Could using social media influencers in the foreign language classroom improve communication skills of non-native learners?

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Could using social media influencers in the foreign language classroom improve communication skills of non-native learners?

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en vue de l'obtention du diplôme de Master en langues et littératures modernes,

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CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
FL	Foreign Language
FTC	Federal Trade Commission
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
MIL	Media and Information Literacy
OIL	Online Informal Learning
OILE	Online Informal Learning of English
SMIs	Social Media Influencers
SMPs	Social Media Platforms
WBE	Wallonie-Bruxelles Enseignement
WBF	Wallonia-Brussels Federation

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND AND RESEARCH MOTIVATION

In the current technological landscape, which has evolved exponentially throughout recent years, social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, etc. have grown to not only be spaces within which we communicate with one another and spend our free time on, but have also become tools to acquire knowledge. New technologies, such as mobile devices and smartphones, have created wider accessibility opportunities for these platforms through applications which can be easily downloaded by the end-user. Nowadays, it is uncommon to find someone without a social media presence even if limited to a few select applications, and even more so in younger generations. This accessibility and connectivity only make it easier for teens to find content with which they can attain knowledge, inspiration and creativity along with adopting changes in their own morality, faith and understanding of the world around them. This knowledge is produced by several entities, but the one entity that has proven to be most popular with teenagers, has been influencers.

The interest in the topic came from a personal experience. When I was younger, my father, who is a computer scientist and is more often than not in contact with the English language, wanted to help my brother and I learn English in fun ways using what he knew best: a computer. Thus, we began playing games in English so as for us to passively learn new words. As we grew older, we started watching TV series in English with French subtitles, mimicking our father. From that point on, we were curious enough that we wanted to know more vocabulary and found ourselves repeating phrases we had heard in the series. Back then, the "Web 2.0" had just been introduced, but we still did not have access to social media. Our only resources to learn English were TV series, movies, games, and songs, and those were my generation's interests. Now, as I am training to become a language teacher, I too want to connect with this new generation of students and peak their interests with modern tool, much as my father did with my brother and I. However, during my internships, I unfortunately found that the material used in classrooms were often outdated and did not connect with this generation. For that reason, I wanted to delve deeper into what makes a big part of teenagers' lives: influencers. They have the potential to become an invaluable tool in a teacher's toolbox, as it would not only allow students to feel as if their interests are being considered, therefore increasing motivation and engagement in class. Additionally, it would also allow teachers to creatively teach students of today's era and to keep in touch with their interests.

1.2. AIM AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This dissertation aims to establish if using social media influencers in the foreign language (FL) classroom would have a pedagogical value to improve communication skills of non-native learners. Apart from the fact that the topic of influencers is relatively new and has not been widely covered in scientific literature yet, the benefits and/or disadvantages of such practices are undoubtedly abundant. In order to discover the pros and cons of using influencers in the FL classroom, I decided to subdivide my dissertation into ten research questions (see Table 1.1 below) to aid in creating a conclusion to the main research topic at hand.

Table 1.1 - Research questions

	RESEARCH QUESTIONS
Q_1	Would influencers be susceptible of offering an input which would motivate students and if so, what would be the motivational aspect of using influencers in the classroom?
Q_2	Is the word 'influencer', its synonym and variations included in legal requirements and curricula of the WBF?
Q_3	Is the word 'influencer', its synonym and variation included in the CEFR?
Q_4	Do English textbooks include the use of influencers and if so, to what purpose?
Q_5	Are influencers' content of value in a foreign language classroom in order to improve students' communication skills?
Q_6	Do teachers make use of influencers' content in their foreign language classrooms?
Q_7	Is there a correlation between the age and gender of teachers and their use of influencers' content in the classroom?
Q_8	If teachers do make use of influencers' content, why do they use them and how?
Q_9	Are students watching/listening to influencers' content in a foreign language, and if so, do they do it consciously in order to learn the language?
Q_{10}	Would students be motivated to have influencers' content in their foreign language classrooms?

1.3. APPROACH

This dissertation is structured as follows. As a first step, a literature review in Chapter 2 provides a definition of the term 'influencer' using different existing sources before giving a historical overview on the emergence of social media and subsequently, influencers. Moreover, we will analyze different types of influencers in order to understand how they work and what to be mindful of when watching their content. Furthermore, we will examine the positive

influence of influencers' content on teenagers, which is the age demographic we will focus on in this dissertation. Chapter 3 will investigate the legal requirements and curricula in force in the WBF as well as the CEFR and official language textbooks in order to determine whether there are any mentions of the term 'influencer', its synonym and/or variations. Chapter 4 will be analyzing one influencer's video so as to demonstrate any linguistical advantages available in an influencer's content that could potentially be used in a FL classroom. Chapter 5 subsequently examines the practices of teachers in the WBF concerning influencers, by means of a survey. In this chapter, the methodology used for the survey will be outlined and a commentary on the results obtained will also be provided. Additionally, this chapter also examines the practice of students with regard to their use of influencers, similarly examined by the means of a survey. Chapter 6 constitutes the hypotheses and suggestions for the integration of influencers in a lesson plan, depending on the results obtained from the survey, and the creation of a lesson plan revolving around influencers. Finally, the dissertation reaches its conclusion in Chapter 7, where an answer to the main research question is presented, as well as suggestions for further research.

1.4.   SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH

Due to the lack of previous research on the topic of influencers in FL classrooms, this dissertation is based on theories closely related to audiovisual learning and my own observations as a student.

Furthermore, quantitative data will be analyzed from the surveys. It is to be noted, however, that the responses from the first survey directed to teachers were few in numbers, which is why it cannot be claimed that the responses represent general practices in the WBF.

Finally, it would be presumptuous to claim that the lesson plan created in the last part of this dissertation is the perfect lesson plan on influencers, as I am in no way an experienced teacher yet. Moreover, there are endless possibilities for the making off a lesson plan on influencers, as will be seen. For these reasons, this dissertation is not exhaustive and does not claim to have found the perfect way of teaching languages. However, it aims at introducing the topic of influencers' content as a tool to teach languages and serves as a blueprint for future research.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter aims to provide a theoretical framework of the main subject of this work. The first section provides a definition of the term 'influencer', using various existing sources. The second section will provide a historical overview of influencers without delving too much into the marketing sphere. The third section of this chapter explains the different types of influencers which currently exist as well as their added value for brands. The fourth section will explore the positive aspects and potential interests of using influencers' content in a FL classroom.

2.1. THE DEFINITION OF THE TERM 'INFLUENCER'

In the interest of facilitating the reading of the next sections, it is crucial to have an understanding of what an influencer is and how they are characterized in today's society. Below, five definitions stemming from dictionaries, researchers, companies and organizations, have been proposed. Although they have some similarities, each definition has their own important nuances.

1. According to the Oxford Dictionary, an influencer is "a person or thing that influences somebody/something, especially a person with the ability to influence potential buyers of a product or service by recommending it on social media".

2. The Cambridge Dictionary notes that an influencer is a "person who affects or changes the way that other people behave; a person who is paid by a company to show and describe its products and services on social media".

3. According to Brandi Watkins and others, an influencer is "a particular type of social media user who leveraged their social media accounts to create a following and to position themselves as a tastemaker or leader in public opinion within its chosen specialty" (Watkins et al 88).

4. According to Geyser from the Influencer Marketing Hub[1], "[i]nfluencers on social media are people who have built a reputation for their knowledge and expertise on a specific topic. They make regular posts about that topic on their preferred social media

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[1] Influencer Marketing Hub is a private media company which specializes in producing how-to guides, courses and research reports in the social media and influencer marketing industry. The firm has one of the world's largest community of influencers and works with leading brands to leverage the power of influencer marketing with over 5 million monthly unique users. (source: Influencer Marketing Hub)

channels and generate large followings of engaged people who pay close attention to their views. Brands love social media influencers because they can create trends and encourage their followers to buy products they promote."

5. According to the Quebec Board of the French language, *"[u]n influenceur est toute personne qui, par son audience sur les réseaux sociaux, est susceptible, à travers la diffusion de contenus portant sur des sujets divers, d'influencer les comportements de consommation et les opinions des internautes. Les influenceurs se servent notamment de plateformes de partages de vidéos (YouTube, TikTok…) et de plateformes de partage de photos (Instagram…) ainsi que de blogs pour se constituer une audience et communiquer. Nous les retrouvons beaucoup dans les domaines des voyages, de la beauté, du style de vie, des jeux vidéo, des célébrités, etc.* "

Considering the varying and vague definitions of the term 'influencer', it is fair to say that there is a lack of consensus about what an influencer is, especially, in the first three definitions, while the last two definitions, however, offer more detailed information on the concept. Therefore, in this dissertation, we will consider elements of all the above definitions, focusing on those from the Influencer Marketing Hub and the Quebec Board of the French Language, resulting in the following definition:

> *An influencer is a person who shows knowledge and expertise on a specific topic on social media and who is paid by brands to influence someone's consumption behavior and opinion by showing, describing and recommending a product or a service which he or she is promoting. They make regular posts about their topic of expertise (or niche[2]) on their multiple media channels (YouTube, Instagram, blogs…) to build themselves a following of engaged people they can communicate with and grow their fan base through. They can be found in an array of topics, such as travel, beauty and makeup, lifestyle, video games, celebrity, etc.* (source: Cambridge Dictionary, Oxford Dictionary, Geyser, Watkins et al, Office Québécois de la langue française).

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[2] A niche is a small area of trade within the economy, often involving specialized products. (source: Oxford Dictionary)

2.2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.2.1. *The emergence of influencers*

When we hear the term 'influencer', we usually think about big household names such as the Kardashians, Cristiano Ronaldo or even Jennifer Lopez who made it to the top by owning a television show, being one of the world's top soccer players and being a singer and an actress, respectively. It is then hard to believe that influencers possibly date all the way back to the eighteenth century.

Indeed, according to Gemma Weinstein, in the year 1760, a potter named Josiah Wedgwood created a tea set for Queen Charlotte of England and publicized himself as the "Potter to her Majesty". Since the monarchy were the influencers of their time, their stamp of approval catapulted Wedgwood into fame and was labeled as a top luxury brand, something it still enjoys today. For this reason, he is considered to be the "father of modern marketing" (Weinstein).

Then, in the twentieth century, Coco Channel revolutionized the fashion industry by creating the little black dress and pantsuit (Weinstein). The reason why it is such a defining moment, is because the pantsuit broke a barrier between men's and women's fashion. Since then, Coco Channel has been credited as being one of the most transformative influences on fashion, paving the way for women to be able to wear what was originally considered a masculine piece of clothing (Weinstein).

Later, the first celebrity endorsement saw the light of day in 1984, when Michael Jordan and Nike created the custom designed Air Jordan sneakers (Weinstein). At the time, Nike was a struggling brand due to fierce competition from Converse and Adidas (Weinstein). Jordan quickly became an American superstar and was acknowledged as one of the greatest basketball players of all time (Andrews 45). The deal between the two "implode[d] athletic achievements with commercialization, merging his sports image with a corporate product, and making Jordan one of the highest paid and most fecund generators of social meaning and capital in the history of media culture" (Andrews 44). As a result, the endorsement proved to be very lucrative and influential for Nike as, according to Forbes Magazine[3], the Jordan Brand went on to generate more than $1 billion in sales revenue (Weinstein).

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3 *Forbes* is a global media company, focusing on wealth and billionaires, finance and investing, technology and innovation, entrepreneurship and founders, leadership and professional communities, consumer business and lifestyle. (Source: *Forbes*)

All three of these moments in time are considered turning points for the influencers' movement, as they all have something in common with current influencers: Wedgwood was recognized and even approved by the Royal Family, which was a very influential institution at the time, providing him with unlimited advertisement for a very long time. When it comes to Coco Channel, their design made them stand out from any other fashion brands by inventing pantsuits, which would change the way women dressed around the world. As for Michael Jordan, he is still one of the highest grossing influencers in the world for having generated enormous amounts of money for Nike using his celebrity status and authentic affiliation to the sporting world. In other words, those brands all sold a product based on someone's influential celebrity status.

2.2.2. The Web 2.0

The term Web 2.0 was first introduced in 1999 by Darcy DiNucci, who predicted the major impacts this new generation of the web would have on our lives and social relations. She wrote:

> "The Web will be understood not as screenfuls of text and graphics but as a transport mechanism, the ether through which interactivity happens. It will [...] appear on your computer screen, [...] on your TV set [...] your car dashboard [...] your cell phone [...] hand-held game machines [...] maybe even your microwave oven." (DiNucci 220)

In 2004, the Web 2.0 was popularly promoted as a new kind of experience in using the web, with a sense of radical departure from what had preceded it (Allen 2012). However, in reality, it was not such a radical change as the Web 2.0 simply refers to the transition from static HTML Webpages to a more dynamic Web; one that is more organized and is based on serving Web applications to users (Pal 107). Therefore, this new generation of the web only provided users with new features and functionality, such as collaboration and content sharing online, which were not available with the Web 1.0 version (Pal 109). This new change implied that users could be much more active, rather than being limited to only viewing content passively. A Web 2.0 website would allow users to not only interact and collaborate with each other through social media dialogue, but also generate their own content. For example, the Web 2.0 features include social networking sites or social media sites, such as:

- Facebook and Twitter,

- Blogs,

- Wikis such as Wikipedia,

- Folksonomies, which is when keywords on websites or links are "tagged[4]",

- Video sharing sites, such as YouTube and TikTok,

- Image sharing sites, such as Instagram (which is also a video sharing site), Flickr or Pinterest,

- Web applications, commonly abbreviated to "apps",

- Consumer-evaluation platforms, such as Amazon and eBay,

- News website, in which users can have a say in the comment section (O'Reilly 8).

2.2.3. *The rise of influencers*

As previously mentioned, prior to the emergence of social media platforms (SMPs), influencers were most exclusively journalists, celebrities, actors, musicians and athletes; in essence, those who had access to a large fan base, like Michael Jordan. There were also community influencers who could provide word of mouth to a smaller audience (Watkins et al 6). For example, when the Darden Restaurant group[5] launched their new restaurant, they invited media representatives as well as 1,000 key influencers from the business, arts, health, and fitness communities to spread the word on their new achievements in order to promote it (Watkins et al 7).

This emergence of SMPs gave rise to different types of influencers, giving them the possibility to become widely known or to simply share content they were passionate about. Bloggers and social media influencers (SMIs) have truly become part of an important growing market as more consumers have adopted SMPs as their sources of information and consumption since the emergence of these SMIs. What is more, the tools and strategies of monetization[6] have evolved as well to benefit brands and influencers along with consumers.

The influencer market is certainly lucrative to both brands and influencers: it has grown from $1.7 billion in 2016 to an estimated $8 billion in 2019 and $9.7 billion in 2020 (Watkins

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[4] A tag is a link to someone's profile from a photo or comment on a website such as Instagram or Facebook by using a Hashtag sign (#). It allows media users to engage an individual, a business or any entity with a social profile when they mention them in a post or comment. (sources: *Cambridge Dictionary*, *Big Commerce*)

[5] The Darden Restaurant group is an American multi-brand restaurant operator. They own and operate more than 1,800 restaurants. (source: Wikipedia, Darden)

[6] Monetization is the act or process of earning money from something, especially a business or an asset. (source: Oxford Dictionary)

et al 19, Geyser). The influencer marketing is expected to continue to grow to be worth $16.4 billion in 2022 as effective strategies are expected to become even more sophisticated (Geyser).

2.3. INFLUENCERS

On the basis of the historical background, we can draw the conclusion that influencers are an ever-growing community present on multiple SMPs. They keep on being sought after by companies who look for someone who can promote their brand by getting close to their audience so as to connect and engage with them almost on a personal level. In this section, we will see that there are three different types of influencers.

2.3.1. Mega-influencer

This is the category people are probably most familiar with, as mega-influencers are those with a tremendous following on SMPs. Although there are no fixed rules on the boundaries between the different types of followers (Geyser), a common view is that mega-influencers have more than one million followers on at least one social platform (Campbell and Farrell 3). They are usually celebrities such as movie stars, musicians, athletes and reality television stars who usually only get approached by big brands for marketing deals. This is due to these celebrities, or 'mega-influencers', using their status to be paid enormous amounts of money which usually only big brands can afford (Geyser). For example, according to the BBC, Kylie Jenner, who is part of the Kardashian family, is paid around $1.2 million for a single post on Instagram, followed by Arianna Grande ($966,000) and Cristiano Ronaldo ($975,000). However, contrary to popular belief, their status does not imply that the brand they are working with has a higher chance of people buying its product. The method with which we can calculate the efficiency of an influencer is through the engagement rate. According to HypeAuditor[7], the engagement rate is a tool which shows a percentage of the audience who like or comment on the influencer's posts and thus 'engage' with the content. Kylie Jenner's engagement rate is only 3.56% for 315.9 million followers, while Cristiano Ronaldo's is 1.98% for 409.1 million. I will invite you to keep those numbers in mind as we go down the list of types of influencers.

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[7] HypeAuditor is a social media analytic firm used by Forbes and other renowned news websites and companies. (source: HypeAuditor)

2.3.2. Macro-influencer

Macro-influencers are those considered to have between 100,000 to one million followers (Campbell and Farrell 4). These are either early celebrities who have not yet 'made it', or online experts. The latter are usually the ones brands are interested in not only because they are focusing on a particular niche, but also because they had to build their following from the ground up, which makes them experts at audience growth (Geyser). However, it is also in this category that influencers would be most likely to engage in influencer fraud by purchasing followers (see section 2.3.5).

Photographer Jesse Driftwood is an example of a macro-influencer with a wide reach and high level of engagement. He has 162k followers, far less than a mega-influencer, yet he has an engagement rate of 8.19%, which is even higher than many top celebrities. However, he is part of a specific niche with a smaller number of followers, who are more engaged and interested in what Driftwood posts than other celebrities as he is considered as a reliable figure in his specific niche.

2.3.3. Micro-influencer

Micro-influencers are probably one of the most important categories of this list. Micro-influencers are ordinary regular people who have become known for their specific knowledge in a specialist niche (Geyser). Micro-influencers have between 10,000 to 100,000 followers (Campbell and Farrell 4), substantially fewer followers in comparison to macro- and mega-influencers. One could then question the interest brands have in using micro-influencers. The reason why they are so important is because even though they have a smaller reach than other types of influencers, they have extremely engaged and loyal audiences. According to Campbell and Farrell, micro-influencers have more intimate relationships with their followers, whereas mega-influencers are considered to have fewer intimate relationships due to their quasi-celebrity status. Therefore, when a product is endorsed by micro-influencers, it conveys a greater sense of authenticity (Park et al 1). This is why micro-influencers are picky about who they want to associate with (Geyser) to not to harm their credibility and their relationship with their followers.

An example is @Guihome_vous_détend, a Belgian comedian, who has a 3.12% engagement rate, with 311,418 followers. Another example is @alexdecunha who has 110,695 followers, who posts about skating and has an engagement rate of 6.18%.

2.3.4. Nano-influencer

As for nano-influencers, they are last on the list because, as their name suggests, they have the smallest number of followers. Nano-influencers have fewer than 10,000 followers (Campbell and Farrell 4), but are still highly specialized in their area of expertise (Geyser), allowing them to engage on a more intimate level than any other type of influencers. This makes them quite valuable for a company which is also highly specialized in a specific niche of the market. However, even though they could be attractive to brands because they are affordable, their lack of followers will not provide brands with the sufficient reach they would need to promote their product (Geyser) thus most likely forcing brand to turn to a micro-influencer instead.

One example of a nano-influencer is @BristolFoodCritic, a photographer and food critic with only 1,856 followers, but has an engagement rate of 4,08%. Another example is @jwtbenn, an art director based in London, who has 4,481 followers and a tremendous engagement rate of 10.48%. Not every nano-influencer has such a high engagement rate, but they are usually higher than celebrities for the reasons listed above.

2.3.5. Regulation concerns

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) in the United States and the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) in the United Kingdom have released guidelines for social media influencers over concerns by consumer advocacy groups, journalists and activists who have been reporting on fraudulent influencers, fake followers, and problematic content related to the influencer marketing industry.

Although these guidelines are not new, as celebrity endorsements started to become more common online, fueled by the emergence of SMPs, the FTC updated their guidelines in 2009, in 2015 and again in 2017 which still saw multiple infringements to FTC regulations. Those violations led the FTC to take important actions. Indeed, they decided to directly educate the influencers themselves by sending more than 90 letters to influencers and marketers, stating that under the law, influencers have a legal obligation to clearly and conspicuously disclose their "material connection" to the products, services, brands and/or companies they promote in their social media feeds (Federal Trade Commission). They also created different guides to help influencers abide by the rules and violating these rules can lead to penalties, fines and legal fees (Bogliari). These guides are as follows:

- FTC's Disclosures 101 for Social Media Influencers
- FTC's Endorsement Guides: What People Are Asking
- FTC's Disclosures: How to Make Effective Disclosures in Digital Advertising

Furthermore, the FTC have taken additional steps to eliminate fraudulent influencers, fake followers and problematic content. *Fraudulent influencers*, on the one hand, are those who create social media posts pretending the content is sponsored by a brand when there has been no previous agreement with that brand (Lorenz). The purpose of such practice is to make out as if the influencer is being sponsored in order to secure legitimate deals with other brands in the future. *Fake followers*, on the other hand, are multiple social media accounts created by the same person or group and sold in bundles to increase an influencer's total follower count (Geyser). This usually happens when a new influencer wants to be successful fast as they believe having more followers is paramount to be seen as more credible and more valuable (Geyser). According to a *New York Times* investigation, 15% of Twitter active users and 60 million Facebook accounts are fake accounts or bots, short for robots, which are automated accounts. As for *problematic content*, it often includes alcohol, smoking, and nudity in sponsored posts, which raises concerns related to the age of an influencer's audience. For example, a study on the most popular YouTube videos from the most popular children's influencers (aged 3 to 14 years) by the American Academy of Pediatrics found that over 90% of the videos promote unhealthy food and drink brands through product placement when it is known that exposure to food advertising is associated with poor diet.

To conclude, to have knowledge of the TFC guidelines and the different types of scams conducted by influencers is important not only for the general public, but also for teachers who engage in influencers' content in the classroom in order for them to recognize to the best of their ability, when influencers are being deceptive. Knowing these guidelines will also help teachers engage in media education (see section 2.4.3) so as to help students decipher content and develop their critical thinking.

2.4. THE POSITIVE ASPECTS OF INFLUENCERS' CONTENT IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

In this section, we will analyze the works of several researchers in the field of language acquisition in order to understand how influencers can be a motivational and linguistic tool which would help students improve their acquisition of a foreign language.

2.4.1. Language acquisition methods

In order to understand how influencers can play a role in second language (L2) acquisition, we will try to understand how languages can be learned with a focus on Krashen's Monitor Model, the Online Informal Learning of English and the theory of motivation from Rolland Viau. The focal language chosen has been the English language as it is the most learned and widespread language around the world, giving more opportunities regarding available learning tools. However, the methods described here can be used for any languages.

2.4.1.1. Krashen's Monitor Model

In the early 1970s, Stephen Krashen presented the Monitor Model, which was constructed around five hypotheses: *the acquisition-learning hypothesis, the natural order hypothesis, the monitor hypothesis, the comprehensible input hypothesis* and *the affective filter hypothesis*. Krashen's last two hypotheses are of crucial importance for any teacher as it attempts to answer the theoretical question of how languages are acquired.

2.4.1.1.1. The acquisition-learning hypothesis

The first hypothesis, the *acquisition-learning hypothesis*, is made up of two different words, each representing a different learning method. On the one hand, "language acquisition is a subconscious process; language acquirers are not usually aware of the fact that they are acquiring language" (Krashen 10). Thus, we acquire a language by being exposed to an input we understand, in the same way children acquire their first language (L1). Indeed, these children are not aware of the rules of the language and will not ever be able to explain why certain things are said a certain way, which is why every native person will say that a sentence 'doesn't *feel* right' (Krashen 10). On the other hand, learning refers to "conscious knowledge of a second language, knowing the rules, being aware of them and being able to talk about them" (Krashen 10), which is more common in a classroom of non-native learners. The learners are conscious of the fact that they are learning a language and if a sentence is not correct, they will '*know',* to some extent*,* as they would be able to justify their claim with the help of the rules that they have learned, instead of simply stating a 'feeling'. The distinction between acquiring and learning belongs to the implicit or informal learning, which will be developed in the next section, and the explicit learning, respectively (Krashen 10).

Also, Krashen explains that acquiring a language is not reserved only to children (Krashen 10). Indeed, adults or teenagers can acquire a second language by being exposed to a

language in varying ways. Firstly, it could be in a natural context, such as if a person travels to a country where the language is not their native language, they will 'pick-up' easy and frequent words and expression, such as "hello", "bye", "thank you", "have a nice day", etc. in much the same way children pick-up their first language. Secondly, it could happen in a classroom context, where a student can acquire a language by listening to the teacher talk, even though the specific word was not part of the intended learning content. Finally, an informal learning context, such as watching TV, movies, series, videos or listening to podcasts, music, etc. also offers an opportunity for teenagers or adults to acquire a second language.

In order to evaluate if this hypothesis would be viable in a classroom context, Lightbown have conducted many studies. In 1986, a region in Canada implemented a new approach to language learning in its primary schools based solely on listening and reading comprehension (Lightbown et al 4). The program consisted of a daily 30-minute session where children could go pick a book they were interested in and they would receive native-speaker input from an accompanying tape, without contact with the teacher (Lightbown et al 4). Children were recommended to pick books from a pile, which represented a degree of difficulty, before moving on to the next pile (Lightbown et al 4). After two years, Lightbown conducted a test on children who had been following this comprehension-based program and compared their results with those of students in the regular program (Lightbown et al 4). Results showed that children in the comprehension-based program knew as much English as (and in some cases more than) learners in the regular program, not only comprehension wise, but also speaking wise, even though children in the experimental program had never practiced spoken English in their classes (Lightbown et al 5). However, they conducted a follow-up study with the same students who were now in secondary school, and they found that students who had stayed in a comprehension-based teaching had maintained a level of comprehension comparable to that of the students in the regular program. However, students from the comprehension-based programs were not able to do some other tasks that those who followed the regular program could, mainly writing, as they had not been given sufficient opportunities for output practice, nor feedback from a teacher (Lightbown et al 15).

This type of program had also been tested in several Belgium secondary schools between 2004 and 2006 by Dahmen and his team (Simons). The program's purpose, called free-access, was, among other things, to increase the amount of input students would receive (Simons), in that students could pick a task, complete it, and correct it themselves. The results were not as conclusive as they had hoped (Simons), which is why they made suggestions to

improve the program. Among those suggestions, the necessity to make connections between the free-access program and the regular program was highlighted (Simons).

As in Lightbown's study, Dahman's study encountered some limitations which seemed to stem from the lack of guidance by teachers. This is why it is suggested that Krashen's hypothesis could work for primary school children, as proven by Lightbown's study, but passed secondary school, students should continue their education with both regular and comprehension-based programs, with the latter being complementary to the former. In that set-up, influencers' content could enable learners to acquire a language as they would acquire new vocabulary, grammar, idioms, cultural references, accents and intonations, in an unconscious way, but will also be taught other necessary learnings by a teacher, in a conscious way.

2.4.1.1.2.   *The natural order hypothesis*

The second hypothesis, the *natural order hypothesis*, will not be analyzed in-depth as it does not have a direct interest to my research. However, it is interesting to note that "the acquisition of grammatical structures proceeds in a predictable order" (Krashen 12). In other words, students acquiring grammar of a L2 do so in a natural order, which holds true for many students of different first language backgrounds (Krashen 12). However, Krashen do not recommend following the natural order in language acquisition (Krashen 14). Thus, what will be retained from this hypothesis is that, since teachers should not follow the natural order of acquisition, they should be able to work with influencers' content, which most likely contain unseen grammatical structures.

2.4.1.1.3.   *The Monitor hypothesis*

The third hypothesis, the *Monitor hypothesis*, suggests that acquisition and learning are used differently; while "acquisition initiates our utterances in a second language and is responsible for our fluency [...] learning has only one function, and that is as a Monitor, or editor." (Krashen 15). In other words, we first produce a sentence by the help of the acquired system, and only then does the learning system tweak its form. However, for the learning system to edit, there are three conditions which must be met:

1. In order to think about what one has learned (conscious rules), one has to have *time*. In normal oral conversation, one usually does not have enough time to think about rules.

2. Also, one must think about the *form* and the correctness. In other words, not only does one need to have the 'what', but one must also have the 'how'.

3. Finally, one must *know the rule,* which, unless that person is a teacher or a linguist, would be difficult to achieve, especially for a student who might not be interested in the language (Krashen 16).

Thus, Krashen attributes a less important role to the explicit system, as it can only be used after it has been produced to change the form of the production, while the implicit system is used before the production and accounts for our fluency (Krashen 15). Therefore, acquiring is central while learning is peripherical (Krashen 20).

2.4.1.1.4. *The comprehensible input hypothesis*

The fourth hypothesis, the *comprehensible input hypothesis*, suggests that in order to acquire a language, one must be exposed to the language which must be comprehensible and that contains the 'i + 1' pattern (Krashen 21). The meaning of 'comprehensible' input is that the meaning must be understood by the learner, while 'i' represents the level of language already acquired, and '+1' represents the level above their current level of proficiency (Krashen 21). But how can we understand language which is above our current level of competence if we have not seen it yet? According to Krashen, we are able to understand an input with the help of context, our knowledge of the world, or extra-linguistic information (Krashen 21).

In accordance with this hypothesis, it is fair to say that content produced by influencers can function as comprehensible input as long as it follows the i + 1 pattern, because students interested in the same topic might already have some sort of knowledge of the influencer's content. However, for the hypothesis to work in a school setting, teachers would need to choose the video carefully as to offer a level of proficiency one step above their students' level, requiring teachers to know their students' current level before choosing the video. Following this logic, we can make the assumption that it would be wise not to begin the school year with influencers' content, allowing teachers time to assess their students' level first.

2.4.1.1.5. *The affective filter hypothesis*

The fifth and last hypothesis, the *affective filter hypothesis*, which is arguably the most important hypothesis for a teacher, claims that while a comprehensible input is the primary variable in L2 acquisition, there are affective variables which prevent or facilitate this input to

be received by the language acquisition device (Krashen 30). Keeping in mind, though, that this device is only a concept and not a physical natural device we naturally possess. According to Krashen, there are three categories to pay attention to:

1. Motivation
2. Anxiety
3. Self-confidence

Firstly, learners will increase their performance in a L2 acquisition if they are motivated to learn it (Krashen 31). As a teacher, is it not only important to show students the importance of a language for either their future careers or future perspectives, but it is also important to motivate them with a content they might appreciate, which is either familiar to them or close to their interests as teenagers.

Secondly, in order to learn well, it is recommended to have low anxiety. (Krashen 31). For example, listening comprehension can be stressful for students, as they are faced with authentic input. This is why it is important to practice the listening comprehension in order for students to get used to different accents and sounds.

Lastly, learners with higher self-confidence and a good self-image usually do better in an L2 acquisition (Krashen 31), that is why promoting self-confidence is one of the priority missions[8] of any teacher. According to Galland, most of the current theories about motivation share the idea that "*les croyances qu'a une personne en ses capacités à réussir jouent un rôle crucial dans son engagement et ses performances, autrement dit que la confiance en soi est un facteur clé de la dynamique motivationnelle des individus*" (Galland 248).
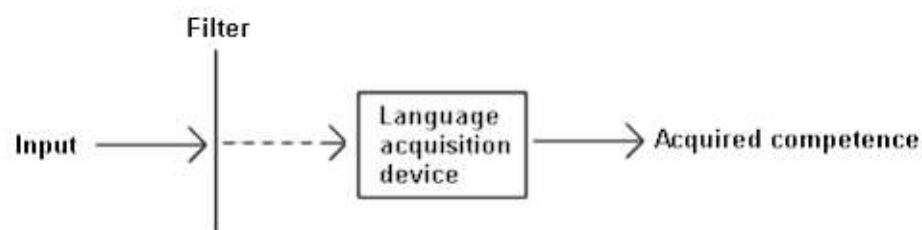
Figure 2.1 - Operation of the affective filter according to Viau (1994)

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[8] For further information, see "Code de l'enseignement fondamental et de l'enseignement secondaire, et mettant en place le tronc commun" (Article 1.4.1-1.)

In addition to having a comprehensible input, the affective variables must be taken into account when teachers prepare their lesson plans. In other words, those whose attitudes are not conducive to L2, either because they lack self-esteem, or are put in a situation which is not motivating, or have high anxiety, will not only tend to seek less input, but will also have a high affective filter which will prevent the input from reaching the part of their brain responsible for language acquisition, even if they understand the message.

2.4.1.1.6. Conclusion

To sum up, even though Krashen's hypotheses are only hypotheses, they suggest that acquiring a language is more important than learning it. Acquiring a language is an unconscious process which belongs to the implicit system, just as children learn their L1. Thus, in order to acquire a L2, students must be given exposure on the condition that the input follows the formula i + 1. Moreover, creating a situation which encourages a low filter is thus a priority for any teacher in order to avoid students filtering out input when they are bored or anxious as this could result in the inability to acquire a language. It could be suggested that influencers' content will produce a "low affective filter" as they align with the students' interests which, in turn, would motivate them to learn.

2.4.1.2. Online Informal Learning of English (OILE)

2.4.1.2.1. Introduction

A couple of decades ago, learning English outside of the classroom was uncommon due to the lack of resources available. However, the emergence of the Web 2.0. in the early 2000s paved the way for the development of what is now called the Online Informal Learning (OIL).

The study on OIL was first conducted in 2006 by Jay Cross who argued that "informal learning is the unofficial, unscheduled, impromptu way people learn to do their jobs." (Cross 19). While this definition can be applied to a broader context, Geoffrey Sockett took this definition as a foundation to suggest a more precise application to the field of language learning. He points out that Online Informal Learning of English (OILE), does not take place as part of an activity prescribed by a higher authority, be it the teacher, the employer or the State, but rather as part of an intention by the person to carry out an activity. The activity might not be related to languages, which is why "it is not necessarily the activity itself which can be defined as informal, but rather the intention which leads to it" (Toffoli and Sockett 2) as the activity carried out will unconsciously lead to language learning (Toffoli and Sockett 2). This

definition also aligns with the action-oriented approach recommended by the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR) which says that the approach

> "views users and learners of a language primarily as 'social agents', i.e. members of society who have tasks (not exclusively language-related) to accomplish in a given set of circumstances, in a specific environment and within a particular field of action. While acts of speech occur within language activities, these activities form part of a wider social context, which alone is able to give them their full meaning." (CEFR 9).

Therefore, in order to carry out an activity where the primary purpose may not be based on languages, such as watching a movie or playing a videogame, the unconscious learning of the language might help to achieve that primary activity.

2.4.1.2.2. *Toffoli and Sockett's study*

One of the first studies ever carried out on OILE was done by Toffoli and Sockett in 2010 in order to understand why the performance of some non-specialist students in English varied from student to student as some seemed to have grasped more linguistic structures from TV series than others (Toffoli and Sockett 2).

Toffoli and Sockett's study took place at the University of Strasbourg, where 222 students majoring in the humanities had only two hours of English a week. The results showed that students' practice of English outside a classroom setting was higher than previously thought, especially in listening, reading and written interactions.
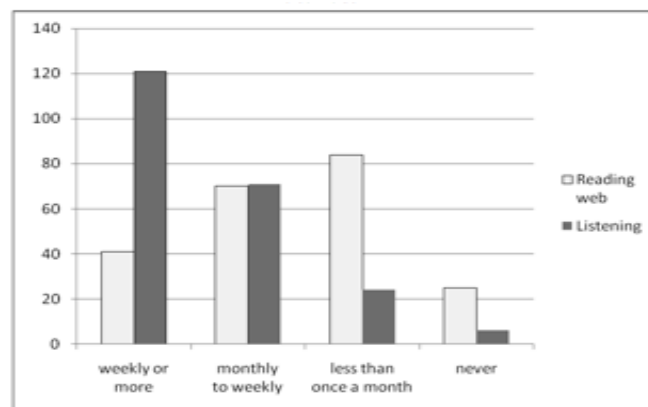
Figure 2.2 - Frequency respondents engage in listening as compared to reading activities in Toffoli and Sockett's study (2010)

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Indeed, more than 90% of the students questioned claimed to listen to English at least once a month and more than half listened to English at least once a week. As for writing, 25% of the students claim to read English on the web at least once a week, whereas 60% of them read documents on the web less than once a month (Toffoli and Sockett 6). The most important category is thus those who listen to English at least once a month.
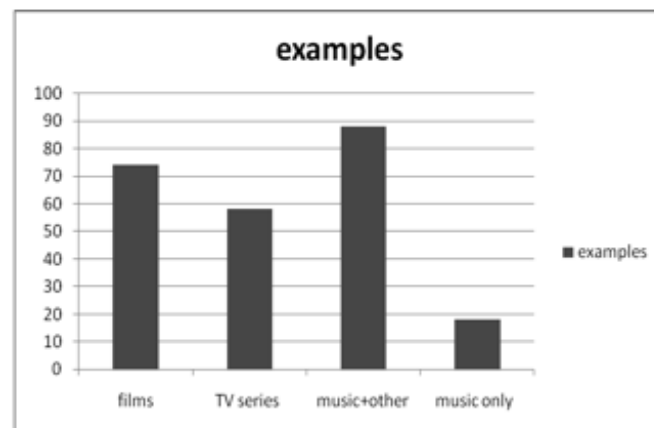
Figure 2.3 - Types of listening in Toffoli and Sockett's study (2010)

On the one hand, the types of content the students mostly listen to are music combined with another type of document such as films or TV series (Toffoli and Sockett 7). This result not only shows that non-specialist students listen to English on a regular basis, but also that they process authentic content made by natives for natives, which unconsciously leads to acquisition. Let us keep in mind that this study was conducted with university students, who might process languages differently than secondary students.

Unfortunately, no studies have been undertaken regarding to the role of influencers in OILE. However, there are parallels to be made between film/TV series and influencers:

- They are activities undertaken for pleasure, especially in an informal context.
- The content of both TV series/movies and influencers offers an input which is comprehensible, if the $i + 1$ pattern has been kept in mind when choosing the content.
- They both offer clues such as context, gesture and optional subtitles (see section 2.5) as to improve the understanding of the overall message when the linguistic background is not sufficient.

- They offer authentic material which can be related to a variety of communication context, formal or informal discourse.
- Discourse, which can happen in both TV series/movies and influencers' content, can expose students to cultural aspects of modern language.
- In TV series/movies, the audience can become faithful to their series, while in influencers' content, the audience can also become attached to their influencers and create relationships, which could lead to subscribing to the values, beliefs and cultures conveyed by the influencer or TV series/movie in question.
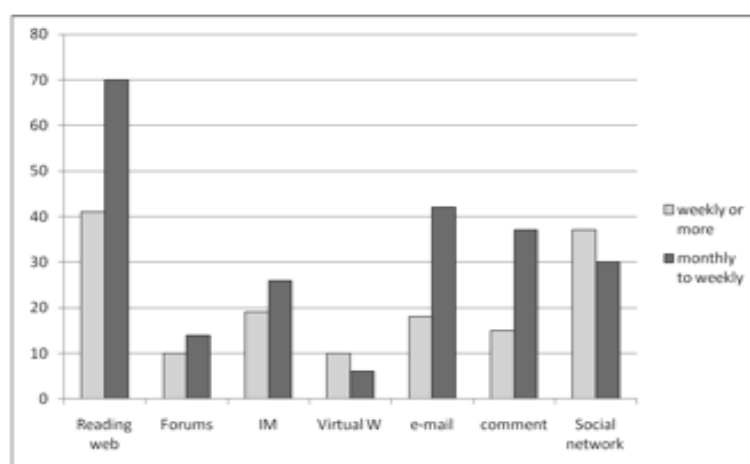
Figure 2.4 - Types of reading and written interaction in Toffoli and Sockett's study (2010)

On the other hand, the type of document the students read the most is information on websites, in addition to partaking in activities such as sending texts to others on social media like Facebook and Myspace, which is a weekly activity. Moreover, Sockett discovered that for most students reading is part of an interactive process, since reading the post ultimately spark the will to take part in the conversation and that students usually understand that kind of reading quite well.

What is important to take from such activities stemming from reading on social media (where influencers post visual/written content), is that not only do students become involved in comprehension activities such as reading exercises (e.g.: blogs, posts, etc.) and listening exercises (e.g.: vlogs, influencers' videos, etc.), but also in productions, especially written productions. The type of discourse produced usually involves a very short production (two sentences or less as a way to introduce oneself in the biography), a personal message to someone (e.g.: instant messaging, social networks and e-mail as a way to communicate with one another) or commenting on other people's posts (e.g.: blogs, social media and forums)

(Toffoli and Sockett 8). These types of written productions seem to be in accordance with the B1 level of the CEFR when stating that a student "can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans." (Council of Europe 24) which should be attained by students at the end of their secondary studies.

It can be noted, however, that the process most of the students (73%) go through when interacting with other people online is to "adapt expressions […] English speaking friends use, then use them [themselves]" (Toffoli and Sockett 9). The risk of using such method is to adapt expressions from native or non-native English speakers that are incorrect, leading to incorrect acquisition.
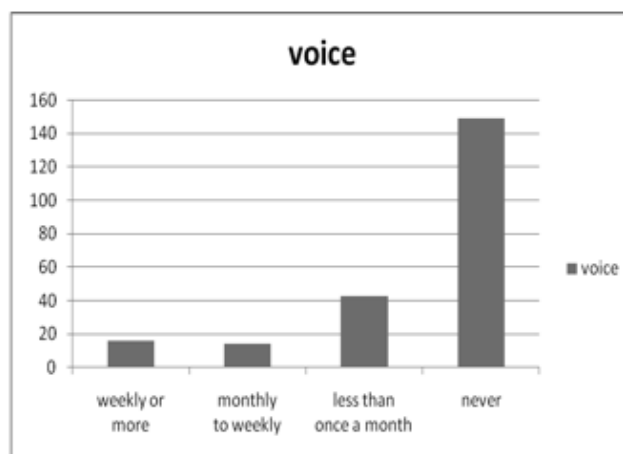
Figure 2.5 - Frequency of speaking in English via Internet in Toffoli and Sockett's study (2010)

As for oral expression, the students very rarely use the tools at their disposal in order to practice. Indeed, around 70% of the students said they never used tools to communicate orally. However, keep in mind that this study was undertaken in 2010, and, even though tools like Skype did exist then, the opportunities of talking online were not what they are today, especially post-Covid-19.

2.4.1.2.3. Similarities with Krashen's Monitor Model

Referring back to Krashen is interesting as the OILE has some similarities with his hypotheses. First, according to Krashen, the comprehensible input hypothesis suggests that a learner must be exposed to an important input in order to acquire a language, just like children acquire their L1. The OILE would be the perfect way for students to be exposed to a larger mass of input than they ever would be in a classroom context. In addition, that input would be

authentic as influencers are usually native speakers. Moreover, that input would be comprehensible as it could be assumed that students are already familiar with the type of content they are watching, which might not be the case with movies/TV series. Secondly, Krashen suggests that the affective filter, which takes into account affective variables when learning, such as motivation, self-image and anxiety, can either impede or help the acquisition process: a "low affective filter" might increase acquisition, while a "high affective filter" might block it. OILE has all the factors which can lead to a "low affective filter", since students choose an activity they are interested in, such as watching an influencer's content, and usually do it stress-free. In a formal context, we could imagine the teacher offering different options of content which their students could then vote on to decide which content to watch. In doing so, they are still allowed to make a choice as to which one they would prefer watching, which, according to the self-determination theory of motivation, would still be a way to motivate students (Fagnant 68) in a formal context and lower their affective filter.

2.4.1.2.4. *Conclusion*

Toffoli and Sockett's study showed evidence of improvement in the listening, reading and writing skills of students who watch English content outside of a school context because of the larger amount of exposure and interaction students have with native English speakers. In a school context, OILE would be difficult to implement, unless classes of free-access[9] are organized, which would then allow students to work on something they would want to work on and do so at their own pace. However, the question of bringing informal learning into a formal classroom context still raises questions, which will be further delved into when analyzing the survey (see Chapter 5).

2.4.1.3. *Motivational aspects*

2.4.1.3.1. *Introduction*

As seen above, Krashen's last two hypotheses: the comprehensible input hypothesis and the affective filter hypothesis would be of crucial importance when preparing a lesson plan. The comprehensible input would be a priority, but the affective variables: motivation, self-image and anxiety would come to complete this priority in order for the input to be received by what would be called the 'language acquisition device'. In addition to Krashen's hypotheses, the

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[9] For further information, see Simons, G. 'Didactique des langues modernes (Partim II)', University of Liège. Jan. 2022. Class handout.

Online Informal Learning of English indicated that when students spend their free time watching TV series or movies, it unconsciously had an impact on language acquisition, provided that the amount of the input be large enough and followed the pattern i + 1 in order for it to be comprehensible. It seems that in both Krashen's hypotheses and OILE, motivation played a subsequent role. Nevertheless, the question of how we can motivate students to participate in activities, still remains. Most importantly for this dissertation, would influencers be susceptible of offering an input that would motivate students and if so, what would the motivational aspect of using influencers in the classroom be?

Rolland Viau, a Canadian researcher, decided to undertake the study of motivation in the classroom when teachers had a hard time understanding why students showed so little motivation to learn. Viau discovered that there were many aspects which could play a role on the motivation of an individual, called the motivational dynamic, which, in turn, could play a role on the motivation to learn (Viau 1).

2.4.1.3.2. Viau's Theory of Motivation

According to Viau's model, motivation comes from a person's perceptions and their context (Viau 22). These perceptions, which are subjective to each individual, are specific to the context and are as follows:

- The perception of the activity's value
- The perception of self-efficacy
- The perception of the control on the activity
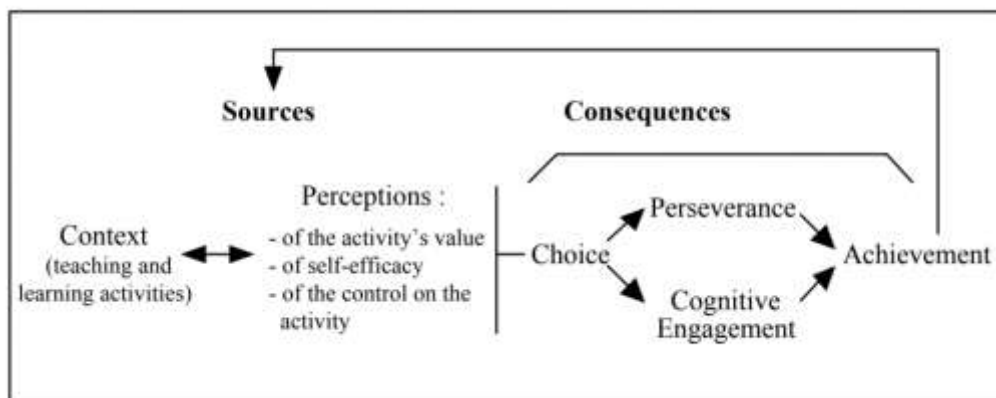
Figure 2.6 – Viau's Motivational Dynamic (1994)

Firstly, the perception of the activity's value is the judgement people make regarding the usefulness and interest an activity has for the goals they are already pursuing (Viau 24). On the one hand, the interest of an activity is linked to the intrinsic motivation, meaning when someone is interested in acquiring knowledge for one's own pleasure; while, on the other hand, the usefulness of an activity is linked to the extrinsic motivation, meaning when someone will use this knowledge for external rewards (Viau 27). At a young age, it is difficult to understand why an activity should be interesting or useful which is why Viau recommends focusing on the future perspectives of students. However, teenagers show interest in a multitude of topics, which is why they make use of influencers to learn a skill, whether it be how to apply makeup, make the best moves in games, or even how to make the right choices when booking a flight. Influencers' content might therefore be interesting to use in order to spark teenager's motivation.

Secondly, the perception of self-efficacy is a judgement one makes regarding their ability to complete an activity (Viau 35). This depends on the students' previous skills, their teachers' and classmates' observations, the support from their teachers and parents as well as their psychological state and emotions (Viau 66).

Thirdly, the perception of the control of the activity is linked to the level of control one believes they possess over the development of an activity (Viau 44). Each person needs some form of autonomy when doing an activity. After the choice of wanting to achieve the task is made, both cognitive engagement and perseverance are required to acquire knowledge.

According to Viau, an activity must also…

- have goals and clear tasks in order to reduce anxiety and doubts on students' ability to achieve a task making the perception of students' self-efficacy better.
- be significant to students in order to promote the perception of the activity's value. A teacher must take the time to explain the value of something by linking the activity with the students' personal life or future career. The more students think an activity makes sense, the more useful and interesting it will be for them.
- lead to the making of an authentic product so as to promote the perception of the activity's value. This will allow students to notice the use of the activity.
- be diversified and integrated with other activities in an organized plan in order to promote the perception of the activity's value and the coherence of other activities.

- represent a challenge for students in order to promote the perception of self-efficacy. The activity must not be too hard so that students give up, but it should also not be too easy so as to not be boring. As seen with Krashen, it should be at i + 1 to be rewarding when completed.

- require a cognitive engagement from students, who must use as many strategies known to them as possible so as to know they are capable of completing the task, thus promoting the perception of self-efficacy.

- empower students by allowing them to make choices by choosing what they want to work on, who they want to work with, etc. in order to promote the perception of control over the activity.

- allow students to interact and collaborate with others in order to promote collaborative, often required in most companies. This will prepare students to work well with others and be team players, as well as promote the perception of self-efficacy and control over the activity.

- be interdisciplinary in order to make the learning even more meaningful as it will heighten the usefulness and interest of such knowledge. This will promote the perception of the activity's value.

- take place over a sufficient period in order to promote the perception of self-efficacy. According to the postulate of educability, everyone is capable of learning if enough time if provided, according to the needs of each student (Viau 136-144).

2.4.1.3.3. Conclusion

All these conditions are in sync with Krashen's affective variables as they play into the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of each student. In addition to the motivation, some of those conditions can reduce students' anxiety, which also taps into Krashen's affective variables. In other words, these ten conditions that make an activity motivating must be taken into account when creating a lesson plan as they will facilitate the process of acquiring a language.

2.4.2. The effect of subtitles in language acquisition

In this section, we will briefly discuss the potential effects of subtitles on language through several studies. However, it is important to point out that all studies found analyzed the effects of subtitles on FL acquisition in movies and TV series only, as no studies on the effect of

subtitles on FL acquisition in YouTube videos have been conducted as of yet, to my knowledge. However, in my opinion, the results of these studies can also be applied to influencers' content as they are all part of the audio-visual medium created by natives in an authentic situation. Nevertheless, even though the effect of subtitles would be similar, there is one important difference as opposed to movies and TV series subtitling, discussed below.

2.4.2.1. *The advantage of the use of subtitles in foreign language acquisition through studies*

In this section, we will analyze several studies related to the use of subtitles in formal and informal context in order to investigate whether the use of subtitles is beneficial to FL acquisition.

In 1990, Koolstra and Beentjes conducted a study on the effect of television on children's reading skills. The study concluded that the reading of subtitles on television may enhance the development of children's decoding skills as reading subtitles provides extensive practice in decoding words (Almeida and Costa 1237).

Later, in 2011, the European Commission conducted a study on the use of subtitling in order to establish if subtitling could be a potential tool to encourage language learning and improve the mastery of foreign languages. Results showed that subtitles helped to improve foreign languages as they raise awareness and provide motivation for language learning, in both formal and informal contexts, and contribute to creating an environment that encourages multilingualism (European Commission 3)

More recently, in 2014, Lekkai conducted a study on incidental language acquisition, and more specifically, if acquisition occurs from watching a television program with or without subtitles. To this end, she created three groups of Greek children aged 9 to 12 years old (Lekkai 84). Group A watched 15 minutes of a well-known children's television program in Italian, which followed the i + 1 pattern, with Greek subtitles, (Lekkai 83). Group B watched the same program without subtitles and group C watched the program in their first language: Greek. The results showed that the acquisition of vocabulary and the recognition of Italian words were higher in group A than groups B and C, which came last (Lekkai 85).

The same year, Almeida and Costa suggested three advantages of using subtitles while watching movies and TV series. First, they claimed that viewers are motivated to understand what is shown and said on TV (Almeida and Costa 1236) because they are making a conscious choice to watch that particular content. Secondly, they suggested that the movies and series offer a wide range of strategies in order to understand the message in the visual images, the

spoken language in the foreign language and the subtitles in one's own language (Almeida and Costa 1236). These means support and complement each other (Almeida and Costa 1236) in order to create an input which should be comprehensible. The third advantage is closely related to the first one, but is more focused on the English language, as they claim viewers have a positive attitude towards the English language and are thus motivated to learn it (Almeida and Costa 1236).

In a school context, however, it is known that listening comprehensions are stressful for students (Gowhary et al 211), which, according to Krashen, would impede the acquisition process as the affective filter is higher. However, according to Gowhary and others, subtitles can reduce the level of anxiety during a listening comprehension, as students feel as if the task is more achievable (Gowhary et al 211). Moreover, if students can choose the video they watch, thus making a conscious choice, they will be more motivate them to learn in a formal context.

2.4.2.2.   *The disadvantage of the use of subtitles in YouTube*

In my opinion, there is, however, a key disadvantage to watching YouTube videos with subtitles. This is due to the fact that, in movies and series, the translation is done by a professional translator, while subtitles on YouTube are generated through a speech recognition technology, leading to possible mistakes in the translation. The faster an influencer speaks and the more they mumble, the more unreliable and incorrect the translation will be.

When teachers choose a video, it is therefore crucial to pick an influencer whose pronunciation, articulation and flow is optimal, in order to offer the most reliable translation possible. Even so, it is inevitable to have several mistakes, in which case the teacher could ask their students to correct the mistakes, provided that the number of mistakes is low enough as to not impede the global comprehension of the message and decrease students' motivation all together.

2.4.2.3.   *Conclusion*

To conclude, watching movies, series, or influencers with subtitles is beneficial to foreign language learning, whether in formal or informal contexts, because not only can they improve children's decoding skills, but can also offer an authentic and comprehensible input, provided that the $i + 1$ pattern is respected. This is due to the fact that subtitles can offer viewers auditory, visual and written clues to understand the message. In addition, they can also reduce the level

of anxiety of students by providing subtitles, which might be a source of motivation on its own. Therefore, it is fair to say that subtitles could help students acquire new vocabulary.

2.4.3. Media and Information Literacy (MIL)

2.4.3.1. Introduction

Media is an important part of our lives, whether at home, at work, or at school. Students spend more time in front of a television screen or videos now than they have ever before. Physical and psychological issues related to media in general are the subject of daily concerns and yet, the development of skills in connection with the media remains problematic. Indeed, no frameworks of reference, curricula or the CEFR created guidelines on media and information literacy (MIL) while FL teachers are one of the most prone to seek resources outside of textbooks. Therefore, this section attempts to briefly explore what media education is and how it came about, while focusing on a few strategies teachers would need to pay attention to when choosing audiovisual content. In turn, those principles can be taught to students, contributing to the development of their skills in terms of media use.

2.4.3.2. History

There were two reason which led politicians to think about MIL. On the one hand, in the 60s and 70s, Belgian schools began to teach using media, which is when the teacher takes a step back to allow the media (e.g.: documentary or recording for language teaching) to teach for them (Hamers). However, researchers soon began to realize that teachers never questioned the effects those productions, which were seen as pure content, were going to have on students (Hamers). Aside from the content, one must consider the consequences that the means, the staging and the esthetic of a production will have on the audience. On the other hand, the second reason was related to the world we live in, in which every aspect of life is surrounded by media (Hamers). To that extent, the media undeniably has a role to play in the idea students have of the world surrounding them and, in order to transmit knowledge, it is therefore important for teachers to know how media shapes the students' views of the world (Hamers).

2.4.3.3. Definitions

Before defining what Media and Information Literacy is, is it important to, first, define what types of media are included in MIL. According to the Larousse dictionary, media is a "process allowing the distribution, the diffusion or the communication of works, documents, or sounds

or audiovisual messages (press, cinema, poster, radio broadcasting, television broadcasting, videography, teledistribution, telematics, telecommunication)[10]". In this dissertation, we will focus specifically on audiovisual media, including videos from influencers on YouTube.

As for the MIL, we will focus on the WBF definition[11], which claims that

> "*l'éducation aux médias a pour finalité de rendre chaque citoyen actif, autonome et critique envers tout document ou dispositif médiatique dont il est destinataire ou usager* […] *Elle veut ainsi qu'il puisse s'approprier les langages médiatiques et se former aux outils d'interprétation, d'expression et de communication par les médias. En ce sens, elle prépare les individus à être des citoyens responsables, capables de contribuer au développement d'une société démocratique, solidaire, pluraliste et ouverte aux autres cultures et assure à tous des chances égales d'émancipation sociale*." (WBF)

The WBF's definition echoes the definition[12] given by the European Council, which describes MIL as

> "of utmost importance for individuals to be able to develop cognitive, technical and social skills and capacities that enable them to effectively access and critically analy[z]e media content; to make informed decisions about which media they use and how to use them; to understand the ethical implications of media and new technologies, and to communicate effectively, including by creating content."

In these two definitions, media education has two purposes: to lead students to develop critical thinking as well as to explore the means of production.

Although there are no guidelines in the WBF, we can find the idea of the importance of critical thinking in the frameworks of reference (FWB: 2017b, FWB: 2017c) when mentioning that critical use of media touches upon the education of responsible citizenship which must be integrated as often as possible into the activities given to students (FWB: 2017, 12).

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[10] Definition translated from French into English by me
[11] http://www.enseignement.be/index.php?page=27510&navi=4152
[12] https://www.coe.int/en/web/freedom-expression/media-literacy

Moreover, it is important to know that the former definition considers, at its core, Article 6 of the *Décret Mission*, which defines the priority missions of primary and secondary education, and highlights, once more, the importance of the making of responsible citizens in a democratic country.

However, what does thinking critically imply? According to Lai, critical thinking "includes the component skills of analyzing arguments, making inferences using inductive or deductive reasoning, judging or evaluating, and making decisions or solving problems. Background knowledge is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for enabling critical thought within a given subject" (Lai 2). She also suggests that when choosing an activity to exercise critical thinking, it is necessary that the activity reflects real-world problems (Lai 39).

In keeping with this idea, although there has been no integration of MIL within the secondary curricula yet, MIL should be implemented by every teacher through activities that help students learn how to properly use media while developing their critical thinking. Arguably, it could be said that influencers' content involves real-world problems, as a large proportion of children are on smartphones from a very young age, thus influencing their consuming behavior which at times can be showcasing ideas of the world that are unrealistic or false. Thus, it is important to teach students how to critically think in order for them to develop their own opinions as well as to be responsible citizens.

2.4.3.4.   Strategies

Surprisingly, I found the research on the topic of media education related to video content very disappointing. To my knowledge, very little literature is available that highlights what to pay attention to when watching an audiovisual content. However, there are several strategies teachers should implement when preparing a lesson plan which includes audiovisual media. These strategies are based on a media education class taught at the university of Liège as well as my own judgment.

First, it is important to mention that the strategies described below are taken from a chapter based on picture related strategies. However, various other strategies could also be applied to videos. Indeed, the way a picture is taken is the result of many choices the photographer makes when choosing where to focus the camera, just as with a videographer. When doing so, one must keep in mind:

- The off-camera
- The organization of the shot (Hamers: 2021)

The *off-camera* content is the set of elements which do not appear in the frame of an image (Hamers). In other words, the off-camera is what the photographer will intentionally leave out of the frame, which can be a tool for deconstructing the image. This strategy is evidently difficult to put in place, as no one can know what is happening behind the scenes. However, some influencers, especially 'mommy bloggers' or 'organizer influencers' who might make the viewers think that they have it 'all figured out' will be honest about how things actually are in their life, by either saying that things are not always picture perfect or showing before and after shots. It is important for viewers to know that things are not always what they seem and that they should not be perfect, even though the influencer world attempts perfection.

The *organization* of the shot refers to the choice of the photographer when organizing the frame, which allows the photographer to attract the viewer's eye to something important to them (Hamers). In order to bring the viewer to look at what the photographer wants them to see, the latter will use various tools, such as the eye tracking device, which detects a person's presence and follows what they are looking at in real-time (Hamers). This method is widely used in marketing for product placement, packaging design or advertisement to attract the viewer's gaze on the product being sold (Bialowas and Szyszka 95).

This next strategy is somewhat linked to the previous one as it pertains to the place from which the influencers will record their videos and how they will organize the space around them. Indeed, influencers use visual communication almost all the time. As a matter of fact, the bedroom setting is quite popular, especially for beauty influencers (Thurlow et al 251) because they attempt to create a shared living space, introducing themselves as an older sister or friend (Thurlow et al 14). This creates a sense of intimacy and closeness between the influencer and the viewer (Thurlow et al 251), making their product recommendation more credible (Thurlow et al 14).

It is also important to understand how influencers promote their products. Indeed, object presentation, object manipulation, glance and gesture can all be of crucial importance (Thurlow et al 266). The reason why is because the way influencers present and hold their objects must come off as attractive to the viewer, while glances from the object to the viewer creates a close space shared with the viewer as the viewer can feel they are being directly

looked at (Thurlow et al 257). Once again, this frames the influencer as a credible friend giving advice.

Lastly, it is recommended for viewers of any content to investigate the influencer they are watching, especially when listening to reviews of products they would consider buying or when listening to advice. Thus, in order to learn more about who they are and their field of expertise, the viewer would have to go to the influencer's 'about me' page. For example, if an influencer promotes a product unrelated to their field of expertise, there would be a reason to be suspicious.

2.4.3.5.   *Conclusions*

The reasons behind needing MIL guidelines in curricula are numerous today, as it would confirm that socialization is a process which is no longer conducted solely by traditional actors in students' lives, such as the school, the family and the church, but also by the media production. Indeed, social media platforms provide audiovisual content that is increasingly accessed by young people. These platforms have a considerable impact in that they make it easier for users to shape and influence the opinion and view of the world of others. Subsequently, it is fair to say that schools should teach students how to read between the lines and decipher information, images and videos and to develop their critical thinking in order for them to create an informed opinion, which is essential to be responsible citizens who are capable of contributing to the development of a democratic society. To this end, teachers should be sensitized to not only the importance of media culture for young people, but also the different types of media content and their purposes, so as to always stay in touch with their students' interests and reality.

2.5.   CONCLUSION

To conclude this literature review, it is fair to say that audiovisual media, such as an influencers' content, is a modern and beneficial way to teach languages. Indeed, influencers offer a wide range of topics that are interesting to students, while also being authentic. They can listen and be exposed to a comprehensible input before producing, providing the teacher takes into account the level of their students and the i + 1 pattern, as they will be exposed to auditory, visual and written clues to understand the message. Students will acquire idioms, vocabulary and grammar structure unconsciously, helping them correct their production, especially if it is the right time for them to acquire them. They will also get used to the sound

of different accents and intonations, necessary for the students to be prepared for different situations. If the teacher chooses influencers from varying backgrounds and nationalities, students will not only be able to go over a wide range of lexical fields, but will also become familiar with the cultures of different countries. Even though students may not particularly get the chance to choose content in a formal context by themselves, teachers would have to have content which is appealing to students, and would also have to create activities around Viau's ten conditions for motivational content if teachers want their students to be in optimal conditions for acquisition.

Influencers' content also contribute to sensitizing students to MIL. Indeed, we have learned that the influencers' business is only going to grow, meaning that students would also become more and more exposed to it. MIL is thus an important tool which students need to be aware of in order to think critically and become more responsible with the content they consume. This kind of teaching must be taught in schools by every teacher who uses media content, since there are no specific guidelines in the frameworks of reference nor curricula.

3. THE PLACE OF INFLUENCERS WITHIN LEGAL TEXT IN THE WALLONIA-BRUSSELS FEDERATION AND ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS

3.1. THE PLACE OF INFLUENCERS WITHIN LEGAL TEXT IN THE WALLONIA-BRUSSELS FEDERATION

3.1.1. Introduction

In this section, the analysis of the various legal documents in force in the Wallonia-Brussels Federation (WBF) will be analyzed. Hypotheses to the two research questions related to the analysis of official documents will be established. Then, the next sections will investigate the place of influencers within the various frameworks of reference for modern languages, which set out the legal requirements for the teaching of modern languages, the curricula of the official and free networks, which determine how legal requirements should be implemented in the classroom, as well as the CEFR, which serves as the foundation for the development of the current frameworks of references in the WBF and European countries. In order to examine if the use of influencers is recommended, the context in which the word '*influenceur*' and its synonym '*Youtuber*' as well as the following variations: '*vidéo*' and '*audiovisuel*' is presented will be analyzed.

3.1.2. Hypotheses

Based on my own conclusions, several hypotheses can be put forward for two of the research questions relevant to the legal documents. These research questions are summarized in Table 3.1 below. Regarding the second research question which seeks to establish whether the word 'influencer', its synonym and variations are included in the legal texts and curricula of the WBF, the hypothetical answer would be that these are not included in the legal texts nor in the curricula. This is due to the fact that the topic of influencers is rather new, as seen in the historical background, but also because it is frowned upon by most teachers, as the analysis of the survey (see Chapter 5) will confirm. The answer to the third research question, which seeks to establish if the word 'influencer', its synonym and variations are included in the CEFR, is similar to the hypothesis made for the second research question.

Table 3.1 - Research questions regarding the legal texts

RESEARCH QUESTIONS	
Q$_2$	Is the word 'influencer', its synonym and variations included in legal requirements and curricula of the WBF?
Q$_3$	Is the word 'influencer' and its synonym and variations included in the CEFR?

3.1.3. Frameworks of reference for modern languages

In the WBF, several frameworks of reference are in application for modern language teaching in secondary education: the *Socles de compétences – Langues modernes* (FWB: 2017a) and the *Compétences terminales et savoirs requis* (FWB: 2017b, FWB: 2017c). In this dissertation, we will focus on the latter as it outlines the goals at the end of the sixth (or seventh) year of secondary education, while the former defines the objectives at the end of the primary education and the second year of secondary education, which is not the focus of this dissertation.

In both the *Compétences terminales et savoirs requis à l'issue des humanités professionnelles et techniques : langues modernes* (FWB : 2017c) and the *Compétences terminales et savoirs requis à l'issue des humanités générales et technologiques : langues modernes* (FWB: 2017b), there was no mention of the term '*influenceur'* nor '*Youtuber'*. However, the term '*vidéo'* and '*audiovisuel'* were more conclusive. Indeed, the term 'vidéo' was used to give examples of audiovisual mediums which could be used to improve the listening skills of students. In addition, it is important to mention that when developing listening skills, they recommend that the message be delivered in a spontaneous, structured and standardized language produced by a native person as to offer an authentic content, with good sound conditions.

3.1.4. Curricula for modern languages

This section now seeks to investigate the curricula of the WBF, which are based on the 2017 frameworks of reference analyzed in the previous section. Indeed, while the frameworks determine what must be taught, the curricula define how the subject matter should be covered in class. This entails that the curricula may differ from one network to another, while keeping a common foundation. This section will therefore analyze the 2000 and 2017/2018 curricula of the free network and the 2000 and 2020 curricula of the official network.

First, the analysis of the free network curricula reveals in the same way as for the frameworks, no use of the term '*influenceur*' nor '*youtuber*'. It is also important to notice that the latest curricula had 44 occurrences for the term '*vidéo*' and 12 occurrences for the term '*audiovisuel*' while the former curricula had only 1 occurrence for the term '*vidéo*' and no occurrence for the term '*audiovisuel*'. The latest curricula mention the use of videos when explaining the types of mediums students must be confronted to. Furthermore, they recognize that the advances in communication technologies allow for a much easier access to authentic documents (FESeC: 2018, 11). However, they mention that those new technologies are only complementary to the traditional tools which constitute the means of access to culture, such as books, films, videos, documentaries, works of art, songs and press articles (FESeC: 2018, 11). It is difficult to assess in which category influencers would stand, as, on the one hand, they are a fairly recent phenomena linked to social media, which would put them in the new technology category, while also, on the other hand, being part of the video medium, which would put them in the traditional category. However, if we focus solely on the description of what an influencer is compared to a random video found on YouTube, influencers would fall into the new technology category, which, in the free network, would only be used as a complement to more traditional mediums.

Second, the analysis of the official network curricula reveals no use of the term '*influenceur*' nor '*Youtuber*'. The latest curricula had 114 occurrences for the term '*vidéo*', and 54 occurrences for the term '*audiovisuel*', which is significantly more than in the free network, while the former curricula had still 30 occurrences for the term '*vidéo*' and 4 occurrences for the term '*audiovisuel*'. In addition, the latest curricula mention two ideas that are important: firstly, they touch upon the fact that, traditionally, most of the listening played in class were based on sound media exclusively, which they admit is far from reality (WBE: 2020b, 19), as social media websites offer both sound and visual. Moreover, they acknowledge that "*le support audiovisuel permet à l'auditeur de mettre en place des stratégies de compréhension : les expressions du visage, les gestes du locuteur, le background sont autant d'éléments qui lui fournissent des informations facilitant la compréhension*." (WBE: 2020b, 19) That is why they now recommend using both audio and visual mediums. Secondly, as the free network, they both recognize the increased use of new technologies, that is why they encourage activities which are closely related to them (WBE: 2020b, 121). For example, students could download the audio file onto their smartphone, allowing them to work autonomously, in their own time, while other students work on another activity (WBE: 2020b, 121). As for the old curricula, they explain, in the second C*ahier* that when watching a video, students are more aware that a

language is more than vocabulary and grammar, and that the non-verbal, such as the look and the expression also play an important role in understanding a language (CFB: 2000, 6). With the same logic, students should use different strategies in order to understand the message, these strategies are the following: noise, intonation, actions, attitudes, gesture (CFB: 2000, 22). Moreover, in the third *Cahier*, they mention the fact the when working on the listening comprehension, the message must be "as interesting, stimulating and motivating as possible" (CFB: 2000, 10). Lastly, in the fifth C*ahier*, they highlight various situations in which videos could be used in a classroom. For example, videos can be used to work on the non-verbal (e.g.: turn off the volume or stop the video to work on hypotheses, body language, the context, etc.), to introduce new vocabulary, to introduce a new topic (e.g.: showing an excerpt and the students guess the topic), to develop oral expression by exploiting the images and to anticipate the meaning (CFB: 2000, 25).

3.1.5. *The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*

The Council of Europe established the *Common European Framework of Reference of Languages* (CEFR) in 2001 with the intent to provide "a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe. […] to overcome the barriers to communication among professionals working in the field of modern languages arising from the different educational systems in Europe" (CEFR 10). As mentioned before, the CEFR worked as a guideline for the elaboration of the 2017 frameworks of reference in the WBF, which, in their turn, worked as guidelines for the various curricula for modern languages. In addition to the CEFR, two Companion Volumes have been published to update the 2001 version. In this section, the 2001 and 2020 English versions will be analyzed, as the 2018 update was the preliminary version of the 2020 update.

When tackling the 2001 version of the CEFR, it does not come as a surprise that neither the term 'influencer' nor 'youtuber' was present. However, the term 'video' is slightly present, with 13 occurrences while the term 'audio-visual' has 1 occurrence. The contexts in which the terms are described are both when they explain a general approach to learning a second language, which includes "watching and listening to TV, video, etc." and "using new technologies (multi-media, CD ROMS, etc.)" (CEFR: 2001, 143) and when they explain how to develop the ability to pronounce a language, which includes being "exposed to authentic spoken utterances" (CEFR: 2001, 153) by the "teacher, an audio-recorded native speaker and a video-recorded native speaker" (CEFR: 2001, 153). To highlight the fact that learners receive

both auditory and visual input when watching audio-visual content, the CEFR introduced an illustrative scale (from A1 to C2) for watching TV and film based on students' levels.

	WATCHING TV AND FILM
C2	*As C1*
C1	*Can follow films employing a considerable degree of slang and idiomatic usage.*
B2	*Can understand most TV news and current affairs programmes.* *Can understand documentaries, live interviews, talk shows, plays and the majority of films in standard dialect.*
B1	*Can understand a large part of many TV programmes on topics of personal interest such as interviews, short lectures, and news reports when the delivery is relatively slow and clear.* *Can follow many films in which visuals and action carry much of the storyline, and which are delivered clearly in straightforward language.* *Can catch the main points in TV programmes on familiar topics when the delivery is relatively slow and clear.*
A2	*Can identify the main point of TV news items reporting events, accidents etc. where the visual supports the commentary.* *Can follow changes of topic of factual TV news items, and form an idea of the main content.*
A1	*No descriptor available*

Figure 3.1 - An illustrative scale for watching TV and film

In the 2020 Companion version, this scale has been updated to not only TV and film, but also video (to see the full scale, see Appendix A).

C1	Can follow films employing a considerable degree of slang and idiomatic usage. Can understand in detail the arguments presented in demanding television broadcasts such as current affairs programmes, interviews, discussion programmes and chat shows. Can understand nuances and implied meaning in most films, plays and TV programmes, provided these are delivered in standard language or a familiar variety.
B2	Can extract the main points from the arguments and discussions in news and current affairs programmes. Can understand most TV news and current affairs programmes. Can understand documentaries, live interviews, talk shows, plays and the majority of films in the standard form of the language or a familiar variety.

Figure 3.2 - An illustrative scale for watching TV, film and video (B2 to C1)

In the upper levels, various details have been added as to what students should be able to achieve, while, in the lower levels, the advantage of early use of videos have been added.

A1	Can recognise familiar words/signs and phrases and identify the topics in headline news summaries and many of the products in advertisements, by exploiting visual information and general knowledge.
Pre-A1	Can identify the subject of a video document on the basis of visual information and previous knowledge.

Figure 3.3 - An illustrative scale for watching TV, film and video (Pre-A1 to A1)

Mainly, the new scale added the use of visual aid which can help for the overall understanding of the video, as WBF curricula also mentioned, as well as familiar words/signs and phrases which could be acquired when there is repetitiveness produced in the videos. In addition to this updated scale, a new scale (see Appendix B) was created for the overall oral comprehension of "in-live, face-to-face communication and its remote and/or recorded equivalent. It thus includes visuo-gestural and audio-vocal modalities" (CEFR: 2020, 48). Particular media are added to the scale, such as "understanding audio (or signed) media and recordings" (CEFR: 2020, 48). However, neither the term 'influencer' nor 'Youtuber' was mentioned, but the term 'video' was significantly more present, with 41 occurrences, than the former version, as well as the term 'audiovisual' with 6 occurrences.

3.1.1. *Conclusions*

To conclude, influencers and Youtubers have never been explicitly mentioned once in any of the frameworks of reference, the curricula from the various networks, nor the CEFR, in any of the versions, as predicted. However, compared to the former version of each of those documents, the importance of the use of audiovisual content such as video have increased considerably over two decades, although the free network makes less use of audiovisual mediums in both the former and latest curricula than the official network. A hypothesis as to why it is so could be made regarding the conservationism of the free network, which is presided by the Christian Church. Consequently, the content which would be deemed appropriate for teaching might then be different than in the official network.

In the new versions, it is clear that students should be confronted to audiovisual medium, including videos, delivered in a spontaneous, structured and standardized language produced by a native person as to offer an authentic content. This authentic content must be interesting, stimulating and motivating in order to help students realize that a language is more than just words, and that is has a purpose of communicating with people who do not have the same cultural background, which ultimately will help students acquire language. Listening strategies have been reinforced, especially when it comes to the non-verbal (noise, intonation, actions, attitude and gesture) aspect of audiovisual content.

All those aspects of the audiovisual medium can be applied to influencers' content, as they are produced by native interlocutors, thus offering an authentic content. In addition, influencers' content is a motivational tool for students, thus making learning fun and interesting and brings it closer to the students' reality as well. These types of content can also make

students familiar with the influencer's cultural background as visual elements can be seen or even explained by the influencer. Furthermore, all non-verbal strategies can also be applied to influencers' content as they follow the video medium and are easy to work with. Lastly, they can be worked in different ways, such as content anticipation, listening activities and production as well.

3.2. THE PLACE OF INFLUENCERS WITHIN ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS IN THE WBF

3.2.1. Introduction

In this section, various textbooks used in the WBF will be analyzed in order to confirm the presence or absence of influencers within them and if the date of publication plays in role in it. To this end, the analysis focuses on three variables: language, date of publication and language level. The textbooks (see Appendix C to see the full list) analyzed are solely English textbooks, as it would have been too time-consuming to analyze all the existing textbooks in every language. The textbooks are all published after 2010, as influencers as we know them were not as popular before then. The language level analyzed is ranging from A2 to B2 on the CEFR language scale, as it is closely related to my major. Lastly, only the student's book was focused on, unless there was an activity related to influencers, in which case the teacher's book could be a relevant resource to the analysis, as it gives suggestions as to how to teach that particular activity.

3.2.2. Hypotheses

Based on the conclusions drawn from the previous chapter, two hypotheses can be put forward for the research question relevant to the textbooks. These hypotheses are summarized in Table 3.2 below. Regarding the fourth research question which seeks to establish if English textbooks include the use of influencers and if so, to what purpose; the first hypotheses would be that it depends on the date of publication of the textbook. As younger generation of teachers flourish, more modern topics of interest will be included in textbooks to appeal to the younger generation, possibly resulting in more influencers' content in recent textbooks, while older textbooks might refer to videos on YouTube at most. The second hypothesis, however, concerns the purpose, which can be varied. It could be an activity which anticipates the content of the chapter, it could be a reading task, a listening task or even asking students to produce a video based on an influencer's video, such as describing a product and reviewing it, for example.

Table 3.2 - Research questions regarding the English textbooks

QUESTIONS	
Q₄	Do English textbooks include the use of influencers and if so, to what purpose?

3.2.3. Results

After an in-depth analysis of over 14 textbooks, it was slightly surprising to notice that no English textbooks have an influencer's content except one textbook. Indeed, in the *Get Up 6: livre de l'élève B1/B2* textbook, which was published in 2021, there is a short activity in connection to influencers in Unit 5: "From rags to riches" which focuses on business. Nonetheless, all textbooks analyzed do mention celebrities, such as royalty, sport people, actors, musicians, in essence, influential people; but they never refer to an influencer's video on YouTube.

3.2.4. Analysis

As previously said, the Unit 5 of the *Get Up 6* is focusing on the business thematic field, which includes an activity related to influencers. We will first briefly analyze the purposes of this Unit, followed by the analysis of the activity itself.

3.2.4.1. Analysis of the Unit 5

There are four purposes to be achieved by students in this unit, which are as follows:

- understand a comic strip/video about business
- talking about business
- analyzing a pie chart
- giving a presentation, which serves as the final activity of the Unit. (Get Up 6 XVI)

There are two transversal skills which teach students how to:

- analyze a pie chart
- present successfully (Get Up 6 XVI)

There are two grammatical structures at the heart of this unit, which are:

- third conditional
- used to (Get Up 6 XVI)

Finally, there are three thematic fields out of the 13, which are:

- Relations to other
- Day-to-day life (Get Up 6 XXII)

3.2.4.2.   *Analysis of the activity*

The exercises which precede the activity are diverse; they are composed of two reading tasks which consist of a comic strip and a rags-to-riches story, followed by vocabulary exercises and grammar exercises as well as two listening activities which consist of video of people starting their own business from scratch using different methods, which eventually lead students to the activity in question.

The activity, titled "Become an influencer", proposes a reading exercise which consists of an influencer explaining what she does for a living. The text is short, but it hopes to convince the reader to become an influencer. The real purpose of this activity, however, is to replace the underlined parts with the words and phrases presented in a box in order for students to learn new words in a context. Obviously, the underlined words as well as the new words are all related to business.

Then, the exercise which proceeds the activity is a listening comprehension of a TV show, which consists of two candidates explaining their business. Students must then create a business plan on the basis of what they have seen in the video. The next exercises help students prepare a presentation which lead to the final activity of the plan: a presentation of a business.

3.2.5.   *Conclusion*

To conclude, recent textbooks do not offer more influencers' content than older textbooks. However, it seems that influencers' content is slowly beginning to appear, with its first occurrence in a 2021 English textbook. Furthermore, the way the activity is offered, which is a simple vocabulary exercise, fits in correctly in the sequence of activities as it offers new vocabulary in order for students to be able to present a business. However, it does not reflect the full potential of what an influencer's content might actually offer to learners, as will be sees in the next chapter.

4. ANALYSIS OF AN INFLUENCER'S CONTENT

4.1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, an influencer's video will be analyzed. The aim of this process is to highlight how an influencer's content could be of value for a language learner. To this end, one of the most chosen topics in the teachers' survey (see Chapter 5), which was on travel, was chosen. Keeping in mind, however, that in order to have a general idea of how influencers' content work, it would be needed to analyze more than one video; the analysis of this video is therefore not exhaustive and only deals with one of twelve thematic fields mentioned in the curricula.

4.2. HYPOTHESES

Based on what has been learned in the literature review, a potential hypothesis could be put forward related to the fifth research question relevant to the value of influencers' content. This hypothesis is summarized in Table 4.1 below. The fifth research question seeks to establish if influencers' content can be of value for students in a FL classroom to improve their communication skills. The hypothetical answer to that question would be that influencers' content is certainly of value for the learning of a foreign language as it touches upon multiple important aspects of teaching languages. This spans from listening and reading tasks, oral activity and vocabulary, to grammar, text genre, language functions[13], culture, idioms and expressions and MIL.

Table 4.1 - Research question regarding the value of influencers

Questions	
Q5	Are influencers' content of value in a foreign language classroom in order to improve students' communication skills?

4.3. CRITERIA

In order to analyze how an influencer's content could be of value for a student in a classroom context, various criteria to look for in the video, which are related to the teaching of language, have been highlighted. These criteria are as follows:

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[13] A language function is an expression, specific to each language which is also a communicative intention such as greeting, thanking, etc. *(FWB 29)*

- Structure:

There are different ways influencers can structure their video. For example, they could start with an introduction which might either be

  o a small teaser or preview
  o an introduction to each person, almost like the opening credits of a movie with the use of music and effects (especially for mommy influencers in which they present their family)
  o a simple introduction to their video in which they would start by welcoming their viewers, which can be done in a neutral way, but also in an endearing way with the use of nicknames

They could also remind their viewers to subscribe to their channel which could happen at the beginning, middle and end, so as to get more followers and thus more credibility in the eyes of the brands.

Finally, they could end their videos by reminding their viewers to subscribe to their channel. They could also lead their viewers to another video of theirs in the past for more information on something they might have mentioned in the video.

- Vocabulary
- Grammar
- Language functions
- Idioms and expression
- Oral language
- Translation

4.4. ANALYSIS OF THE VIDEO

In this section, a video which could quite possibly be chosen for a FL classroom context will be analyzed. Indeed, the topic chosen remains generic as it could be of interest to both boys and girls. In addition, a video[14] of a travel expert influencer, Jess Dante, who is based in London has been analyzed since in the analysis of the results of the survey related to the topic of an influencer's video, the most chosen answer was the topic of travelling. The video, called "5

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[14] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H1nsd2t2CAM

45

cheap eats in London worth your money", describes five meals one could eat around London on a budget.

4.4.1. Structure and text genre

The beginning of the video stars with a small preview of what viewers are about to see. In the introduction, Jess explains what the video will be about: five of her favorite affordable meals in London. She goes on to explain how much money, on average, one would expect to pay for one of those five meals. After the introduction, the meals she describes are separated into five sections, all the while showing pictures and videos of the places mentioned. In those descriptions, she mentions the name of the place, her favorite meal, what the meal is made up of, and the budget one is expecting to spend with. She then offers a summary of what was previously described. To conclude the video, Jess invites the viewer to check out more of her food and tips' videos for a trip to London.

4.4.2. Media and Information Literacy

In the video, there are several things to look for in order for the viewers to form an opinion on the veracity of the content.

First, it is important to do a background check on the person behind the video by checking their 'about me' page on YouTube. In Jess's case, she is an American travel expert who is based in London and has lived there for several years. She shares videos ranging from the best things to do in various London boroughs, to the cheapest things to do or places to eat at in London and even has guides to living in London. She appeals to both tourists and locals who are looking for the cheapest and best way to visit the city, find activities or just simply discover cheap meals. She has 172k followers, making her a macro-influencer, and often partners with other London based influencers when talking about topics she is not an expert in. For example, she partnered with an English teacher for him to teach her followers twenty words to know before coming to London. In other words, she has gained enough credibility based on the content she is sharing to be a reliable and trustworthy source of information. We can conclude that the video chosen for the analysis can be a good primary source of information.

Then, one should look out for the place where the influencer recorded the video. In this case, the influencer is sat in her living room, which, like many influencers, will be done on purpose to give a sense of familiarity, almost as if it was a friend giving advice to the viewer. The effects of this practice could be that viewers feel like the influencer is being genuine,

which, in turn, makes them feel more incline to pay for the service or product the influencer is promoting.

Furthermore, one should look out for the way the influencer is promoting their product. During the video, Jess informs the viewer that the video is sponsored by a company called Questo, which is an application in which you can find exploration games created by locals in several cities around the world. The influencer notes that she created a game on the application and invites the viewer to 'grab' her game. The reason why she said 'grab' is because she does inform the viewer that the application is free to download, however, what she does not mention is that the games in the application are not free. The reason why she used the word 'grab' instead of 'buy', is because she needed to attract people and make them believe the application is free for anyone to use.

Moreover, one could notice how quick she shot the sequences at the locations, which never goes beyond four seconds. This gives a sense of rhythm to the video which can also be found in movie teasers, for example, in order to give people a sense of wanting more.

Also, one could notice the pattern with the color red, which probably refers to the color of the British flag.

Finally, she also makes use of sound editing in a funny way. Thus, we can see that she is targeting a younger audience by giving tips on cheap places to eat and to visit.

4.4.3. Vocabulary

The type of vocabulary which can be seen in the video will now be analyzed as well as if the vocabulary corresponds to a thematic field mentioned in the curricula.

NOUNS			
a meal	drinks	coffee	pastry
crepe	string hoppers	a pavilion	a setting
meat	beans	lettuce	peanuts
a treat	options	street food	time of the day
Chinatown	sauce	pancake	black beans
avocado	plantains	cheese	atmosphere
lunch deal	a main	freshly squeezed lemonade	staff
award-winning	locations	restaurant	vegan

vegetarian	meat lover	ingredients	anduia
sausage	pulled porchetta	dough balls	a modern take on
nachos	cheeseburger	tacos	buffalo
mushroom	burrito	local favorite	cheap eats
breakfast	brunch	lunch	dinner
ADJECTIVES			
delicious	good	affordable	value
really good	cool	really nice	chill
inventive	so good	fully	fantastic
hardy	beautiful	next up	truly
super	hungry		
VERBS			
to expect	to get	to go	to be made up of
to be filling	to end up having	to get too full	to order
to be introduced to	to sell	to be made with	to be stuffed with
to get to choose	to chop it	to enjoy	to serve
to drizzle	to be worried about	to be missing	to beat out
to be known for			
LINKING WORDS			
however	while	then	by the way
ADVERB			
basically			

As can be seen, the amount of vocabulary heard in this short video (+/- 6 mins) attests to the richness of the vocabulary which can be heard in an influencer's video. In this particular video, the vocabulary is linked to the 'food and drink' thematic field, but it also gives examples of the adjectives which could be used with the nouns. In addition, Jess's video was structured by the help of linking words and adverbs, which could be highlighted to students in order for them to structure their own speech and ideas when communicating.

4.4.4. Grammar

In the video, several grammatical structures could be highlighted, as can be seen below.

Grammatical structure	- I love (+ to) I love (+ ing)
	- Passive voice
Tense	- Present (description)
	- Simple past (description + finished action)

It is important to keep in mind that the purpose of a listening activity is rarely to learn new grammatical structures, as will be observed in the results of the survey (see Chapter 5). However, in my opinion, a video could be a way to, at the very least, introduce a small grammatical structure to students, even if it works through other exercises later in the lesson plan.

4.4.5. Language functions

In the video, multiple intentions of communication could be identified, which are in keeping with what the curricula mention.

- Donner un retour positif ou négatif
- Donner un exemple
- Demander/donner des informations
- Décrire/caractériser
- Situer dans le temps et dans l'espace
- Exprimer ses gouts
- Dire ce qui est possible/ce qui ne l'est pas
- Demander et donner des conseils
- Donner envie de faire quelque chose (ensemble)
- Faire des suggestions et réagir à des propositions
- Avertir, prévenir, menacer
- Rappeler à quelqu'un de faire quelque chose
  (WBE: 2020b, 269-272; FESeC: 2018, 116-128)

4.4.6. Idioms and expressions

In the video, various idioms and expressions could be highlighted, as can be seen below.

Idioms	selling out some cash
	cool your chops
	the beauty of it
Contraction	I am going to → I'm gonna (informal)

Phrase	both … and …
	a bunch of
	one of the most
	a sort of → sorta (informal adverb)
	a kind of → kinda (informal adverb)
	the thing about…is that
	I'm telling you
	you might want to
	make sure
	no matter what
	as well
	even so
Conjunction	because → 'cause (informal)
Adverb	freaking (very informal)

We can observe that the video has a rather informal register as it uses youth language, which might not be the first option when teaching students a language. However, as seen with Krashen and Viau, the importance of touching on something related to the students' interests and reality can be a motivational tool for them to acquire the language.

4.4.7. Culture

Here are some cultural points which could be seen in the video:

Currency	The pound (£)
Neighborhoods	Pavilion café in Victoria Park, east London
	Chinese Tapas House in Chinatown
	Arepa&co in Bethnal Green or Hagerston
	Purezza in Camden
	Club Mexicana in Carnaby or Seven Dials Market
Meal	The Sri Lankan breakfast
	Jian Bing (Chinese street food)

	Cachapas and Arepas (Venezuela)
	Pizza (Italian)

The video not only introduces the viewer to various gastronomic cultures, but it also gives a sense of London's geography by mentioning different locations throughout London.

4.4.8. *Oral language*

In this video, the influencer is aware that she is targeting not only a local public, but also, and most likely, foreigners who might want to prepare their trip to London. That is why she speaks slow enough to still feel natural, but also has a very good flow, pronunciation and articulation, making the input easily comprehensible for students.

4.4.9. *Translation*

The video also has the option of adding subtitles, which are mostly accurate in this case, as Jess speaks clear enough for the system to recognize the words spoken.

4.5. CONCLUSION

To conclude, this type of video can serve a purpose in a FL classroom as it could touch upon different skills such as listening and reading skills, and oral production, but also the text genre, MIL, vocabulary, grammar, language functions, culture and idioms. Therefore, based on this video, it would be possible to suggest several activities in a FL classroom.

The teacher can also decide to cut the video into segments and use the first half of the video in class and the other half as a resource for further listening tests, which teachers are always on the lookout for.

5. Surveys on the use of influencers' content in Wallonia-Brussel Federation's classrooms

5.1. Introduction

As established in Chapter 3, the modern language curricula and frameworks of reference of the WBF do not mention the use of influencers. However, the absence of guidelines concerning their content could give enough freedom to teachers to use influencers in different ways. We will therefore explore teachers' practices in order to determine if they use influencers' content in their FL classrooms and if so, for what purpose. In addition, it may be necessary to investigate students' opinions on the matter in order to determine if influencers' content would be motivating for them. To this extent, two surveys will be analyzed: one directed to teachers and the other directed to students.

5.2. Hypotheses

When constructing the survey, five questions (see Table 5.1 below) have guided this research. The sixth research question, which seeks to know if teachers use influencers' content in their FL classrooms, might be linked to the seventh research question, which seeks to understand the correlation between the age and gender of teachers and their use of influencers. To this end, multiple hypotheses can be put forward. The first hypothesis to the sixth research question is that the outcome depends on the teacher's age; younger teachers will more likely be familiar with this type of content and thus use it more, while older teachers will not. It also depends on the teacher's culture; younger teachers have been surrounded by social media since they were teenagers and are therefore more familiar with this influencer/social media culture possibly leading them to seek teaching material outside of textbooks, which might be considered more controversial or less conventional by older teachers who might stick to what they know and traditionally seek teaching material from textbooks. Thus, with regard to the seventh research question, it could be said that age plays an important role in the use of influencers' content. As for the gender, it can be assumed that there are going to be more women who are going to be interested in influencers than men. However, it could be also assumed that there are going to be more women answering this survey since women are predominant in the field of teaching, giving an unrealistic, or even biased, number as to who is watching more influencers' content than others. However, we might be able to get a more realistic and representative number out of the survey directed to students. As for the eighth research question, which seeks to understand how and why teachers use influencers' content, the assumption can be made that

teachers do not make use of the full potential offered by influencers, as seen with MIL and in Chapter 4. Regarding to the ninth research question, which seeks to discover if students do watch influencers' content in a foreign language, the hypothesis made would be that many of them do, as they have an increasing access to a wider range of tools. However, another assumption should be made that a large majority of them do it with the purpose of actually learning the language as society as a whole is more aware of the importance of the English language for their future careers. With regard to the tenth research question, which seeks to determine if students would be motivated to have influencers' content in their classroom, the accompanying hypothesis would be that they would indeed be motivated as it is close to their interests and reality.

Table 5.1 – Research questions relevant to the survey

RESEARCH QUESTIONS	
Q_6	Do teachers make use of influencers' content in their foreign language classrooms?
Q_7	Is there a correlation between the age and gender of teachers and their use of influencers' content in the classroom?
Q_8	If teachers do make use of influencers' content, why do they use them for and how?
Q_9	Are students watching/listening to influencers' content in a foreign language, and if so, do they do it consciously in order to learn the language?
Q_{10}	Would students be motivated to have influencers' content in their foreign language classrooms?

5.3. SURVEY DIRECTED TO FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS IN THE WALLONIA-BRUSSEL FEDERATION

5.3.1. *Methodology*

As mentioned in the introduction, a survey directed to teachers in the WBF[15] was designed in order to look into their practice concerning influencers' content. The following section will present the necessary steps taken in order to construct and finalize this survey.

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[15] A copy of this survey is available to consult in Appendix D.

5.3.1.1.   Survey construction

This survey was constructed based on the advice of Professor Germain Simons and Audrey Renson, a PhD student. The former helped with proofreading the survey to the account of eleven times between December 2021 and March 2022. The latter helped not only with proofreading the survey twice, but also gave a seminar on how to design a survey from the initial construction to the final stages, as well as giving advice on how to analyze the results of the survey. This survey was also constructed based on Zoltán Dörnyei and Tatsuya Taguchi's book, *Questionnaires in Second Language Research. Construction, Administration, and Processing* (2010).

As recommended by Professor Simons and PhD student Audrey Renson, this survey was constructed alongside another MA student, who was also doing her master's thesis in the field of didactics, in the hope of collecting a higher number of responses[16]. By doing so, it allowed for attracting teachers who would not have been interested in the individual topics initially, which ultimately aided in reaching a larger sample than if the surveys had been sent individually.

Furthermore, to ensure a better comprehension of the questions, this survey was written in French, which was assumed to have been the first language of most respondents from the WBF[17].

Moreover, it was decided together with Professor Simons, PhD student Audrey Renson and my partner that the survey would take the form of an online survey due to the fact that it was subsequently easier to design and administer as well as analyze the results of each of the surveys. The online platform chosen by my partner and I was Google Forms as it allowed for the work to be done on a free platform while also offering the possibility of simultaneous online working. In addition, it gave the possibility to the respondents to save their progress and come back to it later, as well as having a progression bar, which informed the respondents how much progress they had made on the survey. However, there was one downside to this platform, which was that the options in terms of layout were limited.

Additionally, in the introduction of the survey, it was made clear to the respondents that their answers were both anonymous and confidential, and they were also given information on

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[16] The respondent's profile was our only common part of the survey. The administration and proofreading of our surveys were also done simultaneously.

[17] For the sake of consistency with the rest of the dissertation, the survey questions will be translated into English when outlined in the following sections. The original French formulation can be found in Appendix D.

their role in participating in the survey as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) establishes.

Finally, the survey was divided into four sections. The first section hosted the general introduction as well as the respondent's profile. The second section delved into the respondents who use influencers' content, while the third section focused on those who do not use influencers' content. The fourth section was where the respondents from both sections were redirected after they had completed their own section which contained a closing/thank you statement and provided the respondents with the contact details of the researchers in case they had any further questions or comments.

5.3.1.1.1. 1st section: general introduction and respondent's profile

This first section of the survey dealt with the general introduction, which briefly introduced my partner and I, further referred to as the researchers, and explained the purpose of the two surveys, the importance of the teacher's participation, the timing of the survey, how the platform worked and the confidentiality aspect of the survey. In this section of the survey, the respondents were also asked if it was possible for the researchers to one day join their class and observe, given the respondent was working on one of the two topics in question.

After the general introduction, the respondents had to fill in their details. The questions were relevant to the personal characteristics of each participant, such as sex, whether the respondent was a teacher or still a student teacher, the number of years of teaching, their scientific and pedagogical background, their school network, their level of teaching (inferior or superior), in which grade they taught (1st-2nd-3rd grade or 4th-5th-6th grade) and the different languages they are teaching this year. Once the participant had filled in that first section, they could then start with the first survey, which was my partner's, and then mine.

5.3.1.1.2. 2nd section: respondents who use influencers' content

The second part of the survey began with an introduction as a means of further explaining the subject research, mainly by giving a definition of the term "*influenceur*" to ensure everyone started the survey with the same understanding of the term, and thus, avoiding biases based on misconceptions. The first three questions as well as the fifth question sought to know if the respondents themselves watched influencers' content, at what frequency, and in what language so as to build a deeper respondent's profile based on the research topic. The fourth question, which sought to know if the respondents had already used influencers' content in their

classroom, was purely used to direct the respondents to their respected sections. If the respondents answered with 'yes', they were redirected to the section *Si vous avez déjà utilisé des contenus d'influenceur·euses dans vos cours de langues…* and the ones who responded with 'no' were redirected to the third section *Si vous n'utilisez pas de contenus d'influenceur·euses dans vos cours de langues…*

The questions asked in this second section, which covered questions 5 to 34 sought to collect teachers' practices in regard to their use of influencers' content. To this end, multiple close-ended questions were used, namely Likert scales, multiple-choice questions, "Yes" or "No" questions, rating scales questions as well as a handful of open-ended questions. According to Dörnyei and Taguchi, while open-ended questions require a cumbersome coding process, close-ended questions are comparatively more straightforward to code, stemming from the fact that the processing of the latter does not require content analysis (Dörnyei & Taguchi 28).

According to Dörnyei and Taguchi, Likert scales probe respondents to express to what degree they agree or disagree with a statement (Dörnyei & Taguchi 27). As advised by Professor Simons and PhD student Audrey Renson, the value of using this type of close-ended question resides in the fact that the coding of respondents' responses, and the analysis of these responses, will be made easier. One of the potential risks, however, was that the range of possible responses might not have been sufficiently anticipated for and that some respondents may not find answers in any boxes (Dörnyei & Taguchi 27). As a countermeasure, an *Other* question was added where text entry was possible. In addition, instead of the classic five-response options, it was decided to only use a four-response option (*strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree*) so as to avoid the respondents choosing the neutral category if they would not or could not make a choice (Dörnyei & Taguchi 28). Finally, after multiple proofreading, double-barreled questions were changed as it would have been impossible to know which part of the question the answer was relating to (Dörnyei & Taguchi 43).

Then, (single-answer and multiple-answer) multiple-choice questions were added to the survey, which, according to Dörnyei and Taguchi, are straightforward (Dörnyei & Taguchi 33). However, a common cause of bias of multiple-choice questions is that they force respondents to a limited predetermined list of options. In this case, if the respondents did not find a proposition applied for them, they could choose a random answer. To counteract this bias, an *Other* open-ended question had to be added so that the respondents could answer the questions in their own words (Dörnyei & Taguchi 33).

Then, True-False question (or "Yes" or "No" questions) were added. According to Dörnyei and Taguchi "while generally it is true that the more options an item contains, the more accurate evaluation it yields, there might be cases when only such a polarized, yes–no decision can be considered reliable" (Dörnyei & Taguchi 32). One of the cases can be applied here, which is when the questions seek answers on a specific area of study habits, especially occurrences of various behaviors in the past (Dörnyei & Taguchi 32). However, there might be a drawback to this type of question as respondents might perceive the question as too "forced" (Dörnyei & Taguchi 32). To countermeasure this, a middle position to some of the questions, such as 'I don't know', was added. In addition to this drawback, it is to be kept in mind that a bias: the acquiescence bias[18], could also stem from these sorts of questions. This bias is when the respondent simply responds in the affirmative way when in doubt (Dörnyei & Taguchi 32).

Rating scale questions were also added, which allowed the respondents to make an evaluative judgement on the question (Dörnyei & Taguchi 26). The scale had multiple points, which indicated different degrees of the category. This type of judgement scale nevertheless presents a potential risk of biased answers as each respondent may attribute a different meaning to a word.

Finally, since open-ended questions are quite difficult to analyze, as mentioned above, a maximum of 250 characters per open-ended questions was allocated.

5.3.1.1.3. *3ʳᵈ section: respondents who do not use influencers' content*

The third part of the survey, which covered questions 35 to 38, sought to collect information from respondents who did not use influencers' content in their classrooms, which was as important as the ones who did (as mentioned in the introduction). The purpose of this section was to understand why some teachers did not use influencers. To this end, three Likert questions were asked as well as one open-ended question with the same character limitation mentioned above, before arriving to the final page of the questionnaire.

5.3.1.1.4. *4ᵗʰ section: "Thank you" page*

Once the respondents from both sections finished completing their section, they were redirected to the final page of the survey which thanked the respondents for their participation, as was recommended by Dörnyei and Taguchi (Dörnyei & Taguchi 21). It also provided them with

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[18] See section 5.3.1.1.5. for further explanations.

necessary contact details in case they were interested in the research topic, and it provided the researchers with their contact details in case follow-up questions were needed.

5.3.1.1.5. *Potential limitation and shortcomings of the survey construction*

In her seminar, PhD student Audrey Renson presented some of the biases inherent to surveys, such as the prestige bias (or social desirability), the acquiescence bias and the tiredness bias, all important to consider when constructing surveys. In order to have more information about these potential biases, Dörnyei and Taguchi's book was of great value. According to Dörnyei and Taguchi, although surveys might be 'perfect research instruments', they do unfortunately have serious shortcomings, which might make them 'not reliable or valid' (Dörnyei & Taguchi 6).

Firstly, it is worth noting that because the survey was a Web-based survey, the respondents could not ask additional information on the questions, which is why they needed to be straightforward and understood by everybody (Dörnyei & Taguchi 7). As a result of the input from Professor Simons as well as the trial run respondents, all the questions were made as easily interpretable as possible.

Secondly, even though some respondents might have been interested in both subject researchs[19], the possibility that they were unmotivated respondents remained, which might have been the case if they were more interested in one of the topics of research than the other. Consequently, the results might be different from one individual to another depending on the time and care they chose or were able to give (Dörnyei & Taguchi 7). According to Dörnyei and Taguchi, respondents are also prone to leave some questions out, either by mistake or because they did not like them (Dörnyei & Taguchi 7). However, this was not an issue in our case, as all questions were made mandatory to answer before the respondent was able to move onto the next section.

Thirdly, another risk which might arise in surveys is the *Social Desirability (or Prestige) Bias.* According to Dörnyei and Taguchi, respondents are able to guess which response is the most acceptable or desirable and, as a consequence, some of the respondents will provide an answer which is not true to them (Dörnyei & Taguchi 8). To counteract this bias, it was mentioned in the introduction of the survey that there were no 'right' or 'wrong'

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[19] As a reminder, my partner and I sent our surveys as if it were one document. Respondents had to answer both subject research in order to validate it.

answers and that the survey was anonymous in an attempt to encourage transparency and truthfulness in the respondents' answers.

Fourthly, as previously mentioned, the A*cquiescence bias* could also play a role in giving unreliable answers, as it refers to the "tendency of people to agree with a sentence when they are unsure or ambivalent" (Dörnyei & Taguchi 9).

Fifthly, a possible other risk, which deals with the emotive side of things, namely: the *Halo Effect,* refers to the "human tendency to (over)generalize" (Dörnyei & Taguchi 9). In other words, the more we like a topic, the less inclined we will be to say anything bad about it, and the more we do not like a topic, the less inclined we will be to say anything good about it, possibly even leading us to be even more negative about it (Dörnyei & Taguchi 9).

Lastly, the length of the survey might negatively impact respondents as it might lead to them giving up if the survey is too long and tedious. This is called the *Fatigue Effect* (Dörnyei & Taguchi 9)*.* In order to counteract this effect, Dörnyei and Taguchi recommend writing a maximum of four to six pages with a completion time limit that does not exceed 30 minutes (Dörnyei & Taguchi 12)*.* Fortunately, even though the overall survey, which included the two individual surveys, was long, the time respondents needed to take to complete it did not exceed 30 minutes. However, it was noted that the fatigue effect may have still been felt by some of the respondents, especially since my survey was the second and last one to be completed.

5.3.1.2. Trial run

Before finalizing the survey, one of the final steps was to send it to a small sample of respondents as a trial run. It was sent the weekend before the holiday break of the 23rd of February 2022, and had to be finalized for the 6th of March 2022, giving the respondents a week to complete it. By doing so, we might have exposed ourselves to the vulnerability that some of the sample respondents might have gone on holiday and did not have enough time to complete it. The purpose of the trial run was to ensure that there were no mistakes or technical problems left, which could arise when constructing a Web-based survey on a platform, but also for the respondents to make suggestions, if needed, and to calculate the time they needed to complete the survey, as to have an average time frame. To this end, the researchers reached out to nine teachers and a school, some of which had supervised the researchers' internships, in order for this panel to be representative of the school networks, as recommended by Professor Simons. Some of these teachers were asked to share the email to other FL teachers they knew, so as to create a *snowball sampling effect*, something Dörnyei and Taguchi describe as a "chain

reaction" (Dörnyei & Taguchi 61). Of the 9 respondents selected, 6 came from the subsidized free education and 3 taught in publics schools organized by the WBF. The school reached out to was part of the subsidized public education organized by the province. Among the teachers, 3 assistants in the modern language didactics department at the University of Liège (Julie Vanhoof, Florence Van Hoof and Alain Segatto) were also asked to participate, as well as PhD student Andrey Renson. Unfortunately, of the 13 people asked to participate, only 8 responded, with the school not respondent either. This implied an absence of a representative panel of 10 teachers, as recommended.

The trial run proved conclusive, especially when it came to typos, but no important mistakes were highlighted. It is important to note, however, that several comments were made on to the layout of the survey, which, unfortunately, could not be rectified, as the platform used, Google Forms, did not offer the necessary tools to be able to modify the layout. The length of the overall survey was also commented on. With regard to the length of this survey, I preferred having a wider sample of questions in order to touch upon various topics and to not overlook some of the questions initially perceived to be important. Owing to the trial run, the average time of completion was calculated to be between 15 and 30 minutes, which was still within the time frame recommended by Dörnyei and Taguchi.

5.3.1.3.   *Survey administration*

After the trial run and after the modifications were made, emails were sent by Mrs Van Hoof on the 30th of March 2022 to the teachers who were part of the internship tutor database working with the University of Liège. Once more, the survey was sent right before Easter break, which proved to be poor timing, considering only 26 answers were received after three weeks of it being online. To resolve this shortcoming, the survey was resent to the same database. The link to this survey was also posted on a teachers' Facebook group, in order to reach as many teachers as possible. The survey remained online for two and a half months and, received a total of 58. It is worth noting, however, that the reason why the number of responses were low may have been due to the fact that the teachers from this database are often required to answer surveys, especially in the last year, when they had six surveys to complete; thus, the motivation might not have been very high to participate this year.

5.3.1.4. *Survey processing*

This survey was quite typical (Dörnyei & Taguchi 9), as it was made to either ask specific pieces of information or offered various response options for the respondents to choose from. In other words, the analysis of my survey was a quantitative analysis. The results of the survey were collected by Google Forms and were summarized in an Excel worksheet, which made the analysis a lot easier. First, the proportion of teachers who were using influencers' content in their classroom needed to be found. Once this information was obtained, it was interesting to know what type of teachers were actually using influencers (i.e., age, gender, school network…) and if those criteria had any influence on the result.

It was also paramount to know how those teachers who did use influencers were constructing the activities or even the lesson plan. To this end, the specific questions about the activity itself were regrouped, so as to create some sort of a 'how-to' guide to using influencers according to the answers received.

Ultimately, the relationship which could exist between the quantitative data from this survey, and the other quantitative data from the survey directed to the students was to be explore to see if some information could be linked to each one another, especially motivation wise.

5.3.2. *Results and analysis*

In the following section, the results of the survey and an analysis of the data collected are presented. As mentioned before, there are more questions in the survey than were necessary for the subject research but were still left in the survey for additional information purpose. Because of this, however, these additional questions will be overlooked in order to focus on the more important ones relevant to the research.

5.3.2.1. *Respondent's profile*

First, it is worth noting that the panel of respondents are mostly women. Indeed, of the 58 respondents, 51 are women, 6 are men and only 1 identifies as gender neutral. Additionally, the panel of respondents have been teaching for varying amounts of time, as shown in Graph 5.1 below. As can be seen, the respondents are divided into seven teaching experience categories: the majority of respondents have been teaching for 11 to 20 years (N=17), while the second most representative group have been teaching for 21 to 30 years (N=14). Thus, more than half of this panel represented teachers who are quite out of touch with today's generation.

The rest of the panel is composed of 10 respondents who have been teaching for 6 to 10 years, 8 respondents have been teaching for 31 to 40 year and 1 respondent has been teaching for 41 to 45 years, which increased the number of respondents who are out of touch to 40 out of 58. Only 6 respondents have been teaching for less than 5 years. The rest of the respondents are student teachers (N=4) who have only been teaching during their internships.

How long have you been teaching?

- I am a student
- 5 or less
- Between 6 and 10
- Between 11 and 20
- Between 21 and 30
- Between 31 and 40
- Between 41 and 45
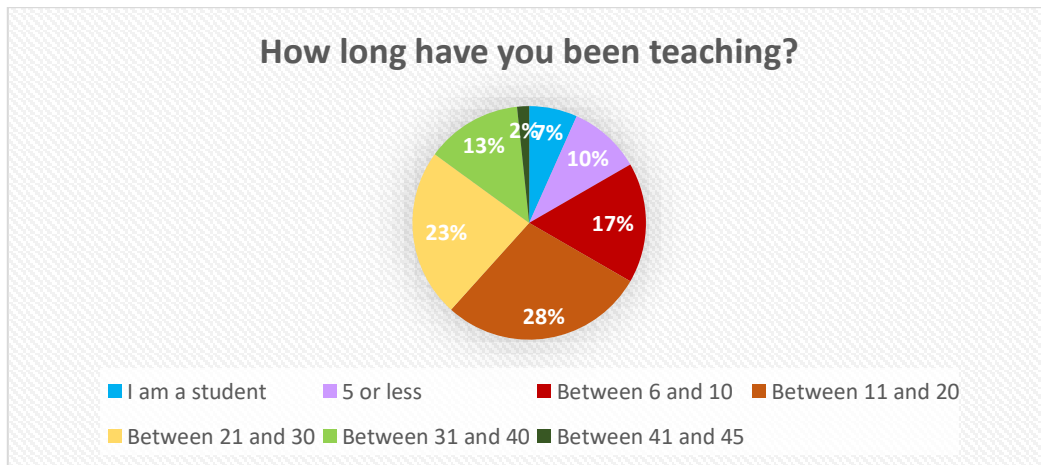
Graph 5.1 - Distribution of responses to the question 'How long have you been teaching?'

As for the education networks, the majority of respondents (N=27) comes from the official network organized by the WBF, followed closely by those coming from the subsidized free confessional network (N=26), with only 4 coming from the official network subsidized by the WBF. The rest of the respondents comes from the non-subsidized free non-confessional network (N=2), which is far less represented. Only 1 is still a student with no experience. The reason why the total number of respondents equals to 60 instead of the previously mentioned 58 is due to the possibility that some of the respondents might be working in two different networks at the same time.

Lastly, the most frequently taught language among the respondents is English (82.8%) followed by Dutch (36.2%), German and Spanish share the third position, both with 27.6%, followed by French (3.4%) and finally, Italian (1.7%).

5.3.2.2. *Respondents who use influencers' content*

In the second section of my survey, I was looking to further add to the respondent's profile before getting into their teaching practices in order to respond to the sixth and seventh research questions (see section 5.2).

Of the 58 respondents, the majority (N=43) do not watch influencers' content, which is not that surprising when knowing that the majority of the respondents are between the age of 30 and 45. Additionally, of the 58 respondents, the majority have not used influencers' content in their FL classroom (N=44), which means that 14 respondents have (see Graph 5.2 below).
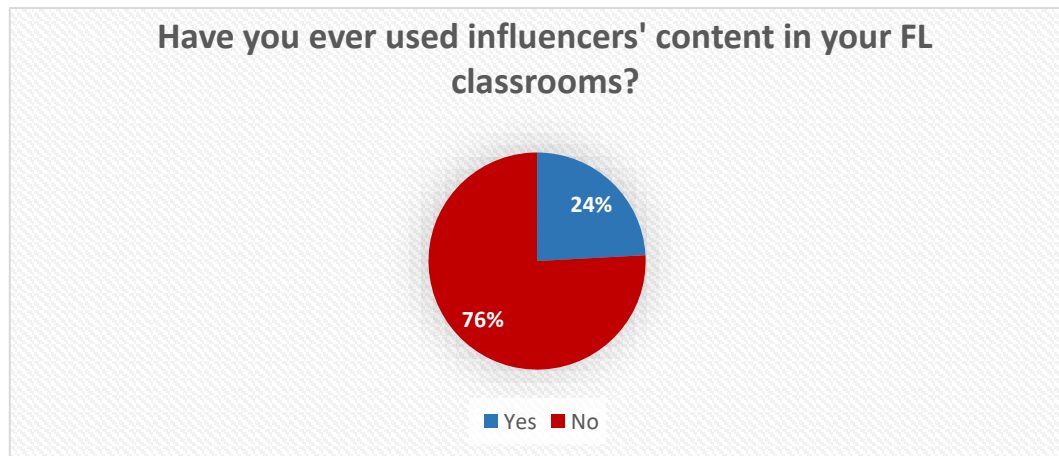
Graph 5.2 - Distribution of responses to the question 'Have you ever used influencers' content in your FL classrooms?'

Among those who are using influencers' content (N=14), all are women, which confirms the gender hypothesis. What is surprising, however, is that of those 14 respondents who are using influencers' content in their classroom, not all of them watch influencers' content in their own free time (N=5), which probably means that some of them are using influencers as a pedagogical tool that they do not particularly enjoy, but know that students will be interested in. What is also surprising, is that those who do not use influencers' content in their classroom are the ones watching them the most often during their free time. It is a surprising result, as those watching influencers in their free time should know the benefits of using them more than those who do not watch influencers, and yet, the latter are those using them more in class. Although, this result could stem from the fact that those watching them the most during their free time are also the younger teachers who might want to try to abide by the curricula and avoid bringing in new ideas which could seem unconventional to their older colleagues.

When looking solely at those who do use influencers' content (N=14), regardless of what they do in their free time (see Graph 5.3 below), half of the 14 respondents have been teaching for less than 10 years, while the other half is composed of the respondents who have been teaching for more than 11 years. This result is not as clear-cut as initially imagined, because although the majority of the respondents who do not use influencers' content (N=44)

have been teaching for more than 11 years (N=33), those who do use influencers' content are not particularly part of the younger age demographic, something initially hypothesized.
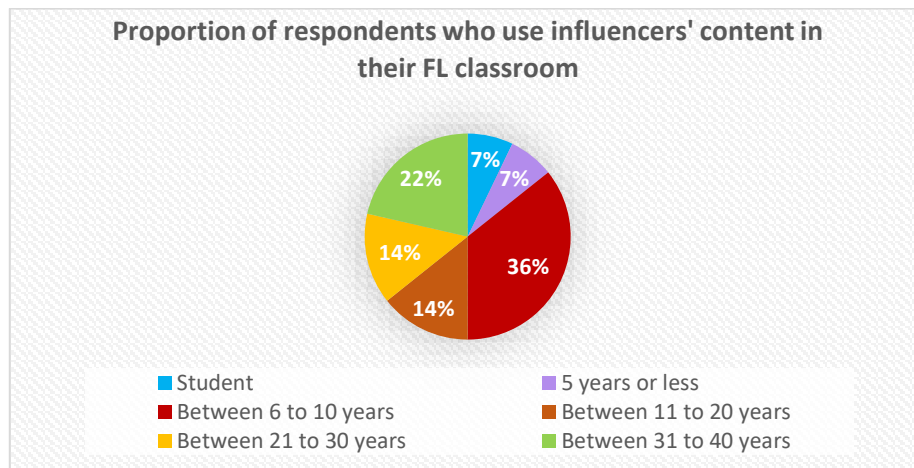
Graph 5.3 - Distribution of respondents who use influencers' content by years of experience

In what concerns the rest of this second section, it was attempted to both understand several teaching practices relevant to influencers' content in order to respond to the eighth research question, and to also create a lesson plan based on those results (see Chapter 6). Thus, we will briefly go through the questions relevant to the teaching practices regarding influencers' content.

The fifth question sought to find out in which grade teachers would propose influencers' content. The general tendency of respondents is to think that students who have a first foreign language (LM1) are able to start watching influencers' content in fourth grade (N=5) up until fifth (N=14) and sixth grade (N=14), while the respondents who have students who have a second foreign language (LM2) are less inclined to use that content, although some still propose them in fourth grade (N=5) up until fifth (N=9) and sixth grade (N=12). As for students who have a third foreign language (LM3), the results are the same in fifth (N=9) and sixth grade (N=12) as they are for the LM2. Thus, the sooner it is for students in their new language, the less teachers are inclined to use influencers' content, while those who are already further ahead in their language education could be confronted more with that content. Although, it is fair to say that the difference between LM1, LM2 and LM3 is not stark. The assumption could be made, then, that influencers' content could be used in every grade, with reservations about LM2 and LM3 when it comes to the linguistic content itself (accent, flow, idioms…) which would need to be more suited to students.

The sixth question sought to understand which platform teachers were using the most when proposing influencers' content. The most widely used platforms are YouTube (N=14), podcasts (N=8) and blogs (N=8), while Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok and Twitter result as equals with 10 respondents who are against these platforms and 4 who are in favor.

The ninth question sought to understand the pedagogical purpose of using a platform such as a podcast. All the respondents (N=9[20]) agree that such platform is used with the purpose of developing the listening skills of students, the culture of the target language as well as to develop new vocabulary. In addition to this, 8 respondents state that they use them to teach idioms related to a younger language, while 7 respondents agree influencers' content could be useful when teaching language functions, 6 respondents agree that developing a better pronunciation is also an objective they are seeking, as well as text genre and MIL. As for grammar and education of citizenship, only 4 respondents agree that using influencers' content could be useful.

The tenth question sought to understand the pedagogical purpose of using another platform such as YouTube. All the respondents (N=14) agree that such a platform is used with the purpose of developing the listening skills of students, the culture of the target language to said students as well as to develop wider vocabulary and language functions. Furthermore, 11 respondents agree that developing a better pronunciation is also an objective they are seeking, 9 respondents agree that they use influencers to teach idioms related to a younger language as well as grammar and 8 respondents agree influencers' content could be useful when teaching text genre. As for MIL and education of citizenship, only 7 agree that it could be useful. Thus, although YouTube is more popular among teachers than a podcast, both platforms are deemed useful tools to help develop all of the skills mentioned above, with the exception of grammar and education of citizenship when using podcasts.

The eleventh question sought to know who chose the influencers' content used in the classroom. The responses are quite balanced, as the content could be chosen by the teacher (N=14), by the students (N=13), or by a suggestion from a colleague (N=14).

The twelfth question sought to know how teachers chose influencers, especially if they were the ones picking them. The answers do not vary much, as they all agree that the accent (N=13), the flow of their speaking (N=13) and the credibility (N=13) of the influencer is important, as well as the content, especially if there are cultural aspects (N=13) involved and

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[20] Let us keep in mind that although 8 respondents have said that they were using podcasts as a platform in question 6, there have been 9 respondents who have replied to question 9

sufficient new vocabulary input (N=13). Even though the grammar (N=11) and the quality of the video (N=12) are still positive answers, they range a little less than the other answers. The notoriety of the influencer among students (N=6) do not seem to be an important criterion for teachers. A couple of respondents also add two new options: "*la façon dont le sujet que je souhaite exploité est traité*" (this respondent only seems to value the vocabulary input and her added response, without taking into account the other options) and "*la qualité du message véhiculé*".

The next question sought to understand the potential added value of watching influencers' content. The fact that the content is created by a native person (N=14), the modernity of the platforms (N=14), the free use of the platforms (N=14), the ease of access (N=14), the ease of use (N=14), the motivating content (N=14) and the fact that this visual content could help students understand the message better (N=14) all seem to appeal to the respondents. Some of the respondents think that the familiar and young language spoken (N=12), as well as the modernity of the content itself (N=12) could also be of value. However, 9 respondents think that the fact that students might know the content in advance is not an added value to influencers' content.

The fourteenth question sought to know when teachers made use of influencers' content within their lesson plans. All respondents agree that they use influencers' content as an introduction to their topic (N=14) in order to attract students' attention as well as a listening exercise (N=14). Others use it as a means to get students to do a written activity (N=12) and oral activity (N=13) at the end of the lesson plan. However, only 5 respondents use them as a reward.

The fifteenth and sixteenth question sought to know the thematic field and topics targeted by teachers when choosing a video. The most targeted thematic fields used by teachers are the travel field (N=11), the daily living field (N=9), the health and wellness field (N=9) and personal characterization field (N=9). These are followed by the purchases and services field (N=8), the hobby field (N=7), the habitat and environment field (N=6), the teaching field (N=6), the weather field (N=6) and the food and drinks field (N=6). As for the less targeted thematic fields, the relationship with others field (N=5), and the time field (N=5) are the least chosen. However, there are no thematic fields left unchosen, which could mean that every thematic field could be covered by influencers' content.

The seventeenth question gave an idea of the topics chosen within those thematic fields. The most used topics are sports (N=13), languages (N=11), celebrities (N=11), cooking (N=10) and fashion (N=9). The less chosen topics are video games (N=5) and makeup (N=4), possibly

due to the fact that they do not appeal to both genders, potentially making it difficult to get everyone's attention in class when working on one or the other topic.

Questions 18 and 19 sought to understand what the language and cross-curricula skills were that were targeted by teachers when using influencers' content. On the one hand, the language skills teachers are targeting the most are listening skills (N=14), followed by oral skills (with interaction (N=11) and without interaction (N=9)) and lastly written skills (N=6). On the other hand, the cross-curricular skills aimed for are 'how to talk about influencers' content (N=13), 'how to use new technologies' (N=13), as well as 'how to develop critical thinking' (N=12) and 'to identify a piece of information in a context' (N=11).

The next three questions sought to know whether teachers made use of subtitles when using an audiovisual content such as influencers' content. Although most of the respondents use subtitles to some extend (N=11), the manner of use varies quite a lot. Indeed, 5 respondents use them only for the second and third listening, 2 use them for every listening, 2 use them for the first and second listening only, 1 uses them for the second listening only and the last one uses them for the third listening only. The only thing all respondents agree upon is the language in which to offer the subtitles, which is always the foreign language (N=11).

Questions were then asked relating to their students' profile, such as if they knew if their students watched influencers' content and if they had a better overall proficiency level than others who did not watch influencers' content and in which linguistic area. According to the respondents, 12 of them believe that students who do watch influencers' content in the foreign language have a better overall level of the language than those who do not watch influencers' content, especially in English, seeing as, it is the most widely used language. Those students are better in every aspect of the language, especially listening skills (N=12), vocabulary (N=12), idioms (N=12), followed by intonation (N=11), pronunciation (N=9) and culture (N=8).

Question 29 sought to collect teachers' opinion on the motivational aspect of those types of content, to which 12 state that students appreciate the fact that they bring in an activity which they normally do in their free time, while 2 do not know the answer.

As for MIL, 12 respondents affirm that they do sensitize students to the fact that there is some sort of manipulation when watching influencers' content, as the purpose of influencers is usually to get the viewers to buy the product the influencer is promoting. To this end, those respondents mostly try to get their students to understand the type of persuasive language used in those videos in order to show them how influencers are trying to convince their viewers to buy something (N=11). They also explain to students that they always need to educate

themselves on the topic before making a judgment (N=10) as well as explain that it is always wise to look for multiple points of view before making a judgement (N=10), which can also be linked to another option, which is explaining what influencers are and thus, their purpose (N=10). Comparing videos of the same topic might possibly be too time consuming if the purpose of the lesson plan is not on MIL. Similarly, explaining the frame of the shot might also be too difficult for those who never received any training on this matter. The 2 respondents who do not sensitize their students to influencers' content agree that they do not have time to do so. While it is purely because of time for first respondent, the second respondent mentions that she do not master this kind of teaching because she was no taught to do so.

5.3.2.3. *Respondents who do not use influencers' content*

As a reminder, there are 14 respondents who do not use influencers' content in their FL classrooms. As mentioned before, the negative answers are as important to this research as the positive ones are in order to understand the reason why respondents do not use influencers' content. To this end, the question 35 was created. The respondents all agree (N=43), apart from one respondent, that influencers' content is motivating for students. Despite this answer, the biggest issue for most of the respondents is that they do not like the values promoted by influencers, such as consumerism, beauty standards, etc. (N=29). In addition, of 44 respondents, 26 respondents do not see any pedagogical advantages to this type of content. Therefore, of the 58 respondents for the whole survey, 32 believe there are pedagogical advantages to using influencers' content (14 who use them and 18 who believe there are benefits). Additionally, 23 of them state that this type of content is not part of their generation. However, a lot of the respondents (N=27) mention that they never really thought about it, to which 2 respondents have added in the open-ended question that from now on, they would consider it further, as can be seen in Table 5.2 below.

Table 5.2 – Responses to the question 'Other' question based on the question 'what are the reasons why you do not use influencers content?'

	Answers
1	Pourquoi encore confronter nos jeunes à ce tissu de débilités circulant sur ces réseaux "asociaux", STOP à la connerie humaine !!!!
2	Je n'y ai effectivement jamais pensé, je vais désormais investiguer !
3	Le niveau de ces documents ne correspond pas à celui de mes LM2.

4	Je n'y ai simplement jamais pensé, mais c'est quelque chose que je pourrais faire à l'avenir si le contexte s'y prête.

As seen in Table 5.2 above, there is one respondent who is adamant on not using influencers. Interestingly, this respondent is also the oldest respondent with between 41 to 45 years of teaching experience, a factor that could play a role in her decision not to delve further into that type of content. As previously seen with the analysis of the video done in Chapter 4 as well as with responses from other respondents, there are indeed benefits to using influencers in a classroom and not all of them promote negative values. There is also another concern which is that the language level of the content does not fit LM2 students, which, as previously seen, is also the concern of other teachers, although it did not hold the teachers back from using influencers' content.

Finally, question 37 sought to know the advantages of other pedagogical tools compared to influencers' content according to the respondents who do not use influencers' content. Although many respondents did reply to this question, most of them did not write the name of the tool they are using at the beginning of their statement, although it was asked of them to do so. Therefore, in the Table 5.3 below, only 13 statements out of the 38 statements will be used.

Table 5.3 - Responses to the question 'what would be the advantages of other tools compared to influencers' video or podcast?'

	Answers
1	Les thèmes abordés par les **vidéos, films et chansons** sont plus intéressants et pertinents que des podcasts d'influenceurs.
2	**Video**: sérieux de l'information.
3	**JT** : A priori, style journalistique structuré, construit. Mais un.e influenceur.euse pourrait l'être aussi.
4	**Films** car plus intéressants à exploiter par la suite en classe au niveau des thèmes abordés
5	**Films** : apport culturel et historique
6	**Vidéo** sur YouTube je ne maîtrise pas les vidéos ou audios d'influenceurs
7	**YouTube** : un éventail de possibilités selon le thème enseigné. Divers niveaux de langue. **NETFLIX** : Idem, beaucoup de documentaires assez courts sur des thèmes très variés, VO + sous titres en anglais disponibles etc. **Chanson, films, etc.** : apport culturel et linguistique plus intéressant.

8	**Vidéos** : le contenu du message est plus adapté aux thèmes rencontrés pendant les cours
9	**Les chansons** leurs permettent de réécouter et de peut-être déjà mémoriser des exemples de grammaire : une chanson avec des *modal verbs* pour mémoriser leur signification
10	**Vidéo de British Council ou Oxford University** (par exemple). Je fais davantage confiance à la source et le contenu est adapté aux apprenants.
11	J'exploite les vidéos **YouTube de la chaîne BBC News** pour traiter de l'actualité. Je ne pourrais pas traiter de l'actualité avec du contenu d'influenceurs.
12	Une **série** par exemple, il y a une histoire, du fond. C'est beaucoup plus intéressant.
13	**Vidéos YouTube** : il en existe de toutes les durées, sur tous les thèmes et elles sont téléchargeables facilement. Le film a un aspect plus attractif et la chanson aussi.

When it comes to movies and TV series, the hypothesis could be made that, although the value of such tools is undeniable, the length of time required to watch them is not always practical in a 45–50 minute lesson. Clearly, if the purpose of the lesson plan is to learn a particular cultural or historical topic, influencers would not fit that lesson plan, unless there is an influencer dealing with that specific topic. However, it could be believed that influencers would be a better tool to deal with other types of topics because they are not as time consuming as movies or series, they can be a recurring activity as opposed to movies, which are usually proposed once or twice a year, and, as seen in Chapter 4, the amount of input is subsequent and can be relevant to the topic at hand, cultural wise too. As for videos from the British Council or Oxford University and the various news channels, it could be agreed upon that these are tools which have proven to be advantageous. However, influencers' content can be just as serious and can also play a big role in students' motivation due to the type of language being closer to theirs, meaning students can identify more towards influencers than to videos on those 'serious' channels. As for other YouTube videos, it should not be assumed that they are more reliable than influencers' content as influencers must be reliable for brands to contact them. However, their content should still be carefully assessed, as for everything we watch and share with young and impressionable minds. Finally, when it comes to songs, they offer great advantages as well, especially for beginners, as students are confronted to shorter sentences, and can listen to them more often than if watching videos. However, the length of a song also implies that the input will be less important than an influencers' content. Obviously, this analysis is purely based my point of view and on the analysis of Chapter 4. As such, further comparative analysis must be conducted in order to have a more reliable and objective analysis on the matter. Although the aim of the thesis is also to find potential advantages to influencers' content, they are in no way

the answer to all problems encountered in a FL classroom, and must be complemented by other types of tools, such as all of the ones mentioned above, so as to offer diverse tools to students as well as to expose students to different types of languages.

5.3.2.4. *Conclusion*

In this first survey directed to teachers, three of the research questions were answered. Notably, that of the sixth research question, which sought to know if teachers made use of influencers' content in their FL classroom. The hypothesis was that it would come down to age and gender, which is what the seventh research question sought to understand, especially if there was a correlation between the age and gender of teachers and their use of influencers' content in the FL classroom. When analyzing the survey, it was found that 14 respondents do use influencers content out of 58 respondents, which is not a lot. However, although the 14 respondents are women, they are not particularly younger. Indeed, there is a mix of years of teaching experience and the younger teachers, who watch more influencers' content themselves, do not particularly use their content more in their teaching practices.

The eighth research question sought to understand how and why teachers actually use an influencer's content and the hypothesis accompanying this question was that teachers do not make use of the influencer's full potential, as seen with MIL and in Chapter 4. Results shows that this hypothesis could be partially rejected. Indeed, the 14 respondents who do use influencers' content usually involve MIL in the activity, more specifically, by making students find out the language used in that type of content. Nevertheless, it is not as thorough as the analysis in Chapter 4, as some of the respondents are only concerned in orally explaining what influencers are and that it is important for students to have multiple points of views and to make further research before making a judgment. Also, they do not analyze the frame because of the lack of knowledge about this type of analysis.

Finally, it is important to keep in mind that those conclusions cannot be generalized, as the survey do not give sufficient insights into the teaching practices of enough teachers in order for a generalization to be made about what the majority of teachers do. However, for the sake of this dissertation, the results still hold importance.

5.4. SURVEY DEDICATED TO STUDENTS IN THE WALLONIA-BRUSSEL FEDERATION

5.4.1. Methodology

This section will present the different steps which were necessarily taken in order to construct and finalize the survey directed to students[21].

5.4.1.1. Survey construction

This survey was constructed based on the advice of Professor Simons as well as knowledge acquired from Zoltán Dörnyei and Tatsuya Taguchi's book, *Questionnaires in Second Language Research. Construction, Administration, and Processing* (2010). Additionally, Professor Simons also helped proofreading the survey to the account of ten times between December 2021 and March 2022.

As recommended by Professor Simons, the survey took the form of a paper-and-pencil-based survey even though the Web-based ones were easier to design, administer and analyze the results. The reason why it was decided to do it so, was because students commonly do not have any interest in surveys, and because they do not understand the stakes of a research study yet, compared to adults. Consequently, the participation rate would not have been the same as that of the survey directed to teachers. In addition, it gave the possibility to the students interviewed to ask questions if they did not understand a question, which proved necessary, even though the proofreading done by Professor Simons foresaw and mitigated incomprehension in the questions.

Furthermore, to ensure a better comprehension of the questions, this survey was written in French, which was assumed as the first language of most respondents.

As with the first survey directed to teachers, it was also made clear in the introduction that the survey complied with the GDPR.

Moreover, the survey, which consisted of twelve pages, was divided into four sections. The first section hosted the general introduction as well as the respondent's profile. The second section focused on the respondents who watched influencers' content during their spare time, while the third section focused on those who did not watch influencers' content in their spare time. The fourth section was where the respondents from both sections were redirected in order to answer some common questions before the final 'thank you' page.

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[21] A copy of this survey is available to consult in Appendix E.

5.4.1.1.1. 1ˢᵗ section: general introduction and respondent's profile

This first section of the survey dealt with the general introduction, which briefly introduced the researcher and then explained the purpose of the survey, the importance of the students' participation, the timing needed to complete the survey, the confidentiality aspect as well as the definition of the term '*influenceur',* which was also used in the teachers' survey. It was also deemed important to remind the respondents that the subject of research focused on audiovisual influencers and not written ones, which was important information for them to be aware of, as the input for the survey relied on this differentiation.

After the general introduction, the respondents had to fill in the respondent's profile. The questions, which covered questions 1 to 6, were relevant to the personal characteristics of each participant, such as sex, age, their school network and if they possessed an electronic device which could allow them to have access to influencers' content. Once the participant had filled in the respondent's profile, they were asked if they were watching influencers' content in their spare time, regardless of the language. If they did, they could continue the survey, but if they did not, they had to skip to page 10.

5.4.1.1.2. 2ⁿᵈ section: "Yes"

The second part of the survey, which covered questions 7 to 25, sought to understand the relationship teenagers have with influencers in general, what kind of topics they were more interested in and most importantly, if they watched influencers' content in a foreign language purposely, and if so, did they believe their foreign language skills improved as a consequence. To this end, multiple close-ended questions were used, namely Likert scales, multiple-choice questions, "Yes" or "No" questions as well as a couple of open-ended questions when they were required to further justify some information.

5.4.1.1.3. 3ʳᵈ section: "No"

The third part of the survey, which covered questions 26 to 28, sought to collect information from the respondents who did not watch influencers' content during their spare time, notably why they did not watch their content and if they still watched videos or podcasts not related to influencers, in either the L1 or a foreign language. To this end, only Likert scales questions were asked.

5.4.1.1.4. 4th section: common section and "thank you" page

The fourth part of the survey, which covered questions 29 to 34, sought to collect information from both respondents about their experience as students related to influencers' content in their classes, regardless of the didactics, and their opinion on why they think teachers do not use influencers' content in the classroom as well as if they would be motivated to learn their foreign language(s) with the help of influencers. To this end, Likert scales, multiple-choice questions and "Yes" or "No" questions were designed.

Once the respondents completed the survey, a 'thank you' page was provided. It also provided the researcher with the respondents' emails in case follow-up questions arose.

5.4.1.1.5. Potential limitations and shortcomings of the survey construction

For the sake of brevity, it is encouraged to refer the reader back to section 5.2.1.1.5, which already dealt with the potential limitations of a survey, specifically when it came to the motivation of the respondents, the a*cquiescence bias* and the *halo effect,* all of which might impact students even more than they would adults.

5.3.1.2. Trial run

As with the teachers' survey, one of the final steps of this survey directed to students was to send it to a small sample of respondents as a trial run. The trial was conducted in March 2022 at the school where the researcher's internship took place, with the permission of the tutor. The purpose of the trial run was to ensure that there were no mistakes and design problems left, but also the time needed to complete the survey to be calculated. Additionally, knowing that not many teachers would have agreed to let the researcher come and steal 15 minutes of their lesson time, a representative panel of the school networks and grades were not sufficiently composed. The sample of respondents was thus composed of 16 students of fourth grade present in the class at the end of the internship.

The trial run proved conclusive; in that the rectifications of two shortcomings present in the survey were done. Notably, the page number as to where the respondents from the second section were redirected to was then also added, which was composed of one small sentence telling them where to pick the survey up again to end up at the fourth section. The purpose of this change was because the respondents from section two would continue the survey into section three, which was designed solely for the respondents who did not watch influencers' content, making the survey invalid. Another small change consisted in deleting one response

option because it appeared twice in a table. Owing to the trial run, the average time of completion was calculated between 5 and 15 minutes, which was well under the maximum time of 30 minutes, as recommended by Dörnyei and Taguchi.

5.4.1.2.   Survey administration

After the trial run and after rectifications were brought to the survey, request emails were sent in April 2022 to 5 teachers, 4 of whom were tutors of the researcher, as well as two schools. The purpose of sending them in April 2022 was to start the administration of the survey after the Easter break but before the rush of the exams. However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, teachers' schedules were disrupted more than usual, which undoubtedly played a role in the participation rate. Indeed, unfortunately, only the 4 tutors responded positively to the request, which represented 3 teachers from the free network and 1 from a public school organized by the WBF. Correspondingly, the survey has been able to be administered to eight classes, as 1 of the teachers allowed the researcher to attend four of her classes, which represented a total of 144 respondents.

5.4.1.3.   Survey processing

As for the teachers' survey, the analysis of this survey was a quantitative analysis. The results of the survey were encoded and assembled in an Excel worksheet. Although time consuming, this was necessary in order to analyze the results properly. It is worth knowing that out of the 144 respondents, many of the questions were left unanswered, or items were missing. For this reason, they were removed from the analysis as the results would not have been reliable nor usable. Thus, out of 144 respondents, the analysis focused on 114 respondents.

Firstly, the proportion of students who watched influencers' content and those who did not wanted to be uncovered as well as how many watched influencers' content in the foreign language and how many watched them in their first language.

It was also the purpose to find out if, in general, students would be motivated to learn their foreign language through influencers' content.

Ultimately, the relationship which could exist between the quantitative data from this survey, and the other quantitative data from the survey directed to teachers needed to be explored, and if some information could be linked to each other, especially motivation wise.

5.4.2. Results and analysis

5.4.2.1. Respondent's profile

In the students' survey, out of 114 respondents the majority are women (N=62), followed by men (N=48) and gender neutral (N=4), all aged 15 and above. Unfortunately, as explained above, the teachers who accepted the request of the researcher to come and conduct the test in their classrooms were tutors of the researcher. As such, all the respondents are part of the *général* education, meaning that the results of this survey cannot be generalized as they only represent a small portion of students of the same type of education.

Also, it is interesting to know that out of 114 respondents, only 4 do not follow influencers (See Graph 5.4 below).
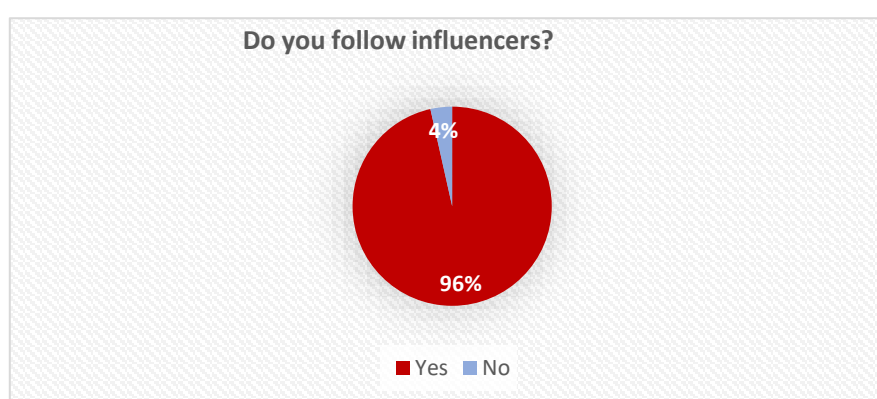
Graph 5.4 - Distribution of responses to the question 'Do you follow influencers?'

5.4.2.2. Respondents who do follow influencers

This section was meant to understand students' practices regarding influencers' content, but more importantly, it sought to answer the ninth research question, which tried to understand if students actually watched content in a foreign language outside of a classroom context, as well as the tenth research question, which sought to know if students would be motivated to learn the foreign language through influencers' content.

With regard to the ninth research question, results show that, out of 110 respondents who watch influencers' content in general, more than half of the respondents watch influencers' content daily (N=63), 33 watch them multiple times per week, and only 11 watch them just once or twice per week. Among those 110 respondents who watch influencers' content, only 6 solely watch French speaking influencers. In Graph 5.5 below, it can be seen that the 104 respondents who watch influencers in a foreign language are mostly exposed to English (N=101), followed by Spanish (N=38), Italian (N=16) and then Dutch (N=14).
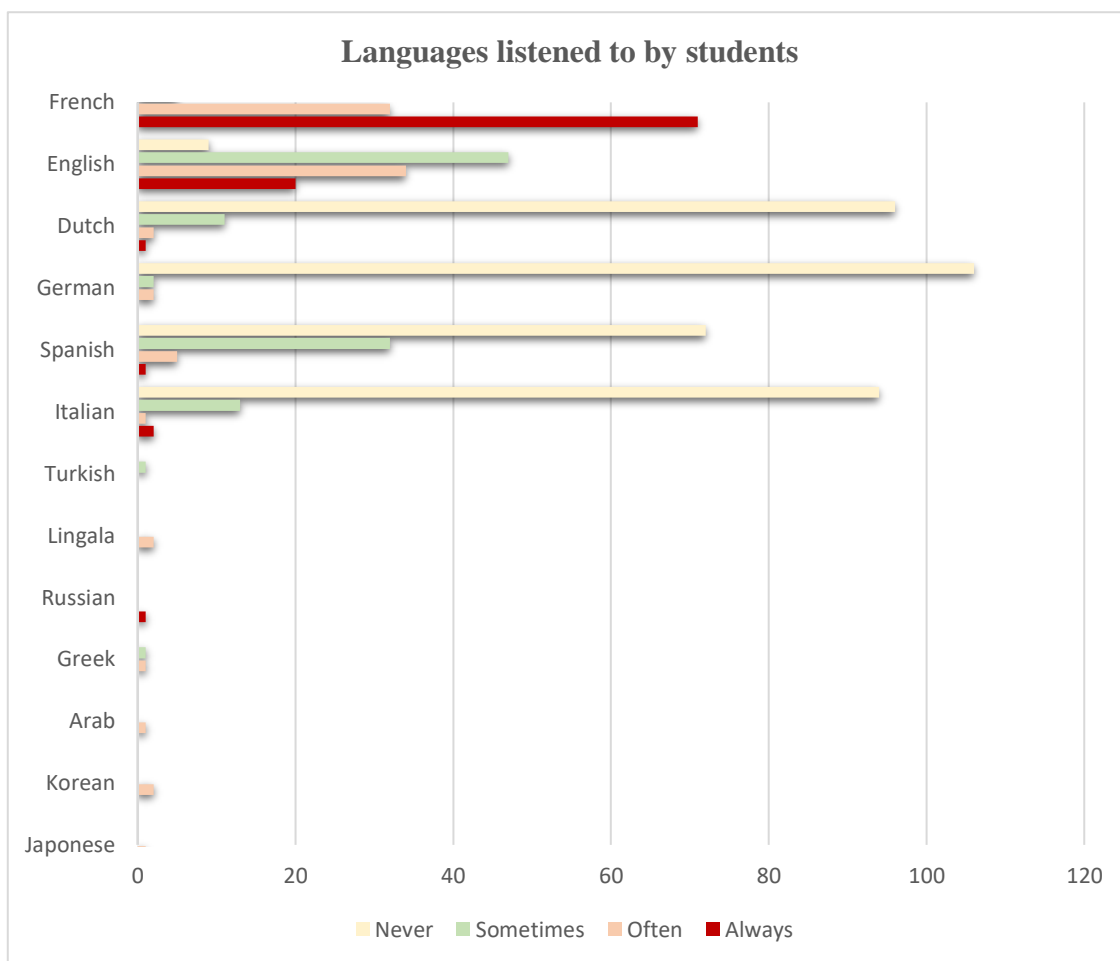
Graph 5.5 - Distribution of responses to the question 'The influencers you are following speak…"

It is worth knowing that out of the 4 students who do no watch any influencers' content, 3 do watch videos on YouTube in a foreign language, meaning that 99% of students are exposed to foreign languages outside of the classroom context. Thus, although the majority still watch content in French, it is fair to say that they are curious and motivated enough to watch content in a foreign language. Indeed, among those 104 respondents who watch influencers' content in a foreign language, 92 of them actually want to learn more about the language and make a conscious decision to learn it.

To further analyze the question of motivation, the tenth research question was further delved into and sought to determine if students would be motivated to have influencers' content in their classroom. In question 24 of the survey, the respondents who do watch influencers content in their free time were asked if they would have the same pleasure of watching influencers' content if they were to watch it in class. In Graph 5.6 below, it can be seen that out of those who watch influencers' content (N=110), almost 81 state that it would still bring them pleasure to watch them in class, while 28 state that it would not.
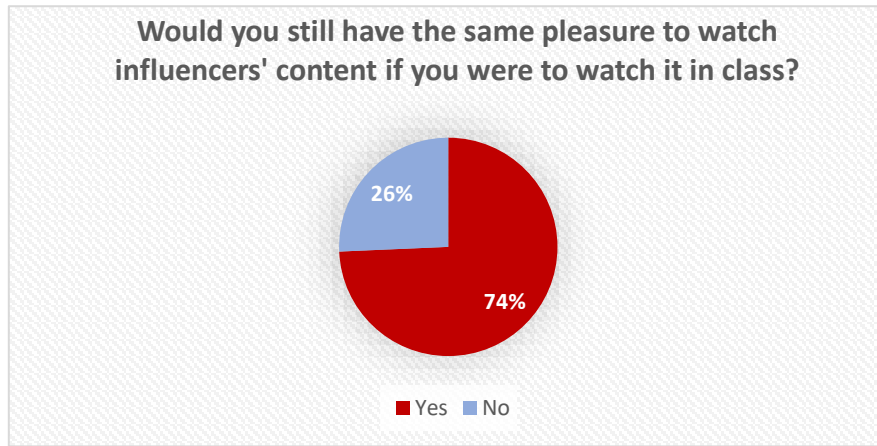
Graph 5.6 - Distribution of responses to the question 'Would you still have the same pleasure to watch influencers' content if you were to watch it in class?'

However, when the totality of the respondents was asked if they would be motivated to learn with foreign languages in question 34 of the survey, it can be seen, in Graph 5.7 below, that out of 114 respondents, 89 would be motivated to learn with FL influencers, while 21 do not know. Only 4 respondents would not want to be confronted by influencers' content in class. Among those 4, only 1 do not watch influencers in their free time, which means that only the 3 respondents who do watch influencers would be bothered if teachers are to bring an activity, which is usually appreciated outside of school, into a school context. In addition, even though 26 state that they would not appreciate watching influencers in class, 15 of them would still be motivated to learn with them.
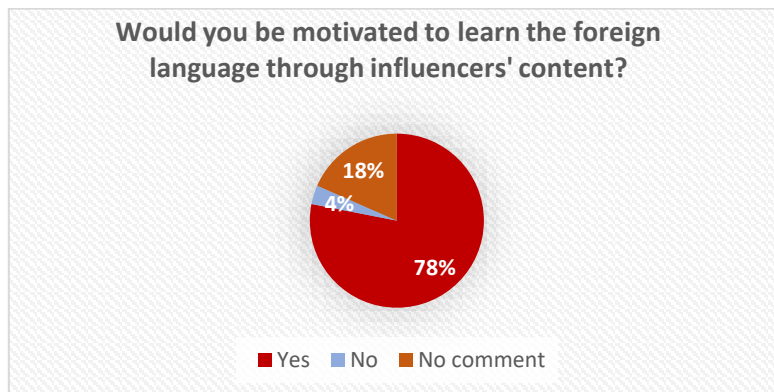
Graph 5.7 - Distribution of responses to the question 'Would you be motivated to learn the foreign language though influencers' content?'

Altogether, it is fair to say to say that a large majority of the respondents watch foreign influencers during their free time, which they do regularly. In a classroom context, 81 respondents report that they would appreciate watching influencers' content and 89

respondents would be motivated to watch influencers' content in order to learn the foreign language.

With the analysis done earlier in this section, it was seen how beneficial influencers could be according to teachers. Now, we will explore what students think of learning from influencers.
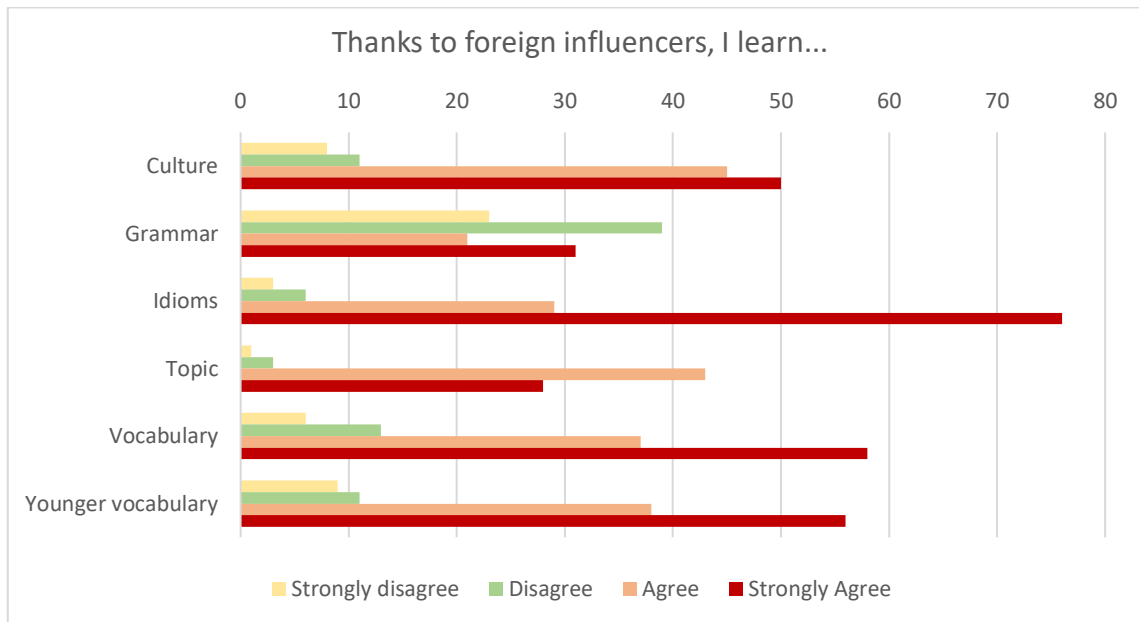
Graph 5.8 - Distribution of response to the question 'Thanks to foreign influencers, I learn…'

In Graph 5.8 above, more than half of the respondents agree that, because they watch foreign influencers, they learn more vocabulary, and specifically, vocabulary closer to their register, which is not present in textbooks or more serious resources. Moreover, 105 of the 110 respondents agree that they learn idioms through influencers' content, which, again, is a lot more present than in textbooks.

When cross-referencing the students' survey with the students' survey, not only do the majority of teachers who watch influencers' content believe that influencers can be beneficial for language learning, but also the students themselves believe that they learn from influencers as well.

5.4.2.3. *Respondents who do not follow influencers*

As for those who do not watch influencers' content in their free time (N=4), they all agree that this type of content do not appeal to them and that it is a waste of time. However, as mentioned

before, they would still be motivated to learn languages through influencers' content in their classrooms.

5.4.3. *Conclusion*

With regard to the ninth question, which sought to discover if students do watch influencers' content in a foreign language, the hypothesis made was that many of them do, as they have greater access to tools nowadays than they did before. This hypothesis is correct, as 110 respondents out of 114 watch influencers' content. Among those 110 respondents who watch influencers' content, 104 watch content in foreign language. The foreign language respondents are exposed to English and Spanish the most, which are one of the most used and spoken languages around the globe. They also report that they purposely learn many linguistical aspects of a language by watching influencers, a sentiment also shared by teachers.

With regard to the tenth research question, which sought to determine if students would be motivated to have influencers' content in their classroom, the accompanying hypothesis was that they would indeed be motivated as it was closer to their interests and reality. Indeed, more than 86 respondents would be motivated to learn the foreign language through influencers and that most of them would even appreciate it as well.

5.5.   CONCLUSION

To conclude, those two surveys were meant to respond to five research questions which guided the research. It is important to reiterate, however, that the results highlighted by both surveys cannot be generalized, as they both hold biases, and they only represent a small proportion of respondents throughout the Wallonia-Brussels Federation.

First of all, the sixth research question, which sought to know if teachers use influencers' content in their classrooms, was considered to be linked to the seventh research question, which sought to understand the correlation between the age and gender of teachers and their use of influencers in the classroom. Several hypotheses were put forward, which were not always confirmed by the surveys. The first hypothesis to the sixth research question was that it depended on the respondent's age and culture: the younger teachers are the more inclined they are to use this type of content. Thus, with regard to the seventh research question, the hypothesis was that age played an important role in the use of influencers' content, as well as for gender, as it was assumed that more women were interested in influencers than men. Results show that, indeed, women are more interested in influencers' than men. However, it was also

found that the age do not play a role in the use of influencers' content and that some teachers are using that content in class when they do not consume them themselves during their free time.

Secondly, as for the eighth research question, which sought to understand how and why teachers actually use influencers' content, the assumption was made that teachers did not make use of their full potential as was seen with MIL and in Chapter 4. Results show that, although respondents do not use influencers' content fully, especially when it comes to MIL, they still use them as either an introductory activity, a listening exercise, or an exercise which would lead to an oral production.

Thirdly, concerning the ninth research question, which sought to discover if students did watch influencers' content in a foreign language, the hypothesis was made that many of them did, as they have an increasing access to a wider range of tools, even if their initial objective was potentially not to actually learn the language. Results show that among 110 respondents who watch influencers' content, 104 watch content in French as well as in a foreign language, most commonly being in English. Among those 104 respondents, 92 of them actively make a conscious decision to watch influencers in order to learn the language and do believe they are learning many different aspects of the language by watching influencers' content.

With regard to the final and tenth research question, which sought to determine if students would be motivated to have influencers' content in their classroom, the assumption was made that they would indeed be motivated. Results show that more than 86 respondents report they would be motivated to learn the foreign language through influencers and that most of them would genuinely appreciate it as well. This offers sufficient evidence to encourage this tool to be taken into consideration, especially since teachers do know that students would be motivated to learn[22] and that they would appreciate it.[23]

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[22] As a reminder, when 44 respondents of the first survey who do not use influencers' content in their classroom were asked about the potential motivation of influencers' content for their students, 43 of them said that, even though they do no use them, they believe students are motivated by this kind of content, and only one said that they are not motivating at all.

[23] As a reminder, when the 14 respondents of the first survey who use influencers' content in their classroom were asked if they think students would appreciate the fact that we bring an activity which is usually undertaken in their free time into a school context, 12 of them said 'yes', two said 'I don't know' and there were no negative responses.

6. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH FOR THE TEACHING OF INFLUENCERS' CONTENT

In this chapter, an analysis has been done of a lesson plan regarding influencers which was created and taught by Julie Moutschen, a fellow MA student, with whom I had to pleasure to conduct an interview with. This was done with the objective of creating my own hypothetical lesson plan based on what we have learned from the theoretical chapter (see Chapter 3), the analysis of the influencer's video (see Chapter 4) as well as the analysis of the surveys (see Chapter 5), which were mostly completed by experienced teachers and by the use of Julie's lesson plan.

Thus, this chapter will firstly host the analysis of the lesson plan created by Julie, and, secondly, I will offer my own lesson plan, in accordance with the theoretical chapter (see Chapter 3), the analysis of the influencer's video (see Chapter 4) as well as the analysis of the surveys (see Chapter 5).

6.1. LESSON PLAN USED IN CONTEXT

6.1.1. Introduction

The interview with July was conducted in May 2022 at the University of Liège. Julie, who, as previously mentioned, was a student in her first year of her Master's in modern languages and literature. Prior to the interview, Julie was personally contacted via email to request her participation as well as to inform her of the practical arrangements of the interview. No specific pre-determined questions were prepared, as the lesson plan was unknown to me prior to the start of the interview.

6.1.2. Analysis of the lesson plan

The analysis of the lesson plan was done on the basis of Julie's lesson plan, which she kindly shared, but also of the interview, which can be seen in appendix H.

6.1.2.1. Internship context

In March 2022, Julie completed a 6-hour internship in a class of 25 students from the *général* education. When Julie delivered the course, the students were in fifth grade (16-17 years old) who had English as their first foreign language (LM1), which they had for 4 hours each week.

When looking back at the first survey, most respondents also preferred to teach using influencers in the fifth and sixth grade, which validated Julie's own choice of topic as well.

The purposes of the lesson plan were for the students to recognize and correctly employ relative clauses as well as to give students an opportunity to share their opinions on social media in general. As such, she dove into the hobby's field, and more specifically into the information and communication technologies topic, as presented in the curricula.

In order to achieve the final task, and in addition to the grammatical structure (relative clauses), she also needed to teach the students about a few language functions, such as '*mark your (dis)agreement*', '*express a feeling*' and '*express an opinion*'.

Finally, the cultural aspect dealt with in the lesson plan was focused on social media, more specifically, on Google and Facebook.

6.1.2.2.   *Analysis of the activities within the lesson plan*

In order for the students to achieve the final task, which consisted of a video presentation of the positive and negative aspects of a social media platform, Julie used both the Present-Practice-Produce (PPP) method as well as the Problem-Solving method[24].

Notably, she started the lesson plan by showing a video made by herself, which presumably would be shown on YouTube, in which she explained the pros and cons of the platforms. The video showed what the students should be able to do at the end of the lesson plan, which they had to achieve in groups made up of two or three students, which is typical of the problem-solving method as students often learn the skills they need in order to have the same results as the task presented. In addition, Julie's purpose for the video was not solely for the students to share their opinions on social media, but to also sensitize them to the platform. According to Julie, teachers have a substantial role to play in the development of critical thinking, without moralizing. To this end, Julie orally explained in the video one of the negative aspects of YouTubers, being that they show idealistic aspects of their lives and that they usually make a living only off YouTube. This enables them to complete social media challenges[25] of which many people would not be able to sustain. Consequently, many of us feel down about ourselves when watching those videos as we often think that we will never be as good, or as

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[24] For further information on the PPP method and the Problem-Solving method, see Simons, G. *Didactique des langues moderne (Partim I),* winter semester 2020-2021, as well as Simons, G. (2018). Pistes méthodologiques pour intégrer la dimension générique dans l'enseignement des langues étrangères. Peter Lang, 213-243.

[25] A challenge on social media is a trend that invites people to create their own content on social media based on a specific task. Julie mentioned the "that girl" challenge which routine is to wake up at 6 am, work out, drink green smoothies, read, etc. to essentially become the perfect "girl".

"perfect" as them. Julie wanted her students to think critically about the other platforms that they use daily for them to think of the negative side of influencers, but also the positive side.

Then, Julie switched back to the PPP method and proposed a reading task on the positive aspects of Google[26], followed by a 'fill-in-the-blanks' vocabulary sheet, a "true or false" exercise as well as open-ended questions in order to verify the overall comprehension of the text. Furthermore, she also presented the grammatical structure on the relative clauses with many practical exercises ranging from closed exercises to more open ones, some related to the "Google" reading task. She then proposed a listening task on how social media is destroying our society, which focused more on Facebook and its cons, followed by a comprehension exercise in order to verify their comprehension of the task. Following this, Julie offered a transcript and a 'fill-in-the-blanks' vocabulary sheet. Additionally, as mentioned above, she delved into the language function of "expressing an opinion". In order to practice that particular language function, she wrote different comments regarding social media, which the students had to debate about using the newly acquired expressions.

Eventually, on the final day, the students had to present their videos, using relative clauses, as well as opinion expressions. The other students watching the videos had a listening task, in which they had to take notes of the presentation and explain why they agreed or disagreed with what was said. According to Julie, many students agreed with her and all found messages to get across, despite the fact that they liked social media. Many of the videos were very well-thought-out and even funny, which meant that many students were motivated by and invested in the activity.

6.1.2.3. Conclusion

As a conclusion, it would be suggested that Julie's lesson plan achieved the purpose of wanting to develop their critical thinking, as they willingly took part in the activity, creating a fun and realistic video, while also taking a step back and expressing their opinions on the pros and cons of the platform they were using. In doing so, it allowed the students to think by themselves and question their habits instead of her explaining her opinion on the matter. It is worth noting, however, that there might have been a desirability bias.

However, because she only had 6 hours to teach, which is realistically not enough for a lesson plan in which there was a '*mise en perspective*', an '*état des ressources*' as well as

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[26] To see the exercise, see appendix I

production from the students, the exercises, and especially the practice exercises were not as thorough as they should have been. This sentiment was also shared by Julie when asked what she would change about the lesson plan. Indeed, if she had had more hours at her disposal, she would have added more practice exercises, especially for the vocabulary as well as the language functions. She would have also shown a real influencers' video, instead of solely showing hers, so that the students could have been exposed to an authentic input created by a native person. Furthermore, as she explained, Julie did not exercise cross-curricular skills, such as '*how to use platforms*' or '*how to create a video*'. However, she did say they could use whatever was at their disposal to record the video (phone, camera…), as she knew not everyone could afford cameras. In the end, they all seemed to know how to make a video, some even more than her.

It should also be pointed out that Julie seemed to have confused both 'YouTuber' with 'Influencer' by saying they are similar[27]. Indeed, as a reminder, YouTubers do not particularly try to get brand deals, while influencers do, which is the most important difference between the two.

6.2. HYPOTHETICAL LESSON PLAN

6.2.1. Introduction

As mentioned above, an attempt was made at creating my own lesson plan based on what we has been learned throughout this dissertation, but also on my personal experiences as a language student in foreign languages didactics. The purpose of this attempt was to illustrate how teachers could fully use influencers' content at their advantage to improve communication skills of their students. To this end, a hypothetical guideline to influencers' content is initially suggested, which will be put into practice by suggesting an example of a lesson plan.

6.2.2. Reasons to use influencers as a teaching tool

Indeed, as seen with the theoretical chapter, motivation is an important factor of language learning according to Viau's theory and Krashen's affective filter hypothesis. In addition to this, Krashen's acquisition hypothesis suggests that students should be exposed to the language the way children are, with no particular need for rules. However, one should not simply expose students to random content. Indeed, it is it necessary to expose students to an

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[27] As a reminder, I took Youtuber and influencer as synonyms in Chapter 3 when analyzing the frameworks of reference, curricula and CEFR, as Youtuber is the closest "profession" to an influencer. As explained, the term influencer would have been too 'new' to have occurrences. However, it is important to know the difference.

input following the i + 1 pattern in order for it to be comprehensible for students. Accordingly, teachers need to focus on offering content which is motivating in order to have a "low affective filter", but which is also suited for each student for them to acquire a language. As such, it could be argued that influencers' content can satisfy these requirements, as the surveys and Julie's lesson plan have proved motivational for students and should be beneficial linguistically as well.

Furthermore, when looking at the curricula and frameworks of reference, it was discovered that they all recommend teaching students to think critically in order for them to be "responsible beings" of society. Although there are no guidelines concerning MIL and how to teach students to think critically, it has been argued that this task falls upon each and every teacher who uses media. As such, it can be argued that there are ways in which students can be taught about MIL through influencers' content, as has been seen with the analysis of the video (see chapter 4), with the survey (see chapter 5) as well as with Julie's lesson plan.

Finally, it has been shown that subtitles can be beneficial when watching an audiovisual content as it adds another strategy to the visual and spoken language in order to understand the message. In addition, it has been proved that adding subtitles in the FL classroom context reduces the level of anxiety (Gowhary 211), which in turn, decreases the affective filter and allows for more acquisition. As such, even though these studies were focused on TV series and movies, it can be said that influencers' video also benefit from subtitles, although, as mentioned, teachers have to be much more careful about those, as some may have mistranslations. The selection of the content is thus worth paying a lot of attention to.

6.2.3. Objectives

Below, a few objectives have been suggested which could be pursued by teachers through the use of influencers' content, such as:

- To motivative students to learn from foreign influencers
- To increase the language input
- To address popular culture in a school context
- To think critically

Firstly, although the majority of students already watch foreign influencers in their free time (see Chapter 5), such activities done in a classroom context might get students to realize that

influencers are a long-term tool they can use in order to both maintain their language level as well as to improve it, or to even learn a new language.

Secondly, as seen in chapter 4, influencers' content offer a wide range of linguistic aspects which increase the amount of language input students are usually exposed to in a classroom context. It has also been seen that serious videos posted by news channels, for example, probably offer the same language input as influencers' content; however, the type of language is very different. Thus, in my opinion, one is not particularly better than the other, but they do complement each other, as it is important for students not only to hear formal speech, with vocabulary that can be closer realted to their age. In addition, depending on the type of organization, students will receive even more input if a free-access system is implemented in their school.

Thirdly, it is believed that it is important for students to know the difference between formal and informal language of the foreign language, much like in their native language. As such, teachers should be able to offer content which is formal, such as videos from news channels, for example, so that students are prepared to enter the workforce or listen to the news; but also, informal content, such as influencers' videos, in order for them to be able to follow a familiar discussion (i.e., gaming, meeting people while traveling…) if their purpose is not to pursue a career where languages are needed. Indeed, even though the general education aims at preparing students for higher education, the reality shows that not all students want to follow a higher education and not all of them will need to use the language in a professional context. However, this reality has been forgotten and mostly avoided in the education system because it is probably not conventional. Thus, it is my opinion to bridge the gap between formal and informal language, as informal language is extremely present in teenagers' lives. Therefore, it is up to schools to tap into students' interest and reality and to seize the linguistic benefits of those content.

Lastly, as mentioned with MIL, students will be able to not only learn how to navigate the web through watching influencers' content on different platforms, but also learn how to think critically, which contributes to the students being "responsible citizens".

6.2.4. The content's selection

According to the survey directed to the teachers, teachers were usually the ones to pick the content (N=14), followed by a suggestion from another teacher (N=14), and only then a

suggestion from a student (N=13). As seen, there is not much difference between who would usually choose the content. Thus, three suggestions are to be made:

- Selection of the content by the teacher;
- Selection of the content by students who choose from a list given by the teacher;
- Selection of the content by students who choose their content by themselves.

The suggestion from another teacher can be put in the same category as the selection by the teacher, as it could be assumed that the teacher will then do their own research on the influencer before using their content in their class. Naturally, the teacher is still the most suited person to choose a content as they know what to look for. However, we know that if the teacher picks the content, it might make the content not as motivating for students. This is why the second suggestion might be a better option so as to compromise. The third option might work for students' presentations on their favorite influencers, for example, but also if there are free-access classes organized, which will be described later.

In order for the teacher to pick an influencer's content correctly, below are some criteria to look for in the content, some of which has already come up when the video in chapter 4 was analyzed. All these criteria are important to pay attention to when choosing a content so as to offer the most suitable content for students. These criteria are as follows[28]:

- Presence and quality of the translation
- Presence of MIL (influencer's credibility included)
- Quality of the oral language (flow, articulation, pronunciation, accent)
- Quality of the video (resolution, sound)
- Richness of the cultural content
- Richness of the grammar
- Richness of the idioms and expression (younger expression included)
- Richness of the language functions
- Richness of the vocabulary

When it comes to the subtitles, it was said that 11 out of 14 respondents used the translation given on the video. As such, and as mentioned before, it is worth the teacher watching the whole video in order to verify if the translation is correct, as it appears to be extremely difficult to find a video in which the translation is 100% correct. As also mentioned

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[28] These criteria are not ordered by the level of importance, but by alphabetical order.

before, it would be important to get students to spot mistakes, either by telling them in advance how many mistakes there are in the translation so that they can try and figure out what they are while the video is playing, or by pausing the video and asking them where the mistake is in the sentence. Either way, it allows students to be aware of the fact that they cannot always completely rely on the subtitles and that they still need to pay attention to it. This is why it is important to show subtitles, as they can be part of MIL, but they can also help students be less stressed when doing a listening task. As such, the subtitles should be used the second and third times the video is played so as to help students if they did not understand the first time, which will probably be the case.

As for MIL, 12 out of 14 respondents on the teachers' survey claimed that they sensitize their students to influencers' content. Although they have different ways to sensitize students, respondents mostly tried to get students to understand the type of persuasive language used in those videos to show how influencers are trying to convince them to buy something. They also explained to students that they always need to educate themselves on the topic before making a judgment (N=10) and explained that it is always wise to look for multiple points of views before making a judgement (N=10), which can also be linked to another option, which is explaining what influencers are and their purpose (N=10). However, there were two options which were less chosen, which were comparing videos of the same topic and explaining the frame of the videos. We could suggest that comparing videos, which might be too time consuming if the purpose of the lesson plan is not on MIL, does not need to be done frequently, but would be worth introducing students to it. Also, explaining the frame of the video, which might be too difficult for teachers who never received any training courses on the matter, does not need to be thorough either as teachers could initiate students progressively to the different frames. Evidently, there are different options which can be chosen in order to sensitize students to MIL solely through influencers.

Regarding the oral language in the video, it is worth paying a lot of attention to it in order to pick a video which is suited to every student. Firstly, the flow of the influencers is really important, as in a classroom context, it might be wise to start with an influencer who has a slower flow and increase it slowly over the year. Secondly, articulation and pronunciation might also be a factor worth paying attention to, as it might help students understand better if the influencer talks clearly. Finally, the accent of the influencer might not be such an important factor, introducing students to diverse accents throughout their education is important so that they can be prepared for their future and for real life situations. However, if the accent is strong (i.e., some southern US states like Texas and Oklahoma or South Africa), it might impede the

comprehension and might be worth reconsidering, unless the purpose of the class is to hear snippets of different accents.

The quality of the video is probably the easiest and quickest criteria to detect, as it only requires the teacher to open the video and make sure the resolution of the video is clear enough for students to use visual aids and that the sound is loud and clear enough in the space being delivered and that there is not any background noises, which might impede the comprehension of the message.

When it comes to the cultural content, even though this was not the number one criterion for the respondents of the teachers' survey, 13 out of 14 respondents agreed that it was valuable? Additionally, it is worth noting that almost 75% of the respondents in the students' survey (N=76) thought that they were learning something about the influencer's culture when watching their content. Indeed, there are endless videos where different types of cultural background can be analyzed (food, hobbies, geography, history, social media culture, etc.) depending on the thematic field targeted which can be of great added-value to audiovisual content in a classroom context.

As for grammar, it was one of the least chosen purposes for influencers' content by surveys' respondents. Indeed, when teaching a new grammatical structure, it is better to use content or a text in which the structure comes up multiple times, which might be difficult to find in an influencer's content. Although, it is not impossible to introduce a grammatical structure through an influencer's content, which would then be more thoroughly analyzed with another medium, as, for instance, with a newspaper article.

Regarding idioms and expressions, 85,7% of the respondents from the teachers' survey (N=12) said that idioms and expressions were one of the aspects of the language in which students who watch influencers' content had a better mastery of. Furthermore, 78,1% of the respondents from the students' survey (N=86) said that they felt they learned idioms and expressions when watching that type of content, which was the category they learned the most out of influencers' content. Additionally, together with this category, younger expressions which are perhaps more familiar to students, were also on the list of what 66,3% of the students (N=73) felt like they learned from influencers' content. Based on the surveys' results, these two categories offer the real added-value of influencers' content, as both those categories are not as easily found in textbooks and are, possibly not abundantly used by teachers, depending on the teacher's profile.

When it comes to language functions, 13 out of 14 respondents from the teachers' survey agreed that they also looked for them when choosing a content. As seen with the analysis

of the video in chapter 4, there are a number of language functions which can be heard in those types of videos and there are therefore a number of different ways in which teachers can work on them. However, it was suggested that teachers prepare a sheet with different columns representing the different language functions present in the video. In that way, teachers let students find by themselves which sentences are related to which language functions by themselves.

Lastly, and as already mentioned, the amount of new vocabulary is paramount for teachers, as it is one of the first purposes of watching an influencers' video. Indeed, 13 out of 14 respondents of the teachers' survey agreed that the lexical content within those videos must be rich in order to be beneficial. Also, seeing as teachers use influencers in almost every thematic field mentioned in the curricula, the diversity of the vocabulary could be extremely varied.

6.2.5. *Organization of the course*

The survey showed that there were multiple ways of using influencers' content, such as in:

- An introduction
- A listening task
- The content of the lesson plan itself
- Free-access[29]

Notably, some respondents used them as an introduction to a topic (N=14) in order to catch students' attention and hopefully motivate them for the rest of the lesson plan.

They can also be used as listening tasks (N=14) relevant to the topic of the lesson in order to expose students to a large amount of new vocabulary.

Much like Julie Moutschen's lesson plan, there is also the possibility of making a lesson plan based on the social media influencers' topic (N=13), meaning that there will be a lot more influencer content-based activities in the lesson plan, thus leading to a final activity similar to creating an influencer-like video.

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[29] The purpose of the free-access is to give to students access to different type of resources, be it reading comprehension, listening comprehension, grammar exercise, and so on, by allowing students to work on their own and at their own pace for an hour per week. Students are thus free to pick whatever they would want to work on (for further information, see Ministère de la Communauté française, Cahier 5, 2000, p. 13)

Finally, it could be argued that in addition to using influencers' content in a normal classroom context, it is also possible to use them in a free-access context which was proved to be motivating for students[30]. Subsequently, students would be able to exercise their listening skills as well as be exposed to a large input while also being motivated, as they would be the one choosing the content.

6.2.6. *Advantages*

The advantages stemming from the use of influencers are numerous. Namely, it contributes to the improvement of students':

- Motivation
- Listening skills
- Vocabulary, idioms, expression, etc.
- Cultural background
- Critical thinking
- Strategies
- …

6.2.7. *Disadvantages*

However, there might also be some disadvantages stemming from influencers. Notably, teachers would need to keep an eye on the:

- Subtitles' quality
- Reliability
- Cross-curricular skills (if the producing activity is to produce a video)
- Unclear instructions (if the producing activity is to produce a video)
- …

The first two disadvantages have already been provided with a solution in previous sections (see 2.4.2.2. for subtitles, 2.4.3.4. for reliability).

As for cross-curricular skills, if the producing activity is to create a video as an influencer, such as Julie Moutschen's lesson plan, it might be worth taking the time to explain some of the cross-curricular skills, such as 'how to create a video' in order for the students who

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[30] For further information, see Simons, G. *Didactique des langues moderne (Partim II),* winter semester 2020-2021

do not particularly partake in sharing content to not be lost and to allow everyone to be at the same starting point. To this end, such activities will have to be done in class.

Lastly, as Julie also explained, some students did not do the producing activity as well as others, either because they were not interested in the project or because they had never done it before. In order for everyone to have clear instructions of the task, she maybe could have shown her video when explaining the task instead of showing hers at the very beginning of the lesson plan (which she could have also replaced with a real influencer's video). Another option, perhaps for more seasoned teachers, is to show a video done by a student from previous years, for example, so as to guide students in the making off the video. By doing so, teachers would show that the task is doable since other students had successfully done it previously.

6.2.8. Example

On the basis of what was learned throughout this dissertation, what is to follow is an example of a lesson plan revolving around influencers. To this end, the same video analyzed in chapter 4 was taken, as the content is already familiar. As a reminder, the video dealt with cheap meals around London.

In order to follow Viau's theory of motivation, the option should be given to students to pick a restaurant they would like to talk about, with the objective of making the exercise more motivating. For example, students would have to give information about a place they like to eat at and explain the meal they like best, what it is made of, the price range, the location, etc. In doing so, it would motivate students to talk about themselves and their preferences, and would also be a safe topic for teachers to let students pick what they want to talk about, which can be difficult to do with other topics.

Furthermore, the objectives of this lesson plan are to increase the language input of students, to make them think critically and to address popular culture in the classroom, all the while motivating students to learn with modern and interesting content. By doing so, it would hopefully give students the motivation to learn languages through influencers, and to make them understand that there are different types of content that they could watch to learn languages.

Moreover, the video will be used as an introduction to the lesson plan so at to appeal to students, but will also be used as a listening task and for analyzing the language functions and MIL.

The hypothesis can be made that this lesson plan would be proposed to a 5th grade class of English as a first foreign language. Additionally, it does not matter when the lesson plan is taught, as long as it follows the curricula recommendation.

As for the content itself, it is advised to refer back to chapter 4, in which the cultural content, the idioms and expression, the language functions, MIL, the oral language, the subtitles and the vocabulary was analyzed.

Class	Phase	Activity[31]	Process	UAA[32]	Time
1	**Presentation**		Welcoming students and first introductions.		5'
		A) Phase d'accroche	I show them the first 5 seconds of an influencer's video found on YouTube to get their attention. Then, I ask them to guess what we are going to watch based on the few images shown.	Listening + oral interaction	5'
		B) Mise en perspective intermédiaire	I show them the rest of the video without any stops. Then, I explain to them that they will have to produce a video similar to this one at the end of the lesson plan.		2'
		C) État des ressources	To that end, I ask them what they will need linguistically to be able to achieve the task → brainstorming.		10'
			In order to produce the video, it is necessary to remind them of the food vocabulary supposedly known. To that end, three exercises will be provided:		
		D) Remobilisation du vocabulaire supposé connu	a) Students will have to try and find as many ingredients sitting in the fridge as possible.		15'
2	**Presentation**		Welcoming students, reminding them what we have seen during the last class.		5'
		A) Remobilisation du vocabulaire supposé connu	b) Students will have to write down the correct word below the right image.		10'
			c) Students will have to fill-in-the-gap of the recipe, using words we have just seen.		15'
					15'

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[31] Some of the activities are written in French, as there is no translation in English which would give the same meaning to those French didactics' terms.

[32] *L'expression « **unité d'acquis d'apprentissage** » désigne « un ensemble cohérent d'acquis d'apprentissage susceptible d'être évalué ».* (Simons, G. Documents officiels et référentiels de compétences en langues modernes, 2020-2021, p.38)

			d) Then, a fill-in-the-gap vocabulary table will be provided, which we will go over to insure pronunciation. Diary + homework: Written exercise: write down your favorite dish	Writing	5'
3	**Presentation**	A) Reading task	Welcoming students + reminder of the last class. Then we move on to the reading activity, which is about the history of British food. a) I ask them to read the text and answer the comprehension exercises.	Reading	2' 20'
	Practice	B) Practice	Then, vocabulary exercises are given in order to practice this new vocabulary. b) Students will have to identify different expressions in the text and complete the gaps in the exercise. c) Students will have to circle the right answer to complete to sentence.		15' 10'
4	**Practice**		Welcoming students + reminder.		2'
		A) Practice	d) Translation exercises.		10'
		B) Reminder of two grammatical structures	The "I love + to/ing" grammatical structure will be briefly worked on, as it must have been seen already. a) Students have to choose the right answer among two propositions. b) Students have to write down two sentences with the two different structures.		5' 10'
		C) Language function	We will learn how to express one's preferences. a) Brainstorming + summary		10' 10'
				Oral	

			b) Students explain what they like doing/to do when going to a restaurant using the vocabulary we have seen and the language function.		
5		A) Listening task	Welcoming students + reminder We listen to the influencer's video, with breaks, in order for them to complete the comprehension exercises. a) Students are asked to complete a sheet of every meal she is sharing in order to create a profile of every meal b) Students will complete a map of London in order to have an idea of where those places are. c) Students are given the fill-in-the-gap script in order for them to see the written words. Correction will be made orally so as to correct their pronunciation.	Listening	2' 20' 10' 15'
6	**Practice**	A) Practice	Welcoming students + reminder Then, vocabulary exercises are given in order to practice this new vocabulary. a) Students will have to write down the correct word below the right image. b) Students will have to link adjectives together so as to create synonym and antonyms. c) Students will have to circle the right idiom to complete the sentence. d) Students will have to create two small sentences with those new words and idioms.		2' 10' 10' 10' 15'
7	**Presentation**		Welcoming students + reminder		2'

		A) MIL	Introduction to MIL.		5'
5'					
			I will ask students their opinion on the reliability of influencers' videos as well as what they would do in order to verify this reliability.		5'
			I will teach the strategies in order to make sure an influencer is reliable (see section 2.4.3.4.).		10'
			We will then put into practice those teachings by watching the video again and by looking up the influencer together in order for them to be able to do it later on their own + Conclusion.		20'
8	**Presentation**		Welcoming students + reminder		2'
			In order to produce a video like influencers do, language functions are needed. We will see five different language functions:		
		A) Language functions	- to locate in time and space - to give general information - to make someone want to do something - to make suggestion/recommendations - to remind someone of something		10' 10' 10' 10' 5'
			To that end, I will replay the video and stop where one of the functions are. Students will have written down the function in the right column on a table sheet. Afterwards, we will provide them with more language functions based on small comments, or texts.		
9	**Presentation**		Welcoming students + reminder		2'
		A) Text Genre: Food influencer	We will watch the video of the influencer again and try to come up with a structure to follow (welcoming → subscribe → end).		20'

		B) Cross-curricular skills	On a voluntary basis, pre-selected students will give a brief presentation on how to make a video on different platforms and explain the options proposed by the platforms. I will also explain how students can send the video on the school platforms/email.		20'
10	**Presentation**	Presentation	Welcoming students + reminder		2'
			In order for the students to have clear instructions of what they need to do, I will provide my own video which we will analyze. Students will have to locate what we have seen in class by writing down the information below in a table sheet: - Welcoming on the channel - Locate in time and space - to give general information - to make someone want to do something - to make suggestion/recommendations - express one's preferences + I love + (to/ing) - To remind someone of something		40'
			Instructions for the video: In groups of two-three, students will have to produce a video just like the influencer's video, in which they give information about a place to eat they like and explain the meal they like best, what it's made off, the price range, the location…		5'
11	**Produce**		Welcoming students + reminder		45'
		Oral production + remediation (or reteaching)	We look at the videos of the students. Other students will have to complete a listening task and contribute to the feedback. The listening task can take the form of the "DOOOLE" so students have to take	Oral without interaction	

| | | | notes about different aspects of the video and they will have to change task when changing videos in order to get familiar with every criterion of the work.

Students will receive feedback on the language from me, and if necessary, remediation can take place. | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 12 | **Produce** | Oral production + remediation (or reteaching) | Welcoming students + reminder

We look at the videos of the students. Other students will have to complete a listening task and contribute to the feedback. Students will receive feedback on the language from me, and if necessary, remediation can take place. | Oral without interaction | 45' |
| | **Test** | After the production in class and the remediation, students will have to do the same process, alone and send me their video, which will be marked. Students will have to choose a restaurant they have gone to recently and they will have to produce a video just like the influencer's video, in which they give information about that place, the meal they like best, what it's made of, the price range, the location… | | | |

6.2.9. Conclusion

In the above lesson plan, five skills were incorporated: listening, reading, writing, speaking with and without interaction. Students will be introduced to the culture of the country, to cross-curricular skills, as well as vocabulary, grammar, idioms and expressions and, finally, language functions.

Moreover, when constructing the lesson plan, it was decided upon to take the advantages of both PPP and the problem-solving method in order to help students with different types of learning styles. In the same logic, teachers do not have to stick to one specific method, giving them the opportunity to experiment with the method they are the least familiar with.

Furthermore, the lesson plan follows the progression of starting from closed exercises to more open ones to facilitate the transfer and acquisition of new knowledge.

Also, this lesson plan takes into account the critical thinking and citizenship dimension as recommended in the curricula, the frameworks of reference, and the CEFR, aligning with the action-oriented approach recommended by the CEFR.

Moreover, as mentioned earlier, this lesson plan could be used whenever as long as it followed the curricula's recommendation. However, this would be an interesting lesson plan to be taught before a school trip to London, for example, as it would make students familiar with the area and the food history. Additionally, in order to make students even more involved with the lesson plan, it would be interesting to let students choose a restaurant among the selection from the video that could be visited when in London; thus, validating the action-oriented approach.

Furthermore, this lesson plan follows the explicit learning approach, which consists of making explicit the intentions and objectives of the lesson, which would be done in the "*mise en perspective*"; the prior knowledge, which would be done when doing the "*état des ressources*" and the "*remobilisation du vocabulaire supposé connu*"; as well as showing what they need to do for the final task, which would be done by showing my own video and then analyzing it together; and giving them feedback, which would be done after each video, not only by me, but also by students with the listening task, and the remediation. This explicit teaching was found to be particularly suitable for younger students, slow learners of all ages, students from disadvantaged backgrounds as well as fast learners, which makes this approach effective and equitable (Gauthier et al 2).

Lastly, this lesson plan also takes into account the informal language, which, as previously mentioned, has been avoided by language teachers. By doing so, students have a

glimpse of what the youth language sounds like, while also having a content which motivates them to learn, which, in turn, could make acquisition faster as the "affective filter" would be low, according to Krashen.

It is paramount, however, to keep in mind that this is still a hypothetical lesson plan and that other combinations could have been made possible as well. In other words, it is not implied that this is "the perfect lesson plan".

7. Conclusion

7.1. COULD USING SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS IN THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM IMPROVE COMMUNICATION SKILLS OF NON-NATIVE LEARNERS?

This dissertation aimed to establish whether the use of social media influencers in the FL classroom could improve the communication skills of non-native learners. In order to answer this question, it was necessary to split this main question into 10 research questions, that of which have guided my dissertation.

The **first research question** sought to establish whether influencers would be susceptible to offering an input that would motivate students, and if so, what would be the motivational aspect of influencers. In order to reach a conclusion, Krashen's Monitor Model, Viau's theory of motivation as well as what is called the Online Informal Learning of English were all analyzed. Results show that for a content to be acquired, it needs to be found motivating, among other factors, by students. Indeed, if teachers want their students to be in optimal conditions for acquisition, they need to offer content which is appealing to their students. In addition, it became clear from the students' survey, that the majority of the respondents interviewed said they would be motivated to learn from influencers. As a consequence of their motivation to learn through influencers' content, their affective filter would be low, and the ease with which students would learn would therefore be higher.

Following this, it was necessary to see if there was an interest that had already been shown towards influencers from researchers and teachers. To this end, the **second research question** sought to know whether the word '*influenceur*', its synonym ('*YouTuber*') and variations ('*vidéo*' and '*audiovisuel*') are included in the legal requirements and curricula of the WBF. The hypothesis for this question was that neither the term '*influenceur*' nor '*Youtuber*' were included, as the topic of influencers is fairly new, but also because it is believed to be frowned upon by most teachers. To this end, the legal requirements and curricula of the WBF were analyzed. Results show that the terms '*influenceur*' and '*YouTuber*' are never mentioned in any of the frameworks of reference nor the curricula from the various networks, as predicted. However, it was confirmed that the interest in audiovisual content has been increasing for over two decades, as the occurrences for '*vidéo*' and '*audiovisuel*' greatly increased, especially in the official network where the number of occurrences increased from 30 to 114 for the term '*vidéo*' and from 4 to 54 for the term '*audiovisuel*', while in the free education, those terms increased from 1 to 44 and from 0 to 12, respectively.

With the same logic, the **third research question** sought to know whether the word 'influencer', its synonym (YouTuber) and variations ('video' and 'audiovisual') are included in the CEFR. The hypothesis for this question was that neither the term 'influencer' nor 'Youtuber' was included, much as in the frameworks and curricula. The same analysis as for the frameworks and curricula was done to the CEFR. Results show that the term 'influencer' and 'YouTuber' are never mentioned in the CEFR, as predicted. However, it was confirmed that the interest in audiovisual content has been increasing for over two decades, as the occurrences for 'video' and 'audiovisual' greatly increased from 13 to 41 and from 1 to 6, respectively.

In the absence of clear guidelines concerning influencers in legal documents, it was of interest to the research if influencers were still used in English textbooks. To this end, the **fourth research question** sought to establish if English textbooks include the use of influencers and if so, for what purpose. The hypothesis for that question was that it depended on the book's generation, as younger textbooks would include content which appeal to younger generation like influencers, while older textbooks would not include any influencers' content. The purpose, however, could vary, as influencers' content could be introduced as a reading or a listening activity, or even a productive task, such as asking students to produce a video based on an influencer's video. To this end, English student's books which had been published after 2010 and which were used in the WBF were analyzed, in order to bring focus to my research. If the student's book proved conclusive, the teacher's book was also analyzed in order to look for potential suggestions and information on how to teach the activity. Results show that only one recent student's book published in 2021 offers an influencer's content. The activity is a reading task and its purpose is to help students present a business, which is the topic of the unit. However, the activity do not offer much vocabulary and do not take advantage of a real influencer's content to achieve the same objectives.

The **fifth research question** sought to establish whether influencers' content is of value to a FL classroom in order to improve students' communication skills. The hypothetical answer to this question was that they are of value for learning foreign languages as they touch upon multiple important aspects of teaching languages. In order to reach a conclusion, an influencer's video found on YouTube, which describes cheap places to eat in London, was analyzed. Results show that this type of video can be of value in a FL classroom, as it touches upon different skills (i.e., listening and reading skills and oral skills), but also text genre, vocabulary, grammar, language functions, culture and idioms.

The **sixth research question** sought to establish whether teachers use influencers' content in their classrooms. The hypothesis accompanying this question was that it depended on the teacher's age because the younger a teacher is, the more inclined they would be to use this type of content. Thus, age would most likely play a role in the presence or absence of influencers' content. Results show, however, that the age do not seem to play a role in the use of influencers' content, as among those who do use that type of content (14 out of 58 respondents), half of the 14 respondents have been teaching for less than 10 years, while the other half is composed of the respondents who have been teaching for more than 11 years.

The sixth research question was linked to the **seventh research questions**, which sought to understand the correlation between the age and gender of teachers and their use of influencers in the classroom. The hypothesis was that the age was going to play a role in the use if influencers' content, while it was assumed that more women were going to be interested in influencers than men. For the age, results show that the age do not play a role in the use of influencers' content, as mentioned above. As for the gender, results show that women (14 out of 14) are more interested than men in influencers' content, overall. However, it was said that the numbers collected could have been biased, as more women responded to the survey than men.

The **eighth research question** sought to establish how and why teachers use influencers' content. The hypothesis to that question was that teachers do not make use of their full potential. However, results show that some respondents do use influencers as an introduction activity to the lesson plan (14 out of 14) or as a listening task (14 out of 14) as well as an exercise which can lead to an oral production (13 out of 14), although some teachers do not use them for MIL (7 out of 14). They also use them to teach new vocabulary (14 out of 14), cultural content (14 out of 14), language functions (14 out of 14), idioms and expressions (9 out of 14), while grammar is not a key focus (8 out of 14). However, throughout this dissertation, we found that idioms and expressions and MIL are the real added-value to influencers' content and that they are, however, the least focused on when using influencers' content.

The **ninth research question** sought to establish if students watch influencers' content in a foreign language. The hypothesis was made that many of them do, as they have an increasing access to a much wider range of tools, even if their initial objective probably is not to learn the language. Results show that, although the majority of respondents do watch content in French, 104 out of 110 who watch influencers' content also watch other content in a foreign language, and more specifically, in English (N=101). Additionally, 92 out of 104 respondents

who watch influencers' content in a foreign language make a conscious decision to watch influencers in order to learn the language and they believe they learn many different aspects of the language by watching influencers' content.

With regard to the final and **tenth research question**, which sought to determine if students would be motivated to have influencers' content in their classroom, the assumption was made that they would indeed be motivated. Results show that 89 out of 114 respondents would be motivated to learn with influencers, while 21 respondents do not know and 4 would not be motivated. Therefore, the majority of the respondents would genuinely appreciate learning the foreign language through influencers' content.

As a conclusion, it is fair to say that, throughout the analysis of this research, influencers' content must be taken into consideration, as it could improve communication skills of non-native learners in the FL classrooms.

7.2. LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This dissertation certainly had its limitations due to several reasons, one of which being the nature of the surveys. Indeed, in addition to the type of questions asked and the biases already mentioned, such as the prestige bias (or social desirability), the acquiescence bias, the tiredness bias and the halo effect, the conclusions highlighted by both surveys could not be generalized, as the surveys did not give enough insights, not only into the teaching practices of enough teachers, but also into the habits of teenagers. The respondents did not represent the majority of teachers and students, respectively, throughout the Wallonia-Brussels Federation.

Furthermore, owing to the limited framework of the master's dissertation, some research ambitions could not be fulfilled. However, some suggestions for future research in this field have been mentioned below.

First, in order for this dissertation to have been more credible, the number of videos analyzed should have been higher. Initially, in addition to food, two other videos were going to be analyzed so as to show different thematic fields consumed by teenagers in their free time: video games and makeup. The reason why these topics were to be suggested, was because they are the least chosen picked topics by teachers, but the most chosen topics by boys and girls, respectively. Indeed, those topics would not be efficient in a classroom, since only half the class would actually be interested in one of the topics, depending on the gender. As to video games specifically, influencers' videos on the topic usually last 1 to 4 hours, even sometimes to 12 hours, making it difficult to choose a video suitable for a classroom context. However,

these topics are still very much listened to by students and the linguistic input received during their online learning would have been interesting to research and see what these topics could bring linguistically and culturally to students.

Moreover, in order to follow the curricula's recommendations and to adapt the content to specific learners, it is important to measure those influencers' videos, which are not initially adapted to a classroom context, in terms of linguistic input. This research should be done using the curricula's guidelines in order to find the right content for a specific language level, which could be helpful in facilitating the selection of videos by teachers.

Furthermore, in order to verify if whether the amount of input present in an influencers' video is actually higher than in a textbook's unit, a more comparative research needs to be done. Indeed, not only would it be interesting to know the type of language found in both mediums, but also to measure the linguistic input students are exposed to, depending on the medium. Undoubtedly, both mediums have their pros and cons and should be complementary so as to offer a variety of different medium.

Finally, the text genre of influencers' videos should be analyzed further, as different text genre could stem from different topics. Notably, a travel video could lead to a touristic text genre, while a food video could lead to a food critic text genre, not to mention the advertisement text genre which could be found in any influencers' video while they promote their products. The making off a profile for each text genre regarding influencers' videos could be an important and beneficial tool for teachers in order for them to know what to look for in those videos and how to work with them while teaching students.

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APPENDICES (SEE USB KEY)

Appendix A: Updated illustrative scale of TV, film, and video found in the 2020 Companion version of the CEFR (2001)

Appendix B: New illustrative scale for the overall oral skill found in the 2020 Companion version of the CEFR (2001)

Appendix C: List of the English textbooks analyzed

Appendix D: Blank survey directed to foreign language teachers of the WBF

Appendix E: Comments and suggestion made after the trial run

Appendix F: Blank survey directed to students of the WBF

Appendix G: Comments and suggestion made after the trial run

Appendix H: Interview with Julie Moutschen

Appendix I: Julie Moutschen's lesson plan on social media