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Pre-service language teacher cognition (LTC) about their future role in Norwegian classrooms

Abstract

The study on language teachers' cognition (LTC) has shown that exploring student teachers' beliefs in initial stages of language teacher education (LTE) can be essential for determining the willingness and ability of pre-service language teachers to get involved in their professional development, not only during their professional coursework, but throughout their professional career. This article is based on a qualitative, naturalistic, and ethnographic study which contributes to understand pre-service teachers' cognitions about their future role as teachers of Spanish as a foreign language (SFL) in Norwegian classrooms. The study has been carried out with the participation of three students at the initial stage of pre-service LTE at the University of Bergen. Data was collected and then analyzed from a narrative inquiry-based perspective on the use of metaphors and student mind maps. Results portray a legitimization of foreign language teaching and learning that implies a tacit conceptualization of the role of the SFL teacher with three outstanding cognitions: 1) The teacher as an intercultural mediator; 2) The teacher as an effective but also affective evaluator; and 3) The teacher as an organizer of learning opportunities. The study reveals that the emotional dimension, which has traditionally been underestimated by LTC research, represents a central part of the pre-service teachers' cognitive system. Further, pre-service language teacher cognition has not only been shaped by previous schooling experiences as research has consistently shown, but especially by personal encounters and experiences as speakers of a foreign language outside the SFL classroom.

Keywords: language teacher cognition, emotional dimension, teacher development, perezhivanie, Spanish as a foreign language

Lærerstudentenes forestillinger om deres fremtidige rolle i norske fremmedspråksklasserom

Sammendrag

Studier om språklæreres forestillinger (LTC) har vist at utforskning av lærerstudenters forestillinger i et innledende stadium av språklærerutdanningen (LTE) kan være avgjørende for språklæreres vilje og kapasitet til å involvere seg i egen faglig utvikling og læring, ikke bare under profesjonsutdanningen, men også gjennom hele yrkesløpet. Denne artikkelen baserer seg på en kvalitativ, naturalistisk og etnografisk studie som bidrar til å forstå lærerstudenters forestillinger rundt deres fremtidige rolle som fremmedspråklærere i spansk (SFL) i norske klasserom. Studien er basert på tre studenter i startfasen av sin lærerutdanning ved Universitet i Bergen. Data ble samlet inn og deretter analysert gjennom en narrativ metode ved bruk av metaforer og tankekart. Resultatene skildrer en legitimering av undervisningen og læringen av et fremmedspråk, som viser til en stilltiende konseptualisering av SFL-læreren sin rolle gjennom tre framtrepende forestillinger: 1) Læreren som en interkulturell formidler; 2) Læreren som en effektiv, men også affektiv bedømmer; og 3) Læreren som en tilrettelegger av læringsmuligheter. Studien avdekker at den emosjonelle dimensjonen, som tradisjonelt har blitt undervurdert av LTC-forskning, imidlertid representerer en sentral del av lærerstudentenes forestillinger. Videre har lærerstudentenes forestillinger ikke bare blitt formet av tidligere skolebakgrunn, slik som tidligere forskning konsekvent har vist, men særlig av språkinnlæreres personlige møter og erfaringer utenfor SFL-klasserommet.

Nøkkelord: språklæreres forestillinger, emosjonell dimensjon, lærerutvikling, perezhivanie, spansk som fremmedspråk

1. Introduction

The interest in language teachers' cognition (LTC) has significantly increased in the last two decades (Burns et al., 2015; Karimi et al., 2023). Initially, research focused on the «unobservable cognitive dimension of teaching – what teachers know, think and believe», (Borg, 2003, p. 81). Recently, however, the focus has shifted to acknowledge the ample complexity of intervening factors. It is widely accepted that LTC is influenced by previous own experiences as learners (Lortie, 1975), by contextual factors (Richards & Pennington, 1998), and that cognitions are long-lasting and resistant to change (Pajares, 1992). However, the impact of sociocultural theories has brought about the demand to account for a wider dimension of intervening factors in teachers' lives. Hence, the reconceptualization of LTC as the «inquiry which seeks, with reference to their personal, professional, social, cultural and historical contexts, to understand teachers' minds and emotions and the role these play in the process of becoming, being and developing as a teacher» (Borg, 2019, p. 1167). This study is situated within the sociocultural perspective of LTC, drawing from the Vygotskian framework (Li, 2020), and acknowledges the strong impact of sociogenesis and mediation in learning, as shown below.

Furthermore, there is a need to address «the fact that teachers' prior experiences, their interpretations of the activities they engage in, and, most important, the contexts within which they work are extremely influential in shaping how and why teachers do what they do» (Johnson, 2009, p. 236). In other words, cognitive development is defined as an interactive process mediated by and inseparable from culture, context, language, and social interaction, where the emotional dimension is perceived as essential to understand the cognitive dimension (Agudo, 2018; Johnson, 2009; Li, 2020; Vygotsky, 1987). In turn, a growing body of LTC research has directed attention to language teacher education (LTE) as it becomes the first step in a teacher's professional life. For instance, there is evidence to suggest that pre-service teachers enter education programs with a pre-established set of cognitions (Li, 2020), and that these cognitions seem to outweigh the effects of LTE (Rubio, 2023). Thus, there is a need to acknowledge that LTE cannot ignore trainee teachers' prior cognitions, as it may be less effective at influencing these (Borg, 2015). Additionally, Borg (2012) claims that the emotional dimension has been underestimated by research, and since then, a growing body of

studies has emerged to underscore its centrality in teaching practice (e.g. Borg, 2019; Golombek & Doran, 2014; Li, 2020). Nevertheless, LTC research that accounts for the emotional dimension during pre-service education in other languages than English, particularly in the Norwegian context, is scarce (Haukås & Mercer, 2022). This study attempts to identify how previous experiences of pre-service Spanish teachers in Norway impact their cognitions about their role as future language teachers.

2. Theoretical framework

The broader conceptualization of the cognitive dimension allows us to see the relationship between teachers' professional lives to «knowledge, teaching, identity formation, and teacher emotion» (Li, 2020, p. 277). Golombek and Doran (2014) emphasize the dialectical relationship between emotion, cognition, and teaching practice. They argue that the development of LTC is characterized by a dialectic logic, where cognition, emotion and teaching activity are intertwined and mutually influence each other. For instance, Esteve et al. (2019) highlight the importance of previous experiences as language learners, whether positive or negative, in shaping our perception of what constitutes a good or bad language teacher. This is particularly relevant in the Norwegian compulsory education context, where SFL teaching practices often diverge from communicative-oriented approaches (e.g. Heimark, 2013; Vold, 2022). Llovet Vilà (2018) suggests that the gap in Norway between intended communicative-oriented curricular plans and observed pre-communicative SFL teaching practices stems from teachers' previous schooling experiences. Therefore, it is crucial to study the role of the apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975) in shaping the cognitions of current pre-service language teachers in Norway.

In language education, understanding the learner as a social agent within an action-oriented approach extends beyond mere language mastery to encompass the development of intercultural, plurilingual, and pluricultural competencies (Council of Europe, 2020). The Norwegian National Curriculum for Foreign Languages (Kunnskapsdepartementet [KD], 2022), hereafter referred to as LK20, is inspired by European guidelines in language education (Council of Europe, 2020), emphasizing a learner-centered approach. The core elements (*kjerneelementer* in Norwegian) of this curriculum are based on the development of

students' communicative, intercultural, plurilingual, strategic, and digital competences. Consequently, such an approach requires a reconceptualization of the teacher's role from a provider to a facilitator in the mediated language learning process (Martín Peris, 1998). Inspired by sociocultural theories (Vygotsky, 1962), this interactionist conception underscores the importance of scaffolded teaching practices that consider students' needs, emotions, and motivations. Such practices aim to gradually develop language learning strategies that foster learner autonomy. There is ample research devoted to mapping the multiplicity of competences assigned to language teachers in general (e.g. EPG, 2013; Newby, 2007), and SFL teachers in particular (Instituto Cervantes, 2012). Romero (2016) manages to encapsulate the essence of the teacher's role into four fundamental tasks, which serve as the theoretical framework for this study: (1) facilitating, (2) motivating, (3) negotiating the language learning process with students, and (4) generating group dynamics which stimulate the affective and emotional dimensions.

However, language learning occurs not only in formal contexts, but it is especially influenced by experiences in informal settings. Extensive research has shown how pre-service language teachers' experiences as learners inform their cognition about teaching and learning, and how this cognition may continue to influence them throughout their careers (e.g. Bailey et al., 1996; Johnson, 1994). A recent review on LTC during LTE programs highlights the need for supportive and comprehensive pre-service teacher preparation that addresses three key factors: (1) valuing pre-service teachers' beliefs as language learners, (2) facilitating negotiation of new beliefs resulting from teacher education coursework, and (3) preparing them to manage tensions in their interactions with their mentors in field placements (Chmarkh, 2021). Regarding the first factor, valuing pre-service LTC, it is essential to identify the system of cognitions that serves as a filter, either consciously or unconsciously, for interpreting new information. This is precisely the focus of the present study: to take an initial snapshot of pre-service LTC about the teacher's role at the start of their education.

Regarding the second and third aforementioned factors, raising LTC awareness during LTE programs is crucial for their success. Verdía (2019) argues that LTE should provide pre-service teachers with opportunities to become aware of one's own cognitions, thereby

engaging in professional development as critical and reflective practitioners. In the Norwegian context, Llovet Vilà (2018, p. 202) asserts that LTE should aim at «raising teachers' awareness of their own past learning experiences, to enable them to analyze these through reflection and introspection, and finally and consequently, foster critical thinking which will eventually bring about change». In addition, pre-service teachers need access to alternative images of teaching if their cognitions are to shift and mature beyond their limited apprenticeship of observation. This process is essential for reconstructing a model of action suitable for effective second language instruction (Johnson, 1994). However, for this transformation to occur, it is first necessary to identify pre-service LTC at the beginning of their LTE program.

3. Method

To investigate the system of cognitions about the role of the SFL teacher in Norwegian classrooms and to portray pre-service teachers' future role, a descriptive and interpretative multiple case study was chosen (Yin, 2014). A qualitative, naturalistic, and ethnographic design approach was selected because it «provides an in-depth, intricate and detailed understanding of meanings, actions, non-observable as well as observable phenomena, attitudes, intentions and behaviors» (Gonzales et al., 2008, p. 3). Consequently, the study was designed around two main questions:

Q1: What are pre-service language teacher cognitions at an initial language teacher education stage about the role of teachers of Spanish as a foreign language?

Q2: Where do these cognitions come from?

a. Participants

The participants in this study were three LTE students, anonymized here as Lisa (I1), Henrik (I2), and Anna (I3). They were enrolled in a one-year teacher training program (PPU, *Praktisk-pedagogisk utdanning*) qualifying them to teach from 5th to 13th grade in one or two subjects (NOKUT, 2023; Wiggen, 2022). Due to the nature of this study, pre-service teachers were selected through convenience sampling (Cohen et al., 2018) with the sole requirement

being their registration in the language didactics course in Spanish (DIDASPA1) at the University of Bergen during the 2022–2023 academic year. The participants were Norwegian native speakers aged between 25 and 30, fully educated in Norway, holding a master's degree in Spanish, and possessing very limited experience as language teachers. To investigate and identify cognitions before external factors could influence and shape their belief systems (Johnson, 1994), pre-service teachers were contacted so that the study could be conducted before and during the first session of DIDASPA1. No specific characteristics were required, and there was no need for further selection as these were the only students enrolled in the program.

b. Data collection

This study aligns with claims encouraging LTC researchers to move away from the traditional use of questionnaires and interviews (Borg, 2019). Instead, it adopted narrative inquiry and non-participant observation (Cohen et al., 2018). Narrative inquiry, or the use of stories, provides unique insights into the construction of human experience and ways of conceptualizing the world (Kalaja et al., 2016; Kalaja, 2019). Thus, it is an appropriate means to explore cognitions, experiences, or attitudes. Additionally, narrative inquires, particularly the use of metaphors, serve as a valuable methodological tool to capture visual images or representations of the language learning and teaching processes of future teachers at an initial stage. The exploratory nature of qualitative observational research allowed the researcher to emphasize the meanings to which participants attached their experiences as presented in their narrative inquiries (Given, 2008). Consequently, data was collected in two consecutive stages with the knowledge and prior consent of the participants (National Research Ethics Committees, 2021).

In the first stage, students were asked to complete and upload a narrative inquiry task (section A and section B) on the course Canvas site before their first in-class session. Section A involved selecting an image, metaphor, or sentence, followed by a brief written explanation, to capture their representation of the SFL teacher. Section B required pre-service teachers to create a mind map using key words or ideas which depicted their understanding of being an

SFL teacher (Esteve et al., 2019). This narrative inquiry served as the starting point for the second stage.

In the second stage, the data collection strategy involved non-participant observation during the first session of the Spanish didactics course. This session aimed at presenting the semester program and introducing the topic of language teacher cognition. The teacher, who was also the first author's tutor, planned a 30-minute class discussion about pre-service teacher responses in section A and B to elicit LTC and gain deeper insights into the narrative inquiry responses. This approach aimed at maximizing data collection validity and reliability by ensuring that the different sources of collected evidence would enable the development of 'converging lines of inquiry' in the triangulation process (Yin, 2014, p. 120). The teacher was provided with an open question guide in advance, following a semi-structured interview format (Cohen et al., 2018), to support the discussion by clarifying or elaborating on students' responses. Although the wording from the question guide varied due to the open interaction format of the class discussion, the main emerging topics from the narrative inquiry were covered.

c. Data analysis

Data analysis involved three phases in each of the two stages (narrative inquiry and non-participant observation), following a circular process where data collection, analysis, interpretation, and reporting proceeded in a recursive and iterative manner (Cohen, 2018). The abductive approach adopted proved to be a resourceful strategy for interpreting the descriptions and explanations provided by the participant pre-service teachers. This approach facilitated the construction and discovery of tacit, mutual knowledge, and symbiotic meanings (Blaikie, 2004).

Primary data from the first stage, specifically the narrative inquiry task, was initially stored and transferred to NVivo. The narrative inquiries were then read, with ideas jotted down and emerging themes identified and categorized during a coding process. This allowed for the display of salient themes for each of the pre-service teachers. The process facilitated the incorporation of new salient themes from the collected data to a priori categories derived from

previous theory. Additionally, it served as a foundation for developing a semi-structured interview guide, which was subsequently sent to the teacher for the first in-class session. Finally, during the third phase, data examination, interpretation, theorizing, and final cross-case display were conducted once data from the second stage had been collected.

Primary data from the second stage, specifically the non-participant observation, was audio- and video-recorded and subsequently transcribed. During this first phase of the data analysis, the recorded audio was transcribed verbatim and, then triangulated, cross-checked, and edited with video recordings to enhance the construct validity of the research (Rudestam & Newton, 2007; Yin, 2014). In the second phase, data was coded using the techniques developed by Gibbs (2018) and Cohen et al. (2018). The transcription was transferred to NVivo, segmented, and tagged per individual pre-service teacher, with different fragments assigned to nodes or categories. This meticulous iterative process of data reorganization involved discarding, merging, or creating sub-nodes within pre-existing categories. In addition, NVivo enabled the first author to analyze data by frequency, identifying the most salient and relevant data for the study. In the last phase, data was organized separately by individual to maintain coherence and provide a comprehensive view of the participants' responses. Combined with the interpretation and theorizing of the data, various fragments of the transcription and narrative inquiry are presented below to support each interpretation (for full transcription, see García, 2023). Note that fragments have been translated from Spanish into English for the purposes of this article. Therefore, due to language-specific conditions (Temple & Young, 2004), there may be differences in the numbering between words and/or the corresponding phrases in the translation.

4. Findings and discussion

The analysis of pre-service teachers' cognitions about the role of the SFL teacher revealed a tacit conceptualization of this role. Specifically, the students' statements indicate a legitimization of the teaching and learning a foreign language, highlighting three cognitions about the role of the Spanish SFL teacher: 1) the teacher as an intercultural mediator; 2) the teacher as an effective but also affective evaluator; and 3) the teacher as an organizer of learning opportunities. These three major themes are presented below with representative

samples from each individual and subsequently discussed in light of the theoretical framework.

a. Cognitions about the teacher as an intercultural mediator

When analyzing pre-service teachers' cognitions, there appears to be a common agreement on the metaphor of the language teacher as someone who opens doors to new cultures. In Anna's narrative inquiry (I3), the chosen image – an open door to a landscape in the background – serves as her visual metaphor, clearly depicting this idea. In her explanation of the image, she explicitly refers to the role of the SFL teacher not only as teaching a language, but also as opening the doors to a new world for students:

- 1 Being an SFL teacher is not only about teaching
- 2 a language, but also about opening the doors to a «new world» for students.
- 3 Parts of the world that students are not as familiar with, new cultures that are
- 4 different, people with a different background and who often have different
- 5 ways of thinking and living. As if you opened the door to a new
- 6 understanding of the world

Interestingly, the metaphor of the teacher who opens doors alludes to the concept of the intercultural mediator introduced by the Ministry of Education and Research in their strategy plan for strengthening SFL in basic education (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, 2007). The importance of the intercultural, plurilingual, and pluricultural dimensions is also emphasized nationally in LK20 (KD, 2022) and internationally in CEFR (Council of Europe, 2020). The understanding of the intercultural mediator is evident in Lisa's narrative inquiry (I1), where she highlights the empowering effect of being multilingual in society and the opportunity it provides to communicate and connect with people from different cultures. Similarly, Henrik (I2) underscores the importance of fostering intercultural understanding among students during authentic foreign language encounters, a point reinforced in his mind map (García, 2023). Within this cognitive framework, the teacher acts as a guide or bridge between cultures, facilitating the development of students' intercultural competence.

Additionally, it can be argued that beyond the sociocultural conceptualization of mediation (Lortie, 1975), pre-service language teachers refer to mediation as one of the four modes of communication in the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2020). This emphasizes the crucial role mediation plays in successful plurilingual and/or pluricultural encounters. However, note that the informants do not make didactic claims regarding how to operationalize the development of intercultural competence or mediation in the SFL classroom. Given the stage at which data was collected and the characteristics of informants, there is reason to believe that pre-service language teachers may not yet fully grasp the didactic implications behind the metaphorical title of an intercultural mediator, and thus may overlook the significance of both interculturality and mediation in the field.

The idea of moving beyond the development of linguistic competence is reflected in the students' system of cognitions where they emphasize a conceptualization of language as a communication tool. In the cases of Lisa (I1) and Anna (I3), these cognitions appear to originate from and be influenced by their previous SFL learning experiences:

- 352 **P:** Do you two agree? Do you have good previous experiences?
 353 **I3:** mhm mhm
 354 **I1:** yes
 355 **I3:** yes
 356 **I1:** more or less
 357 **I2:** (laughs)
 358 (everyone laughs)
 359 **P:** tell me, that's interesting! (laughs)
 360 **I1:** No, I think my Spanish teacher in high school cared a lot about |
 361 it went very well, it was very nice, but it was a lot so eh she would ask,
 362 the teacher, eh there were a lot eh she focused on speaking practice where she would ask
 363 everyone who had to repeat aloud the same question | and many vocabulary tests, many
 364 tests of that kind | eh not much about culture, history, literature, everything we did really
 365 want to learn | we didn't have much of that in high school
 [...]
 389 **I3:** [...] I've had many
 390 good teachers but in periods it was a bit like you describe [Lisa] that there was a lot of
 391 focus on grammar, right? They were always very concerned about being correct and
 392 perhaps there was less focus on things related to culture

Both Anna (I3) and Lisa (I1) refer to SFL learning experiences based on a teaching model with an extensive focus on grammar and accuracy. The language teaching practices they were exposed to reflect the dominant non-communicative oriented paradigm in Norway (e.g.

Heimark, 2013; Vold, 2022). However, pre-service language teachers react to these teaching practices, and the anti-apprenticeship of observation (Moodie, 2016) plays a crucial role. These negative experiences can explain the students' desire to be different and move beyond linguistic competence development, emphasizing the need to promote intercultural competence development. Furthermore, these cognitions align with the relevance of the apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975), evidencing that students enter the educational program with a pre-established, albeit tacit, belief system that shapes their conceptualization of what it means to teach and learn a foreign language (Borg, 2015).

In addition, these cognitions have been influenced not only by previous schooling experiences (Borg 2015), but also by their informal and personal experiences from their travels to Spain or Latin America:

237 **I1:** I know what it's like to learn a language eh you realize about it during the first years
 238 at the university eh how much it means to know how to dare to speak because then when
 239 we started [university] with a high school level so it wasn't eh we didn't have Spanish III
 240 level either but I and II, and being orally active and to dare to speak is meaningful in the
 241 process of learning. I only noticed the difference when I traveled to Latin America and I
 242 was forced to do it, right? Then I had to do it ...

124 **I2:** [...] I have experienced it myself I have many
 125 friends who eh I don't think they're trying to teach me things about Spain for example,
 126 that's where I've spent most of the time, but they do it naturally when they ask me if I
 127 want to join or have lunch and dinner, which for me is very | and for us Norwegians, is
 128 very different and how to do it and eh yes actually just experience things a little bit eh
 129 yes authentic is an appropriate word

372 **I3:** [...] I see that some of the people in my class in high school only had it
 373 [Spanish] because they were obliged to and they were very ready to get over with it
 374 eh while I was a little like eh I had people I knew who only spoke Spanish and
 375 if I wanted to continue knowing them I had to learn the language and I had an uncle
 376 from Chile so Spanish was close to me so I have been motivated

While Lisa (I1) outlines her experience from travelling to Latin America, where she felt compelled to speak Spanish, Henrik (I2) describes the benefits he experienced from learning the language authentically during his travels to Spain. Anna (I3) shares a similar experience, highlighting the need of learning Spanish to maintain contact with Spanish relatives. From a sociocultural perspective, these experiences can be interpreted as *perezhivanie* (Vygotsky, 1994), where lived positive personal experiences have produced a change in the students as

part of their cognitive development (Golombek & Doran, 2014; Smirnova, 2020) –a factor identified by Johnson (1994) and Bailey et al. (1996). According to the new LTC definition proposed by Borg (2019), personal experiences can be linked to personal context. However, these findings do not seem to fit in with Borg’s model (2003), suggesting that the emotional dimension has been underestimated or ignored by previous research.

b. Cognitions about the teacher as an effective but also an affective evaluator

The second central cognition that conceptualizes the teacher as an evaluator is strongly related to the affective dimension in the teaching profession. According to the informants’ utterances, there is a significant relationship between errors, emotions, and motivation. In this context, the role of the SFL teacher is to initially create an emotionally safe environment in the classroom:

244 **I1:** [...] SFL classes often consist of
 245 different parallel classes so they don’t have the same class environment as other classes eh
 246 and I would like to participate in creating a good environment in class, so they have a bit
 247 of eh | that they feel safe and that they in some way have a bit of group cohesion

According to Lisa (I1) during the class discussion, a comfortable environment in class may facilitate students to be orally active, which she considers essential for learning an SFL. In Anna’s (I3) mind map, she emphasizes the need to be an inspiration, to be committed and to show genuine interest in the students as key elements related to the affective dimension of the profession. During the class discussion, there was a common consensus on the importance of creating a classroom environment where students are not afraid of making mistakes. For instance, Lisa (I1) describes an experience involving a friend who was corrected by her parents, who are native Spanish speakers:

- 475 **I1:** [...] she talked to her father once eh and she said something to him and the father
 476 corrected her then she became completely like «no, but wasn't that correct?» and I just «yes,
 477 it was» but but eh I think that for her I think she is very afraid of being corrected, she is
 478 probably used to it and I believe because of what happens at home that if she's going to learn
 479 to speak they correct her every time she tries to say something so she doesn't dare to try
 480 **I2:** no, that's absolutely terrible
 486 [...]
 487 **I2:** so we can include it on the teacher role, that implies being good at correcting that is
 488 correcting in a good way instead of correcting and prodding her
I3: don't do it all the time or maybe when you're really focusing on grammar [...]

Lisa's (I1) experience appears to be connected to language classroom anxiety which, according to Gardner and MacIntyre (1993, p. 2), can be defined as «anxiety reactions to situations in which one might make use of the target language». Therefore, one of the most prominent factors among student teachers' cognitions is the importance of establishing a positive classroom environment, reflecting their previous experiences as SFL learners. In line with Carrai (2022), it is the teacher's responsibility to create a supportive and cohesive classroom environment. Numrich (1996) shows similar cognitions in students who, due to their negative experiences as SFL learners, felt bad about making mistakes and avoided correcting students' errors. What is particularly interesting is how Lisa's cognitions have been shaped not only by her experiences as an SFL learner but also by her *perezhivanie*, especially the incident with her friend. As an SFL learner, Henrik (I2) describes how he always was concerned with accuracy:

- 414 **I2:** [...] I was also ... always very very busy with always saying exactly the right thing
 415 without making mistakes but when I think about when
 416 I talk to my Spanish friends who want to talk to me in English they are also very embarrassed
 422 [...]
 423 **I2:** so eh we make mistakes all the time so it's important to be able to get it into the students' head that, well, making mistakes is part of learning a foreign language

According to Henrik (I2), SFL learners must not only become accustomed to making mistakes but also feel comfortable with them and eventually learn from them. Lisa (I1) supports this view, noting that these cognitions are shaped by Henrik's personal experiences both inside and outside the classroom. Similarly, Anna (I3) emphasizes the importance of intrinsic motivation in language learning, as highlighted in an earlier fragment (line 372–376). In her mind map, Anna identifies the teacher's role as a motivator, inspiration, mediator, influence, and the primary individual responsible for encouraging students by showing a genuine interest

in their personal qualities while also challenging them. These findings evidence a strong awareness of the affective dimension in SFL learning (Arnold Morgan, 2006; Carrai, 2022).

Furthermore, pre-service teachers' cognitions align with key factors identified by LK20 (KD, 2022) and CEFR (Council of Europe, 2020). The CEFR (Council of Europe, 2020, p.105) highlights the affective dimension by acknowledging that communicative performance is influenced by individual factors related to «attitudes, motivations, values, beliefs, cognitive styles and personality types which contribute to their personal identity» (existential competence). LK20 (KD, 2022) expands on this, by incorporating the affective dimension into the specific competences of the teacher as a facilitator. According to LK20 (KD, 2022), effective classroom management is based on an understanding of students' needs, fostering caring relationships, and exercising professional judgement. In Romero's (2016) terms, informants view the teacher as a facilitator, motivator, and negotiator who can diagnose individual needs and consider student's motivation, mastery, and joy of learning as central parts to developing efficient learning situations.

Additionally, according to LK20, proficiency assessment and error assessment identified in students' cognitions must reflect the students' abilities and competences through constructive measures. Hence, the role of the teacher as an effective but also affective evaluator involves the ability to «balance the need for good information about pupils' learning and the unwelcome consequences of different assessment situations» (KD, 2022, p. 19). Pre-service teachers describe that improper use of evaluation can hinder the learning process. Moreover, the importance of knowing how and when to evaluate, as well as promoting constructive feedback, has been highlighted as a teacher competence (Instituto Cervantes, 2012; Newby et al., 2007; Richards, 2010). Despite traditionally receiving little consideration (Rubio, 2023), pre-service teachers' statements emphasize the centrality of interpersonal relationships and the teacher's key role as a facilitator, motivator, and negotiator in the language learning process.

c. Cognitions about the teacher as an organizer of learning opportunities

Many of the pre-service teachers' cognitions are interrelated. Cognitions pertaining to the teacher as an organizer of learning opportunities are likely the least salient, necessitating a higher degree of interpretative analysis. Nevertheless, it can be asserted that the conceptualization of the teacher as an organizer of learning opportunities encompasses the idea of mediation, as perceived by Lisa (I1):

- 292 **P:** So, these three are somehow like the core elements a little bit of | because the
 293 underlying question is: what does it mean to be a good teacher | of Spanish in this
 294 case | is it this? (the teacher points to three elements written on the blackboard [literature,
 linguistics, history and culture]) or is there something else?
 295 **I1:** eh that's the basics, right? but one has to continue with | that is, it's so much more |
 296 they can learn as much grammar, culture and literature as they want, but when the teacher
 297 fails to mediate it or –
 298 **P:** mediate
 299 **I1:** yes
 300 **I3:** yes (smiles)
 301 **I1:** (smiles) yes
 [...]
 305 **P:** «mediate» and what does
 306 mediate mean?
 307 **I3:** the ability to transmit eh ... eh eh yes both transmit yes in some way transmit
 308 the knowledge yes ... but it can also be to challenge it because challenge the students in
 309 different ways so that the students themselves know that you have given them something
 310 but that you have achieved giving them the tools so they can invent it themselves, in some
 311 way, but transmitting knowledge is, in a way, the essence
 312 **P:** right [...]

While describing the core elements of being an SFL teacher, Lisa (I1) realizes that the language profession is «so much more» (line 295). This new dimension she refers to is the mediation of the learning process (line 296–297), emphasizing the relevance of pedagogical content knowledge (Richards, 2010). In other words, Lisa (I1) differentiates knowledge from skill. This raises a central cognition in Lisa's system regarding the SFL teacher role: the teacher as a mediator who organizes learning situations. A similar idea is depicted by Anna (I3) in her mind map, where she refers to the teacher as a facilitator, with strategic mediation playing a central role (Johnson, 2009; Wertsch, 1985).

It can, thus, be affirmed that pre-service teachers enter LTE programs with pre-established cognitions and values, highlighting the strong impact of the apprenticeship of observation

(Lortie, 1975). Similarly, Lisa (line 360–364) and Anna (line 389–392) discuss how they would not organize teaching activities based on their experience with a teacher-centered approach (Moodie, 2016). From a sociocultural perspective, pre-service teachers seem to enhance the essence of scaffolding, where the teacher intervenes in the zone of proximal development (ZDP) by guiding the students and providing tools so that learners can be agents in their own learning process. Hence, teaching can be seen as a way of awakening students' minds by encouraging active participation and fostering student autonomy (Arnold Morgan, 2019). In Vygotsky's (1978) own terms: «what is in the zone of proximal development today will be the actual developmental level tomorrow – that is, what a child can do with assistance today she will be able to do by herself tomorrow» (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 87). Therefore, the teacher must offer scaffolding by supporting and interacting when needed and gradually remove the scaffolding in favor of more autonomous students (Arnold Morgan, 2019; Johnson, 2009). Thus, teaching no longer consists solely of teaching students a subject, but rather teaching them how to learn (Romero, 2016, p. 599).

In this sense, the role of the teacher shifts from being the main source of knowledge to acting as a counselor and guide, while the students transition from passive consumers of content to active participants (Rodríguez Santos, 2014). However, tensions among cognitions may also arise. The repeated use of the word «transmit» by Anna (line 307–311) is particularly interesting, as it may relate to a pre-communicative conceptualization of the teacher (Martin Peris, 1998). According to Freeman (1994) and Phipps and Borg (2009), this is understood as a tension between cognitions, defined as «divergences among different forces or elements in the teacher's understanding of the school context, the subject matter, or the students» (Freeman, 1994, p. 488). Hence, the relevance of LTE in raising LTC awareness whenever tensions among cognitions arise (Llovet Vilà, 2018; Verdía, 2019). Given that pre-service teachers are at an early LTE stage, it may be affirmed that they neither have a clear conception of mediation nor a course of action to didactically operationalize it in the language classroom. Therefore, it has been previously argued that LTE should provide access to alternative images of teaching if cognitions are to shift and mature beyond pre-service teachers' limited apprenticeship of observation, thereby fostering appropriate models of action for effective second language instruction (Johnson, 1994). For instance, the lack of a

clear conception of how languages are learned, or conversely, how they should be taught, is reflected in Henrik's (I2) initial narrative inquiry statement when explaining his representation of an SFL teacher:

115 **I2:** [...] I chose a quote which is «language is the roadmap of a culture»
 116 which it has a lot to do with what has been mentioned and I think that eh to truly be part of
 117 and knowing a culture does not only help to be able to translate, you have to take it | I was
 118 going to say through your mother's milk, but you have to do it from the language so that
 119 you later have the opportunity to meet people who are part of the culture and can teach you
 120 things about the culture without the intention to do it, teach them to eh yes | it's about
 121 knowing foreign traditions, understanding the world better so I think it's much
 122 easier to do it through the language eh instead of someone teaching it to you in another
 123 language or yes | so it's a bit about experiencing it eh authentically through
 124 eventually getting to know people

Although Henrik (I2) specifically describes how to operationalize it, his informal and personal experiences outside an educational context have significantly impacted his cognitions about language learning. Thus, cognitions derived from positive previous learning experiences outside the foreign language classroom seem to outweigh the effect of in-class experiences. The summarized idea of «experiencing it authentically through eventually getting to know people» (line 123–124) seems to align with the intended practical approach to foreign language teaching and learning in the 2006 school reform in Norway (Heimark, 2013), which focused on learning *through* the language rather than *about* the language. It is noteworthy that pre-service teacher cognitions in an early LTE stage align with national directives regarding the teacher's role and the language learning process. However, as Borg (2003) notes, teachers' stated cognitions do not ultimately always correspond to teaching practices. Therefore, caution is to be administered, given that this study focuses specifically on pre-service teachers' cognitions rather than their deployed practices.

5. Conclusion

This article explores pre-service LTC regarding the role of the teacher of Spanish as a foreign language in Norwegian classrooms at a very initial LTE stage. Despite the strong impact of pre-service teachers' apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975), results indicate that pre-service LTC are oriented towards the role of the teacher as a facilitator, supporting the principles behind LK20 (KD, 2022) and CEFR (Council of Europe, 2020). Positive personal

and informal language learning experiences where the target language is spoken, conceptualized here as *perezhivanie* (Vygotsky, 1994), seem to outweigh negative formal schooling experiences as language learners in Norwegian compulsory education. Thus, this study reveals the relevance of the emotional dimension, which has traditionally been ignored by previous LTC research (Borg, 2019).

The most salient cognitions portrait an SFL teacher as (1) an intercultural mediator, (2) an effective yet affective evaluator, and (3) an organizer of learning opportunities. These cognitions depict a language teacher responsible for developing students' intercultural competence while simultaneously considering motivational and emotional aspects. This depends on the conscious planning, deployment, and assessment of the learning activities that mediate the language learning process. These findings align with previous research showing that teachers enter LTE with a pre-established set of cognitions. However, these cognitions do not automatically correspond to experienced language learning practices during schooling; rather, the opposite is true, demonstrating the effect of the anti-apprenticeship of observation on LTC (Moodie, 2016).

Furthermore, the pre-service teacher cognitions presented above portray a fragmented and, therefore, partial picture of teacher competences as compiled by Instituto Cervantes (2012) and Newby (2007), given that informants are at an initial LTE stage. However, it is worth noting that teaching practices do not ultimately always reflect teachers' stated beliefs, personal theories, and pedagogical principles (Borg, 2015). Therefore, it remains to be seen whether and how these cognitions will develop over time during LTE and, eventually, how they will be finally implemented in the SFL classroom. Consequently, there is a need for longitudinal studies to track the evolution of such cognitions and practices and, if possible, to implement pedagogical interventions aimed at successfully impacting LTC change when needed.

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