



## **Bridging Contexts, Making Connections**

Fifth International Conference on Language Teacher Education  
31st May – 2nd June 2007 Minneapolis

# **Professional Knowledge in Language Education: (re)constructing beliefs of in-service teachers**

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# Structure of the Presentation

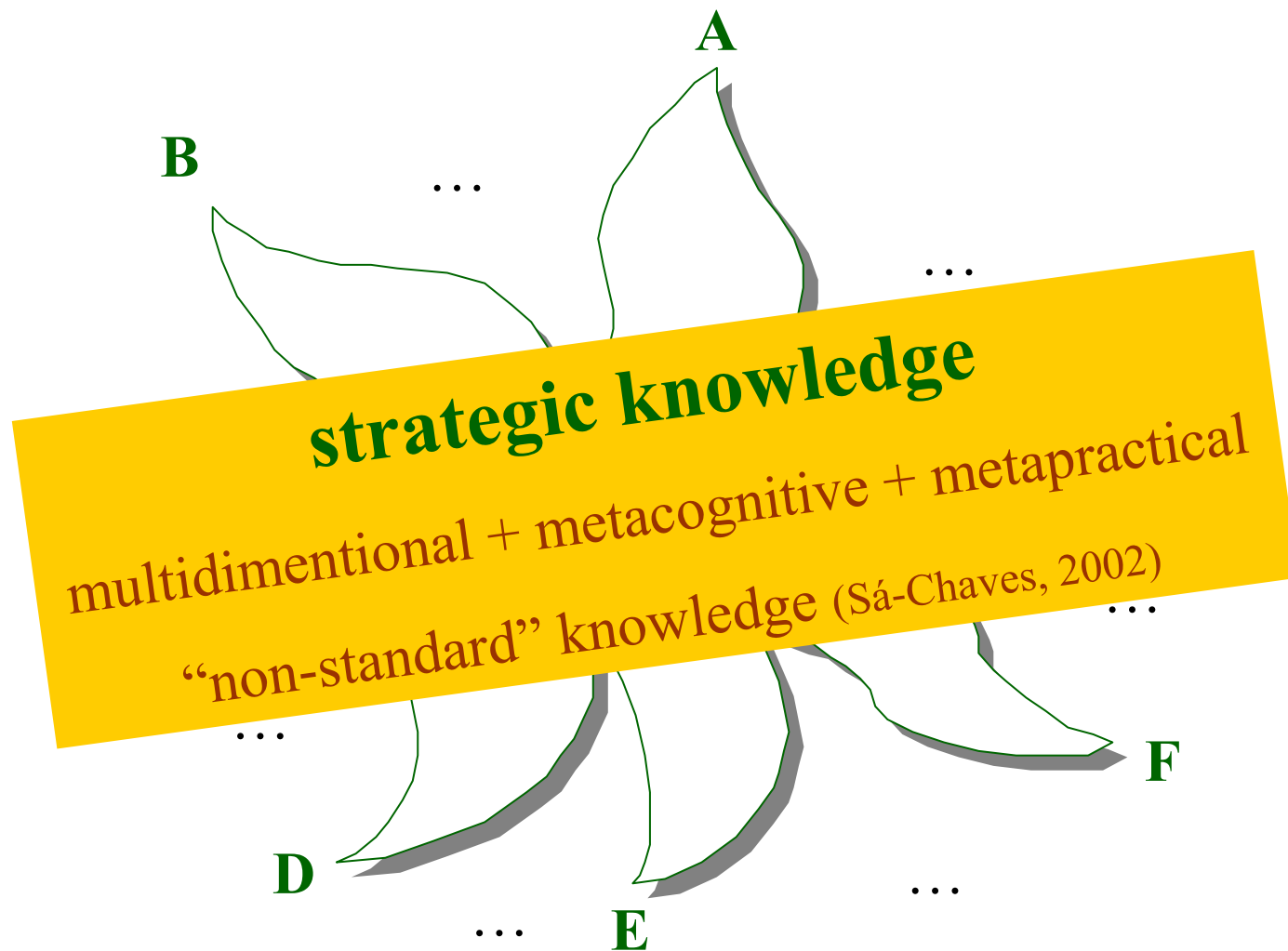
1. Main Concepts
2. Teacher Education Programme
3. Data Analysis
4. Transitory Conclusions

## 1. Main Concepts: Professional Knowledge

Teachers' professional knowledge is a mixed construction, placed in **multiple frontiers**, combining levels of different realities and **different fields of knowledge** in which **beliefs / images** can feed projects, tones, messages and forms of teacher's expression.

(Linhares, 2007)

# 1. Main Concepts: Professional knowledge



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Professional Knowledge in Language Education:  
(re)constructing beliefs of in-service teachers



universidade  
de aveiro

## 1. Main Concepts: Professional Growth

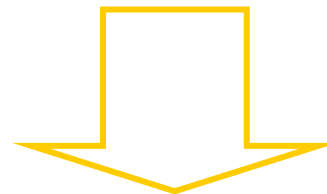
Professional development is the sum total of **formal** and **informal** learning pursued and **experienced by the teacher** in a compelling learning environment under conditions of **complexity** and **dynamic change**”

(Fullan, 1995: 265)

# 1. Main Concepts: Images

“Knowledge, embodied in a person and connected with the individual’s past, present and future... [Image] reaches into the past gathering up experiential threads meaningfully connected to the present. And it reaches into the future and creates new meaningfully connected threads as situations are experienced... Image carries intentionality”

(Clandinin & Connelly, 1984 *apud* Goodman, 1988)



anchors for action



# 1. Main Concepts: Language

“medium through which communities of people engage with, make sense and shape the world”

“Language is a life skill. It is inextricably interwoven with social experience – living in society – and it develops and changes constantly as that experience evolves and changes.”

(Phipps & Gonzalez 2004: 2,3)

**Language  
Education**

Promotion of Plurilingualism and Interculturality  
as Value and Competence

(Beacco & Byram, 2003)



## 2. Teacher Education Programme

### research project

*Portfolio and curriculum construction for language education: potentials and constraints within the portuguese school system*

### In-service teacher education programme

*Working with the portfolio,  
developing the plurilingual competence*

- 1<sup>st</sup> Phase – January to June 2005
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Phase – September 2005 to May 2006

## 2. Teacher Education Programme: Objectives

- presented to all language teachers of the school
- included in the current professional development national rules
  - raise awareness about what is being a language educator
  - motivate to a collaborative and reflexive work
  - question the role of the teacher in what their linguistic practice is concerned
  - propose a reorganization of ways of working, attitudes and roles
  - promote a practice which is organized around projects that confer meaning to it
  - develop the competency of managing and valuing linguistic diversity

## 2. Teacher Education Programme: Strategy

### Beliefs

conceptions of oneself, of teaching, learning,  
curriculum, profession, teacher roles, functions...

What do I do?

What is the meaning behind my teaching?

How did I come to be this way?

How I might do things differently?

**Beliefs**

Smyth (1989, in Pinar, 1995 :770)

## 2. Teacher Education Programme: Teachers

**C** 30, Plu - Port, French, Engl, Germ (Spanish, Italian)  
[4 years service] Eng/Germ

**G** 37, Plu - Port, French, Engl, Germ (Spanish)  
[14 years service] Eng/Germ

**E** 34, Plu - Port, Italian, Engl, Germ (0)  
[10 years service] Eng/Germ

**I** 38, Plu - Port, French, Engl (Spanish)  
[14 years service] Eng/French

**Z** 38, Plu - Port, Engl, Germ Spanish (0)  
[18 years service] Eng/Germ

## 2. Teacher Education Programme: Data collection

**Preparation:** questionnaire (October 2004)

### First Phase

January to June 2005

- \*Individual Written Reflections
  - Visiting Harbour
  - Arriving Harbour 1 Impressions...
  - Arriving Harbour 2 Clarifications...
  - Arriving Harbour 3 Projections...
- \*Transcription of the plenary sessions
- \*Teaching Unit Planning

### Second Phase

September 2005 to May 2006

- \*Individual Written Reflections:
  - Quay 1 Preparing the departure...
  - Quay 2 After the first step...
  - Quay 3 New place, new perspective...
  - Quay 4 (free title)
  - Reflection After Observed Lesson
- \*Films of observed lessons
- \*Transcription of the discussion sessions on the observed lessons

### 3. Data Analysis: Coordinates

#### 1st Step

Interaction in the working sessions (Phase II)

- a)** knowledge of the object, that is considering language as a curricular object, and more precisely the practice of developing and fostering plurilingual and intercultural competence using the portfolio as a privileged pedagogical tool. That includes the knowledge about the languages and the cultures in the perspective of plurilingualism and interculturality;
- b)** knowledge of the self, that considers acquired knowledge and knowledge to be acquired, teachers' own qualities, weaknesses and potentialities, and roles they consider to be able to play.

#### 2nd Step

Discourse analysis (identify traces of beliefs' reconstruction)





### 3. Data Analysis: Coordinates

#### Interaction

searching for regularities and irregularities,  
complexities, continuities and discontinuities

(Vasseur, 2005)

#### Discourse

type of sentences, verbal flexion



### 3. Data Analysis: a) knowledge of the object Interaction FII S03/120-190

FII S03/164 E *whatever s/he draws from it I can discuss with the pupil why s/he drew like that and **what is behind** / what are his/her ideas e so on / it is* FII S03/167 G *if you have a **physical trait** / it's alright / you can draw a Chinese a Japanese an Aborigine an African / that's alright / **beyond that 169 beyond that hey... me personally...*** FII S03/188 G «laughs» *there are things **I don't imagine myself** / (...) for example / eh a list of foreign words that are part of the Portuguese language / very well / to list the presence of various languages in the daily routine / and I wrote down / **what for ?** «laughs» / because I am imagining myself / I am imagining myself in my classes / I can never forget it* 190 G ***I am not doing a research work.***

Example Activities: plurilingual and intercultural competence  
Beliefs – language as curricular object + teacher roles  
discontinuity and complexity (concept + practice)

### 3. Data Analysis: a) knowledge of the object

## Interaction FII S06/1-56

FII S06/32 G *their **work with the foreign language** / isn't it ?/ we end up by watching eh / when they present their work / we watched the class in English + / so the **work with other language** and even their **reaction** had been before*

FII S06/43 Z *initially / the first / the first impact was / the **teacher is crazy** // well now we'll have to read in Spanish / and then what is this / what is that ? eh / FII S06/45 Z *and then **they started to get it and found out it was funny and easy** /**

Class Practice: plurilingual and intercultural competence  
(language work)

Beliefs – teacher roles + pupils' reaction



### 3. Data Analysis: a) knowledge of the object

## Interaction FII S06/90-150

FII S06/106 I *that the costume was African and **they had to speak African** / isn't it ?;*  
FII S06/108 Z *it was a mixture of English and Portuguese «laughs»;* FII S06/117 I  
*they also thought that **English was the official language of all those countries***  
*mentioned in the sheet;* FII S06/118 E *English as universal language should be the*  
*official language.*

FII S06/124 I *the presence of **English in their lives** / in informatics;* 126 I *television*  
*in films and everything;* FII S06/127 E *besides the English they know is the English of*  
*informatics and of the videos and of the downloads and so on;* FII S06/129 E *and the*  
*English they talk on the beach.* FII S06/1368 E *they have **a trauma that they don't***  
*know* FII S06/140 E *and that **they will never know** / they are not able.*

Class Activity: plurilingual and intercultural competence  
(language + culture work)

Beliefs – teacher roles (confidence)+ pupils' knowledge (gap)

### 3. Data Analysis: a) knowledge of the object

## Interaction FII S07/82-134

FII S07/92 I well I **really liked** / (...) / and I enjoyed watching the **small children** some interested some not / isn't it ?; FII S07/93 E my first thought would be that I think not **they would not be able** to do that kind of task and it is funny they so small children doing / well with their own difficulties but **they don't reject** / on the contrary / it looked they **were enjoying very much and they were able**

FII S07/159 E I think it is demotivating / (...) many pupils end up by not wanting / they may be good at English but in **English as a school subject they don't have much success** / or the success they have is not due to what they learn at school rather due to the knowledge they have outside / isn't it ? / because of the films / the dvds / computers etc / and indeed it is annoying / because **as long as we keep starting with present simple ...**

Class Activity: Plu Inter Comp (language work)  
Beliefs: pupils' reaction + language learning gap  
continuity - teachers' surprise + learning gap



### 3. Data Analysis: b) knowledge about themselves

## Discourse RAOL

RAOL I *I enjoyed the class, (...) it is generally **difficult** to articulate and/or foster diversified activities of plurilingual and pluricultural awareness of **elementary pupils** using an elementary syllabus, once they don't know well the foreign language, forcing to the use (...) almost temptingly abusive) of the mother tongue*

RAOL Z *I think I have **opened myself to the possibility of using other languages** that somehow are close to it (ex: Spanish) as a resource to the learning of English. RAOL G the class had a somewhat **accelerated rhythm**, which prevented the dialogue and a more relevant/significant register of the (obtained), pupils' conclusions. RAOL E These **activities had to be guided** and the majority of them in Portuguese, as pupils have little cultural knowledge of the selected countries and a **poor fluency in English**;*

process of analysing own practice and their growth

**...though...**

in a narrow range (daily problems and constrains)



### 3. Data Analysis: b) knowledge about themselves

## Discourse FR

FR C **During** these two years' work I learned a lot about issues which I have always considered important but **upon which I had never reflected** much;

FR E It was crucial to watch our practice and reflect upon it.(...) **Becoming conscious** of my work as a teacher motivates me to consider my work framed within collaboration, reflection and innovation. **I have concluded** it is fundamental to reorganise my attitudes and practices (...) **I became** a better person and a better professional, more aware of my practice, aware of the need to reflect to get better;

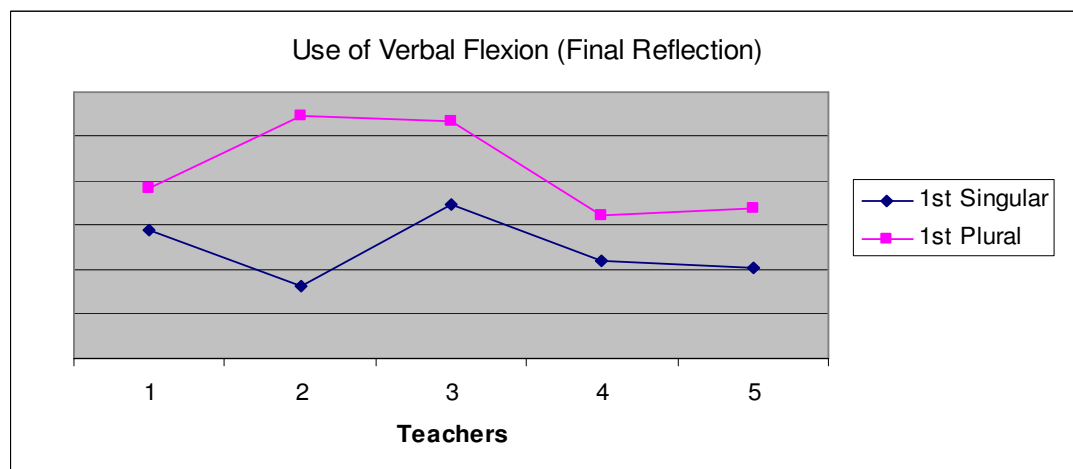
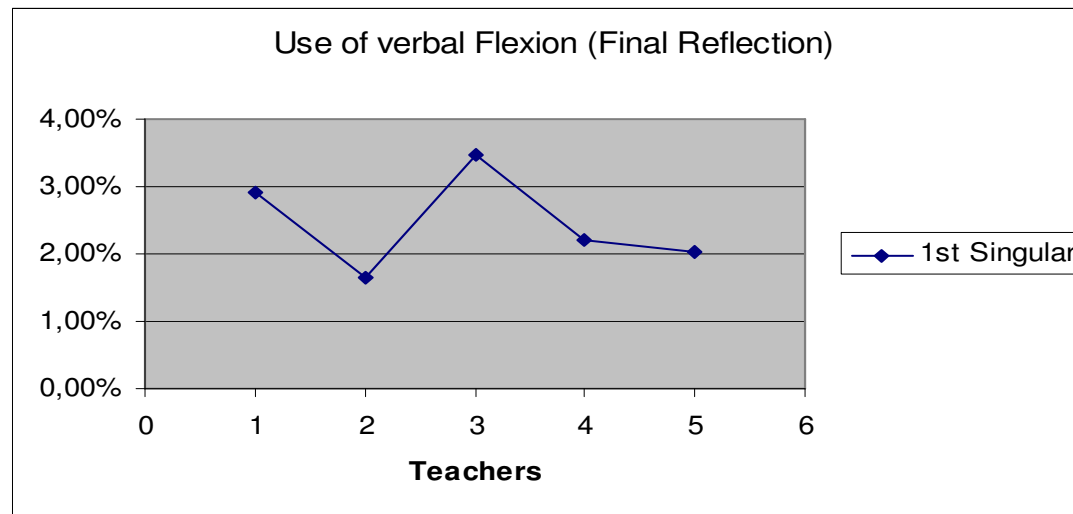
FR I whenever **I was able to overcome** some of those obstacles and I conducted activities within this Programme, I felt very rewarded, not only because **I had attained** a goal, but also because **I could confirm** how pupils grow and appreciate this type of approaches and that it is **really worth insisting on this change**;

FR Z this Programme **gave me a new sensation of comfort** when using other languages in the English class, namely the mother tongue.

FR G This Programme has made it possible **for us to give the first steps**, to recognise the field.

### 3. Data Analysis: b) knowledge about themselves

# Discourse FR





## 4. Transitory Conclusions

Belief reconstruction process:

practice + observation + reflection + discussion

**awareness  
raising**

teachers' role and practices  
language as a curricular object

The more personalised the reflection is, the more reconstruction it allows and the more empowered teachers feel, though, sometimes, frustrated.

## 4. Transitory Conclusions

Professional Knowledge in Language Education:  
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in-service  
teacher  
education  
programme

...awareness...

working sessions  
monitored work  
lesson observation  
group discussion  
Individual reflection

Professional knowledge

images

Professional Growth

\*reconstructed by  
the individuals  
\*engage in a self-  
defined project

...interiorised...

**assistance + support**  
**sustained and continuous professional growth**



## 4. Transitory Conclusions

*As a final note, it is important to stress that no matter how precisely we try to identify and describe teachers' knowledge constituents in order to better understand it, enlarge and improve it, we should never lose the capacity of looking at it in its complexity and become marvelled with its "artistry" (Schön, 1987).*



**Professional Knowledge in Language Education:  
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*Thank you!*

*Obrigada!*

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