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Chapter 2   Background and Perspective of Compulsory Secondary Education Teachers When Working in the School Language in Their Disciplinary Areas

Abstract: The present study was carried out within the framework of a cyclical process of reflective training. Its primary objective was to analyze the background and perspective of teachers with respect to their previous experiences, attitudes, perceptions, and predispositions regarding student characteristics, their own characteristics, and the context in which they carry out their teaching duties. The study was carried out with secondary education teachers at five educational centers in the Basque Autonomous Community and Navarre, Spain. Five group interviews were conducted with 17 Basque language and science teachers, and were analyzed applying of a set of codes derived from Meyer et al. (2018b). Our results show that teachers express tensions and dilemmas having to do with the teaching of language and contents in different subject classes; these issues are based on their analysis of their own teaching experience and their point of view regarding classroom activity and their characterization of the student cohort. Reflective training with teachers should be framed around these dilemmas and tensions so as to transform teaching with respect to methodology; the roles of the school language in the different subject classes; along with the involvement of students in design, implementation, and assessment; and organizational and other aspects.

Keywords: deep learning, school language, reflective teacher education, presage

1. Introduction

The present study takes place within a framework of collaboration between university and schools, through which knowledge is developed, which will enable education professionals to carry out quality multilingual education. Through the use of reflective practice with in-service teachers, where the school language is a minority language and the L2 of most of the students, we aim to examine closely the teaching of the school language along with the content of different school subjects. According to Coyle (2015), the development of deep learning requires fostering the development of subject-specific literacies (Coyle, 2015), and therefore shared learning spaces should be created (Coyle, 2018). This implies that specific work on language is necessary in order to construct meanings and to

express them through the specific discourses of each subject, and this goes beyond merely studying technical vocabulary or certain expressions (Scarcella, 2003). There is a need to inform teachers' views about language in the different subject classes, and for them to share common viewpoints with regards to knowledge, methodology, and the organization of their activities (Pavón Vázquez & Ellison, 2013; Coyle et al., 2018).

An increasing body of research supports the importance of working on language as a path to deeper learning (Meyer et al., 2015; Beacco et al., 2015). Students should have sufficient competence in their school language to be able to participate actively in classroom activities, to achieve a high level of understanding, and to be able to express what they have learned at an appropriate level. Insufficient work is carried out on language, whether this is in content-classrooms, in content and language integrated learning (CLIL), or in immersion settings (Meyer et al., 2018a). Both research (Beacco et al., 2015) and educational institutions with practitioners perceive the need to delve deeper into the tension existing between teaching languages and teaching content in different subjects. This is especially important in education systems in which the school language is not the home language of the majority of students, a common challenge for both content-based instruction and CLIL models. Exploring such tensions may provide suggestions for development and experimentation by teaching staff (Cenoz, 2015).

The pluriliteracies approach provides a model for tackling these issues. Pluriliteracies Teaching for Learning (PTL) "focuses on the development of subject-specific literacies and transferable knowledge and skills as well as on personal growth" (Meyer et al., 2018a: 238). It emphasizes students being able to express their knowledge and understanding appropriately, thus confirming that they have fully understood the content and consequently have developed deeper learning. PTL proposes an ecological perspective, which fosters deeper learning so that, in addition to cognitive (constructing knowledge and refining skills) and linguistic (demonstrating and communicating understanding) aspects, it also takes into account areas such as well-being and emotional engagement (generating and sustaining commitment and achievement) and mentoring (mentoring, learning, and personal growth) (Meyer et al., 2018a).

2. Teacher Training as a Key Factor for Changing Classroom Practice

Teachers ideally need to closely examine their classroom practice, reformulate it, and analyze it, alongside related theory and good practice, and thus become

more aware of the tensions that exist between language teaching and the content teaching of different subjects. To this end, professional development programs are a systematic way of bringing about change in classroom practice, in teachers' attitudes and beliefs, and in the students' learning outcomes (Guskey, 2002). However, not all programs prove to be effective. Reflective training, however, in a group setting (Fullan, 2003), involving dialogue (Esteve & Carandell, 2009) and specifically directed at the teacher's role, facilitates analysis and enables actual classroom practice to become transformed (Bronckart, 2007; Clot, 2001).

Esteve and Alsina (2010) propose a format for reflective training that brings about reflective learning and in which a realist paradigm is seen as the most appropriate for developing teachers' professional competencies. Through reflection, this realist paradigm makes each individual teacher aware of his or her personal experiences, theoretical tendencies, understanding of teaching and learning, and experiences in the classroom both as a student and as a teacher (Esteve, 2013). Promoting this awareness in one's own process can be achieved through systematic reflection, for which specific tools are required, such as the teacher's journal, questionnaires and lists of questions, audio and video recordings, observations, and research-action processes (Richards & Lockhart, 1994).

Throughout their professional development, teachers construct a theory of practice (Van Lier, 1996), a perceived theory with a small "t" based on their reflection about their work. Through the training process, they will contrast this theory with formal theoretical knowledge with a capital "T" (Korthagen, 2001; Esteve & Carandell, 2009; Korthagen 2010) through a process of dialogue that seeks to make connections between the two. Based on this contrast, new knowledge and perspectives will be created, which will, in turn, be reflected on in a cyclical process (Esteve & Alsina, 2010). This process supports the teachers in moving from a basic level of knowledge to a higher one, to advance in their didactic knowledge, and ultimately, to reach a deeper understanding of their teaching activity, which was initially intuitive and *Gestalt* (Esteve & Carandell, 2009). Based on the cyclical process described by Esteve and Carandell (2009), we propose a model consisting of four main stages.

The first stage relates to what teachers do and what they say regarding their practice. The teachers' opinions and perspectives are gathered and served to establish the point of departure for the group of teachers with respect to how they work on the school language when teaching their subjects. Following Lourenço et al. (2017), teachers' trainers could better carry out their professional development by understanding the nature of teachers' belief structures and listening to their opinions. The second stage corresponds to the contrast between theory with a small "t" and theory with a capital "T"; this is the stage at which
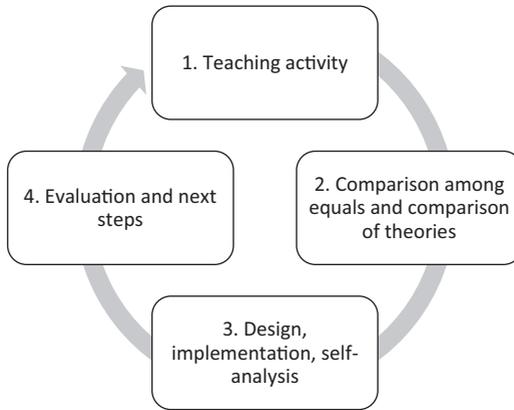
Illustration 1. Four stages of the training cycle. Source: Esteve & Carandell (2009).

teachers discuss didactic strategies that will be contrasted with reported experience. These theories help to better understand what is done, to agree on a framework, to decide what to do and how to do it, and, finally, to determine whether changes are needed. In the third stage, new methods to take to the classroom are designed and, when possible, are recorded in order to carry out a deeper process of self-analysis. In this way, each teacher self-confronts his or her own practice (Clot, 1999) and analyzes it with the help of trainers and colleagues. This stage is an essential part of the training and transformation process, not only with regard to practice but also with respect to the teacher's own professional work. Finally, in the fourth stage, the process is evaluated and the next steps are determined, giving rise thus to a second reflective training cycle.

3. Presage: Teachers' Previous Experiences, Perceptions, and Predispositions

It is essential to be familiar with the teachers' previous experiences, perceptions, and predispositions in order to lay the foundation for the reflective cycle. One of the basic factors regarding student outcomes is the teaching staff (Keller et al., 2017), and therefore it is important to take into account the teachers' background and their perceptions regarding their teaching. We subscribe to the idea that teacher characteristics impact on the scope and depth of learning as they interact with student characteristics and the instructional context (Keller et al., 2017; Schiefele & Schaffner, 2015). Taking the interactive system represented in Bigg's

3P model (Presage-Process-Product; Biggs, 1989, 1993) as a point of departure, Meyer et al. (2018b) emphasize the fact that previous experiences, perceptions, and predispositions (Presage) have an impact on the decisions made by teachers in their work. Presage corresponds to the entry context, and it is related to factors existing prior to the teaching and learning process; it influences not only the creation of the teaching-learning experience, but also the development and results. Meyer et al. (2018b) define presage factors in three categories that we examine below: learner characteristics, teacher characteristics, and context of instruction.

Learner Characteristics

Student characteristics or, following Biggs (1999), how the student "goes about" their learning, have a crucial influence on learning processes and on their results. There are many factors at play, some corresponding to cognitive-academic components and others to components having to do with the students' ways of doing things and relationships, and all of these factors interact among themselves. Learners' previous knowledge and experiences demand recognition and should be valued (Freeth & Reeves, 2004). Biggs and Tang (2011) point out that good teaching requires the effort of inspiring curiosity based on learning that has gone before, in order to avoid pupil discouragement. Such "prior knowledge" may encompass knowledge from different sources such as general knowledge, facts relating to a specific field, concepts, and metacognitive capacities (Dochy & Alexander, 1995; Schneider & Bjorklund, 2003).

Factors having to do with the students' cognitive abilities, generic skills, and social skills interact in teaching and learning processes. According to Gottfredson (1997), cognitive skills are required for reasoning, problem solving, planning, abstract thinking, complex idea comprehension, learning quickly, and learning from experience and, to improve academic performance, students should be trained in cognitive strategies and self-regulation, which in turn will increase belief in their self-efficacy (Roces et al., 1995). Likewise, the students' generic skills should be held in account by their teachers. Making students reflect on their learning process and reflecting on errors provides an opportunity for the development of knowledge (Heemsoth & Heinze, 2015), and for students to adapt their learning and study behavior accordingly in relation to skills such as "oral and written communication, numeracy, information communication technology (ICT), learning how to learn, retrieval and critical analysis of information, time management, and teamwork" (Robley et al., 2005:221). Teaching-learning contexts are becoming more collaborative and it is therefore important to keep the students' social skills in mind. These may be defined as positive social

behaviors, valued both by educators and parents, which can be specifically taught in order to achieve positive outcomes for the group.

Teachers should recognize that the student motivation and resilience are key to fostering a successful learning process. Motivation directly affects the student's way of learning; a motivated student is actively engaged in the learning process making connections, putting ideas into practice, and developing hypotheses, while a less active student will be taking notes and memorizing (Biggs, 1999). We understand motivation as the student's interest in a particular subject (for example, mathematics, science, or languages) or set of subjects (for example, solving problems in different domains), and it includes cognitive and affective processes (Keller et al., 2017). According to Biggs (1999) good teaching creates motivation, rather than the opposite and is driven by different elements such as active methodologies, the make-up of groups, place of instruction, teacher self-efficacy, the quality of the daily pedagogical practice of the teachers, etc. (Biggs, 1999; Van Ewijk & Sleegers, 2010; Meyer et al., 2018a). Motivation is directly related to resilience; resilient learners will be more inclined to take on learning challenges the results of which are uncertain, to persist in learning despite temporary confusion or frustration, and to recover from setbacks and failures (Claxton, 2002).

Teacher Characteristics

Among presage factors, we find the characteristics of the teaching staff and their beliefs and knowledge about good teaching practice within their institutions. Professional knowledge and subject knowledge are also factors involved in their teaching activity. The learning of professional knowledge is acquiring procedural knowledge and pragmatic aspects of the practice (Leinhardt et al., 1995: 401) and it requires the professional to be able to prioritize, carry out, and apply, while enabling reflection on good practice. It also requires making explicit connections between teaching behaviors, student learning processes, and learning outcomes (Biggs, 1989). Subject (or content) knowledge refers to the indispensability of a high degree of knowledge of the subject content in order to teach effectively (Biggs & Tang, 2011). Meyer et al. (2015) regard linguistic content as especially relevant in subject-specific literacies, in which both textual genres and the cognitive-discursive functions that arise take on special relevance as a zone of convergence between content and language pedagogies (Dalton-Puffer, 2013).

In addition to this knowledge, affective factors also determine teachers' ways of doing things. It is important for the teacher to be motivated in his or her teaching and that depends, among other factors, on his or her engagement with

the subject and the institution. Biggs and Tang (2011) propose a "bottom-up" approach which, by first addressing trainee teachers' beliefs and self-efficacy within a good classroom environment, will ultimately result in well-being and achievement for students. Teaching based on enthusiasm and engagement will be of high quality and will foster conditions for excellence as well as positive attitudes in students (Keller et al., 2017).

It is important that the teacher directs their teaching to achieve deep learning on the part of the students and that for that he or she assesses both prior knowledge and learning outcomes in such a way that tasks are adapted to suit students. Given that students often see no connection between learning activities and evaluation processes (Biggs, 1989), teachers need to make progress, milestones, and objectives explicit and understandable to learners (Keller et al., 2017), A learning environment which is well-organized, offering targets and providing support and feedback will sustain student motivation and result in deep approaches (Biggs & Tang, 2011). It is important that the teacher is able to assess and be familiar with the prior knowledge and characteristics of each student, so as to be able to respond to the individual needs of his or her students and thereby achieve successful teaching (Meyer et al., 2018b).

Context of Instruction

For new pedagogies to be effective requires students and teachers to work together in new ways (Fullan & Langworthy, 2014). Teachers need to create activities that will enable students to see the direction their learning is going in and to understand their learning process. In order to do this, teachers will need to interact explicitly with learners, making them feel secure in a new social environment, offering them choice and keeping them well informed regarding the new skills they will learn and how these might be used (Meyer et al., 2018b). Interaction in the learning context is fundamental to learning, and group composition may facilitate or hinder interaction between students and teachers. These interactions may be between experts and novices or between peers. Peer teaching helps the teacher to reflect about what he or she knows and about what he or she can contribute to the group, which in many cases is as beneficial to the individual giving support as it is to the person receiving the help (Biggs, 1989). Students take control of their own learning process if teachers can provide opportunities for them to develop exploratory talk and writing (Coyle, 2007). Additionally, behavioral and attitudinal changes brought about through peer discussion can influence classroom practice (Van Ewijk & Sleegers, 2010).

Student well-being is improved when the learning process is shared, when students take responsibility for their learning and feel interest, need, and aspiration in their learning process; it is when they are given the opportunity to make decisions and when their participation is effective, that they assume leadership in their own learning (Fullan & Langworthy, 2014). Biggs (1989: 17) emphasizes the need for the creation of a "warm classroom climate" and for awakening student interest in the task. Meyer et al. (2018a) underline the importance of the interrelationship between well-being, motivation, achievement, and (teacher) self-efficacy. They point out that the entire system may fail if one aspect is overlooked, citing that a lack of emotional support may decrease teacher and student well-being and result in lower academic achievement, and, consequently, lower self-efficacy in both the teacher and students. All of this requires taking organizational aspects into account, such as the organization of temporary physical spaces and coordination between teachers. In addition, family background and social support may influence the context of instruction. The students' socio-economic status and extracurricular experiences must be taken into account when planning teaching and learning contexts (Biggs, 1989). Furthermore, families and social environments also influence motivation for learning; a student may perceive education as intrinsically important if learning and the fruits of education are valued by others in their environment (Biggs & Tang, 2011). Finally, personal prior knowledge derived from the family context is one characteristic of student prior knowledge and should be taken into account in contexts of instruction.

4. The Study

The primary purpose of the present qualitative study was to analyze teacher backgrounds and perspectives regarding the characteristics of their students, their own characteristics, and the context in which they carry out their teaching (Meyer et al., 2018b), in a context in which the school language is not the majority language socially and where the students work on the language and the other curricular areas within an immersion program (Cenoz, 2009, 2015).

The research questions to be addressed are the following:

1. What do teachers say about the characteristics of their students? What dilemmas emerge in their discourse?
2. How do teachers characterize their own experiences and practices? What dilemmas emerge in their discourse?

Table 1. Characteristics of the Interviews and of the Participating Centers

Group interview	Nº of students	Location	Population	Basque speakers	Participating teachers	Duration of the interview
GI1	1094	BAC	77,530	33.28 %	5	00:56 hours
GI2	1249	Navarre	10,150	17.5 %	3	01:12 hours
GI3	990	BAC	6,776	59.97 %	4	01:15 hours
GI4	900	BAC	11,308	77.91 %	2	00:57 hours
GI5	316	Navarre	7,407	25.5 %	3	01:17 hours

3. How do teachers describe their context of instruction? What dilemmas emerge in their discourse?

To answer these questions, group interviews were carried out (Gibbs, 2017) with teachers from the first year of Compulsory Secondary Education in the Basque Autonomous Community (BAC) and Navarre teaching in a network of charter schools in the Basque Country. These schools proposed collaboration with our University in order to carry out a reflection and training process with teachers from different schools for the purpose of improving the competence and use of the Basque language among their students. The schools in this network are autonomous from the point of view of governance, but they share ideological and methodological aspects, as well as various organizational and educational forums. After a process of reflection-negotiation with teachers and administrators, study of the school language was identified as an aspect to be developed, both in the Basque Language and Literature courses and in other subjects, and the area of Natural Sciences was prioritized.

A total of five group interviews were carried out in five different schools. The interviews were led by two researchers, and a total of 17 teachers with extensive teaching experience took part. Natural Sciences and Basque Language teachers participated in the interviews, some of whom are also Spanish Language, Social Sciences, or Mathematics teachers. The interviews were based on a guide that was adapted in each interview to the particular circumstances of each situation and the responses received. Data on these group interviews are presented in the following table:

The corpus was transcribed and analyzed by applying codes gathered from the literature (Meyer et al., 2018b), described in the following table, and derived from our work in Section 3 of this chapter.

In our analysis of the corpus, we found it expedient to add two subcategories related to the codified characteristics in the table above: teaching methods and

Table 2. List of Categories Used to Codify the Corpus

Category	Subcategory	Description (References to. . .)
	Specific prior knowledge	different types of prior knowledge
	Generic skills	cross-curricular skills, attitudes, and knowledge required in any subject area
Learner characteristics	Cognitive ability	skills, attitudes, and knowledge involved in the creation of knowledge
	Motivation	interest in a particular topic or experience
	Social skills	skills, attitudes, and knowledge required to maintain good relations with other people
	Resilience	ability to deal with uncertain situations and recover from setbacks and failures
	Goal orientation	ability to design and implement the learning experience based on the students' prior knowledge and their outcomes of learning
	Enthusiasm	engagement with the institution, the teaching experience, and the subject
Teacher characteristics	Subject knowledge	necessary knowledge relating to the specific subject taught
	Professional knowledge	acquired knowledge relating to the profession that can be adapted and applied in different professional circumstances
	Diagnostic competence	ability to evaluate the prior knowledge and characteristics of each individual student
	Learning partnerships	teaching-learning experiences in which the objectives and activities are agreed upon by teachers and students
	Group composition	grouping of students in the course of teaching-learning
Context of instruction	Organizational aspects	aspects having to do with the temporal, spatial and coordinative organization of the teachers involved in the teaching and learning context
	Family background and social support	aspects having to do with the family and social environment that may affect teaching and learning processes
	Attention to well-being	activities carried out by the teaching staff to satisfy the physical and mental conditions that will provide the students with a feeling of satisfaction and calm

Source: Meyer et al. (2018b)

Table 3. Categories Added to the List in Table 1

Context of instruction	*Teaching methods*	*The (systematic) manner of teaching used so that students achieve the expected learning objectives.*
	Assessment	*Qualitative and quantitative evaluation corresponding to the learning objectives and learning outcomes to measure the progress of the students.*

assessment. In the interpretation presented by Meyer et al. (2018b), these two subcategories belong to the second component (process) rather than the first (presage), but for the purposes of the present study, we thought it best to include them as part of presage as done by Biggs (1989), since we believe that both methodology and assessment are factors that affect the context of instruction and since both are present in the discourse of the teachers we interviewed.

Furthermore, Biggs (1989) emphasizes the fact that, in order to achieve deep learning, these two factors cannot be separated. When students are aware that the teaching method is not appropriate for the designed learning activities and that what is being assessed is not in line with the corresponding learning outcomes, they will not fully engage with the learning activities (Biggs & Tang, 2011). Fullan & Langworthy (2014) also stress the importance of methodological aspects to foster deep learning, and note that new pedagogies are emerging as a natural consequence of technological development and of an alienation between students and teachers. According to these authors, this has a direct influence on the curriculum, on the design of learning experiences, and on assessment.

The coding process for each category was carried out using the Atlas.ti 7.0 software and was conducted by two researchers and then checked for validity by another researcher through a peer debriefing process.

5. Results and Discussion

In order to answer our research questions, we organized the results according to the three categories presented by Meyer et al. (2018b).

Learner Characteristics

Compulsory Secondary Education first year students are transitioning between childhood and adolescence, and between Primary and Secondary Education. In all group interviews, the notion of this transition moment is emphasized, both at the academic level and at a social level.

Teachers value positive characteristics that they associate with child-hood: respect for teachers, excitement about learning and doing things properly, using the school language among friends, etc. On the other hand, they note as challenges for their teaching some of the characteristics associated with entering adolescence (distance from the teacher, lack of confidence, being rebellious, indifference, overwhelming use of Spanish in classroom relations, etc.).

One concern of the teachers interviewed is the difficulty that some students have in using contents and skills previously learnt, and transferring them from one subject to another. The idea that learning remains "compartmentalized" (GI1:359) and the fact that the students associate types of learning with each of their subjects (GI3:206) rather than with their "real-life application" (GI1:359) are identified as a challenge teachers must face, since in cases when knowledge transfer does take place, it happens "unintentionally" on the part of the students (GI1:101) and not because their teachers have "brought this about."

> *The subjects, the teaching objective, and not only that, and when we test them on skills, they pass the tests quite well. . . but in a group you find all types, but most of them do great, but later, they go on to the next school year. . . and it seems like they've never worked on that before, ever. And it's a real mystery, right? Why? (GI1:359)*

Some teachers associate the students' academic results directly with their linguistic ability:

> *Normally, the ones that do well academically, in any subject. . . don't tend to have problems with the language. (GI2:189)*

When describing their pupils, teachers tend to speak generically and imprecisely about the pupils' cognitive abilities ("good students," brilliant students," and "students who need help"). However, when describing linguistic abilities, teachers, whether from across the subjects or from the language department itself, are much more demanding of linguistic accuracy and specific linguistic difficulties, in most cases related to grammatical aspects (morphosyntactic or orthographic issues), and less associated with textual or discursive aspects.

The difficulties associated with generic skills that are mentioned in interviews have to do with the students' "lack of autonomy" to deal with complex activities (GI1:82), their "lack of planning" when they have to create a written work and, above all, with aspects related to the search for, management, and comprehension of information, a difficulty that Natural Sciences teachers in particular identify explicitly (GI2:61; GI4:286).

In the present interviews, teachers note that the methodology suggested by the teaching materials together with continuous small-group work encourage

students to be more autonomous (GI1:194; GI2:132), more aware of their learning (GI3:221), and accustomed to working in groups without the constant presence of a teacher (GI2:153; GI3:151). Nevertheless, differences between individual students and class-groups are highlighted (GI3:256; GI4:228–229), as are difficulties on the part of the teachers to keep those differences in mind (GI4:223).

> Each student. . . that's where you see the differences among the students: motivation, taking responsibility, that's difficult in a group, reaching agreements, decisions, different paces, that's difficult, very difficult. And it's also difficult for the teacher to observe and monitor. (GI4:223)

The students' social skills are also cited as being associated with the roles they are assigned in group work ("students who help": GI1:181; GI2:175) or with oral participation in didactic interactions in the class-group ("there are some who take part over and over and they have the opportunity to speak, but others are shyer and never open their mouths in class": GI2:27).

The students' motivation is one of the central aspects that emerged in the interviews analyzed. Some teachers emphasize that students in their first year of Compulsory Secondary Education are more motivated with respect to learning than the older students, and believe that this is an important factor to be considered (GI1:110; GI2:19; GI3:337):

> For me, it's about motivation. Students in their first year of Compulsory Secondary Education still have. . . that desire, you know? To do things well. Later that gets lost (. . .) In other years they do it to get a good grade. But in the first year they're still excited. "We're going to do a project" and "wow" and they get down to it quite happily. That's a huge difference, and I believe we can take advantage of that in the first year to do things. (GI1:110)

There are different factors that affect the students' motivation, in the opinion of the teachers interviewed. They associate student motivation with the teachers' enthusiasm in a bidirectional way (GI1:240; GI3:337), with the course being taught and the contents studied in that course (GI1:250; GI2:72), and with positive academic results (GI1:253). Motivation increases when the students feel involved in the learning process (GI1:257) and when their point of view is taken into account (GI3:254), and this happens, according to the teachers, when one seeks to use projects in which the students are involved in the learning processes (GI2:255; GI4:62, 164).

Methodology is also cast as a key factor in student motivation, and the teachers believe that lecture classes ("droning on") discourage students (GI2:255–257), while group work and activities that are more dynamic ("discussions"; GI1:259)

and shorter in duration (GI3:364–365) help them participate more actively in classroom work.

Motivation to use the school language is a recurrent topic, and one of the clearest concerns that emerged in interviews carried out in contexts in which the school language has a low social presence. The first year of Compulsory Secondary Education is identified as a moment of change in the students' habits of use of the school language in the classroom (GI1:30). The presence of the teacher is sometimes the reason for the school language to be used as a language for communication among students, but in group work it is "easy" to fall back on the language with greater social presence (GI1:51; GI2:10).

Teacher Characteristics

The teachers interviewed primarily emphasize elements associated with subject knowledge and professional knowledge, that is, they focus on subjects for study in their field, always from a professional and critical point of view that seeks both reflection and personal and group improvement.

Science teachers stress the purpose of their subject and the topics covered during the school year:

> . . .consolidate the knowledge of their sixth year and little by little delve deeper into and become more familiar with the situation in their immediate surroundings, have an impact on the students' health, also reinforce and encourage concern for the environment (. . .). Keeping content in mind, there are three topics (. . .) the universe, (. . .), geology, and the third is biodiversity, nature. (. . .). And, well, the contents and skills are developed both in group work and also by doing small projects. (GI4:37)

They frequently focus on comprehension and reading (GI3:65) and also stress the importance of the setting for the subjects like Science and the possibility of going outside on field trips (GI2:12) to observe plants or study geology, visit the environmental school or go to the planetarium for astronomy (GI4:67). Teachers associate these activities with the ability to carry out practical research, formulate research questions, seek reliable information in the garden, through the microscope, and on the internet, and approach that information with a critical eye, going beyond Wikipedia (GI4:242,249).

With respect to language, various aspects are mentioned: topics studied in class projects – dialects of Basque, poetry, and the written expression of their feelings, and informational texts about a topic in Basque culture (GI4:41; GI1:109; GI2:72) – technical language, and the structures needed to create their projects (GI1:12); reading novels, the formulation of a hypothesis while reading

(GI4:271), and literary resources (GI4:274)... Additionally, the B2 linguistic profile is mentioned as an exit profile for compulsory education (GI5:19).

The language issue that is mentioned most by both language teachers and science teachers is the question of grammatical aspects, primarily in the context of their difficulties with correction (GI4:84). They state that the errors they see cause difficulties in oral and written expression, especially in students for whom the school language is L2, even though the students' knowledge may be valid: *"On tests, we focus above all on content, if they answer, they know. Since we're in Natural Sciences, I'm not going to grade on language, right?* (GI5:56). *The same thing happens with spelling, you see huge mistakes and you point them out, you correct them, but that's as far as it goes"* (GI2:40). Although teachers bring up the subject so many times, they neither work on nor systematically correct linguistic errors, but rather deal with them in a very intuitive way (GI4:146). They mention the need to work on various linguistic aspects, as well as the need for students to transfer those aspects from one subject to another because they do not tend to do that (GI1:365): verb forms (potentials) and causal forms (GI4:147), spelling (GI1: 347), a richer and more technical vocabulary (GI1:78–80; GI2:51), the ergative case of declension (GI1:350), punctuation (GI2:35), textual organizers, and the organization of paragraphs (GI1:365)... Grammar is mentioned as the biggest struggle, both for teachers and for students (GI2:72).

Correction is not emphasized in oral presentations either. The teachers complain about the amount of time needed for oral presentations in class, about the patience and difficulty involved in having students do such tasks and in listening to all the presentations, and about the lack of oral skills and the difficulty of grading them yet the need for assessment (GI5:105). In the end, what some teachers hope for is not so much the assessment of oral presentations as having their students rid themselves of fear and learn how to do a presentation comfortably (GI4:86-91). The topic of oral skills recurs in the interviews. Some teachers are more organized than others in this respect; they distribute different aspects of the topic under consideration to different groups and the students learn about the topic by listening to each other (GI3:69). But there are also those who, perhaps for convenience, now demand fewer presentations, diagrams, and the explanation of them than before (GI2:232), who believe that students lack the tools to create an effective minute-long piece of discourse (GI5:18), who do oral exercises only when they come up in the materials they use. But this is not sufficient inasmuch as it leaves oral presentation in the hands of the individual teachers, when they should be working on it systematically in all subject classes (GI5:10).

We do things out of habit, and for myself, I often have many doubts with our background of correction and quality, without knowing where the border lies between the two. Here on a daily basis we see that both are lacking, right? First of all, communicative ability is lacking. They also lack correction, and in recent years one of my major concerns has been that they have to learn grammar intuitively, but if we don't offer it to them here, how are they going to learn it? And this is quite a broad concern. (GI5:19)

The teachers underscore the need for appropriate and effective communication that is demonstrated in students not merely repeating things "like a parrot" (GI5:97, 109), in being able to participate in class interactions (GI5:137), in being able to speak for three minutes on any topic without needing previous preparation or memorization (GI5:129; GI2:313), in reasoning and responding to the explanation for the phenomena they're dealing with (GI5:98), in responding coherently and sticking to the task (GI5:99), and in responding amply, going beyond monosyllables and short sentences (GI5:151). On the topic of effective communication, the teachers also allude to various textual genres (oral presentations, descriptions, informational text, etc.) and to various cognitive-discursive functions that are specified in some subject areas: defining, creating a hypothesis, explaining cause and consequence (GI1:268), identifying, schematizing and classifying information (GI2:237), interpreting graphics and maps (GI3:88, 204), and summarizing (GI3:413). But also they mention that these functions are studied as they come up in teaching materials, they are not systematized among the teachers or subjects, and, in general, the students are not helped to transfer and reuse them (GI1:285). In light of this, some teachers speak, for example, about intensifying work on some structures:

. . .(in Language class). . . they work on the structure of the definition. In other areas, in Social Sciences, for example, they work on the structure of the definition. Then that same structure can be transferred. You talked about giving information. In my Social Sciences and Basque Language classes when they give their opinions, they have to give arguments for them. We are continually pushing them toward that. You have this: why? You feel this: why? (. . .) What we as teachers have to do is to keep in mind what structures are used in Natural Sciences and see if we work on them or if we have to reinforce them. (GI3:199)

Regarding distribution across the different subjects, it is noteworthy that the teachers do not see the treatment of language as equal in all subjects, since they believe that there are some subjects like Natural Sciences or Biology that offer more opportunities to speak, give opinions, and be critical – about current affairs like pollution, for example – than others like Mathematics, in which exercises are of a more practical and limited type (GI2:10).

Both content and professional knowledge seem to be very closely associated with teacher motivation, with their relation with the subjects they teach, with their attitudes, and with the relationships that they build with their students.

> *So. . . there is quite a big difference between our ideal theory. . . and practice. Well, we don't focus only on content, but on inspiring them to learn. . . motivating them, so that they'll enjoy it: scientific thought, how to do research, how to learn, how to pose questions. . . (GI2:8)*

At the same time, they are concerned about their self-efficacy, they want their students to engage with their subject, but sometimes they achieve the opposite (GI4:112), in which case they would grant a little less importance to content, and would reinforce research and make the subject more practical:

> *I would reinforce research a bit. . . I don't know how, something more practical. With more creativity and not so much data. (. . .) I feel a little frustrated if I don't reach the students, you want to transmit to them how much you care about your subject and are interested in it, your subject is so interesting to you, there are so many things to learn, so many new things, and not being able to pass on your enthusiasm to your students. . . I know that's very unrealistic, it's just what I would like. . . (GI4:260)*

The teachers try to present their subject as something alive, something that methodologically influences life in the classroom (GI2:15), and they want it to have an influence on the lives of their students (GI1:359). In general, they are motivated and engaged with their subjects, they live through them and enjoy them (GI2:15; GI3:409), and they also hope to have an impact on their students' motivation. They are aware of their students' eagerness and want to take advantage of it. In this sense, they speak of the desire to stimulate both their students' desire to learn and their use of the school language, their participation in classroom activities, and their motivation for the subject and the dialects of the Basque language, even though they are aware of the stages that their students must go through to move from their prior knowledge to their learning achievements, and they mention difficulties in adapting to students that have more difficulties (GI4:186). They would like to create tasks that are appropriate to their needs (GI1:194), better regulate their students' learning (GI1:285), and improve their self-regulation (GI3:294).

Some teachers express the idea that the teacher engineers his or her own attitudes and seeks out and takes advantage of opportunities to promote the well-being of his or her students, from always entering the classroom smiling and transmitting excitement to offering time at the beginning of the class for students to talk about their own issues or work on their relationships (GI1:240).

They also give importance to the atmosphere among teachers and to the positive influence of having open personal relationships (GI3:110).

The teachers' professional knowledge, their ability to reflect, and their willingness to improve and develop professionally are clear in the ideas highlighted so far in our analysis. Furthermore, they do not consider the materials and activities to be "set in stone" and they modify them as needed (GI4:45, 194; GI5:56–63); they analyze their own practices and note how they have implemented new strategies by relaxing and pacing themselves throughout the school year (GI4:113), although some say they hear two voices inside them, one that is consumed by the new methodology and one that tells them not to worry if they cannot finish a unit (GI5:54). They are able to put themselves in the place of their students, identify their challenges, and look at their practices with a critical eye (GI4:53), and they think that perhaps their subject should be less theoretical and more dynamic (GI4:84), that they should take care with their own discourse as a model for their students (GI4:85), that they should strengthen creativity (GI4:260) and plan and systematize linguistic development and study among all teachers (GI5:12), and they would like to use new techniques to better help those students with more difficulties (GI4:284).

Context of Instruction

References to methodological aspects and teaching materials are central to the entire group interviews analyzed. The same teaching materials are used in all schools and are based, according to the teachers, on project work (GI1:12), a demanding linguistic level (GI1:100–103), organization by areas of knowledge with differences in approach among them (GI2:72), and the promotion of cooperative work, with differences among the different areas (GI1:194).

In general, the level of satisfaction with the teaching materials is high (GI1:259; GI5:20), and the teachers recognize that these materials have brought about a change in the approach to teaching processes, a "revolution" (GI2:15). Nevertheless, they also note the need to "make the materials one's own" (GI3:430–431; GI4:45; GI5:10) and adapt them and complement them according to the needs they identify. Various activities carried out by the teachers are cited in the interviews. In some cases, projects are adapted according to the interests or the likes of the students (GI3:390), interdisciplinary projects are created in parallel with the suggestions in the materials (GI3:391; GI4:146–152), or projects are developed by students with specific needs (GI3:366–389). The teachers give positive value to experimentation and the creation of activities that are adapted to the interests and needs of their students:

. . .we have to create these types of things and activities on the spot, and creating them and trying them can be a strong point. We shouldn't be afraid to try things, because it can motivate people. . . And assess them ourselves, and decide how to correct them. . . (GI3:413)

Furthermore, teachers may suggest activities with specific purposes, such as grammatical work (GI2:74; GI4:278) – they work on and "bone up on" grammar in "a different way" beyond what is available in the textbook (GI5:56–63), with supplemental materials (GI2:74), since whatever does not appear in the teaching materials is taken for granted or worked on intuitively (GI5:146) – reading comprehension (GI2:71, 277), and activities to boost reading pleasure (GI3:413).

Although teachers are aware that project work and cooperative group work have brought about a change in their role, they continue to be critical about their forms of classroom instruction and suggest decreasing their "lecture time" or "droning on" (GI1:192; GI2: 252; GI3:228), as well as developing strategies for group interaction in which more extensive and appropriate participation on the part of the student body is fostered (GI4:112; GI5:151). In one noteworthy case, a teacher made changes in the classroom dynamic to foster interaction, precisely to have an impact on her students' language use and quality. However, she remains unsure whether this has been successful, since two dilemmas have arisen: first, when her students tell her that they have been speaking much more, she wonders whether that means something positive or if they think they're wasting time; and second, she reports a rift between how comfortable she felt in class and her students' results, with which she was not so comfortable (GI5:178). It is not clear, therefore, to what extent teaching activities, learning, and evaluation processes are linked, given that teachers and students do not seem to understand the same thing when faced with the same processes.

Some moments are mentioned in which the students make suggestions regarding the objectives, activities, and evaluation of their learning experiences. Nevertheless, in the teachers' discourse, it is clear that the leading role belongs almost exclusively to the teachers, though this is presented as a dilemma or challenge in some cases (GI3:244).

Concern for student well-being and the need to boost motivation appear in the teachers' discourse, and they emphasize that the teacher, with his or her positive attitude (GI1:226) and actions, must foster a good atmosphere in the classroom and express interest in the well-being of the students (GI3:227).

Assessment is another key aspect that surfaces in the interviews carried out in the present study. On the one hand, assessment based on the teaching materials and structured around three main concepts – content, skills, and attitudes – is mentioned in all the interviews (GI1:289). In most cases, content is assessed first,

followed by skills (GI1:290; GI4:165–186). To evaluate these aspects, "assessable activities" and/or "tests" are used (GI1:287–289; GI4:166), although some teachers point out that skills assessment cannot be based solely on a final exam and should be carried out continuously (GI5:75). Likewise, the teachers mention in the interviews the difficulties many students have, especially students with problems, in taking exams intended to assess skills (GI4:171–186; GI5:80–82).

In two of the interviews, it is explicitly stated that assessment continues to be one of the reasons for teacher training (GI1:313; GI3:130). In those centers, work is being carried out to reach an agreement among teachers on assessment criteria (GI1:311–316) and to create tools, rubrics, for assessment (GI3:287). The students in some cases play a leading role in assessment through self-evaluation or co-evaluation (GI1:318–327; GI2:202–203; GI4:209), but always based on the criteria established by their teachers and without any specific training in assessment (GI2:203). One of the dilemmas that teachers bring up regarding assessment has to do with language, and one of the issues raised by teachers is the role of teachers whose subjects are non-linguistic in evaluating linguistic aspects, especially those relating to correction (GI2:40;GI4:87). Although the majority of teachers agree on this analysis and believe that there is cause for concern, previous experiences cast doubt on the effectiveness of rigor when it comes to assessing student productions (GI2:44–55). In one of the schools (GI1:291) it has been suggested that teachers assess and grade attitude toward the school language and its use, in order to strengthen the use of the language in the classroom. The teachers also stress the importance of both the use of the Basque language in the family environment and family attitudes toward the language (GI1:106; GI1:41; GI1:304; GI3:200) and have taken on the challenge of helping students who do not use the school language at home to develop different linguistic variables and registers to "fill the students' toolkits" (GI3:200).

From all the interviews, it is clear that it is common for students to work cooperatively in many classroom activities. In general, the groups are chosen by the teachers and are heterogeneous, composed of "excellent" students who "know how to help" together with others who "need help" (GI1:175–176; GI4:121), and with predefined roles (spokesperson, secretary, etc.) (GI2:153). Nevertheless, many teachers explain that in some instances they prefer to choose homogeneous groups made up of students who are academically similar (GI2:176; GI3:252), since they believe that the "students who help" get tired and in homogeneous groups they can enjoy the work more (GI2:187) while the students who "need help" have to adjust if they have no interest in learning (GI3:256). Additionally, "the results are better, especially in the case of those who need help" (GI3:256–258). There are two main challenges teachers set for themselves regarding

cooperative work: the need to keep in mind differences among students (ability, motivation, interests, work pace, etc.) (GI4:223) and student use of the school language to communicate when working in groups (GI1:10).

Many of the aspects identified in the interviews as targets for improvement have to do with organization. On the one hand, the teachers emphasize the importance of ratios in order to be able to properly meet the demands of the students and their learning process (GI2:300) and to be able to carry out innovative projects with them (GI3:167–169). In many cases, teachers teach more than one subject, which, according to those teachers, gives them a more general perspective on what students learn and improves their ability to elicit the transfer of the students' developed knowledge from one area to another (GI1:365–367; GI3:73). Although deep knowledge in different areas is given positive value, the present interviews confirm a lack of systematic coordination among teachers of different subjects; teachers of one subject have only a superficial and informal familiarity, often through their students, with what is studied in other subject classes (GI1:276; GI2:187; GI3:81–83; GI4:139) and they rely on the approach of the teaching materials (GI3:89). "Lack of time" is one of the arguments put forward to explain this lack of coordination (GI1:385–386; GI3:118), lack of time being one of the most consistent complaints that emerges in the interviews and that is associated both with the work teachers must do outside the classroom and with how classes are planned. Teachers feel the pressure of having to "do it all" (GI3:428; GI5:178) and this has an impact on methodology: it sometimes leads them to prioritize lecture classes over classes planned around cooperative work (GI1:196–199); to prioritize written work over oral work (GI5:106); and with respect to assessment, to prioritize content assessment over skills assessment (GI5:176).

6. Conclusions

The present study analyzes the background and perspective of teachers with regard to linguistic work in curricular subjects. To achieve this goal, group interviews were conducted and then subjected to content analysis based on the categories presented by Meyer et al. (2018b). Our results have revealed that the teachers identify and describe both learner characteristics and their own characteristics, and they are able to characterize their teaching practice and bring up tensions and dilemmas from their own teaching experience and perspective with respect to aspects that determine the teaching of languages and of different subject content, all of which helps us to identify topics for the training process (Lourenço et al., 2017).

The way in which the teachers refer to the "school language" in their discussions reveals one of the tensions or dilemmas that warrant closer examination from a theoretical-practical perspective. When the teachers describe the students' level of competence in the Basque language, they speak primarily about grammatical aspects and correction issues. However, from the perspective of different curricular subjects, they refer to the need to work on different cognitive-discursive functions and textual genres in order to deepen knowledge, in the words of one of the teachers, "so that the students can learn with a good foundation" (GI3:212). Following Meyer et al. (2018b), this would also seem to indicate that there should be more in-depth work on language.

The present analysis confirms that in the schools that participated in this study, the teachers are immersed in methodological changes due in part to the new teaching materials they use. Additionally, they are open to innovation and have the confidence to try out different pedagogical approaches. Project work and cooperative work are carried out regularly on a day-to-day basis, which facilitates the framework recommended for deeper learning (Bell, 2010). Additionally, the teachers mention dilemmas and proposals regarding both project work and cooperative work, which make it feasible to delve deeper into these topics. However, assessment (Biggs & Tang, 2011) and student involvement in the whole learning process, the "learning partnership," are seen as significant challenges in these schools.

The group interview format helps teachers to compare and contrast different teaching practices and points of view with regards to the students and the teachers themselves, and shows how they deal with their teaching activity, both in and out of the classroom. The present analysis confirms that it is not common for teachers to reflect on their teaching practice systematically in groups (Fullan, 2003) or dialogically (Esteve & Carandell, 2009). Therefore, it is important to seek such spaces in which to elicit reflection so that teaching can be adapted or remodeled, thereby improving work through the school language in the different curricular areas in order to promote the students' deeper learning (Beacco et al., 2015; Meyer et al., 2015).

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