Training Language & Technology Masters' Students for
Service Learning

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Context

Master in Language & Technology course:

Active methodologies, approaches and techniques

➢ Research and Service Learning (SL) Project:

Teaching students of Spanish as a Foreign Language (SFL) in China

Chinese public educational model → traditional Chinese education model (Camacho, 2014)

SL methodology suggestion

1. Introduction

Goal: To promote SL as an active and globalising teaching model

Two objectives:

a) To identify the differences and similarities between the SL methodology and the teaching methods applied in China for SFL learning

b) To gather the opinion of Chinese students learning SFL about the different language learning methods and approaches known in China

Expected result:

→Difficulties and contributions of SL as a language learning methodology in general and specifically for SFL can be identified.

2. SFL learning methodologies in China

The oficial SFL learning goes back to the **50's of the last century** (interrupted due to political reasons).

The interest in the Spanish language was renewed and is still popular until our days (Jie, 2015).

Currently, different methodological teaching approaches coexist in the Chinese Foreign Languages classrooms:
  ◦ the traditional Chinese method (centred in the teacher and the book),
  ◦ the audiovisual method (focused on the repetition of native speaking),
  ◦ the discussion method (based on the learners oral output),
  ◦ the tasks based approach (highlighting the learning process) and
  ◦ the cooperative method (built around the interaction between the learners) as it is in Martínez, C. M., & Marco, J. L. (2010) described in detail.

Recently, the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st-century Maritime Silk Road (2013) politics , promoted exchanges between China and Spain, which also introduced:

- new ideas in China

- new teaching models to acquire foreign languages

One of this new teaching methodologies is **SL**: transformation of theoretic knowledge into practical skills by solving a social problem.

 → This idea coincide with those of the Chinese educational reform, as it focuses on a more active role of the students as well as on their social conscience to become better responsible citizens.

3. Methodology (I)

Questionnaire design

Previous studies
- Hua (2014),
- Chuan & Ling (2015) and
- Yan (2016).

All these studies focused on SL in Higher Education in China.
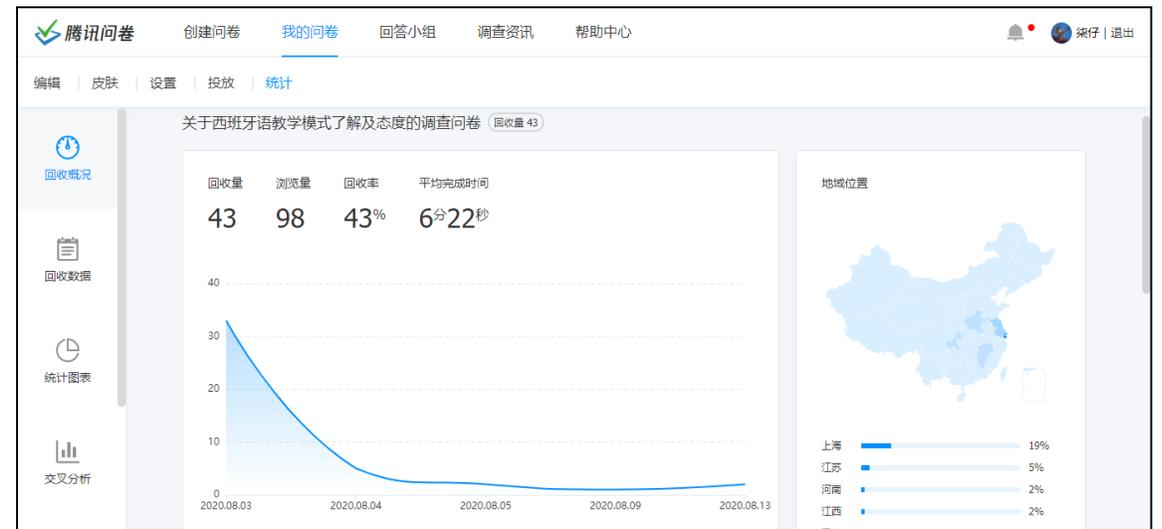
3. Methodology (II)

Respondents: 43

25 students in Valencia

+

18 students in Shangai

Instrument:

Tencent Questionnaire

3. Methodology (III)

26 questions

six different groups, related to:

◦ the profile,

◦ the different SFL teaching models,

◦ the activities taken place in class depending on the model,

◦ the evaluation system applied,

◦ the perception of the students about the methodologies after their learning experience,

◦ the opinion about SL for SFL and

◦ a final open answer question regarding the differences and similarities between SL and the Chinese traditional teaching methodology

Results (I)

3. SFL level (after EFRL)

- A1
- A2
- B1
- B2
- C1
- don't know

39.50%
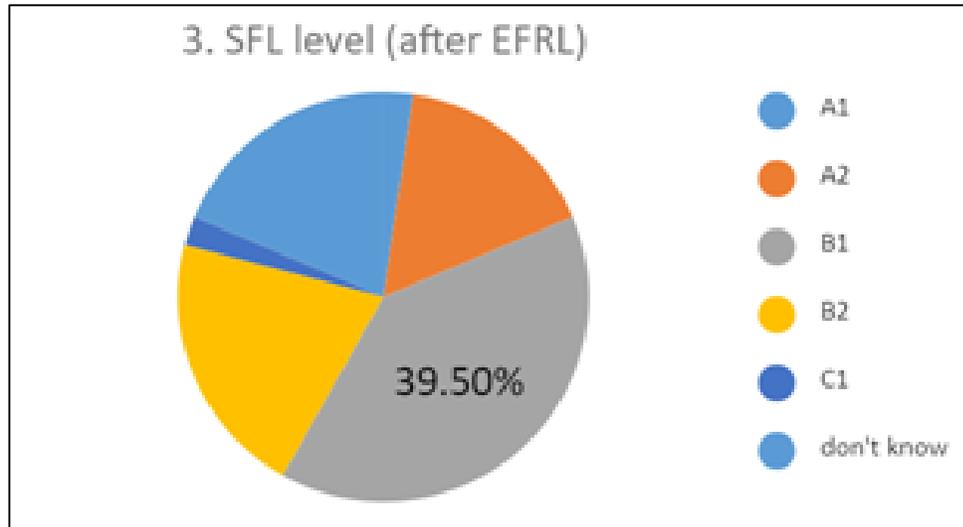
Profile
- female
- between 18 and 25 years old and
- most of them have a B1 level of Spanish*
- followed by B2 and A2

*level of the European Framework of Reference for Languages (EFRL)

Results (II)

Teaching models:

- **groups of 11 to 30** students or more

- **teacher centered classes**, only a third of the students have an active participation

- SFL is taught with the **traditional teaching model** in a 63%

- followed by the **cooperative method**, the **communicative approach** and less applied **SL**
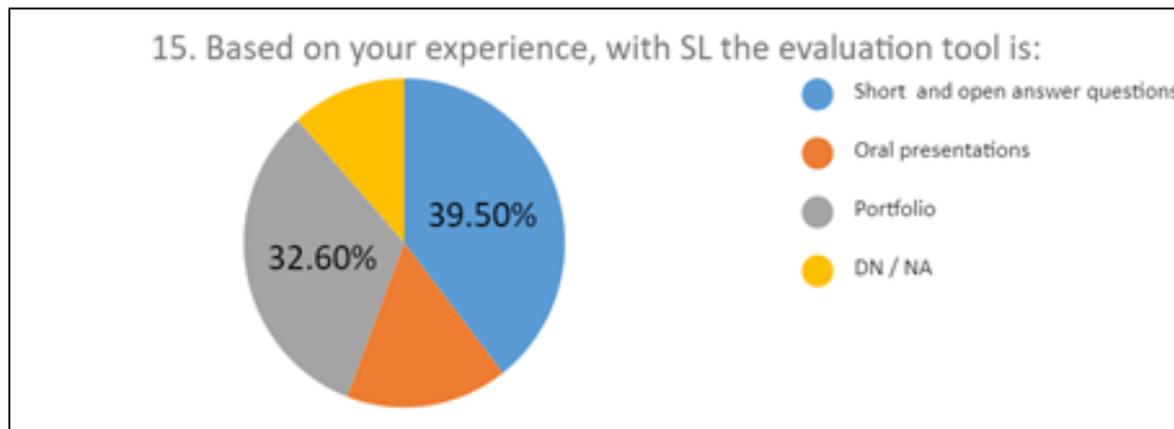
Activities:

- the traditional Chinese model highlights the **individual work**

- the communicative approach emphasizes **simulations**

- the cooperative method is based on **teamwork**

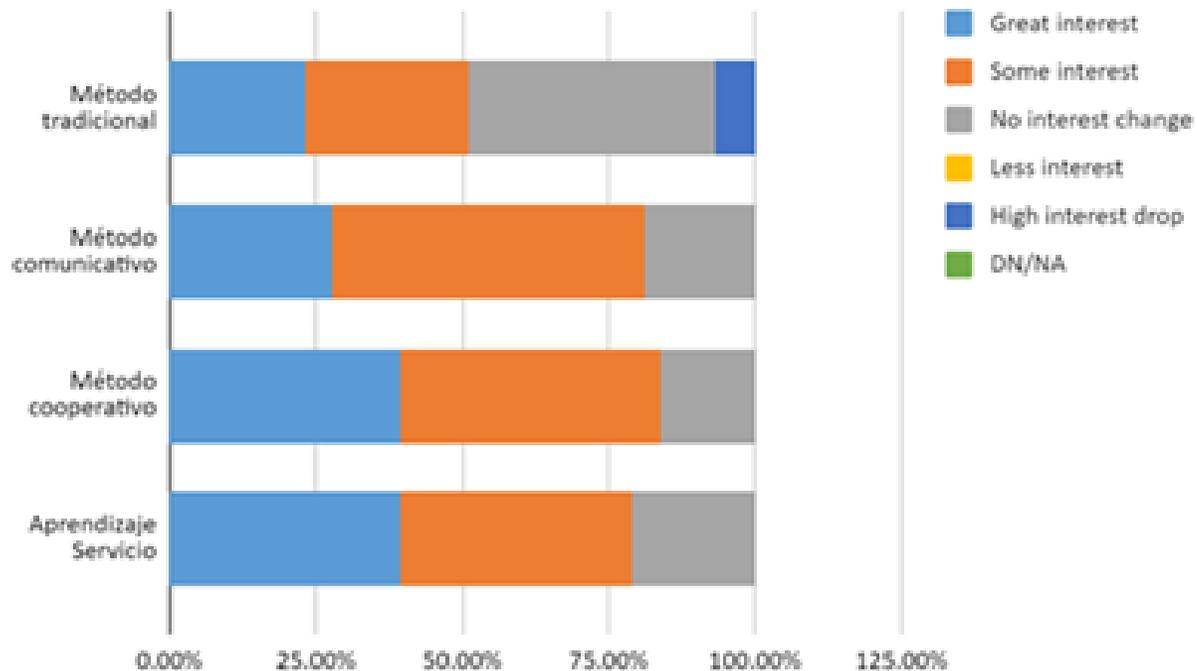- the SL methodology consists in **projects**

Results (III)

Evaluation system:

- **traditional method:** tests of short answer and open answer questions,
- **the communicative approach:** oral presentations,
- **the cooperative method:** portfolio, oral presentations and tests,
- **SL:** all these evaluating systems but without dominating one above the others

15. Based on your experience, with SL the evaluation tool is:

- Short and open answer questions — 39.50%
- Oral presentations
- Portfolio — 32.60%
- DN / NA

Results (IV)

16. Interest in learning SFL after teaching model
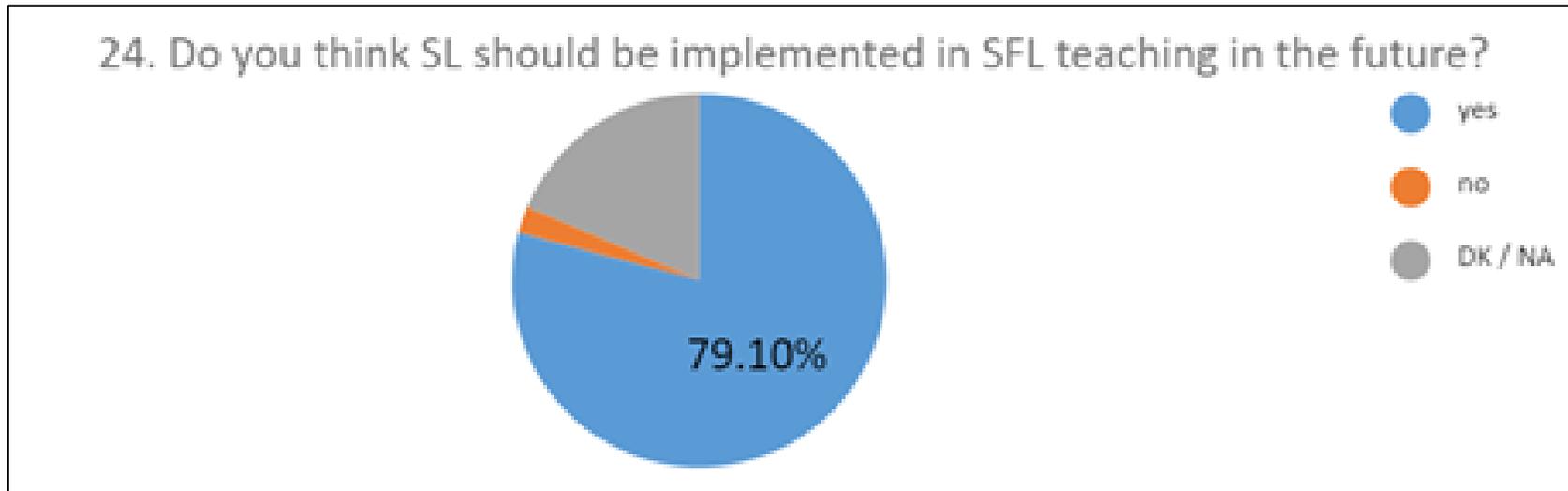
cooperative model + **SL**

communicative approach

traditional model

Results (V)

19. What do you think can SL help to develop in SFL learning??

- Oral comprehension
- Oral expression
- Reading comprehension
- Writing
- Vocabulary
- Grammar
- Pronunciation

58.10% 81.40% 72.10%
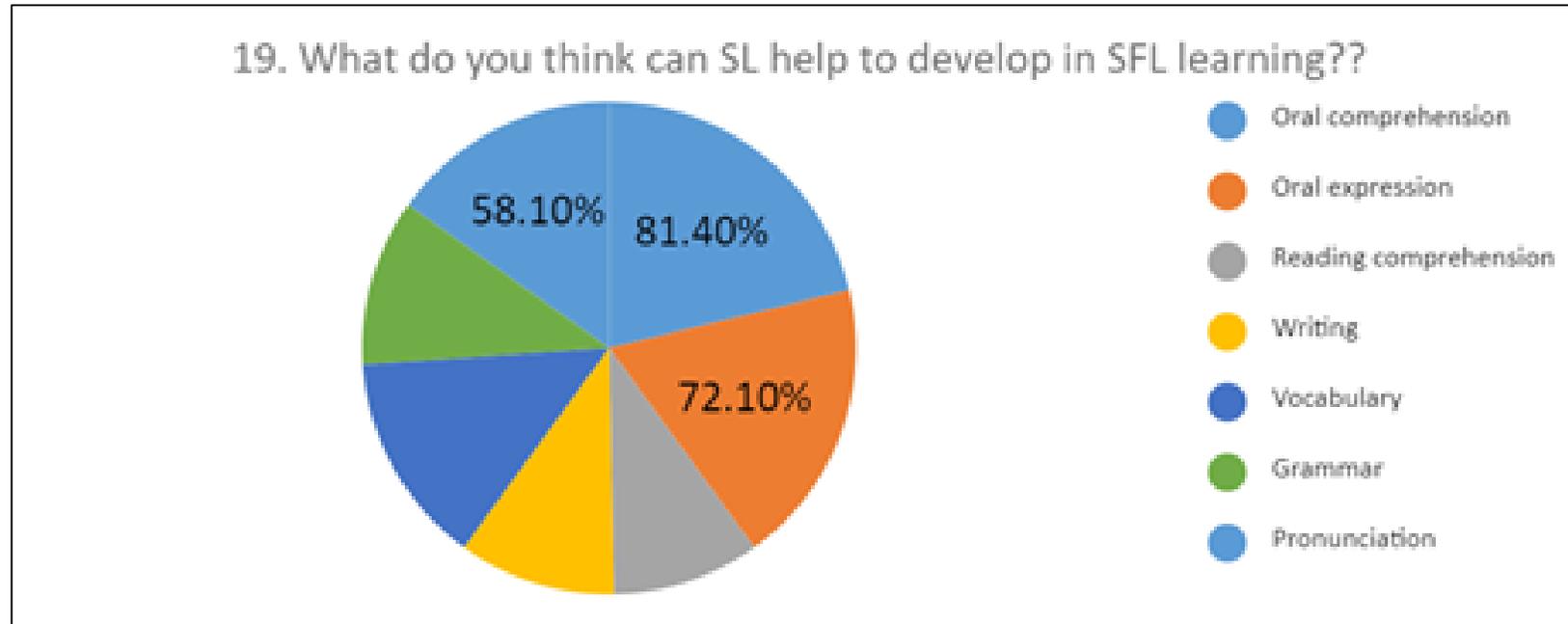
SL can develop all the linguistic skills.

Results (VI)

24. Do you think SL should be implemented in SFL teaching in the future?

- yes
- no
- DK / NA

79.10%

The majority of the respondents answered positively.

Results (VII)

Open answer question

Differences (10 responses collected)

→the contribution SL provides regarding the practical and comprehensive learning against the traditional model

Similarities (9 responses collected)

→ both models maintain an important role for the teacher and for the classroom activities

Didactic unit proposal

SL project learning objectives:

a) To provide children in rural areas with new knowledge

→ widen their horizons learning other languages

b) To allow SFL students learn not only with books, but also through practical activities during the SL project

→ improve their oral skill

c) To enhance the idea of helpfulness in the new generation of SFL teachers

→ in accordance to the Chinese society's demands

SL project proposal (I)

Social problem → **Service** → **Learning** → **Evaluation**
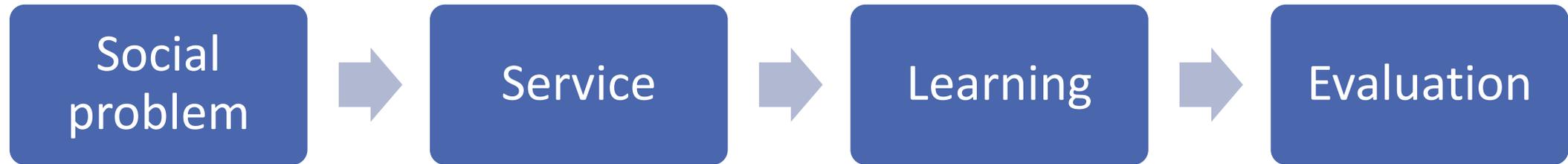
Many children of rural areas in China still cannot receive a good education.

Teaching an important foreign language to primary school pupils.

Students learn Spanish culture and vocabulary applying videos and games.

Participation in class. Participation during the activities. Recipients of the service assessment. Personal reflection.
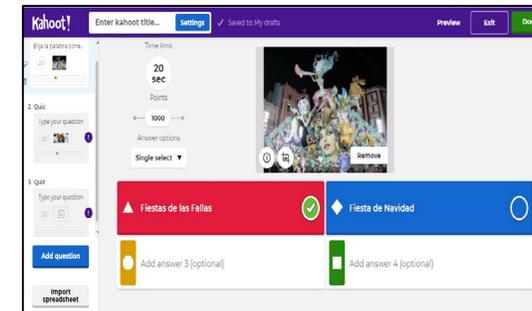
SL project proposal (II)

Spanish-games

Fallas in Youtube

Bilibili

Kahoot

Conclusions

1. SL methodology can develop all the linguistic competences in addition to other transversal competences.

2. The traditional education model is not adapted to the development of modern Chinese society.

3. Regardless their language level, Chinese students value SL positively.

It is hoped that this work on SL methodology for SFL learning in China can encourage SL to be valued in China as a useful active methodology down to their multiple benefits.

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