

TE-Con3 – National Report Template

PORTUGAL

1. Status of EFL in Higher Education

1.1. System overview

1.1.1. The outline of the general organisation of the education system

Higher education in Portugal is organized in a binary system (universities and polytechnic institutes), public and private and religious, social solidarity and military organizations. The system is presented in the page of the Directorate General for Higher Education¹.

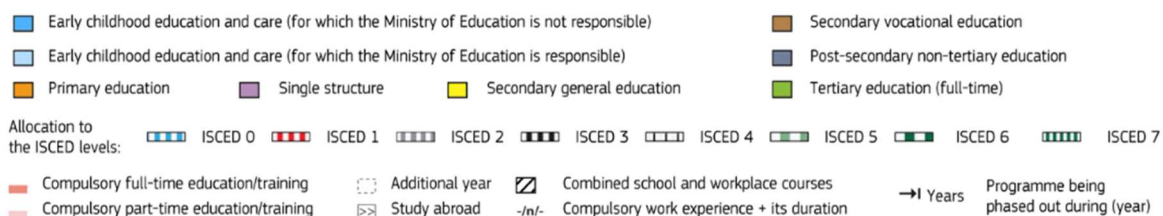
Detailed information is also available in the Eurydice databases and in EACEA sites² where specific information is also available for the entire national education system³.

Structure of the national education system

Portugal – 2020/21



Note: *Agrupamentos de Escolas* (School Clusters) are organisational units that can encompass several schools and learning cycles, from kindergarten to upper secondary education. The institutions in the diagram are examples of some of the learning spaces where each type of education is offered; the diagram does not indicate all educational institutions existing in the Portuguese system.



Source: Eurydice 2020/21

¹ <https://www.dges.gov.pt/en/pagina/portuguese-higher-education-system>

² https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/higher-education-60_en

³ https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/portugal_en

In OECD documents specific information can also be found, as the following⁴:

«Higher education in Portugal follows the Bologna model and is offered at universities and polytechnic institutions. The share of 25–34-year-olds with a tertiary-level qualification grew by 12 percentage points between 2008 and 2018, but, at 35%, remains below the OECD average of 44%. The centralised admission process for tertiary education (Regime Geral de Acesso) uses a national entrance examination based on the science-humanities curriculum for general upper-secondary education. This may hinder the growing pool of VET graduates: 79% of students completing the scientific-humanistic track had entered higher education one year after completing their studies in 2014, compared to 16% of those in the professional track. Curricular reforms in 2018 (...) incorporated measures to counter this, including more flexibility within programmes to reduce disparity in content. Furthermore, in 2020, a new special contest for tertiary admissions for VET and specialised artistic graduates was approved and will be implemented from 2020/21.»

1.1.2. Numerical Data - nº of students/programmes/ international students, how the system is structured

The numerical data below were extracted from the available information at the General Directorate for Science and Education statistics (DGEEC)⁵ and the national database Pordata⁶ (a private service).

In 2018/2019, 385 247 students were enrolled in higher education institutions, circa 240 000 in universities and circa 140000 in polytechnic institutes; 316 289 (82,1%) were in public institutions and 69 058 (17,9%) in private ones.

Some of the students from polytechnic institutes are not in higher education but in post-secondary education, in short programmes (VET) of 2 years that include a high number of hours of practicum. There are 907 of these programs, named TESP – Técnico Superior Especializado (Specialized Superior Technician). In Portugal, there are 803 first cycles in universities and 772 in polytechnic institutes. The country has 1587 master's degrees in universities and 699 in polytechnics. Regarding PhDs, there are 831 programs, however, they are only possible to follow in universities. The total sum of programmes in higher education institutions in Portugal is 5763, an average of 67 students per program. The number of programmes is clearly too high and according with the National Agency for Quality and Accreditation (A3ES), it has been decreasing.

	First Cycle	Second Cycle (MSc)	Third Cycle (PhD)
Universities	803	1 587	699
Polytechnic	772	699	
5 763 Programmes 67 students per programme*			

⁴ <https://www.oecd.org/education/policy-outlook/country-profile-Portugal-2020.pdf>

⁵ <http://estatisticas-educacao.dgeec.mec.pt/indicadores/index5.asp>
http://estatisticas-educacao.dgeec.mec.pt/indicadores/Indicador_5_3.asp

⁶ <https://www.pordata.pt/Portugal/Alunos+matriculados+no+ensino+superior+total+e+por+n%C3%A9vel+de+forma%C3%A7%C3%A3o-1023>

According to the Portuguese law⁷, among the different types of students from abroad, there is a clear definition of international students: an international student is, in a broad sense, someone who does not have the Portuguese nationality or the nationality of a member state of the European Union; or someone who has a nationality from outside the EU but has been living in Portugal for more than 2 years.

In 2019/20, there were 5 477 international students, 38% more than in 2018/19; 52 % of them were from Brazil and 17% from Cape Vert. This means that English is not clearly the most relevant language for international students, as most of them come from Portuguese speaking countries. At Universidade do Algarve, circa 10% of our students are international students, circa 18 % of our students are from abroad.

1.2. Policy Issues Regarding EFL in Higher Education (including EU regulations)

1.2.1. Structural, curricular pedagogical considerations

In Portugal, there are no predefined (?)national rules for languages in Higher Education. Being the educational policy a national responsibility, EU regulations/ orientations on this topic are considered, however not really implemented.

In 2014, the programme of the XIX Constitutional Government assumed as a top priority the internationalization of the HE, especially regarding students and teachers' mobility. A status report⁸ was prepared by a Working Group nominated by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Regional Development. From this report, we can extract some considerations which are relevant for the current project:

- In 2013/2014, international students in Portugal, including Erasmus students, were >31 000;
- 85% of this number, however, came from the EU or CPLP Countries (Portuguese Speaking Countries Community) ;
- Multilingual performance was considered an asset for the working market and global economy, therefore, a recommendation to increase and improve the offer in English learning courses was made, as well as the offer of more curricula taught in English for the 1st degree courses; the safeguarding of the Portuguese language was also clearly assumed/implemented.

Currently, the role and penetration of English in HE in Portugal is reflected by a growing offer of courses taught in English. Thus English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI), is often present at a great number of HE institutions.

⁷ <https://dre.pt/application/dir/pdf1sdip/2014/03/04800/0181801821.pdf>

⁸ 2014, Guerreiro, J. (coord.), 2014, *Relatório - Uma estratégia para a Internacionalização do Ensino Superior Português, relatório. Fundamentação e recomendações*, Lisboa, Ministério da Educação

Nevertheless, as previous studies have shown⁹, the dominant position of English in HE curricula and research practices is seldom expressed by English learning courses, and language issues are commonly bypassed in HE curricula. Moreover, HEIs assume entry level students to hold a B2 level, or equivalent, in English language acquired during secondary school. In practice, however, this representation does not match reality. Consequently, there are few English courses in HE, the majority being offered as option and as free courses in language centres.

1.2.2. Implementing Institutional Language Policy: Existing Measures

Portuguese universities are autonomous entities and are entitled to define their curricula for the different courses and degrees (under supervised evaluation from independent auditors). Therefore, in most Portuguese Universities there is no clear definition, or guidelines, on Language Policies, namely regarding the teaching of English, or English as a tuition language. Nevertheless, as it is assumed that students master the English language, in most cases, what we find are *ad hoc* measures. Additionally, this misconception extends to teachers as there is no certification in English language for teachers lecturing in English.

Multilingual competence may be implemented by the individual choice of teachers on language related curricula, or at institutional levels¹⁰. To illustrate the first case, we can take Universidade do Algarve's and degree of Languages & Communication as an example. Included in the curricula of the Language and Communication Policies course, students are challenged to use their multilingual skills using their languages (first, second, foreign) during various moments of classes (reading, elaborating, or debating on a particular theme). This practice has been recognised by the institution as innovative and a summary has been published in a book on pedagogical innovation and sharing at the University.¹¹

Regarding the implementation of language policy measures at institutional level, we can use Universidade Nova de Lisboa as another illustrative example. This institution shows some Language Policy guidelines on its website¹², namely regarding the use of English on tuition. In this short statement the institution clearly shows its commitment with internationalisation strategies, giving preference to English as a working language, whenever it is present at least one student who does not master Portuguese. The latter is only to be used if *all the attendees* master this language. Then, Nova goes further, and states that all teaching materials (with a few exceptions) should be provided in English. Nevertheless, English is excluded from most curricula, with the exception of language related degrees (e.g., Applied Languages, Translation Studies). As other HE institutions in Portugal, development courses in English Language are offered as free courses, independent of major curricula, and mostly offered through the with

⁹ Pinto, S. (2016). Políticas linguísticas nas universidades públicas portuguesas : discursos e práticas institucionais de formação e de investigação. *Cadernos Do Lale - Laboratório Aberto Para a Aprendizagem de Línguas Estrangeiras*, (September). <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.24451.50726>

¹⁰ Cf Conceição, M.C., E. Caruso and N Costa, 2018, "How can mobility and inclusion be fostered through multilingualism in higher education (HE)?", in Grin, F, et all (ed.), *The MIME vademecum*, Grandson, Artgraphic Cavin, pp. 102-21

¹¹ Conceição, M.C. 2019, "Promoção e avaliação da competência multilingue" in Neves de Jesus, S, (org.), *Inovação e partilha pedagógica na UAlg*, Faro, Universidade do Algarve Editora, pp. 120-122.

¹² [Política de uso das Línguas Portuguesa e Inglesa | Universidade NOVA de Lisboa \(unl.pt\)](https://www.unl.pt/en/node/106)
<https://www.unl.pt/en/node/106>

many others HEI, where language issues are tackled by establishing partnerships with other schools within the institution, or with third parties, usually language schools or centres.

In her work, Pinto (2016) used Universidade de Aveiro as a case study, showing that, despite the central role of English as a working language (namely, in research), English learning is seldom included in curricula. Some reasons blame to Bologna process which limited the number of years in 1st cycle degrees, with the consequent time limitations. Students are exposed to English as a working language in different courses during their degrees, however, English learning must be the student's personal option and responsibility.

1.3. Conclusions

There is no national orientation for EFL in HE in Portugal. To have a clear picture about the presence of English in institutions and curricula, we conducted research in all websites of Portuguese HEIs. EMI, but not English teaching, is present in almost all the HEIs. Students' English language competence is expected at the entrance of HE, independently of the type of course or institution. Internationalisation is a strategic aim of all the institutions but the language factor (including the English language) is not referred to as a relevant factor.

2. Teaching English at the Tertiary Level (country-specific)

2.1. English language provisions at the Tertiary Level

Initial research was conducted on all Portuguese higher education institution's websites using the keywords "English" and "Inglês". The retrieved information is very poor and does not suffice the project's needs regarding English in Portuguese HE institutions. Courses and programmes may include English in the curricula without offering further information. However, there are two significant strands: English (including General English and English language and culture) and Technical English (including Business English). It is, so, very difficult to report on the typology of English taught.

2.1.1. General English

General English is mostly taught in linguistic/philological and communication degrees. It is also present, very often just for one semester, in a broad range of degrees and subjects ranging from Administration, Advertisement, Public Relations, and Cultural Animation to Digital Communication, IT, Nursing, Social Services, Tourism, and General English Studies.

2.1.2. English as a Medium of Instruction (i.e., regular study programs)

The political and educational commitment to internationalization at the tertiary level granted the exponential growth of English as a Medium of Instruction, EMI, (English not being the first language, L1, for most of the population) in Portugal. Universities and Polytechnics in Portuguese HE focuses on teaching diverse content both at the graduate and undergraduate

levels. Notwithstanding EMI representation in Science and the Humanities, there is a particular focus on attracting international students and researchers.

2.1.3. English for Academic Purposes (EAP)

Considering English for Academic Purposes (EAP) as “a branch of English for Specific Purposes that focuses on languages aspects, genres and skills that are relevant for students’ academic studies at university” (Galloway 2020: 6)¹³, it is commonly included in the English Studies curricula alongside with the four English skills (listening, reading, writing and speaking) required in the academic context; alternatively, it may be offered as a separate subject as it is the case at the School of Agriculture at the Lisbon University, the University of Aveiro, the University of Coimbra and the University of Minho.

2.1.4. English for Specific Purpose (ESP)

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is a significant thread in Portuguese Higher Education. The aim is to provide students with professional and technical skills for immediate use in the global job market as well as in Portugal’s expatriate communities. ESP strands include Business, Diplomacy and International Relations, Education (primary schools and physical education), Engineering, Information Technologies, Legal English, Logistics, Marketing (logistics, management, and sales management), Mechanics, Media and Visual Communication, Nursing (and health technicians) and Tourism (accommodation, catering, events management, food management, hotel management and hospitality). Within the scope of technical courses, ESP includes Chemical and Biochemical Analysis, Microbiology, Molecular Biology, Environmental Quality and Safety and Wine Marketing.

2.1.5. Content and Language Integrated Learning

CLIL is predominantly misunderstood in the Portuguese and European HE context and often limited to English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI). In 2015, RECLIS; the Portuguese Association of Language Centres of Higher Education, hosted the Integrated Content and Language in Higher Education (ICLHE) project¹⁴ network on the possibility of CLIL in HE. The project’s SWOT analysis strengths and opportunities included student commitment and motivation, flexibility, student-focused approach, training programmes aimed for teachers and students, collaborative work, and bilingual terminology. Nonetheless, the SWOT analysis presented several hindering weaknesses and threats, namely teaching staff proficiency, unbalanced student engagement, the predominance of English as a Lingua Franca, the defective student and teacher training on primary and secondary education and the inexistent interdisciplinary approach between English and scientific subjects. Given the systemic predominance of weaknesses and threats over strengths and opportunities, CLIL remains unfeasible in Portuguese HE.

¹³ Galloway, N. (ed.) 2020, *English in Higher education - English medium, Part 1: Literature review*, London, British Council, ISBN 978-0-86355-977-8

¹⁴ <https://cnappes.org/cnappes-2015/files/2015/07/CLIL-CNAPPES-Leiria-July-2015-versão-final-1-MC-mdc-.pdf>



Análise SWOT	
Pontos FORTES	Pontos FRACOS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empenho e motivação • Flexibilidade do modelo CLIL • Abordagem socio-construtivista • Terminologia CLIL • Comunidade de aprendizagem • Técnicas pedagógicas centradas nos alunos 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competência dos docentes em inglês • Alunos que reagem mal • Tempo de preparação • Preparação pedagógica • Avaliação
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programas de formação para docentes e alunos • Abordagens pedagógicas centradas nos alunos • Trabalho em colaboração com docentes de LE • Confiança para internacionalização • Comunidades CLIL de partilha de experiências • Terminologias bilingues • Modelos de avaliação 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A hegemonia do inglês língua franca • Deficiente preparação dos alunos e docentes do EB e Secundário em inglês • Falta de elo entre o inglês e as áreas científicas apesar de se utilizar o inglês para ensinar • Centrar o ensino em inglês nos docentes e não incluir as necessidades dos alunos • Incapacidade de articular a cultura internacional com a local
OPORTUNIDADES	AMEAÇAS

Figure 1 - Project's SWOT analysis strengths and opportunities

(original)

SWOT	
Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment and motivation • Flexibility • Student-focused approach 	Weaknesses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching staff proficiency • Unbalanced student engagement • Evaluation
Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training programmes aimed for teachers and students • Collaborative work • Bilingual terminology 	Threats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The predominance of English as Lingua Franca • Defective student and teacher training on primary and secondary education • No interdisciplinary approach between English and scientific subjects

(our translation of part of the original)

2.2. Assessment and certification

The implementation of the Bologna Process has brought to Portuguese universities an apparent student-centred, student involved teaching and learning environment in which the assessment decisions are a product of teacher autonomy, despite the occasional departmental input. Most curricular units analysed did, however, have a selection of criteria and methods of assessment, which reflect assessment practices of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, including written, oral, and project-based assessments, which seek to assess all

skills (reading, writing, speaking, listening and mediation). Nevertheless, by law, Portuguese HEI can not offer official language certification. Protocols are often signed with external institutions (e.g., the British Council, Cambridge University, and ETS) to conduct English language exams (IELTS, FCE, CAE, CPE or TOEFL). HEI may provide English Knowledge certificates (non-official certification) through language centres. Some teacher training is needed in the field linked to the preparation of the courses, for example, to assess mediation competence as well as multilingual and multicultural aspects.

2.3. Perspectives and Needs

2.3.1. Teachers (including our survey results)

The research on the Status of English in Portuguese HE shows a significant lack of national and institutional Language Policies, despite the central role of English in many curricula and HE programmes. The few exceptions found are postulated in very broad and vague guidelines. Also, due to insufficient information on institutional websites, the collected data on the status of English in Portuguese HE may prove to be unreliable and not fully representative.

Portuguese HE institutions reveal a misconception of English as a language. Firstly, there is an implied proficiency regarding both teaching staff and students. It is common for teaching staff to lack training in English, and for students enrolled in HE to not meet the minimum requirements (B2 level), proving a defective curricula articulation between Secondary Education curricula and HE. Some HE teacher training is needed in the field linked to the preparation of the courses, for example, to assess mediation competence as well as multilingual and multicultural aspects.

Secondly, the instrumental use of English reduces its usage to presenting contents and publishing research.

Overall, there is a need for a conceptual revision of English in Portuguese universities and polytechnics. Required modifications may lead from English as an instrumental and commodified language (presenting and publishing contents without proficiency) to teaching language as content (English being less of an instrument to convey information and more of a recipient in itself).

2.4. Conclusions

English taught in HEI in Portugal can simply be divided into three main categories: general English for communication; English as a subject of study in linguistic and philological courses; ESP in specific programmes (this ESP corresponds not always but always to one semester or two). Certification cannot be done by HEI. Assessment follows the CEFR.

3. Existing Training Opportunities and Educational Resources for English Teachers at the Tertiary Level (country-specific)

3.1. Training Opportunities

Training opportunities for English Teachers in HE were not found.

3.2. Educational Resources

Educational resources at the institutional level were not found, except the numerous references to internet available resources.

3.3. Conclusions

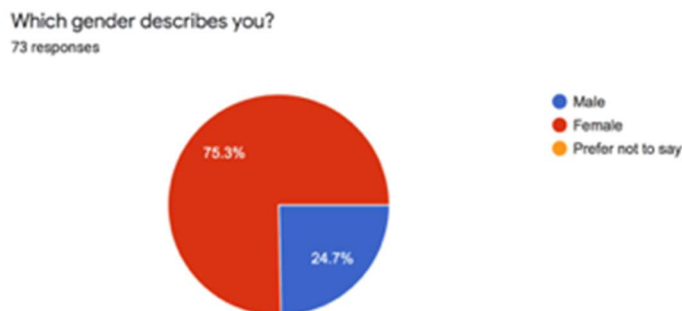
The only possible conclusion is that training opportunities are a real and urgent need. Educational resources are prepared at the local (disciplinary) level.

4. Online Teaching at the Tertiary Level (country-specific)

Before March/April 2020, there was no online teaching of English in HE in Portugal (except at Universidade Aberta with specific resources as in all the open universities). Everything was prepared, reorganized, and delivered in a few days at beginning of the covid-19 lockdown. This means that nobody was prepared, and materials and resources were not built for this type of teaching/learning. As far as EFL is concerned nothing was done at the national level.

5. Teacher Survey

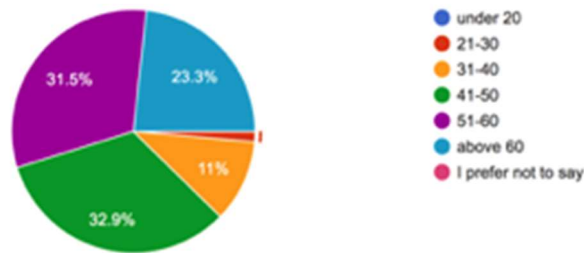
To initiate the online data collection phase of the research, the link to the *English for Higher Education (EHE) Teacher Survey* was sent via e-mail to a total of 152 English language teachers at HEIs in Portugal. During this time, a total of 73 responses were collected from predominantly female respondents, 75,3% to be precise, while 24,7% of the responses obtained were from male respondents. Most of these faculty members (80%) are between 41 and 60 years old.



As is evident in the graph below, English teachers at Portuguese HEIs are an aging group. As the graph below illustrates, a total of 32,9% respondents are between the age of 41 and 50, a number which is closely followed by the 31,5% who are between the ages of 51 and 60. In the

meantime, 23,3% of the respondents are above 60 years old, and only 11% are between 31 and 40 years old. By analysing these numbers, one may conclude that it would be wise to invest in teacher training, on a national level, to ensure a future generation of English teachers at the HE.

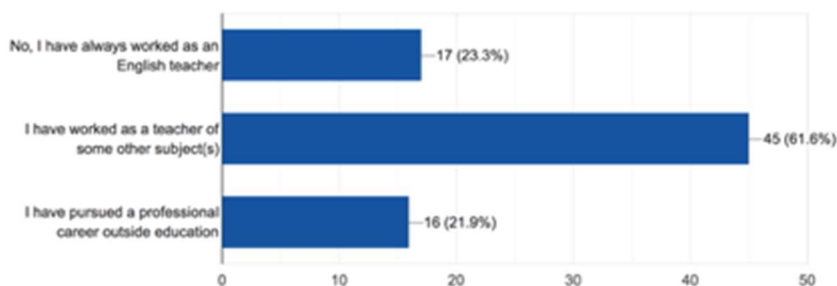
Which age group describes you?
73 responses



Additionally, based on the responses given, we could conclude that about 50% of HE English teachers in Portugal are at least bilingual (Portuguese-English). Portuguese is clearly the native language of most respondents, as 47 faculty members claim it as their native language, as opposed to the 16 who say that English is their native language. In the meanwhile, 6 respondents specifically claim to be bilingual, Portuguese-English, while four others indicate that Russian, French, Polish or Finnish is their native language (1 person per language).

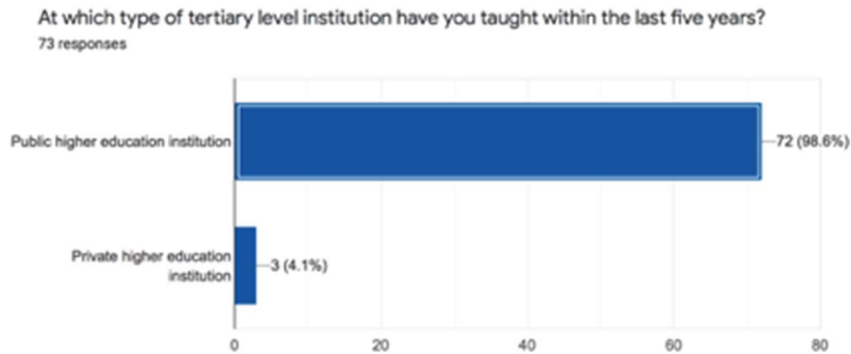
The professional experience of the respondents is also a relevant part of the data collected, for it sheds light on the areas of study these individuals have been and/or continue to be involved with and how this experience may be a plus in the English language classroom. When it comes to professional experience, 20% of the respondents have taught English at a HEI for less than 10 years but only 23,3% claim to have always worked as English teachers. On the contrary, 61,6% have taught a subject other than English and 21,9% have indeed e, at one point, pursued a career outside of education.

Does your professional work extend beyond English Language Teaching?
73 responses



Despite these numbers, in Portugal the data collected also demonstrates that faculty members presently teaching English at HEIs have stable employment. In fact, 61,6% hold full-time, permanent positions, as compared to the 20% who hold part-time permanent positions. It is

relevant to point out that an overwhelming majority (98,6%) is employed at a public HEIs (please see graph below).



More specifically (99%) are presently teaching within faculties or departments, such as the School of Arts and Humanities, The Department of Education and Psychology, Faculty of Letters, Business School, School of Management, Hospitality and Tourism Languages and Cultures, and Arts and Humanities. In contrast, as the graph below illustrates, a mere 5,5% of the faculty state that they work in Language Centres.

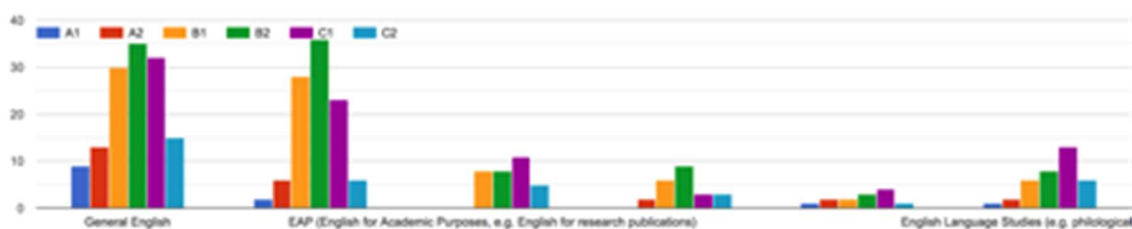


When enquired about the academic degrees the respondents hold, data show that 43 respondents hold a PhD, in a vast variety of academic areas, including but not limited to languages, linguistic, English studies, literature, translation, social psychology and multimedia. In addition, 23 respondents hold a master's degree also in diverse areas of study, including Hispanic studies, an area of studies which we had not expected to find.

The data found, when it comes to teaching English at HEIs (General English, English for Specific Purposes, English for Academic Purposes, Content and Language Integrated Learning, English Medium Instruction, and English Language Studies) during the past five years, correlates with the findings of our desk research, B2 and C1 are clearly the most common CEFR levels taught, while A1 is the level which seems to be taught the least. As was explained earlier, considering that students supposedly end secondary education with a B2 level, this data is not surprising. What may come as a surprise is that out of all the types of English courses offered in HEIs (please see graph below), General English and English for Specific Purposes seem to

be the most common types of courses offered, as opposed to CLIL and EMI, which show exceptionally low numbers. Nonetheless, other courses are also taught, including, but not limited to, Marketing and English Management, Translation, Business English, and Literary English.

Which type of English courses have you taught at the tertiary level within the last five years?

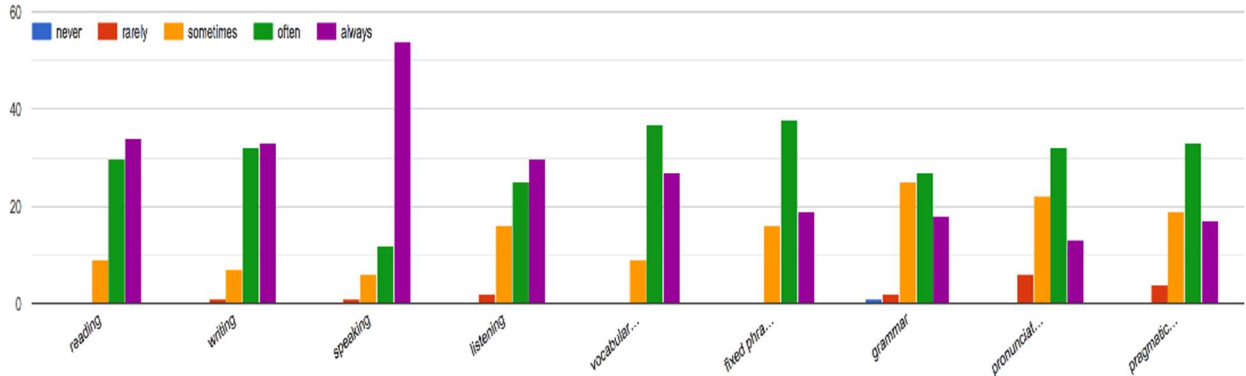


In sum, the most common types of English courses taught in the last five years were:

- General English, B2 was the most common level taught.
- English for Specific Purposes B2 was the most common level taught.
- English for Academic Purposes C1 was the most common level taught.
- Content and Language Integrated Learning - B2 was the most common level taught.
- English Medium Instruction - C1 was the most common level taught.
- English Language Studies - C1 was the most common level taught.

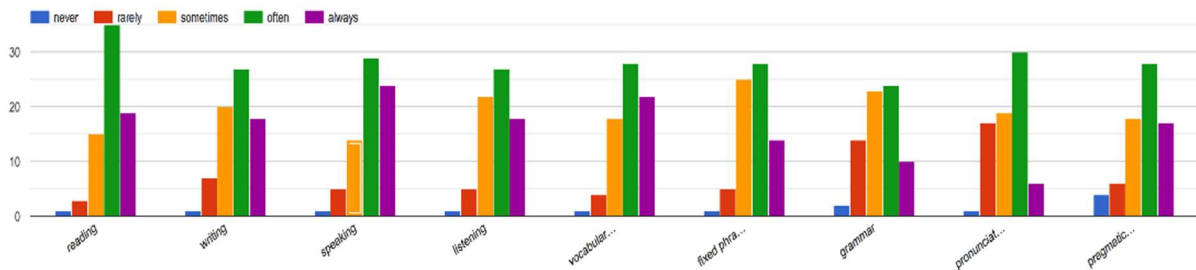
Regardless of the type of course offered at Portuguese HEIs, the teaching and learning methods, more specifically the classroom practices and techniques, used by the faculty seem to **always** focus on language tasks which include speaking, reading, listening, and writing activities, while only **often** do faculty work with students on fixed phrases (collocations and language chunks), vocabulary, pronunciation, pragmatics, and culture. Other language aspects which faculty focus on include literature, digital literacy, plurilingual and intercultural competence. The latter, a practice which we believe to be quite innovative in today's plurilingual context, one in which universities in general are strongly working towards internationalization of their faculty, their staff, and their students.

How often do you focus on these language aspects when teaching?



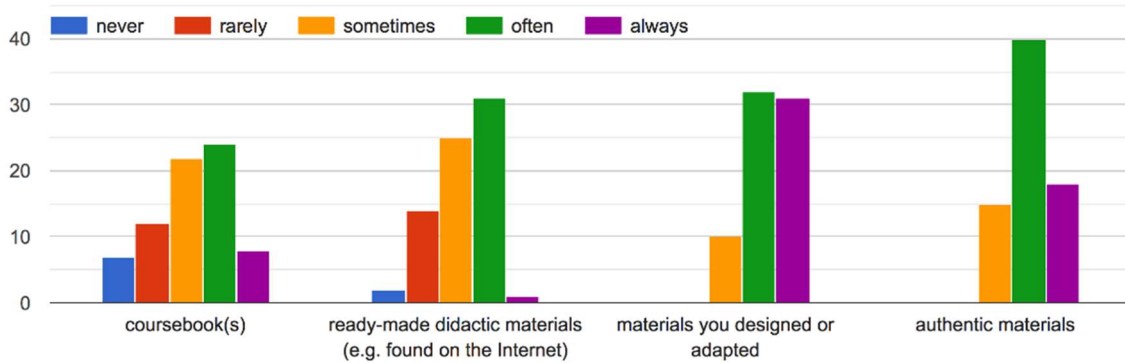
Specialized content (e.g., biology, history, economics) is often used to teach all skills (reading, speaking, pronunciation, pragmatics, culture), and in some cases it is also linked to intercultural studies and communicative effectiveness skills and knowledge pertaining to a specific area, which are often (or sometimes) taught.

How often do you use specialized content (e.g. biology, history, economics), apart from the content present in General English coursebooks, to teach the following aspects?



Respondents claim that the most frequently used teaching resources are authentic materials, designed and/or adapted by themselves, followed by ready-made didactic materials (e.g., found online), including media/digital resources, and lastly, and possibly, the least used are the coursebooks. This does not include however other resources such as video clips, a variety of APPS, videos and songs, podcasts, newspapers, etc.

How often do you use the following teaching resources



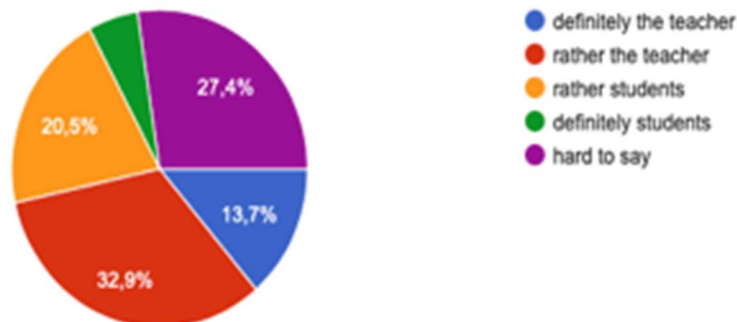
When it comes to the teaching and learning techniques which faculty is presently using, a combination of teaching and learning methods, or mixed methods are used in the classroom. These include but are not limited to:

- Communicative approach
- Task-based approach
- Project-based learning approach
 - CLIL
 - Team-based learning approach
 - Flipped classroom approach

Faculty assert that choices are made on students' needs and on creating learner or student-centred classrooms, where assignments such as presentations, expositions and individual research are used to create a more autonomous learning environment. However, when asked about who spoke more in the classroom, an overwhelming number of teachers said it was them who spoke more in English within the classroom.

In your EHE classes, who talks more in English?

73 respuestas



When compared to the teaching and learning methods, this data is interesting because on one hand, teachers claim to use mostly the communicative approaches, but on the other hand, it is they who speak the most in the classroom. As can be seen in the graph below, 27,4% of the faculty is unsure of who talks more in the classroom, this leaving roughly 45% who say it is “definitely or rather” the teacher, in comparison to the 20,5% who claim it is in fact the students who speak more.

When comparing pre and during pandemic teaching, what seems to have changed when it comes to using internet tools is as first and foremost, communication methods, especially those using platforms such as ZOOM, Teams and SKYPE. This went from never or seldom being used to always being used, as was expected. In addition, data storage and sharing, that is online alternatives like Google Drive, have had a slight increase in use. Consequently, research and class preparation, according to the respondents, has become more dependent on online tools since the beginning of the pandemic. On the other hand, classroom activities were apparently using more tools such as Moodle, Padlet, and YouTube pre-pandemic times.

Nonetheless, teachers do continue to use internet tools for other purposes, especially for research, and tutorials, or even as a source of content. Undoubtedly, (94,5%) plan to continue using these tools for several reasons. Firstly, this type of technology has proved to be very effective. Secondly, this technology has undoubtedly become part of teaching and learning in a post-pandemic world. Thus, there is no doubt that according to the answers given, most communicative resources will continue to be used, even though other, less convenient, changes brought about by the COVID-19 reality will not continue to be used. As one faculty member mentioned, there is a wish to return to a more “humanised learning context”. In addition, technology can sometimes be “stressful and time-consuming” and lend itself to unwanted “technical problems” as other faculty members pointed out.

6. Conclusions

The Portuguese HE context does not present national and/or institutional guidelines on Language Policies. All decisions serving that purpose and within the English context are established at a local level. The teaching staff has the autonomy to solve language policy issues in classes and syllabus.

Portuguese HE institutions present a misconception regarding the English language. Given the predominance of English as a second language in the Portuguese educational, professional and cultural framework, there is an implied proficiency regarding teaching staff and students that does not always verify. As previously informed, the articulation between Secondary and Higher Education English curricula and language level reveals complex and in deficit as a considerable number of students does not present the expected and/or required level. Nonetheless, desk research translated into extensive research on institutional websites with unreliable and thus not representative information. Most institutions present very little information on English syllabus, levels and teaching staff qualifications and/or certification.

The English language is commonly conceived as a code, i.e., as means to an end to attract international teaching staff, researchers and students and to ensure the successful publication

of research articles and findings. For that reason, the English language in Portuguese HE requires a conceptual revision granting its understanding less as an instrumental, commodified language serving financial purposes and more as a language used for the passing on of knowledge and content.