



**Universidade de
Aveiro
2008**

Departamento de Línguas e Culturas

**João Carlos Amorim
da Costa Lopes Vieira**

**A Dimensão Intercultural e o Ensino de Inglês em
Portugal**

**The Intercultural Dimension and the Teaching of
English in Portugal**



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Dissertação apresentada à Universidade de Aveiro para cumprimento dos requisitos necessários à obtenção do grau de Mestre em Estudos Ingleses, realizada sob a orientação científica da Dr.^a Gillian Grace Owen Moreira, Professora Auxiliar do Departamento de Línguas e Culturas da Universidade de Aveiro

Dedico este trabalho aos meus pais pelo incansável apoio.

o júri

Presidente:

Doutor Anthony David Barker
Professor Associado da Universidade de Aveiro

Vogais:

Doutora Francesca Clare Rayner
Professora Auxiliar do Instituto de Letras e Ciências Humanas da Universidade do Minho

Doutora Gillian Grace Owen Moreira (orientadora)
Professora Auxiliar da Universidade de Aveiro

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palavras-chave

interculturalidade, cultura, multiculturalismo, programa de Inglês em Portugal, 2º ciclo, 3º ciclo, ensino da cultura, ensino do Inglês, dimensão intercultural, abordagem intercultural

resumo

O presente trabalho propõe-se abordar a questão da cultura e o seu papel no ensino de Inglês Língua Estrangeira no ensino obrigatório em Portugal, nomeadamente no 2º e 3º ciclos do Ensino Básico, tendo em conta o contexto de globalização em que hoje vivemos e a necessidade de nos relacionarmos com outros povos. Neste sentido, realizámos um estudo baseado no levantamento de opiniões de alunos e professores sobre a dimensão cultural no ensino de Inglês e numa análise de conteúdo do programa de Inglês dos 2º e 3º ciclos de uma perspectiva intercultural. Este estudo mostra que, apesar de existirem elementos positivos no programa e atitudes de interesse e abertura por parte de professores e alunos perante a dimensão cultural, há ainda um longo caminho a percorrer, no que diz respeito à implementação de uma abordagem intercultural no ensino de Inglês em Portugal.

keywords

interculturality, culture, multiculturalism, English Language syllabus, 2nd Cycle, 3rd Cycle, teaching of culture, teaching of English, intercultural dimension, intercultural approach

abstract

This study aims to look at culture and its role in the English Language syllabus for the 2nd and 3rd Cycles of Basic Schooling in Portugal, taking into account the ever increasing need for peoples to interact with and relate to each other in an era of globalisation. To achieve our purposes, we have conducted a survey on the opinions of students and teachers about the cultural dimension of the teaching of English and we have analysed the content of the English syllabus of both the 2nd and 3rd cycles from an intercultural perspective. Our results show that, even though there are positive aspects in the syllabus and teachers and students show interest and openness towards the cultural dimension, there is still a long way to go before we can say there is an intercultural approach in the teaching of English in Portugal.

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INTRODUCTION

Language is culture. Culture is always present when learning a language. However, it is our view that culture is not always given the proper attention or the proper role within the process of language learning. It is often confined to a series of stereotypical habits and famous monuments in a country. When learning English, for example, culture is usually related to the United Kingdom, more precisely to England, and includes aspects like British/English punctuality, drinking tea at 5.00 pm and monuments like Big Ben, the London Eye, Stonehenge. In fact, both language and culture are constantly undergoing a process of constant change due to their dynamic character and to the fact that their users (native and non-native speakers) are not alone in the world and interact with people from other cultures speaking other languages.

In this globalised world of ours, people's mobility is a reality with a strong tendency to increase. This means that people from different cultures come into contact more often than before and their interaction is promoted through language (English mostly, because it is seen as a *lingua franca* and a language of communication). Thus, culture, as a basis for intercultural communicative competence, should assume a more, rather than less, important role in the teaching of English, because when two or more people interact, they bring their cultural backgrounds into the interaction, that is, (different) perspectives, values and beliefs which will strongly influence the communication process.

Bearing in mind the importance that foreign languages have assumed in our days as enablers of the above mentioned interaction between communities that speak different languages, I propose to analyse how culture is interpreted by the English language syllabus for the 2nd and 3rd cycles (5th to the 9th grades) in Portugal and how this component could be used to make our students more intercultural and therefore better citizens. The reason to do this comes from the belief that students must tear down prejudice and old stereotypes and be prepared to live in an increasingly multicultural world, to accept, respect and profit from the interaction with other cultures.

To achieve my goals, I intend to set out a definition of culture, so that it can be clearly understood how it is interpreted in this dissertation. Then, I aim to establish a relationship between language and culture looking at the way both interrelate. Finally, to conclude the research background for this dissertation, I shall analyse the aspects to be included in an interculturally-oriented syllabus.

The second part of this dissertation will shed some light on the opinions of both learners and teachers about the way English-speaking culture is dealt with in Portugal. Learners will be asked about the cultural topics they find more interesting and teachers will express their opinions on how culture should be dealt in the classroom. To reach conclusions on this topic, I shall analyse questionnaires administered to teachers and learners on this matter. The final part of this dissertation will focus on the syllabus and how it deals with English-speaking culture.

In the course of this dissertation, we will aim to find answers to the following questions:

- What and whose culture is approached in the syllabus?
- What is the opinion of both learners and teachers about the teaching of culture in the English classroom?
- How can the syllabus improve towards an intercultural approach?
- How can the syllabus prepare and adapt students' cultural knowledge to the (multicultural) world they live in?

The conclusion of this study will emphasise the gaps in the syllabus as far as (the teaching of) culture is concerned, based on research into this matter and the opinion of both teachers and learners. Moreover, it will consider ways in which culture could be dealt with in the future in order to prepare students better for interaction in diverse and globalised environments.

1. CULTURE AND THE INTERCULTURAL DIMENSION

1.1 A DEFINITION OF CULTURE

'The idea of culture is a strange one, even to the informed citizen.'

Edward T. Hall (1990: 21)

When asked to provide a definition of culture, the common citizen will often say it is a group of habits and traditions inherent to one people which distinguish them from other peoples. Some of them may even say it refers to the monuments and works of art of a specific country or region or associate it with cultural events such as concerts, operas or theatre plays, usually reserved for the upper classes of society. However, most citizens fail to establish a relationship between all these aspects.

In fact, culture is much more than this. It comprehends several aspects of a people's life and heritage and reflects their views, perspectives, beliefs and values in life. It is expressed in several forms from language to traditions and includes all forms of art. While there are many definitions of culture available, we shall concentrate on the following definitions by Patrick Moran and Stella Ting-Toomey, as they put into words our opinion on what culture is.

Patrick Moran takes the National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, published by the foreign language teaching profession in the United States in 1996, to settle on a notion of culture based on three interrelated

dimensions: the first one, **products**, embodies all non-human artefacts included in the environment where people live. These include not only physical objects like tools, clothing or buildings, but also more complex features such as political, social and educational institutions. The second dimension is the **practices** associated to a culture, by which it is meant the kind of interaction established between members of a community through different kinds of communication, both verbal and non-verbal. The third dimension includes the **perspectives** or the points of view of a people towards the surrounding world. These are based upon the perceptions, values and beliefs which tacitly guide people through their practices. The interrelationship between these dimensions can only be completed if we include the people. As obvious as it may seem, one must not forget that people integrate several communities of variable size during their lives and this obviously influences the above mentioned dimensions. Therefore, Patrick Moran adds **communities** and **persons** to the dimensions of culture, raising them to the number of five (Moran, 2001: 24-25).

Communities are the social groups to which people belong, even if no formal agreement of possession is settled on paper, that is, even if no legal bonding is established. They form large groups assembled around language, gender, race or generation or simply around co-workers or family. As they result from the interaction of individuals, they often carry the mainstream of values, beliefs and perceptions.

Within this landscape, it has already become perceptible how important persons are in the process of defining culture. According to Moran,

Each person is a distinct mix of communities and experiences, and all persons take on a particular cultural identity that both links and separates them from other members of the culture.

(Moran, 2001: 25)

This means that each person only apprehends a part of all the cultural standards usually associated with their community, depending on their tastes, goals and desires in life. It is these factors that 'link or separate them from other members'. Sometimes they have lived in communities with a different set of perspectives and

tend to mix them with the perspectives of the communities they are living in now. Hence, the notion of 'mix' brought up by Moran referred to above. Patrick Moran summarizes his point of view on the following scheme:

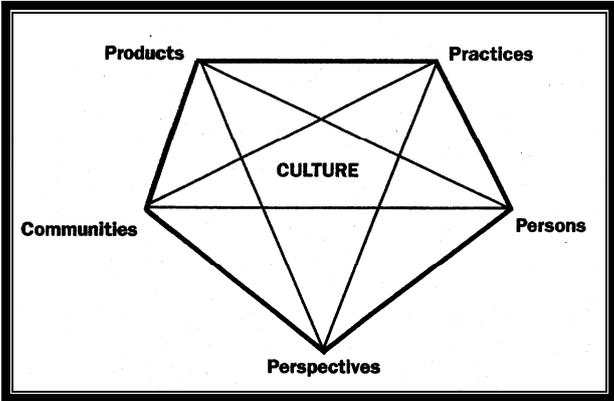


Figure 1 - The Five Dimensions of Culture (Moran, 2001: 24)

Figure 1 clearly states that culture is the result of the interaction between a specific group of persons and/or communities and their sets of practices, products and perspectives. However, the author goes on to say that this interaction does not take place on the same level. As a matter of fact, he claims that while the products, practices, persons and communities are visible, the perspectives are not.

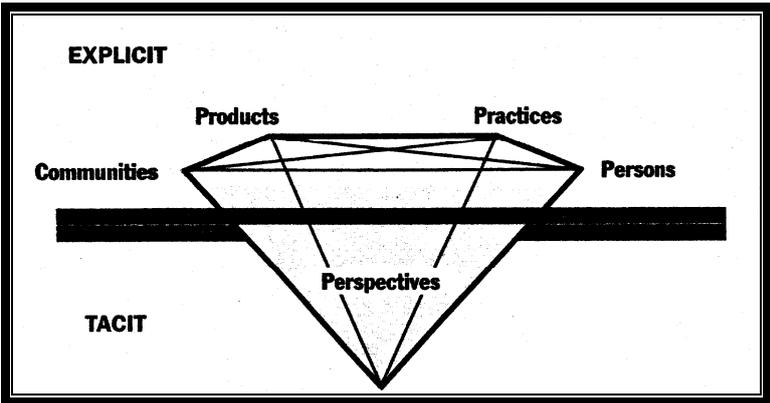


Figure 2 -The Iceberg of Culture (Moran, 2001: 28)

Bearing this train of thought in mind, Stella Ting-Toomey defines culture as

a complex frame of reference that consists of patterns of traditions, beliefs, values, norms, symbols and meanings that are shared by varying degrees by interacting members of a community.

(Ting-Toomey, 1999: 10)

She also uses the iceberg metaphor to place the layers of cultures, pointing out that the visible aspects of culture are outweighed by the layers of culture which are hidden from our view and where values and beliefs which inform our practices are located:

Culture is like an iceberg: the deeper layers (e.g., traditions, beliefs, values) are hidden from our view; we only see and hear the uppermost layers of cultural artifacts (e.g. fashion, trends, pop music) of verbal and nonverbal symbols.

(Ting-Toomey, 1999: 10)

In both definitions, it is implied that culture is divided into visible and non-visible aspects. The visible are the aspects that we see, the objects we use, the (verbal and non-verbal) language that we use, whereas the non-visible include traditions, perspectives, beliefs and values.

For the purposes of this dissertation, culture shall then be defined as:

- a dynamic and interrelated system of values, beliefs, (personal) interactions, habits, behaviours and traditions of a specific community that influences and is influenced by the behaviour of those that belong to that very same community.
- the symbolism that is given to the elements of the above mentioned system.
- a system that includes visible (these being people's behaviours and products) and non-visible aspects (like beliefs, values and perspectives) that together create culture.

1.2 LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

'Language is not simply a reflector of an objective cultural reality. It is an integral part of that reality through which other parts are shaped and interpreted.'

Dieter Buttjes & Michael Byram (1991: 18)

While taking my degree in English and German Philology, I was able to study in Germany for one year, on a student exchange program. Apart from improving my fluency in German, this opportunity gave me the chance to have several cultural encounters and nourish my understanding and respect for other cultures.

In one of those encounters, I met Mustafa, a Muslim in his early thirties, who was studying engineering. Shortly after we met, I was preparing a sandwich for my afternoon snack. As the kitchen was a shared facility in the students' residence we were living in, he showed up exactly at that time. The sandwich was made up of different ingredients such as lettuce, cheese and ham. As I grew up with the established cultural idea that one should be polite and kind to others, I immediately offered him a sandwich by saying "Would you like to have a sandwich and a cup of tea?". The offering was refused with a blunt and angry "No!". Only after a couple of days did I realize that both me and Mustafa looked at the same offering from two distinct points of view: I thought of my utterance as a polite and pleasant way of getting acquainted while Mustafa remarked it as an insult to Muslims, because they do not eat pork, which means they do not eat ham. He had taken my offer as an insult and even mockery of his beliefs and a trace of superiority of the western culture towards his. How could one single utterance have triggered such a cultural clash? The answer is straightforward: language is deeply bound up with culture and it is the means to express our cultural beliefs, opinions, behaviours and, why not, pre-conceived ideas about other worlds, cultures and civilizations.

However, language is also used to create culture. A simple conversation with relatives or co-workers denotes our cultural standards and beliefs, as it encodes meanings (easily and) mostly understandable by people from the same cultural background. In Kramsch's words, these meanings can be in '[the] speaker's tone of voice, accent, conversational style, gestures and facial expressions' (Kramsch, 1998: 3). She claims that culture shapes language, which in itself is a way of 'bringing order and predictability into people's use of language' (Kramsch, 1998: 6). This shaping is done through 'speech communities', i.e., the people sharing a common linguistic code, and 'discourse communities' (Kramsch, 1998: 6), which can be considered as a subdivision of the latter and includes the way language is used to serve the social needs of those communities. These smaller communities can be the family, co-workers and political or social organisations. Each of these shares not only the same vocabulary and grammatical structures but also the topics and style chosen to sustain conversation.

Even though we are aware that such discourse communities exist, they are usually imagined ones as there is no written protocol that enables and sets limits upon what people must say within a specific situation or group. We belong to several discourse communities and this belonging is unconscious. The more communities we are a part of, the more interaction we have and therefore, the more versatile our personal culture becomes. For example, when a person is at his/her workplace, he/she is included in his/her working community and shares a specific discourse. When he/she meets his/her friends, the discourse will probably be a different one, as he/she joins another community. These communities are bound by language and it is precisely the absence of physical boundaries that makes them dynamic and open to changes, because people take aspects from one discourse community to the other. It seems widely accepted that language reveals and determines the way we think and behave and that this process, dynamic as it is, influences our culture. The permanent interaction between language users is constantly mutating our culture. As Corbett wisely states,

To understand how a community uses language it is deemed necessary to understand the community: the dynamic system of its

beliefs, values and dreams, and how it negotiates and articulates them.

(Corbett, 2003: 19)

This statement testifies how interwoven language and culture are. As a matter of fact, the consciousness of this close relationship was brought into the teaching of English as a foreign language by the 'communicative approach'. This way of teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) intended to use language to get things done and to use correct language in appropriate situations. First, real-life situations were analysed and then language was taught accordingly. However, UNESCO, in its *Guidelines On Intercultural Education* (2006) moves beyond this by claiming that linguistic competence is important because it promotes access both to one's own culture and to other cultures thus stimulating intercultural encounters.

While talking about the past, as far as language and culture were concerned, Kramersch talks about the 'one nation = one culture equation' (Kramersch, 1998: 67). As Kramersch rightly mentions,

By analogy with the creation of standard languages, nation-states have promoted a standardized notion of cultural authenticity that has served to rally emotional identification both at home and abroad.

(Kramersch, 1998: 80)

In other words, the learning of a language and culture in the past has been based upon fixed representations that emerge from what is acknowledged as being normal within a society and leaves little or no room for diversity. It was this equation that enabled us to recognize English native speakers as immutable holders of the language and culture we wanted to acquire. However, we must question the accuracy and usefulness of this standardized perspective, as it does not reflect either the diversity of the societies in which the language is used or the diversity of the language itself in these globalised times.

1.2.1 - Language and Culture in the Classroom

Back in the 1970s and 1980s, English was mainly seen as a *lingua franca* and a tool to communicate, giving birth to what was later known as English for Specific Purposes, 'depoliticised and culturally neutralized' (Byram, 1991: 6). Such a view tended to ignore the cultural dimension of using and learning a language. As stated before, language embodies and gives meaning to the behaviour and ways of thinking of a community and therefore the two cannot be separated. In reality, this view neglected the fact that students around the world are surrounded by several sources of input such as television or music, each of them conveying diverse patterns of behaviour or lifestyles, which later influence communication and language. This practical view of English was mainly used for business and commerce but failed to realise that even the briefest contact between people from different linguistic backgrounds that use English as a means of communication is 'a sociological event (...) through which the meanings that constitute the social system are exchanged' (Halliday, 1978: 139) and the result of the conjugation of one's practices and perspectives.

Instead of being seen only as a tool for communication within a specific context such as tourism or commerce, learning a language should then be seen as learning (a) culture, as any dialogue between (non-)native speakers is an extension of cultural perspectives and practices. Doing this would certainly arouse pupils' respect and tolerance for diversity of thought and behaviour. If we understand how the other thinks and behaves, it will be easier to use language for social, commercial or other kinds of relationship. Language can (and should in Byram's words) be used as a vehicle to allow socialisation among non-native speaker pupils and enable their intercultural competence. Going through such a process involves working on students' language awareness, i.e. making them capable of using appropriate language within specific social encounters, and cultural awareness, i.e. making them capable of understanding culture as a complex and multiple system of social differentiation and themselves as potential 'others'. This issue becomes even more relevant, as we live in a time of globalisation, promoted by worldwide mobility, commerce and media.

Bearing the above mentioned relationship in mind, we shall conclude that:

- language encodes cultural meanings such as behaviour and ways of thinking of a community;
- language promotes access to the target culture(s), as it enables communication between people from different communities;
- language is a dynamic system;
- language awareness is important to allow appropriate language use within specific social encounters;
- cultural awareness is important to allow appropriate attitudes and behaviours in situations of intercultural encounter .

1.3 MULTICULTURALISM & INTERCULTURALISM

*'Multiculturalism is not dead, in fact it has been reasserted (...) in the form of
'valuing diversity.'*

Karen Chouan (2004)

1.3.1 – Multiculturalism

Since the Nineteenth Century most nation-states have lived under the notion of monoculturalism as a sign of unity. The cultural paradigm was, in some cases, an imposition of the state itself. It often reflected the dominance of a specific group, usually the most powerful and influential, and left little room for the cultures of less influential groups. Immigrants were asked to assimilate the country's cultural paradigm, as happened in the United States. The 'Melting Pot' was nothing more than the cultural metamorphosis that immigrants from different cultural backgrounds underwent to embrace the notion of freedom and belief in work as the most consistent means to attain prosperity.

The Twentieth Century witnessed a growing concern with minority cultures and their contribution to the richness of the whole. People's mobility and the flows of migrants have intensified over the years and so have the contacts between cultures and the way they (inter)relate. This has drawn society's attention to some cultures (or parts of cultures) which are not so visible and to the complexity of the co-existence of different cultures within the same geographical area.

This is known as *multiculturalism* and it can then be defined as society's attempt to embrace different cultures which share the same physical space and give them equal rights. However, it does not necessarily mean that cultures bond with each other. This process is often referred to as interculturalism.

Opinions tend to diverge on whether multiculturalism is a positive aspect of today's world or whether it represents a new source of conflict and disagreement. Supporters claim that multiculturalism is the natural path to be taken if we truly want a democratic society, because it brings equality to cultures and entitles them with rights, preventing the hegemony of some cultures over others. Supporters also maintain that multiculturalism will eventually lead to interculturalism, where cultures will profit from the exchange of cultural characteristics. This can already be seen in minor aspects like gastronomy with the proliferation of Asian or Mexican restaurants (just to mention a few) in our cities. People that oppose multiculturalism often argue that it represents a threat to the (dominant) cultural heritage which has been created by generations over the years. It is seen as a way of imposing other cultures on us and as a way of making it unnecessary for immigrants to learn, bond and assimilate the host culture.

1.3.1.1 - Multiculturalism and Multicultural Education

As stated above, multiculturalism is the co-existence of different cultural groups (within the same geographical area). Its relevance today derives from the fact that our societies are fast becoming multicultural, due to globalisation and the fast and easy flow of people around the world. Even Portugal, traditionally a country of emigrants, is becoming the destination of many people from Africa, Eastern Europe and even Asia, and therefore, a country of immigrants. But even the roots of the Portuguese people are multicultural, due to the several peoples that inhabited the Iberian Peninsula many centuries ago, like the Romans and the Moors.

Within this setting, multicultural education aims to promote tolerance and respect among (these) different cultural groups. It promotes ethnic, linguistic, religious and even racial pluralism and thus aspires to the democratic principles of world justice (Aguado Odina, 2003; Nieto, 1992). To successfully achieve these goals, a great dose of self reflection and self critique are necessary (Aguado Odina, 2003; Guilherme, 2002) and even the capacity of *re-socialization* (Aguado Odina, 2003), that is the ability the individual has to review his/her place in society and even

readapt to his/her new roles. Following this line of thought, Cardoso (1996) tried to adapt some of these principles to Portuguese schools and suggests that multicultural education can only be possible if both the equality of opportunities and universality of education are ensured and if aspects of cultural diversity are brought not only into the classroom but also to the whole school community. The choice of content(s) to be approached is dependent on the purposes that are to be achieved with this new posture. However, one of those contents, he claims, should promote anti-racism by leading students to adopting a critical attitude, reminding us of the 'critical pedagogy' referred to by Manuela Guilherme (Guilherme, 2002).

1.3.2 - Interculturalism

In a multicultural world where several peoples, ethnicities and cultures share the same physical space, it is necessary to enable people to develop steady relationships with those from other cultures.

It is not always easy to accept *otherness*, i.e., the fact that some people have practices different from our own. Prejudice is often a source of misunderstanding and sometimes discrimination towards other peoples. This undermines the possibility of social enrichment and a peaceful way of life and may even lead to violence. *Interculturalism* can be defined as the effort of bringing cultures together in a peaceful and tolerant way.

The aim of this dissertation is not to discuss the points of view on interculturalism but rather to observe how it can be used in the syllabus and in the (English) classroom in order to create a new behaviour towards the Other in our society. The teaching of languages can play a major role in the process of overcoming barriers (such as misunderstandings or the non-acceptance of otherness) in the relationship between cultures, specially at a time when minorities are going to play a major role in the development of many countries in Europe. If emphasis is given to the intercultural dimension of language teaching, it may be possible for future generations to live in a more peaceful and less restraining world.

1.3.2.1 - Intercultural Dimension and Intercultural Education

This section deals with several perspectives on the objectives and foundations of the intercultural dimension when applied to education.

The intercultural dimension in language teaching takes into account the social identities that inevitably take part in human interaction and tries to bring them to the teaching of languages. Each individual brings a specific background to each interaction, and it is precisely this background that determines the way the encounter develops. In Byram's words,

The 'intercultural dimension' in language teaching aims to develop learners as intercultural speakers or mediators who are able to engage with complexity and multiple identities and to avoid the stereotyping which accompanies perceiving someone through a simple identity. It is based on perceiving the interlocutor as an individual whose qualities are to be discovered, rather than as a representative of an externally ascribed identity.

(Byram, 2002: 9)

According to Byram, this attitude will lead to a more responsible citizenship, should the learner be able to master five *savoirs*: *savoir*, or the knowledge that individuals bring to an interaction; *savoir comprendre*, which means being able to receive, interpret and relate information to one's own knowledge. *Savoir être*, or having attitudes of curiosity and openness towards both other cultures and one's own; *savoir apprendre/faire*, which means having the tools to acquire new (cultural) knowledge and operate it in real-time interaction; and finally, *savoir s'engager* which describes the learner's ability to evaluate his/her own culture and other cultures from a critical perspective, are the other three *savoirs* (Byram, 1997: 31-55). In the classroom, the focus should be on 'the development of attitudes of mutual tolerance and interest, of readiness for communication of view-points, life styles,

convictions, etc, including the development of strategies of comprehension and interaction' (Byram, 1998: 48).

However, this dimension does not disregard linguistic competence. On the contrary, this is instrumental in achieving the above mentioned goals. Nevertheless, the central aim of the intercultural dimension is not to achieve 'native speaker competence' but rather an 'intercultural communicative competence' (Corbett, 2003; Byram, 1997; Guilherme, 2002). As a matter of fact, as Corbett claims, 'few learners achieve 'native speaker' competence. Many, however, can achieve the valuable skills of observation, explanation and mediation that contribute to 'intercultural' communicative competence' (Corbett, 2003: 4).

Such competence can also lead to a more democratic form of social interaction, as it is based on the idea that all cultures and individuals are equally important and deserve the same respect we give to our own culture. Understanding and accepting others, observing their similarities and differences with our own culture, are then the main goals of the intercultural dimension. This dimension should also lead learners to identify with the experience of the communities where the language is spoken and make them aware of other perspectives on life, thus leading them to do some critical thinking about their own habits and ways of perceiving the Other (Guilherme, 2002). The fact that this dimension demands constant reflection and a critical attitude towards the whole process (Guilherme, 2002) will inevitably make students aware of the (important) role languages play in their lives (Corbett, 2003).

Contrary to the idea that learning a language means imitating native speakers both linguistically and culturally, the intercultural dimension leads us to be aware of and accept 'otherness', i.e., bearing in mind that the other has qualities, beliefs and behaviours to be discovered (through interaction), which may be different from the stereotypical cultural patterns usually associated with the community our interlocutor belongs to. In fact, a native speaker of English, born in the United Kingdom, may not drink tea at five o'clock or be a fervent supporter of the monarchy, which are stereotypes usually associated with the British. It is possible to be British and not share the stereotypes held about British people. Therefore, it is extremely important to be aware that even though our interlocutor may share

some of these stereotypes, he/she carries other identities with him/her which are the result of his/her previous interaction with other people and cultures.

The intercultural speaker must, then, be ready to recognise and accept new aspects within an individual that diverge from typical stereotypes or knowledge previously learned. It seems pointless to approach all the cultural aspects of a people in the classroom both because it is an endless process and also because it is impossible to foresee which are the most important aspects students will need in the future. It is much more reasonable to give students tools that will enable them to find and acquire what they need from the foreign culture in a smooth and efficient way.

The main purposes of the intercultural dimension of language teaching, therefore, are:

- To promote respect for all cultures without subduing minority cultures to dominant cultures;
- To widen the focus of education to all students;
- To apply democratic principles;
- To promote intercultural encounters between different cultural groups (both in and out of school) in order to develop interaction skills in multicultural backgrounds.

(adapted from Aguado Odina, 2003)

We can also add other aims to these:

- To accept otherness, i.e., the fact that the Other has different perspectives in life.
- To develop a critical attitude towards one's own culture

Taking our own culture and beliefs as the starting point for the discovery of others, we will need some knowledge of the processes that govern intercultural interaction and the way social groups relate to each other. In other words, we need to know something about the other and be able to imagine ourselves pictured from their eyes.

To set out on this task, we will need skills that can be divided into two major groups: receptive (receiving, analysing and relating) and active (discovery and interaction). The former includes a set of skills that leads us to analyse a specific situation from the other culture and compare and relate it to our own. The latter involves making the speaker aware of the other's difficulty in explaining their own beliefs and values (as they are usually unconscious) and making them able to ask the other about themselves and find out more about their culture.

However, this quest is not complete if the speaker does not adopt a critical attitude towards both his/her own and the other's culture. Interlocutors must be aware that their own beliefs will influence the way they perceive the other's beliefs. Therefore, they must have 'critical cultural awareness' (Byram, 2002: 13) and be able to evaluate the other based on valid criteria and not simply out of their own fear of the different or unknown.

1.3.2.2. - Documents on Intercultural Education

This section deals with some documents that have been published by several reputable institutions in the past years which account for the need to head syllabi and curricula towards the intercultural dimension in language teaching. We shall look at UNESCO'S *Guidelines on Intercultural Education* (already mentioned on page 24); The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and at the recommendation on 'minorities, intercultural education and citizenship', published by the Portuguese National Council of Education¹ in 2001.

The first is included in this dissertation because UNESCO, as the world organisation it is, sets out some guidelines on intercultural education that can be included in the curricula of nations worldwide to promote tolerance, respect and awareness of others. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages is also a relevant document because it is the founding document for language education in Europe today. It is, therefore, of special importance for this dissertation. Finally, the above mentioned recommendation published by the Portuguese National Council of Education in 2001 deserves close analysis, since it works as a sort of bridge between the guidelines of worldwide organisations and the specific features of Portugal and its society. It takes into account the characteristics of Portuguese society and makes recommendations for the usage of intercultural education as a way to cope with difference between the communities (ethnic or immigrant) that shape Portuguese society.

1.3.2.2.1 - UNESCO'S Guidelines on Intercultural Education

UNESCO'S *Guidelines on Intercultural Education* (2006) relate multicultural education with intercultural education which are terms that are often used indiscriminately, even though they are different concepts. While the former uses

¹ Conselho Nacional de Educação

knowledge of other cultures to create acceptance and tolerance, the latter endeavours to go beyond

passive coexistence, to achieve a developing and sustainable way of living together in multicultural societies through the creation of understanding of, respect for and dialogue between the different social groups.

(UNESCO, 2006)

The suggested way to achieve intercultural education is to include linguistic, historic and cultural aspects of minority groups in the curricula.

The objectives of intercultural education for UNESCO involve *learning to know* (UNESCO, 2006: 19), which means making students able to learn for themselves; *learning to do* (UNESCO, 2006: 19), or the ability to have a proactive attitude that leads individuals to acquire their own place in society; *learning to live together* (UNESCO, 2006: 20) by developing understanding of others and realising how inter-dependent today's society is by working together with others in a spirit of respect and pluralism; and finally *learning to be* (UNESCO, 2006: 20), which is nothing more than the attempt to develop one's personality based on autonomy and responsibility.

1.3.2.2.2 - The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) was put out by the Council of Europe with the purpose of assessing a method of teaching languages that could be applied to all languages of the European Union. This need arose from the clear evidence that mobility was fast becoming a reality and that tools were needed to enable and 'facilitate communication and interaction among Europeans of different mother tongues' (Council of Europe, 2001: 2). In 2001 the CEFR was launched by the Council of Europe as a tool for establishing common goals and measuring language ability across Europe.

The CEFR provides guidelines for the elaboration of language syllabi bearing in mind the sociocultural changes that have been taking place in the European Union as a consequence of globalisation. It understands that 'a major educational effort is needed to convert [the rich heritage of diverse languages and cultures] from a barrier to communication into a source of mutual enrichment and understanding' (Council of Europe, 2001: 2). Its necessity stemmed out of the following conclusions drawn on the Intergovernmental Symposium held in Rüşchlikon, Switzerland, November 1991:

1. *A further intensification of language learning and teaching in member countries is necessary in the interests of greater mobility, more effective international communication combined with respect for identity and cultural diversity, better access to information, more intensive personal interaction, improved working relations and a deeper mutual understanding.*
2. *To achieve these aims language learning is necessarily a life-long task to be promoted and facilitated throughout educational systems, from pre-school through to adult education.*
3. *It is desirable to develop a Common European Framework of reference for language learning at all levels, in order to:*
 - *promote and facilitate co-operation among educational institutions in different countries;*
 - *provide a sound basis for the mutual recognition of language qualifications;*
 - *assist learners, teachers, course designers, examining bodies and educational administrators to situate and co-ordinate their efforts.*

(Council of Europe, 2001: 5-6)

The CEFR does not disregard the fact that 'communication calls upon the whole human being' (Council of Europe, 2001: 1). This means that the Framework looks at the building of syllabi from an intercultural perspective and takes into account the (socio)cultural processes that are related to language:

In an intercultural approach, it is a central objective of language education to promote the favourable development of the learner's whole personality and sense of identity in response to the enriching experience of otherness in language and culture.

(Council of Europe, 2001: 1)

However, the CEFR does not intend to be an imposition on any educational system. It is to be seen as a reference document and adapted locally according to regional and particular situations. Therefore, the syllabi across Europe are to be flexible, open, dynamic, non-dogmatic and relevant for learners' needs (Council of Europe, 2001).

The user/learner's competences

The CEFR outlines several competences that the learner must develop in the course of his experience in order to achieve successful interactions.

From all the competences suggested in the CEFR, we shall concentrate on the general competences, as they are more relevant for the aim of this dissertation. Within the general competences, which share a connection to Byram's already mentioned *savoirs*, the CEFR starts by stating that the user/learner will need '*declarative knowledge (savoir)*' (Council of Europe, 2001: 101), which is divided into:

- a) knowledge of the world;
- b) sociocultural knowledge;
- c) intercultural awareness.

As part of the *knowledge of the world*, the user/learner is intended to know how the world functions and its phenomena because 'communication depends on the congruence of the models of the world and language which have been

internalised by the people taking part' (Council of Europe, 2001: 101). This means that the user/learner of a language should see 'factual knowledge concerning the countries where the language is spoken, such as its (...) geographical, environmental, demographic, economic and political features' (Council of Europe, 2001: 102) as an important aspect of language learning, as well as the relations between different classes of entities.

As far as *sociocultural knowledge* is concerned, the user/learner needs to have 'knowledge of the society and culture of the community (...) in which a language is spoken' (Council of Europe, 2001: 102). This can be seen as a part of knowledge of the world, but the CEFRL sees it as an aspect important enough to have special attention because 'it is likely to lie outside the learner's previous experience and may well be distorted by stereotypes' (Council of Europe, 2001: 102).

The sociocultural features of a community that the CEFRL sees as worthy of attention include:

1. *Everyday living, e.g.:*

- *food and drink, meal times, table manners;*
- *public holidays;*
- *working hours and practices;*
- *leisure activities (hobbies, sports, reading habits, media).*

2. *Living conditions, e.g.:*

- *living standards (with regional, class and ethnic variations);*
- *housing conditions;*
- *welfare arrangements.*

3. *Interpersonal relations (including relations of power and solidarity) e.g. with respect to:*

- *class structure of society and relations between classes;*
- *relations between sexes (gender, intimacy);*
- *family structures and relations;*
- *relations between generations;*
- *relations in work situations;*
- *relations between public and police, officials, etc.;*
- *race and community relations;*

- *relations among political and religious groupings.*

4. Values, beliefs and attitudes in relation to such factors as:

- *social class;*
- *occupational groups (academic, management, public service, skilled and manual workforces);*
- *wealth (income and inherited);*
- *regional cultures;*
- *security;*
- *institutions;*
- *tradition and social change;*
- *history, especially iconic historical personages and events;*
- *minorities (ethnic, religious);*
- *national identity;*
- *foreign countries, states, peoples;*
- *politics;*
- *arts (music, visual arts, literature, drama, popular music and song);*
- *religion;*
- *humour.*

5. Body language. Knowledge of the conventions governing such behaviour form part of the user/learner's sociocultural competence.

6. Social conventions, e.g. with regard to giving and receiving hospitality, such as:

- *punctuality;*
- *presents;*
- *dress;*
- *refreshments, drinks, meals;*
- *behavioural and conversational conventions and taboos;*
- *length of stay;*
- *leave-taking.*

7. Ritual behaviour in such areas as:

- *religious observances and rites;*
- *birth, marriage, death;*

- *audience and spectator behaviour at public performances and ceremonies;*
- *celebrations, festivals, dances, discos, etc.*

(Council of Europe, 2001: 102-103)

The final item of Declarative Knowledge, *Intercultural Awareness*, stems from the fact that knowing and understanding the relationship between the user/learner's own culture and the target culture creates an awareness of the diversity that is to be found in both cultures, which, is then 'enriched by awareness of a wider range of cultures than those carried by the learner's L1 [own culture] and L2 [target culture]' (Council of Europe, 2001: 103). This awareness leads the user/learner to place both cultures in context and understand how each culture is seen by the other.

Taking these last competences into account, the CEFRL also suggests a number of '*Skills and know-how (savoir-faire)*' (Council of Europe, 2001: 104), from which the most relevant for the purposes of this dissertation are the *Intercultural skills*. As a matter of fact, the user/learner must have:

- *the ability to bring the culture of origin and the foreign culture into relation with each other;*
- *cultural sensitivity and the ability to identify and use a variety of strategies for contact with those from other cultures;*
- *the capacity to fulfil the role of cultural intermediary between one's own culture and the foreign culture and to deal effectively with intercultural misunderstanding and conflict situations;*
- *the ability to overcome stereotyped relationships.*

(Council of Europe, 2001: 104-105)

The user/learner is also expected to develop a number of competences within one's own individual personality, to which the CEFRL calls '*Existential competence (savoir-être)*' (Council of Europe, 2001: 105). In other words, the user/learner must

take into account aspects like 'attitudes, motivations, values, beliefs, cognitive styles and personality types' (Council of Europe, 2001: 105) while communicating because they are also an important aspect in communication. They affect communication and the ability to learn and include aspects like:

1. attitudes, such as the user/learner's degree of:

- *openness towards, and interest in, new experiences, other persons, ideas,*
peoples, societies and cultures;
- *willingness to relativise one's own cultural viewpoint and cultural value-system;*
- *willingness and ability to distance oneself from conventional attitudes to cultural difference.*

(...)

3. values, e.g. ethical and moral.

4. beliefs, e.g. religious, ideological, philosophical.

(...)

6. personality factors, e.g.:

- *enterprise/timidity;*
- *optimism/pessimism;*
- *introversion/extroversion;*
- *rigidity/flexibility;*
- *open-mindedness/closed-mindedness;*
- *spontaneity/self-monitoring;*
- *(lack of) self-awareness;*
- (...)

(Council of Europe, 2001: 105-106)

To overcome difficulties in communication that might be created by attitudinal and personality features, the CEFRL suggests the development of an 'intercultural personality' (Council of Europe, 2001: 106), or the use of attitudes and awareness as a means of preventing those difficulties.

Finally, the CEFR claims that the user/learner must have the ability to learn new things and integrate them in his/her previous knowledge, 'modifying [it] where necessary' (Council of Europe, 2001: 106). This is the '*Ability to learn* (savoir-apprendre)' (Council of Europe, 2001: 106). Despite its several components mentioned in the CEFR, the heuristic skills that the user/learner must master are the most relevant for us, because the ability to face new experiences and use other competences (like observing, analysing or inferencing) to cope with those experiences, as well as 'the ability of the learner (...) to find, understand and (...) convey new information' (Council of Europe, 2001: 108) are important in an intercultural approach.

1.3.2.2.3 - The Portuguese National Council for Education²

Following the same pattern, the Portuguese National Council for Education recommended in 2001 that more attention should be given to the rising multicultural nature of Portuguese society. It stated that (different) cultures sharing the same geographical area should live in a spirit of mutual tolerance and respect. To do so, the Council argues that school must lead the way in the process of bringing cultures together by setting strategies in each local community, avoiding the dominance of one culture over the other and the prevalence of stereotypes. Also, the document proposes the use of cultural diversity as a resource to be used by educators that will eventually lead to the adoption of tolerant behaviours and to a harmonious and cooperative coexistence (Conselho Nacional de Educação, 2001: 4389-4392). We believe these principles can and should be taken into account in the foreign language classroom.

² Conselho Nacional de Educação

1.3.2.3 - Intercultural Education, Syllabi and Curricula

Adopting an intercultural approach to language teaching does not necessarily mean abandoning linguistic activities but making culture the central topic in the classroom and making students think about the way information is exchanged. Such an approach involves creating and implementing tasks that make the learner search for cultural information in a systematic and active way. It prepares learners to be independent and to be able to deal with the intercultural encounters they will have in life.

Therefore, it is strongly recommended that both linguistic *and* cultural contents are approached to make communication easier, that learners are encouraged to reflect upon the cultural aspects they are faced with through comparison between their culture and the target culture, and that new forms of socialization are created (Corbett, 2003).

Byram (1998) identifies three dimensions of objectives within foreign language teaching which are closely related to what he calls socioculture, as the three of them include cultural aspects:

- a pragmatic dimension (use of foreign language, skills)
- a cognitive dimension (knowledge, information)
- an emotional dimension (attitudes)

(Byram, 1998: 54)

The pragmatic dimension deals mostly with the development of the four skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) by developing linguistic aspects like grammar or vocabulary. Socioculture is here represented by *everyday events* (Byram, 1998: 55) and the way people interact when communicating. The cognitive dimension reveals what the learner must know, which is defined by the curriculum, whereas the emotional dimension sets its main goal on the 'formation of attitudes and views of the foreign world' (Byram, 1998: 56). As we can see, culture is the common denominator among these dimensions, as it is always

present. Once again, the close relationship between language and culture is evident.

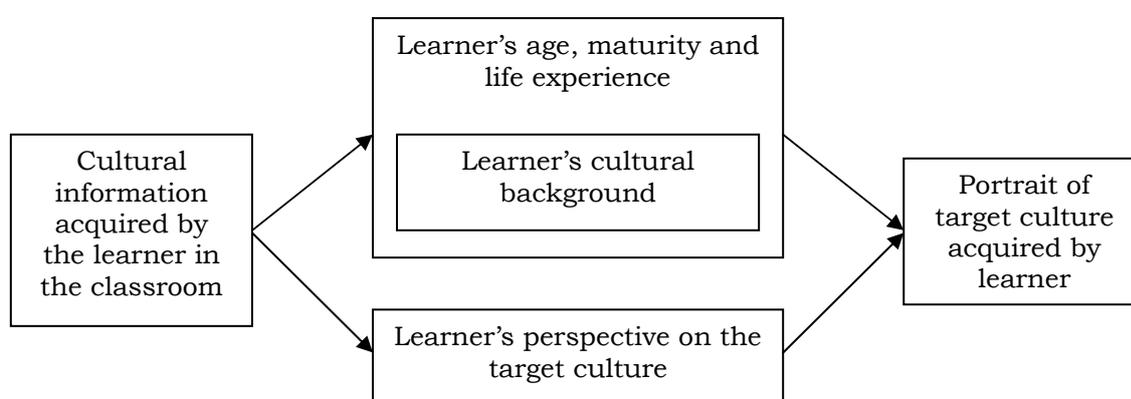
Turning now to what culture might be included in a culturally oriented syllabus, it must be said that settling on a *corpus* of cultural topics that suits both learners' tastes and needs seems to be a hard task. The solution might lie in the definition of the purposes and the characteristics of the group to be taught. Teaching a group of teenagers may not be the same as teaching a class of adults, even if they share the same linguistic level. Their needs and expectations certainly diverge due to their age, maturity or life experience.

Byram has pointed out that the way cultural aspects of a specific community are taught in classrooms resembles a 'sociocultural "film" or "drama" of the foreign world' (Byram, 1998: 64). In other words, the learner is nothing more than a passive spectator to whom cultural facts are presented in an appealing and entertaining form. But to achieve intercultural competence, it is necessary to motivate and engage the learner in the cultural learning process. Most of the passivity attached to cultural learning derived from methods and materials that had learners' competent use of language as their main purpose. The desire for 'near-nativeness of verbal behaviour' (Byram, 1998: 65) of the audio-lingual method is a clear example. Attaining such a goal turned out to be something only accomplished by a small minority, while becoming aware of sociocultural interactions seems a far more feasible purpose to be achieved by a majority of learners. 'Comprehension skills' (Byram, 1998) must be developed because the learner needs to be able to understand a given intercultural situation and act accordingly, using appropriate language and adopting suitable attitudes to promote an easy-going encounter based on the spirit of mutual tolerance and respect. As Gerhard Neuner puts it,

It is essential that in foreign language learning the learner receives information about the people of the target community, about the way they organise their daily lives (routines and rituals), about their ideas, attitudes and beliefs, etc., because this will help the learner to reflect upon his own position (similarities or differences) and come to terms with possible communication "traps" in the foreign language (misunderstandings, blockades; etc.)

(Neuner, 1997: 66)

Besides the input that is provided for learners, their own sociocultural background must not be disregarded. Moreover, learners do not start from zero, i.e., when they come into the classroom, they already have a perspective of the target culture derived mainly from the media, their experiences or life-stories, or relationships with people that have had some kind of contact with the target culture. So both the learners' own cultural background (where age, maturity and life experience – mentioned above – play a crucial role) and their perspective on the target culture will influence the way they will receive and interact with the information to be acquired in the classroom. We can put it this way:



Bearing this in mind, we can say that the portrait of the target culture acquired by the learners, which is determined by the above-mentioned factors, will affect the way they relate to and interact with the target culture. However, it should not lead them to creating stereotypes or pre-conceived ideas likely to make interaction difficult.

Having shed some light over the purposes of intercultural dimension of language teaching, we shall now focus on how it can be applied in the syllabus. It should be rather clear by now that both must include space and guidelines that enable learners to meet the target culture and lead them to adopt values of respect, tolerance and cooperative work, as well as steer them towards a better and deeper knowledge of their own culture.

Byram (1998) suggests that there are two types of criteria when choosing the sociocultural topics to be included: 'subject-matter oriented criteria' and 'learner-oriented criteria' (Byram, 1998: 78). The former deals with a more objective perspective, concerning facts, i.e., institutions, encyclopaedic details or typical aspects of the target culture, whereas the latter involves a rather subjective

perspective and is concerned with what the learners' needs and interests are. Whichever the perspective adopted, emphasis must be given to the 'discussion of intercultural implications of everyday routines and rituals' (Byram, 1998: 81).

1.3.3 - Discussion

Following on from what has been argued in this chapter, we believe that an interculturally-oriented language syllabus should make students able to:

- recognise multiculturalism as a sign of today's globalisation and (people's) mobility;
- acknowledge cultural diversity;
- recognise otherness by being aware of other perspectives in life;
- show tolerance, interest and respect towards (different) values, beliefs and perspectives shared by other communities;
- develop attitudes of openness towards the Other and modify previous (cultural) knowledge where necessary;
- avoid prejudice and stereotyping;
- perceive the Other as somebody to be discovered, rather than a mere representation of a stereotype;
- assume themselves as intercultural speakers or mediators by developing strategies of comprehension and interaction;
- have factual and social knowledge concerning the country where the language is spoken.
- observe difference and similarities between cultures, both mother culture and target culture(s).
- view their own culture from a critical point of view;

We believe these principles can and should be taken into account in the foreign language syllabus and will lead students (and, consequently, society) to see other cultures and communities not as strange enemies, but rather as somebody that has different perspectives in life which are worth being known and shared. Therefore, we shall see whether these principles are included in the English syllabus for the 2nd and 3rd cycles in Portugal and, if so, how they are included and dealt with.

2. CULTURE IN THE SYLLABUS³

This section deals with the presence and relevance of culture in the English syllabus for the 2nd and 3rd cycles. It is divided into two major sections:

1. the analysis of students' and teachers' opinions on the intercultural dimension in the teaching of English in Portugal (section 2.1);
2. the analysis of the contents of the syllabus from an intercultural perspective (section 2.2).

2.1 – STUDENTS AND TEACHERS' OPINIONS ON THE INTERCULTURAL DIMENSION IN THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH IN PORTUGAL

In accordance with the aims of this study as expressed in the introduction, we surveyed 132 students of English from different grades (6th, 8th and 9th) and 38 English teachers in order to gather information concerning learners' and teachers' opinions about culture and the way it is dealt with in the English classroom. This survey was carried out in the form of questionnaires. Students were given one questionnaire (appendix 1) whereas teachers were given another (appendix 2). The reason for using questionnaires is to have some feedback from the agents that use and work with the syllabus. Their opinions and points of view are important to clarify the direction in which the syllabus should be pointed towards the intercultural approach. The details about the administration and results of both

³ NOTE: As this section deals with documents written in Portuguese, these have been translated into English to ensure language consistency in this dissertation and avoid constant switching from one language to another. However, the Portuguese equivalents for the translations made throughout this section are expressed in footnotes.

questionnaires are explained in detail in sections 2.1.1 (students) and 2.1.2 (teachers).

2.1.1 – Students’ Questionnaires

The purpose of this questionnaire was to find out which of the cultural topics dealt with in the school year 2006-2007 were the most meaningful for learners (and why) and the topics they would like to discuss in future school years. I expect to find out more about the notion learners have of culture by identifying what topics they consider to belong to culture. My project also seeks to find out why learners enjoyed some topics more than others and why they want to analyse some topics in the future. The scope of this questionnaire will allow us to link the learners’ cultural interests to the contents dealt with at school.

These answers will be obtained from the analysis of quantitative data from 132 questionnaires distributed in June 2007 to 6th, 8th and 9th grade students in a school in the suburbs of Porto. 50 questionnaires were distributed to the 6th grade, 36 to the 8th and 46 to the 9th. These grades were selected in order to analyse the way students’ wants, concerns and cultural interests differ as they become more mature and also to have a range of opinions from students of both the 2nd and 3rd cycles. The results will be shown in Appendix 3 and the analysis here presented will be divided into the three grades for clearer understanding of the results.

The questionnaires were made up of two questions. These were based on my experience as a teacher and my theoretical background as starting point. The first asked students to mention, in their opinion, the most relevant cultural topics they had discussed during the school year. After mentioning them, they were asked to give the reasons for their choices. The second question invited students to enumerate the cultural topics they would like to approach in future years, were they given the chance to choose them. In other words, the students’ contribution to the changing or reshaping of the syllabus was requested. The questionnaire was made up in such a way as to see what idea students have of culture, i.e., what culture means to them and what topics they regard as being cultural.

6TH GRADE

Beginning with 6th grade students, the average age of students was 11. The following topics were mentioned: Animals, Food, The Environment, City, School, Cinema, Music, Daily Routine, Family, Hobbies, Sports, Famous People, Jobs and Physical Description. The ones students enjoyed the most were Food, The Environment, The City, Animals and School (see figure 3).

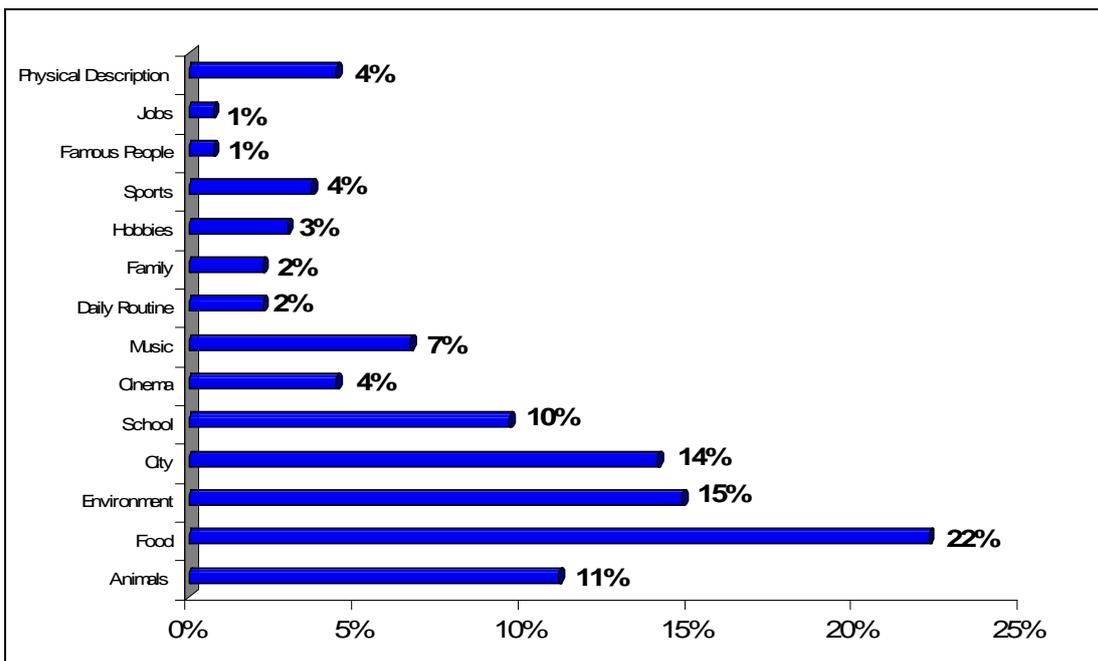


Figure 3 – Topics enjoyed by 6th grade students

As far as the reasons for choosing these topics are concerned, they have been grouped under five major headings: *relevance to learners' interest*, including their personal tastes and the things they enjoy; *fun*, or the topic(s) the students find amusing; *professional need*, or the professional gain students may take from learning something and applying it to their professional careers; *sociocultural interest*, referring not to the personal interest of learners but to their awareness about the surrounding world, i.e., the consciousness that it is important for society to be aware of other peoples and cultures. For example, many students mentioned that they enjoyed several topics because it is important to be acquainted with other ways of perceiving life. Last but not least, *easiness*. Some

students simply noted that they took pleasure in dealing with some topics because they were easy to understand.

The reasons why 6th grade students enjoyed the above mentioned topics are distributed as follows (see figure 4): interest shown by them in the topics (31%) and the fact that they are fun (29%). However, a significant number of students refer that they enjoyed the topics on the grounds that they might be helpful for their professional future (20%) and the sociocultural interest (9%). 11% mentioned that they enjoyed dealing with some topics simply because they were easy to acquire (9%).

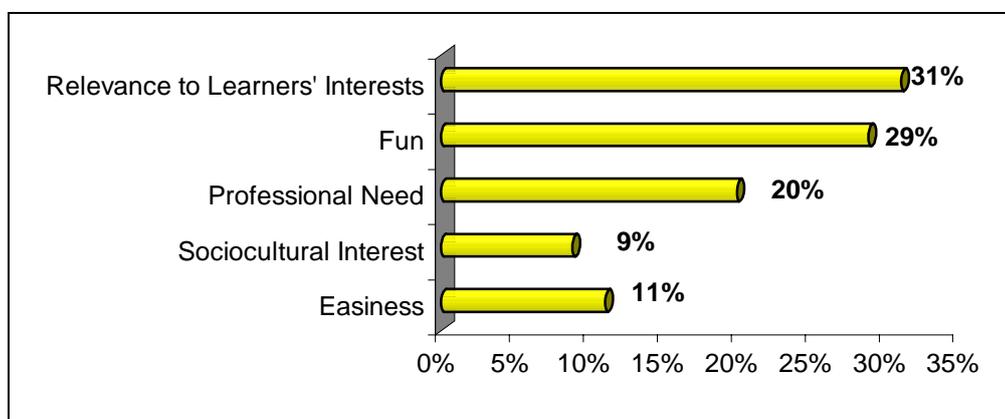


Figure 4 – Reasons why 6th grade students enjoyed topics

This shows that 6th grade students are not yet aware of the importance of being an interculturally competent user of language because they mention their own interest in learning about culture and the fun they take out of learning it. This is acceptable as they are only 11 years old and therefore immature in the sense that they have not yet reached the top of their cognitive development, but they already show a (personal) interest in cultural topics.

Among the reasons for not enjoying some topics, students mentioned the fact that they were not fun (48%), that they were difficult (21%) and that they were irrelevant to their interests (24%) (see figure 5).

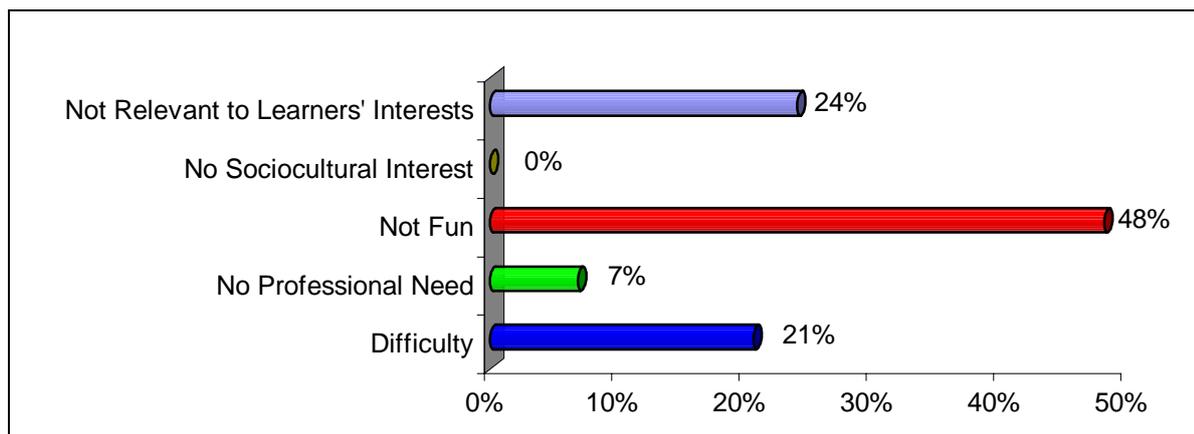


Figure 5 – Reasons why 6th grade students did not enjoy topics

Looking to the future, 6th grade students included the following suggestions for topics they would like to deal with: Sport (28%), the Culture of English-speaking countries (18%), the History of English-speaking countries (9%) and Music (10%) (see figure 6).

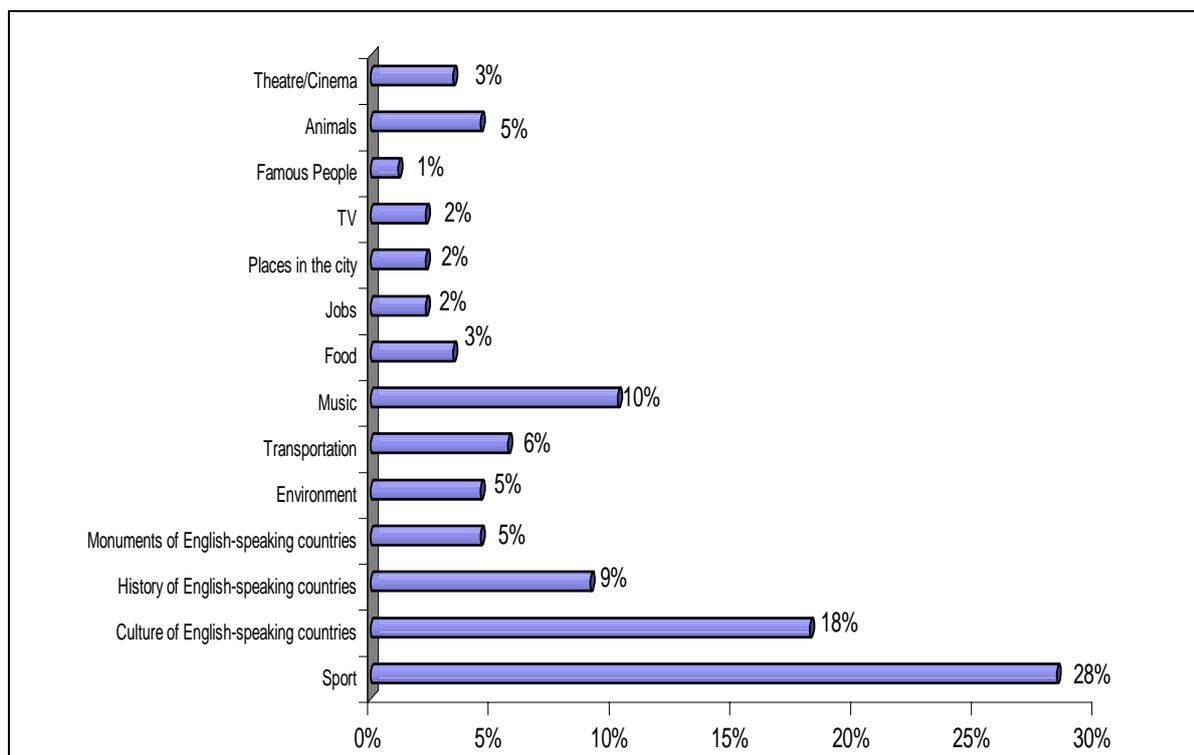


Figure 6 – Topics 6th grade students want to approach in the future

There are only three reasons given for why students want to discuss these topics, and a large majority (70%) of the students mentioned that they have some kind of interest on the subjects (see figure 7):

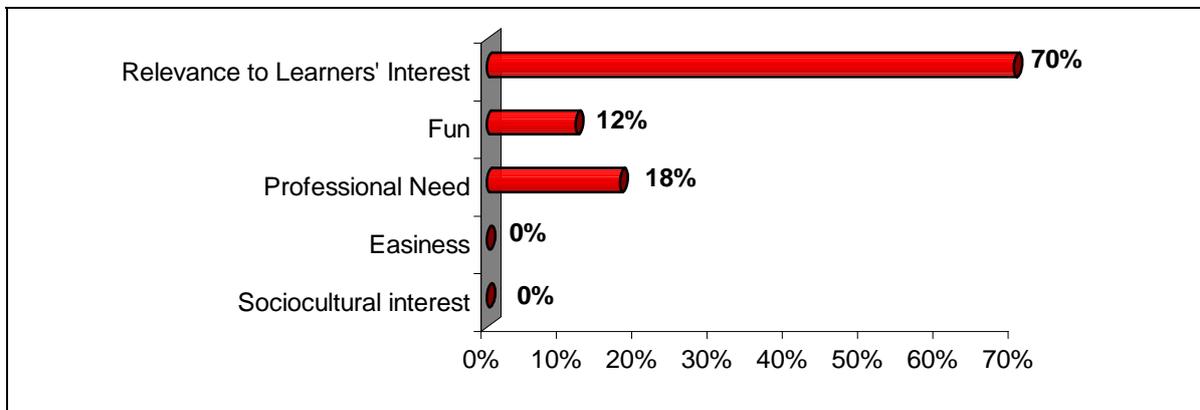


Figure 7 – Reasons why students want to approach topics in the future

8TH GRADE

8th grade students dealt with topics like Teenage Problems, Space Exploration, Mass Media, Internet, Fashion, Extreme Sports and Eating Disorders. It can be said, as a starting point, that these topics are on the whole related to the interests of learners and their major concerns at this time of their lives (most of them are 13 years old). The analysis of the topics students most enjoyed tells us that Mass Media and Extreme Sports are the favourite ones, whereas Space Exploration and Internet did not seem to arouse students' interest (see figure 8).

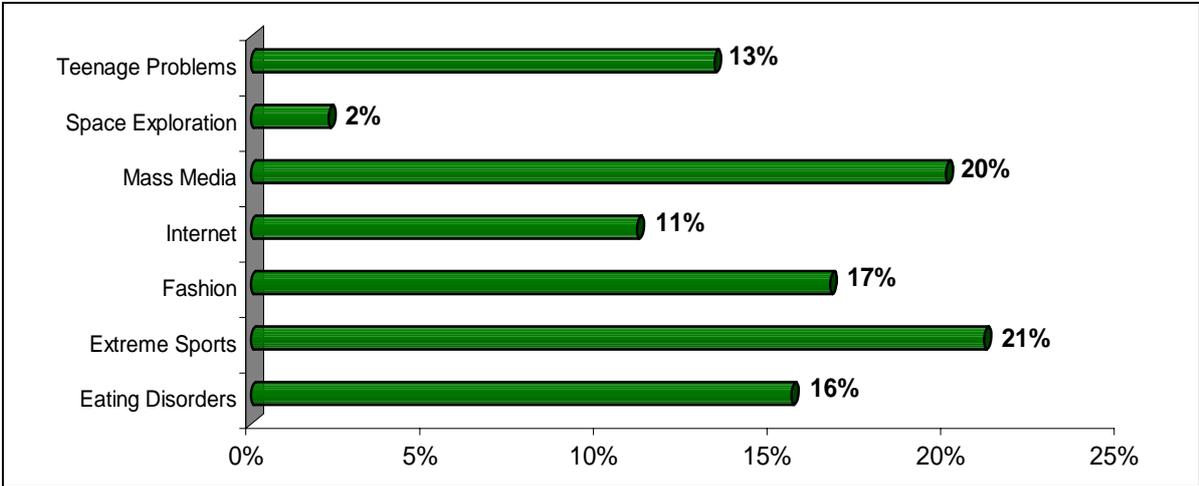


Figure 8 – Topics enjoyed by 8th grade students

The fact that these topics are in some way interesting for students, or that they are interested in finding out more about a specific topic seems to be enough for 79% of them to justify their choices. At this stage, few students seem to be driven by the fun that they take out of learning about certain topics (5%) whereas only 8% indicate that they enjoy some topics because they will be important for their future career (see figure 9).

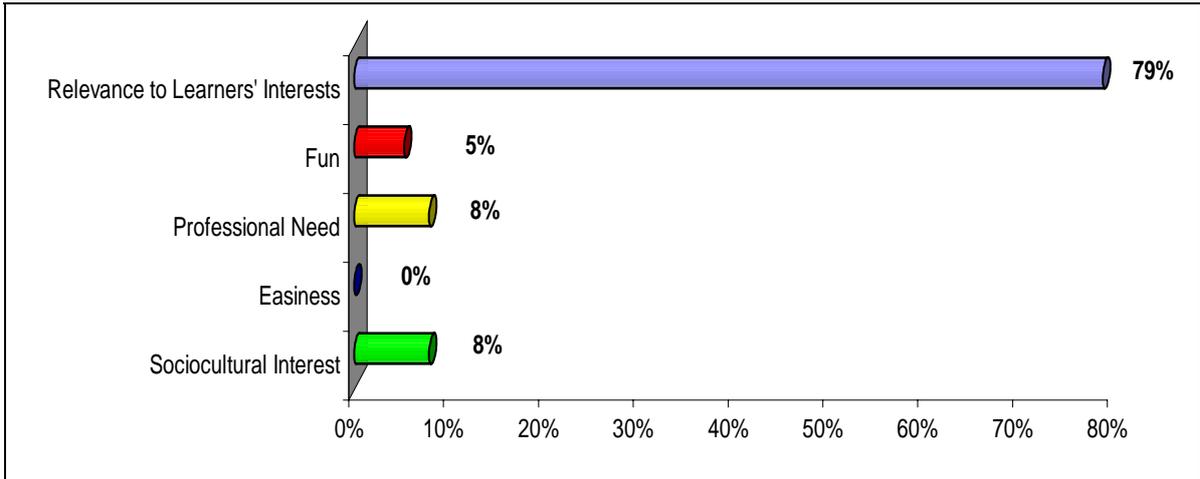


Figure 9 – Reasons why 8th grade students enjoyed topics

Among the reasons why 8th graders did not enjoy the topics, we can see that 80% of the students do not consider the topics relevant for their interests and the fact that they are not motivating (see figure 10).

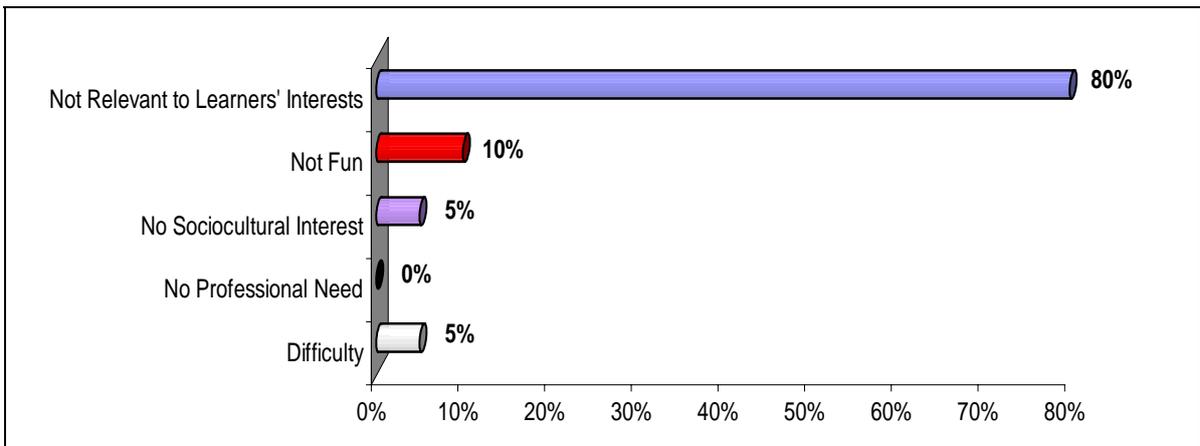


Figure 10 – Reasons why 8th grade students did not enjoy topics

Another interesting detail that arises from the analysis of 8th grade questionnaires derives from the multiplicity of topics students would like to approach in the future (see figure 11). As a matter of fact, students at this age seem to start developing an interest in different areas, from the arts to life at school in the UK. However, most of them (18%) would like to learn about the culture of English-speaking countries (specifically about the traditions and ways of life of English-speaking peoples), with many students showing an interest not only in the UK and the USA but also in

countries like Australia and Canada. An important range of students (14%) would also like to develop their knowledge in topics like Sports (mostly football), whereas another range (12%) seems to show an awareness of the problems that affect our society (such as Poverty or Terrorism) and would like to have them dealt with in class.

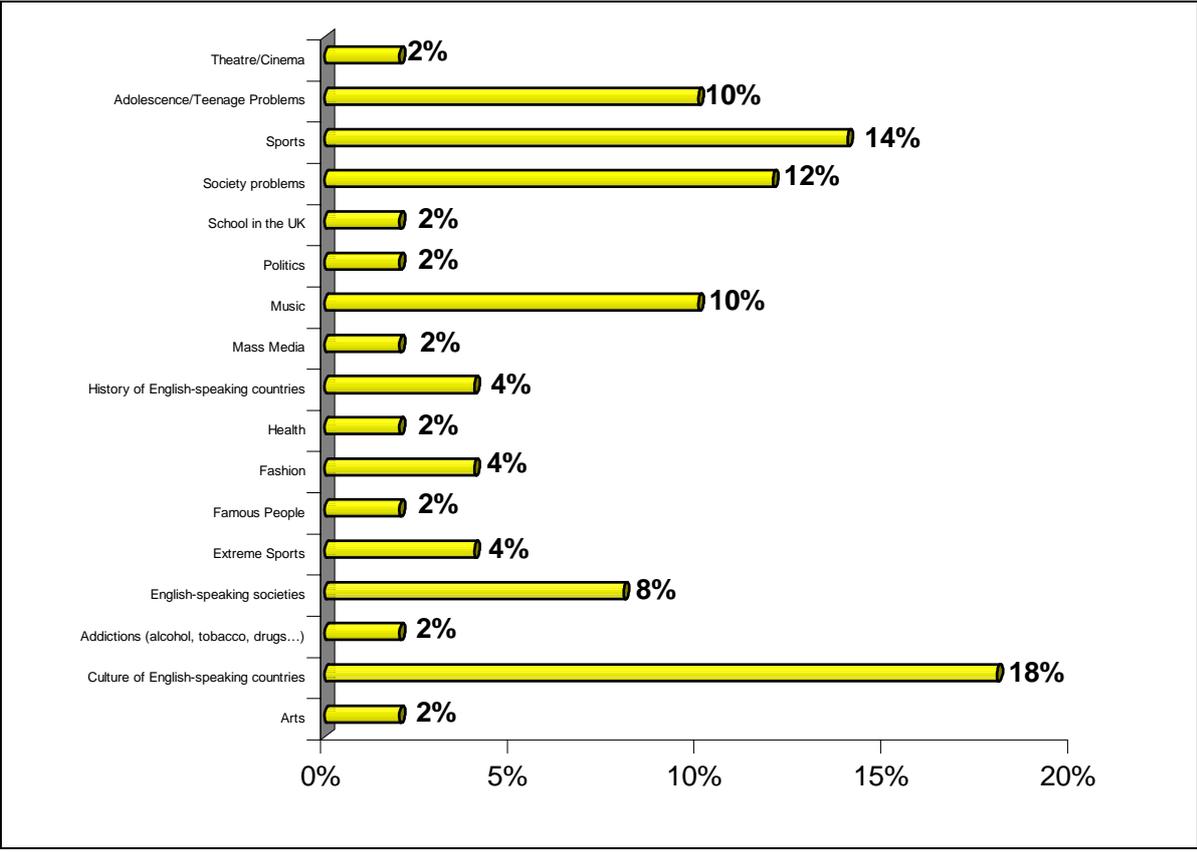


Figure 11 – Topics 8th grade students want to approach in the future

The grounds for students’ choices come from their interest in the topics (71%) and the importance they might have for their development as human beings. However, some of them (17%) show a sociocultural awareness, that is, they would like to approach specific topics not because they share a personal and unique interest in them but because they think it is important for society (in which they are included) to be aware of such topics (figure 12).

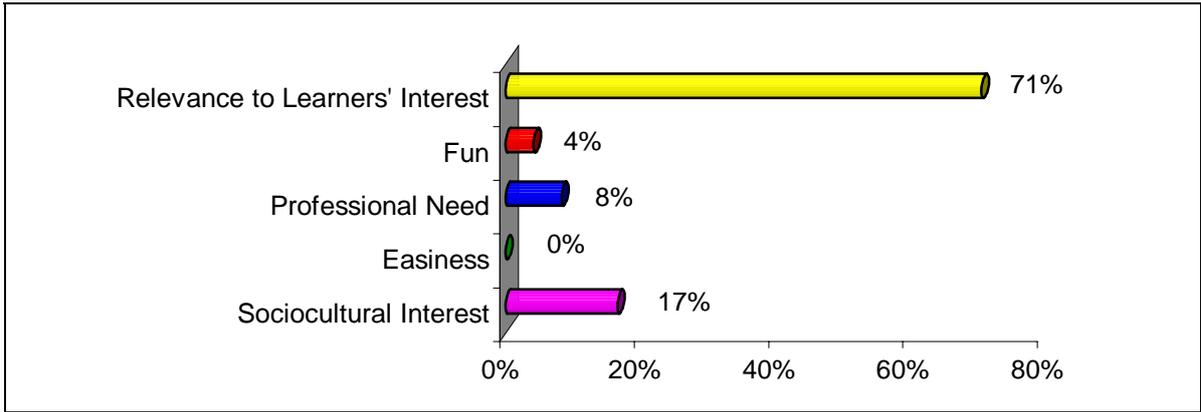


Figure 12 - Reasons why 8th grade students want to approach topics

9th GRADE

As students become older, they become more mature and able to analyse cultural topics in a deeper way. Figure 13 tells us that 9th graders show a great concern with the topics that most affect their generation: Environment (36%) and Employment/Unemployment (20%).

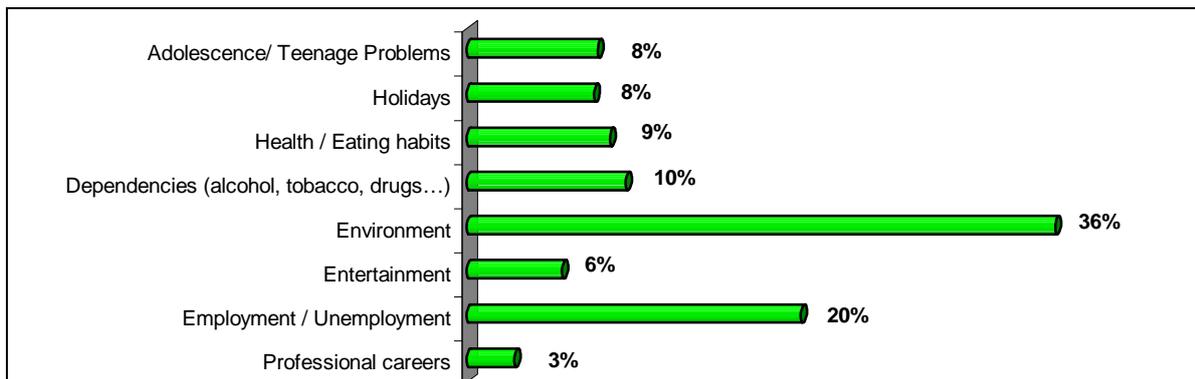


Figure 13 – Topics enjoyed by 9th grade students

We must take into account that the 9th grade is usually the grade when vocational counselling takes place and students are asked to narrow down their choices in terms of a future career by selecting an area of studies in the 10th grade. Therefore, such a decision must be wisely thought about and taken with responsibility. This whole process takes place during the 9th grade and it is no wonder that topics like Employment are among the ones students prefer. As can be seen in figure 14, 66% of students refer that the topics approached throughout the school year meet their personal interests. Nevertheless, 22% mention that it is important to learn about these topics, showing an awareness of the world they live in, which demonstrates, once again, that even though students are not particularly motivated to learn about them, they find it somehow important to be talked about.

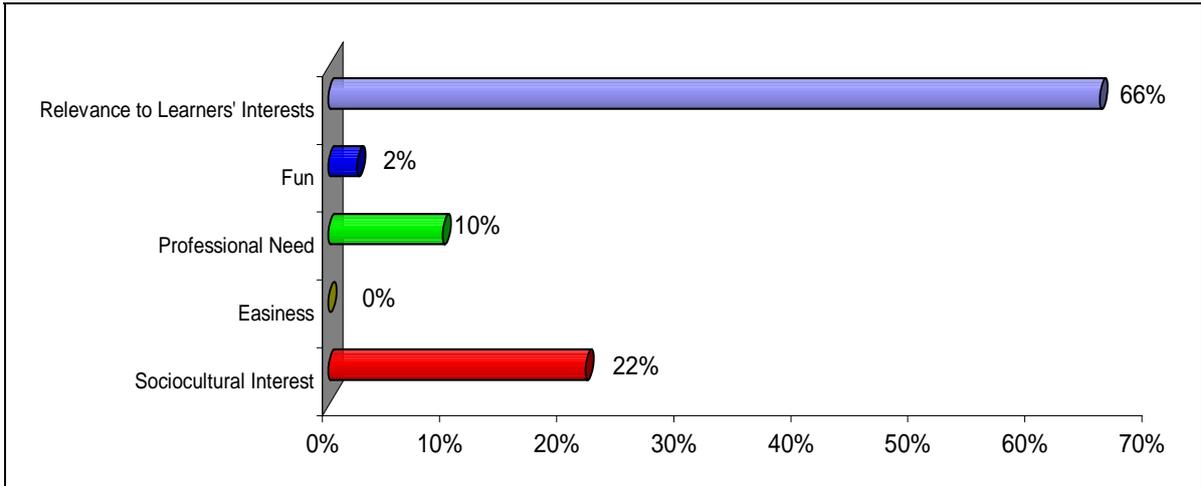


Figure 14 – Reasons why 9th grade students enjoyed topics

Figure 15 tells us that 48% of 9th grade students did not enjoy the topics they approached because they did not meet their interests, whereas 20% mentioned they were somehow difficult.

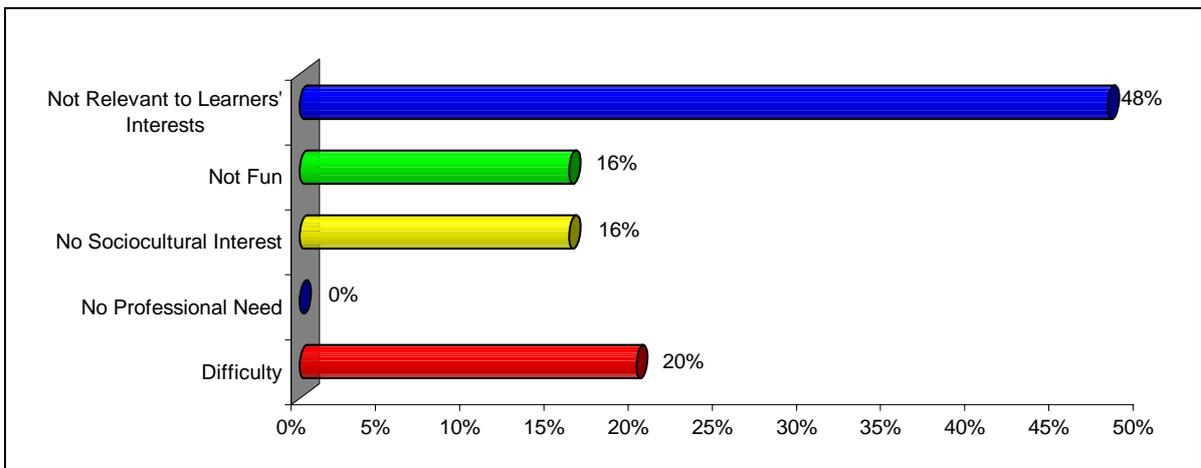


Figure 15 – Reasons why 9th grade students did not enjoy topics

Once again, confirming what happened with 8th grade students, 9th grade students show different interests for the future (see figure 16). The topics students would like to analyse in the future include a great concern for social topics, some of them related to English-speaking countries. Thus, 13% of students would like to discuss English-speaking societies. Music (12%), Sports (12%), Culture of English-speaking countries (11%) and Theatre / TV / Cinema (11%) were the other topics that gathered more than 10% of students' preferences.

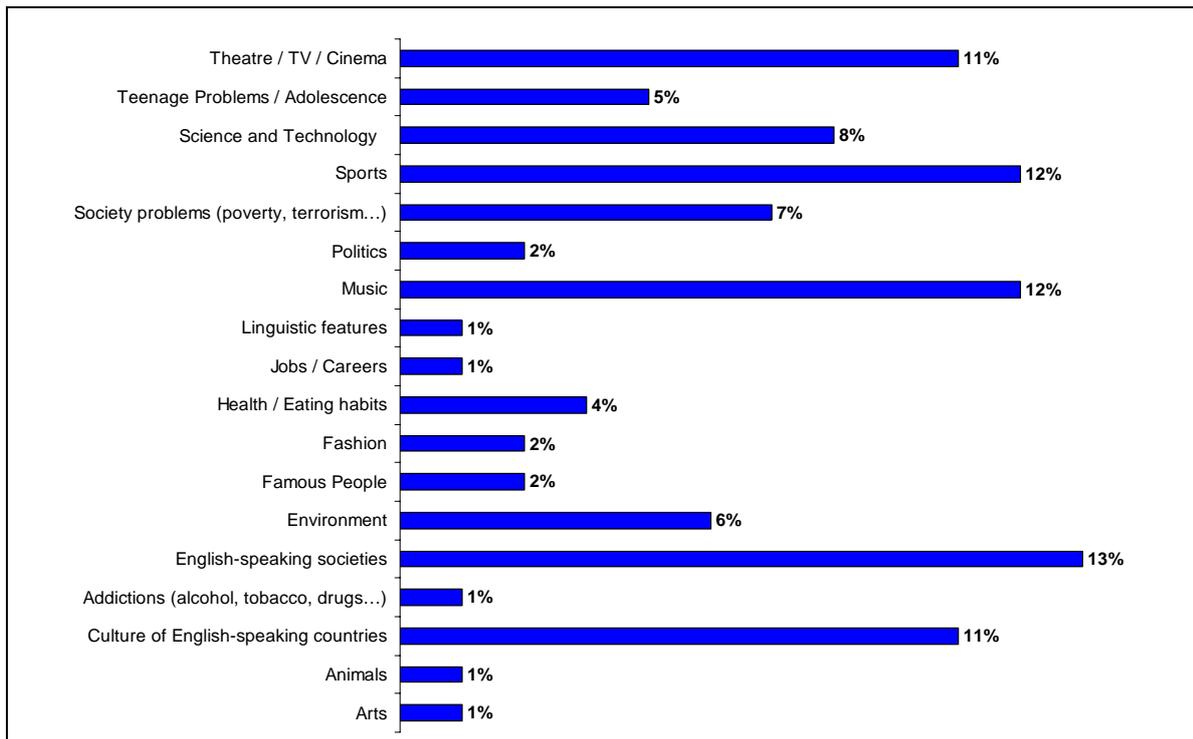


Figure 16 – Topics 9th grade students want to approach in the future

Students' choices are driven by their own interest in these topics (72%), whereas 24% of them refer that they would like to approach some topics because they are fun (12%) and also because they have sociocultural awareness and recognise these topics as important for their development as citizens of a specific society (12%) (see figure 17).

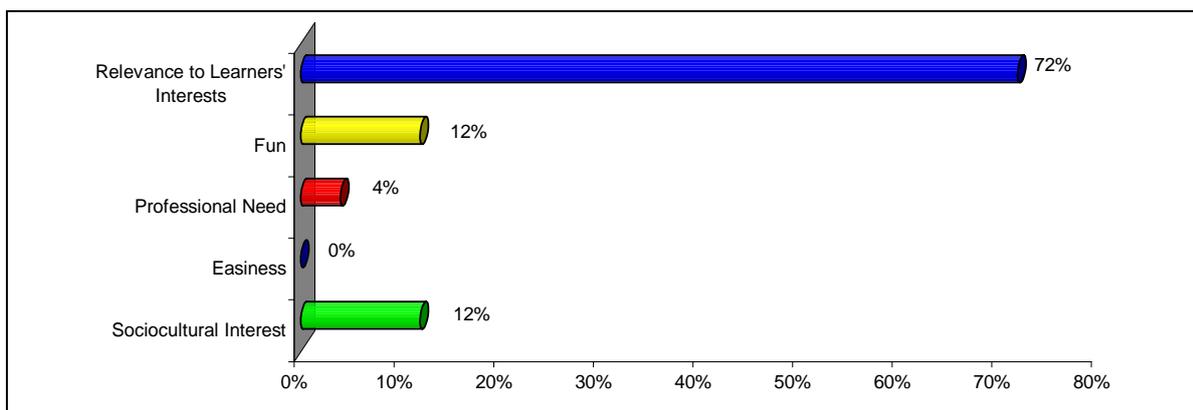


Figure 17 – Reasons why 9th grade students want to deal with topics

2.1.2 – Teachers' Questionnaires

As teachers are also an important part in the process of teaching and learning a foreign language, they were also given a questionnaire to account for their opinions on the teaching of culture (see Appendix 2).

The aim of the questionnaires distributed to English teachers was to identify the importance teachers give to culture. I hoped to learn about the teachers' opinion of culture, its role and weighting in the syllabus, the relevance of the topics suggested, and the idea they have about how it should be dealt with in the classroom. I also intended to find out if teachers place linguistic and cultural features at the same level or if they give more importance to one over the other. They are invited to say whether they believe that the teaching of English can make students culturally competent in a globalised world and how they regard students' mother culture when approaching a foreign one.

The teachers' opinions will be examined through the analysis of quantitative data resulting from 38 questionnaires distributed between April and July 2007 to English teachers of different ages working in several parts of Portugal.

All teachers are teaching, or have already taught at some point in their careers, the 2nd cycle (5th and 6th grade) or 3rd cycle (7th, 8th and 9th grade). The first part of the questionnaire (A) starts by asking for personal data concerning the teachers' position in the job (how long they have been teaching, where they teach, what grades they have already taught, and other elements), while the second part (B) aims to find out the teachers' point of view on the teaching of culture. It is composed of 20 statements to which teachers were invited to state their level of agreement using the following scale:

- A – Totally agree
- B – Somewhat agree
- C – Somewhat disagree
- D – Totally disagree

In the final part of the questionnaires, teachers are asked to rank four sentences about what the teaching of culture should be according to their opinion on a scale from 1 to 4, with '1' being the best option and '4' being the worst option. The results are presented in Appendix 4.

For purposes of clear reading, the analysis of teachers' biographical data (part A of the questionnaire) and their opinions on the role and teaching of culture (part B) have been divided into two sections (2.1.2.1 and 2.1.2.2 respectively).

2.1.2.1 – Teachers' biographical data

92% percent of the teachers are women, whereas only 8% are men (see figure 18).

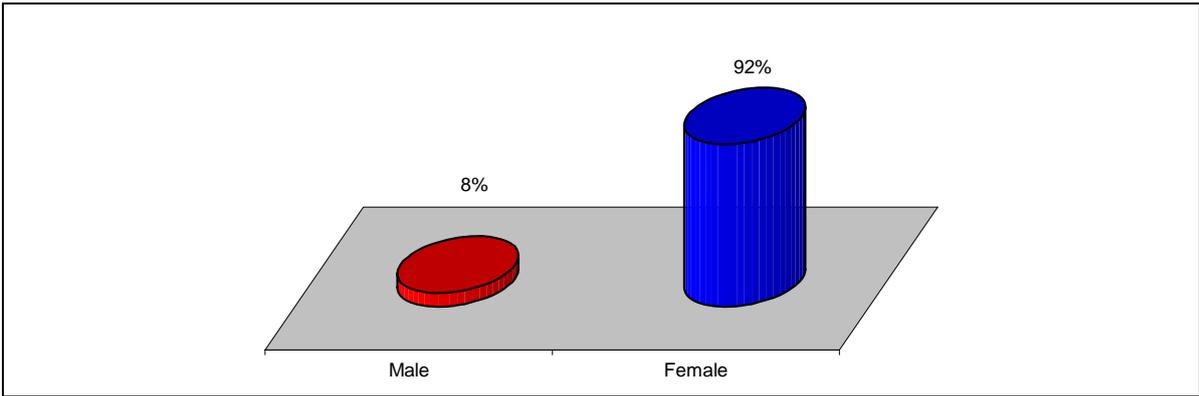


Figure 18 – Gender of teachers

11% of the teachers are very young (between the ages of 22 and 27), whereas 26% are between the ages of 28 and 33. The remaining 63% are distributed according to figure 19:

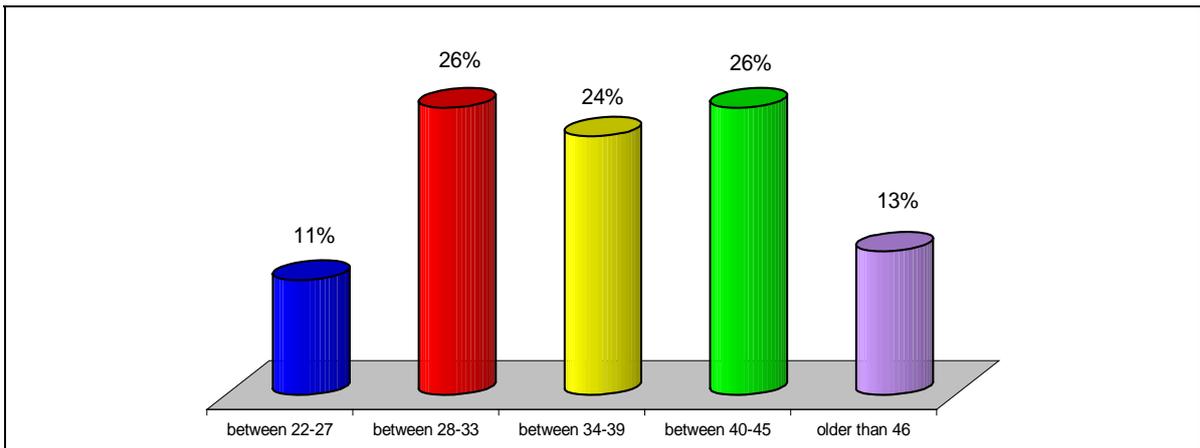


Figure 19 – Teachers' age

Figure 20 shows us that most teachers (84%) have a degree⁴ as a qualification. 12% have teacher training qualifications⁵ and 5% have a masters degree (the latter also have a degree).

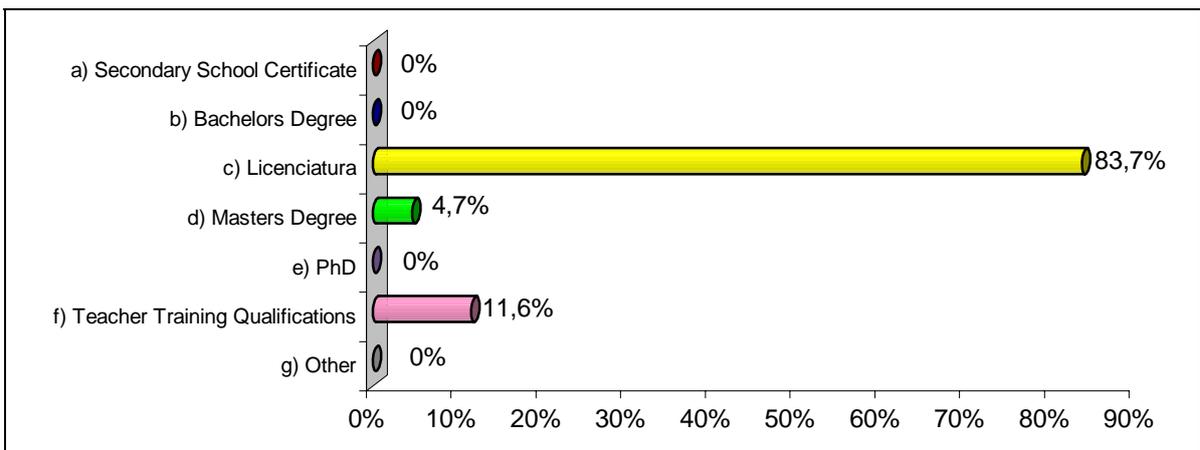


Figure 20 – Teachers' qualifications

Most teachers (85%) teach in a public *Secondary School*⁶ (67%) or a *Private school*⁷ (18%), whereas only 5% claim to have a *Middle/Lower Secondary School*⁸ as their workplace. The other 10% work in other kinds of schools (See figure 21).

⁴ Licenciatura

⁵ Profissionalização em serviço

⁶ Escola Secundária

⁷ Escola / Colégio Privado

⁸ Escola Básica 2º/3º ciclo

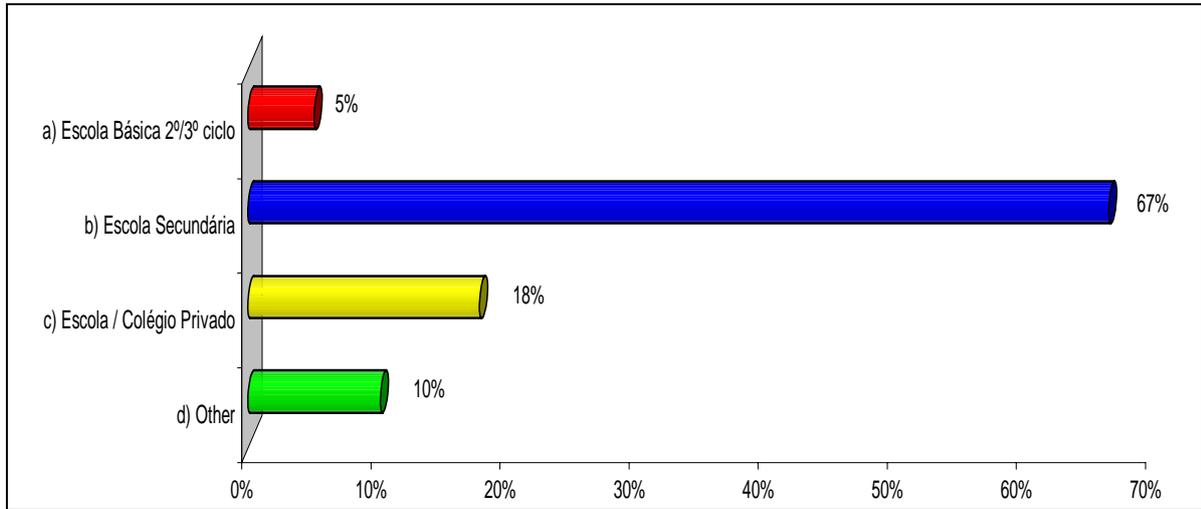


Figure 21 – Schools where teachers teach

Figures 22 and 23 tell us that most of these schools are located in the North of Portugal (63%), Azores / Madeira (34%), or Centre of Portugal (3%). 57% of these schools are located in urban areas, 37% in suburban areas and 6% in rural areas, which allows us to think that most of the students these teachers work with have good access to technology and other (good) learning conditions because urban areas attract technological networks and devices more easily.

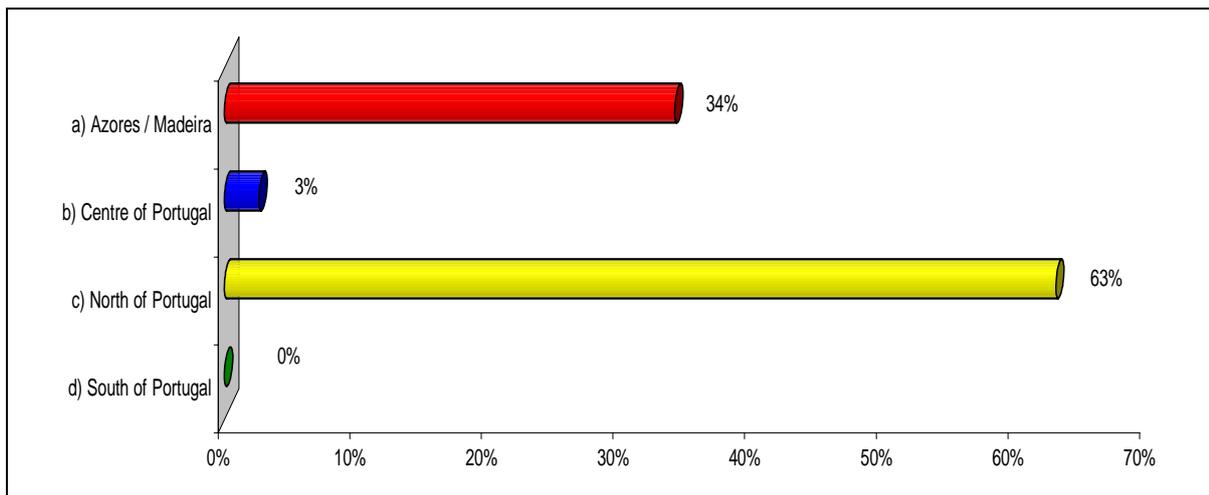


Figure 22 – Location of schools

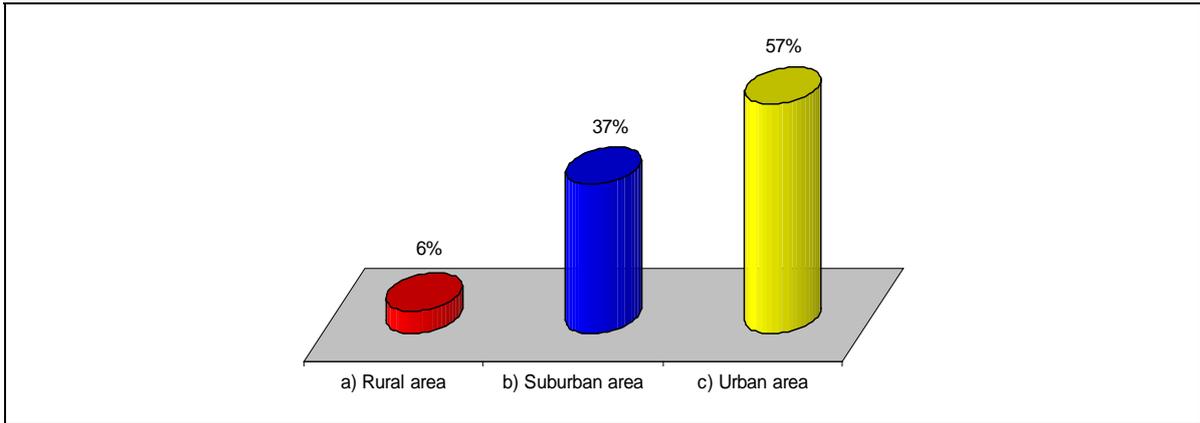


Figure 23 – Distribution of schools through areas

When it comes to teaching experience (see figure 24), most teachers have been teaching for five to ten years (26%), 24% of them have been working for ten to fifteen years, 21% have been working for 20 or more years, whereas 18% have been teaching for fifteen to twenty years or for less than five years (11%).

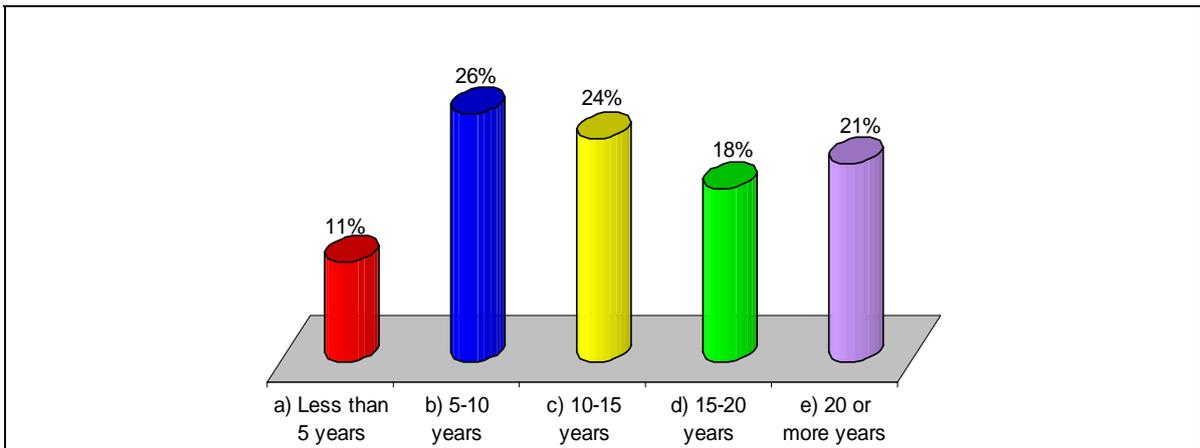


Figure 24 – Teachers' experience

Figure 25 tells us that 29% of teachers claim to have already taught the 7th grade, 27% the 8th and another 27% the 9th grade. 9% of teachers have already taught the 5th grade and another 9% the 6th grade.

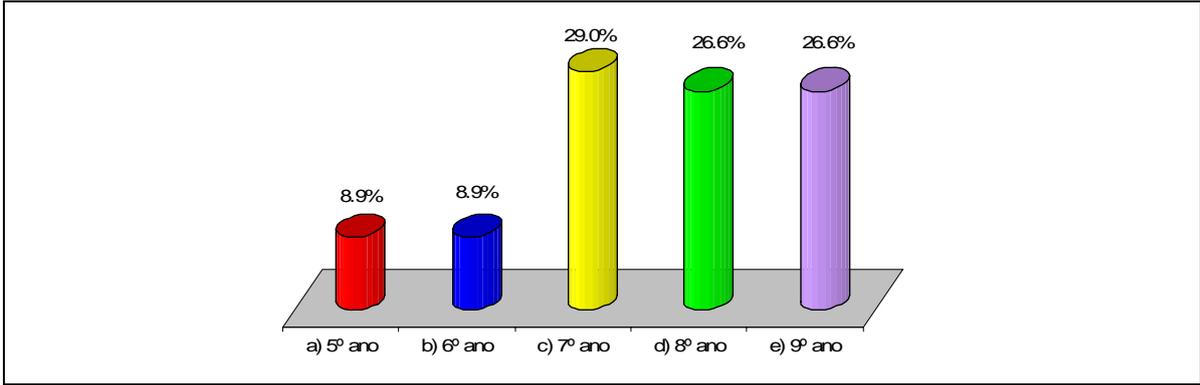


Figure 25 – Grades teachers are teaching / have already taught

2.1.2.2 – The Teaching and Role of Culture

Focusing on part B of the questionnaire, it is clear that teachers think culture is an important aspect of the teaching of English with all the respondents attributing an important role to culture and 92% a very important role (see figure 26).

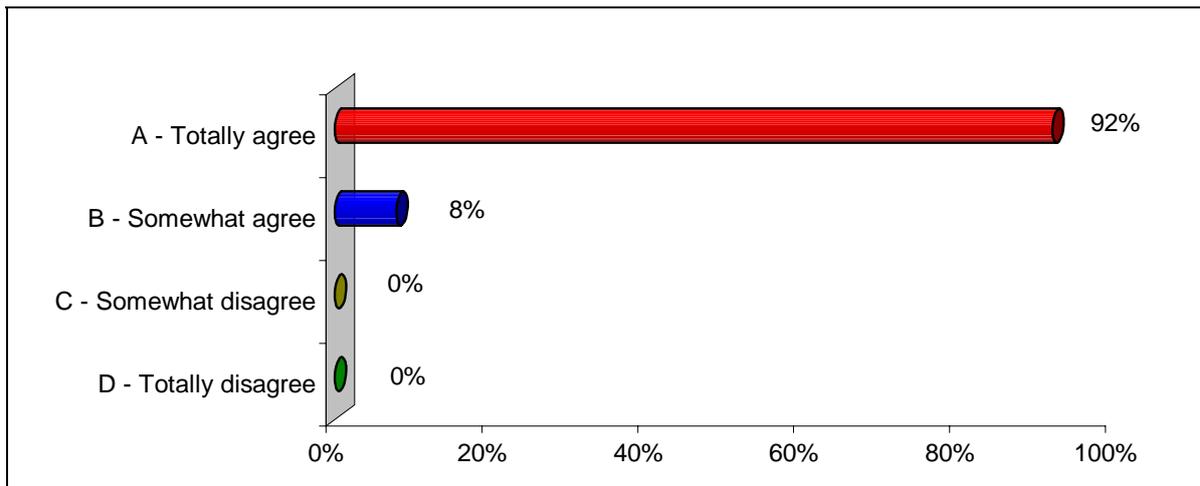


Figure 26 – Statement 1: Culture plays an important role in the teaching of English.

Although all the teachers agree in some way that people’s mobility around the world might change local cultural practices (see figure 27), 29% are not fully convinced that things will really occur that way.

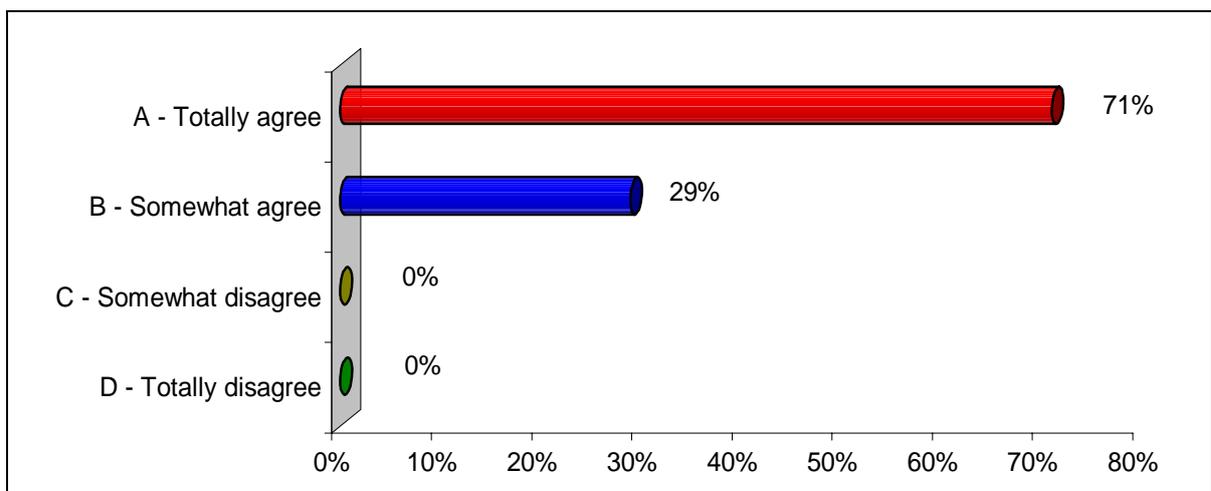


Figure 27 – Statement 2: The increasing mobility of people around the world is having an impact on (and therefore changing) local cultural practices and attitudes.

Most teachers (87%) think that cultural aspects should be evaluated just like any linguistic structure, even though only 26% totally agree with this statement and 13% disagree with this point of view (see figure 28).

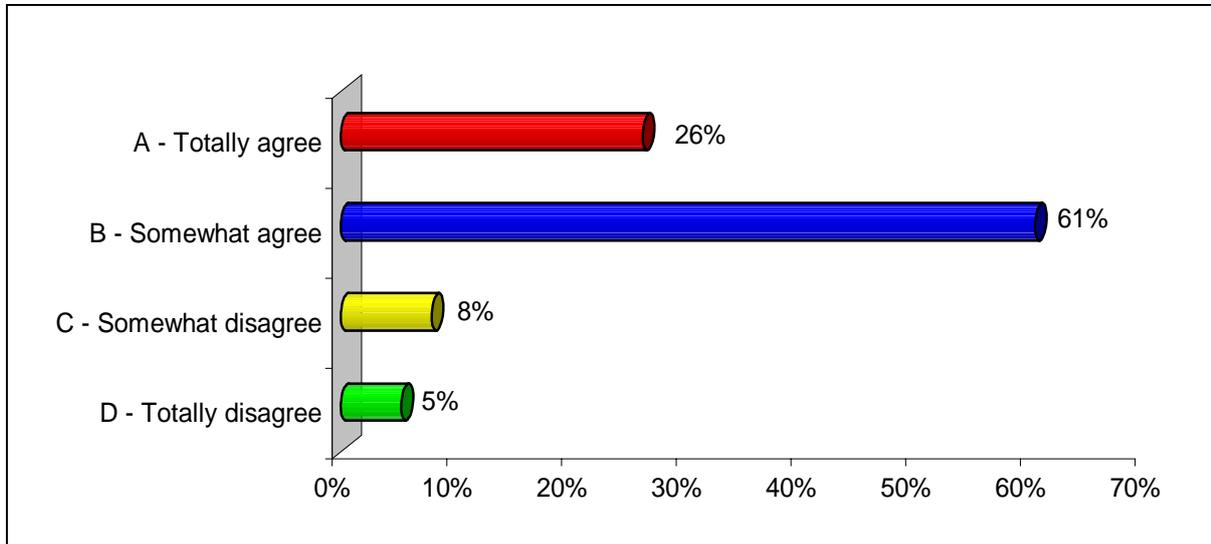


Figure 28 – Statement 3: Cultural contents should be assessed and graded just like any linguistic structure.

Following this train of thought, 65% do not agree that the teaching of linguistic structures is more important than the teaching of culture (see figure 29). However, a considerable number of teachers (35%) agrees with this statement, perceiving the English classroom as a place to primordially learn a language.

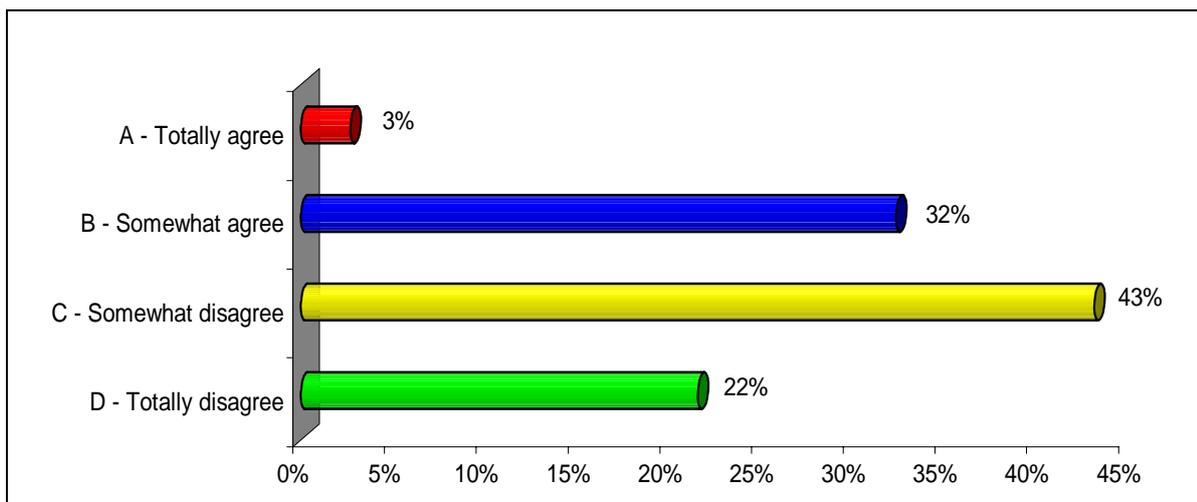


Figure 29 – Statement 16: The teaching of linguistic structures is more important than the teaching of culture.

In keeping with this response, 97% of teachers believe that the teaching of culture has become as important as teaching the language itself, having a globalised world as a scenario (see figure 30). Only 3% somewhat disagree that both features share the same importance.

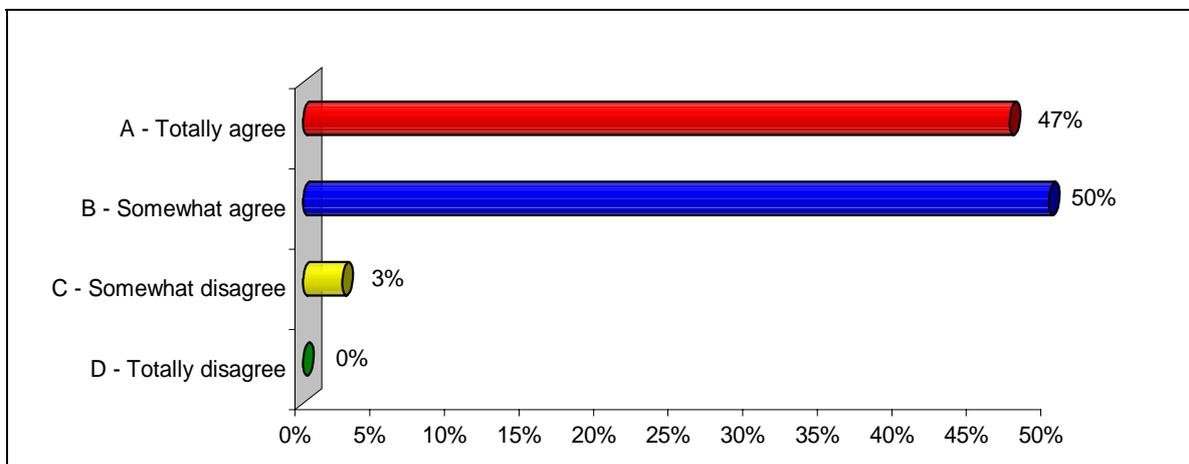


Figure 30 – Statement 19: In a globalised world, the teaching of culture becomes as important as teaching the language itself.

Moreover, 90% of teachers share the opinion that, in a globalised world, it is important to be able to spot cultural differences between L1 and L2 cultures (see figure 31).

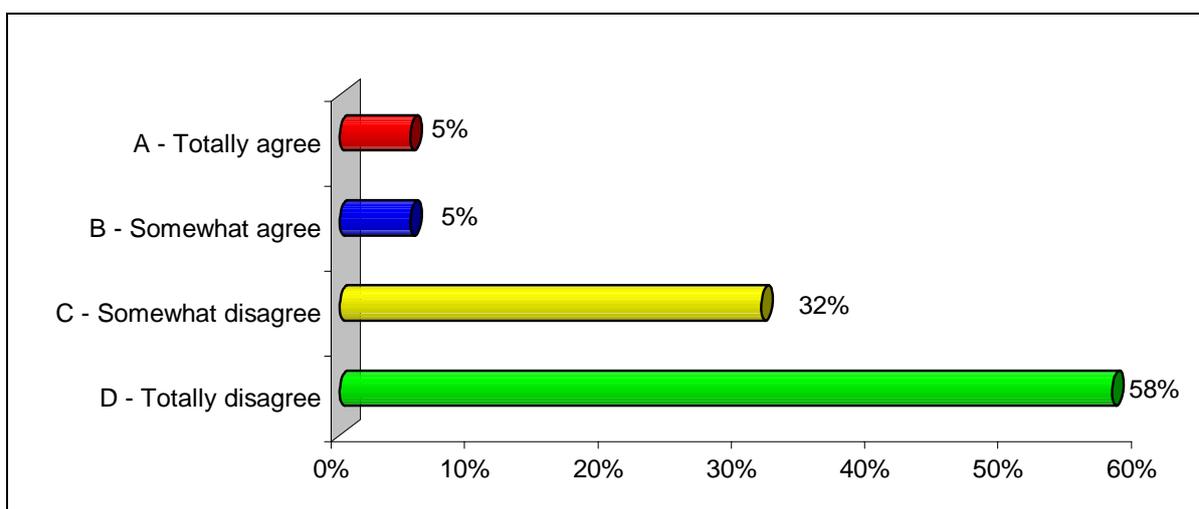


Figure 31 – Statement 10: Spotting cultural differences between L1 and L2 cultures is not important in a globalised world.

More important than spotting cultural differences, all teachers share the opinion that English, as a subject in Portuguese schools, should make students aware of

other cultures and make them culturally competent in a globalised world, despite the fact that 16% of teachers only agree with this statement to some extent, allowing us to think that they give more importance to the teaching of linguistic features (see figure 32).

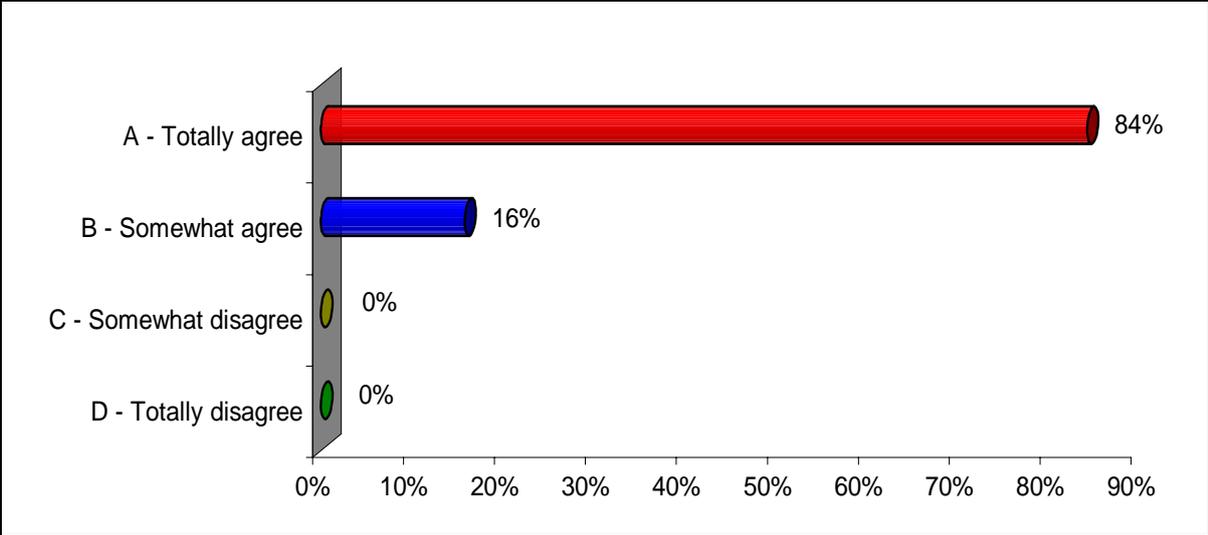


Figure 32 – Statement 11: The teaching of English should make students aware of other cultures and make them culturally competent in a globalised world.

Things are a little bit more balanced when it comes to grading the relevance given by the syllabus to cultural aspects (see figure 33). Thus, 63% agree that cultural aspects are given proper relevance, whereas 37% do not share that opinion.

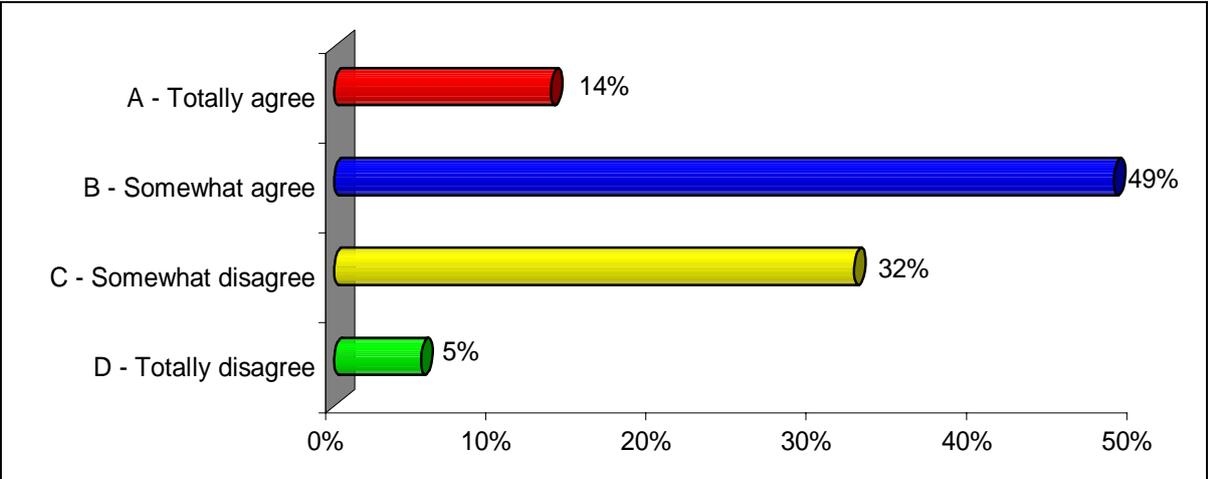


Figure 33 – Statement 4: The syllabus for the 2nd and 3rd cycles gives enough relevance to cultural aspects.

Looking to the future, 97% of teachers believe that the syllabus should not only focus on the positive aspects of the new culture. In other words, the syllabus should convey cultural aspects as they are, regardless of how negative certain aspects might be considered (see figure 34).

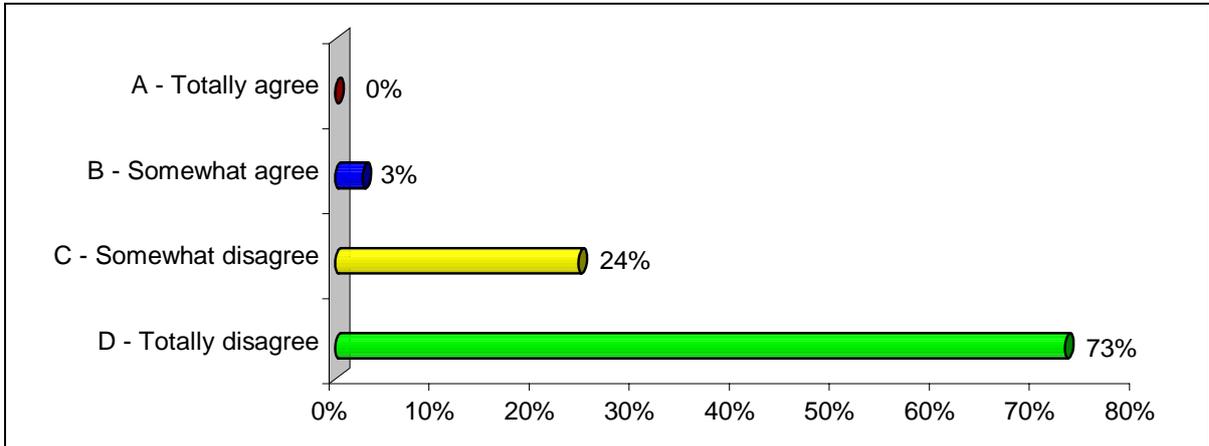


Figure 34 – Statement 9: The syllabus should only bring the positive aspects of the new culture into the classroom.

The scope of the teaching of culture seems to be a rather more consensual issue (see figure 35), as 95% of teachers think that it should not focus on aspects that are different from students' own culture only and the other 5% somewhat agree with this point of view, showing that they are not fully convinced about it.

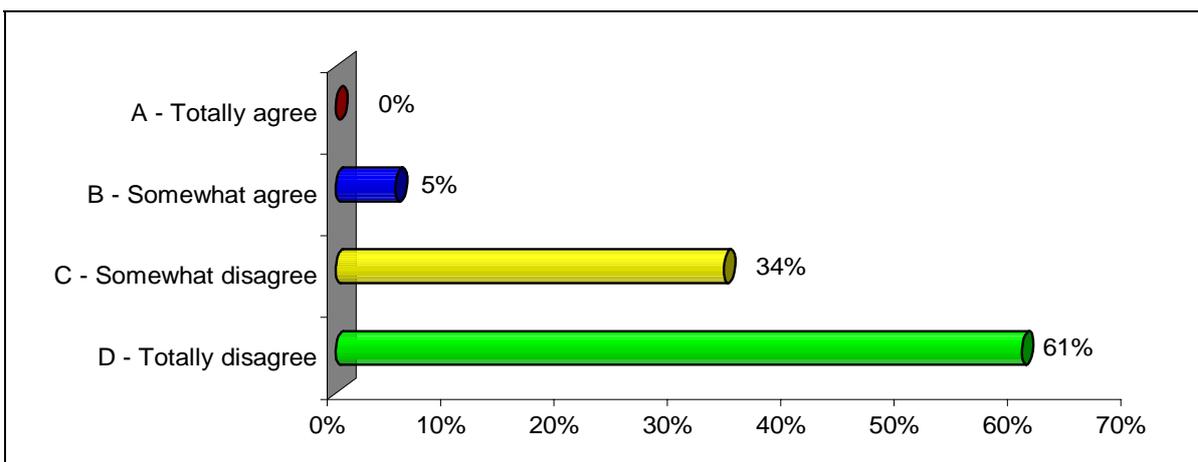


Figure 35 – Statement 5: The teaching of culture should only focus on aspects that are different from students' own culture.

However, all the teachers agree that learning a new culture can help students to get to know their own culture better, although 18% only somewhat agree with this point of view (see figure 36).

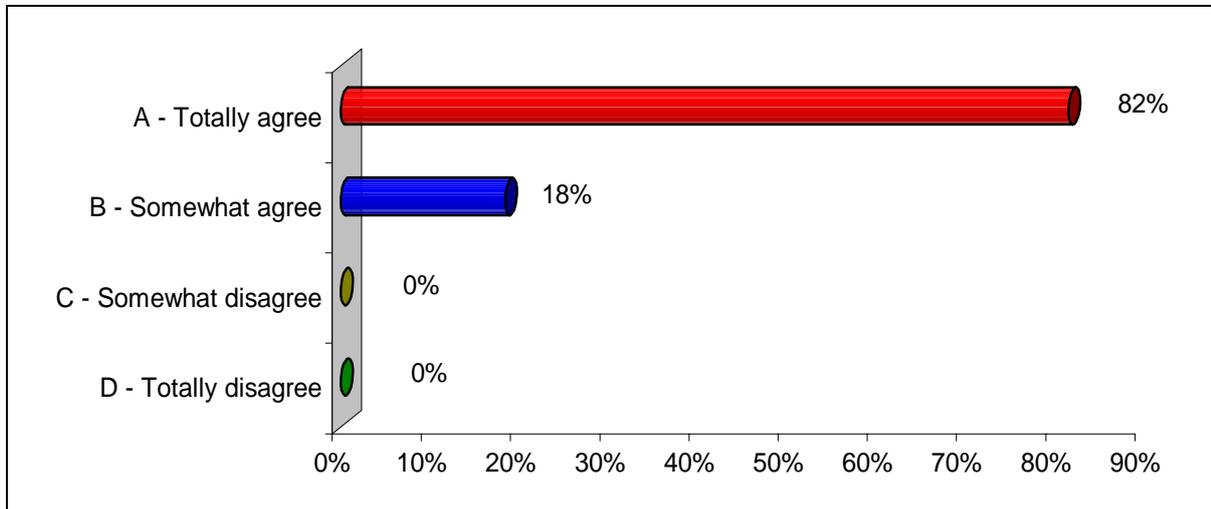


Figure 36 – Statement 6: Learning a new culture can lead students to get to know their own culture better.

89% of teachers go further in their beliefs and claim that learning a new culture can enable students to change their own attitudes and beliefs. Nevertheless, 11% see this with some caution, as they only partially agree with such a possibility (see figure 37).

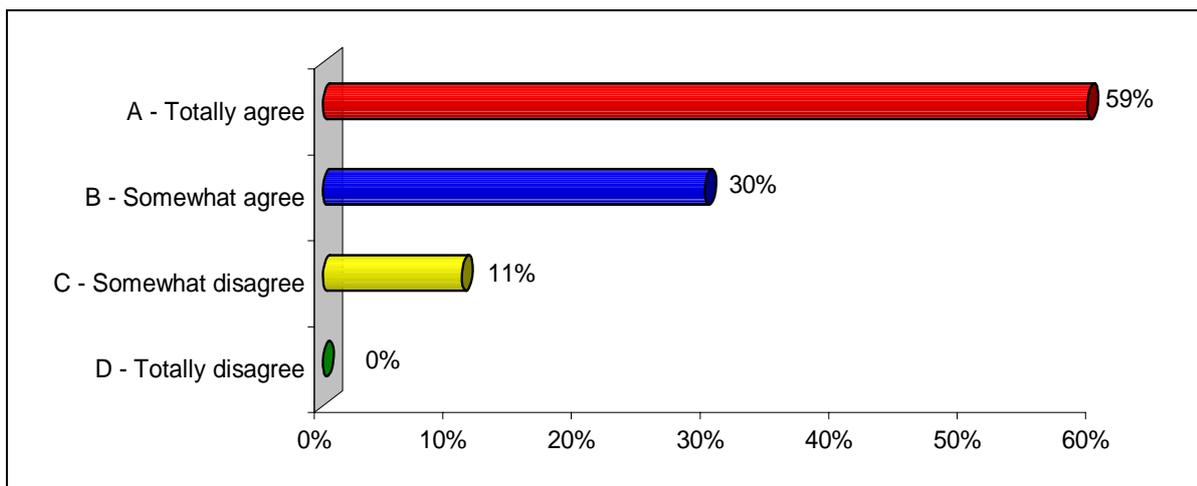


Figure 37 – Statement 13: Learning a new culture can lead students to change their own attitudes and beliefs.

Narrowing down the action of learning a new culture into the Portuguese classrooms, 76% of teachers believe that teaching culture as it is done today enables students to change their attitudes by becoming more tolerant towards other people (see figure 38).

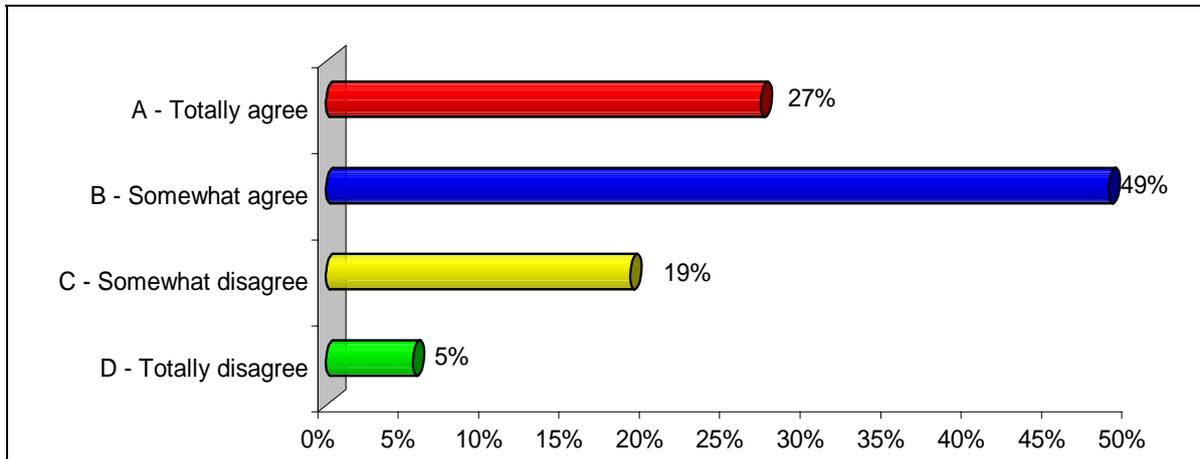


Figure 38 – Statement 14: Teaching culture as it is done in Portuguese classrooms today leads students to be more tolerant towards other people.

As far as the strategies for teaching a new culture are concerned, 95% of teachers agree that L1 culture should be used as a comparison tool between both cultures (see figure 39). 5% somewhat disagree, allowing us to think that they would not totally exclude the possibility of using it in the classroom.

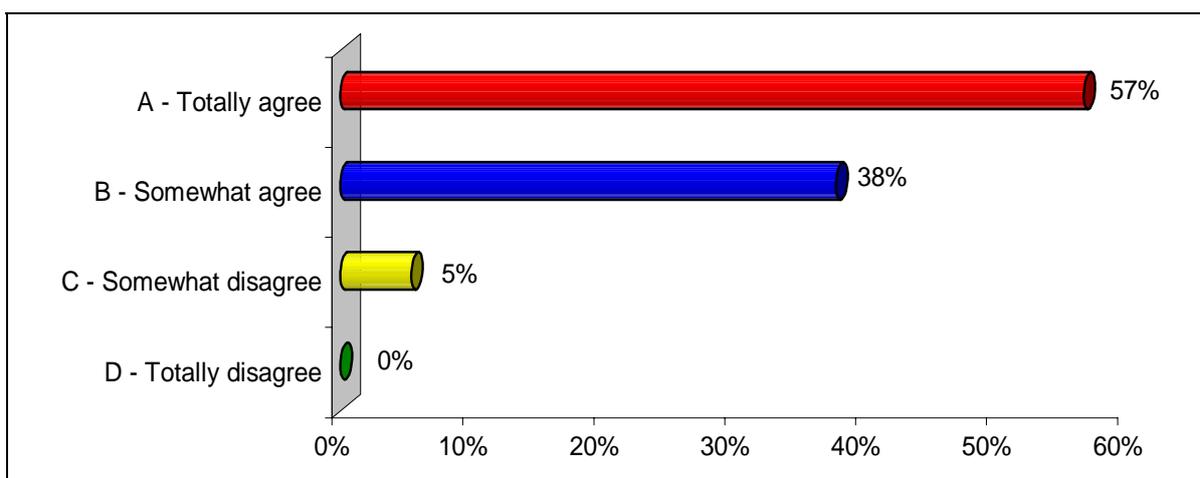


Figure 39 – Statement 7: L1 culture should be used in the English classroom as a comparison tool between the two cultures.

Teachers disagree that the teaching of cultural aspects should be subject to the country's economical power in the world, thus disconnecting a relationship between economy and culture (see figure 40) and implying that all cultures are equally valid for classroom work.

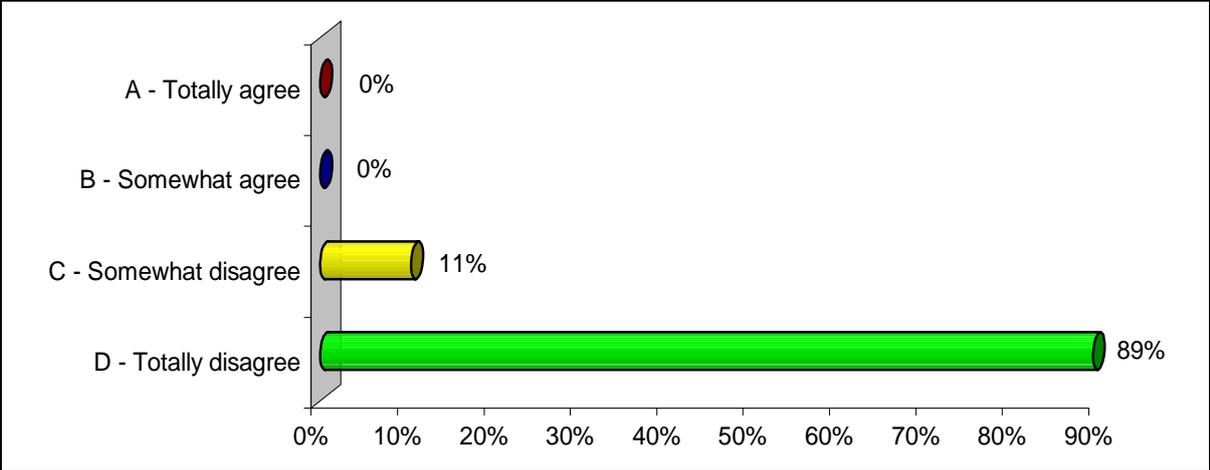


Figure 40 – Statement 8: The teaching of cultural aspects in the English classroom should only be taught if the country they belong is considered powerful in the world.

In addition, most teachers (97%) think that the teaching of culture in the English classroom should include all English-speaking countries. The remaining 3% only somewhat disagree with the statement, leading us to believe that they would consider the importance of including them in the classroom (see figure 41).

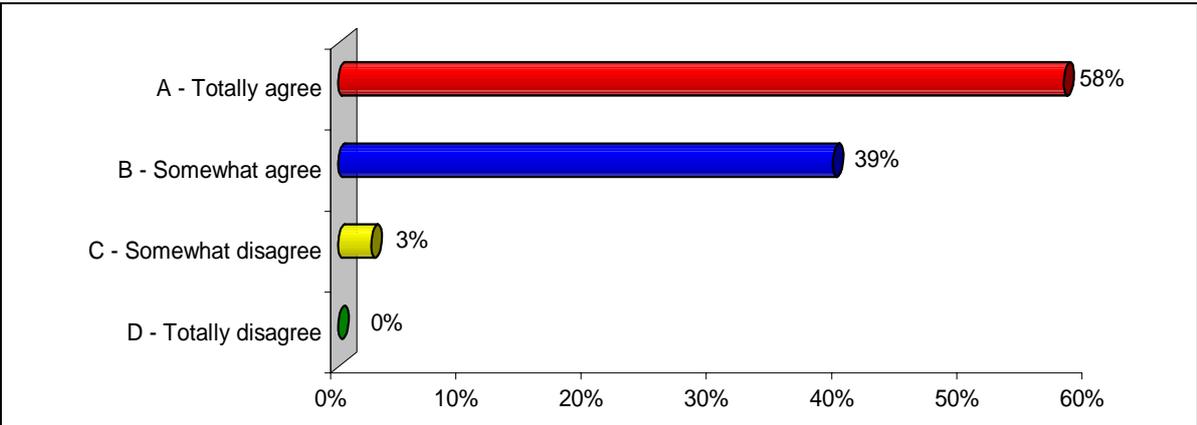


Figure 41 – Statement 15: The teaching of culture in the English classroom should include all English-speaking countries.

As a matter of fact, teachers believe that the teaching of culture should move deeper and focus on the diversity of culture found in every English-speaking country and not only on the so-called 'native' culture (see figure 42). Only 3% disagree with such a point of view, preferring to have a 'native' perspective of culture.

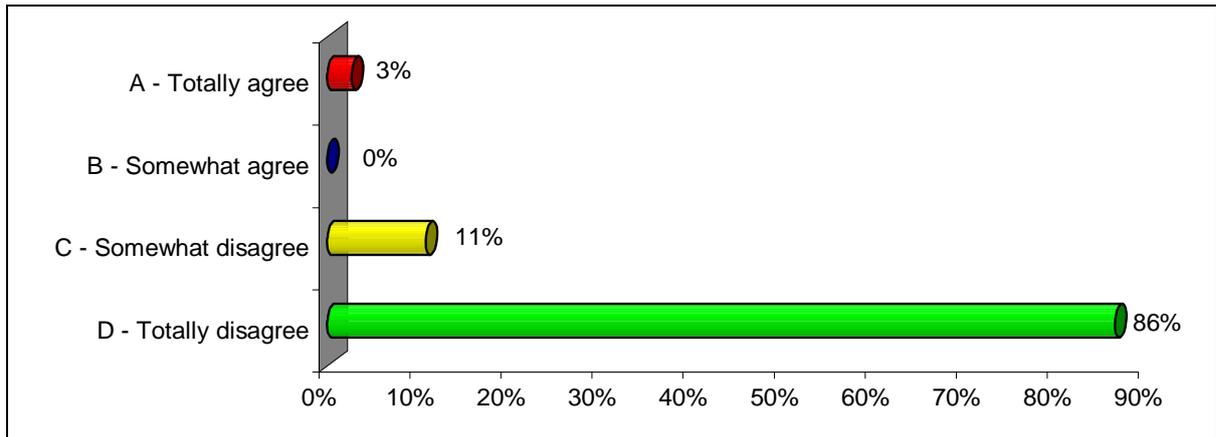


Figure 42 – Statement 12: The English classroom should only focus on the so-called 'native' culture and not on the diversity of culture found within English-speaking countries.

Most teachers (79%) recognise that the teaching of culture focuses on the habits of a people and monuments associated to an English-speaking country, whereas the other 21% somewhat disagree with this statement (see figure 43).

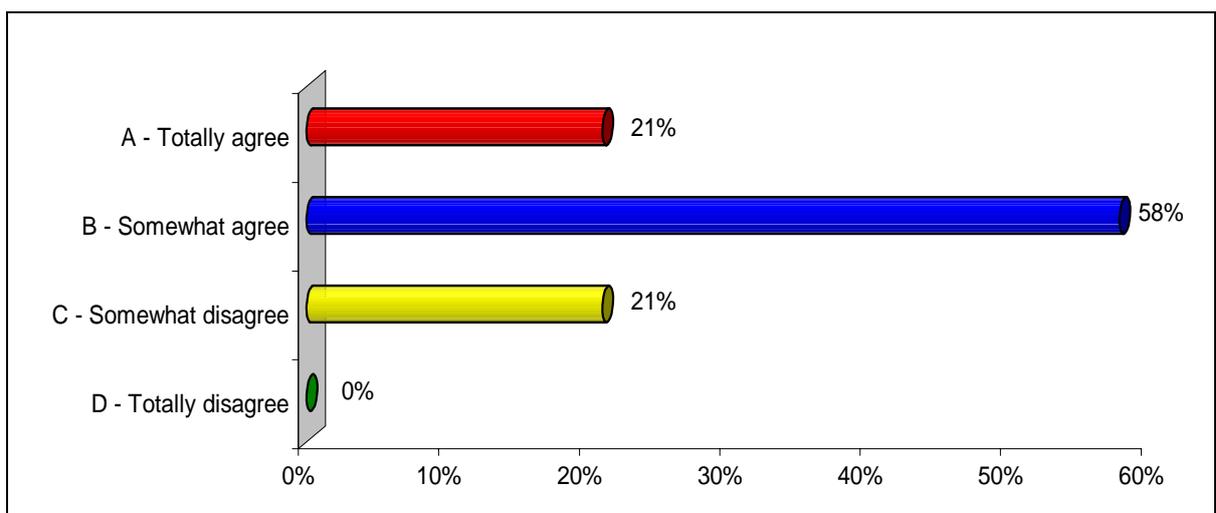


Figure 43 – Statement 18: In the context of ELT in Portugal, the teaching of culture is basically concerned with the habits of a people and the monuments associated to an English-speaking country/English-speaking countries.

Most teachers (60%) also seem to be able to dispose of stereotypes like British punctuality, as they do not see them as an important component of English Language learning and teaching. However, a significant number of teachers (40%) believe such stereotypes are still important in the context of ELT (see figure 44).

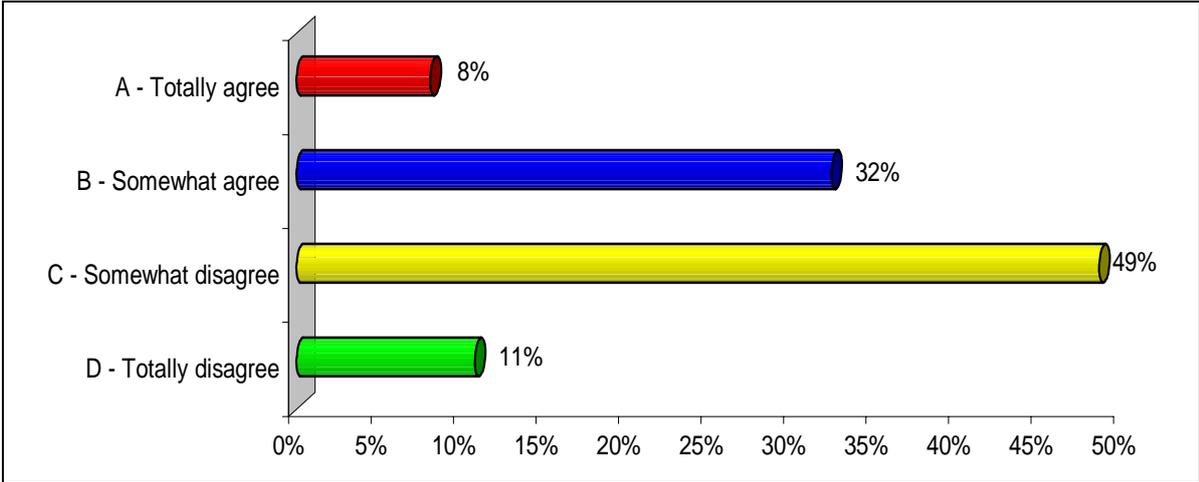


Figure 44 – Statement 17: Stereotypes, such as British punctuality, are an important component of English Language learning and teaching.

97% of teachers share the opinion that the teaching of a language should reflect behavioural patterns of a people, thus focussing on people’s way of life and (different) perspectives in life (see figure 45).

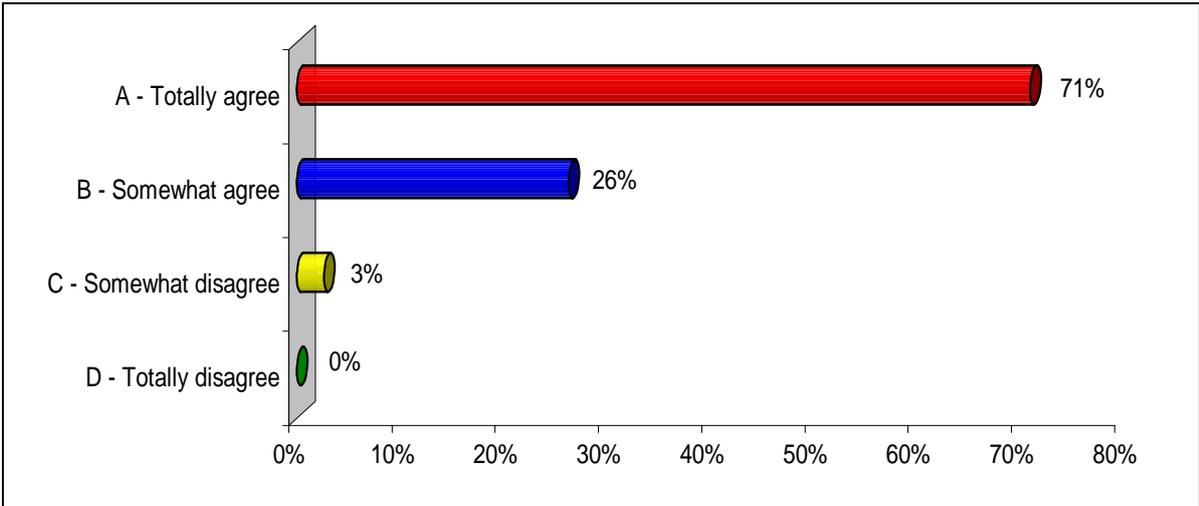


Figure 45 – Statement 20: The teaching of a language should reflect behavioural patterns of a people such as greetings, etc.

Finally, teachers were asked to rank four statements as to what the teaching of culture in the English classroom should be. As teachers were asked to give a value to each statement ('1' being the most preferred option and '4' being the least preferred, as stated before). The evaluation of this item of the questionnaire was made by tabulating all options into a system of points. For each number '1' on the questionnaire, 4 points were given. For each '2', 3 points; for each '3', 2 points and, finally, for each '4', 1 point.

After the tabulation, it was easy to conclude that, for the teachers, the most important aspect of culture teaching in the English classroom is to 'make students understand and accept other peoples' beliefs, values and lifestyles', as it gathered 138 points. The second most acknowledged option, with a total of 103 points, claims that it should focus on 'teaching about the history, art, traditions, political structures and aspects of everyday life of all English-speaking countries', while the third most acknowledged option (with 95 points) sees the teaching of culture as 'making comparisons between students' own culture and the culture of English-speaking countries'. The remaining option, 'teaching about the history, the art, the traditions, political structures and aspects of everyday life of the most powerful English-speaking countries like the UK or the USA' gathered only 57 points (see figure 46).

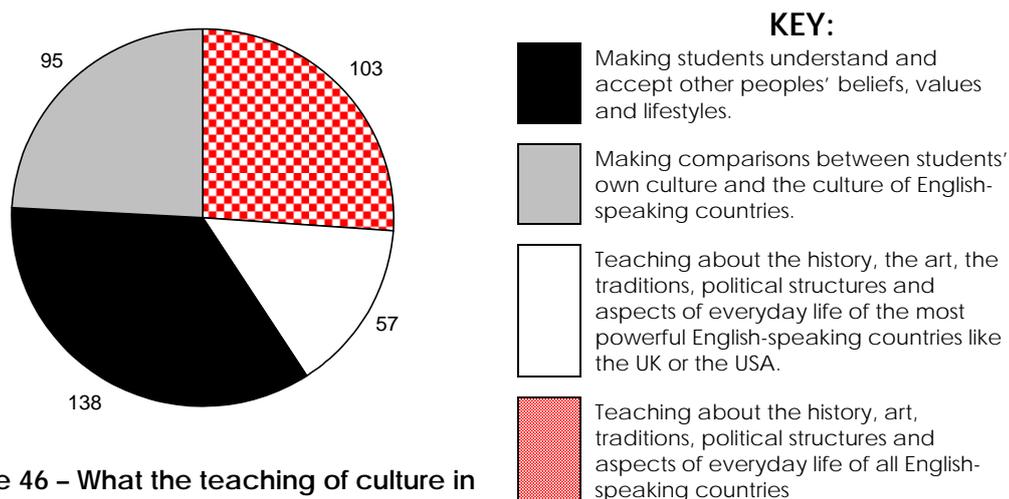


Figure 46 – What the teaching of culture in the English classroom should be

In order to see how younger and older generations of teachers perceive the purpose of teaching culture, this analysis was divided according to the teaching

experience of teachers. From the resulting graphs (figures 47-51), we can see that the overall ranking is kept. However, among the teachers on the job for twenty or more years, the belief that 'making comparisons between students' own culture and the culture of English-speaking countries' is more important than 'teaching about the history, art, traditions, political structures and aspects of everyday life of all English-speaking countries'.

KEY:

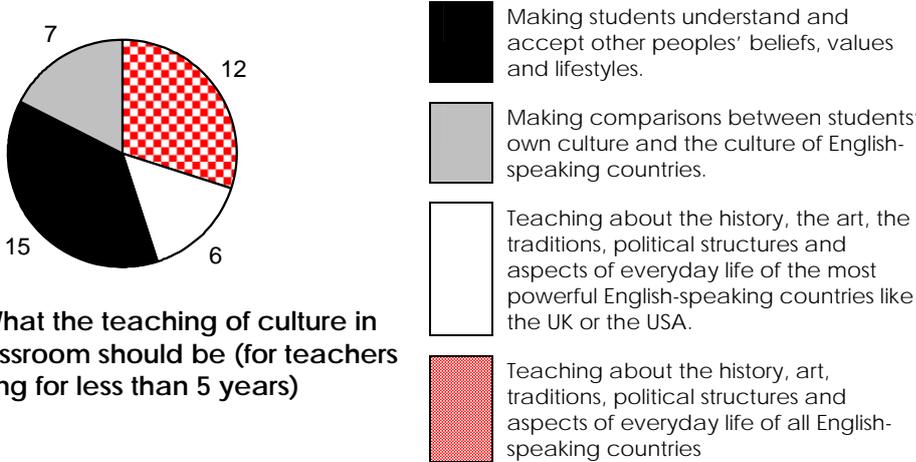


Figure 47 – What the teaching of culture in the English classroom should be (for teachers teaching for less than 5 years)

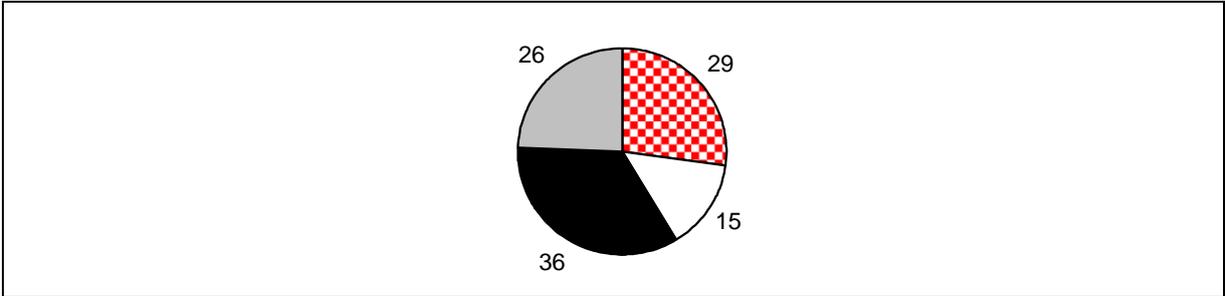


Figure 48 – What the teaching of culture in the English classroom should be (for teachers teaching between 5-10 years)

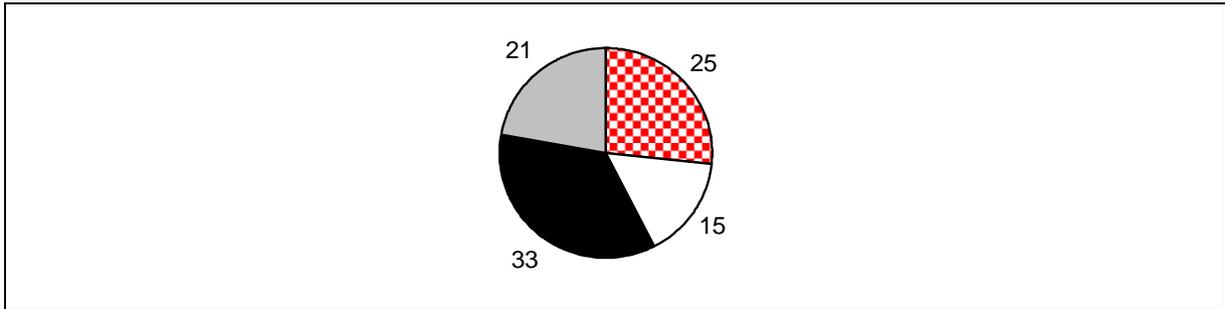


Figure 49 - What the teaching of culture in the English classroom should be (for teachers teaching between 10-15 years)

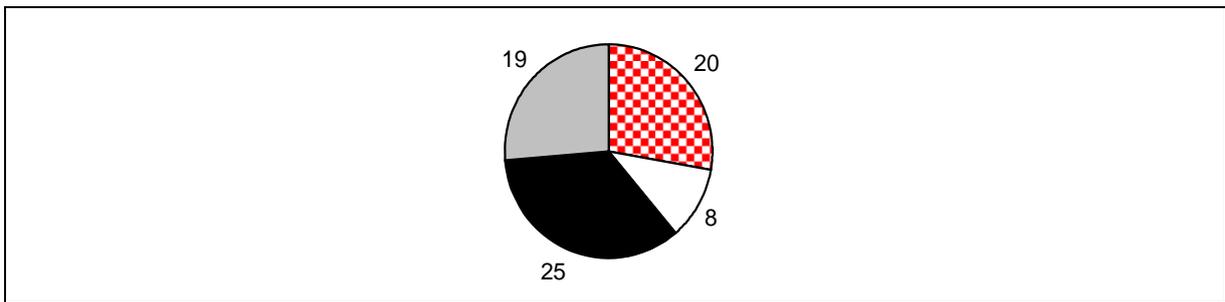


Figure 50 - What the teaching of culture in the English classroom should be (for teachers teaching between 15-20 years)

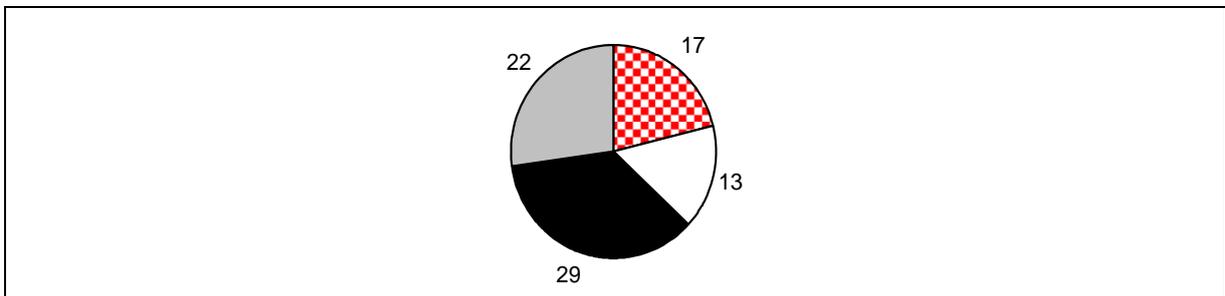


Figure 51 - What the teaching of culture in the English classroom should be (for teachers teaching for more than 20 years)

Also, as there were teachers that never taught the 2nd cycle, the sample was divided between these and the teachers that have taught both the 2nd and 3rd cycles. This was to done to see if teaching younger students had any kind of influence on the perceived purposes of teaching culture. However, we can see that they rank the statements the same way as the general analysis (see figures 52 and 53).

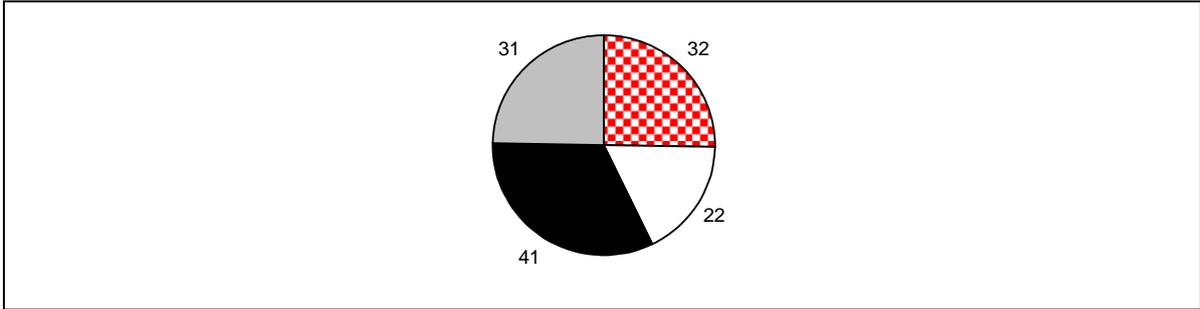


Figure 52 - What the teaching of culture in the English classroom should be (for teachers who have already taught both the 2nd and 3rd cycles)

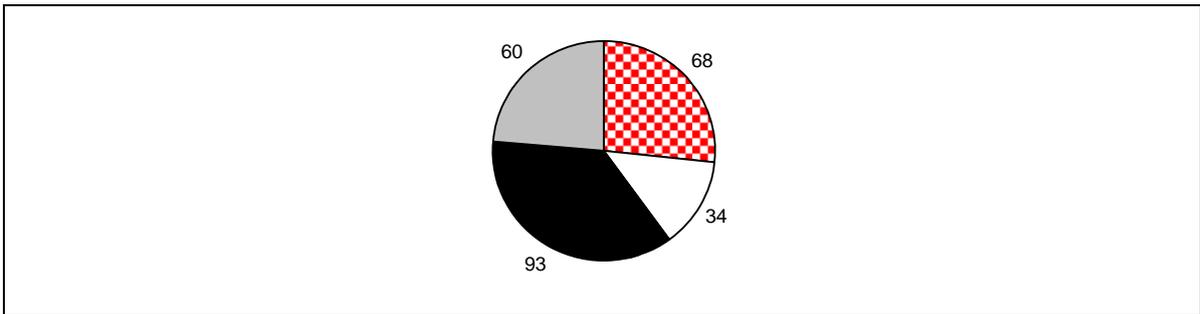


Figure 53 - What the teaching of culture in the English classroom should be (for teachers who have never taught the 2nd cycle)

2.1.3 – Discussion

As far as students are concerned, we can see that younger students (6th grade) like to talk about items that are related to a people's daily life like Food, The Environment or (life in the) City. Some of them also refer that knowing about these items can come in handy at some point in their future. About the future, these students seem to develop an interest in aspects specifically related to the English-speaking countries, like their culture, history or monuments and, again, The Environment. Most of them would like to approach these topics out of their own genuine interest in these subjects. The fact that some of them justify these wishes with a possible need in professional terms is the proof that they recognise the importance of culture in future encounters of some kind.

8th grade students also seem to enjoy topics that are related to their daily life because they are relevant to their interests. In the future, they would like to explore topics related to English-speaking societies, including their culture and (current) issues like Sports, Terrorism or Poverty. Once again, their own interest in these topics is the main reason for these choices.

9th grade students show a more self-centred taste, as they elected (Un)employment, The Environment and Addictions as some of their favourite topics throughout the year. This is acceptable insofar as the 9th grade, as stated before, is an important grade for students, as far as careers are concerned and also because many of them are starting to be exposed to problems like tobacco, alcohol or drugs. Not that all of them face these problems but they may have friends that face them and they are learning to cope with these dependencies, either by joining or refusing them. In the future, they would like to learn more about English-speaking societies, Music, Cinema or Sports. This allows us to think that they would like to learn about other cultures through multimedia facilities (music, cinema...) or leisure (sports). These students also use their own personal interests as the main reason to make such choices.

The main conclusion to be drawn from the results of the students' questionnaires is that they seem to be ready to study and accept other cultures because they would like to know more about different aspects of (English-speaking) societies.

Nothing was mentioned by students as to how this study would influence their own attitudes and beliefs (towards their own perspective of life and towards others) but, judging by their predisposition to learn about others, it seems legitimate to expect that it might have positive effects on them, making them eventually more tolerant, open and aware of other lifestyles, perspectives and practices.

After analysing the teachers' opinions about culture and the way it is used in Portuguese classrooms, a few interesting conclusions can be drawn.

All teachers agree that culture plays an important role in the teaching of English, even though some seem to give more importance to linguistic features. There also seems to be consensus around the fact that the increasing mobility of people is likely to be changing local cultural practices, which may lead to the destruction of any stereotypes one might have about a people.

Most teachers agree that the English classroom should be used to explore cultural features, as they do not believe that teaching linguistic features is more important than teaching cultural ones. As a matter of fact, most of them think that, in a globalised world, teaching culture is as important as teaching a language itself and that learning a language like English enables students to be culturally competent and becoming conscious of other cultures in the world. Many teachers agree as well that a good way to do it is by spotting differences between mother culture and the target culture(s). A huge amount of teachers believe that cultural features should be assessed just like any other item, possibly as a way to assess progress among students.

As far as the presence of culture in the syllabus is concerned, opinions diverge as to whether it gives culture the proper relevance. However, the majority of teachers answered affirmatively to this item. They think that the target culture should be presented as it is, with both positive and negative aspects, as well as both similarities and differences with mother culture. In fact, most teachers believe that students' mother culture should be used as a comparison tool between both cultures. According to teachers, this approach to the target culture will make students get to know their own culture better. By doing so, students might, according to their language educators, change their attitudes and beliefs and even make them more tolerant towards other people, although almost a quarter

of teachers disagree that it might be so. However, most teachers believe that the teaching of English can make students culturally competent in this globalised world of ours.

Teachers seem to separate the importance of culture from the economic power of the country it “belongs” to, as they think that English-speaking culture should include all English-speaking countries and not only the most economically powerful ones. In other words, it should not be confined to the culture of countries like the UK or the USA. Within a country, teachers claim that attention should be given to its diversity in its fullest extension, that is, it should include all (social) groups like minorities, immigrants or others that form English-speaking societies today.

Most teachers disregard stereotypes as an important feature of English Language Teaching (ELT), even though almost half the teachers do not agree with the idea that stereotypes are irrelevant. Many agree that the teaching of culture in the context of ELT in Portugal is confined to the habits of a people and to its monuments but the teaching of a language should mirror a people’s behavioural patterns.

These conclusions lead us to think that teachers regard culture as an important feature and that the English classroom is the perfect ground to put intercultural education into practice, as teachers seem to be ready to make their students accept and relate to other cultures. A reason for these statements is that teachers reject the cultural hegemony of powerful countries like the UK and the USA and believe that these and other English-speaking countries are culturally diverse and this diversity should be explored and studied, even though they believe culture is given enough relevance there.

Another important conclusion to retain is the fact that teachers believe in the power of culture as a tool to make students get to know their culture better and change their attitudes and beliefs. Teachers also believe that the study of culture can even make them more tolerant. After all, for them, both younger and older teachers, the teaching of culture should be about making students understand and accept other people’s beliefs, values and lifestyles. These, as stated before, are some of the purposes of intercultural education, which reinforces the idea that the main actors of the learning process (teachers and students) are actively engaged to embrace it.

2.2 – THE SYLLABUS

In this part of this dissertation, we intend to shed some light on how the documents that regulate the teaching of English in Portugal approach the cultural component. We will focus on the relationship between language and cultural diversity, as well as the presence of the intercultural dimension. For that purpose, the following documents will be analysed:

- Ministério da Educação – Departamento do Ensino Básico (2002), *Currículo Nacional do Ensino Básico. Competências Essenciais*. Lisboa: ME
- Ministério da Educação (1996), *Programa Inglês. Programa e Organização Curricular. Ensino Básico 2º Ciclo*. Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional-Casa da Moeda.
- Ministério da Educação (1997), *Programa Inglês. Programa e Organização Curricular. Ensino Básico 3º Ciclo*. Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional-Casa da Moeda.

The aims and objectives of these documents, as far as culture is concerned, will be analysed, as well as the suggestions made throughout the documents to equip the learner with cultural competence. So, after considering the purposes of the documents, we will observe the role of culture within the syllabus, looking at which cultural topics are suggested for the different grades of both cycles and how they are to be dealt with in class⁹.

⁹ NOTE: The appendices henceforth mentioned refer to quotations taken from the analysed documents written in Portuguese.

2.2.1 – The National Curriculum for Basic Schooling: Essential Competences¹⁰

The document outlining the essential competences for basic schooling in Portugal suggests that the learner acquires plurilingual and pluricultural competence as recommended by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (see appendix 5). The document foresees that the students of the 2nd and 3rd cycles acquire the ability to recognise similarities and differences between the mother culture and the target culture and even establish some relationships between both, as far as the listening and reading skills are concerned (Ministério da Educação – DEB, 2002: 47-48). Nevertheless, the kind of relationships that students are expected to establish is not explicit on the document.

As far as speaking and writing are concerned, students are expected to adopt *communicative behaviours*¹¹, bearing in mind the above mentioned similarities and differences and the characteristics of the communities where the language is spoken (see appendix 6):

2.2.2 - English Syllabus and Curricular Organisation – 2nd and 3rd Cycles Basic Schooling¹²

Both the 2nd and 3rd cycles have similar introductions, goals and purposes as far as culture is concerned. Therefore, these first elements of the syllabi will be dealt with together. However, some differences between the documents remain and shall be discussed later.

The syllabus for the 2nd and 3rd cycles states, in its introduction, that learning a foreign language develops understanding of and respect for diverse sociocultural worlds (Ministério da Educação, 1996: 5; Ministério da Educação, 1997: 5; 91). It

¹⁰ Currículo Nacional do Ensino Básico: *Competências Essenciais*

¹¹ Comportamentos comunicativos

¹² Programa e Organização Curricular de Inglês - Ensino Básico 2º e 3º Ciclo

also intends to support the development of awareness of linguistic and cultural identity through confrontation with the foreign language and the culture or cultures it transmits (Ministério da Educação, 1996: 7; Ministério da Educação, 1997: 7; 93). However, this concern grows deeper as the expected goals of both syllabi are expressed. These include the promotion of contact with other languages and cultures, making sure that basic language use is ensured; awareness of own language and culture by comparing it with foreign language and culture(s); and the establishment of communication as a way of social interaction, as to enable respect for the Other and the sense of cooperation, solidarity and citizenship (see appendix 7).

The objectives also comprehend and regard the importance of culture within the syllabus, by identifying signs of the Anglo-American culture and relating to them, and by nourishing positive attitudes towards the target culture (see appendix 8).

2.2.2.1 – English Syllabus – 2nd Cycle¹³

Section 4.3 of the syllabus for the 2nd cycle establishes the processes which should be used in each content area. In this section, we will consider the contents of the syllabus and how they should be handled.

Subsection 4.3.1, *English language*¹⁴, focuses on the usage of the language. Taking into account the extension of the linguistic items covered by this section (30% of section 4.3), we can say that it assumes special relevance in the syllabus. However, as no explicit reference is made to cultural aspects, it is beyond our analysis at this point.

The objective of Subsection 4.3.2, *Reading Comprehension and Text Production*¹⁵, is to interpret and produce different types of text using discursive strategies (see appendix 9). It is separated into the four skills (*listening, reading, speaking and writing*) and sets different objectives that students are expected to achieve at the end of the cycle.

¹³ Programa de Inglês – 2º ciclo

¹⁴ Língua Inglesa

¹⁵ Produção e Interpretação de Textos

As far as *listening* and *speaking* are concerned, students of both the 5th and the 6th grade are expected to recognize the differences in pronunciation of phonemes both in British and American English (see appendix 10). Once again, it is specified that the English-speaking communities that Portuguese students are exposed to are from Great Britain and the United States of America. Further on, and as far as the *listening* is concerned, the syllabus makes it clear that the student is required to interact actively in different social contexts of growing complexity (see appendix 11). We can say that in order for the student to be able to distinguish the familiarity between speakers, he/she must be somewhat aware of the social conventions that govern the way individuals relate in a society. Therefore this item can be related to (the teaching of) culture. This sort of need is also present in the *Procedures*¹⁶ suggested for *speaking*. The student is expected to recognize specific aspects of the interaction between speaker and listener (see appendix 12).

The two remaining skills, even though they have thorough suggested procedures from the linguistic point of view (pp. 27-31), do not demand a lot from students as far as cultural aspects are concerned.

On the other hand, subsection 4.3.3 is the section where most cultural aspects are found and therefore it is worth analysing more closely. It has the aim of identifying signs of the Anglo-American culture and nourishing positive attitudes towards the target culture (see appendix 13).

Even though the general content is the same for both grades, we can see that the processes for dealing with them at each grade are different, as the charts in appendices 14 to 16 point out.

In the 5th grade, the student is asked to identify, describe and compare aspects of daily life such as personal information, daily life, physical and personality traits, leisure moments or even the family (see appendix 15).

There is some concern with the comparison between both cultures that suits for students' age and interests, as they do not seem too complex for 10-year-olds.

The cultural concern of the syllabus for the 6th grade seems to focus on the city as a place where most cultural interactions take place. Within the city, the school seems to be of great importance, as students are required to identify aspects like

¹⁶ Processos de operacionalização

timetables, facilities, cultural activities and special days, among others. As far as the city is concerned, the focus is given basically to the street/neighbourhood as a place of social interaction (see appendix 16).

However, both grades expect the same from the students, as appendix 17 clearly shows. This means being able to:

- compare and contrast stereotypes and social conventions
- identify the cultural value of non-verbal forms of communication
- recognise similarities and differences between their own sociocultural world and that of others
- relate similarities and differences with their own cultural standards
- demonstrate empathy in relation to different ways of being and living.

These objectives reveal concern with cultural issues as they encourage students to compare and point out similarities and differences between their culture with the target culture.

Subsection 4.3.4, *Attitudes, Values and Competences*¹⁷, expects the students to develop a number of attitudes towards work and the school community. However, it is clear that these attitudes are also expected to be put into practice regarding the target culture (Ministério da Educação, 1996: 35).

As far as extensive reading is concerned (subsection 4.3.5), the first observations to be made are that it is aimed at the 6th grade only and that there is a single procedure related to culture. The student must build up his/her own cultural awareness while interacting with the text (see appendix 18).

¹⁷ Atitudes, Valores e Competências

2.2.2.2 – English Syllabus – 3rd Cycle¹⁸

As stated above, both the 2nd and 3rd cycles have similar introductions, aims and objectives, as far as culture is concerned (Ministério da Educação, 1996: 5-10; Ministério da Educação, 1997: 5-10, 91-96). Therefore, this subsection will focus on section 4, *Contents*, of the syllabus for the 3rd cycle. A prior note before the analysis takes place to say that the syllabus for the 3rd cycle includes English as *Foreign Language I*¹⁹ and English as *Foreign Language II*²⁰. English as *Foreign Language I* applies for students who took English as a foreign language in the 5th grade, whereas English as *Foreign Language II* concerns the students who took a foreign language in the 5th grade other than English and take English in the 7th grade for the first time. Although the latter is not very common nowadays, as most students take English in the 5th grade, both syllabi will be given the same relevance in this analysis.

Subsections 4.1 and 4.2 determine the educational value of learning a foreign language and establish the English classroom as a place where different kinds of interaction take place. This interaction involves three dimensions, which include the topic, the self and us (Ministério da Educação, 1997: 11). Subsection 4.2 goes on to say that all the content areas included in the syllabus take place in a systemic way, that is, all of them interact with each other and converge for the education of the learner both as a citizen and a competent user of a foreign language.

However, it is subsection 4.3 that deserves closer attention, as it deals with the procedures and topics which are to achieve these goals.

As happens with the 2nd cycle syllabus, subsection 4.3.1 focuses on the usage of the English language where no explicit reference to cultural content is made. As a consequence, it is not worth our attention at this point.

¹⁸ Programa de Inglês – 3º ciclo

¹⁹ Língua Estrangeira I

²⁰ Língua Estrangeira II

Just like the 2nd cycle, subsection 4.3.2, *Reading Comprehension and Text Production*²¹, brings us to the four skills (*listening, reading, speaking and writing*). Again, the *listening* and *speaking* skills expect 7th, 8th and 9th grade students to distinguish different kinds of pronunciation between British and American English (see appendix 19).

Once again, it seems reasonable to think that being able to distinguish different kinds of pronunciation means being capable of identifying different cultural backgrounds, as pronunciation is often considered a cultural characteristic of a people. Often, it is the accent and pronunciation of a person that indicates his/her origin and allows the interlocutor to expect a number of cultural characteristics from that person.

Also the familiarity between interlocutors in a conversation that students are expected to recognise (Ministério da Educação, 1997: 33, 115) can be interpreted as being related to cultural aspects, as students must be aware of social relationships and hierarchies in a community to be able to respond to what is expected of him/her.

As far as *reading* is concerned, the student is required to develop a number of reading strategies that will enable him/her to interact with a given text. By 'interact' is meant understanding and relating it with other (con)texts in what could be called intertextuality. However, and for the purpose of this analysis, the most relevant aspect is that the student is expected to evaluate his/her progress as a reader, as far as different cultural universes are concerned (see appendix 20). This is even more relevant, as it applies to all the three grades of the 3rd cycle. In other words, the student is exposed to other cultural contexts from a very early stage (in the context of the syllabus), which appears to be a good attitude to develop in students.

Just like in the syllabus for the 2nd cycle, subsection 4.3.3 of the syllabus for the 3rd cycle deals specifically with cultural aspects. It establishes the competences that the student is expected to have at the end of the cycle. However, some differences between both *cycles* and both *Foreign Language I*²² and *Foreign*

²¹ Produção e Interpretação de Textos

²² Língua Estrangeira I

*Language II*²³ can be seen right from the main purpose. Here the student is not only expected to identify aspects of the Anglo-American culture and to nourish positive attitudes towards different cultural and social contexts, but he/she is also asked to relate and question different behavioural patterns and express positive attitudes towards different cultural and social contexts (see appendix 21).

In the 3rd cycle, it is expected that the student assumes a more active attitude towards culture. He/she is not merely asked to identify signs of the target culture, he/she is asked to question patterns of behaviour and express positive attitudes by sharing information, ideas and opinions. In English as *Foreign Language I*, the demands move further and the student is asked to relate to the target culture, which implies a great level of bonding between the student and the target culture. Emphasis is also given to identity and diversity and to the way communities inter- and intra-relate. The *Procedures*²⁴ for the 7th grade are a good example (see appendices 22 and 23).

Whereas in the 7th grade *Foreign Language I*²⁵ the student is required to describe and compare his/her family in terms of habits or forms of relationship; his/her life at school also in terms of routines and ways of relationship and life in the city, the 7th grade *Foreign Language II*²⁶ approaches almost the same topics as the 5th grade. It is rather natural, as these are both beginning years. However, we can see that this part of the syllabus for the 7th grade takes advantage of the student's developing maturity because it demands more competences from the students.

The scope of 8th grade (*Foreign Language I*), as far as cultural contents are concerned, is again the community. However, this time the syllabus focuses on the media, forms of socialization within the community and behavioural patterns regarding items like fashion or consumerism. It also expects that the students identify and describe geographical aspects of the region, which includes the United Kingdom and the United States of America (see appendix 24).

The contents and processes suggested for the 8th grade (*Foreign Language II*) bear in mind that this is only the second year that students are learning English and

²³ Língua Estrangeira II

²⁴ Processos de operacionalização

²⁵ Língua Estrangeira I

²⁶ Língua Estrangeira II

therefore do not approach the cultural content in subsection 4.3.3 with the same depth as the 8th grade (*Foreign Language I*). It deals with aspects of daily life and with forms of socialization and relationship in different contexts such as family, school and neighbourhood (see appendix 25):

The contents suggested by the syllabus for the 9th grade (*Foreign Language I*²⁷) take into account the fact that students at this stage already possess a level of cognitive development and social and cultural awareness that enables them to analyse specific topics in greater depth. The contents can be divided into two major headings: the socio-economical context of the UK and USA and health. The former explores items like professional careers and (un)employment, whereas the latter deals with lifestyles, eating habits, addictions and health problems (see appendix 26).

The contents outlined above for the 9th grade (*Foreign Language I*) can also be found in the contents for the 9th grade (*Foreign Language II*²⁸); nevertheless, not in the same proportion. The latter expects the students to identify the socio-economical context and relate it to quality of life, and to regard elements such as lifestyles and eating habits. However, it still focuses essentially on forms of socialization in the street/neighbourhood/city (see appendix 27):

However, all these processes aim to lead students to acquire the following competences (in *Foreign Language I*):

- compare and contrast stereotypes and social conventions
- identify the cultural value of non-verbal forms of communication
- recognise similarities and differences between their own sociocultural world and that of others
- relate similarities and differences with their own cultural standards
- demonstrate empathy in relation to different ways of being and living.
- Recognise diversity as an essential parameter to interpret sociocultural contexts.

²⁷ Língua Estrangeira I

²⁸ Língua Estrangeira II

- recognise, in the context of family, school and the widened community, experiences that build up an identity

Even though the competences expected in the 3rd cycle (*Foreign Language II²⁹*) are similar to the ones in the 2nd cycle, there are a few differences between both (see appendix 29):

- compare and contrast stereotypes and social conventions
- identify the cultural value of non-verbal forms of communication
- recognise similarities and differences between their own sociocultural world and that of others
- relate similarities and differences with their own cultural standards
- demonstrate empathy in relation to different ways of being and living.
- recognise, in the context of family, experiences that build up an identity. – *7th grade (Foreign Language II)*
- recognise, in the context of family and school, experiences that build up an identity. – *8th grade (Foreign Language II)*
- recognise, in the context of widened community, experiences that build up an identity. – *9th grade (Foreign Language II)*

2.2.3 – Discussion

As one of the intentions of this dissertation is to detect how the syllabi for the 2nd and 3rd cycles can relate to the intercultural approach, we cannot ignore the fact that both were elaborated in 1996 and 1997 respectively, prior to the publishing of documents like the *Competências Essenciais do Ensino Básico* (Ministério da Educação-DEB, 2002) and the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*, published by the Council of Europe in its current form in 2001. Therefore, it does not include the orientations towards plurilingualism and

²⁹ Língua Estrangeira II

pluriculturalism suggested by the *Essential Competences*³⁰ (Ministério da Educação – DEB, 2002: 39) nor the suggestions made by the Council of Europe (Council of Europe, 2001), as far as cultural aspects are concerned.

After analysing the syllabi for both *cycles*, it is clear that there is progression from the 2nd to the 3rd cycle as far as cultural aspects are concerned. This progression is not only visible in terms of the topics chosen, but also in the functions that are expected from the students. In the 2nd cycle, the student seems to assume a rather passive attitude as he/she is often asked to identify, describe, distinguish and recognise several aspects of cultural life (Ministério da Educação, 1996: 32-34). In the 3rd cycle, however, even though the student is also asked to perform these functions, he/she is also asked to relate, analyse and compare different cultural aspects (Ministério da Educação, 1997: 47-50).

The fact that the syllabus suggests comparisons between mother and target culture(s) leads us to the conclusion that, even though the syllabus was written in the 1990s, it already attempted to include some aspects of what is associated to the intercultural approach, such as comparing and relating (both) cultures. However, one must not overlook the emphasis that is given to the United Kingdom and the United States of America. In fact, it is clearly stated that whenever cultural aspects are approached throughout the syllabus, these refer to the UK and the USA. In a time of globalisation and interdependence between countries around the world, it is clear that confining the reference to the English-speaking culture to two (economically powerful) countries can lead to a situation of contempt towards other (English-speaking) countries. By looking upon developed and economically powerful countries only, learners might feel tempted to compare their cultural world with these countries' and disregard other countries, as well as their cultural value. It has been argued that students should acknowledge cultural diversity. Therefore, even though students learn about cultural aspects of Great Britain or the United States of America, the inclusion of other English-speaking countries (if not all) would be beneficial to widen the scope of cultural diversity in the English-speaking world.

³⁰ Competências Essenciais

Also, the objectives for section 4.3.3 of both *cycles* (Ministério da Educação, 1996: 32; Ministério da Educação, 1997: 47, 128) deserve some attention, as this is the section where most cultural content is found.

As stated before, the aim to develop skills in identifying, understanding, questioning and relating to the target culture is an excellent and desirable start from an intercultural perspective. The student is also expected to develop 'positive attitudes' towards the target culture. Even though it is not stated exactly what these 'positive attitudes' are, we expect that they include showing tolerance, acceptance and respect to the target culture(s). If so, then the syllabus sets students off on the right foot towards intercultural competence. If not, then we should be careful with the attitudes students develop because, as Byram claims, 'even positive prejudice can hinder mutual understanding' (Byram, 1997: 34). However, showing tolerance, acceptance and respect towards the target culture(s) should appear clearly as an explicit objective of the syllabus.

Another aspect that deserves close attention is the choice underlying the cultural topics. In this regard, we shall consider cultural topics the ones mentioned in the figure below (taken from the syllabi):

2 nd cycle		3 rd cycle	
5 th grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Personal information - Physical and personality traits - Leisure activities - The house - The family (Daily) routines - Festivities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The family - The school - The house - The city - Routines 	7 th grade (foreign language I)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The media - Fashion - Regional features 	8 th grade (foreign language I)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Employment - Lifestyles - Dependencies and social problems 	9 th grade (foreign language I)

6th grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The school - Festivities - The city 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Personal information - Physical and personality traits - Leisure activities - The house - The family - (Daily) routines - The school - Festivities 	7th grade (foreign language II)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The house - The family - (Daily) routines - The school - Festivities - The city 	8th grade (foreign language II)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The city - Regional features - Employment - Lifestyles 	9th grade (foreign language II)

(Ministério da Educação, 1996: 32-34, Ministério da Educação, 1997: 47-50; 128-131)

Figure 54 - Cultural topics in the syllabus

The first thing to say is that, regardless of covering the most important cultural aspects or not, they are suitable for students' age and most of their interests. A good example is the selection of topics made for the 9th grade. Bearing in mind that the students are about to narrow their professional and academic path in the 10th grade and that that narrowing must be done taking into account the professional career the student wishes to pursue, it seems rather fortunate that the socio-economical contexts are explored, dealt with and debated in class and that students' awareness is raised towards issues like (un)employment and professional careers. Also, it appears to be a good idea to approach items like health, diseases and (healthy) habits in life, because in the 9th grade students are living their adolescence and these are just some of the issues that trouble most students. On the other hand, students should be learning about young people in other countries and the problems, opportunities and life conditions they have. These should then be compared and contrasted with students' own problems, opportunities and life conditions. Therefore, it is advisable that these topics are also brought into the classroom and, once again, make the school the place where students set the grounds and get prepared to face successful intercultural encounters.

CONCLUSION

In a globalised world where people's mobility is a fact and countries are economically interdependent, culture assumes an important role as a way of bringing peoples together and bridging gaps between different communities. In fact, culture encodes the habits, traditions, beliefs and perspectives of a specific community towards life. It is influenced by many aspects that range from the weather conditions in the geographical area the community lives to ancestral heritage, just to mention some of them. Therefore, it is possible to talk about different cultures in the world. These cultures can not be rated in terms of representing a better or worse perspective of life, but simply a different one. As a consequence, each of them deserves the same respect, tolerance and acceptance.

The teaching of languages assumes a crucial role in the bringing together of cultures. As stated in Chapter 1.2, languages encode cultural meanings and behaviours (by which we mean practices, perspectives, beliefs and values mentioned in section 1 of this dissertation) and allow students to have access to the target culture(s), communicate with people from other cultural backgrounds and share those very same meanings and behaviours. As there is a relationship between language and culture, the purpose of this dissertation was to see how the English syllabus for the 2nd *and* 3rd cycle in Portugal (and consequently the teaching of English) can improve towards an intercultural approach, in order to bring peoples and cultures together. The following conclusions will shed some light on what steps could be taken in order to achieve such an improvement.

Portugal is fast becoming a destination for many communities seeking better life conditions. As these communities bring their cultural backgrounds, which are different from the Portuguese, we can say that Portugal is now more multicultural than ever before. School, as the institution whose goal is to prepare younger generations for life, should be particularly attentive to this and make students aware of the differences/similarities with other communities. It should also equip them with tools to cope with those very same differences/similarities. Therefore, the

syllabus should not focus so much on linguistic features as it does right now. We took section 4.3 of both syllabi (as it refers to the *procedures*) and analyzed how many pages were devoted to linguistic features (subsections 4.3.1 and 4.3.2). As a matter of fact, these two subsections correspond to 69% of the *procedures* in the 2nd cycle, against 73% in the 3rd cycle (*Foreign Language I*³¹) and 72% (*Foreign Language II*). This is, from our point of view, an excessive relevance for a syllabus intended to prepare students for intercultural encounters. Much more relevance should be given to cultural issues. This opinion is also shared by most of the teachers involved in the study presented in section 2.1, as they consider that the teaching of linguistic features is not more important than the teaching of culture itself. Many also believe that culture is still not given enough relevance in the syllabus.

Within cultural issues, the first step the syllabus must take to improve towards an intercultural approach is to recognise multiculturalism as a sign of today's globalisation and people's mobility, to which Portugal is no exception.

The next step that the syllabus must take is to widen the scope of countries (and cultures) approached. It disregards English-speaking countries other than the UK and the USA, failing to achieve one of the purposes of the intercultural dimension: acknowledging cultural diversity (as mentioned in 1.3.3). This opinion is also shared by both the students and the teachers, as they think it is important to approach other English-speaking countries. This would not only broaden their 'factual and social knowledge' (see 1.3.3) about the English-speaking world, but it would also expose them to other different cultures and lead them to be more aware of diversity and more tolerant towards difference.

One of the main purposes of the intercultural approach (as mentioned in 1.3.2) is to make students 'diplomats' (Corbett, 2003: 2), that is, able to accept *otherness*. In other words, accept other cultures as they are. This can only be achieved if values such as tolerance and respect are to be nourished within students. As (future) intercultural agents, students need to be aware of issues like human rights, citizenship, identity and (cultural) difference. However, nothing specific about this is mentioned in the syllabus. Students are expected to relate, recognise or identify cultural patterns, but nowhere is it clearly stated that students should 'show

³¹ Língua Estrangeira I

tolerance, interest and respect towards (different) values, beliefs and perspectives shared by other communities' (see 1.3.3). As stated on page 95, reference is made in the syllabus to the fact that the students should nourish 'positive attitudes' towards the target culture. We tend to believe that these 'positive attitudes' include showing tolerance, interest and respect towards other cultures. However, this aim should be explicit in the syllabus.

One thing that is often an obstacle to an attitude of respect and tolerance towards other cultures is the fact that students base their knowledge on stereotypes. One of the aims of sections 4.3.3. of both syllabi is to 'compare and contrast stereotypes and social conventions' (Ministério da Educação, 1996: 33-34; Ministério da Educação, 1997: 48, 49, 50; Ministério da Educação, 1997: 129, 130, 131). We think that this aim should be removed from the syllabi, as an intercultural approach will 'avoid prejudice and stereotyping' by making students 'develop attitudes of openness towards the Other and modify previous knowledge where necessary' (see 1.3.3). Also, most teachers in our study mentioned that stereotypes are not an important component of the teaching of English. However, 40% of them mentioned that stereotypes are still important, which means that teachers' awareness must also be raised in this matter towards the removal of stereotypes from the teaching of English. In fact, the syllabus should make students ready to face situations that do not match exactly their 'factual and social knowledge' about the community his/her interlocutor belongs to. This aim will lead to another aim of the intercultural approach which is to prepare students to 'perceive the Other as somebody to be discovered' (see 1.3.3). This opinion is also shared by most of the teachers as they believe that dealing with (different) cultural aspects can lead students to be more tolerant towards other people and make them intercultural competent users of English.

As far as students' own culture is concerned in the syllabus, the competences they must acquire are general and unspecific. They are often asked to compare their cultural reality with the one from the target culture, but nothing is mentioned about the critical attitude (referred to in 1.3.3) they must have towards their own culture. The power to 'observe difference and similarities between cultures' (see 1.3.3) will enable students to relate them with their own culture and assimilate (new) perspectives that they might consider more suitable for their desired lifestyle.

This is also an important feature of the intercultural approach that is given little relevance in the current syllabus. Most teachers share this belief, as they consider that the use of the mother culture as a comparison tool between the cultures dealt with in the classroom would be beneficial for the achievement of the intended purposes of the intercultural approach.

Also, students' active engagement in cultural issues should be taken into account and used wisely into the promotion of an intercultural approach. In fact, most students showed an interest in several topics that range from Hobbies, Family and Daily Routine to English-speaking societies, Music and Sports. What is more, they mention relevance to their own interests as the main reason for wanting to approach such topics. As stated before, this accounts for the importance students give to cultural issues and shows their openness to accept or, at least, to study other cultures.

As far as the cultural contents of the syllabus are concerned, they are included in subsection 4.3.3 of the syllabi and could also be submitted to some changes. Some of them seem to focus on the acquisition of linguistic features such as the identification of types of houses and their rooms (Minsitério da Educação, 1996: 32) or the identification and description of regional features (Ministério da Educação, 1997: 49). Other contents try to develop competences like analysing, relating and comparing (see appendices 14 to 20) but rather in a passive form. The student is not asked to analyse behaviours and relate them to his/her own or develop attitudes of openness towards values and perspectives that are different from the ones presented in the syllabus. On the contrary, the syllabus seems to invite students to learn some cultural features and store that knowledge in their minds. Therefore, the choice of contents should be reviewed, bearing in mind (but not being only determined by) students' opinions mentioned in section 2.1.1. For example, the above mentioned topic about housing, instead of being used to merely identify types of houses and rooms, could be used to explore the community's values, practices and perspectives in life by observing and discussing issues like its environmental concerns or views on the way houses are built. The way a community relates to its geographical features and the environment can say a lot about how it faces life. Nevertheless, whichever aspects are focused, students should always be prepared to have an encounter with somebody who, despite

belonging to the community, may not share the features learned in a previous point in time. In other words, attitudes of *openness* must always be encouraged.

The contents should provide the sociocultural and factual knowledge suggested by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. These include knowledge about aspects like everyday living, body language, social conventions, ritual behaviour and others (mentioned on pages 38-39), because these aspects reflect the cultural shape of a community.

Even though the specific aim of this dissertation is not to mention strategies on how to implement an intercultural syllabus in the classroom, we believe that the following could be used in an intercultural approach. Situations at workplaces, stores or institutions could be presented in forms of dialogues or other authentic texts (both formal and informal) between people and be used to analyse the social and cultural implications that lie beneath the interaction. Authentic texts may include conversations, *chats*, interviews, (Corbett, 2003), newspaper or magazine articles and literary texts, just to mention a few. They can be used to observe and identify the role of men and women in society, for example, or hierarchical roles within institutions or companies. They can also be used to observe the way relationships among friends take place. Other ways of conveying data about the target culture are 'visual images' such as 'photographs, drawings cartoons and diagrams' (Corbett, 2003: 140) for they can trigger questions about the representation of several age or ethnic groups; fashion and its correlation with values and even representations of (lack of) authority by politicians or other forces (Corbett, 2003). 'Critical discourse analysis' (Byram, 2003: 76) in which learners scan texts in search of features that denote practices, perspectives and beliefs of target culture, *role play* (Byram, 1998) or parallel texts (Corbett, 2003) are then good strategies to approach, discover and work out the sociocultural notions implied within an interaction and compare them with own culture procedures within a similar interaction.

These are just some strategies that can be used in the classroom to achieve the goals of an intercultural approach. Many others could have been referred to but, as mentioned before, it is not the purpose of this dissertation to set strategies on how to implement such an approach. These have just been used here to illustrate

the way the theoretical purposes of the intercultural approach can be put into practice.

In conclusion, a lot is still to be done until we can talk about *an intercultural approach for the 2nd and 3rd cycles in Portugal*. To achieve the purposes of such an approach the syllabus should:

- give more relevance to cultural issues instead of focusing so much on linguistic features;
- recognise multiculturalism as a reality of today's world;
- broaden the scope of English-speaking countries included in the syllabus in order to assure cultural diversity and attention to smaller English-speaking communities;
- lead students to showing interest, respect and tolerance towards other cultures
- remove the identification of stereotypes as a competence to be achieved by students;
- guide students towards the perception of the Other as somebody that is not a mere representation of a stereotype, but rather a person that has his/her own beliefs, values, perspectives, practices and behaviours;
- steer them into attitudes of *openness*, i.e., readiness to find in the Other something not previously learned or presented, to allow the above mentioned perception;
- make students observe difference and similarities between cultures (both mother and target culture(s))
- develop students' ability to view their own culture from a critical point of view by observing and analysing the above mentioned differences and similarities.

Making Portuguese students interculturally competent users of English is no easy task. It demands hard work from students, teachers and committees that regulate the teaching of English in Portugal. However, it is a task that must be embraced as quickly as possible if we wish to raise our students' awareness to issues like human rights, citizenship, identity and (cultural) difference and thus lead them to accept, tolerate, respect and even relate to other cultures and peoples in a deep and rewarding way.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Students' questionnaire

Este questionário insere-se no âmbito de uma dissertação de mestrado subordinada ao tema "A dimensão intercultural e o ensino da língua inglesa em Portugal" e pretende concluir quais os temas relacionados com a língua e a cultura de expressão inglesa que mais interessam aos jovens portugueses. É anónimo e serve meramente para fins estatísticos. Obrigado pela tua colaboração.

Escola: _____ Ano: _____ Idade: _____

Ao longo deste ano, abordaste vários temas na disciplina de Inglês. Diz quais foram aqueles que mais gostaste e os que não gostaste tanto de abordar e porquê.

Diz também quais são os temas e os aspectos da vida social e cultural dos países de expressão inglesa que gostarias de abordar no(s) próximo(s) ano(s) e qual a razão da(s) tua(s) escolha(s).

Appendix 2 – Teachers' questionnaire

Questionnaire

The purpose of this questionnaire is to assess the opinion of English teachers about what culture is and how it should be dealt with both in the classroom and in the syllabus. The answers will be used for statistical purposes within a master's dissertation on the above mentioned topics. Thank you for your time and cooperation.

A – BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

1. Age:

2. Gender: Male Female

3. Qualifications:

a) Secondary School Certificate

e) PhD

b) Bachelors Degree

f) Teacher Training Qualifications

c) *Licenciatura*

g) Other

d) Masters Degree

4. I teach in a:

a) Escola Básica 2º/3º ciclo

c) Escola / Colégio Privado

b) Escola Secundária

d) Other

5. My school is located in:

6. ... In a(n):

a) Azores / Madeira

a) Rural area

b) Centre of Portugal

b) Suburban area

c) North of Portugal

c) Urban area

d) South of Portugal

7. I have been teaching for:

a) Less than 5 years

d) 15-20 years

b) 5-10 years

e) 20 or more years

c) 10-15 years

8. I have already taught / am teaching the following grades:

- a) 5º ano c) 7º ano e) 9º ano
 b) 6º ano d) 8º ano

B – LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

For each of the following statements please select the letter which corresponds to your choice according to the following scale:

A – totally agree
B – somewhat agree

C – somewhat disagree
D – totally disagree

1. Culture plays an important role in the teaching of English.

- A B C D

2. The increasing mobility of people around the world is having an impact on (and therefore changing) local cultural practices and attitudes.

- A B C D

3. Cultural contents should be assessed and graded just like any linguistic structure.

- A B C D

4. The syllabus for the 2º and 3º *ciclos* gives enough relevance to cultural aspects.

- A B C D

5. The teaching of culture should only focus on aspects that are different from students' own culture.

- A B C D

6. Learning a new culture can lead students to get to know their own culture better.

- A B C D

7. L1 culture should be used in the English classroom as a comparison tool between the two cultures.
- A B C D
8. The teaching of cultural aspects in the English classroom should only be taught if the country they belong is considered powerful in the world.
- A B C D
9. The syllabus should only bring the positive aspects of the new culture into the classroom.
- A B C D
10. Spotting cultural differences between L1 and L2 cultures is not important in a globalised world.
- A B C D
11. The teaching of English should make students aware of other cultures and make them culturally competent in a globalised world.
- A B C D
12. The English classroom should only focus on the so-called 'native' culture and not on the diversity of culture found within English-speaking countries.
- A B C D
13. Learning a new culture can lead students to change their own attitudes and beliefs.
- A B C D
14. Teaching culture as it is done in Portuguese classrooms today leads students to be more tolerant towards other people.
- A B C D

15. The teaching of culture in the English classroom should include all English-speaking countries.

- A B C D

16. The teaching of linguistic structures is more important than the teaching of culture.

- A B C D

17. Stereotypes, such as British punctuality, are an important component of English Language learning and teaching.

- A B C D

18. In the context of ELT in Portugal, the teaching of culture is basically concerned with the habits of a people and the monuments associated to an English-speaking country/English-speaking countries.

- A B C D

19. In a globalised world, the teaching of culture becomes as important as teaching the language itself.

- A B C D

20. The teaching of a language should reflect behavioural patterns of a people such as greetings, etc.

- A B C D

Please read the following sentences and rank them according to your opinion from 1 (best option) to 4 (worst option).

Teaching culture in the English classroom should be:

Teaching about the history, art, traditions, political structures and aspects of everyday life of all English-speaking countries

Teaching about the history, the art, the traditions, political structures and aspects of everyday life of the most powerful English-speaking countries like the UK or the USA.

Making students understand and accept other peoples' beliefs, values and lifestyles.

Making comparisons between students' own culture and the culture of English-speaking countries.

Appendix 3 – Statistical results of students' questionnaires

6th GRADE

Topics enjoyed by 6th grade students

	Animals	Food	Environment	City	School	Cinema	Music	Daily Routine	Family	Hobbies	Sports	Famous People	Jobs	Physical Description
No. of valid answers	15	30	20	19	13	6	8	3	3	4	5	1	2	6
Percentage	11 %	22 %	15 %	14 %	10 %	4%	7%	2%	2%	3%	4%	1%	1%	4%

Reasons why 6th grade students enjoyed topics

	Easiness	Sociocultural Interest	Professional Need	Fun	Relevance to learner's interest
No. of valid answers	5	4	9	13	14
Percentage	11%	9%	20%	29%	31%

Reasons why 6th grade students did not enjoy topics

	Difficulty	No Professional Need	Not Fun	No Sociocultural Interest	Not Relevant to Learners' Interests
No. of valid answers	6	2	14	0	7
Percentage	21%	7%	48%	0%	24%

Topics 6th grade students want to approach in the future

	Sport	Culture of English-speaking countries	History of English-speaking countries	Monuments of English-speaking countries	Environment	Transportation	Music	Food	Jobs	Places in the city	TV	Famous People	Animals	Theatre/Cinema
No. of valid answers	25	16	8	4	4	5	9	3	2	2	2	1	4	3
Percentage	28 %	18 %	9%	5%	5%	6%	10 %	3%	2%	2%	2%	1%	5%	3%

Reasons why 6th grade students want to approach topics

	Sociocultural Interest	Easiness	Professional Need	Fun	Learners' Interest
No. of valid answers	0	0	3	2	12
Percentage	0%	0%	18%	12%	70%

8TH GRADE

Topics enjoyed by 8th grade students

	Eating Disorders	Extreme Sports	Fashion	Internet	Mass Media	Space Exploration	Teenage Problems
No. of valid answers	14	19	15	10	18	2	12
Percentage	16%	21%	17%	11%	20%	2%	13%

Reasons why 8th grade students enjoyed topics

	Sociocultural Interest	Easiness	Professional Need	Fun	Relevance to Learners' Interests
No. of valid answers	3	0	3	2	30
Percentage	8%	0%	8%	5%	79%

Reasons why 8th grade students did not enjoy topics

	Difficulty	No Professional Need	No Sociocultural Interest	Not Fun	Not Relevant to Learners' Interests
No. of valid answers	1	0	1	2	16
Percentage	5%	0%	5%	10%	80%

Topics 8th grade students want to approach in the future

	Arts	Culture of English-speaking countries	Addictions (alcohol, tobacco, drugs...)	English-speaking societies	Extreme Sports	Famous People	Fashion	Health	History of English-speaking countries
No. of valid answers	1	9	1	4	2	1	2	1	2
Percentage	2%	18%	2%	8%	4%	2%	4%	2%	4%

	Mass Media	Music	Politics	School in the UK	Society problems	Sports	Adolescence/Teenage Problems	Theatre/Cinema
No. of valid answers	1	5	1	1	6	7	5	1
Percentage	2%	10%	2%	2%	12%	14%	10%	2%

Reasons why 8th grade students want to approach topics

	Sociocultural Interest	Easiness	Professional Need	Fun	Relevance to Learners' Interest
No. of valid answers	4	0	2	1	17
Percentage	17%	0%	8%	4%	71%

9TH GRADE

Topics enjoyed by 9th grade students

	Professional careers	Employment / Unemployment	Entertainment	Environment	Dependencies (alcohol, tobacco, drugs...)	Health / Eating habits	Holidays	Adolescence/ Teenage Problems
No. of valid answers	3	21	6	37	10	9	8	8
Percentage	3%	20%	6%	36%	10%	9%	8%	8%

Reasons why 9th grade students enjoyed topics

	Sociocultural Interest	Easiness	Professional Need	Fun	Relevance to Learners' Interests
No. of valid answers	9	0	4	1	27
Percentage	22%	0%	10%	2%	66%

Reasons why 9th grade students did not enjoy topics

	Difficulty	No Professional Need	No Sociocultural Interest	Not Fun	Not Relevant to Learners' Interests
No. of valid answers	5	0	4	4	12
Percentage	20%	0%	16%	16%	48%

Topics 9th grade students want to approach in the future

	Arts	Animals	Culture of English-speaking countries	Addictions (alcohol, tobacco, drugs...)	English-speaking societies	Environment	Famous People	Fashion	Health / Eating habits
No. of valid answers	1	1	9	1	11	5	2	2	3
Percentage	1%	1%	11%	1%	13%	6%	2%	2%	4%

	Jobs / Careers	Linguistic features	Music	Politics	Society problems (poverty, terrorism...)	Sports	Science and Technology	Teenage Problems / Adolescence	Theatre / TV / Cinema
No. of valid answers	1	1	10	2	6	10	7	4	9
Percentage	1%	1%	12%	2%	7%	12%	8%	5%	11%

Reasons why 9th grade students want to approach topics

	Sociocultural Interest	Easiness	Professional Need	Fun	Relevance to Learners' Interests
No. of valid answers	3	0	1	3	18
Percentage	12%	0%	4%	12%	72%

Appendix 4 – Statistical results of teachers' questionnaires

A – BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

1. Age:

	No. of valid answers	Percentage
22 to 27	4	11%
28 to 33	10	26%
34 to 39	9	24%
40 to 45	10	26%
older than 46	5	13%

2. Gender:

	No. of valid answers	Percentage
Male	3	8%
Female	35	92%

3. Qualifications:

	No. of valid answers	Percentage
a) Secondary School Certificate	0	0%
b) Bachelors Degree	0	0%
c) <i>Licenciatura</i>	36	83.7%
d) Masters Degree	2	4.7%
e) PhD	0	0%
f) Teacher Training Qualifications	5	11.6%
g) Other	0	0%

4. I teach in a:

	No. of valid answers	Percentage
a) Escola Básica 2º/3º ciclo	2	5%
b) Escola Secundária	26	67%
c) Escola / Colégio Privado	7	18%
d) Other	4	10%

5. My school is located in:

	No. of valid answers	Percentage
a) Azores / Madeira	13	34%
b) Centre of Portugal	1	3%
c) North of Portugal	24	63%
d) South of Portugal	0	0%

6. ... In a(n):

	No. of valid answers	Percentage
a) Rural area	2	6%
b) Suburban area	13	37%
c) Urban area	20	57%

7. I have been teaching for:

	No. of valid answers	Percentage
a) Less than 5 years	4	11%
b) 5-10 years	10	26%
c) 10-15 years	9	24%
d) 15-20 years	7	18%
e) 20 or more years	8	21%

8. I have already taught / am teaching the following grades:

	No. of valid answers	Percentage
a) 5º ano	11	8.9%
b) 6º ano	11	8.9%
c) 7º ano	36	29.0%
d) 8º ano	33	26.6%
e) 9º ano	33	26.6%

B – LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

A – totally agree
B – somewhat agree

C – somewhat disagree
D – totally disagree

1. Culture plays an important role in the teaching of English.

	A	B	C	D
No. of valid answers	35	3	0	0
Percentage	92%	8%	0%	0%

2. The increasing mobility of people around the world is having an impact on (and therefore changing) local cultural practices and attitudes.

	A	B	C	D
No. of valid answers	27	11	0	0
Percentage	71%	29%	0%	0%

3. Cultural contents should be assessed and graded just like any linguistic structure.

	A	B	C	D
No. of valid answers	10	23	3	2
Percentage	26%	61%	8%	5%

4. The syllabus for the 2º and 3º *ciclos* gives enough relevance to cultural aspects.

	A	B	C	D
No. of valid answers	5	18	12	2
Percentage	14%	49%	32%	5%

5. The teaching of culture should only focus on aspects that are different from students' own culture.

	A	B	C	D
No. of valid answers	0	2	13	23
Percentage	0%	5%	34%	61%

6. Learning a new culture can lead students to get to know their own culture better.

	A	B	C	D
No. of valid answers	31	7	0	0
Percentage	82%	18%	0%	0%

7. L1 culture should be used in the English classroom as a comparison tool between the two cultures.

	A	B	C	D
No. of valid answers	21	14	2	0
Percentage	57%	38%	5%	0%

8. The teaching of cultural aspects in the English classroom should only be taught if the country they belong is considered powerful in the world.

	A	B	C	D
No. of valid answers	0	0	4	34
Percentage	0%	0%	11%	89%

9. The syllabus should only bring the positive aspects of the new culture into the classroom.

	A	B	C	D
No. of valid answers	0	1	9	27
Percentage	0%	3%	24%	73%

10. Spotting cultural differences between L1 and L2 cultures is not important in a globalised world.

	A	B	C	D
No. of valid answers	2	2	12	22
Percentage	5%	5%	32%	58%

11. The teaching of English should make students aware of other cultures and make them culturally competent in a globalised world.

	A	B	C	D
No. of valid answers	32	6	0	0
Percentage	84%	16%	0%	0%

12. The English classroom should only focus on the so-called 'native' culture and not on the diversity of culture found within English-speaking countries.

	A	B	C	D
No. of valid answers	1	0	4	32
Percentage	3%	0%	11%	86%

13. Learning a new culture can lead students to change their own attitudes and beliefs.

	A	B	C	D
No. of valid answers	22	11	4	0
Percentage	59%	30%	11%	0%

14. Teaching culture as it is done in Portuguese classrooms today leads students to be more tolerant towards other people.

	A	B	C	D
No. of valid answers	10	18	7	2
Percentage	27%	49%	19%	5%

15. The teaching of culture in the English classroom should include all English-speaking countries.

	A	B	C	D
No. of valid answers	22	15	1	0
Percentage	58%	39%	3%	0%

16. The teaching of linguistic structures is more important than the teaching of culture.

	A	B	C	D
No. of valid answers	1	12	16	8
Percentage	3%	32%	43%	22%

17. Stereotypes, such as British punctuality, are an important component of English Language learning and teaching.

	A	B	C	D
No. of valid answers	3	12	18	4
Percentage	8%	32%	49%	11%

18. In the context of ELT in Portugal, the teaching of culture is basically concerned with the habits of a people and the monuments associated to an English-speaking country/English-speaking countries.

	A	B	C	D
No. of valid answers	8	22	8	0
Percentage	21%	58%	21%	0%

19. In a globalised world, the teaching of culture becomes as important as teaching the language itself.

	A	B	C	D
No. of valid answers	18	19	1	0
Percentage	47%	50%	3%	0%

20. The teaching of a language should reflect behavioural patterns of a people such as greetings, etc.

	A	B	C	D
No. of valid answers	27	10	1	0
Percentage	71%	26%	3%	0%

Please read the following sentences and rank them according to your opinion from 1 (best option) to 4 (worst option).

Teaching culture in the English classroom should be:

	Score after conversion (‘1’=4 points; ‘2’=3 points; ‘3’=2 points; ‘4’=1 point)
Teaching about the history, art, traditions, political structures and aspects of everyday life of all English-speaking countries	103
Teaching about the history, the art, the traditions, political structures and aspects of everyday life of the most powerful English-speaking countries like the UK or the USA.	57
Making students understand and accept other peoples’ beliefs, values and lifestyles	138
Making comparisons between students’ own culture and the culture of English-speaking countries.	95

Appendix 5 – Currículo Nacional do Ensino Básico – competências essenciais

Designar-se-á por competência plurilingue e pluricultural a competência para comunicar pela linguagem e para interagir culturalmente de um actor social que possui (...) o domínio de várias línguas e a experiência de várias culturas.

(Ministério da Educação – DEB, 2002: 39)

Appendix 6 – Expected competences of the syllabus

DESEMPENHOS ESPERADOS NO FINAL DO 2º E 3º CICLO:

- (...)

- Adequação de comportamentos comunicativos tendo em conta:

- os traços característicos da sociedade e da cultura das comunidades que usam a língua.
- afinidades/diferenças entre a cultura de origem e a cultura estrangeira.

(Ministério da Educação – DEB, 2002: 50-51)

Appendix 7 – Expected goals of both syllabi

- ‘Proporcionar o contacto com outras línguas e culturas, assegurando o domínio de aquisições e usos linguísticos básicos.
- Favorecer o desenvolvimento da consciência da identidade linguística e cultural através do confronto com a língua estrangeira e a(s) cultura(s) por ela veiculada(s).
- Promover a educação para a comunicação enquanto fenómeno de interacção social, como forma de incrementar o respeito pelo(s) outro(s), o sentido de entreatajuda e da cooperação, da solidariedade e da cidadania’.

(Ministério da Educação, 1996: 7; Ministério da Educação, 1997: 7)

Appendix 8 – Objectives of both syllabi

OBJECTIVOS PARA O 2º CICLO	OBJECTIVOS PARA O 3º CICLO
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Identificar os sinais da cultura anglo-americana¹' • 'Desenvolver atitudes positivas perante universos culturais e sociais diferenciados – o(s) colega(s), o professor, a(s) cultura(s) alvo²' <p>(Ministério da Educação, 1996: 9)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Relacionar-se com a cultura anglo-americana², questionando padrões de comportamento diversificados' • 'Manifestar, pela partilha de informação, ideias e opiniões, atitudes positivas perante universos culturais e sociais diferenciados – o(s) colega(s), o professor, a(s) cultura(s) alvo'

(Ministério da Educação, 1997: 9)

Appendix 9 – Objectives of subsection 4.3.2 of the syllabus

'Interpretar e produzir diferentes tipos de texto em apropriação progressiva de estratégias discursivas e de compensação'

(Ministério da Educação, 1996: 22)

Appendix 10 – Objectives of listening and speaking skills in the syllabus

Conteúdos – Produção e Interpretação de textos	PROCESSOS DE OPERACIONALIZAÇÃO	
	5º ano	6º ano
OUVIR / FALAR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Reconhece variações de pronúncia do mesmo fonema (BrE e AmE).' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Reconhece variações de pronúncia do mesmo fonema (BrE e AmE).'

(Ministério da Educação, 1996: 22, 25)

¹ Grã-Bretanha e Estados Unidos

Appendix 11 - Student's expected interaction in different social contexts of growing complexity

Conteúdos - Produção e Interpretação de textos	PROCESSOS DE OPERACIONALIZAÇÃO	
	INTERAGE ACTIVAMENTE EM CONTEXTOS SOCIAIS DIVERSIFICADOS DE COMPLEXIDADE CRESCENTE	
	5º ano	6º ano
OUVIR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Distingue o grau de familiaridade entre os intervenientes no discurso e adequa o registo.' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Distingue o grau de familiaridade entre os intervenientes no discurso e adequa o registo.'

(Ministério da Educação, 1996: 24)

Appendix 12 - Student's expected recognition of specific elements of the interaction between listener and speaker

Conteúdos - Produção e Interpretação de textos	PROCESSOS DE OPERACIONALIZAÇÃO	
	DESENVOLVE PRÁTICAS DIVERSAS DE OBSERVAÇÃO DO DISCURSO ORAL (EM CONTEXTOS DE COMPLEXIDADE CRESCENTE)	
	5º ano	6º ano
FALAR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Reconhece especificidades da interacção falante-ouvinte.' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Reconhece especificidades da interacção falante-ouvinte.'

(Ministério da Educação, 1996: 25)

Appendix 13 – General aims of subsection 4.3.3 of the syllabus

‘Identificar os sinais da cultura anglo-americana no âmbito da área de experiência deste programa; desenvolver atitudes positivas perante universos culturais e sociais diferenciados – o(s) colega(s), o professor, a(s) cultura(s)-alvo (Grã-Bretanha e Estados Unidos)’.

(Ministério da Educação, 1996: 32)

Appendix 14 – Aims of subsection 4.3.3 of the syllabus for the 5th and 6th grades

CONTEÚDOS: Eu e a minha comunidade: espaços e pessoas <i>versus</i> espaços e pessoas em comunidades anglo-americanas (Grã-Bretanha e Estados Unidos).	PROCESSOS DE OPERACIONALIZAÇÃO	
	5º ano	6º ano
	<p>EU/OS OUTROS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Quem sou/são.• Como sou/são.• Onde vivo/vivem. <p>A MINHA FAMÍLIA E A FAMÍLIA DOS OUTROS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Quem é• Como vive.• Como celebra.	<p>A MINHA COMUNIDADE/ A COMUNIDADE DOS OUTROS ESPAÇOS E PESSOAS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Como se organiza.• Como funciona.• Como se relaciona.

(Ministério da Educação, 1996: 32-33)

Appendix 15 – Topics of subsection 4.3.3 of the syllabus for the 5th grade

CONTEÚDOS		PROCESSOS DE OPERACIONALIZAÇÃO
		5º ANO
<p>Eu e a minha comunidade: espaços e pessoas versus espaços e pessoas em comunidades anglo-americanas (Grã-Bretanha e Estados Unidos da América).</p>	<p>(...)</p> <p>A MINHA FAMÍLIA E A FAMÍLIA DOS OUTROS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quem é. • Como vive. • Como celebra. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (...) • Descreve/compara vivências do quotidiano e verbaliza opinião: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rotinas - Actividades de lazer. - Hábitos alimentares. - Locais e actividades de férias. - Viagens - ... • Compara diferentes formas de estar e de viver • Descreve e compara formas de socialização familiares: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visitas. - Celebrações.

(Ministério da Educação, 1996: 33)

Appendix 16 – Topics of subsection 4.3.3 of the syllabus for the 6th grade

CONTEÚDOS		PROCESSOS DE OPERACIONALIZAÇÃO
		6º ANO
<p>Eu e a minha comunidade: espaços e pessoas versus espaços e pessoas em comunidades anglo-americanas (Grã-Bretanha e Estados Unidos da América).</p>	<p>A MINHA COMUNIDADE E A COMUNIDADE DOS OUTROS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Como se organiza. • Como funciona. • Como se relaciona. 	<p>CARACTERIZA O SEU UNIVERSO SÓCIO-CULTURAL E O DE OUTROS O(S) COLEGA(S), O PROFESSOR, A(S) CULTURA(S)-ALVO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ... • Identifica e descreve a rotina da escola <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Espaços. - Horários. - Funções. - ... • Relaciona com outras rotinas e expressa opinião • Descreve e compara celebrações/festas da escola: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Actividades culturais. - Actividades desportivas. - Dias especiais. - Visitas de estudo. • ... • Descreve e compara formas de socialização na rua/bairro/cidade: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Locais de encontro. - Festividades/celebrações. • ...

(Ministério da Educação, 1996: 33-34)

Appendix 17 – Syllabus expectations for the 2nd cycle, as far as culture is concerned

- ‘Compara e contrasta estereótipos e convenções sociais.
- Identifica o valor cultural de formas de comunicação não verbal.
- Reconhece semelhanças e diferenças entre o seu universo sócio-cultural e o dos outros.
- Relaciona as semelhanças e diferenças com padrões culturais próprios.
- Demonstra empatia em relação a diferentes formas de estar e de viver.’

(Ministério da Educação, 1996: 33-34)

Appendix 18 – Cultural aims of subsection 4.3.5 of the syllabus

CONTEÚDOS	PROCESSOS DE OPERACIONALIZAÇÃO
	6º ANO
<p>LEITURA EXTENSIVA</p> <p>No âmbito das seguintes áreas do uso da língua:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mundiuidências – suas e as dos outros. - Processos de aprendizagem - Atitudes em geral / funcionamento do(s) grupo(s), par/organização do trabalho. - O mundo da(s) cultura(s)-alvo. - O funcionamento da língua-alvo. - Avaliação de processos e produtos. 	<p>(...)</p> <p>DESENVOLVE PROCESSOS DE INTERACÇÃO COM O TEXTO DE LEITURA EXTENSIVA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ... • Constrói a sua <i>cultural awareness</i> na interação com o texto: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Identifica e compara referentes sócio-culturais (sua cultura/cultura-alvo).

(Ministério da Educação, 1996: 39)

Appendix 19 - *Listening and speaking* aims for the 7th, 8th and 9th grade students in the syllabus

CONTEÚDOS - PRODUÇÃO E INTERPRETAÇÃO DE TEXTOS	PROCESSOS DE OPERACIONALIZAÇÃO		
	7º ANO	8º ANO	9º ANO
OUVIR / FALAR	<p>Consciencializa a forma linguística de enunciados orais em contextos de complexidade crescente</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (...) • Reconhece e distingue variações de pronúncia do mesmo fonema (BrE/AmE) 	<p>Consciencializa a forma linguística de enunciados orais em contextos de complexidade crescente</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (...) • Reconhece e distingue variações de pronúncia do mesmo fonema (BrE/AmE) 	<p>Consciencializa a forma linguística de enunciados orais em contextos de complexidade crescente</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (...) • Reconhece e distingue variações de pronúncia do mesmo fonema (BrE/AmE)

(Ministério da Educação, 1997: 30, 35, 112, 116)

Appendix 20 – Cultural aims of reading skills for 3rd cycle students

CONTEÚDOS - PRODUÇÃO E INTERPRETAÇÃO DE TEXTOS	PROCESSOS DE OPERACIONALIZAÇÃO		
	7º ANO	8º ANO	9º ANO
LER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avalia os seus progressos como leitor: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (...) - Quanto ao entendimento de universos culturais diversos 		

(Ministério da Educação, 1997: 42, 123)

Appendix 21 – Main purpose of subsection 4.3.3 of the syllabus for the 3rd cycle

- ‘Relacionar-se com a cultura anglo-americana, questionando padrões de comportamento diversificados, no âmbito da área de experiência deste programa; manifestar, pela partilha de informação, ideias e opiniões, atitudes positivas perante universos culturais e sociais diferenciados – o(s) colega(s), o professor, a(s) cultura(s)-alvo (Grã-Bretanha e Estados Unidos)’.

(Ministério da Educação, 1997: 47)

- ‘Identificar sinais da cultura anglo-americana, questionando padrões de comportamento diversificados, no âmbito da área de experiência deste programa; manifestar, pela partilha de informação, ideias e opiniões, atitudes positivas perante universos culturais e sociais diferenciados – o(s) colega(s), o professor, a(s) cultura(s)-alvo (Grã-Bretanha e Estados Unidos)’.

(Ministério da Educação, 1997: 128)

Appendix 22 – Procedures of section 4.3.3 of the syllabus for the 7th grade (*Foreign Language I*)

CONTEÚDOS - IDENTIDADE / DIVERSIDADE		PROCESSOS DE OPERACIONALIZAÇÃO
		7º ANO (LEI)
<p>Eu e a minha comunidade: organização e formas de relacionamento versus organização e formas de relacionamento em comunidades anglo-americanas (Grã-Bretanha e Estados Unidos)</p>	<p>EU / OS OUTROS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quem sou/são • Como me relaciono / se relacionam <p>A COMUNIDADE ALARGADA: A MINHA / A DE OUTROS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Como se organiza • Como funciona 	<p>CARACTERIZA O SEU UNIVERSO SOCIOCULTURAL E O DE OUTROS O(S) COLEGA(S), O PROFESSOR, A(S) CULTURA(S) ALVO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Descreve e compara o seu agregado familiar com outros agregados familiares: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hábitos diários. - Formas de relacionamento. - Habitação. - Profissão/ocupação. - ... • Descreve tipos de habitação e relaciona-os com o meio envolvente • Identifica e descreve características sócio-culturais relacionadas com a habitação e o agregado familiar: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Condições de vida. - Co-habitação de gerações. - ... • Compara a estrutura da sua escola com a de outras escolas e expressa opinião: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Espaços. - Horários. - Currículos/qualificações. - Funções. - Formas de relacionamento. - ... • Analisa e compara celebrações da escola: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Actividades culturais. - Actividades desportivas. - Dias especiais. - Projectos escolares. - ... • Descreve e compara a escola e o meio envolvente: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Localização geográfica. - Instituições. - Serviços públicos. - ... • Descreve serviços na rua/bairro/cidade e expressa opinião: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lojas. - Centros culturais/desportivos.

(Ministério da Educação, 1997: 47-48)

Appendix 23 – Procedures of subsection 4.3.3 of the syllabus for the 7th grade (*Foreign Language II*)

CONTEÚDOS		PROCESSOS DE OPERACIONALIZAÇÃO
IDENTIDADE/DIVERSIDADE		7º ANO (LEII)
<p>Eu e a minha comunidade: organização e formas de relacionamento versus organização e formas de relacionamento em comunidades anglo-americanas (Grã-Bretanha e Estados Unidos)</p>	<p>EU / OS OUTROS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quem sou/são • Como sou/são • Onde vivo/ vivem 	<p>CARACTERIZA O SEU UNIVERSO SOCIOCULTURAL E O DE OUTROS – O(S) COLEGA(S), O PROFESSOR, A(S) CULTURA(S) ALVO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifica e enuncia: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nome. - Idade/aniversário. - Origem. - ... • Descreve e compara: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Traços físicos relevantes. - Formas de vestir. - Traços dominantes de personalidade. - ... • (...) • Identifica e distingue tipos de casa e localização relativas. • Identifica espaços da casa. <p style="text-align: center;">(...)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enumera e relaciona elementos da família restrita e alargadas. • Identifica e diferencia profissões/ocupações. • Descreve/compara vivências do quotidiano e verbaliza opinião: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rotinas. - Actividades de lazer. - Hábitos alimentares. - Locais e actividades de férias. - Viagens. - ... • Descreve a escola como espaço da comunidade alargada – locais de: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trabalho. - Apoio. - Tempos livres. - ... • Descreve a rotina da escola – organização de: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Espaços. - Horários. - Funções.
	<p>A MINHA FAMÍLIA E A FAMÍLIA DOS OUTROS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quem é • Como vive 	
	<p>A MINHA COMUNIDADE ALARGADA / A DE OUTROS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Como se organiza • Como funciona 	

(Ministério da Educação, 1997: 128-129)

Appendix 24 – Procedures of section 4.3.3 of the syllabus for the 8th grade (*Foreign Language I*)

CONTEÚDOS		PROCESSOS DE OPERACIONALIZAÇÃO
IDENTIDADE / DIVERSIDADE		8º ANO (LEI)
<p>Eu e a minha comunidade: organização e formas de relacionamento versus organização e formas de relacionamento em comunidades anglo-americanas (Grã-Bretanha e Estados Unidos)</p>	<p>A COMUNIDADE ALARGADA: A MINHA / A DE OUTROS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Como se caracteriza • Como se organiza • Como funciona • Como se relaciona 	<p>CARACTERIZA O SEU UNIVERSO SOCIOCULTURAL E O DE OUTROS – O(S) COLEGA(S), O PROFESSOR, A(S) CULTURA(S) ALVO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifica e descreve intervenções no funcionamento da comunidade: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rádio. - Imprensa escrita. - Associações cívicas. - ... • Analisa e compara formas de socialização na rua/bairro/cidade: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Locais de encontro. - Ocupação de tempos livres. - Festividades/celebrações - ... • Relaciona e interpreta formas de socialização diversificadas e expressa opinião. • Reconhece e descreve outras manifestações de comportamento social: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consumo. - <i>Wining and Dining</i>. - Moda - ... • Identifica e descreve características da região: Físicas. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demográficas. - Etnográficas. - Arquitectónicas. • Compara características de outras regiões e expressa opinião.

(Ministério da Educação, 1997: 48-49)

Appendix 25 – Procedures of section 4.3.3 of the syllabus for the 8th grade (*Foreign Language II*)

CONTEÚDOS		PROCESSOS DE OPERACIONALIZAÇÃO
IDENTIDADE / DIVERSIDADE		8º ANO (LEII)
<p>Eu e a minha comunidade: organização e formas de relacionamento versus organização e formas de relacionamento em comunidades anglo-americanas (Grã-Bretanha e Estados Unidos)</p>	<p>EU / OS OUTROS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Como vivo/vivem • Como me relaciono/se relacionam <p>A COMUNIDADE ALARGADA: A MINHA / A DE OUTROS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Como se caracteriza • Como se organiza • Como funciona • Como se relaciona 	<p>CARACTERIZA O SEU UNIVERSO SOCIOCULTURAL E O DE OUTROS – O(S) COLEGA(S), O PROFESSOR, A(S) CULTURA(S) ALVO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Descreve espaços da casa. • Distingue um espaço próprio e expressa preferência. • Descreve e compara o seu agregado familiar com outros agregados familiares: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hábitos diários. - Formas de socialização (...) - Formas de relacionamento - Habitação - Profissão/ocupação - ... <p style="text-align: center;">(...)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Descreve e compara celebrações da escola: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Actividades culturais. - Actividades desportivas. - Dias especiais. - Projectos escolares. ... • Compara a estrutura da sua escola com a de outras escolas e expressa opinião: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Espaços. - Horários. - Funções. - Formas de relacionamento. - Currículos/qualificações. - ... • Identifica e descreve a organização espacial da rua/bairro/cidade: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Direcções. - Localizações. - ... • Identifica e localiza serviços: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lojas. - Centros culturais/desportivos. - Instituições.

(Ministério da Educação, 1997: 129-130)

Appendix 26 – Procedures of section 4.3.3 of the syllabus for the 9th grade (*Foreign Language I*)

CONTEÚDOS		PROCESSOS DE OPERACIONALIZAÇÃO
IDENTIDADE / DIVERSIDADE		9º ANO (LEI)
<p>Eu e a minha comunidade: organização e formas de relacionamento versus organização e formas de relacionamento em comunidades anglo-americanas (Grã-Bretanha e Estados Unidos)</p>	<p>A COMUNIDADE ALARGADA: A MINHA / A DE OUTROS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Como se caracteriza • Como se organiza • Como funciona • Como se relaciona 	<p>CARACTERIZA O SEU UNIVERSO SOCIOCULTURAL E O DE OUTROS – O(S) COLEGA(S), O PROFESSOR, A(S) CULTURA(S) ALVO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifica sectores da estrutura socio-económica predominante na região. • Relaciona esta estrutura socio-económica com a oportunidade de emprego: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Profissões/ocupações dominantes. - Escolaridade/carreira profissional. - Primeiro emprego. - Desemprego. - ... • Relaciona estrutura socio-económica da região e qualidade de vida e expressa opinião. • Identifica e descreve práticas relacionadas com a saúde e bem-estar: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ritmos de vida. - Alimentação. - Cultura do corpo. - ... • Reconhece e exprime opinião sobre áreas-problema relacionadas com a saúde e bem-estar: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Malnutrição. - Deficiências. - Dependências. - ... • Relaciona novas tecnologias e transformações nos modos de estar e de viver: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Saúde e bem-estar. - Trabalho/lazer. - Comunicação. - ...

(Ministério da Educação, 1997: 49-50)

Appendix 27 – Procedures of section 4.3.3 of the syllabus for the 9th grade (*Foreign Language II*)

CONTEÚDOS		PROCESSOS DE OPERACIONALIZAÇÃO
IDENTIDADE / DIVERSIDADE		9º ANO (LEII)
<p>Eu e a minha comunidade: organização e formas de relacionamento versus organização e formas de relacionamento em comunidades anglo-americanas (Grã-Bretanha e Estados Unidos)</p>	<p>A COMUNIDADE ALARGADA: A MINHA / A DE OUTROS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Como se caracteriza • Como se organiza • Como funciona • Como se relaciona 	<p>CARACTERIZA O SEU UNIVERSO SOCIOCULTURAL E O DE OUTROS – O(S) COLEGA(S), O PROFESSOR, A(S) CULTURA(S) ALVO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Descreve serviços na rua/bairro/cidade e expressa opinião: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lojas. - Centros culturais/desportivos. - Instituições. • Descreve e compara formas de socialização na rua/bairro/cidade: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Locais de encontro. - Festividades/celebrações. - Ocupação de tempos livres. - Outras formas (consumo, moda, ...) • Identifica e relaciona formas de socialização diversificadas e expressa preferência. • Identifica e descreve características da região: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Físicas. - Demográficas. - Etnográficas. - Arquitectónicas. - ... • Compara características de outras regiões e expressa opinião. • Identifica sectores da estrutura socio-económica predominante na região. • Relaciona esta estrutura socio-económica com qualidade de vida. • Identifica práticas relacionadas com a saúde e bem-estar e exprime opinião: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ritmos de vida. - Alimentação. - Ambiente.

(Ministério da Educação, 1997: 131)

Appendix 28 – Competences expected in the syllabus for the 3rd cycle (*Foreign Language I*)

- ‘Compara e contrasta estereótipos e convenções sociais.
- Identifica o valor cultural de formas de comunicação não verbal.
- Reconhece padrões culturais próprios de universos diferenciados.
- Demonstra empatia em relação a diferentes formas de estar e de viver.
- Reconhece a diversidade enquanto parâmetro essencial à interpretação de universos sócio-culturais.
- Relaciona vivências, nos universos da família, da escola e da comunidade alargada, com a construção de uma identidade.’

(Ministério da Educação, 1997: 48, 49, 50)

Appendix 29 – Competences expected in the syllabus for the 3rd cycle (*Foreign Language II*)

- ‘Compara e contrasta estereótipos e convenções sociais.
- Identifica o valor cultural de formas de comunicação não verbal.
- Reconhece semelhanças e diferenças entre o seu universo sócio-cultural e o dos outros.
- Relaciona as semelhanças e diferenças com padrões culturais próprios.
- Demonstra empatia em relação a diferentes formas de estar e de viver.
- Reconhece, no universo da família, espaços de vivências estruturantes de uma identidade. – *7th grade LEII*
- Reconhece, no universo da família e da escola, espaços de vivências estruturantes de uma identidade. – *8th grade LEII*
- Reconhece, no universo da comunidade alargada, espaços de vivências estruturantes de uma identidade.’ – *9th grade LEII*

(Ministério da Educação, 1997: 129, 130, 131)