

**Past and Present Trends and Methodologies used in
Maltese German as a Foreign Language (GFL) Learning
Context: A Comparative Multimodal Investigation**

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Abstract

This study aims to explore past and contemporary teaching approaches within the Maltese educational context since German was introduced as a foreign language option in State secondary schools in 1969. To reach the aims of this study, a comparative investigation between past and present trends and methodologies used within the Maltese German as a foreign language (GFL) context was adopted. This investigation is based on a multimodal analysis of the different textbooks chosen by the Directorate of Education in Malta for the teaching and learning of GFL over the years; accompanied by a bibliographic analysis of past and present official curricular documents designed for the teaching and learning of GFL, which aims to delve into the strengths and challenges of contemporary teaching approaches. From this analysis, multimodal suggestions were then derived for secondary GFL teachers as ideas of how they can keep on scaffolding educational practices on what is relevant to 21st-century students. The pedagogical suggestions may be adapted and used by GFL teachers to provide their students with meaningful educational experiences that are based on the students' interests and realities for more effective learning.

Keywords:

German as a Foreign Language (GFL) – Secondary Education – Multimodality – Comparative Interpretation – Past and Present Pedagogical Approaches

Dedication

To those battling depression and their families.

You are stronger than you think.

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Abbreviations

CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
DQSE	Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education
FL	Foreign Language
FLs	Foreign Languages
GFL	German as a Foreign Language
MEDE	Ministry for Education and Employment
MTL	Master in Teaching and Learning
LOs	Learning Outcomes
LOF	Learning Outcomes Framework
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
NCF	National Curriculum Framework
SEC	Secondary Education Certificate
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
TL	Target Language

Chapter 1 – Introduction

1.1 Motivations for the Study

Since I was a child, I have always been passionate about Germany as a country and its language. Having a mother who is a travel enthusiast, I was lucky enough to get the chance to travel to several countries from a very young age, as we would go on different family vacations. From all the places that I travelled to, Germany has always been my favourite, and after having the opportunity to visit the country during different seasons, I immediately fell in love with almost everything that it has to offer; from natural landscapes, its history, the food and last but not least the language.

The time had come, when as a secondary student I had to choose a foreign language (FL) as one of the subjects that I had to study and without a second thought, I chose German. Luckily, I always had teachers who were also enthusiastic about the subject, and as I progressed from one year to another, my love for the language continued to grow. Being so passionate about the language, I always wanted to improve myself, and I decided to start attending some private lessons which a relative of mine offered to give me. At the time, my mother's aunt was a retired German teacher and when my mother told her that I was learning German at school, she immediately offered to help me get my head around this complicated but majestic language. I was in Form 3 (Year 9) when I started attending to these private lessons and every Wednesday, I used to take the bus from school and go to my mother's aunt house. The lessons lasted an hour and a half, during which we used to go through the things I learned at school and I would work out some exercises, which she would have prepared beforehand. I still remember how some of the hand-outs that she used to give me were handwritten and how at first, I used to find it challenging to understand her handwriting until I eventually got used to it. Some of the hand-outs were even typed with a typewriter with much of the text crammed together. Although I used to be all by myself, I still used to enjoy my time there as I would learn vocabulary through things that were rarely used in class; such as poems, songs, and drawings.

After completing secondary school, and after years of hard work and dedication towards my favorite subject, I did not have the courage to throw away any of the handouts and textbooks that I used to study German. As a result, I decided to collect all of the notes that were related to the study of German and store them away in a carton box.

Being stored away in a box and untouched ever since I finished secondary school, I decided to look through these notes when I had to create resources for my teaching practice as part of my Master in Teaching and Learning¹ (MTL) course. Amongst the books and other resources, there were several hand-outs, which my mother's aunt had given me, to study and learn German. These were resources, which she used in class when she was a teacher herself about sixty years ago.

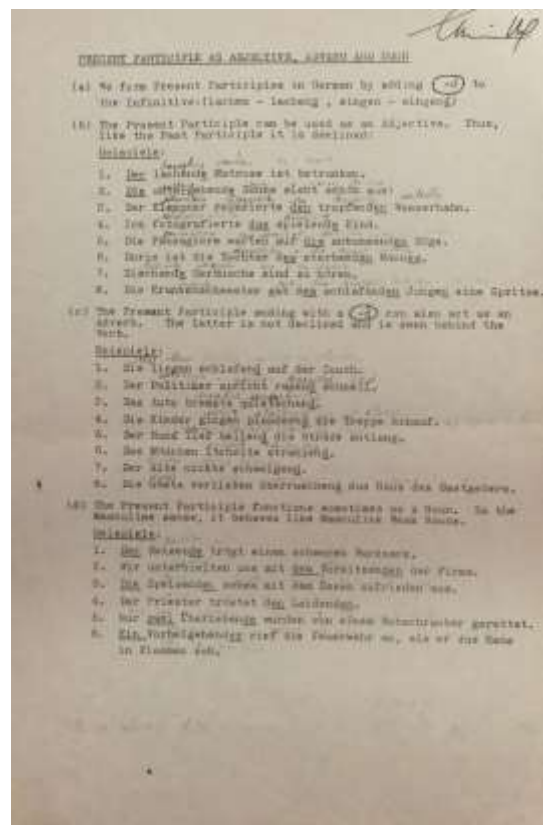
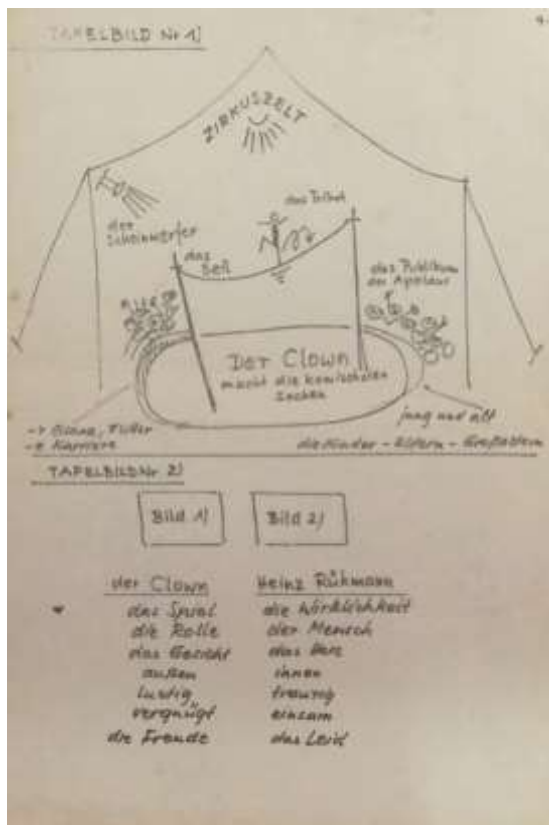


Figure 1 - Some of the handouts which were stored in the box.

The musty smell and yellowish colour of the papers, the font, and layout of these hand-outs were a clear indication of how old these resources were. To my dismay, the hand-outs were typed with a typewriter or handwritten, with no pictures to be seen. "What am I going to do

¹ The MTL course is currently the entry-level requirement to join the teaching profession.

with these antiquated things?” I asked myself. “They are too old to be used in this day and age”. Disappointed, I placed the textbooks and hand-outs aside and went back to my laptop to look for more innovative resources.

My findings in that box got me thinking critically about the resources used in the past, and what current teachers are expected to use for the teaching and learning of foreign languages (FLs). The ‘old-fashioned’ resources found in the box made me curious about the different methods and approaches that existed for the teaching of German as a foreign language (GFL). Furthermore, a quick search on the internet made me realise how broad the topic is and being an inquisitive person, I immediately started researching the area in more depth. This eventually led me to produce the research questions.

1.2 Research Aims and Questions

Now that I am a few months away from becoming a teacher myself, I thought it would be beneficial to make a comparative investigation between past and present trends and methodologies used in the Maltese GFL context. At first glance, the hand-outs found in the box seemed very different from what we were taught to produce during the MTL course. However, at the same time, I thought to myself that despite being old and outdated, the hand-outs and their methodologies were the same which in my case, have set the stone foundations of acquiring a FL i.e German.

The findings in that box got me curious about what past trends and techniques were used for the teaching and learning of GFL within the Maltese educational context. However, when I tried to look for information about the history of GFL teaching and learning in Malta, I realised that very little is known.

Hence, after reflecting on these ideas, I came up with two research questions:

1. Through a bibliographic analysis, what are the characteristics of past methodologies used for the teaching and learning of GFL in Malta along the years?
2. What would a comparative analysis of official curricular documents designed for past and present GFL learning context indicate about the strengths and challenges of contemporary methodologies used to teach GFL?

1.3 Dissertation Overview

As a proactive reaction to the insights obtained from my observations, in my study, I will investigate the different teaching trends and methodologies that have been used within the GFL secondary school context. I will be also evaluating the benefits and challenges of contemporary teaching approaches whilst comparing and contrasting them with past teaching methodologies.

In Chapter 2 I will take a closer look at the available literature to determine what has already been said about the subject. This second chapter comprises an insight into previous studies related to the current research area. This means that I am going to look at the different ways of how FLs have been taught throughout time by focusing partly on the following approaches: the grammar-translation method, the audio-lingual method, the audio-visual method, the direct method, and the communicative approach.

Chapter 3 is the Methodology chapter, in which I will explain in detail the method used to conduct this research, as well as provide reasons for choosing the particular type of methodology adopted. This chapter will also give an account of the tools used in the collection of data whilst highlighting the reasons behind the texts chosen for interpretation. Furthermore, this chapter will include a section about any ethical issues that I had to keep in mind while carrying out the research.

Chapter 4 will present the research findings resulting from comparing the different textbooks designed for past GFL learning context. In this chapter, I will be analysing the data collected from different textbooks that have been used within the Maltese GFL classroom and which provide insights on the different teaching methodologies.

In the next chapter, the research findings will be discussed. Chapter 5 provides an elaborated discussion of the results and information presented in the previous chapter; a multimodal approach will be adopted (Kress, 2010).

Chapter 6 will provide a general conclusion for this dissertation. This last chapter of the study will incorporate the most important findings of this research and the limitations I came across whilst conducting the research. After evaluating the benefits and challenges of contemporary

teaching approaches, this dissertation will provide educators with multimodal suggestions that can be implemented in the FL classroom, based on the current official documents that are in place for the teaching and learning of GFL.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

This chapter provides a historical review of the literature relating to the evolution of FL teaching and learning in Europe and the different trends and methodologies that have emerged over the years. The last part of the chapter provides insights about the teaching and learning of FLs within the local context which will provide a background for the analysis of the present situation. A look at the beginning of German as a FL in local State secondary schools is also provided.

2.1 The Human Language

For centuries, linguists have been trying to define the term ‘language’ (Buttigieg, 1999). Whilst many researchers (Birchenall, 2016; Chomsky, 1896; Finegan, 2008; Frisch, 1967) agree that language is what defines humans from the rest of the other species, finding a definition for the term ‘language’ is not as straight forward as one may think. In many cases these definitions often sum up the main characteristics of language (Galea & Scerri, 2006).

One of the distinctive characteristics of language is communication. Lado (1960) describes language as a tool of communication used by human beings within a community. Correspondingly, Camilleri Grima (2002, p.40) claims that “language is a set of verbal and nonverbal symbols shared by the community”. In addition to being a tool for communication, Finegan (2014) describes language as a human system made of three facets, a system that combines meaning, expression, and cultural context. Thus, language plays an important role in human interaction, as without language it would be nearly impossible for people to communicate in any real sense, despite being able to communicate through some non-verbal forms of arts such as dance, music, and painting (Galea & Scerri, 2006).

Fromkin & Rodman (1993) note that a person is considered to know a language when one is understood by others who know that language. Correspondingly, Chircop (2001) sustains that knowing a language is not only about speaking and writing but also reading and understanding. Hence, successful communication requires competence in the four main language skills; speaking, writing, reading, and understanding.

2.1.1 First and Second Language Acquisition

During the first three years of life, children start acquiring their first language (L1), i.e. the language that they hear in their environment (Lightbow & Spada, 2001). Roche (2008) observes that before running or jumping, a child has to be able to stand up and then gradually learn how to walk. Similarly, before we can talk, we need to learn simple words and phrases that eventually develop into our L1. According to Chomsky (1957, as cited in Gage & Berliner, 1991, p.128), “humans possess an innate ability to acquire language” and as a result, Chomsky (1957) considers language acquisition as a human capacity.

As they grow older, people tend to develop competence in other languages besides their L1. By the time people start studying a FL, these will have already gained rich conceptual and semantic approaches through the acquisition of the L1, unlike young children who are learning their mother tongue (Ellis, 1997). Consequently, “there is a key difference between learning one’s native language and the acquisition and learning of a foreign language” (Chrichop, 2001, p.16).

Gass & Selinker (2008) refer to all language acquisitions (L2, L3, L4, etc.) in addition to the native language, as second language acquisition (SLA). Ellis (1997, p.3) describes SLA as “how people learn a language other than their mother tongue, inside or outside of a classroom” (p.3). Additionally, Ellis (1997, p.119) claims that FL acquisition involves “mapping of the new word form onto pre-existing conceptual meanings or the L1 translation equivalents as approximations”. According to Krashen (1982), there are two distinct and separate methods of how a person can gain competence in a L2; namely ‘language acquisition’ and ‘language learning’. In light of this, Littlewood (1984, p.3) adds that “learning is something done on purpose to internalize a language, whereas ‘acquisition’ is a result of subconscious learning”.

Krashen (1982) views ‘language acquisition’ as a process similar to how a child develops ability in his mother tongue. It is a “subconscious process” (Ibid, 1982, p.10), as while they are communicating in the TL, learners are neither aware of gaining competence in the language nor of the grammar structures and rules of the language. Furthermore, the focus during ‘language acquisition’ is purely on meaningful interaction through communication in the TL. This process of acquiring language is also described as informal and natural learning.

The second way of how a person can develop competence in FL according to Krashen (1982) is through 'language learning', a process which is also referred to as 'explicit learning'. In contrast with 'language acquisition', this method involves conscious knowledge of the L2, as in this case the learner is aware of the rules and grammatical structures that form the language and is also able to talk about them. In 'language learning' the process is more structured and involves "accumulating knowledge of linguistic features such as vocabulary, sentence structure, and grammar, typically in an institutional setting" (Yule, 1985, p.163).

2.2 Teaching Methods and Approaches used in Foreign Language Learning

Throughout history, FL learning has always been considered "as an important practical concern" (Richard & Rodgers, 1986, p.1). Kalpakova (2011, as cited in Kuznetsova, 2015) claims that FL learning can be traced back to 988 A.D² when at the time, priests were asked to translate liturgical books into Greek as well as to teach Greek to children (Bischoff, 1961). In light of this, Kalpakova (2011) explains that back then, books were the only resources for the teaching of Greek.

Later on, in the Medieval period, the study of Latin started gaining importance and up until 1900, Latin dominated the Western world, since it was considered as the language of education, science, religion, commerce as well as of the State (Richards, Platt & Platt, 1992). At the time, the study of Latin and Greek as a FL was highly focused on grammatical structures, translations, and syntax³ (Ibid, 1992).

Due to the political changes that were taking place in Europe, other languages such as French, Spanish, Italian, and English started gaining importance. As a result, Latin started being replaced by other languages and its status shifted from that of "a living language to that of an occasional subject in the school curriculum" (Richard & Rodgers, 1982, p.4). As explored by Howatt (1984) and Wilhelm (2018) the same model that was applied in the teaching and

2 A.D. stands for Anno Domini, meaning after Christ.

3 The way in which words are arranged to show connections of meaning within a sentence (Matthews, 1982, p.1).

learning of Latin, eventually became the model adopted for the teaching of other foreign languages, which model is nowadays referred to as the grammar-translation method.

Over the years, the teaching and learning of FLs have gone through an explosion of transitions in its methodology (Pica, 1997). The most acknowledged methods for FL teaching are:

- The Grammar-Translation Method
- The Direct Method
- The Audio-Lingual and the Audio-Visual Method
- The Communicative Approach

2.2.1 The Grammar-Translation Method

From the 18th century through the 1950s, the grammar-translation method was prevailing across all schools and colleges in Europe and America (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). As mentioned earlier, this method originated from the way Latin and Greek were taught and as the name implies, it relies heavily on the teaching of grammar and practicing translations from the L1 into the L2 and vice versa (Richards, Platt & Platt, 1922). In light of this, Richards & Rodgers (2011) note that in the grammar-translation method, translations from the TL into the learner's native language (L1) are encouraged to facilitate the meaning of the TL.

Correspondingly, Krashen (1987) maintains that the fundamental aim of the grammar-translation method is to make learners attain the ability to read literature in the TL by studying its structures, with a special weight placed on grammar rules, vocabulary memorization, and written translations into and out of the TL. Thus, the focus is "on the form and not on meaning" (Krashen, 1987, p.128). In view of this, Celce-Murcia (1991) and Titone (1968) explain that the importance of learning grammar resulted from the dominating belief that grammar mirrored the logic of thinking, hence grammar exercises improved thinking skills.

Viëtor (1882) was one of the first to criticize the grammar-translation method and argued that language learners need to listen and speak the TL as a starting point in the learning process. Similarly, Piaget (1922, as cited in Field, 2000, p.5)) who argued against teaching anything in the form of dogma, insisted that the learning of a FL should revolve around meaning and that "meaningless grammar-based drills should be abandoned". However, albeit

being criticized by many linguists, the fact that this method is easily applicable and less demanding made it a dominant language teaching method for a long period of time. Infact, the grammar-translation method is still prominent to this date in cetrain countries such as China and in some Arabic countries (Qing-xue & Jin-fang, 2007).

Carvajal (2013, p.244) expresses his concern towards the numerous claims made against the use of this approach and argues that “the assumption that this is a negative model of teaching practice that should be better avoided at all costs might reflect an unconstructive and unfounded ideological interest of mainstream theoreticians”. Moreover, Carvajal (2013, p.258) adds that before criticizing any method, one should be familiar with the “history, social and cultural background of the moment” in which that particular methodology was created and practiced.

2.2.2 The Direct Method

The Reform Movement of the 1880s and 1890s gave rise to a series of arguments against the methods used to teach French and German in English schools (Bayley, 1989). In his influential work *Der Sprachunterricht muß umkerhen*, Viëtor (1882) criticized the eminent grammar-translation method and argued that FL learners need to hear and speak the TL whilst also stressing the value of phonetics. These beliefs, which were shared by other reformers led to the development of the natural method, also called the direct method which was popularized by Berlitz (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). In light of this, Fotos & Hinkel (2002, p.2) claim that the emergence of this method was “a reaction to the grammar-translation method which produced learners who could not use the language communicatively despite their considerable knowledge of grammar rules”.

The direct method takes its name from the fact that meaning has to be transmitted in the TL with no reference to the learners’ L1 (Freeman & Anderson, 2000). Richard & Rodgers (1086) add that this method holds, that if meaning is transmitted directly in the TL through demonstration such as; miming and gestures, a FL could be taught without translation or the use of the learners’ L1. Hence, contrary to the grammar-translation method, the direct method emphasizes the use of the TL during classroom instruction and communication, were

as translations are kept to the minimum (Nkechi, 2018; Richard & Rodgers, 1986; Skidmore, 1917).

Albeit the innovations that the direct method brought about in the field of FL teaching, this method lacked a thorough methodological basis (Zimmermann, 1997). Zimmerman (1997) notes that this method diverted away from the use of the textbooks, relying instead on the teacher's skills. However, at the time there weren't enough proficient teachers to adhere to the basic principles of this method. Hence it was difficult to implement in public secondary schools as it required teachers who were native speakers of the FL (Richard & Rodgers, 1986).

2.2.3 The Audio-Lingual and Audio-Visual Methods

The outbreak of World War II in 1939 gave rise to the audio-lingual method, as armies needed to become orally proficient in the languages of their enemies in the shortest possible time. For this reason, the audio-lingual method was also known as the army method and was shortly transformed into the audio-visual method in the 1960s (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). The audio-lingual method brought about new instructional materials in class; mainly the tape recorder, filmstrip⁴ projector, and language laboratories⁵. Whilst the audio-lingual method is primarily organized around the use of sound, the audio-visual method is based around the joint use of image and sound. In fact, in the latter, a combination of textbooks, tape recordings, and filmstrips is used (McArthur, 1998). Chandler & Cypher (1948) explain how the emergence of the tape recorder was revolutionary in the field of FL teaching and learning as native speaking voices were brought into the classroom for the first time. In light of this, Richard & Rodgers (1986) add that tape recorders and audiovisual equipment have a central role in an audio-lingual and audio-visual course, as they provide accurate models of dialogues for drills with the emphasis being made on pronunciation.

4 Filmstrips consisted of a "number of drawing, photographs or diagrams transferred to a perforated film and would in a roll in order of progression" (Kent, 1969, p.49). They were then shown onto a screen by a projector one by one (Ibid, 1969).

5 The language laboratory combines different forms of audio-visual aids together with the use of a form of programmed learning (Kent, 1969).

Similar to the direct method, the audio-lingual method advocates speech-based instruction and aims at developing oral proficiency in FL learners, as oral language is considered to be more important than the written language (Christensen, 1970; Field, 2000; Mitchell, 2003; Neuner & Hunfeld, 1993). Richards & Richards (2014, p.58) add that in the audio-lingual method “oral proficiency is equated with accurate pronunciation, grammar and the ability to respond quickly and accurately in speech situations”. Larsen-Freeman (2000) and Mitchell (2003) acknowledge the importance given to grammar by the audio-lingual method and claim that this method drills students in the use of grammatical sentence patterns. Hence, similar to the grammar-translation method, importance was once again given to grammatical structures as this method holds that learning a FL entails the study of grammar through syntax⁶ (Nkechi, 2018). However, whilst the grammar-translation method regards literary texts as the main material on which the teaching of grammar is based on, the audio-lingual and audio-visual methods use dialogues as the main means of presenting the language (McArthur, 1998). Correspondingly, Diller (1978) explains that in this approach, new structures are presented within dialogues since one of the most important considerations of the audio-visual method is that grammatical structures are better learned within a context.

The audio-lingual method is founded on the behaviourist learning theory (Loewen & Sato, 2017). According to Cooter & Reutzel, (2004) this theory holds that a FL is acquired by habit formation through a process involving imitation, rewards, and practice. This means that in the audio-lingual approach, the teacher would present learners with the correct model of a sentence or dialogue and the learners have to repeat it until they can memorize it. These patterns are repeated and tested in the TL until the answers given by the learners are automatic, accurate, and without any errors (Ibid, 2016). This technique which consists of repetitions of oral patterns and structures is referred to as drilling and is a distinctive feature of the audio-lingual method (Brooks, 1864). In view of this, Hockett (1959, as cited in Richards & Richards, 2014, p.52) claims that in the audio-lingual approach “it is these basic patterns that constitute the learner’s task. They require drill, drill and more drill, and only enough vocabulary to make such drills possible”.

6 The structure and ordering of components within a sentence (Yule, 2010).

A key supposition of the behaviourist theory of language learning is that "error like sin needs to be avoided at all costs" (Brooks, 1960, as cited in Ellis 2006, p.90). Lado (1964) further adds that this approach holds that once learners form incorrect habits, they will find it difficult to eliminate and replace these with correct habits. Thus, mistakes must be immediately corrected to ensure that learners establish correct habits from the beginning.

2.2.4 The Communicative Approach

As from the '70s, many started feeling the need that FL teaching should focus on language as a medium of communication rather than on the mastery of structures (Chomsky 1967; Mitchell, 2003; Searle, 1969). In his classical book *Syntactic Structures*, Chomsky (1967, as cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2014, p.153) claims that at the time, the theories of FL teaching were "incapable of accounting for the fundamental characteristic of language – the creativity and uniqueness of individual sentences". These ideas were quickly accepted by international language specialists and eventually gave rise to what is referred to as the communicative approach or communicative language teaching (CLT) (Richard & Rodgers, 2014).

In contrast to former methodologies, the communicative approach is based on real-life situations and everyday communication as it attempts to engage learners actively in the lesson whilst considering the differences and needs of individual learners (Byram, 2002; Littlewood 1981). Hence, this approach to language teaching is more student-oriented than the preceding methodologies as it takes into account the individuality of the learning and focuses on the needs, abilities, and interests of the students (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011; Littlewood, 1981).

Shejbalová (2006) explains how the communicative approach encourages meaningful activities in which students use the TL as a medium of communication, where the main aim is to complete a particular task. Furthermore, it makes use of resources, which encourage the use of the TL through task-based learning (Nunan, 1989). In task-based language teaching, problem-solving properties of the task are used as a driving force for students to learn a new language (Macaro, 2003). In light of this, Pachler, Evans, & Lawes (2008, p.68) state that "tasks are viewed as vehicles for foreign language learning through communication". Through these

different tasks, students should experience the use of language as a mode of communication in a way that reflects real-life situations (Ibid, 2008).

Al-Mutawa & Kailani (1989) argue that these kinds of classroom activities bring the student into the focus of learning, as opposed to the previous language teaching methods which supported the model of a teacher-centred classroom. Correspondingly, Basta (2011, p.128) claims “it is active participation instead of passive reception which distinguishes communicative learning from traditional lecturing”. This approach gives space to the learner to contribute his personality to the learning process whilst encouraging the teacher to step out of the instructive role (Littlewood, 2007). Hence, in contrast to the preceding teaching methodologies whereby the teacher directs all learning activities and learners follow instructions blindly (Field, 2000), in CLT learners are allowed to make connections with their personal experiences (Brandl, 2008).

Moreover, in CLT, the four language skills are taught in a context and each skill is regarded as part of communication rather than as a concept on its own (Basta, 2011). Correspondingly, contrary to the audio-lingual and audio-visual methods that tend to focus only on one or two competencies, the communicative approach gives equal importance to the four language skills, and these are practiced in a meaningful context (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011). Furthermore, grammar is also taught in context, and teachers are encouraged to combine grammar with communication.

Hymes (1971) was the first to render the notion of ‘communicative competence’ popular. It is a view which claims that learners not only show mastery in the grammar and vocabulary of the TL but also know how to use the language in different social situations (Mitchell, 2003). Today, CLT dominates language teaching in many countries, not only because it makes language learning more attractive for the students but it also helps learners to achieve linguistic proficiency as well as communicative competence (Qing-xue & Jin-fang 2007). However, just like the preceding teaching methodologies, the communicative approach also has its limitations. Cajkler & Addelman (2013 p.32) point out that as argued by Swan (1985) learning a language is not the same as using a language since “after all, language learning still

takes place in a classroom, a deliberately constructed setting, not a genuine open environment for ‘natural’ communication and language acquisition”.

2.2.5 The Effects of Globalisation on Foreign Language Teaching

The several changes brought about by globalization have not only waived the distance between people in different countries around the world but also changed the way we think about the transfer of information. According to Ivan (2012), this process of globalisation involves a mixture of economic, technological, socio-cultural, and political forces, which when combined can erase national boundaries for global benefit. Through the widespread use of technology, global information networks, and mobility of people, globalization has also influenced the ways FLs are taught, learned, and used (Kramersch, 2014). Over the years, as technologies developed, many educators started feeling the need and to some extent even the pressure to introduce new resources into their methodology (Oliveira, 2009). Consequently, this has brought about substantial changes when it comes to the teaching methods and approaches applied in the FL classroom.

In the local context, the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) (Ministry for Education and Employment, 2012) also urges educators to utilize technologies to enable students to demonstrate and create knowledge, intensify the complexity of tasks, and make use of various representations through different ways of communication. Moreover, it also emphasises the importance of digital literacy in enhancing “the teaching and learning processes, the interaction among peers, and interactions between students and teachers” (MEDE, 2012, p.37). The NCF (2012) asserts for a more active utilization of digital literacy tools in learning and teaching processes which have a positive impact on the learning experiences of students. However, despite promoting the use of technology, the NCF (2012) does not guide educators on how technology is best incorporated into curricula to enhance the educational experiences of students.

Barzen & Leymann (2015, p.280) argue that the adoption of technology as an educational tool has altered the classroom environment as nowadays “students are equipped with technological devices that can be used for learning anytime and anywhere”. Hence, learning activities (including homework) are no longer restricted to pen and paper only as

technological devices now form part of students' everyday life. Ivan (2012) agrees with Barzen & Leymann (2015) and claims that the place of teaching and learning has also changed from static, fixed classrooms to anywhere and anytime; including virtual classroom teaching, online exercises, and tests that can be accessed at any time and from any location. This has been highly evident in the past months during which schools across the world (including Malta) had to physically close doors due to the COVID-19 outbreak. As claimed by Bryant, Child, Dorn & Hall (2020), the use of technology within the educational system, has been considered as a lifeline during the COVID-19 pandemic. Correspondingly, the national efforts to utilize technology and adopt online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic has enabled many teaching and learning processes to start being delivered remotely and on digital platforms.

Moreover, through the use of technology, FL teaching has shifted from a teacher-directed approach to a more student-centred approach, which involves collaborative, investigative, and problem-solving activities. Such activities are intended to encourage learners to be more independent, learn how to use technology with confidence, explore and find out things for themselves, whilst interacting with their peers. (Hennessey, 2015). As a result, the teacher's role has shifted from the "Sage on the Stage" to the "Guide on the Side" as students are becoming responsible for their learning by collecting information on their own through the use of different technological means (Warschauer, 1969, p.6). Johannensen & Eide (2000) also acknowledge that the role of the teacher is now to make the right arrangements for learning so that together with pedagogical expertise, the learning process is enhanced in a varied and inspiring manner. In view of this, Hewer & Shield (2001, as cited in Atkinson, 2001, p.6) point out that technological innovation can only be harnessed by those teachers who "can adapt to the changed role of facilitator or manager of learning, rather than knowledge source".

Notwithstanding the effectiveness of technology in the learning process, the classroom still occupies an important role in the learning process (Galea, 2011). Alipanahi (2004) argues that together with technology, the classroom environment provides learners with an endless stream of information as well as a meeting place that enables communication and sharing of ideas. Whilst agreeing with Alipanahi (2004), Hung (2000, p.54) adds that there is no point in encouraging teachers to exploit technology unless "there are clear benefits in terms of

learning, assessment, time and cost". Additionally, Hung (2000) argues that new technologies are not necessarily better than old practices. In light of this, Oliveira (2009) suggests that educators need to apply what they already know on good classroom practice in the FL classroom to this new dimension, whilst keeping in mind learners' age, language level, interests, and needs. "It is not new pedagogies that we need, but new ways of providing existing pedagogy efficiently and flexibly" (Mayes, as cited in Stephenson, 2001, p.30).

2.2.6 The Implementation of the Common European Framework of References for Languages (CEFR) in European Education Systems

Dulay, Burt & Krashen (1982) claim that by the year 1982, there were already more than over a billion people in the world who could speak more than one language. Moreover, during the last forty years, several social and political changes were present in Europe, and the wide contacts between Europeans, increased mobility and the development of tourism gave rise to FL teaching and learning (Kulackovska, 2004). As a result, there has been a strong sense of shared educational aims which in return have resulted in the need for a document that would promote a common system of language learning in Europe (Galea & Scerri, 2006).

Europe is the meeting point for a variety of multicultural and multilingual societies which are the product of its history and have enriched it and given it strength. This same diversity creates a special need for communication, mutual understanding, and tolerance between people (Redling, 2000, p.3).

The Common European Framework of References for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR) (2001) reacts to the above social and political changes in Europe and "provides a practical tool for setting clear standards to be attained at successive stages of learning a language" (Galea & Scerri, 2008, p.16). The CEFR represented by the Council of Europe (2002) reinforces cooperation in the fields of language policy and language learning with other European countries. This framework includes a six-level system to assess FLs, which serves as a comparable model for describing the reached language levels (Kalackovska, 2004). Moreover, this will make it easier for individual citizens to find out what their qualifications are worth in another Member State. Similar to the other European countries, the Maltese educational system of assessment is based on CEFR 'CAN DO' statements that guide both educators and learners through the learning programme.

The CEFR has generated several discussions about its general issues. Bamber (2012) argues that what the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001, p.21) claims to be, i.e. “a conceptual grid which users of the CEFR can exploit to describe their system” is ingenious. This is because, if such a conceptual grid becomes central for any system it will become ‘the’ system. Fulcher (2004) shares the same view and argues that instead of empowering, the CEFR can easily become the system, thus prescribing and controlling.

2.3 Foreign Language Learning within the Maltese Educational Context

The teaching of FLs has been a fundamental aspect of Malta’s education system for many years. As a country, Malta is highly reliant on FL skills for its economy and also for the interaction with other countries and cultures (Education & Training Monitor, 2018). The NCF (2012, p.58) also highlights the need for learning foreign languages and states that “foreign language learning is a strength in our local system which needs to be sustained”.

Apart from learning two official languages (Maltese and English), all students attending secondary schools in Malta learn at least one FL. In the case of State schools, at the end of the primary school years, students have to choose one FL, which they will learn in the following five years of secondary school. At present, the choice of FLs being offered to students attending State schools includes; Arabic, French, Italian, German, and Spanish (Ministry of Employment and Education, 2019). In addition to these languages, Chinese is offered in one school. In Year 10, students are then allowed to learn another FL or choose another non-linguistic subject (Debrincat, 2007).

On the other hand, different systems and policies are adopted in private schools. In fact, the range of FLs offered in private schools is usually very restricted, however, most students attending private schools also start learning a FL as from their first year of secondary school. Furthermore, in most private schools, French and Italian are the only FLs being offered, whereas, in some church schools, Italian is even compulsory (Galea & Scerri, 2006).

2.3.1 The Implementation of the Learning Outcomes Framework

Malta is currently going through times when its curriculum is changing (Spiteri, 2017).

In 2012, the NCF document (2012) which guides the educational provision in compulsory schooling in Malta, proposed a Learning Outcomes Framework (LOF). The aim of the LOF is to “free schools and learners from centrally-imposed knowledge-centric syllabi, and to give them the freedom to develop programs that fulfil the framework of knowledge, attitudes, and skills-based outcomes” (MEDE, 2017). As a result, as from the beginning of the scholastic year 2018 – 2019, new Learning Outcomes programmes and syllabi for the teaching and learning of GFL at Level 7 (Year 7 and 8) and Level 8 (Year 9 and 10) have been introduced. However, this national reform is still work in progress, and the outcomes-based syllabi of the remaining Levels (i.e. Levels 9, 10, and 11) are still not implemented in schools.

The adoption of LOs in schools and even in colleges and universities is not a recent one (Spiteri, 2017). In fact, outcomes-based education has been used in New Zealand and Australia at primary and secondary school levels since the 1990s. However, it was not until the year 2012 that the European Union called for the adoption of learning outcomes in primary and secondary schools throughout its member states (Cedefop, 2016). According to Spiteri (2017), the main reasons why the European Union advocated to an outcomes-based approach was mainly to address the problem of unemployment. As a result, to reduce the number of unemployed people in Europe, it was suggested that students obtain the skills that they are most likely to need once they complete their education, hence ensuring that education provision was in line with the demands of the labour market.

In light of these changes that are currently taking place in the Maltese education system, Attard Tonna & Bugeja (2016) argue that the real change in the classrooms does not simply come about by introducing new policies, but rather by teachers acknowledging and implementing the process of change. Accordingly, Elmore (2007) adds that there is no automatic correlation between what policymakers’ say will happen, and what happens in the classroom.

2.3.2 The Introduction of GFL in local State Secondary Schools

As previously mentioned, one of the FLs being offered to Maltese students attending secondary State schools is German. The option of GFL was introduced in Maltese State Secondary Schools in the scholastic year 1969 – 1970 (Dalmas, 1985). At first, the idea was simply a trial, and teaching was limited to two schools only; the Boys' Lyceum at Ħamrun and the Maria Regina Grammar School for Girls at Blata l-Bajda. Two years later, German started being offered as a FL option to students that were in their third year of secondary school (Ibid, 1985). This new option, however, was only possible if enough teachers were available to teach the subject. This indicates that the lack of teachers has long been one of the main factors affecting the possibility of the widespread of German in all state schools as well as in church and private schools. Later on, two other schools started offering GFL, namely St Venera Girls Secondary and Naxxar Boys' Secondary. During this period, teaching was still being carried out on a trial basis, in fact, for the first two years teachers had to develop their handouts and teaching material since no official textbooks were available (Ibid, 1985).

2.3.3 Resource Centre

During 1983 discussions were held about establishing a resource and documentation centre for GFL. The German Embassy was keen on the idea and was willing to equip the Resource Centre with resources and material to be used both by teachers and students. Dalmas (1985) notes that initially the project started as a Resource Centre for the teaching of French but at the time, the Education Officer for German (Mr Falzon) suggested that German should be included too, as he believed that the importance given to French, should equally be given to German and that both languages should be treated equally.

Back then, the Education Officer, Mr Falzon argued that the objective of such a project was to meet the needs of curricula and teaching and learning modes (Ibid, 1986). Falzon further explained that for teachers of German it meant “to serve as an agency for stimulating the active creation and exploitation of source material” which includes “the production of audio-visual aids and the selection and acquisition of source material and evaluation” (Ibid, 1986. p.15). Correspondingly, Dalmas (1985) explains how the need for such a centre was felt by teachers who “wanted to improve the effectiveness of their teaching methods, especially by introducing innovative techniques” (Ibid, 1985, p.15). Furthermore, thanks to the Resource

Centre, resources for the teaching and learning of German were stationed in one place and were made available for both learners and teachers. Dalmás (1985, p.16) notes how at that time this was “a bonus, considering the dire lack of written and audio-lingual material in German in Malta”.

2.3.4 German at the University of Malta

As explained earlier, German was locally introduced in State secondary schools on experimental basis in 1969 after it was offered for a short period of time to adult learners in evening courses. Year after year, the number of students choosing German increased quickly and in 1974 the government of the Federal Republic of Germany started to promote the language by providing teaching material including technical equipment and by offering teacher training seminars and scholarships (Conrad, 1996). According to Conrad (1996), an offer for the setting-up of a German department at the University of Malta was made in 1976, however, this was not accepted. It was only in 1981 that after several discussions between the Education Department and the Faculty of Education, German started being offered as one of the subjects for the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) course (Conrad, 1996; Dalmás, 1985). Back then, the B.Ed. prepared potential teachers for the teaching profession and served part of the requirements to apply for the position of a regular teacher.

At the time, two students availed themselves of this opportunity (Dalmás, 1985). One of the first B.Ed. students who chose German was Maria Stella Cannataci (nee Dalmás), whom I personally got to know during the Field Placement which was part of the MTL course. Ms Cannataci explained how at the time that she was a student herself, emphasis was made on the use of the textbook. In fact, the course entailed demonstrations of lessons using the ancillary material offered by the audio-visual coursebook *Vorwärts International* to help the potential German teacher (M. Cannataci, personal communication, April 16, 2020). These insights indicate that in the past, the pedagogy provided to future GFL teachers relied on the use of a particular textbook. According to another German teacher, Mr Brincat, the emphasis on the use of the textbook which was recommended by the syllabus was still there during the years 1996 - 2000, however, at the same time, the use of additional resources such as pictures, flashcards, charts, and audio-CDs to support language learning were also encouraged (M. Brincat, personal communication, May 17, 2020).

Furthermore, my tutor Dr George Cremona noted that when he was a B.Ed. student between the years 2000 – 2004, the teaching skills acquired throughout the course were not directly tied to the use of a specific textbook but more on the general use of the textbook and different teaching approaches provided by the textbook. Moreover, he added that the use of additional resources and materials including digital resources was also encouraged as ICT started being introduced in schools (G. Cremona, personal communication, May 18, 2020). In fact, Zammit (2004) claims that in the year 2000, internet connectivity in several primary and secondary schools was introduced and ICT peripatetic teachers were assigned to aid the teachers in acquiring the necessary skills and competence to use ICT. Having said that, the importance given to textbooks seems to have prevailed. This is reflected in Galea's (2004) study whereby the frequency of textbooks' use in German vocabulary lessons is explored. In this study, Galea (2004) found that 56.3% of German teachers use the textbook every day were as 43.8% use the textbook frequently. This indicates that despite a change in the pedagogical knowledge offered by the B.Ed. course, the textbook suggested by the syllabus is a resource which for many years, has remained very much present in the Maltese GFL classroom.

On the other hand, being a student of the MTL course myself during the last two years, I can aver that the pedagogical skills acquired throughout the course were not based on the use of a specific textbook but are directly transferable to the changing realities of the classroom. Moreover, as future teachers, we were encouraged to venture beyond the use of textbooks and create positive learning environments through the use of different strategies based on multimodal principles. In fact, apart from just providing in-depth theoretical knowledge, the course also helps prospective teachers to critically design appropriate FL resources that address the needs of different students. As a result, the general message which was sent across was that, albeit the textbook remains without any doubt a valid teaching resource, the textbook should not be the only resource exploited in the classroom as it is only one of the many teaching resources available.

2.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I discussed how FL teaching and learning in Europe have evolved throughout the years. For this purpose, I also described the various techniques that are encouraged and supported by different methodologies and approaches to FL teaching and learning that emerged over time. This was linked to the study of FLs within the Maltese educational context which will serve as a general background for the analysis of the present situation in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5. Insights about the beginning of GFL within local State secondary schools are also provided. This led me to view how the teaching and learning of GFL in Malta have evolved and progressed over the course of time.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

This chapter gives an account of the approaches employed to answer the research questions. Along this chapter, I will be explaining the motives behind the research design and methods adopted, the data collection procedure, the ethical considerations related to this study, and the methods in which the data collected was analysed.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, this research aims to address the following research questions:

1. Through a bibliographic analysis, what are the characteristics of past methodologies used for the teaching and learning of GFL in Malta along the years?
2. What would a comparative analysis of official curricular documents designed for past and present GFL learning context indicate about the strengths and challenges of contemporary methodologies used to teach GFL?

An effective research design, data collection tools, and data analysis methods, were chosen to address these research questions. Moreover, to increase the validity of this research, I intended to triangulate the data since I will be using different interpretations produced through various activities (Newby, 2014). Triangulation of data refers to the utilization of a number of sources in the data collection process, which in turn, heightens the validity and reliability of the research (Creswell, 2014; Newby, 2014). After exploring and reflecting on past and present teaching methodologies implied by textbooks and official curricular documents, I provided suggestions which GFL teachers may adopt as part of their pedagogy.

3.1 Epistemology: An Interpretivist and Social Constructivist Approach

In order to implement this study, I had to choose the appropriate epistemology suitable for this research. Ormston, Spencer, Barnard & Snape (2014, p.4) define epistemology as “the nature of knowledge and how it can be acquired”. The epistemology chosen for a particular study depends on the nature of research that is conducted and the results that the researcher intends to achieve. Since this study aims to analyse in-depth different teaching methodologies and approaches, this research follows an interpretivist as well as a social constructivism paradigm.

An interpretivist approach is based on observation and interpretation, “thus to observe is to collect information, while to interpret is to make meaning of that information by drawing inferences or by judging the match between the information and some abstract pattern” (Aikenhead, 1997, as cited in Thomas, 2010, p.296). Creswell (2014) notes that interpretivists believe that individuals search for meaning in life. Hence, an interpretivist approach deals with the meaning and understanding of why things happen, whilst it rejects the concept that meaning exists independently of consciousness (Collins, 2010). Moreover, interpretivism is an inductive approach, which contrasts with a positivist approach to research, as it does not begin with a theory and aims to test it, but develops a theory based on interpretation and observations (Creswell, 2014). As a result, as a researcher, I remained open to various experiences and outcomes throughout the whole research process.

In qualitative research, the researcher is a fundamental instrument since data is collected through the researcher (Creswell, 2009). Thus, there may be an amount of bias involved, as the perspective of the researcher might influence the data. However, an interpretivist approach is still associated with a high level of credibility since the data is considered honest and detailed, as subjective meanings are negotiated contextually between the researcher and the topic being researched (Dudovskiy, 2016).

Another philosophical theory in social sciences, which is generally combined with interpretivism and is typically seen as an approach to qualitative research is social constructionism (Werhane et al., 2011). The latter shares the same objective of understanding human experiences and claims that meaning is created and negotiated by humans, however it extends its theory to the production and interpretation of knowledge. Creswell (2014, p.8) notes that social constructivists develop subjective meanings of their varied and different experiences-meanings directed towards certain objects or things, which in return “lead the researcher to look for the complexity of views rather than narrowing meaning into a few categories or ideas”. In addition, social constructionism is distinctive from interpretivism, in its emphasis on language and interaction as mediators of meaning. As a result, the approach of social constructivism is also used in this study since my intention is to make sense of and interpret different teaching and learning methodologies (Byram, 2012).

In view of the above, an interpretivist approach and a social constructivist approach were deemed most suitable for this research as the use of a particular teaching method is not to be studied independently of the context and era during which it was being applied. Moreover, the practice of a specific teaching method or trend is highly subjective and is shaped through the experiences of teachers who come from different social and cultural backgrounds.

3.2 Research Design

In order to collect data to answer the research question, I had to choose an adequate methodology from the qualitative method, quantitative method, or mixed methods (a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods). For this research, I decided that qualitative methodology is best suited since the aim of the study is to seek a comprehensive understanding and gain a deeper insight into past and present teaching methodologies used in the Maltese GFL learning context (Creswell, 2014; Newby, 2014). Hence the path chosen cannot be a statistical one as the intention is not to reduce data to scientific facts but rather to obtain a profound understanding of various teaching methodologies. As a result, to answer the research questions, I chose to analyse the different textbooks that were chosen for the teaching and learning of GFL and explore the different trends and methodologies implied by the content of the same textbooks, which for many years played an important role in the Maltese GFL classroom. In addition to textbooks, past and present official curricular documents designed for the teaching and learning of GFL were also evaluated. A multimodal approach (Kress, 2010; Cremona, 2017) was adopted.

This research design which was implemented for the study turned out to be different from what I initially had in mind. This is because, at first the plan was to conduct interviews both with teachers who are teaching the subject today, as well as retired teachers who have taught the subject in the past to gain insights about different teaching methodologies. However, as soon as I started collecting information on the research topic, I realized that very little is known about the development of GFL within the Maltese learning context. Although in the past, several attempts have been made (Armeni, 1997; Dalmás, 1984; Mifsud, 1998), a complete compilation of the development of German since it was first introduced as a FL option in State secondary schools to this day has never been presented.

As a result, when reflecting on the data that I had to collect to answer the research questions, I felt that the interview questions were not enough to obtain and capture the details of how the teaching and learning of GFL in Malta evolved along the years. In addition, I felt that to understand and develop the information obtained from interviews, I would need to first have a solid background in the history of GFL teaching and learning within the Maltese learning context. Hence, before interviewing teachers, it was required to collect and analyse readily available material, which sheds light on the various teaching methodologies and trends that have been locally adopted. The analysis of such texts was a fundamental step that needed to be taken before taking into consideration teachers' views and opinions. This is because text analysis would help me understand better the insights and interpret the information obtained from the interviews more accurately (Qu & Dumay, 2016). In light of this, Bowen (2009) notes that it is through text analysis that the researcher will be able to understand the historical roots of specific practices as well as the conditions that influence the phenomena being investigated.

Reflecting upon all of this has helped me realise that the analysis of textbooks and official curricular documents is seminal in gathering the necessary informative baggage. Having said that, it is important to note that this does not imply that the textbooks were the only resources used by teachers in previous years. As argued by Anderson & Tomkins (1983, p.2), although “textbooks may be powerful determinants of the curriculum”, it is at the teacher’s discretion to adapt the material in the textbook and determine how it is used. Moreover, different teachers might vary in the way they use textbooks in class. Some might include supplementary material or eliminate and modify certain content in the textbook to cater for the needs of the students, whereas others might choose to “stick to them [the textbooks] religiously throughout the whole lesson” (Borg, 1999, p.104). However, a look at some of the very first syllabi that were designed for the teaching and learning of GFL within the Maltese learning context indicates that in the past, the textbook played a significant role in the implementation of the syllabus for German. This can be seen in Figures 2 and 3 on the pages overleaf.

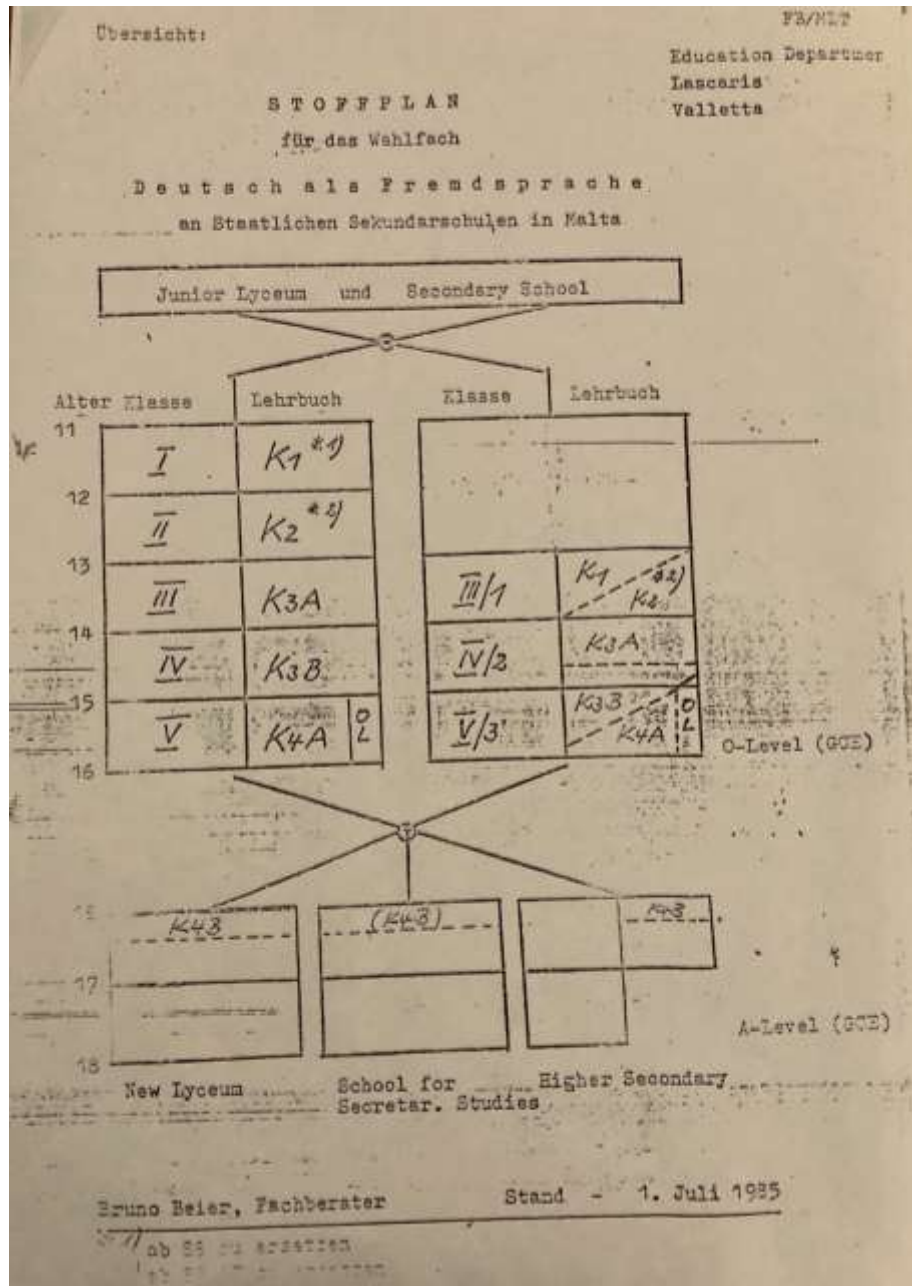


Figure 2 - A copy of the first syllabus for the study of German established in 1985. Supplied by the Assistant Director for Learning and Assessment Programme, Dr Alice Micallef.

ZENTRUM DEUTSCH ALS FREMDSPRACHE
RESOURCE CENTRE FOR THE TEACHING OF GERMAN AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE
THE UPPER LYCEUM COMPLEX
MSIDA MSD 10, MALTA
Tel: 22 58 87

20th September 1996

EXPLANATORY NOTE

To teachers of German attn. _____

re: Syllabus for German for 1996-7

With the introduction of ZICKZACK NEU having started in the previous scholastic year, the syllabus content for the current scholastic year is as follows:

FORM I	-	ZZ NEU I
FORM II	-	ZZ NEU II
FORM III	-	ZZ II Chapters 1 - 5
FORM IV	-	ZZ II Chapters 6 - 10
FORM V	-	ZZ III
FORM III(1)	-	ZZ NEU I & ZZ NEU II Ch 1 - 5
FORM IV(2)	-	ZZ NEU II Ch 6 - 10 & ZZ NEU III
FORM V (3)	-	ZZ II Chapters 6 - 10

Gen. Dr. Joseph M. Debono
Education Officer German.

Figure 3 - A copy of the Syllabus for German for 1996 – 1997. Retrieved from Armeni, E. (1997). *Exploring Interaction as a Key to Teach German Grammar Effectively.*

Figure 2 and Figure 3 indicate that the textbook was the main contributor to the implementation of the syllabus. As shown by the two figures, the first syllabi designed for the teaching and learning of GFL simply consisted of a list indicating the textbook that each year group had to follow. Moreover, Figure 3 demonstrates how apart from listing the name of the textbook that had to be used in class, the syllabus also specified the exact chapters that had to be covered from the textbook. This suggests that as claimed by Woodward, Elliott & Nagel (1988, p.1) for several years, textbooks “have taken over the curriculum in many schools”. In light of this, Kramsch (2004) adds that for many decades, teachers of FLs have relied on the use of the textbook not only to provide students with subject matter content but also to acquire strategies and tactics for teaching.

Against this background, I decided that an in-depth analysis of the GFL textbooks chosen by the Directorate of Education in Malta and an evaluation of official curricular documents designed for the teaching and learning of GFL will help me understand and answer the research questions of this study more effectively.

3.2.1 Multimodal Concepts adopted

Kress, Jewitt, Osborn & Tsatsarelis (2001) propose that when conducting research, one can use multimodality to gather data, to analyse data, or to suggest multimodal recommendations. Hence, I opted for a multimodal approach to compare interpretations of past and present trends and methodologies and to derive pedagogical suggestions from them. This is because multimodality can be implemented within an educational setting as it provides an understanding of how different modal realisations shape knowledge and how this has an impact on both the learners and learning (Jewitt & Kress, 2003).

Vasudevan (2014) describes multimodality as a way of incorporating various modes of communication in the making of meaning. Correspondingly, Jewitt (2009, p.14) claims that multimodality refers to “approaches that consider communication and representations to be more than about language and which attend to the full range of different communicational semiotic resources which people use”. These semiotic resources which form meaning, are socially and culturally shaped and are referred to as modes (Kress, 2010).

Modes of making meaning include writing, image, speech, layout, gesture, and facial expression and are organised under five design elements: linguistic, visual, audio, gestural and spatial (Kress, 2010). The meaning passed on by a particular mode is referred to as modal affordance (Stein, 2008). Kress (2010, p.58) defines affordances as “the potentials and limitations of material drawn into semiosis as mode”. Furthermore, Kress (2010) explains that depending on their modal affordances, modes can be classified into superordinate modes and subordinate modes. Norris (2004) also distinguishes between subordinate modes and superordinate modes, with the latter being those modes with the highest ability to transfer meaning to an interpreter.

In this research, various texts are analysed and interpreted through the application of a multimodal framework; namely the MIRROR Framework (Cremona, 2017). The aim behind these interpretations is to recognize and highlight different methodologies, trends, and approaches perceived through the unique ways by which different modes are arranged together in the textbook. The texts analysed presented a multitude of modes; including *colour, language, pictures, text, and layout*, however, I decided not to choose between superordinate modes and subordinate modes. This is because I am aware that both modes can help me to explore and gain insights about the different teaching and learning methodologies being implied by the texts.

3.3 Sampling

3.3.1 The Use of the Textbook in the Classroom

Different textbooks have different functions and use Seguin (1898). Seguin (1898) explains that from the teaching point of view, the textbook has three fundamental roles. First, it provides information and knowledge, secondly, it structures and organizes learning, and it also guides the learning process. Moreover, textbooks can be used to teach new concepts, engage students in a task or it can be simply used as a reference book (Christiansen, Howsen & Otte, 1986). However, the role and exact purpose of a textbook change from one country to another since these usually depend on “the nature of the country’s educational system” (Howson, 1995, p.29).

Robeck and Robitaille (1997) suggest that when a specific textbook is chosen for the teaching and learning of a particular subject, it is most likely that the choice for that textbook is based on the fact that it closely meets the goals and requirements of the curriculum. Thus, the chosen textbook would be intended to serve and reflect the designated curriculum (Robeck & Robitaille, 1997). In light of this, Buttigieg (2003) also claims that the process for the selection and acquisition of a textbook often owes its birth to the introduction of a new or revised syllabus. Correspondingly, the *Syllabus for the study of the German language* (2006) claims that the aims, methods, and contents presented in the syllabus are to be adopted in the textbook of the same level. As a result, over the years several textbooks were procedurally phased out of the GFL classroom, whilst new ones were introduced to keep in line with the latest principles and vision of the syllabus.

3.3.2 The Production of Textbooks

Each time a school textbook is printed by a renowned publishing house, a complex chronological process made up of several stages takes place (Seguin, 1989). Ravich (2003) notes that during this process, many authors and publishers avoid including certain sensitive topics, which are considered as a taboo. Similarly, Cameron (2012, p.2) talks about ‘verbal hygiene’ and describes the process as “the practices by which people attempt to regulate the use of language”.

Farberow (1963) and Allan & Burrige (2006) highlight the fact that taboos change from time to time, as along the years new ones continuously come into sight and old ones take distinct forms. Although every culture has its own sets of taboos, the main taboos which are globally banned in most school textbooks and learning material involve the following topics: Politics – Alcohol – Religion – Sex – Narcotics – Isms – Pork” (Gray, 2002, p.159). As a result, authors and publishers tend to sanitize their work by purposely avoiding anything related to this list (i.e. PARSNIP). Gray (2002) adds that the intention of banning such topics is to provide global educational materials to as many countries as possible, whilst assuring that nobody feels offended.

Bianchi et al. (2002) argue that textbooks can influence and define school subjects for students, as along the school years these experience subjects through the use of a specific textbook (Bianchi et al., 2002). In addition to this, according to Byram, Gribkova & Starkey (2002, p.12),

the content given in a textbook “can be presented in a way that suggests that the materials are authoritative and definitive or in an intercultural and critical perspective”. The same authors imply that apart from avoiding certain taboos, textbooks can also support certain stereotypes and prejudice. These can be reinforced not only through specific sections which are dedicated to culture but also in the content of grammatical exercises and sentences such as “The French like...; Germans are...; Older people...” (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey, p.21).

Alexander (2009) and Bernstein (1974) explore that the curriculum and the textbook with its content and teaching practices are all interrelated and mutually influence one another when it comes to teaching and learning. Furthermore, a language textbook is not simply a collection of texts drawn from different genres, but also a reflection of a particular pedagogic point of view (Misra, 2016). Okeefee (2012, p.1) also believes that apart from being a global common feature in every classroom, textbooks are also considered to be “important vehicles for the promotion of curricula, as their content and structure are very important for the promotion of a specific vision of curriculum”.

3.3.3 Sample selection

“Data collection is fundamental in research, as the data is meant to contribute to a better understanding of a theoretical framework” (Bernard 2002, as cited by Etikan et al., 2016, p.2). As a result, the means through which data is obtained must be based on sound judgment to ensure valid and reliable results (Bernard et al. 1986).

Generally, a school textbook is made up of several volumes, which cater for different language levels (Unesco, 1964). The Cambridge Online Dictionary (2019) defines the word volume as “one book in a set of related books”. Due to the lack of time available when conducting this research, it was not possible to analyse all the volumes in every textbook series that has been locally used in the GFL classroom. Furthermore, in qualitative research, too much data can undermine the ability of the researcher to achieve a thorough analysis (Ames, Glenton & Lewin, 2009). Hence, I had to inquire which volumes and textual parts should be examined for the purpose of this research (Zierer, 2007).

To answer the research questions in the most effective way possible, data was collected through purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a non-random technique in which the researcher selects elements according to specific characteristics based on one's judgment (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011).

In purposive sampling, researchers handpick the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgment of their typicality. In this way, they build up a sample that is satisfactory to their specific needs. As its name suggests, the sample has been chosen for a specific purpose.... (Cohen et al., 2002, p.103).

This type of sampling permitted the selection of texts whose qualities endorsed a better understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Cluett & Bluff, 2000; Creswell, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Furthermore, when selecting textbooks for analyses, I also had to consider the direction in which the Maltese educational system is currently heading to i.e a shift towards the adoption of learning outcomes (LOs) (Spiteri, 2017). As mentioned in Chapter 2, from the beginning of the scholastic year 2018 – 2019, new LOs programmes and syllabi for the teaching and learning of GFL at Level 7 and Level 8 have been introduced (Spiteri, 2017). As claimed in the Educator's Guide for Pedagogy and Assessment (DQSE, 2015), the Subject LOs for German span from Attainment Level 7 to Attainment Level 10. However, this national reform is still work in progress, and the outcomes-based syllabi of the remaining Levels (i.e. Levels 8, 9 and 10) are still in the process of being implemented. As a result, whilst taking into account the aims of this research as well as the ongoing national reform of the LOs, I realised that I should focus my attention on those textbooks which have been used in the GFL classroom during the first two years of language learning i.e during Year 7 and Year 8. The decision to analyse texts used during the first two years of secondary education in Malta was also based on the recommendations brought forward by the Assistant Director for Learning and Assessment Programme, Dr Alice Micallef. Dr Micallef explained that at present, the newly outcome-based syllabi are only available for Year 7 and Year 8, whereas Year 9, 10 and 11 are still following the 'old' syllabus. As a result, in order to be able to address the research questions of this study, she suggested that material used for the teaching and learning of German for Level 7 should be analysed. Dr Micallef explained how that the implementation of the

outcome-based syllabi for the rest of the Attainment Levels, which is taking place step by step, will be based on the same LOF that is already in place for Attainment Level 7. Furthermore, she added that by the scholastic year 2022, all students attending local State schools will be using the LOF and that the new format of the Secondary Education Certificate (SEC) examination will also be introduced in the same year.

3.3.4 The Rational behind the Chosen Texts

When conducting text analyses, every researcher faces a dilemma, that of determining which textual parts should be analysed for the purpose of the research (Ziere, 2007). The parts of texts I have chosen for the analysis from each textbook are:

- the first chapter,
- the middle chapter, and
- the last chapter.

This choice was based on the claims of Gagne & Briggs (1988) and Schneider (2008), who claim that most textbooks follow a specific and fixed framework throughout the whole script. Schneider (2008) explains that typically, all chapters in a textbook correspond to major topics, whereas the sections in each chapter are usually accompanied by subtopics. Furthermore, in order to ensure a smooth publication, every chapter and section in a textbook very often has a consistent pattern that follows across the whole publication (Gagne & Briggs, 1988). Similarly, Coolidge (2014) also talks about textbook structure and argues that one of the characteristics of a good textbook is a consistent style. In addition to this, Coolidge (2014) notes that as a general rule, after the first few sections in a textbook, there is little or no surprises for the learner with regards to the design, layout and the presentation of content.

Hence, when examining textbooks in this research, it was not required to analyse in-depth the entire textbook, as a sample of the initial chapters is considered to be representative of the whole text. However, in order to ensure valid and reliable results, the chapters in the middle, as well as the chapters at the end of each textbook were also analysed. Furthermore, the selected chapters were not analysed in isolation, but rather in relation to the other elements and chapters of the book.

3.4 Data Collection

For this research, relevant official curricular documents designed for the teaching and learning of GFL were identified using both electronic and manual bibliographic search methods (Bryman, 2016). Moreover, the Assistant Director Directorate for Learning and Assessment Programmes, Dr Micallef, was a valuable asset in the data collection process of this research as apart from providing me with valuable insights about the local current educational situation, she also provided me with sources of secondary data through which I could base my interpretations.

Thus, the initial step in preparation for this research was a bibliographic search of past and present official curricular documents, followed by intensive reading. Not only an insightful reading of various official curricular documents but also of all the other major works written about the teaching and learning of FLs to establish a profound understanding of past and present teaching methodologies. This was accompanied by a thorough reading of articles and papers published in relation to the national reforms that are currently taking place within the education sector following the introduction of the LOF programme and syllabi in the scholastic year 2017 – 2018 (European Commission, 2019).

After collecting several official curriculum documents, contact was made with the Curriculum department to determine which GFL textbooks were used along the years and the specific time frame in which each textbook was used in the Maltese GFL classroom. After establishing the names of the textbooks, a meeting was held with the Education Officer for German as a Foreign Language; Ms Erica Kawka Armeni during which she provided me with the textbooks.

With the help of the mentioned people and by means of a bibliographic search, multiple forms of secondary data were collected. The data was reviewed and after making sense of it, it was organized chronologically for evaluation and then relevant data was selected for analysis.

3.5 Data Analysis

3.5.1 Qualitative Textual Analysis

As part of this study different texts and documents were analysed in order to identify and explore past and present teaching trends and methodologies within the Maltese GFL learning context. Bowen (2009) defines textual analysis as a method of qualitative research in which text is interpreted by the researcher to give meaning around a particular topic.

Textual analysis requires data to be examined and interpreted to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Rapley, 2007). For the purpose of this study the recently issued documents about the LOF program, syllabi, and official curricular documents designed for past and present teaching of GFL were analysed. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, textbooks that were used in the Maltese GFL classroom along the years were also analysed, where a multimodal approach was also adopted (Kress, 2010). In this way, I could evaluate and interpret the principles, methods, and content implied by the texts and gain an in-depth understanding of past and present teaching trends and methodologies.

As claimed by Denzin (1970, p.21) textual analysis is often used in combination with other qualitative research methods as a means of triangulation i.e “the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon”. In this study, a textual analysis was combined with thematic analysis and a multimodal analysis that was based on the MIRROR Framework (Cremona, 2017). By analysing data through different methodologies, I was able to corroborate findings across data sets and thus reduce potential biases that can affect the credibility of the study. In this way, it was ensured that the findings of this study are not simply an artefact of a single method or a single interpreter’s bias (Patton, 1990).

3.5.2 Thematic Analysis

After the data collection process, I decided to analyse the data obtained from textbooks and official curricular documents using thematic analysis which is defined as a method for identifying, analysing and interpreting different ‘themes’ in qualitative data .(Braun & Clarke & Terry, 2006) . This technique aids in recognizing patterns of significance in the data and tries

to connect them into meaningful groups and themes that capture the subject being investigated (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The data analysis is based on Creswell's (2007) steps for analysing qualitative data. This turned out to be an efficient method for my research, as it allowed me to analyse techniques and trends that featured and/or were absent in the different GFL textbooks and curricular documents, by first coding the data and then developing the themes related to GFL teaching and learning methodologies.

In order to analyse the data using thematic analysis, I adapted the process of data analysis suggested by Creswell (2007):

Step 1: I first organised the data and prepared it for analysis. This included identifying and organizing the textbooks and curricular documents in chronological order. The next step involved reading the data collected, which included reading both the texts and my interpretation of the texts.

Step 2: A general sense of the information was obtained by re-reading through the data and listing down any remarks. Re-reading the data several times and looking for common concepts helps for similarities and/or differences to stand out (Rubin & Rubin, 1995).

Step 3: Once the reading was completed, data was organised into systematic categories to begin the coding process. Each category was then labelled with a term.

Step 4: The categories were then sorted and a broader category was created together with a detailed description. From this description, codes were then generated. In order to search for themes, I amalgamated codes which are interlinked, hence forming broader categories as suggested by Braun & Clarke (2006). According to Braun & Clarke (2006), a theme is the result of thematic analysis, it is a phrase or a word that represents something important or the gist of the data in relation to the research question. This analytic step has helped me identify two main themes from the data which are:

- the four language skills as represented in the textbooks, and
- the role of grammar in GFL textbooks.

These themes which I generated from collected data, laid out the basis on which I developed my data analysis chapter (i.e Chapter 4).

Step 5: The last step involved interpreting the data and determining whether this in agreement with previous studies as mentioned in the Literature Review, or entirely new and unforeseen (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003).

3.5.3 The Use of Multimodality in this Study

As stated earlier in this chapter, the data collected from the various textbooks was analysed through a multimodal approach (Cremona 2017, Kress 2010,). As a result, since in this study I produced my interpretations of the teaching and learning methodologies implicated by textbooks and curricular documents, a multimodal framework was needed to compare and contrast the different interpretations.

Although one finds several multimodal frameworks, for the purpose of this research, the MIRROR multimodal framework which was developed by Cremona (2017) was the most suitable as it takes into consideration both multimodal as well as semiotic perspectives which very often are neglected in other frameworks (Cremona, 2017). This is an important aspect with regards to this study, as learning and teaching methodologies cannot be studied without taking into consideration the history, social and cultural background during which that particular methodology was practiced (Carvajal, 2013). Moreover, Cremona (2017) highlights the fact that when applying the framework, the steps of the framework intertwine with each other and as a result do not always follow a chronological order. Consequently, this framework does not restrict interpretation since no confines exist between the different steps (ibid, 2017).

The MIRROR framework (Cremona, 2017) includes the following steps:

1.	Monitoring the available texts. (In the case of this study, various textbooks which have been used locally for the teaching and learning of GFL together with official curricular documents);
2.	Initial descriptive interpretation for each individual text;
3.	Representational multimodal semiotic interpretation (per individual text, i.e. this involves a more profound analysis of the text by looking at the content of the text, the linguistic level of the text, layout, font size and style);
4.	Represented social interpretation (per individual text by concentrating on the socio-cultural messages being implied);
5.	Overview of the representations observed which compares individual trends with common trends derived from texts as a whole following a detailed write up;
6.	Reorganising the representations obtained from the framework and presented in the overview.

Table 1 - The MIRROR Framework (Cremona, 2017).

The first step of the MIRROR framework involves organizing and monitoring all of the resources (textbooks, official curricular documents, syllabi), which are available. Due to time constraints, not all of the resources collected could be analysed and as a result after evaluating all the resources, I had to choose the most relevant ones for the purpose of this research.

In the second step of the framework, an initial interpretation for every chosen text is provided. In this phase, I familiarized myself with the information gathered by re-reading the data collected and writing down my initial ideas and reflections after organizing it chronologically.

The third step involves an in-depth multimodal semiotic interpretation by identifying the different modes that are visible in the texts. In the fourth step, the focus shifts on the social aspects present in the texts. This step allowed me to produce a deeper interpretation by linking the interpretation with the cultural and historic background. This step concurs with Kress' (2010, p.87) argument that "a full theory of communication will need to represent meanings about the social relations of those engaged in communication".

After completion of these steps, a comprehensive write-up about the methodologies and pedagogical implications suggested by the different text is formulated. In addition, a critical comparison between individual and common methodological trends found in the texts analysed will be made. The results of this multimodal comparison are then presented in Chapter 4.

Since this study involves a comparative multimodal analysis of past and present teaching methodologies, the findings in this research are based on my own interpretations. As a result, although backed up by research, the findings will be influenced by my own personal values, knowledge, and cultural background. However, interpretation is still considered as a crucial aspect of communication as it provides an answer to a past prompt (Dimech, 2017). Kress (2010) explains that new meanings are formed through interpretation, which then forms a semiotic entity. He (2010, p.37) further adds that “interpretation can become the basis of a new sign-complex in the making of a new message” whilst creating the possibility to create new meanings through signs. Whilst in this dissertation I share my interpretations, I encourage others to criticize my interpretations and evaluations and put forward other possible interpretations and meanings.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Ensuring that a research study is grounded on good ethical standards is not a bonus but a necessity, as these enable valid results that safeguard the integrity of the research (Cohen et al., 2011). The first step towards ensuring the adoption of ethical measures throughout this research was to present a project proposal to the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) and the Faculty Research Ethics Committee (FREC). Although my study does not involve contact with human subjects, the research process started after my dissertation proposal was vetted and permission was given from the FREC committee, ensuring that the study is valid and based on ethical principles.

McKinnon (2012) argues that qualitative researchers who work with human subjects devote a lot of time discussing what proper ethical standards in research are, whereas researchers who work with texts, rarely reflect upon ethical principles which should guide the practice of collecting, analysing, and writing up research. In light of this, Madison (2005, as cited by

McKinnon, p.15) suggests that many qualitative researchers who work with text should be accompanied by “utilitarian assumptions of the greater good or pragmatic goals of making applied change in the social worlds around them”. As a result, regardless of motivation, researchers should be able to elucidate what guides their choice of text and how they analyze them (Madison, 2005).

To address the ethic of representativeness, text-based researchers should also contemplate whether the analysis completely reflects the data (Davis, 1998). One way how I managed to achieve this is, by asking questions to myself, such as “Am I letting the text or data speak?”, “Does this analysis provide a more complex picture of the issue, text, or event being studied?”. These kind of questions made me aware of the possibility that I may be strategically selecting parts of the data that support my view while ignoring data that contradicts my interpretation (McKinnon, 2012). Additionally, these questions also allowed me to evaluate whether I have analyzed enough text and whether a complete picture of the data is being presented at the end of the study. This approach has helped me to critically reflect on the interpretations represented in the study and ensure that these do not rely on beliefs or stereotypes that may objectify or disempower the topic represented in the research (McKinnon, 2012).

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter aimed at explaining the methodology of this research and the data collection process involved in this study. Information was given about the research design adopted, the selection of the textbooks and sampling method, the rationale behind the methods chosen, as well as the ethical procedures adopted. In the following chapter, I will be presenting the outcomes of the data analysis through the themes which were identified when analysing the textbooks.

Chapter 4 – Data Analysis and Discussion

This chapter presents the research findings of a multimodal investigation between the different trends and methodologies that were used in the Maltese GFL learning context during the past years. A look towards the differences and similarities found between the teaching and learning approaches if any, will prove to be a point of reflection about the strengths and challenges of the contemporary methodologies used to teach GFL.

After collecting the data, I analysed the data through the multimodal MIRROR framework to discover the characteristics of past teaching and learning methodologies used within the Maltese GFL learning context. The analysis helped me answer the first research question:

1. Through a bibliographic analysis, what are the characteristics of past methodologies used for the teaching and learning of GFL in Malta along the years?

I will start this chapter by presenting in a chronological order the different textbooks which along the years have been used in the first two years (Year 7 and Year 8) of GFL teaching and learning. Moreover, I will also be comparing and contrasting the different teaching approaches which came across to me whilst analyzing these textbooks. I would like to highlight that these interpretations are based on the use of the textbook which for many years has been the main resource for learning (Elliott & Nagel, 1988; Gurung, 2017). However, this does not imply that the textbook was the sole resource used by educators. As seen in Chapter 2, in 1995, a Resource Centre equipped with resources and material to be used both by GFL teachers and learners was established.

As I went through the process of organising the data, different themes emerged and data was organised according to them. In this analysis I will be focusing on two main themes:

- the four language skills as represented in the textbooks and,
- the role of grammar in GFL textbooks.

Once again, I would like to point out that this is my interpretation and that other readers may come up with different interpretations. As a result, this analysis should serve as an invitation for others to initiate further interpretations of these textbooks and the methodologies implied by them.

4.1 A Look at the Textbooks used in the Maltese GFL Learning Context along the Years

4.1.1 *Vorwärts International*

The use of the textbook *Vorwärts International* in State secondary schools dates back to the beginning of the '70s when during the time no official textbooks were available for the learning of GFL (Dalmas, 1984). In October 1971, Mr Schmitt, a representative of the Bundesverwaltungsamt Zentrallstelle für das Auslandsschulwesen⁷ came over to Malta to observe the current situation and advise accordingly. It was during this visit that the coursebook *Vorwärts International* was introduced to the small group of German teachers. By the scholastic year 1974, *Vorwärts International* had been approved as the official textbook and started being distributed to all students learning GFL in local secondary State schools (Ibid, 1984).

Hence, *Vorwärts International* became the first textbook series that was officially chosen for the teaching and learning of GFL in Malta. This series entails a series of GFL textbooks at different levels and was first published by the Nuffield foundation between 1969 and 1974. The textbook used in Malta was the *Vorwärts International Kurzfassung*, which forms part of the audio-visual series *Vorwärts* (Arnolds & Son Ltd., 1974).



Figure 4 - *Vorwärts International* K1 & K2 textbooks.

⁷ Central Office for the foreign school system (Bundesverwaltungsamt Zentrallstelle für das Auslandsschulwesen, 2019).

4.1.2 ZickZack

After more than fifteen years of using *Vorwärts International* as the main textbook, a new textbook, named *ZickZack*, was implemented due to a change in the syllabus (Armeni, 1997). *ZickZack* was gradually introduced during the scholastic year 1992 –1993 and presented teachers and learners with the communicative approach, which at the time was relatively new. The version used in State secondary schools was published by Tomas Nelson & Sons Ltd. 1978, a publishing firm in Scotland. The *ZickZack* series consisted of three stages: *ZickZack 1*, 2, 3, and was designed for learners between eleven to thirteen years of age who are beginning to learn German.

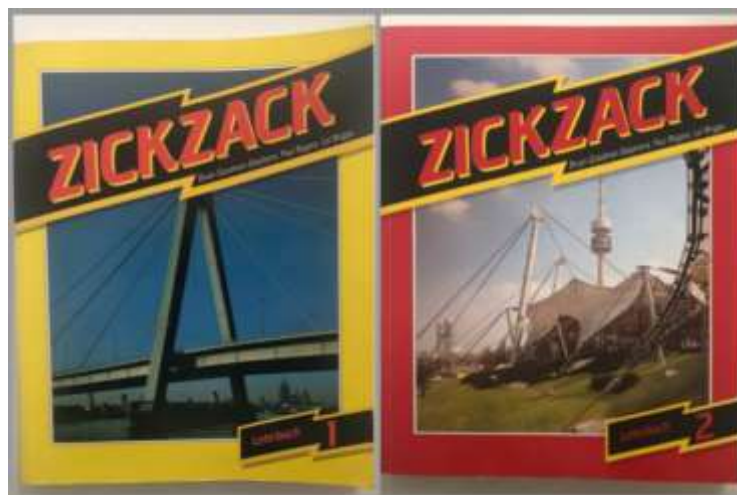


Figure 5 - *ZickZack 1* & *ZickZack 2* textbooks.

4.1.3 *ZickZack neu*

Four years after its implementation in local State secondary schools, *ZickZack* was replaced with a refined edition of the same textbook i.e *ZickZack neu*, which consisted of four volumes, namely *ZickZack neu 1-4* (Zentrum Deutsch als Fremdsprache, 1996). After analysing both versions, I could conclude that most of the changes applied in *ZickZack neu* are related to the layout and the way the content is presented to the learners. Moreover, the same language content presented by *ZickZack* was spread over four volumes instead of three, and as a result, less language material can be found in each volume of *ZickZack neu*.

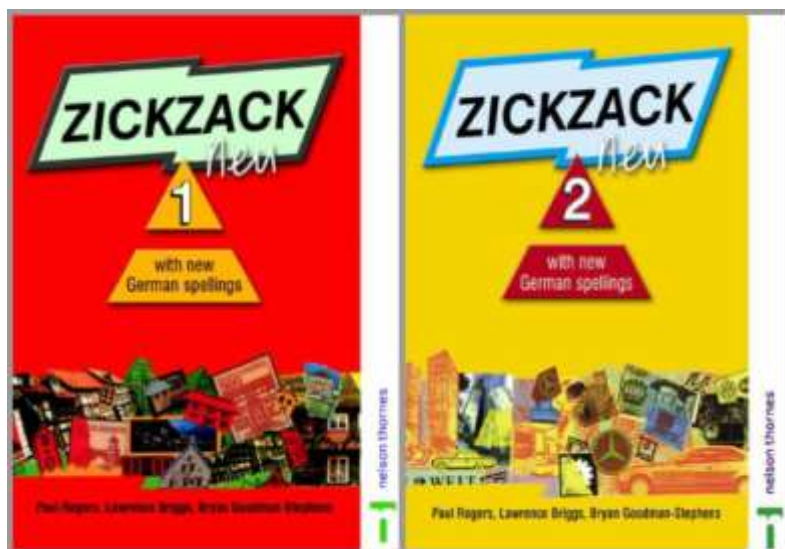


Figure 6 - *ZickZack neu 1* & *ZickZack neu 2* textbooks.

4.1.4 Schritte International

Eventually, the textbook series *ZickZack neu* was phased out to be replaced by *Schritte International*. As from the scholastic year 2008-2009, the *Schritte International* series (Heuber, 2007) became the official textbook series for the teaching and learning of German in secondary State schools. *Schritte International* has been published in Germany by Hueber Verlag GmbH and consists of six volumes, which are based on the requirements of the CEFR (Heuber, 2007). This textbook series is aimed at adults and adolescents aged sixteen and over (Ibid, 2007). The first two books in the series cover material at A1 – A2 level which is the basic level for FL beginners.

Schritte International was the last textbook chosen by the Directorate of Education in Malta for the teaching and learning of GFL and started being phased out as from the scholastic year 2011 – 2012. During this period, *Schritte International 1* & *2* (for Year 7 and Year 8 respectively) was still used in the classroom, however, teachers were expected to use the textbook as they deemed fit. The Education Officer of German, Ms Erika Kawka Armeni explained that as from the scholastic year 2015 – 2016, GFL teachers were ever more encouraged to make use of their own material and different resources, rather than adhering to the exercises presented in the textbook.



Figure 7 - Schritte International 1 & Schritte International 2 textbooks.

Below are listed in chronological order the textbooks which were officially chosen for the teaching and learning of GFL. For the purpose of this research, it was best to analyse and interpret them in chronological order to see how the teaching and learning of GFL evolved throughout the years.

Year	Name of Textbook
1970 – 1973	No official textbook
1974 – 1991	<i>Vorwärts International</i>
1992 – 1996	<i>ZickZack</i>
1997 – 2006	<i>ZickZack neu</i>
2007 – 2014	<i>Schritte International</i>
2015 – till present	No official textbook

Table 2 - A chronological list of the official textbooks used in the Maltese GFL classroom.

4.2 The Four Language Skills

The data analysis suggests that the development of four language skills i.e listening, speaking, reading, and writing, have been part of GFL teaching and learning since the beginning that German started being taught locally in State secondary schools. This corresponds with Chodkiewicz & Trepczyńska (2014) who claim that since the emergence of the direct and audio-lingual methods in the 1890s, focus started being placed on the four language skills. Although in this chapter the language skills are presented into different sections, this does not imply a segregation between the skills. As claimed by Zhu (1997) language skills are interrelated and interdependent. For example, when writing, learners will also be reading, whereas whilst practicing speaking in pairs they are likely to be practice listening as well. Thus, whilst practicing a particular skill, learners are likely to be automatically engaged with other skills (Kennedy, 2011).

4.2.2 Listening Skills

In the early years of GFL teaching and learning, a lot of emphasis seems to have been placed on the development of listening skills. This is evident from the considerable amount of audio material found throughout the textbook *Vorwärts International K1 & K2*. Moreover, the following quotation taken from the *Lehrerhandbuch K1-K2* (Teacher's Handbook) (1980), indicates further the importance that was given to listening skills.

Nothing should be spoken before heard, nothing should be read before spoken and nothing should be written before reading⁸ (Lehrerhandbuch K1-K2, 1980, p.6).

The notable presence of audio material in the first textbook series that was officially used for the teaching and learning of GFL within the Maltese learning context, indicates that the need for learners to listen to the TL to acquire a FL successfully has long been recognized. However, the listening activities that accompanied the audio material suggest that at the time, the aim of listening was not to test comprehension but rather to ensure the development of good

⁸ „...in den ersten Deutschstunden wird weder gelesen noch geschrieben. Erst wenn die Schüler in der Lage sind, in einem Text, den sie hören, Wörter zu unterscheiden, und wenn sie mit der deutschen Artikulation und Intonation ein wenig vertraut geworden sind, beginnt sie mit Lesen und Schreiben“ (Arnolds, 1980, p.30).

pronunciation and intonation amongst learners. This is evident in Figure 8 which shows how in the Vorstellung (Introduction) section, learners are presented with a Photo Story accompanied by audio material that is usually in the form of a dialogue. After the dialogue is played on the tape-recorder, students are to repeat the dialogue first as a whole class, then in groups, and finally individually. In the latter, the teacher can identify those students who have not yet learned the correct pronunciation of some words (Lehrerhandbuch K1-K2, 1980).



Figure 8 - Vorstellung (Introduction) sample from *Vorwärts International K2*, p.6 & 7.

This practice suggests that as claimed by Richards & Richards (2014, p.58) in the audio-lingual method “listening and oral proficiency are equated with accurate pronunciation”. Furthermore, the same dialogue is played again in the different sections that follow to ensure continuous practice in intonation and pronunciation. This further indicates that as seen in Chapter 2, in the audio-lingual method the main emphasis is on pronunciation, memorization of patterns and replication of conversations (Morley, 1999, as cited in Bormanaki, 2017).

In the course of time, this characteristic seems to have been challenged. The insights obtained from *ZickZack 1 & 2* and *ZickZack neu 1 & 2* indicate that over time listening material started being aimed at gaining listening competence through the use of listening comprehension activities. This finding is in line with Rost (1990) who claims that the development of listening skills should emphasize the comprehension of intended meaning rather than simply highlighting the formal structures of the sentences. As can be seen in Figure 9 and 10, the language presented in most audio material and listening comprehensions offered by *ZickZack 1 & 2* and *ZickZack neu 1 & 2* is presented in meaningful, day to day situations such as; exchanging news over the telephone, listening to someone ordering food at a restaurant and asking for directions. This corresponds to the idea that, with the emergence of the communicative approach, effort started being put on the implementation of classroom activities that encourage more realistic use of language (Spada & Frohlich, 1995).

KAPITEL 11
Ist am Freitag noch ein Termin frei?

Trage die Tabelle in dein Heft ein. Höre gut zu, und schreibe den Namen und den Termin auf.

	NAME	ZEIT
Mo	Herr Ziegert Frau Stegemann Frau Timm Herr Carolus Herr Bromma Frau Heinemann Frau Fichte Herr Meyer David Jones Herr Schmidt	
Di		
Mi		
Do		
Fr		

Conversation 1:
 Woman: Guten Tag. Hier Frau Fichte. Kann ich morgen in die Sprechstunde kommen?
 Doctor: Nein, leider nicht, Frau Fichte.
 Woman: Hat Frau Doktor am Freitag noch einen Termin frei?
 Doctor: Ja, um 14.00.
 Woman: Also, gut. Ich komme um 14.00.
 Doctor: Ihr Termin ist also am Freitag um 14.00.
 Woman: Danke schön. Auf Wiederhören.
 Doctor: Auf Wiederhören, Frau Fichte.

Conversation 2:
 Man: Guten Tag. Hat Herr Doktor heute noch einen Termin frei?
 Woman: Nein, heute nicht.
 Man: Geht es wirklich nicht heute? Ich habe starke Schmerzen.
 Woman: Wo denn?
 Man: Im Magen. Ich habe heute Fisch gegessen und habe jetzt Magenschmerzen.
 Woman: Am besten fahren Sie direkt zum Krankenhaus.
 Man: Danke schön. Auf Wiederhören.
 Woman: Auf Wiederhören. Gute Besserung!

Figure 9 - Listening comprehension in *ZickZack 1*, p.198.



Figure 10 - Listening activities in *ZickZack neu 1*, p.88 & *ZickZack neu 2*, p.16.


Having said that, the analysis of a sample of the aural material offered by *ZickZack 1 & 2* and *ZickZack neu 1 & 2*, suggests that although the contexts in which the TL is presented started being more realistic, the language material seems to lack authenticity despite being one of the main characteristics of the communicative approach. As claimed by Clarke (1989), the communicative approach underlines authenticity as the need to communicate, which presupposes an emphasis on meaning rather than on form.

According to my interpretation based on a multimodal semiotic interpretation of the modes, the majority of listening material in *ZickZack 1 & 2* and *ZickZack neu 1 & 2* is characterized by the overuse of particular vocabulary and repetition of information which shows that it has been intentionally designed for an educational purpose. In light of this, Nunan (1999, p.212) claims that listening material that is developed for specific pedagogical purposes “does not always adequately prepare learners for dealing with genuine communication either inside or outside the classroom”. Tomlinson (2010) agrees with Nunan (1999) and adds that if learners are constantly presented with inauthentic language to exemplify a particular language feature, then these will not acquire the ability to use the language effectively.

In contrast to this, apart from presenting learning with meaningful contexts, some of the aural material in *Schritte 1 & 2* presents learners with authentic language such as listening to a weather forecast or a sports report, hearing announcements at a railway station or at the airport and listening to an advert. This reflects one of the aims put forward by the *Syllabus*

for the Study of the German Language (2006, p.18) which states that the development of listening should lead students to “understand authentic texts related to situations, the contents of which correspond to their spheres of experience and interest”. Correspondingly, through the use of background noise such as the noise of a bus, birds chirping, the wind howling, music or people talking in the background, the authors manage to make the language sound more natural. This mirrors one of the main characteristics of CLT which seeks to engage learners in a genuine use of language in authentic situations (Field, 2000). Moreover, Figure 11 shows how listening tasks (marked with a red frame) started being regarded as part of communication rather than as a concept on its own. This concurs with the notion brought forward by CLT, that the integration of the four skills is the key for creating a classroom environment as authentic as possible to teach foreign languages in a close association with real-life communicative contexts (Harmer, 2007; Jing, 2009; Oxford, 2001).

E1 Wa sind die Leute? Ordnen Sie zu.



A. Haus / Café
 B. Im Kindergarten
 C. In der Metzgerei

E2 Was essen oder trinken die Personen? Hören Sie und kreuzen Sie an.

a	<input type="checkbox"/> Steak und Salat	<input type="checkbox"/> Salatbrot mit Zitronen-Sauce
b	<input type="checkbox"/> Müsli mit Milch und Banane	<input type="checkbox"/> Eier
c	<input type="checkbox"/> Wasser und Wein	<input type="checkbox"/> Cola und Wasser
d	<input type="checkbox"/> Fisch und Gemüsesuppe	<input type="checkbox"/> Salat

Ich esse
 Du isst
 Er/sie/Esst

E3 Hören Sie noch einmal und kreuzen Sie an: richtig oder falsch?

a	Susanne isst gern Fisch.	<input type="checkbox"/>
b	Das Lieblingsessen ist Hähnchen mit Pommes.	<input type="checkbox"/>
c	Er trinkt kein Bier.	<input type="checkbox"/>
d	Das Gemüse hat Tomaten.	<input type="checkbox"/>

E4 Sprechen Sie im Kurz: Was essen und trinken Sie gern?

Was essen Sie / isst du gern? Ich esse (sehr) gern ...
 Mein Lieblingsessen ist ...
 Das schmeckt, ist sehr gut/lecker.
 Essen Sie / isst du gern ...? Ja, sehr/total gern.
 Nein, nicht so gern.
 Was trinken Sie / trinkst du gern? Ich trinke (sehr) gern ...
 Trinken Sie / trinkst du gern ...? ... ist mein Lieblingsgetränk.

Ich esse gern Obst, zum Beispiel Bananen und Äpfel. Und du?
 Mein Lieblingsessen ist Lachsfilet. Und du trinkst gern Bier.

Figure 11 - Listening activities in Schritte International 1, p.34.

4.2.3 Reading

The data analysis indicates that at the beginning of GFL teaching and learning, the development of reading as a language skill seems to have been neglected by the textbook in use as reading material in *Vorwärts International K1 & K2* is rather scarce. This finding agrees with Saville-Troike (1971) who claims that in the resulting shift of emphasis in foreign language teaching on the acquisition of oral skills (listening and speaking), reading and writing have been sadly neglected or even ignored.

Furthermore, the insights obtained from *Vorwärts International K1 & K2* indicate that initially, reading in the TL seems to have served as an oral practice of the new utterances and grammatical structures learned. Correspondingly, the *Lehrerhandbuch K1-K2* (1980) notes that in the Lesen (Reading) section, as demonstrated in Figure 12, reading aloud is recommended for establishing sounds that are beneficial in decoding new words. This suggests that as claimed by Krail (1967, p.98), at the time, the objective of reading was “to make a connection between the phoneme and grapheme solely through the presentation of lexical items that the students can vocalize correctly”. Hence in the audio-lingual method, reading is merely “a matter of decoding a series of written symbols into their aural equivalents” (Harmer, 2001 as cited in Chaudhury & Karim, 2014, p.48).

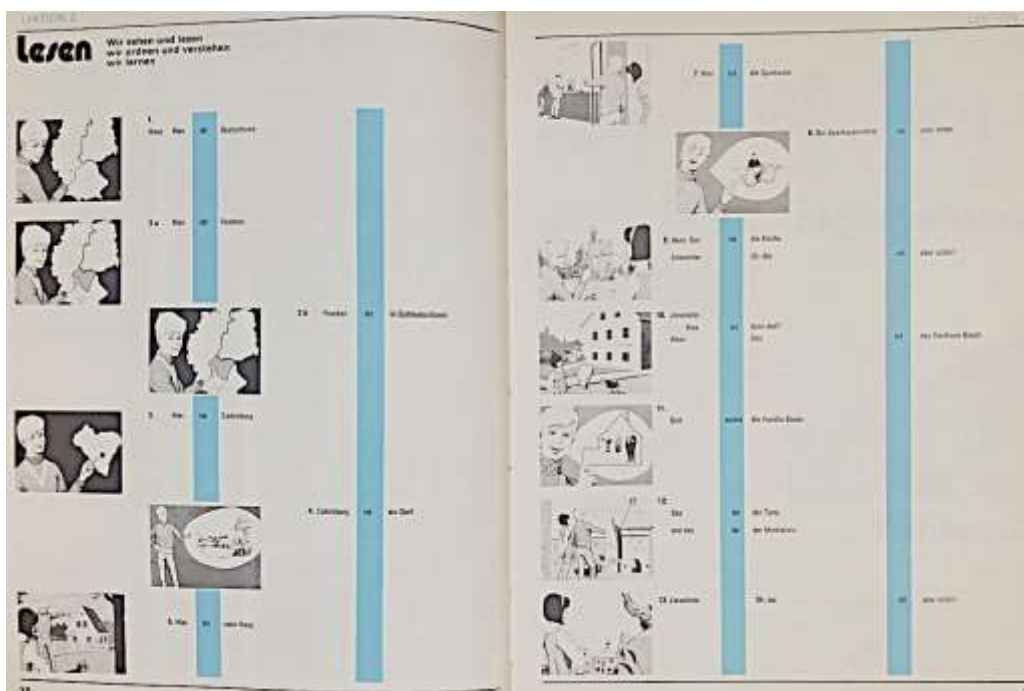


Figure 12 - Sample of the Lesen section from *Vorwärts International K1*, p.11.

The comparative analysis of the insights obtained from the other textbooks that were in use following *Vorwärts International*, suggests that over the years, reading gradually stopped being perceived as a passive activity and started being regarded as an active activity that requires learners to be productive and negotiate meaning. This is because, emphasis started being made on the reconstruction of meaning rather than simply on the decoding of the form (Harmer, 2001) as reading material started being accompanied by various communicative tasks. Figure 13 and 14 represent some of these communication tasks which include; matching, comparing and summarizing key information in tables, multiple-choice questions, map reading, searching for differences in pictures, or sorting out the order of unordered picture sequences or sentences (Chaudron, 2003). Thus, besides allowing aural and oral practice of the new utterances learned, reading started to gain a communicative purpose in FL language teaching (Chaudron, 2003; Ellis, 1997; Hedge, 2000; Skehan, 1998).

KAPITEL 12

Campingplatz Nürnberg

Volkspark
Dutzendteich
Nürnberg

Preisliste

Preis je Person und Nacht	
Erwachsene	DM 4,00
Kinder (3-14 Jahre)	DM 2,50
Stellgebühren	
Caravan mit PKW und Motorcaravan	DM 8,50
Zelt und PKW	DM 5,50
PKW	DM 4,00

Der 2000 qm große Campingplatz verfügt über 200 Einheiten zu je 100 qm. Während der Hauptreisezeit steht dem Gästen eine Cabana zur Verfügung. Außerdem gibt es auf dem Campingplatz genügend Warmwasserduschen, eine Waschmaschine, einen Wäschetrockner und einen Autoschleppplatz.

Herzlich willkommen und gute Reise!

Bist du ein Genie in Mathe?

Kannst du gut rechnen? Mit diesen Aufgaben für diese Familien auf dem Campingplatz Nürnberg!

1		für 2 Nächte
2		für 1 Nacht
3		für 3 Nächte
4		für 4 Nächte
5		für 2 Nächte

Beispiel 1

Ein Zelt und PKW	= DM 5,50 + 2	= DM 13,00
Zwei Erwachsene	= DM 8,00 + 2	= DM 16,00
Ein Kind	= DM 2,50 + 2	= DM 5,00
Gesamtsumme		DM 34,00

Am Campingplatz

Welche Antwort passt zu welcher Frage?

1. Haben Sie noch Platz frei?
2. Wie lange wollen Sie bleiben?
3. Wieviel Personen sind Sie?
4. Wie alt sind die Kinder?
5. Haben Sie einen Wohnwagen?
6. Haben Sie ein Zelt?
7. Können Sie einen Hund mitbringen?
8. Ist das Kind unter fünf Jahren?

Camping ist billig, oder?

Nächte	Erwachsene	Kinder 3-14	Auto (PKW)	Wohnwagen	Zelt	Preis DM
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						

Was hat Eva in den Ferien gemacht?

Ferienbericht

Drei Briefe

TEIL 4

Figure 13 - Reading comprehension samples from *ZickZack 1*, p.213 & *ZickZack 2*, p.88.

Lernziel 2
 **Wann fährt der nächste Zug?**
 Sieh dir den Fahrplan an und beantworte die Fragen.

Beispiel
 1 Um 19.02 Uhr.

		19.00		
19.02	R32 304	Namen 19.26 - Dortmund 21.14 - Essen 21.38 - Duisburg 21.53 - Düsseldorf 21.26 - Köln 21.47 - Düren 22.10 - Aachen 22.45 An 21. 21. 22. nur im Sommer	2	
19.13	R 3049 4	Bielefeld 19.21 - Minden 19.30 - Hannover 20.20 - Braunschweig 21.28 - Magdeburg 22.02 - Halle (Saale) 22.32 - Leipzig 23.49 nur im Sommer	3	
19.25	F 3342 1	Bielefeld 19.20 - Herford 19.36 - Löhne 20.07 An 19. 20. 21. 22.	3	
19.41	F 3329 1	Herford 19.40 - Bielefeld 19.55 An 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24.	4	
19.54	R32 304	Herford 19.57 - Bielefeld 20.08 An 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24.	3	

- 1 Wann fährt der nächste Zug nach Essen?
- 2 Wann kommt der E3583 in Löhne an?
- 3 Von welchem Gleis in Gütersloh fährt der Zug um 19.54 Uhr?
- 4 Wie viele Züge fahren nach Bielefeld zwischen 19.00 Uhr und 20.00 Uhr?
- 5 Wie lange dauert die Reise von Gütersloh nach Duisburg?

Figure 14 - Reading comprehension sample from *ZickZack neu 2*, p.43.

Moreover, a comparison of the interpretations of the reading materials through the MIRROR multimodal framework suggests that along the years, the interests and realities of the learners started being slowly incorporated in the reading material offered by the textbooks. For example, Figure 15 in the following page, shows a reading text in *ZickZack 2* accompanied by various visuals about the effects of smoking and alcohol. This seems to contrast with the reading material found in *Vorwärts K1 & K2*, since despite the use of visuals to facilitate learning and attract the learners' attention (Rather, 2004; Wright, 1976), most of the topics presented in the reading material revolve around the lifestyle of German families and the way members of these families go about their day. Hence, the interests of the learners do not seem to be taken into consideration in the learning process. The latter, which is evident in Figure 16 in the following page seems to reflect one of the characteristics of the teacher-centred approach, whereby as claimed by Garrett (2008) the individuality of the students, including their personal experiences, perspectives, motivations, and interests is not taken into consideration in the learning process.



Figure 15 - Reading material sample from *ZickZack 2*, p.141 – 142.



Figure 16 - Reading material sample from *Vorwärts International K2*, p.86.

The insights obtained from the different textbooks indicate that as seen in Figures 17 – 21, apart from reflecting the interests and the lifestyle of young teenagers, reading material started being presented in different styles through the use of authentic texts such as food menus, brochures, and advertisements. This suggests that by time, apart from photographs which are evident throughout the first textbook series used in the GFL classroom (i.e. *Vorwärts International*), other authentic material started being explored and exploited in GFL textbooks. This finding agrees with the claim by Pérez Ruiz & Santamaría García (2003) that over the years there has been a rapid growth in the use of authentic material for FL teaching and learning. As argued earlier, the integration of authentic materials in the curriculum is one of the practices promoted by the communicative approach (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). This suggests that the development of reading started being based on the engagement of the learner in meaningful and authentic language rather than on the mechanical practice of language patterns (Ibid, 2001).



Figure 17 - Reading material in *ZickZack 1*, p.118 & *ZickZack 2*, p.8.

Achtung Tollwut!

Hinweise für Besucher der Britischen Inseln und der Kanarischen Inseln

TOLLWUT



KEINE TIERE

Schmuggeln Sie keine Tiere nach Großbritannien

Kein Tier, das in einen Landfahrzeug, müssen unter Deck auf dem öffentlichen Gelände oder durch ein Landfahrzeug gebracht wird, darf einreisen. Dies gilt auch für Tiere, die in einem Landfahrzeug transportiert werden.

TOLLWUTVERBÜTTUNG

PIZZA-SPEZIALITÄTEN

PIZZA „PICCOLO“ Tomate, Käse, Salami, Pilze, Paprika	7,00
PIZZA „MARGHERITA“ Tomaten, Käse	6,50
PIZZA „SALAMI“ Tomate, Käse, Salami	7,50
PIZZA „PIZZA“ Tomate, Käse, Pilze	6,50
PIZZA „SALAMI & PIZZA“ Tomate, Käse, Salami, Pilze	10,00
PIZZA „NAPOLI“ Tomate, Käse, Salami, Schinken, Paprika	10,50
PIZZA „PEPERONI“ Tomate, Käse, Peperoniwurst, Paprika	10,50
PIZZA „SCHENKEL“ Tomate, Käse, Schinken, Pilze	10,50
PIZZA „MILKESFRUCHT“ Tomate, Käse, Mineralöl	11,50
PIZZA „SPEZIAL“ Tomate, Käse, Pilze, Paprika, Sardellen, Mozzarella, Knoblauch	11,50

Auf Wunsch belagern wir Ihre Pizza mit Zwiebeln
Melieren DM 2,00

Figure 18 - Sample of authentic text in *ZickZack 1*, p.29 & p.58.

Check-in

SCHWEIZ

REGION 4 ZENTRALSCHWEIZ

Verkehrsbüro Regional Zentralschweiz
Alpenstrasse 1
CH-8002 Luzern
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HOTEL ALPENHORN CH-8002 ALPENHORN Bühnenstr. 4 km, Luzern 12 km 0 20 2 A 041 31 20 00 SWISS HOTEL, 50% BÜCHER 27 12	HOTEL HORN CH-8002 HORN Luzern 12 km, Luzern 12 km 0 20 2 A 041 31 20 00 SWISS HOTEL, 50% BÜCHER 27 12	HOTEL HORN CH-8002 HORN Luzern 12 km, Luzern 12 km 0 20 2 A 041 31 20 00 SWISS HOTEL, 50% BÜCHER 27 12	HOTEL HORN CH-8002 HORN Luzern 12 km, Luzern 12 km 0 20 2 A 041 31 20 00 SWISS HOTEL, 50% BÜCHER 27 12
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TAUSENDFÜSSLER

Willkommen in Jugendherbergen

Alten, vielseitig, modern und kostengünstig sind über 75 Jahren jung wie sie sein. So unbedingt sind die Deutschen Jugendherbergen heute.

5&17 Jugendherbergen

Hobby- und Abenteuer-Freizeiten des DJJ

Figure 19 - Sample of authentic text in *ZickZack 2*, p.78 & p.84.

E1 Visitenkarten

a Lesen Sie und markieren Sie: **Vorname, Familienname, Straße, Land!**

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KÄSEBROT	3,50 €
SALAT MIT EI	4,20 €
2 WÜRSTCHEN	3,80 €
HÄHNCHEN MIT POMMES	4,20 €

Backwaren

APFELKUCHEN	2,80 €
EIS	2,80 €

Getränke

MINERALWASSER	1,80 €
APFEL- ODER ORANGENSAFT	2,20 €
COLA	2,20 €
BIER	2,20 €
KAFFEE ODER TEE	2,80 €
MILCH (HEISS ODER KALT)	2,50 €

Figure 20 - Sample of authentic text in *Schritte International 1*, p.14 & p.61.

a  **b** Flüge von Frankfurt nach Acra

Flug	Abflug	Ankunft	Info	Fluggruppe	Wochentag
LH 091	10:45	16:58	Aktus Industrie A340-300	MDL_Sakl	
LH 094	10:50	16:55	Aktus Industrie A340-300	_D_	

c

Bahnstation	Datum	Zeit	Gleis
Ulm Hbf	31.07.03	ab 10:05	1
Stuttgart Hbf	31.07.03	an 11:06	9
Stuttgart Hbf	31.07.03	ab 11:27	8
Mannheim Hbf	31.07.03	an 12:05	3

Dauer: 2:00, fährt täglich

d **Haltestellen**

Marienburger Südpark	20:25	20:38	20:53
Marienburger Str.	20:34	20:39	20:54
Goldener Gürtel	20:25	20:40	20:55
Tachluzstr.	20:27	20:42	20:57
Koblenzer Str.	20:28	20:43	20:58
Bornstr.	20:29	20:44	20:59
Alteburger Wall	20:30	20:45	21:00
Pölschstr.	20:31	20:46	21:01
Chloekplatz	20:32	20:48	21:03

D1 Lesen Sie die Anzeigen. Welche Therapie finden Sie interessant?

4 **Stress ist die Therapie!**
Lebe- und Konzentrationsprobleme, Depression, Stress - im Kampf mit Tante Frieda und Tante Susi!

Beitrag: 10 €
Buchpreis: 2 €
Tel: 0113-2299

5 **Stress ist die Therapie!**
Lebe- und Konzentrationsprobleme, Depression, Stress - im Kampf mit Tante Frieda und Tante Susi!

Beitrag: 10 €
Buchpreis: 2 €
Tel: 0113-2299

6 **Entspannung im Winter!**
Freuen Sie sich über den Winter und genießen Sie vor der Massage, Sauna und vielen mehr: Tee, Saft, Dampfbad und viel mehr! Genießen Sie den ganzen Tag! Einmal in der Woche! Einmal in der Woche! Einmal in der Woche!

Beitrag: 10 €
Buchpreis: 2 €
Tel: 0113-2299

7 **Entspannung im Winter!**
Freuen Sie sich über den Winter und genießen Sie vor der Massage, Sauna und vielen mehr: Tee, Saft, Dampfbad und viel mehr! Genießen Sie den ganzen Tag! Einmal in der Woche! Einmal in der Woche! Einmal in der Woche!

Beitrag: 10 €
Buchpreis: 2 €
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8 **Entspannung im Winter!**
Freuen Sie sich über den Winter und genießen Sie vor der Massage, Sauna und vielen mehr: Tee, Saft, Dampfbad und viel mehr! Genießen Sie den ganzen Tag! Einmal in der Woche! Einmal in der Woche! Einmal in der Woche!

Beitrag: 10 €
Buchpreis: 2 €
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9 **Entspannung im Winter!**
Freuen Sie sich über den Winter und genießen Sie vor der Massage, Sauna und vielen mehr: Tee, Saft, Dampfbad und viel mehr! Genießen Sie den ganzen Tag! Einmal in der Woche! Einmal in der Woche! Einmal in der Woche!

Beitrag: 10 €
Buchpreis: 2 €
Tel: 0113-2299

10 **Entspannung im Winter!**
Freuen Sie sich über den Winter und genießen Sie vor der Massage, Sauna und vielen mehr: Tee, Saft, Dampfbad und viel mehr! Genießen Sie den ganzen Tag! Einmal in der Woche! Einmal in der Woche! Einmal in der Woche!

Beitrag: 10 €
Buchpreis: 2 €
Tel: 0113-2299

Figure 21 - Sample of authentic text in *Schritte International 2*, p.33,43 & 64.

Brosnan, Brown & Hood (1984) explain that the importance of using authentic material in the FL classroom derives from the fact that it contains meaningful messages. As a result, the use of authentic materials goes hand in hand with the principles of the communicative and student-centred approach as these “relate more closely to learners’ need, for they build a connection between the language classroom and the outside world” (Briton, 1991, as cited in Rao, 2019, p.1). That being said, albeit the use of authentic material, *Schritte International 1 & 2* fail to present the TL in an interesting and meaningful way for Maltese GFL learners, as most of the contexts in which the language material is presented does not reflect the realities of learners in Year 7 and Year 8 but rather those of adults. For example, Figure 22 shows a reading comprehension in the form of an email and text messages. The messages are written from people who are confirming their attendance or otherwise to a party invitation. The reasons given by those who cannot attend the party are based on realities that one usually experiences during adulthood rather than during youth such as, having to take care of the children because the wife is in hospital, having to go to work, and visiting parents.

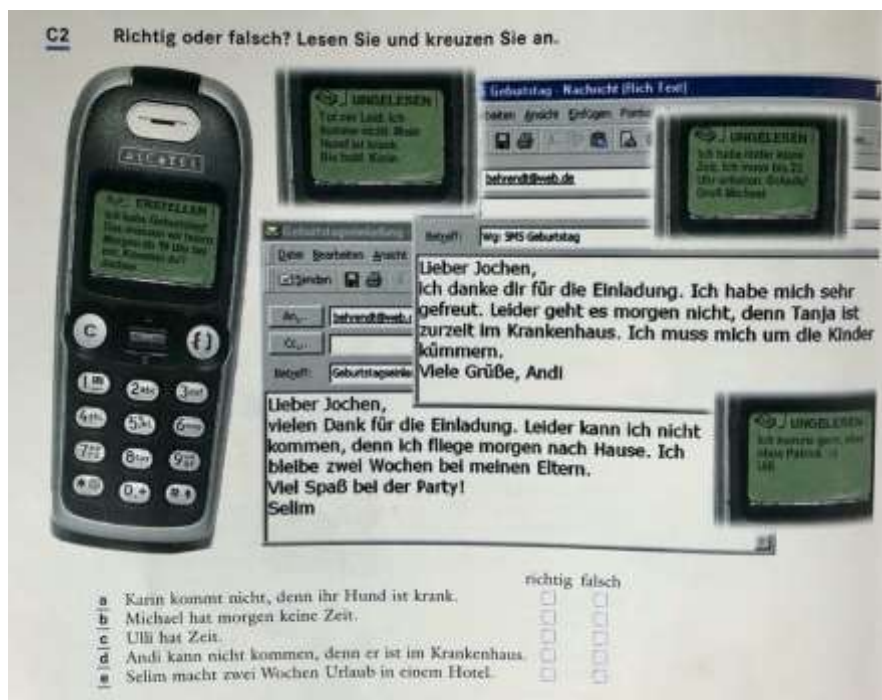


Figure 22 - Reading comprehension in *Schritte International 2*, p.72.

This contrasts with Rings (1986) and Vandergrift (1997) who suggest that authentic materials should relate to learners' life experiences and contain appropriate features that enhance comprehension at their level. In view of this, Field (2000) and Larsen-Freeman & Anderson (2007) add that activities in a FL classroom should be based on the interests and needs of learners in real-life communicative situations in order to make reading interesting and enjoyable for the learners.

Similar to the other language skills, the data analysis suggests that over the years, reading started being presented in coordination of with other language activities. Hence reading activities started to lead to more communicative practice, whereby learners can take part in active communication and practice different skills at the same time. This agrees with the claim by Hinkel (2006) and Harmer (2007) that the development of the four skills should take place in an integrated manner since in real-life communication different skills are also integrated.

4.2.4 Speaking

The insights obtained from *Vorwärts International K1 & K2* indicate that primarily, the development of speaking took place through repetition of words or utterances. This is reflected in the *Erweiterung* (Expansion) section that is found in every chapter of *Vorwärts International K1 & K2*. Figure 23 in the following page, shows how in this section learners are requested to repeat and reproduce utterances of the recorded dialogue which they would have heard earlier in the *Vorstellung* section. This goes in line with the claim by Spada & Lighbow (2008, p.171) that in the audio-visual method “learners are encouraged to internalize language patterns precisely, using a native-like pronunciation by utilizing drills such as choral repetition and pattern practice”.

LEHTUN 2

Erweiterung

Wir fragen und antworten
Wir lesen

1. a) Du fragst: Was ist denn das?
b) Dein Nachbar antwortet: **Das ist das Rathaus.**
Ebenso mit:

1

2

3

4

5

Rathaus

6

7

8

9

10

2. a) Du sagst: Das ist die Kirche.
b) Dein Nachbar sagt: **Oh, die ist aber schön!**
Ebenso mit:

Schule

Kino

Rathaus

Sportplatz

Café

Kirche

Post

Kirche

Gasthaus

Marktplatz

Burg in Cadolzburg

Figure 23 - Erweiterung (Expansion) sample from *Vorwärts International K1*, p.9.

Correspondingly, the practice of speaking seems to have been characterized by a process of imitation and reinforcement. As seen in Figure 24 in the following page, *Vorwärts K1 & K2* invite learners to listen to dialogues recorded on cassette tapes and repeat or rephrase the same utterances. This suggests that as claimed by Palermo (1978) in the audio-lingual method, speaking is developed through intensive drilling of new language forms and sequences. Hence, there tends to be no negotiation of meaning or interaction in the learning process. Furthermore, Figure 24 also illustrates how speaking exercises tend to be combined with audio material which seems to have served as a model for imitation. This concurs with Richard & Rodgers (2009) who claim that in the audio-visual method, the use of the tape recorder was considered crucial in FL learning as it provided accurate models of dialogues for listening and speaking practice.

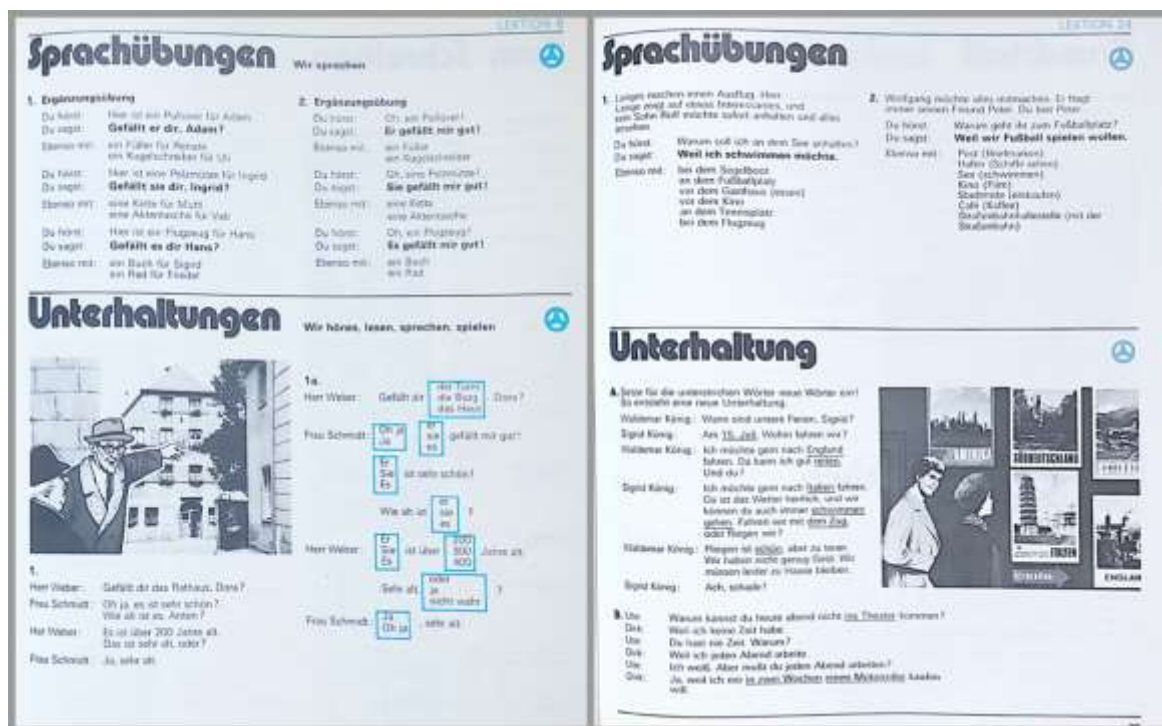


Figure 24 - Sprachübungen (Speaking exercises) & Unterhaltungen (Conversations) sample from *Vorwärts International K1*, p.37 & *Vorwärts International K2*, p.84.

The comparison between the speaking tasks found in the different GFL textbooks series used in the Maltese GFL classroom suggests that over the years, speaking activities started to aim at developing communicative competence in the TL rather than concentrating on the assimilation of grammatical features. This is evident in the textbooks *ZickZack 1 & 2*, *ZickZack neu 1 & 2* and *Schritte International 1 & 2* whereby in contrast to *Vorwärts International K1 & K2*, speaking activities promote the practice of speaking in a variety of real-life situations such as talking about pocket money, asking someone to join you for an activity, asking for directions, discussing holiday plans and making plans to go out with your friends. Hence, there seems to be a shift from the imitative and repetitive pattern drills to communication based on meaningful situations.

Having said that, Figure 25 and 26 in the following page, indicate that similar to the series *Vorwärts International K1 & K2*, most of the speaking activities in *ZickZack 1 & 2* and *ZickZack neu 1 & 2* are characterized by a fixed structure that tends to control the learners' responses. However, there seems to be more than one correct way for learners to respond as most of them require learners to use the TL in situations that elicit pre-learned language, but this time

with some unpredictability. As a result, it seems that in the course of time, speaking tasks slowly began to allow learners to use some of their ideas when speaking in the TL instead of repeating predetermined utterances (Lightbow & Spada, 1999). Against this background, Luoma (2004) argues that apart from putting the language into a realistic context, speaking exercises should be in the form of guided oral activities that allow students to express their knowledge in order to explore their strengths and weaknesses and not controlled practice activities that restrict learners from speaking freely in the TL.

Partnerarbeit:
 Mache Dialoge mit deinem Partner/deiner Partnerin.
 Du fragst:
 - Wieviel Taschengeld kriegst du/bekommst du?
 - Bist du damit zufrieden?
 Dein(e) Partner(in) antwortet:
 - Ich kriege/bekomme . . . Mark die Woche.
 - Ja, das ist . . . Nein, ich . . .

— Wieviel Taschengeld bekommst du? ?
 — 10 Mark die Woche. 10 Wo.
 — Bist du damit zufrieden? 😊 ?
 — Nein, 10 Mark Taschengeld, das reicht nicht! 😞 10

2 50 Wo. 😊
 3 20 Wo. 😞
 4 50 Mo. 😊
 5 20 Wo. 😊
 6 20 Mo. 😞
 7 10 Wo. 😞

Figure 25 - Speaking exercise in *ZickZack 1*, p.9.

Partnerarbeit. Ferienpläne
 Finde heraus, was für Ferienpläne dein(e) Partner(in) hat.

A Wohin fährst du in den Ferien?
B Ich fahre nicht weg. ans Meer. aufs Land. ins Gebirge.
 Ich fahre nach Frankreich. Italien. Moskau.

A Mit wem fährst du?
B Ich fahre allein. mit der Schule. der Jugendgruppe. meinen Eltern. Freunden.

B In einem Hotel. Ferienhaus. Wohnwagen. Zelt.
 bei einer Jugendherberge.
A Wo wohnst du?
B Ein paar Tage. Eine Woche. Zehn Tage. Zwei Wochen. Einen Monat.

A Wie lange bleibst du dort?

Figure 26 - Speaking exercise in *ZickZack neu 1*, p.98.

The data analysis suggests that over the years it has been more acknowledged that the aim of teaching speaking skills is to enable learners to express themselves freely and communicate effectively with others. This is reflected both in the *Syllabus for the Study of the German Language* (2006) which highlights communication as the main aim of speaking, as well as the

textbook series *Schritte International 1 & 2* which seems to provide learners with improved opportunities where they can engage in conversations that involve them directly.

As seen in the examples illustrated in Figure 27, speaking activities in *Schritte International 1 & 2* provide learners with the opportunity to participate actively in a conversation such as; discussing the plan of their apartment, plan a day in their diary and talk about it with their partner, whilst drawing a map to describe the way to different places. These examples suggest that in contrast to the early years of GFL the focus in speaking activities has shifted on fluency and meaning rather than on forms and accuracy. As claimed by Johnson (1982) and Larsen-Freeman (1986) this is one of the characteristics of the communicative approach, whereby primary importance is given to the use or function of the language and secondary importance to its structure or form. The given examples contrast with the ones offered by former GFL textbooks, as the latter did not seem to provide learners with the opportunity to fully engage in real communication since learners' responses tend to be always fixed. In fact, even if learners did not understand the meaning of the question, they could still respond in the right way.

A4 **Meine Wohnung: Zeichnen Sie und sprechen Sie.**
Das ist meine Wohnung. Das ist die Küche. Das Bad ...
vierzig 40 LEKTION 4

C5 **Was machen Sie morgen und übermorgen? Machen Sie einen Terminkalender.**
Sprechen Sie dann mit Ihrer Partnerin / Ihrem Partner.

Freitag	Samstag
7:00 aufstehen	8:00 - 9:00 Fußballspiel
8:00 Frühstück	12:00 Küche aufräumen

- ▲ Was machst du am Freitag?
- Ich stehe um sieben Uhr auf.
- ▲ Und dann?
- Ich ...

A6 **Ihre Wege: Zeigen Sie auf einem Stadtplan.**
Hier wohne ich. Dort ist die Schule. Ich fahre zuerst mit der S-Bahn. Dann gehe ich 100 Meter geradeaus. Da ist die Polizei. Daneben ist gleich die Schule.

Figure 27 - Speaking exercises from *Schritte International 1*, p.40, & p.52 & *Schritte International 2*, p.40.

Moreover, spontaneous discussions in the TL also seems to have started being encouraged by GFL textbooks. Similar to *Vorwärts International K1 & K2*, each chapter in *Schritte International 1 & 2* opens with a Picture/Photo Story accompanied by audio material. This indicates that the use of audio-visual tools for the teaching and learning of a FL has been long-standing. However, in contrast to the picture stories in *Vorwärts International K1 & K2*, the photo stories in *Schritte International 1 & 2* seem to promote spontaneous oral practice in the TL, as these are accompanied by a set of questions that invites the learners to reflect on the photos and predict the context of the dialogue. Such activities seem to stimulate thinking amongst the learners and prompt discussions in the TL. This contrasts with *Vorwärts International K1 & K2* since there seem to be no other activities that aim specifically at the development of spontaneous speaking, except for the five-minutes conversation on the topic of the basic dialogue in the Vorstellung (such as Christmas in Lesson 6 and Carnival in Lesson 9).



Figure 28 - Photo Story Samples from *Vorwärts International K1* (left) & *Schritte International 1* (right).

4.2.4 Writing

The data analysis indicates that at the time that GFL was introduced in local secondary schools, it seems that writing as a language skill was considered to have little to contribute to FL learning. This is manifested in the textbook series *Vorwärts International K1 & K2*, as writing tasks are very limited⁹. This finding corresponds with Carroll (1963, p.10) who claims

⁹ Throughout the whole textbook, *Vorwärts International K1* offers eight writing tasks, whereas *Vorwärts International K2* offers only five writing tasks.

that in the audio-visual approach “a language is, first of all, a system of sounds for social communication; whereas writing is a secondary derivative system for the recording of spoken language”.

The representational multimodal semiotic interpretation of writing activities suggests that in the past, the development of writing seems to have been characterised by copying written models with the emphasis being placed on grammatical structures. This is evident in Figure 29 and 30 in the following page, whereby the majority of writing tasks are based on word by word copying and filling in the blanks by copying model words, phrases, or a particular element of grammar. Moreover, Figures 29 and 30 also demonstrate the rigid structure of most writing tasks which prevents students from making mistakes when producing a text. This finding seems to reflect the claim by Field (2000) that in the audio-lingual methods errors are considered to form bad habits in language learning therefore they should be avoided. Furthermore, the insights obtained indicate that writing activities were often combined with a grammatical point whereby learners had to produce a prescribed set of grammatical sentences by using a particular verb tense, preposition, or conjunction. This suggests that in the early days of GFL teaching and learning, the development of writing was narrowly conceptualized as the production of grammatical sentences. Consequently, GFL learners were rather restricted when it comes to expressing their own ideas and producing long stretches of meaningful text in the TL.

Zum Schreiben

1) Du ... Werkstatt? ...
 ... Werkstatt? ...
 ... Werkstatt? ...

2) Du bist ...
 ...
 ...

3) Du ...
 ...
 ...

4) Schreibe fünf Sätze ...
 ...
 ...

Zum Schreiben

A Lektion 6

Beispiel:
 Hans: Ich gehe ins Kino.
 Fritz: Gehst du auch ins Kino?
 Fritz: Nein, aber mein Bruder Klaus geht ins Kino.

1 Hans: Ich gehe zur Burg.
 Fritz: ...
 Fritz: Nein, aber es ...

2 Hans: Ich wohne in Nürnberg.
 Fritz: ...

3 Hans: Ich kenne Hans.
 Fritz: ...

4 Hans: Ich ...
 Fritz: ...

5 Hans: Ich ...
 Fritz: ...

6 Ich ...
 Du ...
 Und mein Freund ...

7 Ich ...
 Du ...
 ...

8 Hans: Ich kann nicht schreiben.
 Fritz: ...

9 Hans: Ich ...
 Fritz: ...

10 Hans: ...
 Fritz: ...

Figure 29 - Zum Schreiben (Writing) sample from *Vorwärts International K1* p.22 & p.38.

Schreiben

WARUM → WEIL!

1. Warum gehst du in die Schule? (müssen)
2. Warum kommst du zu spät zur Schule? (blau)
3. Warum treibst du Sport? (zu dick)
4. Warum fährst du nicht einen Motorroller? (zu jung)
5. Warum gehst du heute ins Kino? (Krimi)
6. Warum ist dir schlecht? (zuviel)
7. Warum gibst du am ... eine Party? (geboren)
8. Warum bist du heute so schick? (Theater)
9. Warum nimmst du Tabletten? (Kopfschmerz)
10. Warum hörst du dir diese Musik an? (??)
11. Warum ist Griechenland/Italien/Brasilien so schön? (??)
12. Warum möchtest du ein Junge/Mädchen sein? (??)
13. Warum ist die Zahl 13 eine Unglückszahl? (??)

Ergänze:
 Wo waren Sie in den Ferien?
 Waren Sie im Hotel?
 Fahren Sie nächstes Jahr wieder ...
 Wann fahren Sie hin?
 Fahren Sie ... Auto?
 Wie lange bleiben Sie dort?

..... Schweiz
 Nein, Campingplatz.
 Nein, Italien, Meer.
 Nein, Sommer.
 Drei Wochen, dann muß ich wieder
 Büro. Die Kinder haben es besser.
 Schule gibt es 6 Wochen Ferien.

Schreiben

1. Der Sparkassenleiter berichtet:



Schreibe die Fragen und die richtigen Antworten in den Hef!

Polizist:
 Sparkassenleiter:
 Polizist:
 Sparkassenleiter:
 Polizist:
 Sparkassenleiter:
 Polizist:
 Sparkassenleiter:
 Polizist:
 Sparkassenleiter:
 Polizist:
 Sparkassenleiter:

Wie viele Männer waren dabei?
 Wie viele Männer waren am Schalter?
 Und der andere?
 Wo war das Auto?
 Was fehlt?
 Wo war es?
 Wieviel war drin?

Figure 30 - Schreiben (Writing) sample from *Vorwärts International K2* p.60 & p.79.

The overview of the representations observed which compares individual trends with common trends indicates that gap-filling seems to be a dominant trend associated with the development of writing, since as seen in Figures 31 and 32 it remains a common feature in the following textbooks that were used in the Maltese GFL classroom i.e *ZickZack 1 & 2* and *ZickZack neu 1 & 2*. In light of this, Capkova, Kroupova, & Young (2015) claim that gap-filling exercises should not be considered as a writing activity as these only lead to controlled compositions and do not allow the learners to express oneself in writing.

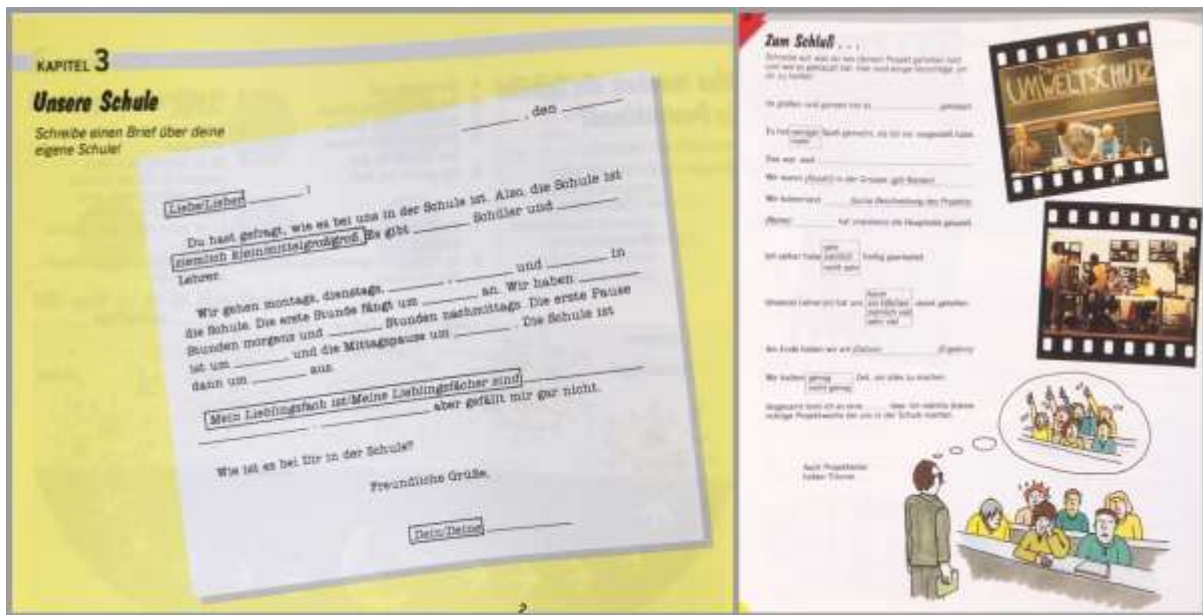


Figure 31 - Writing activities in *ZickZack 1*, p.48 & *ZickZack 2*, p.168.

Lernziel 3
Aber am liebsten ...
 Schreib die Sätze fertig.
 Beispiel
 1 Karin liest gern und spielt gern Squash,
 aber am liebsten spielt sie Klavier.

Mach dein eigenes Freizeitwappen.

1 Karin liest gern und spielt gern Squash,
 aber am liebsten ...
 2 Boris spielt gern Fußball und Basketball,
 aber am liebsten ...
 3 Lars bummelt gern in der Stadt und trifft
 sich gern mit Freunden, aber am liebsten ...
 4 Regina sieht gern fern und spielt gern mit
 dem Computer, aber am liebsten ...

Lieber Kurt!
 Auf Janes Brief ist
 Schokolade gefallen.
 Schreib den Brief noch
 einmal. Füll die Lücken
 mit den Wörtern unten
 aus.

stürmisch
 geschlafen
 müde
 gegessen
 bin
 angekommen
 war
 geschmeckt
 seckkrank
 gekommen

Lieber Kurt!
 Ich bin gut nach Hause [redacted]. Ich habe im
 Zug [redacted], dann habe ich im Speisewagen
 [redacted] das Essen hat mir aber nicht gut
 [redacted]. Die Überfahrt von Hamburg nach
 Harwich [redacted] fürchterlich. Die Nordsee war
 [redacted], und ich war [redacted]. Ich [redacted] um
 16 Uhr in Harwich [redacted]. Natürlich war
 ich sehr [redacted], aber jetzt geht es mir
 wieder besser.
 Schreib bald wieder
 Deine Jane

Figure 32 - Writing activities in *ZickZack neu 1*, p.83 & *ZickZack neu 2*, p.104.

These insights suggest that for many years the development of writing focused on what students knew about the TL in terms of grammatical and lexical items rather than on what they were able to accomplish or do with the language they were learning. Furthermore, writing tasks continued to be characterised by a rigid structure that tends to restrict learners when it comes to expressing ideas and producing long stretches of meaningful text in the TL.

Although the lack of writing tasks is evident across all GFL textbooks analysed in this research, the insights obtained from *Schritte International 1 & 2* indicate that after many years, the development of writing as a language skill seems to have gained a different purpose. Rather than practicing grammatical structures through controlled sentence exercises, writings tasks started to present learners with meaningful situations that invite them to write freely in the TL. In view of this Lightbow & Spada (1999, as cited in Larsari, 2011, p.162) note that unlike

audiolingualism that merely focuses on learners' ability to produce accurate language form and structure, the CLT approach emphasizes the learners' ability to efficiently use the target language in different contexts.

This is reflected in several writing tasks offered by the textbook series *Schritte International 1 & 2*, whereby learners are given the opportunity to produce something of their own which is realistic and meaningful such as designing an advert or a poster, writing a postcard or an email to a friend and writing a short text message as visible in Figure 33. The writing activities presented in Figure 33 correspond to the idea that “writing is a communication skill, hence writing in a FL should include real-life interactive tasks” (Way, Joiner & Seaman, 2000, p.180). Furthermore, a sense of personalisation is also included in the learning process as learners are encouraged to use their own ideas. In view of this Griffiths & Keohane (2000) note that personalised activities help in making language learning more meaningful and memorable for the learners and that personalisation is strongly linked to motivation.

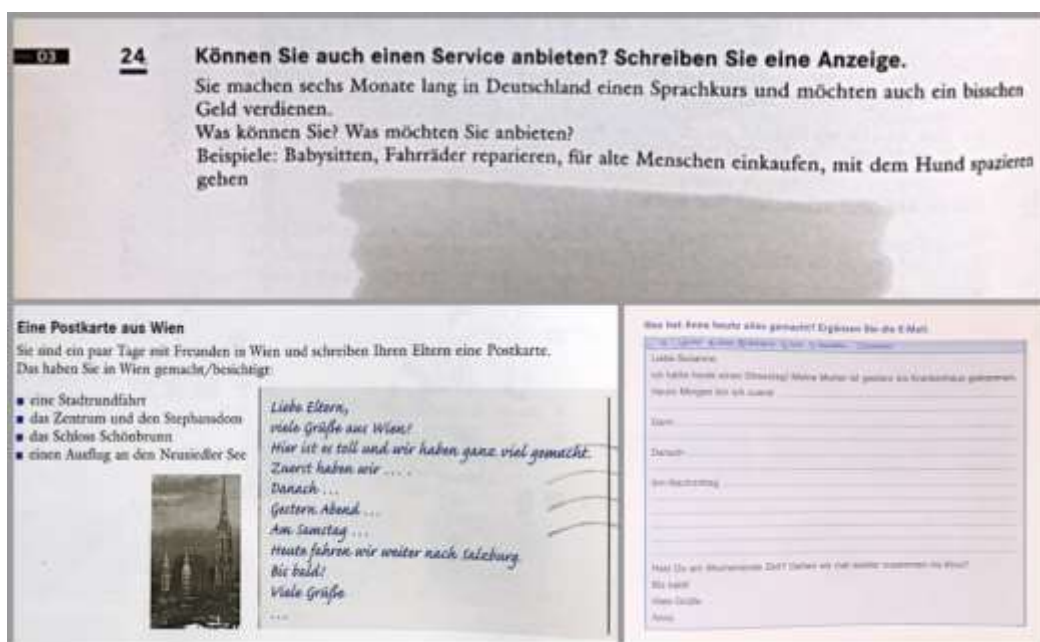


Figure 33 - Writing activities from *Schritte International 1*, p.119 (top) & *Schritte International 2*, p.98 & p.130 (bottom).

That being said, this interpretation cannot be generalised to all the writing activities offered by *Schritte International 1 & 2*, as some activities are still aimed at practicing grammatical structures rather than at developing proficiency in written communication. For example, Figure 34 in the following page, demonstrates how learners are to rewrite the text and substitute nouns with personal pronouns whereas in Figure 35 learners are required to

rewrite the text in the past tense. Hence, similar to past methodologies, the focus seems to be on grammatical forms rather than on communicative intentions of language. As a result, *Schritte International 1 & 2* also entails a series of writing tasks that seem to be conceptualized narrowly as the production of grammatical sentences. Correspondingly, although the *Syllabus for the Study of German* (2006, p.19) does encourage teachers to allow students produce their own language structures and enjoy experimenting with the TL, at the same time it also emphasises the correct use of grammatical structures as students are expected to “write the words correctly and in a grammatically correct form”. All of this indicates, that despite the innovations in the approaches to FL teaching and learning, emphasis on grammatical forms in writing activities seems to have prevailed.

15 Schreiben Sie den Text mit *er – sie – sie*.



Das ist Semra. Semra kommt aus der Türkei. Und das ist Markus. Markus kommt aus Österreich. Semra und Markus leben in Deutschland. Semra und Markus studieren jetzt in Berlin. Semras Eltern leben auch in Deutschland. Semras Eltern wohnen in Frankfurt.

Das ist Semra. Sie.....

 Und das ist Markus.....


 Semra und Markus.....

 Semras Eltern.....


Figure 34 - Writing exercise sample from *Schritte International 1*, p.95.

22 Was erzählt Mirko heute? Schreiben Sie.

Vor zwei Jahren



Heute



Ich bin jetzt in Deutschland.
Ich habe noch keine Arbeit –
ich bin arbeitslos.
Ich habe auch keine Freunde.

Mein Bruder ist schon seit
einem Jahr in Deutschland.
Er hat schon eine Arbeit.
Und ich?
Ich mache einen Sprachkurs.
Dann suche ich eine Arbeit.
Dann finde ich auch Freunde.

Nur zwei Jahren bin ich nach Deutschland gekommen.
Ich hatte.....

Und ich?

Figure 35 - Writing exercise sample from *Schritte International 2*, p.87.

Furthermore, the data analysis indicates that across all textbook series used along the years for the teaching and learning of GFL, writing activities tend to be presented at the end of the chapter. The positioning of writing activities at the end of each chapter seems to indicate the lack of attention given to this language skill. This finding contrasts with the principles put forward by the *Syllabus for the Study of the German Language* (2006) which was in place at the time that the textbook series *Schritte International* was used in the GFL classroom. The *Syllabus for the Study of the German Language* (2006, p.25) states that the “learning of German is successful in view of its use as a means of communication, whereby the four basic skills are developed simultaneously”, however the insights obtained from the textbook which was chosen by the Directorate of Education to compliment the syllabus does not seem to give writing equal importance as the other language skills. Against this background, Moon (2008) adds that writing should be given same attention as the other language skills and should not be treated as an isolated skill or as the skill which is only practiced for homework.

4.3 The Role of Grammar in the GFL Textbook

The text analysis suggests that since German was introduced as a FL option in Maltese State schools, grammar has always occupied a central place in the learning process of GFL. This is because all GFL textbooks analysed in this research entail various sections that are specifically dedicated to the teaching of grammar. In light of this, Ur (2011, p.505) claims that despite all the debates surrounding the subject, grammar “continues to be prominent both in course books and in the classroom practice of teachers in school-based foreign language courses”.

The representations derived from the MIRROR Framework indicate that over the years, the teaching of grammar in GFL textbooks has always been presented in a decontextualized way through the use of structured tables and endless lists as demonstrated in Figure 36 in the following page. The data analysis indicates that all textbooks which have been locally used for the teaching and learning of GFL dedicate a specific section which provides an overview of the most important grammar structures in the particular chapter. Furthermore, Figure 36 suggests that the same textbooks do not seem to present grammar in an appealing way to the learners since visuals, authenticity and contextualization seem to be lacking across the sections dedicated to grammar. This implies that the way that grammar is presented in GFL textbooks might be not that appealing and intriguing for students and does not seem to help them engage with the TL.

Grundstoff

LEKTION 12

Verben im Präsens

ich	du	er, es, sie	wir	ihr	sie, Sie
bin	bist	ist	sind	seid	sind
habe	hast	hat	haben	habt	haben

ich	du	er, es, sie	wir	ihr	sie/Sie
-e	-(e)st	-(e)t	-en	-(e)t	-en

schwimme gehe singe lese male tanze esse trinke spiele springe reite arbeite verkaufe heiße weiß laufe fahre schlafe schlage	schwimmst gehst singst liest malst tanzt isst trinkst spielst springst reitest arbeitest verkaufst heißt weiß läufst fährst schläfst schlagst	schwimmt geht singt liest malt tanzt isst trinkt spielt springt reitet arbeitet verkauft heißt weiß läuft fährt schläft schlägt	schwimmen gehen singen lesen malen tanzen essen trinken spielen springen reiten arbeiten verkaufen heißsen wissen laufen fahren schlafen schlagen	schwimmt geht singt liest malst tanzt isst trinkt spielt springt reitet arbeitet verkauft heißt weiß läuft fährt schläft schlägt	schwimmen gehen singen lesen malen tanzen essen trinken spielen springen reiten arbeiten verkaufen heißsen wissen laufen fahren schlafen schlagen
--	---	---	---	--	---

Grammatik auf einen Blick

Word order: In main clauses (most of the sentences in this book are main clauses) the verb is always the **second** word of the sentence.

1	2	3
Ich	lese	mit dem Rad.
Jeden Tag	lese	ich mit dem Rad.
Ich	spiele	Fußball.
Manchmal	spiele	ich Fußball.
Ich	gehe	mit dem Hund spazieren.
Jeden Abend	gehe	ich mit dem Hund spazieren.
Peter	spielt	Basketball.
Öst	spielt	Peter Basketball.
Sie	geht	in die Stadt.
Nach dem Essen	geht	sie in die Stadt.

Other points

1. **Talking about what you do on a particular day:** Write the day of the week with a small letter and add an -e.
Montags, Donnerstags, Mittwochs, Donnerstags.

Montags und Donnerstags habe ich eine Stunde lesn.

The same applies to different parts of the day.
Vormittags, abends, nachmittags, heute, Nachmittags und abends habe ich lesn.

2. **Asking 'how long' somebody does something:**
Wie lange lernst du best? (How long do you study?)

3. **Talking about what you like doing most of all:** Simply begin the sentence with **am liebsten**, but remember that the next thing you say should be the verb.
Ich lese am liebsten Bücher.

4. **Talking about wanting to do something:** Start the sentence with part of the verb **to want** (wollen), and it with an infinitive.
Ich will Malochen kaffee trinken.

INFINITIVE

1	2	3	INFINITIVE
Ich	gehe	gern	schwimmen.
Ich	gehe	gern mit meinem Bruder	einladen.
Im Sommer	gehe	ich gern	spazieren.
Ich	will	Malochen	trinken.

INFINITIVE

1	2	3
Am liebsten	trinke	ich Kaffee.
	esse	ich Brot.
	lese	ich Comics.

INFINITIVE

Verb	to want	INFINITIVE
Ich will	Malochen	trinken.
Willst du	Kaffee	trinken?

BALD SIND FERIEEN

1 Asking questions

Wohin fahren wir? *Where shall we go?*
 Wie kommen wir am besten dorthin? *What's the best way to get there?*
 Haben Sie noch Plätze frei? *Have you got any spaces free?*

2 Saying what you'd rather do and why

Fahren wir nach	Spanien, Helgoland.	Let's go to	Spain, Helgoland.
-----------------	---------------------	-------------	-------------------

Lieber nicht! Das ist zu	weit, teuer, kalt, warm.	I'd rather not! It's too	far, expensive, cold, hot.
-----------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	----------------------------

Ich	fahre lieber fliege lieber.	mit dem Schiff.	I prefer to travel by boat. to fly.
-----	-----------------------------	-----------------	-------------------------------------

Am besten fliegen wir. *It's best if we fly.*

Ich habe Flugangst, werde immer seekrank. *I am afraid of flying, I always get seasick.*

3 Saying what you want to do on holiday

Ich will Wir wollen	eine Nacht	bleiben.	I want to We want to	stay	for one night.
	zwei Nächte			stay	for two nights.
		schwimmen.		swim.	
	junge Leute	treffen.		meet young people.	
Ich will Wir wollen		reiten.	I want to We want to	go riding.	
	viel Sport	treiben.		do lots of sport.	
	Ausflüge	machen.		go out on trips.	
	auf dem Campingplatz	essen.		eat on the campsite.	

4 Booking into a campsite

Wir sind	zwei Erwachsene und vier Kinder.	We are	two adults and four children.
Ich habe	ein Auto, ein Wohnwagen, ein Campingbus, eine Reservierung.	I have We have	a car, tent, caravan, camper van, reservation.

Grammatik

Akkusativ: definitiver Artikel

Singular	Nominativ	Akkusativ
maskulin	der Anzug	Ich habe den Anzug.
neutral	das Fahrrad	Ich habe das Fahrrad.
feminin	die Tasche	Ich habe die Tasche.
Plural	die Schuhe	Ich habe die Schuhe.

Akkusativ: indefinitiver Artikel

Singular	Nominativ	Akkusativ
maskulin	ein Anzug	Ich möchte einen Anzug.
neutral	ein Fahrrad	Ich möchte ein Fahrrad.
feminin	eine Tasche	Ich möchte eine Tasche.
Plural	Schuhe	Ich möchte Schuhe.

Akkusativ: Negativartikel

Singular	Nominativ	Akkusativ
maskulin	kein Anzug	Ich habe keinen Anzug.
neutral	kein Fahrrad	Ich habe kein Fahrrad.
feminin	keine Tasche	Ich habe keine Tasche.
Plural	keine Schuhe	Ich habe keine Schuhe.

Ja-/Nein-Frage: ja - nein - doch

Frage	Antwort
Hast du das Buch dabei?	Ja, Nein.
Hast du das Buch nicht dabei?	Doch, Nein.
Möchten Sie kein Eis?	Doch, Nein.

Verb: Konjugation

	lesen	treffen	nehmen	schlafen	„möchten“
ich	lese	treffe	nehme	schlafe	möchte
du	liest	triffst	nimmst	schläfst	möchtest
er/es/sie	liest	trifft	nimmt	schläft	möchte
wir	lesen	treffen	nehmen	schlafen	möchten
ihr	lest	trift	nehmt	schlft	möchtet
sie/Sie	lesen	treffen	nehmen	schlafen	möchten

such n: fahren

Wichtige Wendungen

Hobbys
 Was sind Ihre/deine Hobbys? - Meine Hobbys sind Lesen und E-Mails schreiben.
 Was machen Sie / machst du in der Freizeit? - Ich lese gern.

Das Wetter
 Wie ist das Wetter? Gut, Schön, Schlecht, Nicht so gut/schön, Die Sonne scheint, Es regnet, Es ist windig, Es ist bewölkt, Es schneit, Es ist warm, Es ist kalt, Im Sommer sind es circa 25 Grad.

Vorlieben: Mein Lieblingsbuch:
 Mein Lieblingsbuch/Lieblingsfilm ist ...
 Meine Lieblingsmusik ist ...

Figure 36 - Grammar as represented in GFL textbooks: *Vorwärts International 1* (top left), *ZickZack 1* (top right), *ZickZack neu 1* (bottom left) and *Schritte International 1* (bottom right).

Moreover, all GFL textbooks analysed in this research entail several exercises that are designed to provide intensive practice on grammar. As visible in Figure 37, similar to the audio-visual textbook *Vorwärts International K1 & K2, Schritte International 1 & 2*, also entails several grammatical exercises that are mainly based on rote learning as these include gap filling and sentence construction exercises. Moreover, the *Syllabus for the Study of the German Language* (2006, p.63) points out that the textbook used for the teaching and learning of GFL “should contain pattern tests with functional and structural exercises”. This reflects the claim by Cauchi (2018, p.51) that “students are more so given the impression that in language learning all they need to do is learn a ‘mathematic formula’ and rules, where the language is taken out of the context and divided into a series of grammar exercises to fill in and answer”.

1 **C** **Ich komme aus Finnland.**

15 Ergänzen Sie.

ich	komm.....	sprech.....	heiß.....	bin
du	komm..... <i>i</i> <i>ist</i>
Sie	komm.....

16 Was passt? Unterstreichen Sie.

a Ich heißen Maria. **b** Wie heiße du? **c** Woher kommst Sie?

heißt **d** Ich kommst aus Italien. **e** Und wer ist Sie? **f** Ich ist Angelika.

heißt **d** komme **e** bist **f** bin

heißt **d** kommen **e** sind **f** bist

g Was spreche Sie? **h** Ich spreche Englisch. **i** Was spreche du?

sprechen **h** sprechen **i** sprichst

sprichst **i** sprechen

17 Ergänzen Sie in der richtigen Form: sprechen – kommen – heißen.

a Ich spreche ein bisschen Deutsch. **f** Wie Sie?

b Ich aus Berlin. **g** Woher du?

c Was Sie? **h** Wie du?

d Du Italienisch. **i** Sie gut Deutsch.

e Woher Sie?

Figure 37 - Grammar exercises in *Schritte International 1*, p.86.

Correspondingly, Figure 37 shows that time and time again, textbooks have presented Maltese GFL students with drill-based practice through the filling of decontextualized exercises with no significance to the learners' lives. Moreover, many activities presented across GFL textbooks tend to be based on "controlled practices that focus learners' attention on specific structures" (Nassaji & Fotos, 2011, p.4). Consequently, the focus in such exercises seems to be solely on form despite the idea brought forward by the communicative approach that fluency should be emphasized over accuracy to keep learners meaningfully engaged in language use (Harmer 2007; Hymes, 1971; Thompson, 1996).

4.4 Conclusion

According to my interpretation based on the themes which I identified, it can be concluded that the teaching methodologies used for the teaching and learning of GFL have gradually changed from being grammar-driven to providing a more balanced development between linguistic and communicative competences and accuracy. However, albeit a shift towards different pedagogies, from traditional to modern ways and means of passing on knowledge to the students, elements from past teaching methodologies seem to have prevailed throughout the years of GFL teaching and learning. Correspondingly, the research findings indicate that although in the course of time GFL textbooks have infused their content with a communicative element, not all language material presented can be described as being communicative and learner-centred.

Having said that, although as seen in Chapter 2, preceding teaching methodologies and teaching techniques have been subjected to rigorous scrutiny, the same methodologies implied by the textbooks analysed in this chapter have still led to many people (including myself) acquiring a FL successfully despite the criticism.

Chapter 5 – Multimodal Suggestions

After discovering the characteristics of past teaching trends and methodologies within the Maltese GFL learning context in Chapter 4, a comparative analysis of past and present official curricular documents was carried out. This helped me answer the second research question:

2. What would a comparative analysis of official curricular documents designed for past and present GFL learning context indicate about the strengths and challenges of contemporary methodologies used to teach GFL?

This chapter aims to explore the strengths and challenges of contemporary teaching methodologies implied by current official curricular documents by comparing and contrasting them with the characteristics of past teaching methodologies (i.e the findings of Research Question 1). Based on the outcomes of this comparative analysis, I will be discussing some of the strengths and challenges related to contemporary teaching methodologies through my personal interpretation of the data. Moreover, multimodal suggestions for German language teachers who wish to re-evaluate and improve their current teaching practices are provided throughout the chapter.

The outcomes of Research Question 1 suggest that as seen in Chapter 2, various changes have taken place in the history of GFL teaching and learning within the Maltese educational context. However, a closer look at the latest pedagogical strategies and approaches recommended by official curricular documents indicates that most of the changes are not a replacement of past teaching methodologies but rather an evolution of older methodologies and techniques. From everyday language dialogue to the use of authentic material and audio-visual aids, elements of past teaching methodologies continue to be present in modern-day approaches to FL teaching and learning. Consequently, the multimodal suggestions which are provided throughout this chapter demonstrate how contemporary teaching approaches continue to include elements of past teaching methodologies.

5.1 Challenges in implementing current Teaching Approaches to Foreign Language Teaching and Learning

5.1.1 Resistance to Change

One of the challenges brought about by any educational reform in schools is teacher resistance to change (Berkovich, 2011). According to Hunzicker (2004), the main reasons why teachers resist change are lack of motivation due to the impression that stakeholders do not understand the challenges met by teachers to bring about change in the classroom, negative experiences, low levels of knowledge, and poor moral and ego development.

Undoubtedly, the introduction of the LOF in Malta's compulsory schooling education system brought about a change in the local teaching context and this is reflected in various curricular texts. With the introduction of the LOF, teachers started being expected to modify their teaching methods unless they were already adopting a constructivist teaching and learning approach, such as inquiry-based learning, ongoing assessment techniques, and right questioning techniques. In their study Pace & Seguna (2018) explain how such a cultural shift from the current comfort zone to the new expected working zone was not embraced by all educators as many expressed the doubt and uncertainty that very often accompany change.

Hence, for such change to be successful, continuous professional development needs be provided to the point that the teacher feels and understands the need for change from current practices to new approaches. Hunzicker (2004) points out that this is a long process that might take months or even years. However, lasting behaviour will only occur through perseverance and by constantly motivating teachers towards change (Ibid, 2004). As claimed by Pace & Seguna (2018, p.15), it is crucial that educators "do not see this as another reform thus missing out on the golden opportunity of a more meaningful learning experience which this approach presents". Thus, it is fundamental that teachers see relevance in the training that is offered to them and are directly involved in the process. The provision of meaningful teaching and learning experiences is possible if professional learning sessions provide opportunities for dialogue and reflection upon one's work which will hopefully lead to the teachers' personal and professional growth (Hyland, 2000). After all, it is the experience of what the teacher learns that leads to changes in attitudes which in return will result in a better learning experience for the student (Maldarez & Wendell, 2007).

5.1.2 Increased Responsibility on Teachers

One of the fundamental changes brought about by the LOF is the approach to lesson planning (Pace & Seguna, 2018). The analysis of past official curricular documents indicates that in previous years, most of the language material transmitted to learners was based on the content of the designated textbook. Hence, although planning has always been part of a teacher's job (Bugeja, 2008), the content and course design brought about by the given textbook played a significant role in the planning of lessons and in what happens in the GFL classroom.

On the other hand, as previously mentioned in Chapter 2, current curricular documents do not encourage teachers to rely on textbooks when planning German lessons. As a result, contemporary FL teachers should start planning a lesson by first asking the following set of questions:

- a. What do I (as a teacher) want the students to learn?
- b. How will I (as a teacher) know that students in my classroom have achieved the outcome of the lesson?
- c. What variety of outcomes are required to reach different levels of ability in my classroom?

Pace & Seguna (2018, p.6)

This approach seems to contrast with past approaches to lesson planning. This is because, in previous years, the planning of a lesson used to commence with the teacher referring to the students' books, workbook, teacher's book, and other resources including I.T material, and after scrutinizing the content, choose different activities which match with the syllabus content without taking into consideration the needs, abilities, and limitations of the learners (Hutchinson & Torres, 1994; McTighe & Thomas, 2003). Continuing with this line of thought, *The Handbook for the Teaching of German as a Foreign Language* (2011, p.36) points out that traditionally, teachers have taught their students using the same teacher-led teaching method as "they have decided on the lesson and one activity that they want to teach to all the students at the same time". Hence, every student had the same experience. In contrast with this practice, contemporary approaches to teaching encourage teachers to change their

approach from teacher-led to student-centred teaching, whilst suggesting that the learning activity should be the last thing to be thought of (Pace & Seguna, 2018). According to McTighe & Thomas (2003), this is known as the backward design of learning.

With this in mind, current and future GFL teachers need to ask themselves, “Am I using a forward or backward design to learning?” Once this question is answered, a modification or a change in practice according to what is needed should commence. In addressing these questions, teachers need to ensure that their teaching focuses on the potential of each individual student. This is a fundamental change in lesson planning which needs to be embraced by all educators in order to continue moving away from a one-size-fits-all curriculum to a more learner-centred approach in which the learning process is shaped according to one's dispositions to learn (NCF, 2012).

As Wragg (1994) points out, without good planning, the most knowledgeable teacher will still fail to engage the students during the lessons. Some of the activities involved in the planning phase which FL teachers have been doing for many years include; preparing a scheme of work, writing lesson plans, organizing audio-visual material, choosing textbook exercises, anticipating problems which students might face, and mentally rehearse appropriate responses for them (Bugeja, 2008). Having said that, even though planning and preparation have always been a prominent part of a teacher's job, the flexibility given to teachers through the LOF signifies an increased responsibility and workload on teachers (Attard Tonna & Bugeja, 2016; Pace & Seguna, 2018). This is because rather than going from task to task as set forth in the textbook, current teachers have to plan their learning for an increasingly diverse student population whilst keeping in mind the different needs and abilities of their learners. Hence, the teacher must allot more time for the preparation of activities to ensure that instruction is inclusive for the diverse learners. As a result, this brings with it a lot of work that goes beyond school hours, which may not be witnessed by the general public but is essential for the improvement of the method of teaching and students' learning experience.

Taking the above into account, in order to facilitate the planning process, as well as to enhance the learning experience of the learners, teachers should take interest in knowing what the interests of their students are and how these can be acknowledged and utilized during the preparation of lessons. To get to know more about the learners, at the beginning

of the scholastic year, teachers can start by asking students some questions such as; who is their favourite actor/singer/football player/, which is their favourite film, what are their hobbies, what is their favourite fast-food restaurant, what do they usually watch on television/YouTube, and which social media platforms do they use and how do they use it. This can be done through an ice-breaker game whilst both the students and the teacher become familiar with each other. In this way, teachers can identify the interests, preferred learning style, strengths, and limitations of their students. Moving forward, the examples given by students should be taken into account, explored, and noted for application in the classroom.

Cochran-Smith & Fries (2005) argue that the increased expectations of students' achievement in today's world imply that teachers have increased responsibility not only for their students' academic success but also for their development as educators. Thus, being a teacher in today's world demands more specialized work than in the past, as reflected in the increased requirements for certification in many countries; including Malta¹⁰. The increased requirements seem to reflect the complexities and responsibilities created by the increasing diversity of students and the growing use of technology in classrooms (Ibid, 2005).

5.1.3 Lack of Time

One of the challenges that teachers are facing today is the lack of time (Pace & Seguna, 2018). Hargreaves, Earl & Ryan (1996) note that many teachers feel that the language material that they are expected to cover during the scholastic year is very vast and crammed, especially when considering the amount of time available. This indicates that a battle against time has always been a main concern to teachers. Moreover, due to the exam-oriented culture which for many years has characterised the Maltese education system, the main priority for teachers has been syllabus coverage and student preparation for exams (Pace & Seguna, 2018). As a result, educating students within such a system did not allow for enough time for creativity and experimentation within one's lesson planning (Ibid, 2018).

¹⁰ As from 2016 the entry-level qualification for becoming a primary or a secondary teacher became the Master in Teaching and Learning (MQF level 7).

Although the ongoing changes in the Maltese education system are aimed at putting an end to the obsession with exams through the implementation of continuous assessment as a new way of keeping a record of students' performance in schools, teachers are still facing challenges related to the lack of time (Pace & Seguna, 2018). This is because similar to past years, the pressure of final year exams and the national SEC examinations still affects today's teachers as these tend to be judged by the performance of their students. This implies that the exam-oriented culture which has been part of Malta's education system for many years might still be hindering educators from fostering the latest policy changes and dedicate time to be creative and innovative during the planning phase. Furthermore, the implementation of the LOs might require more time in lesson planning, especially until teachers familiarise themselves well with the principles of this framework (Spiteri, 2017).

Additionally, as previously mentioned in Chapter 2, the introduction of the internet and the advancement in technology have brought drastic changes in the teaching and learning approaches (Kramsch, 2014). Correspondingly, in many countries including Malta, "there is a consensus among policy-makers, educators and school leaders that ICT implementation and the integration of the internet into the curriculum must be given high priority" (Liu, 2010, p.534). In fact, the NCF (2012, p.9) identifies digital literacy as a cross-curricular theme and claims that "through this theme, students will acquire skills that include confident and critical use of Information Society Technology for communication, work and leisure". As a result, teachers who are not accustomed to using ICT as a teaching and learning tool might require additional time when it comes to planning lessons and in acquainting themselves with the latest technological advancements. Moreover, the internet offers such a wide array of resources and materials, that it tends to be quite challenging and time consuming for the teacher to find the right materials that are suitable for the teaching and learning experience of a FL. As claimed by Cecilia (2004) the teacher also has to find the time to investigate the internet material and be able to adapt all material according to the learning outcome that the teacher wants to achieve.

5.2 Strengths of Contemporary Teaching Approaches to FL Teaching and Learning

5.2.1 Teacher Flexibility

The analysis of curricular documents indicates that in the previous years, the curriculum had been syllabus-led, meaning that educators had to follow a set of prescribed instructions on what they were expected to cover during the scholastic year. The outcomes-based approach which is currently being implemented in the Maltese educational system does not replace the use of the syllabus since similar to a syllabus, the LOF informs teachers what learners are expected to know by the end of the school year (Spiteri, 2017). Having said that, this approach undoubtedly allows for greater flexibility than a syllabus does. This is because, in theory, there is no fixed curriculum, and as a result, teachers are not bound by a syllabus content but by a set of outcomes within a performance level. As a result, current GFL teachers are in a better position to control the teaching and learning processes according to students' needs, abilities, and interests (Pace & Seguna, 2019). One way how teachers can be in such a position is by moving beyond the textbook and include innovative activities by exploring other resources that are readily available and accessible such as the Internet, authentic material, and games (Ginnis, 2005).

Moreover, as seen in Chapter 3, the analysis of past syllabi for the study of the German language suggests that for many years, the learning material to be taught was affiliated with a textbook that used to be approved as curriculum-adequate by the Directorate of Education in Malta. However, as previously mentioned in Chapter 4, as from the scholastic year 2015 onwards, the textbook which year after year accompanied the syllabus has been eliminated. This does not mean that before this reform the textbook was the only resource used by educators, however by implementing such a change, teachers started being more encouraged to view the textbook as one of the many teaching resources available rather than 'the' optimal resource which drives the teaching process.

Thus, at present, the teaching and learning of GFL within the Maltese educational context is not bound by a particular textbook and teachers are free to choose which textbooks (if any) and other resources they want to work with for the benefit of their learners. In return, this has led to more curricular autonomy as teachers are more flexible and can respond better to the different learner's needs, abilities, and interests. This suggests that as claimed by Attard

Tonna & Bugeja (2016, p.172) contemporary teaching approaches, give teachers “the opportunity to use their professional judgement to translate the broad guidance as articulated through the learning outcomes, into practice”.

5.2.2 A Learner-Centred Approach to Teaching

One of the driving factors behind the NCF (2012) is the use of learning outcomes which are considered to be the basis for learner-centred learning (Gover, Loukkola & Peterbauer, 2019). Moreover, *The Educator’s Guide for Pedagogy and Assessment for German* (DQSE, 2015, p.32) also highlights a learner-centred approach as it states that “teaching and learning methodologies used in the classroom must cater, first and foremost, for the learning diversity, interests, strengths, and limitations of the learner”. In light of this, Spiteri (2017) adds that whilst some educators associate the LOs with more work due to an element of curriculum design that is infused with the teaching process, at its core, the LOF is a learner-centred approach to teaching. This is because through the adoption of the learning outcomes, “teachers will be better enabled to map out the skills, knowledge, and competencies which students acquire” (Ibid, 2017, p.2), provided that there are clear criteria for measurement and achievement of competencies.

The findings of Research Question 1 suggest that a learner-centred approach to learning is not a new approach in the field of FL teaching as characteristics of this approach are evident across the different textbook series that were used over the years. However, despite an element of learner-centredness such as; topics that reflect the interests of teenagers in *ZickZack 1 & 2*, learning tasks with different difficulty levels in *ZickZack neu 1 & 2* and *Schritte International 1 & 2* and techniques that allow for students’ creativity in *Schritte International 1 & 2*, not all content provided by the textbooks promotes a learner-centred approach. Correspondingly, when comparing the outcomes of Research Question 1 with official curricular documents, it could be concluded that the tasks presented in the GFL textbooks do not always reflect the teaching approaches being encouraged by the official curricular documents that were in place at the time. The reason being might be that, as seen in Chapter 3, each time a school textbook is printed by a renowned publishing house, a complex chronological process made up of several stages takes place (Seguin, 1989). Correspondingly, in today’s globalised world, information advances at such a rapid pace that most books

become outdated by the time they are published. Moreover, with hundreds of students learning a FL in secondary State schools, it is no secret that textbooks are a great expense for the State, therefore it takes a considerable amount of time until these are replaced with new textbooks that correspond with the needs required by the syllabus.

Having said that, this does not imply that 'old' textbooks that were previously used for the teaching and learning of GFL should be completely disregarded or that they are no longer valid. However, it is crucial that when using a textbook as a pedagogical tool, teachers look at its content with a critical eye and be selective when deciding which exercises to choose. Furthermore, by having a close look at the textbook structure, textbook content and by comparing different textbooks with other learning resources, educators are encouraged to take a stance in the world of teaching materials and teaching itself (Waltermann & Forel, 2015). Hence, courses aimed at preparing teachers such as the MTL course offered by the University of Malta should ensure that a specific study-unit on teaching material analysis and adaptation is included in their programme of study. As noted by Waltermann & Forel (2015) providing future educators with the opportunity to explore textbooks in a critically way, and not just the ability to refer to them or adapt them to their own needs, is crucial. This is because, besides the fact that every teacher uses textbooks, "it is a real bridge between theory and practice, it helps teachers adapt to new contexts, it fosters a reflexive approach and it promotes critical understanding of methodologies" (Ibid, 2015, p.43).

Nonetheless, establishing a learner-centred learning environment in today's classroom requires more than having the capacity to examine textbooks critically before using or referring to them in the FL classroom. This is because, the current generation of students; known as the 21st-century students, do not remember a life without the internet, and have had advanced technological devices such as smartphones, laptops, tablets, and other devices throughout most of their life (Harvey & Kenyon, 2013). As a result, teachers in today's world cannot practice a learner-centred pedagogy if the learning material is always text-based. Since the new generation of students finds technology more enticing than leafing through textbooks (Alipanahi, 2004), by limiting learning to pen and paper only, students are likely to become demotivated and will quickly lose interest in learning the TL. Having said that, teachers also need to keep in mind that new technologies are not necessarily better than old

practices. Hence, rather than replacing past teaching methods with new technological innovations, educators need to apply what they already know on good classroom practice in the FL classroom to this new dimension, whilst keeping in mind learners' age, language level, interests, and needs (Oliveira, 2009).

5.2.3 The Role of Everyday Contexts in Learner-centred Pedagogy

The outcomes of Research Question 1 suggest that, since German was introduced in Maltese State schools as a FL option in 1969, the teaching of GFL seems to have taken place through different forms of contexts such as dialogues, photo stories, narratives, and comics. Schrum (2015, p.44) explains that the world context in the field of FL teaching refers to "the degree to which meaning and situations from the world outside the classroom are present in an instructional approach or method".

This finding corresponds with Bauer (2016, p.1) who claims that "teaching methods coming up in the 1970s expressed that learning should happen in context, as contextualization is of major importance when learning a language". Furthermore, the multimodal semiotic interpretation of the modes in the GFL textbooks indicates that, as claimed by Schrum (2015) and Bauer (2016) the concept of contextualisation continued to be considered important in subsequent approaches that followed, as for example the communicative approach and task-based learning approach. However, apart from emphasizing language contextualization, current approaches to FL teaching also highlight the importance that instruction should occur in contexts that are meaningful and purposeful to the learners (NCF, 2012; Educators' Guide for Pedagogy and Assessment for German, 2015).

As seen in Chapter 4, most of the language material in the first textbook that was officially used for the teaching and learning of GFL (i.e. *Vorwärts International*) is contextualised through dialogues that are commonly followed by drill-based exercises. However, despite the use of dialogues, a thorough look at the drills typically used indicates that the language material is deceptively contextualized since people in real-life situations do not interact with each other with such limited apparent meaning. As previously mentioned, learners can successfully complete a mechanical drill by simply following the pattern, without even knowing the meaning of what is being said. This indicates that although learners were already

exposed to contextualised input, the input was seldom meaningful and realistic. On the other hand, the insights from the textbooks *ZickZack 1 & 2* illustrate how with time, “greater attention started being given to developing learners’ ability to use language in contexts that focus on the nature of communication in realistic settings outside the classroom” (Schrum, 2015, p.45).

Correspondingly, current curricular documents also point out that learning should take place in a context. This is reflected in the NCF (2012) which highlights that learning is most effective when students are actively engaged in authentic, contextualised tasks. Moreover, *The Educators’ Guide for Pedagogy and Assessment for German* (DQSE, 2015, p.36) states that “knowledge and understanding need to be learned, consolidated and secured within a context”. This seems to increase the chances of the curriculum being meaningful to learners and useful for everyday life, which as claimed by Schrum (2015) is a crucial educational element for successful learning. In light of this, Yamauchi (2003, p.382) adds that “when teachers contextualize instruction, students become motivated because what they are learning is more meaningful and relevant to their lives outside of school”.

Against this background, educators should think about curriculum development in a more comprehensive way. Rather than simply transmitting curricular knowledge, GFL teachers should regard education as a process concerned with attributing meaning and relevance to everyday life (Fernandes, Leite, Mouraz, & Figueiredo, 2013). This indicates that whilst the concept of contextualised learning has kept its place throughout the years of FL teaching, current and future GFL teachers should look beyond providing the language material to be taught in a context and ensure that the language is presented in a meaningful context that reflects the realities and experiences of their learners.

5.2.4 Authentic Material in Foreign Language Teaching and Learning

Closely linked to teaching in a meaningful context is the provision of authentic material (Yamin-Ali, 2010). As previously mentioned in Chapter 4, authentic material refers to materials that have been designed by native speakers for non-pedagogical purposes (Bacon & Finnemann 1990; Tomlinson, 2010). The use of authentic texts in the FL classroom is important as learners tend to find these more motivating than traditional pedagogical texts

(Little, Devitt, & Singleton, 1994). That being said, Jarvis (1997) believes that both authentic and non-authentic tasks are important for meaningful language development and there is room for a combination of both within the FL classroom.

The use of maps and photographs in the textbook *Vorwärts International K1 & K2* indicates that the role of authentic material goes a long way in the history of FL teaching. In the latter, authentic material is usually found in the Deutschlandkunde sections, a section dedicated to the German culture. This indicates that the use of authentic material to expose learners to real-life and different aspects of a culture which is not their own, dates back to many years ago. Moreover, the outcomes of Research Question 1 suggest that over the years, authentic material continued to receive growing support as various authentic material is found across the textbooks series that were locally used in the GFL classroom. This corresponds with Omid & Azam (2015) who claim that in the past thirty years, the need for authentic material in FL teaching has been increasingly recognized by teaching approaches.

Official curricular and policy documents that are currently in place also emphasize the importance of exposing learners to the TL through authentic material. *The Educator's Guide for Pedagogy and Assessment for German* (2015) points out that educators need to keep in mind that the use of authentic material requires the teacher to be pedagogically prepared by creating meaningful tasks in which such material becomes useful in every-day life contexts. The following are some suggestions on how authentic material could be exploited to provide meaningful and socially inclusive learning opportunities which encourage learners' active engagement in learning:

1. Authentic material can be used to demonstrate the meaning of vocabulary words or consolidate vocabulary such as:
 - a. a calendar to teach the names of the months or the days of the week,
 - b. a recipe, food labels or a menu to teach vocabulary related to food and drinks,
 - c. a weather report to teach vocabulary that describes the weather,
 - d. Google Maps or an actual map to teach directions.
2. The use of authentic material in the FL classroom can also be suggested in the introduction section of a lesson to introduce a new topic and let the students have a

guess what the lesson is going to be about. To stimulate curiosity and interest, authentic material can also be combined with the use of different senses. For example, covering the eyes students and asking them to guess the object by smelling, touching, hearing, or tasting it, depending on the nature of that particular object.

3. Authentic material can also be ideal for project-based learning which allows students to develop knowledge and skills through engaging projects based around real-life situations. For example, a city map or brochures of places of interest found in German cities can be used for a writing activity that requires students to plan a school trip or a holiday. For more advanced levels, students can also be asked to plan the transport or work out the budget for example.
4. Classic games such as Ludo, Dominoes, or Snakes and Ladders are another source of authentic material that can be used in the FL classroom. With some creativity, such games can be used as an alternative to the decontextualized grammar exercises that as seen in Chapter 4 have prevailed across the GFL textbooks that have been locally used.

The following is one example of how authentic games that are not intended to be used for educational purposes can be utilized in the GFL classroom with Year 7 students to practice the present tense in a fun and exciting way. To reach this aim, students are to play the game Snakes and Ladders, a popular game that many children and teenagers are familiar with. The activity should be presented in a way that elicits some excitement in the learners. This excitement should lead learners to reach the objectives of the activity (Ur, 2009). In this case, the fact that they have to answer correctly to climb the ladder or to avoid sliding down to the bottom of the snake can make learners more interested and motivated.

During this activity, students are required to work in pairs or small groups. Each group is given a die, a copy of the game Snakes and Ladder, and a set of cards (with fill-in the blanks sentences). The first step is to roll the die and move according to the number that they get on the die. When they come across a ladder or a snake, the learners are to take a card and conjugate the verb in the right form of the present tense. After

writing the answer, learners are to turn over the card and check whether their answer is correct or not. If they are on a ladder and the answer is correct, then they can climb the ladder, otherwise, they remain where they are. If they are on a snake and the answer is correct, they can remain where they are without sliding down the snake. However, if the answer is incorrect, they have to slide down the snake.

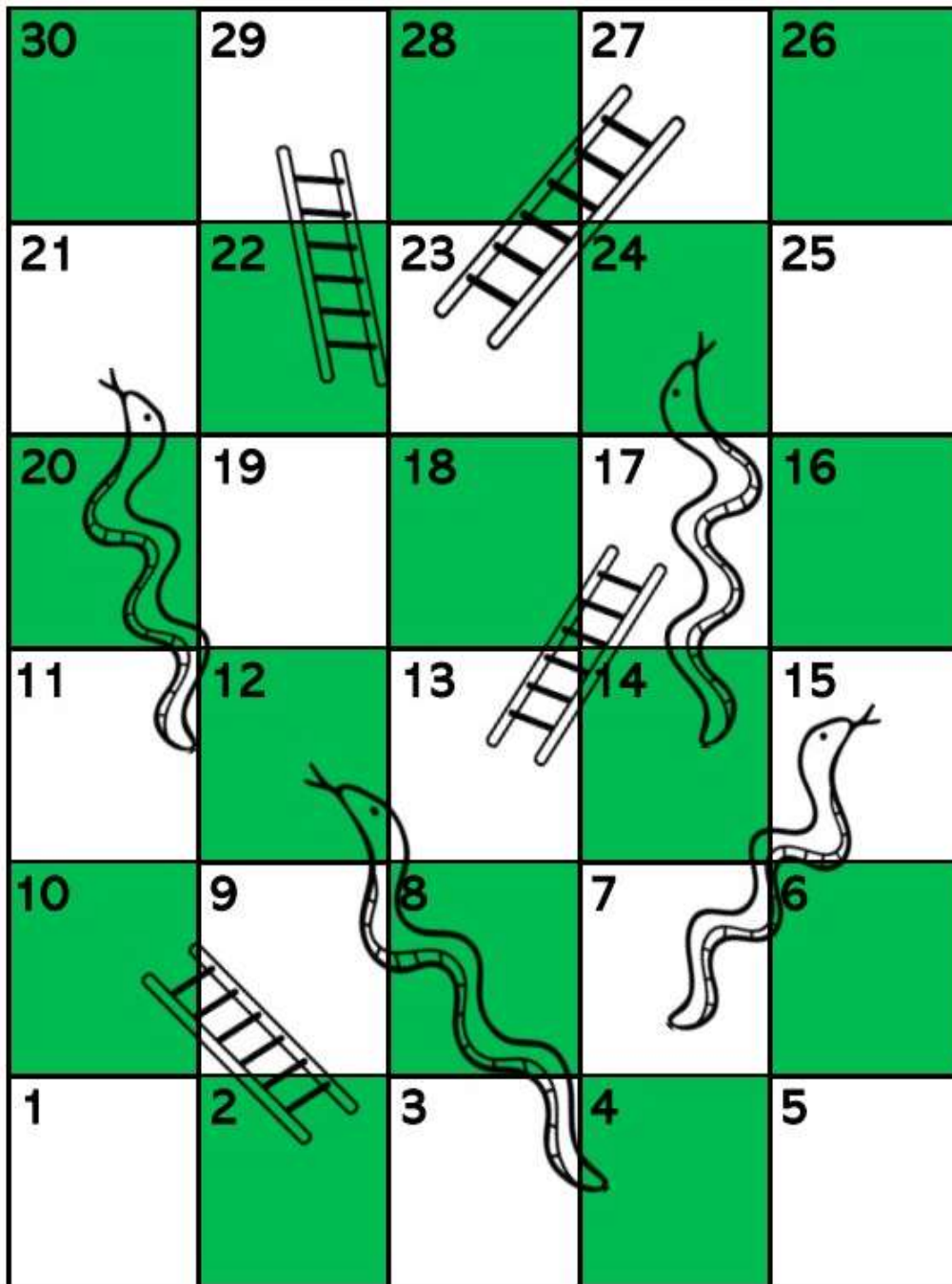


Figure 38 - Copy of the game Snakes and Ladder.

Herr Bean _____ (wohnen) in einem Haus.



Herr Bean sagt „Teddy du _____ (sein) mein bester Freund!).“



Er _____ (haben) ein grünes Auto.



Herr Bean _____ (lesen) gern Bücher.



Herr Bean sagt „Ich _____ (haben) einen Hund als Haustier“.



Herr Bean und seine Freundin _____ (tanzen) in die Disco.



Figure 39 - Flashcards to accompany the game Snakes and Ladders.

5. Authentic material can also be ideal for implementing creative speaking activities in the FL classroom. Nowadays, many restaurants have their menu available online, therefore these can be easily downloaded, printed, and used as a learning resource. For instance, these can be used with Year 8 GFL students as a speaking activity after they have been introduced to different food dishes, including some of the common dishes found in Germany.

The following is an example of how different menus can be used as a speaking activity in the FL classroom. Ideally, the classroom should be divided into four different work stations with each station representing a menu that caters for: starters, main dishes, dessert, and drinks. Students should also be placed into different groups so that they can move easily from one station to another. After the students have been set in groups, one student from each group is chosen to represent the waiter/waitress taking orders at every workstation on a worksheet. The other learners are given a worksheet where they can write what they order at each station (including a section for price). To make the learning experience more realistic, students could be told that they have a budget of €20 to spend and cannot exceed this amount. Students can also be encouraged to calculate their spending and how much money they are going to tip the waiter.

This activity provides learners with the opportunity to practice the register needed when ordering food and drink in a cafe or restaurant whilst allowing them to experiment with the TL in the learning process. Similarly, other forms of authentic material could be ideal for creating simulated conversations that typically take place between a customer and a salesperson in different situations such as at a clothing store, at the market, at the pharmacy, or the train station.

6. Travel brochures, recipes, posters, and advertisements could also be ideal for testing reading comprehension since they do not require heavy reading. The following is an example of how a genuine recipe taken from the internet could be used as reading comprehension in the GFL classroom with Year 8 students to consolidate vocabulary related to Food and Cooking:



LECKER

Nudeln mit Tomatensoße und Fleischwurst

★★★★☆ (43) 3.7 Sterne von 5



Zutaten

Für 4 Kinder

100 g	Fleischwurst
2 EL	Butter
1 EL	Mehl
1/8 l	Milch
1/8 l	Gemüsebrühe
250 g	Spaghetti
	Salz
60 g	Tomatenmark
1 Prise	Zucker
100 g	Tomaten

Zubereitung

25 Minuten

   leicht

1. Wurst in Scheiben schneiden. 1 EL Butter in einer Pfanne erhitzen und Wurst darin ca. 4 Minuten braten. 1 EL Butter in einem Topf schmelzen, mit Mehl bestäuben, kurz anschwitzen. Milch und Brühe unter Rühren dazugeben, unter Rühren aufkochen und ca. 5 Minuten köcheln.
2. Inzwischen Nudeln in kochendem Salzwasser nach Packungsanweisung zubereiten. Tomatenmark in die Soße rühren, mit Salz und Zucker abschmecken. Tomaten waschen, putzen, würfeln und in die Soße geben. Nudeln abgießen, kurz abtropfen lassen, zurück in den Topf geben. Soße und Wurst dazugeben und unterheben.

<https://www.lecker.de/nudeln-mit-tomatensosse-und-fleischwurst-75800.html>

1/2

Figure 40 - Authentic Recipe. Retrieved from <https://www.lecker.de/nudeln-mit-tomatensosse-und-fleischwurst-75800.html>.

After presenting the recipe on the projector for everyone to see, the teacher can ask the following questions to prepare learners for the reading activity and motivate them to read:

- a. Was haben wir hier?
- b. Wo finden wir Rezepten?
- c. Wie findet ihr Kochen?
- d. Was kocht ihr gern?
- e. Gefällt ihr dieses Rezept? Warum?
- f. Findet ihr dieses Rezept gesund oder ungesund? Warum?

This pre-reading activity can also take the form of a discussion in pairs. Each student can discuss a particular question and then share the results of the discussion with the other student. Moving on to the reading activity, the teacher needs to provide a task to test comprehension, such as the one represented in Table 3, which in this case shows a True or False exercise.

		Richtig	Falsch
0.	Das Rezept heißt 'Nudeln mit Fischsoße'.		X
1.	Das Rezept hat 10 Zutaten.		
2.	Für dieses Rezept braucht man keine Tomaten.		
3.	Das ist ein vegetarisches Rezept.		
4.	Man kann dieses Rezept als Nachtisch kochen.		
5.	Das Gericht ist in 25 Minuten fertig.		

Table 3 - True or False exercise that can be used to assess reading comprehension.

Following the reading comprehension exercise, as a post-reading activity, students can be involved in creating a recipe as part of group work. To help the students, the teacher can give them a set of flashcards with the vocabulary that they might need. The students are free to choose the ingredients themselves and are encouraged to discuss what dish they are going to create. In the end, students can be asked to present their recipe and explain whether it will be served as a starter, main course, or dessert. Such activities tend to empower learners and make them more able to thrive within the LOF since by allowing students to choose their own project, a sense of learner ownership of the learning process is created.

5.2.5 The Use of Audio-Visual Aids

The findings of Research Question 1 indicate that since the beginning, the teaching of GFL within the Maltese learning context has always been supplemented by various types of audio, visual, and audio-visual aids, ranging from filmstrips, slides, audio clips, illustrations, flashcards, photographs, videos, and CDs. Dike (1993, as cited in Ashaver & Igyuve, 2013) defines audio-visual resources as “those materials that are directed at the sense of hearing and the sense of sight”. In light of this, Rather (2004) adds that audio-visual aids are those instructional devices that are used in the classroom to facilitate learning and make it easier and interesting for the learners.

The overview of the representations derived from the analysis of GFL textbooks indicates that, although as seen in Chapter 2 technological advancements has indeed brought about exponential growth in the audio-visual tools used in the FL classroom (such as the projector, interactive whiteboard, and tablets), the idea of using audio-visual aids for presenting, practicing and teaching a FL is not a new one. In fact, both the first textbook series (*Vorwärts International*) and the last textbook series (*Schritte International*) that were officially chosen for the teaching and learning of GFL open each chapter with a Picture/Photo Story accompanied by audio. This finding suggests that the idea of using audio-visual material to stimulate and facilitate the learning of a FL (Wright, 1976) was availed of in past teaching methods and continued to be supported by different teaching approaches over the years.

Similar to past teaching methodologies, current theories of learning that are based on the communicative and social constructivist approaches (NCF, 2012) also recommend the use of audio and visual aids in FL teaching. *The Educator’s Guide for Pedagogy and Assessment for German* (DQSE, 2015) points out that educators should make learners aware of different learning styles and teach techniques for learning new content by using visual and auditory modes of learning. However, a new dimension has been given to the existing technique of using visual-aids, as the aim of using visual and auditory material in today’s classroom goes beyond facilitating the learning process. As claimed by Newby (2015), audio-visual aids should engage learners in meaningful use of the TL and lead to a more participative and communicative learning environment.

As seen in Chapter 4, in the textbook series *Vorwärts International* which is based on the behaviouristic approach, the use of audio-visual does not seem to venture beyond habit formation pattern drills to other interactive tasks such as group discussions, project work, or problem-solving activities. Consequently, most of the time, learners are given a passive role as they receive and repeat the information. In contrast to this approach, the NCF (2012) encourages the use of audio-visual aids to initiate discussions in the TL, to stimulate inquiry, and to promote the development of problem-solving skills and critical thinking. This corresponds with Duffy (2008) who argues that audio-visual material should serve as a “vehicle for discovery” that leads to an interactive approach whereby learners are involved in the learning process and reflect on what they know and what they are thinking.

As illustrated in the previous chapter, the insights obtained from the textbooks *ZickZack neu 1 & 2* indicate how, with the introduction of the communicative-approach, the use of audio-visual aids in GFL textbooks started to gradually lead to a more learner-centred approach as focus started being made on the learner’s interests. Having said that, this interpretation cannot be generalised to all the audio and visual material that started being offered by textbooks. As seen in Chapter 4, despite the use of visuals and auditory aids in *Schritte International 1 & 2*, the latter fails to present the TL in an interesting and meaningful way for learners, as most of the contexts in which the language material is presented do not reflect the realities of young teenagers but rather those of adults. This finding highlights the importance of analytical skills in the line of work of teachers and that teachers should use carefully selected differentiated resource banks (Educators’ Guide for Pedagogy and Assessment for German, 2015).

The following are some suggestions on how audio-visual resources can be used in the GFL classroom to incorporate areas of students’ interests in the learning process and engage learners in different meaningful learning experiences.

1. Music videos which can be easily found on YouTube can be used for:
 - a. practicing listening of the TL,
 - b. using different adjectives by describing the singer, clothing, or the scenes,
 - c. placing the scenes in chronological order,

- d. identifying groups of related vocabulary,
 - e. teaching grammar such as the use of tenses or prepositions in the song.
2. Recipe videos and craft videos that seem to be popular with young teenagers can also be found on YouTube. These can be used to consolidate vocabulary as well as to teach the use of the imperative in phrases such as „Erhitze die Pfanne“, „Brate die Zwiebel in Öl an“, „Schneide das Papier“, „Mal das Bild“. Furthermore, such videos could also be used as a listening comprehension, whereby students could be asked some questions on what they watched and heard.
 3. Commercials, which happen to be a source of both authentic and audio-visual material are also a powerful tool that can be used in the GFL classroom. The following (click on the link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V6-0kYhgoRo>) is an example of a commercial which can be used in the GFL classroom to:
 - a. open up learners' thinking processes,
 - b. stimulate creativity and imagination,
 - c. initiate discussions in the TL,
 - d. introduce a particular topic (in this case Christmas or the Family).
 4. Moreover, to instill curiosity amongst learners, the teacher can play around with audio-visual aids, such as:
 - a. blurring an image and having students identifying what is being portrayed,
 - b. cropping a photo of a famous personality and leaving only small parts that are visible so that students will have to guess who the personality is,
 - c. fast-forwarding or rewinding a song,
 - d. making a mashup with different songs.
 5. The use of audio-visual material at home could also be a potential idea to assign homework differently by asking the students to watch a video or listen to a short audio-clip and then assign tasks correlating to that.
 6. Students can also be involved in creating something themselves such as a short video clip, a photo story, or a presentation. One example could be the topic Home and Home

area for Level 7. Assigned in small groups, students can use their mobile phones, tablets, or cameras to shoot a small footage in the form of a vlog (video blog). Whilst taking the footage, learners are asked to go around the village and show important buildings and landmarks such as the post office, the church, the bank, and the museum. Students can then send their work by e-mail to the teacher and these can be watched and peer or individually assessed accordingly.

By being the creators themselves, students will not only be fully engaged in the learning process but also enhancing their visual literacy and creativity. Furthermore, students can also be asked to present their work in front of the class, hence they will also be developing their presentation skills in the process. This approach can be used for assessing students about various topics by giving them a hands-on task that they have to work in groups. Moreover, the use of audio-visual material as a method of assessment challenges the idea of assessing learners solely by taking a pen and paper exam.

5.2 Conclusion

Usually many consider curricular documents and literary works produced many years ago as texts which lack the elements required to attract the younger generation (Cremona, 2019). This chapter proactively responds to this sensation by providing pedagogical suggestions that show how multimodality can transform classic trends and methodologies into a student-centered and adolescent-friendly approach. Moreover, based on the outcomes of this comparative analysis, some of the strengths and challenges related to contemporary teaching approaches were discussed through my interpretation of the data. A closer look at the fundamental educational challenges faced by teachers in the 21st century suggests that in certain cases, similar challenges were also faced by former teachers who were in the GFL classroom several decades ago.

Chapter 6 – Conclusion

6.1 A General Overview of the Outcomes of this Research

In this study, a comparative investigation between past and present teaching methodologies and approaches used in a Maltese GFL context was carried out. This investigation helped me to answer the two research questions of this study.

The first research question which I answered in this study was:

1. Through a bibliographic analysis, what are the characteristics of past methodologies used for the teaching and learning of GFL in Malta along the years?

Since local studies about the history and development of GFL teaching and learning within the Maltese educational context were minimal and to my knowledge did not extend up to the immediate present, an analysis of past official curricular documents and textbooks which were previously used in the Maltese GFL classroom was the best way forward to answer this research question.

The multimodal analysis of GFL textbooks indicates that since the beginning of GFL teaching and learning within the Maltese educational context in 1969, attention has always been given to the four language skills i.e listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Having said that, in agreement with Field (2000) and Pica (1997), this study indicates that along the years different approaches to enabling students to learn and practice language skills have emerged. The data analysis suggests that the teaching methodologies used for the teaching and learning of GFL have gradually changed from being grammar-driven to providing a more balanced development between linguistic and communicative competences and accuracy. However, although teaching there has been a gradual move towards a more communicative approach, various elements from past teaching methodologies continue to appear in GFL textbooks published over the years. This finding suggests that in essence, teaching a FL entails a combination of teaching methods and pedagogical approaches.

Furthermore, the outcomes of Research Question 1 also indicate that the ideal or most suitable textbook does not exist. Hence, educators should be willing to try innovative

materials besides traditional texts and make themselves aware of other ways of teaching the TL that allows them to engage the students more within the learning process, where the learners feel motivated to learn. With this in mind, multimodal pedagogical suggestions were provided in the following chapter.

The second research question which I answered in this study was:

2. What would a comparative analysis of official curricular documents designed for past and present GFL learning context indicate about the strengths and challenges of the contemporary methodologies used to teach GFL?

The aim of this research question was to explore the strengths and challenges of contemporary teaching approaches by comparing and contrasting them with past teaching methodologies i.e the outcomes of Research Question 1. As explained earlier in Chapter 3, today the teaching and learning of GFL is no longer guided by a specific textbook. Hence, in order to gain an insight into current approaches to GFL teaching and learning, official curricular documents were analysed. Based on the outcomes of this comparative analysis, I discussed some of the strengths and challenges related to contemporary teaching approaches through my interpretation of the data. A closer look at the challenges faced by teachers in the 21st century suggests that in certain cases, similar challenges were also faced by former teachers who were in the GFL classroom several decades ago.

Furthermore, when comparing characteristics of past teaching methodologies (i.e the outcomes of Research Question 1) with contemporary approaches encouraged by official curricular documents designed for the teaching and learning of GFL, it could be concluded that certain practices go a long way back in the history of FL teaching and learning. Consequently, based on my interpretation I provided multimodal pedagogical suggestions on how the same knowledge that was transmitted to learners by past teaching methodologies and textbooks can be delivered in a more engaging and meaningful way. These suggestions include activities and resources which can be adapted by FL educators according to their students' interests and understanding. At their core, the given suggestions are founded on techniques that have been supported and practiced many years ago by the same teaching methodologies that many consider outdated for today's modern FL classroom (Darling-Hammond, Flook, Cook-Harvey, Barron & Osher, 2020; Eaton, 2010).

In this way, I demonstrated potential ways of how teachers can utilize what has already been established by former teaching methodologies and textbooks and use their imagination to bring together 'old' methodologies with 'new' teaching approaches, to develop meaningful learning activities that enhance critical thinking and holistic education. As noted by Kress et al., (2001) educators are now looking into implementing multimodality in all classrooms. Hence, rather than trying to reinvent the wheel, GFL teachers should focus their energy on being selective and imaginative when developing lessons.

6.2 Limitations and Suggestions for Further Studies

Every possible effort was made to ensure that the overall objectives and aims of the research have been achieved, however, this study still entails some limitations.

Since the data collected for this study was analysed through text analysis, the results were based on the interpretation of the researcher. Hence, other participants which could have been relevant to this research such as teachers and students were not included. Having said that, as already explained in Chapter 3, the bibliographic analysis of official curricular documents was a fundamental step that had to be taken before speaking to teachers and students since little information had been established by past studies about the history of GFL in Malta. As a result, the interpretation of the findings in this research is a window of opportunity for further interpretations and studies. It would be interesting if further research is conducted in greater depth by possibly interviewing a number of retired teachers who taught German in the past as well as current teachers who are teaching the subject at the moment. Former and current GFL students could also be interviewed for more accurate results and a better representation of reality.

Moreover, qualitative interviews with teachers could also provide a more accurate picture of the successes and challenges that are present within the system and what yet needs to be addressed or improved in the implementation of the LOF. The data obtained from such interviews could yield useful information for education planners and policymakers alike, as they can contribute to the creation of a sound policy in an effort to ensure a successful implementation of the LOF and strengthen our educational system.

In addition, similar to this study, future research can be carried out on a larger scale in which the learning of GFL through contemporary teaching approaches and traditional approaches are compared and contrasted. A project can be set up in which some classes are learning German through the use of contemporary teaching approaches which included an outcomes-based approach, project-based learning, experimental learning, and task-based learning, whilst others are learning it through traditional text-based resources such as textbooks, flashcards, and handouts. The objective behind this study would be to investigate the effects of traditional and contemporary teaching approaches on the learning process and the attitudes of learners towards GFL.

Another limitation is the fact that the data acquired in this study only provides a snapshot of a specific sample of textbooks and policy documents which is limited to Attainment Level 7 (i.e. the first two years of GFL learning). As explained in Chapter 3, the present study was carried out during a time when the Maltese educational system was going through an ongoing reform. As a result, the curricular and policy documents available were limited to Level 7, as the rest of the frameworks for the remaining levels are still in the process of being implemented. In fact, students in Year 9, 10, and 11 are still following the old syllabus. Hence, had the study been conducted at a later stage when the LOF programme is fully implemented across all attainment levels and in full swing, the researcher could have obtained further insights on the research topic.

6.3 Final Remarks

Through my interpretation of selected sections from GFL textbooks that were used during the years of GFL learning within the Maltese educational context and analysis of official curricular documents, it can be concluded that although several changes have taken place along the years, including a change from a teacher-centred approach to a learner-centred approach and a shift from an input to an outcomes-based provision, certain techniques, and trends which have been used many years ago still have pedagogical relevance and educational value in the modern GFL classroom if these are refined and adapted to the needs of 21st-century students.

What resulted from this study should serve as an encouragement for those teachers who are afraid of the changes and challenges brought about by the LOF and as an inspiration to utilise

critical judgment and imagination and integrate them with what they already know on good FL classroom practice. Notwithstanding what has already been established by past teaching methodologies, teachers of German as a FL should keep on scaffolding educational practices on what is relevant to 21st-century students.

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