Russian. So, giving them a voice as well and showing them that your languages are important and the language you already have can support you in learning English or vice versa, depending on [...] their current language level. So, opening up the classroom for multiple languages and giving a stage for that as well [is important].”

(Teacher from Germany, focus group 1)

However, even though the participants seem to want and be able to alter their communication style when needed and involve other languages, it seems to be intuitive and not something that is integrated into their foreign language lessons. This is to be expected because the teacher-training courses are lagging behind in regards to plurilingual foreign language teaching. A majority of the participants said that their course did not teach them how to design plurilingual tasks (59%). This is what this project aims to change.

In regards to technology, the participants claimed to be comfortable using technology (81%) and capable of integrating it into their class (93%). They said they use a wide range of technological equipment including laptops, smartphones, tablets, and interactive whiteboards. A plethora of tools and applications are also used by the participants including Kahoot, Microsoft Office, iMovie, Google, and Youtube.

However, the context of these results is extremely important. In the survey, 50% of teachers said they use technology in every lesson, with Zoom being one of the applications that is used during lessons. In the focus groups, where the conversation was more in-depth, it became clear that, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, classes had been moved online and the teachers were, therefore, forced to use a video-call application, most commonly Zoom. Participants were counting the use of video-call software as having used technology in class.

“What we used during Corona [...] we are using MS Teams to communicate with the students.”

(Teacher from Germany, focus group 1)

“We have been working with Google Classroom and Zoom.”

(Teacher from Lithuania, focus group 1)

This is, in some ways, misleading. Only 31% said, for example, they use technology in the classroom to make learners perform innovative tasks that *would not be possible without technology*. Video-call software is a means of communication between the pupils and the teacher, not technology that is integrated into the tasks themselves. However, the importance and effectiveness of technology-mediated tasks during lessons was recognised by the participants.



“I also think that technology can support the learning process of the students [...and enhance] my teaching as well [...] and maybe through technology it is a little bit easier to show the kids and make them understand something a little bit more easily compared to back when we had nothing.”

(Teacher from Germany, focus group 1)

In reality, this is a complicated issue. Any kind of electronic devices are using not allowed in schools, with some schools going as far as to ban them during lessons.

“So, in our school we also have such a tradition. The students come to school and before the lessons, they have to get rid of their phones, their tablets, any devices, even if they are watches, in a special box and the teacher who had the first lesson should take this box with him or her to the teachers’ room in a special place so they don’t have any access to devices until the end of their schooling day.”

(Teacher from Lithuania, focus group 1)

One of the aims of the project is to teach the participants how to apply technology to task-based language learning, where the tasks would not be possible without the use of technology. When recalling previous training in the use and application of technology, most teachers said that their studies offered little to no training and that they are more or less self-taught in this area.

“There was no seminar I have been to during my studies [in the area of technology...] and the school did not [offer any kind of training].”

(Teacher from Germany, focus group 1)

Others have taken the initiative to visit courses.

“I’ve attended lots of courses and seminars and especially those [that] were organized by the British Council. I had a two month course three years ago where I tried lots of different apps and I even tried filming myself, where I got two iPads, two cameras and I was filming my lessons and watching myself from aside.”

(Teacher from Lithuania, focus group 2)

In terms of the needs of teachers currently when it comes to technology and plurilingual tasks, the participants are eager to learn how to use technology more in class (86%) and especially how to make their teaching more effective through the use of technology (93%). A large percentage of participants said that their course

“I wish we had some training [...] we actually trained ourselves.”

(Teacher from Italy, focus group 2)

In terms of the training itself, it should be practical and not self-taught. The participants of the focus groups expressed their interest in practical examples and collaborations with other teachers in foreign countries multiple times.

“Practical training is always the best. [...] theory doesn’t help, only the practice.”

(Teacher from Lithuania, focus group 2)

“Seeing things in action, so observing how is it done in a classroom and then evaluating and reflecting on it [is the best technique] and not just ‘Okay, this is this device’ and [...] you do not know what to do with it. So, I think [practical examples] would help me.

(Teacher from Germany, focus group 1)

“I would like to get some examples of probably models or recordings showing the actual work [...] or platform so that we can perform the same lesson according to the plan. And then we can discuss after that, like, whether it works with our reality, in our country, for example, with our students, or if not, why not, and what can be done.”

(Teacher from Lithuania, focus group 1)

“What would also be interesting for me is maybe we can talk to people from other countries [and see] how they use technology.”

(Teacher from Germany, focus group 4)

## 7.0 Conclusion

The initial survey was successful with an eclectic mix of participants giving an insight into their knowledge, opinions, and approaches to plurilingualism and technology.

In general, participants seem to have a rough idea of what plurilingualism is although it is not widely taught in the teacher-training course. They seem to have an intuitive feel for plurilingualism and want to be able to use multiple languages in their foreign language lessons. Often, the curriculum or the school itself is hindering this, forcing teachers to use only the target language with the exception of explaining complicated grammar rules. The teachers recognise, understand, and respect other languages and cultures and are also open to using them in the foreign language classroom. They are also comfortable using multiple languages, for example, when learning about a new topic and don't mind mixing languages in conversation when teaching.

Using learners' mother tongues in the lesson seems important to the participants, stating that they see a spike in motivation when their pupils get to use the language that they grew up speaking. Furthermore, there was more involvement from the learners' primary caregivers when the task involved their mother tongue and participants stated that this meant that they could "create a little bit of a unit" for effective learning to take place.

Additionally, the teachers recognise that previously-learnt languages are important and useful when learning a new one, with one stating that it is important to give these languages "a stage". When it comes to plurilingual didactics, participants are aware of its existence but do not know where to find the appropriate tools or resources. They did, however, show interest in learning about the topic and this will be expanded upon in the next step of the TEMPLATE project.

Furthermore, participants seem to be comfortable using technology and integrating it into their class and half stated that they use technology in every lesson. However, this data may be skewed by the recent COVID-19 pandemic in which video-call software was used as classes moved online. Even so, the importance and effectiveness of technology-mediated tasks during lessons is recognised by the participants.

As previously mentioned, the training in this area during the teacher-training course is lacking. Almost all of the teachers said that they had either taught themselves or taken courses through their own initiative.

The needs of the teachers are plentiful in both areas and they seem to be eager to learn about how to integrate technology into their foreign language lessons. Some expressed that wish directly in the focus group. Furthermore, they expressed the desire for the training to be

hands-on and practical instead of purely theoretical, with the possibility of communicating with teachers in foreign countries.

In conclusion, it could be said that the participants would most likely benefit from a guided discovery approach in the next phase of the project. This would help them understand the theory through practical tasks and would not be as tedious. If it is possible, providing them with first-hand experience, workshops with other international teachers, and the possibility of recording and reflecting on lessons would be extremely effective during the next phase.

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