LEARNERS BECOMING TEACHERS

An exploratory study of beliefs held by prospective and practising EFL teachers in Brazil

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ABSTRACT

Adopting the framework of teacher thinking and teacher socialisation, this exploratory study sought to: 1) identify the beliefs about foreign language teaching/learning of prospective and practising EFL teachers; 2) establish connections between their beliefs and educational experiences they went through before and during a pre-service teacher education programme ('Letras Anglo-Portuguesas' course) in Brazil; and 3) reveal aspects of the informants' teacher role identity.

The study draws on two assumptions that have been widely accepted in teacher education in other areas of knowledge but which only recently started to gain ground in foreign language teacher education. The first assumption is that teacher education cannot be based on attempts to shape teachers' behaviours, and teachers' work need to be reconceptualised in terms of teachers' beliefs. The second assumption is that beliefs are shaped by life-long experiences, which include educational experiences prior to formal teacher education and the teacher education

programme itself. For practising teachers it also incorporates the experience as teachers.

I then locate this perspective within the current ideas in foreign language teacher education that emphasise reflection-on-action as the goal to be achieved, a trend that has found expression through three basic proposals: reflective practice as the interaction between 'received' and 'experiential' knowledge, action research and exploratory teaching. I argue that beliefs and biography need to be integrated within a reflective approach in pre-service teacher education, and I reject a particular meaning attached to 'training' at this level.

Finally, this study indicates as a desirable direction for teacher education to frame reflection about wider educational issues, in which the foreign language classroom is seen within the broader social context in which it is inserted.

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List of Abbreviations

- CR classroom research
- EFL English as a Foreign Language
- ELT English Language Teaching
- ESL English as a Second Language
- FLTE Foreign Language Teacher Education
- LAP Letras Anglo-Portuguesas
- MTP Methodology and Teaching Practice
- TP Teaching Practice
- UEL Universidade Estadual de Londrina

A note about data presentation

Seeing the informants as a group and at the same time as individuals presented a challenge. I solved this difficult dilemma by looking for patterns at one hand but also looking at the personal idiosyncrasies of individual informants. In this way I believe there was no sacrifice of the richness of individual differences, which were acknowledged while I presented the analysis of what was common among the informants.

In addition to the approach to data analysis, there were issues connected to the presentation, such as decisions concerning the most appropriate interpretation and what segments of the data should be in the main text. Having worked in a context I was familiar with and with people who trusted me with their stories, I also felt I should try to achieve a delicate balance between their voices and my own interpretation. Therefore, the quotes of individual informants have a dual purpose: they illustrate points I make about the data and they make the informants more visible, allowing their voices to speak directly to the reader, although mediated by my selection.

At other points of the text, however, only my voice is presented, and only my interpretation of the data is visible. The rationale for inclusion or exclusion of quotes was that the quotes should provide a flavour of the data, without necessarily being used to back up every interpretation I derived from the data. To do so would extent the text far too much. Therefore, more pragmatic considerations limited the number of quotes, but whenever corroboration from the data was felt necessary, some reference to the original data was provided. Hopefully, this arrangement will allow the reader to develop trust in my interpretation.

The original data consisting of questionnaire responses, lesson reports, repgrids and interview transcripts are not included in the appendices, since they were very long and some contained parts that were confidential. However, anyone interested in consulting them can contact me.

Chapter 1

Setting the scene

- 1. A brief contextualisation: the justification for the study
 - 1.1 My professional experience
 - 1.2 My working context: the 'LAP' course
- 2. The thesis: research questions and organisation
 - 2.1 Research questions
 - 2.2 The organisation of the thesis
- 3. Conclusion to this chapter

1. A brief contextualisation: the justification for the study

1.1 - My professional experience

Before coming to Lancaster I had six-years' experience as a university teacher in the south of Brazil (at Universidade Estadual de Londrina), involved in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teacher education course ('Letras Anglo-Portuguesas' - LAP), being at first responsible for the English language component of the course, and later involved with student teachers in their teaching practice in secondary schools. I was then given the opportunity to pursue a PhD degree and my wish was to develop a study that could contribute to English Language Teaching (ELT) in my working context.

The research topic evolved from an initial concern with teachers' own interpretation of the 'communicative approach', in contrast with some theoreticians' views. I wanted to understand how I could improve my contribution (and consequently the contribution of the course as a whole) towards the education of those teachers on the course, by giving their own understandings a more privileged status than I felt we were already doing. In the last four years I have been able to reflect on that contribution through the research project I am

going to report, which involved discussions in the various research groups I took part while at Lancaster, readings of the literature in the areas covered by this thesis and retrospectively linking it to my practice as well as by analysing the data I obtained from students and teachers connected to that course.

The choice of this topic derived from the intersection of my interest in understanding the process of learning to teach and the literature I was able to read while doing the study and by discussing it with other people who shared an interest in foreign language teacher education.

Before I go on to explain what this thesis is about, I would like to present the context that I worked on.

1.2 - My working context: the 'LAP' course

'LAP' courses in Brazil were created following a tradition of teacher preparation at university level, and thus belong to the category of 'licenciatura' courses, which are aimed at preparing professionals to work in primary and secondary schools. They give certification to teachers who are then able to apply for jobs at 10. and 20. Graus¹ in schools run by the state or by the private sector.

Two types of 'licenciatura' can be distinguished: short (curta) and full (plena). The short one entitles its holder to teach in the first four years of primary school only (pupils' age from 7-10). Full 'licenciatura', on the other hand, entitles its holder to teach at both 10. Grau (pupil's age 7-14) and 20. Grau (pupil's age from 15-17).²

2

¹ The current legislation regulating pre-university education was introduced in 1971, with 'Lei 5692'. It reorganised the system which was previously divided into 3 levels into 2 levels. 1o. Grau comprises 8 years of schooling, divided into two halves: the first four years correspond to what used to be called 'escola primaria', and the last four years correspond to the 'ginasial'. At the end of the 8 years the students are expected to master some fundamental notions in all subjects of the curriculum, which includes compulsory (core) and recommended disciplines. At 2o. Grau students can choose from a 'profissionalizante' option in which the students are trained to join the labour market in areas such as Economics, Business, Secretary, Teaching (magisterio) at the first four years of 1o. Grau, etc.; or a 'propedeutico' option, through which the students are prepared to join the university, that is, to pass the university entrance exam. At 2o. grau level there are also the technical schools ('escolas técnicas federais'), which provide skilled labour for the industry. There is only one of such school per state, although not all states have 'escolas técnicas'.

²Private language schools can hire teachers with no formal qualification.

By the time I collected data for this study the 'LAP' course at Universidade Estadual de Londrina offered only the full option. However, the students had three alternatives in the 'Letras' course:

- . Portuguese with its respective literature
- . French/Portuguese with their respective literatures
- . English/Portuguese with their respective literatures the 'LAP' option

The admission to one of these courses was done by successfully sitting a university entrance examination ('vestibular'). Due to a continuous devaluation of teachers' work in the state sector, few students want to be teachers, a topic I shall return to when I discuss the informants' prospects about their teaching career. For this reason the standards for passing the examination for 'LAP' were not high. For the English/Portuguese option the thirty candidates who obtained the higher grades among the candidates were admitted. Usually the ratio varies from 3 to 1 candidate per place.

The course was offered in two periods: one in the afternoon and one in the evening. Students enrolled in the afternoon classes usually have a better command of the language because they often come from families with a more privileged economic background (they do not have to work full-time or sometimes do not have to work at all). It is common for these students to attend private language courses in addition to taking the courses at the university. Students in the evening classes possess a lower proficiency level in the foreign language since they usually come from a less privileged economic background (the majority have to work) and had learnt English only in state schools, where the quality of teaching is traditionally considered poor. These students have to end up with a reasonable command of the language and of how to teach it after four academic years. It is not difficult to imagine the demands imposed on teachers and learners and the inevitable pressure to take maximum advantage of the time available.

The course comprises subjects related to linguistics, language, literature and pedagogy. Broadly speaking it is formed by two main blocks of subject areas: the technical and the pedagogical ones. Technical subjects are, for instance, in the Portuguese/English option: Portuguese, English, Linguistics. Pedagogical disciplines³ are: Didactics, Psychology of Education, EFL Methodology. Most of these pedagogical subjects are taught by the Department of Education and it is not unusual to have students from all other 'licenciaturas' studying together (e.g. History, Geography, Mathematics).

The academic year is divided into two semesters. Fig. 1 shows the distribution of semesters in the course and the subjects directly related to the English language:

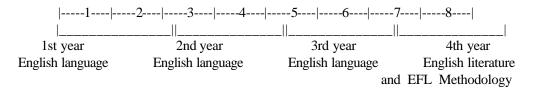


Fig. 1 - Number of semesters in the 'Letras Anglo-Portuguesas' course⁴

In the specific case of the 'LAP' course at UEL, EFL methodology is the responsibility of the Modern Languages Department, and therefore the integration with language teachers is more easily achieved. However, there is a clear division between technical and pedagogical disciplines. The way the curriculum is structured (the pedagogical disciplines are programmed at the end of the course) encourages the view that 'content knowledge' has to be learned first. This is due to the limited knowledge of the language that some students bring to the programme, and this fact has to be taken into account by the course administration.

³Celani (1983) subdivides the pedagogical subjects into two groups: general education (e.g. Philosophy of Education, Educational Psychology) and specialised (e.g. Methodology of Language Teaching, Classroom Techniques, Evaluation of Teaching Materials).

⁴ Academic semesters at UEL go from March to June and from Mid-August to Mid -December.

However, the organisation of the curriculum contributes to widening the gap between these two areas. The 'bridge' between 'content' and 'methodology' is expected to be built up during the teaching practice, as Cumming (1989) and Richards (1991) have already pointed out in relation to similar contexts.

My assumption is that the socialisation⁵ of teachers starts much earlier, not only before they join the course, but also during the language lessons of its language component. Following the view that the students' experience as learners contributes to the beliefs they hold and that these beliefs will interact with the teacher education programme, I would like to explore some of these relationships in this study.

Following this assumption I will argue that the previous experiences that the 'LAP' students had with foreign languages and the language component of the 'LAP' course functions as a "hidden curriculum" (Zeichner, Tabachnich and Densmore, 1987) in relation to the beliefs developed by prospective EFL teachers. In this case, the "hidden curriculum" is what is implicitly conveyed to prospective teachers through the activities developed in the language component of the teacher education programme.

One of the purposes of the 'LAP' course is to prepare teachers to be aware of the methodological options available to them, and thus to adopt an approach that is adequate to the context they choose to work in. Consequently, that goal involves prospective teachers becoming familiar with current methodological options in foreign language teacher education and the potential working contexts available to them. More recently, this purpose has required prospective teachers to develop sensitivity to different educational environments, by involving them in observation of class teachers and teaching practice, followed by a period of reflection. An inquiry-oriented approach has been implemented in the programme, although limited time has been allocated to the methodology

⁵ The socialisation of teachers refers to the "transmission of teacher beliefs, knowledge, attitude and values" (Feiman-Nemser and Floden, 1986:520).

component of the course (for a list of the subjects and number of hours see Appendix A).

However, it seemed to me that we still lacked an understanding of how the students learned to teach, and we certainly could not expect the short methodological component of the course alone to be sufficiently powerful to shape their beliefs about foreign language teaching/learning. For this reason I decided to focus on the beliefs held by the students in the programme as well as by teachers who had already graduated from the same programme, and link them to experiences they had had in educational contexts.

Two perspectives have contributions to offer to the education of foreign language teachers: teacher thinking and teacher socialisation. As we shall see in Chapters 2 and 3, teacher thinking has reinforced the need to conceptualise teachers' work in terms of the thoughts underlying the behaviours, especially the notion of beliefs guiding teacher's practices, and teacher socialisation has acknowledged the influence of other experiences to the formation of teachers' beliefs. If I am allowed to use the metaphor of photography, these areas were the lenses through which I framed the phenomenon I was interested in.

2. The thesis: research questions and organisation

2.1 - Research questions

In accordance with the topic described above, this exploratory study was set up with a view to gaining insights for pre-service foreign language teacher education. It represents an attempt to understand the process of learning to teach while focusing on beliefs, within the framework of teacher socialisation, studying these beliefs from the point of view of prospective and practising EFL teachers.

My interest was to uncover the beliefs held by the students and teachers, especially their teacher role identity, and to understand them in the context of their educational biographies, including the 'LAP' course. The uncovering of teachers' beliefs is crucial to a perspective that takes people's background and

views as valid and valuable in the context of teacher education, since teachers' beliefs are strongly connected with their classroom practices as the whole literature in teacher thinking has demonstrated.

Furthermore, for teacher educators the issue is not only to find out what the beliefs are but also how they interact with the contents of the teacher education programme (Crow, 1987).

The research questions that evolved out of my initial concerns and after the pilot phase of the study were the following:

- 1. What were the beliefs about foreign language teaching/learning held by 'LAP' students and practising EFL teachers who graduated in the same course?
- 2. What were the connections between their beliefs and the educational experiences they went through?
- 3. What teacher role identities did individuals in different stages of the course present?

Two central themes are interconnected in this work: beliefs and personal histories. The first question aims at identifying the beliefs held by the different groups of informants, while the second addresses the relationships between those beliefs and experiences. The third question is related to the first two and singles out teacher role identity because of my interest in finding more about the images that those students and teachers had of themselves in their roles (actual or projected) as EFL teachers. Considering that the teachers' perceptions of their role is central to their classroom practices (Crow, 1987; Knowles, 1992), teacher role identity is an important aspect of learning to teach. As I will argue, teacher education programmes usually represent the turning point, from which learners have to become teachers.

2.2 - The organisation of the thesis

The thesis is divided into four parts. Part One addresses the theoretical framework that guided the study, with Chapter 2 focusing on teacher thinking studies in the area of English Language Teaching (ELT) and how beliefs are connected to classroom practices. Chapter 3 introduces studies in the area of teacher socialisation, establishing the connection between beliefs and personal histories - an approach that takes into account the socialising experiences individuals go through.

Part Two consists of three chapters, focusing on the methodology of the study. Methodology has taken up a large proportion of this thesis because of the importance of considering not only definitions but also methods in discussing beliefs. Methodology is also important because of its potential lessons for other researchers interested in doing research in this area. For these reasons I felt I needed to dedicate a great deal of attention to it. Chapter 4 presents a methodological review of some studies in the field of teachers' theories and beliefs with a brief discussion of the relationship between thinking, behaviour and beliefs. I then justify my approach to the study of beliefs that did not incorporate the direct observation of behaviours but focused on what the informants told me. I move on to present the various procedures used to capture the informants' beliefs and personal histories, and their teacher role identity.

Chapter 5 presents some insights from the pilot study. It describes the procedures followed during that phase and the results as they were analysed at that time, when the focus of the study was on the elicitation of beliefs, with personal histories taking a minor role in the overall research design. The limitations found during the pilot study gave rise to changes that were incorporated in the main study. The changes were motivated by the need to clarify issues related mainly to personal histories.

Chapter 6 presents the steps followed during the main study and introduces the informants in the study: two groups of 'LAP' students and a group of practising teachers who graduated from the same course.

Part Three of this thesis contains five chapters which present the analysis of the data collected in Brazil. Chapter 7 discusses briefly the analytical process employed after the data was collected. Continuing with the metaphor of photography, I refer to this phase as entering the dark room, in order to develop the films I used to photograph the phenomenon I was interested in. Chapters 8, 9, and 10 present the data relating to the students in the 'LAP' course. Chapter 8 displays their beliefs about foreign language teaching/learning in relation to the roles of teachers and learners, materials and activities in the classroom, which were dependent upon the educational context, which, in turn, was connected to the social status of the foreign language. Chapter 9 explores the relationships between the students' beliefs and their personal histories, as they recollected experiences in different educational contexts and told anecdotes about their experiences with foreign languages. Chapter 10 discusses the students' identity as teachers, as they talked both about what they wanted to do in their own classrooms and compared themselves with their former EFL teachers.

Chapter 11 concentrates on practising EFL teachers, addressing the three themes already presented for the students: beliefs, personal histories and teacher role identity.

In Part Four of the thesis I present methodological and professional implications which may be drawn from this exploratory study. In Chapter 12 I discuss issues related to methodology and in Chapter 13 I connect professional implications within the current framework of reflective practice in foreign language teacher education (FLTE). Then I argue for the need to complement the approaches with notions derived from studies in teacher thinking ('beliefs') and teacher socialisation ('biographies') especially in relation to pre-service foreign language teacher education.

3. Conclusion to this chapter

In this chapter I presented the justification for the study, with the contextualisation of the study, and the organisation of the thesis.

Throughout this study I have been drawing on notions that link past, present and future: the beliefs that some 'LAP' students and practising EFL teachers developed as a result of their own experiences as learners of foreign languages and how they projected themselves as future EFL teachers. Having concentrated on my own personal motivation for studying this topic, I now move on to present the theoretical framework that I operated with.

The title of this thesis was chosen a long time ago. Before I knew anything else, I was sure I would like to deal with the process of learning to teach. 'Learners becoming teachers' implies therefore a movement, a change in identity carried out essentially through a process of socialisation in a profession that combines apprenticeship with formal education. As the title also implies, 'becoming' is a process that is never-ending, as teachers are always learning from their experiences as teachers.

Chapter 2

The teacher thinking lens

- 1. Introduction
- 2. Research on teacher thinking
 - 2.1 General Education
 - 2.2 Teacher thinking and ELT
 - 2.2.1 EFL teachers' interactive thoughts
 - 2.2.2 EFL teachers' theories and beliefs
- 3. Teachers' theories/beliefs and teacher education
- 4. Conclusion to this chapter

1. Introduction

The need to understand how foreign language teachers learn to teach and cope with their task is one strand of research that can benefit from insights generated by educational studies on teacher thinking, an area that has yielded a substantial amount of work in recent years (Elbaz, 1983; Halkes and Olson, 1984; Ben-Peretz, Bromme and Halkes, 1986; Calderhead, 1987; Stromnes and Søvick, 1987; Lowyck and Clark, 1989; Day, Pope and Denicolo, 1990; Day, Calderhead and Denicolo, 1993).

Teacher thinking studies are rooted in the dissatisfaction with behaviouristic approaches to the study of teaching that predominated in educational research until the late 1970s. At that time the common focus for research was teacher effectiveness (correlations between teacher behaviour and learner outcomes), a focus that had parallels in second language classroom as evidenced by research reviewed by Chaudron (1988).

Foreign language teaching researchers have looked at teacher thinking studies with great interest and have suggested shifts in the ways foreign language teaching (FLTE) is conducted. Freeman (1992:1) offers us one of the reasons for such interest:

The broad process-product paradigm which tended to dominate educational research generally (Dunkin & Biddle, 1974), and research in second language classrooms specifically (Chaudron, 1988), cannot adequately account for the complex and contingent nature of classroom interaction or for the role of the teacher within those interactions.

Therefore, the inadequacy of these perspectives led researchers interested in FLTE to look for alternatives among studies in a field that could potentially contribute, that is, teacher thinking.

2. Research on teacher thinking

2.1 - General Education

Teacher thinking research, which started with a strong basis in cognitive psychology, has tried to redress the balance and attaches more importance to the way teachers think rather than how they behave. The main concern of research in this area is to understand the rationale underlying teachers' behaviour in classrooms.

Erickson (1986) puts forward the need for interpretive research that is concerned with action, not behaviours. He points out the importance of uncovering meanings related to behaviours and believes that "surface similarities mask an underlying diversity" (:126). According to him

The possibility is always present that different individuals may have differing interpretations of the meaning of what, in a physical form, appear to be the same or similar objects or behaviors.

For this reason, he distinguishes 'behaviour' (the physical act) and 'action' ("behavior accompanied by the meaning interpretations held by the actor and those with whom the actor is engaged in interaction" (:1986:126-7).

Given the strong influence of cognitive psychology, until recently there were two prevalent models to explain teacher thinking: decision-making and information processing. As described by Munby (1982, citing Clark (1980), decision-making hypothesised that teachers consciously choose between alternatives. The focus of this model was on explaining and understanding deliberate teacher activity, probably when there was sufficient time to deliberate (e.g. in lesson planning). According to this model, a typical question for research would be: "Given a particular situation how do teachers decide what to do?" (Munby, 1982:203).

The cognitive information processing model, on the other hand, concentrated on how teachers defined teaching situations and how these definitions affect their behaviour. A typical question in this model would be: "How does a teacher define a teaching situation and how does the teacher's definition of the situation affect his or her behaviour?" (Munby, 1982:204).

More recently, however, a constructivist approach has started to gain strength among researchers on teacher thinking. According to this view, teachers continually build, elaborate and test their personal theory of the world (Clark, 1986). In this paradigm the way teachers perceive their work and the connections they make between experiences and knowledge plays an important role in understanding their work.

Because of the interest in teacher thinking research to go beyond behaviours and understand action, I believe that classroom-centred research that aims at going beyond the observable, such as this study, can also gain insights from studies in this area.

The studies on teacher thinking have comprised three main areas of investigation: a) planning, b) interactive cognitions and c) theories and beliefs¹. Planning includes both pre-interactive (before entering the classroom) and post-interactive phases (immediately after the lesson or further reflections). Since teaching is cyclical, the distinction between pre-interactive and post-interactive phases becomes blurred. Clark and Peterson (1986:258) refer to planning as:

...the thought processes that teachers engage in prior to classroom interaction, but [planning] also includes the thought processes or reflections that they engage in after classroom interaction, that then guide their thinking and projections for future classroom interaction.

Interactive cognitions are the thought processes teachers go through when they are working with their students. Research on this area has tried to identify what teachers think about and the kinds of decisions they make when interacting with their pupils.

Theories and beliefs have also become an important aspect of the research on teacher thinking (Munby, 1982; Verloop, 1989; Johnson, 1994) because they can provide explanations as to why teachers do what they do. They are considered to influence both phases of teaching (planning and interactive thoughts and decisions).

Research on teacher thinking has, therefore, encompassed several lines of inquiry. Basically it has involved studies of teachers' cognitions in planning and interacting with students and their possible origins.

Calderhead (1984:4-5) defines teacher thinking as a term that

has come to unite a body of research which, although starting from a variety of different backgrounds and focusing on diverse educational issues, has a common concern with the ways in which knowledge is actively acquired and used by teachers and the circumstances that affect its acquisition and employment (my emphasis).

¹The terminology in this area is somewhat confusing, and I will discuss some current definitions in Chapter 4.

Recently, the study of teachers' theories and beliefs has become more attractive because of its potential to explain teachers' resistance to innovation and the gap between research theory, or external theories and the teacher's personal theories.

In foreign language teaching, only now have researchers started to investigate this area, although Hosenfeld (1978), Wenden (1988), Horwitz (1988a, 1988b) and Kübler (1991) have already highlighted the potential of beliefs to explain the adoption of specific learning strategies by learners.

2.2- Teacher thinking and ELT

Although on a small scale, teacher thinking research has already caught the attention of some researchers in foreign language teaching. Whereas some of the studies are still probably in form of theses and dissertations² some of them found their way in the published literature. In order to provide an overview of the three areas covered so far, I will present some of the studies that have been carried out in ELT. They can be classified as belonging to the following areas, according to their main objectives:

- 1) studies which concentrated on describing the nature and content of planning and interactive decision-making processes of *practising* teachers (Woods, 1989, 1993; Nunan, 1991a, 1992; Bailey, forthcoming);
- 2) studies which concentrated on describing the nature and content of planning and interactive decision-making processes of *pre-service* teachers (Johnson, 1992a,1992b);
- 3) studies that dealt with eliciting beliefs from groups of practising teachers (Dingwall, 1985; Zuber-Skerritt, 1989; Breen, 1990; Burns, 1991; Richards et al. 1991);

² See, for instance, Johnson (1989), Chryshochoos (1990), Egea-Kuehne (1992).

4) studies that focused on the development of beliefs during participation in teacher education programmes - pre-service or in-service (Cumming, 1989; Freeman, 1991a, 1992; Gutierrez, 1992; Richards, Ho and Giblin, 1992; Johnson, 1994).

The thread that unites all these studies is a dissatisfaction with foreign language teacher education that focuses upon teachers' behaviours rather than upon their thoughts. In the first group I included the studies that concentrated on identifying and classifying the decision-making processes of 'experienced' and 'inexperienced' teachers, with a heavy cognitive orientation (Nunan) or combined teachers' cognitive processes with beliefs about teaching (Woods). In the second group I listed the studies that had a similar orientation, but concentrated on pre-service teachers. Both groups of studies included some recognition of the importance of beliefs to teachers' decision-making processes, but it was in the third group that the studies focused more clearly on beliefs. However, researchers in this group did not try to link beliefs with decision-making, but rather list and categorise the beliefs held by practising teachers.

Although all the studies included implications for the education of teachers, it was the fourth group of studies that had a deeper concern for teachers' thoughts and the socialisation of teachers in the context of teacher education programmes. I will briefly introduce each study of the first three groups since those studies, with an orientation towards cognitive aspects of teaching, were linked to teacher education through the implications they derived from their findings. The fourth group, however, presents a complementary perspective in their attempt to discuss changes in relation to teacher education programmes, and therefore fall more into studies of the socialisation of teachers. For this reason I will postpone comments about them until Chapter 3.

2.2.1 - EFL teachers' interactive thoughts

The studies that dealt with teachers' interactive thoughts were mainly concerned with identifying the cognitive processes underlying teaching. Woods (1989, 1993) conducted a study that he called 'ethno-cognitive' with 8 ESL teachers in Canada. His objective was to contribute to an "understanding of the processes of second language learning/teaching by examining the perspective of the teachers" (:1993:21). He envisaged two key aspects in that process: a) the planning process adopted by teachers, or how they projected their future action in the light of their current behaviour, and b) the teachers' perceptions and interpretations of classroom events, or how the teacher's current behaviour was influenced by beliefs, assumptions, knowledge, goals and prior plans.

Woods structured the results of his study under four headings: structures of teaching, planning procedures, interpretive processes and coherence in the teaching process. He distinguished two types of structures: a conceptual one (what is taught, how and why) and a chronological one (such as the schedule of lessons in the course). He linked decisions (sequential and hierarchical) to those structures. Sequentially-related decisions occurred when one decision followed the other in a sequence but was not part of the previous decision. Hierarchically-related decisions occurred when one decision was subordinate to the other, as in his example, "in order to carry out X I will do x1, x2, x3" (1989:114). Under planning procedures he found that the teachers made decisions "within the context of perceived goals of the course and of the current structure which has evolved out of prior decision" (1993:263).

The individual rationale of the teachers for the decisions they made were found to be "internally very consistent, but not necessarily with standard theoretical perspectives of the field, and not with each other" (Woods, 1989:118). This resulted in differences in the teachers' approaches to teaching that revealed how unique each individual teacher was and how their views differed from established theoretical views on teaching.

Although the results were not surprising, Woods' pioneering study in ESL teachers' thinking made an important contribution by underlying the pervasiveness of the construct he labelled BAK (beliefs, assumptions and knowledge)³. The BAK network not only surfaced during moments of conflict, but

rather it seemed to underlie everything that the teachers did and said: as if it was through their individual BAK systems that the teachers structured their perceptions of the curriculum and their decisions as to how to implement that curriculum, from overall organization of the units down to specific classroom activities and verbalizations. (1993:268)

Woods' study documents more explicitly the processes underlying teachers' decision-making and reinforces the need for rejecting traditional models of teacher education that imply that teachers can be programmed to use desirable methods. His argument is based on the coherence between the way teaching is structured, the decision-making processes and the interpretive processes.

Although conducted within a particular context (English as a Second Language teaching in Canada) his study seeks to provide insights for curricular change and innovation, by pointing out the inadequacy of trying to implement curriculum change uniquely from "a top down perspective" (:1993:273).

The other two studies that focused on planning and decision-making were carried out by Nunan (1991, 1992) and Bailey (forthcoming), both having the comparison of experienced and inexperienced teachers high on the agenda. Nunan conducted a study with 9 teachers of English as a Second Language in Australia, trying to uncover 1) what guided their interactive decision-making process, 2) what they focused on when reflecting on their teaching and 3) differences between experienced and inexperienced teachers regarding interactive decisions in the classroom.

The reports presented in 1991 and published in 1992 contained partial results of a larger study. The data was reduced by categorising the reasons why all the nine

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³ I will discuss his definition in Chapter 4.

teachers departed from their planning according to the following focuses: pedagogical, interpersonal (role) and evaluative. Under pedagogical focus Nunan found that the majority of the teachers' comments centred around management and organisation, with no significant differences between experienced and inexperienced teachers. The results for the role focus showed that teachers made more comments about themselves rather than their students, probably due to the nature of the data collection, that focused on stimulated recall, that is, teachers were asked to comment on transcripts of their own lessons. Experienced and inexperienced teachers again showed no significant differences. There was a significant difference, however, for the evaluative focus. The inexperienced teachers tended to make more negative evaluations, while for the experienced teachers it was the opposite.

There was a strong tendency towards a quantitative approach in Nunan's study, acknowledged by himself as problematic, and therefore anticipating the criticisms that could be levelled against his study:

In attempting to make sense of the retrospective protocols from the nine teachers taking part in the study, I had to quantify a huge amount of qualitative data. In quantifying qualitative data, there is always the risk that one will distort data, and that one's findings will be little more than artefacts of the data collection and analysis procedures employed (1992:156)

It is possible to raise questions about the appropriateness of his categorisations, since in the illustrative example he gives of one teacher, the reasons for the decisions made during the lesson were largely connected with students' reactions to the lesson, whilst he concluded that "most of the interactive decisions made by the teacher reflected her personal philosophy of language learning and teaching" (:154).

Although Nunan's study directs our attention to the decision-making processes of teachers, the research appears to oversimplify the issues by limiting to a list of the

focus of the decisions. Considering that it is a study in the cognitive area, it was frustrating that it did not offer a contribution to a better understanding of those processes. It is difficult to understand why such a concern with contrasting experienced and inexperienced teachers when the research Nunan himself reviewed for that study showed that there are no salient differences between these two groups. In any case, the distinction is difficult to establish. The boundaries are so unclear that when Nunan (1992) wanted to present an illustration from a particular teacher, he selected one that he considered experienced (3 years of experience) (:142), only to conclude pages later (:154) that "the teacher, despite being relatively inexperienced, was able to monitor and adapt appropriately to, the ongoing activity in her classroom".

A similar agenda was pursued by Bailey (forthcoming), who intended to contrast experienced and inexperienced teachers from a cognitive point of view, a trend that I find unhelpful for teacher education, because it implies that it might be possible to transfer the cognitive processes of experienced teachers to inexperienced ones. I shall return to this point shortly.

Working on teacher's departure from plans, Bailey points out that divergence from the original plan may be consciously controlled or unconscious and uncontrolled and that the teacher may resort to strategies not previously used. Bailey draws the distinction between experienced and inexperienced teachers, the former with "a mental lexicon of resources of teaching strategies which can be called up as needed, skilfully and with confidence" (:39).

Bailey's study does not discuss fully how inexperienced teachers can learn from experienced ones, but she points out the need for teacher educators (especially supervisors) to be more tolerant with pre-service teachers. She suggests that in post-observation conferences "novice teachers should not be marked down for departing from plans and helped to explore their strategies and actions to develop decision-making skills" (:39). They can also discuss with experienced co-operating teachers

after their own lessons or by examining videotapes or transcripts of lessons taught by other teachers. For her, novice teachers have to "discover the working rules that effective teachers use"(:39). Bailey seems to be still committed to the paradigm of teacher effectiveness without much consideration of the context, since in the paradigm that sees teaching only as cognitive process, context does not matter. The lack of concern with context can explain the attempts to generalisation such as the ones implied above.

Although with the pitfalls I have tried to present, these studies are important because they add to the calls for more attention to the complex cognitive processes involved in teaching, and they show how diverse studies in the area of teacher thinking can be. They also highlighted the importance of teachers' beliefs in attempts to understand the rationale for their decisions in the classroom.

The studies mentioned so far concentrated on practising teachers. The second group of studies still deal with interactive decision-making, but this time the focus is on pre-service teachers. The study carried out by Johnson (1992a, 1992b) examined the instructional actions and decisions of pre-service EFL teachers during their initial teaching experiences. Johnson, as well as Freeman (1992), saw the need to concentrate on the decision-making processes of English as a Second Language preservice teachers stemming from the inadequacy of the paradigm followed by classroom research, which, according to her, provided "some of the most important contributions to our understanding of second language teaching" (1992a:115). Nevertheless, she claimed:

Much of this classroom-based research has sought to describe effective teaching behaviors, positive learner outcomes and teacher-student interactions that lead to successful second language learning (Chaudron, 1988). However, few researchers have moved beyond characterizing the observable behaviors of second language teachers to exploring the more covert dimensions of how second language teachers'

thoughts, judgements and decisions influence the nature of second language instruction (:115).

Without discussing what characterises an 'effective teacher' Johnson seemed to be interested in finding out whether ESL pre-service teachers presented the same trend of other areas of knowledge. She had already reviewed the literature that pointed out that effective teachers have a repertoire of instructional routines that allows them to make alternative choices without disrupting the flow of instruction, and that preservice teachers, on the contrary, had to rely on conscious decisions, and therefore tend to concentrate on inappropriate student behaviour.

Johnson's study was devised to "provide descriptive evidence of the instructional decisions of pre-service ESL teachers during second language instruction" (1992a:116). She concentrated on identifying the student cues that pre-service teachers took into account when making their instructional decisions, the decisions they made and the prior knowledge they considered while making the decisions. She concluded that in general the pre-service teachers made instructional decisions that were concerned with guaranteeing student understanding, motivation and involvement, and instructional management. Her study, therefore, confirmed other studies in the literature about teachers' instructional decisions from other areas of knowledge.

Johnson's paper also shows a blind acceptance of concepts such as experienced/inexperienced, and curiously, opposes effective and pre-service teachers, implying that pre-service teachers are ineffective. Considering that Johnson also draws implications for teacher education, I found it important to include her study in this review in order to highlight a worrying trend in studies in this area, a trend that risks falling into the same pattern of prescription adopted by the traditional teacher education they want to criticise. This time, instead of establishing appropriate behaviour the aim is to establish appropriate thinking.

However, it is important to note that there is not a consensus among the four studies reviewed so far about the implications for teacher education. Two trends can be noticed: one that favours the process of reflection on observed practices (their own practices or of other teachers), represented by Woods and Nunan, and another that aims at showing novice teachers the thinking underlying experienced teachers' practices, expressed by Bailey's and Johnson's suggestions.

Both strands show that understanding about how reflection can be carried out by teachers varies, therefore enlarging the pool of activities that teacher education can promote under the label of reflective practice. Whilst this diversity is welcome, it is also worrying that they stop short of suggesting reflection beyond the classroom. Given that the agenda in this type of research is to go beyond descriptions and find explanations about why teachers teach the way they do, it seems that a perspective that takes into account the context in which teachers operate is also needed. I shall return to this point in Chapter 12, when I will discuss possible directions for research that is concerned with explaining teachers' work.

Although the studies I reviewed in this section have highlighted the complexity of teaching, I was more interested in focusing specifically on beliefs as part of the explanatory rationale for teachers' actions. For this reason in the next section I will examine studies that were concerned specifically with eliciting beliefs from groups of teachers. They aim not so much at linking decision-making and beliefs, but had an interest in finding commonalities among groups of teachers in relation to their beliefs about teaching/learning.

2.2.2 - EFL teachers' theories and beliefs

As we have seen, studies on planning and interactive decision-making may include some uncovering of the beliefs underlying those decisions. However, in this section I would like to consider studies whose main focus was to discover the theories

and beliefs held by teachers, with a research design that included either direct elicitation (such as through questionnaires) or indirect procedures (as through observation of practice). I will review some of the studies briefly mainly for their conclusions and implications for teacher education and will discuss aspects of their methodology at greater length in Chapter 4.

One of the earlier studies was developed by Dingwall (1985) who called attention to the importance of investigating the 'teacher variable' in EFL. She analysed data generated by three surveys, in an attempt to "fill out a picture of EFL teachers, concentrating on their backgrounds and their expressed opinions about some current issues in EFL".

The approximately 500 returned questionnaires she obtained from teachers working in several parts of the world enabled her to describe the teachers in terms of their background and their opinions about:

- a) teaching methods
- b) techniques and classroom management
- d) curriculum design and development
- e) assessment and testing

Although it is possible to question whether what Dingwall obtained could be considered beliefs⁴ her study stressed the heterogeneity among teachers with such varied backgrounds, and therefore indicated that a better understanding of individual practices has to be somehow linked to finding more about those backgrounds.

The same impression is given by Richards et al (1991). In order to find out the "beliefs, goals, practices and judgements about their teaching and the teaching of English in Hong Kong secondary schools" a questionnaire was administered to 249 Hong Kong teachers. The informants were constituted as follows: 46% experienced

⁴ Dingwall herself referred to the teachers' responses as knowledge and opinions. See Chapter 4 for a discussion about terminology.

teachers (who had taught for 6 or more years) and 52% trained teachers (with a recognised teacher qualification).⁵

The questionnaire was administered in two phases (due to its size), and consisted of five parts. The first part tried to capture the teacher's views of EFL teaching, curriculum and specific aspects of education in Hong Kong. The second part asked for their views on language and language teaching. The majority believed the best way to learn a language was to "expose themselves to the language as far as possible (92% of the respondents), to interact with native speakers (67%) and to read books in English (66%)" (:10-11). The third part focused on the teachers' views of classroom practices and the fourth part on views about their role. Good teachers were considered those who were able to motivate the students (indicated by 52% of the respondents), diagnosed students' weaknesses (26%), knew the subject matter well (26%), assisted students with their development (24%) and were well organised (22%).

Questioned about their specific role as teachers of English they identified the following functions: to help students discover effective approaches to learning (32%) to pass on knowledge and skills to pupils (32%) and adapting approaches to meet students' needs (16%).

The teachers in Hong Kong saw themselves more as guides who had to help the students learn by themselves. However, it is not possible to know how these views were translated into classroom practice. The only information we have is that they claimed to follow a grammar-based approach (59% of the informants), a functional-communicative approach (58%) and a situational approach (44%).

The problem with surveys which look for a common ground is that they tend to lose the **individual** perspective that constitutes the teachers' theories as they are linked to their action in their classrooms. In other words, the beliefs might be expressed in relation to an idealised situation, rather than a real one. In this case,

⁵The authors did not clarify whether these were overlapping categories.

incomplete sets of beliefs may be elicited even within the same topic (e.g. beliefs about the nature of language, about error correction, etc.).

The two studies I have reviewed so far (Dingwall and Richards et al) used questionnaires to elicit teachers' beliefs, which indicates that beliefs can be expressed without direct reference to specific teaching behaviours, a point I shall return to at the end of this chapter.

Adopting a different methodological procedure, Zuber-Skerritt (1989) elicited the 'personal theories of good teaching' of 8 teachers working at the tertiary level at an Australian university. She used the repertory grid technique (repgrid⁶), to obtain their constructs of second language teaching. The results were grouped into four categories: 1) knowledge that teachers have to possess in order to teach well, 2) teaching, assessment and administration, which covered the constructs related to enthusiasm and teacher's relationship with students; 3) methodology which covered constructs the teachers used to refer to approaches, such as traditional, learner-centred, functional or communicative; and 4) personality or communication skills included the constructs that referred to teachers' ability to communicate and other personality traits.

The merits of Zuber-Skerrit's work refer to its use of a methodology that seemed sufficiently economical and fruitful in getting teachers to reveal the way they conceptualised teaching. Considering that one of my purposes was to elicit the beliefs held by a group of prospective and practising EFL teachers, I decided to include this technique in the main study. The advantages of this technique will be discussed in Chapter 4.

With the same objective of finding commonalities among groups of teachers but with a more sophisticated approach, Breen (1990) used the results of a language

⁶Repgrid is a technique used to elicit personal views on topics selected. This technique will be explained in the methodology section, Chapter 4.

learning experience exercise done by teachers while attending an M.A course in Lancaster to present a picture of their collective theories of teaching. In his analysis he found that cognitive processes were considered very important at the initial stage of language learning.

In order to illustrate the nature of implicit theories ("a set of justifications for action in the classroom") Breen collected data from 106 experienced teachers by asking them to participate in a language learning experience. Breen's approach was different from the two other studies mentioned in this section in the sense that he was interested in obtaining data that linked beliefs to teaching practices, and did not result from just answering a questionnaire or completing a repgrid. The participants joined a group in order to learn a foreign language that was totally new to them and kept periodical records of certain aspects of their work, according to instructions provided. In each group there were two participants who knew the language well (one worked as a 'knower' and the other as a participant observer). At least three other members were absolute beginners.

The data analysed in Breen's paper derived from the specific techniques adopted by the teachers during two lessons as described by both teachers and learners immediately at the end of the lesson.⁸ In addition they had to give their own reasons why the teachers had adopted those techniques. The observers were equally requested to identify the techniques and the reasons why the teacher had adopted them.

In order to facilitate comparisons between teacher, observer and learner accounts and to reduce the data to manageable proportions, the learners in each group were asked to synthesise their individual accounts in one. Therefore each group

⁷Knower was a synonym for teacher.

⁸Teachers received as instruction to write down "all those things you did to help your learners with the new language" and learners had to record "all the things that their 'teacher' did in order to help them" (:219)

produced three separate accounts of the same event: the teacher's, the observer's and the learner's.

The analysis of the data (21 self-reports by the teachers, 21 compiled accounts from 64 learners, and 21 accounts from observers) tried to establish whether there was "a consensus of justifications and what implicit theory of the teaching-learning process was collectively represented by this group of teachers" (:221).

During the process of analysing the 63 accounts Breen found that there was no clear consistency across the informants' accounts about the relationship between techniques and reasons for their use. Different reasons were offered for the same technique or the same reason attributed to different techniques. This variety in responses testified to the uniqueness of implicit theories, as revealed by the set of justifications given to teaching behaviours. Because the relative proportions of reasons were kept constant in relation to specific concerns Breen claimed "that the data reveal a collective implicit theory shared within this particular group of experienced language teachers" (:228).

Consequently, Breen identified seven pedagogic concerns shared by the participants irrespective of their role during the experiment. These concerns were described under three foci: learners (43% of the reasons), subject matter (31% of the reasons) and the teacher (25.2% of the reasons). These pedagogic concerns were ranked in the following order:

- 1)learners' cognitive processes, in which the techniques were justified with reference to facilitation of learning
- 2) language as usage, in which reasons were linked to a concern with language as a system
- 3) teacher as guide, as reflected by justifications centred on the provision of feedback for learners

- 4) language as use, in contrast with language as usage. The reasons were linked to teachers' motivation to encourage learners to use the language for meaningful communication in the classroom
- 5) teacher as manager, in which the justifications dealt with the pace of lessons, of getting learners involved
- 6) learner affect, in which most of the references were linked to the emotional climate of the lessons
- 7) learner background knowledge, knowledge of the foreign language and previous experiences as learners were assumed to justify teaching behaviours.

Breen was operating within a theoretical framework of classroom as culture (Breen, 1985a). According to him, the study of the discourse of lessons will only provide access to the routines. He locates learning not in the classroom discourse or procedures but in the meanings given to them by learners and teachers, "through the rationale for what they are doing within the classroom structure" (1990:216).

Although Breen's study adopted an indirect way of uncovering teachers' decision-making rationale, he pointed out the need to refer to concrete events for the elicitation of beliefs. The study, however, posed questions about the tension between individual and collective implicit theories. The individuality of the theories resulted from the same behaviour being justified in different ways by different teachers. The collectiveness was explained by the "consensus between the informants regardless of the role they played during the experiment" (1990:228).

It was unfortunate that Breen's scope was not to explain those differences. Considering the diversity of backgrounds of the teachers who participated in the artificial experiment it is unlikely that they shared a collective theory, unless we admit that the M.A. course could have influenced them towards a certain homogenisation of explanations. The convergence could also result from the reduction of the data to manageable proportions under broad categories.

Another aspect that is important to bear in mind is that those teachers were justifying other teachers' behaviours, and it is not clear they would explain their own behaviours in the same way, although Breen seems inclined to believe so. According to him, the fact that different reasons were given for the same technique or that the same reason was given for different techniques proves that implicit theories guide teachers' interpretations of classroom events.

Following the same trend of other studies in this area, Breen also used the study as a background to draw implications for curriculum change and teacher development, since, according to him, even a minor change will require the teacher to confront established concerns (1990:232):

If a teacher appreciates that particular action in the classroom can be less readily justified, an opportunity for adaptation arises. Similarly, if a teacher perceives alternative justifications and accepts these, then alternative ways of working become plausible.

Although this suggestion seems to derive more from his own point of view rather than from the empirical study he reported, in relation to professional development Breen advocated that we need to uncover the knowledge and beliefs teachers hold in order to know the most appropriate support to be given in in-service development. Breen locates his work within the emergent tradition of studies on teacher thinking and also recognised the need for reflection between theories and beliefs and classroom practice.

Breen's recommendations for teacher education fall into the same trend of awareness and reflection that has been identified in other studies that adopted a teacher thinking perspective.

His suggestion was also echoed by Burns (1991) in the concluding part of her paper describing a study she carried out in Australia in order to find out what the beliefs of a group of teachers were. She addressed the need to consider not only *what*

happens in the classroom, but *why* it happens. She explored the practices adopted by 6 teachers of ESL to beginning students in relation to written language use trying to find out the beliefs underpinning those practices.

Burns used the technique of stimulated recall, in which the teachers had to comment on their lessons using audio-recordings and classroom transcripts. The data was then submitted to a content analysis with the objective of finding common representations of beliefs, which referred to the nature of language, language learning, learners and the teacher's role.

Burns also drew implications for teacher education programmes that, according to her, have to give teachers the opportunity of being aware of the 'nature of the theories which inform their practice' (:14). In addition she stresses that the beliefs have to be articulated and critically evaluated, conditions that she felt were essential for change:

If the goal of language teacher education is to effect change and improvement in the teaching and learning of language, an essential pre-requisite would seem to be the critical exploration of 'what is' in order to move to 'what might be'. Change involves above all the challenging and questioning of one's beliefs, but changing one's classroom practice is likely to be intuitive and <u>ad hoc</u> unless beliefs are first articulated and critically evaluated. (:14-15)

Burns' and Breen's studies shared their approach to beliefs' elicitation by relying on actual classroom events. While in Breen's case they were somewhat artificial, Burns used the teachers' own lessons. Given the idiosyncrasies of beliefs of specific groups of teachers, these studies can contribute more fully to the field by pointing to alternative ways of eliciting beliefs and showing the pitfalls of the various approaches. Considering that they all suggest teachers' reflections on their beliefs as a desirable component of teacher education, the identification of beliefs represents an important step, and therefore, appropriate ways of eliciting them should be welcome.

The methodological approaches adopted by the studies reviewed in this section suggest some of the existing alternatives for elicitation of beliefs, and I have already mentioned some of the problems associated with them. Studies that focused mainly on decision-making gave beliefs a marginal space within the research design. They involved a small number of informants, given that the researchers have to establish connections between decisions and their rationale.

The studies reviewed in this section reveal two separate research agendas: one that is concerned with characterising particular groups of teachers and therefore they try to elicit data from as many informants as possible; the other is concerned with making connections between beliefs and teaching practices, and therefore they have necessarily to work with few informants. Given these separate objectives, the research methodology has necessarily to differ.

The procedures adopted by the studies I have mentioned so far reflect the debate in the literature about the degree of explicitness of beliefs, with some arguing that they can only be reconstructed through inferences, and others claiming that they can be verbalised. In the former approach researchers try to derive lists of beliefs from stimulated recall sessions (e.g. Nunan, Woods), from observing teachers' practices directly (e.g. Burns), from their justifications for specific teaching techniques (e.g. Breen); the latter approach is represented by studies that asked teachers directly (Richards et al., Dingwall).

These different approaches also suggest that the elicitation of beliefs can focus around teaching in more general terms (Dingwall, Zuber-Skerritt and Richards et al) or teaching in specific situations (Burns and Breen). Beliefs may also refer to a real situation, when teachers make comments on actual contexts or to a hypothetical one, when they refer to ideal situations.

The figure below represents visually these possibilities:

	Reference point	
Levels of generality	IDEAL	REAL
GENERAL	A	В
SPECIFIC	С	D

Fig. 2 - Matrix of possibilities of beliefs elicitation

Although it might be difficult to concentrate on all the four boxes when investigating beliefs, I would like to claim that unless we have access to all four boxes (A,B,C,D) for the same individual we will have a limited picture of the relationship between behaviour and beliefs. In this study I tried to incorporate as much as possible insights generated by the studies I have reviewed, especially in terms of methodology. Considering that my interest was to elicit the informants' beliefs about foreign language teaching/learning, I relied on procedures that referred to general and specific aspects of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching/learning (questionnaire, lesson reports and repgrids), as well as implied real or ideal reference points. These procedures will be described in Chapter 4.

3. Teachers' theories/beliefs and teacher education

Despite their usefulness for researchers interested in investigating beliefs, the perspective adopted by these studies did not seem to account for some of the issues involved in teacher education, since they either relied heavily on a prescriptive view of cognitive processes, or worked descriptively with lists of beliefs held by groups of teachers.

The studies reported here touch upon different areas of research on teacher thinking (planning, interactive cognitions and theories/beliefs) but they did not offer us a picture of how EFL teachers have developed their theories/beliefs about teaching.

The researchers tried to capture a snapshot of the teachers' thought processes in one specific moment in time, and have given preference to some of the boxes shown in Fig. 2 (previous page).

The studies I have examined so far were restricted to the elicitation of teachers' beliefs without necessarily adopting a developmental perspective. Fewer other studies addressed more directly the development of teachers' beliefs as practising or prospective EFL teachers attended teacher education programmes. These studies will be reviewed in Chapter 3, when I will discuss the process of teacher socialisation.

The studies I have described so far have given me insights about methodological procedures for investigation in the area of teacher thinking, and I have already pointed out their contribution to the design of this study. I have also argued that for teacher education we need not only to find what the beliefs are but also their potential sources. Therefore, besides capturing teachers' theories and beliefs we also need to understand how these theories and are formed and developed, if our ultimate goal is to provide insights for teacher education.

4. Conclusion to this chapter

In this chapter I have presented an overview of research on teacher thinking carried out in the field of foreign language teaching (with emphasis on EFL) and focused particularly on teacher's theories and beliefs. The first two groups of studies I reviewed showed researchers concerned with determining student teachers and teachers' cognitive processing while planning or interacting with their students. These studies highlighted the importance of uncovering beliefs in order to understand teaching. The other group of studies focused on the elicitation of beliefs held by particular groups of teachers.

The review showed that although teachers' belief systems have already been accepted in the field of FLTE, we still know very little about how teachers develop their theories and beliefs. In order to gain insights for pre-service teacher education, I have included another perspective, taken from teacher socialisation studies, which emphasises the importance of school experiences prior to formal teacher education in the formation of theories and beliefs.

In the next chapter I will review some of the literature in the field of teacher socialisation, especially the notion of biography, and its relationship with beliefs. I will include the studies in FLTE which have already acknowledged the complex relationship between beliefs and experiences prior to teacher education that help shape those beliefs, along with their implications for FLTE.

Chapter 3

The teacher socialisation lens

- 1. Introduction
- 2. Teacher socialisation
- 3. The influence of teacher education on the development of teachers' theories and beliefs
 - 3.1 Studies in other areas of knowledge
 - 3.2 Studies in foreign language teaching
- 4. Teacher education and teacher role identity
- 5. Biography and beliefs
- 6. The framework for this study
- 7. Conclusion to this chapter

1. Introduction

In Chapter 2 I introduced the teacher thinking perspective which has been influencing studies in foreign language teaching/learning that have a focus on the teacher. Given that my interest is in the education of pre-service EFL teachers the teacher thinking lens seemed appropriate but insufficient to explain how teachers acquire the beliefs they come to hold and that underlie their teaching practices.¹

One lens that can be useful is teacher socialisation and in this chapter I will discuss some perspectives available in this area. I will draw mainly on notions developed by Crow (1987), Knowles and Charvoz (1989), Knowles and Holt-Reynolds (1991a, 1991b), Bullough Jr, Knowles and Crow (1991) and Knowles (1992).

¹ For a fuller discussion about the contribution of teacher thinking to teacher education see Clark (1988) and Floden & Klinzing (1990).

2. Teacher socialisation

In contrast with teacher development, teacher socialisation generally implies externally shaped rather than internally imposed changes. This area has been more clearly associated with how novices come to hold the values and practices shared by the group of experienced teachers with whom they interact. Although other groups have been considered potentially influential on novice teachers, experienced colleagues have been shown to play a major role. Socialisation is usually understood as the period during which the novice imitates other teachers and learns from them about the acceptability of different ways of acting. (Feiman-Nemser and Floden, 1986:520).

Research on teacher socialisation has focused on initial teaching and what factors are influential to the acquisition of values about teaching by the novices. Among the influential sources are the social structure of schools, the classroom itself or the bureaucratic nature of schools (Crow, 1987).

Researchers working in this field have been concerned with how students and beginning teachers react to the norms and values they encounter. Lacey (1977), cited by Feiman-Nemser and Floden (1986:520), defined three types of possible reactions: a) one that he called 'internalised adjustment', for those situations in which novice teachers conform to expectations, believing they are appropriate; b) another he called 'strategic compliance', in which novices may adjust their behaviour in line with expectations but inwardly they keep reservations, and c) one type of response he did not label but which refers to teachers who may work to modify the expectations.

Crow (1987) referred to the trends in this area and classified them as pertaining to two positions: those who advocate that influential factors are more closely related to the forces beginning teachers encounter in schools when they start to teach, and those who argue that novices are socialised prior to their teacher education experience, the latter position being the one defended by Lortie (1975).

The contribution of teacher education programmes is challenged by Lortie who argues that the time students spent in schools exerts a powerful influence on how teachers perform as professionals. This "apprenticeship of observation" was found to be influential in dictating how teachers behave in their classrooms. This position stresses the importance of experience (either as learners or as teachers). Lortie (1975:79) summarises it

This kind of socialisation sequence (unformulated experience as a student, college attendance and abrupt transition from college student to responsible teacher) leaves room for the emergence and reinforcement of idiosyncratic experience and personal synthesis.

According to one of the views in the field of teacher socialisation, formal training, as represented by university courses, might not be powerful enough to eradicate the effects of prior socialisation experiences.

Crow (1987:2) criticised the two approaches which located influential factors either on the point when teachers start in the profession or prior to their formal teacher education in the following terms:

The problem with both schools of thought is that neither one pays attention to the interactive nature of socialisation called for by the current literature. Each approach continues to point to socialization as unidirectional and disregards the interplay between the participants' personal perspectives and the teacher education program.

Although it is difficult to disagree with the idea that teachers are exposed to the culture of classrooms long before they enter teacher education courses, the interplay of those experiences and teacher education programmes is less clear. In the next section I would like to review some of the studies which have dealt with this topic in order to show the complexity of the issues involved.

3. The influence of teacher education on the development of teachers' theories and beliefs

In recent years there have been calls for greater understanding of how teachers learn to teach (Carter, 1990). In pre-service teacher education there is a perceived need to investigate how student teachers develop their conceptualisations of practice. For instance, Goodman (1988:121) argues that

a crucial period for examining the development of teachers' practical philosophy of teaching is during their pre-service education.

However, very little is known about the process of learning to teach during formal teacher education. Only recently have researchers started to look at the process of knowledge growth amongst student and beginning teachers (Calderhead, 1991). The majority of these studies have focused on the role of teaching practice and the students' views of teaching while they were enrolled in these programmes.²

In the field of foreign language teaching the scarcity is even greater. Although there has been an increasing number of investigations in the area of teacher thinking in ELT, as I have shown before, there have been fewer studies which focus on the development of beliefs during teacher education at preservice level. We still know very little about how people learn to teach, that is, how they develop their conceptions of teaching during their formal education and throughout their professional lives.

Some research has already been done in the EFL field trying to understand the contribution of teacher education courses to teacher's theories and beliefs, as I will describe in section 3.2 (page 42). Before that, however, I will comment on the studies which were concerned with the socialising impact of teacher education in other areas of knowledge.

² For a review see Mayer & Goldsberry (1987).

3.1 - Studies in other areas of knowledge

It is now widely accepted that students derive many of their beliefs from their own experiences as learners, what Lortie (1975) coined "the apprenticeship of observation". The studies in teacher socialisation have drawn on Lortie's influential sociological study of the teaching profession (Lortie, 1975:61), who claimed that:

One often overlooks the ways general schooling prepares people for work. Such an oversight is especially serious with public school teachers, for participation in school has special occupational effect on those who do move to the other side of the desk. There are ways in which being a student is like serving an apprenticeship in teaching; students have protracted face-to-face and consequential interactions with established teachers.

However, the deterministic perspective presented by Lortie has been challenged by researchers who want to ascertain that formal teacher education does contribute to the education of teachers. These researchers have sought to establish what this contribution is.

For instance, Tabachnich & Zeichner (1984) explored the contribution of personal and institutional context in the development of teaching perspectives of a group of student teachers. They found that the experience did not alter the substance of the teaching perspectives³ that the student teachers already had when they entered the programme, but solidified them. The teaching perspectives the student teachers developed were consistent with the ones they had brought to the experience, with the exception of three students (out of 13). However, they pointed out that the students became more articulate in expressing these perspectives and more skilful in implementing them. According to those authors, the students also gained a more realistic perception of the job. Those three students who did not follow the perspectives they brought to the programme employed 'strategic compliance', as defined by Lacey (1977, cited by Feinam-

³ Defined as "the ways in which the student teachers thought about their work and the ways in which they gave meaning to these beliefs by their behavior in classrooms" (:28)

Nemser and Floden, 1986). This study suggested that there was an interplay between the intentions of individuals and institutional constraints. The authors rejected the approach that suggests that individuals respond passively to institutional forces.

Tabachnich & Zeichner's findings generally supported Lortie's position but at the same time challenged it by asserting that student teacher socialisation is a "more negotiated and interactive process where what students bring to the experience gives direction to but does not totally determine the outcome of the socialisation process" (1984:34).

Several other studies have investigated whether there were changes in student teachers' beliefs about teaching (Borko et al. 1987; Bolin, 1990; Weinstein 1989, 1990; Hollingsworth, 1989) concluding that there was little change over time. These authors supported the view that the conceptions of teaching that student teachers bring to the courses act as 'intuitive screens' (Goodman, 1988) or 'culturally based filters' (Hollingsworth, 1989) that give them an orientation point from which they make sense out of the activities and ideas presented to them.

What these studies (conducted in other areas of knowledge than ELT) show is that prior beliefs can exert a powerful influence on the way teachers view their education programme. Weinstein (1990:279) asserts:

There is consensus that prospective teachers' implicit theories about teaching serve as a filter through which the teacher education program is viewed.

The powerful influence of past experiences was also noted by Elbaz (1983:47)

Student teachers come into training with a stock of knowledge-in-use developed from their previous experience as students and from the variety of informal teaching situations which abound in everyday life. This knowledge-in-use sometimes interferes with the different knowledge-in-use to be acquired in the program.

Similarly, Clark (1988:7) stated that "students begin teacher education programs with their own ideas and beliefs about what it takes to be a successful teacher".

Calderhead & Robson (1991) studying student primary teachers during their first year of a B.Ed. found that students had particular images of teaching, mostly derived from their experiences in schools as pupils.

Nespor (1987) points out that a number of teachers suggested that critical episodes or experiences earlier in their teaching careers were important to their present practices. He goes on to say that (:320):

such critical episodes are probably at the root of the fact that teachers learn a lot about teaching through their experience as students.

All these studies reinforce the view that teachers derive their theories and beliefs from their experience as learners, and that these theories and beliefs act as 'filters' through which the teacher education programme is viewed.

Underlying the discussion whether teacher education courses are powerful enough to supersede those beliefs is the notion of 'change' and what we mean by it. As Freeman (1991a, 1991b) has argued, changes can occur at the level of behaviour or at the level of discourse, a recognition that makes it extremely important to analyse results of studies in this area with those criteria in mind. In the studies I have presented so far, there were no claims of teacher education courses replacing past experiences. Rather, they focused on the interaction between those beliefs and the programmes. It is this framework that this study falls into.

In the next section I will review some studies in FLTE that have the objective of observing the relationship between teacher education courses and student teachers' practices/beliefs.

3.2 - Studies in foreign language teaching

One study in pre-service FLTE that tried to explore student teachers' conceptualisations of the training they received was carried out by Cumming (1989). His approach had a strong cognitive orientation and did not acknowledge the socialisation force of the informants' prior experiences in schools. He was interested in seeing how student teachers viewed the knowledge they received in the teacher education course they attended and how they applied this knowledge to their teaching. He chose to investigate how 37 pre-service teachers of English as a Second Language at a Canadian university conceptualised curriculum decision-making. He asked them to prepare a chart outlining curriculum decisions they considered important in teaching an ESL course. The participants had just attended a course on ESL curriculum and were asked to prepare a chart bringing together the knowledge they received in the course in a way that they felt would be 'personally useful' in their future teaching. Besides the chart the participants had also to explain in writing how they would use it in teaching.

An interpretative analysis of the data generated by the charts and the written texts revealed that "in general the student teachers produced representations with obvious (but revealing) shortcomings" (:36). The participants showed problems in integrating knowledge (in the way the programme wanted) that were classified by Cumming into three categories: disjunctive representations (in which the knowledge about the curriculum was fragmented), disproportionate representations (unbalanced representations in which too much value was attached to theories, teaching practices, the teacher or to the learners' similarities). The third category was disparate representations in which the decisions were seen as isolated events.

Cumming stressed that although the schemas presented by those student teachers represented a 'partial glimpse' of the actual knowledge which they may have and use when they teach, the variety of representations suggested that it was important to understand how this type of knowledge is seen by individual

teachers. He was calling attention to the fact that not all teacher education input is incorporated by individual student teachers in the same way.

For Cumming this result proved the inadequacy of input-output models of education that did not take into account what went on in the minds of individuals. He proposed a developmental model to bridge this gap (Cumming, 1989:45):

To fill out the obvious gaps between the conventional 'inputs' and 'outputs' of language teachers' education requires a more substantial understanding of how student teachers develop their knowledge and what that knowledge consists of.

According to Cumming, to accomplish this target we need to understand the process of learning to teach. Two perspectives are necessary: a cognitive one, in which the student teachers' conceptions are described; and a developmental perspective which reveals how student teachers enhance these conceptions with experience or increased knowledge.

He called for further research on the kind of knowledge held by teachers and by student teachers (Cumming, 1989:47):

If language teacher education is to have a substantial basis, grounded on an understanding of the learning it aims to produce, then much, much more needs to be done to document, analyze, and assess what that learning actually is.

Cumming's study (although with a heavy cognitive orientation) highlighted the need to try to understand what happens during the educational formation of second language teachers, especially the relationship between input and practice.

A study in ELT that took a socialisation perspective was carried out by Freeman (1991b). He started with the assumption that research on this area has to examine not actions but perceptions of actions. His longitudinal study of four teachers while they were attending an M.A. course showed how the teachers incorporated the professional discourse to refer to their own practices.

Freeman's study problematized the meaning of 'change'. In the introduction of his thesis he emphasised that the effects of teacher education programmes can be perceived in terms of "1) instances in which the teaching seems the same externally although the thinking behind it has shifted; 2) those in which the similar thinking is enacted in new classroom practices, and 3) those in which both the thinking and the practice shift while maintaining the same overall purpose".

Although Freeman's study had a perspective centred on discourse, it contributed to reinforce the need to consider beliefs in the relationship between talk, thinking and behaviour, as I will discuss in Chapter 4. He has also called into question traditional models of teacher education that assume that changes in behaviours are the only ones that matter in judging the impact of teacher education courses.

Freeman showed how, for the teachers he worked with, "naming/renaming" was "a crucial feature of the process whereby teachers renegotiated the meaning of their actions and thus constructed different, more critical ways of understanding what they were doing in their classrooms" (1993b:486).

Although Freeman's study raises interesting issues about what teachers take from formal education, he does not address directly other potential influential sources, such as the prior experiences, preferring to subscribe to Lortie's "apprenticeship of observation", which he renamed as "norms of experience". Therefore, there is very little attempts to relate beliefs to prior experiences, since the focus was on the discourse/practices adopted by those teachers.

More recently, however, Gutierrez (1992) carried out a study that aimed at elucidating some issues about learning to teach a foreign language. She was interested in describing the experience of a group of foreign language student teachers during a pre-service teacher education programme, especially regarding

changes in their knowledge and its relationship to their teaching practices. In addition to the content of this knowledge she was also interested in tracing its origin and focused particularly on pre-training (before entering the college) and initial training (college and teaching practice). Her conclusions about the origins of pre-training knowledge were that "all student teachers had memories of their language learning experiences on which they built an initial conceptualisation of their profession" (:261). Those memories were based not only on the way they were taught but also on their own learning experiences (both formal and informal). As to the content of the pre-training knowledge she concluded that "the student teachers had general knowledge that was subject specific and about learning and teaching particular subjects. They were also aware of instructional and interactional aspects as well as teacher's personal characteristics"(:261).

Gutierrez was interested in the effects of their training (both at theoretical and practical levels). She noticed that during their teaching practice the students did not draw on pre-training knowledge but on the knowledge acquired during the theoretical component of the teacher education course, "at least regarding the observable aspects of their teaching activity" (:263). Based on her observations of their lessons, she concluded that the pre-training knowledge of the students was not "so apparent when the student teachers teach, but in their discussions of teaching" (:267). Therefore, Gutierrez found a mismatch between the knowledge herself as researcher identified in the behaviours she observed (attributed to the knowledge acquired during the teacher education course) and the discussions that followed (which drew on pre-training knowledge). The obvious conclusion she arrived at was that the teacher education course had a homogenising effect in terms of the student teachers' teaching practice, but in the discussion of the results she recognised that this effect had been internalised differently.

Gutierrez's study points again to the issue of who does the explaining of behaviours and how discrepancies in these explanations are resolved. Depending on how one decides to interpret the results, the teacher education course could or could not have had an impact on those prospective teachers' conceptualisations of practice. While the course content seemed to be reflected in their practices, their discourses remained attached to pre-training knowledge.

Two other studies in EFL/ESL focused on beliefs held by teachers while they were attending teacher education courses. Richards, Ho & Giblin (1992) carried out research with five teachers enrolled in a UCLES/RSA⁴ Certificate in Teaching English as a Foreign Language to Adults and Johnson (1994) with four teachers enrolled in an M.A. in TESL⁵. In contrast with the studies carried out by Freeman and Gutierrez, none of the studies attempted to provide a longitudinal approach, although the data was collected during several occasions.

With regard to teachers' theories of teaching and the programme itself, Richards, Ho & Giblin concluded that "while a program such as the UCLES/RSA Cert. is built around a well articulated model of teaching theory and practice, this is interpreted in different ways by individual trainee teachers as they deconstruct the model in the light of their teaching experiences, and reconstruct it, drawing on their own beliefs and assumptions about themselves, about teachers, about teaching and about learners" (:52). Nevertheless, we have to take this conclusion at face value, since there is very little information available about what these beliefs were prior to the course, or the biographies of those teachers.

The purpose of Johnson's study (Johnson, 1994) was to examine preservice teachers' beliefs about second language learning and teaching, and analyse in what ways they shaped their conceptualisations of teaching practice and their perceptions of themselves as teachers and of second language teaching. After collecting data in the form of journal entries, observations, interviews and stimulated recall sessions, she grouped it under themes, resulting in images (not only beliefs but also models for action) that were classified under four headings:

a) images of their formal language learning experience, b) images of their

⁴ University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate/Royal Society of Arts.

⁵ Teaching English as a Second Language.

informal language learning experience, c) images of themselves as teachers, and d) images of the teacher preparation program.

Since Johnson ended up grouping beliefs around categories, there is little exploration of the relationship between beliefs and the teacher programme itself, except in the pre-service teachers' images of the course. The results showed that, similar to Richards, Ho & Giblin's study, the teachers judged "the appropriateness of certain theories, methods, and materials in terms of their own first hand experiences as second language learners" (:445).

It seems, therefore, that the data generated by these two studies support the claim that experience as learners plays an important role in the beliefs held by pre-service teachers and that the teacher education programme had only a minimal impact. This impact was reflected mainly on the opportunity it offered to confront established beliefs. Johnson's suggestion for teacher education programmes is that they have to offer alternative images of teachers and teaching to replace the ones prospective teachers already have when they enter those programmes.

If we take this reasoning further it is perfectly possible to justify providing methods to teachers, although this was not a conclusion drawn by Johnson herself. However, methods can be seen as alternative images of teaching. In fact, Larsen-Freeman (1993) argued that methods can be used at preservice level as a 'foil' against which student teachers can confront their own theories of teaching. Methods, in this case, are a point of departure, a position also argued by Richards, Ho & Giblin (1992:52).

The implications for teacher education suggested so far by the studies in foreign language teaching/learning involving beliefs have therefore all converged towards a reflective approach, although through diverse means. What seems to be commonly agreed is the need for articulation, awareness and confrontation of

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⁶ For some definitions and discussion of reflection see, for instance, Schön (1983) and Grimmet & Erickson (1988). I will discuss the notion of reflection in FLTE in Chapter 13.

beliefs, either of oneself or of others. Under the umbrella of reflection even a concept like 'method' loses its negative connotation, since it does not imply blind acceptance anymore.

However, all these suggestions were made on the basis of projects in particular contexts and there is no possibility of generalising these suggestions to all contexts. If the aim is to contribute to teacher education in particular contexts we need to understand how teachers develop their conceptualisations of practice and what kinds of experiences are more likely to influence them.

In addition to paying attention to particular contexts, it is essential to consider change in terms of behaviour and/or verbalisation, and from what perspective they are interpreted, that is, the participants' themselves or the researcher's.

In addition to clarifying methodological issues connected with what constitutes beliefs, that is, on what basis the beliefs are found to be representative of individual's thoughts, FLTE research needs to gain insights from teacher socialisation studies in order to acknowledge all other potential forces involved in the process of learning to teach, since the aim should be not only the identification of beliefs, but also how they integrate with formal teacher education experiences.

The studies in FLTE that have been developed within the framework of assessing the contribution of teacher education programmes to teachers' classroom practices have acknowledged but not investigated fully the other socialising forces in operation. Although informants made references to their own experiences as learners, these did not receive much attention in the overall design of the study.

Grossman (1991) correctly sees limitations in an approach that denies possibility of change. She believes the 'apprenticeship of observation' has to be challenged (:345). The rationale is that experience as learner is bound to be limiting, since it exposes the student to a limited range of views about

teaching/learning. According to her, prospective teachers should not rely only on their learning experiences, because they could have had only negative experiences, which, if reproduced, would cause a vicious circle.

Two assumptions are connected with this view: first, that whatever experiences prospective teachers have had they will tend to reproduce them in their own teaching, and secondly, that teacher education programmes should be concerned with overcoming these past experiences and advocating innovative modes of teaching.

Considering that we cannot ignore the contribution of past experiences in the education of prospective teachers, the role of teacher education seems to rely more on acknowledging this influence, and investigating how this influence can be maximised (in case it matches the programme concerns) or minimised (in cases when it would be desirable if those experiences were not reproduced). I will return to this point in Chapter 13.

As I have already mentioned, this study draws mainly on two areas that can help illuminate the questions about how teachers learn to teach. From teacher thinking I have incorporated the notion that the beliefs held by (prospective) teachers play an important role in determining teachers' actions in the classroom. For this reason my first research question deals with the identification of those beliefs. Therefore, that question reads: What were the beliefs about foreign language teaching/learning held by 'LAP" students and practising EFL teachers who graduated in the same course?

From teacher socialisation I have adopted the notion that there is an interaction between the beliefs (prospective) teachers bring to the teacher education programme and the ideas the programme intends to promote. What exactly the nature of this relationship is constitutes the core of my next research question: What were the connections between their beliefs and the educational experiences they went through as evidenced by fragments of their personal histories?

In addition to those questions I have added one that singles out teacher role identity at the intersection of those two areas, which is one aspect of learning to teach I would like to focus on. In the next section I will justify this concern.

4. Teacher education and teacher role identity

Learning to teach has often been equated with the "acquisition of knowledge directly related to classroom performance" (Carter, 1990:291). The content of this knowledge is usually associated with subject matter and methodology. In this study, knowledge of methodology has been translated as beliefs about materials and activities which were likely to be more successful, and the role of teachers and learners in EFL teaching/learning.

Drawing on Crow's (1987) teacher socialisation framework, I subscribe to the idea that the process of learning to teach is continuous and starts long before prospective teachers join their teacher education programmes. According to this framework, 'personal histories' help explain existing educational beliefs, and learning to teach is not only about the acquisition of a certain type of knowledge (subject matter and methodology), but also about learning to distance oneself from the learner end of the continuum and to move towards the teacher end. In this sense, teacher education programmes represent a transitional phase in the lives of teachers, in which they are confronted with the need to change roles, or as Lortie (1975:61) puts it, "to move to the other side of the desk".

The literature about teacher education at the pre-service level associated mainly with studies on teacher thinking, has devoted considerable attention to knowledge⁹ at the expense of identity. Studies on student teaching reviewed by

⁷In this study personal histories and biography are used interchangeably.

⁸This transition is visible even through the way these individuals are called in teacher education literature: *student teachers*, carrying words referring to both roles and therefore revealing the ambiguity of their identity.

⁹In reviewing studies that addressed the question of how teachers learn to teach, Carter (1990) acknowledged that the focus was essentially on knowledge (:291).

Calderhead (1991) show that the transition of roles was never part of the research interests. Recent literature, on foreign language teaching education (such as Richards & Nunan, 1990) has also failed to address the process of learning to teach from that perspective. Although in that same volume Wright refers to the importance of paying particular attention to roles, he does so in the context of in-service training, in which teachers are alerted to the need to consider issues related to the roles of teachers and learners. My concern here is with the transition of roles in pre-service teacher education.

It is not only research on teacher education that has failed to investigate the transition of roles. Research on the socialisation¹⁰ of teachers has also concentrated on the "transmission of teacher beliefs, knowledge, attitudes, and values" (Feiman-Nemser and Floden, 1986: 520), with little research being done on the construction of teacher role identity while the students were enrolled in the teacher education programme. One of the exceptions is the work carried out by Crow (1987) which I have already referred to. She argued that "understanding the composition and purpose of the informants' teacher role identity in the socialization process was central to answering questions about the potential influence of teacher education on novices' professional development and the interactive nature of socialization" (Crow, 1987:7).

In my view the gap in this area in both the education and the socialisation of teachers can be attributed to at least two reasons: a) the assumption that students entering teacher education programmes somehow have already developed an identification with the profession, and b) the interest of researchers operating within the framework of teacher thinking in concentrating on the cognitive aspects of teaching, and establishing itself in opposition to the behavioural tendency that had dominated research on teaching. The first

¹⁰ Teacher socialisation has been distinguished in the literature as either "virtually all changes in teachers through any means", or "how novice teachers, through interaction with experienced colleagues, come to hold the set of values or practices shared by that group". (Feiman-Nemser and Floden, 1986:520).

justification does not hold true, as Doyle (1990) pointed out in his review of the status of teacher education programmes in the United States. He noted that students usually did not have a strong sense of identity with the profession, since the way courses were organised at the university level (subjects offered by different departments) encouraged a split between pedagogical and content preparation. Another reason for the weak identification with teaching stemmed from the low status of those undergraduate programmes, which had difficulty in attracting "talented students and engender a strong sense of identity with teaching" (:6).

I would like to argue that in teacher education programmes we also need to look at the *process* of learning to perform a new role. Students' attachment to their roles as learners can be demonstrated through the way they refer to their own experiences as implicit models for the teaching situation they will encounter. As I have indicated, Grossman (1991:349) refers to this as a limitation in the apprenticeship of observation:

Prospective teachers recall their own academic interests and abilities to inform their judgements of the interest level or difficulty of academic tasks they plan to assign to students... In using themselves as models, teachers often express surprise when their students complain over the difficulty of a task they remember as being relatively easy.

Therefore, my third research question addresses the teacher role identities that the students and teachers presented in the context of the study.

5. Biography and beliefs

Although in other areas of knowledge the sources of beliefs have been investigated¹¹, this has not been the case in foreign language teacher education, partially because the interest has concentrated on finding out whether formal

¹¹See, however, Su (1992) and Alexander et al. (1992) for a quantitative approach to this issue.

education does make a difference to the growth of beliefs. What Lortie called the 'apprenticeship of observation' has been explicitly acknowledged as influential in foreign language teaching education, as I have already pointed out.

A recent article by Freeman & Richards (1993:210) highlighted the fact that teacher education programmes are not taking these pre-programme experiences into account:

Teacher education programs generally concern themselves with the promulgation of various forms of instruction without taking into account the fact that trainees come with pre-existing conceptions of teaching.

Since past experiences have helped constitute beliefs held by (prospective) teachers, the attempt to identify their potential sources can only be done retrospectively, and on the informants' own terms. As Bruner (1990:120) advises us

It does not matter whether the account conforms to what others might say who were witnesses, nor are we in pursuit of such ontologically obscure issues as whether the account is "self-deceptive" or "true". Our interest, rather, is only in what the person thought he (sic) did, what he thought he was doing it for, what kinds of plights he thought he was in, and so on.

Considering that experiences prior to teacher education are part of the socialisation of teachers, in this paradigm teachers' past histories in schools play a major role, and for this reason recent research has drawn on narratives as both method and object of investigation.

The contribution of studies using this framework has mainly shown how biographies¹² help explain classroom practices (Knowles, 1992), or how biographies relate to teacher role identity (Crow, 1987). The studies reviewed by Knowles (1992) suggested that "it is not primarily the pre-service teacher education programmes that establish teacher role identity, but, rather previous

¹²Biography has been defined by Knowles (1992: 99) as "those formative experiences of preservice and beginning teachers which have influenced the ways in which they think about teaching and, subsequently, their actions in the classroom".

life experiences as they relate to education and teaching" (:147). In the same chapter, Knowles pointed out the need to deal with biographies in teacher education courses:

University pre-service teacher preparation programmes are usually too short, too structured and too insensitive to individual needs and backgrounds to do anything but provide a thin overlay experience, one that usually does not meld with previous life experiences and beliefs about teaching. Rather, university programmes often create further discontinuities about teaching for the preservice teacher, particularly if the negative aspects of previous experiences are not dealt with. By not accommodating and dealing with the biography of teachers in preparation, future beginning teachers are bound to become teachers who teach in the manner in which they were taught and who will be limited in the ways in which they can professionally develop.

The same rationale has guided my decision to incorporate biography (although in limited form) in this study. The biographic episodes (or anecdotes) told by the students and teachers who participated in this research dealt mainly with significant experiences they felt contributed to their beliefs about foreign language teaching/learning. For this reason, my data collection included narrative elicitation.

Narratives as a tradition of research are based on the theory that "humans are storytelling organisms who, individually and socially, lead storied lives" (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990: 2), and that the study of narratives is the study of how individuals experience the world. According to Riessman (1993:4) "a primary way individuals make sense of experience is by casting it in narrative form". In Chapter 5 I will discuss the methodological implications of incorporating narratives into studies of teacher socialisation.

6. The framework for this study

The identification of the sources of beliefs held by a group of students while attending the teacher education programme, such as the 'LAP' course I am

investigating in this study, is important because it may provide clues as to how to maximise the effectiveness of efforts towards the shaping of the beliefs the programme seeks to promote.

It is worth emphasising that my objective is not to pinpoint the exact sources of the informants' beliefs, but rather to understand how individuals develop their beliefs throughout their school-related experiences. Following Lortie's proposition that teachers learn about teaching while they are still pupils (the apprenticeship of observation), in this study I decided to adopt a model that indicates the contribution of three potential sources of teacher's theories and beliefs:

Experience as learner
$$\rightarrow$$
 Formal training \rightarrow Experience as teacher \downarrow \downarrow \downarrow Teacher's theories and beliefs

Fig. 3- Potential schooling sources of teacher's theories and beliefs

This model shows that teacher's beliefs can be shaped by the interaction of three main sources related to schools: their experience as learners (either in school or in the language component of the university course), formal training, and their experience as teachers.

The framework I adopted in the research design of this study encouraged the students and teachers to mention biographic episodes mainly related to the experiences mentioned in Fig. 3, as I will explain in Chapter 5.

According to the model I suggested, in the context of a 'LAP' course, the socialisation of EFL teachers is an on-going process that is not located either in the experiences prior to the teacher education programme or during the period between teaching practice and the first year of teaching, but throughout those various phases, as shown in Fig. 4:

|-----early school experiences-----formal training------first year of teaching------|

language component pedagogical component

Fig. 4 - The socialisation of EFL teachers in the context of the 'LAP' course

7. Conclusion to this chapter

In this chapter I presented the strands in the debate on the socialisation of teachers, which encompasses three positions: one that emphasises that teachers are socialised when they start their work in schools, the other which claims that teachers are socialised prior to their teacher education experience and a third that claims that prior experiences interact with teacher education programmes.

I reviewed studies carried out at pre-service level in other areas of knowledge and a few which have been done in foreign language teaching. These studies both acknowledged the value of prior experiences and sought to identify the contribution of formal teacher education.

I also noted that implicit in some of the studies was the perspective that teacher education programmes regard previous experiences as something to be simply overcome in order to prevent reproduction from occurring.

I claimed that in order to investigate the socialisation of EFL teachers at pre-service level we need to dedicate more attention to biography in addition to focusing on their beliefs about foreign language teaching/learning. However, the attention I give to biography does not imply a belief that previous experiences will be simply reproduced. Reproduction is more likely to occur in contexts that ignore what students already bring to teacher education courses, that is, their previous educational experiences, especially in schools.

In order to gain understanding of the complex relationships between beliefs, biography and teacher education, I worked with students and teachers who had recently graduated from 'LAP'. In the next chapter I will discuss methodological issues involved in the investigation of beliefs and their potential sources, and introduce the procedures used in my study.

Chapter 4

Which camera? Some methodological issues involved in investigating beliefs and personal histories

- 1. Introduction
- 2. Investigating beliefs
 - 2.1 Behaviour and verbalisation
 - 2.2 Beliefs defined
- 3. The elicitation of beliefs
- 4. The elicitation of personal histories
- 5. Some methods for investigating beliefs and personal

histories

- 5.1 Questionnaire
- 5.2 Diaries
- 5.3 Repertory Grid Technique
 - 5.3.1 The elicitation of constructs
 - 5.3.2 The use of repgrids in educational

research

- 5.4 Interviews
- 6. Conclusion to this chapter

1. Introduction

In this chapter I will discuss methodological issues connected with the two areas I have been interested in attributing a greater importance to in studies of pre-service foreign language teacher education: beliefs and personal histories. I will look at the former in respect to studies on teacher thinking and the latter in the literature on teacher socialisation.

2. Investigating beliefs

2.1 - Behaviour and verbalisation

As we saw in Chapter 2, researchers working in the area of teacher thinking have employed various methods of investigation, with the objective of going beyond the observation of classroom behaviours. They have focused on cognitions and used techniques that have aimed at getting the teachers to articulate their reasoning¹. However, some researchers did not discard the observation of behaviours entirely, and searched for relationships between behaviour and their verbalisations.

As this is a recent field of investigation, research on teachers' theories and beliefs has struggled to find an appropriate methodology that can reveal them. There has been a continuous debate as to whether theories and beliefs can be verbalised or have to be inferred from behaviour. In the first case, beliefs are considered to be explicit and at a level of consciousness that allows the individual to express them through words. In the second case, the assumption is that theories and beliefs are implicit in what teachers do in classrooms and can be reconstructed by an analysis of that behaviour².

Both positions demonstrate the complexity of the relationship between behaviour, talk and thinking, for which we are far from providing appropriate explanations.

Given this complexity, another position assumes that what teachers say is not necessarily coherent with their behaviour in classrooms. Mismatches between what teachers say and do have been solved by giving behaviour a privileged position, that is, by trying to find explanations for beliefs expressed through words, which differ from behaviour (see, for instance, Moraes, 1991). According to this view, what teachers say (teachers' discourse) is seen as a crucial feature in understanding teachers' work. Mismatches between discourse and behaviour (usually as observed by researchers) are accounted for by explanations that either favour discourse or behaviour as the true reflection of

¹Although most of the techniques pertain to the category of mentalistic data (see Cohen & Hosenfeld, 1981) "thinking aloud" has not been possible because of the difficulty of getting (student) teachers to teach and verbalise what they are thinking at the same time.

²See Pajares (1992) for an extensive review of the issues connected with research on educational beliefs.

beliefs. In this case, behaviour, as described by the researcher, constitutes 'objective reality', and reveals 'true' underlying beliefs³.

Bruner (1990:17) describes this dichotomy in the following terms:

There is a curious twist to the charge that 'what people say is not necessarily what they do'. It implies that what people do is more important, more 'real' than what they say, or that the latter is important only for what it can reveal about the former.

What seems to be left out of the explanations for the mismatches is the context in which the teacher's discourse was produced. The conditions under which beliefs are elicited (and under what terms they are defined) have to be examined together with the context in which they were produced. Freeman (1993a) has recognised that studies in teacher thinking need to consider the vital role played by language. He has identified a 'second generation of research' in this area that does not rely on a presentational view of language (verbalisation equating thinking), but one that takes into account "the interrelationships between what is said about the teacher's inner world, the language used (or not used) to say or 'present' it, and the context - both virtual and actual - of its 'presentation'" (1993a:2). Freeman's research project (1991a) was largely concerned with discourse (in the linguistic sense) as the means through which teachers make sense of their own work. In the doctoral research he carried out, he emphasised the key role of discourse articulation in the process of educating teachers.

In addition, the awareness of constraints may prevent some beliefs from being translated into observable behaviour, and therefore they exist only at an abstract level. These constraints may account for discrepancies between expressed and inferred beliefs, and therefore these discrepancies cannot be attributed to incoherence in teacher thinking. As I have shown in Chapter 2,

³ Because there is the assumption that they do not necessarily match, some argue that in doing research on teachers' beliefs we need to examine action as well as verbalisations (e.g. Lynch, 1990).

researchers may be operating with limited aspects of the whole belief system held by a teacher, which may be an explanation why there are apparent discrepancies between what teachers say and do.

Nevertheless, one of the predominant views in the literature is that behaviour reveals **real** thinking (e.g. Tabachnich & Zeichner, 1986:85), and that verbalisations may not necessarily reflect thinking. Thinking, behaviour and verbalisations are therefore assumed to be independent, although related to each other.

Research on teacher thinking has shown that the above triad is usually seen as constituted of separate elements that can be in disharmony, and it is the researcher's responsibility to explain existing mismatches. According to this line of reasoning, thinking is different from expressed verbalisations. Woods (1993:67-68) refers to this conflict when he deals with the notion of hotspots: "points in a text where there seems to be a conflict between what is stated and what is believed":

This notion is particularly important in the study of teacher beliefs where teachers (often in a subordinate power relationship with supervisors, evaluators, theorists, and researchers) may prefer to claim allegiance to beliefs consistent with what they perceive as the current teaching paradigm rather than consistent with their unmonitored beliefs and their in-class behaviour.

According to this view, 'unmonitored, in-class behaviour' is a true expression of belief, whereas what is said during interviews, for instance, might be rationalisations that do not correspond to 'real' thinking.

The awareness of audience, which could influence what teachers say to researchers, can be overcome, according to Woods (1993), by examining longer texts, over longer periods of time and in different circumstances, which will allow "structured patterns of beliefs" to emerge (:68). Therefore, the safeguard

against insincerity is yet more data, a paradox that can only be solved if we accept that triangulation⁴ will help dissipate fears about the validity of the results.

Woods' solution also has implications for researchers working with beliefs, since longer texts collected in different circumstances mean using triangulated methods in more in-depth case studies rather than large groups of teachers. However, that solution may as well bring further problems, since the comparison of data obtained synchronically (for instance, through classroom observation and interviews) is not free from difficulties, since verbalisations may not coincide with behaviour, as I have pointed out above.

Considering the issues raised above, research that seeks to establish a relationship between beliefs and teaching practices has pointed to the desirability of conducting studies that involve a triangulated methodology, and concentrate on case studies rather than large groups of people. Furthermore, studies should consider the relationship between behaviour and verbalisation, and examine the possibility of conducting an analysis that is both horizontal (across informants) and vertical (examining different types of data from the same individual). In this study I have tried to take these issues into account.

On the other hand, researchers working within the paradigm of behaviour as the truer expression of beliefs will be ready to subordinate language produced by participants as the expression of their rationale for the observed behaviour to a minor role, by focusing on descriptions of classroom interaction as the 'core' of their data.

The third alternative, of course, is to try and combine both behaviours and verbalisations, although with the pitfalls I presented above, when discrepancies arise.

These three approaches to teachers' theories and beliefs are to be more clearly found in the methodology adopted in the study. Therefore, whether to rely

⁴Methodological triangulation is the "combination and use of several research methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon" (Grotjahn, 1991:201).

on teachers' verbalisations of their behaviour or to adopt a methodology that provides other perspectives on that behaviour (such as that of a classroom observer) is an important aspect of this type of research. This decision has to be considered along with results reported, since operational definitions of beliefs are usually implied in the methods used for data collection. The choice of methods reveals the definitions researchers are operating from, and therefore what they mean by beliefs can be made accessible through definitions or through the methodology used in the study. This is an important consideration when discussing the terminology in this field, a topic to which I now move in order to present some of the alternatives available in the literature and their relevance to the definition I am adopting in this study.

2.2 - Beliefs defined

The discourse of teacher thinking involves complex issues as I have hinted at earlier, involving conflicting points of view that are reflected in the large number of terms to refer to concepts such as 'beliefs'. The variety in terminology has already been pointed out by other authors working in the EFL field (e.g. Johnson, 1992a, 1992b; Woods, 1993). Chosen words used included (among others), theories, images, interpretations, perspectives, concerns, attitudes, beliefs, conceptions, philosophy of teaching, opinions, beliefs and knowledge. To illustrate the variety, Table 1 (next two pages) shows a non-exhaustive list of some of the terms used with their definitions⁵:

The examples show variety in relation to degrees of explicitness of the defined constructs, their amenability to reconstruction, how individual or

Table 1 - Some of the terms used in the literature to refer to teachers' theories and beliefs

AUTHORS	TERM	DEFINITION

⁵ Those references until 1986 were taken from Clandinin & Connelly (1986). The others were added by me.

F=	T	
Duffy (1977)	Conceptions of reading	a conception of reading is the
		approach to reading which the
		teacher believes is most like him
		or herself
Marland (1977)	Principles of practice	principles that guide a teacher's
		interactive teaching behaviour
		and that can be used to explain it
Elbaz (1981)	Practical knowledge	a complex, practically-oriented
	1 Tuevieur III o Wieuge	set of understandings which
		teachers actively use to shape
		and direct the work of teaching
Janesick (1982)	Down outing	a reflective, socially-derived
Janesick (1982)	Perspective	
		interpretation of experience that
		serves as a basis for subsequent
		action
Munby (1983)	Beliefs and principles	coherent structures that underlie
	(implicit theory)	a teacher's practice
Connelly & Clandinin	Personal practical	knowledge that is experiential,
(1984)	knowledge	embodied, and reconstructed out
		of narratives of a teacher's
		life
Sanders & McCutcheon	Practical theories of	conceptual structures and visions
(1986)	teaching	that provide teachers with
	teaching	reasons for acting as they do.
		Often consciously held
Brown & McIntyre	Professional craft	knowledge that is embedded in
(1986)		and tacitly guiding teacher's
(1900)	knowledge	everyday actions in the
		classroom. Seldom made explicit
Clark (1988)	Implicit theories	eclectic aggregations of cause-
Clark (1700)	Implicit theories	20 0
		effect propositions. Not clearly
		articulated by their owners but
		inferred and reconstructed by
P (1000)		researchers.
Breen (1990)	Implicit theories	personal conceptualisation of the
		teaching-learning process. Entails
		a set of justifications for action in
		the classroom; the theory
		overlays what may be observable
		in that classroom with a
		particular interpretation.
Handal and Lauvas	Practical theory	a person's private, integrated but
(1987) cited in Cole	·	ever-changing system of
(1990)		knowledge, experience and
		values which is relevant to
		teaching practice at any
		particular time.
L	1	I Larrison mine.

Calderhead & Robson (1991)	Images	represent knowledge about teaching but might also act as models for action. In addition they frequently contain an affective component.
Woods (1993)	BAK (Beliefs, Assumptions, Knowledge)	spectrum ranging from conventionally accepted facts(knowledge) to a proposition for which there is accepted disagreement (beliefs).

Table 1(continued) - Some of the terms used in the literature to refer to teachers' theories and beliefs

shared they are⁶, and whether they are seen from a cognitive or sociological point of view. Terminology is not a mere side issue in this area, since the words used to describe personal knowledge in opposition to external or scientific theories, carry overtones as to the status of this body of knowledge.

The choice of words is meaningful. The term 'theories' has been preferred by Prabhu (1992) without qualification, whereas others who use the same concept refer to them as 'implicit theories', 'personal theories' (in opposition to 'public theories') or 'research theories'.

Clark & Peterson's review (1986) refers to 'theories and beliefs', and in more recent work 'knowledge' has gained preference (e.g. Doyle, 1990; Calderhead, 1991). In the field of foreign language teaching 'theories' have been used by authors who want to assert the need for bringing teacher's theories to the same level of academic theories (e.g. Ramani, 1988; Prabhu, 1992).

The concept of 'belief systems' is considered relevant in the study of teacher thinking because, as I pointed out before, planning and interactive decision-making depend on the interpretations that teachers derive from their actual practice, which are dependent upon the belief systems they hold. Although the distinction between theories or beliefs has been less dealt with in the literature, the distinction between 'beliefs' and 'knowledge' has been more

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⁶ Cole (1990), working with the notion of personal theory suggested that it was unique to individuals, whereas Handal and Lauvas, cited by the same author, had a notion of practical theory that was collective, considering similarities of teachers' experiences, values and beliefs.

clearly addressed. Abelson (1979) tried to tackle the differences and similarities between the two, mainly within parameters defined by cognitive science and artificial intelligence.⁷

From a cognitive science perspective Abelson (1979) considers a series of features which, when taken together, characterise more belief systems than knowledge systems. According to him, belief systems exhibit the following characteristics:

- 1. Existential presumption: belief systems frequently contain propositions about the existence or non-existence of entities;
- 2. Alternatively: beliefs contain alternative 'worlds' that are not necessarily experienced
- 3. Affective and evaluative aspects: belief systems rely on feelings, emotions and subjective evaluations.
- 4. Episodic storage: beliefs derive their subjective power, authority and legitimacy from particular episodes or events
- 5. Non-consensuality: belief systems consist of propositions that are recognised as being disputable
- 6. Unboundedness: belief systems are loosely bound and have certain linkages to events, situations and knowledge systems
- 7. Variable credence: beliefs can be held with varying degrees of certitude.

Although, according to Abelson, each individual characteristic listed above does not guarantee the distinction, the combination of these features could describe a set of propositions either as belief or knowledge. Abelson himself did not want to commit too much to a clear-cut distinction between knowledge systems and belief systems. According to him, basically, the differences lie in the degree to which propositions can be disputed, since belief systems include propositions, concepts, arguments, recognised as being in dispute or in principle disputable, whereas "knowledge accumulates and changes according to relatively well-established canons of arguments" (Nespor, 1987:321) Therefore, the decision to call a statement 'belief' or 'knowledge' depends on how far these

⁷ Authors who tackled the differences between beliefs and knowledge have drawn on Abelson's concepts (Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992; Woods, 1993,).

statements are shared or agreed upon within a community. In this view, beliefs do not belong so much to the realm of cognitive science, but go closer to sociology. As Abelson (1979:357) puts it in relation to cultural belief systems:

If every normal member of a particular culture believes in witches, then, as far as they are concerned, it is not a belief system, it is a knowledge system. They **know** about witches. But the anthropologist who studies this culture is aware of many witchless cultures, and thus uses the label "belief system" without flinching. The other side of this same coin is that scientific knowledge can be viewed as mere belief by those outside the community of shared presuppositions about science as a way of knowing.⁸

Considering the blurring on the terminological front, Woods opted for using the acronym BAK (Beliefs, Assumptions, Knowledge) because he recognised the difficulty of establishing the differences in the data he obtained from teachers (Woods, 1993:185):

There is a sense in which the terms 'knowledge', 'assumptions' and 'beliefs' do not refer to distinct concepts, but rather to points on a spectrum of meaning, even though they have been treated for the most part as separate entities in the literature... it was difficult in the data to distinguish between the teachers referring to beliefs and knowledge as they discussed their decisions in the interviews. Their 'use' of knowledge in their decision-making process did not seem to be qualitatively different from their 'use' of beliefs.

In this study, I preferred to use 'beliefs' following Abelson's definition, because my theoretical framework included not only elicitation of beliefs but also speculations about their origins, and this is a characteristic included in Abelson's definition but not in the others. Furthermore, the other features described by him could be identified in the set of statements produced by the

⁸ According to this view, choosing 'beliefs' or 'knowledge' depends on how shared the ideas are for writer/speaker and the people he or she is describing.

⁹Although Clandinin and Connelly's term (personal practical knowledge) is defined by experiential knowledge and is reconstructed through narratives, my work included some informants who were not teachers yet. Clandinin and Connelly's concept, however, is very closely connected to 'beliefs' as I adopted in this study.

informants, and for this reason I decided to adopt his terminology, although being aware of the different status associated with 'theory' and 'belief'.¹⁰

Having explained the terminology in the literature and my option for a definition that encompassed recognition of the value of personal experience to the formation and refinement of beliefs, in the next section I would like to consider methods which have been used to elicit beliefs.

3. The elicitation of beliefs

In their review, Clark & Peterson (1986) listed as the main methods of investigation into teachers' theories and beliefs, the use of ethnographic participant observation, clinical interviews, stimulated recall and repertory grid technique. The difficulties in carrying out research in this field were stressed (:287):

Prior to the researcher's intervention, these systems are typically not well specified, and the central task of the researcher is to assist the teacher in moving from an implicitly held and private belief system to an explicit description of his or her cognitive frame of reference.

In the statement above Clark & Peterson are subscribing to the view that beliefs have to be dug out, that they are implicit and have to become explicit. I have already referred to the importance of language in gaining access to those beliefs, since they need to be reconstructed by analysing the texts produced by teachers or by inference from behaviour.

Clark & Yinger (1977, 1979) and Clark & Peterson (1986) did extensive reviews on studies that investigated teacher's theories and beliefs. I would like to focus on studies in other areas of knowledge that have sought to reveal student teachers' theories and beliefs while they were attending teacher education

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¹⁰See Bromme (1984) for a discussion about the use of 'theory' as a term for teacher's expert knowledge by comparing analogies and differences between subjective and scientific theories.

courses. Some of these studies were mentioned in Chapter 3, when I discussed pre-service teacher socialisation.

Table 2 - Methods of research on student teachers' theories and beliefs

AUTHOR(S)	RESEARCH OBJECTIVES	METHODS
Iannaccone (1963)	to find out whether student	daily diaries of 25 student
Talliaceone (1903)	teachers changed their ideas	teachers supplemented by
	towards specific problems	interviews and observations
	arising from classroom and the	during one semester
		during one semester
A 11 (1004)	nature of those changes	1 (1) (1
Adler (1984)	to investigate student teacher	conducted interviews and
	definitions and interpretations of	observations of 4 student
T 1 1 1 0 7 1 1	social studies	teachers for 4 months
Tabachnich & Zeichner	to explore the contribution of	Administered TBI (Teacher
(1984)	personal and institutional context	Beliefs Inventory). 13 student
	in the development of teaching	teachers interviewed at least 5
	perspectives of a group of	times during 15 weeks and
	student teachers	observed while teaching
Galluzzo (1984)	to examine the concerns of	10 elementary level student
	student teachers	teachers were videotaped and
		participated in stimulated recall
		interviews
Mayer & Goldsberry	to establish the relationship	followed two student teachers
(1987)	between beliefs and practices of	using participant observation,
	student teachers during their	semi-structured interviews,
	teaching practice	doing analysis of journals kept
		by the students and applying
		repgrids before and after the
		experience
Borko et al (1987)	to examine the development of	7 stronger and 7 weaker
	conceptions of successful	student teachers' definitions of
	teaching	successful and unsuccessful
		lessons as reported in journals
		collected during one year
Goodman (1988)	to investigate the thinking and	observed and interviewed
	actions of pre-service teachers	(formally and informally) 12
	as well as explore the way they	students in an elementary
	organised their perspective into	education programme
	a practical philosophy of	
	teaching	
Marso & Pigge (1989)	to investigate developmental	applied 3 types of
	changes in teachers from early	questionnaires
	pre-service training through the	
	fifth year of teaching	
Hollingsworth (1989)	to look at pre-service teachers'	conducted loosely structured
	global changes in knowledge	interviews and observed
	and beliefs while learning to	teachers during a 9 month
	teach, with reading as the	graduate teacher programme
	subject area focus	

Weinstein (1990)	to explore beginning teacher education students' beliefs about their future teaching performance and their conceptions of a 'really good teacher'	applied questionnaires to 28 students and conducted interviews with 12 of them
Bolin (1990)	to investigate how student teachers develop a concept of teaching and think about their role	analysed a student teacher during two semesters in a pre- service programme by collecting journals written by the student, doing observations and interviews
Calderhead & Robson (1991)	to investigate the knowledge that student teachers have of teaching and learning as they enter teacher education, how this knowledge influences what they abstract from their courses and how it relates to their interpretations of their own and others' classroom practice	12 student teachers followed through the first year of a B.Ed. interviewed in the first days of the course and on three other occasions spread over the year

Table 2 (continued) - Methods of research on student teachers' theories and beliefs¹¹

An overall analysis of the studies depicted on Table 2 reveals that they have tried to achieve one of the following goals: a) to find coherence between expressed theories and behaviours, b) to detect what these theories were, or c) to assess the impact of specific programmes on those theories.

These studies have tried to focus on the development of theories and beliefs as the students went through a programme, and, as I have pointed out in Chapter 3, they recognised the potential socialising force of other educational experiences the student teachers had before entering the programme. As the table shows, there is a huge variety of methodological approaches, ranging from the use of only questionnaires to a combination of procedures that would enable access to the students' thinking in relation to specific practices (such as the use

¹¹Because my interest in this section is to present an overview of the methods used in these studies I am not including the results obtained by those researchers.

of stimulated recall and diaries) as well as more general aspects of their thinking about the profession (with interviews and questionnaires).

The same range of methods listed in Table 2 were adopted by researchers in FLTE. These researchers have combined several methods from which they derived their understanding of the effects of the prospective teachers' participation in those teacher education programmes. Some of those studies asked informants directly about the relationship between their beliefs and practices (e.g.Richards, Ho & Giblin, 1992), whereas others adopted a more indirect approach, inferring beliefs from statements and behaviour (Johnson, 1994).

Whereas there were various methodological approaches to the elicitation of beliefs, the exploration of biographies or personal histories presented fewer options. In all these studies, prior experiences in classrooms were elicited mainly through interviews or questionnaires and were reconstructed from particular episodes which could have contributed to the emergence of the informants' beliefs.

In the research design of this study I tried to incorporate the methodological options that seemed suitable considering the experiences of those researchers whose papers were available by that time. In order to identify the beliefs held by my groups of informants, I relied on lesson reports, questionnaires and repgrids. Interviews were used mainly to find out more about the informants' personal histories. The rationale for these methods will be fully explained in section 5 (page 75).

As I argued in Chapter 3, studies on teacher education can benefit from adopting an approach commonly associated with teacher socialisation that focuses on narratives, or biographies, for the collection and analysis of data. In this approach, not only is the teacher education programme considered influential, but also other experiences which might give rise to beliefs held by teachers. Working with the definition offered by Abelson, that beliefs derive

their power from particular episodes, these episodes could be made available through autobiographical accounts.

4. The elicitation of personal histories

The study of teachers' lives falls within 'qualitative' studies which are interested in reasserting the importance of teachers as human beings: of knowing them, listening to them and allowing their voices to be heard. It is also about understanding their lives in a wider context of socialisation (Goodson, 1992).

As in the area of beliefs, terminology in this field is not uniform. In the literature there are references to biographies or personal histories, autobiography, life story and life history (Goodson, 1992), stories of experience (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990; Carter, 1993).

Biographies and personal histories have been considered synonymous by the authors using them (Knowles, 1992; Knowles and Holt-Reynolds, 1991b). Elbaz (1990) distinguishes story and biography/autobiography, the former achieving unity or coherence by the teller himself/herself, the latter by encompassing everything a person had undergone.

Goodson (1992:243) sees *life story* and *life history* as separate accounts:

The life story is a personal reconstruction of experience in this case by the teacher. 'Life story givers' provide data for the researcher often in loosely structured interviews. The researcher seeks to elicit the teacher's perceptions and stories but is generally passive rather than actively interrogative.

The life history also begins with the life story that the teacher tells but seeks to build on the information provided.

Stories, according to Carter (1993:6) "consist of events, characters, and settings arranged in a temporal sequence implying both causality and significance".

In this study I am adopting the definition of personal histories used by Knowles and Holt-Reynolds (1991b). I have included procedures to elicit the informants' prior experiences with foreign language learning and other biographical fragments that helped to explain the beliefs they held. In addition to that, because of my interest in their teacher role identity, the possible influence of former teachers on their socialisation was also explored. These procedures will be discussed in detail in Section 5 (page 75).

Personal histories have been commonly elicited by interviews or biographical accounts written by the informants (Knowles, 1992). This mode of investigation requires a good rapport between the researcher and the researched. If people are going to tell stories about their lives they need to feel confident to do so. In many cases, the research situation does not allow this rapport to develop, especially when the researcher is an 'outsider'. Fortunately, however, this was not my case, as I was a teacher in the context being studied.

In addition to a good relationship between researcher and researched, personal histories also require careful thinking about the degree of structure that is established *a priori* by the researcher. In interviews that have the objective of getting people to tell about their experiences, too much structure may prevent illuminating episodes from appearing. However, the constraints of doing research within a limited time span may put pressure to impose some structure on what will be talked about. In this study a compromise was achieved by seeking a degree of informality that would allow informants to talk about their educational experiences, while focusing on specific topics.

For this study my methodological choice was guided by what other researchers had done before and by taking into consideration the objectives of this work. Therefore, the methods of data collection had to satisfy the following criteria:

a) they should give an opportunity to the participants to express their views using their own words,

b) the methods selected should provide the participants with different opportunities to do so in order to ensure that their opinions are faithfully captured.

According to the methodological options available in this research area, as presented by the studies listed in Table 2, I would like to discuss four of the procedures I decided to adopt in this study: questionnaires, structured daries (which I called lesson reports), repgrids and interviews, procedures that were judged sufficient given that my interest was basically to identify beliefs and relationships between beliefs and educational experiences.

5. Some methods for investigating beliefs and personal histories

5.1 -Questionnaire

Questionnaires have been less frequently used to elicit teachers' theories in comparison with other methods, as Table 2 shows. The reason for this is that the majority of the studies in this area have looked for longitudinal changes and concentrated on a few informants. However, there may be situations, depending on the research objectives, in which only questionnaires will be feasible.

Dingwall (1985:87) justified using only questionnaires by arguing among other things that "it is less threatening than observation, a single researcher has limited resources and is forced to be selective", and that she was interested in carrying out "large-scale research". She cites Cook (1982) as a developer of a questionnaire to "prompt teachers to make their theories explicit". The short multiple choice questionnaire suggested by Cook (1982:41) might indeed be useful in identifying broad orientations such as cognitive code, audio lingual, communicative or humanistic, but answers are so self-evident that it is not difficult to guess which alternative in the example below we should choose if we want to appear "humanistic" (or in fact any other orientation):

In the classroom I attach great importance to

- a) explaining grammatical structures only
- b) drilling the students
- c) making the students communicate with each other
- d) the student's personal relationships

The use of questionnaires to discover beliefs is problematic because of the difficulties in guaranteeing a consistent interpretation of the questions by the individuals and because of the level of generality at which the questions have to be asked¹². In addition, given that respondents have more time to think about the questions, questionnaires can also be more prone to generate answers that are considered 'adequate', that is, respondents may feel inclined to reply what they think would be appropriate in that circumstance, as I noted above. Nevertheless, questionnaires have been used by researchers investigating teachers' theories in combination with other methods and alone in contexts where the beliefs are captured in a moment in time, as shown in Table 2. Studies carried out by Brouseau et al (1988) and Marso & Pigge (1989), however, used questionnaires in this manner, but with a view to comparing theories of different categories of teachers and students.

Closed multiple choice questionnaires such as the TBI (Teacher Beliefs Inventory) restrict the choices for the respondents and frame the answers according to a pre-established set of statements. They are, of course, easier to tabulate and particularly appropriate for large number of respondents. Openended questionnaires, on the other hand, widen the respondents' choices, but make their tabulation more difficult to achieve.

The precise balance of avoiding being too explicit or too cryptic in a questionnaire makes it less appropriate to elicit beliefs. However, although working with a relatively small number of informants I felt I needed a questionnaire for the following reasons:

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¹²A questionnaire with vignettes, however, could focus more specifically on particular concrete situations.

- a) it would provide expressions of beliefs at an ideal level with a high level of generality;
- b) it would generate topics for clarification and expansion, and consequently would help in focusing the interviews,
- c) it would help in keeping a record of factual information on the participants and their opinions on certain topics.

5.2 - Diaries

Diaries can serve research and educational purposes. They are valuable educational tools when used to raise students' awareness of the process of learning. They are helpful for research because they enable the researcher to uncover variables such as feelings and emotions, personal factors that would otherwise remain unveiled. Their value as a research tool lies also in the possibility of generating hypotheses for further investigation (Bailey & Ochsner, 1983).

Diary studies have been incorporated into qualitative ESL/EFL research fairly recently. Although studies showing biographical accounts of language learning experiences date from 1969 (Stern, 1983) they received greater attention during the last decade, with the growing interest in the interpretive analysis of language learning data.

Bailey (1990) reports on many of these studies, which were basically used to:

- a) document language learning experiences, as in the case of studies of second language acquisition;
- b) document student-teachers' reactions to academic courses, as reported by the same author regarding a teacher education program;
- c) document language teaching experiences.

In teacher education diaries have also been used to encourage a reflective approach (Palmer, 1988; Bailey, 1990).

More recently there has been interest in diaries as a tool for language learning and some advocate their use for enhancing learners' reflection on the process of learning. My choice for this instrument is also linked to its potential use as a tool for helping language students to think about what goes on in the classroom with a view to developing their theories of teaching. I believed that due to the nature of the themes they asked the informants to focus on they would generate texts which could reveal underlying beliefs.

The themes usually investigated by personal accounts vary from the diary study as a self-evaluative tool to salient patterns such as competitiveness and anxiety, as shown by Bailey (1983). Published analyses of diaries that revealed they contained information referring to:

- a) feelings and emotions towards the foreign cultures, the target language speakers and the methods of instruction (Schumann, 1978)
- b) time, place, feelings, input of others involved and how the experience of language learning was perceived (Bailey, 1980)
- c) learning strategies (Lynch, 1979 cited by Bailey 1990)
- d) definitions of own philosophy of teaching (Telatnik, 1977 cited by Bailey, 1990)
- e) teachers' language choice (Ho Fong, 1985 cited by Bailey, 1990)
- f) development of student teachers' concept of teaching and their role (Bolin, 1990)

Normally the emphasis is placed upon the personal analysis of the entries, with the diarist looking for salient topics when doing his/her own analysis of the entries¹³.

According to Bailey (1990:215):

a diary study is a first-person account of a language learning or teaching experience, documented through regular, candid entries in a

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¹³For this reason Long (1983) categorises this method of data collection as participant observation.

personal journal and then analyzed for recurring patterns or salient events.

This definition and the steps suggested by Bailey (1990) for conducting diary studies imply: a) the diarist has to have the capacity to analyse and edit the entries (as was indeed the case in most of the studies reported), and b) the original version is never available to the researcher.

Since I was not sure the students would be able to analyse the entries in the way the diarists like Bailey did and because as a researcher I was interested in specific aspects of their views in relation to the lessons I opted for a kind of structured diary, which I believe is better called 'lesson report', due to the amount of guidance provided and its restricted regularity. The original version would be available to me and the students would not be requested to edit them. For this reason I also decided to follow Zimmerman & Wieder's definition of diary (an annotated chronological record) "in which individuals are commissioned by the investigator to maintain such a record over some specified period of time according to a set of instructions" (:481).

Zimmerman & Wieder (1977) considered the diaries combined with interviews as an "approximation to participant observation", exploiting the subject as both observer and informant.¹⁴

Studies on (student) teachers' theories with a longitudinal approach have benefited from diaries, as Table 2 shows. Iannaccone in 1963 had already made use of it. Borko et al (1987) also opted for this method and provided a set of questions that the student diarists had to answer ("select the lessons you considered successful, outline what you attempted to do, and provide comments on how the students reacted").

windows on the classroom world".

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¹⁴ Brown (1985) considers the differences between participant observation and diary studies and concludes that both are useful, and the choice depends on whether one wants more personal perspectives or societal variables to be focused on. She refers to both as "two

As I already explained, I chose lesson reports also because they could help to promote self-awareness (Matsumoto, 1987) and because they could reveal aspects linked to personal views of the learners. They can also show reactions to specific events, such as lessons, that are very difficult to trace by more conventional elicitation procedures.

In my study I opted for a type of diary which I decided to call "lesson reports", where I gave precise instructions about what the informants would comment on, and asked for the reports to be written with restricted regularity. These decisions were linked to my interest in countering many of the difficulties associated with diaries, such as the burden placed on the diarist, time-consumption, dependence on the informant's personality and the possibility of being influenced by what is socially desirable.

Nevertheless, I faced some other problems regarding:

- a) convincing teachers and learners to participate
- b) maintaining confidentiality and ensuring that the students would not feel frightened to write their opinions in a report collected by the teachers
- c) deciding on the amount of guidance that would be provided.

In the next chapter, when I describe the methodology used during the pilot study, I will present the strategies used to ensure these problems were minimised.

5.3 - Repertory Grid Technique

Repertory Grid Technique or repgrid is one of the techniques developed by Kelly (1963) to find out how his patients viewed the world and was originally called "Fixed Role Therapy". It is based on his Personal Construct Theory, which postulates that people reason as scientists "who place their own interpretation upon the world based on previous observation or experience, and from these personal theories, which are distinct for each individual, make predictions about future events" (Rowsell, 1990:66).

Constructs are interpretations individuals derive from events. These personal constructs are interconnected and form a personal theoretical framework, from which the events are viewed.

Kelly's theory is nicely summarised by Zuber-Skerritt (1988:3):

Kelly's fundamental postulate and his corollaries give a picture of the person/learner as a 'personal scientist', with a hierarchical construction system (organisation corollary) which is personally unique (individuality corollary) and which can be explored by him/herself as well as by others (sociality corollary). Apart from their individuality, a group of people may be similar in terms of their construction of experience (commonality corollary).

The basic assumption in Personal Construct Theory is that each individual perceives the world differently, not only construing events in diverse manner but also perceiving distinct implied contrasts to their constructs. The constructs, therefore, are bipolar, i.e. the elements (events, people, activities) are construed along two dimensions, with likeness at one end and its opposite or contrast at the other.

"Elements" in a repgrid are events, people, activities. Constructs are usually elicited by asking the person to compare three elements and describe one characteristic that is common to two of them that makes them distinct from the third.

5.3.1 - The elicitation of constructs

The elicitation of constructs is time-consuming and for this reason some researchers have preferred to provide the constructs and ask the informants to rate the elements according to a scale. Pope (1978) prefers elicited constructs and elements. She explains:

Whilst I agree that, provided adequate groundwork is done in obtaining representative (hopefully) elements and constructs, the

analysis of such grids can often provide more useful information than the conventional questionnaire, I feel that the most powerful use of repertory grid technique lies in the elicitation of elements and constructs (:77)

Repgrids have been modified by researchers according to the conditions of data collection and the purposes of research. However, Fransella & Bannister (1977) advise against using repgrids without understanding the theory underlying the technique.

The most common form of elicitation is by triads in the "minimum context card form" (Fransella & Bannister, 1977). As noted above, three elements are presented to the person who has to specify some important way in which two of them are alike and thereby different from the third. This will constitute the construct pole. The way in which the first element differs from the other two will form the contrast pole. After having elicited constructs and contrasts the person is asked to tick the constructs that apply to each element. Another variant is to ask individuals to rate each element in relation to the constructs using a scale.

One important aspect in the elicitation of the grids is the context in which they were generated: individually or in group. Individual elicitation may be coupled with individual interviews in which particular topics can be pursued further by the interviewer. Group elicitation makes clarification more difficult, although interesting discussions from the comparison of grids could emerge.

One of the advantages of repgrids is that although they could be used independently of other methods of data collection, they lend themselves to further probing and therefore their strength lies in the opening up of possibilities for exploration by the researcher.

5.3.2 - The use of repgrids in educational research

Because the origin of this technique is in clinical psychology its use for educational or research purposes requires adaptations. Generally the subjects are interviewed in order to elicit the elements and constructs/contrasts and further checked on their ratings. When difficulties in filling in the grids are anticipated some training can be provided, as Rowsell (1990) did in her study of dropout in an ESL programme in Canada.

In educational research, as Rowsell reports, repgrids have been used to uncover teachers' perceptions of innovative ideas, how students perceived each other in individualised learning programmes and teachers' perceptions of these activities, how primary school teachers typified their students and how the children perceived their teachers, and what the students' attitudes to school subjects were.

In teacher thinking it has been advocated (Munby, 1982; Ben-Peretz, 1984) as a promising technique to probe into teachers' beliefs since it can reveal what is not easily articulated. Duffy (1977) was one of the first to use this technique to investigate teacher's conceptions of reading. Mayer & Goldsberry (1987) used an adaptation of the technique by interviewing two student teachers twice. In the first interview the student teachers listed concrete teaching practices and organised them into constructs. The elements were then rated based on which construct or contrast they tended toward. Each grid was analysed by a computer program called FOCUS. In the second interview the student teacher and the researcher explored the FOCUS output to clarify the student's belief system. The researcher asked the student teacher to talk about the groupings of elements and constructs. This helped maximise the participant's talk and minimised the interviewer talk.

Munby (1982) elicited a series of elements from an experienced teacher in the USA in an interview where he asked her to provide him with brief statements of what he should observe in one of her classes. The statements that constituted the elements of the grid were then written on cards and the teacher

requested to group them in any order she wished and justify her groupings. These explanations constituted the construct axis.

Boei et al (1989) also used this technique to find out the content of subjective theories of student teachers concerning good teaching. They elicited the elements from interviews with a group of student teachers and selected the 15 most frequent statements which became the elements in the repgrid. These statements reflected 5 categories: 1) conditions for good teaching, 2) to be reached, 3) qualities of the objectives/goals teacher, interaction/classroom climate, 5) didactic process/teaching-learning process. Two other elements were added to the repgrid: "I as a teacher" and "I as ideal teacher". Later they interviewed 60 student teachers and asked them to generate the constructs to those elements and rate them using a scale. This scale ranged from 5 (construct pole is fully applicable) to 1 (contrast pole is fully applicable). When none of them applied, the students had to mark it with a dash.

In foreign language teaching Zuber-Skerritt (1989) used repgrids to generate language teachers' personal theories of good teaching. She elicited eight language teachers' repertory grids individual sessions by asking them to think of 4 language teachers they knew well: two good and two poor. They constituted the 'elements' of the grid that also had the teachers themselves in two moments: i) at the time of elicitation and ii) in the future (the ideal they would like to become).

Eight different combinations of triads were generated and eight constructs with the contrasts listed. The grids contained a ninth construct provided by the researcher: effective/ineffective as language teacher.

The teachers were asked to rate all elements on a scale from 1 to 5 depending on whether each element contained the constructs listed on the right or on the left columns (contrasts and constructs). For the ninth construct the teachers had to rate the element for overall effectiveness, being 1 most effective

and 5 least effective. The computer analysis produced the groupings of theories of good teaching for each of the 8 informants.

Using the grid with groups is more complicated because individual elements and constructs do not easily allow for comparisons. The studies that looked for group overall patterns such as Rowsell's had to provide the options for elements and constructs (though generated from discussions and previous contacts with the students).

Repgrids can be used in studies of socialisation of teachers by selecting 'significant others', such as former teachers, and asking informants to talk about them. As Pope and Denicolo (1993:530) pointed out, the repgrid alone cannot provide useful insights into this area, but it "is best seen as a procedure that facilitates a conversation". By focusing on former teachers, past experiences in schools could be elicited more easily.

In addition to helping focus past experiences, repgrids can also be used to investigate issues related to identity, as Weinreich (1977) demonstrates. They do this by asking people to align themselves with other people.

Like the other research procedures mentioned so far, repgrids can also be used to heighten awareness and also obtain subjective perceptions of events. The power of this technique in revealing personal viewpoints lies in its use of subjects' own constructs and elements.

However, none of the procedures I have described so far (questionnaire, lesson reports and repgrids) alone would have been enough for the purposes of this study. For this reason, I decided to include also an interview with the informants.

5.4 - Interviews

The use of unstructured interviews in research on teacher thinking derive from their advantages in providing opportunities for probing further into aspects of teachers' cognitions. In planning and interactive decision-making studies they have been mainly used in stimulated recall sessions, where teachers comment on aspects of their teaching. Studies in this area have also combined interviews with repgrid elicitation. In both cases interviews take a particular format, in which what is said is guided by the other research procedures.

I considered the advantages of incorporating interviews in the study along with other procedures, in order to provide the informants with another opportunity to have their meanings clarified. However, I wanted a type of interview that would allow the interviewees to express their ideas in their own terms, while at the same time bearing some structure in mind. Since there would be opportunity for only one interview session, I took Jones' (1985) advice and listed the topics I would like to cover during the interview session.

In addition to clarifying issues related to the informants' beliefs I also wanted them to expand on their educational experiences. Studies following approaches that incorporate biography have used interviews to elicit stories from the informants by giving interviewees time for their stories to be told. Riessman (1993:3) refers to typical interviews in qualitative research that follow a question-and-answer exchange and are therefore distinct from those which allow the respondents "(if not interrupted with standardised questions), to hold the floor for lengthy turns and sometimes organise replies into long stories".

An essential element in the design of interviews in studies following a narrative approach is the amount of freedom that the individual has to tell his or her story. Practical considerations might limit the time available and an interview that is highly unstructured would not be feasible.

Interviews were crucial in the design of this study, since they would be an opportunity for the researcher to seek clarification of the other methods of data collection and would allow the informants to introduce anecdotes about their experiences both prior to and during the teacher education course. A certain degree of structure was envisaged and details will be provided in Chapter 6.

I will now present a general overview about each of the data collection procedures I incorporated into this investigative framework during both phases of the research, i.e., during the pilot study and in the main study, whose differences in terms of methods of data collection as seen in Table 3 below.

	Pilot study	Main study
Informants	first year students	first year students
	third year students	fourth year students
		practising teachers
Methods	questionnaire	questionnaire
	four lesson reports	two lesson reports
		repgrid
		interview

Table 3 - Differences between pilot study and main study

As the table above indicates, two of the procedures were not piloted. The reasons for not including them during the pilot phase were twofold: 1) since the technique of repgrid had already been fairly established in educational research (reported in 5.3.2), it required no piloting as a technique, 2) since I was not able to be in Brazil for the pilot study, the piloting of interviews would have required extensive, detailed instructions to the teachers who were co-operating with me. In addition, I would not be able to benefit fully from the insights generated at this stage, since the interviews would have been carried out by others. In any case, piloting of the repgrid with a different group of students (the pilot study and the main study groups were not the same) would not have enhanced the technique in itself. In retrospect, however, I admit that some familiarity with the technique by the same group of students (of the type carried out by Rowsell), could have resulted in greater ease in completing the grids. That procedure, however, would have required working with different sets of elements, with the purpose of getting the students to be used to the grid.

On the other hand, the piloting of the interviews could have improved the quality of the interactions during data collection. However, considering that the interviews would have very little structure, such piloting would have only added to

my experience as an interviewer and my ability to react 'on-the-spot'. While that in itself would be an important asset, the practical constraints of doing research at a distance made that learning feasible only during the data collection for the main study.

My choice of the methods discussed in this section was guided by the literature and the constraints imposed by data collection in the context of the study. A summary of the methods and their strengths and difficulties is presented next page, together with the level of generality they were trying to achieve:

Procedure	Strengths	Difficulties
Questionnaire	provide some bio-data on	difficult to guarantee
	informants, and topics for	consistent interpretation of
Level of generality: general	interview discussion.	questions.
Reference point: ideal		
Lesson reports	access to beliefs as revealed	difficult to engage learners
	by descriptions and reactions	and teachers to participate
	to lesson	because they are time -
		consuming;
Level of generality: specific		need to ensure confidentiality.
Reference point: real		
Repgrid	synthetic	difficult to administer.
T 1 C 12	participants' own words	
Level of generality: general	opening up topics for	
Reference point: real	interview discussion	
Interview	opening up topics for	trust need to be developed, if
	interview discussion	not existing;
Level of generality:		lack of structure requires
general/specific		interviewer's careful
Reference point: ideal/real		monitoring.

Table 4 - Strengths and difficulties of data collection procedures

6. Conclusion to this chapter

In this chapter I have presented the methodology employed by studies in the area of theories and beliefs and personal histories, and introduced some of the methods I incorporated in the design of this study. The objective was to report my 'shopping' strategies in order to choose the camera that would help me in taking good pictures. I ended up with some options that I found relevant to my work.

In my 'shopping list' I included procedures used by other researchers interested in this area, and explained my option for methods that could potentially elicit beliefs and personal histories from prospective and practising EFL teachers.

In relation to beliefs these 'cameras' focused on different levels of generality and reference points, that is, they targeted beliefs at a more specific or general level and referred to ideal or real situations.

In the next chapter I will present the outcomes of the trial pictures I took and the modifications that were needed for the main study.

Chapter 5

Testing the cameras: some insights from the pilot study

- 1. Introduction
- 2. Objectives of the pilot study
- 3. Methodology in the pilot study
 - 3.1 Questionnaire
 - 3.2 Lesson reports
- 4. The students in the pilot study
- 5. The students' past experiences
 - 5.1 Images
 - 5.2 What they liked or disliked
 - 5.3 What contributed to or hindered learning
- 6. Students' beliefs about foreign language learning
 - 6.1 Evidence from the questionnaire
 - 6.2 Evidence from the lesson reports
 - 6.2.1 First year students (Group 1)
 - 6.2.2 Third year students (Group 2)
- 7. Students' comments on the lessons and reports
- 8. Comments on the results of the pilot study
- 9. Data gathering in the main study
- 10. Conclusion to this chapter

1. Introduction

This chapter will describe my experience with the pilot study conducted during the first semester of 1991 with some 'LAP' students from Universidade Estadual de Londrina, and its contribution to the research design that was adopted in the main study. The research questions that guided this phase of the study were connected with finding what the LAP students' beliefs about language learning/teaching were and how they were linked to the language lessons the students were attending at that university course.

Two groups were involved: one in the first semester and another in the sixth semester (see Fig.1). At that time I was considering only the students' experience as learners of English at the university and for this reason the

participants were language students at two different stages in the course, that is, at the beginning and at the end of their language studies. My focus was mainly on the contribution of the language lessons to the development of prospective teachers' beliefs. Therefore, student teachers were not involved because I was not focusing on the contribution of formal training to their beliefs. The scope of the work was much narrower than the one adopted in the main study. Furthermore, because I was away from the students during that phase, the data consisted only of an open-ended questionnaire and lesson reports written by the teachers and students.

The data reinforced the already foreseen need to clarify issues with other procedures and the desirability of using a triangulated methodology, as explained in Chapter 4. The input which was provided showed the need to introduce modifications that took into account the possibility that beliefs could be expressed via reference to a real situation or with respect to an idealised one. They could also refer specifically to concrete classroom events or be presented at a more general level.

In the next section I will explain the objectives of the pilot study and the modifications deemed necessary, after the analysis of the data produced in this phase.

2. Objectives of the pilot study

The pilot study had the following objectives:

- a) to enable me to check the adequacy of the data collection procedures and to help in adjusting the research methodology
- b) to check the feasibility of conducting the study in the context of the 'LAP' course at UEL
- c) to help in focusing the research questions

This phase of the study proved to be invaluable in the design of the main study in that it showed limitations in the data collection procedures. It also

suggested that an analysis that focused on the group rather than on individuals would be far too narrow to explain how beliefs were connected to experiences as depicted in Fig. 3 (page 55). In the main study I tried to solve this tension by looking at the data both horizontally and vertically, that is, seeing what was common among the informants as a group but also acknowledging the idiosyncrasies related to their personal histories.

Students enrolled in the 'LAP' course at UEL during 1991 were contacted for the study. The objective in the main study was extended to gain insights on how their experiences as learners and formal training shaped their beliefs about foreign language teaching/learning. As a consequence other groups of informants were included.

During the pilot study phase two groups were selected: one consisting of students in the first semester and one in the sixth semester, at the end of the third year, usually before they take most of the pedagogical subjects. These students are referred to as "first year and third year students". The third group, included in the main study, consisted of student teachers who had been exposed to pedagogical principles, and were at the final year of their studies. These students are referred to as "student teachers". Another group of informants included during the main study was of practising teachers, who had graduated at the same university and attended the 'LAP' course. These teachers are referred to simply as 'practising teachers', or 'school teachers'.

The pilot study was conducted during the first semester of 1991 with two groups of language students. The lessons learnt from that experience were incorporated in the design of the main study, which took place between October and December 1991, and involved another population of students, different from the one contacted for the pilot study.

The initial research questions evolved from this phase of the research to incorporate a stronger biographical framework - in the sense of bringing in other educational experiences, not only the language lessons at the university. This

development was brought forward by the interaction of the analysis carried out during the pilot phase and readings of the literature I have reviewed in previous chapters. According to the final research questions, there were three interconnected purposes in this study which required a combination of methods that would reveal:

- a) the informants' beliefs about foreign language teaching/learning
- b) relationships between those beliefs and the informants' experiences with foreign language teaching/learning, and
- c) the informants' teacher role identity.

3. Methodology in the pilot study

3.1 - Questionnaire

Because I was away from the students during this first stage of the study and I needed to elicit their beliefs about foreign language teaching/learning, as well as obtain some biographical data from them, I designed the questionnaire in Appendix B, which was written and answered in Portuguese. Although Portuguese was not the language all of them learned first, it was the language they had mastered and used in the school system and at the university. The generation of data in Portuguese was felt necessary to avoid the difficulty of having the informants express ideas in a foreign language, especially in relation to first year students. The data was analysed in its original linguistic form, but for the purpose of presentation I translated the responses that were incorporated into the main text of this thesis.

Another purpose for the questionnaire was to enable me to see how comparable the two groups were in terms of how they construed their past experiences as language learners. The first four questions were asked to generate information on their previous educational and job experiences and their views on their past experiences as foreign language learners (questions 1 to 4).

From question 5 on English was specifically mentioned. The respondents were asked to list the factors that contributed to or hindered those experiences (questions 5 and 6¹) in order to provide a picture of what things were viewed as positive or negative in their language learning.

Questions 7 and 8° were aimed at eliciting some cues as to what their beliefs were about the role of the teacher and the methodology. Questions 9 and 10 were directed to their self-evaluation as language users and as language learners.³

Question 11 investigated their opinions on teaching as a career and if they did not consider taking it, why they were studying 'LAP'.

The questionnaire was planned to be as short as possible, since a long questionnaire could be off-putting. The questions were asked in order to obtain some biographical information that could be helpful in generating and analysing additional data.

Information gathered through the questionnaire proved to be useful in understanding how the participants construed previous experiences as foreign language learners and what they thought was involved in successful language teaching/learning. However, there were problems with the interpretation of the questions (e.g. questions 2⁴ and 7). I also feared that question number 3⁵ directed the informants' responses by providing examples of possible answers. For this reason, the questionnaire was revised for the main study. Two versions were created, since practising teachers were incorporated in the main study. These two versions are in Appendices C and D.

¹ These questions were: "what helped you learn English or other foreign language(s) in the past?", and "once you started learning English or other foreign language, what hindered your learning?"

² These questions were: "how would you define a successful language learning?" and "what are the things that best help someone to be a successful language learner?"

³ I also asked the teachers to provide an evaluation of the students using the same criteria.

⁴ "when you think about the foreign language classes you had, what comes to your mind?"

⁵ "what did you like most when you studied a foreign language? (e.g. the course as a whole, the teacher, the materials, the classmates, the school)"

As was expected, the data obtained through the questionnaire suggested that this type of procedure alone would not have been enough to understand the issues connected with the objectives of the study, since the questionnaire focused on the elicitation of beliefs, and not so much the experiences the informants went through in schools.

3.2- Lesson reports

Considering the difficulties associated with getting informants to write the lesson reports, I relied on the university teacher's cooperation in order to convince learners to participate in the pilot study. I clarified the purposes of the research and provided the guidelines for the writing of lesson reports in a letter to the teacher and another to the students. At this stage I felt that confidentiality would be preserved through the use of pseudonyms. In addition, I asked the teachers not to read the reports, and said so to the students, in order to provide a more relaxed atmosphere for the writing.

Usually diaries are requested without much structure (see however Rubin,1981 and Borko et al, 1987), but I felt that in this case instructions would be necessary, bearing in mind the time constraints and my specific interest in having access to students' beliefs as shown by their evaluation of the lessons they were attending.

I asked learners and teachers⁶ to keep the following records of four lessons selected during the first semester (March to July 1991)⁷ (instructions to teachers when different appear in square brackets):

⁶ The reason for asking the same information from the teachers was to obtain another perspective on what went on in the classroom.

There were many problems associated with the university during that semester. A teachers' strike for better pay paralysed the institution for two weeks followed by students' protests against the governmental contempt towards the difficulties UEL was facing. Therefore most teachers spent part of their time trying to revise and at the same time provide new content to the students.

- a) your pseudonym [name]
- b) identify the lesson (day of the month and of the week, beginning and ending times)
- c) what was the lesson about?
- d) what did the teacher do? [what did you do?]
- e) if you had to teach this lesson to the same group of students [again] would you change anything? What would you change and why?
- f) what did you learn that you did not know before the lesson? [what do you think the students learnt?]
- f1) if you learnt something, what helped it?[if you think they learnt something, what helped it?]
- f2) if you did not learn something, what hindered it?[if you think they did not learn something, what hindered it?]
- g) do you have other comments on the lesson?
- h) do you have comments on writing this diary?

Two assumptions underlay the collection of the reports in the format selected: 1) the way the students described the content of the lessons and the teachers' actions would reveal their conceptualisations of the teachers' role in the classroom, 2) asking them to "take the role" of the teachers would force them to reflect on how they might conduct themselves as teachers in the future and would possibly reveal their views on teaching methodology⁸. Lortie (1975:62) justifies this procedure:

This requires that the student project himself and imagine how he [sic] feels about various student actions... the motivation to engage in such role-taking is especially great when students have already decided to become teachers.

The methods for data collection in the main study were modified to account for the gaps that surfaced during the pilot study. There was the need to

⁸Defined as what teachers do in the classroom to help students learn.

rephrase some of the questions in the questionnaire due to the informants' misinterpretations of the intended meanings. There was also a shift in the focus of the questions about teacher's contribution and 'method'. Instead of focusing on the respondents' own experience, the questions focused on their beliefs at a general level of abstraction. These questions referred more specifically to the teacher and the method, whereas during the pilot study they were more vague. Therefore, the piloting of the questionnaire showed how vague the first version was, and proved to be a useful step in designing the data collection for the main study.

The lesson reports proved to be an interesting procedure for both research purposes and students' awareness-raising of pedagogical practices. I feared, however, that too much guidance could hinder interesting comments from the students who could see them as a questionnaire to be answered and, therefore, opted for being too cryptic. However, loosely structured reports would have to be produced in great quantity and with certain regularity in order to allow for patterns to emerge. In this study practical considerations limited the number of reports that could be obtained. For this reason detailed guidance was provided during the pilot study. In the main study there was a change towards a more loosely structured diary, without abandoning the provision of some guidelines.

In the next section I will describe the informants who participated in this phase of data collection. It is worth noting that at the time of the analysis of the data gathered during this phase the objective was to compare both groups of informants and therefore the presentation of the results was done with that objective in mind.

It should also be noted that at that stage biographies played a minor role in the data that was collected, since the focus was on eliciting the students' beliefs.

4. The students in the pilot study

Group 1 was composed of students in the first semester of the course (first year), and Group 2 of students in the sixth semester of the course (third

year). Table 5 provides some information about each participant. During this phase data analysis was carried out essentially from a horizontal perspective, and the analysis concentrated on comparing the two groups.

Table 5 - 'LAP' students in the first year - pilot study

	Table 5 - 'LAP' students in the first year - pilot study					
Id.	Age	Sex	Foreign languages	1o. grau	2o. grau	Professional
			studied			experience
1	18	f	German - 11 years French - 6 months English - 9 years (private language	private	private	Teacher - 1o. grau
	1.7		school)			
2	17	f	Japanese English (private language school)	private	state	-
3	25	f	English (private language school)	state	state	Teacher - 10 grau, since 1984
4	18	f	English - 11 years (private language school)	not informed	not informed	EFL teacher, private language school
5	22	f	English - 6 years (private language school)	private	state	secretary - 1 year office clerk - 2 years
6	18	f	Spanish English (private language school and abroad)	private	private/state	TEFL teacher (private language school) and 20. grau - 1 year each
7	20	f	English - 4 years (private language school)	private	private	-
8	17	f	German - (private language school)	state	state	-
9	37	f	English - 3 years (4 months abroad) Spanish - 2 years (abroad) Hebrew - 3 years (abroad)	private	state	Accountant - 6 years Teacher - Theology College, since 1990
10	19	f	English - 2 years + 1 year abroad German - 1 semester French - just started	not informed	not informed	Office clerk EFL teacher, private language school - 1 year
11	40	f	English - official	state	state	-
12	17	f	English - official	state	state	-

⁹A foreign language is recommended in the second half 10. grau curriculum (from age 11 onwards) and compulsory in 20. grau. English is the language normally chosen. The responses that indicate studies in private language schools imply that those students also had the official lessons in 10. and 20. grau schools.

13	17	f	Japanese - 11 years (private language school) English - 1 year and half (private language school)	state	state	-
14	20	f	English - official	state	state	Bank clerk
15	18	f	English and French - official	state	private	-
16	19	f	French - 1 year (private language school) English (private language school)	private	private	-
17	23	f	English - official	state	state	Teacher - 1o. grau (1987/1991)

Table 5 (continued) - 'LAP' students in the first year - pilot study

As can be seen from this table, the students exhibited a variety of experiences with learning foreign languages in contexts that were not only connected with the 'official' school system. Some of them were also teaching at 10. grau or even working as TEFL teachers, which makes the need for their background to be taken into account by the programme even more relevant.

Table 6 gives some information about the students in the third year:

Table 6 - 'LAP' students in the third year - pilot study

Table 6 - LAP students in the third year - phot study					uuy	
Id.	Ag e	Sex	Foreign languages studied	1o. grau	2o. grau	Professional experience
18	22	f	English - 8 years (private language school)	state	state	Teacher - 1o. grau, 1987/88
19	22	f	English - 3 years (private language school)	state	state	Office clerk Teacher - 1o. grau
20	22	f	English - official German - 18 months	state	state	-
21	23	f	English -3 years (private language school) Spanish - 6 months	state	state	Office clerk since 1985
22	21	f	English - official	state	state	Typist - 1 year Teacher - 1o. grau - 2 years

23	21	f	English - 6 years (private language school)	state	private	-
24	24	f	English - official	state	state	Teacher - 1o. grau, 1985/87 Bank clerk - 1987/91
25	25	m	English - 6 months (private language school)	state	private	Office clerk
26	22	f	English - 4 years (private language school)	state	state	-
27	21	f	English - 3 years (private language school), - 1 year (abroad)	state	private	-
28	32	f	English and French (private language school)	state	state	Teacher - 1o. grau, since 1984

Table 6 (continued)- 'LAP' students in the third year - pilot study

Group 1 had more students who studied foreign languages other than English (52%, compared to 27% in Group 2). In both groups, however, the students did not feel that they could remain only with the foreign language lessons offered by the 'official' system, and studied in private language schools.

Group 2 was apparently more positive about their ability as learners. However, they did not seem confident about their own command of the language, despite being in the last year of their language studies. It was somewhat worrying that two participants indicated they had a poor command of the language, since in a year's time, provided they satisfied all the official requirements, they would be entitled to teach English.

Table 7 displays their self-assessment as learners and users of English:

Assessment	As learners of	f the language	As users of the	he language
	G1 (N=17)	G2 (N=11)	G1 (N=17)	G2 (N=11)
excellent	1	-	-	-
good	5	5	6	1
average	9	6	6	8
poor	2	-	4	2

extremely poor	-	1	-	-
didn't answer	-	-	1	

Table 7 - 'LAP' students self-assessment - pilot study

Regarding their intention in following a career as teachers of English both groups exhibited approximately the same proportions, as Table 8 shows:

	G 1 (N=17)	G2 (N=11)
Want to be teachers of English	10	6
Do not want to be teachers of English	4	2
Have not decided yet	3	3

Table 8 - 'LAP' students professional prospects - pilot study

Although the course is generally aimed at preparing teachers to work mainly in primary and secondary schools, it also attracts those who do not intend to teach. These are usually students who like the English language or want to work in jobs that require some knowledge of it.

The students who had not decided yet said they would reach a decision based on the prospects for teaching as evidenced by the government educational policy and their confidence in their command of the language.

After presenting some information about the informants, I would like to examine some data concerning their past experiences as foreign language learners, as these were operationalised in this research. The students' past experiences were evoked through questions about images of previous lessons, things they liked or disliked, and what they felt contributed to or hindered their learning. My hypothesis was that responses given in these areas would be closely connected with their beliefs as expressed in more general terms in the same questionnaire and in the lesson reports.

5. Students' past experiences

As I explained in Chapter 4, the purpose of the questionnaire was to obtain some biographical information on the students and see how comparable the two groups were in terms of their past experiences as language learners. As I have shown with Tables 5 and 6, the groups were similar in terms of the majority attending English lessons in the private as well as in the state sector.

5.1.- Images ¹⁰

The question that would reveal this information was "When you think about the foreign language classes you had, what comes to your mind?" (question 2). The answers were categorised as positive or negative. Examples of positive images were: "good feelings", "good memories" and "pleasant lessons". Negative images were, for instance, "the lessons were very tiring, we learned only grammar", "I was afraid of saying things that were wrong" and "difficulty in communicating at the beginning".

Table 9 shows the distribution of these images by groups:

	G1 (N=17)	G2 (N=11)
Positive	8	6
Negative	8	3
Invalid answers ¹¹	1	2

Table 9 - 'LAP' students images of past experiences as foreign language learners - pilot study

Group 2 had more informants indicating positive images. Although it cannot be stated categorically, it might be the case that the university lessons were helping to overcome the negative images the students had prior to entering 'LAP' course. However, this conclusion would have to be supported by information obtained from the students themselves, since this was not a

¹⁰ It should be noted that the meaning of 'image' here is not the same meant by Johnson (1994) and Calderhead & Robson (1991).

¹¹Invalid answers were those which indicated the knowledge they could remember from the lessons, e.g. "the minimum that any high school student should know".

longitudinal study, and during the pilot study it was not possible to clarify these issues, which could be further explored in interviews.

5.2 - What they liked or disliked

Answers to questions 3 and 4 in the questionnaire (what they liked or didn't like when they studied a foreign language) were analysed and classified into two main categories: external and internal factors. External factors referred to those factors which do not depend directly on the learners, such as the teacher, the method, the school, etc. Internal factors refer to motivation, interest and strategies employed by the students in order to learn the foreign language. The classification of the factors into two main categories would facilitate comparisons between the groups. Table 10 (next page) summarises the alternatives they mentioned. These results show that for both groups external factors accounted for the majority of the things they liked or disliked most during their experiences as foreign language learners. Group 2 had a slightly stronger negative view of the teacher and the teaching methods, in the sense that they had more indications of these items among what they disliked.

5.3 - What contributed to or hindered learning

Questions 5 and 6 of the questionnaire elicited the students' impressions on what things contributed to or hindered their learning. Table 11 displays the results:

	What they liked		What they disliked		
	G1	G2	G1	G2	
	(N=16)	(N=11)	(N=14)	(N=11)	
	External fact	ors			
- course as a whole	9	4		-	
- teacher	5	4	2	5	
- method ¹²	1	3	4	4	
- teaching materials ¹³	1	2	5	2	
- classmates	1	4	-	-	
- language 14	2	1	-	-	
- school	2	1	-	-	
- status of English in the school curriculum ¹⁵	-	-	-	3	
- not having time to study	-	-	2	-	
	Internal fact	ors			
- own interest in learning the language	1	-	-	-	
- (not) being able to communicate ¹⁶	-	2	1	1	

Table 10 - Likes and dislikes in experiences as foreign language learners - pilot study

¹²Examples of statements that were classified as method: "The way the language was taught", the didactics of the school in England was very good", "I like the methodology in this course; it is dynamic and modern".

¹³Examples of comments under this category: "lack of audio-visual materials", "materials were not uptodate".

¹⁴Comment classified under this category: "I liked to learn the language itself"

¹⁵Comments under this category included complaints about the lack of prestige of English in the school curriculum and the number of hours allocated for its teaching

¹⁶Comments under this category: "To learn the songs motivated me to go on", "I liked when I could translate the songs or something I read", "At the beginning I didn't know anything" and "I couldn't understand what the teacher said"

		tributed to ning	What hi learr	
	G1	G2	G1	G2
	(N=16)	(N=10)	(N=12)	(N=11)
	External fa	ctors		
- (not) having someone to talk to in	4	-	1	8
English				
- method ¹⁷	-	2	1	2
- family support	2	-	-	-
- school	1	1	1	-
- teacher	-	ı	1	-
- large classes	-	-	1	-
- teaching materials/resources	-	-	1	1
- language 18	-	-	1	-
	Internal fa	ctors		
- (lack of) interest in learning the language	8	4	1	-
- strategies ¹⁹	2	3	-	-
- desire to visit the country where the language is spoken	1	1	-	-
- difficulty in learning the vocabulary or grammar	-	-	2	2
- not being able to communicate ²⁰	-	-	2	-

Table 11 - Student's views on what contributed to or hindered their learning - pilot study

In both groups more informants indicated that internal factors were more useful to their own learning. External factors were mentioned by fewer informants in terms of contributing to their experience. Lack of practice, as represented by the lack of opportunity to talk to someone in English, was mentioned by more students in Group 2 as a factor that hindered their learning. Following the categorisation adopted in this phase of the study, Group 1

¹⁷Comments: "The way the teachers taught us with songs, games, texts", "I liked when we learned how to sing"

¹⁸"It is difficult to speak because the two languages are different" (i.e. they have different sounds)

¹⁹Strategies were those comments that related to the students' own initiative in learning, such as: "Reading texts, doing translations", "using the dictionary".

 $^{^{20}}$ Understanding tapes, videos, etc." "The teacher speaks too fast; I cannot speak English correctly."

presented a wider spread of factors that made it difficult for them to learn the foreign language, whereas Group 2 tended to focus on fewer items.

6. Students' beliefs about successful foreign language learning

6.1 - Evidence from the questionnaire

Considering the results as presented in Section 5, there were more students in both groups indicating the contribution of internal factors to their own learning than external ones. I was assuming that their experiences would be somehow reflected in their verbalisations of successful language learning conditions.

Unfortunately the first of two questions led to misinterpretation by the students in both groups. The majority understood it ("How would you define successful foreign language learning?") to mean the result of teaching, instead of the process. A typical answer was:

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"the learner can communicate successfully" (G1)
"the message is understood without noise" (G2)
```

However, students from Group 2 cited more specific conditions that they felt were necessary:

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"good number of teaching hours"
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The second question ("What things are more useful for a successful language learner?") generated answers as shown on Table 12:

[&]quot;maximum of 5 students/classroom"

[&]quot;constant practice"

[&]quot;early contact with the language"

[&]quot;a dynamic teacher who creates a good learning atmosphere"

		_
	G 1 (N=15)	G 2 (N=10)
Practice		
- contact with speakers of the language	4	-
- listening activities	4	1
- conversation	3	2
- writing activities	1	2
- reading activities	-	1
Study the langua	ge	
- pronunciation practice	-	2
- grammar	1	3
- vocabulary	-	3
External factors	s.	
- good teacher	3	3
- time to study	1	-
- teaching materials/resources	2	2
- method ²¹	1	2
- small classes	-	1
Internal factors	,	
- attention and dedication	3	1
- interest in learning the language	3	2
- communicative abilities ²²	-	4

Table 12 - Students' views on what is useful for learners - pilot study

A summary of the factors is presented below:

	G1 (N=15)	G2 (N=10)
Practice	12	6
Study the language	1	8
External factors	7	8
Internal factors	6	7

Table 13 - Summary of factors that help learning according to 'LAP' students - pilot study

If we consider practice and study of the language as external factors rather than internal, then it seems that there is a mismatch between the saliency of what

²¹"Translation, lots of exercises, interesting activities, games, discussion"

²²"To know how to speak well", "to understand and speak fluently"

the students felt helped them, and what conditions they feel are necessary. It is possible to hypothesise that they tended to indicate things they had not experienced but which could have been helpful in an ideal situation. In this case, they would be drawing lessons from their own experience by believing in things that could have been the opposite of what they actually experienced. It is important to note that at this point in the research I was not specifying what they would be relying on, but the way the question was framed implied an ideal situation.

I have to recognise that the questions may not have been very clear, despite being discussed on several occasions with colleagues in the Linguistics department in Lancaster.²³ As I have stated earlier, they were somewhat vague and asked the respondents to think about EFL without reference to a specific situation.

The high level of generality and vagueness of the questionnaire was set alongside the lesson reports, which, as I have explained, would reflect their beliefs at a more specific level. I will now summarise the main findings from this second data source.

6.2 - Evidence from the lesson reports

The lesson reports were requested in order to obtain information about the content of the lessons and to generate the students' beliefs especially about the role of the teacher and methodology. The assumption was that when asked to reflect on what happened in the lesson and specify whether they would change it (and how) the students' beliefs about these areas would surface.

I will present the results of a preliminary analysis of the reports according to each group. I will also include some direct quotes from the students to exemplify the statements that constituted the basis for the analysis.

²³I would like to take this opportunity to thank colleagues who during the first semester of 1991 patiently listened to my presentations and contributed to the discussions at the Classroom Language Learning Research Group.

6.2.1 - First year students (Group 1)

The lesson reports were collected during four occasions, between April and June 1991. There was not much difference between what the teacher and the students described as the content of the lessons. Some students mentioned fewer topics than the teacher, who was seen predominantly as a manager²⁴:

"She reviewed the lessons following the book, played a tape and gave one activity to be done among us" (5).

Only one student added a comment to her description:

"She corrected the exercises in a dynamic way" (11)

When asked to "take the role of the teacher" the students showed almost unanimous agreement with what the teacher did. Those who would change the lesson if they were the teacher revealed that the changes would be mainly related to helping the students by resorting to the mother tongue.

"I would speak slowly and would translate everything" (8)
"The game was interesting but I think she should translate more" (13)

Two students mentioned opportunities for practice as the goal of their changes:

"I would give more opportunity for conversation and would try to bring posters or describe scenes on the topic of the lesson" (3)

"Maybe I would ask the students to speak a bit more in English" (9)

²⁴ Breen (1990) defines this as a "supervisory role in matters to do with implementing lesson plans or maintaining the working procedures of the group" (:226).

One student mentioned the organization of the groups("I would organise the group in a better way"), without specifying how that would be done.

However, there was a sharp decrease in the number of students who would change something from 7 in Lesson 1 to 1 student in Lesson 4. This reduction in the number of comments can possibly be explained by reference to the students' confidence in the subject. Because at the beginning they were more confident and knew the subject better, they felt they could improve the lesson. Later, when new topics started to emerge, they accepted what the teacher did more easily. Of course this speculation would have to be confirmed with the participants themselves. We should not forget also that the task itself (too tiring to write the lesson report) could have been responsible for the lack of changes. At the beginning, when the lesson report was a novelty, the students could have felt inclined to suggest more changes, whereas later on they could have incorporated the report into their classroom routine.

It is also worth noting that some of the students who said they would make changes in the first and second lessons were the same students (2,6,9 and 13), as Table 10 below will show. All of these students said they had a good command of the language and two of them were teachers. In addition to that, all of them had also studied other languages besides English and therefore had more experience as foreign language learners.

6.2.2 - Third year students (Group 2)

Four lessons in Group 2 were described by the teacher and the students between June and July 1991. Group 2 presented the same pattern as Group 1. The topics they mentioned were similar to those described by the teacher. However, she was more frequently seen as a guide²⁵ during the discussions of texts:

²⁵ The teacher as a guide was a category used by Breen (1990) as "essentially a responsive role, in which the teacher does something in reaction to learner feeedback or provides formative evaluation to individual learners in relation to their production of the language" (:225).

Chapter 5

"She helped us interpret the text and taught us the differences in pronouncing

the phonemes" (21)

She asked us how to make friends, differences between friends, acquaintances

and colleagues, and showed us how to pronounce words" (28)

A great proportion of the students who wrote reports for the first lesson

said they would change the lesson (4 students out of 6 who completed the

reports). The changes included comments on the pace and sequence of the

activities:

"Maybe I would correct the exercises more slowly and would give the

phonemes individually" (23)

"Maybe I would talk about the phonemes at the beginning of the class. The

students would be more alert and less tired and would memorise better "(27)

One student made reference to the use of resources:

"I would use the OHP showing similar words like three-tree, tin-sin-thin, etc.

so that the students would practice" (26)

As with the group of first year students, they showed a decrease in the

changes they would make. For Lesson 2 only one student said she would change it

and from Lesson 3 onwards none of the students said they would change

anything.

Table 14 shows an overall picture of the students' willingness to change

the way the lessons were taught:

Coding scheme:

+: would change the way the lesson

-: would not change the lesson

/: did not write the diary

o: no comments

Students'

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Identification	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	11	12 13	14 1	15	16 17	18 19 20	21	22 2	3 24	25	26 27 28	
Report 1	- + + / - + - + + -	-	- +	+	-		+ -/	/	/ +	- /	-	+ + /	
Report 2	/ + / - / + / - + /	-	- +	-	-		/ + /	-	- /	-	-	- / -	
Report 3	/+	o		/	-	/ -	- / /	-		-	-	- / -	
Report 4	- 0 / - + /	/		/	_		/	_		_	_		

Table 14 - Reports written by the students

The rationale for asking the students to report any changes they would make was that by taking on the role of the teacher the students would reveal their beliefs about teaching under the conditions described. Although I was aware of the fact that the students could be inclined to agree with the teacher, given the fact that these reports had to be handed in to her, the results showed that was not the case, and there were many instances when they suggested changes. Both changes and no changes revealed student beliefs about teaching. I interpreted the informants' agreement with what had been done as their understanding that what was going on in the classroom was in accordance with what they believed in. In both cases, beliefs acquired before entering the university could have been reinforced by the subsequent experiences in the 'LAP' course, either by accepting or by rejecting the activities carried out in the university classroom.

7. Students' comments on the lessons and the reports

The students in both groups were generally happy with the lessons and expressed their appreciation especially when they had opportunity to practise the language.

"I love the games because we learn and play the games - we learn playing games" (student 6, group 1)

Comments on the reports were, in general, positive and the students found the lesson report an interesting procedure.

Because I had also an interest in seeing the students' reactions to doing the tasks requested during this phase I included some evaluation of the research at the end. The teacher of Group 2 noticed that the students were interested in knowing the results of the research. She explained:

"It is interesting to engage in this retrospection at the end of the lesson, both for the teacher and the learners. The students seem to be very interested and would like to know the results".

One of the students expressed her opinion about the reports:

"It is an interesting way of assessing my own knowledge of the lessons" (student 19, group 2)

In Group 1, students expressed interest in obtaining copies of the materials the teacher was using. The teacher seemed surprised about this interest, since most of the first year students do not seem to be aware of the fact they are being prepared to become teachers.

For this reason I believe that lesson reports could be used to raise students' awareness about what goes on in classroom, especially the role of the external and internal factors which contribute to classroom foreign language learning.

8. Comments on the results of the pilot study

The analysis of the data revealed that both groups of students in general shared similar experiences as language learners expressed in terms of what they liked or disliked, what contributed to or hindered their learning.

External factors were considered more impeding to learning (with special reference to lack of practice) and their own interest and dedication more helpful.

However, when asked to list the things that they felt were more conducive to learning the informants seemed to be influenced by the kinds of experiences

²⁶In July 1991 I wrote a letter to each student who participated in the pilot study thanking them for their participation.

they were going through in the university, with Group 1 emphasising practice and Group 2 concentrating on the study of the language. Both groups attributed approximately the same importance to external and internal factors as they were expressed in terms of what (ideally) contributed to or hindered learning in an idealised situation.

In a previous study with Brazilian postgraduate students I had found that a group of 18 Brazilians studying abroad believed practice through contact with speakers of the language was a key component to learning a foreign language. The first year students in the pilot study, not being yet influenced by the course, shared the same views. Their comments coincided with those of the informants in Wenden's research (Wenden 1988), and the opinions of secondary school teachers surveyed by Richards et al (1991) in Hong Kong. The teachers indicated as the best ways to learn English: exposure to the language, interaction with native speakers and reading books.

During the analysis of the data collected at this stage, it seemed that the course was influencing the students' views on the role of explicit knowledge about the language as a key component to successful language learning. For this reason during the main study I tried to check whether EFL methodology classes challenged these views by studying fourth year students' definitions of the most helpful conditions for foreign language learning.

Students at a later stage in the course exhibited more concern with the knowledge of grammar and vocabulary than first year students. First year students were also more keen to make changes in the lessons than third year students. As I speculated, this might be explained by the fact that Group 1 had more students with experiences both as foreign language learners and as teachers of English. This amount of previous experience could have given students more confidence to be more critical of the teacher.

Numerically speaking the results were not conclusive enough, and a great deal of speculation arose from the analysis. Although some beliefs were identified, they could not be related to specific episodes because the informants had a limited range of situations to refer to (only the lessons they were attending at the university). Neither did they have much opportunity to refer to their past experiences except in those terms specified by the questionnaire. For this reason the interview was considered essential to allow the informants to recollect those episodes and for the researcher to tap their own perspectives on what they considered influential to those beliefs. Their identification as teachers could also be further explored through this mode of data collection, and with the addition of repgrids in which they had to position themselves in relation to former teachers.

In the main study I decided not to pursue so strongly the comparison of groups because of the difficulty in adopting a pseudo-longitudinal approach with three groups of individuals who shared similar school experiences, but who also exhibited a wide variety of other experiences with foreign languages, as well as in professional lives.

The pilot study revealed that the data collected following this methodology required a big leap from the data to interpretation, and this gap needed to be narrowed down through further refinements. In the next section I will discuss the changes this need implied.

9. Data gathering in the main study

As a result of the limits imposed by data collection during the pilot study, I moved to a more focused approach that incorporated different groups of informants and more methods of data collection. In addition to these changes I decided that the analysis would also undergo modifications. In the main study the connections between beliefs and personal histories would be more clearly addressed, as well as the informants' teacher role identity. The inclusion of two groups of informants in the main study was due to the need to account for two other potentially influential sources of theories: formal training and experience as a teacher (see Fig.4, page 57). The exclusion of the third year students was

justified due to refocusing the study away from the initial interest in working with students in the language component of the course only. The lesson reports also had to be modified to account for the changes perceived as necessary, mainly due to insights generated by the pilot phase of the study, and to accommodate the new situation of data collection, which involved other contributions from the students and teachers. It was with their time in mind that I restricted the reports to an absolute minimum.

Therefore, the main study differed from the pilot study not only by the addition of methods and informants, but also in terms of the focus of analysis. Personal histories became more prominent as well as teacher role identity. Rather than comparing beliefs of two groups and speculating about what influence the course was exerting on those beliefs, the informants' biographies were given more space.

10. Conclusion to this chapter

In this chapter I have described some results of the data collected during the pilot study and explained some guidelines that were adopted for the methodology followed in the main study. Two groups of 'LAP' students participated in this phase of the research. Their beliefs, as elicited through questionnaires and lesson reports showed that there were differences among first and third year students. First year students believed language practice was more important than formal language study, and the third year students exhibited the opposite view. Consistent with this result, first year students saw the teacher performing a supervisory role, whereas the third year students identified her performing an instructional role. Therefore, when asked to take the role of the teacher the students did not suggest many changes to what had been done.

The results of the pilot study showed the need to modify the procedures as well as incorporate other 'cameras'. The interplay between the informants' beliefs and their experiences as learners and as teachers as well as formal training

would be further explored during the interviews, which would also provide the opportunity to find out the participants' reaction to the research.

All the different methods had the common goal of not only enabling the identification of beliefs, which had been the focus of the pilot study, but also incorporating information about significant episodes that the informants felt helped shape those beliefs. The informants would also be required to expand on their images of themselves as teachers (in addition to taking the role of the teacher in the lesson report).

The framework adopted for the pilot study was more of a descriptive type, in which beliefs were identified and the two groups of students were compared. Having recognised the fragility of these comparisons, during the main study I decided to focus on the stories that the informants would tell me about their learning experiences and how they justified their practices (or their views).

To continue with the metaphor I have been using, the pictures I obtained at this phase of the study were incomplete and slightly out of focus, and required sharpening in order to become more visible. The focus was to be found in the addition of other methods of data collection, which would offer a greater resolution in the final pictures.

In the next chapter I will describe the cameras and the people in the pictures in the main study, or the research design adopted and the informants.

Chapter 6

Cameras and people: the main study

- 1. Introduction
- 2. Methods of data collection
 - 2.1 Questionnaire
 - 2.2 Lesson reports
 - 2.3 Repgrids
 - 2.4 Interviews
- 3. The informants
 - 3.1 The first year students
 - 3.1.1 Some biographical data
 - 3.1.2 Reasons for studying 'LAP'
 - 3.1.3 Professional prospects
 - 3.2 The fourth year students
 - 3.2.1 Some biographical data
 - 3.2.2 Professional prospects
 - 3.3 The practising teachers
- 4. Conclusion to this chapter

1. Introduction

In the last chapter I presented the rationale and methodology for the pilot study and the modifications that were deemed necessary considering the pictures I obtained during that phase of the research. In this chapter I will present the various methods used during the main study. I will give more specific details about the way the data was collected (the 'cameras' I used) as well as supplying background information about the informants, the people who agreed to be photographed.

2. Methods of data collection

2.1 - Questionnaire

In the light of the answers obtained during the pilot study and the fact that I would interview the students, the questions were slightly changed, as Appendices C and D show. The main changes in the students' questionnaire referred to the need to be more specific by asking questions directly related to the role of the teacher and methodology (the topic for the beliefs), and rephrasing some of the questions that led to misinterpretation by the students.

As I would be personally involved in handling in the questionnaire, the participants would have the opportunity to clarify the intended meaning of the questions. This proved to be important since during the pilot study some of the questions did not generate the expected responses.

2.2 - Lesson reports

For the pilot study the provision of guidance for the report writing had been seen as a necessary element due to its restricted regularity. The purpose was to obtain the language students' views on the teacher's role and teaching methodology (what the teacher did) as they referred to a more specific event (a lesson).

The lesson report in the pilot study was apparently seen as a questionnaire to be answered after the lesson. During that phase of the research the instructions were perhaps too restrictive. For this reason, during the main study, while still maintaining some guidance, the instructions focused on three aspects only. The reports were geared towards obtaining the participants' reactions to concrete lessons they were experiencing and their feelings towards specific classroom episodes described by themselves. For the language students, university teachers and the school teachers the directions were:

"Reflect on what happened in this lesson and a) describe it as if you were telling a friend about it, b) write about how you felt in relation to it, c) if you had to teach in a similar situation would you like to hold on to anything the teacher did in this lesson? What would you like to hold on to and why?, d) if you had to teach in a similar situation would you like to change anything? What would you change and why?

The student teachers were exposed to another kind of situation, since they would not be attending language lessons anymore. They would be observing lessons in private or public schools and teaching in those classrooms. For this reason they were asked to reflect on a lesson they had recently taught.

Only two reports were elicited from each participant before the interviews, since I did not want to be too disruptive of the classroom routine. I was also aware of the time constraints that represented a concern for both university and school teachers. The procedures were the same as for the pilot study. However, I explained the details personally and collected the reports directly from the students, and for this reason I did not ask them to use pseudonyms instead of their real names, as I did during the pilot study. However, for the presentation of data in this study I am giving them pseudonyms to safeguard their immediate identification.

2.3 - Repgrids

Recent studies on personal theories have benefited from the use of the repgrid, as I discussed by presenting the work done by Zuber- Skerritt (1988). For this reason and because of their potential in revealing personal viewpoints, repgrids were incorporated into the methodology during the main study.

Coherent to the view that teacher thinking has been increasingly influenced by a constructivist perspective (Clark, 1988) the repgrid represents an appropriate method for exploring theories of teaching.

For the main study I planned to request two repgrids from each participant. The first would be concerned with the teacher's role, as revealed by their constructs of former teachers, and the second on successful activities in an EFL class. I have already explained that during the pilot study it was not possible to include repgrids and justified the reasons for not doing so in Chapter 4.

The first repgrid (repgrid 1) had as elements 5 teachers of English the participants had and themselves (how they are or how they would like to be).

During data collection, an example of how to produce a repgrid was explained in a step by step fashion. Six cards containing the letters A,B,C,D,E and the word 'self' was shown to the participants. Each card was then representative of a person: mother, father, brother, sister, best friend, self. These were the 'elements' of the repgrid. Groups of 3 elements (triads) were then compared and constructs and contrasts produced. Each construct and contrast were written down and shown on the blackboard. After generating constructs and contrasts the elements were rated in relation to the constructs using a scale from 1 to 5; in which 5 meant that the 'construct' pole fully applied and 1 that the 'contrast' pole fully applied. The finished grid looked like this:

CONSTRUCTS	A	В	С	D	Е	F	CONTRASTS
	MOTHER	FATHER	BROTHER	SISTER	BEST FRIEND	SELF	
very religious	5	1	1	5	2	1	doesn't
							believe in God
sociable	5	2	4	4	5	1	not sociable
understanding	1	3	3	5	5	2	not
							understanding
bossy	5	5	2	4	1	3	docile

After the explanation of this example doubts were clarified. Then repgrid 1 was elicited. The participants received six cards and were asked to identify each of the five cards containing the letter A,B,C,D,E, with a foreign language teacher

they had (either in schools (private or 10./20. graus) or at the university) in a way that allowed them to recognize each coded card. The sixth card referred to themselves as teachers.

The participants generated the constructs and contrasts considering teachers' attributes and wrote them down on the form provided (Appendix E) and rated each element in relation to each construct using a scale from 1 to 5.

The second repgrid was planned to be elicited in another session, following the same procedures. The elements would be nine activities that a teacher does in a good EFL class. The purpose was to find out the participants' views on what they saw as successful teaching/learning activities. The informants would have to list both elements and constructs/contrasts on the form provided (Appendix F), and rate them accordingly. Due to time constraints during data collection this second repgrid was elicited from student teachers only. The other groups (first year students and practising teachers) did not produce this second repgrid.

As I have already mentioned in Chapter 4, the repgrid technique has seen successfully adopted in educational studies with the aim of eliciting beliefs in the form of constructs. In this study these constructs referred mainly to the teacher's role as perceived by prospective and practising teachers. The elicitation of data in such way relied on the assumption that by reflecting on former teachers (with the potential of acting as role models) these constructs would reveal how teaching was construed by the informants.

Given other researcher's experience with the technique, piloting the repgrid was felt unnecessary. However, the informants' better familiarity with the technique itself could have facilitated the task of completing the grid forms. Anticipating these difficulties I asked the teacher to allow for one of the classes (one hour and a half) to be dedicated to this task.

2.4 - Interviews

The other procedure not included in the pilot study was the interview, for reasons already explained in Chapter 5. The interviews had the purposes of a) clarifying information generated in the questionnaire, lesson reports, and completed repgrids; b) obtaining information and recollections of past experiences as language learners and the teaching practice (when applicable), c) the influence of these previous experiences on their beliefs, and d) an overall assessment of the experience of participating in this research. During the interviews I tried (though not always successfully) to minimize the interviewer talk and increase the number of opportunities for participants' explanations of previous responses, collected through the other research instruments.

The main themes covered by the interview were¹:

- a) clarification of information obtained through other methods
- b) experiences with foreign language learning in school or other contexts
- c) significant episodes they found connected to their beliefs
- d) images of themselves as teachers

In the next section I will present some introductory bio-data about the informants who participated during the main study, and details about the way the data was collected.

3. The informants

- 3.1 The first year students
- 3.1.1 Some biographical data

¹The interview schedules are reproduced in Appendix G.

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The students in this group joined the university in August 1991. I had contact with them during October/November in the same year.² The group was taught in the afternoon and, in addition to the other subjects in the curriculum, had English language lessons three times a week (sessions of one hour and a half each) with two teachers³.

One of their teachers was already familiar with the research, since she had participated in the pilot phase. She allowed me in one of her lessons when I explained the purpose of the research to the students⁴ and agreed on the follow-up sessions for data collection. The rep grid about teachers they had and about themselves as teachers was elicited in one session that lasted for one hour and a half on October 23, and it followed the procedures explained in Chapter 6. The instructions for the lesson reports were given to both teachers in a separate meeting. The teachers collected the lesson reports on two occasions in this group: 28.10.91 and 6.11.91. I administered the questionnaire on November 18. Therefore, the sequence of data collection for this group was

repgrid \Rightarrow lesson report 1 \Rightarrow lesson report 2 \Rightarrow questionnaire

The interviews were conducted according to the students' availability and started after I had contacted them in the repgrid session. For this reason, for some students the interview was done before the completion of the lesson reports or questionnaire, and consequently, the sequence was not the same for all the students.

²I wanted to contact them after they had had some initial experience of the course, because then it would make more sense to ask them to reflect on the lessons at the university.

³It is a common practice in the foreign language component of the course to have two teachers allocated to the same group.

⁴During that session I told them I was interested in their views about teaching/learning EFL and their previous experiences with it. I also told them the objective was to gain insights for the 'LAP' course. When asked about their opinion about their participation in the research they said they were doing it to help me, although some pointed out the benefit of doing this reflection for themselves.

Since data collection took place on different occasions the students who were absent on the days scheduled for that purpose did not produce the whole set of data. Therefore, for some of them the interview probed into topics covered by the other means of data collection. Table 1 displays the sets of data according to each informant.

There were 15 students regularly attending the English language lessons in this group, of whom 11 were interviewed. The other 4 students missed most of the sessions and were not included during the interviews. Of the 11 interviews, 3 were unusable because the recordings presented technical quality problems.

The analysis in this chapter will therefore be based on the eight students who were interviewed, according to the following table, presented in descending order of completeness of records.

	INTERVIEW	QUESTIONNAIRE	LESSON REPORT	LESSON REPORT 2	REPGRID
			1		
Carina	X	X	X	X	X
Edneia	X	X	X	X	X
Jose	X	X	X	X	X
Carla	X	X	X	X	
Rose	X	X	X	X	
Maura	X	X	X		
Fabiana	X		X	X	
Helena	X	X			X

Table 15 - Types of data obtained from the first year students

3.1.2 - Reasons for studying 'LAP'

The course attracts people with varied degrees of proficiency and background experiences with the foreign language, as I explained in the introduction. This group seemed to fit into the pattern of diversity, as shown by the profile of the students provided (Table 16- next page).

The students came to the 'LAP' course with diverse backgrounds of learning experiences and contact with foreign languages. These experiences differ in relation to what languages were learnt, at what ages and in what contexts. Only one student had not attended any private English language school, and one was studying other foreign languages while attending the university. Two had languages other than Portuguese as their mother tongue. For this reason, the students arrived at the university with a culture of foreign language learning that was either going to challenge or reinforce their views on what successful foreign language teaching/learning.

As the table shows, all the students were uncertain about working as teachers after completing the course. Their uncertainty could be seen in the variation of responses in different procedures, as evidenced by the footnotes.

The students' motivation for attending the 'LAP' course and their comments on professional prospects are presented next.

3.1.3 - Professional prospects

The students in this group were uncertain as to whether they would like to teach English. Some of them had already had some teaching experience during their teaching practice in the 'magisterio' (teaching) course they had at '2o. grau', which qualifies teachers to work in primary schools. Two of them were working as teachers and therefore had more experience, though in neither case were they directly involved with the teaching of English.

Although the course is designed to prepare teachers of Portuguese and English to work in '1o. and 2o. graus' the students' motivations might not

Student	Age	Wants to be a TEFL?	Experience as teacher	Other foreign languages	English in language school	1o. grau	2o. grau	Other jobs
Fabiana	19	doesn't know	'magisterio'	no	yes	public school	public school	worked as secretary
Maura	19	doesn't know	no	German, French	yes - 3 years	public school	private school	no
Carina	19	doesn't know ⁵	no	Dutch as L1	yes - 4 years	public school	private school	worked as receptionist
Claudia	18	doesn't know	yes	no	yes - 1 1/2 year	public school	public school	teacher in primary school
Edneia	17	doesn't know ⁶	no	Japanese as L1	no	public school	public school	
Helena	28	doesn't know ⁷	no	no	yes - 6 months	private school	private school	worked as bank manager
Jose	21	doesn't know ⁸	no	no	yes - 2 years	public school	private school	no
Rose	21	no ⁹	yes	no	yes - 4 years	private school	private school	teacher in primary school

Table 16 - A profile of the first year students

⁵In the questionnaire answered yes, but during the interview said she was not sure.

 $^{^6}$ In the questionnaire answered she did not know, but changed her mind after a job offer in Japan.

⁷In the questionnaire answered yes, but during the interview said she was not sure.

⁸In the questionnaire answered yes, but during the interview said he was not sure.

⁹In the questionnaire answered she was not sure, but during the interview said no.

INFORMANT	MOTIVATION FOR ATTENDING 'LAP'
Fabiana	likes languages, but not sure whether she
	wants to teach Portuguese or English
Maura	likes languages, but not sure she would like
	to be a teacher
Carina	tried other courses, but couldn't pass the
	entrance exam
Carla	wants to learn English
Edneia	wants to learn English
Helena	wants to learn English
Jose	interest in studying languages
Rose	wants to be a vet; just waiting for another
	entrance exam

Table 17 - First year students' reasons for attending 'LAP'

coincide with the course objectives. A summary of their motivations is presented on Table 17 (above).

It seems that the students were initially attracted to the course because of its language development component, and did not welcome the possibility of being teachers enthusiastically. Two of them were doing 'LAP' because they had failed the entrance exam for the course they originally intended to apply for. The others were interested in learning English and did not worry so much about their future as teachers. This could be partly due to their perceptions of the status of the teaching profession in Brazilian society nowadays¹⁰. One of the students, who started working as a primary school teacher, referred to the prospect of remaining in the profession pessimistically¹¹:

I think it is not attractive to be a teacher nowadays. It's not only a problem of pay, but teachers are in a situation worse than that of garbage collectors, no offense to garbage collectors, but teachers are in a worse situation. Education is what we should invest in more and it is the one that receives less investment. Then, the teacher, who should

¹⁰A recent survey by Fundação Carlos Chagas showed that the main cause of the teachers' frustration in São Paulo state is the little value that society gives to them. (Folha de São Paulo, 16.5.93).

¹¹Original text in Portuguese translated by me.

be better paid, better qualified, the contrary is happening. (interview, Car 127-133).¹²

In some cases the family exerted pressure for them to join 'LAP' or abandon it altogether. Rose, who is the other student in this group who is working as a primary school teacher resented the fact that her mother wanted her to be a teacher, to continue a family tradition:

... the whole family is in teaching, then I had to do it too. (445). My mother told me to do 'magisterio', then I did it. (451). But I don't want to be a teacher [...] I think the students are not polite, they don't want to study, you give the subject, they don't do the homework, they are not interested, and we keep seeing the teachers complaining. I also complain about my salary, which is not enough for anything, unfortunately. (interview, Ros 300-310)

For this reason, what she really wanted was to follow another profession that would be more rewarding in those terms.

On the other hand, Maura suffered influence in the opposite direction:

My mother has never actually taught, but she is a qualified teacher [...] I have an aunt who is a teacher, who keeps saying never be a teacher, it's the last thing[...] what makes you angry is that it is hard work, dealing with people throughout your life, demanding from you and there is no reward, you don't earn enough. (interview, Mau 630-642).

These two students were being influenced not by what they personally had experienced, but reacting to the values held by members of the family about the teaching profession, as a type of secondary biography. These external forces are playing a part in the shaping of their views about the profession, in line with Knowles' (1992) model. The same uncertainty about the profession was also presented by students during the pilot study. It might that 'LAP' students were attracted to the course because of its language component. Their concern with

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¹² The numbers in parentheses refer to the text units coded by the programme NUD-IST used during the analytical process which will be described in Chapter 7.

learning the foreign language may override concerns about their possible future as teachers. Their comments on their language experiences and the parallels they drew about them are an indicator that the lessons at the university were seen as an extension of their former foreign language experiences.

Although these students were not concerned primarily with their future as teachers of English, they could express their conceptions about what is required in successful language teaching, defined in terms of roles of teachers and learners, and the types of materials and activities that are more helpful. They could also hypothetically see themselves as teachers (actually two were already teaching, and one had experience during her teaching practice).

In this section I have provided a brief description of the first year students' reasons for attending 'LAP' and concluded that their primary concern was with learning the foreign language rather than learning to be teachers. They saw the possibility of joining the profession negatively. In the next section I will follow the same format to present data about the final year students.

3.2 - Fourth year students

3.2.1 - Some biographical data

Whilst for first year students there were many groups running simultaneously (both in the afternoon and evening periods) for the final year students there were two groups only: one in the afternoon and one in the evening¹³. Because most of the evening students worked during the day I could work more easily with the afternoon group. The sequence of data collection for this group was

repgrid 1 (about teachers) \Rightarrow repgrid 2 (about activities) \Rightarrow lesson report 1 \Rightarrow lesson report 2 \Rightarrow questionnaire \Rightarrow interview

¹³Although there are no statistics available, the dropout rate in the course is considerably large. In addition to that, it is only at later stages in the course that the students have to decide whether they want to obtain the dual certificate (to teach English and Portuguese) or just the Portuguese language one.

I met the students in the afternoon group during one of their sessions with their supervisor and elicited the first grid at that time. In the same session I gave them instructions about the lesson reports, which, unlike for the first year students, would focus on their *own* lessons.

As with the first year students not all the informants could provide the whole set of data due to their own commitments. Table 18 shows the type of data obtained from each informant, in descending order of completeness of records:

STUDENT	REPGRID 1	REPGRID 2	QUESTIONNAIRE	LESSON	INTERVIEW
TEACHER				REPORTS	
Samira	X	X	X	1	X
Marion	X	X	X	1	X
Mariane	X	X	X	1, 2	X
Clara	X	X	X	1,2	X
Suzana	X	X			X
Eliana	X		X	1	
Rafaela		partial	X	1	

Table 18 - Types of data obtained from the student teachers

For the chapter that deals with the informants' beliefs about foreign language teaching/learning I will draw on responses generated by the questionnaire, and in one case I will draw on interview responses. For the remaining sections, in which their experiences were explored through the interview, obviously I will have to rely on the five students who were interviewed (the first five in Table 18).

Table 19 (next page) displays some background information about the student teachers who were interviewed. In this group there were fewer

STUDENT	AGE	WANTS TO BE A TEFL?	OTHER FOREIGN LANGUAGES	ENGLISH IN LANGUAGE SCHOOL	10. GRAU	2O. GRAU	OTHER JOBS
Mariane	21	yes	studying Japanese	3 years	private/state	state	TEFL in language school
Samira	20	yes	-	6 years	private/state	private	no
Rafaela	25	yes	Japanese for 6 months	studying since 1987	private/state	private	TEFL in language school
Eliana	22	yes	-	3 years	state	state	teacher at 10. grau /5 years
Clara	25	doesn't know	-	4 years	state	state	travel agent
Marion	23	doesn't know	-	3 years	private/state	state	worked in a bank for 7 months
Suzana	NA	yes	-		state/private	private	worked as TEFL in language school/3 years

Table 19 - A profile of the student teachers

students with experiences with other foreign languages and, unlike the first year students group. Portuguese was the mother tongue of all of them. All of them had studied English (one was still studying it) in a private language school.

In both groups the students who had jobs were working in areas which required either some contact with the foreign language (as is the case with secretaries and travel agents) or with teaching.

3.2.2 - Professional prospects

It is perhaps surprising that at this late stage of the course some of the student teachers were still not sure whether they wanted to be teachers. They were the students who had worked in environments other than schools. The reasons they gave for the indecision were related to their insecurity in relation to their command of the language (Clara 449-452, Q.11; Marion 594-602) and the fact that teaching is a less valued profession (Clara 789-797, Marion, 360-366, Q.11). The others, who stated that they would like to work as teachers, had all had some experience as teachers and some were still teaching (at primary schools or in language schools). It could be the case that experiencing the taste of teaching was enough to attract them to the profession. It ought to be recalled that three of them had actually worked as EFL teachers in private language schools and one worked at 10. grau (although not teaching English).

As I have mentioned, although 'LAP' is intended as a pre-service course, many students come to the university with some teaching experience. Therefore, for some of the students, 'LAP' is actually an in-service course, and in many working contexts, a necessary requirement to achieve the legal permission to teach.

As I will discuss when I present the results about their beliefs about the educational system, the first year students evaluated the educational context essentially in terms of its effectiveness. In other words, they believed that the

private sector was more effective in teaching English than the state sector. The student teachers, on the other hand, saw the educational context mainly as a possible context for their work. They were in a sense thinking as teachers rather than as learners. The perception of the educational context as a place to work reveals a stronger identification of the students with teaching as a profession, and therefore is a point to bear in mind in relation to their teacher role identity.

The student teachers who manifested the intention of working as teachers were thinking mainly of the private language schools. Except for one student teacher who had never worked but who had always wanted to be a teacher, the public school remained an unattractive place. Another student, Mariane, who was already working as a teacher in a private language school, felt that by improving her knowledge of the language she would be able to teach at more advanced levels, while remaining in the same school.

In this section I have presented data about the student teachers, who were more keen on becoming EFL teachers than the first year students. However, they preferred the private sector to the state one. In the next section I will introduce the practising EFL teachers.

3.3 - The practising teachers

I contacted practising EFL teachers at the beginning of October 1991, and agreed with them a timetable for data gathering, involving the open ended questionnaire, lesson reports, repgrid and interview. Table 20 summarizes the type of data I obtained from the teachers I interviewed.

It was not possible to obtain a complete set of data from all the teachers, due to their time commitments. Especially with the repgrids this task revealed to be extremely troublesome, since none of them were familiar with the

Teacher	Interview	Questionnaire	Diary 1	Diary 2	Repgrid	Repgrid
					1	2
Cristiana	X	X	X	X	X	X
Lia	X	X	X	X	X	X
Nidia	X	X	X	X	X	X
Carmem	X	X	X	X	X	-
Josefa	X	X	X	X	-	-
Fernanda	X	X	X	X	-	-
Roberto	X	X	X	X		
Luisa	X	X	X	X	-	-
Valeria	X	X	-	-	X	X
Jane	X	X	X	X	-	-

Table 20 - Types of data obtained from practising teachers

technique, and I had to explain the procedures individually to each of them¹⁴. For this reason, only three practising teachers produced the whole set of data. Nevertheless, the interviews proved to be very interesting, with many teachers talking about their own experiences at length.

The teachers I contacted had all attended the 'LAP' course at that same university, with varied length of experience in teaching. Table 21 (next page) summarises some biographical information about them.

The teachers I interviewed exhibited a wide range of experience in terms of time length (from one year to thirty-one years) and educational contexts (private language school, private secondary school, state secondary school). It is worth noting, however, that the majority was teaching in private language schools¹⁵. I will summarise the responses to the questionnaire given by all

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¹⁴As I explained, the elicitation of Repgrids with the students was done in a group, taking one of the class sessions with the teacher's permission.

¹⁵The sample I obtained was of a convenience type (those who were willing to participate in the research), and therefore, I cannot claim that this reflects an overall trend in the profession. However, considering that the students who expressed willingness to become teachers pointed out they would have preferred to work in the private sector, this might reflect a trend of the graduates in the course.

Teacher	Age	Graduated (year)	Jobs as TEFL teacher	English in language school	Other foreign languages	1o. grau	2o. grau
Cristiana	29	1984	81-82 - private language school since 87 - private language school	4 1/2 years	French - 9 months Spanish - 3 months	private school	private school
Carla	23	1990	since march 91 - state school	632 hours		state school	state school
Lia	25	1987	since 87, private language school	9 years		state school	private school
Josefa	46	1980	76 - 77 since 82, state school	3 y ears + 255 hours		state and private schools	private school
Fernanda	44	1973	since 74, state school			state school	state school
Roberto	22	1990	87-90 90-91 - USA since 91, private language school	4 years	Spanish - 3 months	state school	state schools
Nidia	36	1979	72 - 80, private language school since 89, private language school			state school	High School - US
Luisa	37	1975	75 - 82 since 82, private 1o. grau school	2 years		private school	private school
Valeria	32	1989	since 86, private language school and private 10. grau school	7 years		state school	private school
Jane	49	1976	since 1960, state school	624 hours		state school	state school

Table 21 - A profile of the practising teachers

the ten informants, but considering the limitations involved in discussing in greater depth all the ten teachers' perspectives, I will discuss in greater depth four teachers' views, as revealed by their comments during the interview. These four teachers were: Cristiana, Carmem, Lia and Roberto, selected because they were the more recent graduates in the course (1984, 1990, 1987 and 1990 respectively) and were less experienced in terms of time spent on teaching.

4. Conclusion to this chapter

In this chapter I have presented information about data collection, the informants' bio-data and their professional prospects. I have discussed the diversity of experiences students bring to the programme, in terms of learning foreign languages and teaching in contexts other than EFL.

I referred to the difficulty in obtaining complete sets of data from all the informants due to their time commitments. Nevertheless, the analysis concentrated on those cases that provided most complete sets of the information. Considering that I was not interested in achieving numbers that were statistically significant but data which provided insights into the socialisation of teachers, I felt that a small number of informants would not endanger the overall analysis, since I considered each individual's personal histories separately.

In this chapter I have provided some bio-data about the informants, bearing in mind the framework I am adopting that implies connections between personal histories and beliefs. The personal histories showed that the informants' schooling experiences varied, in relation to the foreign languages they had studied and the type of schools they had attended. Their working experiences also revealed that they did not have an optimistic view of teaching as a career. Continuing with the metaphor of photography, I introduced the subjects of my photographs, bearing in mind that in the next chapter I will discuss the analytical process employed after the data was collected. I will, so to speak, explain how I

entered the darkroom, in order to develop the film and produce the pictures that will be presented in Chapters 8, 9, 10 and 11.

Chapter 7

Developing films: the analytical framework

1. Introduction

2. Making sense of the data

3. A model for the analysis

4. Conclusion to this chapter

1. Introduction

Having taken the photographs in the way I described before, I ended up with several films to develop. In this chapter I will describe my experience in the 'darkroom', working from the films I ended up with after the data collection, and developing the pictures that will be presented next.

The education of foreign language teachers is in a state of flux and in need of a new framework (Freeman, 1992; Freeman and Richards, 1993). I have argued that in pursuing this new framework teacher educators could benefit from studies carried out in the fields of teacher thinking and teacher socialisation, which I have presented in Part I of this thesis. There I also pointed out the scarcity of studies that addressed the **process** of learning to teach.

The purpose of this study was, therefore, as set out in my research questions (Chapter 1), to understand the beliefs held by prospective EFL teachers in a foreign language teacher education programme, to consider some of the potential sources of their beliefs, and to identify how they viewed themselves as teachers, that is, their teacher role identity. As Knowles (1992:126) points out

... the concept of teacher role identity is central for understanding the process by which prior experiences are transformed into classroom practice.

During my contact with the students in the data collection phase the informants had the opportunity to reassess their learning experiences retrospectively (both the remote and the more recent ones). I concentrated on what they believed would be successful foreign language learning conditions, and how they were related to their past and present experiences with foreign languages.

The underlying assumption was that the students brought to the education programmes conceptions that would interact with their current experiences and would be reflected in the way they saw themselves as future professionals, according to the framework suggested by Knowles (1992). The data was looked at mainly through the framework of personal histories, i.e. "those experiences that mold (sic) the educational thinking of pre-service teachers" (Knowles and Holt-Reynolds, 1991:89).

Considering my interest in the specific field of FLTE, in this study the elicitation of personal histories focused around school experiences with foreign language learning.

The data consisted of open-ended questionnaire responses, repgrids, lesson reports and interview transcripts, as I have already detailed in Chapter 6. The next stage was to analyse them and bring them together. In the next section I will explain the procedures I followed to make sense of the huge amount of textual information generated at the data collection phase of the research.

2. Making sense of the data

Qualitative data analysis is one of the most important phases for the researcher operating with subjective understandings. Yet there is little written about the process itself (see, however, Miles and Huberman, 1984; Dey, 1993). I tried to plan a research design that would be flexible enough to allow for the informants' views to be captured, and therefore, would not impose a rigid structure on it. That is why I opted for procedures with varying degrees of

structuring, instead of using conventional attitude scales or multiple choice questionnaires. Another reason for this type of approach was that I was not interested in carrying out an exhaustive but necessarily superficial survey to find out what the beliefs among the groups of students were, but rather in developing greater understanding of the relationship between beliefs, personal histories and teacher role identity.

The data collection procedures were guided by the assumption that in answering questions posed by the questionnaire and interview and by reacting to the lessons, the students would be able to provide some clues as to what they had in mind in relation to successful foreign language teaching/learning conditions. These procedures were considered potentially more rewarding than multiple choice questionnaires, since they would capture the informant's own words and not some pre-conceived alternatives to be rated according to a scale.

Considering the exploratory nature of the study and the fact that this type of research had not been carried out before in that context, I felt the difficulties posed by those various procedures I have already described would be compensated by the possibility of allowing the informants to use their own words. The unpredictability of results generated by that decision, however, had to be dealt with. The result was an amount of data that would require extensive analysis drawing on pre-established categories, but which was also open to the unexpected. For this reason I decided to rely on computer software to help me during the analytical process.

Computer-assisted analysis of qualitative data is a recent phenomenon, but one that has already caught the attention of many social scientists (see, for instance, Tesch, 1990; Fielding and Lee, 1992; Dey, 1993).

I chose to work with the programme NUD-IST¹ (acronym for Nonnumerical, Unstructured Data Indexing, Searching and Theorising), developed in

¹ I describe the potential of the programme and my use of it in the study in more detail in a paper to be published shortly (Gimenez, forthcoming a).

Australia by Tom and Lynn Richards at La Trobe University (Richards and Richards, 1987, 1991).

Typically, the analysis of qualitative data (or data that is expressed in words, rather than in numbers), involves the following stages (Dey, 1993):

- finding a focus
- managing the data
- reading and annotating
- categorising the data
- linking the data
- connecting categories
- corroborating evidence
- producing an account

I will describe each of these stages according to my use of NUD-IST, version 2.2, available through the mainframe computer of Lancaster University. As I have already explained, the data consisted of the questionnaire responses, lesson reports, and interview transcripts for each individual informant. They were in the form of typed files (in Portuguese) that were transferred to the mainframe and then transformed into on-line documents through NUD-IST. This operation automatically numbered the lines as text units. The data could then be read on screen or printed out for closer inspection.

After making the texts available on-line I produced print-outs that were read and annotated with my first impressions. I kept those notes on paper only and started to elaborate an indexing system (categories) to assign to those text units. These categories consisted of three main areas: beliefs, experiences, and projections, and derived from the theoretical framework I was employing. Each of these broad categories was subdivided in a hierarchical fashion, according to the topics I was interested in (for a complete list of all the categories see

Appendix H). Initially, these categories were labelled in close connection with the themes included in the questionnaire and the interview schedule. Later on they were grouped under more general categories. Although the programme would have allowed me to start from very detailed categories I opted for a compromise that took into account the topics explored by the data collection procedures, and those topics emerging from the informants themselves.

The use of the computer programme also allowed me to look across informants more easily, since I was able to retrieve the texts assigned to a particular category, either for individuals for the whole group. I could also examine the informants' connections between beliefs and experiences by looking at each case individually.

I interpreted the repetition of certain themes across the various data formats for the same individual, collected at different points in time, as an indicator that those themes were salient to the informants themselves. These 'guiding themes' were repeatedly mentioned by them to describe their past experiences, to analyse their actual experience as learners at the university, and to project themselves as teachers. Those themes worked as threads uniting their beliefs about successful learning/teaching conditions, as they referred to past, present and future learning/teaching experiences.

Saliency in this way was attributed to the frequency with which those themes appeared in their verbalisations in the various data collection formats and to the extent to which they were used to refer to past as well as present and future experiences with foreign language teaching/learning. They were the 'lenses' through which the informants reported their experiences, and reflected their beliefs.

In trying to identify potential sources of their beliefs I tried not to direct the students' response. Maura, for instance, provided an example of how these themes were connected. In the same stretch of text during the interview she expressed her beliefs twice and made references to both past and present experiences:

{what she believes}:²

I think it is important to know what we are going to learn

{recollects how she was taught at private language school}:

for instance, at [name of school] we had a text, and with that text they emphasised what we would learn. Then we knew that we were going to learn 'the past tense', first the past tense. We knew we were going to use the past tense, we saw everything and asked everything in the past, the teacher explained something

{what she believes}:

I think this helps us memorise, the learners have a text in hand. {evaluates experience at UEL):

This book we are using now is good, it brings lots of things, I think it is enriching my vocabulary. There are lots of things I didn't know, but it doesn't have a text. Then when we are asked to reproduce a text, for instance, you are selling a house {reference to an activity described in one of the diaries} you'll have to produce a dialogue, the book is not bringing it to us, then it's difficult to express it. (Mau 177-192)

Despite the advantages of working with procedures which allow greater flexibility to the informants to use their own words the data obtained in such way brings further difficulties during the analysis because of its 'messy' organisation. The challenge to the researcher is therefore to achieve some sort of organisation while at the same time not being too rigid with the interpretations derived from the data. For this reason this phase of the study took a considerable time and involved moving from data to categories interactively. For instance, having started with the categories referring to the three broad areas (beliefs, experiences, projections) I felt I needed to look into more detail the 'beliefs' category. I looked at all the data again with the purpose of elaborating further this category, and another set of categories emerged. This new set of categories included teachers, learners and materials more specifically, as well as other

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² The text in curly brackets are my own comments on the data.

categories I did not envisage before, which took into account the educational context and the social status of the foreign language in the Brazilian society.

I started out this research project with the purpose of identifying the beliefs about foreign language eaching/learning held by 'LAP' students. This purpose evolved to incorporate the contribution of their educational experiences and their identities as teachers, as a result of the pilot study and the interaction with the literature. The analytical model I am going to describe equally developed from my interaction with the data, which in a dialectical process with my thinking resulted in the framework presented next.

3. A model for the analysis

The three key points connected with the research questions that guided data analysis were:

- 1) what are the beliefs expressed by the informants?
- 2) what are the connections between beliefs and experiences?
- 3) how do they see themselves as teachers?

Having interacted with the data for about one year, trying to identify the categories that would capture the informants' ways of thinking, and trying to bring together the information I had collected, I found that in relation to the first question the students expressed beliefs not only in terms of the classroom (partly due to the questions I asked) but referred to a wider context. They did not see the classroom in isolation. They exhibited beliefs about the wider context in which the EFL classroom was encapsulated. There were remarks about the social status of the foreign language in the Brazilian society, and about the differences between the various settings in which EFL teaching was carried out, all of them producing implications for what went on in classrooms.

The topics for the representation of the beliefs exhibited by the informants therefore evolved out of these remarks. These beliefs can be represented in three levels: the social status of the foreign language (English as a

foreign language), the educational context (the type of school: official or private), and the EFL classroom (roles of teachers and learners, and the materials and activities that help learning). These levels were related as shown in Fig. 5 (next page).

The model represents the levels as pertaining to three domains: society, institution and event. I have already mentioned (Chapter 2) that research on teachers' beliefs in FLTE has placed emphasis on the classroom level, without much concern for the context it belongs to.

The view of the classroom embedded in institutional and societal levels has been suggested by others authors (e.g. Moirand (1982, cited by Coracini (1992) and Hadfield and Hayes (1993)). According to the model I am suggesting, the three levels are interconnected. The perceived status of English as a foreign language leads to its learning taking place essentially under formal instruction (the educational context), which may vary depending on what type of school it is taught (official or private). In this manner, the social status of the foreign language has implications for the EFL classroom, especially for the roles of teachers and learners: the teacher has to concentrate on providing input, not available elsewhere in the society, and the learner has to develop motivation to learn the language under formal instruction. On the other hand, the educational context has direct implications for the ways of working in the classroom. The materials and activities will vary according to the conditions offered by instruction provided by the 'official' system or the private sector.

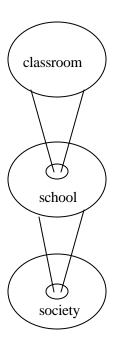


Fig. 5 - A model for the representation of beliefs about foreign language teaching/learning³

The two dimensions which are related to the model are: first the reference point for beliefs and the second is teacher role identity. In relation to the first, the students projected an ideal situation with reference to their real experiences. In thinking about successful teaching/learning conditions they either incorporated or rejected those real experiences - in other words, the experiences provided the basis for the idealisation. An experience that was considered negative could well lead them to believe that the opposite might be right, even though they had not actually experienced it. In relation to the status of English as a foreign language, for instance, the ideal context would have been one in which it was more widely spoken. In reality, the students are rarely exposed to English. For this reason, the classroom has to compensate for the 'deficiency'. The ideal vs. real dimension will be dealt with in Chapter 9, which discusses the possible sources for their views and locates in their texts instances about these influences.

³ A similar graphic representation was used by Silva (1979) to discuss the embedded relationships between departments and other hierarchical structures within universities.

The second dimension related to their teacher role identity. It refers to the contrast between the students themselves as eachers or learners and other teachers or learners they know - or self vs. others. This dimension refers specifically to issues of identity and allows the differentiation between the students themselves as learners or as teachers when talking about the ideal and the real situation. This second dimension will be discussed in Chapter 10 which will deal with the identity of the first and fourth year students.

4. Conclusion to this chapter

In this chapter I have briefly presented the steps followed during the analysis of the data and the topics under which the beliefs were grouped. These steps involved looking at the data several times in order to find a focus for the categorisation, bearing in mind the three general areas I was interested in: beliefs, biography and teacher role identity.

Given the amount of data generated by the procedures described in previous chapters I used computer software during the analytical process and I referred briefly to the stages I followed after transcribing the interviews and bringing all the data together.

In relation to beliefs, I suggested that the informants did not see the classroom isolated from its wider context. Three levels were identified: the social status of the foreign language, the institutional context and he EFL classroom (roles of teachers and learners, materials and activities). Beliefs were expressed in two dimensions: one that had as reference points either real or ideal situations, drawing on their personal histories; and the other dimension that referred directly to their identity as teachers, that is, one in which they located themselves. The presentation of the data will therefore follow the model, by bringing together the beliefs held by the informants under the three levels I referred to earlier: the social status of the foreign language, the institutional context and the EFL classroom.

Chapter 8

A picture of beliefs about foreign language teaching/learning

- 1. Introduction
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 - 2.2 The educational context
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 - 2.3.1 The teacher's role
 - 2.3.1.1 First year students
 - 2.3.1.2 Student teachers
 - 2.3.2 The learner's role
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 - 2.3.2.2 Student teachers
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 - 2.3.3.1 First year students
 - 2.3.3.2 Student teachers
- 3. Conclusion to this chapter

1. Introduction

In chapter 8 I explained the procedures I followed to develop the film that would result in the pictures I took. In this chapter I will show one of those pictures, by concentrating on the analysis of the beliefs about language teaching/learning held by first and final year 'LAP' students. The research question that drives this chapter is therefore: What were the beliefs about foreign language teaching/learning held by 'LAP' students?

By selecting the first and final year groups I am not, however, implying that this study is longitudinal or pseudo-longitudinal. Nevertheless, I would like to register differences when they occur. I am also well aware of the illegitimacy of considering the differences in the students' beliefs to be a direct result of the

influence of the course. Although I do not want to discard the possibility that differences could be at least partially explained by reference to course experiences, I was also interested in their past experiences with foreign languages prior to entering the university course.

The first year of the course is the meeting point for several expectations the students bring to the programme - expectations about what they are going to learn, what they will get at the end, how their future is related to it. The final year is the moment for retrospection and evaluation whether their expectations have been confirmed. It is also an opportunity to develop views towards their professional lives and their commitment to the profession. The course is, therefore, the background for the construction of their identity as professionals. It is the moment they start to move from their identities as learners to become teachers.

In this chapter I will concentrate on the beliefs held by those students, as they were manifested in the various data collection opportunities. The first year students could be expected to see the course largely as an extension of their foreign language training, since at this stage the course did not deal explicitly with pedagogy. The final year students had had their attention explicitly brought to methodological issues and therefore should be more aware of the concepts of teacher's and learners' roles, materials and activities which lead to successful teaching/learning. I will discuss their beliefs, separately by groups, as described in a framework that encompasses three layers: the social status of the foreign language in the Brazilian context, the educational system and successful EFL classroom conditions. The practising teachers will be dealt with in Chapter 11.

2. 'LAP' students' beliefs about TEFL in Brazil

2.1 - The social status of the foreign language

The social status of the foreign language can be reflected in two perspectives: teaching (in the sense of reasons for inclusion of a foreign language in the school curriculum) or learning (in the sense of reasons people may have for learning it). The inclusion of a foreign language in the school curriculum has generally been justified on grounds that can be roughly classified into three categories: a cultural motivation (it widens the horizons of the learner who then becomes aware of other cultures and who is able to contrast his or her own culture with others); a cognitive motivation (it helps the development of the learner's learning strategies or his/her capacity for learning to learn, for dealing with new, unforeseen situations), and an instrumental one (it opens up opportunities for communication with other people and creates better job prospects) (Busnardo and Braga, 1987; Silva, 1992).

There are not many surveys carried out among school children in Brazil with the purpose of finding their predominant reasons for learning English. One of the few studies was carried out by Leffa (1991) with 33 1o. grau pupils. His survey revealed that the children's motives were linked to an instrumental purpose. The majority pointed out that learning a foreign language was important because it would enable them to teach it, to travel, to study, to read technical books and to find a job. This result suggests that there is a mismatch between what educationists believe should be the justification for **teaching** a foreign language, and the reasons learners themselves perceive for **learning** English.

The 'LAP' students' beliefs were expressed by reference to reasons for learning English, rather than reasons for teaching it, i.e., its inclusion in the official school curriculum.

2.1.1 - First year students

The reasons for learning English presented by the first year students showed that they were mainly thinking in terms of instrumental purposes, as shown in Table 22:

STUDENT	REASONS	CATEGORY
Jose	to learn a foreign language	CULTURAL
	is to learn new cultural	
	values (Q. 3 + 111-115)	
Helena	important to know a foreign	CULTURAL
	language (993-999)	
Carina	means to have access to	CULTURAL
	other cultures. English is	INSTRUMENTAL
	used everywhere. Possibility	
	of getting jobs (609-610)	
Edneia	lingua franca (390-391)	INSTRUMENTAL
Rose	English is widely known, a	INSTRUMENTAL
	language we need, in any	
	course we need to read	
	books in English (414-418)	
Carla	It is langua ge that is not	INSTRUMENTAL
	going to be much used here,	
	maybe only for 'vestibular'	
	(173-178, 506-511)	
Maura	Many people study it	INSTRUMENTAL
	because they need it for the	
	'vestibular' or because their	
	mothers force them (423-	
	425)	

Table 22 - First year students' opinions: reasons for learning English in Brazil

In addition to the reasons for learning English the students also referred to the constraints on that learning, due to the status of English as a foreign language. All of them agreed that the context for learning English made a difference, and that formal instruction was slower than being in the 'natural' environment, and sometimes ineffective in producing results.

If that was the case, where could English best be learned? In this group the common opinion was that going abroad was better. They felt that in order to

¹ I will be using quotes from one individual to show inferences drawn from the analysis of other informants as well.

learn one had to go to the country where that language is spoken. Fabiana's opinion represents the view of this group:

In my opinion you have to go to the country, because here I'm learning grammar, I'm learning how to speak, the formal language, but I think that in order to really learn you have to go there, to use the language everyday. Because here you learn, right, but it isn't the language you speak, there are certain things you don't know. Going there you learn everything (interview, Fab 114-121).

Fabiana was expressing scepticism about learning in the Brazilian context because of the status of English as a foreign language, that was not so much used, and therefore did not provide opportunity for contact with the language. The recognition of this lack of contact² with the foreign language was also presented by Carla:

... when we talk to someone who already speaks English we can understand 3 or 4 words because we don't listen to it too much; we don't have contact with the language, then this makes it difficult (interview, Car 389-394).

Now, to speak it in Brazil, despite the schools and everything else, it isn't the same thing, because here we will always continue using Portuguese. You're going to use English only during the lesson, you're going to speak it only with the teacher, afterwards you're not going to use it anymore. (interview, Car 405-411).

The distinction between learning the foreign language in Brazil and abroad was also mentioned by Maura, for whom the difficulty was associated with understanding:

²This situation had already been pointed out by Vereza (1989:105): "Another problem in the teaching of English in Brazil, which would make the notional syllabus even more inappropriate for that context, is the short amount of time which is devoted to foreign language teaching in schools, particularly in state schools. Consequently, the contact which the students have with the target language is very little since they have very few opportunities to speak or listen to English outside school".

... sometimes you have to spend some time abroad. For instance, you listen to a Brazilian speaking English it is easy to understand. From the moment you are listening to an American or a British person speaking, then it is completely different. There is a huge gap between managing to say something and understanding what the other person is saying (interview, Mau 675-685).

Implicit in these comments about the importance of listening to 'native-speakers' was the view that knowing the language is basically knowing how to speak and understand it as it is spoken. The predominance of these two skills was apparent in the comments presented so far.

The students' views in relation to the ideal context revealed their concern with exposure to the language as an efficient means of learning the foreign language. It also showed that they thought mainly in terms of oral skills. The first year students seemed to agree with the idea that to practice the language in face-to-face communication was more important than to be formally exposed to an analysis of it in the classroom, a view that the students in the pilot study also revealed. In reality, the classroom remains the main option for most of them. For this reason, they linked the social status of the foreign language to what has to happen in the classroom.

The first year students revealed unanimous agreement about the level referring to the social status of the foreign language. Their beliefs in this area showed that they thought mainly in terms of instrumental reasons for learning English. They also believed that it would be easier to learn English in a naturalistic environment, rather than under formal instruction. Implicit in these beliefs was the view that being exposed to be language more often was relevant to learning it.

2.1.2 - Student teachers

In this section I will discuss mainly what the student teachers felt were the reasons for including English in the school curriculum³. One of those student teachers, Samira, reported that the aim should be

to prepare him to face the world, to sit 'vestibular', but not only that. If he is able to travel, to communicate with someone (interview, Sam 599-603)

For two other student eachers (Clara and Marion), the pupils did not consider English as important, seeing it more like another school subject, which, nevertheless had an inferior status because it did not prevent students from being promoted to another year even if they did not achieve the minimum grade. Clara felt, however, that English was a very important language, because it was everywhere. She pointed out its importance in the following terms:

It is to show him that English is in his day-to-day activities, from the chocolate he eats, the soft drink he has, the ads (interview, Cla 747-794)

... it is also to show the importance of a future for him (interview, Cla 752-753)

As I explained in the previous section, the views the students held about the status of the foreign language had implications for classroom practice. In this group it seemed that the immediate implication would be the need for the teacher to show students how important the language was. In the display of their beliefs about the role of the teacher (Table 24) the need to show the importance of English is listed.

For the teacher educators working in the 'LAP' course, it could be worrying that at this stage of the course the student teachers were not adopting a

³Only three of the five student teachers made reference to this topic. For this reason the quotes that follow will refer to those three student teachers.

critical stance towards ELT in the context of the school curriculum, that is, not seeing it as **a** foreign language in the curriculum, but as **the** foreign language in the curriculum.

Having discussed the student teachers' beliefs about the social status of the foreign language, now I would like to move to the discussion about their conceptualisations in relation to the educational context, for which they are being prepared to act as teachers.

2.2 - The educational context

Formal EFL instruction takes place in Brazil essentially in two contexts: 10. and 20. Graus and private language schools. As I have briefly explained, at 10. and 20. Graus (the official school, that could be run by the state or by the private sector) ELT is compulsory and private language schools are for those who can afford them.

The students in this study shared the experience of going through an official educational system in which English was seen as a school subject of minor importance, revealed by their comments on those experiences. They seemed to have a clear perception of the different educational settings available to them and what made them different, because the majority had had the opportunity to experience both 1o. and 2o. Graus EFL teaching and attend private language schools (Chapter 7 presents their schooling history). Their perceptions could also be reinforced by the widespread belief in the country that public school education is failing to achieve its aims, with private education taking place. Consequently, learning a foreign language in that context is something difficult to achieve (Almeida Filho, 1993).

2.2.1 - First year students

Fabiana's conclusion is, like the ones expressed by many others, that it is not possible for pupils only attending public schools to learn English:

Those who really want to learn English have to go to private schools (interview, Fab 496-498).

A student who works as a teacher offered an explanation for this situation:

because in order to teach well a teacher has to have books, journals, has to be uptodate, attending courses, conferences [...] and he⁴ doesn't have the time or money for this (interview, Car 230-235).

The contrast with the private school is inevitably brought into the foreground, with some of the students ascribing the differences to specific factors such as class sizes, the way the foreign language is taught, the learners' motivation and the duration of the study. All of the students believed that it was difficult to learn English in 1o. and 2o. graus (either in private or public 1o. and 2o. grau schools) and that private specialised language schools could be more successful. A pessimistic view about state schools was put forward by Carina, who said:

Those who go through the public school know less and will never learn. There they are just given words, and asked to translate texts with the dictionary (interview, Cna 324-327).

Learning English in 1o. and 2o. graus is, therefore, seen with scepticism by all the students in this group, especially in relation to the public sector, which is associated with unsuccessful experiences.

Considering the beliefs about the educational contexts expressed by the students, it would be reasonable to assume that private language lessons were seen as part of a compensatory strategy making up for the deficiencies of the public sector.

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⁴ The generic 'he' is often used in Brazilian Portuguese to refer to the teacher, although the majority of the teachers are women.

2.2.2 - Student teachers

The students in this group exhibited concerns about TEFL in public schools, pointing out difficulties they were likely to face, especially because the pupils were used to traditional methods. Their comments derived mainly from their experiences during their teaching practice in 10./20 grau schools, which was perceived as essentially different from what had been done by teachers in the context of the public school.

The students' view was that they would be able to do better than teachers they observed. This view persisted when they talked about their teaching practice. I will return to this point when discussing their identification as teachers (Chapter 10).

The students' beliefs about the type of school show that schools represent an important variable in their repertoire of successful conditions, as is the availability of the foreign language for everyday practice. Considering these beliefs, then what conditions should classrooms meet to try to achieve some success? In the questionnaire I asked them directly about the teacher's and the 'method' contribution. By 'method' I meant things that needed to happen in the classroom. I tried to elicit their own understanding of 'method' later during the interview. As I explained in Chapter 8 these understandings were coded as their beliefs about the EFL classroom, expressed through the role of teachers and learners, materials and activities, which will be presented next.

2.3 - The EFL classroom

2.3.1 - The teacher's role

Informants in both groups presented views about teaching as transmission of knowledge⁵ and the teacher's role in terms of his or her ability to convey the

⁵Examples of these views were: "teaching is to convey what we know" (Mau 240-241,643-647), "to make students understand without the need to be so dependent on books " (Hel 437-440), "teaching is to convey what we know to the students" (Edn 482-438), "to transmit

subject matter. Naturally, viewing teaching from this perspective implies that the language is an object, possibly something to be absorbed like other disciplines in the curriculum.⁶

In the analysis of the data collected during the pilot study I pointed out that the students referred more often to the teacher as a manager, a category derived from Breen (1990) in which he described the teacher's role as seen by the participants in a 'language learning experience' I reported in Chapter 2. Two roles were identified in that study: the teacher as guide, defined as "a responsive role in which the teacher does something in reaction to learner feedback or provides formative evaluation to individual learners in relation to their production of the language" (: 225); or teacher as a manager, related to reasons the informants in the study attributed to "a 'supervisory' role in matters to do with implementing lessons plans or maintaining the working procedures of the group"(:226)

In the main study, however, I found it difficult to categorise the students' views about the teacher' roles according to those two options, because they did not seem to capture all the possibilities the data presented and because a considerable degree of data reduction would be necessary. They were categories devised for a specific set of data, in which the teacher was seen essentially as someone who adopted a responsive role in relation to students' demands (guide) or a managerial role associated with the implementation of lesson plans or classroom organisation (manager). I felt I needed another set of categories that could capture the initiative role linked to the provision of input that I thought was present in the data, as well as the many other references to teachers which could not classified as either 'guide' or 'manager'.

knowledge and experience "(Suz 578-579), "teaching is transmission of information, knowledge, content" (Mar 468-470).

The metaphors adopted by teachers have been for some time object of investigation (see Munby, 1990). Learners' metaphors have been explored by Block (forthcoming).

The other option available in the literature of FLTE comes from Wright's work about teacher and learner roles (Wright, 1987). He refers to two main roles for teachers in classrooms:

- 1. to create the conditions under which learning can take place: the social side of teaching;
- 2. to impart, by a variety of means, knowledge to their learners: the task-oriented side of teaching. (Wright, 1987:51-52).

He called the first one the **management** function and the second the **instructional** function, and pointed out how difficult it would be to try to see them separately:

In practice, it is very difficult to separate the two and often one act in the classroom can perform both functions simultaneously. Wright, 1987:52)

My impression is that the category related to management has opposite meanings for Breen and Wright: in Breen's the first case management relates to the organisational environment of the classroom and would be more clearly associated with what Wright calls the 'instructional' role, whereas for Wright management relates to the social environment that has to be created in the classroom.

As Wright points out, it is very difficult to establish clear distinctions between the main roles he suggested. It was equally difficult to associate individual's beliefs as expressed through the various data formats as belonging to one or the other. For this reason I tried to group them under sub-categories: all the statements that referred to the knowledge (either about the content or about pedagogy) the teacher had to possess and his or her responsibility to provide 'linguistic input' were coded under the role of 'instructor'; all the statements that referred to the teacher-student relationship were coded under the role of 'manager'. Statements that referred to characteristics related to the personality

of teachers were coded separately. As the literature about prospective teachers' views of teaching, has shown there is was tendency among student teachers to place strong emphasis on affective/interpersonal aspects of teaching (Weinstein, 1990).

It must be reminded that those statements were taken from the responses to the questionnaire and the interview, and reflected beliefs about successful learning conditions, that is, they indicate an ideal dimension, that did not necessarily meet reality.

The model below represents visually the relationship between these three types of teacher's contributions to successful foreign language learning in classrooms.

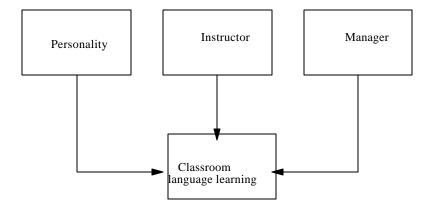


Figure 6 - Teacher's contribution to classroom language learning

In order to minimise over-interpretation, I maintained the statements as close as possible to their original version⁷. Although in many cases there were many similarities between statements, I opted for showing them separately, since they entailed subtle differences in their wording (e.g. Table 24: 'lets students feel comfortable in class to express whatever they wish" and "creates situations that allow the students feel the need to express"). The purpose of categorisations is to enable groupings, but they are abstractions, and as such involve a great deal

⁷It is worth remembering that the data was all collected in Portuguese, which is also my mother tongue.

of interpretation. In bringing together statements from various informants I tried to maintain their individuality by listing them separately. Some of them were more abstract (e.g. "motivates the students") whereas others mentioned specific action ("uses diversified teaching materials"). It is reasonable to believe that many specific statements belong with more general ones, that is, different informants had the same thing in mind when they expressed their beliefs in general or specific terms. It might be the case that some people had not yet arrived at a more general principle and were still too much attached to the action itself. Another alternative explanation is related to their understanding of the question, some framing the responses in more general terms whereas others interpreted they should reply in more specific terms. The interconnections between the statements were not explored through further interviews, since they became more visible only during the analytical process.

2.3.1.1 - First year students

In their idealisations the students seemed to focus on the teacher as instructor (especially someone who provides the input in and about the foreign language), considering that there were more mentions of what teachers need to know about the subject matter (Table 23, Appendix I). The first year students' responses show that there was little overlap across informants, since I maintained their words as close to the original as possible. There was, however, consistency within the same informant, by concentrating beliefs on specific categories, like Helena's preference for knowledge of pedagogy or Fabiana's constant references to the importance of a good relationship with students.

Although their responses indicate that they saw teachers as presenters or providers of input in the foreign language, certifying that the students produce the language correctly, as it would be expected the informants did not exclude a managerial role for the teacher, expressed through the various references to the teacher's relationship with the learners.

The model I suggested (Fig. 5, Chapter 7) seems to capture the relationship between the various levels to which beliefs could apply, since the status of English as a foreign language in Brazilian society was apparently having implications for the role of the teacher (for many the only model they will have access to during their lives). Since the foreign language is not widely available, the classroom is the privileged space for exposure to it. Therefore, the teacher plays the role of the model speaker of the foreign language. Similarly, the importance of practice in the classroom related to the few opportunities they would have outside the classroom to be exposed to the foreign language.

In bringing the eight students' views together I could see how some mentioned a substantial number of factors on several occasions, whereas others tended to concentrate on a few factors. Jose, for instance, was divided between attributing importance to grammar and conversation at the same time, while not forgetting the cultural input. This was, in fact, his dominant theme. Edneia, on the other hand, was very quiet and not very explicit during the interview. Actually she confessed she had no idea about successful conditions but nevertheless indicated two roles for the teacher: the teacher as supervisor of the learner's work and someone who clarifies doubts.

The model of the EFL teacher presented above reflects their beliefs about the ideal teacher. Their picture of teachers they had had as well as their projections as teachers will be discussed in Chapter 10.

2.3.1.2 - Student teachers

Table 24 (Appendix J) exhibits what this group of students considered to be the role of the teacher in the classroom. There were many similarities between first year students and fourth year students' beliefs about the teachers' contribution to learning a foreign language. Although these student teachers presented more mentions to knowledge of pedagogy, they did not present beliefs that diverged from those held by first year students. It was not possible to identify a general trend among this group, since their beliefs varied in a continuum that ranged from major responsibility for successful learning being with the learners to being with the teacher.

As it would be expected, there was a wide range of variation among the students in both groups about who holds the largest share in the joint enterprise of teaching/learning the foreign language. They implied that successful foreign language learning entails roles for teachers and learners in which the former can affect the latter by creating appropriate conditions. Some examples of their comments will be presented in the discussion of the learner's roles, which follows.

2.3. 2 - The learner's role

2.3.2.1 - First year students

Consistent with the overall pattern that the teacher's role is mainly that of an instructor, the students expressed the view that learners have to be receptive, by keeping an interest in learning the foreign language. Maura, for instance, reflected this point of view:

the student is there to receive, but he [sic] cannot be passive when he has doubts (interview, Mau 247-249)

If the student likes it [...] he is going to make an effort, he is going to do his part, and the rest comes from the teacher [...] he will be ready to receive what the teacher is able to give him (interview, Mau 383-388).

However, they showed sensitivity to different groups of learners, depending on their age and the educational context they were studying. Fabiana, who had had experience with pupils during her practicum in the 'magisterio' course exhibited beliefs about learners in the following way:

... with children, if you do not impose some respect from the beginning, you cannot control the class anymore. Not by saying 'sit down, shut up, because I'm going to teach you', but talking to them, making them understand that you are there to teach them, and that they have to respect you. Because whether they want it or not, you know more [...] and they have to behave themselves in class (interview, Fab 456-465).

In her view the same approach would have to be adopted only until to 2o. grau, because then

you're not going to deal with children anymore, you're going to deal with adults, inverted commas, and they will know how to respect you. (interview, Fab 471-473).

The successful learner is someone who is interested in learning the foreign language. On several occasions this interest was considered crucial. Helena believed that the teacher should be a guide, but the main responsibility remained with the students:

the learner has to be really willing to learn, because the time we spend in classrooms is very little (interview, Hel 428-430).

Helena's comments show again how the status of English as a foreign language is playing a part in the role of learners. Having in mind that English is not widely available in society, she believed that eagerness to learn is fundamental, as if to compensate for the little time they were exposed to English.

2.3.2.2 - Student teachers

The question about who was mainly responsible for learning elicited responses from student teachers that placed greater emphasis either on the teacher or on the learner. Although Marion believed that the initiative should be first and foremost with the student

I think the first step is this: the student has to feel the need to learn or like the English language. (Q.8, Mar)

she did not come back to this point in the interview to allow for further clarification on the teacher's contribution.

For others the responsibility has to be shared between the teacher and the student. They also implied that what the teacher does could influence the student's participation. Mariane believed that it would be important that the students felt a sense of achievement, to know they were progressing (424-425), whereas for Samira if the learners participated in class they would learn more (780-785).

However, the two other student teachers believed that the teacher was mainly responsible for learning. Suzana expressed it in the following terms:

the teacher can arouse the students' interest (interview, Suz 433-434)

Clara attributed the major responsibility to the teacher, claiming that

if the lesson is boring, the students are not going to be interested. (interview, Cla 266-268)

Therefore, it seems that although the learner's role was not directly addressed by the research methods, it was possible to identify among the group of student teachers a continuum of opinion that ranged from major responsibility with the learner to major responsibility with the teacher.

Although working with a very restricted number of student teachers, these results show great diversity of beliefs among this group of 'LAP' students as to who bears greater responsibility for learning, a diversity that was present in their beliefs about the teacher's role (either initiating - as instructor; or being responsive - as manager).

2.3.3 - Materials and activities

2.3.3.1 - First year students

In the pilot study the students made the distinction between learning about the language or practising it. This group of first year students, similarly to the first year students in the pilot study, emphasised practice as the key to learning. The materials and activities they considered more successful are displayed on Table 25 (Appendix K).

There were more overlaps among informants in relation to 'materials and activities' than in relation to the role of teachers. There was also discrepancy in relation to the usefulness of particular activities. In one case two students had opposing views in relation to the use of the mother tongue in classrooms. For Maura it was helpful to make use of Portuguese, for Helena it was harmful. I found the explanation for this contrast in the experiences they reported later in the interview. Carina, who also indicated translation as useful at beginning stages said that it should not be literal. Therefore the level of 'materials and activities' revealed beliefs that were more specific and reflected more directly their own experiences as learners.

On more than one occasion the students expressed their beliefs through negative statements, by reinforcing what they would not like to see done. Knowles (1992) refers to these negative experiences as equally important in the formation of beliefs. They often represent what prospective teachers would not like to do once they start teaching.

Again this time the beliefs about what materials lead to successful learning revealed their emphasis on the oral skills, though not completely disregarding reading and writing. Maura and Carina explicitly referred to themselves as learners, whereas the others provided the opportunity to establish the links between their experiences and what they were saying later on.

2.3.3.2 - Fourth year students

Table 26 (Appendix L) displays the materials and activities mentioned by the student teachers. In contrast with first year students the student teachers focused on characteristics of activities rather than mentioning the activities themselves, although they were answering the same questions.

As it would be expected, variability in beliefs was also expressed through materials and activities. The table also allows us to see how some students tended to concentrate their options on just a few constructs (e.g. Marion) or emphasise the same beliefs though answering different questions (e.g. Mariane).

4. Conclusion to this chapter

The majority of the studies which have been conducted on EFL teachers' beliefs have been concerned with identifying what those beliefs were, as I have reported in Chapter 2.

In this chapter I represented the beliefs held by two groups of 'LAP' students under three levels (as explained in Chapter 7): the social status of the foreign language, the institutional context and the EFL classroom. I pointed out the similarity of beliefs in relation to the first two levels and the diversity in relation to the specific level of the classroom. The diversity was reflected mainly in the materials and activities that the students felt more clearly associated with successful English language learning.

Although the identification of beliefs represents an important step in understanding the work of teachers and learners in classrooms, for teacher

education programmes it seems more desirable to try to find out how biographies interact with the contents of the programme, and how these are translated into classroom practice. Especially in relation to this group I was interested in seeing whether the lessons at the university would have any impact on their views about EFL teaching/learning, as those lessons were seen retrospectively.

Having presented in this chapter the beliefs held by the 'LAP' students in the next chapter I will relate their foreign language experiences with those beliefs, as they were revealed by fragments of their educational experiences.

Chapter 9

Personal histories and beliefs about foreign language teaching/learning

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1. Introduction

In the last chapter I presented a composite picture of the beliefs held by prospective EFL teachers in the context of a 'LAP' course, according to their references to materials and activities and the roles of teachers and learners in the classroom that were more likely to lead to successful teaching/learning of a foreign language. Those beliefs revealed notions of effective teaching in terms of how to teach, in what context, and for what reason. The informants expressed those beliefs according to an ideal dimension, by making reference to their own biographies or what they had seen during their 'LAP' course at the university.

I observed that, although an important step, for teacher education programmes the identification of beliefs the students bring to the programme, and which are therefore linked to their biographies, may not be enough. We need to know how these beliefs interact with formal education.

Given the scarcity of studies in the area of pre-service foreign language teacher education and the controversial views on the role of teacher education, as I discussed in Chapter 3, this exploratory study aimed at identifying some of the potential sources for the existing beliefs among the groups of first year students and student teachers in the 'LAP' course at UEL.

Research on student teaching thinking reviewed by Calderhead (1991:532) listed as one of the findings that

Student teachers have a wealth of initial knowledge about teaching. We know that when student teachers start out in their training, they have a great deal of classroom experience on which to draw from their lives as students at school. The knowledge gained from this experience may be highly influential for student teachers, providing a rich repertoire of models, images and taken for granted practices about teaching.

Considering that the 'LAP' students might have constructed a great deal of their beliefs about teaching and learning from their own experiences with foreign languages, I was interested in exploring the relationships between the beliefs and the experiences of the two groups of students who were enrolled in the course.

The study was not longitudinal and, as such, the data collected functioned as snapshots of an on-going process. In this study the potential sources for the informants' beliefs were explored through their own perspectives.

The potential sources I focused on were previous experiences as learners or as teachers, and I also hypothesised that the students would be potentially influenced by the English language lessons at the university, which would be considered part of their 'apprenticeship of observation'. I was particularly interested in finding out how the students viewed their experiences with foreign

languages prior to entering the university and the 'foreign language component of the 'LAP' course. In the case of final year students, I also wanted to explore the impact of the EFL methodology course with their teaching practice in schools.

Therefore, and as I explained in Chapter 4, I considered as potential sources the experiences the students had gone through with foreign languages (as learners, as teachers or under formal training at the university). Those experiences constitute their 'biographies' or 'personal histories' (Knowles and Holt-Reynolds, 1991), which are events that individuals experienced in the course of their lives that were significant to them, and as such "provide an initial perspective against which they can begin to make purposeful choices how they will behave as teachers" (:87).

Although beliefs about education in general might be explained through an individual's complete biography, that is, by incorporating childhood and family experiences, I restricted the potential sources to schools and to their experiences with foreign language teaching/learning because that was the area I was interested in. Furthermore, the socialisation framework I adopted relied on the informants' experiences in schools as the main socialisation forces of teachers (Lortie, 1975).

According to this framework, classrooms are seen as a culture (Breen, 1985; Allwright, 1989). By participating in such a culture students are exposed not only to the content of the lesson but also to patterns of behaviour that are deemed appropriate in that context. In this sense a foreign language classroom embodies values about roles for the actors (teachers, learners) and the action to be performed (materials/activities) that are more likely to be successful.

Having that framework in mind, I encouraged the students to think about their foreign language experiences, either before or during that semester at the university. Although I focused the questions around EFL learning, they spontaneously referred to other experiences, as users of other languages, or as

teachers of English or other subjects¹, when that was the case. Details of individual personal histories will be presented during the analysis to exemplify statements about the relationship between personal histories and beliefs. Therefore, this chapter discusses basically the research question that adopts the teacher socialisation approach, i.e.

What were the connections between the informants' beliefs and the educational experiences they went through as evidenced by fragments of their personal histories?

In the following sections I will present instances of the relationships between experiences and beliefs according to each area of the model presented in Chapter 7: the social status of the foreign language, the educational context, and the EFL classroom.

2. Beliefs and their potential sources

2.1 - English as a foreign language

What came up in relation to the broad area of the status of the language is what Allwright & Bailey (1992:157) termed 'receptivity', whose definition is presented below:

a state of mind, whether permanent or temporary, that is open to the experience of becoming a speaker of another language, somebody else's language.

Allwright & Bailey discuss 'receptivity' in opposition to 'defensiveness', which is the "state of mind of feeling threatened by the experience of becoming a speaker of another language, and therefore needing to set up defences against it"

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¹ In this context it is not difficult to find students who, because they are already proficient in the foreign language, have started to teach in private language schools, where a formal degree is not required. Others could be teaching in primary schools, on the basis of having completed the professional training at technical level, the 'magistério' course.

(1991:157). Although referring specifically to 'speaking', I believe their definition could well encompass 'language user'. They distinguish the receptivity in terms of openness to the teacher as a person, to fellow learners, to the teacher's way of teaching, to the course content, to teaching materials, to being a successful language learner, to the idea of communicating with others. In this case I am extending the meaning of receptivity to cover the students' receptivity to English as the foreign language in the school curriculum, since that was the context the students were being prepared to work as teachers.

2.1.1 - First year students

As some of the students presented views about the reasons for teaching/learning English, they revealed heir opinion about the status of the foreign language. These beliefs derived from the wider context in which the students lived, a context in which English brings all sorts of positive associations, like better job prospects, ease of communicating with other people when travelling abroad, facilitated access to scientific literature, etc.

In a developing country like Brazil English is usually connected with technology and modernisation (see Tollefson, 1991). The first year students' reasons showed that they had incorporated many of these associations, and in some cases projected their own motivations in the expression of the reasons for the inclusion of English as a foreign language in the school curriculum.

The status of English as the preferred language in the school curriculum is recent. Until the 1960's French was the chosen foreign language. Brazil had always had academic links with France, whose influence, especially on the social sciences, continues to be felt until today. However, the need for the industrialisation of the country in the post-colonial era led to increasing business links with the international financial market. At the beginning of the century these contacts were mainly with British banks. In the post-war period Brazil moved to the sphere of influence of the USA. From then on the appeal of the 'American

way of life' became a fact in the lives of the majority of Brazilians, especially through cinema, music and later television. Multinational corporations established in the country helped to fuel the belief that to know English was a means of achieving upward social mobility.

Today English is the preferred modern language in the school curriculum, a status that has been occasionally challenged by other modern foreign languages without success. English has kept its appeal as the language everyone wants to learn properly in order to achieve a higher status. Due to this demand, ELT is a market in constant expansion, despite the country's increasing financial difficulties.²

I would like to suggest that the beliefs exhibited by the first year students, which portray a negative picture of the official educational system in Brazil in relation to the teaching of the foreign language, derive from their exposure to that same system, as we shall see from the mouths of the informants themselves. Most of them went through the public school system, and attended English lessons in the private sector (see tables 16 and 19). The failure of the former and the relative success of the latter contributed to their conceptualisations of what it is to know a foreign language and how it can be achieved.

The way the first year students referred to the reasons for studying English reveals that they incorporated many of these beliefs as their own, and their verbalisations echoed their own motivations. This would be consistent with their strong identification as learners of the language, and as we will see in the next chapter, corroborates that all of them had a weak sense of identification with the profession. Rose, who was interested in becoming a veterinary doctor, indicated that English was important to those who want to read academic texts (Ros 414-418). Carina and Edneia, who had not had Portuguese as their mother tongues, saw English as an international language that opens doors, especially in

²EFL Gazette, June 1993 - "Brazil's increased stability leads to student growth".

relation to jobs, and both wanted to acquire it in order to be able to work abroad. (Cna 609-610, Edn 390-391).

However, there were dissonant voices from two students. They could clearly see a distinction between them and the pupils in 1o. and 2o. graus. One of them, Carla, who was working as a primary school teacher, saw no purpose in teaching/learning English, because it would not have practical use beyond the university entrance exam. In addition, she was sceptical in relation to the possibility of achieving success:

The student who doesn't even know Portuguese wouldn't know English (interview, Car 173-178)

Her experience as a primary teacher seemed to have strongly influenced her opinion about the effectiveness of public education. She used every opportunity to reinforce the view that teaching English at 1o. and 2o. graus is bound to fail. Also, Carla believed that Spanish would have been a more useful foreign language, considering the need to strengthen Brazilian links with other countries in Latin America. It is worth mentioning too that her grandparents were Spanish, and she used to listen to her grandmother speak Spanish at home. It is also important to note that Carla established links between the status of the foreign language and the educational context and could not see beyond her experience as a primary school teacher in the outskirts of the city, as she said, working with children whose interest in going to school was limited to getting a free meal.

Maura was influenced by contact with her friends. According to her, most of the learners go to private language schools because their mothers force them, and that English has limited value, that is, it is restricted to its use in the 'vestibular'.

The other students who mentioned cultural reasons were equally motivated by their own experiences. Jose was studying in a private language school which was closely associated with the British culture, a theme that dominated the conversation I had with him. He emphasised the cultural aspect of learning English. Carina, the other student who mentioned both cultural and instrumental reasons interpreted culture as being "views" which influence what a person does (Car 799-802). The word 'culture' appeared in almost all her answers in the questionnaire: questions concerning images about her past experiences, what helps learning, how the teacher can contribute to learning, what a good teacher is, how methods contribute to learning and her self-assessment as learner. The fact that she grew up in a Dutch community may have contributed to her awareness of the advantage of being bi-cultural.

Therefore, it seems that when talking about reasons for teaching/learning English at 1o. and 2o. graus students tended to rely on their own motivations and personal experiences at home, as learners of other languages or as teachers. These experiences provided the background for their views on the status of English as a foreign language.

It becomes clear then that the students were referring to reasons for teaching or learning a foreign language they imagined an ideal situation rather than a real one. When a real situation was brought in they relied strongly on their own experiences, rather than considering other people's reasons for learning English. When they did, their comments were often negative, as I have described in relation to Carla and Maura.

2.2 - Student teachers

The group of student teachers shared similar beliefs in relation to the reasons for teaching/learning English in Brazil, i.e. citing more instrumental reasons. This is not surprising since both groups of students were exposed to the

same culture where English is seen as an international language and a fundamental asset for those who want to succeed professionally. Ironically, though, the only area that seemed to be faced with scepticism was the teaching profession, since very few wanted to work as teachers.

While for the first year students it was possible to identify links between the way they referred to reasons for learning English with their own motivations, those in this group who mentioned reasons did so with reference to pupils, mentioning instrumental justification³. The student teachers' comments on this topic did not enable the establishment of links between those reasons and their own motivations. These comments could be attributed to the acceptance of the widespread belief that English is an international language that leads to success.

Whereas the first year students saw themselves in contrast with pupils in schools, the responses in this group indicated that the student teachers were aligning themselves with the teachers, mentioning the importance of the teacher's role in showing the students the importance of learning English. The need for this reinforcement stemmed from their views that the pupils in general are not interested, and the students in this group who talked about it relied on their practicum experience to exemplify the pupils' lack of interest. Clara, for instance, felt that it is the teacher's job to change the status of English as another school subject to something meaningful:

I think [the learners] have not been alerted to the importance of English. I tried to explain it to them, but I think it had to be more emphasised, for them and for the whole population. They think it is simply the domination of the First World upon the Third World. They don't see a practical purpose for it. (interview, Cla 491-498)

Another student teacher, Marion, also expressed the perception that pupils see English as just another school subject, because its use is restricted to a few

³This difference might be explained by the first year students' focus on reasons for 'learning' English whereas the student teachers concentrated on reasons for 'teaching' it.

who are able to travel abroad, get to the university or works in a job that promotes its use:

...there are many pupils who think that English is not like Portuguese, or Maths that you have to know and so on. If I want to learn English, OK, if not... now Portuguese is something you have to know, you live in Brazil, you have to know Portuguese (interview, Mar 549-654)

Another student teacher (Suzana) who had worked as a teacher in a private language school contrasted that experience with the teaching practice at UEL and concluded that they were two different realities. The contact with pupils in the state school context seemed to trigger a negative view of schooling. The student teachers who commented on this area made remarks similar to the ones presented by the first year student who was already working as a primary school teacher. However, contrary to Carla's scepticism, the students in this group saw the students' lack of interest as something that could be changed by the teacher.

Because for the majority of the pupils there was little or no use of the language outside school (therefore it was seen as a school subject only), it was the teacher's responsibility to point out the usefulness of learning English:

- to show that English is in his everyday life, from the chocolate he eats to the soft drinks, the ads (interview, Clara 747-749)

- I would say that English can be used, let's say if I want to ask for information... like he sees that he can use it daily, despite not having contact with English, but he can [ask for information] in the classroom. Then, let's say that when he needs to ask for information, not only in Portuguese, if he wants to ask in English, this happens outside the classroom, it is possible that you have to ask for information (interview, Marion 701-713)

Their consideration that teachers are responsible for making the foreign language useful implies that at least at this stage of the course the student

teachers find it possible for the classroom to influence the educational context, that can influence the learners' receptivity to the foreign language.

Their comments on this topic also serve as evidence that the identification as teachers is stronger among student teachers, even by those who are not sure they want to teach, like Clara and Marion. I will return to this point in Chapter 11, when I will discuss the students' identity as teachers.

2.2 - The educational context

In their first year at the university the students will have had access to at least two types of EFL learning contexts: at 10. and 20. graus, and naturally their English language lessons at the 'LAP' course. Those who could afford it will have studied also in private language schools and will have had a wider repertoire about what is involved in foreign language learning. The wider the range of experiences the wider the repertoire they have access to and therefore this variety will tend to be expressed in what they consider more useful for foreign language learning.

As the small sample of students in this study showed, these experiences ranged from studying only English in the 1o. and 2o. graus to studying it in different contexts, using it in real contexts (e.g. abroad) and learning other foreign languages. The episodes related to foreign language learning and use have exerted influence on their views about the effectiveness of certain contexts in opposition to others, especially when they were attending the course at the university and doing some English studies in a private school.

The expectation in relation to first year students was that they would have been heavily influenced by those experiences which they associated with success or which helped them achieve success in the university. Student teachers would have been able to see at least two contexts (1o. and 2o. graus and university) as distinct, and would have found ways of overcoming the apprenticeship of observation attached to the negative experiences.

2.2.1 - First year students

Seven of the eight students in this group had attended private language schools (with length varying from six months to four years) as shown on Table 16. The students were unanimous in considering the lessons at 10. and 20. graus as ineffective, and they had few recollections of that time. The word 'fraco' (weak) was repeated several times by many of them. In 10. grau Fabiana saw English mainly as a school subject, something she studied to pass the test (619-633). Carina saw that the materials and the activities she had at this level as ineffective (324-328). Carla repeated her explanation that because English is not going to be used, the pupils do not feel motivated. She described her lessons in 10. grau at one school, in which the teacher followed the textbook and the model answer book:

We learned vocabulary by copying the text three times [...] We had to copy the word in English and in Portuguese three times each (interview, Car 161-163)

Later she moved to another public school, and there the teacher changed the pattern of activities, though she still found it boring:

I think her method wasn't that bad. She gave songs, she made us sing in English and graded us for that. At that time we found it boring, were angry, but it's something that sometimes motivates the pupil, right? (interview, Car 168-174)

To follow the textbook became associated with boring activities, according to Carla. She felt she did not learn anything, because grammar was the only topic:

I think we end up studying too much grammar. It is always 'I am, you are, he is, it is ', well, with me it was like that, at 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th grades [...] I was tired of listening to this (interview, Car 208-219)

When asked about the best ways to teach English she replied:

Grammar should be less studied. (Q.3, Car)

Edneia learned Japanese first and went to a Brazilian school to learn Portuguese. She also attended Japanese lessons. She remembered a teacher of English, who seemed to ignore the fact that she worked on a different pace:

The first teacher I had, she went fast, explained and that was it. (interview, Edn 152-154)

For this reason, a good teacher, for Edneia, was someone "dedicated, who explains everything with no hurry "(Q.6).

Jose's concern with three main characteristics for teachers, that is, to know about grammar, conversation and culture, reflects his view of successful learning conditions. When talking about his lessons at this level, he presented them as missing the other factors he considered important:

[the dasses] were more explanatory in relation to grammar. They explained grammar more. They did not have conversation and neither did they focus on the cultural aspects, of English culture, British culture (interview, Jos 107-111).

Rose's beliefs about the teacher's contribution were related to the need to go beyond the textbook and do other activities. She acknowledged the influence of the private 10. grau school she attended, which did not include outdoor activities.

We just followed the textbook and almost did not have lessons because it was a nun's school, and they concentrated on religious matters. (interview, Ros 170-172)

I was there for 13 years and did only one educational trip. This means that we were very cut off the world. (interview, Ros 613-614)

Carina mentioned heterogeneity in the classroom as negative, because a student who knows more than others loses motivation. She remembered that in her classes at 10. and 20. graus those who attended private language schools knew more than others and she could easily spot those who did.

One student, Carla, felt that their private language school lessons were not much different, because the environment outside the classroom provided no opportunity for use of the foreign language:

... they were too much attached to lecturing, I think it makes it tiring. (interview, Car 258-260) at [name of school] I think the lessons were good, but [...] when it is over [...] it ends there, you will go on speaking Portuguese. (interview, Car 457-464)

As I explained, because the majority of the students in this group attended classes in two different environments (1o. and 2o. graus and at private schools), they could contrast the two and identify the more successful one. Although classes at 1o. and 2o. graus had chronological precedence, they were shorter in terms of classroom hours, and were judged against the new criteria created by their new experience at the private language school. Also because they were just starting their courses at the university the influence of the private language school seemed to be more salient.

I have considered only these two contexts (1o. and 2o. graus and private language school) because they were the potential contexts where the students would work as teachers. Although it is possible that some might enter the university and teach at that level, this possibility is more remote. The potential influence of the University lessons on their opinions about successful teaching/learning conditions will be treated in section 4.

2.2.2 - Student teachers

As with the group of first year students, the student teachers had all attended private language schools for lengths of time varying from three to six years, and as such could contrast the two environments. Only two were learning other foreign languages and three had worked or were working as EFL teachers, and one had been teaching at primary school level for five years. Two had jobs unrelated to teaching and one had never worked. Unlike the first group, however, none of them were attending language lessons at that stage of the 'LAP' course (doing their teaching practice (TP)).

Lessons at 1o. and 2o. graus seemed remote and some could not remember them. As with the first year students, during the interview, the recollections of those lessons referred to activities rather than teachers.⁴ Also in their descriptions of practice during TP the student teachers wanted to change essentially the activities in their role as teachers.

The recollections associated with the language school were related to the lessons at the university and the differences or similarities mentioned. I will discuss the university lessons' potential influences in section 4 (page 189).

It would be natural that the educational context would be seen mainly in terms of a working context, since the students were finishing their courses and some of them thinking of working (or continuing to work) as teachers. What they remembered from these two contexts (public versus private) was reflected mainly in their beliefs about materials and activities, but pointing out that in private schools teachers can be more responsive to learners' needs. They also pointed out how different the learners' receptivity to the language was in both contexts, as I discussed in the previous section.

The student teachers believed that private and public schools provided different learning backgrounds. For instance, Samira pointed out that in private

⁴However, in the questionnaire, the images the students in both groups remembered from their lessons were associated with teachers (two students among the first year students and four among the student teachers).

schools they take the learners' needs into consideration, and the way she referred to this showed that she was thinking of herself as a learner:

... because in the private school they take the students' wants into account, they give <u>us</u> different things. Now, in public schools the teacher is not interested, everything depends on the students' eagerness to learn. (interview, Sam 729-732) (my emphasis)

Public schools, according to Samira, rely too much on the learners, and again based it on her own experience:

... since I liked the subject, but my friends didn't learn anything because they didn't like the subject. (interview, Sam 732-734)

Another student teacher, Suzana, worked as a teacher in a private language school and contrasted her experience during the practicum and concluded that it was highly demoralising to work in the context of public schools:

... it is lack of respect, lack of interest [...] I taught adults, then they were there because they were interested, then for me it was rewarding to work. (interview, Suz 116-120)

Later on in the interview Suzana recognised that "it is much easier to teach in private language schools, with smaller groups" (Suz 303-304).

All the five students who were interviewed had experienced different contexts and only one wanted to teach in the state sector. The other two who expressed the desire to teach wanted to remain in the private sector.

There is no doubt that by being exposed to both educational contexts (private and public) the students could see differences between the two and projected much of what they believed about the two contexts from their own experiences at 10. and 20. graus and at private language schools.

3. The apprenticeship of observation prior to entering the university and the EFL classroom

In this section I will concentrate on referring to those experiences that the students had before entering the 'LAP' course at the level of the classroom only, i.e, I will not include issues that deal with the institutional and societal level, which have already been raised in previous sections. For this reason the focus of the comments will be on what experiences the informants themselves saw connected with the teacher's role as well as the materials and activities that are more likely to lead to successful foreign language learning.

3.1 - The apprenticeship of observation prior to the university: first year students

The private language school seemed to provide most of the images of successful learning activities they had. For instance, Maura's perception of her lessons at the language school surfaced in many of her comments about the conditions for learning. She felt that knowing what is going to be learnt is helpful, as well as translating from one language to the other. Her belief seemed to have been reinforced by a visit to Germany, where she could confirm the usefulness of those strategies she had been exposed to:

we had to remember how we would do it, how to use those loose words, and this helped me a lot [...] especially when I arrived in Germany, because I had to speak and couldn't be waiting to remember whether it was 'do' or 'does' or 'did', I couldn't, I had to be quick, this helped me a lot, I felt it was not so difficult (interview, Mau 337-344).

It is not only the experiences at school that serve to form or reinforce views about learning. In some cases, experiences as users of the language might prove just as important (or traumatic). Helena's insistence on avoiding the mother tongue is recognised by herself as stemming from a trip to the United States, when people laughed at her because of her pronunciation. After returning

from the trip abroad she decided to study English and enrolled in a private language school which emphasised listening and speaking. Her recollection of these lessons was positive, as her answer to question 3 showed, because they fitted into her pattern that to think in English, avoiding the mother tongue, is more productive. Since her lessons at 10. and 10 graus had emphasised grammar, "things to help her pass the vestibular", and she experienced failure when travelling abroad, she felt that an emphasis on oral skills would be more appropriate. Helena's answer to the question about the teaching method (7) shows how these ideas are deeply rooted in her mind:

Often the method teaches to write only, and to learn the traditional English grammar. But when we talk with Americans we feel great difficulty in communicating. I think that today the method is too much concerned with reading and writing

She attributed the failure to communicate with native speakers to the way she was taught, because it encouraged her to think in her mother tongue, which interfered with her pronunciation. She recalled an episode that seemed particularly meaningful in her history as a learner of English. During a trip to the U.S. she was misunderstood because of her pronunciation.

... when we got there [...] I simply could not communicate with anyone, because every time I opened my mouth, they laughed at me. (interview, Hel 93-98)

Something happened in a hotel in Orlando. My husband was in the swimming pool and left the room and the door was locked from the inside. I was wearing just a swimming suit, a T-shirt and a pair of slippers. I told my husband he would have to get the key, 'I won't go there', and the said 'yes, you're going there'. I went there laughing to myself, saying 'what am I going to say?'. Until now I can remember the sentence I said. The porter was a Cuban, he knew, he didn't have to laugh at me the way he did. I said 'I forget a kiss in the room', and he said 'what?' I had to repeat this about twenty times until he finally understood that I had forgotten the key inside the room. It was the only time I said something, but he laughed at me and I laughed at him. Then

he asked for the number, then I said 'God', it was 1088 and I wrote it on a piece of paper.(interview, Hel 584-602)

Although it is a lengthy quotation, it is important to contextualise what Helena said about that fragment of her personal history because it was repeated on many moments in the interview.

She believed that the mother tongue had to be completely disregarded:

In order to speak English you've got to forget Portuguese completely, for if you think in Portuguese you cannot speak English (interview, Hel 365-367).

Therefore, Helena rejected her experiences at 10. and 20. grau because they led to her failure in communicating. She recognised the influence of that critical incident in her life:

...it is the same thing as dessert and desert, you know? These things are the same for us, but [...] in the restaurant too, they laughed at me. These things creeped up on me. That is why I became worried about this. (interview, Hel 682-692)

Upon her return, she started learning with a different approach (based on drills), which coincided with her point of view, and therefore, was seen as successful - consequently transferred to the status of a model for her:

{the teacher} speaks in Portuguese with me, but I can only speak English with her, there is nothing written down, I don't write anything; then I started to try [...] to develop reasoning. (interview, Hel 186-188)

Rose also mentioned the lessons at the private school in her response to question 3 (about the best ways to teach). Although she decided not to be a teacher, she felt that if she were to teach, she would follow that method. What both 1o. and 2o. grau and private language schools had in common was to follow the textbook, though at the private school they had more activities.

There was lots of songs, theatre, I had lots of dialogue, we had to produce a dialogue in groups (interview, Ros 183-185)

In other cases experiences with other languages could either serve as source or reinforcement for what students mentioned as successful materials and activities. Maura incorporated one of the activities she experienced while in Germany into her repertoire of successful tasks:

The teacher said a sentence in English and we repeated the sentence in German. Then we had to reformulate, I had to restructure the language, because the structure is completely different; then we adapt to it, we are faster in talking, manage to build up sentences more speedily. (interview, Mau 256-260)

Another student in this group (Carina) learned Dutch as her first language and lived in a Dutch community for some time. She included the knowledge of other cultures in her repertoire of successful learning. Her response to question 7 is an example of the various times she mentioned culture as important:

Each method is different. For a person who already lives with people from other cultures it is easier to learn a language, while people who speak only Portuguese have more difficulty. This is why it's so difficult to teach English in Brazil.

Japanese was Edneia's first language and she had to attend lessons at a Japanese school in order to learn how to read and write it. Her recollection of foreign language lessons is related to Japanese lessons, in which the teacher asked her to copy several times the words she did not know. She was the student who expressed a narrower repertoire of successful materials /activities.

The interconnections between the experiences the students in this group reported were mirrored in their beliefs about successful foreign language learning.

3.2 - The apprenticeship of observation prior to the university: student teachers

As I have demonstrated, the student teachers did not see their experiences in the context of 1o. and 2o. graus as successful teaching/learning. At that educational level they reported that they had to be more interested than the average and study at home in order to learn. Memories from this time were mainly seen in terms of action (materials and activities) which they associated with a traditional methodology. The experiences at this level could be influencing their beliefs about the need for the teacher to create interest and to motivate the pupils. Therefore, the experiences at 1o. and 2o. graus functioned as a negative model for these student teachers, and their reaction, as teachers, was to create interest by bringing in materials and activities that contrasted to the way they had been taught at that level. In the next Chapter I will discuss the student teachers' identity as teachers and will refer again to what extent their idealisations departed from what they had experienced.

In this group all the students had attended private language schools. Those lessons were seen positively by some of them, but also with pitfalls. The purpose of attending those lessons was to complement the language lessons at the university. For this reason, both experiences were contrasted in their recollections of private language lessons. The contrast was either in terms of content or activities. For Mariane the private school taught grammar, whereas at the university it was conversation. She believed they were complementary and that both are important to learning. Samira said the English she knew she learnt at the private school, where the students talked a lot, and gave their opinion. 'To give opinion' was the theme that dominated the way she talked about teaching/learning English in the classroom. Clara attended two different private schools and reacted against the one that she believed taught only through 'functions'. She changed to one that emphasised grammar and conversation, and where she learned by playing games. She acknowledged that she used one of those games in her teaching practice classes.

Experiences prior to entering the university did seem to have influenced the beliefs of the students interviewed for this study. They provided models (either positive or negative) as to what kind of materials and activities seemed to be more successful in the classroom.

4. The apprenticeship of observation at the university

The language component of 'LAP' courses may function as 'apprenticeship of observation' since it is a stage at which they are learning the foreign language. I have already referred to the fact that the students and student teachers saw those lessons in contrast with English lessons they had before entering the university or while in private schools. This was an indication that this part of the course might have influenced their views on what constitutes successful language teaching/learning. The extent of this influence will be discussed in the next section.

4.1 - First year students

I joined the students for data collection in the last two months of their term, and wanted to obtain their views about the language lessons at the course as well. It is worth reminding that one of main objectives was to try and obtain clues as to whether the language lessons at the university were functioning as models for them.

The assumption was that the students entered the course with some beliefs about successful foreign language teaching/learning which would act as 'lenses' through which the course would be apprehended.

Although some students felt that the lessons at the university were well beyond their expectations, others felt they were not progressing much. Helena was one of these students. She resented not being able to talk (which she considered essential for learning):

When I entered the university it seems that I went backwards a bit, mainly in terms of conversation. (interview, Hel 232-232)

On the other hand, Carina was positively surprised, believing that it was a course geared towards conversation (Car 356-358), and she expected it would have followed the same type of teaching she saw at 10. and 20. graus.

As I have explained, during the first year at the university the students were able to compare all the experiences they have already had with learning English and evaluate them. Most of the students could talk about these experiences at length, expressing their feelings in relation to the lessons they were attending at the university. In relation to the course in general many students made references to the heterogeneity in the group, and how the different levels of proficiency hinder learning. For instance, Maura, when commenting on how she felt in relation to the course, pointed out how the other students might have perceived it:

As I have already studied for three years, it's very basic, easy, but I think that those who are beginners they have difficulty. (interview, Mau 194-196)

She felt she had learned little in the course, because of her background, but for the others what is missing is linked to her idea of what helps learning:

I think the teacher needs to tell, listen, this is how you're going to use this. (interview, Mau 369-370)

Carina also referred to the heterogeneity in the group and felt that she was not progressing because a lot of time was spent on explanations for those who were not at the same level. She returned to this point when talking about her lessons at the university Then I and others, we've already talked about it, right, that you stay there, answer everything and the others don't understand. You notice it's awkward. The teacher directs the explanation to that person, then you lose your interest totally. At the end of the term you're unmotivated. (interview, Car 250-254)

Other students also mentioned heterogeneity in their class in relation to students' proficiency as harmful to learning. Jose was one of them. He pointed out that the course has a large proportion of dropouts because some students were not really interested. Lack of interest was also mentioned by Carina, who expressed the view that if students had to pay for the course they would be more interested. She was not sure why people wanted to study 'LAP', but believed that if they had a goal in mind (like travel abroad) they would learn more quickly.

The students had different perceptions of what the course was about, and what was emphasised: for Helena it was neither grammar nor conversation, for Carina it was conversation, and for Jose it was grammar. The students did not seem to have a clear picture of the course objectives, since many saw it as essentially a language course, as their comparisons of it with other similar courses showed. Jose, for instance, contrasted the two and pointed out differences between the private school he was attending and the university language lessons in terms of use of the mother tongue in the classroom, teacher's attention, interaction among the students, resources (including laboratories), explanation of grammar, and size of the class.

Because I assumed that language lessons at the university could potentially contribute to the beliefs the students were developing about foreign language teaching/learning, I asked for two guided diaries in which, in addition to a description of the lesson, the students would have to imagine themselves in the teacher's position and suggest changes to the lessons, if any. The rationale for asking the students to keep the diaries was that it would be an opportunity for the students to express, once again, their beliefs about the teacher's role and to what extent they identified themselves with the teacher. Although the number of

diaries was kept to a minimum I hoped they would corroborate other instantiations of the students' beliefs.

The first year students tended to evaluate the language lessons in terms of the constructs they revealed in their conceptualisations of successful language learning. Similarly, they tended to suggest changes in terms of those constructs. Table 27 shows the students' reaction to the two lessons they had to report and the changes they would make, in comparison with the beliefs they expressed.

Lesson One took place on October 28. The teacher described this lesson as follows:

As I had already taught the simple past, this lesson would be simply a review. I distributed some picture stories of famous people [names] and they had to get into pairs, prepare a dialogue and ten tell us what happened. We used some texts from 'New Incentive' which focused on famous people (Shakespeare, da Vinci, etc.). They had some prompts and from that on they had to build up their own stories. (lesson report)

The students' descriptions divided the lesson into the following activities:

- homework correction
- dialogue and report back
- reading and note-taking
- postcard writing

Their descriptions of the lessons matched what they expressed as being important for learning a foreign language in the classroom. For Fabiana it was the personal dimension (teacher as friend) that predominated. Carina thought the lesson was good because the teacher went beyond the textbook. Edneia felt lost and presented a negative picture of herself. Jose felt it should include more conversation, which he considered essential to learning. Rose, who had emphasised the need to incorporate extra activities in the classroom consistently suggested changes in that direction.

Their willingness to change the lessons, however, could be linked not only to the existence of a wider repertoire of beliefs but also to the learners' confidence in their own performance and the degree of match between their own beliefs about successful learning conditions and what happens in the classroom. It could be the case that the students tended to agree with the activities when they matched their own beliefs, and suggest changes only when they disagreed with those activities.

The second lesson took place on November 6. The teacher's description was:

We worked with some games from 'Play Games' (there is, there are, some/any/a/an). I presented some dialogues from 'Interchange' - one was about houses/flats. I asked some oral questions, they listened to the dialogues without opening their books and managed to answer many questions. Then they read the dialogues and I asked them to work in groups with the same subject. For homework I asked if they had to rent a house, what the newspaper ad would be like (houses needed/houses available).(lesson report)

The students divided the lesson into the following sections:

- exercises from 'Play Games' (a resource book)
- exercises from the textbook

Although the lesson reports were written over a time span of about two weeks, the students were consistent in their reactions. The second lesson, which emphasised oral activities, was perceived as more successful than the first one and this time the students would have made no changes. The emphasis on oral skills was perceived as more useful than other types of activities, and the teacher acknowledged the students' preferences in her report about Lesson Two:

I would maintain the whole oral part. I would change the reading - games - they don't like to work with reading and writing. They prefer conversation. (lesson report)

During the interviews some of the students also talked about changes they would have implemented if they were the teacher. Maura would have given more stories to be read, so that students would have a basis to speak later. She

criticised the textbook because it did not provide a structure for the beginning students who had not studied before (which was not her case). She would also use the language lab more frequently.

As the students' comments about changes have shown, their perception is based on their own personal experiences, without considering their classmates' reactions to the activities. Although there was some awareness of other students' reactions, such as their mentioning of heterogeneity in the classroom, the changes they would make as teachers would be mainly related to their own performance as learners.

One example of this was presented by Helena who, during the interview, talked about one specific activity that the teacher organised (a picnic) as something she would do herself, although pointing out her frustration because personal creativity was not allowed:

That was a good opportunity to speak English, but we almost did not say anything. Instead of asking us to talk about a trip we had made (that was a mistake)[...] if she had asked us to talk about a trip we made - in English - then I think everybody would have spoken more; but we almost don't speak in class. (interview, Hel 298-308)

Helena felt that the initiative was a good idea, but the opportunity to speak English, avoiding the mother tongue (which she considered fundamental to learning) was not there.

The picnic was also reported by Rose, who complained that during her school years the lessons were confined to the classroom only and she had not experienced that kind of activity before. As we saw above, in her lesson reports she pointed out the need for extra-class activities and praised that sort of initiative. She felt that lessons that concentrated on the textbook were boring.

The language lessons at the university could be providing students with models for learning, but the preconceptions they already brought to the course were serving as lenses through which they see the same course (Hollingsworth, 1989). The wide range of reactions to the lessons, as exemplified by Table 27, testifies to the contribution of these previous experiences to existing beliefs. They also show how perceptions of the same event vary, depending on the belief systems held by the individuals, what demonstrates the importance of paying attention to those perceptions in classroom research.

4.2 - Student teachers

The language lessons at the university were compared with lessons at the private language schools they attended, since I asked them about their views on both. Their comparisons showed also that the language component of the 'LAP' course was seen as similar to those experiences at the private language school, and, therefore, did not address directly the fact that they were being prepared to become teachers⁵.

There was a consensus that not all the teachers followed the same approach. The student teachers looked back at the language lessons at the university recognising that they did not form a homogeneous whole. They pointed out that some teachers did not follow a 'communicative' approach (Marion), some of them just followed the textbook (Samira), or that some just explained the subject, not where or how the students would use the language (Suzana). Whether or not the teachers in the programme followed a homogeneous approach (and that would be doubtful), the students' perspectives were that some of behaviours and activities they saw at the university would be part of their repertoire, but only those which conformed to their own beliefs, which resulted from an amalgamation of experiences.

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⁵ However, there has been a growing interest in incorporating notions about teaching at later stages of the language component of the course. During the data collection period, for instance, the programme for the third year students included discussions about what teaching meant, and they had to get involved in assignments in which this subject was addressed.

Although the 'apprenticeship of observation' is considered influential to the beliefs, as I pointed out, it is not enough to watch teachers. There is an active component in this apprenticeship. It is mainly through an evaluation of the success of experiences as learners that beliefs are formed. Therefore, when we refer to an 'apprenticeship of observation', we actually imply some degree of evaluation, through which experiences are judged and projections of what should or should not be done are created.

In the next section I will consider instances of the data that referred to other experiences not included in the discussion so far.

5. Beyond the apprenticeship of observation

Both first year and final year students in this study referred to episodes in their lives beyond the school context that were linked to their ideas about successful teaching/learning of a foreign language. Some of these episodes have been discussed earlier in this chapter. I shall now consider the experiences of the student teachers during their final year, when they were directly exposed to theoretical and practical issues related to actual teaching.

Some student teachers in this group had already worked as teachers, and as such also brought their preconceptions to the programme, which, however, as far as I am aware, did not explicitly address them.

The formal training in EFL teaching was carried out by the Methodology and Teaching Practice (MTP) course that lasted for two semesters. The course comprised sixty hours of theoretical background in methods for ELT teaching, and a Teaching Practice (TP) component, with a further sixty hours, involving observation of class teachers in schools, engagement in helping class teachers, and actual teaching.

In the past the actual teaching comprised two to three lessons of fifty minutes. During the semester I interviewed the students the number had increased to twelve, and the student teachers were also required to carry out a small piece of research (usually through questionnaires) with the teachers and pupils in schools.⁶

I contacted the student teachers in the last two months of their academic year, and asked them to produce two lesson reports about a lesson they had taught. During the interview I explored some of the issues related to their TP and to what extent they were happy with it. Although recognising that all their experiences contributed to their views about teaching English, they felt that the Methodology and Teaching Practice (MTP) lessons were influential. Table 28 summarises their opinions about the sources of influences:

	OPINION ABOUT SOURCES OF INFLUENCE
STUDENT	
TEACHER	
Mariane	I think it was a painful process [I changed because] of the MTP lessons. I think it was basically this.
Samira	It is much better to teach than to have someone telling you how to teach. You learn more by going through the experience. Because you go until the third year only learning the subject, then
	you don't know how to teach. I would have taught in a wrong way, the way I was taught.
Suzana	I believe in this methodology due to what I saw at the school where I worked, and also because of what we studied, despite being very short time to work in the schools, the results were there.
Clara	What influenced me was the practical aspects, to go to the field and see whether that theory fitted or not to the reality. They were two semesters when we had contact with the pupils, then you could decide what was good, what you would adopt, what you wouldn't adopt.
Marion	I think it is a bit of everything, but I think it is more from the application of what we saw at the university. However, we wouldn't be able to say it is really this way, maybe there are others.

Table 28 - Student teachers' opinion about sources of influence

The student teachers acknowledged the influence of MTP because especially those who had not taught before, it represented an opportunity to try

⁶ The initiative was being gradually introduced in the Methodology and Teaching Practice course. Two teachers involved presented the rationale and some results of the experience during the XII ENPULI, held in Sao Paulo, in 1991. The title of the presentation was "Introducao da iniciacao a pesquisa na disciplina Pratica de Ensino de Ingles: relato de uma experiencia" ("Introduction to research initiation in English Language Teaching Practice: a case report")

and put into practice what they believed in. However, for some the experience was frustrating in many ways, especially because of the time limitations and the artificiality of the task. In their comments the student teachers who were unhappy about their performance tended to blame the pupils, and the fact that they were used to a different methodology.

Mariane, who was already working as a teacher in a private language school, although recognising the influence of the course, still projected much of her own experience into her beliefs about teaching:

It is because I learnt, I think I learnt a lot with this - with grammar, right?, with the traditional method. And I could improve when I had what we can call methodolo- that is, when I had this communicative methodology. (interview, Mar 241-246)

However, her experience as a teacher was also playing a part, since at one point she presented it as evidence that the teacher has to react to individual needs .

Then I see by my students too, there are some who can work with functions, but there are others who need that explanation, why do I use this verb here and not there? (interview, Mar 253-256)

The other student teacher who had worked as a teacher in another private school also attributed part of her beliefs to that experience, as shown in Table 28.

Therefore, "moving to the other side of the desk" (Lortie, 1975), rather than being solely responsible for beliefs, interacts with other forms of learning experiences to constitute the prospective teachers' beliefs. Depending on how the TP is conducted, acting as a teacher can function just as another opportunity to reinforce beliefs acquired long before being exposed to current methodologies, instead of challenging those beliefs.

With the intent of finding out more about their reactions to those TP lessons, I also asked for lesson reports from the student teachers. Their practice was explained through the same constructs they associated with successful teaching. The post-lessons reflections showed sensitivity to the context, although no changes at the level of content (grammar structures). Given that student teachers had to teach following the normal curriculum, it would be expected that the content would remain unchanged. What they did, however, was to adopt an approach that they felt incorporated elements to attract the pupils' attention and engage them in the class activities, conditions they felt were essential if learning was to take place (see Tables 24 and 26, Appendices J and L). I will present their reactions to the lessons they taught at TP individually, to facilitate understanding.

5.1 - Mariane

Mariane reported two lessons: one for 7th graders in a public school, and another at her own school, with her own pupils. For Mariane, participation in the class was fundamental. She reacted differently to the two lessons, and her comments reflected her concern with pupils' engagement in classroom activities:

I felt good because there was a lot of participation and interest. [state school] (lesson report)

I wasn't very happy with this lesson because not all the pupils participated as I expected [private school] (lesson report)

In her evaluation of the lesson taught at the state school she showed sensitivity to the context:

I wouldn't change the lesson because in this situation - maybe in another situation it wouldn't have worked, but because it was the first day of the teaching practice, a novelty, the reading comprehension questions in Portuguese, then everything was new. (lesson report) She attributed participation and interest to the fact that it was a new situation for the pupils, a different teacher, breaking with the routine and changing the pattern they were accustomed to.

After completing her TP she felt the need to continue monitoring her own practice, and trying to overcome the gap she noticed between theory and practice. She did not want to commit herself to any particular methodology, expressing the desire to follow her own conception of teaching, although she did not think it was well-defined yet.

5.2 - Samira

Samira had no previous experience as a teacher and attributed her beliefs to the her TP lessons, because they put into practice an approach that attracted the pupils' interest:

The lessons I had were boring, dull, then you did not have any interest in learning, but with this [method] you are interested. (interview, Sam 252-255)

Again participation in class was considered crucial, as she reported her feelings about a lesson she taught during the TP:

I liked this lesson because the pupils were interested in giving their opinion. Everybody participated. (lesson report)

Samira had already expressed her concern with the expression of opinion, which was the construct she used to refer to past experiences as well as successful ones. By that she meant the possibility of saying something in the class, a possibility that was never available when she was a student in that context.

As with Mariane, Samira acknowledged that her status as a student teacher affected the type of interaction in the classroom. Her post-lesson reflections

pointed to the constraints faced by the student teachers who have to compromise due to the provisional nature of the TP:

If I had to teach a similar lesson I would maintain everything I did. As I said, the pupils liked the lesson. The only thing I would change is that I wouldn't ask for translation as homework. This was done because I was a student teacher and had to follow the class teacher's scheme. I could have asked them to think about another wardrobe as homework. (lesson report)

5.3 - Suzana

Suzana did not write the lesson reports, but we talked about the lessons during the interview. She described two lessons she taught and also referred to the artificiality of TP, since she was not responsible for the class from the beginning. She found the experience difficult because

the [class] teacher used a different method and we went there to use another (interview, 307-308)

It is interesting to note that whereas Mariane saw the interruption of the routine as positive, Suzana found it difficult because of the lack of continuity. Her suggestion was that the involvement with schools should be encouraged from early stages in the course, not only during TP.

5.4 - Clara

Clara taught a group of 26 pupils enrolled in a "special support" (recuperação) course. She wrote reports about two lessons, and in both her reaction was positive, because she felt she managed to generate pupils' interest. Clara also referred to the novelty of the experience to the pupils as motivating, and the large number of students in class requiring better time management.

It was a good lesson, and all the pupils participated. However, they are not used to this type of activity and were very excited. There were 22 pupils in this class and it was not possible to have everyone saying something about their candidate due to the short time available. I enjoyed this lesson, the pupils' interest and the results, because they did it very well. (lesson report)

Participation in class was considered crucial and the second lesson reported was also evaluated positively because it conformed to this criterion:

It was an excellent lesson. All the pupils participated and were enthusiastic, especially with the second half of the lesson, when they could say everything they wanted to do. There were 17 pupils. Everybody spoke and there was time for two tasks.(lesson report)

Clara was not sure she wanted to be a teacher, and was still sceptical about the communicative approach, which she would like to see working in large classes. Clara emphasised the issue of class size, which was also mentioned by Suzana when referring to the contrast between private and state sectors. As reflected in her comments in Table 28, Clara saw TP as an opportunity to check theory against practice.

5.5 - Marion

According to Marion the MTP lessons were a good opportunity to reflect on their practice. She could not remember what ideas she had before MTP lessons but had the impression that she would teach the same way she was taught. It was the first time she had stopped to think about the issue:

...if one day I had to teach I would teach more or less the same way I learnt, I think I had not thought about it before. (interview, Mar 827-833)

Marion was not very happy with her TP experience and attributed the failure to the pupils' lack of interest. Blaming the pupils for not being used to a

different methodology, she did not show signs of the need to change her own practice:

Because it was their last term and because they were used to another method, I felt a lot of difficulty in transmitting what I wanted. English is seen by the majority as a minor subject, something without importance. The pupils do not respect the teacher, let alone the student teacher. They're not interested in learning. But, despite all this I thought that at least some of the learners managed to assimilate what I tried to convey.(lesson report)

For Marion teaching is transmission of knowledge, and she did the best she could, as her post-lesson reflections show:

If I had to teach a similar lesson I would keep everything exactly as I did, because I think I gave everything the best way I could. But, if on the one hand I didn't achieve total success, the failure wasn't mine. This failure can be traced further back, which explains the pupils' learning deficiencies, since they are conditioned [to that type of teaching]. If I had to teach a similar lesson I wouldn't change anything, because as I said, it is difficult to work with a group that is not yours, who is not used to your methodology, who are conditioned to another type of learning, and who are not familiar with English. (lesson report)

It seems that the TP did very little to change Marion's beliefs about the pupils in the context of 1o. and 2o. graus. The TP experience was not perceived as meaningful because the conditions were artificial, as shown by her comments that she was working with a group that was not hers, who were not used to the methodology she adopted.

From what the student teachers perceived the MTP component of the course had an importance influence in their teaching practice, as Table 24 shows. From what they said about that influence, the impact was stronger or weaker depending on their previous teaching experiences, and the pupils' reactions to their lessons. In all cases, however, the student teachers acknowledged that the situation they faced during the TP was not the one they would encounter in their actual teaching situation. Nevertheless, it represented an opportunity to discuss

issues related to theory and practice, especially in relation to the approach the programme intended to promote.

As I discussed in Chapter 3, in the literature about the socialisation of teachers one strand holds that experiences prior to formal training (biography) can be seen as more powerful to future teaching practices than the training itself (Tabachnich & Zeichner, 1984). The other position is that teachers are socialised during their initial years of teaching, which include teaching practice in schools. Following Crow (1987) I am adopting the middle-of-the-road approach that postulates that there is interaction between what people bring to the training programme and the values and beliefs they acquire during the contact with teachers.

Beliefs about foreign language teaching, therefore, are acquired through an amalgam of experiences, and therefore can be explained by reference to both biography and formal education.

Beliefs acquired through the 'apprenticeship of observation' function as lenses through which later language learning experiences are evaluated, as I have indicated in relation to the informants in this study. In the formal teacher education course they find new ways of articulation and are submitted to a test. As many of the informants have pointed out, the test (carried out at the practicum) is seen as largely artificial, and therefore, do not provide a 'real' context, therefore, postponing the student teachers' complete socialisation into teaching.

'LAP' courses represent a privileged forum for the education of EFL teachers because they combine both socialisation and education experiences. They provide socialisation for the students while they are still learners, through the apprenticeship of observation. They contribute further to socialisation by having a component that explicitly addresses theoretical and practical issues related to teaching and gives the students the opportunity to experience (though in limited form) teaching.

However, it is obvious that experience *per se* is not enough. As Saunders and McCutcheon (1986:58) recognised:

How do teachers and administrators acquire "educational wisdom" or theories that have practical value in teaching? They say they learn how to teach well simply through experience, rather it seems likely that they learn to teach through a process of practice-centred inquiry that helps them to discover effective teaching practices and to develop effective practical theories of teaching.

It might be the case that learners are already exercising a practice-centred inquiry in relation to their experiences and therefore actively building up their belief systems. The challenge is for teacher education programmes to foster and give direction to the process.

6. Conclusion to this chapter

In this Chapter I have examined instances in the data that indicated potential sources for the students' beliefs as described in Chapter 9. I considered those sources in relation to the three levels of the model I am following: the status of the foreign language, the educational context and the EFL classroom.

These sources were captured retrospectively, and according to the participants' own perspectives. The beliefs seemed to have been originated and sustained not only by passively observing their teachers, but also by actively assessing the experiences themselves.

Especially with these groups of students, who had spent larger number of hours in classrooms as learners rather than as teachers, their move from one identity into another could have only been achieved gradually. I examined some of the experiences they went through that were not related to the university and within the course the language (content) and methodology (pedagogy) components. I considered the possible links between these experiences and beliefs.

In the next chapter I shall consider the issue of identity as teachers in more detail, looking for connections between beliefs, experiences and teacher role identity.

Chapter 10

From learners to teachers

- 1. Introduction
- 2. The 'LAP' course and teacher role identity
- 3. Personal experience and ways of working
 - 3.1 First year students
 - 3.2 Student teachers
- 4. Former teachers and self
 - 4.1 Constructs
 - 4.2 Identification with former teachers
- 5. Conclusion to this chapter

1. Introduction

In chapter 8 I presented the beliefs held by the students in the 'LAP' course in relation to successful foreign language teaching/learning at three levels: society, institution and classroom. In Chapter 9 I examined how students referred to their own experiences as learners when talking about the reasons for learning a foreign language, the differences between the private and state educational sectors and the EFL classroom. More specifically, in that chapter I adopted the framework of personal histories to refer to the connections that students made between their beliefs and their own learning experiences, both past and present. I also discussed their reactions to the teaching practice they had to undertake as part of their education.

In this chapter I want to explore the future dimension through two facets of the identity of prospective EFL teachers: what kind of teaching they would like to promote, especially in relation to materials and activities, and what kind of teachers they construed themselves they would be in contrast with former

teachers. Both issues are related to the teacher education programme, and its role in shaping students' conceptualisations of teaching, *vis a vis* their experiences outside the course.

This chapter then focuses on the third of the research questions, that is, What teacher role identity did the LAP students present?

In Chapter 3 I introduced the notion of teacher role identity as an important aspect of the process of learning to teach. Since teacher education courses represent a point of transition in roles, I wanted to investigate how student teachers moved away from their identity as learners; that is, to what extent they managed to go beyond their own experiences as learners when thinking about teaching.

As I have shown in Chapter 6, the majority of students in this study were either unsure about choosing teaching as a profession or sceptical about good prospects if they decided to do so. Although the reasons for this lack of confidence in teaching as a profession might be due to issues beyond the control of the course, I believe the way the 'LAP' course was organised could have encouraged no more than a weak sense of identity with the profession, since there is a split between subject matter and methodology. This split seems to be a feature of such courses worldwide (Cumming, 1989; Richards, 1991; Doyle, 1990).

2. The 'LAP' course and teacher role identity

The course was structured in such a way that until the third year the students were seen essentially as learners of the foreign language (emphasis on subject matter). It was only in the last year that the students were exposed to explicit notions of methodology, i.e. existing methods and how they can help the learning process. It was at this phase of the course that they had a chance to put their own approaches into practice (and for some of them still not without

problems, as I have shown in Chapter 9). That is to say that it is only in the final year that students are actually alerted to and forced to face the fact that they are being prepared to become teachers. Therefore, it would be expected that the 'LAP' students would show stronger identification with teaching at the end of the course, after doing their teaching practice (TP). If we consider that the language component of the programme treats the students as learners only, the amount of time spent on the transition to teaching (assuming it is done implicitly in the TP sessions) is minimal. It would not be surprising if when talking about how they would like to teach, student teachers exhibited views similar to those of first year students, because they were relying heavily on their own personal histories centred mainly around their roles as learners.

Being a teacher in the programme I suspect then that we encouraged the students' reliance on their experiences as learners by assigning methodology classes only at the end of the course, after they had completed a certain amount of disciplines, and consequently, had achieved a certain proficiency in the language. This course organisation focuses on learning for most of the course, and it is the students' roles as learners that were more frequently reinforced by the course as a whole. In addition, although there were some students who had already experienced some teaching, the course did not address directly their prior experiences and, as such, made the emphasis on learning even more salient.

Although the amount of time spent on discussions and practices related to 'teaching' during the course is shorter than those around their own language 'learning' or other theoretical disciplines that constituted the curriculum, the student teachers referred to a specific 'method' more explicitly than the first year students. Assuming that 'method' is a concept that is only dealt with at the EFL methodology component of the course, this result suggests that the students were incorporating those notions when they talked about the way they would like to teach. It is this topic that I will discuss in the next section.

3. Personal experience and ways of working

In talking about their future performance as teachers, the students adopted different angles to refer to what they would like to do in their own classes, as revealed in Table 29

FIRST YEAR STUDENTS	STUDENT TEACHERS
since I felt that type of difficulty, I thought	but if you teach this way [the way she
that I'd have to see this difficulty in my students	described her TP lesson] they'll be interested,
when I teach (Fab 263-265).	because we're going to try to create the need to express, to think, they'll speak what they think
Each person learns in a particular way. I don't	will happen, then they participate more, and by
know if this is because it was the way I learnt (Mau 226-228).	participating more they learn more (Sam 779-785).
I think I would try to bring examples of everything I had. And you would have to have a method, right? (Cna 831-832,834-835).	I think I'll have to learn a lot with practice (Man 686-687).
	You can feel tired with that traditional method.
I would like to teach the lesson I imagine for myself (Car 821-822).	I was taught that way, but because I liked English a lot, I persevered. Now I see that with the communicative method the learners participate more and are more interested (Suz 686-692).
	I think I'd follow everything I learned, it would be a mixture (Cla 850-851).
	Today I'd adopt the communicative method, which I think is the best. Maybe in the future I'll change, I'll know another method (Mar 417-420).

Table 29 - Approaches the students would follow in their own classes

The table shows illustrative examples from the interview transcripts which indicate the existence of a continuum, in which at one end the students talked about their approaches in terms of their own experience as learners and at the other end they used an external concept such as 'communicative method'.

The first year students emphasised their own experiences, and referred more explicitly to themselves as learners in their projections. Although there were two questions about 'method' in the questionnaire, only Carina mentioned method as a necessary requisite. Its meaning, however, later clarified during the interview (Cna 705-708), showed that she considered it synonymous with a 'textbook'. Considering that these students were at the beginning of the course, and had not yet been explicitly directed to think about EFL methodology, it would be expected that they would project more of their own experiences as learners into their teaching.

The expectation about student teachers was that they would tend to distance themselves from their own experiences as learners, since they had had a chance to learn about different methods, act as teachers, and reflect more about teaching during their TP. It was not surprising then that when talking about their own approaches, they referred to a 'communicative method' to justify their practices, since that approach was encouraged by the programme. It is interesting to observe, however, that while some (like Marian and Suzana) were happily adopting the label 'communicative', others (like Mariane and Clara) wanted to be open to choices.

When combined with the students' beliefs about successful foreign language teaching the pattern which emerges is that the TP is providing the students a concept called 'communicative method' to refer to activities which they consider successful either because they had successful experienced with them as learners (positive models) or because they represented the antithesis of the way they were unsuccessfully taught (negative models).

Considering that first year and final year students did not present strikingly different beliefs (see Chapter 8), and that many of those beliefs were connected with their own experiences as foreign language learners (Chapter 9), we might speculate that the role of the EFL methodology classes and TP is to help them name their own conceptions within an accepted framework, that is, under the label of a 'communicative method'. Freeman (1993) refers to this function of teacher education as "naming" (or "renaming"), in which individuals

perceive their classroom experience using a vocabulary that is shared by the teacher education community. He sees the contribution of teacher education as follows:

When seen exclusively as the inculcation of knowledge and skills, the potentially powerful effects of teacher education programs may remain unrecognized and unexamined. It may be that the role of teacher education lies less in influencing teachers' behavior than in enabling them to rename their experience, thus recasting their conceptions and reconstructing their classroom practice (Freeman, 1993b:496)

At the more specific level, Table 30 (next page) shows a summary of what kind of activities the informants would like to develop in their own classes:

3.1 - First year students

Fabiana's projection contains elements present in her view of the role of the teacher as an instructor. She would also evaluate the students' progress and adjust her teaching to meet different learning styles. She would also try to generate interest in the classroom. Maura was not sure about her performance as a teacher because she believed she was not patient enough, but she was open to changing her mind after the teaching practice. She recognised the influence of her own learning on the way she thought (225-227).

Carina was not sure about what things she would like to do, but also acknowledged that her experiences would play a part (831-833).

Would try to explain the subject so that everybody understands, seeing individual difficulties, paying attention to those who know less. Would try to generate a common interest in the class, and would impose respect from the beginning (Fabiana)

Would try to generate interest and that the students were attending classes because they like them, not being forced to. Would try to create situations (games) to make the lessons more fun (Helena)

Would explain the grammar better, would encourage more conversation, would try to convey more about the English culture (Jose)

Would give more films for the students to watch and then re-tell what happened, drama, games, to go outside the classroom (Rose)

Does not feel confident to say anything, but thinks that to read a text helps (Maura)

Doesn't know how she would like to teach, but would rely on examples she had (Carina)

If she had the conditions, she would teach the lesson she imagined for herself, doing different things (Carla)

Has no idea of what to do (Edneia)

Would change the whole class, wouldn't translate, wouldn't follow the textbook, would try to renew, to bring games, songs, different activities (Samira)

Wouldn't just explain the subject (Suzana)

Would try to teach dynamic lessons, not boring ones (Marion)

Would like to be able to give sequence to a work that was initiated, to avoid going back to the type of teaching they were trying to eliminate, of doing little exercises in the book (Clara)

Would learn from experience, would take her time in putting things into practice (Mariane)

Table 30- What the students would do in their own classes

Their idealisations of themselves as teachers usually incorporated the activities linked to successful learning. The educational context, however, provided some limitations, as Carla mentioned in her comments about what she would be able to do in the public and the private sector. The constraints teachers have to face in the public sector were reflected in the projection of herself as a teacher (Car 779-781). The need for variety, for changing the routine, was repeated in her comments about the ways she would like to teach. The ideal lesson would be a lesson she would like for herself, one in which she would be

able to say things that relate to her own life, not constrained by the textbook (Car 821-849).

Their experiences as learners are largely projected into their teaching. As it would be expected, it seems that they idealise activities which they would like to have for themselves, as Carla explicitly recognised.

Helena would try to create interest, so that the students would attend her lessons not because of the grades, but because they liked them. As a teacher, in order to achieve that, she would eliminate the register and change the evaluation system which would be based on oral skills (again her understanding that these skills have priority).

Jose was more vague about what he would do as a teacher, though he distinguished between 10. and 20. graus. At 10. grau he would teach some grammar rules and give some songs. The ideas exhibited in Table 25 refer to 20. grau.

Consistent with her view that going beyond the classroom is important, Rose mentioned the extra materials she would bring, and organise outdoor activities (544-549).

Although some first year students did not mention specific activities, those who did reacted in terms of situations they had experienced themselves, and were, therefore (understandably) closely attached to their identities as learners.

3.2 - Student teachers

Mariane was the only one who had a job as teacher at the time of the interview and did not make any commitment in relation to teaching at 10. and 20. graus. She was very cautious in the way she talked about her future as an EFL teacher.

The changes suggested by the other student teachers reflected their scepticism for the way English is being taught in Brazilian state schools. In general they were reactions against the type of activities they associated with that context of teaching. Therefore, although relying heavily on their own personal histories, they wanted to move away from that type of experience they considered negative, by adopting techniques they felt were more likely to be successful, which they learned to conceptualise as a "communicative method".

Although wanting to teach the lesson they wanted for themselves and wanting to follow the 'communicative method' might coincide in terms of classroom activities, the way the students used to refer to the lessons they would like to teach revealed their identification with different ends of the continuum (learner x teacher) referred above.

It needs to be observed that although they were required to think about a hypothetical situation, what they said had as reference a real situation they experienced either while they were learners or during their teaching practice. Again the levels of abstraction varied, with some indicating specific tasks (Samira), and others reacting against the type of teaching they associated with 1o. And 2o. Graus (Suzana, Marion, Clara).

Asking the students to reflect on what kind of teaching they would like to promote generated answers that revealed (at least partially) their image of themselves as teachers, the repgrids enabled them to express the way they saw teachers (including themselves) through constructs. It is the analysis of those constructs that I present next.

4. Former teachers and self

In the previous section I have referred to the way students talked about what they would like to do as EFL teachers, using data derived from the interviews. Now I want to explore their views of themselves as teachers, in

contrast with teachers they had had. Consistent with the view that past experiences as learners (and therefore in contact with teachers) play an important role in the formation of the students' beliefs about EFL teaching/learning, I would like to show to what extent the students tended to distance themselves from these former models, and what constructs they used to refer to those teachers.

The data for this analysis was generated by Repertory Grids (repgrids), some of which had some terms later clarified during the interview. The assumption was that memorable past teachers had exerted influence (either positive or negative) on these learners, and therefore, they constituted the elements in the grids. The teachers could be any foreign language teacher they had, either in schools (1o. And 2o. Graus, private language schools) or in the university.

As I explained in the methodology section (Chapter 5), the objective of the grids was to provide further insights into how the students conceptualised teaching, by asking them to verbalise, through constructs, what features they considered salient in teaching.

Repgrids can serve many purposes and have been used in fields as diverse as psychotherapy, market research and architecture. The technique has been adopted extensively in research on teacher thinking within a constructivist perspective. In Applied Linguistics the technique has been used by Rowsell (1990) and Littlejohn (1992) to explore learner's perceptions of ESL classes and textbook writers' views of learners, respectively. The technique lends itself to many variations (for a list of elicitation methods see Fransella & Bannister, 1977; Bannister & Fransella, 1986), although the basic concept remains the same (the constructs represent a person's view of the world). As well as being amenable to various elicitation methods, Repgrids also allow many forms of analyses (for a consideration of potential difficulty areas see Pope and Denicolo, 1993). Repgrids which are elicited through the use of a numerical scale (such as

the one I adopted) can be analysed by a computer programme called INGRID¹, which performs Principal Component Analysis, grouping elements and constructs that are clustered together.

Repgrids have been used in studies of self-identity by Weinreich (1977) and Norris and Malhlouf-Norris (1976). The latter used INGRID in their analyses. Basically the computer programme gives the distance between any pair of elements as a ratio of the expected distance between all pairs of elements in the grid. This measure has a minimum of 0, a mean of 1, and it seldom exceeds 2. Any pair of elements that have a distance close to 0 are seen as being similar, and with a distance of 2 as being dissimilar, and with a distance closer to 1 as being neither similar nor dissimilar. The programme produces statistics related to measurements of distances between elements and constructs and creates a chart which allows a visual representation of how the informant identifies himself/herself as being similar or dissimilar to other people.³

My understanding is that in contact with teachers learners acquire notions of what teaching is about. By looking back at those teachers and revealing them in terms of constructs these notions become more explicit. When these teachers are contrasted with oneself, it becomes clearer how close the (prospective) teachers see themselves in relation to former teachers.

4.1 - Constructs

Four of the eight first year students⁴ and all the five student teachers completed the grids. The first year ones did it during a group sessions in their class, and the student teachers completed them individually, in their own time,

¹This programme was developed by Patrick Slater (1965).

² In this case similarity or dissimilarity is not an issue, as when elements do not belong to the same range of convenience (they refer to different sets of categories).

³A detailed explanation of how the chart is drawn from the statistics will be given in the appropriate section.

⁴ Other first year students completed the grids but because they were not considered as informants in the analysis, I will leave them out of the grid analysis.

and without my presence. The constructs they exhibited are displayed in Tables 31,32, 33 and 34⁵, categorised as 'Personality' when they referred to individual traits that involved a personal style of relating to students. The other categories were Knowledge of Pedagogy when the constructs referred more explicitly to what EFL teachers do in classrooms in order to bring about learning and Knowledge of Subject Matter, when the constructs related to knowledge of English. The last category was 'Professional Commitment', when constructs referred to teachers' attitudes towards professional development.

Considering that each informant was asked to present an average of 8 constructs, it is clear that two students construed teachers mainly in terms of 'personality'. One (Edneia) was a first year student who was not sure about her future as a teacher. The other (Samira) was a student teacher who showed greater identification with her own experience as a learner in her comments about her future teaching. Some constructs were mentioned by more than one student, and the most frequent ones were: understanding/not understanding, dynamic / boring, authoritarian / not authoritarian. These characteristics reveal that students remembered teachers in terms of their ability to relate with them as learners.

One of the main advantages of Repgrids is that they enable individuals to use their own words, and for this reason groupings of constructs in tables like the one above can be more difficult. However, the constructs which were expressed similarly (for instance, dynamic/active and not dynamic/boring) were grouped together. The variety in the use of words was preserved by maintaining all the alternatives presented by the students themselves. In some cases the meanings were clarified during the interview.

-

⁵ The order of presentation of informants was alphabetical, according to their original first names.

	ls	st year s	student	s		stude	nt teac	hers	
Constructs	Cna	Edn	Hel	Jos	Man	Sam	Suz	Cla	Ma r
authoritarian/not authoritarian/less authoritarian/democratic	X	X		х		X			
understanding/not understanding shy/flexible (jogo de cintura)	X X	х	Х			X			X
disciplined/careless		X							
truthful/liar hard-working/lazy		X							
loyal/not loyal		Х							
flexible/conservative		X							
younger/older	X	X		X					
dynamic/active/ not dynamic/boring			X		X	X	X	X	X
communicative/not communicative/less communicative/not very communicative			X			X	X		X
calm/agressive				X					
demanding/easy-going/tolerant	X				X				
more forceful/less forceful			X						
friendly/serious					X			X	
friendly/unfriendly accessible/distant					X	X			
extrovert/blunt/serious						X	X		X
spontaneous/not spontaneous									X
Total number of constructs	5	8	4	3	4	6	3	2	5

Table 31 - Constructs related to 'Personality'

Table 32 (next page) exhibits the constructs about Knowledge of Pedagogy. Creativity was the construct most referred to by the students, and it appeared among both groups. I categorised it under 'knowledge of pedagogy' because the way the informants referred to creativity was related to the teacher who broke with the routine, by giving different activities and bringing something new. Although some constructs grouped under 'Personality' (like dynamic/boring) could have a relationship with things that those teachers did in classrooms, I have categorised under Knowledge of Pedagogy only those constructs which appeared to be more explicitly related to classroom tasks. The next category is 'Knowledge of Subject Matter', shown in Table 33 (next page).

	lst year students			student teachers					
Constructs	Car	Edn	Hel	Jos	Man	Sam	Suz	Cla	Mar
creative/non-creative	X		X		X	X	X		X
gives extra-activities/relies on method (=textbook)	X								
in a hurry/slow more experienced/less experienced		х		x	x				
organised/disorganised					X				
transmits knowledge more easily/transmits knowledge less easily						X		X	
teaches with little participation of the students/teachers with greater participation of the students							X		
captures students' attention/doesn't arouse students' interest							X		
doesn't show much the application of what is being taught/shows well the application of what is taught							Х		
diversified/gives only one type of activity								X	
innovative/traditional motivating/unmotivating								X X	
Total number of constructs	2	1	1	1	3	2	4	4	1

Table 32 - Constructs related to 'Knowledge of Pedagogy'

Fewer students mentioned constructs in this area. The most frequent attribute was 'confidence', which is connected with the second most referred construct: 'knowledgeable'. It is interesting that not all the students presented constructs about teachers in terms of knowledge of subject matter in the grids, although they did so with the other procedures (see appendices I and J for a comparison).

	1:	1st year students			student teachers				
Constructs	Car	Edn	Hel	Jos	Man	Sam	Suz	Cla	Mar
went abroad/didn't go abroad	X			X					
knows other cultures/knows only Brazilian culture	X								
better command of spoken language/weaker command of spoken language				X					
better command of grammar/weaker command of grammar				X					
confident/lacks confidence					X		X	X	X
high level of knowledge /knowledgeable/ low level of knowledge /doesn't know much							X	X	X
Total number of constructs	2	-	-	3	1	-	2	2	2

Table 33 - Constructs related to 'Knowledge of Subject Matter'

The last group is 'Professional Commitment', a topic which was more consistently mentioned by one first year student (a mature student who had worked as a bank manager) and by a student teacher who was already working as a teacher of English. It was surprising to find that student teachers did not present more constructs related to professional commitment, since they would be the group more likely to see teachers from that perspective.

	1	st year	student	S		stude	nt teac	hers	
Constructs	Car	Edn	Hel	Jos	Man	Sam	Suz	Cla	Mar
researcher/not researcher			X						
interested/not interested			X						
uptodate/not uptodate			X						
dedicated/not much					X				
dedicated									
Total number of	-	-	3	-	1	-	-	-	-
constructs									

Table 34 - Constructs related to 'Professional Commitment'

The total number of all constructs is as follows:

Construct type	first year students	student teachers
Personality	20 (60.6%)	20 (47.6%)
Knowledge of Pedagogy	05(15.2%)	14(33.3%)
Knowledge of Subject Matter	05(15.2%)	07(16.7%)
Professional commitment	03(9.1%)	01(2.4%)
Total	33(100%) ⁶	42(100%)

Table 35 - Total number of constructs provided by first year students and student teachers

The comparison of both groups shows that first year students and student teachers presented more constructs related to 'Personality', although in a lower proportion among student teachers. The predominance of personality characteristics for both groups can be more easily seen in the Figures below:

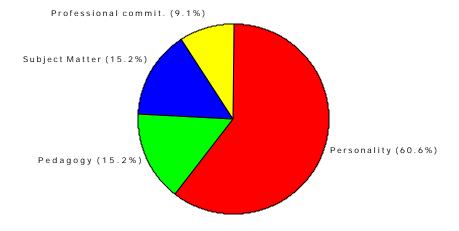


Fig. 7 - Distribution of constructs about teachers - first year students

⁶ The sum of the percentages exceed slightly 100% because the sums are rounded up by the computer programme spreadsheet used (Microsoft Works).

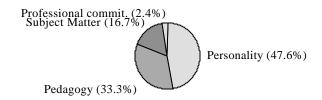


Fig. 8- Distribution of constructs about teachers - student teachers

In percentage terms, there was a higher proportion of constructs about 'Knowledge of Pedagogy' mentioned by student teachers in comparison with first year students and lower number of constructs for 'Professional Commitment'. The proportions for 'Knowledge of the Subject Matter' were similar for both groups. Therefore, student teachers showed a greater number of constructs about 'Knowledge of Pedagogy' in contrast with first year students.

Although Repgrids allow for numerical considerations such as the ones presented above, a word of caution is necessary. As Pope and Denicolo point out, the main advantage of this technique is to obtain individual views about people or events. They argue that the grid should be best seen as a procedure that facilitates a conversation (1993:530). In itself the Repgrid cannot provide deep insights into what the individuals meant when they used certain words. Researchers who advocate Repgrids because they do not require extensive verbalisation of one's thinking might have to couple it with other types of data in order to understand the resulting grids. From the constructs presented it becomes even clearer that a grid alone cannot provide insights into what the students had in mind.

Solas addresses the problem of using only Repgrids. He pointed out the advantages of using this technique (Solas, 1992:208):

One approach which promises a holistic view of the individual, which renders explicit what individuals hold tacitly, and which enables them do so in their own terms is Kelly's (1955a, 1955b) personal construct

theory. Whereas other techniques - such as questionnaires, attitude scales, or observation techniques - presuppose that one can use the terms offered by others, the repertory grid technique evolving out of Kelly's work allows one to discover the personal constructs in terms of which one experiences attitudes, thoughts, and feelings in a personally valid way.

In order to overcome the pitfalls associated with repgrids⁷, Solas suggested a combination of repgrids with autobiography to reconstruct the experiences of the process of teaching and learning:

Autobiography may be described as the life story of just one individual who is the central character of the life drama which unfolds. It presupposes that the person has developed an identity, an individuality, and a consciousness in order to organize his or her own private history from the perspective of the present. (:212)

Although limited, repgrids can provide some insights into individual's perceptions, and these can be probed further with other techniques of data collection. In this study, they were used in conjunction with the lesson reports, questionnaires and interviews to provide a picture of how the students in the course conceptualised EFL teaching/learning. Since the students themselves were included among a group of teachers as one of the elements for rating, it was possible to see them contrasted with former teachers, a topic which will be discussed next.

4.2 - Identification with former teachers

As I have already explained, the repgrids provided constructs about teachers (and therefore, about teaching). Because they were elicited through a

⁷ Among those he cites the generality of the data and its incapacity to capture the flow of ongoing processes. In addition to these, repgrids are amenable to being highly structured by the researcher, who can impose constructs and elements by the use of ready-made grids.

scale (from 1 to 5), it was possible to use the computer programme INGRID to generate charts mapping out the distances between the informant and former teachers. These charts (cognitive maps) are reproduced here in simplified form. The chart represents a multi-dimensional space, in which elements are plotted (through mathematical calculations) in relation to two axes, representing the main dimensions (i.e. set of constructs) exhibited by the individual.

The resulting original chart (not shown here) displays the elements plotted inside the circle. Their position in the chart depends on the numbers assigned to them in the original grid. In this case, these numbers ranged from 1 to 5. In the simplified chart the elements are identified by the letters A,B,C,D and E representing former teachers and F representing the informant himself/herself.

The table of distances between elements generated by INGRID allows the identification of clusters of elements and the constructs associated with them. In order to avoid further confusion with understanding the chart, I have not reproduced these numbers here. However, I took them into account when I was analysing the clusters. According to the tables of distances, the smaller the number, the closer the elements were. As a rule of thumb, relationships expressed in numbers lower than .7 were considered. To facilitate visualisation, researchers working with this programme draw a line if the number is between .6 and .699, two lines if the number is between .5 and .599, three lines if the number is between .4 and .499, and so on. I have used thicker lines to indicate bigger number of lines and thin lines to indicate only one line.

Once elements were located in relation to each other I looked for the constructs that were associated with them. The combination of elements and constructs with strong associations among them was considered a cluster. In order to find out what constructs were *more closely* associated with those elements it was necessary to look at the table of relationships between constructs and elements. In this case, the higher the number the stronger the correlation

between the element and the construct. Again I have not included these numbers here in order to avoid more confusion about interpreting the charts.

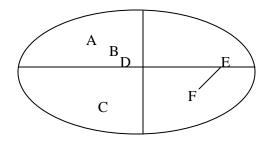
Although the programme generated statistics of several types, due to my interest in identifying how the informants saw themselves in relation to former teachers, I concentrated on those two main indicators: the **distances between** the elements (former teachers and the students himself/herself), and which constructs were more closely associated with the informant and former teachers, when that was the case.⁸

I will present the charts for each of the informants, and some brief explanation of what they revealed about the students' identification with former teachers. I will start with the first year students and then will analyse the student teachers' charts.

4.2.1 - Carina

There were five clusters of teachers in Carina's chart. Four clusters are represented by individual teachers (A, B, C, D) and the fifth cluster contains herself and teacher E. She misunderstood the procedure, and her repgrid was ranked, instead of graded, that is, she gave sequential numbers from 1 to 6 to the elements, according to her opinion about their compliance with the constructs. This was not problematic because the programme allows for repgrid to be ranked or graded.

The chart produced by INGRID is reproduced belowin simplified form:

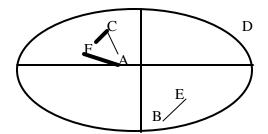


⁸Because informants could see themselves totally unrelated to former teachers, in some cases the most salient construct referred to the informant only.

The axes in the form of a cross represent the main dimensions Carina identified in relation to teachers. Because of my interest in the clusters of elements and constructs, and in the contrast between the student and former teachers, I did not believe it would be relevant to specify what these dimensions were. More important was the contrast between Carina and these former teachers. She saw herself (letter F in the chart) slightly associated with teacher E. The constructs which were more strongly connected with that cluster were 'not authoritarian', 'not creative', 'relies on method', 'less demanding'. During the interview she explained that that teacher was the worst teacher she had had, and considering that was the only teacher she felt closer to, she showed a negative view of herself as a teacher.

3.2.2 - Edneia

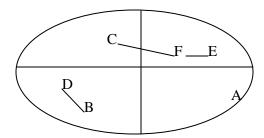
Three clusters formed Edneia's chart, whose reproduction is presented below:



Edneia positioned herself with two former teachers (A and C), to whom she was strongly linked. The most salient construct uniting them was 'young', a fact that became clearer during the interview when she talked about an old Japanese teacher who taught her in primary school and who was seen as providing a negative model for her, insofar as she praised teachers who exhibited the opposite characteristics. Edneia was also the student who saw teachers mainly in terms of personality characteristics more than any other student in the group.

4.2.3 - Helena

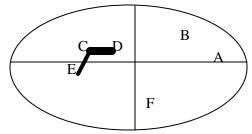
Helena also showed three clusters of teachers, and she placed herself among one of them (with teachers C and E). Her chart is reproduced below:



The most salient construct for Helena was understanding, and that was one quality that she favoured when talking about teachers. She exemplified with her own case, a special event in her life during the time of the interview, in which teachers' understanding was crucial to her.

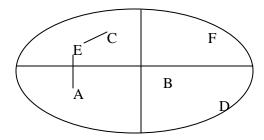
4.2.4 - Jose

The only first year student who isolated himself from former teachers, Jose followed a consistent pattern, since during the interview he wanted to establish himself as not pertaining to the group (frequent mentions to his classmates as 'they', for instance). The two most salient constructs related to him were 'less authoritarian' and 'never lived abroad'. His chart is reproduced below:



4.2.5 - Mariane

This student teacher saw herself not associated with any of her former teachers, seeing them under two separate clusters, as the chart below shows:

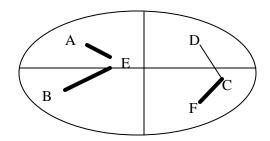


The constructs which correlated more strongly with Mariane were 'boring' and 'insecure', a view that was consistent with her attitude towards her future (that she was not ready yet, and that she needed to learn from practice). When I asked her whether, among those teachers, there were any she would like to copy, she replied:

I don't know, because there are two here that I liked a lot, but they are completely different, I mean their styles.... I think I'm trying, I've always had them as models, I've always admired them. I know I'm not going to be like them, but I'll try my best, because they managed to convey many things to me. (interview, 770-777)

4.2.6 - Samira

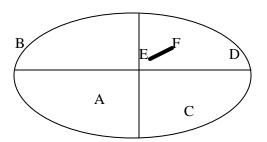
Samira identified two main clusters of teachers, and included herself among teachers C and D (see chart below:)



The construct that correlated more strongly to all the three of them was 'understanding', a characteristic that this student teacher considered important in her description of her own practice during TP.

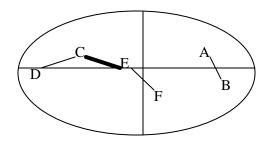
4.2.7 - Suzana

Three clusters emerged in Suzana's chart (below), and she felt very strongly connected with teacher E, in that both were 'less confident', and 'less knowledgeable'.



4.2.8 - Clara

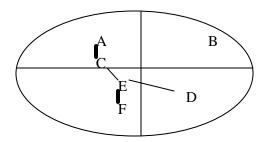
Two main clusters were identified for Clara. Her chart is presented below:



One cluster showed teachers A and B connected, and another linked teachers C, D, E and herself, although her connection was only indirectly done with D and C. The construct that correlated more with teacher E was 'friendly'.

4.2.9 - Marion

Marion's chart is presented below:



Marion felt closer to teacher E, and just slightly connected with two other clusters of teachers: A and C, and D. The construct that correlated with them was 'less knowledgeable'.

Each student revealed constructs pertaining to different dimensions such as Personality, Knowledge of Pedagogy, Knowledge of Subject Matter, connecting them to their former teachers, although a concern with subject matter was more salient among student teachers.

5. Conclusion to this chapter

In this chapter I examined two aspects of the identity of prospective EFL teachers: what kind of teaching they would like to promote, and how they construed former teachers and themselves in relation to them.

In relation to the first aspect, I noted that although both group of students shared the same beliefs about EFL teaching/learning, largely derived from their own experiences as learners of the foreign language, student teachers used the concept of 'communicative method' to refer to what they would like to do in their own classes. I speculated that the methodology component of the course could be doing little more than providing them with a framework to talk about teaching, a function defined as 'naming'/'renaming' by Freeman (1992, 1993b).

In relation to the second aspect, it was possible to detect a different distribution in the number of constructs referring to 'Personality' and 'Knowledge of Pedagogy' among first year students and student teachers. Although for both groups 'Personality' had a larger proportion of constructs, the group of student teachers exhibited a lower percentage of them, at the same time they presented a larger percentage of 'Knowledge of Pedagogy' constructs.

Individual charts showing how close the informants felt in relation to former teachers resulted in unique patterns and demonstrated different degrees of identification, ranging from no identification at all to strong identification with either positive or negative models.

In the next chapter I will analyse the data collected from practising teachers, and will consider the same issues that I have examined for the students in the course: their beliefs about EFL teaching/learning, their relationships with their experiences as learners, and how they saw themselves as teachers.

Chapter 11

Entering the world of teachers

- 1. Introduction
- 2. Teachers' beliefs about TEFL in Brazil
 - 2.1 The social status of the foreign language
 - 2.2 The educational context
 - 2.3 The EFL classroom
 - 2.3.1 Roles of learners
 - 2.3.2 Roles of teachers
 - 2.3.3 Materials and activities
- 3. Teachers' comments on their practices
- 4. Teachers' personal histories
- 5. Former teachers and self
- 6. Conclusion to this chapter

1. Introduction

So far I have presented the beliefs held by two groups of students enrolled in a 'LAP' course and related them to the individuals' personal histories, as well seeing how those prospective teachers projected themselves as teachers. In this chapter I want to examine the perspectives of a group of practising teachers who attended the same course and who were now working in different educational contexts. I will adopt the same framework I employed for looking at the students' perspectives.

2. Teachers' beliefs about TEFL in Brazil

The teachers' beliefs about TEFL teaching were expressed in general terms as they answered the open-ended questionnaire, and reflected a more abstract situation for teaching. During the interviews, however, awareness of

various factors which could limit the implementation of those ideals were mentioned. The questionnaire did not establish boundaries for the beliefs, and for this reason the responses reflected a more general, idealised view. A narrower focus was presented during the teacher's interviews when they talked about their own practice and the working conditions they operated in.

At a more concrete level, the practising teachers were sensitive to learner objectives, to educational context as well as to age (children in contrast with teenagers, like in Cristiana's case), teaching level (basic, intermediate, advanced, as Roberto mentioned), or size of the group (one-to-one versus group teaching, as Cristiana pointed out). In acknowledging differences depending on the variables above the teachers located their practices within boundaries that defined the implementation of beliefs.

Therefore, the answers to the questionnaire reflected beliefs at the ideal level, i.e. they did not necessarily reflect what teachers put into practice in their classrooms, since these were subject to constraints.

The research design adopted in this study tried to capture beliefs at both abstract and concrete levels, since the teachers had the questionnaire to express some of their beliefs and made comments on their practices, thus revealing also their beliefs.

As I have already explained, their classroom practices were not independently observed in order to establish the 'true' degree of implementation of the beliefs expressed at an abstract level.

In the next section I will examine one of the boundaries that limited the beliefs held by this specific group of teachers, that is how they perceived the aims of TEFL teaching in the Brazilian context.

2.1 - The social status of the foreign language

As I mentioned before, I did not include questions to all the informants specifically about their views on the status of the foreign language. However, the

group mentioned the reasons for learning English as a foreign language as they made comments about their own students (Cristiana, Carmem and Roberto) or students in a context different from the one they were teaching at that moment (Lia). I have summarised their points of view (expressed in the interviews) as follows:

Cristiana	For some students (conscious, within a certain age range) it's because they will need it for vestibular, for their career. For some it's because the parents want them to study it.
Carmem	The student is not convinced that English is important. The teacher has to show this need. To teach English is to try and show that there is this other language that is practically dominating the world, that leads all the economy, that is another country, another reality, and contrast it with our country. It is very important to see this difference of culture, but it's very difficult to convince the student because he (sic) doesn't see the need.
Roberto	In his school the learners are interested because of the 'vestibular'. For others it is because they will win a trip to Disneyworld. There is an unconscious will to learn English, because it's the language of the First World. Many are interested in studying abroad or entering the university.
Lia	English is a subject discriminated against in the curriculum. It is not seen as important because it doesn't have a gate keeping function. Teachers try to teach pleasant lessons and are not worried about teaching the students to be users of the language, readers of technical books, etc.

Except for Carmem, who was teaching at 10. grau, the only dimension presented by this group of teachers was the instrumental one¹. Because they were referring specifically to their students it did not mean necessarily that they did not see other dimensions as equally important. They could have mentioned other reasons if they were thinking of the foreign language in the official school

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Although Cristiana mentioned that the teacher had to "associate the language to the culture of the people" she described it as "talking about the habits and customs" of the speakers of English. In her case she felt confident to talk about the Americans because she had been there. This was interpreted as her belief about the content of the lessons rather than the reasons for teaching English.

curriculum, as it was the case of Lia and Carmem. English as the dominant language in the world was unquestioned and this group of teachers saw this as a motivating factor for the students in general. However, different educational contexts provided further constraints to this motivation, and it was felt that teachers had the role of fostering this motivation by showing the students the importance of what they were learning. Therefore the status of the foreign language reflected directly the learners' receptivity that foreign language, and had an effect upon the perceptions of the teacher's role.

2.2 - The educational context

There were only two teachers who experienced teaching at state 10. and 20. grau schools: Carmem and Lia, and because my conversation with teachers centred around their own practices, it was only those two teachers who contrasted the two contexts (that is, private language schools and state 10. And 20. Graus schools). For Lia it was not possible to learn English in state schools, whereas in some private language schools students could learn the grammar but not necessarily be able to speak. Carmem referred to the limitations of her own context of teaching, by pointing out that it was difficult to get the learners to communicate orally. By expressing their reservations about state 10. and 20. graus schools both teachers revealed their interpretations of what they understood by learning a foreign language and their interpretations were closely associated with oral skills. In this sense they were in agreement with the students who also linked learning the foreign language with oral skills. This could be seen as a particular interpretation of the communicative methodology, often associated with the ability to speak the foreign language.

Carmem pointed out the difficulties associated with teaching in state schools because of the lack of materials that makes the teacher's work more difficult. She also reported that in this context the students are unruly and not open to oral communication.

2.3 - The EFL classroom

I was interested in eliciting the teachers' views on the classroom conditions that are necessary to enable learning to take place in particular with reference to the roles of teachers and learners, materials and activities.

2.3.1 - Roles of learners

Question 4 of the questionnaire offered the respondents an opportunity to mention the learner's contribution to learning. Their responses were interpreted as what is embedded in performing the role of learners. Again, when asked about what factors contribute to foreign language learning, learners were mentioned in the following ways:

- likes the language (Cristiana)
- has aptitude (Cristiana)
- rapport with the teacher (Cristiana)
- dedication and commitment (Cristiana)
- interest (Fernanda, Nidia, Jane)
- students' production (Carmem)
- students' motivation (Roberto)
- students' involvement and participation (Nidia)
- students' low filter, low anxiety (Valeria)

In talking about their students, the teachers attributed to them greater responsibility for learning. Roberto believed that even without a teacher, or even with a 'bad method' it would be possible to learn, if the learner is motivated and interested. He mentioned the various groups in his school and how those who went there with some goal in mind (not just because their parents wanted them to study English) were keen to learn. Carmem saw the role of the learner as to 'assimilate' (assimilar) and use the language, and compared to Roberto, she attributed greater responsibility to the teacher, who would have to convey this knowledge that is going to be 'assimilated'. For Cristiana, the students are used

to a tradition that the teacher has to spoon-feed them, and that they do not have to do anything. She felt that learners were responsible for doing the homework, paying attention to the corrections and finding out how they learned best. However, she thought, this is not what learners are used to.

Lia did not address the learner's role specifically. She felt that it was the teacher's responsibility to respect the students' cognitive styles. In contrast with Cristiana, who attributed to the learners the role of finding their own learning styles, Lia saw this responsibility as part of the teacher's role. Furthermore, she mentioned the student's interest and motivation as important factors in language learning.

2.3.2 - Roles of teachers

I focused the questionnaire around the roles of the teacher and the 'method', and the responses were tabulated as shown in Table 36 (Appendix N), which summarises the responses given by all the respondents.

The beliefs presented were similar to those expressed by the students, but teachers tended to concentrate on the pedagogical level and the relationship with students. Some were more articulate, others restricted their answers to some dimensions only. Teachers were seen essentially with the role of creating a good relationship with students, being responsive to their interests and needs as a means to achieve the end of bringing about learning.

As I have already pointed out about the beliefs held by the 'LAP' students, the way teachers perceived the educational context (and by implication the type of learner motivation) had implications for the teacher's role. During the interview Carmem reinforced her view that the teacher is responsible for creating student interest in the subject, and by showing them that they are learning, they are producing, and showing the importance of the foreign language. This perception of her role was consistent with her metaphor of learners having to assimilate the subject. She also associated good teachers with those who know

the language and who were always trying to keep themselves up-to-date. Carmem felt, according to her experience in teaching, that it was important to treat the students with friendship, because it made them enjoy the lesson.

Both instructional and managerial functions were envisaged in the teachers' beliefs about the role of teachers. Cristiana believed that this role included to transmit the content (language, grammar) very clearly, enabling the students to practise, allowing them to go on learning, by encouraging them, correcting them and demanding from them.

The language as an object of transmission was also presented by Roberto, who believed that the role of the teacher was to help learners absorb ('absorver') the language.

2.3.3 - Materials and activities

Not all the respondents mentioned specific materials or activities they felt necessary to successful foreign language learning, because they were expressing beliefs at a more abstract level. In private language schools in general the materials are those established by the academic coordinator of the school. In state schools there was an official textbook. According to Carmem, the only teacher working in that context, if the teacher did not use the textbook at all the students would start complaining because "they are used to it". Table 37 displays the material and activities which were mentioned by all the respondents in the questionnaire. It is interesting to note that Cristiana, Lia and Roberto did not mention specific materials and activities in their responses. They were the only teachers who mentioned just learner and teacher as the factors that guarantee successful learning in their responses to question number 4 of the questionnaire. Other respondents mentioned the following:

- techniques (Josefa)
- learners, topics, teachers (Fernanda)
- topics, environment, materials (Carmem)

- learners, teachers, method/resources, environment (Nidia)
- teachers, learners, resources (Valeria)
- teachers, materials, classroom conditions (Luisa)
- learners, topics, teachers (Jane)

A comparison of the beliefs held by the first year students, the student teachers and the practising teachers showed that teachers tended to think more about abstract properties of activities, a trend also exhibited by student teachers. The first year students mentioned more specific activities.

Having discussed the teachers' beliefs as they appeared mainly in the questionnaire, I would like to explore next some of the thinking underlying their practices as they talked during the interview about their own approaches to teaching.

3. Teachers' comments on their practices

In discussing the student teachers' identification with teaching I pointed out that at the end of the course there were those who mentioned specifically that they would like to follow a 'communicative method' and others who reported that they would follow their own methods. The four practising teachers exhibited a pattern closer to the latter. Lia and Cristiana mentioned that they followed their intuitions, and Lia felt difficulty in verbalising these intuitions. None of them wanted to say they were totally committed to 'a' method. When talking about their understanding of the 'communicative method' they opposed it to the teaching of grammar, that is, the structure of the language. The way they understood that method was that it excluded formal explanations about the language, something that they considered important in the context where English is a foreign language.

Cristiana felt that grammar was important, otherwise the students would communicate inadequately and make mistakes. She equated method with syllabus and in the particular context of her school, a syllabus that is contained in the textbook. She pointed out that when she found the students need grammatical explanations, she was ready to give them:

I noticed that if you explain grammar for any level, if you explain, look, it's like this, the example is like this, and do this and this, everybody understands and everybody feels confident with your explanation. (interview, Cristiana)

Cristiana assumed her own preferences as a learner were the same as her students'. As a student she also liked everything explained to her. Knowing the reasons why the language worked like it did helped her have confidence to explain it to the students.

Carmem said she used a 'miscellaneous' method. However, she felt she was following a communicative approach, though she expressed concern whether she was using it correctly. She did not feel confident to say what this 'correctly' meant, because she would need to learn more about it. Her definition of the approach was that

It would be something that you do, you try to put your students in contact with real things. If I want to talk about food, nothing better than to bring a menu. It is to create conditions for them to communicate in real terms, to see the need of what they were studying, within their reality. (interview, Carmem)

This interpretation was also present in the student teachers' beliefs about what it meant to follow a communicative methodology. Carmem mentioned that she tried to react to her students, and that 'sometimes she had to use the structural method'. She was not sure what theoretical principles she was following:

I use the communicative approach, mixed with TPR^2 , this I know for sure because I am studying it... I have to see whether I am following the right line. I would need more theoretical background to know. (interview, Carmem)

In her first year of teaching Carmem was still struggling with the notion that a teacher has to follow the 'right' method or adopt a more eclectic approach. She was still testing the concepts she heard about during the course, particularly those with which she identified with.

Although the practising teachers justified their teaching in terms of students' needs/interests, they tended to follow approaches that derived from the amalgamation of their experiences. Carmem felt her guiding principle was the students' needs, but actually these needs were interpreted in the light of her own experience, hence her strong belief that students enjoyed TPR (which perhaps could be externally established by some form of measurement of genuine interest from the students) when she herself had decided to embrace that technique as part of her teaching. When putting it into practice she saw that the students enjoyed it, because they could practise the language, and the practice had a meaningful purpose for them. In contrast with that, she had to accommodate their other interests, and she sometimes tried to use the textbook, because they were used to it. However, she did not like following the textbook strictly because the "students' interests should come first", and also, because it was not part of her nature to be "tied with things". Since the school did not provide her with adequate materials she had to improvise with her own teaching resources, by bringing in cartoons and other texts to supplement the textbook. Carmem expressed a belief about students in state schools similar to those of the student teachers who had done their teaching practice. She started to work with a group of students who were used to a teaching routine that had to be gradually replaced and she was accommodating what she wanted to do with the students' expectations.

²Total Physical Response, developed by James Asher, which "attempts to teach language through physical (motor) activity" (Richards and Rodgers, 1986:87).

Working in a different context, Roberto told me he followed a structuralist method, which was the method adopted by the private language school he was working for. He had doubts about the communicative method, because he had never seen it 'working'. His understanding of the method emphasised aspects such as the syllabus and the role of the mother tongue. For him the communicative method does not focus on structures and does not use translation.

Although operating within the parameters set up by the school, Roberto felt he was following his own method, which involved using translation and avoiding grammatical explanations. He would like to have more time for planning, but usually had an idea of what he was going to teach, and also believed that the students had some expectations (they want the "standard") and he could not depart much from what is already established by the school.

Roberto seemed to conform to the school procedures, which did not allow much freedom to teachers, who had their practices largely guided by these procedures. However, it was interesting to hear him say that he used his own method, implying that at least at the classroom interactive decision-making level he felt a certain degree of freedom.

Lia worked in a private language school which she felt allowed her freedom to react to particular groups of students. She considered herself a communicative teacher, "but taught grammar, depending on the learner needs". However, in answering the questionnaire she confessed disbelief in the 'best ways', because the teacher has to be responsive to his or her students. Having had some theoretical background on cognitive styles³, she described the students' differences according to those terms. She distinguished two types of teachers: those concerned with teaching, and those concerned with learning, among whom she included herself. Those concerned with teaching would follow a theory and

³She took a specialisation course at the university after graduating and was writing her monograph on this topic.

those concerned with learning would be sensitive to the learning styles of his or her students. She confessed she had never agreed with the exclusion of grammar teaching, even when the communicative method was more 'radical', and justified it by her belief that the teacher has to respond to the way students learn, rather than to follow a theory that does not work for some learners.

The four teachers had all positioned themselves in relation to the 'communicative method' and explained their practices acknowledging the framework established by the institutions within which they were working. All of them expressed concern with their students' needs and justified their practices in those terms. For this reason they did not want to follow rigidly any particular method, since they felt it would not allow them to respond to those needs adequately. Although it would be expected that teachers were sensitive to their learners' interests the way they tried to match these interests varied according to their own beliefs, and they projected their own experiences as learners into what they believed their students needed. The same pattern was present in the student teachers' discourse as they talked about the way they would like to teach.

The teachers had all followed a pattern similar to the students I interviewed: they attended the 'official' lessons at 10. and 20. graus, which they considered ineffective, and studied at private language schools simultaneously or previously to entering the university. In the next section I will present fragments of their biographies and what they acknowledged as influential to their teaching, since, as we have seen, it is only through their recollections of experiences they considered significant that we can establish the potential sources for their beliefs.

4. Teachers' personal histories

As with the students, the beliefs found expression also through stories the teachers told me. They used those personal histories not only to explain their beliefs but also to show how meaningful certain experiences were and how

deeply rooted they were. These stories appeared during the interview at moments when the informants wanted to make explicit what they had expressed in one statement or because the statement would not do justice to the complexity involved. These stories ranged in length: some were just brief anecdotes, others were more elaborated. In this section I will present fragments of these stories but will consider the implications of this simplification in Chapter 12.

The teachers who graduated more recently from the course and who are discussed in more depth in this chapter decided to study 'LAP' for reasons associated with their interest in English, a pattern that was also exhibited by the students I have analysed. They decided to pursue a career in teaching because they enjoyed it. Cristiana liked it since her childhood, when she used to teach friends. Carmem also taught her classmates when she was studying. Roberto was invited to teach in the school he studied and decided to accept it. Lia developed her 'passion' for teaching while she was doing LAP, when she entered a classroom as a teacher for the first time. They all had other jobs, but preferred teaching, although worried about the possibility of surviving in a profession that was so underrated socially and that rewarded teachers so badly.

The teachers remembered very little of their experience at 10. and 20. graus. They worked more like 'anti-models', as Lia put it, because they were boring. At private language schools a positive influence was acknowledged by Cristiana and Roberto who started teaching in the same schools they had studied at. They acknowledged that they copied teachers they had.

Lia perceived the experience at the language school also as negative, reinforcing her view that the way she was taught was not the one she would like to follow. Her frustration came out of the experience of spending nine years studying in a private language school and going to the United States and not being able to utter a word. Although at first she blamed the course that focused essentially around grammar, later on she realised that what she had learned was

not wasted and she started to communicate. For this reason she did not want to exclude formal explanation about the structure of the language from her teaching.

The EFL Methodology component of the course, with its theoretical and practical sessions, was acknowledged as the moment when the teachers learned about the different methods. Carmem was the teacher who had started to teach the most recently but felt that before having the EFL Methodology classes she only knew how to teach structures⁴. She was the teacher who explicitly recognised that the adoption of a particular method into her teaching was due to the course. It was also during her teaching practice that she observed a teacher and decided that was not the way she would like to teach. During the course she had to demonstrate the method (TPR) to her classmates, and from then on she decided to incorporate it into her repertoire of activities. Roberto expressed disbelief with the possibility of applying what he heard during the course unless he had his own school. He was very much aware of the constraints imposed by the institution he was working with, which had a particular series of steps to be followed.

Lia had already mentioned that her interest in teaching developed out of her teaching practice, although she felt it was not enough. During the theoretical sessions they discussed their practice and it was then that she felt she started to question teaching.

The language component of the course was not felt to be influential to any of these teachers because they had already studied the language or were studying it in private language schools. The lessons about teaching that they received at that time were implicit: some of the teaching they were exposed to reflected ways they did not want to teach.

⁴As I am a teacher working with EFL Methodology the teachers might have felt compelled to emphasise the importance of that component of the course when talking to me. However, I have reasons to believe that they were sincere since they also put forward criticisms of that component and expressed scepticism about the possibility of it achieving major changes.

One lesson that can be drawn from these stories of the teachers' perceptions of the influence of the course on their teaching is that 'LAP' students see their language lessons at the university in the same way they see the private language schools. If that parallel can be drawn, then they are also learning implicitly about teaching, and trying to compare and contrast these experiences with a view to developing their own identity as EFL teachers.

However, it is not only the course that shapes the teachers' identity. Experiences in other contexts also contribute to reinforce or reformulate beliefs about teaching. For three of these teachers who went abroad the experience served to put some of these beliefs into check, as Lia's story above about the learning of grammar confirms. Cristiana strongly believed that culture was an important aspect to be taught and derived her explanation from her stay in the United States⁵. Roberto also felt that non-native speaker teachers were better than native speakers, and had a chance to 'confirm' his belief during the year he spent in an exchange programme abroad.

In this section I have presented some fragments of the teachers' personal histories that might help us begin to understand the beliefs they held at the time I interviewed them.

In addition to questionnaire and interviews, I also asked for repgrids about former teachers from these teachers⁶. In the next section I would like to look at these repgrids and consider the teacher's views in light of the constructs they produced.

5. Former teachers and self

⁵Probably it is not just a coincidence that the United States was the country that all the informants had referred to. For many of those studying English in Brazil a very strong motivating factor is the possibility of visiting or working in that country. To speculate about the reasons for the predominance of this desire would go beyond the scope of this chapter. ⁶Although the teachers also wrote diaries about their own teaching, these functioned as topics for conversation during the interview.

Three teachers completed the repgrids and their constructs are displayed in Table 38:

	1		-	
Constructs	Cristiana	Carmem	Lia	
Personality				
calm/nervous	X			
confident/not confident	X			
free speech ⁷ /uses notebook	X			
democratic/authoritarian	X			
dynamic/passive		X		
flexible - discipline and emotional control of the	X			
group/dull personality				
charisma/distance teacher-student			X	
Knowledge of Co	ontent	1	1	
knows the subject/limited knowledge	X			
excellent pronunciation/bad pronunciation	X			
good control of content/doesn't worry about form			X	
Vnowledge of Do	dogogy			
Knowledge of Perfriend - considers the student as a	uagugy 			
person/hierarchical - cold	X			
good relationship with students/doesn't care about	A	X		
keeping good relationship with students		A		
clear objectives/unclear, undefined objectives		X		
involves all the students in the activities/doesn't				
involve all the students in the activities		X		
communicative approach/traditional approach		X		
use of games and competition to stimulate				
students/no competitive activity		X		
always brings something new, surprises/no novelty		X		
explores students' interests/doesn't consider				
students' interests		X		
improvisation/planning			X	
traditional/creative			X	
Professional Com	mitment	1	1	
shows enthusiasm for the job/doesn't seem to enjoy				
the job		X		
dedicated/self- sufficient			X	
concerned about learning/concerned about teaching			X	
conscious/chaca chaca teacher			X	

 $^{^{7}}$ The words in italics are direct quotations from the teachers, who used English rather than Portuguese in that section of the grid.

idealist/disorganised		v
idealist/disorganised		Λ

Table 38 (continued) - Constructs exhibited by practising teachers

Considering the small number of grids from the teachers, it was not very surprising that there was no overlap at all in the constructs used by the teachers. What was more surprising was the different emphasis that each gave to the overall category for the constructs. As a group these teachers showed greater number of constructs related to Knowledge of Pedagogy, as Figure 9 shows:

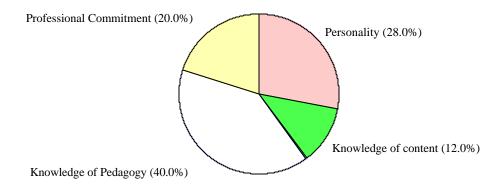


Fig. 9 - Distribution of constructs about teachers - practising teachers

When compared with the students' grids it becomes clear that these teachers concentrated more on Knowledge of Pedagogy and Professional Commitment. 'Personality' decreased in salience⁸ from 60.6% with first year students, 47.6% with student teachers and 28% with teachers. This is not surprising and is within the expected. However, what must be noted is that each individual teacher had a preference for one of the overall categories. Cristiana emphasised personality constructs, whereas Carmem thought of teachers more in terms of pedagogy and Lia in terms of professional commitment. This result is

⁸ Saliency is reflected in the larger number of constructs that fell into that category.

consistent with the concerns expressed by the teachers during the interview. Cristiana spent a large proportion of the interview talking about the importance of the affective dimension and how important she considered it to be. This importance was reinforced by the story she used to exemplify her belief about learning and the importance of the teacher as a friend that inspires confidence. She reported one episode when she was learning scuba-diving. After receiving the theoretical background ("I'm curious, I want to know, because that's the way I am"), she failed to dive into the sea because the teacher did not hold hands with her, and she did not feel confident enough to do it alone. As a teacher she felt she had to relate affectionately with the students, so that learning could take place. However, she saw differences between one-to-one and group teaching:

I'm saying this because to hold hands with an individual is one thing, to do this with a whole group - I do a lot of this, you know, but I don't go until the end, you don't do it completely, because you have the whole group, you have other things to do. I try to relate emotionally

whole group, you have other things to do. I try to relate emotionally with the student, I try to win him on this aspect, because I think it works, it is possible to learn. (interview)

Carmem, on the other hand, in her first year of teaching showed concern for adopting the 'right' approach and saw her former teachers mainly in terms of pedagogy. During the interview she expressed her uncertainty:

Sometimes I am in doubt: is what I am preparing really communicative? To what extent is it? I am in doubt... is what I've written to you⁹ really communicative? Am I really communicative? I think I am, but I would need more theoretical background to know for sure.

Lia focused on the different types of teachers and how she saw herself as distinct from them. Her definition of a good teacher in the questionnaire illustrates this concern:

A good teacher is someone who, independent of the situation, does his or her job with eagerness, professionalism and enthusiasm. It is

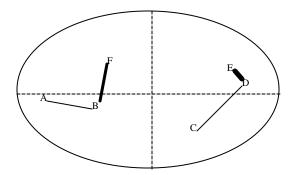
⁹She is referring to the lesson reports about her classes.

someone who is dedicated, cares for what he or she does and, consequently, looks for ways and alternatives from his or her own practice.

The maps produced with the help of the computer programme INGRID revealed how closely or distantly the teachers located themselves in relation to former teachers. I will consider each teacher individually.

5.1 - Cristiana

Cristiana identified two groups of teachers: one among whom she included herself, of teachers who were perceived as exhibiting constructs closer to one of the poles (positive attributes¹⁰), and another which contained two teachers closely connected (closer to the negative pole) and a third loosely connected to them. The construct that showed greater correlation with herself was 'friend - considers the student as a person', which is consistent with the story she told.

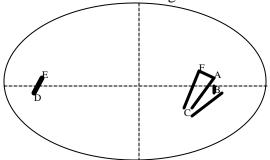


5.2 - *Carmem*

Carmem also identified two groups of teachers and both groups had teachers very closely connected, which is presented in the grid by her assigning the same numbers to those groups of teachers. She included herself among the group that was closer to the positive pole. The construct that correlated more

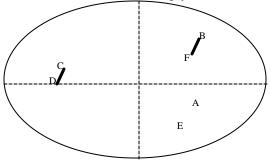
¹⁰Positive attributes in general were placed on the left hand column of the grid and the negative ones (in many cases opposites) on the right hand column.

strongly with her was 'explores students' interests', which confirms her concern with the pedagogical dimension of her teaching.



5.3 - Lia

Lia showed a wider spread of groups: four clusters were identified. She saw herself as more similar to teacher B, who had characteristics on the positive pole. The construct that correlated more strongly with her was 'dedicated'.



The analysis of the grids enabled some interesting speculations about the potential of grids to confirm teachers' perceptions of teaching by looking back at former teachers and contrasting themselves with them. In this particular case the grids combined with other methods of data collection to show constructs that a group of teachers held about EFL teaching.

6. Conclusion to this chapter

In this chapter I have examined a group of practising teachers' beliefs about EFL teaching as they were expressed through the open-ended questionnaire, and analysed in more depth four of those teachers. Their identification as teachers was presented as well as their personal histories. Some

comparisons with the students in the 'LAP' course were drawn. The three groups of informants (first year students, student teachers and practising teachers) shared beliefs about the status of the foreign language, educational context and the conditions for successful classroom foreign language learning (roles of teachers and learners, materials and activities). Their personal histories (including those experiences in schools) were reflected in the expression of those beliefs, which were shaped by the amalgamation of those experiences. According to them, the 'LAP' course contribution through the EFL methodology component rested on allowing them to see the diversity of methods available. It was that component that helped them name their own set of beliefs about teaching/learning, and to position themselves in relation to a particular approach.

Regarding their identification with former teachers, those few informants who completed the grids positioned themselves with the group which exhibited positive characteristics. These school teachers also identified themselves according to different categories of constructs, each concentrating either on 'personality', 'pedagogy' or 'professional commitment'.

Having presented the analysis of the data for all the three groups of informants, in the next chapter I would like to discuss the lessons learned from investigating beliefs within the framework I adopted and the professional implications for teacher educators working in contexts similar to the one I investigated.

Chapter 12

A picture in motion...

- 1. Introduction
- 2. Methodology and the pictures: biography and beliefs
- 3. The photographer's position
- 4. Of pictures and truths: validity and reliability
- 5. Methodological implications
- 6. Conclusion to this chapter

1. Introduction

In Part III of this thesis I presented pictures of beliefs about foreign language teaching/learning held by two groups of 'LAP' students and a group of practising EFL teachers. The theoretical framework adopted was one that linked teacher thinking and teacher socialisation, by connecting beliefs about foreign language teaching/learning to experiences the informants had been through, during their schooling prior to the university and also during the teacher preparation course, as well as how they viewed themselves as EFL teachers.

In accordance with the research questions that guided this exploratory study the investigation was conducted with three interrelated purposes in mind: a) to identify the beliefs about foreign language teaching/learning held by prospective and practising EFL teachers, b) to relate these beliefs to the experiences the informants went through before and during a pre-service teacher education programme, and c) to reveal aspects of the informants' teacher role identity.

I have used the metaphor of photography to document the processes involved in the study, in order to make it more readable. Considering that the socialisation of teachers is not a static process, the pictures I presented in Part III have to be seen together in order to convey some of the dynamism involved.

According to those pictures, the following patterns could be observed:

- 1. Not surprisingly, the 'LAP' students who approached the end of the course used professional labels to refer to their own approaches to teaching and positioned themselves in relation to particular teaching methodologies.
- 2. The teacher's role was perceived as increasingly less instructional and more managerial by the students who were about to complete the course than by the first year students.
- 3. Student teachers referred more to properties of activities, rather than activities themselves, when answering questions about what is more conducive to successful language learning.
- 4. The social status of the foreign language was perceived in similar ways by the three groups of informants.
- 5. The educational context was seen by first year students mainly in terms of its usefulness for language learning, whereas student teachers saw it mainly as a working context.
- 6. In relation to their own identities as learners, the outcomes were less homogeneous, with some of the informants taking their identity as teachers with optimism, believing they would perform better than the teachers they observed, and others who doubted their ability to change the status quo. This result confirms Weinstein's study with prospective teachers (Weinstein, 1988, 1989, 1990).
- 7. Considering that the teaching practice was seen as the transitional period between the identity as learner and as teacher, some of the informants still relied heavily on their experiences as learners to project their performance as teachers. A similar trend was found by Johnson (1994) in her study with prospective ESL teachers.
- 8. Practising teachers exhibited more constructs that elated to professional commitment than first year students. Personality, knowledge of content and knowledge of pedagogy were the other categories used to represent teachers.

Personality decreased in importance for student teachers and practising teachers, whereas knowledge of pedagogy increased its overall share of constructs. This trend indicates that practising teachers may develop their sense of belonging to a profession as they start teaching, although other professional notions (such as knowledge of content and pedagogy) are developed much earlier.

According to these results, although the practising teachers exhibited greater awareness of professionalisation (as reflected in their constructs about professional commitment) traces of this awareness could also be found among first year students.

Given their previous experiences, first year students, student teachers, and practising teachers shared beliefs pertaining to the three levels I suggested (the social status of the language, the educational context, and the classroom). However, greater diversity became more visible as they moved from the more general level (the social status of the language) to the more specific (the classroom).

These results support the position that the beliefs prospective teachers bring to teacher education programmes serve as filters through which they see their formal teacher education. However, these beliefs, derived from prior educational experiences, include assessments of degrees of successfulness of particular ways of working. These assessments may be challenged or confirmed by the teacher education programme itself. Therefore, the 'apprenticeship of observation' interacts with the teacher education programme.

The research agenda of this exploratory study, however, needs to be pursued with other explorations that deal more explicitly with changes over time and the constraints posed by the teaching practice itself.

In the next section I would like to discuss some methodological issues connected with this study.

2. Methodology and the pictures: biography and beliefs

This study started out with the main objective of identifying beliefs held by different groups of students in the 'LAP' course as well as teachers who had graduated recently from the same programme. One of the objectives was to compare and contrast these beliefs. From the start, I realised that if the goal was to understand the programme's contribution to teachers' pedagogical practices via their beliefs, some understanding of where these beliefs came from was necessary. For this reason, the research design incorporated narratives in two ways: as biographical information about the informants' schooling and professional experiences, and as anecdotes, by encouraging the informants to talk about their previous foreign language learning experiences.

Data collection that relied on narratives was specifically introduced to elicit those personal episodes that might have been useful in explaining the existing beliefs. As I have discussed in Chapter 3, narratives as data in educational research have already established their credentials, through studies that place teachers' stories as central to the understanding of teaching.

Although I did not obtain a complete record of individual biographies, some episodes from the personal histories the informants provided were important in illuminating some of the beliefs they expressed through the various methods of data collection. As Carter (1993:9) justifies:

A story ... is a theory of something. What we tell and how we tell it is a revelation of what we believe.

The final picture that is represented in this thesis is, therefore, one that portrays individuals holding beliefs which are illuminated by anecdotes they told as part of their personal histories as EFL learners or teachers. As with any research the results are a direct reflection of the methodology used to collect the data and the theoretical assumptions that guided data collection. To continue with

the metaphor I have adopted, I want to explain what kind of lenses I used and what my position as a photographer was.

As I explained in Chapters 5 and 6, the methodology used in the main study was a result of what I had tried with a pilot study and also based on the literature of research in the field of teacher thinking, especially teachers' theories and beliefs.

One important consideration was that beliefs were elicited at the level of verbalisations only and not at the level of behaviours observed independently and no attempt was made to cross-check behaviours and verbalisations of those behaviours. Therefore I am not claiming that the beliefs reported by the informants were or would be directly reflected in their own teaching practices. I pointed out that beliefs inferred from observation of behaviours might not yield 'real' beliefs, but rather that teachers are aware of the constraints to the implementation of their 'real' beliefs. Therefore, I did not assume a correspondence between belief and behaviour, although they were connected when the informants referred to specific classroom events (such as when they completed the lesson reports).

I also relied on verbalisations at the ideal level. With the first year students these verbalisations seemed particularly important, since their practices as teachers could only be projected. The student teachers had the opportunity to refer to their own behaviours during the teaching practice and justify them. Not surprisingly when these references to real practices were made the informants showed awareness of constraints, as represented by the three levels: the classroom (particularly the roles of teachers and learners, materials and activities), the educational context and the status of the foreign language in society. Practising teachers also revealed awareness of constraints as they talked about their current practices, justifying their practices according to the teaching conditions imposed by the educational context (or institution) they were operating in.

Considering that my understanding was that beliefs would be revealed by the informants themselves according to their own words, it is important to consider what counted as a belief in the final analysis. The methods I employed tried to combine direct and indirect ways of eliciting beliefs. Direct ways included the questions posed by the open-ended questionnaire and during the interview, whereas the lesson reports and repgrids tried to obtain those beliefs via their descriptions of what happened in their own classrooms or through the constructs they used to characterise teachers, including themselves.

The responses to my questions were analysed and categorised according to the three areas I was interested in: beliefs, personal histories and teacher role identity. Considering that at the beginning of the study the main focus was on beliefs, the other two areas were subordinate to the first, and the order of the chapters reflects this subordination.

In this study, however, there was consistency between what individuals expressed through the different means of data collection, and the repetition of themes was interpreted as reflecting a common guiding construct. These guiding constructs were generated by the various methods of data collection, some of which were presented against the background of personal histories, which illuminated the associations between previous experiences and those beliefs.

To sum up what I have said so far, beliefs were revealed at three levels and with varying degrees of abstraction. They were linked to previous educational experiences (either as learners or as teachers) in an attempt to understand the process of socialisation of EFL teachers in a particular pre-service teacher education programme.

I would like to move on and discuss validity and reliability issues. However, as I adopted a qualitative approach, I feel that I must present first my position as the photographer of the pictures summarised above.

3. The photographer's position

Verbalisations of beliefs constituted the core of the data in this study. In considering these verbalisations it is also important to bear in mind my role as a teacher who was temporarily working as a researcher. What the informants told me during the two months of data collection has to be interpreted in the light of my position as a researcher. As I discussed in Chapter 4, what informants say cannot be divorced from its context of articulation.

As a teacher working in the programme, I had known some of the student teachers and the practising teachers for varied periods of time. Considering that I had been away on a leave for one year at the time of data collection, I did not know the first year students previously. I met them for the first time during data collection. Some of the informants had been my students when I taught in the course before taking the leave to do a research degree. Many of those who volunteered to contribute with the research did so because of the personal relationship I had with them or because they felt their participation in the research could contribute as feedback to the course as a whole.

The fact that I was an 'insider' in the 'LAP' course had many advantages, and in some sense guaranteed the feasibility of the study. Furthermore, a study in that context would potentially contribute to a better understanding of my role in educating prospective EFL teachers.³

I do not believe that my position as teacher/researcher represented a threat to the sincerity of the informants' responses. Comments about the contribution of the course did not appear to have been censored by them and remarks that could be interpreted as negative were included in their appraisal of the course. I promised them the anonymity of their comments would be preserved by the

¹ This perception was confirmed during the interview when I asked about their reaction to the research.

² See Wright (1992) for a discussion about the relationships between outsider and insider researchers.

³ I had the opportunity to discuss issues related to the choice of topic and potential audiences in a paper presented during the Linguistics Department Research Students' Forum (Gimenez, 1993).

adoption of pseudonyms. I hope that by including details of personal histories this anonymity is not cancelled out, and only those especially close enough to the informants would be able to recognise them⁴.

Having explained my position of photographer, I would like to discuss some issues that could be connected with the notion of the 'validity' and 'reliability' of the study.

4. Of pictures and truths: validity and reliability

Validity is usually associated with 'truth': "the extent to which an account accurately represents the social phenomena to which it refers" (Hammersley, 1990, cited by Silverman, 1993:149). In this study the validity of the outcomes can be judged against the methodology employed (data collection and analysis) which has already been explained in detail in earlier chapters, when I justified the decisions I made.

The studies that sought to examine the influence of teacher education on beliefs adopted a longitudinal approach. I have already noted the debate whether teacher education can influence or not and what exactly that influence is, and the possibility of accepting an affirmative or negative answer depending on what one means by 'change'. For this reason in this study I opted instead for a focus on retrospective accounts of potential influences, in which the participants' own views were considered as well as my own knowledge of the context. Instead of a film, I offer snapshots which taken together hopefully provided a reasonable representation of the process that was taking place across time.

The perspective I have striven to present is that of the informants themselves, through their verbalisations of beliefs and story telling about their personal experiences with learning and the foreign language. As I explained the rationale did not include a triangulation of perspectives, although my selection in the presentation of the data could also be seen as another perspective. However,

⁴ I have discussed these issues in a paper to be published (Gimenez, forthcoming b).

my perspective is mediated by what became available by the informants themselves.

Instead of a triangulation of perspectives I adopted a triangulation of methods which would provide the possibility of eliciting beliefs in different circumstances and checking their saliency through their repetition across the various methods of data collection.

I have explained which camera I used to capture the beliefs held by the groups of prospective and practising EFL teachers and my position as a photographer. In presenting this picture I made a partial selection of what would be included in the final text and the data suffered reduction and transformation resulting in abstractions I deduced from its analysis. Examples of the original data and how it was presented in the final text will be discussed later in this section.

In the context of qualitative research that is essentially exploratory, and carried out by the researcher as an 'insider', the criteria for assessing the results cannot be the same as those traditionally associated with quantitative research. In this case the question associated with validity would be to what extent beliefs were accurately represented at those two levels of reduction: first by the informants themselves in expressing them through the various methods of data collection, and secondly by me in presenting them in the final text of this thesis, and at various points I have already briefly referred to these concerns.

I want to discuss the first set of considerations and the possible objections that could be raised in relation to the accuracy of the statements which were taken to represent beliefs. As I said, they were elicited directly and indirectly, and were restricted to some aspects of foreign language teaching, which I represented in three levels.

In Chapter 4 I claimed that beliefs elicited through multiple choice questionnaires did not represent a viable alternative if an exploratory study was envisaged. Instead of relying on a pre-determined set of statements, the objective

in this study was to obtain a large repertoire of beliefs as they were expressed by the informants and reproduced, as much as possible, according to their words.

In choosing the methods for data collection the different levels of generality and terms of reference that individuals may adopt have to be taken into account (see Fig. 2, Chapter 2). I believe it is very important to allow the informants opportunities to express beliefs in all those dimensions.

It is worth repeating that the results presented need to be taken in the context they were produced, that is, the conditions under which they were elicited, analysed and presented, which brings me to the second set of considerations about validity, that refers to the presentation of the data.

One inevitable problem arising from the use of stories is the distance between telling and presenting. Stories are a very rich source of meanings, many of which remain untackled due to their complexity. In this study informants came up voluntarily with some stories which not only exemplified the point they were trying to make, but also legitimised their own experiences. Unfortunately, however, due to space limitations and the inevitable need to reduce and transform data for presentation, the biographical details were simplified, some converted into tables containing data about age, schooling, professional experience, etc, others being reduced to a sentence or two. In order to give the reader a sense of what type of reduction was involved I would like to exemplify it with the anecdotes as they were told by two informants.

The first story comes from Helena, for whom avoiding the mother tongue was essential to learning a foreign language, especially because the transfer of sounds would lead to misunderstanding. During the interview she spontaneously came up with an incident that happened during her visit to the U.S. which made it clearer why she thought that way. I have already reproduced part of her story in chapter 10, but now I include it in context:

H: I think that the closest you get to the correct pronunciation, the better, because it's going to be rewarding. I think you have to force these words. When I can avoid these words, I try to do it.

I : How do you do this?

H: I don't know exactly - because of the shame I felt when I travelled with my husband. We dated for seven years and he always told me to learn English, and I said that what I knew was OK. When we travelled, we went to New Orleans, we visited many villages where they had never seen a Brazilian. He left me on my own on purpose. Then it was great, because if anyone came to talk to me I laughed...

if it were today I would try to speak a lot of nonsense, I could even say 'me want eat' you know, this type of thing, but at that time I was so scared of saying anything! Something happened in a hotel in Orlando. My husband was in the swimming pool and left the room and the door was locked from the inside. I was wearing just a swimming suit, a Tshirt and a pair of slippers. I told my husband he would have to get the key, 'I won't go there', and the said 'yes, you're going there'. I went there laughing to myself, saying 'what am I going to say?'. Until now I can remember the sentence I said. The porter was a Cuban, he knew, he didn't have to laugh at me the way he did. I said 'I forget a kiss in the room', and he said 'what?' I had to repeat this about twenty times until he finally understood that I had forgotten the key inside the room. It was the only time I said something, but he laughed at me and I laughed at him. Then he asked for the number, then I said 'God', it was 1088 and I wrote it on a piece of paper.

The story Helena told me made me see why she needed to reinforce the point about avoiding the mother ongue. It was her personal experience that produced a very strong image of failure that she would want to prevent happening again in the future. The sense of frustration that Helena experienced during that time was relived through the story-telling. Her story was important because it showed the strength of her belief exactly because emanating from an episode full of personal significance and one which had not gone away and was remembered so vividly that even the words kept resonating in her mind.

In this case, it was not difficult to trace this particular belief to the episode reported in Helena's story about her trip abroad, but not all the beliefs could be traced back to meaningful or well-remembered events. In this example, the generalisation that Helena drew from her private experience was very strong, and was extended to her projection of herself as a teacher. It would remain to be

seen whether she would still keep the same belief after being explicitly exposed to other external theories of foreign language teaching/learning.

The second example of story comes from a teacher, Cristiana, who introduced a story about her personal experience to clarify what she meant by learning. During the interview a particular episode was brought up and through this story-telling event Cristiana narrated the event, justified her action during that time and drew generalisations about learning. In order to represent this 'mixing' of incident and generalisation I will reproduce the interview transcript adopting different typographical styles: capital letters for the narration of the event, underlined text for the explanations she presented for the event and italics for her generalisations which the narrated event helps understand.⁵

A: I think that learning in our culture is more static - I'm trying to find the word, I can't remember it. Learning is more like receiving - to a certain extent, I think that everything you're going to learn, it's like a child learns. If I don't know I'll need some time to assimilate everything, you know. FOR INSTANCE, I TRIED TO LEARN SCUBA-DIVING. I TOOK A COURSE IN SCUBA-DIVING. I don't like water. I went there for some reasons. [husband's name] does it and I am always with him. I decided to learn it too, more for this reason than because I like water. THEN I TOOK THE COURSE - THE THEORETICAL BITS - EVERYTHING THERE. I'm curious, I want to know, because that's the way I am. THEN I WENT THERE, TO PRACTICE, trying you know, a challenge for me, trying to do the things with some difficulty, but trying nevertheless. UNTIL I FINALLY MANAGED TO DO IT IN THE SWIMMING POOL. THEN I WENT INTO THE SEA. Do you know what I needed? I NEEDED SOMEONE WHO WAS PATIENT WITH ME, WHO HELD MY HAND AS IF I WERE A CHILD, FRIGHTENED, because I'm not a brave child, a frightened child, I would only be able to have the 'baptism' which is the first dive into the sea, if I really had had that. The teacher could even say' what else could I have done?' but each of us has a limit, right? I DIDN'T HAVE THAT. I DIDN'T FEEL CONFIDENT. I DIDN'T FEEL I WAS WITH SOMEONE WHO WAS PATIENT ENOUGH AND I DIDN'T DO IT. IT DIDN'T WORK. All this I did in the school, with whole groups, because it's completely different with one-to-one teaching.

I : What is different?

A: I'm saying this because to hold hands with an individual is one thing, to do this with a whole group - I do a lot of this, you know, but I don't go until the end, you don't do it completely, because you have the whole group, you have other things to

⁵I would like to thank Professor Courtney Cazden for these suggestions.

do. I try to relate emotionally with the student. I try to win him on this aspect, because I think it works, it is possible to learn.

People may find story-telling a more efficient way of conveying their views. This particular story illustrates Cristiana's metaphor about the teacher holding hands, or having a closer contact with the students, relating emotionally to them in order to guarantee learning. She also showed awareness of the constraints on putting this belief into practice with large groups and justified her practice as a compromise between her belief and what she felt was possible to achieve.

These stories are backdrops against which beliefs were presented and as such they pose some interesting but so far insoluble problems for researchers interested in using stories as reflection of thinking. Cause-effect relationships are difficult to establish when individuals frame their past experiences in narration form. For instance, it is not possible to know whether the reported episode gave rise to a belief about learning or reinforced views Cristiana already had about learning. Neither is it clear whether it is just in retrospect that she is able to recast the story within the framework of learning, or whether at the real time she thought about it in the same way. In either case webalisations are the only clues that we have to start drawing conclusions, and precedence in terms of chronology does not constitute an issue. For researchers who aim at using stories or biography as part of their methodology what matters is that individuals are able to recast their experiences in terms that the informants themselves deem salient.

Despite these inherent difficulties, anecdotes play an important function in understanding beliefs expressed in statement-like forms. Had I elicited Helena's beliefs about the role of the mother tongue in foreign language learning and remained at the level of her statements, their saliency could become visible through repetition but it was only through the anecdote about her trip that I came to understand why they had been so salient. These episodes in personal histories

are significant because their impact is likely to last for long periods of time and are either confirmed or disconfirmed by subsequent experiences.

The other parameter according to which research is usually judged is reliability, defined by Hammersley (cited by Silverman, 1993:3) as the "degree of consistency with which instances are assigned to the same category by different observers or by the same observer on different occasions". Reliability involves then the crucial question of categorisation, a process that is related to the theoretical framework adopted. I have already referred to the analytical process (Chapter 7) and how the use of computer software helped me in assigning categories to the data and cross-checking them on several later occasions. The way the data was interpreted and categorised is made explicit by the quotes in the text and the tables containing the informants' words and the ensuing category they belonged to. I hope this procedure helps the reader to get a picture with a clear focus.

Having discussed validity and reliability in relation to the verbalisation of beliefs and the presentation of the data in this thesis, and how they rely as much as possible on the explicitness of the analytical process, I would like to move on to some of the implications of the study.

5. Methodological implications

In this section I would like to report my personal reaction to data collection. As with any research involving fieldwork and interaction with people, the experience was both challenging and rewarding. I have already mentioned some of the advantages and disadvantages of the methods I employed, but would like to reflect on the individual contribution of each of them to the overall study.

I found the open-ended questionnaire very productive in generating themes for further exploration. The questions focused around the role of the teacher and methodology, and were worded so as to allow for different angles to be brought in. They also concentrated on a high level of generality. By itself the

questionnaire would not be enough to generate responses that allowed for establishing links between stories and beliefs. Although they were useful in identifying some of the informants' beliefs, a deeper understanding of the reasons why the informants held those views would have to be complemented by other methods of data collection.

The lesson reports were much more opaque, and would have to be produced in a substantial number to show beliefs as an expression of justification for classroom action. However, they were more appropriate for focusing on beliefs at a more specific level, and their contribution, although limited in this study, should not be disregarded.

The repgrids posed some practical difficulties, demanding more time than would be expected, especially because the informants did not have prior acquaintance with the technique. The students in the course completed them after receiving explanations about the steps in filling in the repgrid form and this was done in a whole class situation, although each person worked individually, whereas the practising teachers, because they were working in different schools, received explanations about the technique and produced them individually only. The repgrids provided some interesting information about the way the informants saw teachers and how they perceived themselves in relation to former teachers. The interview could have explored this issue in more depth, but because there was a whole list of topics to cover, role identity was only superficially discussed, and the interview concentrated mainly around the meanings of the constructs.

Clearly the most fruitful of the methods used in this study was the interview, which picked up some of the issues raised by the other methods of data collection when it took place after all of them. The openness of this format of data elicitation allowed some interesting unexpected outcomes, such as the anecdotes I presented in section 5 above. Because of its lack of structure, the interviews allowed those anecdotes and personal histories to occupy a privileged space in the understanding of beliefs. A study that has interest in placing stories

as central would have to allow for more opportunities for these stories to emerge. In retrospect, I feel I could have allowed the informants to expand more extensively on their stories. As Riessman (1993:3) advises:

Respondents (if not interrupted with standardized questions) will hold the floor for lengthy turns and sometimes organize replies into long stories.

Because of the need to cover several topics during the interviews, the stories were constrained by my own agenda. Studies which find narrative a fruitful approach to understanding teacher socialisation would have to allow a greater space to stories.

In reviewing each of the methods I used I would like to conclude that none of these methods alone could have resulted in the picture I presented, and that their interconnections were an important feature of this study. For this reason I believe that triangulation of methods is a crucial feature of studies on beliefs.

When I reviewed some of the published research reports on teacher thinking and teacher socialisation (Chapters 2 and 3), I pointed out the variety of purposes and methodologies employed by the researchers. I have already explained my research objectives and the decisions I made about methodology. However, particularly for those researchers interested in the relationship between verbalisation and behaviour as expressions of beliefs, it would be fundamental to observe the students' practices or have them engaged in some form of introspection, such as the stimulated recall interviews. Those with an interest in changes over time would obviously need to adopt a longitudinal approach, collecting data at various points in time and probably developing long-term projects in order to be able to document changes over the time students spent on formal teacher education.

I have also pointed out that biography can be more usefully incorporated into studies that seek to understand the process of learning to teach. For that

purpose, they would have to be more centrally placed as a methodological procedure.

Finally, in a context in which the methodological procedures can perform the dual function of generating data and raising awareness about the process of learning to teach, research and pedagogy can be more clearly integrated. This integration will be more clearly addressed in the next chapter, when I will discuss professional implications of this study.

6. Conclusion to this chapter

In this chapter I have discussed some issues connected with the way the data was collected, analysed, interpreted and presented. First I presented a brief summary of the main points raised by the results of the study and then located myself (my position as photographer) and the implications of such a position for the data I gathered.

In addition, I discussed issues of validity and reliability in relation to the data analysis and presentation, justifying the choices I made during the process of reducing data to enable me to see the informants both individually and collectively. By looking at the informants as a group I identified commonalities and differences among them. These commonalities and differences were further seen with reference to the informants' personal histories, or biographies, especially their experiences with foreign languages.

This study was an exploratory one, and I presented an evaluation of the procedures I followed, procedures that could be fruitfully used both for data collection and for awareness-raising about pedagogical practices. Therefore, they could be employed by teacher educators interested in adopting the perspective that I am suggesting and that will be spelt out in the next chapter.

Chapter 13

Pre-service foreign language teacher education from another perspective

- 1. Introduction
- 2. The study in the current context of teacher education
- 3. Reflective practice, the teacher as researcher, and pre-service teacher education
- 4. Implications for the 'LAP' course
- 5. Implications for pre-service teacher education
- 6. Conclusion to this chapter
- 7. Conclusion to this thesis

1. Introduction

In this final chapter I would like to locate this study within the general framework of foreign language teacher education (FLTE) and suggest some implications derived from the research that I reported in this thesis. First I will discuss the notion of reflective practice as it has been suggested both from educators drawing on teacher education theories and from educators operating within the perspective of foreign language classroom research. Then I will bring the perspectives adopted in this study together with these notions, which have so far been operating in parallel, but which offer potential for integration.

2. The study in the current context of teacher education

The process of educating foreign language teachers has received great attention in recent years with calls for more empirical research that focuses on that process (Freeman and Richards, 1993). This area has also been fostered by a

growing literature which deals specifically with theoretical aspects related to the education of foreign language teachers.

Foreign language teacher education has therefore striven to promote discussion of the issues connected with the different approaches to teacher education and also to encourage research that focuses specifically on the process of becoming a teacher.

In relation to the discussion of theoretical issues, the notion of reflection has been agreed as a useful direction. As we saw in Chapter 3, the process of becoming an EFL/ESL teacher is also receiving attention through studies that focus on how teachers interpret the content of teacher education courses. The move towards reflective practice has replaced the dogmatic approaches that highlighted pre-packaged 'methods' as the cornerstone of the teaching activity (Richards, 1990). Rather than focusing on 'methods', there is a disposition to find out what concepts underlie teachers' actions in the classroom.

Parallel to the suggestion that teachers should be encouraged to reflect upon their teaching practices, and as I have indicated, there have been calls for more research to focus on teachers' thoughts and the processes of learning to teach.

Given the scope of this study, that focuses on the processes of learning to teach, I would like to discuss reflection as it is represented by the approach suggested by Wallace (1991) at the pre-service level, and two interpretations of the 'teacher as a researcher' notion that coexist in our field, as defined by Nunan (1989, 1993) and Allwright (1991, 1992, 1993).

I will suggest that these interpretations, which are not aimed at any particular context but refer to 'universal' principles, need to be complemented by studies that take into account the socialisation process teachers go through in specific contexts such as the 'LAP' course I am investigating.

While teacher thinking has provided another focus for researchers interested in foreign language teacher education, studies on the socialisation of

teachers can contribute with a theoretical approach that brings in people's experiences and gives them an opportunity to have them aired and reflected upon.

The areas I have mentioned have in common a focus on the teacher, and reflect a move towards valuing teachers and the knowledge they derive from their experiences, in contrast with the imposition of external theories¹ generated by academic research.

3. Reflective practice, the teacher as researcher and pre-service teacher education

Reflective practice is now a widespread notion within teacher education in general. Two main approaches dominate the debate: one that emphasises reflection (as distinct from routine practice) as a means of achieving efficiency, as exemplified by Schön's views; and another that projects a more transformative role for teachers and that calls into question the very essence of school and society (Gore and Zeichner, 1991). Adler (1991:140) distinguishes three meanings ascribed to reflection:

- a) reflection as represented by Cruikshank's views which is "the ability to analyze one's own teaching practice". This interpretation sees reflection as "instrumental to enabling behaviours which empirical research has deemed effective".
- b) reflection as seen by Schön, in which it involves thinking while acting and being able to "respond to the uncertainty, uniqueness and conflict involved in the situations in which professionals practice".
- c) reflection as viewed by Zeichner, which involves three levels: technical (reflection on the effectiveness of teaching), situational and institutional (reflection on why certain choices of practices are made), moral and ethical

¹Griffiths and Tann (1992:71) refer to external theories as 'public' theories, in opposition to 'personal' theories.

issues (reflection guided by concerns for justice and equity).² In FLTE the first and second interpretations have been more commonly advocated³.

Recent literature on the education of foreign language teachers has echoed teacher education in general with the adoption of 'reflection' as the approach that should replace prescription which is largely ineffective because it does not take into account the meaningful nature of teaching. For instance, Freeman (1992:1) criticised the present paradigm in foreign language teacher education which does not acknowledge the thinking underlying behaviours:

... the education of second language teachers has generally been based on two misguided premises. The first is that teaching is the execution of activity, that it involves doing things in the classroom. The second, which follows from the first, is that teacher education involves shaping that activity to reflect some broadly held perceptions of effective classroom pedagogy.

In a recent book on teacher education, Wallace (1991) discusses three major models of teacher education⁴: the craft model, the applied science model and the reflective model. The craft model implies that the trainee will learn from "imitating the expert's techniques and by following the expert's instructions and advice". The applied science model presupposes that findings of scientific knowledge are conveyed to the trainees by experts in the area. The reflective model is a compromise solution, trying to combine both experience and scientific knowledge. According to Wallace (1991:14-15), knowledge development should comprise both received knowledge and experiential

² For further discussion about this approach to teacher education see Giroux and McLaren (1986), and Gore (1993).

³In TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) the adoption of a critical perspective has been gradually gaining ground. Recent articles have questioned notions that do not take into account wider social issues (Pennycook, 1989, 1990; Canagarajah, 1993).

⁴In a recent article Freeman and Richards (1993) also make a distinction between three conceptions: science/research (derived from research and supported by experimentation and empirical investigation), theory/philosophy (based on what ought to work or what is morally right), art/craft (dependent upon individual skills and personality).

knowledge. With the former "the trainee⁵ becomes acquainted with the vocabulary of the subject and the matching concepts, research findings, theories and skills which are widely accepted as being part of the necessary intellectual content of the profession". With the latter "the trainee will have developed knowledge-in-action by practice of the profession, and will have had, moreover, the opportunity to reflect on that knowledge-in-action".

Although claiming that his model emphasises the fact that "people seldom enter into professional training situations with blank minds and/or neutral attitudes" (Wallace, 1991:50) he does not conceive of this previous background as knowledge, and therefore attributes a lower status to it. What he calls the trainee's schemata derive from a craft model, which he considers conservative, because it "implies no change, or very little change over a long period of time" (Wallace, 1991:15).

Although considering it useful to find where trainees are 'coming from' (and according to him the sources might be personality factors, cultural factors, social factors, etc.), Wallace finds it more important to "find out where they are 'at' now". This view assumes that prior experiences are less powerful and can be overcome by reflecting on current practice in the teacher education programme. The content of the trainee's knowledge has to become available, but its origins might not receive the same importance. Professional education, according to that author, has to highlight two types of knowledge: received and experiential. Received knowledge comprises "facts, data, theories, etc. which are either by necessity or by convention associated with the study of a particular profession" (:52). Experiential knowledge comprises the opportunities that trainees have to "evaluate the inputs in terms of their own practice and decide to change their teaching in some way, or not"(:52).

⁵ I do not agree with the use of trainee to refer to teachers, either in in-service or pre-service courses, due to its heavy behavioural moulding connotation.

However, considering that what student teachers bring to the programme has the status of knowledge because derived from direct experience, it cannot be consigned to a list of 'mental constructs' or 'schemata' upon which received knowledge is superimposed. It is crucial to understand how these forms of knowledge integrate and interact (Calderhead and Robson, 1991). For an understanding of the processes involved in learning to teach it is essential to capture the thinking that guides student teachers in their teacher education courses, and how this evolves throughout the programme⁶.

Wallace's views centre on the assumption that past experiences do not interfere in the process of interpreting the 'received knowledge'. His approach ignores the fact that student teachers enter teacher education courses with ideas of what eaching means, acquired through their participation in classrooms. Reflection in his understanding is only about to what extent 'received knowledge' matches the practice of the classroom ('experiential knowledge'). Therefore, in his model, the present is more important, and biography plays no role at all.

I would like to claim that in order to be able to help student teachers to develop their conceptions of practice in a way that is likely to produce positive impact on their teaching we need to understand not only their thinking but also give greater importance to the knowledge they already bring to the programme.

So far I have discussed reflective practice as a component of current FLTE theory, a notion that derived basically from teacher education theory. As has been suggested in the literature in the field of FLTE, reflection on practice is nevertheless a concept that implies (perhaps unintentionally) the immediacy of the classroom, and for this reason it tends to concentrate largely on instructional practices. There has been very little emphasis on why (prospective) teachers come to think the way they do. As Gore (1993:155) points out "the more aware we are of the practices *of self*, the greater the space for altering those practices".

⁶I shall refer to programme as the sum of courses offered by teacher education institutions that have an overall aim of fostering professional development to teachers (either pre-service or inservice).

For this reason I believe teachers' biographies need to be given a more privileged space within the framework of pre-service teacher education.

Parallel to developments in FLTE that took subsidies from teacher education theory, foreign language classroom research coincidentally also came to the conclusion that teachers needed to investigate their own classrooms if further developments in our understanding of language learning in formal contexts were to be achieved.

According to some authors, action research or research carried out by teachers themselves in their own classrooms represents the alternative for the failure of academic classroom research (CR) to have an impact on classrooms. Van Lier (1989:174), for instance, points out:

In practical terms, if significant and lasting improvements in classroom second language learning are to be achieved, this can best be done by teachers and learners doing their own research in their own classrooms (Stenhouse, 1975) and this is the most meaningful form of classroom research.

The confluence of the perceived failure of classroom research to produce conclusive results about how people learn languages in instructional settings (Mitchell, 1985; Chaudron, 1988; Nunan, 1991b) and the recognition that classrooms are complex environments led to the suggestions described by van Lier. This trend has called for greater teacher participation in the research.

Following a trend that started much earlier in general education (Stenhouse, 1975, cited in Elliott, 1991; Carr and Kemmis, 1986) the adoption of a non-prescriptivist view to teacher education led to the notions of 'action research' to be advocated in the field of foreign language teaching.

Action research has been subjected to many interpretations. In simple terms it refers to research that is carried out by the teachers themselves in their own classrooms. Two main versions of action research coexist in EFL. A model that is close to action research that follows an interventionist approach is

presented by Nunan (1989,1993). According to him, teachers have to work out problems they have in relation to their classrooms and design an investigative approach to them. The steps he envisages for this approach are (Nunan, 1993:41):

The action research process is generally initiated by the identification by the practitioner of something which they find puzzling or problematic. This puzzle or problem may, in fact, have emerged from a period of observation and reflection. The second step is the collection of baseline data through a preliminary investigation which is designed to identity what is currently happening in the classroom without trying to change anything. Based on a review of the data yielded by the preliminary investigation, an hypothesis is formed. The next step is the development of some form of intervention or change to existing practice, along with a way of evaluating the effects of this change. The final step is reporting on the outcomes of the interaction, and, if necessary, planning further interventions.

Nunan suggests an approach to research that favours intervention, therefore adopting a view of the classroom as a laboratory, a view which can be criticised for its failure to involve teachers in understanding what is going on in their classrooms and instead encouraging them to join in an (probably) endless cycle of experiments.

An alternative view has been put forward by Allwright (1991, 1992, 1993), who prefers to use 'exploratory teaching', a concept that relies much more on teachers' reflection on their own teaching than the action research model suggested by Nunan, since 'exploratory teaching' is not seen as an activity different from teaching, but integrated with pedagogy (Allwright, 1993:125):

Broadly, it is that we should try exploiting already familiar and trusted classroom activities as ways of exploring the things that puzzle teachers and learners about what is happening in their own classrooms.

The steps suggested by Allwright (1993) are as follows:

- 1. Identify a puzzle area
- 2. Refine your thinking about that puzzle area
- 3. Select a particular topic to focus upon
- 4. Find appropriate classroom procedures to explore it
- 5. Adapt the procedures to the particular puzzle you want to explore
- 6. Use them in class
- 7. *Interpret the outcomes*

8. Decide on their implications and plan accordingly.

Therefore, whereas the 'action research' model endorsed by Nunan sees research as an extra activity in the classroom, Allwright proposes the integration of both research and pedagogy. His proposal differs from the one suggested by Nunan in which he does not see the need for teachers to adopt standard research procedures in their explorations, and neither is he suggesting problem-solving.

In addition to presenting an alternative to teachers who decide to do research in their classrooms, exploratory teaching also has implications for teacher education. Allwright considers the relationship between research, teaching and development and sees basically three potential types of relationships (Allwright, 1993:126):

- 1) Research as an (optional) extra
- 2) Research as the driving force for development
- 3) Research as the driving force for development and development as the driving force for research progress

In the first option teachers join research projects and carry out activities outside their pedagogic work, and the results will contribute to knowledge in general but do not necessarily represent a step towards professional development. In the second option the research effort is geared towards bringing about professional development. The third option, preferred by Allwright, is one that brings together both 1) and 2), in the sense that teachers adopting an exploratory teaching approach develop understandings that could be useful to the profession as a whole. Therefore, not only teachers might benefit in terms of their own development but they might also help others in the profession (Allwright, 1993:127):

...if teacher research is made central to the pedagogy, and is in fact successful in enhancing teachers' understanding of classroom language pedagogy, then not only will the professional development aim be well served, but so will potentially an additional aim of general 'research progress'. By 'research

progress' I mean a sense that the profession as a whole is developing its general understanding of classroom language learning and teaching.

Allwright's position has, of course, implications for the academics who work with CR, since they will have different roles depending on whether they are working without the contribution of teachers towards developing a theory of foreign language learning, or whether they wish to incorporate teachers' understandings as they evolve out of their own pedagogy/research. His position is that, even in the latter case, academics can potentially make connections between individual experiences of teachers and contribute to general theory-building.

In other words what Allwright suggests is that theory-building might benefit equally from teachers doing research in their classrooms. The claim that teacher research can only aim at limited application (in the context the teacher operates), is probably false, since the adoption of an investigative approach along the lines suggested by Allwright could in principle contribute to the wider goal of theory-building. The bridge, however, has to be made by someone who has access to different groups of teachers in many parts of the world. Therefore, whereas some academics would like to retain the distinction between academic and teacher research, the boundaries have been blurred by Allwright's suggestion.

In addition to presenting contrasting views about the relationship between research and pedagogy, action research and exploratory teaching also go separate ways when it comes to encouraging teachers to reflect on their classroom practices. In the model suggested by exploratory teaching, reflection seems to receive greater emphasis than with the action research model, since there is no haste to test new approaches and check their results. Another important difference is that exploratory teaching deals more explicitly with the possibility of engaging learners in the process of trying to understand better the language learning experience in classrooms.

Reflective practice is therefore embedded in the notion of exploratory teaching. I have already referred to reflection as an important trend in the field, as Richards and Nunan (1990: xii) suggested in their summary of the themes of their collection on second language teacher education:

- a movement away from a 'training' perspective to an 'education' perspective and recognition that effective teaching involves higher-level cognitive processes which cannot be taught directly
- the need for teachers and student teachers to adopt a research orientation to their own classrooms and their teaching
- less emphasis on prescriptions and top-down directives and more emphasis on an inquiry-based and discovery-oriented approach to learning (bottom-up) -use of procedures that involve teachers in gathering and analyzing data about teaching.

The acceptance of reflection as an important component of FLTE (at least as presented in the literature) does not eliminate the problems of interpretation of the meanings available, especially when the concepts are still being formulated and their translation into pedagogical practices in teacher education are yet to be investigated.

I have tried to show how teacher education in general and CR have come together with their emphasis on reflective practice, although with diversity of interpretations about how that process can take place.

If teachers are to become more involved in reflecting or inquiring on their own practices then the role of pre-service foreign language teacher education has to be re-examined, since the concerns have concentrated largely on the input, especially at the level of methodology (Nunan, 1993:39), within a 'training' perspective⁷.

I would like to argue that we need to encourage teachers (both at inservice and pre-service courses) to reflect not only on their immediate practices, but on understanding where these practices come from, what makes them the way

⁷For an idea of the meanings ascribed to 'training' in FLTE see Larsen-Freeman (1983, 1992), Woodward (1991)and Calil (1992)

they are. For this purpose, uncovering one's own biography as part of the rationale for the explanation is necessary. Although beliefs derived from school experiences alone are not enough to explain teacher's practices, these experiences provide the background against which teacher education experiences are evaluated. Depending on how the teacher education course is structured (for instance, not explicitly addressing these experiences), the 'apprenticeship of observation' is not going to be challenged, and therefore it may continue to have a powerful effect on how teachers perceive their teaching situation and act upon it (e.g. Johnson, 1994).

In this section I have identified three strands that have been suggested in FLTE to replace a 'training' approach to teacher education. All the three strands converged towards reflective practice but focused on teaching practices in the immediate context of the classroom. I would like to suggest that reflection can also focus on beliefs teachers hold and how they come to exist. In addition to incorporating beliefs and biography in a reflective approach, I would like to suggest that the scope of reflection has also to be expanded, to incorporate wider social issues.

The results of this study showed that beliefs can be identified in relation to several dimensions, and that these dimensions need to be addressed if teacher education programmes aim at educating reflective professionals.

However, before discussing pre-service teacher education at a more general level, I would like to comment on some possible implications of this study for the 'LAP' course at UEL.

4. Implications for the 'LAP' course

I have pointed out that the dichotomy between the language and pedagogical components of the 'LAP' course could foster two potential influences: through the language component as a source of socialisation, since the students are treated as language learners and see the course as a 'language'

course; and through the pedagogical component as a source of teacher education. The former is realised through the 'hidden curriculum': the implicit messages that are conveyed to the students who incorporate them as part of their repertoire, either by rejection or by acceptance (with or without modifications). The latter (pedagogical component, represented by EFL Methodology and Teaching Practice) was perceived by the informants themselves as a more powerful influence, although individually this influence was perceived differently. This influence was perceived to operate mainly at the level of discourse, in which student teachers and practising teachers were able to refer to their own approaches using labels such as 'communicative' and TPR, typical of the professional discourse.

Although this study was carried out with a small sample of the students in the course and teachers who graduated from the same course, the results indicate the desirability of blurring the boundaries between the language and pedagogical components of the course, so as to make its socialising impact more explicit and addressed in a way that the students are aware of the decisions made during the teaching process. One of the ways in which this integration could be achieved is that of adopting the teaching/learning process as a topic of the syllabus, thereby providing grounds for reflection on the language teaching/learning process itself. This practice could be considered a kind of 'pedagogy awareness' exercise in which learners (prospective FFL teachers) would be encouraged to reflect upon their own experiences while attending the language classes of the LAP course. This would represent an authentic and relevant topic for discussion.⁸

In other words, my suggestion for reflection is in line with Allwright's interpretation, when he proposes 'exploratory teaching' rather than an action research model that has an experimental approach. In this approach teachers' puzzles could coincide with learners' puzzles in exploring what brings about successful foreign language learning in the classroom.

⁸ See Breen (1985b) and Kramsch (1993) for a discussion of 'authenticity' in the foreign language classroom.

It is important to note that this strategy differs from the suggestion by Bailey (forthcoming) referred to in Chapter 2. Here the objective is not to discover the strategies of experienced teachers to convey to novice teachers, but rather to ask the 'LAP' students to reflect on their own experiences as learners of the foreign language, by focusing on the teaching strategies adopted and their effects on the student him/herself and his or her classmates.

This proposal, which emphasises the need for better integration between the pedagogical and language components of the 'LAP' course, also claims that teacher role identity has to be more clearly addressed, in order to focus on the transition that is subtly carried out during the course.

In relation to the pedagogical component itself, especially EFL Methodology and Teaching Practice experience, the notion of 'methods' as prescriptions for practice would have to be deconstructed *vis a vis* the pedagogical insights generated by personal experience and the beliefs that students already bring to the programme. This suggestion is in line with Larsen-Freeman's (1993) view that methods need to be redefined as a strategy to help prospective teachers clarify their own beliefs and assumptions about the teachings/learning process. 'Teaching methods' in this case could also be seen as 'alternative images of teaching' envisaged by Johnson (1994).

If we consider that the content of the pedagogical courses will be filtered by the 'lenses' created by previous personal experience in classrooms, then 'methods' cannot be assumed to replace personal theories. Rather, they may be used to frame the insights generated by personal experience. 'Method' as 'alternative images of teaching' would have to integrate with beliefs generated by personal experience through a process of reflection.

The reflective process could focus around issues that go beyond the classroom, encompassing the three levels I have specified in this work: the social status of the foreign language by analysing the different objectives for teaching

English in the various educational contexts, and what implications they have for the classroom itself.

I understand this process of reflection as one that not only focuses on teacher's actions at the immediate level of the lesson, but relates that action to the wider context, in terms of lessons being part of courses (as suggested by Woods, 1993) and of courses being part of an educational context in which objectives and goals are specified.

At the pre-service level it is also desirable that teachers' identity be more clearly addressed, since this is one aspect that is only implicitly conveyed by the course.

Furthermore, considering the links between beliefs and biography, in the process of reflecting upon specific classroom practices and relating them to a wider context it would be interesting to consider the prospective teachers' personal histories as a way of capitalising on them. Given the richness of individual experiences, including students who are already working as teachers, it is important not to disregard such experiences.

5. Implications for pre-service teacher education

In this study I have brought two areas to the foreground of FLTE: beliefs and biography. The importance of making explicit the beliefs held by teachers has already been established by the studies reviewed in Chapters 2 and 3.

In addition to awareness of one's own beliefs, it is also important to understand how they came to exist, and to be aware of alternative ways of thinking (Breen, 1990; Johnson, 1994). Therefore, beliefs and biography should be at the core of teacher education programmes that want to value the students' background and do not want to adopt a training perspective, in the sense of prescribing external theories upon teachers.

According to this suggestion the roles of teachers and learners are centrally placed together with discussions about the degree of identification with teaching, both relating directly to the individual biographies.

It is necessary to point out that the context in which these suggestions are made is one where EFL teachers are non-native speakers, in which the teacher education course functions both as a socialising and as an educating force.

I would like to argue that prospective teachers need to reflect not only at the level of the real, but also the ideal, and that beliefs derived from personal experience have to be identified and brought into the programme as a way of encouraging reflection. Some of the methods used in this study could be adapted for that purpose, particularly the questionnaire, diary and repgrids. Peer-interviewing could also be used with the purpose of eliciting beliefs and biography. In adopting these methods, narratives would need to be brought in, not only as a way of finding out more about where beliefs come from, but also as a strategy for teacher education.

The double role of stories in research methodology and teacher education has been pointed out by Carter (1993: 9), who argued that stories could also "inform the work that many now do, namely, tell stories with and about teachers to advance knowledge in the field and tell stories to novices as a means of educating them for the profession".

Considering that biographies play an important role in explaining beliefs held prior to the education programme they should be integrated within the methodology employed by teacher educators and, therefore, be incorporated into the course. This aim can be achieved by creating an atmosphere that will encourage student teachers to tell 'stories' and therefore reveal aspects of their own personal histories. These 'stories' can be reflected upon and emerging issues discussed either individually or in groups. The important issue is to provide a non-threatening environment in which awareness can be more easily developed.

Throughout this study I have drawn on the notion that classrooms are an important site for the socialisation of teachers. By asking prospective teachers to reflect on their past experiences in classrooms we may start unravelling their beliefs about teaching/learning, the connections of those beliefs with those experiences, and we may provide opportunities for the reformulation of those beliefs.

6. Conclusion to this chapter

In this chapter I have located my study within the area of teacher education research that focuses on teachers' thoughts rather than behaviours and that does not consider the teacher education programme as the only potential influence to those thoughts. I discussed the notion of reflective practice as it has been presented in FLTE and suggested that beliefs and biography can be integrated within a reflective approach. As such, I envisage two main points that could be considered: reflection to incorporate beliefs and biography and reflection that goes beyond the immediate context of the classroom.

Given the relationship between teacher education programmes and the socialisation of EFL teachers in the context of a 'LAP' course in Brazil I suggest it is necessary to æknowledge and explicitly address the beliefs about foreign language teaching/learning that the students bring to the programme. These beliefs, resulting from a whole history of participation in a particular social environment, cannot be disregarded and assumed to be superseded by theoretical concepts conveyed by the course.

In a teacher education programme that does not consider students as 'tabula rasa' there is a need to present opportunities for both reflection on practice (as through the 'practicum') and on the personal histories as a way of understanding why that practice came to be like that. This perspective therefore rejects a 'training' approach that denies prospective teachers the opportunity to look back in order to develop their views towards the future.

7. Conclusion to this thesis

I started out this study with the intention of gaining understanding of the process of learning to teach. After reviewing current ideas in the field of foreign language teacher education that centre around the motion of reflection, I sought insights from the areas of teacher thinking and teacher socialisation. From teacher thinking I borrowed the notion that beliefs are at the heart of teacher's classroom practices, and from teacher socialisation I incorporated the notion of biography, *vis a vis* the contribution of formal teacher education.

The findings from a small sample of the students and teachers who went through the 'LAP' course revealed that there were pervasive beliefs among them in relation to the social and institutional context of teaching, while specific classroom instructional strategies presented more individual variability.

Although not wanting the particularities of my findings to be generalised across the entire population of 'LAP' students, I have argued that these results do nevertheless hold some potentially important implications for the course itself and for pre-service teacher education, my proposal adding to ideas already put forward by teacher educators with an interest in non-prescriptive views of education.

I claimed that awareness of teaching practices has to go beyond the immediate context of the classroom and to link them to wider social and institutional forces.

Almost a decade ago, Britzman (1986) alerted teacher educators to the importance of awareness of the interaction between teachers' personal histories and the common myths of our culture in order to maintain current teaching practices. She argued (:443):

Prospective teachers, then, bring to their teacher education more than their desire to teach. They bring their implicit institutional biographies - the cumulative experience of school lives - which, in turn, inform their knowledge

of the student's world, of school structure, and of curriculum. All this contributes to well-worn and commonsensical images of the teacher's work and serves as the frame of reference for prospective teachers' self-images. But the dominant model of teacher education as vocational training does not address the hidden significance of biography in the making of a teacher, particularly as it is lived during student teaching.

I hope this exploratory study has contributed to highlighting the importance of seeing teacher education as the process by which teachers need to identify their own beliefs about teaching, get to understand where they come from, and contrast these beliefs with alternative practices.

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LIST OF APPENDICES

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Appendix B

Questionnaire for students - pilot study (translation)

Name:					
_ Pseudonym diaries:			used	in	the
Age:			· ····		
semester:					
			. _		
Schooling					
Course		Type of public)	school(private	e, Years	
1o. grau					
2o. grau					
others (pl	lease				
list)					
	_	he jobs y	ou have had so	far)	
Job		Employer		Years	
) have you stu (for instance		

2. When you think about the foreign language class(es)you had what comes to your mind?

schools, private language schools, abroad)

3. What did you lik language(s)? (for ins teacher, the material	tance,	the cou	rse a	s a who	le, the
4. What did you like language(s)?	the lea	st when	you s	studied	foreign
5. What helped you language(s) in the par		English	n or	other	foreign

6. Once you started learning English or other foreign language(s) what hindered your learning?

How rning		you	define	successf	Eul fore	eign lang	,uage
				t best he		one to be	ecome
						lish lang por). Why	
						you eval bad, poo	
Do y es (Why)	tend t	o be a	teacher c	of Engli	sh?	

What can you foresee about your career as a teacher of English?

b) No ()
 Why are you studying Letras?

c) I don't know yet ()
 What will help you decide?

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Telma Gimenez

Appendix C

Questionnaire for students - main study (translation)

Name:					
S age:S contact:	ex:Te	elephone	num	ber	for
Term		at			the
university:					
				_	
Schooling					
Course	Type of	school(pri	vate,	Years	(from
	<pre>public)</pre>			to)
lo. grau					
_					
2o. grau					
)					
others (please					
list)					
,					
Professional exper	ience				
(Please list all t		rou harre had	l an fa	ar)	
(Flease list all t	ile Jobs y	ou nave nac	L BO LO	al /	
Job	Employer			Years	
				(from	t.o.
)	

1. Which foreign language(s) have you studied? For how long? (Please list all the English language courses you have attended so far)

Course	School	Years

2. What is the strongest memory that you have of those classes?

3. In your opinion what are the best ways to $\underline{\text{teach}}$ English?

4. What helps more in learning English? (If more than one factor, please list them in order of importance first, second, third, etc)
5. In what ways can the teacher contribute to the learning of English?
6. What do you have in mind when you use the phrase "a really good teacher of English?"

7.	In	what	ways	can	the	teaching	method	contribute	to
the	le	arnin	g of	Engli	ish?				

8. What do you have in mind when you use the phrase "a really good method for English language teaching"?

9. How to you evaluate yourself as an English language learner? (excellent, good, average, bad, poor). Why?

10. As an English language user how do you evaluate your proficiency? (excellent, good, average, bad, poor). Why?

Skill	evaluation	reasons for evaluation
DVTTT	Evaluation	reasons for evaluation
listening		
speaking		
reading		
1 3 4 4 1 1 5		
writing		

11. Do you intent to be a teacher of English? .()Yes . Why?
What can you foresee about your career as a teacher of English?
.() $\underline{\text{No}}$. Why are you studying Letras?
. () <u>I don't know yet</u> .What will help you decide?
12. Have you got any other comments about the best ways to teach a foreign language?
Please check whether you have answered all the
questions.
Thank you very much for your cooperation.
Telma Gimenez

Appendix D

Questionnaire for teachers - main study (translation)

Name:					
_		. 7		1	C
	'T'€	elephone	num	ber	for
contact:					
Schooling					
_					
Course	Type of	school(pr	ivate,	Years	(from
	<pre>public)</pre>			to	
1o. grau					
2o. grau					
others (please					
list)					
1100)					
Professional exper					
(Please list all t	the jobs y	ou have ha	ad so fa	ar)	
	_ ,				
Job	Employer			Years	
				(from.	
)	

1.Which foreign language(s) have you studied? For how long? (Please list all the English language courses you have attended so far)

Course	School	Years

2. What is the strongest memory that you have of those classes?

3. In your opinion what are the best ways to $\underline{\text{teach}}$ English?

4. What helps more in learning English? (If more than one factor, please list them in order of importance: first, second, third, etc)
5. In what ways can the teacher contribute to the learning of English?
6. What do you have in mind when you use the phrase "a really good teacher of English?"

7.	In	what	ways	can	the	teaching	method	contribute	to
the	16	arnin	g of	Engl	ish?				

8. What do you have in mind when you use the phrase "a really good method for English language teaching"?

10. As an English language user how do you evaluate your proficiency? (excellent, good, average, bad, poor). Why?

Skill	evaluation	reasons for evaluation
listening		
speaking		

Skill	evaluation	reasons for evaluation
reading		
writing		
wiicing		

10. Have you got any other comments about the best ways to teach a foreign language?

Please check whether you have answered all the questions.

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Telma Gimenez

Appendix G

Interview schedule/Language Students

Points raised by the preliminary analysis of the questionnaire, repgrids and lesson reports (mainly why)

Significant events that influenced their thinking about teaching and learning

Past experiences as learners of English

- > what contributed/hindered
- > what liked/disliked
- > role of the teacher
- > role of the teaching method/definitions

Current experiences as learners (English lessons at UEL)

- > have helped to learn how to be a teacher?
- > specific instances

Do you think you have changed your ideas on how to teach English

- > what ways
- > why

Expectations

- > how do you feel about your forthcoming teaching practice
- > what kind of teacher would you like to be
- > how would you like to teach

Evaluation of participation in research

Interview schedule/Student teachers

Points raised by the preliminary analysis of the questionnaire, repgrids and lesson reports (mainly why)

Significant events that influenced their thinking about teaching and learning

Do you think you have changed your ideas on how to teach English

- > what ways
- > why

Past experiences as learners of English

- > what contributed/hindered
- > what liked/disliked
- > role of the teacher
- > role of the teaching method/definitions

EFL Methodology classes and teaching practice

- > contribution
- > specific instances

Expectations

- > what kind of teacher do you want to be
- > how would you like to teach
- > how has the experience in the university contributed

Evaluation of participation in research

Interview schedule/Practising teachers

Points raised by the preliminary analysis of the questionnaire, repgrids and lesson reports (mainly why)

Significant events that influenced their thinking about teaching and learning

How they decided to become teachers

Do you think you have changed your ideas on how to teach English

- > what ways
- > why

Past experiences as learners of English

- > what contributed/hindered
- > what liked/disliked
- > role of the teacher
- > role of the teaching method/definitions

EFL Methodology classes and teaching practice

- > contribution
- > specific instances

Expectations

- > what kind of teacher you are/want to be
- > how do you teach/would you like to teach
- > how has the experience in the university contributed

Evaluation of participation in research

	MAN	SAM	RAF	ELI	SUZ	CLA	MAR
	Instruct	ional funct	tion				
Knowledge of content							
- competent	Q.6						
-knows content beyond level required for students' level			Q.6				
- has good control of oral and written language				Q.6			
-dominates the content						Q.6	
-educated, rich in information							Q.6
- has good pronunciation and knows English well							Q.6
- has clear pronunciation		R2					R2
Knowledge of pedagogy							
- familiarises students with English							Q.4
- explains the subject in easy and interesting way	R2	Q.5, 189- 190, 584- 585					
- shows that English is widely spoken and not a difficult language to learn							Q.5
- helps clarify doubts	Q.6						
- adds to knowledge	Q.6						
-teaches in a clear way			Q.3, Q.4, Q.5				
-shows importance of what is being learnt and why						998-1000	
-teaches at students' level							
-doesn't let lessons get boring						Q.6	
-changes activities when sees they are not working						Q.6	
-knows how to teach clearly			Q.6				
-knows how to stimulate the group			Q.6				
-uses diversified teaching materials				Q.5			
-adopts a good teaching method				Q.6			
- writes unknown words on the board		R2					R2
-has clear objectives					379-388		

Table 24 - Student teachers' beliefs: teacher's role (to continue)

Table 24 (continued) - Student teachers' beliefs: teacher's role

	CRIS	CYN	DAN	ELA	LUC	MEY	MIR
- creates interest						240-241,	
						254	
- shows how the language is going to be used						256-260	
- shows the students the application of what is being taught (through		220-223			R2, 170-		
situations) and allows extrapolation					171, 174-		
					177		
- creates a relaxed atmosphere					R2		
- encourages students to speak		575-577			R2		
- creates opportunities for practice					R2		
- corrects all the activities		R2					
- promotes independence	365-369						
	Manage	ment func	tion				
is available for consultation when the students need		Q.5, 188-					
		189584-585	5				Q.6
leads students to reasoning		Q.6					
allows the student to express his or her own thoughts							
•		Q.6,R2					
does not correct all the time		Q.6					
lets students feel comfortable in class to express whatever they wish		Q.3					
creates situations that allow the students feel the need to express		Q.3					
creates opportunities for practice	Q.5						
meets students' needs and interests	238-247			Q.6	648-655		
gives the students opportunity to express opinions, ideas and feelings				Q.5			R2
allows at least 50% of the lessons to come from the students							Q.6
gives equal attention to students		R2			R2		
dialogues with students							R2

Table 24 (continued) - Student teachers' beliefs: teacher's role

	Table 24 (continued) - Studen	it teachers t	ichers. wa	THE STOIC			
	MAN	SAM	RAF	ELI	SUZ	CLA	MAR
motivates the students		190-191	-1		434-435, 447-452, R2	Q.6,R2	
-reacts to the students' needs					TT / - 132, 102	309-313	
	Pers	onality	<u></u>	<u></u>			<u></u>
dynamic						Q.6	Q.6
creative						<u>.</u>	Q.6
friendly						<u>.</u>	Q.6
confident	Q.6						
active					438-441		
nice					438-441		
happy					438-441		
<u> </u>	Professiona	l Commit	ment	<u></u>			<u></u>
loves profession					636-637		

648

dedicated

	MAN	SAM	RAF	ELI	SUZ	CLA	MAR
	M	aterials					
Video	R2					Q.5	
Songs	R2					Q.5	Q.3, Q.5
Games	R2						
Audio -visual materials				Q.12			
Texts	R2						
	Skills/L	anguage in	put				
Reading		Q.4				Q.4, Q.5 908-914,	
Conversation	R2					Q.4	
Practice, contact with the language						Q.4, 914- 919	
Speaking	R2						
All four skills			Q.3, Q.5				
Direct contact with the language through interviews, videos, ads, etc				Q.4			
Direct contact with speakers of the language				Q.12			
	Properti	es of activ	ities				
Students feel sense of achievement	Q.3, Q.4, Q.8,						
Students practice more	Q.3, Q.4						
Students feel need for expression		Q.8					
Create interest and catch students' attention						Q.3	
Compatible with reality, related to day-to-day of students						Q.5	Q.3, Q.4, Q.5, R2
Create interest						Q.5	
Varied, different						Q.5	R2
Take students to real learning and not memorization of rules and functions						Q.8	
Start from and fulfill the students' needs						Q.8	

Table 26 - Student teachers' beliefs: materials and activities (to continue)

Table 26 - Student teachers' beliefs: materials and activities (continued)

	MAN	SAM	RAF	ELI	SUZ	CLA	MAR
Learners have to think and understand why that content is being taught							
being taught			Q.3				
Bring something new		R2	Q.4				

Student	Beliefs about teacher's role	Beliefs about materials and	Lesson One	Lesson One	Lesson Two	Lesson Two
		activities	How they felt	Changes	How they felt	Changes
Fabiana	good command of English, creative, brings in new things, explains the subject, shows the subject is not difficult, does not impose, generates interest, is a friend, understands individual diffficulties, flexible, sense of humour	songs, films, cartoons, news, tapes, read texts, books	[did not write]	I would keep [teacher's name] calm and disciplinary commonsense. She manages to convey the subject in a simple and intelligent way	[did not write]	I would maintain [teacher's name] calm and good humour, because it makes the lesson more interesting and informal.
Maura	knows about English, has good teaching method, has good teaching materials, knows how to present things, explains why learn the language and how it's going to be used, clarifies doubts, gives students opportunity for questioning	Teacher says sentences in Portuguese and ask students to translate them orally, translation only at basic stages, grammar and vocabulary in context, oral and written exercises, read texts, books	It was a calm lesson. I believe everybody felt comfortable, with no difficulties.	I would maintain the good humour because it makes everybody feel comfortable to ask questions.	no diary	no diary
Carina	Speaks the language correctly, has a 'feeling' for another culture, presents content so students don't forget, concentrates on correct pronunciation, is demanding, flexible	songs, films, cartoons, news, tapes, games, Teacher should use only English in class, translation only at basic stages, no literal translation, grammar and vocabulary in context, oral skills, to copy texts and to know what one is writing	It was a calm lesson, with development of creativity and group work. I think this type of activity is good because it goes beyond the routine of the book.	I would add more activities of a different kind, more intensive	[did not write]	I would maintain the extra grammar exercises, and the development of points of view other than those presented by the book.
Carla	uptodate with recent developments, knows how to convey the subject matter, corrects students whenever necessary, stimulates learning, is dynamic	songs, laboratory, conversation, dialogues, writing, read texts, books	The lesson was good.	I would leave it as it was.	I learned, I remembered, it was an interesting lesson	I wouldn't change anything. Despite being basically lecturing, the lesson was good and [teacher's name] has a good method.

Edneia	explains the subject matter, clarifies doubts, supervises students' work	games	I felt a bit lost, because I forgot to bring my friend (the dictionary), and my vocabulary is poor.	I would read the text again since she read it only twice. In this way, people who hadn't caught much ifnormation, like me, would understand it	I felt lost.	[did not write]
Jose	excellent command of grammar and conversation, knowledge of English culture/way of life	audio-visual materials, laboratory, grammar and vocabulary in context, conversation, create atmosphere similar to that of the country where the language is spoken	I felt bored. It was boring. We didn't do many activities. I was bored perhaps because I wasn't feeling well or because I know a bit more than my classmates.	much better. I wouldn't maintain anything. I would add more conversation lessons.	I felt good. The lesson was terrific. Lots of oral activities. Few formalities.	The great emphasis on conversation is essential to learning a foreign language. I wouldn't change it.

Table 27 - First year students' reports of two lessons

Table 27 (continued) - First year students' reports of two lessons

Rose	creative, brings in new things, has several	songs, films, cartoons, news,	I'm bored.	I would give everything	I felt	I would maintain
	techniques, breaks with routine, participates	tapes, teacher uses only		she gave us and in	indifferent.	the dialogue
	in class with students, gets the students to	English in class, dialgoues,		addition to that (if we		because I think it
	feel at ease and willing to learn	comments on texts, read		had time) I would take		is one of the best
		texts, books		the students to the		things there are.
				video lab to watch a		I would give
				film in English, and		music for
				after it, tro try to tell		relaxation.
				the story to the		
				classmates. Finally		
				they would have to		
				write the story in their		
				notebooks. I would		
				maintain the writing		
				activities because this		
				helps understand: we		
				learn how to write, and		
				it by practising that we		
				learn.		

	CRI	JOS	FER	CAR	LIA	ROB	NID	VAL	LUI	JAN
	Instruction	al functi	on							
Knowledge of content										
theoretical knowledge	Q.4									
knows the language s/he is teaching				Q.6				Q.6		
well trained									Q.4	
fluency	Q.6, Q.4									
good pronunciation							Q.6			
good grammar							Q.6			
skilled										Q.6
Knowledge of pedagogy										
associates the language to the people's culture	Q.5									
shows the students the need of what they are learning				Q.3						
shows the students study skills					Q.5					
shows the students the need and importance of learning English									Q.5	
teaches in a clear and confident manner	Q.5									
plans lessons							Q.5	Q.4		
makes the lessons interesting and pleasant							Q.5			Q.6
uses variety							Q.5			
suggests activities which are of interest and involve students									Q.5	
knows students'reality		Q.6		Q.3						
has some guidelines/objectives in mind				Q.3						
gets students to speak							Q.3			
creates interest										Q.3
encourages and facilitates learning									Q.4	
creates lessons that fulfill the students'needs/objectives/expectations					Q.4					
able to create and not only copy								Q.6		
creative, knows how to use resources							Q.6			
teaches according to students' needs/reality		Q.6		Q.6						

Table 36 - Practising teachers' beliefs: teacher's role

Table 36 - Practising teachers' beliefs: teacher's role

Table 50 - Pract			1				1	1		1
	CRI	JOS	FER	CAR	LIA	ROB	NID	VAL	LUI	JAN
	1	1			1		1	1		1
plans lessons having in mind the student, the environment, the method										
							Q.6			
worries about students as individuals							Q.6			
tries to understand the students							Q.6			
tries to help students to study and apply what they are learning							Q.6			
is responsive to students'needs and wants									Q.3,	
									Q.6	
finds out what the students' interests are								Q.3		
allows students to feel free and confident in order to ask questions								Q.4		
is a friend								Q.5		
respects students'individuality								Q.5		
fair and coherent								Q.5		
challenges students								Q.6		
helps students not to give up								Q.6		
available to clarify doubts								Q.6		
has the student as the centre of the process				Q.3						
has an interest in the student							Q.3			
in a friendly atmosphere finds out what the students would like to learn										Q. 3
praises progress achieved							Q.5			
encourages students							Q.5	0.5		
tries to meet individual needs							Q.5			
promotes good teacher/student interaction							Q.5			
is sensitive to students' level							Q.5			
respects age characteristics							Q.5			
establishes a comfortable and inviting atmosphere							0.5		0.5	
encourages students to learn, without inhibition		0.5	1				1		1	
knows students and respects their cognitive styles, needs and		¥	1		Q.5					
expectations					۷.5					

provides activities and tasks according to the students'interest	1				Q.5	5						I
--	---	--	--	--	-----	---	--	--	--	--	--	---

Table 36 - Practising teachers' beliefs: teacher's role (continued)

Personality

	1 6180	шашіу								
	CRI	JOS	FER	CAR	LIA	ROB	NID	VAL	LUI	JAN
communicative									Q.6	
nice									Q.6	
flexible									Q.6	
dynamic	Q.6									Q.6
active			Q.6							
confident	Q.4,							Q.6		
	Q.6									
patient								Q.6		
has sense of humour								Q.6		

Professional commitment

	I Toressionar com						
uptodate		0.5	Q.6				
enthusiastic		<u> </u>	Q.6		Q.5	Q.6	
doesn't allow personal problems interfere with lessons							
						Q.6	
motivated		Q.6		Q.4	Q.4		
tries to improve him/herself					Q.6		
interested in learning in order to teach better	Q.6						
eager to work independent of the situation			(Q.6			
dedicated and always tries alternatives to his/her practice							
			(Q.6			
likes what s/he does							Q.6
seeks professional growth							Q.6

	CRI	JOS	FER	CAR	LIA	ROB	NID	VAL	LUI	JAN
Materials										
Games, questions and answers, contextualization, drama, texts							Q.3			
Visual appeal				Q.4						
Skills/Language Input			Q.3							
Vocabulary presentation										
Collective and individual reading of learned words			Q.3							
Topics of interest			Q.4	Q.4						
Copy structures			Q.3							
Properties of activities										
Real situations, within students'reality								Q.4		
Create involvement							Q.3		Q.4	
Allow language practice									Q.3	Q.3
Pair and group work		Q.4								
Enviroment		•		•					•	
Relaxing atmosphere			Q.4							

Table 37 - Practising teachers' beliefs: materials and activities