

Susana Isabel Brazuna Nassa

**Task-based Language Teaching
in the Portuguese Primary Education
Teachers' perceptions and practices**

**Master's in
Teaching English in Primary Education
(Ensino de Inglês no Primeiro Ciclo do Ensino Básico)
Report supervised by
Professor António Manuel Bernardo Lopes**



**Escola Superior de Educação e Comunicação de Faro
2018**

**Task-based Language Teaching
in the Portuguese Primary Education
Teachers' perceptions and practices**

Declaração de autoria do trabalho

Declaro ser a autora deste trabalho, que é original e inédito. Autores e trabalhos consultados estão devidamente citados no texto e constam da listagem de referências incluída.

(Susana Isabel Brazuna Nassa)

Copyright© Susana Isabel Brazuna Nassa, estudante da Universidade do Algarve. A Universidade do Algarve reserva para si o direito, em conformidade com o disposto no Código do Direito de Autor e dos Direitos Conexos, de arquivar, reproduzir e publicar a obra, independentemente do meio utilizado, bem como de a divulgar através de repositórios científicos e de admitir a sua cópia e distribuição para fins meramente educacionais ou de investigação e não comerciais, conquanto seja dado o devido crédito ao autor e editor respetivos.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	4
List of Figures and Tables	5
Abbreviations	6
Abstract	7
Resumo.....	8
Introduction	11
I – Literature review.....	15
1 - Teaching Young Learners.....	15
2 – Task-based Language Teaching.....	16
3 - Young Learners and TBLT.....	18
4 - Studies about teachers’ perceptions on TBLT	20
II – Research methodology	22
1 - Description of the study	22
2 - Method.....	22
3 - Sample population (Section 1).....	23
III – Data analysis	25
Section 2 - Teaching methods and practices	25
IV – Discussion	32
V – Conclusions	35
References	36
Appendix	40

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor, Professor Antonio Manuel Bernardo Lopes, who patiently assisted me throughout the research phase.

I wish to thank all my Professors and my Supervisor of the Supervised Teaching Practice, Sandrine Coelho, for all that I have learnt with them.

I wish to thank my dear sister Lúcia Tardão, who has inspired me as a teacher, to learn more about TBLT and to innovate.

I owe many thanks to my dear friend, Ana Rita Ferreira, who defied me, from the first day, to take part in this academic path.

I would like to thank all the friends and colleagues, who listened to me throughout this period and all the teachers, who collaborated in answering my questionnaire.

I am thankful to my beloved children, António and Miguel, who were patient enough to resist the long hours of my distant presence at home.

And finally, I would like to express my infinite gratitude to my beloved husband, Licínio, who has taught me the meaning of the words commitment and perseverance in every sense and who unconditionally supported me during all the master's degree.

List of Figures and Tables

Fig. 1: Bar chart displaying the frequency of use of different teaching methods and approaches.....	25
Fig. 2: Pie chart displaying the percentages of use of the Curricular Targets to plan the lessons	26
Fig. 3: Bar chart displaying the frequency of use of the textbook to plan the lessons	27
Fig. 4. Pie Chart displaying the importance given to communicative interaction	27
Fig. 5. Pie chart displaying the percentage related to the daily-based nature of the planned activities	28
Fig. 6. Bar chart displaying the reasons for teachers to apply TBLT in class	28
Fig. 7. Bar chart displaying the reasons for teachers not to apply TBLT in class	30
Table 1: Table displaying distribution of the number of responses to question 15: <i>I implement TBLT because...</i>	29
Table 2. Table displaying distribution of number of responses to question 16: <i>I do not implement TBLT because...</i>	30
Table 3. Table displaying the distribution of responses to question 17	31

Abbreviations

CEFR– Common European Reference Framework for Languages

CLT – Communicative Language Teaching

DL – Decree-law

EFL – English as a Foreign Language

EPOSTL - European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages.

Fig. – Figure

ICT – Information Communication Technology

TBLT – Task-based Language Teaching

YL – Young Learners

Abstract

Portugal has followed the example of several countries all over the world as far as multilingualism is concerned. The path to introduce English as a compulsory subject in Primary Education has been a long one, but now that third and fourth graders in Portugal have already got English as a Foreign Language (EFL), it is significant to analyse how this language is being taught in these levels. This study aims at presenting the main practices of teachers in primary schools and their understandings of Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT), which is considered as a holistic language teaching approach. To verify the level of acquaintance and use of TBLT in the teaching of English in Portuguese Primary Education, the methodology of this study is based on a simple quantitative analysis. Thus, a questionnaire was delivered to teachers through mailing lists and closed groups of social networks, throughout a period of one month. Despite the limited number of teachers who participated in the study, the fact that they are from different parts of the country contributes for having an overall representation of the teachers' practices within English language teaching in the primary level in Portugal. The results reveal that teachers tend to adhere to different teaching methods and approaches, such as the Communicative Method and the Audio-lingual Method. Furthermore, although teachers recognize the value of TBLT, the results demonstrate that are constraints that discourage them to apply it more frequently. This study displays similar outcomes to other international studies, mentioned in the literature review, which lead us to reflect on the relevance of adopting TBLT in EFL settings with young learners. As English was recently implemented as a compulsory subject in Primary school in Portugal and given the limitations of this study, the development of more research on EFL teaching techniques with young learners in Portugal is suggested. The same study could be complemented with variance tests and action-research could also be developed.

Key words

English as a foreign language; young learners; pedagogical practices; teachers' perceptions; teaching approaches; Task-based Language Teaching.

Resumo

Portugal seguiu o exemplo de vários países em todo o mundo no que diz respeito a políticas de multilinguismo. O caminho para introduzir o Inglês como disciplina obrigatória no Primeiro Ciclo do Ensino Básico (1.º CEB) tem sido longo, mas com o Decreto-Lei n.º 176/2014, de 12 de dezembro, o Currículo Nacional do Ensino Básico foi atualizado e contemplou a inclusão da disciplina de Inglês no Primeiro Ciclo, com um tempo mínimo de duas horas semanais nos terceiro e quarto anos (DR, 2015).

Agora que estes anos de escolaridade já têm Inglês como área curricular obrigatória, urge analisar como a língua está a ser ensinada nestes níveis. De entre as várias abordagens existentes, este estudo, inserido no contexto de Prática de Ensino Supervisionada do Mestrado de Ensino de Inglês do 1.º CEB, pretende sobretudo verificar quais as principais opções metodológicas e práticas adotadas dos docentes de Inglês neste nível e quais as perceções e práticas dos professores relativamente a Ensino de Línguas Por Tarefas (ELPT).

Durante a frequência do Mestrado, mais concretamente na unidade curricular de Iniciação à Prática Pedagógica, tive oportunidade de observar aulas de três professores distintos, e pude verificar que os três adotavam estratégias diversificadas, sendo que uma das professoras tinha uma maior tendência para desenvolver tarefas e projetos com os seus alunos. Aquando da minha Prática de Ensino Supervisionada, procurei também trabalhar com base em tarefas, tais como: apresentação de *role plays*; realização e troca de postais com os meus alunos e de outras escolas; elaboração de *posters* com respetiva apresentação e elaboração de convites de aniversário, com recurso às Tecnologias de Informação e Comunicação. Todas estas tarefas estavam planeadas de acordo com os temas e objetivos contemplados nas *Metas Curriculares Para o Ensino de Inglês de 1.ºCEB* (Bravo *et al.*, 2015). No entanto, o facto de ter observado professores a trabalhar de forma distinta e o facto da literatura apontar para a necessidade de se desenvolverem estudos sobre ELPT levou-me a desejar investigar mais sobre esta temática.

As principais questões que este estudo procura responder são três: quais são as principais abordagens de ensino utilizadas pelos professores de Inglês no Primeiro Ciclo de Ensino Básico em Portugal? os professores entendem a abordagem de ELPT? e em que medida os professores aplicam ELPT?

Desta forma, este estudo visa apresentar as principais opções dos docentes relativamente às abordagens de ensino de língua; procura apresentar perceções gerais dos

professores de Inglês sobre ELPT e pretende também verificar o grau de adesão ao ELPT, uma abordagem considerada como uma abordagem de ensino de língua holística.

A literatura a nível internacional sobre ELPT no ensino básico demonstra os professores, em geral, estão familiarizados com a conceção teórica da abordagem. No entanto, hesitam em aplicá-la, sobretudo devido à problemática da falta de tempo, pela dificuldade em gerir os comportamentos e a disciplina durante a realização das tarefas e, ainda, pelo facto dos alunos terem poucos conhecimentos linguísticos para realizar as tarefas.

Para verificar as opções e perceções dos professores de Inglês de 1.º CEB em Portugal, optou-se neste estudo por uma metodologia baseada em análise quantitativa simples de frequência, em detrimento de análise de variâncias. Foi elaborado um questionário na aplicação *Google Forms*, o qual foi enviado por email a professores de Inglês de 1.º CEB e partilhado em grupos fechados de professores em redes sociais. Os resultados foram conferidos com auxílio das folhas de cálculo Excel e convertidos em percentagens, quando necessário. Responderam ao questionário trinta e cinco professores, com idades compreendidas entre os 30 e 59 anos, e com formação de base diversificada.

Apesar do número limitado de professores que participaram no estudo, o facto de serem oriundos de diferentes partes do país, contribui para uma representação geral das práticas dos professores no ensino de língua inglesa no 1.º CEB em Portugal. A formação de base dos participantes é diversificada, tendo 54,3% habilitação para Inglês de terceiro ciclo e secundário. 71,4% apresenta experiência de ensino superior a cinco anos. Estes aspetos são relevantes pois, depreende-se que, com formação de base adequada e com experiência profissional, os docentes já tiveram contacto com diferentes abordagens e métodos de ensino de línguas. Assim, 42,8% dos professores adere ao Método Comunicativo em quase todas as aulas; 37,1% adere quase sempre ao Método Audio-lingual e a mesma percentagem adere em quase todas as aulas ao Método Direto. O ELPT é utilizado em quase todas as aulas por 28,5% e nenhum docente selecionou a opção “Nunca utilizo EPLT”. Existe a noção de que o ELPT deve ocupar algum espaço nas aulas de Inglês de 1.º CEB e prova disso é que, nenhum dos docentes questionados considera suficiente o trabalho com o manual, recorrendo algumas vezes ao ELPT. A frequência do recurso a ELPT pode, no entanto, ser dúbia, uma vez que o conceito de tarefa diverge. Isto porque o que alguns professores consideram ser tarefas, são entendidos como exercícios pelos teóricos, nomeadamente o preenchimento de espaços com verbos ou a elaboração de uma cópia.

Os aspetos mais relevantes que levam à implementação de ELPT são os seguintes: a abordagem permite trabalhar determinados temas de forma mais criativa; promove mais interação entre os alunos, bem como mais autonomia, confiança e motivação. Os principais constrangimentos que desencorajam a adoção mais frequente desta abordagem são: as turmas são demasiado grandes, o que dificulta a implementação e avaliação das tarefas; as Metas Curriculares para o Ensino de Inglês são demasiado extensas e ambiciosas para permitir o desenvolvimento de tarefas; a indisciplina dos alunos restringe a opção de trabalhar por tarefas e ainda o facto dos alunos não saberem trabalhar em grupo.

A implementação do Inglês como área curricular obrigatória é recente e aspetos logísticos, como a distribuição das aulas por horários inadequados e o facto de os professores terem de lecionar em diferentes contextos, muitas vezes condicionam as suas opções de planificação. Apesar dessas condicionantes, os professores portugueses, aparentemente, diversificam as suas estratégias e opções de abordagens, revelando, no entanto, à semelhança de outros estudos, uma adesão não muito elevada ao ELPT.

Este estudo procura ir ao encontro da sugestão de vários teóricos, que propõem mais investigação sobre ELPT em diferentes contextos e dadas as conclusões limitadas que se apresentam, sugere-se a elaboração de um estudo semelhante, com recurso a testes de análise de variância, e também o desenvolvimento de investigação-ação sobre ELPT no Inglês de 1.º CEB em Portugal.

Palavras-chave

Inglês como língua estrangeira; crianças; práticas pedagógicas; perceção dos professores; abordagens de ensino; Ensino de Línguas por Tarefas.

Introduction

Over the past decades there have been numerous policies around the world advocating the implementation of English teaching at a younger age (Lo Bianco, 2013; Nunan, 2013; Copland & Garton, 2014). In 2002, the Barcelona Council defended that European schools should embrace the multilingualism and cultural diversity of the continent, by promoting the learning of languages. Since then, English has been the first compulsory foreign language in fourteen European Countries and the most taught in the Member States. In most of these countries children can choose to learn English as a Foreign Language (EFL) from the age of six (Education *et al.*, 2012).

Portugal has followed the European tendency regarding the teaching of EFL. However, implementing English as a compulsory subject in Portuguese primary schools was a process that took about ten years. EFL was first officially introduced as an Extra Curricular Activity in primary Education in 2005. The Decree-Law no. 176/2014, of 12 December 2014, determined that English would be compulsory for third graders in 2015/2016 and for fourth graders in 2016/2017, with a minimum of two 60 minute-lesson a week (DR, 2015). This measure reflects how Portugal recognizes the importance of English as a lingua franca and as its domain is important for increasing skills among the younger generations (M.E., 2001).

Throughout a period of approximately ten years, EFL was taught in primary schools by many teachers who did not have specific training for teaching young learners, which resulted in pupils having uneven preparation (Couceiro, 2010; Nunes, 2011; Copland & Garton, 2014). Cameron (2001) highlights that the teacher of children needs to be “highly skilled to reach the children’s world”. Both the social and cognitive development of learners, as well as the linguistic, need to be considered when planning and working for young learners (Williams, 1998). Several studies reveal the necessity for training teachers in the pedagogy of primary education and didactics of language (Edelenbos *et al.*, 2006; Couceiro, 2010). In fact, Portuguese teachers were given the possibility of attending online and complementary courses, promoted by the British Council and by various Faculties, which provided them with essential tools to teach young learners more effectively. In my case, I enrolled in a master’s degree, being this study the final report of the Supervised Teaching Practice to obtain the professional qualification to teach EFL in Primary Education in Portugal. Throughout the theoretical period, I had the opportunity to enlarge my knowledge on English Didactics and I could confirm my

personal beliefs on different topics related to language teaching. One of those beliefs was that different theories of language and learning influence the focus on a method (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Methods help teachers bringing “conscious awareness of the thinking that underlies their actions” (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). These methods have been listed in several ‘how to’ books, recommending good practice in teaching YL.

Many of these books display essential references on theories of learning: Piaget’s Cognitivism; Vygotsky’s Social Constructivism, Bruner’s theory of *Scaffolding* and others like Bandura’s Social Cognitivism (Neriman, 2014; Costa, 2016). All the principles intrinsic to these learning theories contributed for the development of various language teaching approaches and methods. The one which perhaps influenced Task-based Language Teaching the most is Bruner’s theory of *Scaffolding*. This theory emerged as a part of social constructivist theory, because for Bruner the simple interaction between child and adult suggested by Vygotsky was insufficient for the learning development. The term *Scaffolding* means that adults are essential in monitoring the child’s learning process; they should deconstruct the task into smaller and simpler tasks, allowing the child to understand and to achieve its purpose.

The Task-based Language Teaching approach (TBLT), an approach which derives from the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), embraces many of the concepts of the Constructivist learning theories and considers the importance of meaning rather than form. The relevance given to meaning and authenticity are crucial when children learn a foreign language. Thus, TBLT comes as an approach with substantial features essential for teaching children. Chapter 7 of the Common European Reference Framework for Languages (CERF) (Council of Europe, 2001) highlights the importance of tasks in language learning, as a means of solving everyday problems. According to the EPOSTL (Newby, *et al.*, 2007), the process of language learning requires learning with peers, but also the development of autonomous work monitored by the teacher, as suggested in Bruner’s *Scaffolding*. Thus, it is important that the teacher promotes the development of tasks and / or projects. Concerning the teaching of English in Primary Education in Portugal Bento *et al.* (2005) suggest that, besides songs, rhymes, drama, etc, methodologies such as Total Physical Response and Task-based Learning are also adopted.

The reference document for English teaching in Portugal, called *Curricular Targets for English Teaching* (Bravo *et al.*, 2015), do not suggest the adoption of any specific teaching methodology or approach. However, the *Support Notebook for the*

Curricular Targets (Bravo et al, 2015) contains some recommendations that suggest the adoption of techniques which foster the development, not only of linguistic skills, but also of communicative and interactive skills. The accomplishment of diverse tasks, such as posters, comic strips and other types of peer work are strongly recommended. Bearing these suggestions in mind one is led to think: to what extent is TBLT being implemented in Portuguese Primary schools?

During my master's degree, practical subjects, such as Initiation to Teaching Practice, provided me with the opportunity to observe three different teachers working. Each one adopted different strategies and one of them tended to develop more practical tasks and projects than the other two. The latter would be my supervisor throughout the Supervised Teaching Practice and I would say that her dynamism influenced me in a positive way. As she promoted tasks and projects, I felt more confident to follow that path. My teaching practice was eclectic because it was influenced by the CLT, as TBLT. I recognize the influence of different theorists in the unit and task plans. The tasks contained the following steps: pre-task; task preparation (Willis, 1996), with different enabling tasks (Estaire & Zañon, 1994), pedagogical tasks and communicative tasks (Nunan, 1991) and the post-task (Willis, 1996) or follow-up (Cameron, 2001), when the pupils presented or displayed their final products.

Throughout the master's period, I have also realized that there are not many studies in Portugal which reveal teachers' understandings and perceptions on the TBLT approach. Carless (2012) suggests the need for more reports on the implementation of TBLT from different EFL settings. So, I will seek to answer the following questions:

1. What are the teaching approaches used by English teachers in Primary Education in Portugal?
2. Do teachers understand the concept of task, regarding the Task-Based Language Teaching approach?
3. To what extent do teachers apply Task Based Language Teaching?

The research methodology to define the answers to the questions suggested is based on a simple quantitative data analysis of inquiries. The questionnaires were developed in Google Forms; they were sent through selected teachers' emails and through closed group of social networks.

In the literature review I explain what is meant by “Young Learners” and how they learn better. TBLT and the concept of task are described and then I highlight some logical associations between “YL and TBLT”. Finally, the last section of the literature review aims at presenting the main conclusions of international studies on teachers’ perceptions and practices of TBLT (Carless, 2003, 2004, 2012; Ilin *et al.*, 2007; Mahdavi; 2017 and Lopes, 2018).

The data analysis displays similarities and differences between the perceptions and practices of teachers from all over the world and the Portuguese reality, regarding TBLT.

The conclusions taken from this research may contribute to a brief characterization of the pedagogical practice of English in Primary Education in Portugal, as well as the teachers’ perceptions on TBLT in this teaching level.

I – Literature review

1 - Teaching Young Learners

To learn about the suitable teaching methodologies for young learners, it is essential to understand what is meant by “Young Learners” (YL). This term refers to children from five or six years of age, to eleven or twelve years of age (Philips, 2000). According to Piaget, (cited in Neriman, 2014) children are active learners who go through different developmental stages. From five to eleven or twelve years old, children go through several stages that influence their capacity to focus and to perceive reality and abstract concepts. Throughout the different stages, YL construct knowledge from actively interacting with the physical environment and exploring the objects around them.

In what language learning is concerned, Brumfit (in Brumfit *et al.*, 1991) states that children hold an advantageous position, for they are learning all the time, without the responsibilities and worries of adults. Children’s brains are more adaptable before puberty than after, and the acquisition of languages is possible without self-consciousness at an early age (Brumfit *et al.*, 1991; Cameron, 2001). Brumfit refers that children are better motivated than adults, because they have fewer negative attitudes to foreign cultures and languages than adults. In addition, the author says that “children’s language learning is more closely integrated with real communication, because it depends more on the immediate physical environment than does adult language.”

A young learner may be in a more positive position to learn, as suggested by Brumfit, but teachers should not neglect the stages defined by Piaget. When planning their lessons, teachers should consider that the attention span of children is not as high as the older students’ and that they are active learners and meaning-seekers. In addition to Piaget’s views, Vygotsky’s theory of Constructivism states that children build their knowledge when more knowledgeable people mediate learning by talking while playing, reading stories, and asking. Thus, for Vygotsky a classroom is a place where learning occurs in an interactive and very dynamic way. When teaching YL, the educator should consider the latter and also Bruner’s theory of *Scaffolding*, since the way teachers create interest and model tasks are very important in a child’s learning process (Bruner cited in Neriman, 2014 and in Costa, 2016).

For the reasons mentioned above, the job of a YL’s language teacher may be more demanding than the job of teachers in other levels (Cameron, 2001). Teaching English to YL involves more than merely language teaching (Williams, 1998). Besides being

sensitive to the children's needs, the EFL teachers of young learners must have the ability to provide dynamic, creative lessons and plan tasks to motivate students, so that they can concentrate and get mentally involved in class (Cameron, 2001). Peck (2001) sets out the following principles to guide these educators:

Focus on meaning, not correctness.... Focus on the value of the activity, not the value of the language... Focus on collaboration and social development...
Provide a rich context, including movement, the senses, objects and pictures and a variety of activities... Teach ESL holistically, integrating the four skills...
Treat learners appropriately in light of their age and interests...
Treat language as a tool for children to use for their own social and academic ends...
Use language for authentic communication, not as an object of analysis.

In conclusion, young learners are meaning-seekers who learn best by doing (McCloskey, 2002) and who need adequate monitoring from adults when developing tasks. Core features of TBLT are, in fact, the importance of meaning and of performing tasks. Thus, it is inevitable to associate YL's language teaching with TBLT.

2 – Task-based Language Teaching

Throughout History, the field of teaching foreign languages has witnessed many changes. These changes show the will of applied linguists, researchers and methodologists to seek for more effective ways of teaching modern languages (Neriman, 2014). Until the 1970s the most common methods were the Grammar-translation Method, the Direct Method (exclusive use of the target language) and the Audio-lingual Method (focus on the repetition of chunks). Then from 1970s to 1980s alternative teaching methods emerged, such as Total Physical Response (teachers give action commands to learners), Silent Way (teachers should be silent, and learners encouraged to speak and solve problems) or Suggestopedia (memorization of extensive dialogues; vocabulary lists and grammar point analysis).

However, in the 1970s educators started to question if the goal of communicating in the target language was being achieved, since students could produce sentences accurately in class, but could not communicate efficiently outside the classroom. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, there was a shift from a structure and teacher-centred approach to a more learner-centred Communicative Approach (Larsen-Freeman, 2000) and consequently to the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) methodologies. CLT covered the principles of communication (mainly through communicative functions), but

it also covered the principles of task and meaningfulness, which are common principles of the Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) (Neriman, 2014).

TBLT was first suggested by Prabhu in his Bangalore research report in 1982. He believed that students learn more effectively when their minds are focused on the task, rather than on the language they are using (Prabhu, 1987, cited in Littlewood, 2004). TBLT is characterized as an approach, rather than a methodology, since it is multifaceted and it can be linked with other approaches and methods (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). According to these authors, TBLT is motivated by a theory of learning and not of language. Nunan (1991) outlines five characteristics of a task-based approach on learning languages: an emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language; the introduction of authentic texts (teaching materials) into the learning situation; the provision of opportunities for learners to focus not only on the language, but also on the learning process itself; an enhancement of the learner's own personal experiences as important contributing elements to classroom learning and an attempt to link classroom language learning with activation outside the classroom.

In defining the concept of task, Nunan (1989) points out that a task is a “piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form” and Skehan (1998) adds the following features: “there is some sort of relationship to comparable real-world activities; task completion as some priority and the assessment of task is in terms of outcome”.

In lessons where TBLT is applied, the task plays a central role, the students have autonomy to accomplish it and the teacher just monitors their work (Estaire & Zañon, 1994). The students have an active role and learn by doing and through the interaction among the peers. In fact, Ellis (2006) points out the following: the overall purpose of task-based methodology is to create opportunities for language learning and skill development through collaborative language-building.

In addition to these definitions, it is also suggested by Nunan (2004) that tasks can be divided into two different types: real world tasks and pedagogical tasks. The real-world tasks are rehearsals of daily communicative situations, but the pedagogical tasks, which have a psycholinguistic basis, do not necessarily correspond to real-world tasks and can be used in cases where the learners do not have specific needs outside the classroom. Estaire & Zañon (1994) also make a distinction between communicative tasks and enabling tasks, which would correspond to the concept of pedagogical tasks according to

Nunan, exercises, according to Ellis or even the activities that belong to the task preparation, according to Willis (1996).

According to Willis & Willis (2007) tasks vary in terms of complexity. The simplest tasks are listing, enumerating, classifying, matching. The most complex ones are: solving problems and making projects. In TBLT it is not only the linguistic development that is at stake, but also the fact that the language is used to accomplish a task.

The way teachers perceive and apply tasks has led many researchers to develop numerous studies and according to Bygate (2015) there are three main approaches to the adoption of TBLT in language education: the “task-supported” teaching, which means that tasks are imported into structure-based programmes to provide additional communicative use, extending the existing language-focused syllabus; the “task-referenced” approach, in which tasks are used as a way of defining the target abilities which students are intended to develop by the end of each unit or scheme of work and the “task based” approach, in which the curriculum of the programme and the pedagogic procedures within it are all designed around tasks.

Bygate (2015) explains that a “task-supported” approach is likely to be the most practicable introduction of TBLT. If the way teachers perceive and implement TBLT with young learners tends to vary, Bygate’s opinion on the adoption of a “task-supported” approach may correspond to the reality in this teaching level.

3 - Young Learners and TBLT

It is more complex to define a real task in the YL’s context rather than in other levels of teaching, since many of the children do not speak the language outside the classroom. Willis (1996) suggests an adaptation of the task application for young learners that follows this structure: first, the child is exposed to the language; secondly, the *task cycle* may be composed by several tasks; thirdly, the usual planning and report are omitted or shortened, since the learners still struggle to speak and write. However, this sequence suggested by Willis is like a sequence of activities that can also be found in Presentation Practice and Production (PPP), with the exception that the language focus is reduced. According to Willis, given the short attention span of children, it is important that their lessons have a great variety of activities.

Cameron (2001) admits not to be concerned with the theoretical meaning of task saying that “tasks can be defined as language activities but that not all activities can be

named as tasks". Apart from the theoretical definitions of tasks, Cameron considers that, most important for the child is that a classroom task should have a clear purpose and meaning, and the teacher should clearly define the learning goals of the task. The author summarises the features of classroom tasks as having: coherence and unity for learners (from topic, activity and /or outcome); meaning and purpose for learners; clear language goals; a beginning and end and active involvement on the part of learners. Cameron also suggests that any task, must be divided in three stages: preparation; core activity and follow up, which correspond with the pre-, while and post- stages and which have been used for many years with the different language skills. Consequently, according to Cameron, it is advisable to choose from a range of activities that are appropriate to the children's age and to their cultural background. Duran and Ramaut (2006) also refer to this matter:

Tasks for absolute beginners ideally feature a familiar world they have in common. Using "worlds" that are familiar to some (...) and unfamiliar to others may lead to misunderstandings, intercultural miscommunication and prejudices.

Despite the numerous suggestions and terminology suggested by the different theorists, they all seem to agree that the tasks should be appropriate to the children's features. This means that choosing suitable tasks for YL requires teachers to be familiar with the interests of the group of children. It requires that the teacher is acquainted with a vast number of different tasks which promote not only the language learning, but also cultural aspects.

YL are more likely to learn language through doing things, so there are several tasks that can be developed. Bearing in mind suggestions made by Willis (1996), Cameron (2001) and Richards (2018) and the goals defined by the *Portuguese Curricular Targets for English Teaching* (Bravo *et al.*, 2015) suitable tasks for YL could be: role-plays on the topic Introductions; writing invitations for birthday parties; making posters; creating comic strips; presenting a pet; drawing and describing a perfect house.

Most of the suggested tasks require the execution of enabling tasks that allow the YL to gain confidence throughout the learning process. Furthermore, *scaffolding* is a key-word in the TBLT approach, because although it is a learner-centred approach, the teacher, who plays the role of a monitor, should give the child support, showing a model task, supplying or repeating language chunks, when necessary, and giving positive reinforcement to the learner, as Cameron (2001) alludes:

In trying to strike a balance between demands and support, we can apply what cognitive scientists call “the Goldilocks principle”: a task that is going to help the learner learn more language is one that is demanding but not too demanding, that provides support but not too much support. The difference between demands and support creates the space for growth and produces opportunities for learning.

The diverse perceptions teachers hold regarding the tasks may lead to different ways of applying TBLT. In order to verify such assumption, it is relevant to proceed to the analysis of studies on this matter from different EFL settings.

4 - Studies about teachers’ perceptions on TBLT

The analysis of several international studies displays “a bipolarity between teachers’ increase of awareness and a difficulty of implementation [of TBLT]” (Agolli, 2016). This means that teachers’ descriptions reveal clear understanding of key elements of TBLT, such as “focus on meaning” and “learner involvement” (Ilin *et al.*, 2007; Mahdavi-rad, 2017; Lopes, 2018), but that in practice their perceptions do not precisely match their practices.

Some teachers hold a positive attitude towards TBLT (Carless, 2003) and tend to point out the following positive aspects of TBLT: the approach is suitable to promote small group work, creativity and interaction skills; it encourages learners’ intrinsic motivation and it promotes autonomy (Mahdavi-rad, 2017).

Nevertheless, classroom observation reveals that teachers either end up by adopting their own understandings of task-based approach, or by performing activities that focus on form rather than on meaning (Carless, 2003 and 2004; Ilin *et al.*, 2007; Mahdavi-rad, 2017). In fact, the positive perceptions teachers have of TBLT do not seem to correspond to their actual practices and teachers do come across constraints that deprive them from adhering to TBLT more frequently. Teachers admit that they feel difficulty in assessing learners’ task-based performance and that they lack instruction to apply TBLT; they also agree that learners themselves are not used to work within TBLT (Mahdavi-rad, 2017). Another issue is related to the time available to plan and implement the tasks, which is considered insufficient (Carless, 2003; Mahdavi-rad, 2017). Teachers understand that the topics of the textbooks are not always in consonance with the design of tasks, which demands more creativity and time for planning. Furthermore, the language proficiency of the students is seen as a barrier to carry out communicative tasks and the teachers say that students end up using their mother tongue rather than English and

discipline tensions arise more frequently during task completion, which makes the monitor's work more complicated. (Carless, 2003 and 2004; Lopes, 2018).

In conclusion, although teachers have a clear understanding of TBLT and positive attitudes towards it, the approach is not being thoroughly applied and there are still negative views about implementing it.

II – Research methodology

1 - Description of the study

The implementation of different language teaching methods in the classroom depends mostly on the teachers' decisions. Thus, it is significant to analyse how they perceive the teaching approaches, in order to determine whether they hold positive or negative beliefs about them and to understand to which approaches they adhere.

The objectives of this study can be divided into three different categories: methodological, conceptual and practical. As far as the methodological aspects are concerned, the objectives are:

1. To understand what methods and approaches teachers most value;
2. To understand the role of the *Curriculum Targets* in the teaching practice.

Regarding the conceptual point of view, the study is aimed to:

1. Determine how well teachers are acquainted with the concept of task.

From the practical point of view, the objectives are:

1. To enumerate the most significant teaching approaches used by teachers of English in Portuguese Primary Education.
2. To identify the main difficulties that teachers face, regarding the implementation of TBLT.

2 - Method

The purpose of this study was to understand the overall teachers' perceptions of teaching methods, particularly of TBLT and to verify their main teaching practices. Surveys are a useful tool to assess attitudes and opinions, as well as to describe behaviours (Hutchinson, 2004; Ponto, 2015). In order to accomplish the objectives of the research, a simple descriptive quantitative design, based on frequencies, was adopted. The survey was designed in Google Forms (see appendix); the data were analysed using an Excel spreadsheet to help calculate the percentages. The instrument was delivered in Portuguese and posted in mailing lists of different schools and in teachers' closed groups of social media. The participants' responses were collected over a period of one month, from April to May 2018.

The survey comprised three sections. The first one is about the teacher's workplace (1), age group (2), gender (3), qualifications (4), current professional situation

(5), experience in teaching young learners (6), years of teaching practice (7) and other subjects/levels they also teach (8/9). The second section comprised questions related to the teaching methods and practices. With the first question in this section (10) it is possible to verify the frequency teachers adhere to different teaching approaches and methods; question 11 shows if teachers follow or not the *Curricular Targets for English Teaching* (Bravo *et al.*, 2015) set for English teaching. Question number 12 is related to the frequency of use of the textbook, regarding the lesson planning. When the teachers are asked: do the planned activities promote communicational interaction? (13) and do the planned activities report to every day communication situations? (14) there is an intention of verifying if teachers are aware of the importance of interaction and of performing every day communicative tasks, which are key elements of TBLT. A third section comprises two multiple-choice grids, which reveal the reasons for teachers applying (15) and for not applying (16) TBLT in classes and a multiple-choice grid with examples of tasks and other activities.

3 - Sample population (Section 1)

The data collected in Section 1 of the survey contributed to the characterization of the sample population. A total of 35 individuals participated in the survey, 94.3% of the participants were female (Question 3). From the 35 respondents only 45.7% indicated the city where they currently work; these answers were given by teachers from Porto (1), Marinha Grande (1), Póvoa do Varzim (1), Castelo Branco (1), Santarém (1), Lisbon (1), Loures (1), Sintra (3), Torres Vedras (1), Entroncamento (1), Moita (1), Abrantes (1), Évora (1), Faro (1) and São Brás de Alportel (1). So, this sample group comprises respondents from the North, Centre and South of Portugal. The age groups (question 2) were distributed as follows: 48.6% of the individuals were above 40 between 40 and 50 years old; 42.9% were between 30 and 40 years old and 8.6% were between 50 and 60 years old. It is interesting to notice that, among the 35 respondents, no teachers were below 30 years old. The teaching qualifications are the following: 60% of the respondents have a Postgraduate Degree in Education; 25.7% have a Masters' Degree; 11.4% detain a Degree and a Complementary training to teach English to Young Learners and the remaining percentage (2.9%) of the respondents have a PhD. 64.7% of the teachers who answered hold a permanent teaching position whereas 36.3% of the teachers hold temporary teaching positions. 57.1% of these teachers have more of 5 years of experience teaching English in Primary Education; 40% has more than two years of Experience in

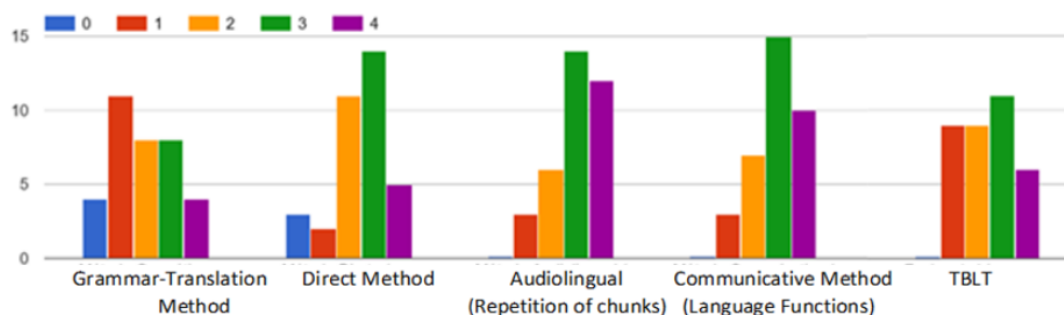
this teaching level and only 2.9% has up to one year of experience teaching English in primary school. However, when questioned about the overall time of teaching experience, 28.6% of the teachers have up to twenty years of teaching experience; 25.7% of the teachers have up to 10 years of teaching experience; 17.1% of the teachers have more than 20 years of teaching experience and 28.6% of the teachers have up to five years of teaching experience. The fact that 28.6% of the teachers have more than ten years of teaching experience leads us to believe that they started to teach other subject rather than English in primary schools and in fact, question number 8 shows that 54.3% of the teachers are qualified to teach English in middle and secondary school (Group 330); 20.7% are teachers qualified to teach English in pre-middle school (ages 10-11, group 220); 20% of the teachers are qualified Primary school teachers and 22.9% of the teachers teaching English in primary schools have a qualification to teach other subjects and level rather than EFL to young learners, like Portuguese, German, Special Needs and Primary School.

III – Data analysis

Section 2 - Teaching methods and practices

Fig. 1: Bar chart displaying the frequency of use of different teaching methods and approaches

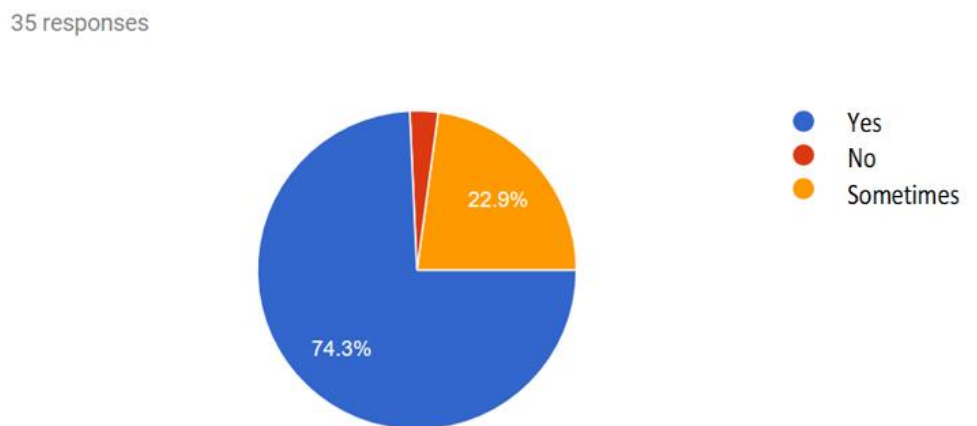
How frequently do you adhere to the following methods?



According to this chart, the Communicative Method is the most frequently used by the teachers; 42.8% of the respondents use the Communicative Method in almost every lesson; 28.5% say they use it in all the lessons; 20% do not use this method frequently and 5.7% almost never adhere to it. The Direct Method is often used by 40% of the respondents and sometimes used by 34.2% of the respondents; it is used in every lesson by 14.2% of the teachers and 8.5% of them almost never use this method in class. 37.1% of the respondents use the Audiolingual Method in every lesson and 40% in almost every lesson. 17.1% of the respondents use it sometimes and 8.5% almost never use it; in fourth place comes TBLT; 28.5% of the respondents say adhere to this approach in almost every lesson; 25.7% of the respondents use it sometimes and 25.7% almost never apply it; 17.1% of the participants use it in every lesson. 11.4% of the respondents never use the Grammar-Translation Method, but the same percentage of respondents adheres to this method in every lesson; 11 answered that they use it seldom; seven respondents use it frequently and seven also use it in almost every lesson. Although TBLT is not the

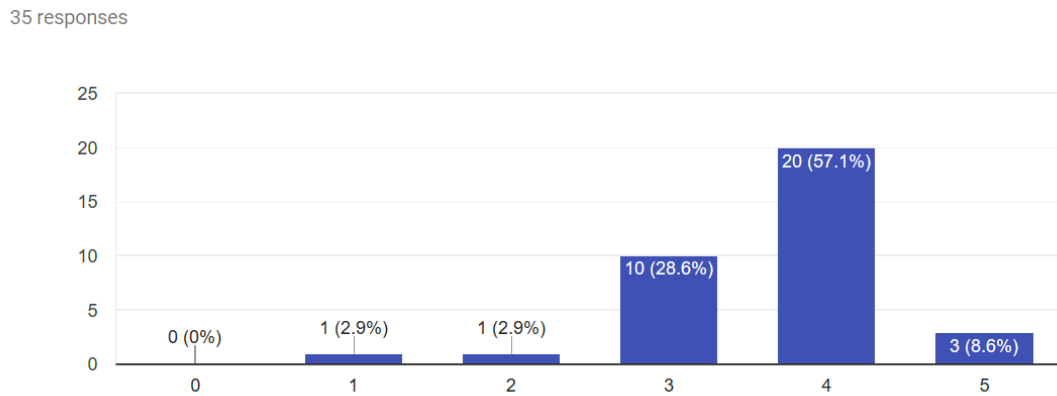
approach most significantly used, it is interesting to notice that no one answered that TBLT is never used in class.

Fig. 2: Pie chart displaying the percentages of use of the Curricular Targets to plan the lessons.



The *Curricular Targets for English Teaching* (Bravo *et al.*, 2015) is the Portuguese reference Document for English teaching in Portugal. Textbooks follow the contents suggested in this document and teachers analyse it, in order to check which items are to be taught in different school years. According to this pie chart 74.3% of the respondents use the Curricular Targets to plan their lessons. 22.9% of the teachers use this document sometimes and only 2.8% of the teachers never avail themselves of this document to plan their lessons.

Fig. 3: Bar chart displaying the frequency of use of the textbook to plan the lessons.

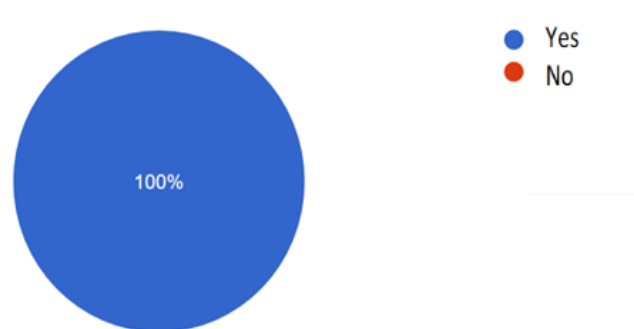


Among the 35 respondents, 57.1% of the teachers use the textbook to plan almost all their lessons; 28.6% of the respondents use the textbook very often; 8.6% of the teachers use it to plan all the lessons and only 2.9% uses it sometimes; 2.9% of the respondents use it rarely and no teacher admitted never to use the textbook to plan the lessons. This means that the teachers rely a lot on the textbook to plan their lessons.

Fig. 4. Pie Chart displaying the importance given to communicative interaction.

Do you foresee activities that promote interaction when you plan your lessons?

35 responses

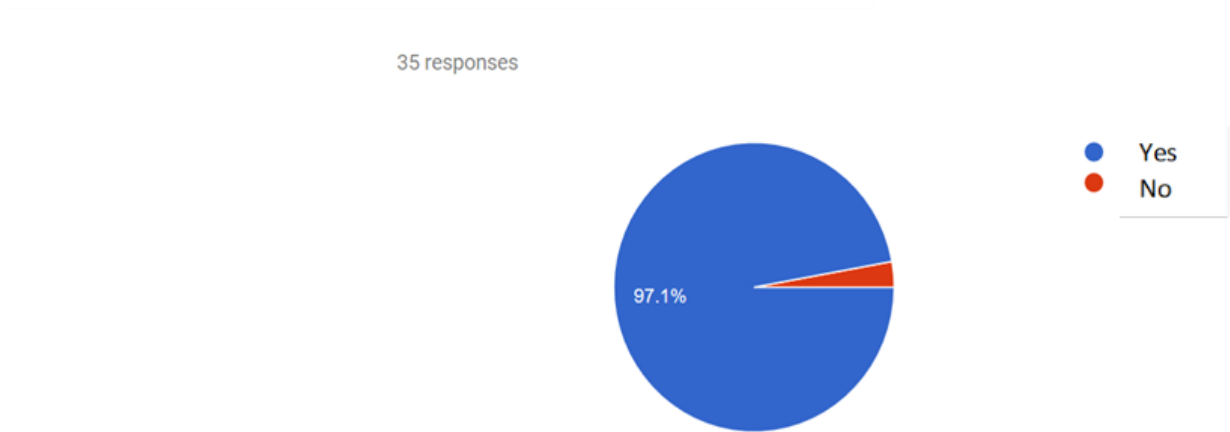


The main aim of this question is related to a specific point: to verify whether the teachers recognize the importance of interaction, which reinforces the question related to the teaching methods, mainly on what the principles of the Communicative Method and of TBLT are concerned. 100% of the teachers foresee the application of activities that promote communicative interaction. Thus, even though not all the teachers adhere to the

Communicative Method or to TBLT, this means that apart from the method they admit to use, they do not ignore the importance of communication principles, which are intrinsic to the referred methods.

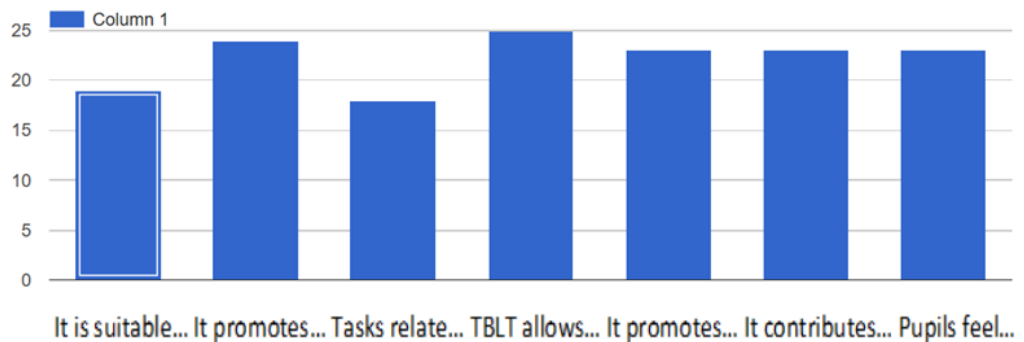
Fig. 5. Pie chart displaying the percentage related to the daily-based nature of the planned activities.

Do the activities done in class refer to daily situations?



According to Nunan (1991) real-world tasks are rehearsals of daily communicative situations, but the pedagogical tasks, which have a psycholinguistic basis, do not necessarily correspond to real-world tasks and can be used in cases where the learners do not have specific needs outside the classroom. According to this chart, 97.1% considers that the activities done in class refer to daily situations.

Fig. 6. Bar chart displaying the reasons for teachers to apply TBLT in class.



The highest number of people who answered to this question was 24, which corresponds to a percentage of 68.5% of the respondents. 68.5% of the respondents admit they implement TBLT because it is an approach that allows pupils to work in a more creative way. 65.7% of the respondents admit that this approach promotes more interaction amongst pupils. 62.8% of the respondents consider that TBLT promotes the pupils' autonomy; the same percentage of respondents admits that it contributes to increase the pupils' confidence in the use of the language. 62.8% teachers also admit that pupils feel more motivated to make small projects that to do exercises from the textbook. 51.4% of the teachers acknowledge that TBLT is suitable to learn specific competences and the same percentage of teachers recognize that tasks relate more to daily communicative situations.

Table 1: Table displaying distribution of the number of responses to question 15: *I implement TBLT because...*

	No. of Respondents	Percentage of respondents
It is suitable to learn/ develop specific competences.	18	51.4%
It promotes more interaction among pupils.	23	34.2%
Tasks relate more to daily situations.	18	51.4%
TBLT allows pupils to work on specific topics in a more creative way.	24	68.5%
It promotes more pupils' autonomy.	22	62.8%
It contributes to increase the pupils' confidence in the use of the language.	22	62.8%
Pupils feel more motivated creating small projects than doing exercises in their textbook.	22	62.8%

Fig. 7. Bar chart displaying the reasons for teachers not to apply TBLT in class.

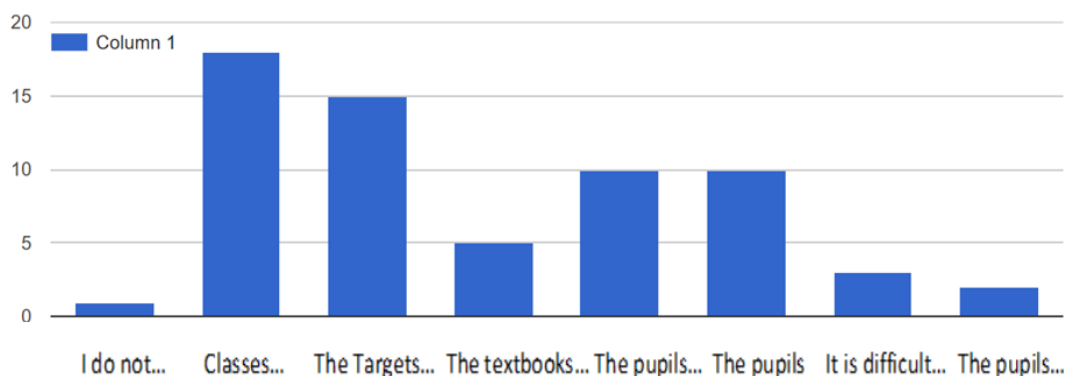


Table 2. Table displaying distribution of number of responses to question 16: *I do not implement TBLT because...*

	No. of respondents	Percentage of respondents
I do not understand the approach.	1	2.8%
The classes are too big to implement and assess the tasks.	17	48.5%
The Curricular Targets are too ambitious, and the time is not enough.	17	48.5%
The textbooks do not suggest adequate tasks.	5	14.2%
The pupils' indiscipline makes it difficult to accomplish the tasks.	10	28.5%
Pupils do not know how to work in group.	9	25.7%
It is difficult to plan diverse and stimulating tasks.	3	8.5%
Pupils seem to prefer doing exercises from the textbook.	2	5.7%
Working with the textbook is enough.	0	0%

The main reasons for teachers not to implement TBLT are related to the size of the classes and the extension of the syllabus regarding the limited time for teaching. 48.5% of the teachers answered that the classes are too big to implement TBLT and 48.5% answered that the *Curricular Targets* are too ambitious and the time scarce. 28.5% of the respondents say that the classes are too big implement and assess the tasks and 25.7% chose the option related to the pupils' indiscipline as an issue to implement TBLT. It is relevant to highlight that no teacher answered that working with the textbook is enough.

Table 3. Table displaying the distribution of responses to question 17.

What are tasks?	Yes		No		Didn't answer	
Filling in a table with verbs or degrees of adjectives	5	14.2%	22	62.8%	7	20%
Creating a comics strip.	28	80%	2	5.7%	4	11.7%
Colouring a picture.	17	48.5%	14	40%	3	8.5%
Repeating language chunks.	17	48.5%	15	42.8%	2	5.7%
Producing a short video about places in the city.	26	74.2%	4	11.4%	4	11.4%
Listening to a story.	15	42.8%	17	48.5%	2	5.7%
Associating pictures to words.	18	51.4%	15	42.8%	1	2.8%
Making an invitation for an event.	26	74.2%	5	14.2%	3	8.5%
Word salad	14	40.%	16	45.7%	4	11.4%
Exchanging emails with pupils from other countries.	26	74.2%	4	11.4%	4	11.4%
Oral presentation.	22	62.8%	9	25.7%	1	2.8%
Role playing a dialogue.	28	80%	6	17.1%	0	0%
Gap filling (with words or correct verb tenses)	9	25.7%	20	57.18%	5	14.2%
Reading a text silently	9	25.7%	19	54.2%	6	17.1%
Making a poster	26	74.2%	4	11.4%	4	11.4%
Making a questionnaire	23	65.7%	6	17.1%	5	14.2%
Copying a text	8	22.58	19	54.2%	7	20%

The percentages above clearly demonstrate that the majority of teachers are able to identify tasks, being *Role playing a task* the most select answer, with a total of 80% of respondents and the least selected option *filling a grid with verbs or degrees of adjectives*, which actually would be considered as an exercise.

IV – Discussion

The sample group reveals that most of the teachers of EFL in primary schools detain a degree in English Language, contrary to what happens in other European countries (Edelenbos *et al.*, 2006). It also reveals that, since Couceiro's study (2010), there seem to be more qualified English teachers in the Portuguese Primary Schools. Furthermore, the figures show that a high percentage of teachers have more than five years of teaching experience. The adequate qualifications and the experience of teachers may justify the fact that they are acquainted and make use of the different teaching methods and approaches.

The results show that most teachers adhere to the Communicative Method and that TBLT comes fourth. 42.8% of the respondents admit that they use CLT it in almost every lesson, against 28.6% who admit that they seldom use TBLT.

74.3% of the teachers admitted basing their lesson plans in the *Curricular Targets for English Teaching* (Bravo *et al.*, 2015) which reveals a cohesion between this practice and their answers regarding their choices of teaching approaches. What is meant by this is the following: regarding the spoken interaction, the *Curricular Targets* enumerate a series of simple language functions that the pupils should be able to use, such as: greeting, introducing themselves, talking and asking about preferences, asking for something or for information. Thus, it is then logical that 28.5% of the teachers adopt the Communicative Method in every lesson and 42.8% of them use it in almost every lesson.

As far as the spoken production is concerned, the *Curricular Targets for English Teaching* (Bravo *et al.*, 2015) set numerous goals that include terms as “to repeat; to pronounce; to intonate” and these terms are closely related to the Audiolingual Method, which 44.1% of the respondents admitted using in almost every lesson. This number of respondents is understandable because, according to the behaviouristic theories, children need a great amount of repetition to assimilate the new sounds, words and structures they are learning. The *Curricular Targets for English Teaching* is a document mainly based on the descriptors taken from the CEFR, but it does not make any suggestions about the way teachers can plan their lesson for students to achieve the presented goals. So, this leads us to think about two different aspects: either the teachers rely mainly on their textbooks to prepare their lessons, or they try to combine the use of the textbook with other techniques that may include the principles of TBLT. This takes us to question 12, related to the frequency of use of the textbook. Among the 35 responders, 57.1% claims

to use the textbook to plan almost all their lessons. Only 8.6% admits using it in every lesson. This means that the teachers use other resources and techniques in class, rather than the ones suggested in the textbook. According to question 13 all the respondents promote communicative activities and according to the answers to question 14, 97.1% of the teachers assures that those same activities relate to daily communicative situations. This reinforces the fact suggested in question 10, which revealed that a significant number of teachers adhere to the Communicative Method. 2.9% agrees that the activities do not relate to daily communicative situations, which leads to think if these teachers interpret those activities as being merely pedagogical.

As far as the implementation of TBLT is concerned, there is a discrepancy between the number of teachers that gave reasons for implementing TBLT. If 24 (68.5%) teachers admitted adhering to TBLT, it would be expectable to have 11 respondents (31.4%) presenting reasons for not implementing TBLT. Yet, this number is surpassed, with a percentage of 48.5% of respondents admitting they do not apply TBLT. We may assume that this is due to a simple fact that some teachers adopt TBLT, but do not do it more frequently because of the constraints they associate to the approach and which influences their motivation to apply it.

The last question reveals the understandings that teachers have of tasks. A considerable number of teachers can identify tasks if we take in consideration the examples of tasks given by TBLT theorists. What raises some doubts is the number of teachers that considers some of the suggested activities as tasks: 48.5 % of the teachers considers “colouring a picture” a task, but in case of language teaching we may not consider colouring a picture as a task, especially if we take into account that, according to Richards and Rodgers (2014), tasks are “activities that involve real communication are essential to learning.” Yet, if colouring that picture requires oral instructions given by the teacher, it may be considered a task (Richards, 2018).

80% of the participants recognize role plays and the creation of comic strips as tasks. They are in fact communicative tasks, which foster creativity and interaction. They were very popular in the Communicative Method, one of the favourite methods of the inquired teachers.

In the case of repetition of language chunks, 48.5 % of the teachers considered this to be a task. It is in fact a pedagogical task, but not a task according to Nunan’s definition of “real world task”. Repeating language chunks is a drill, typical in the Audiolingual Method, which is also frequently adopted by the survey participants.

As far as the methodological aspects are concerned, this study reveals that three thirds of Portuguese teachers of English rely on the *Curricular Targets* to plan their lessons. Despite the existence of different teaching approaches, most teachers seem to value the Communicative approach rather than traditional methods, such as the Grammar-translation Method.

Regarding the conceptual point of view, it seems that teachers understand that task as a broad concept, which includes activities that are considered as mainly “pedagogical tasks” by EFL theorists. This leads us to question whether teachers really understand the theoretical concept of task within the TBLT approach, or not.

From the practical point of view, teachers adopt mainly the Communicative Method, the Audiolingual and the Direct Method. It is logical that they tend to do that, for the *Curricular Targets* put an emphasis on the development of the oral competence, which is also central in those approaches.

Although teachers recognize TBLT as an interesting and stimulating teaching approach, that promotes creativity, interaction, autonomy and motivation of the learners, factors like class size, behaviour issues, short time to accomplish the *Curricular Targets* are understood as constraints that limit the frequency of TBLT adoption. These are basically the same issues pointed out by Bygate (2015), Carless (2003; 2004; 2012), Ilyn *et al.* (2007) and Lopes (2018).

This study also reveals that teachers in general do not limit their classwork to a single technique, approach or material. The figures demonstrate that the participants adhere to the several approaches displayed. Although teachers make use of the textbooks to plan their lessons, they consider this resource to be insufficient to prepare their lessons. So, they do not only adhere to different approaches, but they also use different materials in class, which is advocated by language theorists in general.

V – Conclusions

Despite the recent implementation of English as a curricular subject in Portuguese Primary Education, this study already displays a picture of the methodological perceptions and common practices of EFL Portuguese teachers.

The EFL teaching conditions in Primary Education are not perfect, due to the inadequate timetables, size of the classes and heterogeneous pupils' contexts. Nevertheless, the suitable qualifications and the years of teaching experience of the sample population may be considered as important factors for teachers to overcome these issues. According to the results, not only did teachers reveal to be acquainted and to adopt different methods and approaches, but also to make use of documents like the *Curricular Targets* to plan their lessons, in addition to the textbooks.

As in other studies, this study reveals that teachers consider TBLT to hold positive aspects, like the promotion of creativity, autonomy and interaction among pupils. The Portuguese respondents, as well as the teachers that participated in international investigation (Lopes, 2018), considered that issues like class size, extensive list of learning targets, indiscipline and incapacity to work in group, deprive teachers from a more frequent adhesion to TBLT.

Considering the data analysis and my personal experience, I agree that TBLT is a useful and effective approach in improving language skills, because children do feel more motivated when negotiating meaning and working cooperatively. Yet, apart from any specific approach adopted by teachers, I believe that the most important thing, as Cameron (2001) also emphasises, is that teachers should think about a *dynamic congruence*, by choosing activities and content that are appropriate for the children's age, socio-cultural experience and by choosing language that “will grow with the children.”

From what was analysed, it is perceptible that teachers are eclectic, for they adopt different didactic approaches. In my opinion, this is very important because it contributes for lessons to be more dynamic and appealing.

Given the limitations of this research, I suggest the application of a similar study with complementary variance tests for more precise results. As a complement to the theoretical perceptions of TBLT, the development of action research on TBLT with YL is also recommended.

References

- Agolli, R. (2016). Revisiting the TBLT model: Theoretical, critical and practical connotations. *TESOL-SPAIN Newsletter*. May. 1-11, 2016. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/0957136.2015.1039566>
- Bento, C., Coelho R., Joseph, N. Morão S. (2005). *Programa de Generalização do Ensino de Inglês no 1º Ciclo do Ensino Básico*. Lisboa. Ministério da Educação. Available at: https://www.dge.mec.pt/sites/default/files/Basico/AEC/ensino_ingles_3e4_anos.pdf
- Bravo C., Cravo A., & Duarte E. (2015). Metas Curriculares de Inglês. Ensino Básico: 1º Ciclo. Governo de Portugal. Ministério da Educação e Ciência.
- Bravo C., Cravo A. & Duarte E. (2015). Metas Curriculares de Inglês. Ensino Básico: 1º Ciclo. Caderno de Apoio. Governo de Portugal. Ministério da Educação e Ciência.
- Bygate, M. (2015). Sources, Developments and Directions of Task-based language teaching. *The Language Learning Journal*. 44:4. Available at: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09571736.2015.1039566?journalCode=rlj20>
- Brumfit C., Moon, J. and Tongue R. (1991). *Teaching English to children – from practice to principle*. London: Harper Collins Publishers.
- Cameron, L. (2001). *Teaching Languages to Young Learners*. Cambridge University Press.
- Carless, D. (2003). Factors in the Implementation of task-based teaching in primary schools. Elsevier Limited. Doi:10.1016/j.system.2003.03.002.
- Carless, D. (2004). Issues in Teachers' Reinterpretation of a Task-Based Innovation in Primary Schools. *TESOL Quarterly*. 38: 639 – 662.
- Carless, D. (2012). *TBLT in EFL settings. Looking back and moving forward*. University of Hong Kong. Available at: https://web.edu.hku.hk/f/acadstaff/412/2012_TBLT-in-EFL-settings-looking-back-and-moving-forward.pdf.
- Copland, F. & Garton S. (2014). Key themes and future directions in teaching English to young learners: introduction to the Special Issue. *ELT Journal*. Vol. 68/3 July 2014. doi:10.1093/elt/ccu030.

- Costa, A. (2016). *O potencial do Task-Based Learning (TBL) para trazer a autenticidade para a sala de aula de língua estrangeira através das tarefas baseadas no mundo real*. Master's report. Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto.
- Couceiro-Figueira, A.P. and Pereira, M.A. (2010). O Ensino e Aprendizagem de Inglês no Primeiro Ciclo do Ensino Básico. Um estudo exploratório. *Educ. Educ.* 13, no. 1, 43-59.
- Council of Europe (2001). *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*. Cambridge University Press.
- Duran & Ramaut (2006). Tasks for absolute beginners and beyond: Developing and sequencing tasks at basic proficiency levels. In K. van Den Branden (ed.) *Task based Language Education: From Theory to Practice*. Cambridge University Press.
- Edelenbos P., Johnstone R., Kubanek, A. (2006). *The main pedagogical principles underlying the teaching of languages to very young learners. Languages for the Children of Europe. Published Research, Good Practice & Main Principles*. Final Report of the EAC/04, Lot 1 study. European Commission.
- Ellis, R. (2003). *Task-based Language Learning and Teaching*. New York. Oxford University Press.
- Ellis, R. (2006). The Methodology of Task-based Teaching. *Asian EFL Journal*. 8 (3):19-45. January 2006.
- Estaire, S. & Zañon, J. (1994). *Planning Classwork: The Task-based Approach*. Oxford, Heinemann.
- Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency, Eurostat, Eurydice. (2012). *Key Data on Teaching Languages at School in Europe*. European Commission. Available at: <https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/26d366d8-031d-472c-bec6-81c8d258ce58/language-en>.
- Hutchinson, S. (2004). Survey Research. In deMarras K. & Lapan S. (Eds.), *Foundations for Research. Methods of Inquiry in Education and the Social Sciences*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc. Publishers. USA.
- Ilin G., İnözü J. et Yumru, H. (2007). Teachers and Learners' perceptions of tasks: Objectives and Outcomes. *Journal of Theory and Practice in Education*. ISSN:1304-9496. Vol. 05. Issue: 04. October – December 2017.

- Larsen-Freeman. (2000). *Techniques and principles in Language teaching*. 2nd Edition. Oxford University Press.
- Littlewood, W. (2004). The Task-based Approach – Some Questions and Suggestions. *ELT Journal*. Vol. 58/4. October 2004. Oxford University Press.
- Lopes, A. (2018). How bold are language teachers? Comparative analysis of the data of a transatlantic survey on technology-mediated Task-based language teaching. In Lopes A. & Cecília R. (Eds). *New Trends in Foreign Language Teaching. Methods, Evaluation and Innovation*. (Chap.6. pp 82 – 136). Cambridge Scholars Publishing. UK.
- Lo Bianco, J. (2013). Innovation and change policy and planning: Ties to English Language Education. In: Hyland, K. and Wong, L. (Eds.). *Innovation and Change in English Language Education* (Chap.10. pp 139 - 140). Routledge. New York.
- Mahdavi F. (2017). Task-Based Language Teaching in Iran: A Study of EFL Teachers' Perspectives. *International Journal of English Language & Translation Studies*. ISSN: 2308-5460. Yazd University. Iran. Available at: <http://www.eltsjournal.org/archive/value5%20issue4/3-5-4-17.pdf>
- McCloskey M.L. (2002). Seven instructional principles for teaching young learners of English. TESOL Symposium. San Diego.
Available at: https://pdfsecret.com/download/seven-instructional-principles-for-teaching-young-learners-of-english-tesol-symposium-san-59f786dbd64ab20a751929ed_pdf
- Ministério D.E. (2001). *Currículo Nacional do Ensino Básico: Competências Essenciais*. Ministério da Educação. República Portuguesa.
- Neriman, A. (2014). *Teaching English to Young Learners Through Task-Based Language Teaching*. Master of Arts Thesis. Pamukkale University. Denizli. Turkey.
Available at:
[acikerisim.pau.edu.tr/xmlui/bitstream/handle/11499/2166/Neriman%20AKBUL
UT%20YYL.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](http://acikerisim.pau.edu.tr/xmlui/bitstream/handle/11499/2166/Neriman%20AKBUL%20UT%20YYL.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y)
- Newby, D., Allan, R., Fenner, A., Jones, B. Komorowska H. e Soghykian, K. (2007). *European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages. A Reflection tool for language teacher Education*. European Centre for Modern Languages. Council of Europe.
- Nunan, D. (1989). *Designing Tasks for the Communicative Classroom*. Cambridge University Press.

- Nunan, D. (1991). Communicative Tasks and the Language Curriculum. *TESOL Quarterly*. 25, 2, Summer 1991. 279-295. Available at: <http://ontesolteacherscorner.com/CommunicativeTasksAndTheLanguageCurriculum.pdf>.
- Nunan, D. (2004). *Task Based Language Teaching*. University of Hong Kong. Cambridge University Press.
- Nunan, D. (2013). *Innovation in the Young Learner Classroom*. In Hyland, K. and Wong, L. *Innovation and Change In English Language Education*. (Chap.16. p. 235). Routledge. New York.
- Nunes, L. (2011). *A Formação de Professores de Inglês para o 1.º Ciclo do Ensino Básico*. PhD Thesis. Available at: <https://ubibliorum.ubi.pt/bitstream/10400.6/1845/1/Tese%20PhD%20Luís%20Nunes.pdf>
- Peck, S. (2001). *Developing Children's Listening and Speaking in ESL. Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language*. Heinle & Heinle. Boston.
- Phillips, S. (2000). *Young learners*. Hong Kong. Oxford University Press.
- Ponto, J. (2015). Understanding and Evaluating Survey Research. *J Adv Pract. Oncol*. 2015. 6 (2). March-April. Pp. 168-171.
Available at: <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/9a74/8722741fb64ba17422e8d253b6dce99322d7.pdf>
- Richards, J. & Rodgers, T. (2014). *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: C.U.P. (3rd. edition)
- Richards, J. (2018). *Task-based Teaching in Primary School*. Available at: <https://www.professorjackrichards.com/task-based-teaching-in-primary-school/>.
- Skehan, P. (1998). *A Cognitive Approach to Language Learning*. New York. Oxford University Press.
- Williams, M. (1998). Ten Principles for Teaching English to Young Learners. *IATEFL Newsletter*. 142. April-May 1998.
- Willis, J. (1996) *A Framework for Task-based Learning*. Harlow: Addison Wesley Longman.
- Willis & Willis (2007). *Doing Task-based Teaching*. Oxford University Press.

Appendix

O Ensino de Inglês por Tarefas no 1º Ciclo do Ensino Básico

O meu nome é Susana Nassa e esta é uma investigação do Mestrado de Ensino de Inglês no Primeiro Ciclo de Ensino Básico da Escola Superior de Educação e Comunicação de Faro.

O preenchimento do questionário dura cerca de 5 minutos.

Skip to question 1.

★

1. **Identificação do concelho.**

- 2.

Idade

Mark only one oval.

- ≥20
- ≥30
- ≥40
- ≥50
- ≥60

- 3.

Sexo

Mark only one oval.

- Feminino
- Masculino
- Não responde

4. **Habilitações Literárias**
Mark only one oval.
- Licenciatura em Ensino ou com Ramo de Formação Educacional
- Outra Licenciatura
- Licenciatura e Ramo de Formação Complementar
- Mestrado
- Doutoramento
5. **Situação profissional**
Mark only one oval.
- Professor/a Efetivo/a
- Professor/a Contratado/a
6. **Experiência profissional em Ensino de Inglês de 1º Ciclo (Incluindo AEC)**
Mark only one oval.
- Até um ano
- Mais de dois anos
- Mais de cinco anos
7. **Tempo de serviço**
Mark only one oval.
- Até 5 anos
- Até 10 anos
- Até 20 anos
- Mais de 20 anos
8. **Grupo disciplinar (para além do 120)**
Check all that apply.
- 110
- 220
- 330
- Outro:

9. Se respondeu outro, p.f. especifique.

Skip to question 10.

Com que frequência recorre aos métodos apresentados na tabela abaixo?

(Sendo 0 nunca e 4 em todas as aulas)

10. Mark only one oval per row.

	0	1	2	3	4
Método Gramática-Tradução	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Método Direto (uso exclusivo da língua alvo)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Método Audiolingual (Repetição de chunks)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Método Comunicativo (Oralidade com base em funções linguísticas)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ensino de Língua por Tarefas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. Baseia-se nas Metas Curriculares para planificação das aulas?
Mark only one oval.

- Sim
 Não
 Às vezes

12. Recorre ao manual para planificar as aulas?
Mark only one oval.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Nunca	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Sempre

13. Quando planifica as unidades prevê atividades promotoras de interação comunicacional?
Mark only one oval.

- Sim
 Não

14.

As atividades planejadas reportam-se a situações do cotidiano.

Mark only one oval.

Sim

Não

Skip to question 15.

*

Preenchimento obrigatório

15.

Implemento Ensino de Línguas por Tarefas porque...

Check all that apply.

	Column 1
Se ajusta à aprendizagem de determinadas competências.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Promove mais interação entre os alunos.	<input type="checkbox"/>
As tarefas aproximam-se mais de situações de comunicação autênticas.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Permite trabalhar determinados temas de forma mais criativa.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Promove mais autonomia por parte dos alunos.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contribui para aumentar a confiança dos alunos no uso da língua.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Os alunos sentem-se mais motivados a fazer pequenos projetos do que a fazer exercícios do manual.	<input type="checkbox"/>

16.

Não implemento Ensino de Línguas por Tarefas porque...

Check all that apply.

	Column 1
Não entendo a abordagem.	<input type="checkbox"/>
As turmas são demasiado grandes para implementar e avaliar as tarefas.	<input type="checkbox"/>
As Metas Curriculares são demasiado ambiciosas e o tempo insuficiente.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Os manuais não sugerem tarefas adequadas.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Os alunos são indisciplinados o que dificulta a realização da tarefa.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Os alunos não sabem trabalhar em grupo.	<input type="checkbox"/>
É difícil planificar tarefas diversificadas e estimulantes.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Os alunos parecem preferir elaborar exercícios do manual.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trabalhar com o manual é suficiente.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Skip to question 17.

O que são tarefas?*

17.

Mark only one oval per row.

	Sim	Não
Preenchimento de tabela de verbos ou de graus de adjetivos.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Realização de uma banda desenhada.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Colorir um desenho.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Repetição de "language chunks".	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Elaboração de um pequeno vídeo sobre locais de uma cidade.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Audição de uma história.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Associação de imagens a vocábulos.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Elaboração de um convite para um evento.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sopa de letras.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Troca de emails com alunos de outro país.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Apresentação oral.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Simulação de um diálogo.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Preenchimento de espaços (com vocábulos ou tempos verbais corretos).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Leitura silenciosa de um texto.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Elaboração de um poster.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Elaboração de um questionário	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Elaboração de uma cópia.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Skip to "Terminou o questionário. Obrigada pela sua colaboração!"

Terminou o questionário. Obrigada pela sua colaboração!