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Unveiling teacher learning:
an investigation on the role of narratives and dialogic mediation
on concept development

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**UNVEILING TEACHER LEARNING:
AN INVESTIGATION ON THE ROLE OF NARRATIVES AND DIALOGIC MEDIATION
ON CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT**

Esta Tese foi julgada adequada para obtenção do Título de "Doutora em Inglês: Estudos Linguísticos e Literários", e aprovada a em sua forma final pelo Programa de Pós-Graduação em Inglês.

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**To my parents, especially to my father (in memoriam), as a birthday present….**

**É fundamental diminuir a distância entre o que se diz e o que se faz, de tal forma que, num dado momento a tua fala seja a tua prática. (Paulo Freire)**

# ABSTRACT

The overall duty of teacher education programs has always been the same- preparing pre-service and in service teachers for teaching- yet, the way the field understands how teachers learn to do their job has been sensibly changing over the last decades (Freeman &Johnson,1998). On the flip side of the traditional positivist paradigm which dictate(d) and model(ed) specific teaching behaviors to achieve determined outcomes, is the vygostskian sociocultural theoretical perspective, which recognizes learning as a unique process shaping and being shaped by the social context in which the individual is inserted. This perspective has garnered prominence in the scenario of second/foreign language teacher education and prompted a call for researches on teachers' learning. Joining the various voices aiming at responding to such call, this study's ultimate goal was to show the power of sociocultural perspective in unveiling language teachers' cognition. As such, this study investigates how two English as a foreign language experienced teachers' conceptions of teaching emerged and evolve as they move along a one-semester teaching experience in which their pedagogical practice is object of study of the researcher, a peer teacher who follows their classes, questions their decisions, and responds to their teaching practices and anxieties via a blog constructed to these ends. The findings underscore that  teacher learning is a unique process that demands time and engagement in meaningful learning opportunities, and is mediated by teachers' prior experiences as language learners,  language teachers, by their own agency, by emotion, and also by the contextual aspects in which learning/teaching takes place. Moreover, a close reading across the cases of the participants makes visible that the longstanding quandary about theory and practice divide is still an issue permeating teachers' practices and has prevented teachers to develop conceptual thinking. Given the elucidatory power that researches on teacher development brings to the fore, it seems that teacher education programs should consider designing curricula that account for the individual aspects of teacher learning and that promote strategic mediation along all the course periods and across all levels of education within the program.

# RESUMO

Apesar da missão primordial dos programas de formação de professores ter se mantido a mesma ao longo dos anos-preparar professores para o ensino-a forma como a área entende como os professores aprendem a fazer seu trabalho vem mudando sensivelmente ao longo das últimas décadas (Freeman & Johnson, 1998). Na contramão do tradicional paradigma positivista, que dita(va) e molda(va) comportamentos específicos de ensino a fim de alcançar determinados resultados, está a perspectiva teórica sociocultural vygotskiana, que vê a aprendizagem como um processo único no qual o indivíduo influencia e é influenciado pelo contexto social no qual está inserido. Esta perspectiva tem se destacado no cenário de formação de professores de língua estrangeira/segunda língua mobilizando chamados para pesquisas sobre a aprendizagem de professores. Juntando-se às várias vozes que visam responder a tal chamamento está este estudo, cujo objetivo final foi mostrar o potencial da perspectiva sociocultural em desvendar a cognição do professor, investigando como alguns conceitos relacionados a ensinar surgem e se desenvolvem ao longo de um semestre curricular, quando a prática de dois professores experientes de inglês como língua estrangeira tem sua prática pedagógica acompanhada pela pesquisadora -uma professora mediadora que assiste suas aulas, questiona suas decisões, responde às suas práticas de ensino e ansiedades através de um blog criado para estes fins. Os resultados revelam que a aprendizagem de professores é um processo único que exige tempo e engajamento em oportunidades de aprendizagem significativas, é mediado por experiências anteriores dos professores enquanto alunos de línguas, professores de línguas, por sua própria agência, pela emoção, e também por aspectos contextuais onde este processo ocorre. Além disso, a leitura atenta dos casos de cada participante revela que o dilema de longa data em relação à divisão entre a teoria e a prática ainda é uma questão que permeia as práticas dos professores e tem dificultado o desenvolvimento do pensamento conceitual. Considerando-se o poder elucidativo que as pesquisas sobre o desenvolvimento de professores trazem à tona, os programas de formação deveriam considerar montar currículos que levem em conta aspectos individuais relacionados à aprendizagem dos professores e que promovam a mediação estratégica ao longo de todos os níveis dentro do programa de formação básica e continuada de professores de língua.

**Palavras-chave:** Teoria sociocultural, desenvolvimento de conceitos, mediação dialógica, narrativas.

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**CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION**

The education field has been a fruitful arena for debates around the knowledge base that grounds teacher education programs. In the core of these debates is the call for the reconceptualization of this knowledge base aiming at establishing a dialectic, dialogic and reflective relationship between theory and practice.

Freire (1972) used the term praxis to refer to pedagogical action that reflects the articulation between theory and practice. As Freire (1972) stresses, human beings cannot be understood apart from their relations with the world, each person is a "ser-em-situação"[1], and a potential agent of transformation. Human beings are therefore, agents of praxis: agents of action and reflection. To be aligned with this philosophy, Freire (1972) argues that teachers' discourse should get as close as possible from practice so that there is no clear separation between them.

Lack of mutual articulation between theory and practice has important pedagogical implications. For Freire, the traditional educational model, based on expository classes - narratives of theoretical content disconnected from reality and from practice -  leads students to a rote memorization of content and can be compared to a banking system in which learners are empty recipients of deposits made by teachers. Students, instead of taking part of the educational process, simply receive knowledge, not being able to make connections to concrete experiences, and therefore not being able to make sense of great deal of this knowledge. That is what the banking system educational model is about "[...] fora da busca, fora da práxis, os homens não podem ser (Freire, 2005, p. 66).

The teacher educated in this paradigm will be more likely to reproduce his/her own experience (Freire, 2011):

Se, na experiência de minha formação, que deve ser permanente, começo por aceitar que o formador é o sujeito em relação a quem me considero objeto, que ele é o sujeito que me forma e eu, o objeto por ele formado....nesta forma de

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[1] the expression"ser-em-situação" means that each person acts according to the situation in which they are inserted.

compreender e de viver o processo formador, eu, objeto agora, terei a possibilidade, amanhã, de me tornar o falso sujeito da formação do futuro objeto de meu ato formador. (p. 25)

Likewise, second/foreign language teacher education has been experiencing this longstanding quandary engendered by the traditional binary relationship between theory and practice. Such dichotomy is still the echo of a positivist epistemology that conceives learning as a process imprinted in the learner's mind and apart from the physical and social environment in which learning takes place (Lenneberg, 1967). Moreover, positivist research in education has postulated the use of pre-determined behavioral patterns that would eventually lead to learners' achievement regardless of contextual features. As Johnson (2009) points out, the teacher educated within this paradigm figures as a mere transmitter of pre-arranged activities, designed by language teaching theoreticians who believe that such activities can work in any teaching context. Furthermore, the complexities of a classroom are disregarded and subverted to simplified and generalizable assumptions, a misguidance that has generated overgeneralizations concerning students, teachers and teaching practices that are far from corresponding to classrooms' reality.

Hardly surprising, when entering classrooms teacher learners are confronted with real teaching situations in which those routinized models, generalizable assumptions and theories do not present the intended outcomes, or are useless for a specific circumstance. In trying to fill this gap, teachers often rely on what Lortie (1975) calls *apprenticeship of observation*, a term that refers to the learning that students intuitively acquire as they observe their teachers' attitudes, behavior, didactics and methodology. As the author cautions, the conception of teaching that derives from this experience – despite providing teachers with some idea about what it means to be a teacher – reveals to be fragmentary and asymmetric, because it originates solely from teacher learners' experiences and memories as students, thus lacking their former teachers' motives, points-of-view, reflections and objectives when applying certain activities or when adopting certain attitudes and behaviors.

More than three decades ago, this dominant positivist epistemology started to be the focus of systematic criticism. The shifting epistemologies that followed understand human learning fundamentally as a social activity. As Childs (2011a) points out, Freeman and Johnson's seminal TESOL *Quarterly* article in 1998 proposed the resettlement of the activity of teaching as the quintessential knowledge base of second language teacher education (SLTE), emphasizing the role of teachers as learners of teaching. This article was the point of departure for a great deal of discussion and research on this issue (see Johnston & Goettsch, 2000; Putnam & Borko, 2000; Tarone & Allwright, 2005; Widdowson, 2002), and it also propelled the sociocultural turn, drawn from Vygotsky's theory of learning and development, as having elucidative potential for understanding language teacher learning.

From a sociocultural perspective, cognition originates in and is shaped by the engagement in social activities, therefore what one learns cannot be separated from how one learns, and what one teaches cannot be seen apart from how one teaches (Johnson & Golombek, 2011). From this stance, Johnson & Golombek (2011) argue that knowledge for teaching must be seen as a whole, and it is in this interdependence between what is taught and how it is taught that lie the processes of learning to teach and the development of teacher expertise.

For Smagorinsky *et al* (2003), this dichotomous relationship between theory and practice occurs because the profession lacks the insights provided by Vygotsky's notion of conceptual thinking, in which worldly experience – spontaneous concepts – is interconnected with abstract principles – scientific concepts. As the name suggests, spontaneous (or everyday) concepts are grasped spontaneously through informal everyday situations, and since they are connected to learning in specific contexts, they can hardly ever be applied to new contexts, and, if they are, they can be quite misleading. Conversely, scientific concepts are learned by means of systematic instruction, and because they are rooted on general principles, permit generalizations and application to new contexts. Yet, in order to make sense of these abstractions, it is important that they are linked to real situations.

Implementing pedagogies to foster conceptual thinking, however, is still a major challenge to be achieved, since great deal of scientific concepts presented by SLTE programs to students are still "disconnected in any substantive way from practical goal-directed activities of actual teaching" (Johnson & Golombek, 2011, p.4). It is this confrontation, this encounter between spontaneous concepts, grounded in practical experience, and scientific concepts, grounded in theoretical foundations, that SLTE should head to.

In Brazil, although we have been witnessing important movements towards a more consistent pedagogical praxis, the foreign/additional language teacher education still has a long path to cover. In the opening pages of *Conversas com Formadores de Professores de Línguas: Avanços e Desafios*, Professor Vera Lúcia Menezes de Oliveira e Paiva makes a brief retrospect about the insertion of pedagogic related disciplines in the Letters programs. As she points out, not long ago there was a general belief that pedagogical knowledge concerned only the Education Faculties. In 2002, MEC (Education Ministry) implemented the document "Diretrizes Curriculares Nacionais para a Formação de Professores da Educação Básica, em nível superior, curso de licenciatura, de graduação plena", and changed the traditional lisensure curricula, known as 3 plus 1 - three years of specific disciplinary and content knowledge in the area plus one year of pedagogical practice in the Education department. Furthermore, the amount of hours for the practicum increased to 300 hours whereas 500 hours more were delegated to other educational activities. The new directives pointed to the need of articulation among all disciplines of the curriculum highlighting their equal role in forming teachers. Also, they emphasized the importance of carrying out research focused on the teaching/learning process and, most importantly, they repositioned practice at the center of the curriculum stating that it has to be part of the program since the initial stages.

Lagging behind by more than a decade, effective and solid changes in practice are still a goal to be achieved. Although the implementation of new directives was paramount to the field, there seems to be resistance on the front lines. If, on the one hand, the teacher education field is trying to recast the

vacuum between theory and practice, on the other hand, this paradigm – still present in the context of schools in general, curbing attempts to change – may be an equally hard obstacle to be tackled. As Oliveira (2013) observes, there is a discrepancy between pre-service teachers' discourse – innovative and critical of practices based on traditional paradigms –- and their own practices in the practicum. As she points out, it seems that the new understandings, generated during the years of undergraduate program, fades away when confronted with the still dominant traditional paradigm in schools. There seem to be at least two possible explanations for this to happen - either the attempts to promote the pedagogical praxis are failing, and teachers are not being able to translate the theory into their practices, or as aforementioned, the *status quo* is subduing any attempts of change.

My own experience in the practicum twenty years ago illustrates the tough enterprise faced by teachers in trying to implement a consistent theory/practice pedagogy. By the time of my practicum I had already been teaching for about five years but I was very excited and concerned in developing consistent classes, adding the knowledge I had acquired with my supervisor in the methodology classes. After witnessing, with a mix of surprise and disappointment, some very traditional structurally based language classes in the school where my practicum would take place - a school supposed to present the most up- to-date pedagogies due to its insertion within a university –, I planned under the guidance of my supervisor, basic but effective practices involving interaction and participation among the students in a communicative basis, as previewed in the school directives. For my frustration, even though I had received positive feedback from the practicum supervisor and from the students, the class teacher, a thirty-year-experience professional, in her official report defined the classes as "utopic for the school reality" and "impossible to be implemented on a daily basis". This kind of feedback brings to the surface inconsistencies that reflect common practices - generalized accepted beliefs that insist and persist in demarcating the divide between theory and practice, thus raising concerns that deserve scrutiny until nowadays, even after the establishment of new directives.

At that time, my practicum experience, and subsequent experiences observing language classes, ignited at least two major suspicions concerning teacher practices that were reinforced as I started to get acquainted with language teacher education and sociocultural perspective. Firstly, the suspicion that promoting teachers' development – and thus promoting practice informed by theory - without encouraging changes in the schooling paradigm where they are going to act, represents only part of the work done, since the power exerted by the school's directives or even by the hidden curriculum (Densgombe, 1982) may inhibit teachers' initiatives of change. Second, the suspicion that the context *per se*, even if it seems to favor innovation, does not suffice to promote consistent practice, there must be articulation among the opportunities for learning offered by the context in order to make them work as real tools for mediation, and consequently, for development. Learning to teach entails a complex and long term enterprise operated within the social context, where opportunities for learning function intertwingly rather than in isolation.

There is a great deal of research pointing that learning to teach requires pre-service and also in-service teachers' engagement in reflection 'on' practice as well 'in' practice (Schön, 1983). Reflection can lead teachers, experienced or not, to describe, inform, confront and reconstruct their practices (Smyth, 1992).

As regards experienced teachers, reflective teaching can also lead them to review practices that do not conform to the theories that ground their coursework and the researches they carry out. After all, learning to teach is an ongoing activity that has no beginning or ending clearly demarcated:

> As teacher educators, we recognize teacher professional development as a complicated, prolonged, highly situated, and deeply personal process that has no start or end point. A novice teacher entering the classroom for the very first time is involved in professional development; a pre-service teacher taking academic coursework in a teacher education program is involved in professional development; an in-service teacher participating in a workshop is involved in professional development; an experienced teacher attempting to understand and overcome a persistent classroom dilemma is involved in professional development. For us, understanding, supporting, and enhancing teacher professional development for all teachers, at all points in their careers, constitutes the essence of our scholarly and professional work. (Johnson & Golombek, 2011,p. xi)

Notwithstanding, key to the learning process is to create meditational spaces to engender reflection aiming at development. Teachers, more than reflecting isolatedly about their practices, should engage in dialogical processes of reflection, so that effective mediation can take place, and therefore, it can actually guide the process of development. It is motivated by this statement of problem that I have addressed the present research, whose objectives and questions are posed next.

1.1 THE RESEARCH OBJECTIVE AND QUESTIONS

Having the sociocultural perspective as the foothold for my investigation, the objective of my research is to trace how two English as a/an foreign/additional language experienced teachers' conceptions of teaching evolve as they move along a one-semester teaching experience in which their pedagogical practice is object of study of - a peer teacher (the researcher) who follows their classes, questions their decisions, and responds to their teaching practices and anxieties via a blog constructed to these ends.

The following question is the point of departure of my dissertation:

How do two English as a/an foreign/additional language experienced teachers' conceptions of teaching evolve as they move along a one-semester teaching experience in which their pedagogical practice is object of study of a peer teacher (the researcher) who follows their classes, questions their decisions, and responds to their teaching practices and anxieties via a blog constructed to these ends?

In order to be able to answer this general research question, the following specific questions are investigated:

1-What are the concepts most often raised by teachers as they verbalize their teaching in their narratives?

2-How did teachers come to conceptualize teaching as evidenced in their learning history narratives and how do these conceptualizations reflect in their classes?

3-How do these concepts progressively evolve? To what extent has strategic mediation via narratives (blog) contributed to these teachers' development?

4-Has the teachers' teaching practice been transformed along the period in which these teachers have been traced? Which contextual factors contributed for fostering/ curbing change?

1.2 ORGANIZATION OF THE DISSERTATION

This dissertation is divided into seven chapters, namely *Introduction; Review of the Literature; Method; Mayra: An accidental teacher; Andrey: A teacher blooms out of passion for the English language; Conclusion; Implications, Limitations, and Future Research Directions.* I now provide an overview about each one.

In Chapter 1 - *Introduction,* I provided a brief overview about the divide between theory and practice that still permeates the general education as well as the second and foreign language education fields. I proceeded presenting the effects of this positivist paradigm on teachers' practices that instigated me to carry out a research on this topic. Following, I briefly presented Vygotsky's notion of concept development as a way to overcome the theory-practice divide. I also provided a general description of my investigation and the research questions.

In Chapter 2 - *Review of the Literature*, I present the basic tenets of Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory and their implications for second and foreign language teacher education. I bridge this part with a discussion about teachers' beliefs and concept development. I proceed the review focusing on narrative based inquiry because language, in the form of narratives, is the prevailing mediational tool used in my investigation. In this vein, I dedicate part of the chapter to discuss the contributions of narrative research in the process of concept development. I also present the narrative framework developed by Johnson & Golombek (2011) which represents a powerful tool for tracing teacher's development through narratives. I close this chapter emphasizing that when teacher's narratives are combined with strategic mediation, the teacher has more chances to achieve concept development.

Chapter 3 - *Method*, depicts the participants – Andrey and Mayra – and the context in which classes were observed. It also brings some information about my own trajectory and my motivation to develop a study on concept development. Following is a description about the rationale behind the blog

design in order to better capture data. The chapter finishes with the description of the method through which data were analyzed.

In Chapter 4 – *Mayra: An accidental teacher* and Chapter 5 – *Andrey: A teacher blooms out of passion for the English language,* I present the analysis of Andrey and Mayra's data respectively. I divided the data analysis in two main axes. The first is concerned with describing the participants' teacher persona and the second axis refers to the analysis of their teaching activity and the mediation via blog.

In Chapter 6 - *Conclusion*, the most important findings and conclusions that emerged from the data analysis are revisited and summarized in order to answer the research questions.

In Chapter 7 – *Implications, Limitations, and Future Research Directions*, I pose some final remarks on the research findings. I also comment on the limitations and implications of this research study as well as offer some insights for further inquiry that emerged from data analysis. As a closing point, I emphasize the relevance of studies that aim to capture the process of teachers' development through authored narratives fostered by dialogic mediation, having the sociocultural perspective underpinning the floors for concept development.

**CHAPTER 2 – REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

2.1 APPROACHING SOCIOCULTURAL THEORY: A NEW PERSPECTIVE TO UNDERSTAND

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT COMES TO THE FOREFRONT

The principles of sociocultural perspective are anchored in the theory of learning developed by the Russian psychologist and educator Lev Semenovich Vygotsky and his pupils Alexei Nikolaievich Leont'ev and Alexander Romanovich Luria. To start with, Rego (2012) underscores that Vygotsky did not intend to elaborate a theory to understand specifically children's development. He resorts to childhood as a way to explicate human behavior as a whole, *"justificando que a necessidade do estudo da criança reside no fato de ela estar no centro da pré-história do desenvolvimento cultural devido ao surgimento do uso de instrumentos e da fala humana"* (p. 25).

Vygotsky's work brings great contributions to psychology and education since it raises reflection to understand how higher level functions are constituted and developed along people's lives (Johnson, 2009). As Oliveira (1993) notes, these functions, or high mental processes, which are only observable in humans, comprehend behavioral conscious control, the intended action and the freedom individuals have concerning the characteristics of the present moment and space. As such, human beings are able to retrieve from memory things that are not physically present on the time of speaking, imagine events never experienced, as well as plan future actions. These kinds of psychological activity are considered more complex and sophisticated because they differentiate from basic mechanisms such as reflex actions (e.g. a baby in the moment of breast feeding), automatic reactions (e.g. turning the head towards a sudden sound), or simple association processes between events (e.g. avoiding hand contact with a flame).

Ever since Vygotsky's ideas became known in Eastern societies, his theory has gained prominence among scholars within the field of education. As it appears, his ideas broke paradigms and offered new ways of looking at the processes of teaching and learning. In order to better comprehend

the range of the impact that Vygotsky's ideas brought to education, it is imperative to examine the basic principles of the theories that dominated Psychology until then.

### 2.1.1 Innatism and Behaviorism: mind and body

Until the first decades of the twentieth century, Psychology was divided into two radically opposing trends. One of them tried to explain the psychological processes from the point of view of a natural science, whereas the other understood psychology as a mental science. Both of them were shaped and influenced by the socio-historical contexts in which they were systematized, the philosophical paradigms that grounded their rationale included.

As Rego (1995) observes, the Innatist theory, inspired in the Rationalism and Idealism Philosophy, is grounded on the belief that human basic capacities, such as potential, personality and values, are innate, meaning that these capacities are at least potentially ready in the moment of birth and need only to mature in order to manifest. The Innatist theory attributes to hereditary factors the responsibility for the human developmental process and consequently, it does not take into account the role of sociocultural interactions in the constitution of cognitive and behavioral structures.

Moreover, this paradigm credits limited importance to the role education plays in the individual development, since students' performance is directly dependent on their innate abilities. This belief has served as background to justify the adoption of spontaneist pedagogical practices, which not only are not challenging for students but also underestimate individual capacities, since they assume that one's success or failure is mostly dependent on innate talent, natural gift or maturity.

Conversely, the Behaviorist theory, whose basic tenets were drawn from the Empiricism and Positivist Philosophy, ascribes the constitution of the human characteristics solely to the environment and considers the experience as the main source of knowledge and behavioral development. As Rego (1995) notes, Behaviorist postulates may serve to justify different and even contradictory teaching methodologies that range from conservative to spontaneous teaching practices. As regards the traditional pedagogy, the role of the school is overestimated due to the belief that students are empty

vessels that need to be filled and modeled in order to prepare them morally and intellectually to live in society. Since it is a teacher-centered approach, the responsibility to convey knowledge, correct, evaluate and judge students' performance belongs to the teachers, who address students' mistakes and difficulties, and value what the students are able to do alone. At the other pole, there are spontaneist pedagogical practices, which also use Behaviorism as a pedagogical background. Such practices can be observed in student-centered pedagogy that claims that a full range of stimuli environment offers challenge and is conducive for learning. Within this perspective, experiences and relationships established naturally and freely between learners and the objects of their physical environment are likely to lead to the construction of knowledge. Moreover, teachers function as moderators who interfere the least possible in order not to inhibit learners' interest, creativity and discovery. Another characteristic of the spontaneism is the presupposition that learners' performance and individual characteristics are determined unidirectionally by external factors, mainly by the education provided by the family and by the socio-economic environment in which the person is inserted. Thus, it exempts the school of any responsibility when learners do not achieve the expected performance.

Vygotsky did not accept this dichotomy, as it undervalues the human capacity to break beyond biological or environmental limitations, thus proposing a new way of looking at the origin and development of human psyche, as well as at the relationship between individual and society and, consequently, at education. The next sub-section presents Vygotsky's view to learning and development.

## 2.1.2 Understanding a Sociocultural perspective: the roots and basic tenets of Vygotsky's line of thought

Grounded in the principles of the Dialectical Materialism developed by Karl Marx (1818-1883) and Friedrich Engels (1820-1895), Vygotsky (1978) claims that the development of the human complexity lies on the process of interaction with and appropriation of the historical and cultural experience. For Vygotsky (1978), individual and environment influence each other, meaning that

biological and social are not separate and independent factors, but rather the opposite, they are highly interdependent. Biological factors and the social world are absolutely crucial and valuable for the constitution of human psychological functioning. It is while engaging in activities that are mediated by others and by cultural objects that individuals develop what Vygotsky calls higher forms of psychological functioning, mentioned on the previous section.

According to this view, human beings are constituted through their social relations and at the same time that they transform these relations, they are transformed by them. This means that the socially mediated activities individuals engage in change not only their external behaviors and surroundings but also their minds. In this sense, Vygotsky argues that social learning precedes development. For him, human development, marked by the individuals' insertion in a cultural environment occurs from "outside in" and not from "inside out", as proposed by Piaget (1973) .That is, higher mental functions take place within a social plane before happening within an inner plane. As he puts it:

> An interpersonal process is transformed into an intrapersonal one. Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first on the social level, and later, on the individual level. First between people (interpsychological), and then inside the child (intrapsychological). This applies equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory, and to the formation of concepts. All the higher functions originate as actual relations between human individuals. All the higher functions originate as actual relations between human individuals. (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 57)

Given the importance that interaction plays in Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, this line of thought is also known as Socio Interactionist and, in claiming that the interaction between individual and environment is the core factor for human constitution, he stands in stark opposition against the theories which polarized the innate and the acquired, either for giving too much emphasis to the environment influences, or for overestimating hereditary and maturational aspects. At this juncture, it is important to underscore that for Vygotsky, the developmental process does not consist of a simple addition of biological and acquired factors; rather, it consists of dialectical interactions that happen

since birth between human beings and the cultural and social environment where they are inserted. In other words, development is a socially mediated activity.

The concept of mediation, which is central to understand Vygotsky's ideas concerning higher psychological functions, arises from the observation that the relationship individuals establish with the world is not direct; it is done through the symbolic systems which represent reality. As John-Steiner and Mahn (1996) note, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory is "based on the concept that human activities take place in cultural contexts, are mediated by language and other symbolic systems, and can be understood when investigated in their historical development" (p. 191). Similarly, Lantolf & Thorne (2006) state that the relevance of Vygotsky's methodology relies on the fact that it is grounded on the fundamental role that social practices and cultural artifacts play as mediational means in the developmental process of human psychological functions.

Vygotsky (1978) thus extended the notion of mediation between human and world through the aid of physical tools - auxiliary artifacts that are external to the individuals and refer to objects - to the use of psychological tools (signs). Vygotsky (1978) notes that:

> The invention and use of signs as auxiliary means of solving a given psychological problem (to remember, compare something, report, choose, and so on) is analogous to the invention and use of tools in one psychological respect. The sign acts as an instrument of psychological activity in a manner analogous to the role of a tool in labor. (p. 52)

As such, physical tools mediate human activity and change the object to which they are aimed, as for example, the use of a knife to peel a fruit, or a hammer to fix nails: both the fruit and the nails are changed after the intervention of the knife and the hammer. "The sign, on the other hand, changes nothing in the object of a psychological operation" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 55). It is self-oriented, it assists in the control of the individual's psychological actions or of other people's (Rego, 2012), in other words, a sign "can be both externally directed at others and internally directed at the self" (Johnson & Golombek, 2003, p. 751).

As Johnson and Golombek (2003) note, psychological tools are built within specific social-cultural contexts, used for a period of time and changed, shaped or adapted by individuals, until they develop internal resources which enable them to disregard the use of such tools, leading them to a stage of mastery of skills called Internalization, which is, for Vygotsky, one of the most important processes to be mastered concerning human cognition. He defines internalization as "the internal reconstruction of an external operation" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 56). As he explains, this process does not happen at once or ascendently. In his words,

> Development, as often happens, proceeds here not in a circle but in a spiral, passing through the same point at each new revolution while advancing to a higher level…the process being transformed continues to exist and to change as an external form of activity for a long time before definitively turning inward. (Vygotsky, 1978, pp. 56-57)

Thus, the vygotskian concept of higher cognitive development does not mean a mere substitution of abilities; it refers to a dialogic process of both inner and activity change" (Valsineer &Van der Veer, 2002).

At this juncture, it is clear that for Vygotsky (1978), human development is fostered by the learning that happens within the cultural group, through interaction with other individuals in this social environment. And, in the inherent relationship between learning and development lies a crucial discussion that Vygotsky brings to fore as he proposes his theory. From Vygotsky's (1978) perspective, it is this learning that warrants the developmental process, that is, it is learning that guarantees that high mental functions and culturally organized characteristics will develop.

In opposition to traditional ways of measuring development in terms of achievement – what is usually valued and focused on in education is the final product, the establishment of the developmental level already attained, namely, the identification of the tasks a person is already able to perform independently – Sociocultural theory (SCT) understands real development can be attained as the potential development of an individual is considered, and not by the level of his/her actual development. For Vygotsky (1978), little attention is directed to the process through which knowledge

is achieved. The difference between these two levels – actual and potential development – constitutes what he denominated the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Therefore, the ZPD can be understood as the distance between the actual capacity for independent problem solving and the potential capacity of problem solving under assistance of others, or even through the use of cultural artifacts, such as books, recipes, class plans, and manuals. Santrock (2001) defines the Vygotskian concept of ZPD as the range difference between what a learner can achieve without and with the assistance of others. Hence, the bottom limit of the ZPD indicates the highest level capacity for independent task solving, whereas the top limit represents the level achieved with others' support.

Fundamental in this process it that "learning creates the zone of proximal development, that is, learning awakens a variety of internal developmental processes that are able to operate only when the child is interacting with people in his environment and in cooperation with his peers" (p. 90). Thus, learning is not development; it precedes it, and if appropriately organized, can lead to development.

As this understanding of learning and development can be extended to any area of knowledge, teacher education being one of them, I now turn my attention to what the literature on sociocultural theory says about second/foreign language teacher education.

## 2.2 SOCIOCULTURAL PERSPECTIVE APPLIED TO SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHER EDUCATION

In sharing the view with sociocultural theory which claims that human mind is mediated mainly by the socio-cultural-historical context, we assume that teachers, as social beings inserted in social contexts, may have their practices and behaviors borrowed from their former experiences as learners, as teacher learners, and later as teachers in educational settings. As Johnson & Golombek (2003) put it, "cognitive development is a socially mediated activity and as such, the way in which our consciousness develops depends on the specific social activities in which we engage" (p.730).

Moreover, sociocultural theory (Leont'ev, 1981; Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1985), through its basic tenets such as the zone of proximal development (ZPD) and mediation, has definitely spread its

roots on the field of L2 teacher education due to its potential of providing elucidatory understandings concerning the processes which ground teacher learning (Johnson & Golombek, 2003). Karen Johnson, in her book entitled Second Language Teacher Education – A Sociocultural Perspective (2009), is basically concerned in demonstrating what a sociocultural perspective on human learning has to offer the enterprise of L2 teacher education. Throughout the book, she addresses this matter from five changing points of view.

First of all, she argues that a sociocultural perspective changes the way we think about teacher learning. Since L2 teacher education is basically concerned with teachers as learners of teaching, **figuring out the cognitive and social processes which teachers engage in** throughout their learning process is basic to informing what to do in L2 teacher education.

Second, she believes that a sociocultural perspective changes the way we see language. **Language**, from a sociocultural perspective, **not only works as a psychological tool used to make sense of experiences but also serves as a cultural tool**, since it may serve to share these experiences with others, thus turning experience into cultural knowledge and understandings. Since the sociocultural perspective emphasizes the social nature of language, preparing teachers to see language as social practice demands that they become aware of the underlying concepts which are disguised in how language use conveys meaning. According to Wright (2002), an L2 critical cognizant teacher is the one able to develop an overall sensitivity to language, reflect upon it and observe how language functions in practice and how to transform knowledge about language in teaching activities. This teacher is also able to grasp opportunities to explore the language and promote discussions which will lead to learning.

Thirdly, Johnson argues that a sociocultural perspective changes the way we view language teaching. She points out that when **learning opportunities which engage students in direct experiences in the use of new psychological tools** are generated by teaching, these tools are potentially capable to enhance learning. The author also highlights that for development to really

happen, several opportunities have to be offered to teacher learners for dialogic mediation, scaffolded learning and assisted performance as they engage in and make sense of meaningful aspects concerning their profession.

Fourth, the author defends the idea that a sociocultural perspective changes the way we think about the broader social, cultural, and historical macro-structures that are always present and transforming themselves in the L2 profession. She observes that the Activity Theory (Leont'ev, 1977), which is an extension of Vygotsky's work, is a conceptual framework used to describe **how activities of an individual teacher influence and are influenced by the cultural, historical and social macro-structures which represent their profession**. In this sense, she reviews the latest studies that show how educational reform policies and high-stake tests influence the positions taken by teachers and students, the way pedagogical practices are performed by teachers and also the nature of learning environments teachers desire and are able to offer to their learners.

In Johnson's fifth and last changing point of view, she argues that a sociocultural perspective changes the way we think about what constitutes professional development. She argues that L2 teacher education must redefine the lines that have framed the concept of professional development, aligning it with the idea that **teacher learning is social, context situated, and distributed among individuals, activities and tools**. It means including forms of teacher learning that are not the traditional ones (such as workshops and seminars) and giving room to teachers' informal social and professional networks; their own classrooms constituting sites for professional development

Johnson also depicts similarities between the grounding assumptions of inquiry-based approaches to professional development and the sociocultural perspective and describes how fruitful these approaches can be in terms of enhancing teacher practices. For Johnson, these changes will certainly modify the knowledge base of teachers, the core aspect to which we now turn our attention.

In sum, the changes proposed by the sociocultural theory towards second language teacher education (in bold) emphasize the fact that teachers are social beings, or *seres –em –situação* as

proposed by Freire (1972), and as such, we develop socially in a given context and from our interactions with the world and with the others, being mediated by the language, among other tools.

Although sociocultural theory and second/foreign language teaching seem to be natural born partners, only recently we have witnessed a growing stockpile of microgenetic research being carried out in second / foreign language classrooms. In Johnson and Golombek's (2011) publication, fourteen empirical research studies systematically examine teacher professional development within different SLTE programs. The contributors present an examination of the quality and character of the mediational means offered to support teacher professional development and traces the development over time and within the cultural, historical and institutional settings in which teachers do their work. Of key importance is that this kind of research "has the potential to expose the discursive practices that shape teachers' knowing, thinking, and doing and provide us with a window into how the use of deliberate and strategic mediational means can help to create opportunities for teachers to move toward more theoretically and pedagogically sound instructional practices within the settings and circumstances of their work" (Johnson & Golombek, 2011, p. xi).

Another example of publication of sociocultural theory applied to second /foreign language education is Ilha do Desterro's 68th issue (Johnson and Dellagnello, 2015). Given the importance that the practices of L2/FL teacher education represent for teacher educators to observe, give support, and increase the professional development of L2/FL teachers, this issue aims at bridging the complexities of teaching and the learning of teaching by examining the professional development activities that teachers and teacher educators are involved in their pre-service or in-service L2/FL teacher education programs. Among the contributors of this issue, many ground their research in the vygotskian sociocultural theoretical perspective on teacher learning and focus at the social activities that teachers and teacher educators engage in to observe how the expert mediation that is implemented during these activities reappears as mental activities in teacher thinking and in teachers' activity.

**2.2.1 The knowledge base in second language teacher education: the core problem concerning the theory/practice divide.**

In the last decades, the concept of teacher learning, which has informed the way teacher education was structured, has gone through important changes. According to Johnson (2009), such changes were influenced by shifts in the way epistemological traditions view human learning. These shifts added to the accumulation of years of research on how teachers learn to do their work evidence the social nature of the teaching activity and of the activities related to teaching. In this sense, a sociocultural perspective can help the field of education to develop an epistemological stance that justifies the content that informs L2 teacher education. Since the professional education of teachers is mainly about teachers as learners of teaching, the knowledge base of this profession must reflect its needs.

Dating back to 1998, Freeman & Johnson discussed a vital aspect concerning teacher education: the kind of knowledge that has traditionally served as the basis for forming teachers. The lack of theoretical frameworks in the education programs led to the inclusion of general theories concerning language teaching and learning. It was as an attempt to legitimize teaching as a profession grounded on scientific bases (researches) rather than on descriptions of teaching procedures, positive learner results, and teacher-student interactions which were observed in classes and considered successful.

According to the Freeman & Johnson (1998), the core of the problem with the curriculum of teacher education programs relies on the fact that what constitutes teacher knowledge is neither determined by teachers nor by partnered observations of their work, but rather by researchers. Therefore, the guidelines that have directed the practice of language teaching education have accounted for what teachers needed to know (the subject matter), and how this knowledge should be put in practice (methodological procedures and routinized behaviors).

The authors contend that teacher education programs fail when they ground their curricula on general theories and methods expecting that they work in any context. In other words, this kind of approach fails for not taking into account the different priorities, needs and objectives of each learning

context, since, as the authors point out, the teaching learning process occurs in three distinct contexts: in the teacher education program, where teacher learners learn about teaching; in the practicum, where they observe and practice; and in schools, where teacher learners actually start their profession.

Freeman & Johnson (1998) thus defend that a tripartite systemic framework constitutes the knowledge base of teacher education programs because it is these three domains intertwined that constitute the sociocultural environment in which teachers learn to do their work: the nature of the teacher learner, the nature of school and schooling (the social context), and the nature of language teaching (pedagogical process). As they stress, this view stands in sharp opposition to the polarized discussions between subject matter and learners that have been the focus of language teacher education (Celce- Murcia & Mcintosh, 1979; Oiler & Richards-Amato, 1983; Shulman, 1987; Widdowson, 1978). Freeman & Johnson claim that a change on the teachers' knowledge base is mandatory in order to help teachers to become critical and reflective of their own teaching practices.

Similar concerns about the implementation of more practice-based and a context-grounded curriculum also permeate the language education field in Brazil and still represent a buzz topic in everybody's lips in congresses, seminars, and conferences, bringing about elucidative researches and publications. The books *Projetos e práticas na formação de professores de língua inglesa* (Medrado e Reichmann, 2012) and *Conversas com formadores de professores de línguas: avanços e desafios* (Silva & Aragão, 2013) represent two outstanding examples of publications that portray the *status quo* of the Brazilian language education field.

The former book - *Projetos e práticas na formação de professores de língua inglesa* - published after the III Congresso Latino-Americano de Formação de Professores de Línguas – consists of a compilation of eleven articles which catalyzed the new routes and projects in the area of language teacher education. The articles not only point to new directions but first and foremost describe examples of projects and researches about education programs that look at issues concerning language teaching/learning in a holistic manner as opposed to a fragmented way, and whose focus goes beyond

the classroom limits, taking into account the inextricable relationship among teacher, student and school. In one of the articles, Gimenez (2012) discusses the curricular redefinitions through which Brazilian language education programs have gone due to the crescent awareness about the need of an actual intertwinement between the contexts in which how to be a language teacher is learned - Letters undergraduate programs - and where this knowledge is put into practice - schools. As Gimenez (2012) stresses, new perspectives that understand learning as social practice have been trying to find room in a curriculum composed basically by disciplines whose foundations are underpinned on language sciences. As she points out, in considering social activity the basic requirement for learning to take place, it is expected that teachers build their knowledge through the interrelations with other professionals and through engaging in activities related to their profession. At this juncture, Gimenez (2012) underscores the role communities of practice play in bringing about the pedagogical praxis.

The latter book - *Conversas com formadores de professores de línguas: avanços e desafios* - is a compilation of interviews with three dozen language educators from various Brazilian universities discussing the advances and challenges in the teacher education programs. Albeit holding different epistemological positions, the interviewees bring to the fore common thoughts especially regarding the theory/practice divide and a call for the establishment of a more contextualized and practice-grounded curriculum in all disciplines since the first stages of the Letters course.

In this regard, Xavier (2013) states to believe that bridging the context where teacher learners will act and the theoretical knowledge presented along their education still represents a challenge for teacher educators. She also points out that in order to engage teacher learners in projects that are consonant to the target public it is paramount to promote a closer relationship between university and school, and among teacher educators. Thus, teacher education has to account for the various contexts where teaching takes place observing their social components - teachers, students and administrators - as well as aspects related to the physical structure, curriculum, policies and pedagogy. She cogently contends that when teacher education is open to learn with and about the school realities and is

compromised with issues that really mirror the activity of teaching, the field is able to propose effective changes.

In this regard, projects as PIBID (Programa Institucional de Bolsa de Iniciação e Pesquisa) – designed to approach teacher learners to the contexts of public schools they will eventually work – find among the authors/interviewees many advocates who claim that such projects represent an effective mediational vehicle that enables teacher learners to actively engage in the pedagogical planning, classroom practices, projects and events within public schools (Cristóvão, 2013; Figueiredo, 2013; Garcez, 2013; Gimenez, 2013; Jordão, 2013; Reis, 2013; Xavier, 2013)

As regards the theory/practice divide, Bonini (2013) notes that most of our Letters programs still do not form a teacher properly, but rather a "language scientist" or even a "humanist master"- the supposedly owner of a superior and erudite knowledge who still reproduces a linguistic normativism. He points to the need for opening more space to disciplines that are convergent with the actual practice of teaching, namely, discourse analysis, pragmatics, reading, writing, didactic material, discourse genres. He also points to the necessity of breaking up with the prescritivism and the linguistic positivism still present in many language teacher education programs.

This argument is epitomized by Xavier's (2013) claim that "teoria sem prática é demagogia, ação fundamentada em teoria é pedagogia" (p.67). He contends that a coherent pedagogical action not only confirms theory but also strengthens the argument in favor of a more effective and lasting pedagogy.

Despite the advances in the teacher education field, there is a general agreement among many authors in *Conversas com formadores de professores de línguas: avanços e desafios* about the still ubiquitous prescritivist/positivistic pedagogy that fails in bringing theory and practice together. The importance of looking at the knowledge base in teacher education programs is that it mirrors how the field conceptualizes teaching and learning. This way of thinking will ultimately influence teachers' conceptions. It means that if a prescritivist/positivistic pedagogy is part of teacher learners' formation, they will likely reproduce it in their own classrooms. As Zozzoli (2013) underscores, the knowledge

grasped by students through this kind of pedagogy tends to be vague or even theoretically misguided, since in teacher education programs that only "throw" the concepts they teach, there is no room to another kind of pedagogy. As it turns out, teacher educators who are reproducers of theory and models, tend to form teachers who cannot go beyond simple repetitions as well.

Due to the relevance of recognizing the knowledge base in teacher education as the force that undergirds and defines the profession and that will eventually influence teacher learners' conceptualization of teaching/learning, the next section is concerned with discussing the power teachers' previous experiences as learners exerts in the formation of beliefs and misconceptions as regards the profession.

## 2.3 THE APPRENTICESHIP OF OBSERVATION, TEACHERS' BELIEFS AND CONCEPTS

From a sociocultural perspective, human learning is defined as a dynamic social activity, situated in physical and social contexts, and distributed across persons, tools and activities (Rogoff, 2003; Salomon, 1993; Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1991). Thus, when teachers start their careers, unarticulated concepts regarding teaching learned after extensive exposure periods along their lives, namely through the apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975), are triggered and ground their practice (Bailey *at al*., 1998). Be this apprenticeship a blessing or a curse (Johnson, 1999), the fact is that when teachers start their careers, these memories are so entrenched in the teacher learners' minds that they are transformed into beliefs.

Although it is a prominent psychological construct to teacher education, belief is a controversial term since it "does not lend itself to empirical investigations" (Pajares, 1992, p. 308). In a review about research concerning this topic, Pajares(1992) considers beliefs a "messy construct", that has not been precisely defined and which:

> …travels in disguise and often under an alias of attitudes, values, judgments , axioms, opinions, ideology, perceptions, conceptions, conceptual systems, preconceptions, dispositions, implicit theories, personal theories, internal mental processes, strategies, rules of practice, practical principles, perspectives, repertories of understanding, and social strategy, to name but a few that can be found in the literature (p. 309).

Regardless of definitional problems, beliefs have become an issue that demands special attention from teacher educators. Not only are beliefs difficult to be changed or removed, but they also represent a restrictive factor in teacher's development, because they blur teachers' capacity of seeing things as they are, functioning as filters which refine their sight and influence the way they interpret information (Gimenez, 2002; Pajares, 1992; Silva *et al*, 2012). The fact that most teachers may be not aware of their own beliefs turns them into an issue for teachers themselves and for teacher education. It is not until teachers are led to justify their practices that their own beliefs are revealed – even for themselves.

The vygotskyan construct of everyday concept appears to encapsulate the overarching term belief, and for the purposes of this dissertation, it will be used intertwinedly to refer to concepts formed through observation and/ or generalizations grasped from superficial understandings about language learning and teaching. As regards teachers' everyday concepts, Johnson and Golombek (2011) argue that the limiting nature of everyday concepts may result in doubtful conceptions about language learning and teaching, which may lead to equally doubtful classroom practices. In this respect, Johnson (2009) describes three common everyday concepts that novice teachers have traditionally incorporated before entering teaching programs. The first common everyday concept related to teaching is built around the belief that there is an ideal method (set of teaching procedures) which assures successful teaching and learning regardless of context. The second everyday concept is related to the mentalist-individualistic view of language which grounded a great deal of traditional research in second language acquisition (SLA) and led novice teachers to believe that language is a neutral and static system. Finally, the third everyday concept is based on the idea that pre-determined topics could be taught without taking into account students' needs, interests, identities or cultural aspects.

The over reliance on the apprenticeship of observation may happen because when entering classrooms teacher learners are not able to connect the theory learned in teacher programs to practice. As aforementioned, the most common complaint regarding teacher education programs is that they are too theoretical and not directly connected to the classrooms' realities. However, putting value into

practice does not mean a denial about the importance of theory; it is rather a movement towards the establishment of the lost link between theory and practice. As Smagorinsky *et al* (2003) state, theory and practice are separated as different realms and the only connection happens when theory informs practice. They argue that the dichotomy happens because the field lacks the insights provided by Vygotsky's notion of concepts, in which abstract principles (scientific concepts) are interconnected with worldly experience (everyday concepts).

In the following sub-section, I discuss with more details the interdependence between everyday and scientific concepts and its role in concept development.

### 2.3.1 The process of concept development and its implications for teacher learning

As previously mentioned, Vygotsky (1986) distinguishes basically two types of concepts, namely everyday and scientific concepts. Everyday (or spontaneous) concepts are grasped through cultural practice and, because they are grounded in tacit knowledge, permit limited (if any) applications to new situations. Yet, because they are learned through experience, they constitute "truths" in people's psyche as well as are deeply rooted in their minds. On the other hand, scientific concepts are learned through formal instruction and, because they are based on abstract and general principles, can be applied to new contexts and situations. Despite this advantage, there is the drawback that they are too abstract, and in the process of concept development - the development of true concepts - scientific concepts need to be anchored on everyday concepts. That means that a true concept can only be formed when these two kinds of concepts dialectically interact:

> In the case of scientific thinking, the primary role is played by *initial verbal definition*, which being applied systematically, gradually comes down to concrete phenomena. The development of spontaneous concepts knows no systematicity and goes from the phenomena upward toward generalizations. (Vygotsky, 1986, p. 148; emphasis in original)

As Vygotsky (1986) outlines, in order to develop a concept, individuals may have to go through several meaningful social experiences (interpersonal plane), where this developing concept is (re)introduced, explored and modified through new experiences and reapplied in new contexts, before

it is fully internalized (intrapersonal plane). Vygotsky (1987) describes two intermediate stages along the process of achieving concept unity, namely complex and pseudoconcepts. At the stage of a complex, items are grouped under a superficial common characteristic (Smagorinsky, 2003). It means that "If empirically present, any connection is sufficient to lead to the inclusion of an element in a given complex" (Vygotsky, 1987, p. 137): a child addressing any portion of water – a puddle, a swimming pool, or a lake - as a "pond", for instance (Smagorinsky, 2003). In the case of language teachers, applying indistinctively filling in the gaps grammar exercises, sentence unscramble activities and drilling exercises and call them communicative tasks. All these activities share a superficial common characteristic of being language classroom activities, but differ greatly in design, objectives and view of language. While a fill in the gaps exercise and a sentence unscramble activity emphasize form over communication, a drilling exercise reveals a positivist view of language. A communicative task emphasizes communication over form, and by design, views language as a tool for communication and as a socially driven and contextualized event. A pseudoconcept, albeit closer to the unity of a concept, still presents internal inconsistencies; it is a "shadow of the concept, one that reproduces its contours" (Vygotsky, 1987, p. 144). Now, it is like referring to a lagoon as a" lake", or in language teaching, referring to a free conversation activity with no specific outcome as a "communicative task".

Smagorinsky et al (2003) summarize the process of achieving concept unity stating that "in the course of development, a learner goes from the highly associative complex, to the apparently conceptual yet internally contradictory pseudoconcept, to the unified concept" (p. 7). However, the final stage of concept development may be never achieved. Vygotsky (1994) adverts that "for many functions, this stage of external signs lasts forever as their final stage of development. But other functions go further in their development and gradually become inner functions" (p. 154).

Vygotsky (1986) stresses that the responsibility to introduce scientific concepts to learners and to bridge them to their everyday counterparts belongs to education. He adds that instruction in principles *per se* will not lead to concept development, as "knowledge of abstracted governing rules must come in

conjunction with empirical demonstration, observation, or activity" (p. 7). Vygotsky (1986) also points out that direct instruction in concepts is not pedagogically feasible. If teachers do that, they will come up with meaningless and parroting learning of words that disguises the presence of concepts in students. As a result, the learner will not be able to grasp the concept itself but rather will retrieve the word from memory, regardless of engaging in an act of thought. In this kind of approach resides the greatest deficiency of the traditional educational system that has been the focus of a lot of criticism. For Vygotsky, this interconnection between formal knowledge of principles and knowledge accomplished through practical activities enhances people's ability to reasoning beyond their experience's sphere. Therefore, the core of concept development lies on how formal education manages the need to intertwine everyday and scientific concepts, since it is from this relationship that internalization takes place (the transition from the social to psychological plane).

As regards language teacher education programs, Johnson (2009) claims that the field should present meaningful scientific concepts to teachers and concurrently lead them to make everyday concepts explicit in order to have the latter work in favor of the former, thus enabling internalization to occur.

In this vein, it seems that the great challenge of second language teacher education programs is not only to present scientific concepts to teachers but also turn these concepts into meaningful ideas, what happens when the abstraction of the scientific concepts are faced with the empiricism of their everyday counterparts. By implication, it is licit to say that this learning is more likely to happen as teachers engage in concrete situations of teaching. It thus seems that the problem with education, as Smagorinsky et al (2003) epitomizes it, is not too much theory, but too little concept.

All things considered, we can observe that the process of concept development is neither linear nor simple. The next section is devoted to discussing aspects about the tortuous process of conceptualizing teaching and the implications of strategic mediation (Wertsch, 2007) in this process.

**2.3.2 The twisting path of concept development and the role of strategic mediation**

Regardless of the nature of the teacher education program one goes through when preparing to become a teacher, conceptualizing teaching, like any other professional activity, is not an easy task. Concepts acquired spontaneously are so powerful – due to their empirical feature – that even when teacher education programs provide teacher learners with opportunities to make sense of scientific concepts, offering support, guided practice, and promoting reflective teaching, when entering schools novice teachers may go through a "twisting path" (Vygotsky, 1987) when (re)conceptualizing teaching.

In the backlash of the psychology of his time that viewed cognitive development as a sequence of stages in the learners' mind independent from the social environment, Vygotsky understands human consciousness as a nonlinear process, with many backs and forths. This is to say that despite teachers having already developed some knowledge about teaching, when facing unexpected classroom situations, they may take inappropriate in-flight decisions based (consciously or unconsciously) on those entrenched beliefs that are so deeply rooted on them, displaying the spiral movement previously referred to.

Along these lines, there are several examples of teachers whose sayings and doings differ enormously (Dellagnelo, 2007). In a study carried out by Dellagnelo (2007), the author reports about a case in which teachers affirmed to follow a communicative approach to the teaching of English, but did not allow students to interact much with each other due to the noise this interaction brought to the classroom environment, which is ultimately quite contradictory with the notion of communicative language teaching. Other examples along this same line are cited, leading Dellagnelo (2007) to the conclusion that, when faced with the unexpected, teachers most relied on experiential knowledge (everyday concepts) as opposed to theoretical knowledge (scientific concepts), a finding that signals the presence of the traditional theory-practice divide.

The twisting path of concept development can become even more tortuous when the learning contexts themselves present internal inconsistencies. Cook *et al* (2002) and Smagorinsky *et al* (2003)

refer to the twisting path to exemplify the struggle that student teachers go through to conceptualize constructivism. Smagorinsky et al (2003) observed that some teacher educators of an education college and the teachers with whom they shared the mentoring of student teachers in their practicum, either had developed different notions about constructivism, or presented serious contradictions between their speech (theory) and their actions (practice). Although this education college had the student-centered instruction underpinning their pedagogical practices, had promoted extensive field experiences, and organized a mentor teacher group as a means to bridge student teachers to the school realities, these efforts did not reverberate as expected in the frontlines. As described by the authors, this program designed a unified and consistent student-centered teaching offering three campus-based courses and a semester-long practicum one semester before students' teaching experience. As regards teachers and their pupils, there was a concern in developing activities that would be consonant with pupils' interests. The program faculty also promoted a series of encounters along the year with the team of mentor teachers to debate the most appropriate and effective ways to help student teachers to immerse and function into the teaching realm. As it turns out, what was conceived as student-centered instruction among the university professors stood in sharp contrast with the ways through which some of the mentor teachers practiced and, in turn, apprenticed the student teachers under their supervision. Among these teachers, the authors recount a case of a teacher, regarded as being the most out of tune with the proposed philosophy among the 25 participant mentor teachers. She discouraged the student teachers to adopt small group activities and other noisy and potentially task deviating practices. Moreover, she had kept "a wall full of file cabinets during her three decades of teaching that held innumerable worksheets, fixed-answer exams, and other accoutrements of what's generally regarded as teacher-and-text-centered instruction" (p.17). Interestingly, the referred teacher described herself as adopting a student centered approach and attuned to the college philosophy albeit her practice had shown she has not grasped the essence of constructivism and its related practices.

Besides teachers' controversial pedagogical practices regarding constructivism principles, Smagorinsky *at al* (2003) observed lack of a unified and consistent conceptualization regarding this theory of learning among the education college as well. Such variation and inconsistency let undergraduates drifting amidst imprecise and varied theoretical tenets, and eventually, finished the course with complex or pseudo concept about constructivism, as observed through students' inability to articulate the concept and through inconsistencies in their practice.

Another example about the influence the context exerts in the process of conceptualizing teaching is reported in a study carried out by Childs (2011), where she depicts how the learning to teach evolves (or remains unchanged) for a novice teacher during two semesters in two different contexts: on the first, he received vast pedagogical support aligned with his emerging teaching concepts, and on the second, he was not provided with opportunities for reflection, support, or challenge. Childs (2011) traces the development of this teacher through the analysis of a weekly journal where the novice teacher would write about his feelings and impressions concerning his experiences inside and outside the classroom, during planning time, reflections on his classes (videotaped) and meetings with his supervisor and colleagues. Through his reports, Childs (2011) could have a clear idea of how this novice teacher came to conceptualize teaching throughout the two semesters the data were collected. Not surprisingly, the study showed that on the first context - where the program teaching philosophy was consistent with the novice's, and where he was challenged and stimulated - this teacher was able to advance his teaching conceptualizations. On the second semester, however, his emerging conceptualizations stagnated. As he was working in a department where mediation was not available, he did not receive advisory from a mentor teacher (recall sessions, class planning) neither participated of meetings with peer teachers. Furthermore, he also reduced the frequency of reflective writing exchanges with the researcher. Data analysis regarding the second semester suggested that the fact that he was teaching in a different context, with a different teaching philosophy and in an environment where he was not challenged, were the main factors that influenced his commitment and thus his

development. Given that teaching programs cannot provide ready formulas to enable novice teachers to teach at any context, Childs (2011) claims that teacher educators must prepare novice teachers to realize the importance of the context as a mediator in their learning and also realize that contexts can shape and be shaped by their concepts concerning teaching.

Apart from signaling the importance of context for the activity of learning to teach, this study also showed the relevance that mediation from an expert other plays in this process. In this regard, Johnson (2009) notes that the kind of mediation offered in educational settings tends to be traditional, meaning mediation based on textbooks, instructional techniques and routinized norms, regardless of students' zone of proximal development or of who they are. Apart from that, Johnson (2009) highlights the importance of strategic mediation. For her, mediation not only has to be dialogic, i.e., attuned to the learner's needs and capabilities, but also strategic. Strategic mediation (Wertsch, 2007) is basically characterized by goal-oriented mediation, meaning guidance provided as the learner engages in real and contextualized activity. The goal-oriented support that teachers provide to students is likely to enable them to develop an 'overall orientation' related to the task proposed while they develop 'an expert's understanding of it' (p. 20). It is through these learning opportunities created in contextualized situations that professionals of education ground the path for concept development, which is the overall goal of teacher educators.

In understanding how teachers come to know what they know, how concepts are developed and how teachers' learning processes affect them and change their teaching practices, teacher educators will be more prepared to guide novice teachers to become critical and reflective on their own teaching behaviors.

In this sense, the next section is devoted to review the basic assumptions of reflective teaching movement as well as to discuss the role of reflection as a vehicle for bringing out teacher's beliefs and values. This section closes with a claim that the combination of reflective narratives and strategic mediation can be a powerful resource to boost teacher's growth.

2.4 UNCOVERING TEACHERS' BELIEFS THROUGH REFLECTIVE TEACHING

Largely adopted in general education since the 80's, especially in the form of teachers' authored narratives, reflective teaching – a movement that emphasizes the role of reflection as a means of being constantly evaluating beliefs and hypotheses – helps teachers to go beyond implicit knowledge based on experience since it offers opportunities to make teachers' values and beliefs explicit to themselves, thus enabling them to share and to make sense of their own pedagogical practices.

However, there are multiple understandings of what reflective teaching is (Schön, 1987; Smith, 1992; Magalhães, 1998; Loughran, 2002; Zeichner, 1994; Pimenta, 2002, Ghedin, 2002; Arruda and Gimenez, 2004). For Schön (1987) reflective teaching consists of a mental process that must happen "in" action (during the practice) as well as "on" action (after the practice) because it leads to consciousness regarding teachers' tacit knowledge and, this way, they might be able to reformulate their practices and beliefs. By pursuing these two kinds of reflection, Schön understands that professionals may (re)signify eventual specific problematic aspects of their practice, and engage in a "conversation" with this problematic situation, thus mapping the problem - "problem setting"- and then changing their practice -"problem solving" (Arruda and Gimenez, 2004).

Zeichner (1994) presents a broader framework regarding reflective teaching. This broader view encompasses three types of reflection, according to the nature of intervention intended: technical, practical and critical. Technical reflection refers to the efficiency and efficacy of the means applied for educational purposes. Practical reflection aims at bringing the theoretical tenets that ground pedagogical practice to the surface as well as evaluating if the intended results conform to the pedagogical practices. Finally, critical reflection comprises moral and ethical values that question if educational goals, activities and experiences are socially fair. For Zeichner (1994), a critical and reflective teacher evaluates the context in which school and students are involved, taking into account their moral and ethical issues in order to elucidate his/her own actions and to promote changes that go beyond the classroom limits.

Another very influent scholar whose work has inspired many researchers interested in critical reflection is John Smyth. Grounded on Paulo Freire's ideas, the four stages for reflection proposed by Smyth (1992) – describe, inform, confront, and reconstruct – were intended to foster teachers' critical reflection. Broadly speaking, in the first stage teachers describe their practices. In the second, teachers try to find the formal theories that inform their practices. In the third stage, teachers are led to question those theories and thus, start to be cognizant of the influence school and schooling exert on teachers' practices. Through the understandings developed along the three first stages, in the last stage - reconstruct - teachers are expected to self-regulate and emancipate themselves to the point of finding alternative actions and implement changes in their practices.

In their 2004's article, Arruda and Gimenez trace the publications of Brazilian researchers on reflective teaching from 1998-2003 in the foreign language teacher education field (Monteiro, 1996; Assis-Peterson, 1998, 1999; Almeida Filho, 1999; Liberali, 2002; Vieira-Abrahão, 2000, 2001, 2002; Telles, 2002; Magalhães, 2002; Castro, 2002; Freitas, 2002; Cruz & Reis, 2002; Cristóvão, 2002; Ortenzi, Mateus e Reis, 2002). Their survey embraces conceptions of reflection, theoretical filiation, strategies used to foster reflection, as well as the educational context in which their studies have been applied (pre service or in service). As Arruda and Gimenez (2004) note, the researches mapped out in their survey share the view that reflection is based on practice and that it triggers practice re-signification. Another important point revealed in their investigation concerns the role language plays in these researches. Whereas in some researches language is not problematized as an element for igniting reflection, in others it is paramount. As they note, for Magalhães (2002) and Liberali (2002), who have a socio-interactional view of knowledge building, reflection is generated by language and, for this reason, they are affiliated to Smyth (1992) whose four-stage-proposal is convergent with the idea that linguistic mechanisms work as tools to develop ways of thinking. Moreover, from a critical stance in which language is viewed as a socio-historical discursive practice, Magalhães (2002) is also

concerned with the analysis of how language contributes for building understandings about learning/teaching in teacher education programs by means of collaborative research.

On the other hand, the objective of researchers who disregard language - and focus on content analysis - is to verify if reflection has been occurring and if it has led to changes in teachers' practices. As Arruda and Gimenez (2004) state, researchers such as Monteiro (1996) propose the use of pre-established scripts that predetermine which aspects must be the focus for analysis to judge classroom practices. Thus reflection would consist of analysis of practices based on those scripts. For Arruda and Gimenez (2004) the problem of analysis oriented by scripts relies on the fact that although the object of inquiry is practice, there is no way to know which criteria are being used to justify the need for changes in teachers' practices. They also emphasize that in this paradigm, it is not possible to identify how knowledge engendered by theory and practice interact, nor the value this knowledge has for language education programs that adopt reflection as a means to overcome practices that do not conform with their new proposals of development.

All in all, the authors could identify that in the research projects under their scrutiny in both paradigms, there was a distance gap between researcher and participant, and the evaluation about the efficiency of the reflective paradigm is kept with the researcher, undercutting participants' chances to profit from the investigation and thus improve their practices.

Albeit reflective teaching has inspired enthusiastic accolades among teacher educators who underscore its effectiveness to achieve informed independence that would enable teachers to construct local knowledge from their practices, Oliveira (2013) cautions that becoming a reflective teacher is not a straightforward enterprise, it is a process that must be carried out through stages, and requires courage to confront the self. She argues that teacher learners often engage in the process with a superficial idea of what reflective teaching is, do it in a non-systematic way, and many times with a positivistic view about teaching and learning. As she notes, this process requires psychological strength and support, at

least at the beginning of the process, otherwise the feeling of frustration can take place and the teacher is more likely to give up the enterprise.

In this regard, collaborative teaching can become an effective means to support reflective teaching as underscored by Mateus (2013). Through collaborative teaching, she notes, local knowledge is brought about from mutual efforts of teachers involved in action-research. She contends that reflection about practices is crucial to bring issues that must be discussed and eventually changed to the surface; however, a change to occur effectively does not limit itself to the act of reflecting upon issues, for her, "reflexão só tem sentido quando transform(ação)" (p. 103).

Working reflectively and collaboratively seem to be crucial to promote teacher's development, as we take a sociocultural stand. Teachers, as social beings inserted in a socio historical context, should be open to the mediation that reflecting and acting collaboratively can represent for teacher's development. In this sense, reflective and collaborative mediation can be done by different means, using different tools, and not only the traditional face-to-face encounters between teacher learner and teacher educator. It can be carried out between peer teachers with different levels of expertise and experience. Also, it can be done synchronously, as in face-to-face encounters using oral or written language (via online chats), or asynchronously, using oral language (via audio files), or written language (via paper reports, e-mail, blogs, etc). In this specific study, the collaborative and reflective work is done between peer teachers (the participants and the researcher, with different levels of expertise and experience), and mediation is conveyed through written language -narratives[2].

In this vein the last sub-section discusses how reflective teaching, carried out through narratives as a vehicle for teacher inquiry, represents a potentially rich meditational tool, given that narratives can uncover teachers' current level of development, opening spaces for the implementation of strategic mediation.

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[2] For the purposes of my dissertation, narratives embodies any expression of written language that compose the data, namely, blog entries , papers and autobiographical accounts.

2.5 NARRATIVES AND TEACHING INQUIRY: MAPPING DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING
STRATEGIC MEDIATION

When talking about communicative development, narratives, both oral and written, appear quite early in humans' lives. When expressing themselves through writing, individuals "make their thinking fully explicit, if it is to be apprehended by their audience; and in so doing, they are at the same time making this thinking visible to themselves" (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006, p. 293). Likewise, for Ochs and Capps (1996), narratives function as an interface between self and society, becoming a powerful tool for sharing emotions, identities, and developing interpersonal relations.

As Johnson (2009) notes, for many SLTE and general education scholars, narratives constitute the most genuine way to investigate teaching from the teachers' standpoint (Cizek, 1999; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Doyle, 1997; Johnson & Golombek, 2002; Lyons & la Bokey, 2002). That is, "story is the very stuff of teaching, the landscape within which we live as teachers and researchers, and within which the work of teachers can be seen as making sense" (Elbaz, 1991, p. 3).

For Carter (1993), teachers' knowledge conveyed in narratives works as "interpretive lens in comprehending one's experience" (p. 7). Therefore, the analysis of narratives sequentially and over time can provide insights about what a teacher already knows, how this knowledge is organized, as well as the transformations this knowledge goes through along the teacher's career. However, Carter (1993) posits that among the corpus of stories told by researchers, some teachers are characterized as well-intentioned persons that cannot succeed in teaching due to the lack of enlightenment that is provided by research-sponsored training or staff development, in contrast to well succeeded teachers, who, having had the chance to be enlightened, were able to change their practices accordingly. For Carter (1993), poor depictions of both characters and plot happen to conform to the more dominant paradigmatic goals, such as establishing the effective and the failing practices.

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) note that the chief argument for the legitimacy of the knowledge brought about from teachers' accounts is that the required knowledge for teachers to do their work must be also generated from the ones who act in the frontlines and not only from researchers from outside the teaching context. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) considered forerunners of teacher research movement, credit to teacher inquiry the advances in blurring the line that separates theory and practice, by providing rich accounts of the classroom complexities as well as understandings concerning the teaching activity from inside out, rather than outside in (Johnson & Golombek, 2011).

Through legitimating teachers' narratives as an inquiry approach, as Carter (1993) notes, the education community of investigators-practitioners stands in stark contrast with quantitative methods in which correlation coefficients and lists of generalizable findings are reported. As she points out, more than any scores or mathematical formulae, these stories are able to grasp the richness, complexities and nuances of understandings about the teaching activity, redressing the gaps left by the "traditional atomistic and positivistic approaches in which teaching was decomposed into discrete variables and indicators of effectiveness" (Carter, 1993, p. 6).

Sociocultural theory and narratives are natural born partners (Taniguchi, 2009). The ultimate goal of SCT, more than simply having a snapshot of what people are already able to do - on the results of their learning; is to trace how the process of development occurs. For Swain et al (2010), "SCT glasses are designed for both breadth and depth" (p. xii), it is to say that through the lenses of SCT, narratives can provide a more overarching view of phenomena, allowing us to go back and forth in time, and as such constituting not only a site for tracking development (genetic method), but also a site for the development to occur. Moreover, since they are usually chronologically structured, narratives center in teachers' interpretation of a series of events, and in reconstructing those events, teachers try to interpret and apply meaning to them (Johnson, 2009). Through narratives, the teller, researcher, or/and teacher educator can point out inaccurate views, ambiguities, beliefs, and unsuccessful practices, making the reframing and the restructuring of those practices feasible.

Given the inherent features of narratives, it is not expected that they depict phenomena precisely, but rather that they unveil teachers' understandings of phenomena imbued with interpretations from both their inner and social worlds (Johnson and Golombek, 2011). As such, teachers' narratives and the contexts from where they originate are inseparable, constituting, this way, non-neutral accounts brought about by the specificities of those settings (Johnson, 2009). As Martin (1986) notes, "narratives, no matter how peppered with generalizations, always provide more information or food for thought than they have digested" (p. 187). As such, teacher narratives can be seen as a "socially mediated view of experience; they are holistic and cannot be reduced to isolated facts without losing the essence of the meanings being conveyed" (Golombek and Jonhson, 2004, p.308).

Johnson and Golombek (2011) highlight that a considerable body of research on the reflective teaching in the 80's and the teacher research on the 90's made use of teachers' narratives as a means for teacher inquiry taking for granted that teacher inquiry would engender changes in teacher's practices. However, as they argue, there is little documentation depicting such changes or even describing how the engagement in narratives ignited teachers' growth. Their claim is for the use of narrative inquiry as teacher development, since ''inquiry into experience enables teachers to act with foresight. It gives them increasing control over their thoughts and actions; grants their experiences enriched, deepened meaning; and enables them to be more thoughtful and mindful of their work'' (Johnson & Golombek, 2002, p. 6–7).

In this vein, Johnson and Golombek (2011) posit that the sociocultural perspective can offer a "tremendous explanatory power to capture the transformative power of narrative" (p. 3). Such transformative power is based on the potential narrative has to deflagrate cognitive processes to promote teachers' development. Grounded on this observation, Johnson and Golombek (2011) developed a framework to investigate how cognitive processes are developed. These processes, or functions, were identified as three different albeit non-exclusive categories, namely, narratives as externalization, as verbalization, and as systematic examination. The observation of the cognitive

processes ignited by the engagement in narrative activity allows the tracking of qualitative transformation in teachers' development.

As the authors note, through narrative as externalization teachers manifest their understandings, functioning, therefore serving as an opportunity for self-analysis and sense-making; moreover "it enables teachers to make their tacit thought, beliefs, knowledge, fears, and hopes explicit; to create cohesion out of what might have once seemed disconnected; and to articulate the day-to-day problems teachers confront in their professional worlds" (Johnson and Golombek, 2011, p. 6). As such, it also functions as a mediational tool, as their words can serve as a means for self-regulation and control of their behaviors and their own worlds. In this sense, narrative as externalization functions as a starting point for cognitive development. Through the externalization provided, it is possible to actually see teachers' current capabilities and the ones that are ripe to be developed, making it possible to implement mediation attuned to the teachers' ZPD.

The second narrative function identified by Johnson and Golombek (2011) – verbalization, is characterized by the use of scientific concepts as tools for understanding, functioning as a regulator of the thinking process. It reflects the notion of *thinking in concepts* (Karpov, 2003) in which this intentional use of scientific concepts is viewed both as an outcome and as evidence for internalization. The current research and the theories engendered by research on L2 learning and teaching represent the scientific concepts in the SLTE field. The failure in connecting scientific and everyday concepts results in the traditional binary between theory and practice, which is characterized as *empty verbalism* (Vygostky, 1986), whereas in their intertwinement rests the principle of concept development. As Johnson and Golombek (2011) explain, these scientific concepts, if internalized, function as psychological tools which enable teachers to deal with any kinds of circumstances and act in differentiated teaching contexts in informed ways. In functioning as verbalization, narrative becomes a mediational tool "that enables teachers to begin to not only name the theoretical constructs they are exposed to in their SLTE programs but, through the activity of narrating, to begin to use those concepts

to make sense of their teaching experiences and to regulate both their thinking and teaching practices" (p. 8).

Finally, the third narrative function, namely systematic examination, consists of a description of a teaching related activity following some pre-established parameters typical of that specific teaching activity being described. As Johnson and Golombek (2011) note, when engaging in systematic examination, one must follow some parameters inherent to that specific narrative, focusing on aspects necessary for its examination. It may also lead teachers to a "self-directed, often collaborative, inquiry-based learning that is directly relevant to teachers' day-to-day experiences" (p. 8). As such, different kinds of narratives require different kinds of systematic examination. In order to write a learning to teach autobiographical account, the parameters might focus on the reconstruction of self as a teacher, while the parameters to write about an action research project might focus on the specifics of a classroom activity (Johnson and Golombek, 2011). Moreover, systematic examination has direct implications for teachers' cognition, since, by its very nature, it leads teachers to a "self-directed, often collaborative, inquiry-based learning that is directly relevant to teachers' day-to-day experiences" (p. 8).

Although research in SLTE from a sociocultural stance has shown that engaging in reflective narratives has proved its effectiveness both for novice and experienced teachers (Arshavskaya & Whitney's, 2014; Childs, 2011; Johnson, 2004; Johnson & Golombek, 2011; Verity, 2000), at this juncture, it is important to emphasize that the engagement in narratives, especially for novice teachers, although having potential to ignite cognitive processes, must not be taken as a cure-for-all remedy that leads to ready-made solutions or quick instructional fixes. As Johnson & Golombek (2011) stress, the internalization also depends on other aspects such as actual level of development, the person's agency and, contextual features. It is fundamental to bear in mind that the vygotskian construct of internalization – the movement from the interpersonal to the intrapersonal plane, does not mean a direct transfer of knowledge from outside in, but rather, a process that entails a transformation in the person's

cognitive structure. As a result of this transformation, activity is also changed (Leont'ev, 1981; Valsineer & van der Veer, 2000).

Therefore, the lack of evidence of change in a teacher's activity is not altogether surprising, it simply denotes the need of multiple opportunities, preferably with the mediation from an expert other (e.g., supervisor, teacher educator) to map their current level of development and thus, plan strategic mediation to foster the cognitive processes. Arshavskaya & Whitney's (2014) article instantiates the effectiveness of Johnson & Golombek's (2011) framework to uncover the cognitive processes ignited by narratives, and how these processes, combined with strategic mediation, empower the development of teacher's expertise. In their study, the participant- a novice teacher engaging in a dialogic blog during her practicum- externalizes her current understandings regarding teaching , systematically inquiries into her own teaching and ends up being able to connect some of the theoretical teaching concepts to her observations of teaching (verbalization). The participant also incorporates some of the pedagogical concepts presented by her practicum supervisor via blog to her own practice. More specifically, the researchers observed the participant's externalization of her emotions and feelings towards her own teaching as well the supervisor's moves to connect those everyday teaching concepts to more expert conceptualizations. The researchers observed the participant verbalizing and incorporating the concepts provided by the supervisor (i.e. instructional paraphrasing, situating an instructional activity, and developing a teaching persona). As signalized by the authors, the participant's learning unfolds within five main moves: "She (1) externalized her thoughts and feelings, (2) recognized the loss of self-regulation, (3) experienced emotional dissonance in regard to her first-time teaching, (4) incorporated Melanie's[3] pedagogical concepts of teaching and became conscious of her own learning, and (5) verbalized her understandings of teaching using expert discourse. (Arshavskaya & Whitney, 2014, p.734)

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[3] The participant's supervisor.

Based on the discussions so far accomplished, it seems that when reflective narrative is combined with strategic mediation it is more likely to be effective and lead to concept development. From a sociocultural stance, cognitive development is understood as unfolding in the social activities, through mediation aligned to one's ZPD; therefore, in the dialogic relationship that is established between teacher learner and more expert other(s), lies the quintessence of development. When Vygotsky observes that high mental functions first appear externally and only afterwards become inward, he underscores the interdependence between the social and cognitive (Johnson & Golombek, 2011). That is to say that social activity not only influences cognition,but, rather, it is actually the very process through which cognition develops (Lantolf and Johnson, 2008).

## 2.6 SUMMARY ON THE REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In order to close this chapter, it seems necessary to account for the main topics that delineated this research and that shaped the theoretical framework upon which the data analysis was carried out. Given that this research is underpinned by the vygotskian sociocultural theory, I first presented an overview of this theory of learning, discussing its basic tenets. I then directed the discussion to second/ foreign language teacher education, underscoring sociocultural theory as a powerful theory to understand teacher cognition. I also raised the discussion about the knowledge base that traditionally grounds teacher education programs, which favors a positivist paradigm and the theory/practice, divide rather than conceptual thinking. Considering that teachers' beliefs may be brought about out of the positivist paradigm, I also employed a discussion on beliefs tracing a parallel with the vygotskian notion of everyday and pseudo concepts. At this juncture, reflective teaching is brought to the fore as having potential, among other aspects, to uncover teachers' beliefs. In this regard, it is emphasized that, due to the interrelated functions of narratives (Johnson & Golombek, 2011), reflective written accounts can foster teachers' understandings and thus teachers' development, especially when combined with strategic mediation. After having undertaken this theoretical account of the basis which support this

study, I now move to the method chapter, in which I describe the data, methods, and analytical

procedures I took in this research in order to answer the research questions.

**CHAPTER 3 – METHOD**

This chapter deals with the methodological aspects of this research within seven sections. First, I define the nature of this study. Following, I bring back the research objectives and questions already presented in the introduction. After that, I provide a detailed description about the context of investigation, criteria for participants' selection, participants, data sources and procedures for data analysis.

3.1 THE NATURE OF THE RESEARCH

This research is characterized as a multiple case study (Yin, 2005) within the qualitative paradigm of investigation (Bortoni-Ricardo, 2013; Mason, 1996; Stake,1995; 1998; Yin, 1994; 2005;). Put bluntly, qualitative studies seek to understand and interpret phenomena within a context, rather than finding generalizations for their occurrences. As Bortoni-Ricardo (2013) explains, the qualitative researcher is interested in a process that takes place in a specific environment and wants to investigate how this very process is understood by the social actors involved. Moreover, through qualitative research it is possible to investigate a wide range of social dimensions "including the texture and weave of everyday life, the understandings, experiences and imaginings of our research participants, the ways that social processes, institutions, discourses or relationships work, and the significance of the meanings that they generate" (Mason, 1996).

Based on Yin (2005), this research is also characterized as a multiple case study, since it investigates how the same phenomenon - concept development - develops for two participants, each within their context. For Yin (2005), "the strength of the case study method is its ability to examine, in depth, a "case" within its "real-life context" (Yin, 2005, p.380). As such, the present study accounts for the contextual aspects, providing a detailed picture about the context of investigation, participants, events and dialogues throughout the period data were collected.

3.2 OBJECTIVE AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In order to design a research in foreign language teacher development aligned with the vygotskian sociocultural perspective, it is crucial that its basic principles be respected (Childs, 2011). Since, according to Vygotsky (1978), language is the main psychological tool that mediates human cognition, this research uses language as the main mediational means through which to look at teachers' development. Another vygotskian postulate to be considered in this study concerns the process of concept development. For Vygotsky, this process originates on the intermental psychological plane and later on moves to the intramental plane. In other words, it is through the intersubjective relation between teacher and mentor that the teacher will internalize new knowledge – or turn the new learning into intrasubjective knowledge – and develop professionally. To observe this process, another Vygotskian postulate is considered: the requirement of a developmental method for understanding cognition. In this vein, a microgenetic analysis was carried out as two case studies were conducted along one academic semester (around 4 months).

Given that the transformative power of narratives lies in its potential to ignite cognitive processes, functioning as mediational tools to promote teacher development, I also used Johnson and Golombek's (2011) narrative framework as a backdrop to help me detect how the narrative functions, namely externalization, verbalization, and systematic examination, evident in the participants' written accounts -blog entries, papers and autobiographical accounts - henceforth referred as "narratives", helped participants to make sense of their practices and/or contributed to their development.

Therefore, grounded mainly on Vygotsky's sociocultural theory and, more specifically, on the constructs concerning learning and development previously mentioned, the objective of my research is to trace how the teaching conceptualizations of two experienced teachers of English as a/an foreign/additional language emerged along their lives and evolve along one semester of teaching. having narratives both as a source of investigation to capture their conceptualizations' ontogenesis, and

as a mediational tool between the participants and researcher to foster reflection, awareness and eventually, concept development.

The following question is the point of departure of my dissertation:

How do two English as a/an foreign/additional language experienced teachers' conceptions of teaching emerged and evolve as they move along a one-semester teaching experience in which their pedagogical practice is object of study of the researcher - a peer teacher who follows their classes, questions their decisions, and responds to their teaching practices and anxieties via a blog constructed to these ends?

In order to be able to answer this general research question, the following specific questions are investigated:

1-What are the concepts most often raised by teachers as they verbalize their teaching in their narratives?

2-How did teachers come to conceptualize teaching as evidenced in their learning history narratives and how do these conceptualizations reflect in their classes?

3-How do these concepts progressively evolve? To what extent has strategic mediation via narratives (blog) contributed to these teachers' development?

4-Has the teachers' teaching practice been transformed along the period in which these teachers have been traced? Which contextual factors contributed for fostering/ curbing change?

3.3 THE CONTEXT OF INVESTIGATION

The classes were observed at the Extracurricular program, an extension language program housed in and organized by the academic department of Foreign Languages and Literature (DLLE – Departamento de Língua e Literatura Estrangeiras) at the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC), located in the southern part of Brazil.

The program started more than 40 years ago with the intent to be a 'laboratory' for graduate students of the language programs held in the Department. Nevertheless, it soon expanded its initial

goal as the academic community started to participate on it aiming at linguistic development and proficiency.

The program offers language courses in English, French, German, Spanish and Italian open to the community in general, but most of the students are undergraduate and graduate students from UFSC. As regards the English program, most of the students intend to learn English to continue their studies abroad or simply to become fluent in English for diverse individual reasons.

The program adopts a communicative view on language teaching. The four abilities (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) are practiced but an emphasis should be given on oral and aural skills. The teachers have a textbook to guide their teaching, prepare and apply at least two written tests and one speaking test along each semester/level.

In order to teach English at the extracurricular language program, the teacher must be connected to the university, preferably as a graduate or undergraduate letters student. The candidates also have to be approved in a microteaching to an examination board.

The coordination staff is composed of a general and a pedagogical coordinator[4]. There are two meetings opening and closing the semester in which general messages and due dates are pointed out, and procedures and rules are revisited. Although there are not general meetings to share or reflect about teaching practices, the pedagogical coordinator is available for individual support the whole semester. By the middle of the semester she also attends a class of the newly hired teachers, giving them feedback after the class and returning to their classes if necessary. The coordination is also open for any teacher who feels the need to have meetings to talk about whatever the teacher demands. Also, an evaluative questionnaire is applied to students in order to have a feedback concerning aspects related to the teacher and the course. Unfortunately, few teachers look for the pedagogical coordinator for support or to discuss the evaluative questionnaire. Yet, the teacher whose evaluation presents any kind of

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[4] The semester following data collection, I assumed the pedagogical coordination position. Besides the responsibilities aforementioned, I also supervised some newly hired teachers in planning their first classes.

comment that the coordination judges pertinent is called for a talk, and, if this is the case, their class will also be attended by the coordination.

3.4 CRITERIA FOR PARTICIPANTS' SELECTION

The two participants invited to take part in this study are enrolled in the same graduate program – PPGI (Programa de Pós-graduação em Estudos Linguísticos e Literários, more commonly known as Programa de Pós Graduação em Inglês) at the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC), Brazil. They were cautiously chosen because I would like them to have similarities in terms of disciplinary knowledge, yet different previous language learning histories. In order to choose the participants I complied with the following criteria.

First of all, I decided that there should be a certain level of acquaintance and confidence between me and the participants. More than allowing an outsider observing classes during the whole semester, a study like this requires intensive and extensive willingness to write long blog posts twice a week, either answering reflective questions or writing class reports.

A second criterion concerned previous experience. I did not intend to develop a research with pre-service or beginning teachers because novice teachers have been the focus of many studies carried out in the area (Golombek &Johnson, 2004; Childs, 2011, Johnson & Golombek, 2011; Johnson and Dellagnelo, 2013; Arshavskaya and Whitney, 2014). Studies investigating the effects of new contexts on experienced teachers' practices have also been undertaken (Verity, 2000; Childs, 2011). I thus intended to investigate graduate students with teaching experience.

Both participants had more than five years as foreign language English teachers. They taught in similar contexts - language institutes in Brazil - and also worked for one year as tutors in a distance learning continuing education program, offered by the University to public school teachers of English. Another criterion for choosing the participants is related to background knowledge related to language teaching and learning – linguistics, applied linguistics, methodology (disciplinary knowledge) and the target language – English (content knowledge). The participants would be teaching English as a foreign

language in Brazil, so I believe that selecting participants with a good level of English would allow me to focus on methodological issues as opposed to linguistic aspects.

As regards as disciplinary knowledge, the participants hold a degree in Letters, both are students in the same graduate program, and attended to the same discipline on sociocultural theoretical perspective offered by the program.

The last criterion for the participants' selection was related to the classes to be observed. I wanted the participants to be teaching in similar contexts. It included the place - school policies (criteria for evaluation, teaching methodology), working conditions (equipment available, time and length of classes, number of students per group), students' profile (age, objectives, level of proficiency).

The groups I observed the classes were level 1, because it demands more from teachers in terms of communication strategies. While in Intermediate and in Advanced groups teachers do not need to calibrate their speech with slower pace, short sentences, and cognates; in beginner levels, teachers must be cautious and find a balance between the amount and complexity of the target language used in class, and at the same time choose activities which will boost students' communicative competence within their ZPD. The Extracurricular program does not offer an introductory level, so teachers have to cope with activities which cover real beginners and false beginners' needs.

3.5 THE PARTICIPANTS

**3.5.1 Our trajectories meet**

Having established the criteria for participants' selection, I arrived at Mayra and Andrey's names. Our academic journey together started in 2013 when we attended the same course at the English graduate program. By that time, I was already a PhD candidate, Mayra was finishing her undergraduate degree in Letters, so she was a special student in the program, and Andrey was a master's candidate.

The course was entitled: *Ensino de Língua Inglesa: Práticas de Sala de Aula*. For the purposes of this study, it is worth mentioning it because it was a course grounded on a sociocultural perspective to foreign language teaching. One of the readings in the first part of the course was "Understanding

language teaching: Reasoning in action", a publication by Johnson from 1999 in which she approaches how the knowledge-base of language teachers if formed and what are the factors that often affect teachers' subjectivities. The book also brings accounts of teachers regarding their practices. They were basically narratives in which students had to reflect about their experiences as foreign or second language learners and write about their reasoning related to teaching. Some of the reaction papers required by the professor were based on this book's chapters.

The second part of the course were hands on activities in which students were divided into teams of three, each team having to prepare and practice teach a lesson to professor and classmates, who commented and provided feedback. Following this phase, there was a stage of actual teaching in a real English language teaching context, which was attended by the professor and videotaped. The following stage comprised a stimulated recall session in which team-teachers and professor sat together to watch, question, justify and reflect on the lesson taught. There was a final step in which each student would individually write a narrative talking about the experience of teaching in teams, having feedback from classmates, watching their own lessons, reflecting about the experience etc. Mayra and Andrey were in the same teaching team and they taught the actual class in my group at Extracurricular. First, they observed a class in my group in order to know the group's profile and dynamics, and therefore prepare a class aligned to their needs and characteristics.

Alongside with this course we started another meaningful experience together. We were invited to work as tutors in a distance education project designed and coordinated by some of our professors. The project was a continuing education course, offered by the university to public school teachers of English (Projeto Institucional de Formação Continuada de Professores de Inglês como Língua Estrangeira/Adicional). It was organized in two semesters and divided in two modules with different goals. The first module focused on developing expertise in the design, adaptation and evaluation of English language activities; and on reflecting upon ways of designing activities within a communicative and purposeful context. The second module was devoted to developing oral

proficiency and accuracy in English for inside and outside the classroom.

This experience has also been pertinent for the purposes of this study due to its length, group engagement, the tutors' role with the teacher-students, and the nature of the activities developed, which intended to raise the teacher-students' awareness upon their practices and to suggest theory-informed classroom activities.

During this period, the group of nine tutors and the pedagogic coordinators met weekly to co-construct the activities and discuss issues related to the teacher-students' involvement and development. We also exchanged a lot of ideas online in a group we created in a social network.

By the end of that year, Mayra graduated in Letters, was approved in the Master's exam, and engaged in the field of Applied Linguistics, in the area of Teacher Education. Andrey defended his Master's thesis, took the exam to the PhD program, and, upon approval, continued his studies in the field of Applied Linguistics, more specifically, in task based language teaching. By the beginning of the following year, and still working as tutors together, I decided to invite them to take part in my research. They promptly accepted. As this research deals with human subjects, it was submitted to the approval of the Ethics Review Board (CEPSH-UFSC) and was granted under the number 757.764. The consent forms are available in the Appendix D.

### 3.5.2 The participants by themselves

Although the participants had similar academic trajectories, their histories as language learners and as language teachers differ, and consequently, so does the way they conceptualize teaching. These experiences, along with other aspects, mediate their reasoning and show unique ways the participants came to the English teaching field. Their auto biographical paragraphs were captured from the very first blog post and from one of the reaction papers written to the course *Ensino de Língua Inglesa: Práticas de Sala de Aula*.

As the researcher responsible for class observations and for the dialogic mediation in the blog, I start this participants' section recounting my own trajectory into English language teaching and explain

the motives behind my decision for using a sociocultural theoretical perspective to understanding human cognition.

### 3.5.2.1 The researcher's trajectory

I have been working as a teacher of English as a foreign language (or additional language) for seventeen years. Although I have also worked in an undergraduate Letters program where I taught English, Literature and Linguistics, my experience is mostly grounded in language institutes, where in one of them. I also worked as a teacher trainer for seven years.

The language institute I worked as a teacher trainer followed a communicative approach to language teaching. Since I worked there for eleven years – seven also as a teacher trainer – I could participate of the methodological changes the school went through. When I started teaching there, the school had a step-by-step method that should be strictly followed regardless teachers' and students' personal characteristics or students' level. Experience proved that ready-made recipes do not work for different contexts and the school started to change its policies. Differently from a regular school, where there are teachers of different subjects, in a language school teachers have similar doubts and needs, thus the school staff met periodically to share successful and unsuccessful experiences and reflect about them. At the teacher's room, teachers could  exchange ideas and experiences that rendered good results with their colleagues, and also give and get advice from colleagues as they exchanged ideas about their practices. Besides that, teachers had the opportunity to attend special guests' talks delivered by teaching specialists. The teacher training period for newly hired teachers started to function more like a development program than "dos and don'ts" program. It was an opportunity where communicative activities were shared and classes were discussed and planned with the assistance of more experienced others. The once called "teachers' trainers" now functioned more as teacher mediators who assisted novice teachers.

Differently from most language institutes in Florianopolis where the most important hiring requirement is fluency in the target language, in this specific language institute one of the policies

adopted by the school coordination was to hire preferably professionals related to the teaching field. Most of the applicants at this language center were graduate or undergraduate Letters students or teachers who had recently graduated.

As a student, I had the belief that being fluent in the foreign language and having a native-like accent was enough to be a good teacher. Again, experience proved it wrong. As a teacher trainer I could see wonderful teachers who struggled to be proficient in English and pedagogically poor teachers with great proficiency. I could also witness teachers with a diploma who could do a great job and others who could not. Most importantly, I had the opportunity to follow teachers who, even though having started doing a poor job, were able to become great professionals.

As myself, many teacher candidates arrived at the school without knowing how to translate theory learned at the undergraduate program into practice, or to justify their practices grounded on language teaching and learning epistemologies. Many still carried beliefs concerning language teaching and learning, or had barely developed what Vygotsky calls complex and pseudo concepts.

So, if after all these years I have to comment on what makes a good teacher, I may not have a precise answer, but I do have some guesses. I think good teachers are those who care for their students' needs and characteristics, who reflect upon their practices and know how to work in teams. Above all, good teachers never think they are always right or ready, rather, they are willing to change when something does not work well, and are curious to learn new things. Also, I believe good teachers are always open to discussion, to thinking, to changing, to reconceptualizing their teaching. In sum, good teachers "teach what they preach", provided that they have their practices coherently informed by theory.

Therefore, my interest in developing a study on the basis of sociocultural theory and teacher development is motivated by my own views of what being a good teacher means, by my own practices as a teacher, my experience as a teacher trainer, the recognition of the importance of assisting and being assisted in a reflective and cooperative manner, and also by the understanding - at the time I

started teaching only a suspicion - that teaching is a co-constructed and a context-driven activity. I was also driven by the curiosity to figure out how concepts related to teaching develop, and the extent to which they are transformed throughout a teacher's career. Overall, I was driven by the necessity to understand how we could clear the boundaries between theory and practice and effectively start to "teach what we preach".

Following are descriptions of Mayra and Andrey, the two participants in this research, according to fragments of accounts of their own trajectories. Instead of simply reporting the information from their narratives, I would rather keep their own voices.

### 3.5.2.2 Mayra: an accidental teacher

> *I could say that I'm an accidental teacher. I have worked 17 years in the Hotel management and Tourism Industry. I used to have a small travel operator, a family business in Sao Paulo and I was a registered Tour conductor at that time, so I used to take groups abroad in the USA and Europe. In 1999 our business bankrupted and I was invited to teach English in a small town in the south (Yazigi). As I always liked a challenge I accepted the offer and taught there for the whole year. I loved the experience but at that time I used to feel I was a fraud as a teacher, so I decided to go to the UK -London for one year English course to improve my skills. I ended up staying there for 8 years and I set all the Cambridge Certificates that I could, including CPE and CELTA[5]. After 8 years there (still working with hotel/events industry) I came back to Brazil in order to pursue my brand new career. In 2009 I set the vestibular and passed!! Now I'm a graduated English teacher and started my master's degree. Since I started at UFSC I have been teaching at the Extra-Curricular course. I have also taught at Teddy Bear (for children), CNA, SESI, taught in some immersion courses and for the elderly. At present I'm an online language tutor and I work at Extra teaching levels 1 and 5.*
> *... I like to think that I teach English for life, not for a test. For me language is social, we use it to communicate to make bonds to feel that we belong and we learn English in order to be able to participate actively as citizens of the world. I don't see myself as the owner of the knowledge that will be passed to my students. I learn a lot from them so teaching and learning are totally connected, it's an exchange, I try to use stds' knowledge and background to empower them. As a teacher I'm a lifelong student too!*
>
> Mayra, May 7, 2014, blog entry

As can be noticed in Mayra's narrative, her initial profession was not teaching, but was with English. She became a teacher by chance. In liking the experience, she decided to invest on the career as she felt there was a gap to be filled if she wanted to become a professional of English teaching.

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[5] Certificate of Proficiency in English(CPE) and Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults (CELTA)

The figure that follows portrays Mayra's experiences with the English language as a student, as a teacher, or working in an activity in which English was required. The figure shows her experiences chronologically until 2014 when data were collected and includes the period the event lasted, her age at that time, the kind of experience (teacher, student, tour guide, attendant) and the state /country it took place. If two experiences happened concomitantly, I separated them under the period indication.

| Year: | 1980-83 | 1993 | 1995-98 | 1999 | 2000-2008 | 2009-2014… |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | |
| **Age:** | 12-17 / 13 - 16 | 26 | 27-30 | 31 | 32-33 / 32-40 | 41-46 /45-46 |
| **Period:** | 5years / 3 years | 6 months | 3 years | 1 year | 1 year / 8 years | 5 years / 1 year |
| **Activity:** | student | student | tour agent | teacher | student / attendant | Letters student and teacher / online tutor |
| **Place:** | (school) / (lang. center) | (lang. center) | (tour agency) | (lang. center) | (Intl Institutes) / (hotel) | (UFSC , lang centers and extracurricular / UFSC |
| | RS (BR) | SP (BR) | RS (BR)/Europe/USA | RS (BR) | LND (ENG) | SC (BR) |

**Figure 3. Mayra's timeline of English learning and teaching (formal and informal contexts)**

As the figure shows, Mayra's first contact with the English language was at the regular school, at the age of 12. She had English classes at school until she finished high school at the age of 17. Along this period, she enrolled in an English language institute, where she studied for three years, from 13 to 16 years old. As her family owned a tour agency and she had been working with them, at the age of 26 she decided to enroll in a language center again to keep up with the English language as she intended to take people on tours abroad. The following three years, she traveled to the USA and Europe several times as a tour guide. When the agency bankrupted, she was invited to teach at a language institute, where she stayed for one year. In the following year, at the age of 32, she moved to England to take courses. The courses lasted one year, but as she was working since she arrived there, she decided to stay longer. During the period of eight years she lived in London she worked as an attendant in hotels

and with events. By the age of 41, she returned to Brazil and started to teach in language institutes, she passed UFSC entrance examination and started to attend the Letters course. In 2014, she entered the Master's program. From 2009 until 2014 she had studied at UFSC, she had been working at the extracurricular program (UFSC) and in different language institutes in Florianópolis. In 2013, she also started to work as an online tutor at UFSC where she stayed for one year.

3.5.2.3 Andrey: a teacher blooms out of passion for the English language

*When I was a child I was not a popular child at all. I didn't have many friends and I didn't fit in any groups because I believed I was not good at anything. I was plump and shy, and I didn't play any sports. Children at school usually made fun of me. I believe this was the main reason that made me want to learn new languages. I wanted to be good at something. I wanted people to admire me somehow. [   ] I asked my mother to enroll me in a private course. She didn't have much money at that time, but she made an effort and managed to pay the course for me. It made me really happy. [   ] I tried my best to watch movies in English, to listen to music in English, to chat with people in English. I spent great part of my day doing that, and when someone complimented my English (especially a native speaker) I got really proud of myself.*
*Learning English in general made me become a more confident person. It was a very important process for me. Most of my good memories come from succeeding to learn English.*
*[   ] I didn't really want to be a teacher when I got into Letras course. After two years in the course, I got a position as an English teacher and I really liked the experience, and I realized it was something I wanted to my life because I could use the language I had been studying so passionately".*

Andrey, Reaction paper - Ensino de Língua Inglesa: Práticas de Sala de Aula

*I graduated in English teaching in 2007, but since 2005, I've been teaching English in private schools. I also worked in a university for 4 years. I taught the English related disciplines there.*

Andrey, April 24, 2014, blog entry

As his narrative shows, learning English for Andrey has a powerful emotional component and is closely linked to the feeling of being accepted and admired by peers. Learning English also helped him to become self-confident. Although he entered Letters to improve his language skills and not to become a teacher, he enjoyed his first teaching experience and decided to invest on the career.

The next figure shows Andrey's experiences with the English language as a student and as a teacher. The figure portrays his experiences chronologically until 2014 when data were collected and shows the year the event started and finished, his age, the kind of experience (teacher or student) and

the state /country it took place. When two experiences happened at the same time, they were separated by a slash under the period indication.

| Year: | 1999-2004 | 2004-2009 | 2008-2012 | 2012-2014… |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Age:** | 12 -17 / 13-17 | 18-22 / 20-23 | 22 -26 | 26-29 /28-29… |
| **Period:** | 5 years / 4 years | 4 years / 3years | 4 years | 2 years /1 year |
| **Activity:** | student | student / teacher | teacher | Master's student /online tutor |
| **Place:** | (school ) / (lang center) PR (BR) | (Letters)/ (lang centers) PR(BR) | Letters college PR (BR) | UFSC SC (BR) |
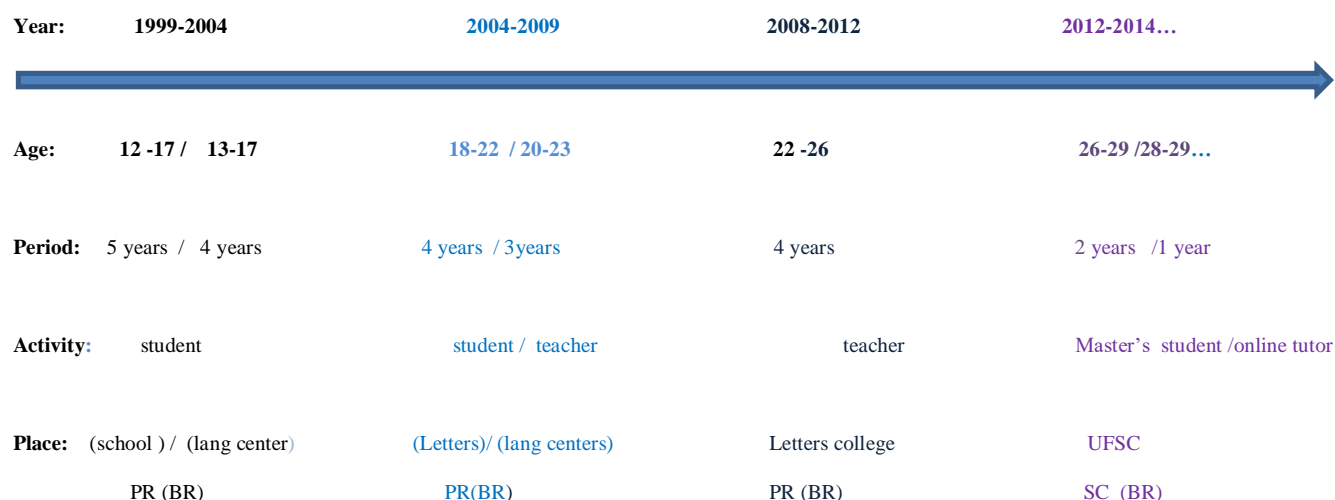
**Figure 4. Andrey's timeline of English learning and teaching (formal and informal contexts)**

As the figure shows, Andrey's first contact with the English language was at the regular school, at the age of 12.He had English classes at school until she finished high school at the age of 17. One year later, he enrolled in an English language institute, where he studied for four years. At the age of 18 he started the undergraduate course in Letters where he studied for the following four years. After two years attending the course he started to teach at a language institute, where he taught for three years. When he was in his second year teaching in the language institute and had recently graduated from college, he got a position at the university where he taught for the following four years. In 2012 he applied for the graduate program at UFSC. In 2013 he started to work as an online tutor where hat UFSC where he stayed for a year.

## 3.6. DATA SOURCES

Data were collected in two different moments and they represent different kinds of written sources. Autobiographical and team teaching papers- done along a course in the graduate program at UFSC in one semester, and blog entries along the following semester. The blog functioned as a mediational space where the participants had the opportunity to narrate their classes, externalize their

dilemmas, ask for suggestions within the three kinds of posts designed to these ends (to be described in 3.6.2). The blog thus provided room for strategic mediation – mediation attuned to the learner's zone of proximal development – to take place. I believe that each kind of narrative offered a singular lens to look at how these teachers' (re)conceptualization process occurred.

As discussed in the review of literature (subsection 2.6), written accounts present interrelated and sometimes overlapping functions in igniting cognitive processes (Johnson & Golombek, 2011); and, as all the data collected represented written accounts, I expected the data collected to be able to ignite these functions - externalization, verbalization and systematic analysis - and therefore boost the cognitive processes for concept development. As there is no causal relationship between the narrative product and the function it will accomplish, that is, the kind of written account does not imply that a specific narrative function will be fostered (Johnson and Golombek, 2011), having different kinds of written accounts was a strategy to favor multiple functions to be brought about. In this sense, the narratives used in this study emerged in different contexts and/or aimed at different ends.

The sections that follow name the different narratives and delineate the features of each.

## 3.6.1 Autobiographical papers (Foreign/second language learning histories and foreign language teaching histories) and Team teaching Project paper

As aforementioned, the narratives produced for the course *Ensino de Língua Inglesa: Práticas de Sala de Aula* have been used as data for the present research. The autobiographical narratives offered rich accounts that helped me to learn about the participants' language learning and teaching trajectories, and thus verify how and the extent to which their histories influence and inform their performance in class. The team teaching experience narratives unveiled teachers' understandings, beliefs and impressions about some teaching concepts and about the collaborative teaching activity.

## 3.6.2 The blog

The blog-Praxis was a tool created for this research and, as a dialogic space for teachers to reflect and comment on their everyday teaching decisions and practices, its analysis was able to trace the

extent to which the strategic mediation that took place along the semester led teachers to move from social to psychological functioning, i.e., to implement classes which echoed previous conversations that brought about misleading and/or mistaken practices that should be avoided. Thus, in order to capture the participants' response to strategic mediation, I organized the blog into three different kinds of posts, namely *Recall sessions, Weekly journal, and Tips for classroom activities*. On the blog opening page, there was another post called *Starting up questions* with general questions addressed to participants.

The groups had classes twice a week along four months (thirty encounters of ninety minutes). I observed classes and took field notes in each participant's group once a week (ten classes), and for those classes, I posed some questions on the blog under the post *Recall session*. For the other weekly class I did not watch (15 classes), the participants wrote an entry about some points in the class they found relevant under the post *Weekly journal*. The other five classes, review classes and tests were not included in this study. By the beginning of each week, I opened a post called *Tips for classroom activities* where suggestions for activities were shared or requested by the participants. On the very first entry I explained the purpose of each kind of post and how they would work on the blog (see appendix A). Following, I present more details about each kind of post.

3.6.2.1 *Starting up* questionnaire and *The last but not the least* questionnaire

As a way to welcome participants and collect more information about their previous experiences and understandings about teaching, I opened the blog with a post called *Starting up* questions (see appendix B). Besides questions related to teaching experience and language learning common to both participants, I also included more specific questions to each participant related to some aspects observed in their narratives for the course *Ensino de Língua Inglesa: Práticas de Sala de Aula* in the previous semester. These questions concerned pseudoconcepts observed as a means to identify participants' scientific knowledge about such concepts.

As a close up for their participation, I finished the blog with a post called *The Last but not the Least* questionnaire (see appendix C) in which I asked their impressions concerning the blogging experience.

3.6.2.2 Recall session

This post was started by me on a weekly basis, after each class observation. The post consisted of reflective questions related to the class observed. After receiving their answers/comments I would write another entry in response to their replies to my questions, at which point, if I fell they wanted, I posited my impressions and/or suggested some changes. The participants were invited to reply to it if they felt the need to. The recall session started with different questions to each of them according to their specific class. Since we three were teaching the same level on the same teaching context, I kept the two participants on the same post, thus we all could contribute with each other and benefit from each other's comments, add additional remarks, and share similar concerns.

The questions in the *Recall Session* post were purposely designed to elicit from the teachers their informed justifications and goals in applying certain activities or in taking some specific actions during the class; that is, they were meant to make them reflect and have awareness of the aspects underlying their practice. In this regard, verbalization would suggest concept development. That is, if teachers are able to connect the theory that grounds language teaching (that represent the scientific concepts in the language teaching field) to their daily practices, it would point to concept development (Vygotsky, 1986). On the other hand, if their practices were grounded solely on the apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975) or on beliefs (Pajares, 1992), it would suggest the development of concepts at a stage of complex or pseudoconcepts (Vygostky, 1987). This detection would require a strategic redirection of the mediation in order to guide teachers to (re)signify their understandings.

3.6.2.3 Weekly Journal

This post was initiated by the participants themselves to talk about the class I was not observing. In this space, they would posit issues and/or comments about their own classes based on a starting but

not limiting list of possible topics they might want to refer to in their narratives (see appendix A). This should be done the day following their classes. This report should not take longer than one day because participants might forget important aspects to be narrated. After their reports I would write a reply asking some questions or giving some suggestions. Participants would then reply to my comments. This journaling post was intended to reveal participants' own views about their classes and their concerns.

### 3.6.2.4 Tips for classroom activities

This post was opened on a weekly basis as well, and the participants posted contributions / requests only if they wanted or felt the need to. It was a space for sharing or requesting ideas to be applied on Level 1 (English language class). This post, besides creating a peer environment among the three of us, was intended to reveal teachers' needs and their notion of what an effective classroom practice is. Furthermore, when teachers realize what their needs are, changes are more likely to happen. As Arshavskaya and Whitney (2014) well state it, according to sociocultural theory, when learners vocalize their need for help, they become more responsible for their own learning.

### 3.7 PROCEDURES FOR DATA ANALYSIS

The procedures for data analysis were the following. First of all, by the end of the course *Ensino de Língua Inglesa: Práticas de Sala de Aula* (second semester of 2013), the narratives produced were read several times. This cautious reading helped me to acknowledge the participants' language learning and teaching histories, and thus have an overview about which aspects were mediating the participants' teaching conceptualization and that could be reflected on the second semester of data collection - when teachers would write about their classes and be mediated via blog. Moreover, the narrative analysis was fundamental to help me plan strategic mediation in case those recurring concepts actually reflect in classes along the second semester. After that, by the end of the second semester, the most recurrent and expressive not yet fully developed concepts (complex and pseudo) that appeared in data were identified and chronologically traced. Vygotsky's sociocultural perspective on human development provided the

grounds to assist me in the identification of the pseudo concepts regarding teaching that emerged in the data. It also helped me to implement mediation, and trace development. Also, Johnson and Golombek's (2011) analytical framework helped me in the identification of the cognitive functions ignited through the participants' engagement in the narratives - language as externalization, as verbalization, and as systematic analysis. In sum, I intended to identify the aspects mediating and being mediated by the participants' conceptualizations, and to investigate the way some recurrent concepts regarding language teaching/learning evolved (or remained the same) along the semester as evidenced by the participants' practice, narratives and manifestations via blog.

In order to systematize the analysis aforementioned, after looking at data as a whole, I organized all the information gathered through data collection into two main axes - *Mapping* and *Teaching activity* as displayed in Figure 3:
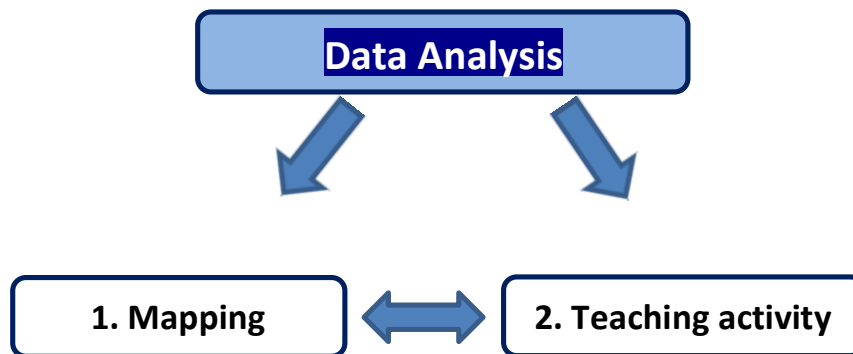


**Figure 3. The two axis of data analysis.**

Both axes have subdivisions and include data collected in both semesters, however, there is a predominance of data from the first semester in the first axis - since it deals with teachers' trajectories and their personal motivation towards the profession - and a predominance of data from the second semester on the second axis, given that it refers to teachers' actual performance and to mediation via blog. The subdivisions are detailed in the figures and in the paragraphs that follow.

The first axis of data analysis – *Mapping* consists of a depiction of each participant. It proved to be crucial for the purposes of my dissertation, since they exposed Mayra and Andrey's teacher persona - how they came to know what they know, why they think the way they think and why they do what they do. It is subdivided in *Learning trajectories* (language learning, teacher learner, and teaching trajectories), and *Affective volitional tendency (*personal motivation to enter and improve in the teaching career). This overview provided by the *Mapping* unveiled crucial aspects: it brought to surface everyday concepts they had as regards language learning/teaching built along preceding years as students; it made possible to perceive their understandings of some scientific concepts, presented to them as they engaged in the academic contexts, providing a glimpse of their stage of development (complex or pseudo concepts). It was also possible to identify their personal motivation to enter and improve in the teaching career, and to detect, through emotionally charged language, foci of contradictions that were addressed during mediation as they reappeared during the teaching activity.

The following figure represents the first axis of data analysis –*Mapping:*
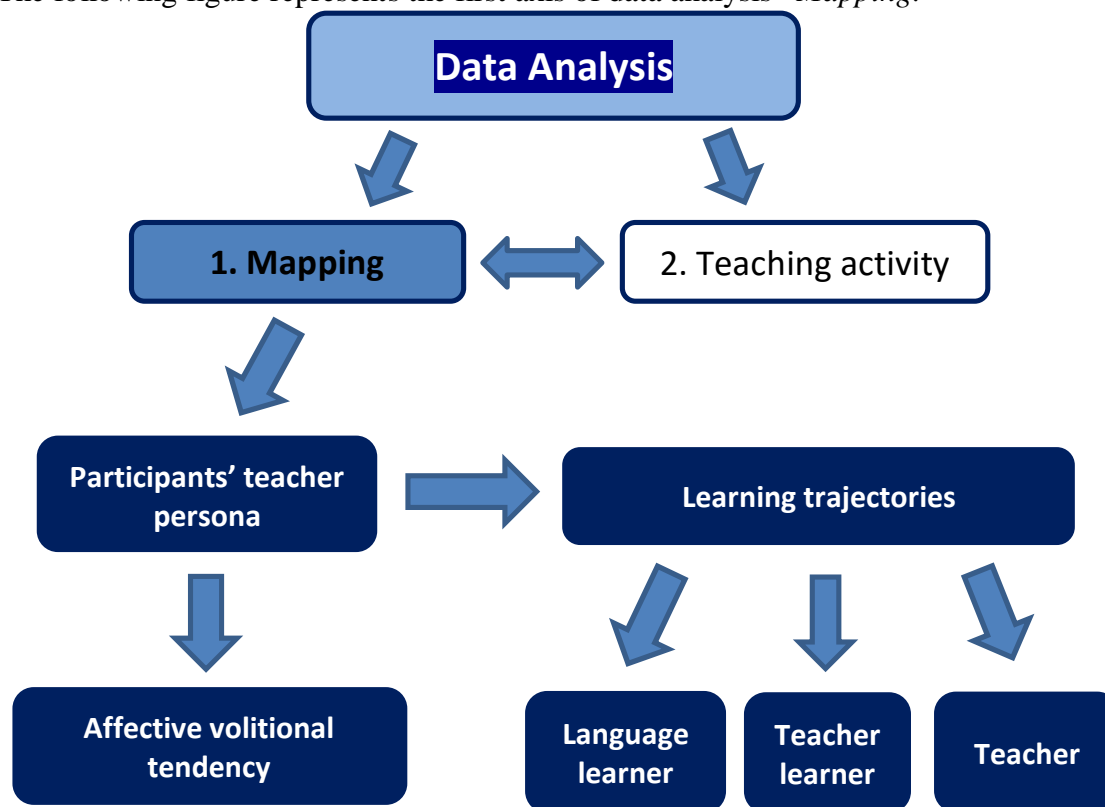


**Figure 4. The first axis of data analysis.**

The second axis of data analysis – *Teaching activity* – corresponds, in great part, to the data collected via blog, when the blog entries and class observations enabled me to employ strategic mediation in relation to the not fully developed concepts (complex and pseudo) detected in the narratives and which were foci of contradiction during the teaching activity. The tracing of concept development is depicted within each subdivision in this part of data analysis. As such, the subdivisions are established according to the (complex or pseudo) concepts that appear as mediating each participant's teaching activity.
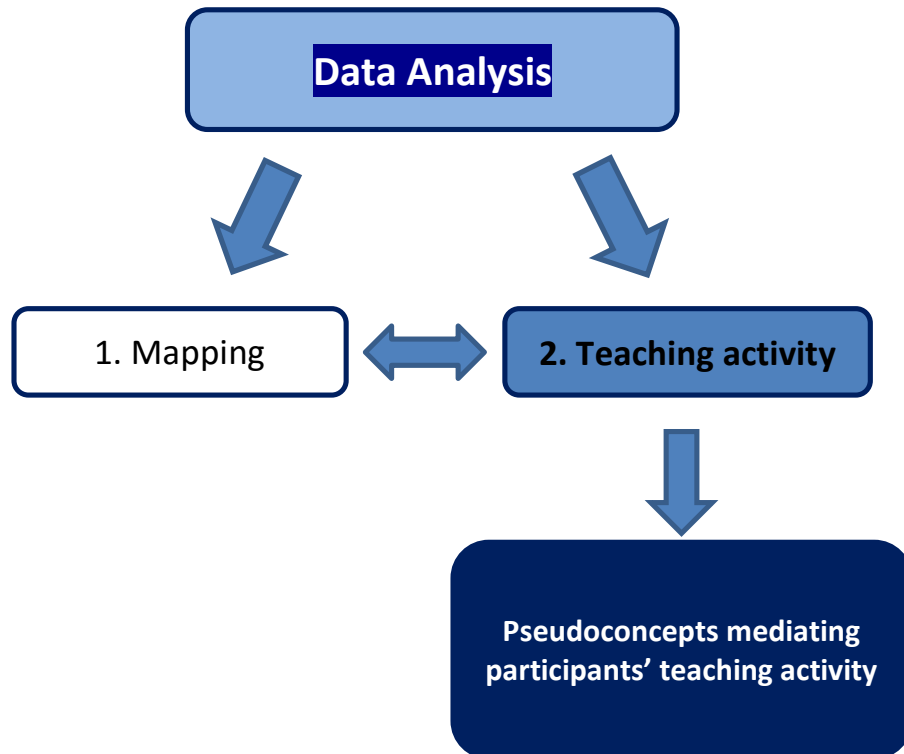
**Figure 5. The second axis of data analysis.**

Having described the methodological aspects of my dissertation, I now move to the analysis per se, which was done within two chapters, one for each of the participating teachers. As presented in the Introduction and in Subsection 3.2, the main research question underlying the analysis is:

How do two English as a/an foreign/additional language experienced teachers' conceptions of teaching evolve as they move along a one-semester teaching experience in which their pedagogical practice is object of study of the researcher -a peer teacher who follows their classes, questions their decisions, and responds to their teaching practices and anxieties via a blog constructed to these ends?

As a means to answer this research question, I will investigate the following aspects:

I start each analytical chapter by mapping the teacher in reference to their teacher persona and by eliciting the concepts (pseudo) that have been most often raised by each of them along the period of data collection as Figure 5 displays. Although the data is presented in separate, I am aware that these two aspects influence one another, as can be shown by the bidirectional arrow.

The chapter that follows focuses on Mayra, who I refer to as an accidental teacher.

# CHAPTER 4 - MAYRA: AN ACCIDENTAL TEACHER

This chapter focuses on Mayra, a 7-year-experience EFL teacher and MA candidate. The chapter is divided in two sections, each of which dedicated to one of the main axes that compose the data, namely *Mapping* and *Teaching activity*. Section 1, *Mapping*, focuses on the teacher persona. It is subdivided in *Learning trajectories* (language learning, teacher learner, and teaching trajectories), and *Affective volitional tendency* (personal motivation to enter and improve in the teaching career). In Section 2, *Teaching activity*, I refer to the not fully developed concept (pseudo concept) that has most often permeated Mayra's decisions in class.

## 4.1 *MAPPING-* GETTING TO KNOW MAYRA'S TEACHER PERSONA

In order to understand Mayra's conceptualization of teaching and how it mediates her practice, I start describing and analyzing her trajectories as a language learner (both as a foreign and second language learner), as a teacher learner (at entrance training courses for language institutes in Brazil, as a student at the CELTA teachers' preparatory course in England, and as an Undergraduate Letters student in Brazil), and as a teacher (language institutes). Due to their interconnectedness, these trajectories are depicted in an intertwined way. A second aspect in this section is her affective volition - her personal interest and motivation to engage in the field. Figure 6 represents the analytical path followed so as to depict the participant. The sections and subsections in which each topic is discussed along this chapter are signalized with numbers inside the squares.
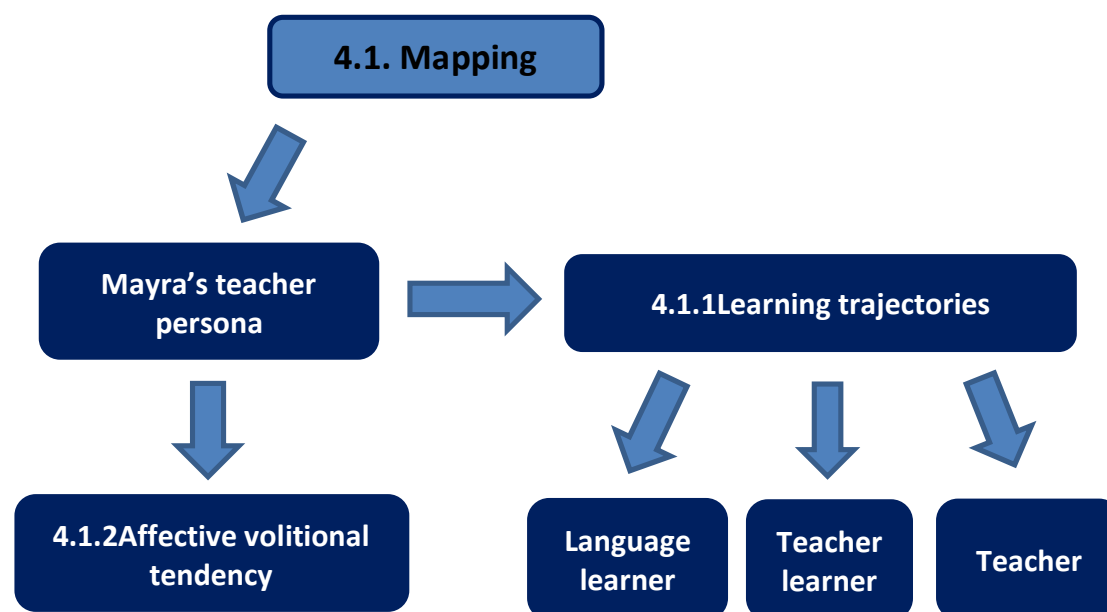
**Figure 6. The first axis of Mayra's teacher persona**

4.1.1 Learning Trajectories: Language learning, teaching, and teacher learner

As expected, the teacher Mayra became has been built on the basis of her previous experience as a learner of English, a teacher of English and also an English teacher learner. It is thus on these aspects that I now focus. The sources that compose the data for the analysis in this subsection are the narratives produced as reaction papers (first semester), and some blog entries (second semester). Also, it is important to point out that the emphasis in bold signals important bits of discourse, whereas ellipsis -  [ ] signals that the narrative continued but was not relevant for the topic under discussion.

In the excerpt that follows, Mayra reflects about her language learning history as a foreign language learner at a regular school, at a language institute, and later as a second language student in England.

> *My experiences as a foreign language learner are very limited not to say inexistent. Trying to enter the memory lane, **the only picture that comes to my mind from elementary school is having red grades in the English tests**. It was around 30 years ago and from that time on, things have sure changed a lot! Due to my bad grades **I entered an intensive course at Cultura Inglesa and since then my English skills bloomed almost imperceptible, but to be honest, I don't remember the contents of the classrooms apart from the fact that I started to learn English through authentic texts, songs, rated books and plays which were no doubt much more entertaining.** I studied at a language school from 13 to 16 years old and after a 10 year break, **I did one semester more in Sao Paulo, because I wanted to set the FCE exam from Cambridge.***

*[  ]Learning English as a second language as opposed to learning it as a foreign language was completely different to me. As far as I remember there was nothing special about my classes over there: We used to follow a book in the first half of the period and then we could choose between conversation classes or classes with a focus on the Cambridge exams. There were no audiovisual nor very exiting games. I believe students were less demanding with regards to what kind of materials and activities the teacher would use. My motivation was at its highest and I was having three hours classes every day, and studying at home too. The classes were multilingual and I started to learn more about history, geography, art and cultural diversity which were already a plus.*

Reaction paper- Ensino de Língua Inglesa: Práticas de Sala de Aula, 2013

In the previous excerpt, as she systematically examines (Johnson and Golombek, 2011) her learning experiences, she establishes a gradual progression in terms of efficiency among those experiences. Learning English as a foreign language at a regular school was not so exciting and her memories lead her to the bad grades she had back then. At a language institute, she acknowledges that she turned into a better learner whose English skills improved with the authentic material she was exposed to. It was as a second language learner in an English speaking country that she indeed dedicated time to this learning and that she had the highest level of motivation, although she says that there was nothing special about the classes. Yet, she contradicts herself when she comments that learning history, geography, art and cultural diversity were a plus. Her narratives also suggest that she gives importance to practicing the language in an English speaking country.

*….My work experience always required me to speak English. I worked in the hotel and tourism industry and have worked as a tour guide for 3 years, which gave me a chance to travel to the United States and Europe a few times practicing my English.*

Reaction paper- Ensino de Língua Inglesa: Práticas de Sala de Aula, 2013

In the next excerpt, Mayra points out that she had not planned to pursue a teaching career. Her first foreign language teaching experience happened by chance.

*Due to that experience [as a tour guide] I was invited to work as an English teacher in a town called Santa Cruz do Sul in the south of Brazil in 1999. …To be honest, I had never thought of becoming a teacher until I got the invitation to move cities and teach at an English school. Before I started I was in a two weeks pre-service training and started straight away.*

Reaction paper- Ensino de Língua Inglesa: Práticas de Sala de Aula, 2013

Given that Mayra, by the time she started teaching, did not have any formal knowledge about teaching, she is surprised with the invitation to teach and externalizes her concern in being considered a fraud as a teacher.

> **I was amazed by the trust people put on me** *and was also amazed by my courage to leave everything behind and start this new enterprise.* **I had no experience at all and thinking back on my classes I know things were done intuitively and with no background knowledge about methods and procedures. …I felt I was a bit of a fraud as a teacher.**
> Reaction paper- Ensino de Língua Inglesa: Práticas de Sala de Aula, 2013

She uses the term "intuition" to refer to her teaching based on the apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975). Moreover, although the passage does not reveal exactly what she understands about "methods and procedures", it may indicate that she has some positivist views of language teaching.

In the following excerpt, through systematic examination (Johnson and Golombek, 2011) of her previous experiences with listening activities, she critically analyses her own procedures based on everyday knowledge, and compares them to teaching procedures learned afterwards - throughout her formal experiences as a teacher learner. In this specific example the referred procedures are the ones derived from scientific concepts engendered from research on how brain processes aural information.

> *Just to give you an example of* **how raw I was***; I did not even know how to do a listening exercise.* **I would just play the CD and then, ask students to do the exercise. I did not talk about the subject before in order to raise students' previous knowledge nor pre taught vocabulary that might have prevented students to comprehend the listening.** *I had no idea about basic procedures like those and* **my listening exercises somehow became a memory exercise.**
> Reaction paper- Ensino de Língua Inglesa: Práticas de Sala de Aula, 2013

Her decision to go abroad was driven by the gap she felt in her own practice. As evidenced in the next excerpt, as a way to legitimize herself as a teacher, for her it was important to get as many international certificates she could and attend to courses abroad.

> *…After one year teaching* **I decided to invest on the career and bought myself a year course in London to improve my English skills** *and off I went! … I went to London to improve my language skills and I* **had this dream of doing the CELTA course. In the first three years I took all the certificates I could: FCE, CAE, CEELT (for foreign teachers)** *but was not accepted to enrol at CELTA due to my English proficiency. …. I set the CPE and was accepted in the CELTA*

*course, which is a very hands on 120 hours course, divided into input classes and real classroom teaching.*

<div align="right">Reaction paper- Ensino de Língua Inglesa: Práticas de Sala de Aula, 2013</div>

Despite the fact that she did take some teaching courses (CELTA course- Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults, CEELT- Cambridge Examination in English for Language Teachers), the high stake tests she took (FCE- Cambridge First Certificate in English, CAE- the Cambridge Certificate in Advanced English, CPE- the Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in English) only testified her proficiency in the language – *content knowledge* – but did not help her to develop language teaching expertise and thus her *pedagogical  knowledge* (Shulman, 1986)

Back to Brazil and to her position as a teacher, she soon realized that the certificates and short term courses (as CELTA) did not suffice to help her cope with the complexities and demands of real classrooms, more specifically, of real Brazilian classrooms. This dissonance created between her actual classes in Brazil and what she idealized (everyday concepts concerning language teaching based on her experience as a second language learner, as well as a teacher learner on the CELTA course), forced her to try to reconceptualize and reorient her practices.

> *...**Even with this certificate**, **when I started teaching in Brazil I could still feel the need of practice.** It is amazing how **Brazilian students are demanding** (especially adults). I felt many times like I was being challenged and compared with previous teachers they had before. Following the book was a no no, and **I had to learn to be creative and to respond to students needs and expectations.***

<div align="right">Reaction paper- Ensino de Língua Inglesa: Práticas de Sala de Aula, 2013</div>

After some years working in language institutes, Mayra entered the Letters Program at UFSC, where the experiences of teaching and learning to teach happen in an intertwined way.

> ***Since I started at UFSC I have been teaching at the Extra-Curricular course. I had also taught at Teddy Bear (for children), CNA, SESI, taught in some immersion courses and for the elderly. At present I'm an online language tutor and I work at Extra, teaching levels 1 and 5.***

<div align="right">Starting up Post, Abril 22, 2014<br>Mayra's reply: May 7, 2014</div>

As aforementioned, before Mayra entered the Letters undergraduate program she had taken the CELTA course in London and short term training programs in two of the Brazilian language institutes

she taught. During the two semesters in which data were collected she finished her undergraduate program and started her graduate studies (MA program) in the field of Teacher Education with emphasis on sociocultural studies. She was enrolled in three courses in applied linguistics in her MA program

### 4.1.2 Affective Volitional Tendency

The second aspect in the Mapping section is the affective volitional tendency, which refers to the personal motivation Mayra reveals to enter and improve in the teaching career. The sources that compose the data for the analysis in this subsection are the narratives produced as reaction papers and team teaching project assignment (first semester)  and some blog entries (second semester).

Vygotsky (1986) notes that thought – which originates from our wishes, emotions, needs, interests, impulses, and inclinations – influences one's affective volition, therefore cognition and affection cannot be understood separately. As evidenced in the previous excerpts (subsection 4.1.1) retrieved from the autobiographical reaction paper, Mayra externalizes her enthusiasm and anxiety with the new enterprise, showing interest in taking the profession seriously, even though she clearly states that she had not thought of becoming a teacher until their family business bankrupted and she received the invitation to teach.

> ***I could say that I'm an accidental teacher****. I have worked 17 years in the Hotel management and Tourism Industry. I used to have a small travel operator, a family business in Sao Paulo .....In 1999 our business bankrupted and I was invited to teach English in a small town in the south (Yazigi).* ***As I always liked a challenge I accepted the offer*** *and taught there for the whole year.* ***I loved the experience*** *but at that time* ***I used to feel I was a fraud as a teacher…After 8 years*** *[in London]* ***I came back to Brasil in order to pursue my brand new career. In 2009 I set the vestibular and passed!! Now I'm a graduated English teacher and started my master's degree.***
>
> Starting Up post April 22, 2014
> Mayra's entry: May 7, 2014

The positively charged bits of language identified in the narrative (autobiographical reaction paper) denote her volitional tendency as regards her intention to pursue a career in the teaching field.

> *As I always* ***liked*** *a challenge [   ] I* ***loved*** *the experience [   ] I used* ***to like*** *to know about their lives and create a* ***nice*** *atmosphere in our classes but I knew I had to do a lot* ***better*** *as a teacher [   ]my* ***brand new*** *career[   ] follow my* ***new career dream***

Nonetheless, as her narrative progresses (autobiographical reaction paper) we can notice that her excitement with the new profession was at times replaced by a sense of frustration and a deep worry caused by the expectation she had in relation to students' response to her classes.

> *Brazilian students are **demanding**. I felt many times like I was **being challenged** and **compared with** previous teachers they had before. Following the book was a **no no[   ]***
>
> Reaction paper- Ensino de Língua Inglesa: Práticas de Sala de Aula, 2013

In the following passages, captured from the Team Teaching Project final paper, Mayra demonstrates her willingness to participate in the team teaching project and thus to learn and improve regardless of her 7 years of experience, familiarity with the extracurricular context, and with the extracurricular methodology. In the next excerpt, after having watched the class in the group she would be supposed to team teach in the following week, she comments on her peer teacher's class showing her enthusiasm and that she is open to discuss the suggestions to her own classes.

> *Fortunately I was already familiar with the institution, the material, and with the resources available so **my main focus was on the students' behaviour and their interactions with the teacher** in order to plan my classes accordingly. I have noticed that the **group wasn't very energetic and that the teacher had to insist to have students interacting and answering her questions, although in groups they would participate well and collaborate more.[   ]** The key concepts of the class were renting a house and all the vocabulary related to describe houses. The forms focus was on "It is..." "It has..." "there is..." there are..." and **the teacher tried to teach them integrating all the four skills (listening, speaking, writing and reading) in a very dynamic and diverse fashion. The teacher used a lot of visual aids as well as realia and made the students move throughout the class, which in fact is a very good tactic for long classes (like this group that was a 3 hour class). Although she followed the curriculum she only referred to the book half of the class**, bringing various activities and games to complement the content. It was quite educational to observe the way the teacher made students move and the way she complemented and adapted the material with games and visual resources. **I will definitely use them in my future classes.***
>
> Team Teaching Project final paper, 2013

Before the team teaching class at extracurricular, the teams had the teaching practice for the whole group enrolled in this course (see Chapter 3, subsection 3.5.1). In the excerpt that follows, she

shows she values her peers' opinions and wishes she could have had a feedback from them about her team class plan before applying it to a real group at the extracurricular.

> *It was a shame* though that **many colleagues were absent** on my practice teach day, and *I **was not able to contrast and compare different beliefs** with them as we knew for sure that we had done things differently, and **I was expecting to be challenged on that…***
>
> Team Teaching Project final paper, 2013

Following, she externalizes her excitement before teaching the real group at extracurricular (Chapter 3, subsection 3.5.1) with emotionally charged impressions. Her systematic examination (Johnson and Golombek, 2011) of this experience served as a psychological tool for understanding why she felt that way in that specific moment.

> *Although I had planned my class and knew what I had to do, in the day of the practice I had butterflies in my stomach. I believe even though experienced teachers know their procedures and the content of the class, the 'just before teaching moment' could be compared to an actor that is about to enter the stage and be on the spotlight. Thus, **no matter how much experience we have**, there is always the **emotional nerve-racking sensation** that is human's nature. In addition we knew we were being **observed and criticized** and this certainly **added some adrenaline to** the feeling. I also knew from the practices of the previous groups that I was **supposed to justify my options and convince my audience** that I was doing the right thing **or be convinced otherwise**.*
>
> Team Teaching Project final paper, 2013

Her enthusiasm with the results of her actual class in the team teaching project is externalized through positively charged language.

> *… it was **very profitable…** that **instigated** our creativity… experience gave us an opportunity to try out our ideas in a **safe and supportive** environment… filming it helped to build a **good rapport** between the teacher[Mayra] and the students… students were **engaged and actively** participating… There was a **pleasant** buzz and students were **smiling** and appeared to be **enjoying** themselves. ..she [me, the actual group teacher]told me that they **really liked** it and said that students told her that I was **calm** and seemed much **secure** about what I was doing… I believe I have **achieved my goals**...Also, as I could see from the video; the students were able to do the activities proposed **successfully**.*
>
> Team Teaching Project final paper, 2013

As the new semester began and she started to teach a Level 1, her feelings towards her actual group in the first classes differ from her feelings during the team teaching project class. Her externalization is expressed through negative charged language.

> *I left this class with a feeling of **frustration**... I tried to correct homework and realized that **they hadn't done it**. Also, there were just a few students (**they are not punctual**) I had a feeling that due to the holiday there was a need to review the content because **they did not touch the** material since last class. This feeling of noticing that students **are not doing their part** is **devastating** and can **harm** the initial mood of the class.*
>
> Recall Session post May 10, 2014
> Mayra's entry: May 20, 2014

As aforementioned, her students' apathy added to the difficulties faced to approach the communication strategies required for a Level 1 class in a communicative based language teaching context affected her agency in the process making her lose self-regulation.

> ***Are there many different ways to work with songs? How to have students speak in such low levels? Please enlighten me!!!***
>
> Tips for Classroom Activities Post, May 13, 2014
> Mayra's entry: May 20, 2014

Throughout the semester, I witnessed a concerned Mayra asking for ideas and bringing a varied number of activities to class, which although had a connection to the class content, sometimes did not have the expected outcome. Her loss of self-regulation is also apparent in the following excerpts.

> *Dear peers! I would like to have some ideas as **how to start my classes with games that have a link with the contents of the book (Interchange 1**). I believe **we could also share games that do not have any relation but that are helpful** anyway.*
>
> Tips for Classroom Activities post, May 13, 2014
> Mayra's entry: May 20, 2014

> *Hi guys!! I start unit 5 today which topic is family! **Would you have any game or nice activity** on this topic to share with me?*
> *Cheers*!!!!
>
> Tips for Classroom Activities post June 2, 2014
> Mayra's entry: June 9, 2014

In the passage that follows, she adopts a more positive approach to her teaching, trying not to take students' low level of participation personally. Even though students were not actually actively

engaged in the activities proposed, she tries to have a broader view of the situation rather than taking all the responsibility to herself.

> *I was happy with their participation. I believe they are a **bit slow due to the time (20:10) and due to the fact that they are not confident to speak or just simply don't know how to say things in English.** However the content was easy (types of music) **and they had previous knowledge to share**.*

> Recall Session post May 15, 2014
> Mayra's entry: May 20, 2014

If on the one hand the low commitment of students in terms of attendance, participation, and homework affected her affective volition, on the other, the fact that throughout the semester she kept trying to find a better way to get tuned to students' needs, demonstrates her desire to overcome the difficulties.

> *Well I guess although the exercise part of the class was dreadful it was necessary to review previous content…. **The part with colors and the flashcards worked well** and I had to teach them numbers in order to continue with the content.*

> Recall Session post May 10, 2014
> Mayra's entry: May 25, 2014

> *I had started the unit in the previous class so I tried to act the dialogue bringing some realia to class and acting both roles: customer and salesperson.*
> ***The realia was great, but I believe the acting was confusing as I was two people at the same time.***

> Weekly journal post, May 25, 2014
> Mayra's entry: May 25, 2014

> *… I brought **some realia to present different kinds of material**…There was also **a bingo** to revise numbers.*

> Weekly journal Post, June 2, 2014
> Mayra's entry: June 9, 2014

In her last narrative, produced after the end of the semester, she shows a positive view of her class and group. She compares her first impressions about the students at the beginning and at the end of the semester, acknowledging changes in the group's characteristics and in herself.

*I believe it always **change[s]! At first students do not feel very comfortable with us and with each other.** With time **they become more confident** to speak and the **relationship gets less formal** and the **atmosphere gets lighter**! At first I thought **it was difficult to please them [  ] it was not a problem with me** or with the **activities but with the implementation itself**. **I feel I'm starting to organize and connect the activities·better, so they can make more sense to students.]***

<div align="right">Recall Session post, July 28, 2014<br>Mayra's reply via e-mail: October 24th</div>

The next section refers to the second axis of Mayra's data analysis - *Teaching Activity* which refers to Mayra's actual teaching and entails both the mediational moves and the tracks towards concept development.

*4.2 TEACHING ACTIVITY:* FOCUSING ON MEDIATION AND TRACING DEVELOPMENT

The data in the second axis of analysis corresponds mostly to the data collected via blog in the second semester, during the participants' actual teaching in their own groups at the extracurricular program. However, the section starts with narrative excerpts from the first semester of data collection which instantiate the most relevant not fully internalized concept tackled through strategic mediation on the second semester. This brief recapitulation is intended to show evidence that justifies the decision to focus on a given concept through mediation on the second semester.

Therefore, this section traces the genesis of the not fully internalized concept (pseudo concept) as regards motivation detected in the narratives of the first semester of data collection, how this pseudo concept impacts and permeates her practice, and describes the mediation movements in the blog Praxis as an attempt to foster concept development. The diagram that follows displays the organization of the second axis of Mayra's data analysis.
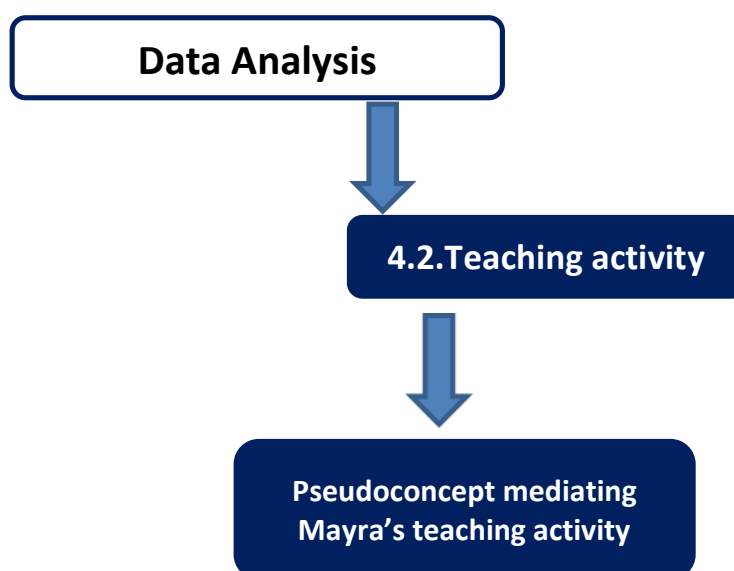
**Figure 7. Organization of the second axis of Mayra's data analysis.**

As identified in the language learning trajectory, Mayra's mental image of an ideal foreign language classroom was built on her own second language learning experiences - when she was motivated - rather than on her foreign language learning experiences - a period that she barely remembers. The dissonance created by the ideal (motivated students) and real (demotivated students) pushed her to find ways to motivate them. The ways she finds to motivate students are focus of the analysis that follows.

As a second language student, regardless the traditional course she was attending abroad, Mayra was motivated, i.e., she was internally driven to learn English. For her, there was no need for the teacher to make efforts to design different and varied activities.

> *As far as I remember **there was nothing special about my classes over there**: We used to follow a book in the first half of the period and then we could choose between conversation classes or classes with a focus on the Cambridge exams. There were no audiovisual nor very exciting games. I believe **students were less demanding** with regards to what kind of materials and activities the teacher would use. **My motivation was at its highest** and I was having three hours classes every day, and studying at home too.*
> Reaction paper- Ensino de Língua Inglesa: Práticas de Sala de Aula, 2013

Moreover, she was studying in a multilingual class, aspect that, for her, was by itself motivating.

> *The classes were multilingual and I started to learn more about history, geography, art and cultural diversity which were already a plus.*
>
> Reaction paper- Ensino de Língua Inglesa: Práticas de Sala de Aula, 2013

Besides that, Mayra was living in an English speaking country where multiple chances to speak the language naturally happen outside the classroom. Her motivation added to the opportunities available to use and learn the language in an English speaking country disguised the external motives behind her decision to spend some time abroad - the necessity to improve her English abilities to validate her entrance in the teaching career.

Her students in Brazil, conversely, had a different profile; many were studying English to fulfill a job or course requirement and did not exactly like languages, not mentioning the fact that the context is not as diverse. Moreover, these students did not have as many opportunities to practice the language outside the classroom as she did[6]. The dissonance caused by her experiences as a second language learner and her actual experiences as a teacher made her lose self-regulation, becoming regulated by her students' reaction towards the activities proposed, and by what she believed could motivate them.

> *It is amazing **how Brazilian students are demanding** (especially adults). I felt many times like **I was being challenged and compared with previous teachers** they had before. Following the book was a no no, and **I had to learn to be creative and to respond to students needs and expectations**.*
>
> Reaction paper- Ensino de Língua Inglesa: Práticas de Sala de Aula, 2013

Although she had been an extrinsically motivated student at some point of her language learning trajectory in Brazil - when she declares she was studying just to pass the school year - she is surprised and disappointed with her students' lack of intrinsic motivation. She even compares herself – an intrinsically motivated second language student[7] - to her students in Brazil. Another point that indicates that Mayra did not fully develop this concept refers to the observation that Mayra feels totally

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[6] Information provided by the participant gathered from students on the first day of class during informal conversation.

[7] This difference does not refer to the fact that she was a second language student (rather than a foreign language student), but on each person's drives to learn a language.

responsible for students' motivation. In her trajectory, she declares she feels burdened by students comparing her to previous teachers so that she "had" to learn to be creative to cope with students' demands. The concept of motivation she developed with her experience as a teacher was connected to "pleasing" students and to avoiding difficulties in class. As a concept raised in Mayra's comments and reflections recurrently, I now focus on motivation.

**4.2.1 Motivation**

Defining and applying the concept of motivation has been a longstanding issue in language education and requires judicious choices. Brown (1994) noted that the way one defines motivation will depend on the theory of learning one adopts, namely, positivist or cognitivist.

From a behaviorist (and positivist) standpoint, motivation is ignited by external triggers (rewards or punishments) which function to reinforce or suppress behavior (Skinner, 1969). From a cognitivist view, however, this igniting force is internally driven (Crookes et al, 1991; Maslow, 1970; Rogers, 1983), that is, the motivation lies in pursuing the activity itself rather than on the anticipation of an external reward.

> Intrinsically motivated activities are the ones for which there is no apparent reward except the activity itself. People seem to engage in the activities for their own sake and not because they lead to an extrinsic reward...Intrinsically motivated behaviors are aimed at bringing about certain internally rewarding consequences, namely, feelings of competence and self-determinance. (Deci, 1975, p. 23)

Since students' motivation was an aspect that caught my attention in her narratives before class observation started, in the *Starting Up* post in the blog, I posed some questions to Mayra related to motivation intended to capture her understanding about this concept.

> *What's motivation? How can a teacher deal with students who are not motivated to learn English?*
>
> Starting Up post April 22, 2014

.

> *I think motivation is the **feeling that drives us to achieve our goals**. I try to show them that they **learn English for life, not for a test**. Language is social, we use it to communicate to make bonds to feel that **we belong** and we learn English in order **to be able to participate** actively as citizens of the world. I try to use stds' knowledge and background to **empower them**.*

Through her elaboration of motivation it is clear that she holds a cognitive view of this concept, albeit she does not provide a complete definition, nor distinguishes between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. This observation is evidenced by her use of "feeling that drives us", which is internal, and "not for a test", which can be seen as an external reward (or punishment).

As Brown (1994) notes, traditional education – grounded in a positivist paradigm – is populated with extrinsic motivators. Grades, stars, punishments and some kinds of feedback are common rewards to be achieved. This paradigm is then part of the apprenticeship of observation (Lortie,1975) of most teachers and can, at a certain extent, explain Mayra's conflicting decisions to enact the tenets of motivation she declared holding. Her practices oscillated from being congruent to the cognitive view - albeit presenting problematic aspects - to positivist, traditional behaviors.

Her not fully developed concept concerning motivation – identified  basically by her difficulty in dealing with not motivated students, taking for herself the whole responsibility for their motivation- might have been reasons for Mayra's loss of self-regulation and that led her to take some incongruent decisions in her teaching as an attempt to motivate students. The incongruences that will be discussed along this subsection are the following:

- Proceduralization and selection of activities: some activities were not goal directed and lacked clear procedures.

- Negotiation of meaning: as an attempt to avoid students' difficulties to make sense of the language to become a demotivating factor, Mayra avoided negotiating meaning.

-  Control of students' learning: as Mayra felt responsible for the lack of students' motivation and commitment to do their part, she tried to control students' learning.

Figure 8 represents the second axis of Mayra's data analysis. It shows the pseudoconcept and the incongruent practices it generates organized in three main categories. The sections and subsections in which each category is discussed are signaled with numbers inside the squares.
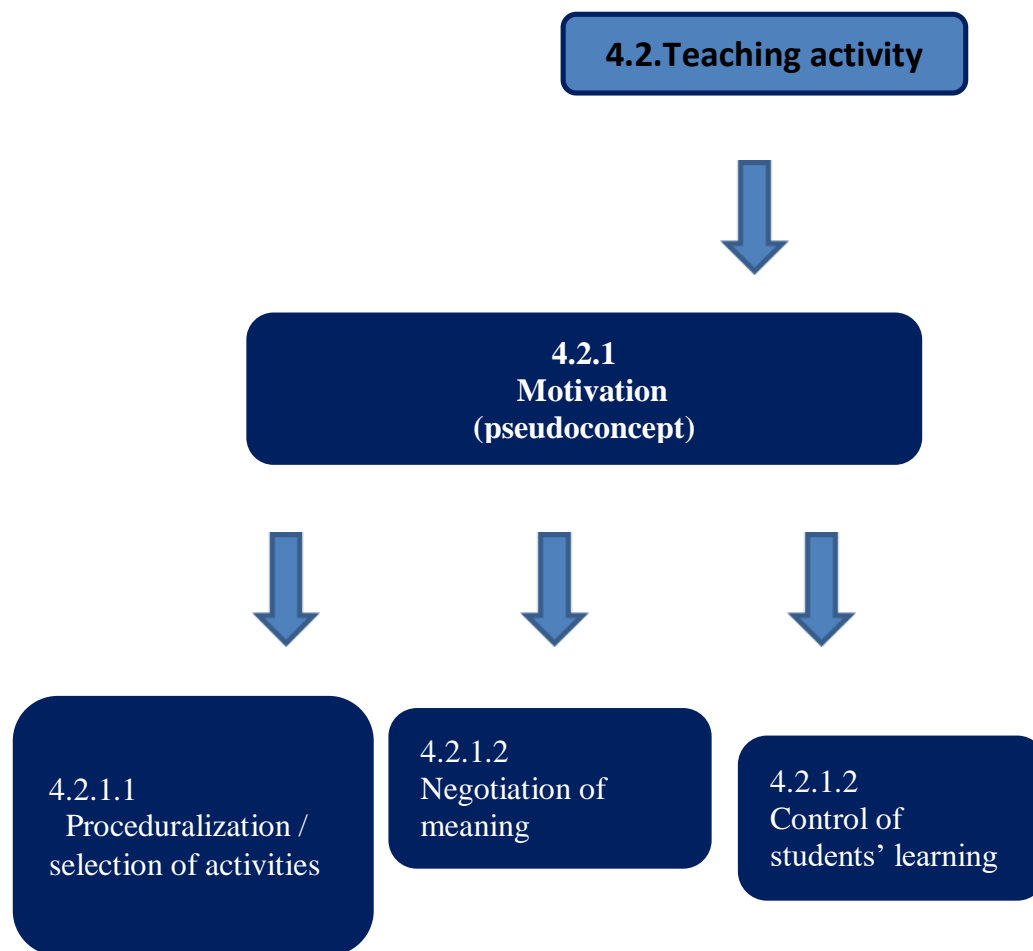
**Figure 8.Pseudoconcept permeating Mayra's teaching activity and the resulting teaching behaviors**

4.2.1.1 Proceduralization and selection of activities

As aforementioned, Mayra's teaching activity was permeated by her struggle to find ways to motivate students. In other words, her teaching practice was mediated by the emotions generated from the students' reactions to the activities proposed and also by her own beliefs about what could motivate them or not.

Analyzing data it seems that for Mayra, games played a central role as indicated by the various occasions she mentioned the need for new games and fun activities along the semester. It seems that for Mayra the ideal foreign language class is the one in which students have fun, especially through games.

*I should have started with a game or something to set the mood high*! *but I did not have any ideas at the moment... (my mind went blank) sometimes you just don't have time to plan accordingly.*

<div align="right">

Recall session post, May 10, 2014
Mayra's entry, May 20, 2014

</div>

*…how to start my classes with games …we could also share games that do not have any relation but that are helpful to motivate students anyway.*

<div align="right">

Tips for Classroom Activities post, May 13, 2014
Mayra's entry: May 20, 2014

</div>

*…Would you have any game or nice activity on this topic to share with me?...*

<div align="right">

Tips for Classroom Activities post May 28, 2014
Mayra's entry: May 29, 2014

</div>

*…I could explore Arcade as a game to engage them more… But I do need ideas and suggestions of how to improve stds' engagement and motivation …*

<div align="right">

Recall session post, May 15, 2014
Mayra's reply: May 20, 2014

</div>

*… it was difficult to please them …seemed not to like the games / activities that I proposed)...*

<div align="right">

Recall Session post July 28, 2014
Mayra's reply via e-mail: October 24th

</div>

In the following excerpt, posted after a class observation, I started my meditational moves with questions intended to stimulate Mayra's externalization of her impressions concerning students' little engagement in the activities (including games) proposed.

*-How do you feel students' participation in this class? What can be done to enhance students' engagement in the extra activities (games, song, arcade, etc)*

<div align="right">

Recall session post, May 15, 2014
Marcia's entry: May 15, 2014

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*I believe they are a bit slow due to the time (20:10) and due to the fact that they are not confident to speak or just simply don't know how to say things in English*. *However the content was easy (types of music) and they had previous knowledge to share.*
*I believe I could explore Arcade as a game to engage them more and songs are most of the time engaging. But I do need ideas and suggestions of how to improve stds' motivation in those activities :)*

<div align="right">

Recall session post, May 15, 2014
Mayra's reply: May 20, 2014

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It is important to mention that right after that class she asked me about my impression on students' little participation and about the possibility that their behavior be a personal reaction towards her, rather than towards the way the activities in class were being proceduralized. My next meditational moves, based on the brief conversation we had at the end of her class and on her reply to my questions in the blog, consisted of the following steps: first, I addressed her concern as regards students' little participation, reiterating the possible reasons for their slow behavior we had discussed after class and that she had mentioned in her reply to my post.

> ***I decided to pose these questions based on your concerns (we talked about that in the hall right after class). There are many reasons that might explain students' "slow" behavior, and you've just mentioned them above*** *(lack of target language fluency, lack of confidence)…*
>
> Recall session post, May 15, 2014
> Marcia's reply: May 21, 2014

Second, I added another possible reason for their "slow" behavior: the fact that they do not know each other very well. I then suggested some ice-breakers:

> *…****I'd also mention embarrassment to expose themselves*** *in the target language, added to the fact that* ***they don't know each other*** *very well (they've have been studying together for 2 months only.* ***I usually try to break the ice, bringing "ice-breakers" to class which involve more peer activities in closed groups/closed pairs, rather than teacher-student activities. If students start to talk to each other, besides knowing their classmates better, they help each other to organize their understandings/thoughts before exposing them to the whole group in open group activities.***
>
> Recall session post, May 15, 2014
> Marcia's reply: May 21, 2014

I also mentioned an activity she had applied with them at the beginning of the semester as an example of a goal oriented and interactive activity.

> *Do you remember how nice that open-pair activity you did with them once was? That one* ***they walked around the class asking questions to each other****? It was really nice****!****.[   ]****if they feel they are producing language they might feel motivated to participate****, they might feel that they are really communicating.*
>
> Recall session post, May 15, 2014
> Marcia's reply: May 21, 2014

Following this comment, I took the opportunity to point out that a possible reason for the students' lack of interest was the way she proceduralized the activities, and not the activities themselves. I then suggested some procedures do deal with the activities.

*You always bring some nice activities; I'd just suggest some modifications in the procedures to engage students more. As you also mentioned maybe with those arcade games (hangman and memory), it would be nice to handle them as games (as they actually are), otherwise these games lose most of their appealing component and students do not feel like participating). In the case of the memory game, you can divide them in teams and ask a member of the team to come to the computer. The fastest team wins. In the case of the hang man you can challenge the students (you against them), If they can do it in less than, let's say... 1 minute and a half, they win.*

Recall session post, May 15, 2014
Marcia's reply: May 21, 2014

In her reply to the comment above, she admits there is a lack in her planning and that she needs to review her procedures. However, by the end of her reply she seems to transfer the responsibility to students.

*[   ] About the activities, yeah, I do agree that I have to think them over and plan better how to put them in practice to avoid students to be demotivated!*
*Sometimes I think they will seem bored even if I bring the best activity ever...*

Recall session post, May 15, 2014
Mayra's reply: May 25, 2014

In the last part of the post I referred to a nice song she brought that I had also used with my group. The song and the activity were very nice, but students did not show much interest neither to do the activity nor to sing along.

*About the song,* **I think it's great, but I'd just explore more that rhyming activity! Also I'd suggest, before introducing the song, to have a conversation about their favorite/least favorite days of the week - since the song is "Friday I'm in love". Also I'd stimulate them to sing it the second time you play it. Songs are great for practicing pronunciation in a fun/moving way.** *I used this song too and in the second time I played it, I asked them to sing along. In the chorus, I turned the volume down, so I could listen to students, and I stimulated them to sing louder, we had a lot of fun, and it broke the ice). I know students are different and groups, even in the same level, differ a lot, but I think it's worth a try!*

Recall session post, May 15, 2014
Marcia's reply: May 21, 2014

In her reply to my comment, Mayra systematically analyses her procedures with the song and reflects about them. As a result of her analysis she acknowledges that she could have made the activity more meaningful and taken the opportunity to break the ice with her students. Her last comment reveals she is not devoting enough time to actually plan her classes.

*[  ] About the song, I think **I just decided to bring the song, they did the fill in the gap exercise, they listened and that's it***! But, you'r right, **I should've explored the song more** *and taken the opportunity to chat about the days of the week and things like that,* **I could know the sds better and get closer to them. I think I just didn't have the time to think over!**

<div align="right">Recall session post, May 15, 2014<br>Mayra's reply: May 25, 2014</div>

Data show that students' low engagement is reverberating in Mayra's behavior towards this group, i.e. Mayra herself is not motivated to work with this specific group, and although she shows concern about her students, she seems not motivated to plan classes or activities accordingly. Her previous experiences with not motivated students brought, and are bringing again, dissonances as regards the concept of motivation (her idealized and the real), in their turn, such dissonances bring about negative emotions. From a vygotskian stance, cognition and emotion influence each other and thus cannot be investigated in separate, as variables to be controlled. In the case of Mayra, her difficulties in dealing with this specific group are connected to her previous experiences with students of similar characteristics and thus to the concept of motivation. Vygotsky (1987) explains that this happens because learners perceive events in new contexts from the point-of-view of previous lived experiences, or as he calls it, *perezhivanie,* a cognitive and emotional bidirectional processing of former and new experiences. As Golombek and Doran (2014) put it, the way one experienced (sensed or felt) a previous experience reverberates in the way one experiences (senses or feels) an ongoing experience, and this perception subsequently influences how one perceives, or reinterprets, that former experience. This bidirectional processing regenerates with each new experience. At this juncture, mediation can be used to help individuals to reinterpret the ongoing event and change individuals' *perezhivanie*.

The following excerpt shows that the problem of proceduralization persisted, so in my reply to her narrative I recalibrated the mediation (Lantolf &Thorne, 2006) and tried to be more explicit in the mediation.

*I had started the unit in the previous class so **I tried to act the dialogue bringing some realia to class and acting both roles: customer and salesperson. The realia was great**, but I believe the*

*acting was confusing as I was two people at the same time.* I don't like the content of this class... I do not agree that stds have to perceive so early in their learning process the differences between one/ones this/that these/those... **It's very grammatical and takes most of the time.** There were only four students present and I had it done anyway… **I presented the content with realia and role play, they did exercises and that was it.**

Weekly journal post, May 25, 2014
Mayra's entry: May 25, 2014

*It's great to bring realia, especially because the theme of the class is shopping.* **But why did you play the both roles in the role play? Weren't there 4 students in class?** *It's a good number of students and I don't see any problem in doing the activity.[   ]***Why don't you adapt the activities in the book which are more grammar focused?** *I know the book presents grammar focus based on forms (not on form), what may turn things more confusing,* **but try to prioritize the meaning, this unit presents nice opportunities communicative/interactive activities.**
**You can present forms in a contextualized way, one by one, in different classes, even so, don't expect students to internalize all forms. Surely, they will need (and will have) more opportunities in future units/levels to see these forms again.**

Weekly journal post, May 25, 2014
Marcia's reply: May 26, 2014

I also showed her how I worked with this unit, emphasizing the importance of contextualization

and providing multiple opportunities for students use the forms.

**Mayra, let me show you how I decided to work this unit with my students. I tried to present the grammar implicitly first, and only later, I presented the grammar forms in a contextualized way. It was still difficult for students, but I tried to emphasize the meaning not the forms. Even though, I don't expect students will internalize them in a few classes. As I said before, they will need several opportunities to internalize these concepts.**
*I used realia with my students to practice the customer/seller dialogue as well. I know the demonstratives are confusing (I had previous bad experiences too), so I decided to present the notion of demonstratives since the very first class of this unit, so that they have more opportunities to understand them:*
*1- first class: I presented slides with pictures of products and their prices( singular and plural) with the question "How much is this/that flash drive" /how much are these/those flash drives?* **Although, at this point, the focus was not grammar, it was the price itself** (*it was a game, students, in three teams had to guess the price, so they decided the price and the team that got closer, won*) **I took the opportunity to start presenting the notion (this/these- that/those), Since it was not the focus, students did not get anxious about it.** *In the slides, I placed the pics on the left or on the right, so according to my own positioning (near or far from the slides, students helped me to answer this/that -these /those)*
*2- 2nd class- I played the dialogue in two parts: first I posed the object (brown sunglasses/green sunglasses - black pencil/ blue pencil, etc) with price tags on my table. So, students, in pairs, would practice only that/those. Afterwards, they role played with the same objects, but this time the objects were on their desks (students passed them around). (I did not use the pictures in the dialogue presented in the book, because I found them confusing, I replaced them by the realia)*

*This way was easier for them, they had to choose only between singular or plural (this/these) and not far or close, since it was already established for them before they started the dialogue.*
*3rd class- I started the class with the same role play, but now each pair received a paper in which two pictures of similar objects ,one was represented far (on the top of the page)and with a hand far from it) and the other represented close (on the bottom of the page and with a hand touching it). I believe these three steps helped students to figure out the concepts in a gradual way. (of course some students had difficulties, but I had fewer problems than in the previous semesters when most students got really confused). ;)*

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Weekly journal post, May 25, 2014
Marcia's reply: May 26, 2014

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Her reply shows that her understanding about motivation (declared on the first blog post) does not reflect her practices. Her decisions are based on what she believes is going to "please" students even though these decisions interfere in the proceduralization of activities or are at odds with what she thinks would work better for students.

*Yeah, but since only 4 students showed up I decided not to do the role play the way I had planned and I played both roles,* **so that I had more time to the other activities [    ]** *it's* **still difficult for me not to follow the book exercises and not to focus on grammar (although I don't agree with the way they organized it) I'm afraid sds think I'm neglecting and their motivation decreases. But  I liked the way you organized the activity ,it surely makes sense, I can see you tried to make them  connect the grammar point to a communicative activity, and not only explain on the board**.

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Weekly journal post, May 25, 2014
Mayra's reply: June 2, 2014

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However, it also seems that the recalibrated mediation above is having some impact on her understanding.  She reflected about the way I tried to do the activity, working with the grammar point within a communicative activity. The importance of recalibrating the mediation,-showing how things worked or did not work for me in my group more explicitly- relies on the fact that it has potential to establish a  level of intersubjectivity (Cerutti-Rizzati & Dellagnelo, 2016)  between us as peer teachers. This interpsychological relationship established during mediation can have an echo in her practice and become part of her intrasubjectivity.

Since Mayra was asking for suggestions of games/engaging activities, I suggested some examples.

*About engaging activities I'd suggest "speed dating" activity (there's a variation of it known as inner circle-outer circle, but it's impossible to apply in the physical space we have). I guess you saw it when you watched my class for Adriana's discipline. Anyway I'll give one example:*
*"Speed dating" activity:*
*aim: to practice questions/answers with a variety of students in an open pair feature.*
*Procedures:*
*1- Elicit from students how to ask in English the favorite kind of music/movie/sport/tv program, and their favorite singer/athlete/actor. Write on board; "What kind of MUSIC do you like?" Who's your favorite singer/athlete/ actor/tv presenter, etc. Ask them to think about their answers/ask some students just to check if they understood.*
*1- Ask students to stand up and organize themselves in two lines facing each other, so that each student is in front of another. (If there's odd number of students, the teacher also participates).*
*2- One line is gonna ask questions, whereas the other just answers. The line facing the board asks, so that they can see the questions written on the board. The line facing the wall, answers and moves. Allow them one minute to talk to the person in front of them, and then shout "move", so the "answering line" gives a step to the right and talks to another student. (The last student in the "answering line" comes to talk to the other end of the line, let's say, comes to talk to the first student in the "question line". When they've talked to everybody, invert the lines, so the students who were asking, now answer, and vice-versa.*
***Positive aspects: Students have the opportunity to repeat the question many times, but within a communicative activity (the activity is not a mere repetition of questions, since they really don't know each other). Students feel safer because they're not exposed speaking in front of everybody. Another advantage is that they get better acquainted to each other, and it helps in lowering their anxiety.***
*If you want to have an outcome for this activity, you can ask students to write/talk about one student they remember: e.g. "Jane Doe's favorite kind of _____is_____,and her favorite _____is_____.*
*I'm gonna write more ideas for games in the next "Tips" post, ok! (it's already open)*

Tips for Classroom Activities Post June 2, 2014
Marcia's entry: June 2, 2014


**I saw you doing this one and I think it's great! thanks!**

Tips for Classroom Activities Post June 2, 2014
Mayra's reply: June 9, 2014


In the following *Tips for Classroom Activities post*, I suggested another example of interactive activity. Since she was still complaining about her students' lack of self-study, engagement and interest in class, I thought this simple activity would help as a warm up for the class. In the first part of my mediation I described the activity procedures in detail and in the second part, after Mayra's reply, I tried to justify its use pointing the positive aspects.

*Mayra, there are many activities/games that can be adapted to any topic. They are like "curingas".* ***I'll start with "Hot Potato" because it's good to review, to revisit information:***

*1-Hot potato*
*Hot potato is very simple, you might know it.*
*aim: to practice questions/answers.*
*material: one (or two )ball(s). A bag with strips with questions you want to review.*
*level: any*
*procedures: Pass an object around (a small ball, for example, and turn backwards to students. Start counting while they pass the ball randomly. When you shout "stop" the student with the "hot potato", takes a question from a bag and answers.*
*variation: pass two balls with different colors. When you shout "stop", the two students with the balls ask and answer the question (from bag). Pre-establish which color "asks" and which color "answers".*
*hope it helps!!!!*

<div align="right">Tips for Classroom Activities Post June 7, 2014<br>Marcia's entry: June 9, 2014</div>

**you're right, this one I knew already. but thanks anyway!**

<div align="right">Tips for Classroom Activities Post June 7, 2014<br>Mayra's reply: June 9, 2014</div>

*Although* **it's a mechanical exercise (the questions are ready and there's no "real" need for communication nor outcome in the interaction)**, *there are* **two major positive aspects to use it in low levels: first, it helps automatize basic questions/answers**, *second, since the questions are ready,* **it lowers students' anxiety** *(at least to ask the questions) that some students might feel to speak in front of everybody. As they get more confident, or in the following levels, you may simply indicate the questions to be formulated (e.g ask your classmate's name/ ask you classmate's age, etc). I also like to do this activity in small groups (maximum 4). I place a bag with questions for each group and they take turns to ask each other.*

<div align="right">Tips for Classroom Activities Post June 9, 2014<br>Marcia's reply: June 9, 2014</div>

Mayra's reply showed that mediation in this specific event was attuned to her ZPD. She is not only seeing the importance of reflecting about the activities proposed, but also was able to see it in practice.

**I never thought about this activity from this perspective. I used the variation (with the balls) and it was really good to review. Next time I think I can try asking them to make up the question as well. I'll let you know.**

<div align="right">Tips for Classroom Activities Post June 9, 2014<br>Mayra's reply: June 12, 2014</div>

*I just think that even when the activity is simple or well known as is "hot potato", it is worth reflecting about the positive outcomes this activity can bring and also on ways to adapt them to your students level/characteristics.*

Tips for Classroom Activities Post June 9, 2014
Marcia's reply: June 12, 2014

In the following excerpt, Mayra asks for games or activities to work with the topic family. My meditational moves consisted in giving suggestions of activities that had worked well in my group that semester, and in previous ones. The first suggestion is a contextualized activity (not a game), to introduce the topic. Then I suggest some games (vocabulary and grammar).

*Hi guys!! I start unit 5 today which topic is family! Would you have any game or nice activity on this topic to share with me?*
*Cheers!!!!*

Tips for classroom activities post, June 2, 2014
Mayra's entry: June 9, 2014

*Hi Mayra! I usually start the topic with my own family tree. I write it on the board and write the names of the people only. Next to the board, I stick "Post its" with the family members vocab. I then circle my name on the tree and ask them how people are related to me. (instead of using your own family, you can do the same with famous families from tv, like The Flintstones, Simpsons, etc).*
*Here are some suggestions of simple games. **Games 1 and 2 are vocabulary games (although they do not have an elaborate communicative purpose (they're not tasks), I believe it is another opportunity for students to revisit the vocabulary (the more they revisit something, more chances to retain in the memory). They are good to set their mood high (as you would say!) as warm ups/wrap ups for the class, and they don't last more than 5 minutes:***

*1- memory game about family members: I stick two sets of small square papers on the board with the words facing down, In one side of the board I put the "male" ones, on the other side, the "female". Students in two teams, take turns to find the pairs. (to make it less mechanical, when they take the first post it, I ask them to say the  pair word, before trying to find it.*
*2- Relay race: students in teams, write on the board (or on a piece of paper) as many family members as they can think of. Give them one minute to write down.(if you do it on the board, one group can do with "males" and the other with "females", this way, you avoid them to copy from each other.*

*Game 3 is a vocabulary and grammar game (**students usually like this game because the grammar – possessive ('s) and vocabulary - are in the backdrop, for students, the focus, the challenge is to know the famous people's relationship:***
***3- Celebrity Quiz:** I write famous pairs of relatives on pieces of paper. Students, divided into teams, take a paper from a bag and say the kind of relationship they have, e.g "Cleo Pires and Gloria Pires" students can say: "Cleo is Gloria's daughter/ Gloria Pires is Cleo's mother".*

Tips for classroom activities post, June 2, 2014
Marcia's reply: June 10, 2014

Besides the problem of proceduralizing the activities to turn them more meaningful and interesting, another difficulty detected was in selecting the more goal directed ones. During class observations, I could notice that Mayra skipped some potentially engaging activities, especially the ones suggested by the book, based on what she believed would motivate students or not, without reflecting about the characteristics of the activity. This behavior can be problematic, since many times, students miss great engaging and learning opportunities.

One example was during a class in which the topic was family. The student book brought one activity in which students were supposed to draw their family trees and afterwards they would go around the class asking and answering questions about their family members. Mayra read the activity rubrics to students and said "you don't want to do that, do you? You look tired!" students looked at each other and nobody actually answered. She then moved on reviewing family vocabulary in an automatic and decontextualized way - writing them on the board. I was puzzled with her decision for two reasons: first because before that class she had asked for suggestions of engaging activities to use in this class, and second, because I saw in that activity, and not in the activity she chose to do instead (writing the vocabulary on the board), a great chance for students to engage in real conversation, trying out what they had already learned, and getting to know each other's families better. On the same day, I asked her why she decided not to do the activity.

*Why did you decide not to do the "Family tree" activity?*

Recall Session Post, June 15, 2014

Márcia's entry June 15, 2014

In posing only that question, without arguing about the positive aspects of that activity, I wanted Mayra to systematically analyze that event in class, eliciting her point-of-view about the activity itself and about the students. Afterwards, I would try to show the positive outcomes that could result from this kind of activity. As she did not reply via blog I asked her that question personally, and as we had this conversation while she was commuting from a class to another within a ten-minute break, I asked

her to enter the blog and see the comments I would post afterwards. I insisted in this point because I thought it is a core problem in her practice, and this was the moment to recalibrate mediation. During our quick talk in the hall, she said she skipped the activity because she was behind schedule and felt students were not motivated to participate and talk about their own families. I found here the perfect moment to interfere. The reply I posted afterwards was based on her answer. I reminded her about her first entry in the blog at the beginning of the semester when she talked about motivation.

> *Mayra, do you remember your very first entry in the blog? In the Starting Up post? When* **you said that in order to try to "motivate" students teachers should make students see that they learn English for life, not for tests or grades? That we use language to socialize, make bonds with people and that we, as teachers, should bring students' knowledge and background to empower them?** *I think that activities like the ones* **you skipped (because of time constraints or based on your belief guesses about what can motivate (or not) student) are exactly like that! I** *think it is our responsibility as teachers, to plan goal oriented activities, activities that are aimed at developing communicative skills in a contextualized way. That's our duty. Students looked tired and this activity could have made them feel at ease! They could have engaged students, they could have known know each other better, they would be using language for real communication!* **Do you think students profited more from the activity you replaced? (Writing a family related vocab list on the board)?** *I know each group is different, lower levels can be even more challenging, I remember when you taught in my group at extracurricular last semester (level 5), students loved the activities you proposed Mayra, you're a great teacher! so try not to lose your essence,* **just teach what you preach!**

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Recall Session Post, June 19, 2014
Márcia's entry June 19, 2014

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In her reply she admits she is not devoting enough time for reflection, and also points out that, for her face-to-face mediation would be more profitable:

> *It's amazing how we just* **do things automatically***! Now that you pointed this out I'm realizing* **I'm teaching without reflecting and doing things that go against my beliefs! I really need a peer to tell me things that go beyond my perception but also I wish I could have more face-to-face recall sessions** *(I told you that, didn't I?). I'm having a hard time at home and having problems with Internet as well. ;)*

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Recall Session Post, June 19, 2014
Mayra's entry June 20, 2014

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What I consider crucial in the previous meditational moves is not providing a list of suggestions for games and engaging activities, but the reflection about each activity. Again, it was a strategy to try to establish intersubjectivity between us, or to get tuned to one's attunement (Wertsch, 1984). In other

words, using something that for her was important- games, I tried to make her reflect about it. As I noticed Mayra was having problems in proceduralizing the activities, more than providing ideas (sites and suggestions of books with great ideas abound on Internet), I intended to stimulate the exercise of reflection about each activity: nature, goal, positive and negative aspects, and mainly, how to put them in practice.

More than applying these kinds of activities to try to "get" or "please" students, these activities should be seen as tools for learning, as means to have students work in groups/ pairs, exchange ideas, moving away from the teacher-student interactions. Motivation then, can (or not) arise from the feeling of developing their language skills through the engagement in collaborative activities.

Although Mayra had not been answering my posts, I kept observing classes and underscoring the importance of planning games and engaging activities more cautiously, i.e. to systematize the rules, goals and predict some possible problems that might occur and adapt the activity/game, e.g. few students in class, scoring points, dividing the groups, etc. I kept posting my impressions about how she started to systematize and connect the activities to the class topics, and the students' positive reactions towards the activities. I also suggested some ways to maximize the communicative and learning potential of those activities and some suggestions to make these very same activities and games more challenging as students get more proficient. The example that follows is about "Find someone who", a very well-known activity I had suggested her to use on the blog. She adapted the activity to the class topic. In this activity students had to write three columns, one with the heading "name", one with the activity and another one with "yes/no". They also had to choose two weekend activities and write one in each line (e.g. go to the movies/ travel/ watch TV). Students went around the classroom asking each other about both activities, writing yes or no and the peers' name. By the end they reported to the whole group how many people had done the activities.

> It was very nice to see how things went well and **students engaged to do the activity** asking each other about the past weekend activities. **You gave short and precise procedures as you showed them on the board!** It was easy for students to understand! During the activity, as I observed, they really tried their best and scaffolded each other to ask/answer the question, check

*vocabulary and even to ask additional questions before recurring to your help. By the way, this is the point I want to comment, **you can push students a little bit harder now, next time you use this activity you can add (or ask students suggestions to add) follow up questions**, I mean, instead of only asking " did you go to the movies on Saturday?" , writing the classmate's name and that's all,  when a student says "yes" students can ask follow-up  information questions (who did you go with,when did you go, what time,etc).Another suggestion is **to have a close up for this activity with the information collected from their peers** , students can talk or write about one classmate.*

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Recall Session Post, June 19, 2014

Márcia's entry June 19, 2014

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As data show, Mayra's ideal of extra activities are fun games that would necessarily bring about students' motivation. For her, these fun games represent the main key for solving the problem of students' motivation. Thinking this way, she ended up looking for striking games and forgetting that some simple but goal-oriented activities, including the ones suggested in the book, can make the students feel they are really using the language they want to learn. Also, Mayra was forgetting to reflect about the rationale behind the activities. An activity can be fun, but it is only worth applying in a classroom context if it has clear purposes and if it is goal oriented. Moreover, students can show satisfaction engaging in other kinds of activities, not necessarily games, activities that entail the use of language for communicative purposes. That is the point Mayra had to focus: designing activities that had a communicative purpose and not trying to motivate students at any cost. As Brown (1994) notes "if the learners in your classroom are given an opportunity to "do" language for their own personal reasons of achieving competence and autonomy, surely those learners will have a better chance of success than if they become dependent on external rewards for their motivation". Motivation could emerge or not as a result from this feeling of accomplishing a goal, but this is not something that teachers have total control of or are responsible for. Teachers are responsible for planning classes and activities accordingly, in this sense, having students' motivation as the primary goal seems to be anti-productive or even utopic.

 Looking back at my mediation, I think I should have redirected her focus more emphatically. Although my intention in suggesting engaging activities and games was to promote reflection about

their goals and procedures, it seems that I emphasized her ideal of motivation, that is, that promoting students' intrinsic motivation would be a guaranteed and attainable goal, and the "cure- for-all remedy".

I now move to negotiation of meaning, another aspect that has caught my attention in reference to Mayra's pedagogical practice.

4.2.1.2 Negotiation of meaning

In trying to motivate students, many times Mayra ended up facilitating things for them and neglected negotiation of meaning. This is problematic since it might interfere in their development as regards the foreign language, as this is a moment in which students can profit from the meanings exchanged. In this regard, a huge stockpile of research has identified evidence that validates the hypothesis that oral communication is an important tool for language development because it may bring up negotiation of meaning (e.g., Gass & Mackey, 2007). Long (1985, 1996) claims that the comprehensible input engendered in interactional calibrations in negotiation of meaning is crucial to second language acquisition. For Long (1996), corrective feedback fostered by negotiation of meaning offers opportunities for language learners to direct their attention to specific linguistic forms and, eventually, lead to language learning.

Rather than fostering learning, such facilitative movements as the ones adopted by Mayra, can curb students' learning, as they operate within students' comfort zone, i.e., worked under the bottom limit of students' ZPD.

The absence of corrective feedback in class was a recurrent facilitative teaching feature of Mayra's class to keep students motivated and comfortable, and to avoid embarrassment. My first mediational move was to address the issue pointing to a specific class moment in which students were reading (not actually producing).

*While students were reading their texts about their classmates' for the others to guess, I noticed that you did not correct their mistakes. In which moments and how do you think the teacher should correct students?*

Recall session Post, May 4, 2014

After her reply, as she was not very clear in her answer to my questions, I exemplified some ways to correct students implicitly (topic that we were dealing with in the Teachers' Development Program we were working as tutors).

> *I try not to correct stds[students] while they are producing **to avoid embrarassment and frustration.** Some **stds are very resiste[a]nt** to speak and if they are corrected while speaking the communication might break down and **stds won't feel con[m]fortable to speak in a next opportunity.** I believe **it's important to correct their pronuciation but not ALL the time,** I always try to convince them that it's ok to have an accent as long as it does not prevent people from understanding what you say.*

Recall session Post, May 4, 2014
Mayra's reply: May 7, 2014

> *Regarding correcting students, I agree that correcting may cause embarrassment, but it depends on the way it's done and on the moment (as you mentioned above). I don't mean you have to ask them to repeat a hundred times as in behaviorist audio-lingual classes. **There are implicit ways to correct students (e.g confirmation checks, repetitions, recasts, clarification requests, and even facial expressions that express confusion), are good strategies to avoid embarrassment**. I do agree with you when you say that some students are resistant, I feel the same with my students, but in level 1, it's more than expected that they commit mistakes and if we never*
> *correct them these mistakes may solidify throughout the time. **In more advanced levels, when they're speaking freely, it's advisable not to cut their line of thought, however, in initial levels, since they are only able to formulate short sentences, recasts are a good way to correct, without putting the student on the spot. But I said that because I noticed that you chose not to correct them while they were reading their classmates' descriptions** for the others to guess who they were.*

*Recall session Post, May 4, 2014*
*Marcia's reply: May 8, 2014*

Another example of this facilitative tendency was the use of translation instead of negotiation of meaning in some specific situations in which negotiation would be a good opportunity for expanding the top limits of students' ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978). For example, when applying a song activity during a class observation, she would translate the whole song with students instead of preparing activities that would enable students to find out the meaning. Moreover, translating songs systematically does not guarantee students actually learn the new vocabulary, since they will need multiple opportunities to use the new vocabulary to really internalize it – the passage from the interpersonal to the intrapersonal plane. Besides being time consuming and its results not necessarily positive, translation of songs is

something students can easily find, since there are many lyrics sites that provide translation of songs. The example that follows illustrates how, after a class observation, I tried to approach the translation issue in the blog. First, I posed some questions to elicit some theory grounded justifications from her and after receiving her reply, I made some comments. The idea was that she would confront the practice she was adopting to the theory she had been introduced to in her Letters Program in what regards translation and negotiation of meaning. I did that quite implicitly though. I did not say that translating a song in that context is not beneficial for students; instead, I asked her questions that I thought would make her externalize that knowledge for herself and then be able to recognize the song translation as inefficient for the purposes of teaching-learning communicative skills.

> *The song you chose is perfect for level I and for that specific lesson. Do you think it's important to connect the song with the topic they're studying? why? why not?*
> *I noticed that you also asked students to translate the whole song. What are the positive/negative aspects of translating in beginning levels?*
>
> <div align="right">Recall session post, May 04, 2014<br>Márcia's entry: May 04, 2014</div>

> ***I think it's important to connect the song with the topic they're studying, absolutely!!*** *However it's not always possible to find the perfect song... Sometimes I use songs that are not connected with the lesson topic but **it always has a pedagogical purpose,** even if just **teaching vocabulary**. Sometimes I give them songs after **a very tiring class just to make them relax**.*
> *I ask stds to translate just to clarify meaning. Anyway if I don't ask them, they will ask me! **Stds get demotivated and frustrated if they don't understand the songs.** The benefits are **they learn vocabulary in a pleasant way and** the disadvantage is that they might **become addicted to translating everything all the time :(***
>
> <div align="right">Recall session post, May 04, 2014<br>Mayra's reply: May 7, 2014.</div>

As she systematically analyses her usual procedures to work with songs, she makes explicit her concern with students' reaction to the activity proposed. The words "relax", "clarify", "demotivated", "frustrated", "pleasant" suggest a desire to please students and her concern to fulfill their immediate need - get the song translation - even though it may entail students' addiction to translation. In my comments to her reply, I tried to mediate reinforcing the idea of dependence on translation that Mayra

had already mentioned, adding to it the risk of creating resistance to negotiation of meaning. I also

suggested an alternative way to check students' comprehension.

> *.... About the song, it was a perfect close up for the class,* ***I only don't think it is necessary to ask students to translate (they can see the lyrics/translations on internet if they wish), or you can check their understanding asking questions, for example, or at least, wait for them to ask you one word or another, and if it's not possible to negotiate if the word is too abstract, then you translate.*** *Another point is that systematic translations in class (which is not your case), may* ***create a dependence on translation (as you also mentioned), and they become more resistant to negotiation of meaning.***

Another point that I tried to re-address was her need to motivate students, stating that the process

of negotiation of meaning is hard for them but important to foster comprehension in the foreign

language.

> ***We have to push students and make them understand that this initial frustration is for their benefit, to create an automaticity in understanding a language (without translating first), and this process is slow and hard at first, but necessary. Students feel motivated when they see they are able to understand things, but of course, you have to push them until their limits and take care not to give them neither too little nor too much. If the activities are too easy, why will they make an effort? what will they strive for?***
>
> Recall session post, May 04, 2014
> Marcia's reply: May 8, 2014

Another aspect regarding translation noticed during class observation which could also bring

down students' potentiality to learn within the ZPD is the belief that students only understand grammar

aspects in the foreign language if instruction is done exclusively in the mother tongue. I noticed Mayra

used to switch the language to approach grammar, leaving communication strategies completely aside.

The mediation followed similar moves of the previous example, that is, first I posed questions, so that

she could systematically analyze her procedures and elaborate on the reasons for choosing translation

instead of communication strategies, and after her reply I made more explicit comments.

> *Are there moments in the class that you believe Portuguese is a must in Level 1?*
>
> Recall session post, May 10, 2014
> Marcia's entry: May 10, 2014

> ***I believe*** *when we have* ***to deal with grammar*** *it is better to* ***do it in Portuguese*** *to* ***avoid misunderstandings*** *and avoid the risk to have students* ***demotivated or frustrated***.

Although Mayra based her answer on empirical observation, and did not extend her justifications for using only the mother tongue in the grammar focus, one important aspect to point out is that she showed to be aware she switched the code during these moments, given that I did not mention it in the question. This signals that the issue of speaking Portuguese in a foreign language class is already in her zone of proximal development. It is not yet a matter she has internalized and thus masters. As can be noticed in her post, what guides her decision into using Portuguese is not an understanding or a reasoning related to this use, but rather to (de)motivation.

Since I had approached her facilitative teaching tendency through translation in a more implicit way on the previous week, this time I tried to approach this aspect more explicitly, that is, I decided to recalibrate (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006) the mediation as a more focused endeavor to create a new zone of development.

> ***As I also mentioned in the comment above to Andrey, try not to facilitate too much for them. I don't mean the mother tongue must be execrated from the class***. ***As I wrote to Andrey,*** *the well-known sandwich technique –English-Portuguese-English can be a good strategy not to break the "English environment" when the sentence or word is too abstract.*

Also, as an attempt to create a sense of community among the two participants and I, in my reply to Mayra I referred twice to my reply to Andrey to point out that this is a common concern among foreign language teachers[8]. Next, I give some simple suggestions to negotiate meaning in the grammar focus. I also tried to give a theory grounded reason for using the mother tongue as a mediational tool rather than using it to simply provide translations.

> *I just **suggest avoiding it when possible, or use Portuguese to help students get the meaning but not the translation itself.** For example, to explain "third person" you can ask them: "What is the first person in Portuguese?" students/teacher say "Eu"- teacher asks: "and in English",*

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[8] Eun-Ju Kim (2011), in Johnson & Golombek (2011), chapter 14, reports the difficulties Korean teachers have, especially regarding teaching grammar in the target language, in trying to adapt to new curricular norms which required teachers to teach English through English.

*students/teacher say: "I", and so on until the third person. **This way Portuguese is not used as a simple translation device but as a real mediational tool to get the meaning of "third person".** Another even more simple suggestion is to show them on the board I- first (1ˢᵗ), you- second (2ⁿᵈ), and he/she/it –third (3ʳᵈ). **When it comes to cognates**, you don't need to translate, as in the example of "simple present" since the words are similar to Portuguese.*

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Recall Session post, May 10, 2014
Marcia's reply: May 20, 2014

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Having in mind the vygotskian postulate that emotions are mediators of cognition and that "one way to meet teachers in their ZPD is to cultivate supportive and open relationships as a way of creating trust" (Childs, 2011;p.149), I also provided an example from my own experience to create a friendly and informal atmosphere between us.

***By the way, once I was trying to negotiate meaning about ordinal numbers** in an Intro group, and I drew a podium on the board and three cars, Rubens Barrichello's car, Schumacher's car and my car (a Gol). I asked them: "who's the first?" I pointed to the highest position in the podium, and students promptly answered "Schumacher!" and so on. Not surprisingly, Rubinho was the third on the podium!!!*

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Recall Session post, May 10, 2014
Marcia's reply: May 20, 2014

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I finished my reply emphasizing the importance of providing opportunities to use the target language at any moment of the class:

*I believe these techniques are important to be used **not only during the "communicative part" of the class, the focus on grammar points can be also a good opportunity for fostering students' cognition in the foreign language, thus** the more opportunities students have to deal with the language interpersonally (between teacher and students or among students), the better are their chances to move beyond the structural/form level. (as Lantolf & Thorne (2008) argue "… social activity is the process through which human cognition is formed." (p. 878))*

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Recall Session post, May 10, 2014
Marcia's reply: May 20, 2014

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As the issue target language use in class had been raised in the previous blog entries, Mayra externalized her concern with the students' little oral production.

*   ***How to have students speak in such low levels? Please enlighten me!!!***

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Tips for Classroom Activities Post May 13, 2014
Mayra's entry: May 20, 2014

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*Mayra! Concerning English in class, I always start the semester with those "Students' requests". I hang several "survival" sentences next to the board and ask them to use them.* **I believe it's important to create a habit and an English environment /mood in class.** *(I can copy them for you,if you want).* **It's nice to see students looking for the question they want, their effort to speak in English, by the end of the semester, they don't resort to them anymore. It seems to be simple for us, but for them is a lot, and as I said before it's important to create the habit.** *Also, at the beginning or at the end of each class, you can have "conversation stations". Divide students into groups of four and for each group give a set of strips of paper with different questions/topics (put them in a plastic cup or bag). Allow 3 minutes for each group to discuss/answer the questions. When time is up, ask students to pass their cups/bags to the group on their right. Do this until all groups have discussed /answered all the questions/topics.*
*Putting students into conversation stations offers some advantages:* **they are not on the spot), since they are in small groups and all groups are speaking at the same time (it may help to break the ice). Everybody has the opportunity to speak, and they have the possibility to revisit topics seen in class.**

<div align="right">Tips for Classroom Activities Post May 13, 2014<br>Marcia's reply: May 20, 2014</div>

Given that Mayra's primary goal is to promote students' motivation, data show that the lack of negotiation of meaning (the use of translation and no corrective feedback) was for Mayra a strategy to facilitate things for students, to avoid frustration, demotivation and to make them feel comfortable in class. As it turns out, what for her would motivate students, ended up demotivating them. As previously discussed, students were not cognitively challenged to make sense of the language, as they were operating under the bottom limit of their ZPD. The core problem here was to calibrate her teaching to work within students' ZPD. To turn the challenge attainable, not too complex, so that students would not have resources to learn, nor too easy, so that students would not be pushed forward.

As the semester progressed she still relied on Portuguese to explain grammar, however, these explanations were shorter and more focused. In the classes I was present I did not see her try to use corrective feedback, and students did not make efforts to communicate in English. However, I observed that Mayra avoided whole song translations and planned more elaborated activities taking advantage of the visual aids of video clips to enhance students' general understanding. The fact that she used the video clips to negotiate meanings with students when dealing with songs as opposed to using translations appears to signal that the interactions we had resonated to Mayra. It seems that her belief that students felt motivated in understanding what songs say has been challenged by the understanding

that they can grasp meanings by answering questions made with the purpose of comprehending the language used in these songs.

Looking back at the findings in relation to the use of Portuguese in class and at the interactions undertaken between me and Mayra along the blogs, one can notice that the only aspect she indeed changed was the songs one. In my interpretation, this happened because, as I argued and reasoned about the dispensable role of translation of songs, I used her own filter, namely motivation, when I said that "*Students feel motivated when they see they are able to understand things*". This, apparently, was the dot that allowed the two of us to come into terms of intersubjectivity.

Apart from the two aspects so far raised and discussed, a third feature present in Mayra's class and raised in our interaction was control, which I now focus on.

### 4.2.1.3 Control of students' learning

As aforementioned, Mayra was deeply concerned with students' lack of interest and self-commitment, and externalized her feelings regarding their apathetic behavior.

> *..I left this class with a **feeling of frustration**... I tried to correct homework and realized that **they hadn't done it**...*
> *..This feeling of noticing **that students are not doing their part is devastating** and can harm the initial mood of the class...*

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Recall session post, May 10, 2014
Mayra's reply: May 20, 2014
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She felt responsible for their learning, and to revert this situation, instead of positioning herself as a guide, someone who offers the tools for them to appropriate, she wanted to control it: she repeated explanations of previous classes for students who were absent or late for class, for those who had not reviewed content at home, or for the ones who had not done the homework.

> *... Also, there were just a few students (they are not punctual) I had a feeling that due to the holiday **there was a need to review the content because they did not touch the material since last class**.*
> *... Well I guess although **the exercise part** of the class **was dreadful** it was **necessary to review** previous content.*

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Recall session post, May 10, 2014
Mayra's reply: May 20, 2014
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*.. I had **to teach them numbers** in order to continue with the content. I think you could tell me better what worked well and what didn't... would you?*

*...As I said I realized most stds [students] did not revisit the units so **I had to go back** to previous* **explanations. I'm afraid to keep on with the unit and students feel bad in class.**

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Recall session post, May 10, 2014
Mayra's reply: May 20, 2014

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Moreover, in order to cater for students basic deficiencies as regards the language, Mayra spent class time with mechanical and decontextualized activities, which could have been addressed in a more meaningful way. For example, she reviewed a long list of vocabulary items from a specific unit on the board without any specific goal, being that students already have it in the book. The first example is my reply for the previous excerpt:

*What are the positive/negative aspects of writing the numbers on the board? Was it something you had planned or it was something you decided to do during the course of the class?*

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Recall session post, May 10, 2014
Marcia's reply: May 20, 2014

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Even though Mayra did not answer, I wrote some comments.

*I asked you that question because I don't think it is productive to write all those numbers on the board. I truly believe ss [students] can memorize things better if they're contextualized. One suggestion is to give them items with price tags ,so they can ask each other about prices, and decide if they are expensive or not. This way they are practicing numbers but in a contextualized way. The teachers' manual brings a task in which pair of ss have items with price tags and others without price tags (what one student has ,the other doesn't) In pairs, ss ask each other and complete the price tags.*

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Recall session post, May 10, 2014
Marcia's reply: May 27, 2014

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*How do you analize the activity to review family members you did at the beginning of the class? (the one you asked students in Portuguese the correspondent vocab. items in English?).What are its positive/negative points? Was it an inflight decision?*

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Recall session post, June 4th
Marcia's entry, June 4th

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As Mayra did not answer, I wrote some observations.

*I asked you that cause I observed you spent too much class time reviewing /writing the vocab on the board (they already have it in the book),I'd suggest an activity in which ss[students] would have to retrieve these vocab. items in a more contextualized way (as I suggested with numbers, remember?). You could use family trees (with famous cartoon/ movie/TV families -Simpsons, Flinststones, Jetsons,A Grande Familia, Modern Family,etc) and review the vocab. I think it can be more meaningful for students and they have more chances to memorize the vocabulary. Do you remember that activity about family we (tutors) planned for Formação continuada de professores? We used The Modern Family presentation video and developed a task in which students had to watch the video and complete a family tree chart?It was great!!*

Recall session post, June 4th
Marcia's reply, June 11th

Another example is that she applied several mechanical exercises (e.g. transforming from past simple sentences into interrogative and negative) in class, when they could have been designed within a context and with a communicative purpose and/or assigned as homework:

*This week in unit 7 you applied several exercises in class to work with the simple past. (affirmative sentences to be transformed into interrogative and negative sentences). How could you make them more communicative? Was it [applying the exercises] something planned or an inflight decision based on your observation of students' needs?*

Recall session post, June 30th
Márcia's entry: June 30th

As she did not reply, I wrote some comments.

*I'd suggest (again) to do it in a more contextualized, communicative way. After I had watched your class I was wondering about the students' need (my students too) of more practice with past tense forms and I planned an activity for my group (to do at home), with dialogues using the book characters. I created the dialogues and included the ss [students] in the dialogue as if they had traveled to the USA to meet the book characters, and now they are telling a friend about this experience. Maybe you can take a look and tell me your opinion.*

Recall session post, June 30th
Márcia's reply: July 2nd

Concerning the control of students' learning, I noticed little change. The lists on the board (not brainstorming) - as she had done to review with numbers and family vocabulary - were replaced by the lists available in the textbook showed on the power point. It surely saved class time, but the core of my questioning was about the effectiveness of this kind of activity, given that the vocabulary items were shown as long lists to be memorized and not presented within a context -which could enable students to

use language for communication. The fact that Mayra had changed something in her practice (avoiding spending class time writing long lists on the board) but not the core of my questioning (the effectiveness of the activity) can be attributed to one of three possible reasons. One possibility is that the mediation provided was not able to meet Mayra in her ZPD, and, given that she did not reply to my posts, I did not have the opportunity to attune it. Another possibility is that Mayra could have relied on the apprenticeship of observation. Since she was not devoting much time to plan classes, her inflight decisions might have been based on past experiences as a foreign language student. A third possibility is that Mayra may have entrenched beliefs about the efficiency of presenting vocabulary items with no purpose or context. Her beliefs in this regard are not clear in her posts, though. However, this belief stands in sharp contrast with her general positioning concerning language learning.

> *Language is social, we use it to communicate to make bonds to feel that we belong and we learn English in order to be able to participate actively as citizens of the world. I try to use stds' [students'] knowledge and background to empower them.*

> Starting Up post April 22, 2014
> Mayra's entry: May 7, 2014

Another point worth mentioning was the use of technology in class. When I started watching her classes, Mayra did not use the resource available in every classroom computers called "presentation plus" which is an auxiliary tool to work with the course book. It facilitates displaying pictures, playing audios, dialogues, videos, and checking homework. It surely turns the class more vivid and dynamic and instigates teachers to use other resources which help to move away from traditional "chalk and talk" practices. Throughout the semester Mayra started to incorporate some of the basic resources into her practice (audios, pictures related to the conversation, pictures related to the vocabulary)

Although I had kept observing classes and asking questions on the blog to raise Mayra's reflection about these issues, after the 20th of June she did not enter the blog to answer the questions on the *Recall Session Post*, to write about narratives of her classes on the *Weekly Journal Post* nor even to

ask for suggestions of games/ engaging activities on the *Tips for Classroom Activities Post*. In my last post on the blog, I left her a final message about my impressions concerning the issues aforementioned.

> *Mayra,* **you position yourself as responsible for their motivation to learn. You are responsible for guiding them, for offering the tools** *(after cautiously selecting and designing them) however,* **whether they are going to appropriate these tools or not is their individual and unalienable choice.** *You cannot do their job. Your part in this orchestra is not only to play the conductor's role, but also to "tune the instruments" (through engaging and goal oriented activities) so that they can try to play them harmonically to achieve the desired results. However, they are the ones responsible for playing them- engaging in class activities, reviewing things from previous units, doing the homework, being on time, not missing classes - are* <u>their</u> *part of the process.* **Try not to take their behavior personally, and try not to do their part, otherwise you'll feel burdened, and, in trying to motivate them, you run the risk to demotivate yourself. Reposition yourself as a conductor and tuner of your orchestra, and let's listen to the music you get**…
>
> <div align="right">Recall session post, July 6, 2014<br>Marcia's entry: July 6, 2014</div>

The last post of the blog was *The last but not least Questionnaire*, and, as she did not answer, I decided to send it to her by e-mail.

When asked if she had noticed any aspects or changes worth to be punctuating in her work with the students, she mentions the aspect that had permeated her teaching since the very beginning of the semester and guided my mediational moves – her relationship with students and her efforts to motivate them.

> *I believe it always* **changes! At first students do not feel very comfortable with us and with each other.** *With time* **they become more confident** *to speak and the* **relationship gets less formal** *and the* **atmosphere gets lighter! At first** *I thought* **it was difficult to please them** *(they were always tired due to the starting time 8:10pm, and seemed not to like the games / activities that I proposed)*
>
> <div align="right">The Last but not the Least Questionnaire, July 28, 2014<br>Mayra's reply via e-mail: October 24th</div>

Although her practice does not show robust changes yet, she reveals that mediation has at least promoted some reflections about her practice as well as has enabled her to see things beyond her perception. She also shows willingness to change and to continue receiving mediation.

> *Actually* **it was your feedback that made me change the way I saw them[ ]**
> *But with the time I saw (you showed me that!)* **it was not a problem with me** *or with the* **activities but with the implementation itself**. **I feel I'm starting to organize and connect the activities**

*better, so they can make more sense to students. This way I think I'd be less anxious about their participation. (I just need to find more time for planning...).*
*I'd like to have you watching my classes next semester, I feel I still need someone to point things that are beyond my perception.*

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The Last but not the Least Questionnaire, July 28, 2014
Mayra's reply via e-mail: October 24th

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When she points to her need to "please" students (***At first I*** *thought* ***it was difficult to please them [   ])***, it seems that she is still thinking on the surface level of motivation, that is, she is concerned with satisfying students immediate "wants" (e.g. I want someone to motivate me, I want to have fun, I want the translation, etc.), rather than working with their "needs" (e.g. I need goal oriented activities, I need to make efforts to understand the language, I need to do my part outside the classroom, etc.). Besides that, she continues to place games in the central position of her practices. She still feels that her central need is to learn more games and activities, instead of learning how to proceduralize them and understand the rationale behind them.

> *I* *think* ***I still need to learn more games*** *and* ***activities from level 1 that move away from the book.***

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The Last but not the Least Questionnaire, July 28, 2014
Mayra's reply via e-mail: October 24th

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There are three aspects in her brief comment above that indicate that her previous concerns are still present: first the aforementioned need for games and activities. Second, the need of games and activities specific for Level 1, which implies she still has difficulty in dealing with level 1 students through a more communicative based pedagogy. Third, the need of games and activities that move away from the book, rather than games or activities that complement or adapt the book activities to students' interests, needs and realities. Her comment unveils a restriction against the book activities in general, that has been constructed since earlier experiences as a teacher. Lying behind this comment seems to be a belief that teachers have to be creative and design activities and tasks themselves as opposed to using a coursebook. This might explain her own demotivation and her anxiety to use more games in class so that to show to herself and to her students that she is creative despite the fact that she

uses a coursebook. We can interpret this as a result of her readings/studies about the communicative approach, which, among other principles, postulates the importance of games. It happens though that this scientific concept is too abstract for her, resulting in empty verbalism. She wants games, she likes games, she knows games may be important for students, but she does not understand exactly why; she knows they motivate students, and motivation, as already discussed, is a must for her.

Games represent a helpful tool for learning, for integrating students and for breaking the ice, among other aspects. In the second/foreign language teaching literature, advocates presenting the innumerous benefits of games in language teaching/learning abound (see Ersoz, 2000; Hadfield,1999; Lee, 1979; Millis, 2005; Orlick, 2006; Rixon, 1981;  Uberman, 1998; Wright, Betteridge & Buckby ,2005). As afore mentioned, games became popular with the Communicative Approach in the 80s and are still largely used in language classrooms. Notwithstanding, teachers must be careful in selecting the games and other engaging activities, establishing clear and consistent challenges, objectives, procedures, and rules, otherwise, the intended outcomes may not be met and they may figure as mere fill-in activities and pastimes.

Besides that, although at the Extracurricular course there is a book to follow, teachers have freedom to use it as a guide. They can add, adapt, change and replace the activities according to the group's specificities. Because many times teachers lack this knowhow, the book activities become meaningless to students and an obligation to be fulfilled for the teachers, instead of a source to be adapted.

> *Following the book was a no no, and I had to learn to be creative and to respond to students needs and expectations.*
> Reaction paper- Ensino de Língua Inglesa: Práticas de Sala de Aula, 2013

I also asked Mayra her opinion about mediation and teaching practices. She acknowledges the importance of having a mediated reflection.

> *I believe that it is **only by reflection that we can understand our practices** and work on **change and development**. I also believe that **this reflection needs to be mediated** as we don't **have total awareness of what is going on in our classes**. **Feedback is paramount to development.***
> The Last but not the Least Post, July 28, 2014

The observation that the  mediation did not suffice to help Mayra have robust changes in her practice and thus change her conceptualization of motivation- corroborates what Mayra had affirmed above given that it did not trigger discussion and reflection. With some exceptions, Mayra entered the blog mostly to answer to the initial part of the mediation, but she did not reply to most of the feedbacks provided afterwards. Although Mayra was open to mediation and believes that its combination with reflection can lead to concept development, she expected me to tell her what to do, what was right and wrong, without asking questions intended to foster reflection first. She had signalized that need in her replies in the blog:

> I certainly **need a peer to tell me things** that go beyond my perception :(
>
> Weekly journal Post, May 20, 2014
> Mayra's entry: May 20, 2014

> I think **you could tell me better what worked well and what didn't... would you?**
>
> Recall session Post, May 10, 2014
> Mayra's reply: May 20, 2014

If we want to develop reflective teaching it is paramount to initiate the mediational process eliciting the teachers' point-of-view concerning class events. This way, teachers can revisit their practices and justify their choices. Moreover, through the narratives that emerge from these questionings we start to unveil the reasoning that underpins their pedagogical choices. I truly believe that mediation involves the engagement of both parts in a movement aimed at understanding the motives behind teachers' actions and reactions in a determined teaching context. The following passage in which Johnson (1999) describes one of her supervising sessions with a teacher instantiates the importance of exploring teachers' reasoning.

> Through our conversation, we catch glimpses of her reasoning - how she constructs an understanding of and an explanation for a particular lesson based on what she knows about herself, her students, and the instructional context in which she teaches. Exploring her reasoning in this way is essential if I, as her supervisor, am to truly understand her teaching, since I cannot presume to know why she teaches the way she does unless I understand the reasoning that undergirds her classroom practice. (Johnson, 1999, p.2)

In this vein, effective mediation cannot be restricted to attending teachers' lessons and coming to conclusions. This way, we would be falling in the shortcomings of the apprenticeship of observation: drawing conclusions based on only one part of the whole, the part that is open to everyone's eyes, and without understanding the complex ways through which her/his reasoning has been constructed. As Johnson (1999) puts it "exploring and expanding teachers' reasoning through reflection and inquiry into why teachers teach as they do is central to the long-term developmental process of learning to teach and understanding the complex nature of teaching" (p.1). In order to change external features (teacher's practices), there is the need of modifying the internal ones (teacher's ways of thinking) otherwise any effort would function as a palliative measure that would certainly not last long. It would be as if we were forming a pseudoconcept as opposed to a concept; with time it would fade away because as one tests a pseudoconcept and realizes that some premises do not confirm, one ends up putting that aside.

As the final question, I asked Mayra about her view of the experience as a participant in this study, more specifically concerning the mediation via blog. In her reply, she explains her reasons for the little participation.

> *I have been through many changes through the semester (houses inclusive) and they affected my mood and my time. **I was without internet at home for the most of the semester… I wish we had more face-to-face feedback sessions**. I have a terrible memory and **having to write in a blog afterwards made my life more difficult.***
>
> <div align="right">The last but not the least post July 28, 2014<br>Mayra's reply via e-mail: October 24th</div>

The difficulties pointed by Mayra resulted in little participation, cumulative replies (replies on the same day for different classes), and absence of replies to feedbacks - which harmed the establishment of a consistent mediational process. Another aspect pointed by her is her need for face-to-face mediation. For her it would be more practical and faster, however, my research aimed at investigating the potential of written narratives as mediational means and their power to ignite cognitive processes, for this reason I wanted to collect written narrative data. The written mode was important because when one writes, one has to elaborate more than in oral language, and this elaboration is already a mediational process that one engages in (Johnson and Golombek, 2011).

Looking back at the data, especially to the mediation via blog, I see that I should have been more systematic as regards her concept of motivation. Instead of only working with the practices resulting from her misconceptualization, I should have been clearer as regards the need of redirecting her efforts to motivate students at any cost, to planning more goal oriented activities. Also, I should have challenged her belief that classes must be fun and that students would be more motivated if they did not face challenges. Even so, for me as a researcher, this case study was undeniably a great opportunity to understand how her reasoning has been constructed and how it is mirrored in her practice.

4.3 SUMMARY ON FINDINGS

Mayra is a 7- year- experience EFL teacher. By the time data were collected, she graduated in the undergraduate Letters Program of English and entered the graduate program to pursue an MA in Linguistic Studies. Her research interest lies on teacher education and is grounded on sociocultural studies. When recollecting her language learning experiences, she establishes a gradual progression in terms of efficiency among those experiences - learning English as a foreign language at a regular school, at a language institute, and as a second language in an English speaking country. Her professional curriculum as a language teacher is basically formed by experiences in private language institutes in Florianopolis (SC) and in Rio Grande do Sul (RS), where she had started to teach before having an academic level preparation for taking up the career. Although her first experience as a language teacher had not been planned, she welcomed the new challenge. Her first experience was crucial since it raised her awareness about the profession: she learned that teaching not only presupposes *knowing the language,* meaning being able to communicate, rather it goes way beyond that. At that time she thought that this extrapolation could be fulfilled by more knowledge *about the language*, or what Schulman (1987) calls content knowledge. This feeling made her look for certificates abroad. For her, these certificates would give her the credentialing for entering the profession. Studying the language abroad was very meaningful for her and shaped her overall concept of teaching a language. Back to Brazil and feeling herself ready to enter a classroom, two aspects made

her question some facets of teaching: first, most of her students were not intrinsically motivated as she had been as a language student, and second, she figured out that the international certificates (most of them only measured content knowledge) and her previous teaching experiences were not enough for the complexities of the classroom. She then realized that teaching is more than knowing the language and about the language. It also included *knowing how to teach it* - Schulman's (1987) pedagogical knowledge - which is not only learned through experience and everyday concepts, but also through formal education and scientific concepts. Her entrance at the Letters course has been transformative and elucidatory in that way. She was able to recognize how raw she was when her practices were only intuitive-based. However, some everyday concepts as regards teaching, acquired during the years as a second language student in England and as an EFL teacher in Brazil, still need to be deconstructed and reconceptualized. In her case specifically, as identified during class observations and in the blog interactions, the not fully developed concept as regards motivation was the main point mediating her teaching. Since, in her practice, "motivate" meant efforts to "please" students, such efforts are at odds with her declared views about language teaching and learning, identified in her narratives before the semester started. One point that deserves to be mentioned and more deeply explored (although data does not show much evidence) is that her view of motivation as "pleasing" students might have been influenced by her experience as a tour guide and tour agency owner. It means that

her efforts to please her clients, facilitating things for them, trying to make them feel comfortable and happy in a nice and fun atmosphere might have influenced the way she conducts her classes. Her not fully developed concept as regards motivation made her lose self-regulation and she became regulated by what she thought could please students. This loss of self-regulation resulted both in the adoption of confusing, disconnected activities and more structure- focused, traditional "chalk and talk" classroom practices. Although her participation in the blog was not frequent and thus not satisfactory and her teaching activity does not show visible changes, mediation via blog seems at least to have

promoted a reflective movement, a small but necessary step towards professional development and change.

The next chapter follows Andrey, an 8-year-experience EFL teacher and Ph.D candidate.

**CHAPTER 5 - ANDREY: A TEACHER BLOOMS OUT OF THE PASSION FOR THE**

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE**

This chapter focuses on Andrey, an 8-year-experience EFL teacher and Ph.D candidate. During the two semesters in which data were collected, Andrey got his MA certificate, and entered the doctoral program in the field of Applied Linguistics. In the first semester, when the autobiographical narratives were drawn, he was attending the course *Ensino de Língua Inglesa: Práticas de Sala de Aula* along with Mayra and I. In the second semester of data collection, when the blog and class observations took place, he was taking 3 courses in the applied linguistics doctoral program as a PhD candidate.

As in Mayra's case, the procedures for presenting the data analysis section is to divide the chapter in two parts, each of which dedicated to one of the main axes that compose the data, namely *Mapping* and *Teaching activity*. Section 1, *Mapping*, focuses on Andrey's teacher persona. It is subdivided in *Learning trajectories* (language learning, teacher learner, and teaching trajectories) and *Affective volitional tendency (*personal motivation to enter and improve in the teaching career). Section 2 - *Teaching Activity* - refers to the most relevant (pseudo)concept that has permeated Andrey's practice.

5.1-MAPPING - GETTING TO KNOW ANDREY'S TEACHER PERSONA

In order to better understand Andrey teacher persona - how he came to know what he knows and why he does what he does - we shall describe his learning trajectories as a language learner (regular school, language institute and as an autodidact), as a teacher learner (as an Undergraduate Letters student, as an MA and a PhD student) and as a teacher (language institutes, and undergraduate Letters program). As in Mayra's data, these trajectories are depicted together due to their interconnectedness. Another important aspect - A*ffective volitional tendency* - regards his personal interest and motivation to enter the teaching career and to develop as a teacher.  Figure 9 represents the first axis of Andrey's data analysis. The sections and subsections in which each topic is discussed along this chapter are signalized with numbers inside the squares.
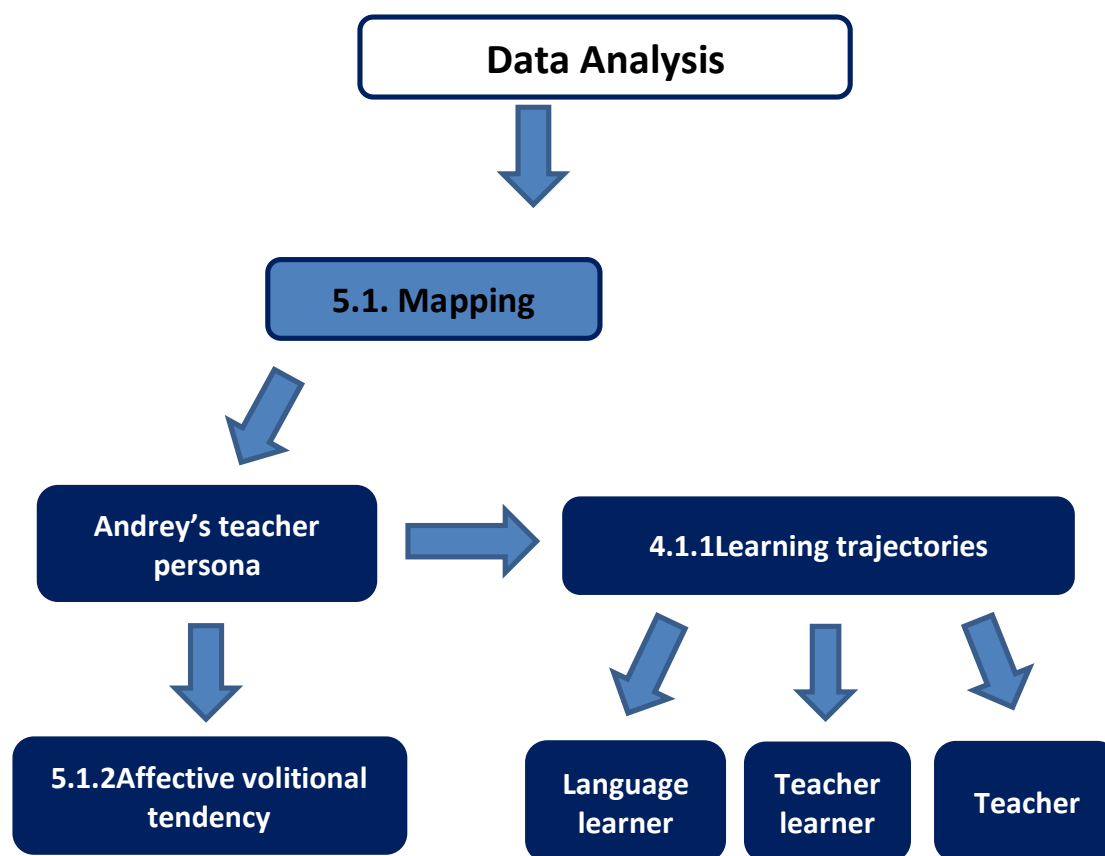
**Figure 9. The first axis of Andrey's teacher persona**

## 5.1.1 Andrey's learning trajectories: Language learning, teacher learner, and teaching

Andrey describes his language learning history in three different periods: as a foreign language learner at a regular school, at a language institute, and later as an autodidact. As he systematically analyses the three different stages of his language learning, it is possible to identify the progression he established along these stages, according to what he expected from a language class: being able to use it for communication rather than focusing on the structural aspects of the language.

> *I had English classes in public school, but I don't remember much about the classes. Teachers just made us do grammatical exercises. Craving for learning how to speak, write, read and understand English, I asked my mother to enroll me in a private course. She didn't have much money at that time, but she made an effort and managed to pay the course for me. It made me really happy.*
> *I learned a lot in this English school, but I don't remember much about the classes. They were not memorable for me. All I can recall is that grammar was always there, but at least the teachers spoke English with us. I was learning English, but I wasn't using it for communication. I wanted to interact with someone. I wanted to use the English I had.*

*My memorable experiences come from trying to use and learn English by myself. I remember being very upset when people said that if someone really wants to learn a language, this person must go to a native speaking country. I knew I couldn't afford going to the States, Canada, or England, but I wanted to prove those people wrong. I tried my best to watch movies in English, to listen to music in English, to chat with people in English. I spent great part of my day doing that, and when someone complimented my English (especially a native speaker) I got really proud of myself.*

Reaction paper- Ensino de Língua Inglesa: Práticas de Sala de Aula, 2013

It is clear in his narratives that, for him, learning a language was more than learning aspects connected to structure and form. He wanted to be able to interact with people and not only with the teacher, who was the main source of English in his classes. This not fulfilled need led him to develop his own strategies to learn the language. Even though Andrey clearly states that he believes that focus on grammar and lack of group activities were weak aspects in those past experiences, these very same aspects still have an echo in his teaching and, albeit he is aware of that, he still struggles to find ways to overcome the beliefs entrenched along the years of apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975), as will be discussed in the teaching activity session.

In the next excerpt, Andrey recounts his teacher learner trajectory and his first experience as a teacher that occurred half way through his undergraduate course.

*After two years in the course, I got a position as an English teacher and I really liked the experience, and I realized it was something I wanted to my life because I could use the language I had been studying so passionately*

Reaction paper- Ensino de Língua Inglesa: Práticas de Sala de Aula, 2013

As pointed out, Andrey started his English teacher trajectory two years before he graduated in Letters and, since then, he has been working in the field.

*…I graduated in English teaching in 2007, but since 2005, I've been teaching English in private schools. I also worked in a university for 4 years. I taught the English related disciplines there.*

Reaction paper- Ensino de Língua Inglesa: Práticas de Sala de Aula, 2013

**5.1.2 Affective- volitional tendency**

The affective volitional tendency concerns Andrey's intrinsic drives in pursuing a career in the language teaching field. It also traces how he emotionally responds to students' reactions, and how he deals with possible contradictions that appear in his teaching activity as a consequence of not fully developed concepts. These narratives cognitively function as a form of externalization and as a form of systematic analysis.

As Andrey externalizes his thoughts and feelings, the emotionally charged language he uses unveils the relevance of learning languages in his life. In the excerpts that follow, Andrey reflects about the reasons that triggered his interest in learning languages. For Andrey, learning languages during childhood and adolescence had a strong psychological meaning. The societal values - as regards what was considered cool or not - reverberated in his school relationships and marked his childhood memories. The negative sentences and adjectives based on those values demonstrate how he felt about himself.

> When I was a child **I was not a popular** child at all. **I didn't have many friends** and **I didn't fit in any groups** because I believed **I was not good at anything**. I was plump and shy, and I **didn't play any sports**. Children at school usually **made fun of me**.
> Reaction paper- Ensino de Língua Inglesa: Práticas de Sala de Aula, 2013

The negatively charged language is replaced by positive bits of language when he recounts how learning English functioned as a psychological tool for building self-confidence.

> I believe this was the main reason that made me want to learn new languages. I wanted to **be good** at something. I wanted people to **admire me** somehow. Learning English in general made me become a **more confident** person. It was a **very important** process for me. Most of my **good memories** come from **succeeding** to learn English.
> Reaction paper- Ensino de Língua Inglesa: Práticas de Sala de Aula, 2013

Andrey entered the Letters program attracted by the English language itself rather than by the intention to teach it.

> **I didn't really want to be a teacher when I got into Letras course. To be sincere, I didn't even know that Licenciaturas graduated teachers. I got kind of frustrated when my Linguistics professor told us that if we were there we would have to teach.**
>
> Reaction paper- Ensino de Língua Inglesa: Práticas de Sala de Aula, 2013

He externalizes his frustration with the realization that he had entered the field of teaching, a field which had been portrayed negatively by his mother.

> *…* ***I didn't have much support from my parents****, especially from my mother who was a teacher herself and* ***always complained about the teacher career****. She said* ***she didn't want me to suffer with the salary and the students…***
> Reaction paper- Ensino de Língua Inglesa: Práticas de Sala de Aula, 2013

Although he joined the Letters program without having a clear idea about the career he was being credentialed to perform, he enjoyed his first teaching experience.

> ***..I really liked the experience, and I realized it was something I wanted to my life because I could use the language I had been studying so passionately.***
>
> Reaction paper- Ensino de Língua Inglesa: Práticas de Sala de Aula, 2013

In the following excerpt, retrieved from the Team Teaching Project final paper, Andrey demonstrates his willingness to learn and improve with the course and peers, regardless his eight years of teaching experience.

> *Although I have been a teacher for some years, 8 years to be precise****, I must confess that I did not feel very confident about my practice****. I guess I had never really reflected about it.*
> Team Teaching Project Final Paper, 2013

Although at first he was not enthusiastic about the Team Teaching Project, and signalizes it through negatively charged language, Andrey shows he is willing to try and learn with new experiences. His emotional tone changes when he refers to his satisfaction with the opportunity to learn from and with his peers.

> *At first,* ***I was not very thrilled about team teaching*** *[   ]I imagined it would be a little bit* ***confusing*** *with people* ***disagreeing*** *with one another and* ***getting upset****, in short, all that stress, but I was wrong. It was* ***not confusing or stressing at all!*** *My two teammates, Mayra and Guilherme,* ***were great*** *and we* ***got along very well****. We had the chance to sit together twice and discuss our choices, and especially learn from each other. Well, at least, I did!*
> Team Teaching Project final paper, 2013

He also sees his forthcoming class at extracurricular positively.

*And I **was positive about** working with it in the extracurricular group, because at the observation day,* I could notice that the group we would **teach interacted nicely** *working in groups.*

<div align="right">Team Teaching Project final paper, 2013</div>

The next passage instantiates how Andrey takes into account his classmates' opinions during the microteaching, before the actual teaching at extracurricular.

*Once we had prepared our lesson, we practiced teaching it to our colleagues and Professor Adriana with the purpose of reflecting upon our choices. I did exactly what I had planned, and **I was feeling good about it**. When we were finished, we opened our lesson and practice to discussion. We were questioned about our choices and we also received some feedback. **They drawn my attention to three things: (i) watching out not to misspell words on the board, which I possibly did because I was nervous, and I am not used to handwriting anymore (technology's fault), (ii) setting a scene before eliciting from the students the things they would take with them if they went to Rio de Janeiro or Paris in the summer or winter, for instance, and (iii) teaching the English names for the sights in Rio de Janeiro (Sugar Loaf, Christ the Redeemer).***
***I took into consideration these suggestions. In fact, they got stuck in my head, and I was concerned with following them in the real teaching.***

<div align="right">Team Teaching Project final paper, 2013</div>

After the actual teaching, Andrey acknowledges how positive it was to have taken his colleagues' suggestions from the microteaching.

***I could notice that many students wrote down the English names of the sights in Rio de Janeiro. I did not really expect that, but I was glad I took that suggestion; it provided the students with extra and interesting information.***

<div align="right">Team Teaching Project final paper, 2013</div>

He also acknowledges the contributions the team teaching experience brought to his understanding of teaching. He was able to profit from the experience, learning new things and reevaluating beliefs.

*And I do not think I would teach this lesson to this specific group differently, because it was **informed and contextualized, but I would adapt it if I had to use it with another group. All in all, the team-practice teaching was a very nice experience. I learned to be more confident about my decisions and my practice, always considering that the context, the students' styles and beliefs must be taken into consideration while planning a lesson. I also learned to teamwork, and I realized it is a good opportunity to learn with your peers**.*

<div align="right">Team Teaching Project final paper, 2013</div>

Although he had shown self-confidence throughout the Team teaching project process, on the team teaching day he felt insecure. Following, he externalizes his feelings before teaching at

extracurricular with emotionally charged language. His systematic examination of this experience functions as a psychological tool for understanding why he usually feels that way before and after teaching.

> *I tend to get really nervous in the first lesson I teach. I stutter. I blush. I feel like running away. It is probably because I do not know the students, and I do not know whether they will like me or not. I am very insecure, but when I see things are going well, this insecurity vanishes. Surprisingly I was not nervous at all when I started teaching the lesson*.

> Team Teaching Project Final Paper, 2013

He had a positive view about his actual class in the team teaching project, although he modalizes a little bit his impressions on students' opinion about his class.

> *Everything went the way I had planned*, despite of having to rush things a little bit. Students were *very participative*, and *they seemed to be enjoying it*
> ...All in all, the team-practice teaching was a *very nice* experience. I learned to be *more confident*…

> Team Teaching Project Final Paper, 2013.

Andrey had applied to teach at extracurricular one semester before I started data collection. Although his class plan for the selective process was considered good and appropriate for a communicative based class, the committee asked him to apply again in the following semester as he showed lack of confidence in the practicing part of the entering test. The following semester he applied again and was accepted to teach there. As the new semester began, and he started to teach Level 1 at extracurricular, his lack of confidence as regards teaching appears in a slight way. In the next passage, retrieved from the blog, he shows doubt about whether or not to use an activity suggested by a colleague. Andrey is afraid that in playing the game proposed by his fellow - which seems not to have a meaningful pedagogical purpose - students would think he is going off track.

> [   ] *but I still thought it was **silly**. **I was afraid** students would think I would be playing around instead of teaching real stuff… Surprisingly, the game was a **success** and the **students really like it***.

> Weekly Journal post, April 30, 2014
> Andrey's reply: May 4, 2014

In the following classes, still in the beginning of the semester, his lack of confidence is replaced by confidence in relation to his practices and to his students' reactions.

*I always feel that the students are **comfortable and willing to participate** in the activities, but in this class specifically; I noticed that **they were more exciting [enthusiastic]**. I guess it is because I followed your advice to start the class with some activity that would **catch their attention and motivate them**.*

<div align="right">Recall Session post, May 5, 2014<br>Andrey's reply: May 5, 2014</div>

Although he modalizes his impressions about students' reactions towards the activities he proposes, he keeps a positive view of his class.

*The **students seemed to like it a lot**, specially the first activity. **They seemed really engaged** in finding the mistakes.*

<div align="right">Recall Session post, May 20, 2014<br>Andrey's reply: May 25, 2014</div>

The positive feedback he received from students helped him to get more confident as the semester progressed.

*Something that caught my attention was the students telling me that **they love my classes and they loved this class in special**. One student said that **we could have classes like this every week.***

<div align="right">Weekly Journal post, May 21, 2014<br>Andrey's entry: May 25, 2014</div>

*I actually liked the class as a whole. I thought **they were engaged in the activities as usual.** But if I had to choose a specific moment, I would pick the activity they had to present their family to each other. **It was very nice** seeing them speaking English. **I felt very well**.*

<div align="right">Recall Session post, May 28, 2014<br>Andrey's reply: June 2, 2014</div>

Although students demonstrate engagement, he feels guilty in having a review class focusing on forms.

*I cannot lie that **I felt kind of strange** in this class. I could see that **they were engaged** in doing the exercises, **but I didn't feel so comfortable** with the situation, because it was a too grammatical lesson. I believe we have focused a lot on criticizing grammatical lessons that when we have one, **we feel like we are doing something wrong.***

<div align="right">Weekly Journal post, June 4, 2014<br>Andrey's entry: June 14, 2014</div>

The last month of classes was still marked by a positive mood. His students' feedback and engagement in the activities proposed helped Andrey to build a more confident teacher persona.

*I told them **I was impressed** by it, and they said: **you made it very simple** for us last class. **Oh I felt like hugging them!***

<div align="right">Weekly Journal post, July 6, 2014<br>Andrey's entry: July 10, 2014</div>

*I did it before in the past, and I remember **the students enjoyed** it, because they were producing language.*

<div align="right">Recall Session post, July 23, 2014<br>Andrey's reply: July 24, 2014</div>

*Well, I had **a very good group** of students. They were really **easy-going and willing** to learn. I felt comfortable with them from the beginning…But after all, I guess it was pretty much the same environment from the beginning.*

<div align="right">The Last but not the Least post, July 28, 2014<br>Andrey's reply: August 12, 2014</div>

The next section refers to the second axis of Andrey's data analysis – *Teaching Activity* – and especially focuses on the dissonances caused by not fully developed concepts that could be identified in the narratives of the first semester of data collection as they appeared in the classes observed and in the blog entries on the second semester of data collection.

5.2. *TEACHING ACTIVITY:* IMPLEMENTING MEDIATION AND TRACING DEVELOPMENT

This section traces the development of the most relevant not fully developed concepts (pseudo concepts), namely group work and focus on form instruction, along with the mediation provided via blog. As in Mayra's teaching activity section, a brief review of the first semester narratives in which these concepts appear is found necessary to better situate their stage of development and justify the implementation of mediation. The figure that follows shows the organization of the second axis of Andrey's data analysis.
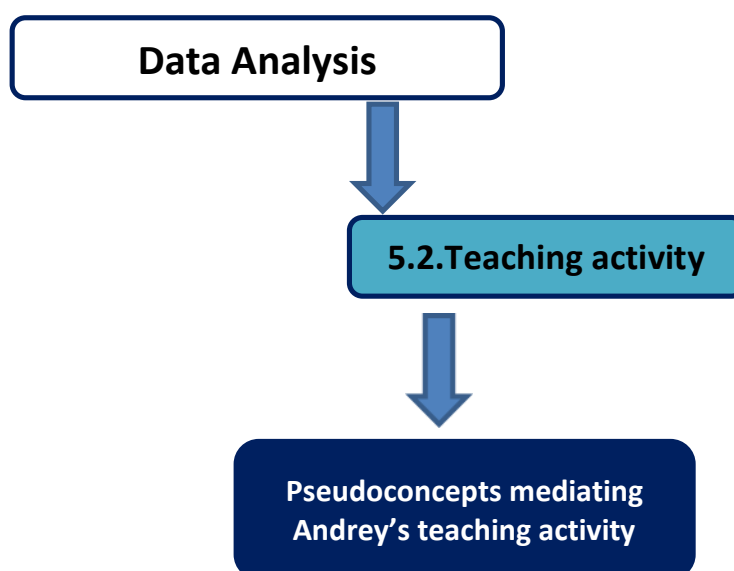
**Figure 10. Organization of the second axis of Andrey's data analysis.**

Narratives on the previous semester reveals that Andrey's idealized conceptualization of language learning and teaching is grounded on a communicative based language teaching. Andrey's first participation in the blog reinforces this indication.

> *Learning and teaching English for me is learning and teaching how to communicate, thus, fostering the development of a communicative competence. In this vein, a good language class is the one in which the main focus lies on the use of language where the students have the opportunity to perform collaborative activities that engage them in the contextualized use of language and linguistic structures are explored out of a communicative event. The role of the teacher, in this scenario, is to provide students with input, to assist them in the performing the activities*

<div align="right">

Starting Up post, April 22, 2014
Andrey's reply: April 24, 2014

</div>

As for the way to address linguistic structures in class, Andrey describes and positions himself about the kinds of instruction, identifying the scientific concepts (forms of instructions) in his experiences as a language learner.

> *Focus on forms instruction has always been part of my experiences as a learner and a teacher, and it may have helped me somehow; however, it was not interesting and motivational at all. Taking a more meaning oriented approach and addressing errors either more explicitly or more implicitly when they appear is a more appealing way of learning and teaching. I recall some moments when I was practicing English with some virtual friends, some doubts regarding form(s) accidentally appeared and I tried to understand them, and they completely made sense to me. Some of those forms I had seen and practiced in the classroom, but I couldn't understand them. I believe it proves that a meaning focused instruction is a more efficient way to teach English.*

Notwithstanding, Andrey's recollections as a language learner unveiled key aspects that grounded his early conceptualization of language teaching and that still have an echo in his teaching activity: the  dichotomy between language as a system and language as a tool for communication.

As evidenced in the previous excerpts, the idealized English class is the one in which language functions as a tool for communication for peer collaborative work and grammar structures are addressed out of a communicative event. However, the reality of his classroom showed many instances of teacher-student- driven interactions, or not very well designed group activities. As regards linguistic structures, his classroom reality, many times, followed a focus on forms instruction pattern. The cognitive functions - narratives as externalization, as systematic analysis and as verbalization-ignited by the narratives done in the first semester of data collection-as well as in the blog entries on the second semester-helped Andrey to develop awareness about his practices and realize the dissonances between his idealized and real classroom practices. His struggle to diminish incongruent practices resulting from not fully developed concepts as regards cooperative work and focus on form instruction constitutes the points I tried to address through strategic mediation via blog.

Two major aspects stand out, namely, his difficulty in designing/applying group activities to promote fluency and his inconsistency in applying focus on form instruction.

Figure 11 represents the second axis of Andrey's data analysis. It shows the pseudoconcepts and the dissonant practices it generates organized in two main categories. The sections and subsections in which the each category is discussed are signalized with numbers inside the squares.

```
                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │  5.2.Teaching activity │
                    └─────────────────────┘
```

| 5.2.1 group work (pseudoconcept) | 5.2.2 focus on form instruction (pseudoconcept) |
|---|---|
| 5.2.1.1 designing/applying peer activities | 5.2.2.2 designing/applying focus on form activities |
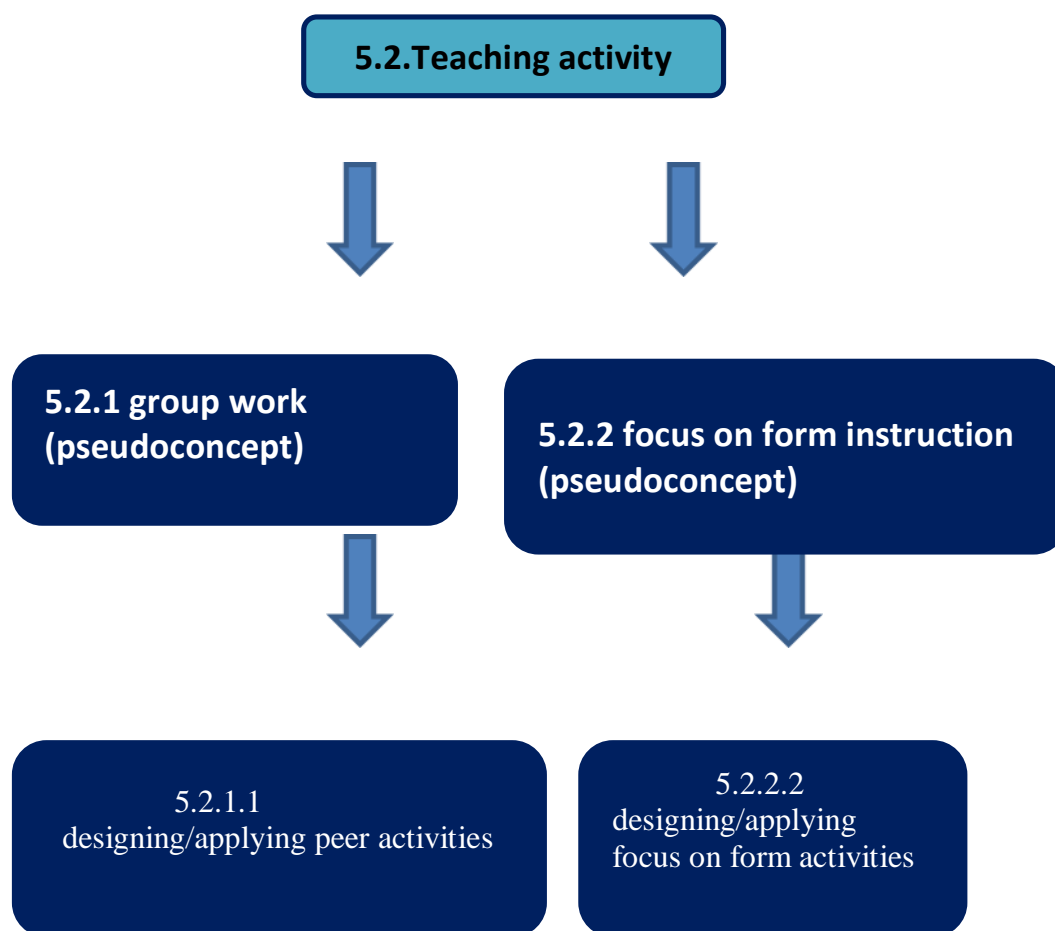
**Figure 11. Pseudoconcepts permeating Andrey's teaching activity and the resulting teaching behaviors (126)**

## 5.2.1 Group Work

As Brown (1994) notes, group work is fundamental for keeping linguistic interaction within the classroom and can be defined as "a generic term covering a multiplicity of techniques in which two or more students are assigned a task that involves collaboration and self-initiated language" (p.173). He contends that group work generates interactive language and increases the students' opportunities to speak. Moreover, group work can offer an embracing affective climate, since students' participation in small groups is not overtly exposed to the whole group. Paradoxically, it becomes more difficult for a student to hide behind the screen of whole class activities carried out in big groups, given that small groups naturally demand more participation from students.

Group work also presents its drawbacks, which, for Brown (1994), function more like teachers' excuses to avoid the adoption of group work in their classes. Among these excuses are the difficulty to monitor and control all groups at once, students' use of the native language and some students' preference for individual work. Brown (1994) argues that all these problems can be overridden with cautious planning, management, and clear objectives.

The benefits of group work have been long discussed in the second/foreign language education field (Brown, 1991; Di Pietro, 1987; Doughty and Pica, 1986; Long and Porter, 1985;). Advocates of group work argue that its advantages outnumber the disadvantages, and research discussing its appropriateness and systematizing its implementation in the second/ foreign language classroom abound. Positive outcomes of group work and some beliefs commonly related to its implementation can be found in Long and Porter's (1985) seminal article.

5.2.1.1 Designing and applying peer activities to promote fluency

As observed in the learning trajectories section, as a language learner, Andrey felt the need to use language as a tool for communication. He wanted to interact with peers, however, when he was a student, his English classes did not provide interactive activities to foster fluency, and the only reference of cooperative peer work in class he could remember were not successful whatsoever.

> *… I was an individual-oriented person when it comes to doing something.* ***I had never had good experiences with team work;***
>
> <div align="right">Team Teaching Project final paper, 2013</div>

> *I was learning English, but* ***I wasn't using it for communication****.* ***I wanted to interact with someone. I wanted to use the English I had [ ]I tried my best to chat with people in English. I spent great part of my day doing that****, and when someone complimented my English (especially a native speaker) I got really proud of myself.*
>
> <div align="right">Reaction paper- Ensino de Língua Inglesa: Práticas de Sala de Aula, 2013</div>

 As reported by Andrey, the only source of English was the class teacher; therefore, he decided to follow his own English learning path in which the language was an instrument for communication and interaction among people.

The Team teaching project narratives functioned as externalization since Andrey could let explicit to himself his reasons for being apprehensive with team work. The reflection promoted by Andrey's narrative led him to reconsider his pseudo concept concerning group activities based on previous experiences as a student, that is, a pseudo concept constructed based on the apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975). Revisiting those memories and comparing them to the recent successful experience enabled him to start to reconceptualize this pseudo concept through the real experience of group work during the team teaching project. He was able to experience that working in groups, depending on how it is organized, its goals and on who you are working with, can also be a profitable experience.

> ***At first, I was not very thrilled about team teaching,*** *because I believed I was an individual-oriented person when it comes to doing something.* ***I had never had good experiences with team work; I imagined it would be a little bit confusing with people disagreeing with one another and getting upset, in short, all that stress, but I was wrong. It was not confusing or stressing at all! My two teammates, Mayra and Guilherme, were great and we got along very well. We had the chance to sit together twice and discuss our choices, and especially learn from each other.*** *Well, at least, I did!*
>
> <div align="right">Team Teaching Project final paper, 2013</div>

Through the systematic analysis of the class prepared by the group, he concluded that team work is a feasible activity and that together they could mediate each other to make sense of theory.

> *Mayra, Guilherme and I divided the content: Mayra would start the lesson with a* ***pre-activity and the listening exercise; Guilherme would be responsible of teaching the grammar focus; and I would do a post-activity. Things started making sense to me, and I realized that team work was not that bad, but more importantly, I was taking informed decisions****. **I could relate the theoretical texts we read and discussed in class with my decisions, and also discuss Mayra's and Guilherme's choices based on these texts and help them out***.
>
> <div align="right">Team Teaching Project final paper, 2013</div>

In the following passage, the issue of group work is again emphasized by Andrey. During the class observation at extracurricular, Andrey could witness another event in which team work had positive results.

*And I was positive about working with it in the extracurricular group, because at the observation day,* **I could notice that the group we would teach interacted nicely working in groups.**

Team Teaching Project final paper, 2013

Due to his successful experience with cooperative work during the Team Teaching Project, he seems to start changing his mind in relation to the positive outcomes it might bring.

**Things started making sense to me, and I realized that team work was not that bad…**

Team Teaching Project final paper, 2013

Through Andrey's narratives it is possible to observe that only when the scientific concept of group work meets the spontaneous concept he is able to understand the concept and convince himself about the effectiveness of group work. Although he already knew the scientific concept, until that moment it had not communicated with its spontaneous counterpart (during his experiences as a language student at school), not allowing him to make sense of it. It is clear here the fundamental role the communication between the scientific and spontaneous concept plays for the process of concept development.

Andrey refers to *tasks* a couple of times. It certainly mediates his teaching practices since it has been something he has been working with since he entered the graduate program. Through verbalization - using expert knowledge and expert discourse - he systematically analyses the task he has planned for the Team Teaching Project and justifies its use.

*I came up with another activity to work with the students.* **I decided to use a task in which the students were presented to two pictures:** *one of Rio de Janeiro and another of Paris; and they had to decide in groups each city they would choose and why, and after that share their opinions with the entire group.* **Another reason for me choosing a task is because it would make the students focus on meaning and also practice the vocabulary and grammar they would see with Mayra and Guilherme…I particularly am a big fan of tasks.** *They are communicative and fun. Students generally enjoy them.*

Team Teaching Project final paper, 2013

Although Andrey had planned and successfully applied the aforementioned task for the team teaching project, blog entries demonstrate that he still had difficulties in transferring his scientific knowledge and in incorporating it to his day-by-day classroom practices.

In the *Starting up* post, as Andrey started a new semester in his real group at extracurricular, I asked Andrey about group work:

> *What's group work in a L2 context like extracurricular? Which aspects are fundamental in group work?*
>
> <div align="right">Starting Up post April 22, 2014</div>

> ***What I know about group work is that it not just putting students to work together.*** *For group work to be effective, students must have **well defined roles**, focusing on a **common and clear goal** (at extracurricular, a communicative goal) I also believe **teachers should monitor** students while they're tasking to help them out.*
>
> <div align="right">Starting Up post April 22, 2014<br>Andrey's reply: April, 23, 2014</div>

The following excerpt demonstrates his difficulty in designing a meaningful group activity that could engage students around the class topic. Although he considers the activity suggested by a colleague not challenging and off track, he tries it anyway.

> *In this class, I was concerned on how to start the class **considering the topic: colors.** Talking about colors with adults is something that I find quite silly, and **I couldn't think of an activity to contextualize the topic.** A friend of mine gave me the idea of starting the class with a game called STOP, in which one category would be 'colors'. I kind of like it, **but I still thought it was silly**. I was afraid **students would think I would be playing around** instead of teaching real stuff. However, as I couldn't think of anything else, I decided to try it. Surprisingly, the game was a success and the students really like it. It just took me 5 to 10 minutes, and I could use it to contextualize the first activity from the book.*
>
> <div align="right">Weekly Journal post, April 30, 2014<br>Andrey's entry: May 4, 2014</div>

My mediational moves were the following: first, I highlighted the importance of trying new group activities in order to demystify beliefs but observing the goals we intend to achieve, whether is just to relieve students' tension or prepare them for the class topics in a more elaborated way.

> *Andrey, it's always good to try new things and break some paradigms we construct along our student/teaching life. **Trying is important, as long as you have clear objectives,** and, in case it does not work with that specific group, we try another thing. Usually, games are welcome at any group, regardless the age, and they also work as **ice breakers, stimulating students to participate more.***
>
> <div align="right">Weekly Journal post, April 30, 2014<br>Marcia's reply: May 4, 2014</div>

The second mediational move highlights the importance of selecting/designing more elaborated group activities, which in fact, corroborates Andrey's first feeling towards the activity. I also tried to call Andrey's attention as regards the class topic.

> *We just have **to be cautious in choosing group activities/games that are not off track,** in other words, choosing activities that **work more as pre-tasks**, whenever possible or that **at least focus on the class topic** (actually I don't think the topic is exactly "colors", do you?). This way, students will never feel they are wasting their class time.*
>
> <div align="right">Weekly journal post, April 30, 2014<br>Marcia's reply: May 4, 2014</div>

I finished my reply with a suggestion of a group activity that, although restricted to vocabulary items, is related to the class content.

> *I remember that for this class I worked with their own clothes/personal belongings. I wrote on strips of paper (white socks, black watch, silver bracelet, etc) and put them in a bag. Groups took turns to pick an item from the bag, and scored points according to the number of white socks, etc they could find in their own teams. Students negotiated meaning, and helped each other to find the objects. **Since colors is not something new for most of them, it was a way to review colors and pre teach some other vocab which will appear along the unit.***
>
> <div align="right">Weekly journal post, April 30, 2014<br>Marcia's reply: May 4, 2014</div>

In the following excerpt Andrey's expected communicative outcome from the group work he had proposed is the point of my questioning.

> *In the group activity (you showed pairs of animals and products on the screen) in which students were supposed to **choose the one they liked more**: What was your objective in asking the **group components to reach to an agreement about the items?***
>
> <div align="right">Recall Session post, May 4, 2014<br>Marcia's entry, May 4, 2014</div>

> *In some groups activities I did before, I noticed students did not pay much attention to the other groups' tasking while I was checking their outcomes...*
>
> <div align="right">Recall Session post, May 4, 2014<br>Andrey's entry, May 4, 2014</div>

As he did not get the point of my questioning, I recalibrated (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006) the mediation, addressing the issue more directly.

*Ok, the only point **I did not understand very well was the purpose of "reaching to an agreement", because they were talking about likes/dislikes, so some students had to "lie" to express the group's opinion** (I listened to a girl in a group say "but I don't like cats, why do I have to agree with you two"!)*

<div align="right">Recall Session post, May 4, 2014<br>Marcia's entry, May 5, 2014</div>

I also suggested an alternative outcome for the activity, and reinforced the validity of having problem solving group activities.

*…you could maybe have asked **the majority's opinion in each group**, rather than **reaching to an agreement**. I completely agree with you when you say that when all the students have to report their answers individually, the others get bored/don't pay attention, and more, some level 1 students feel embarrassed when they have to talk in "open group", so "closed groups" provide more opportunities to talk and they don't feel so exposed, since only one member is responsible for reporting the results. **The only point here is the kind of communicative outcome required.***

<div align="right">Recall Session post, May 4, 2014<br>Marcia's entry, May 5, 2014</div>

His reply to my feedback shows he still relies on everyday knowledge as regards tasks when he takes inflight decisions.

*Thanks, Marcia! Your feedback is great! :) Regarding the agreement part, I agree with you. **I hadn't planned to do that. I guess it just appeared as a "gathering thing", meaning that I didn't just want to ask them something and that's done. I'll think it through next activity.***

<div align="right">Recall Session post, May 6, 2014<br>Andrey's entry, May 6, 2014</div>

Although Andrey is a specialist in tasks, he was proposing tasks without a clear and meaningful outcome. It seems that only through the reflection engendered by writing on the blog he notices it and admits the "outcome" proposed was an inflight decision. Moreover, the outcome proposed signalizes that the concept of task is not yet a full concept for him, given that what comes to his mind as an inflight decision does not fit properly in the concept of task.

Andrey had planned a group activity to reinforce content of previous classes in a communicative way, but students' lack of excitement made him think over revisiting content. In this example, his difficulty is not related to planning the peer activity, but to being confident about its benefits.

*This was my last lesson on this unit and I only had the text to work with them. I was a little bit concerning, because **I didn't want to start Unit 4**. **It would be against my timetable (Yes, I'm really obsessed about it, hehe),** so I decided to bring a video which shows different prices of the*

*same product around the world to begin the class. They watched it and then I proposed a little group discussion about expensive and cheap prices and also compare with the products' prices in Brazil. **My intention was to reinforce things seen in the last classes; however, I felt that the students were not really excited about it as they usually are. I guess it happened because it was too repetitive, but anyway. I continued the class…***

Weekly Journal post, May 10, 2014
Andrey's entry: May 11, 2014

Through mediation, I intended to address the importance of revisiting things for the socially mediated process of internalization. It is also underscored the common belief that connects "good" activities to "fun" activities.

*..**About your concern regarding "repetitive" subject, I think repeating the same topic but with a different activity (especially in groups) is more than valid, is fundamental (especially in Level 1), how can they really internalize something if they've seen it just once?** Maybe the activity itself (its nature) was not something to show excitement (as in games, for example), and **sometimes we tend to think activities are successful if students have fun or show excitement, and this is not totally true** (I taught at a language center in which the classes were labeled as good if the coordinator could listen to laughter behind the door. She used to eavesdrop the classes!!) It was hard to change my mind about that, actually I'm still trying!*

Weekly Journal post, May 10, 2014
Marcia's reply: May 13, 2014

I indirectly referred to his insecurity concerning the validity of the activity he had planned, due to his students' low excitement. I tried to address the aspects we should have in mind when planning an activity, that, if clearly stated in the teacher's mind, can help develop a sense of confidence.

*I believe it's good to have a **balance between these kinds of activities**. What is important is that the activity be **not too easy, not too difficult and have a clear communicative outcome**.*

Weekly Journal post, May 10, 2014
Marcia's reply: May 13, 2014

As Andrey had brought his concern in not being ahead schedule, in my final move, I reiterate the importance of the role of practice in learning a language (or the role of socially mediated activities for the process of internalization - moving from the interpersonal plane to the intrapersonal plane).

*Another point I'd like to comment is **concerning the schedule**, I'm also worried about it (for many reasons, coordination's directions, students' pressure to cover all the book topics, etc), **but, differently from you, I'm usually behind schedule, cause I do believe students need to practice**, as I said before, the same thing in different ways, otherwise the topics **have fewer chances to "solidify". So relax, and, since you're ahead schedule, try to feel the students' needs.***

*About the fun activities, we **are led to believe that if students are not having fun or laughing they're not learning!** Thanks for sharing your experience! Since I'm usually ahead schedule **I'm going to plan group activities to practice more. I have to remember how important revising and practicing are***!

Although data show that Andrey had not used group work again for this specific purpose- revise contents- the welcoming way Andrey received  feedback signalizes that a ZPD was created, and that ZPD may have led him to propose more group work in order to keep testing its validity as shown in the next passage

About a week later, I touched the issue of peer work again, but through a positive example of an activity suggested in the class book that worked well in his class. The groups got together to decide the best date for a girl (book character) who was looking for a date on a TV show. First they listened to the audio, completed a chart based on the girl's and candidates' likes and dislikes, and in groups decided, based on each candidate's profile, the best date for the girl.

*In the group work about "Who's my date?"(right after the listening). How did **you feel, perceive students doing the task? (choosing the best date** for the book character? **Were they able to do it? Why (not)?***

***I don't really remember going around and helping them out with this activity, but I don't think they had any trouble doing it, because it was not so difficult.** I do remember the **correction part**, and there was a **consensus** on their answers. I also remember all the groups saying **the same 'date'***.

Although the way I formulated my question led Andrey think in terms of achievement - the result itself - that is, if students had difficulty to get to the "right answer", I was more interested in hearing from him about his perception of the interactive process taking place, that is, I intended to underscore

the positive points in terms of oral production and collaborative work that this kind of activity can engender. I then tried to make myself clearer.

> *I asked the third question because,* **when students work together** *(in pairs or groups)* **they have the opportunity for "scaffolding", for discussing and elaborating** *their answers and explaining why (I was listening to a group next to me, and* **I could clearly see how students helped each other, and this is the point.***)*

> <div align="right">Recall Session post, May 15, 2014<br>Marcia's reply: May 18, 2014</div>

> *Ah, ok! I had the same perception!*

> <div align="right">Recall Session post, May 15, 2014<br>Andrey's reply: May 20, 2014</div>

The goal of my question in the post was to show Andrey the good results that the activity had in terms of students' participation and to emphasize the importance of group work for a language class. I also intended once more to make him notice the scientific knowledge dialoguing with the spontaneous, empirical knowledge.

The next passage from the same class is an example of an individual activity that, if had been done in groups, could have been more profitable. During this class in which the topic was entertainment, Andrey selected a short video activity adequate for level 1, followed by a multiple choice activity. Before playing the video, Andrey contextualizes the characters and the scene, and, after playing the scene twice, projected the questions and read the questions and alternatives one by one for students to answer right away. My reflective questions intended to elicit from him informed reasons for contextualizing the scene and raise his awareness for the missed opportunity of group work.

> *Why did you decide to introduce the cartoon scene (The Simpsons) the way you did? How did you feel, perceive students' ability to answer the follow up questions? Were they able to do it? Why (not)?*

> <div align="right">Recall Session post, May 15, 2014<br>Marcia's entry: May 15, 2014</div>

> *[ ]I took some time to google some activities I could use in the class related to TV-shows, and then a bunch of activities related to 'The Simpsons' came up.* **I took a look at some activities and most of them appeared to be difficult and so focused on grammar issues***. Then, I found this*

*specific one, the one I used in the class, which seemed to be simpler, and plus there was some comprehensible questions to answer.* **In order not to start the class just showing a random episode for the students, I decided to contextualize it with the theme of the unit which was "Entertainment" and ask some questions about the cartoon.**
**I used questions that the students would be able to recognize and luckily answer, because they had seen those structures in previous lessons. Moreover, it was a nice opportunity to use only English in the class, and also for them to see they are learning and get motivated. I felt they like this activity**.

<div align="right">Recall Session post, May 15, 2014<br/>Andrey's reply: May 18, 2014</div>

My reply emphasized the importance of contextualization, praising his way to raise students' awareness and curiosity. Also, as I noticed during class observation that some students did not have time to think over the follow up questions/alternatives appropriately, I brought this issue as an argument in favor to peer activity.

> *Andrey, I think The Simpsons is a great choice.* **I asked the first question thinking about the way you contextualized the cartoon before playing it**. *You asked students about the characters' names how they are related and why they liked one or another.* **I think contextualizing is really important, especially for the ones who are not very familiarized with the characters**. **It prepares them for the scene and raises their curiosity.** *My suggestion is to work with the follow- up questions in a different way* **to maximize students' understanding**. *I mean* **you could allow more time for them to elaborate, discuss the questions (did you notice that the questions were answered by the same students, the most outgoing ones?)** *You could, for example,* **ask them to discuss the questions in pairs or groups**, *it would* **give them time to elaborate/understand the questions and the alternatives and also, it would give the opportunity for the shy or not confident ones to speak, this way more proficient students help the less proficient**.

<div align="right">Recall Session post, May 15, 2014<br/>Marcia's reply: May 18, 2014</div>

The following excerpts describe a sequence retrieved from the same class of an individual work, that did not present the expected results, and a peer activity that had positive outcomes. The first activity, due to its design, could have worked better if done in pairs/groups. The second activity, done through open pairs, promoted interaction among the whole group.

> *Is there anything you'd change in this class?*

<div align="right">Recall Session Post, May 28, 2014<br/>Marcia's entry: May 28, 2014</div>

> **I would change the activity which I asked the students to write down all the vocabulary** *related to family they knew. I thought they would remember many words, but it was not the case.* **Maybe if I proposed a more controlled activity, it would be more successful,** *like giving them some*

*cards with the vocabulary in English and Portuguese and they would have to relate them. Or something like this.*

<div align="right">

Recall Session Post, May 28, 2014
Andrey's reply: June 2, 2014

</div>

*Yes, I do agree with you,* ***maybe because it was an individual activity, it was not so profitable. It could have been done in pairs/groups****, so that they could have had lists, or as you said, a more controlled activity like a memory game or something like a matching activity in groups.* ***I'd just suggest not to write the names in Portuguese, I'd suggest definitions in English****: e.g in one card: sister/ on its pair: my mothers' daughter.* ***Students could pick the definition first, try to figure it out among groups and find/pick the pair. It would be more cognitively demanding and students would have the opportunity to help each other****.*

<div align="right">

Recall Session Post, May 28, 2014
Marcia's reply: June 4, 2014

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*What did you like most about this class? How did you perceive students' reaction to the open pair activity? (about the family tree) Was it positive/productive? Why?(not)*

<div align="right">

Recall Session Post, May 28, 2014
Marcia's entry: June 2, 2014

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*I actually liked the class as a whole. I thought they were engaged in the activities as usual. But if I had to choose a specific moment,* ***I would pick the activity they had to present their family to each other. It was very nice seeing them speaking English. I felt very well.***
*Well, as I said before,* ***I really enjoyed this activity****.* ***They usually complain about exposing themselves to the whole group, and I guess it is a nice way to solve it. I have to confess, I had never done this kind of activities before, because I imagined they wouldn't do it or maybe they would use Portuguese. I will try it more often.***

<div align="right">

Recall Session Post, May 28, 2014
Andrey's reply: June 2, 2014

</div>

***I asked this question because I had the same perception. It was great to see Level 1 students going around and talking to each other about their families****.*
*That's the point. Having students in* ***open pairs, having them move and repeat many times (with different people) the same information, make them practice and they are not so exposed, because everybody is speaking at the same time****. Besides,* ***classes tend to have too much sudent-teacher interaction, it is important to have them communicate with different peers as well.***
*Another point that* ***caught my attention was the reaction of [student's name]. She resisted in standing up and engaging in the activity. It's understandable that people used to traditional language classes resist to actually "use" the language*** *in less controlled activities. They feel on* ***safer grounds attached to book-and- board activities.*** *While the other students promptly stood up, she'd rather keep sitting. For this reason,* ***since the very first class, I try to do activities in which they have to move /change pairs/groups, to create new habits and establish the class dynamics.***

<div align="right">

Recall Session Post, May 28, 2014
Marcia's reply: June 4, 2014

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As noticeable in the previous excerpts, Andrey's answers to my questions show his awareness as regards the impact that the both activities had in his class. Also his reflection revealed his beliefs concerning less controlled interactive activities - "*I imagined they wouldn't do it or maybe they would use Portuguese*". My mediational moves, then, only reinforced his systematic examination about his class and suggested some alternatives. Also I drew his attention to the resistance some students still have as regards using language as a tool for communication.

About three weeks later though, by the end of the semester, Andrey brought the issue of group work again. He is still having difficulties in designing a peer activity with a report phase and feels frustrated when applying it with no outcome to be shared with the whole class. In this class, the class book presented an activity in which students would get in groups to exchange information about their neighborhood.

> *Is there anything in special that caught your attention (good or bad)?*
>
> Recall Session post, June 25, 2014
> Marcia's entry: June 25, 2014

> *Well, **I still get a little concerned with the group activities. I feel I don't do it right**. For instance, in the group activity I proposed this class, the students were supposed to **ask each other some information, but after they are done, I feel something was missing**. **Before, I would tell them to share their opinions with the entire group, but as we have discussed some students get a little shy and some get distracted,** so I just ended the activity like that, **like there was no closure. I guess I have to work a little harder on that.***
>
> Recall Session post, June 25, 2014
> Andrey's entry: July 1, 2014

My mediational moves started with the same suggestion I had given him before; I purposefully reintroduced the same comment aiming at strategic mediation, and I also suggested a second alternative that would allow all students to speak.

> *I see your point. As we have discussed before, **you feel as if there was a gap: a communicative purpose.** As if they were asking just for the sake of asking. **You can transform this exchange information exercise suggested by the book into something more elaborated**, like after they have interviewed each other within groups, they could systematize their answers. If you are afraid they feel embarrassed or bored to do so (I agree that each student reporting to the whole class is anti-productive),only one component reports to the whole class or  you can ask them to mix groups (form totally mixed up groups out of the previous ones) so that **each student reports to that group only, and listens from that group only**: for example, if you have 4 people in group*

*A, 4 in group B, and 4 in group C ,you can have 4 totally different groups, with three components- taking one component A,B and C from the previously formed groups. **This is also a good strategy because, instead of having one component of each group responsible for reporting, everybody will have the chance to speak in smaller groups**.*

<div align="right">

Recall Session post, June 25, 2014
Marcia's reply: July 2, 2014

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As I noticed Andrey's concern was not only restricted to having an outcome for the activity but also to not controlling students' production, to check if they do it "right", I also emphasized the fact that teachers cannot have total control of their students' learning, but monitor and guide it.

*Your role would be to **monitor them in this stage, and help them out whenever they ask for**. I don't think **we have to have the total control of their learning (actually we cannot),** especially in **less controlled activities** in which students have more freedom to use the resources they have, it's part of the process. And remember, it's very **important that they practice, it's never a waste of time**.*

<div align="right">

Recall Session post, June 25, 2014
Marcia's reply: July 2, 2014

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I finished my reply trying to unburden Andrey from the guilt of applying fluency focused peer activities with "no" outcome, that is, no result to be shared with the whole group.

*Another suggestion is to keep on basing classes on **peer activities that are more elaborated and have a clear communicative outcome and, once in a while, have the ones aimed just at developing fluency,** like having informal chats at the beginning or end of classes. How many times did you, as a language learner talk to people just for the sake of talking? Just to use the language and get to know people better?*

<div align="right">

Recall Session post, June 25, 2014
Marcia's reply: July 2, 2014

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In his reply, Andrey recollects the way he acquired fluency in English and agrees that his controlling tendency during group activities goes against the way he learned the language.

*I liked a lot the suggestions (for outcomes), I'll surely use them (especially the the mixed up suggestion!) It's great! About the chatting, I remember **I used to spend hours and hours chatting on Internet when I was learning English and nobody was around to say if I were right or wrong**! I really **have this tendency of controlling students' learning.** I have to remember I **can monitor but not have total control** of their learning! I just think I need more time to **change the way I see things and relax** a bit!let's see if next semester I can work harder on it!*

<div align="right">

Recall Session post, June 25, 2014
Andrey's reply: July 4, 2014

</div>

Andrey's difficulty as regards group activities permeated the whole semester. As data analysis showed, it was a point he had raised during the team teaching project and on the first semester of data collection and that reappears with his group at extracurricular on the second semester of data collection. Although he has total awareness of his difficulty- awareness engendered by his systematic examination of his practices- he still needs more time, and more opportunities to reconceptualize group activity. At this point, it matters that this project of attending his classes and interacting about what happens in class and how/why these classes are designed the way they are, created new zones of proximal development for Andrey to the point that he himself comes after me to comment on it, as seen in his post *"Well, I still get a little concerned with the group activities."* I am pretty confident that he is taking this reflection ahead and coming to a conclusion of his own, this time based on the confluence of spontaneous and scientific knowledge.

## 5.2.2 Focus on form instruction

Ellis et al's (2001) article discusses the role grammar instruction plays on second/foreign language classes. They identify three types of instruction, namely, focus on meaning, focus on forms, and focus on form. Shortly put, *focus on meaning* instruction "is predicated on the assumption that linguistic knowledge is acquired through communication rather than through direct instruction" (p. 407). *Focus on forms* instruction refers to teaching linguistic forms pre-established by a syllabus. *Focus on form (meaning focused)* instruction involves focusing on specific linguistic forms resulting from communicative interactions. However, to be effective, focus on form instruction has to occur within a meaning centered event and not in the midst of a pre-selected and/or decontextualized linguistic structure. The authors distinguish between two kinds of focus on form instruction: reactive and preemptive. "**Reactive** focus on form arises when learners produce an utterance containing an actual or perceived error, which is then addressed usually by the teacher, but sometimes by another

learner" (p. 413), and "**preemptive** focus on form addresses an actual or a perceived gap in the students' knowledge" (p. 414).

For Andrey, this discussion has been an issue along the semester. Although Andrey stated the belief that focus on form was the best approach to meaningful language teaching, he would present some inconsistencies when designing his classes, as can be noticed in the debate that takes place in the next subsection.

5.2.2.1 Inconsistency in designing /applying focus on form tasks

As pointed out in the language learning narrative, Andrey's classes as a language student followed a focus on forms instruction. As a teacher, he also had experienced teaching through focus on forms syllabi.

> …*focus on forms instruction has always been part of my experiences as a learner and a teacher, and it may have helped me somehow; however, it was not interesting and motivational at all*. Some of those forms I had seen and practiced in the classroom, but I couldn't understand them. Taking a more **meaning oriented approach** and addressing errors **either more explicitly or more implicitly** when they appear is a more appealing way of learning and teaching.
> Reaction paper- Ensino de Língua Inglesa: Práticas de Sala de Aula, 2013

Andrey had declared to be a sympathizer of a *focus on form* instruction, as it was convergent with the way he actually learned the language as an autodidact. As doubts concerning language structures were appearing through use, he tried to solve them.

> I recall some moments when I was practicing English with some virtual friends, some doubts regarding form(s) accidentally appeared and I tried to understand them, and they completely made sense to me. I believe it proves that a meaning focused instruction is a more efficient way to teach English.
> Reaction paper- Ensino de Língua Inglesa: Práticas de Sala de Aula, 2013

Notwithstanding, data analysis showed he had difficulties in approaching a *focus on form* instruction in class. Although he had been presented to the scientific concept of *focus on form instruction* in his academic life, and had been able to recognize it in his everyday experience of learning a language as an autodidact, he still cannot transfer this knowledge to his practice as a teacher. This not fully developed concept, or pseudo concept, is verified by his lack of confidence as regards the

way to approach grammar in class. This difficulty in being coherent to what he believes is the most effective way to approach linguistic structural aspects creates a dissonance between the ideal (focus on form instruction) and the way he was instructed most part of his experience as a language student. (focus on forms instruction). When focusing on pre-established language structures, Andrey was permeated by a feeling of "not be doing the right thing". This difficulty is aggravated by the fact that the book adopted at extracurricular follows a notional/ functional syllabus which favors a focus on forms instruction, that is, it brings pre-established language structures. His attempts at designing activities to "create the need" for some structures rather than just "presenting" them to students for a later practice was a way he found to have a more meaning focused approach to grammar.

The first excerpt is an example of a task planned to focus on form[9]. The activity would create the need for comparative form, leading students to try to use it, or to ask the teacher how to do it when elaborating the activity, so that Andrey would use their attempts to produce comparatives to focus on form. However, the way the activity was designed permitted students not to use the structure and Andrey had to resort to his own examples to explain grammar, as it was part of the syllabus. As such, his explanation did not really reflect students' needs.

> *In the group activity (you showed pairs of animals and products on the screen) in which students were supposed to **choose the one they liked more**:*
> *What kind of **linguistic structures** did you **expect** them to use?*
>
> Recall Session post, May 4, 2014
> Marcia's entry: May 4, 2014

> *I expected the students **to use comparisons, so that I could use their own examples to explain the grammar focus, so it would be contextualized**.*
>
> Recall Session post, May 4, 2014
> Andrey's reply: May 5, 2014

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[9] As Xavier (2011) explains, tasks like the one used by Andrey, called *task essentialness*, whose aim is to promote spoken or written production with a determined structure within a communicative context, are difficult to be designed since they do not always elicit from students the linguistic structures expected by the teachers.

This very same task, discussed in the previous section, generated controversy in some groups, since Andrey had asked each group to reach to an agreement about the product they liked more. The fact is that groups did not actually compare the two options, they produced sentences like: I like cats more because they are independent and calm/ I like the Ferrari car more because it is expensive and red.

> *About the comparative forms, I think* **this kind of task** *(they hadn't seen comparatives before)* **are meaningful because it raises the need /curiosity for the form, things are not given ready without being required, and then right after that, you focused on form,** *I thought it was a nice way to escape from PPP (presentation, practice, production pattern).* **It's a pity the examples did not come from students though. Anyway, in these kind of tasks it is difficult to direct, to predict which linguistic structures students are going to resort to perform them.**
>
> Recall Session post, May 4, 2014
> Marcia's reply: May 5, 2014

It is important to acknowledge that Andrey is aware his practice sometimes does not correspond to what he judges ideal. It signalizes that this aspect is already in his ZPD, mediating his teaching, although he still feels he needs to work harder on it.

As the test approached, Andrey decided to have a review class based on grammar exercises. As students reported to feel more secure about the subjects with the explicit grammar explanations and exercises done in this class, Andrey tried to raise their awareness about the importance of seeing learning a language as a process and not only as a set of rules learned explicitly in one class.

> *This class was prior to the test, so I had planned to bring some exercises to review the contents we had worked in the first 4 units… As there was one page for each review, I told the students they had 15 min to do each page and we would correct the exercises and clear up questions and doubts. The class was basically focused on this.* **Something that caught my attention was the students telling me that they love my classes and they loved this class in special.** *One student said that we could have classes like this every week. Then,* **I asked them if they didn't think that they were able to do the exercises because of the classes we had before**. *All of them replied 'yes'.* **They still believe that learning language is the same as learning about language.**
>
> Weekly Journal post, May 21, 2014
> Andrey's entry: May 25, 2014

Although Andrey had decided to use grammar exercises in this specific class, his comments in class reinforces to students and to himself his view of language as a tool for communication. My reply

to his comment reiterates his reflection, and also discusses some common beliefs students have as regards learning languages developed along the years as students.

> *Andrey, you're such a nice, helpful and patient teacher. This students' reaction concerning your classes was expected and you deserve it!!!! And I agree with you, **some students are resistant to see language as a tool for communication and not as the focus of study**. I guess they feel on safe grounds having **grammar based, structural exercises** ( rather than tasks), first because that was **the way they've learned at school,** and also because, **learning about the language "protects" them from exposure**, from having to actually **use it as a tool for communication**. **It's a paradox, because students always complain about not learning how to speak in traditional grammar based instruction**. I have nothing against teaching grammar, **but the way we approach it and the emphasis we give to it makes all the difference! It was great that you raised their awareness pointing out that they were able to do the exercises because of the previous classes**!!*

> Weekly Journal post, May 21, 2014
> Marcia's reply: May 28, 2014

> *Thank you, Márcia**! I really like this paradox thing. I had never looked at it from this perspective.** Great! :)*

> Weekly Journal post, May 21, 2014
> Andrey's reply: May 28, 2014

It is important to mention that the way he organizes the review for the test seems to be incoherent to his reported beliefs as regards grammar. If the review he elaborated emphasizes structures it is because his test reiterates this view. It ends up emphasizing this belief to students as well.

Although Andrey felt bad in only applying the exercises proposed by the book and focusing on grammar, I noticed that, as students liked it, asked for grammar exercises and explicit explanations, Andrey lowered his efforts to develop tasks or adapt the book activities. However, the feeling of "doing something wrong" continues to warn him to reposition his view of language teaching/learning.

> *I was supposed to start UNIT 6 in this class, but many students did not come. So **I let them decide if they wanted me to start UNIT 6 either way or if they wanted to do the exercises from the workbook in class, correct them, and clear up doubts and questions.** They opted for the second option. **I cannot lie that I felt kind of strange in this class. I could see that they were engaged in doing the exercises, but I didn't feel so comfortable with the situation, because it was a too grammatical lesson.** I believe we have focused a lot on criticizing grammatical lessons that when we have one, **we feel like we are doing something wrong. I know and I believe there's no harm in teaching grammar to our students, especially because of our learning culture in which our students believe they learn this way, but sometimes the feeling is stronger than the reasoning.***

> Weekly Journal post, June 4, 2014
> Andrey's entry: June 14, 2014

*Andrey, I feel the same way when I spend more time than I had planned in grammar explanations. **I do agree that grammar is important but I believe that we feel bad not only because people tend to criticize grammar lessons, but because we know (not only through theoretical texts) by observation and by experience that classes based on grammar exercises will not enable students to communicate in English. Moreover, as I said in another post, the way we approach grammar makes all the difference**. **I think that's why we feel bad when we base a class on grammar.***

<div align="right">

Weekly Journal post, June 4, 2014
Marcia's reply: June 14, 2014

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It seems that Andrey starts to be mediated by his emotion. As students liked grammar based classes, complimented and valued him –and being valued has an important emotional component in his trajectory-he starts to give in to be valued by students, and instead of keeping trying to deconstruct students' belief that learning a language limits itself to learning its grammar, he chooses to attend students' requests for more grammar based classes, even though it brings him a sensation that he is betraying his own conceptions as regards learning a language.

His students' positive feedback has lowered his initial internal struggle between the ideal class, and the real class. His initial internal struggle: the ideal class-in which communication prevails and the real class-where grammar is the central aspect to be mastered is not the focus of his reflections in the blog anymore. He seems to be comfortable having a grammar-based class. The following excerpt is another example of his gradual detachment from his declared view of language.

*Something that caught my attention in this class was the beginning of it. The class before that, **I explained to them how past simple worked. They were really curious and willing to learn about that. So I started this class asking them about the rules of simple past and they were able to tell me everything. I told them I was impressed by it, and they said: you made it very simple for us last class. Oh I felt like hugging them!***

<div align="right">

Weekly Journal post, July 6, 2014
Andrey's entry: July 10, 2014

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Since Andrey did not mention in his blog entry any activity through which past simple forms could have been used with a communicative purpose, I tried to address it through meditation.

*What about the use of simple past? **Were they able to transfer the explicit knowledge into use in communicative activities?***

**We haven't had the opportunity to practice it yet. As soon as we do it, I'll let you know.**

Due to students' interests, demands and positive feedback, he seems to have incorporated the focus on forms instruction to his teaching in the latest classes.

In the last week of classes, Andrey's practice still oscillates between focus on communication and focus on forms.

*Why did you decide to start the class asking students about their neighborghood?*

*I wanted them to name the places and use the prepositions of place. I remember the students enjoyed it, because they were producing language.*

His first activity could have worked as a "prática conversacional"[10] (conversational practice), in which Andrey prepares the students for a task eliciting from them and providing the necessary linguistic resources, in this case, for describing the neighborhood. This conversational practice would make the next activity feasible for students. However, what followed was a grammar focused activity, where the prepositions took a central role, rather than working as vehicles to get to a communicative outcome.

*what's the reasoning behind the way you presented the prepositions of place (when you moved to the book)*

---

[10] Xavier (2010; in Xavier, 2011) proposes a "prática conversacional" between teacher and students, or among students, in order to familiarize them with the linguistic structures necessary for the task performance. As the author explains, this initial conversation does not imply an outcome.

*I also have to confess that **I hadn't prepared that class very well. It was something that came to my mind while they were doing the listening exercise***.

Recall Session post, July 23, 2014
Andrey's reply: July 24, 2014

*I know how it is, Andrey...**besides this semester was atypical (holidays, world cup, etc),we had to rush and, I don't know about you, but I felt my students did not have the necessary time and practice to internalize things we saw in class**. I asked you that question because I noticed that **you started the class focusing on communication (they described their neighborhood), and as they needed vocabulary you assisted them. But, when you moved to the book, you did the other way round, you focused on the form (meaning of prepositions) and then asked for an example on the city map**. In this book activity, I think it would make more sense if you had started from the map and then they would feel the need for a preposition, I mean**, instead of asking students "use the preposition'next to'" to locate a place on the map", you could have asked them to find certain places on the map (or you could hide the names of the places on the map and give the locations for students to find). They would be "forced" to use the prepositions, but with a communicative purpose. It creates the need for using them, as in the beginning, talking about their own neighborhood.***

Recall Session post, July 23, 2014
Marcia's reply: July 28, 2014

*You are completely right! You see, that's my problem. **When I prepare things I put communication in the first place** (at least I try to), but when I don't think the lesson through, **I tend to focus on grammar. I guess because we have always had this way, and it seems easier.***

Recall Session post, July 23, 2014
Andrey's reply: July 31, 2014

Andrey's reply to my feedback shows once more the power of the apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975). We may say that when concepts are not fully internalized, inflight decisions are informed by this apprenticeship. Although Andrey has declared that the way he learned English in formal contexts (regular school and language institutes) did not suffice for him to be able to communicate in the target language, he ended up reproducing the same practices, since it was the memories he has about formal English teaching environment.

It seems that for Andrey to overcome the apprenticeship of observation it would be necessary to insist more systematically in a practice based on focus on form so that he will be able to see results. Only this way the scientific concepts will confront everyday and this way pass from the zone of proximal development to the zone of real development. Also, because of the emotional component

aforementioned, it would be important that students start to see the positive outcomes and compliment Andrey for non-grammatical classes as well.

Andrey's last participation on the blog was in the *The last but not the least questionnaire* I posted on the blog. When asked about aspects worth being punctuated in his work with the students, he highlights the aspects, namely - group activities and focus on form/s - we had been working on along the semester through mediation. His narrative shows he is aware that these are concepts still need to be developed. The excerpt that follows instantiates Andrey's difficulty in designing group activities. For him, not controlling students' production individually is still a point to be thought over. He also emphasizes he needs more time to incorporate new practices into his own classroom practices:

> *Looking back at this semester, something that **I struggled a lot was the group activities. I really see them as important, and I always propose them in my classes and they work just fine, but I do not know how to evaluate the outcome of these activities.** I have this tendency to **ask students individually**, and it gets really annoying. Students get distracted and I feel bad once it is over. [the researcher] presented me some options, and I tried them, but **I guess it takes some time until we incorporate new things. I hope I will overcome this in my next classes**.*
>
> The Last but not the Least Questionnaire, July 28, 2014
> Andrey's reply: August 12, 2014

As regards the focus on form/s, Andrey's next narrative shows he is aware that his inflight decisions are informed by structural exercises, perhaps because this was the way he learned English, these memories were the first to come to his mind.

> *As this semester was such a mess for me regarding personal problems, I could reflect upon that point this semester, and I realize that somehow these problems caused an impact in my classroom. I mean, I continued not remembering them while I was teaching, but because of them, I did not prepare my classes properly, **which made me improvise during the classes, and sometimes these improvisations were not good. When I did not prepare my classes, I tended to rely on language structure exercises, because they were the ones that came to my mind in such a short notice, and after the class, I used to feel upset because I did not give my best.** Now I see that our own identities are not immune to each other. They may not interfere a great deal, but they will be present somehow...*
>
> The Last but not the Least Questionnaire, July 28, 2014
> Andrey's reply: August 12, 2014

If we go back to his language learning history in formal language learning environments, he never experienced language learning via tasks, did not have good experiences with group activities and

did not experience a focus on form approach to grammar aspects. He was presented to these concepts
only as a teacher learner, and did not have actually transfer these concepts to his practice on a daily
basis.

About the importance of reflecting about practice, Andrey states the place reflection had in his
professional growth. The engagement in reflection gave him the opportunity to externalize his
difficulties with no fear to be judged. As he recounts his uncertainties as a novice teacher the issue with
grammar is again the focus.

> ***I do believe that reflecting upon my practice made me grow professionally. – This is a fact****! Before coming to UFSC, I used to feel quite insecure about my way of teaching. I was never sure if I was doing the right or the wrong thing. **I didn't know when and how to teach grammar or if I had to teach grammar at all. In sum, I did not reflect upon my practice at all.** I had these uncertainties, but I did not talk about them to anyone because I believed it could make me a weaker professional. Attending Prof. Adriana's classes gave me peace of mind and showed me that there is not right or wrong, that everything depends (as Karen Johnson would say)**. I believe there is always room for improvement. I still have many things to improve in my classes. We are not perfect and it is not easy to be perfect when dealing with human beings. Everyone is different and we have to adapt our practices to people's needs.**
>
> The Last but not the Least Questionnaire, July 28, 2014
> Andrey's reply: August 12, 2014

For Andrey, having a peer raising questions about his pedagogical procedures is paramount for
boosting reflection and thus, for developing professionally. He also underscores the role feedback plays
in this process.

> *When I started teaching at extra, and [researcher] asked me to be her participant, I did not hesitate and said 'yes'. **It was really good to have someone attending my classes and posing questions that helped me really reflect upon my choices. I believe it is an experience every teacher should have.** I remember watching a Bill Gate's lecture from TED in which he talked about the importance of teachers receiving feedback on their practice and how it may improve the education in general. I really agree with him.*
>
> The Last but not the Least Questionnaire, July 28, 2014
> Andrey's reply: August 12, 2014

Overall, I interpret my mediation along the semester as an opportunity for Andrey to think
through his own practice and then unveil and bring to awareness his own beliefs about teaching as well
as his teaching practices themselves. Yet, I cannot say that his pedagogical practice was mediated by
our interactions; what has mediated his practice, it seems, has indeed been the apprenticeship of

observation and his positive emotions, materialized on the students' likes and praising. These tended to deny or extinguish the feelings of incoherence between his doing and his thinking.

## 5.3 SUMMARY ON FINDINGS

Andrey is an 8- year- experience EFL teacher. By the time data were collected Andrey got his MA certificate, and entered the doctoral program in Applied Linguistics, carrying out his research on task-based learning and teaching. Although he had not entered the Letters course to become an English teacher, he enjoyed his first teaching experience. His professional curriculum as a language teacher consists of an English language Letters Program in a university in the state of Paraná (PR) and experiences in private language institutes in Paraná and in Santa Catarina. Andrey describes his language learning history in three different periods: as a foreign language learner at a regular school, at a language institute, and later as an autodidact. As he systematically analyses the three different stages of his language learning, it is possible to identify the progression he established along these stages, according to what he expected from a language class: being able to use it for communication rather than focusing on the structural aspects of the language. It is clear in his narratives that, for him, learning a language was more than learning aspects connected to structure and form. He wanted to be able to interact with people and not only with the teacher, who was the main source of English in his classes. This not fulfilled need led him to develop his own strategies to learn the language. Even though Andrey clearly states that the way grammar was focused and the lack of group activities were weak aspects in his past experiences as L2 student, these very same aspects still have an echo on his teaching. Albeit he is aware of that and struggles to address those aspects from an informed perspective, he gradually starts to adopt more traditional practices (focus on forms instruction) in response to his students' likes. This may have happened due to his students' demands for structural, forms – focused activities and by the entrenched traditional practices he was exposed to along the years of apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975). Our interactions along the semester touched this issue, and Andrey is aware of his difficulties, but these factors were not enough to promote his

reconceptualization. However, the narratives of the first semester and the mediation raised his awareness about the incongruencies in his teaching practices. Although this awareness can bring the feeling of disorganization, it represents the first and necessary step for changes to take place.

For Andrey to overcome the apprenticeship of observation (empirical knowledge), both regarding group work and focus on form instruction -it will be necessary that this knowledge be confronted to the scientific concept. Although Andrey knew the scientific concept, the empirical knowledge- everyday concept- still speaks louder than the scientific concept. In the case of focus on form instruction, Andrey stops making efforts to keep coherent to his teaching conceptualizations and ends up surrendering to the practicability of the everyday concept. He was mediated by the emotion and by the apprenticeship of observation more than by any other aspect, and this can be seen by the changes in his practice along the semester. However, it is clear that both concepts analyzed (group work and focus on form instruction) are on his ZPD, and due to the conflict created by the idealized and real, in order to escape from the conflict he gives some steps backward. This is what twisting path is about, the same way he stepped backward this time, in a future opportunity, when he comes across conflict again, he can give some steps forward. For this to happen, Andrey needs to keep on reflecting on his practices, and at his stage of development he does not need necessarily the mediation of another person, he can do it via narratives, for example.

The next chapter, Conclusion, is devoted to the discussion of the most important findings and results that emerged from the data analysis in order to answer the research questions.

## CHAPTER 6- CONCLUSION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The overall duty of teacher education programs has always been the same-preparing teachers for teaching-yet, the way the field understands how teachers learn to do their job has been sensibly changing over the last decades (Freeman &Johnson,1998). On the flip side of the traditional positivist paradigm which dictated and modeled specific teaching behaviors to achieve determined outcomes is the sociocultural theoretical perspective, which recognizes learning as a unique process shaping and being shaped by the social context in which it is inserted. This perspective has garnered prominence in the scenario of second/foreign language teacher education and prompted a call for researches on teachers' learning.

Joining the various voices aiming at responding to such call, the present study was designed to investigate how two English as a/an foreign/additional language experienced teachers' conceptions of teaching emerged and evolve as they move along a one-semester teaching experience in which their pedagogical practice is object of study of the researcher-a peer teacher who follows their classes, questions their decisions, and responds to their teaching practices and anxieties via a blog constructed to these ends. In order to answer this general research question, the following specific questions were investigated:

1-What are the concepts most often raised by teachers as they verbalize their teaching in their narratives?

2-How did teachers come to conceptualize teaching as evidenced in their learning history narratives and how do these conceptualizations reflect in their classes?

3-How do these concepts progressively evolve? To what extent has strategic mediation via narratives (blog) contributed to these teachers' development?

4-Has the teachers' teaching practice been transformed along the period in which these teachers have been traced? Which contextual factors contributed for fostering/ curbing change?

Through a sociocultural lens, it was possible to capture the most relevant not fully developed conceptualizations regarding teaching, how they were shaped by teachers' language and teaching learning histories, as well as the impact they engender in teachers' practices. Moreover, the virtual space created via blog constituted a mediational tool through which those conceptualizations were foci of reflection and questionings in the attempt to foster concept development. Together, Vygotsky's psychological tenets and Johnson and Golombek's (2011) narrative framework provided the grounds to answer the specific research questions aforementioned which now I proceed to answer.

6.2 SPECIFIC RESEARCH QUESTIONS

**6.2.1 RQ 1 and RQ2**

In order to answer the first specific research question "What are the concepts most often raised by teachers as they verbalize their teaching?" I relied on data collected in both semesters, namely, learning histories narratives and reaction papers on the first semester and blog interactions and class observations on the second semester. Through the analysis of data from the first semester, it was possible to identify Mayra's pseudo conceptualization as regards motivation, when her idealized expectation (motivated students) based on her own experience as a student, was frustrated by the reality (demotivated students). Her struggle to motivate students was the aspect that she was most concerned about and was the focus of mediation during her teaching practice.

In Andrey's case, data showed that two concepts were the foci of contradiction in his practice- his difficulty in designing group work and in adopting a focus on form instruction. These aspects permeated his practice and were brought to discussion several times through mediation via blog. Although both participants had showed that they were able to use scientific knowledge to refer to these concepts, their teaching practice (when classes were observed) indicated that they are not fully internalized, or that what they have internalized is a misleading concept, what we have been calling pseudo concept. Moreover, instances of verbalization-using scientific concepts to make sense of

teaching experiences and to regulate both thinking and teaching practices-concerning the concepts analyzed were not identified in the narratives of the second semester. This corroborates the suspicion that the participants are not *thinking in concepts* (Karpov, 2003), "understood as both an outcome of and evidence for internalization" (Johnson and Golombek, 2011, p.492).

Connected to the first research question is the second: "How did teachers come to conceptualize teaching and how do these conceptualizations reflect in their classes?" The systematic examination they engaged in to write their learning histories provided insights about how their previous experiences shaped their conceptualizations.

In Andrey's case, engaging in narratives brought to awareness his conceptualization regarding group work, i.e. in recollecting his earlier experiences as a learner he was able to recognize the reasons of his difficulty in working in groups and reconsider his conceptualization as regards group work from a student's point-of-view (in the course Ensino de língua inglesa: práticas de sala de aula), and in the class observation in my group previous to his team teaching practice. However, in practice as a language teacher, he still struggled to design group work attuned to his idealization.

As regards his conceptualization of focus on form instruction, his previous successful experiences as a learner (autodidact) have made him consider this kind of instruction the ideal one. However, given that his classroom experiences as a language student were not based on focus on form instruction, but on focus on forms instruction, those past lived classrooms experiences are the ones that drive his teaching practices, and not the idealized experience as an autodidact. His systematic examination done through narratives enabled him to organize his thoughts about how he learned the language and to recognize what has worked (focus on form) and what has not worked satisfactorily (focus on forms) and also about the effectiveness of group work, showing that these aspects are in his ZPD. However, simply engaging in systematic examination through narratives did not suffice to change his practice as observed in his teaching activity.

A closer look at Mayra's systematic examination about her learning histories shows that the not fully developed concept as regards motivation- the main point mediating her teaching- is transformed into efforts to "please" students, such efforts stand in sharp contrast with her declared views about language teaching and learning, identified in her narratives at the beginning of the semester. When facing not motivated students, her ideal conceptualization based on herself as a second language student crashes with the reality of many of her foreign language students. Her (mis)conceptualization made her lose self-regulation and she became other regulated by what she believed could "please" students rather than motivate them. This loss of self-regulation resulted in the adoption of more structure- focused, traditional classroom practices, and not very well designed engaging activities, i.e. activities that did not have clear procedures or communicative objectives.

**6.2.2 RQ 3 and RQ 4**

While data collected in the first semester revealed how the participants conceptualizations were built along their engagement in social events throughout their lives (ontogenetic analysis), data collected in the second semester via blog traced how these concepts evolved (or remained the same) along the semester in which classes were observed and mediation was implemented (microgenetic analysis). The mediational space created via blog provided the tools to answer the third and fourth research questions: "How do these concepts progressively evolve? To what extent has strategic mediation contributed to these teachers' development?" and "Has the teachers' teaching practice been transformed along the period in which these teachers have been traced? Which contextual factors contributed for fostering/ curbing change?"

Before describing how the participants' conceptualizations progressively evolved, and the role of mediation in this process, it is worth mentioning that the engagement in narrative accounts can be twofold - it provides insights for the researcher to understand how the teachers come to know what they know or to think in a certain way, but first and foremost it can bring to teachers themselves the conscious awareness necessary for fostering the development of concepts. Inviting teachers to write

their language learning/teacher learning histories "requires teachers to reflect on their prior language learning experiences, critically analyze those experiences, and then relate their analyses to their current conceptions of both language learning and language teaching" (Johnson, 1999). As previously mentioned, for Andrey, the systematic analysis engendered by the narratives from the first semester let him aware of his difficulty in working in groups and the reasons that led him think that way. Likewise, the narratives helped him to verbalize-use scientific knowledge to refer to his own experiences as a learner when referring to the different kinds of instruction (focus on form/forms). The engagement in narratives brought to him the awareness about his difficulties, and, at this juncture, strategic mediation within his teaching activity in the second semester was necessary as an attempt to foster concept development.

For Mayra, narratives of the first semester were not elucidatory in regards to the conceptualization of motivation the way they were for Andrey. In this sense, Andrey was one step ahead in his zone of development since he started the new semester aware of the points he needed to reconceptualize – designing group work and addressing grammar in classes. In Mayra's case, her learning history narratives functioned as externalization of her thoughts and feelings, but it did not bring to conscious awareness, as they did for Andrey, that the concept of motivation was one point that deserved to be reconceptualized, however it was crucial for me as a researcher to identify her conceptualization before classes started and plan mediation, since narrative as externalization "opens up teachers' current understandings (and potentially their ZPD) to social influence and restructuring." (Johnson and Golombek, 2011, p.491). During the second semester-when classes were observed and mediation was implemented-she began to show awareness of her (mis)conceptualization and some glimpses of change in her practices were identified, although such changes were not robust enough to evidence internalization.

For Andrey, his conceptualization followed a more twisted path than Mayra's. At the beginning of the semester he was struggling to stick to his idealized conceptualizations, however, as the semester

progressed, he started to adopt more traditional practices, although his concerns continued to be present in his narratives and to be the focus of mediation. In this sense, mediation seemed to be more effective for Mayra than for Andrey.

As regards the first part of the fourth research question "Has the teachers' teaching practice been transformed along the period in which these teachers have been traced?", data indicates that for both participants, the period of one semester (four months) did not suffice to show transformation in their practice. This is not altogether surprising given that from a sociocultural perspective, time is paramount for the development of higher cognitive processes (Kozulin, 1986; Lee, Wertsch, & Stone, 1983; Newman & Holzman, 1993) and thus for transformation to take place. Moreover, as Vygotsky (1986) explains, in order to develop a concept, the individual may have to go through several meaningful social experiences (interpersonal plane), where this developing concept is modified through new experiences and reapplied in new contexts, before it is fully internalized (intrapersonal plane). As such, time becomes an intrinsic factor for concept development given that the amount of time demanded for concept development will depend basically on the opportunities faced (during the actual practice of teaching) or offered (mediation) for development, and on each individual's agency in the process. As such, years of experience will not be enough if opportunities for concept development are not offered or not taken. Moreover, data analysis instantiates that the vygostskian notion of "twisting path" is observable not only in novice teachers' practices, but also with more experienced ones. This could be explained by the fact that concept development is not only a matter of teaching hours, but of a lack of intertwinement between everyday and scientific concepts, therefore experience alone does not guarantee that teachers become aware of not fully internalized concepts and change their practices.

In order to answer the second part of the fourth research question "...Which contextual features contributed for fostering/ curbing change?" data showed that although their learning histories had shown their agency in the process of learning to teach, other contextual factors were identified as mediating their cognition and as potential deviators from the path of concept development. In the cases

investigated, these contextual features identified as interfering in teachers' concept development were managing time, the emotional connection between teacher-students and the kind of mediation received.

The notion of time appears again in data mediating teachers' cognition, but now in a different dimension. For both participants managing time to plan classes accordingly and coping with their academic tasks and/or personal issues was an aspect often raised by the participants during mediation. Teaching activity requires time for planning classes and for researching/designing material to be incorporated to classes. Given that at the extracurricular course the textbook is seen as a guide and not as the main resource, teachers are free to adapt the book to their own teaching goals. The difficulty in balancing roles – teacher and graduate student-and thus managing time to plan classes, may have been one factor that induced participants to rely on the apprenticeship of observation and adopt traditional practices.

The emotional connection with students appears as a powerful mediator for both participants albeit it manifests from opposing emotions. If for Mayra, the negative emotional connection with the students (lack of students' involvement in class) uncovered her pseudo conceptualization about motivation, leading her to try to 'please' students more than designing goal oriented classroom practices, for Andrey, it was the positive emotional connection with his students that ended up in the same results-the adoption of traditional practices. In Andrey's case, students' requirement for classes based on focus on forms instruction, probably based on their own apprenticeship of observation during their regular school years in which  language classes may have privileged form over meaning, may have led him twist the path and adopt more traditional practices. Although at the beginning Andrey had tried to change students' everyday concept as regards language learning, he ended up falling into this trap, in most part, due to students' recurrent positive feedback towards forms focused classes. As aforementioned, the Extracurricular course does not follow a traditional grammar based curriculum, it is intended to develop overall communicative abilities, having the language structures as a backdrop. Notwithstanding, it does not mean that language forms should not be addressed, but the way it is done

and the place and importance is given to structural aspects is the point worked during mediation. If Andrey's students' goal is to be able to communicate, sooner or later they will be forced to reevaluate their concepts concerning language learning, or at least, change their goals.

Another contextual aspect identified in Mayra's data that could have influenced concept development is the dependence on Internet connection rather than having face-to-face mediational sessions. As she had reported in the last questionnaire, she would like to have had more synchronous face-to-face interactions. Moreover, she reported having problems connecting the Internet, what curbed the establishment of a dynamic dialogic mediation. Although Mayra seemed to be open to mediation and believes that its combination with reflection can lead to concept development, for her, face to face and more direct mediation would have been more profitable. As Golombek (2014) points out, how teachers receive mediation differ, and as such, reflective journals may be ineffective for some teachers, as researches have shown (Akbari, 2007; Strand, 2006; in Golombek, 2014). It is necessary to be sensitive to perceive if the mediation is welcome or not, and as Lantolf (2000) suggests, withdraw it "when a learner shows signs that it is either not required or not welcome" (p.81).

Among a myriad of factors influencing teachers' practices which may curb teachers' concept development, the emotional aspects involved in the profession of teaching as regards its target audience deserves to be under deeper scrutiny. As in any profession teachers desire to have their work positively recognized, especially and primarily by their students. However, the need to be accepted and approved by their pupils may blur teachers' broader view of contextual features and influence teachers' practices. If, on the one hand, students' feedback can function as thermometers and help to promote change, on the other hand, it can deviate teachers from the path towards concept development. Thus, teachers must be cautious and analyze the situation wisely before abandoning their informed views about teaching. In this enterprise, narratives and dialogic mediation can be a starting point to develop a robust reasoning (Johnson, 1999). The path is tricky and twisted, however, there is always the opportunity for a stopover, for reevaluating the route and, more importantly, for enjoying the trip along with students.

The last chapter *Implications, Limitations, and Future Research Directions*, starts with some closing remarks on the research findings. I also comment on the limitations and implications of this study and suggest some insights for further inquiry that emerged from data analysis. To finish, I underscore the relevance of studies that aim to capture the process of teachers' development through narratives fostered by dialogic mediation, having the sociocultural perspective paving the path towards concept development.

**CHAPTER 7. IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS**

7.1 IMPLICATIONS

The ultimate goal of this investigation was to show the power of sociocultural perspective in unveiling language teachers' cognition. This study underscores that teacher learning is a unique process that demands time and engagement in meaningful learning opportunities, and is mediated by teachers' prior experiences as language learners, language teachers, by their own agency, and also by the contextual aspects in which learning/teaching takes place. Moreover, a close reading across the cases of the participants makes visible that the longstanding quandary about theory and practice divide is still an issue permeating teachers' practices and has prevented teachers from developing conceptual thinking. Given the elucidatory power that research on teacher development brings to the fore, it seems that teacher education programs should consider designing curricula that account for the individual aspects of teacher learning and that promote strategic mediation along all the course periods and across all levels of education within the program. As such, this investigation contends that writing in dialogic blogs is a useful mediational tool since it allows development "to be seen as it unfolds" (Arshavskaya & Whitney, 2014, p.738) and the narratives and interactions produced can be open up for public scrutiny. Furthermore, as Arshavskaya & Whitney (2014) put it, dialogic blogs can "function as a powerful tool for self-reflection and systematic examination of everyday teaching practices, and further teacher educators can trace an individual teacher's professional development in this context"(p.738). Dialogic blogs can free participants from a gnawing sense of unease that many times face-to-face mediation can produce and it allows time for both parties (participants and researcher) to articulate and reflect about the questionings before answering or providing feedback. The effort to recollect classroom events to write in the blog can help creating the habit for reflection after classes. Blogs also allow more participants to join in the process, mediation then, can be profitable for all individuals involved, given that all participants can suggest, question, and reflect upon the topics raised.

Although proposals for change seem easier said than done, some are within easy reach. Programs as ISF (Idiomas sem Fronteiras) and as PIBID (Programa Institucional de Bolsa de Iniciação à Docência) offer pre service and in service teachers opportunities for self-development and mediation. ISF, under the guidance of more expert others, offers teachers mediation through reflection, microteachings and peer collaboration providing a sense of unity among teachers. In this vein, Extension programs at UFSC could follow the same path. Although the extracurricular language course affords great opportunities for teachers (novice or not) to put their teaching knowledge into practice, functioning as a laboratory for collecting data and for applying action research, irrespective from that, many teachers still adopt traditional practices. The great majority of teachers I had the opportunity to observe inscribe a borderline between their academic knowledge (scientific knowledge)-resulted from the latest research in the field, and their daily practice-mostly based on "chalk and talk" practices. It seems that for them, the academic knowledge and the teaching activity belong to different realms.

## 7.2 LIMITATIONS

The most outstanding limitation of this study was time. As aforementioned, research on concept development demands time and, within this time, it is necessary that multiple opportunities appear during the classes for that specific concept under construction manifest and thus be the focus of mediation and discussion. The period of an academic semester to implement mediation did not suffice in that sense. Also, my own performance as a mediator seemed to be a limiting factor. After collecting and analyzing data I could see points in my mediational moves that could be changed or recalibrated. Moreover, the fact that I was a peer teacher, and not a credentialed teacher educator in that context, might have interfered in the process of mediation.

Another important limitation worth underscoring related to Mayra's data was receiving late feedback to my posts and having feedback from different classes on the same day. This fact hindered the observation of signs of development as it unfolded along the semester.

As a final comment, I would like to state that this study did not intend to judge participants' teaching behaviors or abilities let alone imposing practices that spring from one particular theoretical perspective. As a study focused on concept development, it limits itself at promoting a collaborative work as a peer - teacher and help participants to review their practices so that they can conform to participants' own views of teaching.

7.3 FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Some possibilities for future research sprang from this investigation. Perhaps the most relevant ones concern expanding the research to broader contextual levels and investigating the role emotion plays in teachers' cognition. Working with sociocultural theory requires researchers to acknowledge the social influences mediating teachers' cognition and observe phenomena as a whole and not in isolation. Activity theory used in combination with Vygotsky's psychological constructs has the potential to capture the phenomena as a whole and at the same time identify how the activity systems within it relate to each other. In this sense, carrying out a research on Activity Theory (Engestron, 1999; Leont'ev, 1977) would be elucidative since it accounts for the cultural, social, and historical context in which activity is taking place.

Research indicates that the instances of emotional dissonance can function as potential growth points (Childs, 2011; DiPardo & Potter, 2003; Golombek and Doran, 2013; Golombek & Johnson, 2004; Johnson and Worden, 2014; Kubanyiova, 2012; Reis, 2011), so another aspect that deserved a deeper scrutiny is focusing on the role of emotion in teachers' cognition. I believe that a deeper analysis on how the emotional dissonances could be explored to trigger teachers' development would be very elucidative to plan more effective strategic mediation, given that, for Vygotsky(1986), "a true and full understanding of another's thought is possible only when we understand its affective-volitional basis (p. 252).

I hope the present dissertation can contribute to the field of teacher education and to researchers interested in investigating teachers' development from a sociocultural perspective. Also, underscoring

Smagorinsky *et al'*s (2003) claim that  the problem in teacher education is not too much theory but too little concept, I  hope that this study can join the various voices that aim at showing the importance of developing teachers' conceptual thinking. The tools are out there, in form of research, seminars, articles, communities of practice, etc. To appropriate them or not is our untransferable and unalienable choice.

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**APPENDIX A**

Blog Praxis

**Schedule for class observation and posts**

*<u>Schedule and activities:</u>* **We'll have three different kinds of posts. The first one is called *Recall Session* and is started by me right after the class observation, the other one is called *Weekly Journal* and is started by you (see more details below). There's a third one called *Tips for Classroom Activities,* and it is optional.**

*Recall Sessions*

**Tuesdays: Andrey's class observation -**
**Thursdays: Mayra's class observation-**
*Recall session-* **Each observation is followed by questions on the blog related to the class observed. After receiving your answers/comments I write a feedback about the class as a whole. The recall session starts with different questions to each of you concerning your specific class. I decided to keep you two in the same post because, since we three are teaching the very same level in the same teaching context, we could benefit from each other's comments and concerns. Feel free to express any comment you may find relevant, ok!**

_____

*Weekly Journal*

**Tuesday-Mayra's class**
**Thursday-Andrey's class**
*Weekly Journal* **- Participants' blog posts: participants   post some issues/ comments about their own classes having the following points having the Discussion Questionnaire as a basis:**

 **The following questions will be the point of departure for class reflection. I'd like you to raise some points concerning the classes I'm not present in the "Weekly Journal". You don't need to answer all of them. They serve as a guide for you to write something about the class which you find worth writing about:**
**Points for Discussion Questionnaire:**
**1-Is there anything in the class that you think you could've done differently / didn't like /didn't work as you imagined?**
**2-What did you like about the class? What worked well? What makes you think so?**
**3-How did you feel the way students reacted to the activities proposed?**
**4How do you feel about the way you present grammar/ negotiate meaning?**
**5-Are there any issues (concerning activities/ issues about any student in particular) that you might feel relevant commenting about?**

_____

*Tips for Classroom Activities*

**It will be opened by me weekly and you post only if you feel like doing. It is a space for sharing/ asking for ideas to be used in Level 1.**

Posted by Márcia Rosa at Tuesday, April 22, 2014

**APPENDIX B**

*Starting Up* questionnaire

<div style="background-color:#cd7f5f">

This blog is a space for sharing experiences, concerns and reflecting upon classroom practices. Tuesday, April 22, 2014

</div>

Starting up!!
**Dear participants! Here are some starting up questions which will help me to understand a little bit more about your background experiences and concepts regarding teaching:**

**Mayra**

**What's your education/experience background?**
**What's your view about language teaching/ learning?**
**What's your view of a good language class?**
**What are the necessary components of a good class?**
**What do you consider a bad class?**
**What is your view of a good teacher (how did you get to this concept?)**
**What is (are) the greatest challenges about teaching initial levels?**
**What's motivation? How can a teacher deal with students who are not motivated to learn English?**


**Andrey**

**What's your education/experience background?**
**What's your view about language teaching/ learning?**
**What's your view of a good language class?**
**What are the necessary components of a good class?**
**What do you consider a bad class?**
**What is your view of a good teacher (how did you get to this concept?)**
**What is (are) the greatest challenges about teaching initial levels?**
**What's group work in a L2 context like extracurricular? Which aspects are fundamental in group work?**

Posted by Márcia Rosa at Tuesday, April 22, 2014

**APPENDIX C**

*The Last but not the Least* questionnaire

This blog is a space for sharing experiences, concerns and reflecting upon classroom practices Monday, July 28, 2014

## the Last but not the Least...

**Dear participants!**
**This is the last questionnaire I'm asking you to answer. I'm really thankful for your participation, for your willingness and patience to reply to my comments, and for having me in your classroom throughout the semester. I hope it was a positive experience for you, because my understandings about teaching improved a lot this semester!!!**
1-   **Having your class /students in mind, how do you see your work with them at the beginning and at the end of the semester? Has it changed in some aspects? (If "yes": Which ones? Why do you think you've changed them?)**
2-    **Which things do you think still think you should improve in your classes?**
3-   **What were the negative aspects about the semester? Do you think that your academic work /personal issues interfered in your performance?**
4-   **Do you believe that reflecting upon your practice is an effective way to grow as a professional? Why? Why not? Has this experience directed influenced your understandings about teaching? If" yes", how?**

Posted by Márcia Rosa at Monday, July 28, 2014

**APPENDIX D**

Consent letter

**Consent Letter**
**Carta de Consentimento**
**Formulário do Consentimento Livre e Esclarecido**

Título do Projeto: Desvendando a aprendizagem professor: uma investigação do papel das narrativas e da mediação dialógica no desenvolvimento de conceitos .

Gostaria de lhe convidar a participar de um projeto de pesquisa sobre o desenvolvimento de conceitos através da prática pedagógica no ensino de língua estrangeira.

Aprender a ensinar envolve uma ampla prática social. Em outras palavras, aprender a ensinar é social e culturalmente construído e estar ciente disso é fundamental para que os professores reconceituem suas práticas de ensino. Nesta perspectiva, é fundamental fornecer aos professores a oportunidade de se expressarem sobre as suas práticas, situando-as e justificando-as com embasamento teórico significativo. Tendo como fundamento teórico a teoria sociocultural para a qual a linguagem a principal ferramenta psicológica que medeia a cognição humana, esta pesquisa utiliza a linguagem como o principal meio de mediação através do qual olha-se para o desenvolvimento dos professores.

Você está sendo convidado (a) a participar deste estudo por ter formação em letras-inglês e já possuir certa experiência na área. Se você aceitar participar, por favor, leia este consentimento e se concorda com a informação aqui apresentada, assine onde indicado. Uma cópia ficará comigo, pesquisadora responsável pelo projeto, e outra com você.

Objetivo do Estudo: O objetivo deste estudo é investigar o processo de desenvolvimento de professores de inglês como língua estrangeira, na sua prática de ensino e como a (re) conceituam. Estudos que investigam a prática docente de professores iniciando suas carreiras indicam que esta prática sofre transformações ao longo do período em que estes são acompanhados por um mentor, entretanto, há a necessidade de mais estudos com docentes com maior experiência na profissão.

Procedimentos:

Se você aceitar participar deste estudo, você será solicitado a realizar as

seguintes tarefas: (1) permitir a presença do pesquisador em sala de aula uma vez por semana durante o período letivo de um semestre (2) responder a um questionário que apontará o seu perfil e sua trajetória docente (3) participar semanalmente de discussões e responder a questionamentos em um blog que será construído para esse fim (3) responder a um questionário ao final do semestre letivo. (4) disponibilizar os questionários de avaliação respondidos pelos alunos da sala.

Riscos e benefícios do estudo:

Não há riscos em participar deste estudo. O pesquisador não interfere nas aulas, nem no planejamento das mesmas. A observação fornecerá subsídios para as interações no blog, que servirá de espaço para reflexão e questionamentos. Acredito que com estas interações, você terá a oportunidade de refletir sobre suas próprias práticas, bem como dividir experiências, ansiedades e dilemas.

Ao final da pesquisa, os resultados do estudo serão tornados públicos, mas sua identidade será totalmente preservada e não será incluída nenhuma informação que possa identificá-lo (a). Somente a pesquisadora deste projeto terá acesso aos dados coletados.

Natureza voluntária do estudo:

Sua decisão de participar ou não deste estudo não irá afetar você ou sua relação com a Universidade de nenhuma forma. Se você decidir participar e depois decidir desistir, não tem problema. Você poderá

desistir a qualquer momento. Peço apenas que você me notifique, através do e-mail listado abaixo. Para contato telefônico: (48 91320038). Não será necessário justificar-se.

Contatos:

O pesquisador responsável por esse este estudo é Márcia de S.Thiago Rosa. Para contatá-la envie um e-mail para o seguinte endereço marcia.sthiago.rosa@gmail.com.

Declaração de consentimento:

Declaro que li a informação acima. Quando necessário, fiz perguntas e recebi esclarecimentos. Eu concordo em participar deste estudo.

Nome: _____

Assinatura do participante _____

Assinatura do Pesquisador Responsável_____