



Transnational research across languages and
cultures: Beyond monolingualism and
intercultural competence

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Proposal



Thematic Stream: “Transnational research across languages and cultures: Beyond monolingualism and intercultural competence”

Brief introduction to the topic – Manuela Guilherme

Title: *Researching and comparing across languages and cultures in teacher education in Europe*

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As researchers on language education we, Ana Gonçalves Matos and Silvia Melo-Pfeifer, are interested in exploring how two different groups of pre-service teachers from different European countries, different educational contexts and speaking different languages, understand a specific social and political issue and consider the intercultural implications of these understandings in their response to teaching and learning languages.

The main purpose of the research will be to characterize these teacher candidates' perceptions of the intercultural dimension of the foreign languages they will be teaching by addressing a specific social and political issue and by placing the discussion around central issues such as human transformation, respect of diversity, and social cohesion.

The issue of migration and refugees associated to matters of identity and cultural diversity has polarised opinions between and within European countries. Educational systems, on the other hand, are doubly challenged when called on to promote the integration of migrants and managing visible divisions and controversies.

We propose to reflect on and research how language teacher educators of French and English, with a German and Portuguese background, face a relevant intercultural issue in two distinct contexts, respectively, the School of Education in Hamburg University and the School of Social Sciences and Humanities at NOVA University, Lisbon.

A comparative small-scale research project is designed to gain insights to the cultural perspectives and attitudes from pre-service teachers in both institutions and to reflect on the challenge of sharing common competences, knowledge, strategies and values to be met by European teacher candidates of different languages, from different national cultures and working in different geopolitical contexts. The document of the European Commission, *European Profile for Language Teacher Education—a Frame of Reference* (2004), identifies key items related to knowledge, strategies, skills and values in foreign language teacher education and will be taken as a point of reference.

This paper will present the rationale of such a project and underlying research questions and methodology. One major guiding question will be: How is such a dense, complex, and polysemic concept, such as “interculturality” understood by these actors and how do they view their responsibilities as future language educators?

The two researchers, based in different academic institutions will collect data based on the teacher candidates’ readings of Shaun Tan’s wordless graphic novel, *The Arrival* (Tan 2007) and two subsequent focus group interviews in each institution and jointly discuss and negotiate meanings, understandings, and implications for the professional growth of the researchers themselves as educators.

Ultimately the project aims to inspire and stimulate these student teachers to become teacher-researchers as well.

Title: *Research in Education across languages and cultures: voices of doctoral students coming from Portuguese-Speaking Countries and supervisors*

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Keywords: research in education; research across languages; doctoral students; higher education institutions; Portuguese-Speaking countries

Within the internationalization of Higher Education Institutions, namely concerning PhD programmes, Portuguese universities have been receiving an increasing number of students coming from Portuguese-Speaking Countries under special cooperation protocols between Portugal and their countries (Faria & Costa, 2012). Some studies highlight the hindrances they experience when coming to Portugal (bureaucratic issues,

financial problems, homesickness, prior learning, relationship with home students,...). One of the major hindrances relate to language issues (Ambrósio et al, 2017; Araújo e Sá et al, forthcoming) since for many of these students Portuguese is not their mother tongue and they do not master the standard norm of European Portuguese.

If we focus our attention on doctoral research education, we realise that language issues have been receiving more attention in literature. Namely studies focus on: thesis writing in a second language (Paltridge & Starfield, 2007); students' experiences of supervisor multicultural competence and impact on doctoral work (Soheilian et al, 2014); multilingual communicative practices between supervisors and students and the influence of languages and research cultures in research design (Araújo e Sá et al, forthcoming; Robinson-Pant, 2017).

Considering this framework, our study aims to understand how languages and different academic/research cultures influence the process of doing a PhD, by students from Portuguese-Speaking countries, focusing on three main themes: the impact of working in second language/another standard norm of Portuguese; the role of English as a lingua franca; the acquisition of the discipline discourse. The study was conducted at the University of Aveiro (currently having 328 students from Portuguese-Speaking Countries enrolled in PhD Programmes) and used a case study approach informed by individual semi-structured interviews with 4 doctoral supervisors and 4 students.

We conclude that languages/cultures influence the process of doing a PhD concerning: i) the supervision process (relationship&communication between students and supervisors); ii) the construction of a researcher identity (working within diversified languages and research cultures allows to develop competences considered essential in identity construction); and iii) knowledge construction (languages are assigned different roles in scientific work, namely in writing&dissemination activities).

Ambrósio, S., Marques, J. F., Santos, L., & Doutor, C. (2017). Higher Education Institutions and international students' hindrances: a case of students from the African Portuguese-Speaking countries at two European Portuguese universities. *Journal of International Students*, 7(2), 367-394.

Araújo e Sá, M.H., Costa, N., Guerra, C., Lopes, B., Lourenço, M., & Pinto, S. (forthcoming). Case study – University of Aveiro, Portugal. In M. Byram & M. Stoicheva (Eds.), *The Doctorate Experience in Europe and Beyond*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Faria, M., & Costa, A. B. (2012). Introdução. In A. Costa & M. Faria (Orgs.), *Formação superior e desenvolvimento – estudantes universitários Africanos em Portugal* (pp.5-16). Coimbra: Edições Almedina.

Paltridge, B., & Starfield, S. (2007). *Thesis and dissertation writing in a second language*. London: Routledge.

Robinson-Pant, A. (2017). From cross-cultural to intercultural. An alternative perspective on the research process. In A. Robinson-Pant & A. Wolf (Eds.) *Researching across languages and cultures* (pp.1-19). New York: Routledge.

Soheilian, S., et al (2014). Multicultural supervision: supervisees' reflections on culturally competent supervision. *Counselling Psychology Quarterly*, 27(4), 379-392.

Title: 'Glocal languages' and 'intercultural responsibility' in Brazil-Europe transnational research groups: Linguistic and intercultural issues in the Life Sciences

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This paper will draw on research carried out under the scope of a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship (2014-2017) (<http://www.ces.uc.pt/projectos/glocademics>) both in Brazil (settled at Universidade de S. Paulo and with research also carried out at Universidade Federal da Bahia, Universidade Federal do Paraná and Universidade Federal do Sul da Bahia). It will introduce and analyse a new terminology, that of 'glocal languages', versus that of 'lingua franca', and present a brief account of a study of language education carried out at 3 of the above universities. The core of this paper, however, will focus on 'research on research' with 5 research groups in the universities above, of which I will focus on one research group on biology/ecology, at the Universidade Federal da Bahia, and on another research group on nutrition/public health, at the University de S. Paulo. Another new concept to be introduced in this paper is that of 'intercultural responsibility' versus that of 'intercultural competence'. Both concepts support a third concept, that of 'glocademics' which provide a conceptual framework for the process of internationalisation of higher education and transnationalisation of research by focusing of their workings at the grassroots level in research communities of practice. Finally, I will deal with discourse, power and resistance in research activities and in related lifelong learning activities.