

INTERCULTURAL EXCHANGES IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE DIMENSION IN RETROSPECT: A CORPUS ANALYSIS OF RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS

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Abstract:

his paper aims at reassessing some evidence on EFL learners'/undergraduates' perceptions on intercultural exchanges in/between a foreign language (FL) and mother tongue (L1), grounded on an empirical research undertaken in Madeira (1998-1999). This involved a representative number of 12th form Humanities students (secondary school) and first- and second-year undergraduates taking English (Joint Honours) then. The process of interpretation of respondents' output borrows from a cross-disciplinary framework (Traugott and Pratt 1980, Woods et al. 1996) in a postmodern paradigm of applied research to which Foucault (1972), Bakhtin ([1935] 1990) and Barthes (1975) have left their contribution, while resorting to corpus analysis (Biber et al. 1998, Sinclair 2004). The analysis of some core lexemes, like text, knowledge, and meaning, and other collocations were singled out which have allowed for the identification of recurrent patterns (for example, "informative texts", "descriptive texts" and "cultural texts") and the meaning potential associated with them.

Among the issues under scrutiny, there will be a focus on both language/culture interface underpinning FL teaching/learning standards, and informants' affective identification with a foreign language/culture reinforced by the so-called representative cultural artefacts (Byram 1988: 41). In the discussion about the dialogic encounter of mother tongue/foreign languages, issues of culture, identity, discursive communities and practices will come to the fore.

Keywords: *Cultural awareness; Globalisation; "Same"/"The other"; Language and cultural identity(ies); Discursive practices; "Third culture".*