

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Beyond (or not) the teacher's manual

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the extent to which a novice teacher follows (or not) the classroom practices suggested in the teacher's manual he works with, and to uncover the reasoning behind his practice when not doing so, as a manner to understand what aspects tend to mediate his practice. To do so, three classes of a novice teacher from the English Extracurricular Program of Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina were observed, being followed by interviews in which a more experienced peer teacher inquired into the participant's reasoning. Also, the participant answered three questionnaires about his perceptions in relation to the use of the textbook and the teacher's manual. Results show that the teacher's practice is mediated by concepts and beliefs regarding teaching which tend to be unconscious, thus needing to be externalized and assessed so they can be uncovered, understood, and possibly modified.

KEYWORDS: teacher's manual; reasoning teaching; mediation; externalization.

Para além (ou não) do manual do professor

RESUMO

O presente estudo teve como objetivo analisar em que medida um professor em início de carreira segue (ou não) as práticas de sala de aula sugeridas no manual do professor com o qual ele trabalha, bem como desvelar os aspectos relacionados ao seu processo de tomada de decisão quando ele não segue tais sugestões, para então entender o que medeia sua prática. Para isso, três aulas de um professor em início de carreira do Curso Extracurricular de Inglês da Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina foram observadas, seguidas de entrevistas nas quais um professor mais experiente o indagava sobre o seu processo de tomada de decisão. Além disso, o participante respondeu a três questionários relacionados às suas percepções sobre o uso do livro-texto e do manual do professor. Os resultados demonstram que a prática do professor é mediada por conceitos e crenças a respeito da profissão que tendem a ser inconscientes, tornando-se necessário que os mesmos sejam externalizados e acessados para então serem desvelados, compreendidos e possivelmente modificados.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: manual do professor; reasoning teaching; mediação; externalização.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The answers to the complexities of teaching are not simply formulated, and depend on a variety of aspects, such as teachers' beliefs, students' needs, the curriculum of the institution where teachers teach and so on. In order to understand that there is no right or wrong way to teach, teachers need to constantly reason about the *whats*, *hows*, and *whys* behind their practices. Engaging in this process – coined by Johnson (1999) as *reasoning teaching* – lies “at the core of both learning to teach and understanding teaching” (p. 1). Needless to say, teachers have a lot to gain by doing so.

For novice¹ teachers, however, engaging in reasoning teaching may be troublesome. Lack of experience, confidence, and knowledge may lead them to solely rely on tools such as textbooks, or more specifically, teacher's manuals, without even understanding or going after the reasons that underlie the use of a given task or activity. Johnson (2009) claims that the “initial over-reliance on a teacher's manual will most certainly shape how a teacher thinks about and engages in instructional activities” (p. 19). It might even inhibit their reasoning teaching if they do not take some time to reason about how effective a particular activity is, considering their context of teaching.

Both the textbook and the teacher's manual function as mediating artifacts (Vygotsky, 1987) that aim at improving classroom practices' effectiveness, most of the times guiding novice teachers through the complex processes of planning and teaching a foreign language class. However, again, due to lack of experience, confidence, and knowledge teachers tend to accept anything that is suggested in the textbook/teacher's manual without reasoning about the convergence between intentions and procedures. Inquiring into the pedagogical reasons behind these tools may prevent this from happening as it may foster an informed decision-making process when choosing between following or adapting the suggestions given.

In this vein, the present study has a twofold objective: to analyze the extent to which a novice teacher follows (or not) the classroom practices suggested in the teacher's manual; and to uncover the reasoning behind his practice when not doing so, as a way to understand what aspects tend to mediate his practice. Under these circumstances, the following research questions (hereafter RQ1 and RQ2) guide this study:

- RQ1 – To what extent does a novice teacher follow (or not) the teacher's manual?
- RQ2 – When he does not do so, how does this teacher justify his choices? What aspects mediate his practice?

In order to answer these research questions, this study counts on three data sources: classroom observations, interviews, and three questionnaires. Such sources will be detailed in the methodological section of this work. Beforehand, though, in the next sections, the rationale that underlies the basis of this work is briefly presented, namely Sociocultural Theory and Teacher Development, presenting the main tenets of Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (Lantolf, 2000; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006, 2009; Oliveira, 2001; Valsiner, 2001;

¹ This study understands *novice teachers* as those who have either none or up to one-year experience in the classroom.

Vygotsky, 1978; Werstch, 1984, 1985) and how it informs teacher development (Biehl & Dellagnelo, 2016; Cerutti-Rizatti & Dellagnelo, 2016; Dellagnelo & Moritz, 2017; Johnson, 2009; Johnson & Golombek, 2011; Johnson and Arshavskaya, 2011; Johnson & Dellagnelo, 2013; Johnson & Golombek, 2016; Vieira-Abrahão, 2012, 2014a; Ruhmke-Ramos, 2018; Silva, 2018); Beliefs (Barcelos, Batista & Andrade, 2004; Barcelos, 2006, 2015; Farrell and Ives, 2015; Johnson, 1999; Kuzborska, 2011; Pajares, 1992; Rosa, 2016; Vieira-Abrahão, 2014b); and Reasoning Teaching (Johnson, 1999).

2. SOCIOCULTURAL THEORY AND TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

Many aspects influence foreign language teachers' practices, and teachers' participation in real teaching contexts stands out as a paramount particularity in the process of learning to teach. According to Johnson (2009), this process "is based on the assumption that knowing, thinking, and understanding come from participating in the social practices of learning and teaching in specific classroom and school situations" (p. 13). Johnson's idea is rooted in Vygotskian sociocultural perspective, which claims that human cognition is socially formed through people's engagement in sociocultural activities (Johnson, 2009). To put it differently, the process of people's cognitive development is related to the culturally established relations they have with the world and people around them, and such relations enable them to make sense of the world and the cultural artifacts present in it.

The author adds that "cognitive development is an interactive process, mediated by culture, context, language, and social interaction" (p.1). By deploying culturally constructed artifacts, concepts, and activities to regulate the material world and mental activities, mediation makes people's relations to the world more robust, since it is strictly related to people's cognitive development (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). As a central concept within sociocultural theory, mediation may encompass physical tools (instruments) and psychological tools (signs). While physical tools are elements that mediate the relation between the subject and the object of an action, possibly modifying the world around them, signs are elements that impact psychological processes, because they control psychological actions (Oliveira, 2001).

When people engage in social activities they are introduced to mediational means that are culturally shared by the community they interact with. Lantolf and Thorne (2009) state that these elements only become meaningful for individuals after they are repeatedly used or regulated by others in social practice. In other words, people see and make sense of mediational means through the lenses of their community, context, and culture. Over time, people start self-regulating their actions without the need of external elements to do so.

Such movement – from the outside to the inside – is known as "internalization", being defined as "the process through which a person moves from carrying out concrete actions in conjunction with the assistance of material artifacts and of other individuals to carrying out actions mentally without any apparent external assistance" (Lantolf, 2000, p. 14). This does not mean that people's actions to the world lose their mediational character – they are internally mediated instead (Lantolf, 2000).

A reciprocal and complementary process to internalization is externalization (Valsiner, 2001), as it serves as an opportunity to turn implicit meanings into explicit ones. By externalizing thoughts, individuals become aware of their own beliefs, perceptions and understandings. This is to say that, as externalization comes into practice, knowledge that is abstract and too vague to define, yet constantly applied to concrete situations, enters the perceptual domain of the individual, allowing new knowledge to emerge. The results of externalization therefore feed into further internalization processes.

As for teacher development, Johnson and Golombek (2011) claim that externalization “enables teachers to make their tacit thought, beliefs, knowledge, fears, and hopes explicit; to create cohesion out of what might have once seemed disconnected; and to articulate the day-to-day problems teachers confront in their professional worlds” (p. 6). This process is also beneficial in that it opens room for more expert others to see the current capabilities of learners and identify the ones that are ripe to be developed, thus enabling mediation that is attuned to their zone of proximal development.

The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is an important concept in Vygotsky's studies. The concept requires two main notions: real development – the capacity people have to perform actions without the need of assistance – and potential development – the capacity people have to perform actions with assistance (Oliveira, 2001). According to Vygotsky (1978), the ZPD is “the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (p. 86). In this line, Vygotsky claims for the social origins of mental functioning, which means that individual development comes into existence via interpersonal relations, i.e. one's psyche is formed in two planes, an interpsychological one – representing relations between people – and an intrapsychological one – referring to the individual's inner world. The author adds that development happens in the ZPD, meaning that teaching is effective when it “awakens and rouses into life those functions which are in the stage of maturing, which lie in the zone of proximal development” (Wertsch 1985, p. 71).

Teacher development, the area in which the present study fits, has largely been supported by sociocultural theory and these notions of mediation, internalization and ZPD these days. Johnson and Dellagnelo (2013) examined the practices of a teacher educator who defined and modeled pedagogical tools to mediate the practices of three novice teachers of English as a second language, aiming at fostering a greater level of students' participation and engagement in L2 instruction. The researchers found that after these novice teachers used these tools and were mediated by the teacher educator and peer teachers as for their use, significance and role in the classroom, the meaning of those tools developed for them, i.e. those ‘empty’ words gained meaning as they became more concrete for the teachers. This study, which happened in the context of an extended team teaching project² (Johnson and

² Simply put, this project requires a team of teachers to take part in activities designed to prepare them to teach a lesson in a real English as a second language class. Detailed information can be found in Johnson and Arshavskaya (2011) or in Johnson and Dellagnelo (2013).

Arshavskaya, 2011), has foregrounded the importance of strategic mediation in sign meaning development.

In this vein, Johnson and Golombek (2016) highlight the extended team teaching project as a practice that creates opportunities for teachers to explore the theoretical and pedagogical reasoning behind their practices, through dialogic interaction. The authors claim that this project enables teachers to think together, due to the interaction they have with their classmates and teacher educator (a more experienced other), helping mediate their reasoning.

In the Brazilian context, studies on teacher education that follow a sociocultural perspective have also emerged in the past few years. Vieira-Abrahão (2014a) analyzed the extent to which collaborative sessions with English teachers fostered teacher education, concluding that such spaces – which involved, among other aspects, information exchange with and mediation provided by teacher educators and participants – favor the development of these professionals.

Biehl and Dellagnelo (2016), for example, traced a novice teacher as she attempted to develop the concept of *contextualization*. In order to do that, she had her classes videotaped and then discussed with a teacher educator via feedback sessions after class observations. Along a one-semester period, with the help of mediation provided by a teacher educator, the teacher moved from not acknowledging the concept at all to acknowledging it in discourse only – she could only talk about it and sometimes refer to it in planning – and finally in her practice as well. She could then indeed contextualize her classes in relation to students' lives and reality, as well as contextualize the class activities within the realm of the topic of the lesson as a whole.

Dellagnelo and Moritz (2017) investigated changes in states of intersubjectivity (Wertsch, 1984, 1985; Cerutti-Rizatti & Dellagnelo, 2016) possibly fostered by interactions between a teacher educator and her student-teachers along a one-semester academic course addressing the teaching of English as a foreign language. In the authors' evaluation, the participating teacher manifested expressive signs of development in response to the mediation provided by the teacher educator.

Silva (2018) investigated the interactions of a teacher educator and a student-teacher in pre-service education as well as the practices of the student-teacher and verified that the construction, co-construction, and reconstruction of academic and everyday concepts in the action of the student-teacher somehow reverberate the teaching of the teacher educator.

Ruhmke-Ramos (2018) analyzed the extent to which the required Practice-Teaching Course of a *Letras* undergraduate program may be considered a tool to promote the development of the concepts of language and teaching of three future teachers, also focusing on the extent to which interaction with a more experienced teacher may mediate them so as to (re)conceptualize these notions. Results suggest that robust teacher education, characterized by high level of attunement among university supervisors, school supervisors, and future teachers may potentially promote professional development.

The studies aforementioned illustrate how strategic, goal-directed mediation takes place and impacts teachers' progress, who create and build

up zones of proximal development as they work on their understanding of what revolves around their practices, thus being actively engaged in processes that foster their professional development. Along with that, Vieira-Abrahão (2012) states that teacher education, from a sociocultural perspective, is not only about the acculturation process of preexistent teaching and learning practices, but it is “constituted in a dynamic process of reconstruction and transformation of such practices, in accordance with individual needs and particular teaching contexts, which means that human agency is essential in this perspective.”³ (p. 461), highlighting the active role teachers should take so as to develop in the profession.

In light of that, Johnson (2009) argues that inquiring into teachers’ practices “make visible teachers’ current capabilities and reveal those abilities which are not yet fully formed but are still in the process of developing” (p. 99). By this means, teacher educators may decide on forms of social interaction attuned to the needs of learners, supporting them to master the values and skills of teaching and therefore enabling cognitive development – the transformation of interpsychological thinking in intrapsychological thinking.

The present study fits in this inquiry perspective and has two main artifacts aiming at mediating the teacher development: the teacher’s manual and the opportunities for externalization promoted by the interviews that followed the classes observed by the researcher, the very questions asked fostering the teacher’s reasoning.

Having teachers externalize their understandings may also unveil their beliefs, an aspect that deserves attention when looking for answers to the complexities of teaching. The following section aims at briefly elaborating on the role of beliefs in understanding teachers’ practices.

3. BELIEFS

As Pajares (1992) points out, many researchers find the concept of beliefs impossible to “be clearly defined or made a useful subject of research” (p. 308). In Brazil, Ana Maria Ferreira Barcelos stands out for both having defined and characterized the concept, understanding beliefs as “a way of thought, as constructions of reality, as ways of seeing and perceiving the world and its events, co-constructed in our experiences and resulting from an interactive process of interpretation and (re)signification”⁴ (Barcelos, 2006, p.18). In other words, beliefs are the lenses through which people see the world around them.

According to Pajares (1992), all teachers hold beliefs. Such beliefs are related to many aspects of the profession and their importance lies on the influence they may have on teachers’ practices (Barcelos, Batista & Andrade, 2004). Moreover, beliefs guide our thoughts and behaviors, since they have a cognitive, an affective, and a behavioral component, filtering and influencing our perceptions (Johnson, 1999).

³ Translated from Portuguese: “[...] constitui também em um processo dinâmico de reconstrução e transformação dessas práticas de acordo com as necessidades individuais e dos contextos de ensino particulares, o que significa que o agenciamento humano é essencial nessa perspectiva.”

⁴ Translated from Portuguese: “(...) como uma forma de pensamento, como construções da realidade, maneiras de ver e perceber o mundo e seus fenômenos, co-construídas em nossas experiências e resultantes de um processo interativo de interpretação e (re)significação.”

There are many studies about the impact of beliefs on teachers' practices. Farrell and Ives (2015) investigated the relationship between stated beliefs and classroom practices of one second language reading teacher. The results show that the beliefs this teacher had about reading reflected on his classroom practices. Also, after reflecting upon his beliefs, the teacher became more aware of their impact on his classes, showing the importance of fostering teachers' reflection.

Johnson (1992) investigated the relationship between ESL teachers' theoretical beliefs about second-language learning and teaching and their instructional practice during literacy instruction with non-native speakers of English. Findings sustain that literacy instruction for non-native speakers of English was consistent with each teacher's theoretical orientation.

Kuzborska (2011) investigated the relationship between the beliefs of eight teachers and their practices in the teaching of reading to advanced learners and, again, found a relation between the teachers' beliefs and their classroom practices. Simply put, there was a shared belief among the teachers that readers should understand all the words of a text. The result of this belief in the classroom was to have students analyze texts in detail, studying all the words, and translating all the sentences.

In Brazil, research on the relation between beliefs and the teaching and learning of foreign languages has largely grown in the past decades. Vieira-Abrahão (2014b) conducted an interpretative study in which she aimed at analyzing how teacher knowledge was built in two specific courses of a *Letras Inglês* undergraduate program, as well as how the beliefs of the program's student-teachers interacted with the scientific knowledge they dealt with in the two courses they took. In the study, the author highlights the importance of unveiling one's knowledge and beliefs so that these two elements can be eventually modified or replaced.

Barcelos (2015) investigated the relation between beliefs and emotions of in-service English teachers. The author suggests an interactive relation between such aspects, showing that the negative ways these teachers feel about the school they teach may have lead them to beliefs that limit both the teacher's and the students' development.

Additionally, when beliefs are challenged and teachers apparently have them altered, in case there is a classroom situation in which they have to make in flight decisions, their tendency is to base their decisions on their "previous" beliefs, reinforcing the characteristic of belief as being "a rock we stand on" (Johnson, 1999, p. 30).

Still in Brazil, Rosa (2016) carried out a study in which she worked with a participant – Andrey – who had been struggling to move from a focus on forms paradigm to a focus on form instruction pattern due to his "understanding" that the teaching of linguistic forms cannot happen in a decontextualized way, but rather in a meaningful event to which a specific form is relevant and necessary. However, whenever there was some time left in a class and he had to come up with something to fill in the time, he used those minutes for isolated grammar instruction.

These studies instantiate the impact of teachers' beliefs on their practices and indicate that beliefs mediate teachers' strategies and decisions for coping with the challenges they face in their professional life. As Johnson (1999)

observes, “the ways in which teachers come to conceptualize themselves as teachers and develop explanations for their own classroom practices tend to be filtered through their beliefs” (p. 31), these beliefs thus having a strong influence on the ways teachers think about their practices, or, as aforementioned, what Johnson (1999) comes to call *reasoning teaching*.

Considering the importance of reasoning teaching for the present study, the following section explains this concept, drawing a discussion on how it develops as teachers engage in reflection upon their practices.

4. REASONING TEACHING

As Richards and Farrell (2011) advocate, teaching is shaped, among many other elements, by teachers’ knowledge and beliefs about teaching. These beliefs and knowledge are important elements that help constitute *reasoning teaching*, which represents the complex ways in which teachers conceptualize, construct explanations for, and respond to the social interactions and shared meanings that exist within and among teachers, students, parents and administrators, both inside and outside the classroom (...) Reasoning teaching reflects the complex ways in which teachers figure out how to teach a particular topic, with a particular group of students, at a particular time, in a particular classroom, within a particular school. (Johnson, 1999, p. 1)

When considering teachers as life-long learners of teaching, the definition above corroborates the idea that teachers’ development revolves around many complexities that influence their practices. Such practices can be better understood when teachers reason upon the various aspects that determine the doing of teaching, which enables them to puzzle out their own teaching. According to Johnson (1999), knowing what to do in class depends on a variety of aspects, and the process of reasoning teaching lies “at the core of both learning to teach and understanding teaching” (p.1). That is to say, teachers have a better understanding of both themselves as teachers and their practices by engaging in constant reflection upon the numerous aspects involving their teaching context.

The author claims that the reasoning teaching process happens differently among teachers, some of these differences being related to how thoroughly teachers reason upon the complexities of their teaching, or as the author herself calls, to the robustness of such reasoning. Therefore, the more robust teachers’ reasoning is, the better they will understand the great range of considerations related to their professional activities. By inquiring into novice teachers’ practices, Johnson (1999) helped them externalize the reasoning behind their actions, making them think about things they had not thought of before that moment and expanding the robustness of their reasoning, thus contributing to their development.

Fostering this process holds paramount importance when it comes to teachers as learners of teaching, because it enables them to examine the complexities of their teaching over time (Johnson, 1999). Since this study aims at investigating the extent to which a novice teacher follows or adapts the suggestions made in the teacher’s manual, it is important to keep in mind that “Exploring and expanding teachers’ reasoning through reflection and inquiry into why teachers teach as they do is central to the long-term

developmental process of learning to teach and understanding the complex nature of teaching" (Johnson, 1999, p. 7).

Having briefly provided the rationale that lies behind the present study, the next section focuses on describing the method used so as to reach its objective.

5. METHOD

This qualitative piece of research is characterized as a case study, since it has one single participant and one single context. In pursuance of its main twofold objective, which is to analyze the extent to which a novice teacher follows (or not) the classroom practices suggested in the teacher's manual, and to uncover the reasoning behind his practice when not doing so, as a way to understand what aspects tend to mediate his practice, this section will give details about the study's context and participant, as well as the instruments and procedures used for data collection.

5.1 Context and Participant

The extracurricular program is an outreach program of foreign languages held by the Foreign Languages and Literatures Department of the researched university and offers courses in five different languages, English being one of them. Classes are held at the same building of the undergraduate program of Languages.

Before teaching at the program, teachers go through a selection process in which they have to teach – from ten to fifteen minutes – one of the program's textbook contents to a committee composed of 3 experienced teachers, two of which necessarily belonging to the faculty of the department, one being the course coordinator. The third component is usually the sub-coordinator, who plays the role of pedagogical coordinator, and who is usually a graduate student with plenty of teaching experience. This committee assesses the teacher candidates in relation to their practice.

After entering the program, novice teachers have to observe six classes of experienced teachers and write reflective reports on them. When they start teaching, pedagogical support is provided: the pedagogical coordinator attends their classes and gives them feedback on their practices. If necessary, this coordinator also helps the teachers prepare their classes. Due to that, it seems fair to say that the program stands out as a good laboratory for teacher education.

In relation to the material used, the program works with a textbook that includes a teacher's manual, namely *Interchange 4th edition*, which is a paramount aspect in this study. Moreover, the textbook used in this program follows the principles of the communicative approach to foreign language teaching (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). Emphasis on function over form stands out as one of the approach's main claims.

The group observed was composed of about twelve pre-intermediate level male and female students, most of them undergraduate students from a variety of different majors. The class met once a week on a three-hour period over the course of four months.

The participant, here referred to as *Alex*, was a novice teacher of an English extracurricular program from Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina (UFSC), aged 19 years old. He started teaching at this program in April 2016; until then, he had only had a three-month experience of teaching as a volunteer in a course offered by PET⁵. Besides that, the participant is friends with the researcher, who knew that there would be a high chance for the participant to accept to be part of this study, and be committed to it until its end.

At the time data was collected – first semester of 2016 –, the novice teacher was in the final year of his undergraduate program of Languages: English and corresponding literatures, doing his student practice teaching.

5.2 Instruments and Procedures for Data Collection and Analysis

As a way to carry out the data collection, the participant answered three semi-structured questionnaires⁶: the first one had eight questions, the first four inquiring into the teacher's previous experience with other teaching resources, while the last four focused on the teacher's manual of the textbook *Interchange*; the second and third questionnaires were composed of the last four questions from the first one. This type of questionnaire was chosen as a manner to enable the researcher to make follow up questions, if necessary, and make the participant feel comfortable with expressing his ideas. The questionnaires were sent to the participant and returned to the researcher by email before each of the classes observed. Besides that, three of the participant's classes – one at the end of the first month of classes, one in the middle, and one at the end of the course – were observed. During these observations, the researcher compared the teacher's practices with the suggestions made in the manual. Semi-structured interviews were carried out after each class observation, so as to inquire into the rationale behind the changes implemented by the teacher. This is to say that the participant was inquired into the reasoning behind his choices whenever he did not follow the manual's suggestions – be when he adapted or skipped activities, or yet when he added supply material – so as to unveil the aspects behind his practice. The interviews were recorded with a cell phone and later transcribed.

The data analysis procedures had an interpretative nature and were based on content analysis (Bardin, 1977). Attention was given to the participant's answers when being inquired into his practice: the researchers looked for patterns – comparing the three interviews – in the teacher's answers that could help unveil the aspects that mediate his practice. Besides that, the questionnaires were also taken into account as a means of triangulating the data. Not every excerpt analyzed in the study is used in the paper, due to its length limitation. Thus the excerpts here presented are the ones which

⁵ PET stands for "Program of Tutorial Education" ("Programa de Educação Tutorial", in Portuguese). In UFSC's Languages Program, students from the University's language department voluntarily teach. PET is known for allowing these students to have their first experience(s) with teaching, and it does not have a pedagogical coordinator, meaning that teachers step into the classroom with either little or none experience.

⁶ See Appendix A and B.

most clearly illustrate the aspects that mediate the participant's practice, also enabling the researchers to further explore the pedagogical implications that result from this study.

It is important to mention that before starting the data collection procedures, the participant signed a consent letter that explained his role in the study.

The following section presents and discusses the findings of the study, connecting them to the theoretical rationale.

6. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Bearing in mind the twofold objective of this study, the present section aims at presenting and interpreting the data collected so as to answer the following research questions:

- RQ1 – To what extent does a novice teacher follow (or not) the teacher's manual?
- RQ2 – When he does not do so, how does this teacher justify his choices? What aspects mediate his practice?

Since this study is mainly concerned with the way a novice teacher uses the teacher's manual – which is a tool to be used in conjunction with the textbook – it seems fair to present the importance he gives to such materials. In response to the first questionnaire, Alex shows that he believes both the textbook and the teacher's manual to be important tools for teaching a foreign language. When asked about possible advantages or disadvantages in using a textbook, Alex said

“I think one of the advantages of using a textbook is that students have something concrete to ‘hold on to’, and in an ordered sequence (...) Besides, I guess the ‘need’ for a textbook is a widespread belief among most language students, so perhaps these students could face some trouble adapting to the idea of not having a textbook. I think the only disadvantage would be if the textbook were too ‘restrictive’ and the teacher had no room to bring extra material or ignore parts of the textbook.” (Questionnaire 1)

Alex attributes the importance of using a textbook in class to how his students would feel if they did not have such material to work with, showing that he is concerned with their welfare. Between the lines, his comment “that students have something concrete to ‘hold on to’, and in an ordered sequence” appears to reflect a belief that the non-use of a textbook may lead to disorder or lack of sequence. Also, when citing a possible disadvantage of the textbook, he shows the belief that bringing extra materials and skipping parts of the textbook are parts of a language teacher's job, which would be limited by a “restrictive” book.

As regards the teacher's manual, Alex finds it

“important because it gives teachers (especially beginners such as myself) a kind of blueprint for approaching the activities, introducing them and concluding them. It also suggests questions for the teacher to ask, or cues s/he can use to better explain some contents. I would say it's not essential, but it can be a great help.” (Questionnaire 1)

In this passage, Alex acknowledges that the manual helps teachers – “especially beginners” – better explore their practices, facilitating their jobs since such tool works as a “blueprint”. However, he believes that even though it might help teachers do their jobs, it is not enough. These passages show that Alex acknowledges the importance of both the textbook and the teacher’s manual, but also that teaching goes beyond following the manual and the book to the letter.

Even though the passages above appear to show a confident teacher who sustains that textbooks and manuals have advantages while recognizing their shortcomings, most of the changes and adaptations made by Alex in the suggestions given in the teacher’s manual were unconscious. Many times, when asked about the reasons that led him to make changes in some activities, Alex could not justify them, stating that those changes had not been planned nor had they been a decision on the fly. Apparently, he forgot to do them, as the passage that follows demonstrates

“R: And then, there is a part that the manual suggests you to ask students to guess what places they might read about.

A: About wonders... Yeah.

R: Yes. And you didn’t do that.

A: No, I didn’t.

R: Do you know why?

A: To be honest... I think I had planned to do that but... Just... Where is it? Uhm... Yep... I don’t know, I... I don’t think it was conscious. I...

R: Ok...

A: I didn’t remember or I just...

R: Yep. This is an answer. Haha.

A: I was... I was... Very nervous (...)

R: Oh, and also, just one thing, the second part of the conversation: you didn’t play it. Is there a reason for that?

A: Oh... Again, I forgot it. I was kinda nervous, but I had planned to do it.” (Interview 1)

One should bear in mind that it was Alex’s first semester teaching at that extracurricular program and there was a researcher observing his class, so it is reasonable that he was affected by his emotions, getting “nervous”, as he himself states. Besides that, Alex was not able to self-regulate yet, so he had to monitor himself all the time, and resort to the manual and his own class plan. As Lantolf (2000) states, it takes some time for people to start self-regulating their actions, and Alex was teaching at the program for the first time, so he still needed the assistance of the teacher’s manual (material artifact) to remember what his next step was.

In the same vein, as the following passage illustrates, he cannot explain the reasons that motivate him to not follow the manual’s instructions when it comes to explaining grammatical topics. When inquired into the reasons why he skipped the manual’s suggestions for introducing the differences between adjectives ending in –ED and –ING, he answered

“Uh... The reason is: I totally forgot it. Because when I planned the lesson I was going to do that, but then I forgot it. Well, I got confused because I wanted to do this, but for some reason I thought ‘no, I can’t do this anymore’...” (Interview 2)

⁷ “R” stands for “researcher”, while “A” stands for “Alex”.

Besides this excerpt, his attempt to justify why he did not accept the manual's suggestion to present the grammatical topic in the third class shows he did not know why he did not do so.

"I think I didn't do it, because... Well... I don't know. I thought it would perhaps be... I don't know (...) I think what I thought was that perhaps it would be too structuralist, perhaps, so it might have an effect on students, like all those words and... I don't know. I really don't know. Sorry, I..." (Interview 3)

Alex tries to find a reason for not accepting the manual's suggestions, but can find none. He tries to link his decision from the third class to the fact that the textbook sounded structuralist, showing that he does not side with this perspective, but he ends up giving it up due to not being able to build an argument. Also, even though he states in his third questionnaire that "the 'scripts' it [the manual] presents for explanation of the grammar" are rather good, he does not use them. These findings appear to give room for two interpretations: i) Alex still lacks agency in relation to his practice and ii) he has not yet internalized the pedagogical resources he works with. As previously mentioned in this paper, human agency is essential for teachers' reconstruction and transformation of their practices (Vieira-Abrahão, 2012), the findings signaling the need for Alex to further develop the ways he understands and conceptualizes the manual so as to foster positive impacts of its pedagogical implications on his classes.

As opposed to the examples given above, there were occasions in which Alex changed the suggestions made in the manual because he did not find them relevant, or even found them "too basic". For instance, in the first class observed, students were supposed to do a listening activity in which they had to check statements about the Empire State Building as true or false. Before playing the listening, however, students should predict the true statements according to their own knowledge of the place. In order to prepare students for the activity, the teacher's manual suggested asking them what they knew about the Empire State Building. Instead of doing that, Alex only asked students if they had ever been to New York. Right after that, he had them read the statements about the Empire State Building and make the predictions. After that, he played the audio so as to check the students' answers. When questioned if he had not accepted the manual's suggestions consciously, Alex said

"It was conscious because... Well, I don't know... I might be, perhaps, I might be underestimating them, but I don't think they would know too many details about the Empire State Building. I mean, I don't, and I imagine 95% of the people I know don't know either, so..." (Interview 1)

After that, Alex was asked if he thought that the activity's outcome would have been different had he asked students if they knew anything about the Empire States, and he said

"I imagine the only difference would be that, perhaps, uh... If I asked them about the Empire State Building first, and some of the students knew some facts, then all the other students would know the facts too, so that would affect their decisions about the one which they thought were true." (Interview 1)

These passages illustrate that Alex was not aware of the pedagogical implication of the manual's suggestion: to make students activate the vocabulary of the topic and retrieve from their memory previous knowledge that would prepare them for the listening activity. In other words, even though the researcher's questions aimed at implicitly mediating the teacher's reasoning, he was not able to see the goal of the manual's suggestion, which might reveal that such implication was not within his ZPD yet. Another example that can help illustrate this assumption is that as a response to the third question of the last questionnaire – *Have you ever felt the need to change/adapt/skip any activities from the textbook? If so, when? Why? Give an example.* – Alex said

“(…) in some of the listening activities (mainly the ones in the conversation sections), I skip the part where the teacher asks the students to look at the pictures and try to make guesses about the incoming conversation, and sometimes I skip some of the initial comprehension questions (...) I feel that sometimes the initial comprehension questions, related to the picture, seem to be too basic.” (Questionnaire 3)

It is clear thus that Alex did not know the essential role of pre-listening activities as a way to provide context as well as linguistic background and guidance aiming at generating students' interest and facilitating their comprehension. It looks like he was indeed not ready to understand the pedagogical aims of these suggestions. This is to say that the researchers' question did not suffice to mediate Alex's understanding of the pedagogical implication veiled in the suggestions, thus showing that such pedagogical aim does not appear to be within his developmental zone. As previously mentioned, it is within one's ZPD that development takes place (Vygotsky, 1987). In the words of Oliveira (2001), “not everyone is able to perform any actions with the help of another. The capacity of benefiting from someone else is going to happen within a certain level of development, but not before.”⁸ (p. 59).

As previously mentioned in this section, Alex acknowledges that teaching may benefit from not following every step of the manual and every activity of the book, which seems to be a belief of his. In alignment with his positioning, he indeed brought one extra activity in the first class observed, another one in the second class, and two others in the third class. This behavior appears to side with Barcelos, Batista & Andrade's (2004), who claim that beliefs' may influence a teacher's practice. During the interviews, he mentioned why he believes that bringing activities that are not suggested in the manual is important, and the way he justified such changes uncovered some aspects that mediate his practices, as can be noticed in the excerpts that follow.

The activity Alex brought in the first class was a group game that involved speaking and dealt with the structure students had just studied. When asked about the reason why he brought this activity, Alex answered

⁸ Translated from Portuguese: “(...) não é qualquer indivíduo que pode, a partir da ajuda de outro, realizar qualquer tarefa. Isto é, a capacidade de se beneficiar de uma colaboração de outra pessoa vai ocorrer num certo nível de desenvolvimento, mas não antes.”

"(...) it involved speaking and that... It was, uh... I thought about bringing this game to kind of end the class because the... I... I felt that much of the lesson, except for the quiz, you know, had been about... one specific structure had been, perhaps, a bit too tiring for them (...) and although the... the game involved using that structure I thought it would be a good thing for them to kind of relax a bit because... uh... they were using the structure, but they were using it in a fun way (...) they could talk between them, in groups, and they also could (...) bring their personal experience, their preferences, or the things they remember. I mean... it's a game that relies upon them." (Interview 1)

This excerpt shows that Alex was concerned with having students speak, relax, have fun, and bring their personal experiences to class while practicing what was studied, these aspects having mediated his choices.

At the end of the second class observed, Alex brought another extra activity. Since the class focused on movies, the activity consisted in having students conduct a survey about their classmates' preferences considering the show business (favorite movies, TV shows, actors, actresses etc). Each student received a set of questions to ask their classmates, but before that, Alex gave them some time to think about their own answers. When inquired about the reason why he brought this activity, Alex said

"I thought it'd be interesting for them to have a survey and then I thought initially about 'Oh, perhaps they should conduct a survey on what kinds of movies their colleagues like'." (Interview 2)

One more time, Alex was concerned with keeping students interested in what they were studying by having them talk about their preferences, bringing their reality to class. It seems like the belief that motivating students by allowing them to talk and bring their personal lives to class, once again, mediated Alex's pedagogical choice, which corroborates Johnson's (1999) idea that "beliefs have a powerful impact on the nature of teachers' reasoning" (p. 31). Moreover, Alex was inquired about the skills he wanted to develop in his students with such activity, and he answered "*mainly speaking*". Once again, Alex used *speaking* to justify his choices, the importance of this skill to L2 learning heavily mediating his practices.

At this point, it is interesting to present an example from one of the classes that illustrates an activity conducted having in mind Alex's concept – or rather a misconception – of talking, which is here taken as a synonym for speaking. The introductory activity of the lesson he was teaching required students to read – by themselves – some information about modern wonders of the world. This was a book activity. Alex had his students read these sentences aloud instead. When inquired if there were a specific reason for that, he answered

"Uh... I think part of it was to get them to talk a bit, because, uh... sometimes I'm concerned that sometimes I'm talking too much (...) well, they would start talking and I could, perhaps, model some pronunciation... uh... mistakes (...)." (Interview 1)

It is clear that Alex was concerned with having his students talk, but it is interesting to see how he perceived "talk" and "read aloud" as synonyms

and how he focused on form by intending to use this activity to “model” some “pronunciation mistakes”. One should consider that both talking and reading require an interlocutor. In talking, this interlocutor is usually an external person; in reading, the interlocutor is aimed to be the reader actually, in this case reacting to the writing piece. In justifying the use of reading out loud as a way to make them talk, he actually mirrored a mistaken view of both these concepts. He appeared to conceptualize talking and reading as unilateral processes that do not involve or require interaction. Thus, the nature of his reasoning was confusing, since he attributed a different meaning to “reading aloud” and focused on form to justify his answer. As Johnson (1999) states, it is important for teachers to develop robust reasoning so as to understand their practices and carry out their professional activities. Thus by considering “talk” and “read” as synonyms and as non-interactive processes, also by aiming at using the activity to work on students’ pronunciation, Alex’s reasoning was mediated by a misconception and by a focus on form, limiting the way he could have explored the activity being presented to students.

In the third and last class observed, Alex came up with two extra activities: one at the beginning and another one right before the class’ break. The first extra activity consisted of a set of “if” clauses – a topic studied in the previous class. The activity had students make predictions of their classmate’s answers. First, they were asked to complete sentences such as “If you could meet a famous person, I think you’d like to meet ‘x’.” Then, they had to get together in pairs and read what they wrote about each other, checking their guesses.

When questioned about the reason why he brought this activity, Alex answered

“I thought it was a good way to get them to practice the ‘if’ sentences, the conditional. It’d be a good way to practice that and it would be fun and engaging for them. Cause personal answers are involved, even though the personal answers of your colleague, but yours as well.” (Interview 3)

Alex explicitly said that he brought such activity because it was a “fun” and “engaging” way for students to practice what they had studied, due to the fact that personal answers were involved. Besides that, an intriguing matter popped up when he was questioned about the idea of bringing students’ reality to class.

“R: and you mentioned that they were supposed to give personal answers. Do you think it’s different when they fake something and when they give personal answers? You think it’s better for them to talk about themselves or...”

A: I think they could fake perhaps, but I think... uh... and this is based on my experience and on the experience of other people I have talked to... I think when they talk about themselves, their personal experiences, they get more engaged because they feel like... most people, not everybody, but most people like to talk about themselves, or what they think about certain things, so I think they get more engaged, more motivated.” (Interview 3)

It is interesting that Alex acknowledges that this idea of engaging students by bringing their reality to class both comes from his own experience –

either as a student or as a teacher – and from conversations he had with other people. This meets Johnson's (1999) idea that beliefs are “grounded in powerful episodic memories from prior learning and teaching experiences” (p.31), showing that much of what a teacher does in class is a reflection of their experiences as a student or as a teacher, not necessarily being learned within a teacher education program. In other words, the complex developmental process of learning to teach is “continuously constructed and reconstructed within and out of your experiences, whether they be as a learner, as a teacher, or as a student of teaching in your professional development program.” (Johnson, 1999, p. 43).

Regarding the second extra activity in the last class observed, he again showed concern in engaging students. The activity was similar to the one previously presented: students had to guess a classmate's answers, get together in pairs, read what they wrote about each other, and check their guesses.

When questioned whether the reasons he brought this activity were the same of the previous extra activity, Alex answered

“yeah. The same reasons and I tried to make this activity more like a game because (...) I thought it'd be nice for them to play a game and laugh a bit because I tried to make some funny sentences, some absurd situations... I think it'd be a nice way to still get them to practice and, like, perhaps make them a little less tired. (...) During the break, one of my students mentioned that she really liked that I brought extra activities because they usually were fun and they moved away from the book...” (Interview 3)

Again, Alex shows to care about his students' likes and well-being, and thus brings to class something they enjoy so as to promote a less tiring and more engaging environment and as such substantiate the process of learning a foreign language.

Addressing the research questions posed in this study, the findings so far presented indicate that at times Alex followed the manual's suggestions and at times adapted them and brought extra activities. All in all, the reasoning behind his adaptations and inclusions seems to revolve around the concepts of speaking, engagement, motivation, and students' reality. It can be said that these aspects strongly influence Alex's choices and thus shape his teaching and the way he interprets what goes on in his class.

In the first interview conducted, Alex seemed to reason upon one of the manual's suggestions he had skipped in a way that he had not thought of before, showing that the very engagement in reflecting on the situation helped him develop an understanding that was novel in relation to previous states of that same environment. The following extract illustrates this occurrence

“R:(...) Alex, you did this listening activity on page 74... and I have some questions about it. So... uh... you set the mood, you asked the students to have a look at the pictures, and then read the questions, and... you asked them to listen to... let me see... ok, to listen to the passage. You played the passage and asked students to listen to it. And then, there's one thing that the book suggests that is 'have students compare answers in pairs'.

A: hmm... yeah...

R: and you didn't do that.

A: Oh... yeah.

R: Do you know why?

A: No... I don't think I know why. In fact, looking at it now it's a good idea.

R: Why?

A: I think I just didn't think about it, I didn't remember it at the time.

R: but why do you think it's a good idea?

A: I think it's a good idea because... well... they get to talk a bit more to the pairs and, perhaps, they feel more confident to share their answers with the whole class. If you talk in pairs or in small groups first, then you're kind of 'oh, so I'm more certain that my answer is correct so, perhaps, it's ok if I share'."

This passage illustrates that, when being invited to revisit his practice and externalizing his reasoning, Alex came to an understanding that uncovered an important pedagogical implication of the use of pair work, which goes beyond giving students the chance to practice speaking; it also gives them the chance to "test" their idea/opinion in small groups before exposing it to the whole class, helping them build self confidence in relation to both the idea/opinion itself and language use. The fact that the externalization process (Johnson & Golombek, 2011; Valsiner, 2001) sufficed to enable Alex to see the goal of the manual's suggestion, further understanding the role of pair work, appears to indicate that this knowledge was already within Alex's ZPD. This finding supports Johnson (1999), who claims that engaging in critical inquiry into classroom practices helps teachers develop robust reasoning.

This finding appears to corroborate the idea that, just like any other professional activity, learning how to teach is a lifelong endeavor. Therefore one should consider that three interviews served as the starting point of Alex's development, but these few opportunities to externalize and consequently make sense of his teaching were not enough, which concurs with Johnson's (2009) claim that teachers should be provided with "[...] sustained opportunities for [...] mediation ..." as they participate in and learn about relevant aspects of their professional worlds." (p. 4).

In what concerns the role of mediation, apart from the externalization process having played the role of a mediator into Alex's reasoning, the intervention of the researcher when inquiring into the teacher's choices also mediated his reasoning, concurring with the Vygotskian claim that social interaction fosters cognitive development (Oliveira, 2001).

Finally, while granting Alex his due value for willing to participate in this study and putting effort into becoming a reflective teacher, it is also licit to mention that although he has little experience with teaching, the fact that he sees it as a more complex process than merely following what the manual suggests shows that he is aware of his profession's plurality, which characterizes him as a thoughtful teacher who is considerate with the students and with the profession. His understanding of teaching, therefore, looks to be aligned with Johnson's (1999), who claims that there is no right way to teach, and that – when it comes to teaching – "it always depends", making it essential for teachers to be aware of their profession's complexities.

7. CONCLUSION

From the discussion drawn in the data analysis section, it was concluded that – from the first to the last class observed – Alex both followed and adapted the manual's suggestions. As could be seen, most times Alex was not able to explain why he adapted such suggestions, saying that some of them were not followed because he forgot to do so, which means that it was not a conscious decision. This can be explained by the fact that it was his first time working with that manual, so this lack of agency may be explained by his non internalization of the material artifact he was working with.

Another aspect that may explain why he adapted the manual's suggestions is the fact that sometimes Alex was not able to see the pedagogical implications of these suggestions. It is important to point out that even experienced teachers may have trouble with seeing pedagogical implications of some activities and suggestions given by the manual, so it is not a surprise when a novice teacher does not do so as well. It seems unfair to expect that Alex would be aware of all the implications of the manual's suggestions, since – as Johnson (1999) advocates – much of what a teacher learns about teaching comes from the experiences they have in class, contributing to develop their process of reasoning. By answering that he did not accept some suggestions because he found them “too simple”, not seeing the pedagogical aims behind them – even when being questioned by a more experienced other – Alex showed that such implications were not within his ZPD yet, which means he was not ready to make sense of them. In the words of Johnson (2009)

Given that the ZPD is a metaphor for capturing an individual's potential abilities by observing and promoting his or her current performance through social interaction, the public spaces created by inquiry-based approaches both make visible teachers' current capabilities and reveal those abilities which are not yet fully formed but are still in the process of developing (p. 99).

In relation to the extra activities brought by Alex in the three classes observed, developing students' speaking skills, getting them engaged, and bringing their reality to class stood out as aspects that mediate his practices. Every time the researcher inquired into the reason why he brought an extra activity, these aspects popped up as having influenced his choices. As regards bringing activities that fostered the development of students' speaking skill, one should bear in mind that Alex was required to teach in accordance with the principles of the communicative approach to foreign language teaching, what might have made him prioritize activities that promoted student talking time. However, as previously illustrated, the moment in which he takes “talk” and “read” as synonyms leads us to interpret that Alex's choice was mediated by a misconception. This demonstrates the importance that constantly reasoning upon their practices has for teachers' development, considering that robust reasoning is flexible and continually informs and reforms teachers' practices (Johnson, 1999). Furthermore, it is interesting to point out that he seems to hold the belief that bringing students' reality to class is connected to the idea of motivation, having explicitly said

that in one of the excerpts presented during the analysis. This shows the powerful influence of beliefs on teachers' reasoning, as suggested by Johnson (1999).

Another aspect that deserves attention in this study is the strong relation between the processes of internalization and externalization. Vygotsky made it clear that among the various physical and psychological tools that constitute human relations, speech is the most important one (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). This comes into light when observing that Alex was only able to revisit his practice and make sense of it after being inquired into why he did what he did, which allowed him to externalize and unveil the reasoning which mediate his choices. Furthermore, his reasoning was not "simply" unveiled during interaction with the researcher: when externalizing his ideas, Alex was able to come to a new understanding that, being within his ZPD, was further developed, language being the means by which that happened. One cannot affirm that Alex did internalize the goal of the manual's suggestion previously presented (giving students the opportunity to compare answers in pairs so as to build self confidence) since it was the only occurrence of such externalized reasoning. However, the passage demonstrates that externalization allowed Alex to move forward in relation to his understanding of the implication of having students compare answers in pairs, possibly impacting the internalization of such knowledge. Therefore, it becomes essential to have in mind that "[...] internalization forms an inseparable unity with externalization." (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006, p. 154).

All in all, from the first class observed to the last one, Alex was both mediated by the teacher's manual, his beliefs, and concepts that shape the way he teaches. Also, by showing the idea that teaching goes beyond following every step of the manual, and by being concerned with aspects that go from developing students' skills to how they feel in class, Alex revealed that he is aware of the fact that his profession is made of a plurality of complexities, teaching depending on these various issues that revolve around his professional reality. To conclude, it is essential to keep in mind that learning to teach is a continuous process, since – when it comes to teaching – it "always depends" (Johnson, 1999).

8. PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Research in the teacher education area has been providing teachers with the understanding that their practices are influenced by a variety of aspects that need to be taken into account when teaching. By focusing on the way a novice teacher works with the teacher's manual, this study shows the importance of such tool as a mediational means that helps teachers – especially at the beginning of their careers – both organize their planning and carry out their professional activities. Despite the discussion whether teachers should or should not go beyond the manual, it is undeniable that when using this tool, teachers have a support that helps them organize their planning, better exploring the ways through which they make knowledge available to their students.

As previously presented, this study's participant perceives the manual as a kind of "blueprint", acknowledging its importance as it works as a model

for teachers not to feel at sea when teaching. As regards how teachers' use of the manual develops during their careers, Johnson (1999) claims that

(...) a novice teacher's activities may be initially regulated by a teacher's manual, but later come under her control as she internalizes certain pedagogical resources (...) that enable her to teach concepts and/or skills in ways that are more appropriate for a particular group of students in a particular instructional context (p. 18).

Another paramount implication is the importance of allowing teachers to externalize their reasoning. As previously seen, the teacher only realized the reasons/rationale behind some of the activities proposed after being questioned, by the researcher, about the adaptations/changes made, allowing the teacher to explore his reasoning. In other words, the participant's reasoning was implicitly mediated by the researcher (a more experienced other) when inquiring into the participant's practice, drawing his attention to aspects of his teaching that he had not thought of before, contributing to expand the robustness of his reasoning, showing the importance of such moments in helping this professional uncover the thoughts behind his professional activities. According to Oliveira (2001) and Johnson (2009), one's ZPD is constantly changing, being of great importance to detect what one is currently capable of and what abilities are still being developed. In the same vein, Johnson (2009) states that the ZPD "(...) comes into existence and changes in the activity of dialogic engagement." (p. 20), reinforcing the importance of fostering teachers' critical reflection. In short, the "simple" activity of observing classes and conducting interviews that focused on the teacher's practices helped him expand his reasoning, positively impacting his professional development, and showing that cognitive development happens through social interaction, which demonstrates the importance of the social relations we establish within our professional community.

It should be taken into account that, from a sociocultural perspective, teachers should have sustained opportunities to engage in critical reasoning upon what they do so as to develop professionally (Johnson, 2009). This concurs with the sociocultural stance that internalization is not a straightforward process, the individual merely internalizing what is learned through any sort of interaction with the world around them. However, due to some study limitations, it was not able to follow the teacher for a longer period of time. It is possible that, if Alex had had more opportunities to work on the concepts/ideas/beliefs unveiled during the three interviews conducted, the researcher providing mediation that is strategically directed at his ZPD, results would be even more significant since "[...] the nature of language use within the ZPD is critical to shaping opportunities for learning that in turn create the potential for cognitive development." (Johnson, 2009, p. 19).

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

Questionnaire 1 – Language Teachers and the Use of Textbooks

Matheus André Agnoletto
Dr. Adriana de Carvalho Kuerten Dellagnelo

Dear teacher, I would like to invite you to answer these eight questions about your perception on the use of textbooks and the teacher's manual in language classes. Please, answer the questions on the basis of your own beliefs and feel comfortable to write as much as you want.

1. Can you think of advantages and disadvantages of the use of textbooks in language classes?

2. Before starting to teach, had you had contact with other language textbooks for some reason? If so, why?

3. Can you think of any differences and/or similarities between the Interchange textbook and the other language textbooks you came across before Interchange?

4. How important do you think the teacher's manual is? Why?

5. Do you like the Interchange's manual? Would you like to comment on any advantages and/or disadvantages of it?

6. Do you think teachers need to follow every step of the teacher's manual? Why?

7. Have you ever felt the need to change/adapt/skip any activities from the Interchange textbook? If so, when? Why? Give an example.

8. Would you be (more) comfortable with preparing the classes without using the teacher's manual? Why?

APPENDIX B

Questionnaires 2 and 3 – Language Teachers and the Use of Textbooks

Matheus André Agnoletto
Dr. Adriana de Carvalho Kuerten Dellagnelo

Dear teacher, this questionnaire contains four of the eight questions from the first questionnaire. I would like you to answer them only if you feel the need to comment on something different from what you answered in the previous questionnaire. If your answer is the same, please, write “same as the previous questionnaire”.

1. Do you like the Interchange's manual? Would you like to comment on any advantages and/or disadvantages of it?

2. Do you think teachers need to follow every step of the teacher's manual? Why?

3. Have you ever felt the need to change/adapt/skip any activities from the Interchange textbook? If so, when? Why? Give an example.

4. Would you be (more) comfortable with preparing the classes without using the teacher's manual? Why?

Submetido: 02/06/2018
Aceito: 04/07/2018