



## Evaluating and Improving Teacher Educators' Language-Oriented Performance in Content-Based Teaching

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**Abstract:** In general, teacher educators are considered to be educational specialists whose main task is to communicate content-based concepts to prospective teachers. However, unfortunately, most studies on teacher professional development overlook this specific language-oriented aspect of content-based teaching. Therefore, we address the aforementioned research gap and argue that teacher educators' evaluation of their language-oriented performance in educational communication enhances the quality of their content-based teaching. Accordingly, we examine how the language-oriented performance of teacher educators is evaluated by both individual teacher educators (sample size N=3) and their students (N=32) in a small-scale intervention study. The findings of the study reveal that there is a relationship between the order of application of five language focus areas (i.e., language awareness, active listening, formalizing interaction, language support, and language and learning development, as noticed by the students), and teacher educators' ability to apply these areas in accordance with their objectives related to content-based teaching.

**Keywords:** *Content based teaching, teacher evaluation, student evaluation, reflective teacher practice, language focus areas, evaluation utilization.*

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### Introduction

Language-oriented evaluation research on teacher educators' educational communication is required to enhance the quality of their content-based teaching. To date, numerous studies on professional development have attempted to gain insight into teaching performance through reflection and evaluation activities carried out by teachers (Amador & Weiland, 2015; Cajkler & Wood, 2016). Only a few of these involved language-oriented teaching performance, albeit implicitly. Therefore, to encourage teacher educators to use an empirical, language-oriented evaluation approach in their professional development, attention should be given to both their pedagogical knowledge of content (Gudmundsdottir & Shulman, 1987) and their personal practical knowledge of language (Swart, de Graaff, Onstenk, & Knezic, 2018). In this context, teachers' personal practical knowledge of language can be described as interpretive based on experiential, both interpersonal and pedagogy-oriented, teacher modalities (Swart, Onstenk, Knezic, & de Graaff, 2018).

In general, contemporary understandings of classroom communication are based on the theory that most teachers' cognitive and linguistic knowledge is developed on the basis of their extensive participation in sociocultural activities (Hall & Walsh, 2002), which is also referred to as a dynamic sequence of interrelated settings (Heikonen, Pietarinen, Pyhalto, Toom, & Soini, 2017) including the use of language as a means of communication. Language, in general, is related to not only tools for acquiring and transferring new substantive knowledge but also the development of language and thinking themselves. This versatility of language is often overlooked, although educating students about this versatility is one of the key objectives in teacher educators' content-based teaching. (Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Swart et al., 2018a). Based on this distinction between regulated language and content registers, many studies have adopted a more wide-ranging approach (DiCerbo, Anstrom, Baker, & Rivera, 2014) in which teaching is also considered a means of *negotiating* (Cobb, Gresalfi, & Hodge, 2008; Pica, 1994), *constructing* (Mercer, 2010); and *re-conceptualizing* meaning (Swart, de Graaff, Onstenk, & Knezic, 2018).

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According to Mouza and Wong (2009), participation in research-based professional development provides new perspectives on examining the development of teachers, since the classroom experience inspires continual learning and change. Simultaneously, difficulties have been reported in the practical implementation of effective professional development (Bakkenes, Vermunt, & Wubbels, 2010; Morris & Hiebert, 2011). Implementations as such often focus on subareas, such as collaboration aspects, rather than key issues (Bausmith & Barry, 2011). Hence, according to Van Driel and Berry (2012), one should focus on practical effectiveness and the understanding of how teacher educators learn while teaching and, subsequently, how they teach their students to learn and teach about subject matter. Based on this previous research, this study considers the evaluation of language-oriented performance as a vital part of teacher educators' continuing professional development, intended to enrich their pedagogical arsenal (Swart et al., 2018c). In practice, this means a language-oriented approach to teacher professional development to develop an understanding of teacher educators' educational communication in content-based teaching based on the following central research question: 'How do teachers and students evaluate teacher educators' language-oriented development in subject-specific teaching?'

A previous study on teacher educators' personal practical knowledge of language (Swart et al., 2018a) showed that the occurrence of classroom interaction was predominantly considered by the educators as a derivative of instruction and, in that capacity, a precondition for generating learning conversation. In such cases, teachers indicated that they mainly use contingent strategies such as active listening and metatalk to support students' language-oriented thinking and formulations. Based on these outcomes, and building on the language elements from content-based instruction and language-sensitive education (Hajer, Prenger, Koole, Elbers, & Jonkers, 2003; Swank, 2005), three continual teacher language modalities, that is, intentions and means, were identified and arranged in the order of anticipated professional development. These modalities were referred to as language-sensitive, interpersonal-oriented, language-focused, and pedagogical aspects, which reflects a corresponding receptivity-oriented or productive and goal-oriented manner of communication (Swart et al., 2018c).

Based on this analysis, in this study, we develop a framework for language-oriented professional development and examine this in detail in relation to three teacher cases (Table 1). To do so, we use the concept of performance, which is described as the capability of teachers to deal with the requirements of the teaching profession as manifested in both their performance (i.e., practical knowledge, skills, and attitudes) and reflections (Nijveldt, Beijaard, Brekelmans, Verloop, and Wubbels, 2005). This integrated approach to performance is presumed to resemble the complexity of the actual teaching process as closely as possible (Den Brok et al., 2010). To understand this complexity, a teacher's performance should be measured during the actual practice of teaching. In this so-called "context embeddedness" (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000; Den Brok et al., 2010, p. 725), teacher performance is assessed over a period of time; in addition, teachers' intentions and thinking processes, as well as students' behavior and reflection, are considered to generate "interdependence and specificity" (Den Brok et al., 2010, pp. 726–727). To further understand the multilayered characteristics of teachers' teaching performance, "multiple instruments" are required to evaluate and, in doing so, generate "variability" (p. 726). With this study, we intend to contribute to the professional development of teacher educators in classroom interactions by examining their evaluated language-oriented performance within content-based teaching over a period of time by focusing on the reflections of experienced teacher educators and their students.

## Method

### *Research Design*

In a small-scale intervention study, we examined how teacher educators' language-oriented performance was evaluated by individual teacher educators and their students. Since we were interested in understanding how practical knowledge of language was related to the language-oriented professional learning goals of teacher educators,<sup>†</sup> we first reported how they conceptualized and operationalized these objectives (Swart et al., 2018b). Subsequently, we examined their understanding of language-oriented performance based on recordings of their regular classes without prior instruction (Swart et al., 2018c). Based on these outcomes, we developed a framework for language-oriented professional development that consisted of modalities and focus areas (Table 1). In the current study, we used this framework to examine in detail the language-oriented performance in content-based teaching in three cases.

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<sup>†</sup>Teacher educators from different subjects—sciences, social sciences, and humanities—comprised a part of a larger group of study participants (see Swart et al., 2018b).

Table 1. Framework for Language-Oriented Professional Development

Language modalities: Intention and means	Focus areas	Description
Language-sensitive and interpersonal <i>Language as a tool</i>	(1) Language awareness	Differentiating content and language levels by verifying students' interpretations
	(2) Active listening	Applying active listening skills through questioning, paraphrasing, reflection, repetition, and summation of students' wording
Language-focused and pedagogical <i>Language as a means</i>	(3) Formalizing interaction	Applying different interactive forms aimed at the transfer of content and development of language proficiency
	(4) Organizing language support	Paying attention to relevant language aspects in students' subject learning development
Language sensitive and language focused <i>Language as a tool and means</i>	(5) Improving both language and learning development	Paying equal, simultaneous attention to students' linguistic, conceptual, and communicative development

(Based on Swart et al., 2018a,b,c)

#### Framework

The framework, as identified by Swart et al. (2018b), recognizes five interrelated language focus areas of teacher educators' language-oriented professional development: (1) language awareness, (2) active listening, (3) formalizing interaction, (4) language support, and (5) language and learning development and improvement (Table 1). These focus areas, which were employed as starting points in this study, should be considered not as fixed or complete aspects or as major areas of concern, but rather as empirically relevant points to examine. From this perspective, we argued that the language focus areas that were applied and evaluated by the teachers, lead to language-oriented reflection and, thereby, to a broader pedagogical arsenal, which should result in an improvement in teaching performance quality. This, in turn, enables language conditions to support more effective content-based teaching (Bunch, 2013; Love, 2009; Schleppegrell & O'Hallaron, 2011).

In the current study, these five language focus areas were deployed as a reference framework for the evaluation of teachers' language-oriented performance. In this manner, the focus areas were based on previously identified teacher modalities and intended as a structure for the applied and evaluated data.

#### Context of the Study and Participants

Our study involved three experienced teacher educators in social sciences subjects, religious studies, geography, and educational science, all of whom were second- or third-year bachelors' student teachers (N=32) at a university of applied sciences in the Netherlands. This institute for teacher education offers a certificate that allows graduates to teach students at lower levels of secondary education. Convenience sampling was used to select participants, based on their voluntary involvement in the previous three phases of the language-oriented professional development study (Swart et al., 2018a,b,c). In addition, all their students were invited to voluntarily participate in the evaluation of their teacher educators' language-oriented teaching; all the students who were present at the time of invitation agreed to participate. Since the number of students and, thus, the composition of the groups differed by lesson, we used only the data from the students who attended all the lessons (Table 2).

Table 2. Participants of the Study

Group	Participants	Male	Female	Age	Years of teaching experience	Subject	Total participants
Teacher educators	1 Mariam <sup>a</sup>		1	61	29	Religious Studies	3
	2 Alex <sup>a</sup>	1		34	7	Educational Sciences	
	3 Willy <sup>a</sup>	1		57	26	Geography	
Total T							
Students of T1 of T2 of T3	15	6	9			Religion S.	32
	10	3	7			Education. S	
	7	4	3			Geography	
Total S							
Total T & S							35

Note. T, teachers; S, students: first row under participants contains the total number of students present in each of the three classes. T1, T2, and T3 refer to the three teachers, Mariam, Alex, and Willy (Pseudonyms)

### Instruments

To enable the teacher educators to evaluate their language-oriented performance in content-based teaching, we conducted three parallel courses over a 12-week period. Prior to each lesson, all three teachers were individually asked to select two language focus areas from the framework of five areas (Table 1). Subsequently, they were asked to self-evaluate their applied (in class) and perceived (after class) focus areas using self-selected video excerpts. Simultaneously, their students were asked to complete and keep a logbook at the end of each lesson. After the completion of all the lessons, teachers were asked to evaluate their own language-oriented performance through a plenary group session (Table 3).

Table 3. Intervention Phases, Instruments, and Objectives

Intervention rounds	Phase 1 (1 week)	Phase 2/3 (10 weeks)			Phase 4 (2 weeks)
Instruments	Individual Introductory meeting	Individual Stimulated recall interviews (T) Students' logbooks (S)			Plenary group session
Objectives	Selection of focus areas (T)	Reflection 1 of applied focus areas (T/S) and reselection of focus areas (T)	Reflection 2	Reflection 3	Final evaluation of best language- oriented practice
Participants					
T Teachers	T	T	T	T	T
S Students		S	S	S	

Note. T, teacher; S, student.

To answer the first sub-question in terms of teacher educators' reflections, the following instruments were available: individual interviews for the purpose of selection, stimulated recall interviews for the purpose of reflection, and one group interview for the purpose of final evaluation. For students' reflections, the available instruments were individually written logbooks. All the instruments for teachers and students were accompanied by a pre-structured format based on the framework for language-oriented professional development (Table 1). A more detailed description of this instrument, as provided to students, is presented in the section Student Evaluation Tool.

### Student Evaluation Tool

The evaluation tool for students was developed to measure the frequency of each of the five focus areas as used by their teacher educator. The form comprised three pages. On the first page, the following main points were briefly introduced: the subject's being a teaching intervention in the context of research, request for voluntary participation, and objective of evaluating language-oriented professional learning and teaching. The second page contained a description of each of the five focus areas and some examples of related teacher actions. Accordingly, students could indicate how often each one of the described focus areas was observed during an entire lesson by means of a three-point frequency scale, containing the statuses "not," "occasionally," and "frequently." On the last page, students were asked to elaborate on the evaluations using examples.

### Procedure

The framework was designed to guide students' and teachers' evaluation processes. The students based their evaluation on the lessons they attended, whereas the teachers consulted video-recordings of the same lessons provided in the professional online learning platform Iris Connect (WEE/AA1796TU, Brighton). This online platform allowed them to individually collect and select video data of their teaching performance and record their responses, both individually and in groups.

To help the researcher follow teachers' intended language strategies prior to each lesson, the teachers were asked to make a *selection* of two out of five language focus areas from the framework. For this purpose, individual interviews were held three times: one week prior to the first lesson (initial selection), one week prior to the second lesson (selection two), and one week prior to the third lesson (selection three). To clarify teachers' *reflection* on their applied language focus areas, individual stimulated recall interviews were held three times, directly after the first, second, and third lessons, using self-selected video excerpts. In this manner, all the individual pre-post interviews consisted of a selection part (looking ahead) and a reflection part (looking back), in addition to the initial and final interviews, prior to the first lesson and after the last lesson. Subsequently, for teachers' *final evaluation*, all three teachers were requested to reflect on their best language-oriented practice based on their selected video excerpts in a plenary group session after completing the lesson series. All individual and group interviews were semi-structured to enable the collection of specific, reliable, and comparable qualitative data related to the focus areas, including the data to track instances where the method diverged from the framework.

To enable the students' evaluation of their teacher educators' applied language focus areas, log entries were made at the end of each class in a standardized form, which were distributed at the beginning of each lesson and later checked for understanding. All students who attended the lessons agreed to participate since they felt that the pre-structured research approach was user-friendly, facilitated easy participation at the end of each lesson, and required a relatively low amount of time and effort. To avoid bias in the reflections and assessments stages, teachers were not shown student reflections, nor did they receive feedback from the researcher until after the intervention was completed (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2013).

### Analysis

The following datasets were analyzed: 3 transcripts from the initial interviews regarding teachers' selections, 12 transcripts from the pre-post lesson interviews, and one report from the plenary session for teachers' self-evaluation of best practice, along with 96 completed evaluation logs containing students' assessments and reflections.

To analyze the data, first, teacher selections and reflections were separately examined. Next, student logs, including frequency scales, were sorted per student group and then converted to numbers (not: 0, occasionally: 1, frequently: 2). To examine individual groups for differences between lessons, percentages were computed based on the final total for each group per lesson. To describe teachers' reflections, the data obtained from the stimulated recall interviews were analyzed using the coding scheme for language-oriented professional development (Table 1): language awareness (Focus area 1, F1), active listening (F2), formalizing interaction (F3), language support (F4), and improving (F5). To identify levels of reflection in teachers' thinking and formulation, practical examples obtained prior to (referred to as initial) and three times after (referred to as finals 2, 3, and 4) their initial cycle of three lessons were analyzed using a framework for reflective pedagogical thinking (Sparks-Langer, Simmons, Pasch, Colton, & Starke, 1990). The framework consisted of three levels: 1 = descriptive experience, 2 = 1 plus reflective observation, and 3 = 2 plus conceptual reflection (Table 4). For example, if the fragment seemed to express an explanation of what happened during teaching with literal, generic, and/or descriptive language use, we assigned the entire fragment a score of 1, whereas if the fragment expressed an explanation (also), including skills and tasks labeled with appropriate terms and including personal preference and conceptual principle given as rationale, such as "Focus groups help me to get out of the instructional mode and develop a better focus on my goals for professional development," we assigned a score of 3. In this manner, all the fragments were coded using numbers; counted; and, for each of the four interviews, averaged and rounded to a half or whole number (Table 10). To determine inter-rater reliability (Cohen's kappa), two of the authors independently coded three rounds of approximately 20% of the examples, which were randomly selected. The coding showed a moderate level of inter-rater reliability, with a Cohen's kappa of .76. To increase the accuracy and reliability of all steps, both data and method triangulations were applied; in other words, multiple quantitative and qualitative methods were used to collect and analyze the data (Jack & Raturi, 2006). Furthermore, member checks were integrated (Lincoln & Guba, 1985); in this process, the teachers were provided with interview reports directly after each interview and invited to comment on their accuracy.

Table 4. Framework for Reflective Pedagogical Thinking

Categories	Definition	Examples
A = descriptive experience	Literal, generic, and/or descriptive language use	I teach and I explain the content
B = A + reflective observation	Reflective language included skills, tasks, events labeled with appropriate terms, and/or personal preference given as rationale	I interact with my peers in a focus group about language
C = B + conceptual reflection and/or normative reflection	Reflective language included skills, tasks, events labeled with appropriate terms and/or personal preference, and principle or considerations of context such as moral issues	Focus groups help me to get out of the instructional mode and are also useful for my students because they are not used to working together in groups, and I want to teach them how to do this

Based on Sparks-Langer et al. (1990).

### Results

Our discussion of results is presented case by case. Each profile begins with a brief sketch of the participating teacher and their current language themes emerging from the data pertaining to their perceived language-oriented abilities. Then, the results of the teacher's intended language strategies in anticipation of their upcoming performance are presented, which are followed by their selected best practice based on the reflections obtained from the stimulated recall interviews and final evaluation. Finally, the outcomes of student evaluations are described based on students'

**Teacher 1: Mariam**

Mariam, who is 61 years old and has 29 years of teaching experience, works as a teacher educator in religious studies. With respect to her field of study in relation to the function of language, she says, “My field of study has everything to do with language; so, I am already language sensitive in nature.” She further referred to her ability to “state and summarize the essence of a point to be learned” in order to “make the connection and put it in the context of history and culture.” According to Mariam, her ability consists of a combination of content and language proficiency: “This is the discussion between content and language, which is the source of all thought.” Mariam also indicated, as a general language strategy, her intention to work from “abstraction to concretion by way of comprehensible language and making the right emphasis.”

Table 5 presents an overview of teachers’ selections. Mariam’s adjusted language strategy, which is based on her selection of focus areas prior to lesson one, consisted of the need to exercise “active ways of listening” (F2) and developing ways of stimulating students’ awareness of language through “language support” (F4). The former strategy was chosen because, according to Mariam, she tended to talk too much and listen too little due to both her enthusiasm and her “impatience and need to rush.” According to her, the latter strategy “allows her students access to the subject.” In addition, she indicated that she was generally “language aware” (F1) and familiar with “improving language-oriented learning and teaching” (F5). This was, according to her, about “thoroughness and differentiation” and “subject jargon.” She opined that “organizing interaction” (F3) was “too laborious” and “from a practical point of view” not useful for the intervention, although it was necessary because she also realized that she delivered “too many monologues.”

Mariam’s adjusted language strategy, prior to lesson two, was directed at “language awareness” (F1) and “listening actively” (F2). According to her, it was important to go “back to the essence” by paying attention to what students say and how they say it through “language awareness” (F1) to “pass it on to students by having them looking at words and allowing them to associate” accordingly. According to Mariam, her potential pitfall was “not to lapse into monologues” and thus “learning to listen” (F2).

Mariam’s adjusted language strategy, based on her reflection on lesson two and selection prior to lesson three, was directed at “formalizing interaction” (F3) and “organizing language support” (F4). According to her, there was an ongoing interactive process in class, whereby the students “were busy with each other about a subject that everyone liked,” even though the content was “at stake,” that is, not at the required level. Therefore, she considered “formalizing interaction” (F3) as a prerequisite for “language support” (F4). After reflection, she realized that this selection (F3, F4) was not dependent on whether the students had been prepared, because “you can create this as a teacher yourself by paying more attention to effective instruction and working forms.” Here, she added some associated key attitudes and working forms, such as “self-regulation” and “interactive and collaborative learning.”

Mariam’s motivation for her selection of best practice, as explained in this section, was that the students “visibly experienced a lot of pleasure in taking the floor.” This was because she realized that when the students were actively engaged in conversation, her additional instruction and explanation worked better, that is, “in clear language the actual content was delivered in after their presentation, and was well understood,” than when she delivered it in the monologue form, because of its direct connection with students’ experience.

The students present their summary of the literature with their own questions and comments. Afterwards, I thank and compliment them. Because the content was not quite clear, I also gave my own summary. Through my more substantive explanation, I added a new dimension and placed it in a historical perspective to broaden the meaning of the words. They thus learned that the meaning of words is very contextually oriented. (TP1) (Mariam’s description of her self-selected excerpt showing best practice)

*Table 5. Language Selections of Teachers*

Focus Area (F)	L1			L2			L3		
	Mariam	Alex	Willy	Mariam	Alex	Willy	Mariam	Alex	Willy
F1 Language awareness				M	A	W			
F2 Active listening	M	A	W	M					W
F3 Formalizing interaction					A	W	M		
F4 Language support	M		W				M	A	
F5 Improving		A						A	W

According to Mariam, the first focus area, “language awareness” (F1), came up through reflective feedback on what students said and how, using repetition and correct terminology: “It is about being distinctive in content and opinion, by reiterating what they say with new terminology and by showing them how they can understand and use these technical terms.” In this context, “active listening” (F2) was about “developing a basic attitude,” whereby she could support both the learning process and process of appropriation regarding new material of students. “Not just talking but listening leads to students being stimulated to think for themselves and to participate more actively in conversations by listening to each other and thereby enriching the content.” According to Mariam, “formalizing

interaction" (F3) involved an approach whereby she organized forms of meta-conversation by talking to students about the interaction that just had taken place and asking questions about both their findings on the subject-specific content and the conversation itself, that is, how it took place. "Language support" (F4) was, according to her, about identifying relevant language aspects in learning, especially "when discussing and explaining key words or thoughts." "Improving" (F5) occurred when she focused on the transfer of content, as well as the language of instruction, along with the development of language during interaction:

Certain familiar words are loaded with symbolic meaning and that is often the reason for misunderstanding. I spend time developing sensitivity to the fact that words with meanings related to religious belief have an emotional meaning in combination with a certain absoluteness for the person concerned.

According to Mariam, key elements of improvement were the need for a more equitable and clearer distribution of tasks and roles between teacher and students to provide students with more space to experience collective ways of composing propositional meanings using language and to use different methods of expressing themselves more explicitly and effectively:

It would be better to stimulate the students to question each other. Then, as a teacher, I can add some necessary content clarification instead of still delivering a monologue after a meaningful discussion. That way I would have given them the chance to go through the entire process themselves and we would collectively generate more of the newly developed knowledge.

#### *Students' Reflections on Mariam's Language-Oriented Performance.*

Table 6 depicts the students' reflections on Mariam (T1). With respect to Mariam's performed language focus areas, the first two, "language awareness" (F1) and "active listening" (F2), were most regularly pointed out by the students for all the three lessons: "language awareness" was perceived to be "occasionally followed by" "active listening," which was "not" perceived in lesson one but "frequently" perceived in the latter two lessons. This was fairly in line with Mariam's applied language strategies. Although she applied "active listening" in lesson one, this was not noticed by the students; however, when she repeated it in lesson two, they noticed it. In the last lesson, she replaced it with other strategies based on an assumed sense of control regarding "active listening," which corresponded with the students' reflections. A similar agreement applied to "formalizing interaction" (F3), which, according to the students, was not observed in lesson two and was observed only occasionally in lesson three. This corresponded with Mariam's strategy to not use it in lesson two but to deliberately commit to it in lesson three. A more implicit type of agreement was seen with respect to the first and last focus areas: according to students, "language awareness" (F1) and "improving" (F5) were perceived "occasionally," whereas Mariam indicated that she would not apply these areas as a strategy and did not indicate in her reflection that she attached much importance to them, other than its assumed and self-evident presence, such as a more equitable and clear distribution of tasks between teacher and students as a result of the deployment of the other focus areas.

*Table 6. Students' Reflections on Mariam's Teaching: T1 in Lessons 1,2,3*

Focus Area	L1		L2		L3	
	Prevailing Frequency	%	Prevailing Frequency	%	Prevailing Frequency	%
1 Language awareness	Occasionally	60	Occasionally	60	Occasionally	70
2 Active listening	Not	60	Frequently	60	Frequently	60
3 Formalizing interaction	Occasionally/ Not	50	Not	60	Occasionally	70
4 Language support	Occasionally	50	Frequently	40	Occasionally	50
5 Improving	Frequently/Occasionally	40	Occasionally	70	Frequently/Occasionally	50

#### *Levels of Reflection in Mariam's Formulation.*

As shown in Table 7, initially, Mariam's formulation was mainly characterized by generic language use and sometimes supplemented with reflective observation (1-2), such as for example, "Language awareness I have not selected because I am language aware. But perhaps that is something else than being language fluent." In final interviews 2 and 3, her formulations contained explanations, as well as skills supplemented with labels such as personal preference and principle as a basis for her statements (2-3). In the final interview (final 4), her formulations contained generic statements, as well as statements mentioning more specific skills and tasks; they were labeled with appropriate terms, including personal preference, principle, and conceptual reflection (3), such as "The meaning of words is very context-bound, time-bound, and personal, because for me it means something completely different than for them. So, you have to know and propagate this as a teacher without making it absolute."

Table 7. *Levels of Reflection in Teacher Educators' Thinking and Formulations*

Interviews	1	2	3	4	Central tendency
	Initial	Final	Final	Final	
Teacher					
Mariam	1-2	2-3	2-3	3	2-3
Alex	2	1-2	3	3	2-3
Willy	1	2	1-2	2-3	1.2
Tendency	1-2	2	2-3	2-3	2-3

Note. 1 = Descriptive experience; 2 = 1 plus Reflective observation; 3 = 2 plus Conceptual reflection.

### Teacher 2: Alex

Alex, who is 34 years old and has seven years of teaching experience, works as a teacher educator in educational science. With reference to his field of study in relation to language, he indicated, "In my field, I'm always looking for ways to use language to help them think, and for ways to explain this in order to stimulate them." In this manner, he referred to his ability to "search for a mixture of being directive and less directive in language." Alex indicated, for example, that he generally uses the word "must" too much due to his desire to be convincing. However, he also noticed that this was counterproductive: "I do the work and the students take a pending attitude." According to Alex, his ability consisted of an "awareness of how language plays a role in learning and how to use language to make the students think." As a general language strategy, Alex indicated the desire to experiment more with teaching methods "by being less directive and less present and paying more attention to my verbal and non-verbal presentation." In addition, he suggested to try and adjust his teaching "to tell less and do more" by "group work forms or games" and, in doing so, to help the students in "working together on group assignments."

Table 8 presents an overview of Alex's selections. His adjusted language strategy, based on his selection prior to lesson one, is focused on "active listening" (F2) and "improving" (F5). Alex substantiated this by granting a hierarchical order to the presented focus areas: "the first two concern the pre-phase; a diagnostic and problem phase." According to him, "learning to listen" (F2) meant "one hundred percent of a listening ear and contact with students" and "improving" (F5) his "methods of teaching and interaction forms." His "ultimate goal" was the last focus area (F5): "ensuring that the application of your teaching and language methods form the double loop." With respect to the other focus areas, he recognized "language awareness" (F1) as a key point and that he was already working with processes of formalizing interaction (F3). According to him, "language support" (F4) was too technical: "It's too much about language, while it should be in service of the interaction."

Table 8. *Students' Reflections on Alex's Teaching: T2 in the Three Lessons*

Focus Area (F)	L1		L2		L3	
	Prevailing Frequency	%	Prevailing Frequency	%	Prevailing Frequency	%
1 Language awareness	Occasionally	40	Frequently	50	Occasionally	70
2 Active listening	Occasionally	70	Frequently	70	Frequently	70
3 Formalizing interaction	Not	70	Frequently	80	Occasionally	50
4 Language support	Not	40	Occasionally	70	Occasionally	70
5 Improving	Occasionally/Not	40	Occasionally	70	Occasionally	70

Note. L1, Lesson 1; L2, Lesson 2; L3, Lesson 3.

Alex's adjusted language strategy, based on his reflection on lesson one and selection prior to lesson two, was directed at "language awareness" (F1) and "formalizing interaction" (F3). According to Alex, there was a degree of turbulence in the classroom; hence, he had to "shift to communication at a meta level" and a more appropriate interaction form: "I had to quickly make a complex decision about a substantive follow-up, a technical approach, and whether I would do it with this one student or with the group." Consequently, Alex realized that he was "not fluent enough" in the interaction "by letting students speak more and through forms of differentiation at certain times." Therefore, he intended to select "awareness" and "formalizing interaction," as he explained: "It is my pitfall to do well in general terms, but there is less awareness of the details and technical effects."

Based on his reflection on lesson two and selection prior to lesson three, his adjusted strategy was directed at "language support" (F4) and "improving" (F5). According to Alex, there was considerable opportunity to not only organize group interaction and provide language support but also use the modality "language as a tool and target." Examples included his reactions during group interactions: "Can you say this differently?" and "I think you told a good story; now, can you choose the key words?" About his technical language approach (F4), he expressed less satisfaction: "I was afraid to lose the thread if I focused on language-related aspects." For this reason, Alex thought that formalizing interaction could be added by means of "various forms or alternating" interaction in order to "hold the attention span." In his reflection on lesson three, he expanded that the essence should be to "interact much more and speak less."



According to Alex, the results showed that he thought more about what he said and what the students said: “By seeking more connection from verification and listening, rather than only responding intuitively and in a directive manner.”

Alex’s motivation for his selection of best practice, as explained in this section, was the fact that there was “a great deal of interaction among the students” stimulated by the way he guided them in his role of a facilitator: “I asked several times explicitly for clarification of words or gave an explanation. Because of this the interaction between the students continued well and relevant things were said”.

Students are interviewed in response to an example I have provided. It’s a fruitful conversation, the students respond to each other. First, I keep my silence, let them go their way. Sometimes I support the conversation by asking for clarification and additional arguments. At one point they stop and start asking questions. To avoid losing the overview, I formulate some generic clues. Eventually I interrupt the interaction to keep the input relevant and clear and thereby help them be able to move forward in their learning process. (Alex’s description of his self-selected excerpt of best practice)

According to Alex, with respect to the related focus areas, “language awareness” (F1) included an “ongoing discussion of content and assignments” by means of the teacher continually asking questions, instead of “being the main supplier” of all conversation and answers: “Now, I actually answer the questions to the students myself by formulating immediate follow-up questions in the absence of reaction.” Further, he opined that “active listening” (F2) was merely the timely use of silence: “I do not listen to the students enough when there is no answer immediately. By inserting silences, time is created to search for the connection and from there making the transition needed.” He also mentioned that “formalizing interaction” (F3) was necessary to create more variation and innovation during those moments that generally seemed to emerge from more unilateral ways of providing information: “It may be useful to select more practical forms, for example, by collecting the input on the white board and do the ordering together.” To make this work, Alex indicated the need for additional language assignments to “support language” (F4): “Making a glossary or a mind map of matters that are important for displaying results during the lectures, or let them think in writing and support them.” According to Alex, “improving” (F5) was related to more of a substantive focus on language through “repetition and analysis.” Alex indicated that language as a tool and target “as the essential part of improving” involves “both asking for explanation and clarification of content so it can also be used as an effective tool to keep the interaction smooth and productive.” Key aspects for improvement were related to developing a better understanding of students’ language experience and, in doing so, choosing the right moments for accurate and fruitful interference. According to Alex, this was essential for supporting language and learning development.

#### *Students’ Reflections on Alex’s Language-Oriented Performance*

Table 8 depicts the results of the students’ reflections on Alex (T2). With respect to Alex’s performed language focus areas, “active listening” was pointed out most consistently, from “occasionally” in lesson one to “frequently” in both lessons two and three. This evaluation was not in agreement with Alex’s selection but matched his reflection after the lesson. Alex only selected this area in lesson one “to have this under control.” There was also significant understanding with respect to formalizing interaction (F3); Alex indicated the intention to work on this in lesson two. According to the students, there was a development in lessons one and two from “occasionally” to “frequently.” Finally, both Alex and the students shifted attention to the latter two focus points, “language support” (F4) and “improving” (F5), which, according to Alex, were not completely controlled but still “in the making” or, as indicated by the students, “occasionally” as a result of the occurrence, or otherwise, because of his performance in class. Finally, a less overt congruence was related to “language awareness,” which was selected once by Alex in lesson one and not considered by students as noticeable.

#### *Levels of Reflection in Alex’s Formulation.*

As shown in Table 8, in the initial round, Alex’s formulation was generally characterized by generic and descriptive experiences, which were supplemented with reflective observation level (2), such as “It still is too much about language and it should be about interaction. It is also not interesting because it is too technical. With me, language must be at the service of the interaction.” In final 2, his formulations mainly contained generic descriptions as well as some reflective observation levels (1–2). In finals 3 and 4, his formulations generally consisted of reflective observation supplemented with conceptual reflection level (3):

I think it has to do with my old thoughts about teaching, you do that by telling and presenting an impressive story, so the more you start thinking, the more important language becomes and the quest of finding a shared language.

#### **Teacher 3: Willy**

Willy, who is 57 years old and has 26 years of teaching experience, works as a teacher educator in geography. With respect to his field of study and the function of language, he indicated that he usually tries to communicate in “fairly interactive ways.” Listening appeared to be his key word, and he addressed his “wanting to intervene too hastily” and his tendency “to comment on everything.” According to Willy, one positive aspect of his communication as a teacher was his ability to “dare to be vulnerable by not knowing everything” and provide his students space to reflect.

Regarding general language strategy, he indicated that it was merely about “listening, connecting, vulnerability, and providing space.” According to him, this should never become routine: “A safe learning environment is a kind of a habit; otherwise, you would have to enforce it.”

Based on Willy’s selection prior to lesson one, his language strategy was directed at “active listening” (F2) and “language support” (F4): “to invite students more to explain content in their own words” or by “having them explain it to each other.” In this manner, “it becomes more their learning process and I disappear to the background.” Further, according to Willy, “working with silence” was “very effective; especially in situations where students know that they get a turn.” In addition, according to Willy, “advancing their knowledge by responding in exemplary language on student input,” instead of “correcting when it is wrong,” was important.

Willy’s adjusted language strategy, based on his reflections on lesson one and selection prior to lesson two, was directed at “the same things as my initial language strategy and more” on “language awareness” (F1) by repetition and summarizing content during “formalized interaction” (F3) and by “separating the main issues.” According to Willy, the attention that he now received from the students was “extraordinary” because of his strategy of “always asking about and summarizing what has just been said.”

Subsequently, based on his reflection on lesson two and selection prior to lesson three, Willy’s language strategy was directed at “actively listening” (F2) and “improving” (F5). He explains, “Despite the stupendous start of this third lesson, I learned to act more intensely than at any time before, by asking, reflecting, repeating, and by summarizing.” In this sense, according to Willy, language could also be used to “encourage students to think and formulate rather than [...] using monologues and defining only the concepts.”

Willy’s motivation for selection was that during this part the students realized that they also could play a role during teacher instruction. This perception was a new experience for him, which emerged from the silence and space that he, as the teacher, was willing to provide: “a story in the beginning about the peat formation, and slowly people start complementing each other. I left a lot more to them and did not give the right answer.”

I ask the questions classically and not personally. And when this does not work out, I ask someone who was not paying attention. That way I try to involve everyone. I wait for responses by being silent at times. A lady reads out loud from the book in response to my question. Some students immediately search things online to check or correct something. There is a variation between instruction and interaction. (Willy’s description of his self-selected excerpt of best practice)

According to Willy, there was a greater “self-awareness of language” (F1) than before “without putting the emphasis on language” but “by using listening skills” in deliberate ways: “I have used many different linguistic aspects in various ways and moments, such as questioning, paraphrasing, and concluding certain things.” However, “active listening” (F2) turned out to be more difficult than he originally thought:

Apparently, listening is more than just using listening skills or providing space and silent time to reflect. I could say that this is my strong point, but I did not always seek the connection to what they actually said. It also has to do with interchanges in between listening and responding.

“Formalizing interaction” (F3) mainly took place prior to the actual starting point of his lessons. Here, he referred to his ability to “socially connect” with the students “apart from the content”: “It can also be about someone’s personal experiences. I’m looking for a connection, in word and gesture, just before I get started.” In this context, Willy felt that “language support” (F4) was less relevant: “It does not fit well in geography, I do not understand grammatical things and it would also distract too much from the content.” Regarding “improving” (F5), a combined approach, using language as both a tool and a target, could be applied, but not necessarily both at the same time:

Language as a target ultimately, that is the most difficult question for me. I got the impression that it was happening though. For example, by explaining and understanding how things actually connect, you are basically also teaching people how to think, and you can only do that by using language as a goal.

Key actions for improvement were primarily aimed at stimulating language-developing interaction by repeating what the students said, instead of continuing to follow his “fixed and predetermined” thoughts about how to continue the course: “You should hear one’s thoughts by repetition rather than talking about what you intended to discuss via their response.”

#### *Students’ Reflections on Willy’s Language-Oriented Performance.*

As shown in Table 9, “language awareness” (F1) was most regularly pointed out by Willy’s students; it changed from “frequently” in lesson one to “occasionally” in lesson two and “not” in lesson three. It is noted that “active listening” (F2) underwent the same change. This reflection was implicitly in agreement with Willy’s reflection, as he mainly committed to “active listening” and, therefore, according to himself, he forgot to be aware of his own language. For this reason, he selected “language awareness” in lesson two, after which he again focused on “active listening” (F2) and “improving” (F5) to “encourage students’ thinking and formulation.” The latter (F5) was equally noticed by students in the final

lesson. “Active listening” (F2), in contrast, was explicitly noticed in lesson one; however, contrary to Willy’s applied language strategy, it changed to “not” in lesson two and nothing in lesson three, that is, it was not noticed by the majority of the students.

*Table 9. Students’ Reflections on Willy’s Teaching: T3 in Lessons (L) 1, 2, 3*

Focus Area	L1		L2		L3	
	Prevailing Frequency	%	Prevailing Frequency	%	Prevailing Frequency	%
1 Language awareness	Frequently	60	Occasionally	60	Not	60
2 Active listening	Frequently	90	Not	60	Occasionally	40
3 Formalizing interaction	Frequently	50	Occasionally	60	Occasionally	30
4 Language support	Occasionally/ Frequently	40	Occasionally	60	Frequently	40
5 Improving	Frequently/ Occasionally	50	Not	40	Occasionally	90

#### *Levels of Reflection in Willy’s Formulation.*

As shown in Table 7, initially, Willy’s formulation was merely characterized by descriptive experience (1), for instance, “I liked the interaction between the students better than normal, I also really liked that they continuously complemented each other.” In final 2, his formulations contained both descriptive experience and reflective observation (2), for instance, “I have never done this before and was able to explain something in such a way that they never forget it just by constantly asking what does he mean and what does she mean?” In final 3, Willy’s formulation was mainly characterized by generic language use and sometimes supplemented with reflective observation (1-2). In final 4, his formulations contained reflective explanations using labels such as “personal preference” and “conceptual principle” (2-3): “Having a Socratic kind of conversation about the content is like a challenge to me. I would like to try this more when geopolitics are discussed so I can improve my listening and observation skills.”

### **Discussion**

In general, the teachers’ initial self-assessment of their language-oriented ability, prior to the intervention, clarified their language competence in content-based teaching. Both Mariam and Alex indicated an attentiveness to learning and thinking development, from a combined interpersonal and pedagogical perspective, whereas Willy emphasized his awareness of empathically oriented communication with students, from a predominantly interpersonal perspective. Generally, all of them indicated that their projected abilities were based on their initial language strategy, that is, to explore ways of reducing their speaking time in favor of increasing the students’ opportunities for speaking. They attempted to do so in diverse ways, by “setting a good example” (Mariam); “being less directive and more verbally present” (Alex); and “seeking connection, offering space, and listening” (Willy).

Overall, the language intentions of all three teachers rooted in their subject backgrounds, were similar to each other and primarily associated with developing and improving their language-oriented teaching strategies, personal language, and social interpersonal relationships with students. During the intervention, we examined various language strategies, beginning with an initial preference for active listening and language support. The only exception was Alex, who also selected improving (F5). Subsequently, a preference gradually developed for a more exclusive inclination toward the first three focus areas, that is, language awareness (all the teachers) from a leading interpersonal language orientation, followed by active listening (Mariam) and organizing interaction (both Alex and Willy). Then, their final language strategies were merely aimed at the last three focus areas—formalizing interaction (Mariam) and language support (both Mariam and Alex), supplemented by improving (both Alex and Willy), which employed language from a combined interpersonal and pedagogical language orientation. One teacher (Willy) decided to partially maintain his starting strategy of interpersonal focus by once again selecting active listening. The “key aspects for improvement” indicated by teachers mainly focused on a joint orientation in which language was considered both a means and a purpose in itself, which confirmed with the teachers’ final language strategies: a means to make interaction “smooth and productive” (Alex) or to deepen content through a continual approach of “reiteration and analysis” (Mariam, Alex, and Willy).

These results confirm the previously identified language skills to be fundamentally attained by teachers, including awareness of language variances, ability to make content comprehensible through language, and possibility of language production (Den Brok et al., 2010). In addition, the outcomes seemingly confirm the previously assumed chronological progression of the language framework (Swart et al., 2018c). In other words, in the current study, participants considered the first two focus areas of language awareness and active listening to be a preparatory phase for diagnosis and problematization; this was followed by the organization of interaction and language support in the main phase and the application and evaluation of language and learning improvement in the final phase.

According to all the teachers, these approaches encourage students to think about the application of knowledge and the subsequent formulation. Moreover, apart from the intended treatment of content, the management and elaboration of students' experiences and thinking process was considered very important for language and learning development.

In conclusion, all three teachers agreed that the connected language orientation essentially pertained to an amenable approach for prolonging, pausing, and providing space (language sensitive and interpersonal) so that they could intervene in the learning process purposefully (in a language-oriented and pedagogical manner). This enables the teachers to create optimal opportunities for students to express themselves more explicitly and effectively, based on the teachers' empathic capacity and pedagogical decisiveness. Therefore, these findings constitute a language-specific addition to the merely pedagogical perspective of Renshaw (2004, p. 7), who claimed that teacher educators should be simultaneously receptive and facilitating to induce availability and distinctiveness. An imperative aspect of this language-specific context was that the teachers became aware that they should fundamentally become active listeners, which conforms to the viewpoint of Boyd and Markarian (2011).

In summary, the teachers indicated that they understood and propagated their content in a language-oriented fashion and could better understand their students by actively listening to and encouraging the latter to articulate their thoughts and knowledge. Consequently, according to the teachers, their students were, in turn, better able to present and position themselves as future teachers. On this basis, it is expected that through the convergence of interpersonal and pedagogically oriented language in content teaching (Swart et al., 2018c), teacher educators can extend their pedagogy to support and coach learning conversations (Boyd & Galda, 2011), as well as facilitating well-informed interactions in an understanding manner.

The teacher educators in this study were stimulated to develop reflective language skills to support their observations regarding what happened in and due to their language-oriented actions during their class interactions and, in due course, learning to understand their language-oriented development as reflected in their pedagogical decisions. Thereby, they were encouraged to be flexible in their formulations. On observing their language-oriented reflection levels, we found moderately similar developments for all teachers based on the difference between their averages in the first and final four reflections (Table 10). Initially, all teachers appeared to use a general or literal description of their teaching experiences, which was sometimes supplemented with an explanation, while reflecting on their observations. In contrast, during the two latter rounds (final 3 and 4), teachers tended to provide explanations more readily, for which they used principles and theory, as well as context. For example, during the final interview, Alex said, "And now that I am better articulated and understandable, it also has an educational and interpersonal effect, namely, that it is entirely your [the teacher's own] concern that you understand them because it is about the students. They witness that you try to formulate carefully. For that reason, the example function is not primarily the goal, but it also becomes a consequence." In other words, when the teachers first engaged in self-reflection, they had only a superficial understanding of what they did and what occurred. However, during the intervention, they gradually learned to observe their behavior and use of language more critically and develop both in a series of continuous and intensive reflections, in which personal preferences were combined with pedagogical principles and conceptual information.

Table 10. Students' Evaluation of Their Teacher's Language-Oriented Performance

Focus Areas	Mariam						Alex						Willy					
	L1	%	L2	%	L3	%	L1	%	L2	%	L3	%	L1	%	L2	%	L3	%
F1	O	60	O	60	O	70					O	70	F	60	O	60	N	60
F2	N	60	F	60	F	60	O	70	F	70	F	70	F	90	N	60		
F3			N	60	O	70	N	70	F	80					O	60		
F4									O	70	O	70			O	60		
F5			O	70					O	70	O	70					O	90

*Note.* Focus areas are denoted as F1, language awareness; F2, active listening; F3, formalizing interaction; F4, language support; F5, improving. Status is denoted as F, frequently; O, occasionally; N, not. The prevailing percentages (<60%) of focus areas as perceived by the students in Lessons 1, 2, and 3 are denoted using L1, L2, and L3, respectively.

These outcomes can be explained in many ways. One reason for the initial lesser degree of reflective attention paid to conceptual aspects of language-oriented teaching is the teachers' individual language-oriented ability, based on which they had first selected excerpts to be discussed in interviews. For example, Alex, who chose to focus on the language-oriented effects of group work, may have more promptly comprehended the link to social and conceptual values than Willy, who first focused on the use of language to improve receptiveness. Moreover, due to their new experiences with language-oriented teaching, the teachers were initially preoccupied with the mechanical side of language, which mainly considered "how to do it." In addition, probably, the content of the teachers' respective subject-specific areas did not actively invite critical or conceptual reflection on language-oriented teaching strategies, as indicated by Willy, and such reflection and changes in a teacher's instructional thinking about language were elicited only after a long period due to the recurrence of critical questions during the interviews. In other words, the training outcomes of this professional development activity, which was surrounded by continuous and intensive reflection, may have been cumulative. In line

with Fuller's theory of teacher development (1969) and other literature, which suggest that reflective narratives support teachers in simultaneously developing and analyzing their actions (Colton & Sparks-Langer, 1993; Conway & Clark, 2003), the discussion and analysis of their language-oriented teaching finally improved their reflective thinking and language-oriented formulation.

Research on the effects of teachers' reflection on the transfer of professional training indicates that teachers learn to assess their class experiences through reflective conversations with others and, consequently, develop themselves over time (Putnam & Borko, 2000). This type of research involves collaborative planning and interaction through teachers' self-assessment of lessons (Lieberman & Miller, 2008; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006) to understand what the teachers did and said and how their students responded.

According to the students who participated in the current study, as shown in Table 10, the teachers were initially (during L1) preoccupied with a largely interpersonal orientation toward the first three focus areas (language awareness, active listening, and formalizing interaction), particularly active listening. Subsequently, in lesson two, they gradually diverged from a pedagogical perspective toward a more extensive repertoire of multiple focus areas grouped around the "middle of the frame." Finally, in lesson three, teachers appeared to converge again from a generally unchanged pedagogical orientation (Mariam and Alex) or a diverging orientation (Willy). Here, both the sometimes explicit, sometimes implicit agreement among teachers regarding the application and adjustment of language strategies and the indicated fluctuation and development of focus areas are important points. There is an apparent contradiction between what the teachers indicated (Table 5) in their adjusted language strategies through the varying selections of focus areas and what was noticed by the students during the lessons (Table 10). The teachers develop from a mainly pedagogical orientation toward the middle three focus areas (2, 3, 4) and gradually shift their attention to a more interpersonal orientation with an emphasis on the first three focus areas (1, 2, 3). Subsequently, this changes to either a pedagogical or a combined interpersonal-pedagogical approach with the implementation of the final three focus areas (3, 4, 5).

An explanation for this shift is that there is essentially an implicit agreement between the teachers and students: teachers' development, as shown in Table 5, is based on their intentions and language strategies, whereas students' development, as shown in Table 8, is based on what they experience. The teachers initially indicated that they preferred the middle categories because they were assumed "to have the first one under control," implying language awareness. However, after the completion of lesson one, they realized that this seemingly self-evident first category is more complicated than expected. This explains their unanimous choice of language awareness as the key focus area in lesson two. In the student evaluation results, this realization is supported by their observation of a lack of the first three focus areas in lesson one (for Mariam and Alex). According to the students, the teachers seemed less aware of their language and listened poorly in their initial lessons.

This shows that, according to the student, although the teacher appears to have cognitive academic skills, he exhibits low basic interpersonal competence. Interestingly, here, Willy's shift seems to be different from that of the other teachers, from a reverse, interpersonal orientation, which also gradually shifts upward but remains limited to a focus on the two ends of the language framework, in focus areas one and five. These outcomes appear in accordance with the perspective of Ward and McCotter (2004), who claimed that teacher educators must be able to (re)formulate their reflections in a way that makes the qualities they teach visible; one way of realizing this may be the development of a language framework that includes practical dimensions for processes and emphasizes the broadening of critical reflection. The incorporation of students' reflection in such a framework recognizes the importance of students' perceptions regarding teachers' intentions and implementation in this process.

### Conclusions

Currently, theoretical research on the collaboration between language- and subject-specific content is attracting much attention in teacher education (DiCerbo et al., 2014; Sedova, 2017). One goal of this field of research is to transcend the conceptualization of language- and subject-specific content as unrelated entities, allowing them to be part of the same process of educational performance of teacher educators. Furthermore, clearly, empirical research on the practical knowledge of language in relation to teachers' teaching strategies in various subject areas is required.

The findings of this study show a connection between the direction of application of focus areas, as noticed by students, and teachers' ability to apply these in accordance with their intentions regarding both their subject and language skills, as well as pedagogical goals. Therefore, based on the evaluations made by teachers and students, the outcomes of this study conform to Fuller's (1969) theory on the stages that describe teacher development. The outcomes with respect to understanding new tasks and skills confirm that the achievement of new skill levels is not a typical process and is often difficult for the participants. The findings indicate that the evaluation of the teachers generally developed through their ability to, first, personalize new language concepts and, subsequently, link these concepts to their personal values and educational theories, while experimenting with them in classroom practice. Based on the results of this study, we conclude that teachers develop new skills and perspectives on their teaching as extensions of their existing skills and views, and that they acquire theoretical knowledge in combination with practical experiences, which are embedded in

the context of teaching (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000; Den Brok et al., 2010). Our results signify that both theory and practice play important roles in the skill development of teachers (Putnam & Borko, 2000) and have, in this case, the potential to improve the personal practical knowledge regarding language and its pedagogical role in the professional context of the experienced teacher educator. Therefore, this study lays the foundation for further research in pursuit of the construction and refinement of frameworks for language-oriented professional development and for the conduction of further empirical evaluations of teacher educators' language-oriented performance in different teaching fields.

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