

Politics of knowledge, innovation and participation in education systems in Latin America: the case of ESOL teachers in Buenos Aires.

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Abstract

This thesis is centrally about knowledge changes and inclusive education in Latin America. It explores the ways in which politics of knowledge and teacher professional activity have changed, seem to be changing and resist change in the light of state policies which relate knowledge, literacy, technology and ESOL education as part of a strategic educational plan for sustained development and the inclusion of vulnerable sectors in the region.

It reports the findings of a qualitative research study carried out in the field of ESOL literacy development in the second largest South American system of education, the province of Buenos Aires, using multiple methods of data collection. The thesis intends to assess what the present politics of knowledge are and to describe the ways ESOL teachers embrace change at ideological and practical levels when faced with novel policies.

Findings show inconsistencies between theory and practice that place at risk innovation and the possibility of inclusive education and democratic participation of vulnerable social sectors in a knowledge society. These inconsistencies are evidenced in teachers' ineffective strategies to embody those changes in their daily practice, in highly complex contexts of work, by ignoring students' needs, by structuring authoritarian interaction patterns in class and by neglecting curricular aims. Also, ideological clashes are disclosed through contradictions between politicians' discourses and the strategies implemented top down to support policies in educational institutions with vulnerable intakes.

The main contribution of this thesis is the notion that this mismatch between policies and politics in the Province of Buenos Aires results in anarchic conditions of work in schools and the inexorable reproduction of inequality evidenced in schooling without learning, the ghettoisation of schools and effective ESOL education restricted to upper social classes. To conclude, as a further contribution of this thesis beyond mere analysis, I will explore a possible contextualization strategy of policy implementation and context bound teacher education provisions to address the needs in ESOL teacher education found in my research context.

Declaration

I hereby declare that, except where explicit attribution is made, the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'S' followed by a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke.

Silvana Julieta Barboni
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Politics of knowledge, innovation and participation in education systems in Latin America: the case of ESOL teachers in Buenos Aires.

*Soy América latina,
un pueblo sin piernas pero que camina.
(Calle 13)*

*I am Latin America,
People without legs but walking
(Calle 13)*

Preface

When I graduated as an ESOL teacher in Argentina, back in 1994, little was known about the teaching of English in formal schooling in my country. Most of the teaching positions were found in the private sector, in English institutes or language companies. Though English had been taught in Secondary Education as part of the curriculum since the 1950s, secondary schooling itself was non-compulsory in our system of education. English was viewed at the time as a capital, an instrument that would help upper social classes find a better job, travel abroad and study with foreign bibliography. It had been so for decades. Needless to say, English was an upper middle class goal, absent from the education of lower working classes.

Most of the preparation that an ESOL teacher required for teaching was, in consequence, of a technical nature. Teacher preparation was limited to knowing the content matter, that is, English, and a set of techniques to be able to apply pre established class procedures that would eventually make students communicatively competent to operate effectively with English speaking interlocutors.

In the course of twenty years, deep changes have occurred. New understandings on the nature of knowledge, literacy and language learning and teaching, the massive expansion of ICT technologies, the expansion of compulsory formal schooling, and complex socio political drives in Latin America, among other aspects, have accelerated

new needs and demands on ESOL teachers in this part of the world. ESOL teachers are now challenged to develop an expertise that was never before expected in their professional communities.

This thesis is centrally about change. It is about the ways in which politics of knowledge and teacher professional activity have changed, seem to be changing or resist change in the face of social and educational change in my country. My main concern is to explore how the identity of ESOL teachers as myself can change in a changing environment, one that is strongly ideologically driven, one that echoes international and regional development strategies for the Americas and one that places these into dialogue with pre existing academic cultures. I am interested in showing the dilemmas and possibilities of that interaction and the ways teachers can participate in that dialogue in the Province of Buenos Aires to foster social justice and citizen participation in present day knowledge societies.

The thesis will be structured in five chapters. Chapter 1 will present the contextual background of the research and its theoretical foundations considering local and international perspectives as regards educational change agendas and ESOL reform in systems of education with a focus on the Province of Buenos Aires. I will develop a conceptual and contextual framework for this thesis within the field of educational innovation guided by my thinking and reflections as a professional in the field of ESOL. In Chapter 2 I will report some of the contradictions and challenges described as a result of the implementation of a reform agenda making a case for my research purposes as an ESOL practitioner in the Province of Buenos Aires. I will also present the research questions in the light of my research problem. Chapter 3 will describe the methodological decisions made considering the nature of the research problem and thesis questions. I will also report the ways participants were sampled and data were collected. Chapter 4 will present an analysis of the data gathered in the light of the ideas discussed in chapters 1 and 2. Finally, Chapter 5 will introduce the main conclusions of this thesis with a prospective view as regards the main concern of this thesis: educational change.

Chapter 1

Conceptual frame and contextual circumstances of educational change in the province of Buenos Aires: an interaction between the global and the local reform agenda.

As stated in the Preface, this thesis will study the process of educational change of the Province of Buenos Aires with a focus on ESOL educational reform and implementation. I am going to explore the concept of educational change as a complex process in the system of education of my province, as an exponent of educational change in developing countries in Latin America. In this chapter, I will situate my study in the global and national educational context on the basis of my reflections as an ESOL professional. To do so, I will first refer to educational change and some important considerations to situate the whole thesis within this field of study. Then, a conceptual framework will be presented. It is my aim to refer to key theoretical concepts considered globally and locally in educational change processes in systems of education today. I will describe how notions of knowledge, literacy, development, technology and teacher education interact and are presented in policy changes in Argentina and in the Province of Buenos Aires in line with international tendencies. Finally, I will explain how ESOL methodological changes in policies adhere to postmethod pedagogies as an international trend in ESOL and how these changes require a redefinition of the role of ESOL practitioners in international and local settings.

1.1. Educational change as a complex process: factors to be considered.

Educational change has been described by a number of scholars as an complex process by means of which innovations are introduced to curricular documents, materials used in schools, timetable distribution and subject weight in educational timetable, among others (Wedell, 2009; Fullan, 2007; Levin and Fullan, 2008; Leithwood et al, 2002) . As Wedell (2011: 4) rightly points out, "planning the implementation of such changes involves consideration of the interactions between a range of people playing many different roles at many different levels of responsibility both within the overall education system and outside." This implies that tensions and contradictions are likely to be found in implementation processes, as well as parallel perceptions of change processes among different stakeholders.

Levin and Fullan (2008) explain these tensions and contradictions in terms of three main factors that need to be considered when introducing educational change. Firstly, they refer to the need for sustained effort to change school and classroom practices beyond existing structures such as accountability and appraisal systems. In this line of thought teaching and learning in educational change become central, they are "the heart of improvement" (Ibid: 291). Secondly, they point out the need to understand educational change as highly context bound, that is, a process that will vary greatly depending on the diverse contexts of application present in huge systems of education. Change is, in consequence, never homogeneous and will not occur in the same way in different classrooms namely because there will be differing contextual conditions such as class sizes, available resources and teacher preparation to mention a few. As a result, large scale educational change cannot be a uniform process of innovation. Finally, the authors point out a critical factor in educational reform: the "focused and sustained effort by all parts of the education system and its partners" (Ibid: 291). If educational change is intended to be a success, it will require the active commitment of stakeholders inside and outside the system. After all, education is a public good and as such it will affect all citizens. Educational reform is then a *whole-society* issue, it is the responsibility of people in different roles of society and from different sectors who will have to interact about changes and support those changes in time.

From Levin and Fullan's discussion above, it is possible to note the complexity that defines educational change and its implementation. In the field of ESOL education within systems of education, such complexity has been highlighted by Wedell (2011) due to the "significant reculturing" (Ibid: 9) required among implementers when challenging the comfortable routines of work (Padwad and Dixit, 2011) of traditional ESOL towards present international trends in reform agendas in ESOL. These require complex theoretical understandings and practical applications of such understandings that are difficult to apply if implementers do not interpret change in the light of their own contextual circumstances or if they fail to develop genuine understandings of the methodological nature of the change required.

What are the conceptual changes at the level of mainstream education and ESOL education that lead educational change internationally? What is the context of the implementation at an ideological and social level in the province of Buenos Aires? How are global ideas interpreted in the local context for their application to educational reform? These are some of the issues that will be discussed in depth in the next sections of this chapter.

1.2. How notions of knowledge, literacy, development, technology and teacher education are interrelated in the global and the local educational change agenda proposed.

In this section I intend to analyse how notions of knowledge, literacy, development, technology and teacher education become central issues in large scale educational change in present policies locally and internationally. A focus will be placed on the Argentine case which provides the contextual basis for my thesis.

1.2.1. Knowledge as understood in reform agendas.

In an unprecedented way, debates on the role of education for national and regional development are now placing an emphasis on the relationships between knowledge and technology in present Latin American knowledge societies as in other parts of the world. We understand knowledge societies as those in which different forms of production (using science and technology) and distribution (using new communication technologies) of knowledge have become fundamental processes in the tapestry of these societies (Dominguez Rubio and Baert, 2012).

The term *knowledge* in this political context is considering present international understandings on what knowledge is which are not constrained to a description of knowledge *per se*. The term is also used internationally and locally to refer to the cultures and practices in educational and work settings where knowledge is produced, aspects that explain why and how that knowledge is developed (Guile 2010: 1). This position requires a cultural understanding of knowledge as mediated by the epistemic cultures and practices in which knowledge is produced. Consequently, it is not simply knowledge *per se* that needs to be developed by education. It is necessary to think about the knowledge embedded in subjective practice, that is, the tacit type of knowledge that circulates in the communities where that knowledge is developed and generated. This relates to what Guile (Ibid: 5) calls "the learning challenge" to refer to "the creation of cultures and practices in education and work, which assist people to mediate between different forms of knowledge in order to create new practice and objects" .

As Thomas et al (2011) point out in their local interpretation of the notion, this conceptualisation of the knowledge society creates a new agenda for the State, current administration and public policies. This is due to three main aspects of the knowledge society. The first one is that knowledge becomes a key to understand new forms of economic accumulation and development. Secondly, the socio cognitive relationships that are established are based on new social, cultural and political articulations and bring about changes in the way relationships are established at both interpersonal and institutional levels. Thirdly, by taking advantage of circulating bulks of knowledge, new possibilities in the generation of goods and services are developed, as well as new cultural goods and learning trajectories (Daniels, 2012; Baker, 2012).

In terms of our regional context, it is interesting to see the way in which the relationship between knowledge and technology shapes participation and social justice in two distinct ways. On the one hand, production and distribution of knowledge have become central processes in the generation of value in capitalist economies for development. In these terms, national researcher Hernán Thomas (1995) advocates for “surdesarrollo” (“south development” -as a pun upon words with the word “subdesarrollo” meaning “underdevelopment”) to refer to the way knowledge and technology can help add value to primary exploitation of natural resources. This region has historically been characterised by the exploitation of primary resources namely through mining and agriculture. Primary resources are then exported to other parts of the world to be processed and resold in our national and regional markets restricting productive activity almost exclusively to the exploitation of our soil. In this respect, Gianella and Thomas (2011) point out that regional economies need to add value to their primary production based on the exploitation of natural resources, diversify their productive structure and modernise industrial and service sectors which are low in productivity. Yet, this is just part of the economic strategy that national bodies such as the Scientific Research Committee (*Comisión de Investigaciones Científicas - CIC*) are sketching out. As Rozenwurcel et al (2011: 20) explicitly analyse “in the frame of the current process of internationalisation of economy, deepening the process of regional economic integration [in Latin America] requires exploring regional mechanisms of cooperation of R+D+I (research, development and innovation) in some key technologies of the new world techno productive pattern, in particular in technologies of information and communication (ICT) and biotechnology.”

On the other hand, the relationship between knowledge and technology is being explored around the paradox of knowledge and non-knowledge of the knowledge

society, with a strong impact on citizenship issues. Both at a national as well as international levels knowledge is being recognised not just as a source of certainty but also as a source of questioning. New knowledge, under the conditions presented by the knowledge society, brings about uncertainty and risks requiring citizens' participation to face the ethic and political debates generated by knowledge. In present day societies, knowledge is a "Janus faced phenomenon in which every piece of new knowledge is invariably accompanied by uncertainties and risks which have to be politically governed and managed" (Dominguez Rubio and Baert, 2012: 7). Our societies are in consequence both *knowledge intensive* as well as *uncertainty intensive*, a key defining feature that makes citizens' participation and social justice essential for democracy and development.

1.2.2. Notions of literacy in educational change: the international picture.

This conceptualisation of knowledge requires the development of literacy in a wide sense. From this perspective a person is literate only when he is able to operate with knowledge and participate in the practices and cultures of education and work environments where knowledge is generated. As a result, the role of teachers is clearly associated to ample processes of literacy development that can only occur in formal schooling to guarantee the democratic distribution of knowledge to students from the most diverse contexts and cultural backgrounds in an attempt to guarantee democratic participation and social justice for all in present societies.

As well as a culturally sensitive treatment of what counts as valuable knowledge, it is important to highlight the role attributed to languages internationally. The way language intervenes in the complex process of knowledge development and knowledge construction participation, is influenced by international ideas on multiliteracies in a plurilingual world (García, 2009) and how ICTs have influenced our use of language(s) (Kress, 2010).

Firstly, educational policies globally have acknowledged the need to address new literacies in schools, that is, the flexible and sustained mastery of a repertoire of practices through oral, written or multimedia texts containing a variety of semiotic systems used for different purposes in different contexts (Luke and Freebody, 2000; Anstey and Bull, 2006). Unlike traditional views which aim at helping students become users of language, the literacy perspective embraced in national and provincial policies requires both teachers and learners to become intercultural explorers (Kern, 2001) of a

plurality of genres to prepare learners for the complex and dynamic literacy identities they will enact when using languages (Gee, 1999; 2012).

Secondly, digital literacy is considered today as one of the pillars of the education that children need to develop in school in an intimate relationship with multimodality education (Rowse, 2013; Kress, 2010). We understand digital literacy as a complex combination of skills that help people make responsible and sensible choices when searching for, locating, developing and sharing digital materials and information (Lankshear and Knobel, 2011; Facer, 2011).

This definition has two main pedagogic implications. The first one is that school learners need to develop an understanding on how digital content is created making use of images, text, sound and languages considering diverse communicative purposes and multiple modes. In other words, teaching digital literacy involves an explicit focus “on the mixed modes through which meaning is communicated” (Street, 2007: 130). The second one is concerned with the collective responsibility for construction and distribution of knowledge in a connected world, what Facer (2011: 56-58) calls “the collective intelligence”. So, developing digital literacy at school is not simply about learning to use software. It is about learning to operate with this “collective intelligence” with discernment and responsibility using multiliteracies. Defining digital literacy as part of a plural literacy or multiliteracies perspective is here an overt recognition that engaging with digital literacy is necessarily a social act, embedded in social practices and contexts. Teaching digital literacy within a multiliteracies approach comprises helping students make conscious choices among the diverse available meaning making tools which are socially used in dynamic ways “by human beings who now move constantly across real and virtual borders” (Miller, 2007: 174).

1.2.3. The local version of ideas on literacy: a revival of a Latin American progressive framework.

These ideas of literacy are made explicit in curricular documents and educational acts, as the pervasive legacy of Freire’s (1979; 2004) pedagogy in Latin American systems of education and educational policies. Evidently, this literacy legacy needs to be analysed in its full complexity since it is not a translocation of the theories of the 70s into the 21st century. What I mean is that there is in fact a revival of a certain ideological framework for what a liberatory education is and what literacy represents in developing Latin America. Yet, there is also a new, more complex and more refined understanding

of what literacy entails in terms of language use and interaction (or rather plurilingual interaction) within knowledge societies in a globalised world as analysed in the previous section.

The persistent ideological framework of Freire's pedagogy in educational strategies is made evident in the presence of what Torres (2008: 6-9) describes as the two main theses of Freire's work. The first one places democratic socialization as a precondition of democratic society. It is through democratic practices in schools that we lead people to democratic citizenship. To achieve democratic socialization, Freire proposes to teach students to read the world by reading the word, through a humanizing pedagogy that helps them become conscious of their presence in the world through dialogue. The second thesis is the notion of cultural diversity. Pedagogical subjects are not homogeneous and educating them entails the ethical imperative of empowering them instead of oppressing them into dominant cultural practices. The relationship between the individual and the collective is implicit in recognizing the historicity of our experiences. As Souto Manning (2010: 11) explains "to be able to challenge and change their worlds, individuals need to start reading the history of their worlds in order to name the issues oppressing them". This requires understanding our individual life histories embedded in a collective socio historical context.

These two ideas operate as the structuring framework of all educational policies and strategies devised by the state in Argentina. How is that done? In two distinct ways: by universalising and expanding formal schooling to guarantee educational rights of all children from diverse social and cultural backgrounds and by establishing a pedagogic paradigm consistent with the ideological framework of the political agenda.

In terms of formal schooling, the *National Education Act* passed in 2006 and the *Universal Child Benefit* passed in 2007 became the most powerful legal measures to guarantee the presence of children in schools, the State thus becoming responsible of the democratic socialization of children. While the *National Education Act* made Secondary School compulsory and ensured a minimum of 13 years of formal schooling for all children between ages 5 and 17, the *Universal Child Benefit* (a measure similar to *Bolsa Familia* in Brazil) provided the poorest sectors of society, generally those with high levels of vulnerability due to unemployment, with the financial means to compel them to send their children to school other than work.

Also, as from 2010 6.5 % of the national budget is assigned to education, the highest percentage in history representing an increase of thousands of millions assigned to education in the course of ten years (see table 1). In the words of former Minister of Education, Daniel Filmus, responsible for the *National Financing Law for Education* passed in 2005, “the construction of a country model based on adding value to production as from the training and knowledge of its people requires the decision to maintain these levels of educational investment in the next 15 to 20 years. The strongest efforts in budget increase are addressed to reaching the universalisation of kindergarten provisions and making secondary level compulsory, the educational inclusion, the improvement of technical education and the strengthening of university education” (Filmus, 2012). What is interesting to note is that though Argentina has a federal administrative system, the *National Financing Law for Education*, in its article 7 compels all the provinces to maintain the provincial budget assigned to education up to the national standards and also promotes the use of any increase in the tax revenue of the provinces to be used for education. This has been considered a transparency measure to direct financing to education automatically in all provinces (Morduchowicz, 2010: 12). As expected, this had a great impact on all provincial systems of education, in particular, the one of the province of Buenos Aires. The Province of Buenos Aires assigns 31% of its total revenue to education, the highest percentage of all provinces (see table 1), most of which has been specifically allocated to teachers’ salaries.

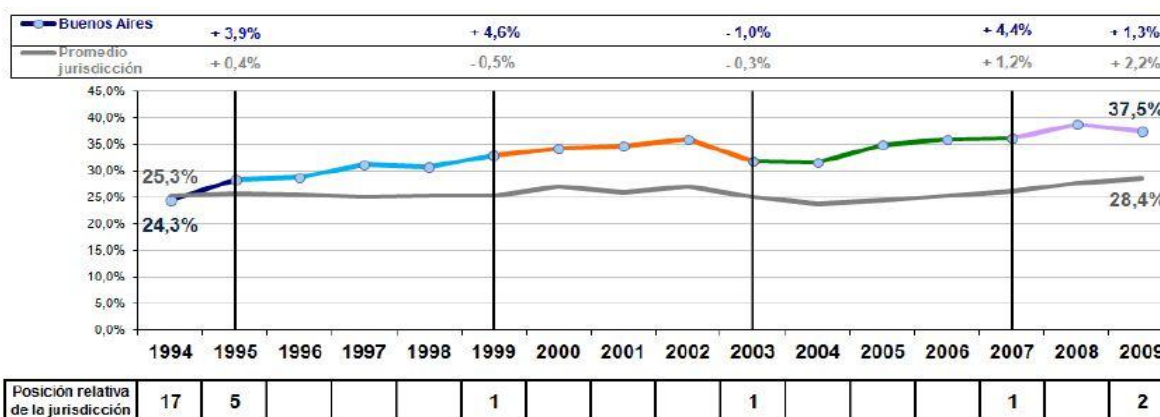


Table 1: Budget assigned to education in the Province of Buenos Aires as compared to the average budget for education in other provinces.

As regards pedagogic measures, curricular documents and materials devised by central as well as provincial administration addressed to both students and teachers, foster participatory practices from a socio constructivism standpoint (Lantolf, 2000). From this perspective learning is understood to occur in interaction through the use of physical as well as symbolic tools or artifacts mediating that learning. These tools can be enumerated as the cultural artifacts and activities, the concepts and the social relations that people will use to learn (Johnson, 2009). These mediational tools or artifacts will need to be rich and varied to cater for the diversity of experiences present in the classrooms, taking people's knowledge, identities and desires into account as well as overall educational objectives. These tools will be the ones available to students and teachers, culturally developed in the communities where they live and learn, as well as those which are considered socially meaningful. This is why, for example, materials for children distributed in schools by the Ministries of Education of the Provinces and the Nation contain samples of popular culture as well as canonic culture. The aim behind their development is to use the contextual experiences with knowledge that children from different cultural backgrounds bring to school from their communities to build on from that into what is established as socially valued knowledge that formal schooling intends to develop. Also, the teacher education provisions devised by the national as well as the provincial administrations are aimed at catering for a diversity of teacher profiles and trajectories.

Digital literacy is the supporting argument presented by the Presidential Decree 459/2010 creating the Programme "*Conectar Igualdad*" (*Connecting Equality*), a national project which consists of distributing netbooks for free to all teenagers in secondary schools to guarantee the material resources (computers, internet connection and specific pedagogic software) so that digital literacy can be developed in schools. The Presidential Decree is precise on this when it reads: "secondary education has as its aims to educate responsible subjects, capable of using knowledge as a tool to understand and transform constructively their social, economic, environmental and cultural context and of situating themselves as active participants in a world of permanent change" (Presidential Decree 459/2010). An important aspect to consider about "*Connecting Equality*" is that students become the owners of the netbooks they are given at school, they are expected to take them home. The presence of computers reaching homes through this project is reported to generate changes in communities when it comes to bridging the digital divide among social classes since netbooks become available in families and communities where such technology would be out of

reach unless provided for free by the state. This availability is thought to ensure the material means in all homes –no matter their social class- for the availability and distribution of knowledge that technology can facilitate. Also, the role of school in democratizing knowledge is highlighted among communities. Schools become institutions of reference in the use of technology and digital literacy to access to knowledge and participate in its construction.

As never before, policies have acknowledged the presence of a plurilingual context with the recognition of indigenous languages and the pervasive presence of English as an international language (McKay, 2010) in particular through the use of ICTs. Also, they have cherished languages as a necessary resource in all fields of knowledge but centrally in citizenship and intercultural education in the region (Barboni and Porto, 2013). This is conveyed through a strong revision of the offer of languages present in the provinces in line with the communities that inhabit them and their cultural and linguistic diversity. The agreement with Brazil through the *National Law of Portuguese* by means of which Portuguese should be taught in all provincial systems of education by 2016 and the creation of the Schools of Foreign Languages in the Provinces of Buenos Aires and Córdoba are among some of the political strategies devised in this direction. As Beacon (2013: 5) asserts “This shift of paradigm has contributed to reflect upon and deconstruct certain beliefs, such as monolingualism or monoculturalism in Argentina. Intercultural and citizenship education offers new ways to dialogue and integrate plurilingual and multicultural realities. Foreign language teaching becomes one of those curricular spaces where this dialogue can take place.”

1. 3. ESOL in the Province of Buenos Aires as a local understanding of global trends.

A strong emphasis is then given to the role of English in this part of the world as a language that can contribute to intercultural awareness (Byram et al, 2001) and citizenship education bearing in mind a wider understanding of citizenship beyond the national (Porto, 2013). Also, it can contribute to facilitate people´s access to knowledge and their participation in the collaborative production of that knowledge. Even though the complex status of English as a language of domination in Latin America -as in other parts of the world- cannot be neglected (Barboni, 2012; Porto, 20103), it is a recognised fact that knowing English is a *sine qua non* to flexibly use and produce text in the knowledge society. Knowing English is then closely associated with being literate

in the complex shades of meaning that literacy conveys from a social semiotic perspective by means of which multimodality is at its core in communication processes (Gee, 2012; Lankshear and Knobel, 2011; Rowsell, 2013; Street, 2007).

The teaching of two weekly hours of English is compulsory in 9 years of formal schooling from ages 9 to 17 distributed in 3 years of primary education (ages 9 – 11) and 6 years of secondary education (ages 12 – 17/18). Throughout these years it is expected that children gain an intermediate level of English (B1) by school termination. The teaching aims of the subject have been devised in such a way that they respond to international standards as marked by the Common European Framework and the American Association of Teachers of English. This means that every three years of formal schooling children should progress from an A1 towards an A2 and finally a B1 level (see Appendix 3 for a description of attainment objectives).

The legal frame that supports the teaching of English is in line with a plurilingual model of an education in languages, one in which the relationships between languages “are never competitive, but are strategic, responding to functional needs” (Garcia, 2009: 117). This dynamic bilingual framework under which English is included in compulsory schooling builds on the idea developed internationally that languages are a resource for students for two main reasons.

The first one is that plurilingualism helps develop linguistic tolerance towards other citizens who bring diverse linguistic backgrounds. It is important to note that there is an increasing percentage of students in our classrooms who speak indigenous as well as foreign languages other than Spanish as their mother tongue. This pervasive presence of other languages is the result of complex migratory movements from neighbouring countries as well as certain Asian countries in the last decade. For example, it is not uncommon to find speakers of Guarani, Wichi, Mapuche and Mandarin Chinese in the same classroom (Sürling et al, 2013).

The second reason is the emphasis given internationally to interactive processes in general and the development of multiliteracies: knowing languages will multiply improved communication strategies (García, 2009: 5-18) in multiple contexts of use for work, study, entertainment or any other purpose. It is well acknowledged that languages, whether it be the mother tongue, a second language or a foreign language, are seen as a resource for the development of *translanguagings*, that is to say, “multiple discursive practices” (Ibid, 2009: 45 - 47) necessary in a world of constant

interaction among people. In this respect, Canagarajah (2013) proposes a translingual orientation other than a dominant monolingual one, being his proposal coherent with García's advocacy for translanguaging practices. Canagarajah (2013: 6) claims that communication transcends single isolated languages, it also transcends words since it involves diverse semiotic resources and specific ecological affordances. In this respect "communication involves treating languages as "mobile resources" (Bloommaert, 2010: 49) that are appropriated by people for their purposes; these resources index meaning and gain form in situated contexts for specific interlocutors in their social practice" (Ibid: 7).

A task-based internationally acknowledged pedagogy, based on a sociocultural perspective of language (Lantolf, 2000) and research on interactive processes of language development, is promoted as a result of a plurilingual model of languages education. Such pedagogy will inevitably focus on helping students learn English by using it and will have strong implications for teachers in the ways in which a language class is to stimulate learners towards meaning making through English. Such a view understands teachers as mediators, expected to select and shape rich learning experiences through the activities they propose in class (Williams and Burden, 1998). Activities should develop the ability to use English to convey meanings. Tasks of that kind are what Samuda and Bygate call "holistic activity" (2008: 7) that is, tasks that "involve the learner in dealing with the different aspects of language together, in the way language is normally used" (Ibid: 7). Holistic activities have also been called "tasks" (Ellis, 2003; Ellis, 2009; Willis, 1996; Prabhu, 1987). Unlike analytic activities, in which individual sub areas of language (e.g. grammar, phonology, syntax, etc) are used and rehearsed, tasks involve using language as a whole for communicative purposes to solve problems. Thus, in tasks language is a means to achieve a certain communicative outcome (Ellis, 2003; 2009).

These ideas are presented locally in the theoretical foundation of the ESOL curriculum for Secondary education when it reads:

"English being an effective resource for international communication and the spread of technical-scientific knowledge and literature, it allows access to:

- *advances of science and technology for its use and adaptation in the development of self projects;*
- *other cultures and a reflection about self culture;*

- *an education in agreement with present day work requirements and with new modes of production;*
- *updated information in its original language.*

All the above address language as an object of study as well as the construction of knowledge on how to do something, that is to say, knowledge to address communicative situations inside and outside the classroom. (ESOL Secondary Level Curriculum Design, 2009: 155)

The global flow of ideas has also contributed to the introduction of certain pedagogic trends in our provincial educational policies apart from the notion of task. This is the case with the postmethod pedagogies implicit in our legal framework, which are now a global phenomenon in ESOL. These pedagogies aim at responding to the complexity of addressing the “real” school trajectories of young people by making English meaningful to our students rather than by responding to method based prescriptions (Richards and Rogers, 2001).

The discussion of postmethod pedagogies was internationally introduced in 1989 by Pennycook in his seminal paper where he states that the concept of method “reflects a particular view of the world and is articulated in the interests of unequal power relationships” (Pennycook, 1989: 589). This post colonial perspective was taken up in 1990 by Prabhu, who analyses the concept of “method” and presents a discussion on the notion of a “best method” developing with it an analysis on the relationship between method, context and teacher sense of plausibility. Prabhu’s conclusion created the basis for a deeper understanding on ESOL pedagogy and postmethod conditions when he concludes:

“The search for an inherently best method should perhaps give way to a search for ways in which teachers’ and specialists’ pedagogic perceptions can most widely interact with one another, so that teaching can become most widely and maximally real” (1990: 176).

At a linguistic level, postmethod pedagogies adhere to theories of critical discourse analysis (Pennycook, 2001; van Dijk, 1993; Fairclough, 1995) to understand, explain and teach language. These theories explain discourse, on the one hand, as the ways language is used for social action and interaction and describe how people use

language in real social situations. On the other hand, they define discourse as a social construction of reality, a form of knowledge, using post-structural theory of language.

Postmethod pedagogies rely on both conceptualisations of discourse and they use Halliday's (1973; 1978) systemic description of texts as a set of options at three levels of activity that students of language need to be aware of: textual, interpersonal and ideational. These different levels of analysis help define language activity as genre based, that is to say, an activity by means of which people engage in staged goal oriented social practices (Martin, 2009; O'Keeffe et al, 2009). To carry out those social practices, people make ideational, textual and interpersonal choices to convey context specific and purpose oriented meanings through language. In this respect, Kumaravadivelu (2008: 75) refers to the educational impact that working with these three levels in class has:

"the three types of interaction may be said to produce three types of discourse: a) interaction in a textual activity produces instructional discourse resulting in better conversational understanding; b) interaction as an interpersonal activity produces informational discourse resulting in superior social communication; and c) interaction as an ideational activity produces ideological discourse resulting in greater sociopolitical consciousness."

Traditional views of language teaching confine the teaching of English to the development of an instrumental use of the four macro skills (reading, listening, speaking and writing). "Moreover, learners are not sensitized to the generic conventions, the interactants, their purposes, why the texts are written as they are and how they work" (Bronia, 2005), they are simply introduced into restricted textual levels, such as syntax and grammar, that help them use the system without actually conveying and interpreting meanings at discourse levels (Widdowson, 2007).

In contrast, postmethod pedagogies advocate the development of multiliteracies. As Collins and Blot (2003: 174) note, this expanded view of literacy "is coupled with an account of identity which emphasises the fluid, changing nature of identity" and the ways in which cultural affiliation (Sen, 2009) is inseparable from language use so much so that genre theorists describe culture as a system of genres. Implicit in this socio cultural view of language learning is the notion that becoming literate is necessarily a process of "understanding oneself and one's own relationship to the world in terms of

the relationship between power and knowledge in society" (García, 2009: 352) when interacting through texts. This brings about important pedagogic consequences.

At a pedagogic level, postmethod pedagogies stem from theories of critical pedagogy (Giroux, 1988; Giroux and McLaren, 1989; Shor, 1992) that in turn spring from the foundational work of Paulo Freire (1970) advocating for a problem posing education. The "recipes" provided by method based prescriptions, applicable to any context and any student, are rejected as exponents of a "banking education" (Ibid: 71-74). In contrast, post method pedagogies emphasise the role of educators in creating, together with students, conditions in classrooms where reality unveils fostering the emergence of consciousness and where dialogue is indispensable for cognition. As Cannagarajah (1999: 17-19) points out, critical pedagogic practice is conceived "in terms of an expanded notion of context" by means of which the teaching of English becomes context specific and *cultures* sensitive (Kramsch, 1998; Byram et al, 2001).

This postmethod condition establishes new relationships between the theory and practice of teaching and claims for what Kumaravadivelu (2003) calls "the pedagogic parameters of particularity, practicality and possibility". Particularity refers to the deployment of context sensitive pedagogic strategies which bear in mind the local socio cultural, historic and linguistic realities of learners as well as the complex settings where the language will be spoken by learners. The second parameter encourages teachers to theorise from their practice, to develop a body of knowledge from their own experiences and to feed their practice with new theory. It is the praxis dimension of teaching which continuous professional learning echoes. The third parameter "seeks to tap the sociopolitical consciousness that participants bring with them to the classroom so that it can also function as a catalyst for a continual quest for identity formation and social transformation" (Ibid: 37).

These parameters become core issues to develop adequate teaching projects to address the diverse trajectories that secondary school students bring to ESOL classrooms throughout formal schooling because of the reflective processes they trigger in teachers. Reflective processes combine aspects of reflection-in-action, reflection-of-action and reflection-for-action (Edge, 2012) that will help them devise improved teaching strategies to address specific "real" school trajectories. In such a process, communicational processes and strategies and classroom interaction are considered core features of the class to develop intercultural understandings of reality

and better learning conditions and results. The legal framework of educational policies implicitly assigns teachers the role of mediating in that interaction when it says:

School constitutes that place of intercultural meeting and this implies:

- *generating experiences of integration and exchange;*
- *defining the knowledge that circulates in each intercultural context in terms of schooling;*
- *valuing the interaction with different “others” as producing learning;*
- *recognising the knowledge that each subject possesses as an instrument and product of the relationship with others;*
- *capitalising the presence of cultural diversity in all educational situation and not only in some groups and not in others;*
- *Creating bonds among subjects making sure that diversity and difference do not turn into educational inequality.*

(Marco General de la Política Curricular, 2006)

There are a number of ELT postmethod pedagogic proposals. This is the case of Stern's (1992) three dimensional framework, Allright's (2000; 2003a; 2003b) exploratory practice and Kumaravadivelu's (2003; 2006) macrostrategic framework among the best known. In all cases, the class becomes an exponent of a number of guiding insights in terms of teaching and learning processes.

The peculiarity of a postmethod pedagogy is that it is not a fixed prescriptive list of classroom routines or behaviours for teachers to copy. Much on the contrary, it is a frame of reference to understand the highly creative task of teaching which can only be described and explained in culture specific contexts and communities of practice through an interpretive understanding of teacher activity (Johnson, 2009). Through classroom work, teachers amalgamate in complex ways the technical knowledge they have, the ongoing development of theories they test, appropriate and transform through their everyday practices and the innovative practices they carry out through their professional engagement in the institutional and cultural settings where they work.

1.4. ESOL teacher identity in reform agendas internationally.

Postmethod pedagogies as explained in the previous section require teachers to transcend method based prescriptions that in the past seemed to simplify the task of

teaching by assigning clear routines of class work. As Akbari (2008: 642) notes “[M]ethods in the past provided frameworks for classroom practice by defining a view of learning and language (Richards & Rodgers, 2001) and supplied teachers with guidelines as to what presumably worked and did not work in the class based on the objectives set down by the method”. These method based prescriptions provided teachers with a comfort zone at the time of doing the job and with simple tools for teacher educators to train the new generations of teachers. However, they also restricted their role to that of semi professionals (Etzioni, 1969). In many respects, teachers were expected to follow a “recipe”, a set of given procedures developed by theoreticians and presented in teacher training courses both in initial as well as in in-service programmes for them to re-produce (Barboni, 2011). They were submissive to institutionalised authoritarian mechanisms of control and accountability that made them “operative” (Roberts, 1998: 104) in deploying the curricular mandates from a supposedly “professional” international textbook industry in Argentina (Barboni, 2009) as in other parts of the world (Pennycook, 1998; Canagarajah, 1998; Gray, 2012). The semi-professional teacher was thus reduced to “communicate rather than to create or apply knowledge” (Etzioni, 1969: 14) with the ideal of efficiency, undermining, thus their sense of shared responsibility towards broad educational objectives.

In contrast, postmethod pedagogies define teachers as professionals, since they encourage teachers to use their discretionary judgment to apply teaching strategies. Also, they enhance the intellectual freedom of teachers as problem solvers in specific contexts of practice where they will apply their professional expertise reflectively. This means that teachers will be “thoughtful and well informed about their practice setting because they have built up their knowledge of that setting through learning from experience and being open to standing back and considering not only alternative ways of responding to a given situation, but of framing the situation in ways that acknowledge and respond to alternative perspectives” (Loughran, 2010: 164).

A postmethod perspective of teacher identity places teachers in the position of transformative professionals, that is, “serving the best interests of all those interested in and participating in schooling and education” (Sachs, 2003: 16). Such a definition of what an ESOL professional “ought” (Barnett, 2008: 198) to do enacts the notion of a democratic professional that requests from teachers “to work in tandem with all relevant stakeholders” (Whitty, 2002 in Whitty, 2008: 44), leaving behind fixed standardised notions of what should be done in class “in favor of the identification of practices or strategies of teaching designed to reflect local needs and experiences”

(Savignon, 2007: 218). Teacher identity is understood in terms of what Hargreaves and Goodson (1996) call “postmodern professionalism”, that is, one guided by discretionary judgment, moral and social purposes, collaborative cultures, occupational heteronomy, active care for students, continuous learning and recognition of task complexity (Ibid: 20-21).

This understanding of teacher identity highlights the intellectual agency of teachers but also considers the constraints faced by teachers in specific contexts of application. As Johnson (2009: 93) points out, “individual mental functioning does not exist as separate from the cultural, institutional and historical situations in which it occurs.” Teachers find themselves in communities of practice (Wenger, 1998) with heterogeneous institutional cultures and all sorts of contextual constraints such as institutional regulations, parents’ expectations and material limitations, to name a few. Also, teachers are affected by what Johnson (2009: 77) names “the macrostructures” of language teaching such as curricular mandates and testing norms and the ways these are embodied in each institutional context. In the process of applying their expertise, teachers find themselves confronted with contradictions, limitations and dilemmas. It is under these contextual circumstances that their identities continue to develop and change.

Language teacher education is then conceptualised from a sociocultural perspective (Freeman and Johnson, 1998). It takes place in interaction with others, it is the result of participating in communities of practice (Wenger, 1998). Roberts (1998), for example, refers to the interaction between the personal and the social dimensions of language teacher learning acknowledging a partial agency to teachers in the construction of their own identities which, he says, are determined in many ways by the contexts in which teachers learn and work. “Our development [as teachers] will be framed by the relationships and dialogue that are available to us” (Ibid: 44). Similarly, Johnson (2009: 10) states that learning to teach is “a long term, complex, developmental process that is the result of participation in the social practices and contexts associated with learning and teaching.”

In brief, teacher identity is developed both individually and collectively. This conceptualisation of teacher identity development challenges a knowledge transmission model, typical of many continuous professional development (CPD) programmes, as totally inadequate to address teacher learning (Johnson and Golombek, 2002; Roberts, 1998) for being de contextualised and paternalistic. If culturally responsive practices are at the basis of postmethod pedagogy in the English

class, as expected by curricular documents, teacher education needs to be concerned with helping teachers develop an awareness of their own cultural identity and to "know how to interpret cultural symbols, and establish links between cultures and their teaching" (Smolcic, 2011: 15). Teacher education in line with postmethod pedagogies "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" (Johnson, 2009), it is intrinsically interpretive in nature and it relies on teacher authored accounts to help teacher thinking evolve through reflection (Loughran, 2010). Such an approach needs to be collaborative in that it is essentially school based and highly contextualized in communities of practice.

Teacher learning takes place collaboratively, mainly through interaction with others so that "advances in knowledge and refinement of interpretations of knowledge take place as a result of collective, supportive, endeavour" (Cunningham, 2008). Such a perspective of ELT education emphasises the centrality of "dialogue" in a teacher education programme in that it offers the opportunity for a teacher learner "to clarify one's own meanings and... support changing views of self as teacher" (Roberts, 1998: 45) and develop teacher agency in connection to "broader questions about education in a democratic society" (Zeichner, 2009: 119).

It is well acknowledged that through interaction in a learning community, teachers enrich in two main ways. Firstly, they develop what Eraut (1994: 71) calls "a disposition to theorise" an aspect of teacher cognition that a teacher should develop in teacher education in order to keep learning for life. Such a theorising disposition "to interpret, explain or judge intentions, actions and experiences" (Ibid: 71), that is, a disposition to apply theory in context specific situations and to reflect upon how theory has been used can only be reached through cycles of activity "in concert" (Roberts, 1998: 46) involving listening to and participating in teacher discourse, observing other teachers teach and practising and discussing one's own teaching in collegial ways (Eraut, 1994: 69). Secondly, participation in communities of practice through the self narration arising from context bound interaction gives rise to "more active, spirited debate about policy and practice" (Sachs, 2001: 158) leading towards renewed teacher professionalism and the formation of what Sachs calls "an activist professional identity" (Ibid: 158) that present day ESOL requires.

1. 5. ESOL practitioner profiles in the province: initial educational background and in service teacher education provisions in line with international ideas.

As regards ESOL initial teacher education (ITE), the Province is the home of forty-one state ESOL Teacher Education Institutions (*Profesorados*), almost as many belonging to private ones and two Universities. All these institutions are responsible for the teaching degrees of most of the teachers in service in the province. To work in the system, teachers need to have a teaching degree from a provincial or national higher education institution. Unlike other parts of the world, international certificates such as TKT or Delta are not recognised as teaching degrees. All ITE programmes have a duration of at least four years by law and tuition is done mostly in English and covers namely three fields of knowledge in all programmes: linguistics, literature and pedagogy.

The province runs the biggest In-Service teacher education system ever developed in the country in charge of the Continuous Professional Development Department (Regional Technical Team). This system, which is composed of a net of teacher educators located in the districts, operates coordinately with the centralised In- Service teacher education provided by the Programme of Plurilingual Education of the Province in charge of a set of central administration specialists (Programme Open Classrooms). While the first system aims at helping teachers develop in the fields of knowledge they are interested in, it is off-work hours and non-compulsory for teachers, the second system compulsorily assembles them during working hours to discuss and develop issues of relevance for ESOL professional practice in the Province as determined by central authorities.

The two systems work coordinately since they address the same educational problems from different perspectives, with varying levels of analysis, and they do so using the same teacher education pedagogy. Also, the emphasis of each in service provision is different. While *Open classrooms* works to guarantee a common basis for continuous professional development and the right of all teachers to access to free quality continuous education provided by the state throughout the year, *the Regional Technical Team* work to guarantee the development of differential profiles according to teachers' interests and to make a regional support system available any time throughout the year.

The teacher education pedagogy followed by both systems can be described as a socio cultural one following global trends in ESOL teacher preparation (as described in the previous section), in which reflexivity is at its basis to aid the development of a reflective rationality as well as the adjustment of teachers' technical rationality, helping theorizing capacities in teachers develop and evolve.

For example, the programme *Aulas Abiertas* (Open Classrooms) consists of inter-related stages of teacher development activities leading towards improved professional practice and the construction of stronger communities of practice in the districts. These stages are based on the theoretical ideas presented by Campbell et al (2010) and Zeichner (2003) among others who point out that when teachers inquire into their own practices, they "take ownership of their professional learning and manage change in their own classrooms and schools through knowledge production" (Campbell and McNamara, 2010: 20).

During *Aulas Abiertas* teachers undergo the following sequences of work:

- Together as a community of practice: Teachers analyse teaching materials and sequences of work developed by other teachers, student productions and teacher interventions leading to those productions, classroom interactions, etc. They share their views as they analyse these instruments, they relate the instruments with theoretical concepts they learnt in ITE and with new bibliography.
- Alone in class as a member of that community of practice: They relate the work of others to their own work as part of a community of practice with a common set of educational objectives. They test materials and sequences analysed in the off school meetings with adaptations to their own contexts and they record the experiences. They are also encouraged to try out their own examples.
- Together as an empowering community of intellectuals: They then work in teams and relate to each other during the meetings exchanging their experiences, encouraging further analysis through the challenges posed by the views of their colleagues as they listen to their narratives and records compiled in their portfolios.
- Alone as a transformative intellectual: They refine their own thinking of their own learning and teaching through further reflection, analysis and enquiry tasks promoting integration of the conceptual framework worked with.

As common practice within the programme, teachers are requested to keep a learning portfolio (Turner and Simon, 2007; Richards and Farrell, 2005) which compiles reflective tasks of different kinds. We define a learning portfolio as a collection of documents and other items that provides information on teachers' work and learning. It is a selection of works which present evidence of teachers' thinking in the process of learning. In this particular programme, it consists of a set of reflective accounts of teachers' exploratory tasks in class (Edwards, 2005) and their narrative accounts of discussions and reflections with colleagues. As part of the narratives compiled in the portfolio, teachers may include student works, class plans and any other institutional document they consider of use to develop their reflections on their teaching and learning.

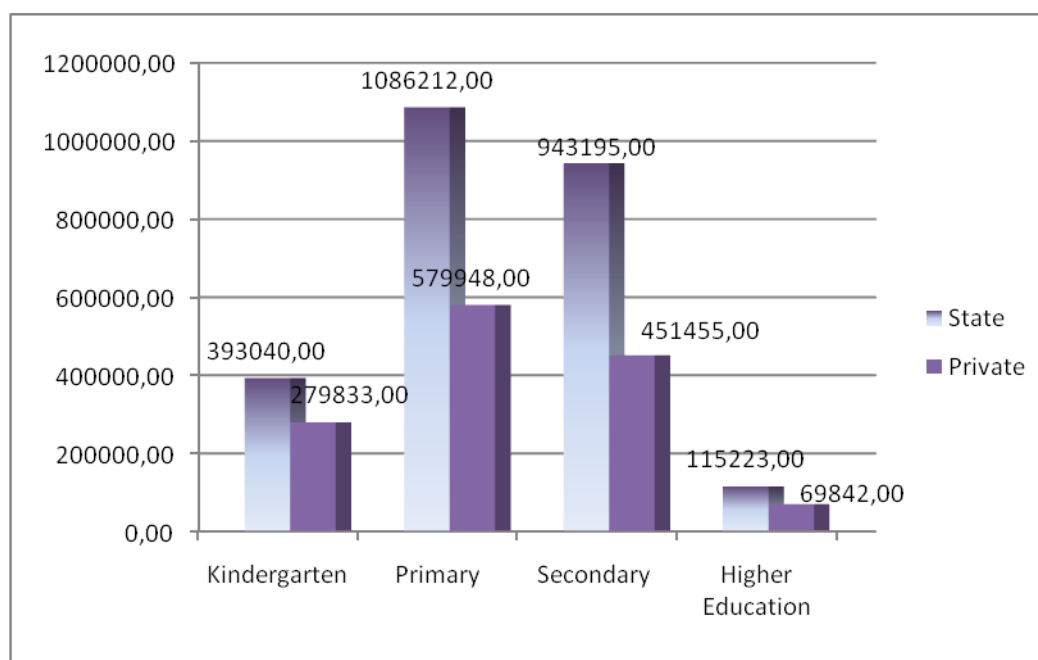
Chapter 2: Educational change under scrutiny: failures and contradictions that feed my inquiry.

In this chapter I intend to explain the most important tensions and contradictions that have been reported as a result of the implementation of change processes in the system of education of the Province of Buenos Aires. I will therefore report some of the challenges faced by the implementation of educational reform as well as some of the failures documented in the process, to provide the reader with a basis to understand the purpose of my research and my research questions. I will end this chapter by introducing the research questions of this thesis which aim at inquiring further into the nature of the contradiction between policy and practice in educational change.

2.1. Complex settings for educational changes: the Province of Buenos Aires as an exponent of Latin American systems of education.

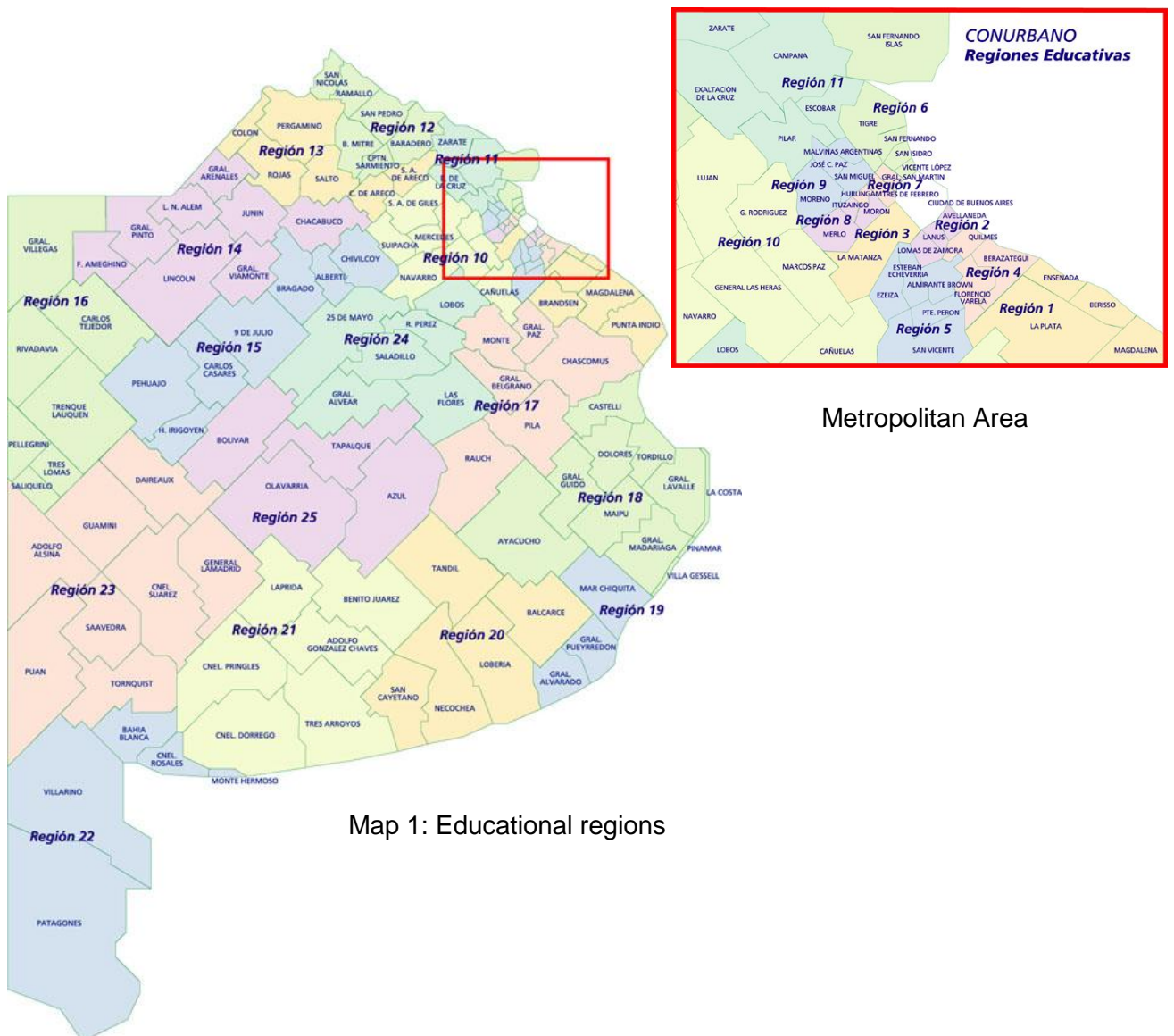
The province is home to the second largest education system in Latin America after Sao Paulo. The province of Buenos Aires consists of 134 districts distributed in 25 educational regions in its 307,571 square kilometres (see map in Appendix 1). Its 21,249 educational institutions hold 4,620,867 students out of which 69,0% attend public state institutions while the rest study at private institutions (see table 2 with data on the 2009 census). Both the private and the public systems are under the scope of the ministry of education of the Province even though private institutions hold varying degrees of autonomy in staff hiring and economic financing, though not in curriculum policies. 58,8% of students attend schools located in “*conurbano bonaerense*” which is the metropolitan area surrounding the city of Buenos Aires (2009 census - Information and Statistics Branch- Office of Educational Planning). The metropolitan area (see map 1) is the most densely populated zone of the province and it contains most of the industrial activity of the region whereas the rest of the province is characterised by its agricultural and farming activity. Buenos Aires’ dimensions in land and its wealth in terms of regional landscapes, traditions, economic activities and migration processes impact on its cultural and social diversity. I believe this fact makes the Province of Buenos Aires a very good exponent of Latin American reality and it can mirror other developing regions in the world.

Table 2: Enrolment in Mainstream Education by educational level and sector 2009 census



Source: Information and Statistics Branch- Office of Educational Planning.

The province of Buenos Aires has historically led educational changes in Argentina. Since 2005 it has foregrounded the progressive educational changes introduced by Kirchnerism (a political movement within *Peronism* with former president Néstor Kirchner leading the movement) in Argentina in line with a common Latin American political agenda made evident in the region by the creation of the Community of Andean Nations (CAN) and the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR). The province of Buenos Aires was the first of the country to modify its legal framework to respond to the educational agenda established by the *National Education Act* passed in 2006. Because of its weight in the National System of Education (39% the total system), the educational policies of Buenos Aires have historically led the federal educational discussions of the country. The Province is also home to 13 State Universities and rich intellectual movements stemming from the universities and feeding into the system of education.



Map 1: Educational regions

With reference to ESOL education, the province is also a good exponent of the country for the wide variety of teacher profiles that it reveals among its 10 thousand ESOL practitioners. Statistical information provided by the Office of Administration of the Ministry of the province shows that most of these teachers work on average 30 hours a week distributed among several institutions. The youngest generations tend to work more weekly hours on average while those nearest to retiring age, due to salary incentives, work fewer hours and tend to concentrate their teaching in fewer institutions. Though there is one fourth of the population who restrict their teaching scope to primary or secondary education, approximately 75% work in both levels of compulsory schooling. Also, qualitative information derived from interviews with teachers reported by the Programme of Plurilingual Education of the Province shows

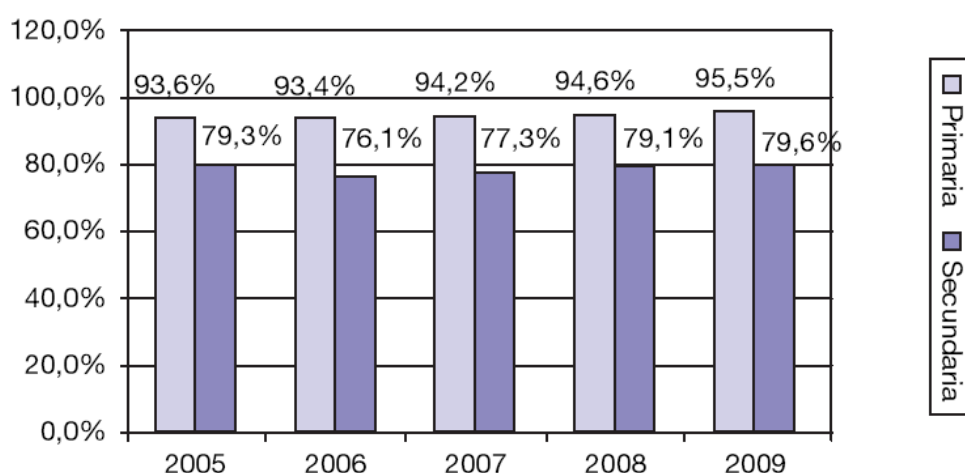
that most of these teachers also work in the private sector, and in universities. This shows that ESOL teachers in the Province of Buenos Aires develop a comprehensive teaching experience by working in diverse formal schooling contexts and they tend to focus on a specific context by the end of their careers.

Statistical information provided by the Ministry of Education shows that by 2011 on average, 80% of the ESOL teachers in service in the Province of Buenos Aires were graduate teachers. Approximately, 15 % of the ESOL practitioners were students of an ESOL Higher Education Institution and only 5% were teachers of some other subject with a sound knowledge of English, who were teaching English in institutions with a low coverage due to lack of ESOL graduate teachers (e.g. rural contexts). This distribution of teachers varies from district to district and from region to region.

2.2. A picture of the system: diverse trajectories and signs of alarm.

The 2009 census provides quantitative data of relevance to understand the educational situation of the province and picture the most serious problems that seem to tackle educational policies in a period of seven years. The study shows that throughout compulsory schooling, most of the problems affecting the satisfaction of the right to education are to be found in secondary education, with a high dropout rate and a set of other related problems affecting the welfare of youngsters. Unlike the primary level, with coverage, permanence and promotion rates amounting to 95.5%, secondary education remains a vulnerable educational level in the system, with a 79 % of permanence and coverage as shown in table 3.

Table 3: Rate of promotion according to educational level in the province. Historical data period 2005-2009.

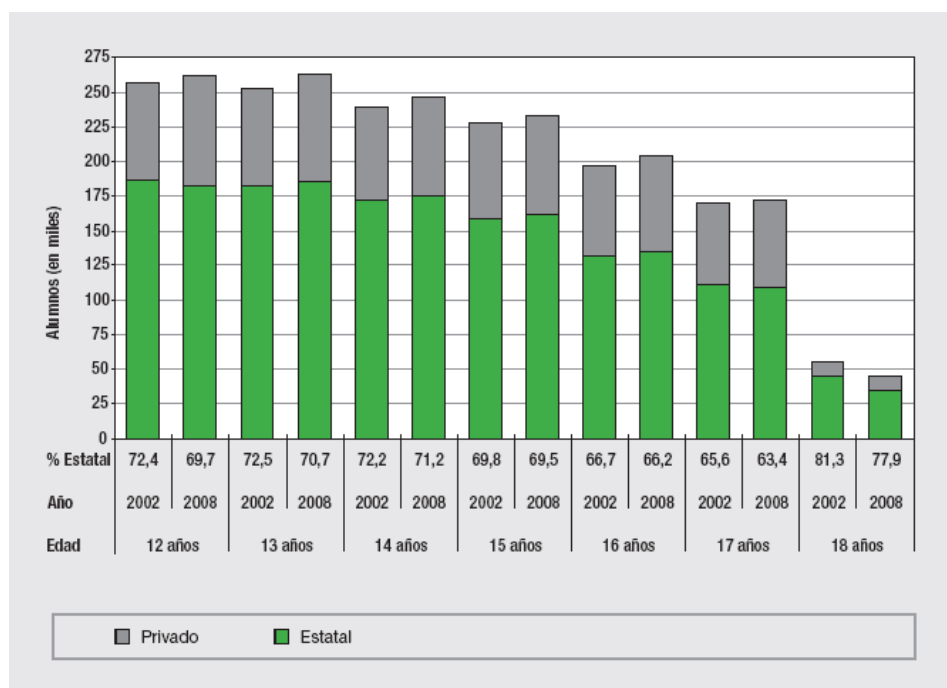


Source: Research 2005-2009. Information and Statistics Branch- Office of Educational Planning.

Secondary Education proves to be a critical area as well as the main focus of educational policies of knowledge. It has been subject to most of the policies developed in the last years, with specific projects designed to address the needs assessed. Also, further statistical information has been derived since great many research projects have been carried out by ministerial branches to measure the impact of those projects and policies in the level.

The information derived from those research projects provides a detailed picture of the main problems found. In the first place, comparative studies within age groups in secondary education developed by the Office of Educational Planning and Census of the Ministry show that most of the dropouts occur in the last three years of compulsory schooling. A 2002 – 2008 study warns about a dramatic fall between the ages 16-18, the schooling years in which students attend the discipline oriented cycle of three years (see table 4). These last three years of compulsory secondary education aim at helping students focus on areas of personal interest for future work and study purposes (social studies, natural sciences, foreign languages, art, physical education, economy and production and communication). A fall in the oriented cycle intake can have serious long term consequences in the life choices of youngsters and impacts seriously on their chances to find formal employment (Jacinto, 2010). Above all, it shows our system of education fails to give younger generations the chance to choose, which is in fact the empowering capacity of education, as expressed in the legal framework of the curricular policy where it reads: “Young people of the province need to have a formative process that allows them to know, problematise and deepen knowledge to take future decisions on the continuity of their studies and their insertion in the productive World”(*Marco General de la Política Curricular*, 2006: 12).

Table 4: Students between ages 12 and 18 in Primary and Secondary Mainstream education by age and sector (state-private) years 2002 – 2008.

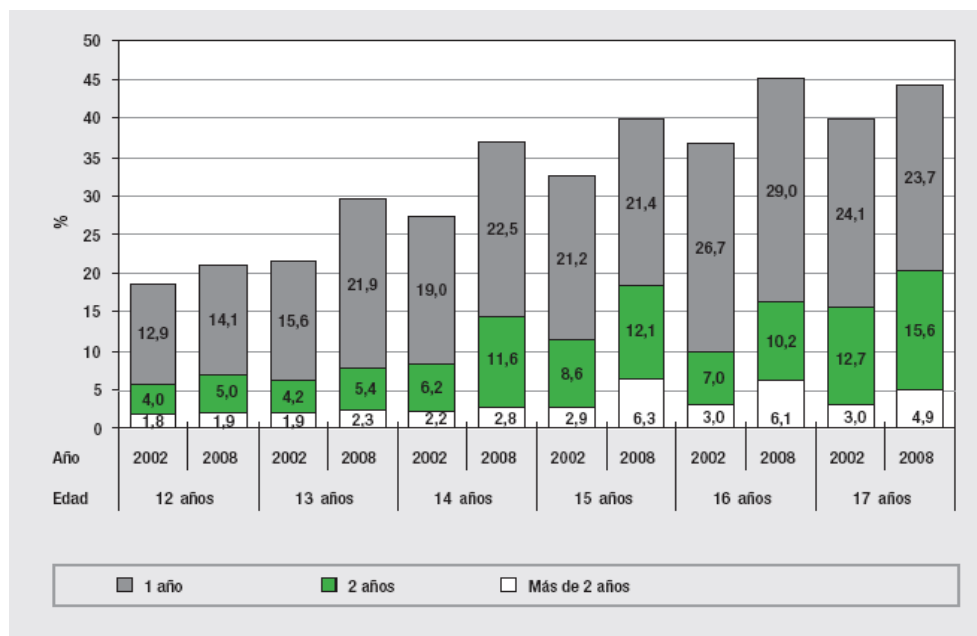


Grey: Private Green: State

Source: Annual research 2002 and 2008. Office of Educational Research.

Census data show there is a high percentage of students who, after dropping out, return to school and are overage in their school groups. Table 5 shows a dramatic percentage in the last years of schooling and reveals that this is a tendency going on the increase throughout the 6 years of compulsory secondary schooling. These numbers also present in black and white classroom realities if we think that on average, out of 10 students in public secondary schools, 5 have dropped out at some point in their school trajectory and are overage in their class. This problem becomes cyclical if we consider that those students who are overage are the ones who will eventually become dropouts, that is, they will leave school without having finished their formal schooling.

Table 5: Students between ages 12 and 17 in Mainstream Primary and Secondary Education by age and number of years of school delay. Province of Buenos Aires years 2002 and 2008 including both sectors in percentage (State and Private).



Grey: 1 year Green: 2 years White: More than 2 years

Source: Annual research 2002 and 2008. Office of Educational Research.

Among the reasons that can be traced in high dropout rates, ministerial studies report both an adverse educational home climate¹ and background contexts of social vulnerability² as the main reasons. The data show there is also a correlation between vulnerable contexts and adverse educational home climates: the more vulnerable the context, the more adverse the educational home climate seems to be. This also needs to be triangulated with the data provided by the census on the number of youngsters who work. The census shows that 1 person in 5 people aged 16-18 are not attending school, some of them work, others do not work or study. The number of youngsters who work and study has increased dramatically as from 2002 in all social sectors affecting in particular those with an adverse educational home background.

¹ Educational home climate is a research indicator of the average schooling years and level of studies reached by the total number of people aged 25 or more living in the home.

² Social vulnerability is a research indicator of people at risk in studied populations. It is constituted by five components considered of risk: illiteracy, malnutrition, poverty, death of children and ethnicity.

The data from this study correlate with other studies that show that the Province of Buenos Aires has a high percentage of homes with unsatisfied basic needs (UBN)³, 13 %. Out of 3,921,455 families, 508,671 families have incomes below the level of poverty. As expected, those districts comprised in the metropolitan area ("Conurbano Bonaerense") have the highest percentages on average, 14.5%, which is sensibly higher than the outback of the province with 10.5%. This fact compels many young people to search for work opportunities to help in the home or drop out to take care of younger siblings. Also, unsatisfied basic needs prevent many youngsters from attending classes on a steady basis. Such intermittent but constant absenteeism makes pedagogic strategies more complex to devise and implement. Student learning becomes non systematic and learning trajectories end up being precarious and limited.

This educational situation among youngsters has challenged educational authorities to think of projects to help dropout, overage and working teens to finish their studies to guarantee their rights to secondary education. Among the projects developed for this purpose, "*Plan FinEs*" with a National Funding and COAs (*Centros de Orientación y Apoyo – Centres for Support and Orientation*) with provincial funding were created and applied in the Province of Buenos Aires to find alternatives to mainstream schooling to compensate for educational delays, finish formal schooling and aid youth insertion in the labour market (see Appendix 2 for a description of the projects).

These projects are showing that "real" school trajectories in educational institutions confront the "theoretical ones" (Terigi, 2007) which have historically been based on an organisation by levels, with a gradual curriculum and instruction divided in schooling years in which students are the same age. As Terigi explains (Ibid: 17) real trajectories challenge educational policies not only to generate institutional conditions to respond to overage, absenteeism and dropout, but also to develop didactic knowledge to address the teaching and learning conditions present in these diverse and flexible trajectories without compromising learning (Terigi, 2010).

³ Unsatisfied Basic Needs measurements in the developing world, carried out by the UN, are used in Latin America to analyse poverty indicators in different regions and are sources of reference for local governments when devising policies. These indicators are developed using the following categories: type of housing and type of housing construction, number of people per square metre, running water availability, sanitation services availability, school attendance of people under 18 and economic capacity (salary) (Feres and Mancedo, 2001)

2.3. Contradictions between policy and practice: some evidence of failure in educational change.

In spite of the legal framework developed, the strong investment done and the pedagogic paradigm conveyed through materials and learning provisions, we are unsuccessful. That is what national and international research reports are showing about our national system of education, the province of Buenos Aires representing almost half of that system. Research is painfully describing a gap between what we think we are doing and what we are actually doing in terms of social justice and participation. If we take, for example, the level of education that has been the focus of most of the latest governmental policies, Secondary Education, it is possible to point out appalling evidence of profound social inequities that are being reproduced in our schools.

The first shocking fact is the apparent democratization of secondary education and low quality student learning even though there is an expansion of formal schooling. In their study on inclusion and social justice in secondary education, Romero, Krichesky and Zacarías (2012: 99) report that in Argentina 700 thousand teenagers do not attend school at all (total exclusion). Of those who do attend school, 50% drop out at some point before ending their studies (early exclusion) and the remaining 50% finish secondary school but reflect poor levels of learning attainment according to international and national tests (exclusion due to inclusion with no quality). As the authors point out, there is a dramatic dispersion of results, being the most vulnerable children the ones who profit less from educational provisions.

These statistics provoke scandalous reactions at political and administrative levels as much as the reports of international assessment agencies carried out in our schools. PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) assessment 2009 showed that in Argentina our 15 year-olds perform significantly below the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) average in all assessed fields. Also, 50% of the youths assessed reflect difficulty to understand a simple text, one which conveys referential information. In a world which expects a critical appraisal of communicative resources to understand and create meanings using multiple modes, as explained before in this chapter, half of our Argentinian youths are considered to be illiterate up to present day standards.

Policies are clear in that the challenge faced by teachers today is to help students become literate in specific compulsory schooling. As clear, or so we think, as the policies which explain the ways ESOL should take place in schools by means of social interactionist practices (Swain et al, 2011; García, 2010) that help students use and make English their own in the process of learning, to be able to operate with it beyond the classroom context (Janks, 2010; Brice Heath, 2007). Yet, we are faced with research reports that show a shameful truth of our present ESOL educational reality. As Beacon informs “in some contexts, teachers are successfully working towards intercultural awareness but in some others, teachers still advocate blindly to a linguistic approach to the teaching of a foreign language, in which cultures are taught in a fossilized and essentialist way, and are unable to see the need to help children develop intercultural awareness”(Beacon, 2013: 5). The consequent low motivation of students reported by Gandolfo (2008) and the inadequate teaching practices leading to poor student learning and teacher frustration noted by Mastache (2011) are just some examples of the ways in which a contradiction is revealed between policies and politics, discourse and action.

2.4. My research questions

The set of contradictions described in the previous section represent the guiding path of my inquiry as an ESOL professional in the Province of Buenos Aires, Argentina, for a number of reasons. Firstly, as a professional with strong beliefs on the emancipatory nature of education I want to comprehend more deeply what is taking place, that is, the nature of those contradictions, so as to contribute to generate change from my field of work. At theoretical levels, Argentina seems to be in a groundbreaking moment in educational terms with a strong investment in education. Also, the ideological framework of educational innovation is coherent with a wider ideological scheme intended to support novel notions of development at national and regional levels. However, research evidence is showing that this ideological drive is failing to go beyond the utopist dream, it is unveiling little empirical change in the contexts of application. This concern is what shapes my first research question. I intend to find out what the actual politics of knowledge is if we define politics as those practices and institutions that establish or create knowledge and how knowledge is defined. I want to find out how policies of knowledge are enacted, that is, interpreted and conveyed through actual practices in an attempt to unveil with an empirical basis the nature of the contradictions that I have described in previous sections resulting from educational change implementation.

The second reason why this contradiction between ideas and praxis is guiding my inquiry is connected to my ESOL background and my present professional role as Head of the Programme of Plurilingual Education in the Province of Buenos Aires. ESOL professional activity in Argentina has been subjected to deep changes lately, guided both by international ideas as well as by the impact of national and regional perspectives (Barboni, 2012; Porto and Barboni, 2013). In this process of adopting international ideas and developing local versions of international trends, ESOL teacher identities, as agents of the state within a literacy project, have been subject to educational change. I want to inquire how ESOL teacher identities have evolved and changed in the light of the ideological changes introduced in the Province of Buenos Aires, my own context of work, which is, I believe, representative of other Latin American systems of education. Both the nature of the ideological change in ESOL education introduced by the policies developed and the empirical evidence rooted in contexts of application have shaped the second research question of this thesis. I believe the evidence gathered to address this question can shed light on what might be happening in other fields of knowledge under the same contextual circumstances, not simply in ESOL education.

My research questions (which are, as will be evident, multifaceted) will then be centred round these two main concerns and will be the following:

- **What is the politics of knowledge in the present political context of the province of Buenos Aires?** What ideas drive educational change in Argentina as part of a regional policy of knowledge in Latin America? How do these ideas morph in specific contexts of application? How is knowledge defined and understood? As agents of the state in knowledge policies, what are teachers' attitudes towards inquiry and reflection in the present political context?
- **How does ESOL teacher identity as an agent of the state evolve and change in a political context that places teacher enquiry and reflection at the foreground of school innovation in the province of Buenos Aires?** What international ideas of ESOL education are adopted and adapted within such policy in the Province of Buenos Aires? To what extent are innovative ESOL ideas developed in educational institutions of the Province of Buenos Aires? How do they embrace new ESOL ideas as exponents of a specific political agenda? How do they understand and transform school cultures in the

institutions where they work? How do their ESOL identities evolve in terms of ethical commitment to professional activity?

The next chapters of this thesis will be devoted to presenting the reader with a detailed report of the research process and its findings in response to the above research questions.

Chapter 3: The research approach adopted for the study

This chapter intends to explain the methodological design I used to carry out my research project. This design stems from the research questions and purposes I presented in Chapter 2 and my conceptual framework as presented in Chapter 1. I will start by describing the epistemological background supporting the project and I will refer to the ethical considerations that were taken into account during the study as an example of insider research. Then, I will refer to the methods of data collection I selected for this study and the sampling strategies I devised. I will also refer to my reasons for those decisions considering why they seemed to be the best in the context of this study. To conclude, I will describe how sampling and data collection were carried out and how data processing was done.

3.1. Epistemological background

This thesis follows an interpretive epistemological approach (Robson, 1993) based on an understanding of human activity as complex, meaningful and context bound. From this standpoint, I acknowledge that this requires viewing social phenomena, as educational issues are, in the light of the settings where they take place, considering that the inquiry requires the researcher to “identify how people’s experiences and behaviour are shaped by the context of their lives, such as the social, economic, cultural or physical context in which they live” (Hennink et al, 2011: 9).

This research project is grounded in social constructionism, a research epistemology that recognises meaning “is constructed by human beings as they interact and engage in interpretation” (Robson, 2012: 24). This is why, as a researcher I intend to “begin with individuals and set out to understand their interpretations of the world around them” (Cohen et al, 2007: 22) acknowledging the subjectivity implicit in this position both in the research participants and in myself as a researcher. As Hennink et al (2011: 19) rightly point out, in interpretive research “study participants reflect their subjective views of their social world” and “researchers also bring their subjective influences to the research process, particularly during data collection and interpretation”.

It is important to consider that the research questions mentioned in chapter 2 were addressed in this research design by considering the research objectives, the conceptual framework developed, the methods of data collection used and the sampling strategy developed in interrelated ways (Robson, 2011) after an intense

process of reflection and analysis. This initial process of decision making is what Hennink et al (2011) call "the design cycle". I firstly analysed the ways in which my research would add up to existing theory and I mapped out the main concepts that I intended to study from a social constructionism perspective. This process of design reflection helped me refine the research questions and also facilitated the interpretive process involved in this thesis.

Gibson and Brown (2009: 53) rightly point out: "research questions provide a focus for the development of research plans". This means that they provide the researcher with a sense of the type of data required to answer and the ways the data can be gathered to find answers to the research questions always bearing in mind the purpose of the researcher and the field of knowledge one is working in. In this particular case, I reflected extensively on the ways research methods would make sure I gathered/generated relevant data for the questions posed and the selections of methods and sampling used- which are described in section 3.3.- account for such a process of decision making.

Another related aspect to consider is the qualitative cross-sectional nature of this research, which involves processes of description, analysis and interpretation in interrelated ways (Gibson and Brown, 2009). Therefore, providing a description of what informants say and do is concerned with "creat[ing] a narrative that presents the original data in a motivated way" (Ibid: 5) to then go beyond descriptions into an account of factors and relationships among them to finally "give sense to the data by creatively producing insights about it" (Ibid:5). I hold the idea that informants' actions and discourses are intrinsically meaningful -as all social phenomena are (Sayer, 2000)- and are based on and result from mechanisms that operate in particular ways in specific contexts (Ibid). The role of the qualitative researcher is to construct a contextualised analysis reflexively, bearing in mind that there might be different perspectives on the same phenomenon.

3.2. Ethical considerations

This thesis is an example of insider research. I used my position as Head of the Programme of Plurilingual Education to address the people involved in the sample groups. In order to avoid the ethical problems that might arise from such research I took special care to obtain the informed consent of the participants as will be detailed in

the next sections of this chapter. In all cases I provided clear information on what the research was about by explaining the topic of my thesis. In all cases I referred to the terms and conditions of this research making clear that this project was not part of my job but a research project for my doctoral thesis and that they could withdraw from the project or refuse to participate in it at any moment during the process. I requested written consent to carry out the interviews with teachers by email and I requested oral consent with the sample of teachers, head teachers and policy makers before starting the interviews. This oral informed consent was recorded at the beginning of the interviews and their carrying out the interviews reflects such consent.

In the case of students observed in the lessons, informed consent was provided by school authorities, teachers and the Head of Institutional Management of Secondary Education of the Province of Buenos Aires who provided me with a written letter authorizing me to observe classes. No authorization was necessary from parents since students were not recorded or videotaped.

I also explained to all participants that their identities would remain anonymous and I informed them that the data gathered would only be used for the research purposes of this project. This was highly relevant in particular with the group of policy makers involved due to the public domain of their role. I was aware of the fact that confidentiality was an important issue since they might restrict the responses given in the interview unless they were confident about the way their identities would be preserved and the research results disseminated. I also made clear that they would be able to read the final report of the results and they would have the chance to decide whether their contributions be included or not. I sent a copy of the draft thesis report to them all before submitting the final version. Nobody felt at risk since most of them responded positively to my research project and some of them excused themselves from reading it on behalf of their trust towards me and/or for their limitations reading English. In the latter cases they all accepted my submission of the final report.

Anonymity was guaranteed by coding the informants, the schools and the students. Schools were coded with numbers from 1 to 7. School documents were coded SD plus the number assigned to the school (eg. SD1, SD2) while classroom observations were coded COS plus the number (eg. COS1, COS2). For the interviewees, nomenclatures PM (for policy maker), HT (for head teacher) and T (for teachers) were used. In all cases the numbers of their schools were assigned to each of the sample HT and T. In the data recorded in observation field notes, students were identified as S1, S2, etc. At

times, their names remained recorded in the records but not their surnames, making it impossible to identify them.

During the project I was confronted with some ethical dilemmas concerning namely questions of confidentiality and role conflict. As regards the first dilemma, it was during interviews that there were a set of "off air" comments of particular interest to me as a researcher. These comments were generally made through accidental disclosures after the interviews were carried out and were in most cases the kind of comments that informants felt would place them at risk in their work environments if made public.

These were topics of a controversial nature. I understand that their disclosures were considered by them as part of interpersonal exchanges with me as a fellow colleague in the educational field and not as the researcher. This was the case with comments on political trends and ideological indoctrination in student unions in secondary schools, for example, which revealed to be a highly sensitive issue for most teachers and head teachers. I decided to keep these confidential and not use them as part of the data. In consequence, these were not included in the data even though some of them were of interest for the research purposes of this thesis.

Being myself a ministerial officer and a teacher educator I found myself in a role conflict dilemma during classroom observations. This was the case with two of the classes observed in which serious pedagogic deficiencies were observed. I found myself wondering whether an intervention, that needed to be made in the context of observation to stop serious discipline misbehaviour, for example, would interfere with the non participant observation that I was carrying out as a researcher. In those cases I painfully remained silent until all the data were gathered and then contacted the teacher and school supervisor to find out appropriate strategies for the problems encountered with a constructive and supportive attitude rather than a punitive one. I believe this was the most appropriate decision considering the context of this research and the implications of the problems found which can place at risk students and seriously hinder learning.

3.3. Methods of data collection used.

This project is a multiple-methods one since it will gather information using "experiencing, enquiring and examining" (Wollcot, 1994) methods by resorting to classroom observations, interviews and school documents respectively. There are a

number of reasons why these methods were used in this study. Firstly, the use of these three methods, belonging to different forms of data collection can help provide richer descriptions for the analysis and interpretation stages (Gibson and Brown, 2009) in the light of the research questions. As explicated in chapter 2, research questions are multifaceted and require analysing in depth certain notions that contain different shades of meaning in the light of the theoretical and contextual background of this thesis. These different shades of meaning can only be derived from data gathered and generated from different sources which help provide complimentary meanings. For example, a full description of the notion of teacher identity in response to research question 2 (see chapter 2) can be better attained if descriptions come from what different interviewees say, what school documents show and what classroom situations reveal, in complimentary ways, of how teacher identities are conceived and effected in actual contexts of work. Secondly, using multiple sources helps triangulate information more effectively, in particular, when gaps in knowledge are being addressed or when the researcher wants to examine, for example, the relationship between how people record their practices in documents with the way they talk about them and the way they perform them (Gibson and Brown, 2009: 59) to reach more reliable conclusions during data analysis. Also, as the research problem of this study is of a complex nature, I believe having multiple perspectives of the same issues from different sources and in different formats can help derive more complex understandings of the studied problems for the sake of trustworthiness.

Collecting data from multiple sources can help avoid some of the threats against validity that are commonly found in qualitative research. As Robson (2011: 156-157) points out, one of the main threats against validity is when description is based on incomplete or inaccurate data and when interpretation is reached by imposing a framework or meaning. A more comprehensive collection of data can help generate better accomplished descriptions and reach wider and richer interpretations.

The prolonged involvement of myself, the researcher, with this project can generate what has been called researcher bias. To maintain an objective and rigorous position I decided to include the data triangulation strategy proposed through the use of multiple methods of data collection. Also, I carried out member checking with classroom observations. I sent the transcripts of the observations to the participant teachers for them to acknowledge whether the description provided in the observation record was faithful to what had actually taken place in the class. As with interviews, I facilitated the transcripts and recordings of the interviews to two university students who listened to

the interviews while reading the transcripts to make sure the transcriptions were faithful to the recordings. Since some of the interviews were translated from Spanish into English, a colleague translator double checked the reliability of the translations I made. Finally, the invaluable support and questioning of my supervisor helped me keep an attentive attitude towards dangerous generalisations and guided my thinking towards more elaborate understandings.

3.3.1 Interviews

I devised semi structured interviews to gather data from three sample groups: five politicians involved in policy development at the ministry of education, seven teachers participating in INSET programmes in the province of Buenos Aires and their respective head teachers. A semi structured interview can be defined as one in which “interviewers ask a list of questions, but these can be asked in a flexible order and with a wording that is contextually appropriate” (Gibson and Brown, 2009: 86-87).

The choice of face to face semi structured interviews as a data collection tool was based on the need to understand the meaning educational agents assign to their “lived experiences” (Seidman, 2010: 9) in educational institutions from a diversity of roles. Though other methods could have been used exclusively, such as classroom diaries, school documents, policy documents or classroom observations alone, the research questions of this thesis drive us to search for the meaning educators attribute to their experiences in the system enacting different roles to be able to derive relevant general conclusions considering multiple perspectives as well as “voicing” participants in this piece of research. Interviews allow for an interest in the stories of others and help the researcher understand more deeply not simply the meaning people attribute to their experience but also how those meanings affect the way they carry out their experiences (Blumer, 1969 in Seidman, 2006: 10). Because of the co-constructed nature of interview data, interviews were considered of particular relevance to gather the data that would respond to subjective aspects of the research questions and which would not be possible to address through other methods. Interviews help researchers work through the ideas with participants as they are gathering the data (Gibson and Brown, 2009).

Also, interviews provide a richness of possibilities while maintaining a focus on the main themes to be researched on. On the one hand, unlike structured and open interviews, semi structured interviews allow for a flexible schedule that respects a natural flow of ideas in conversation and generates a more fertile soil for research by

allowing a climate of disclosure between interviewer and interviewee. In addition, being the mode of the interviews face to face, a closer rapport with the interviewee could be established, that is, one that creates a harmonious atmosphere to disclose personal understandings on the topics (Seidman, 2006: 96). On the other hand, semi structured interviews help maintain the researchers' interests in mind while helping elicit relevant data and analytically adapting to unfolding topics -which might have not been predetermined but the researcher and which might result of interest for the research project (Ibid: 88-89).

Even though teachers are the main policy enacting agents, there are several reasons that justify my choice of head teachers and politicians as interview respondents besides teachers. On the one hand, head teachers are viewed as key agents in educational reform and school leadership. They are responsible for mentoring the institutional architecture and capacity building of the communities of practice of schools they lead (Fullan, 2009; Timperley, 2011) as described in chapter 1. In addition, they tend to have a direct incidence in the construction of either expansive or restrictive work environments (Fuller and Unwin, 2003) which enhance or constrain teacher agency and educational change as well as teacher identity development in times of new educational policies. On the other hand, politicians are important to show the political ethos of educational reform affecting teacher daily practice and professional learning through the direct incidence they have on the macro-structures of teaching described in chapter 1. They can give details on the ideological frame of the politics of knowledge in the Province of Buenos Aires as studied in the first research question. Also, the data gathered from them can help understand the tensions and relations between the voice of authority and "a pedagogy of voice" (Durrant and Holden, 2006: 90) as covered in the second research question of this thesis.

The interviews were devised following the format of an interview guide as shown in Appendix 4, focusing on key concepts that were operationalised from the research questions and the supporting bibliography of this study. These key concepts were organised into six thematic areas: the educational agenda, notions of knowledge in relation to development, literacy and ESOL, institutional contexts, the role of teachers and teacher education and perspectives of the future. Open questions were devised as well as some sets of topical probes to facilitate elicitation of relevant data during the interaction and to help the researcher focus on important areas of the theoretical background of the study. A specific difficulty was found during the design of the interviews because of the diversity of roles of the respondents and the task of framing

the questions “so that the interviewees can orientate their answers towards those concerns but without excluding other areas of discourse” (Gibson and Brown, 2009: 97).

Therefore, once devised, the interviews were piloted with a colleague policy maker and two colleague friends who hold positions as secondary school teacher and secondary school head teacher. The pilot testing was a very positive strategy to improve the formulation of the interview guide and helped me assess whether the interview helped me generate the data required for the research questions. It helped reformulate some of the open and probe questions, terminology was simplified in some cases to make it more accessible and less technical, some question sets were re ordered and some questions were removed and replaced by others to avoid guiding answers or closing up discourse.

3.3.2. Classroom observations

Data were also gathered using unstructured classroom observations of the seven sample teachers interviewed. An unstructured observation can be defined as one in which the researcher does not follow a pre specified observation schedule but works “in a more iterative fashion to find out about a particular setting or set of practices” (Gibson and Brown, 2009: 101). Although all observations contain some form of structure since they are oriented to some kind of research interest, the peculiarity of this observational approach is that data were derived in the process of observation while the researcher is trying to understand what is happening and why and the relationship between what is being observed and the research questions. In this particular case, observations were non-participant, since the researcher is expected to be a passive and known observer but not a participant in the activities of the class.

This approach in observation was considered particularly useful for different reasons. The first one is the lack of previous research data available on actual practices in English secondary school classes of the Province of Buenos Aires making it impossible to derive a set of pre specified observational schedule items of relevance for the research purpose of this work. Though there are a few seminal research studies detailing ESOL classroom practices in Buenos Aires (Gandolfo, 2008; Mastache, 2011), they are insufficient to help systematise observational categories in the contextual diversity of the province. The second one is the need to select an approach to observation that can allow for an unfolding construction of data through observation and reflection in terms of the relevance of the observed behaviours for the project.

Classroom activity is immensely rich and contains a varied set of classroom behaviours, apparently non-connected. Unstructured classroom observation can help construct a comprehensive description and interpretation of the observed behaviours. After all, “data work is an absolutely integrated feature of data generation” (Gibson and Brown, 2009: 103) in observations, since researchers are generating data through their recorded field notes.

The type of analytic work required in observations comprises recording data in field notes by doing data analysis in the context of observation. For this reason, my main concern during observations was to provide enough descriptive detail of key structural aspects of the classes as expected for an English class, problems that might arise, aspects that might be unintelligible to the researcher and unexpected behaviour. To do so, I decided on a twofold strategy. On the one hand, I chose to provide as many relevant examples in the records as the flow of the lesson would allow. I did so by copying interactional exchanges of the classes, for instance, or by providing rich descriptions of people, settings and events. On the other hand, I kept at hand an analysis sheet during the observation and after it. The analysis sheet consisted of four key questions that would help me focus on relevant topics of my research questions. These three questions were: a) What are the particular settings/practices/ educational actors that are being observed like? b) The data I am gathering, how do they correlate to my research questions? C) What are the strengths and limitations of the data gathered? D) How do data relate to/complement with the information gathered through the interviews?

This recording strategy helped me topically focus during observations as a researcher. Although I hold extensive experience in classroom observation due to my mentoring position in the university I work for, I tried to restrict my observational skills to those relevant for my research purpose.

3.3.3. School documents

I used school documents, namely annual class plans, given to me by the teachers participating in this study with the consent of the head teacher. Annual class plans can be described as institutional documents which schools use in the Province of Buenos Aires to show curriculum progression explicitly for a specific group of students in specific contextual and institutional settings. It is important to note that annual plans are primary data written down by teachers and institutionally supervised by head teachers to respond to the policies developed by policy makers. These prospective registers are

often used as accountability documents and represent the curriculum as plan. The fact that annual class plans are shared by teachers and head teachers and usually made public to other ministerial officers makes them a relevant source for the researcher. The reason for that is that they inform about the consented curricular practices that take place in specific classrooms as exponents of the prescribed policies.

There are two main reasons why ESOL annual plans were chosen as a documentary source method. The first one relates to my triangulation purposes for the sake of research validity in this project. Annual class plans are pre existing documents in educational institutions. In consequence, they need to be used by the researcher as an analytically filtered source of data since "the documents as *data* are produced through the practices being researched, rather than in order to answer a research question" (Gibson and Brown, 2009: 66). This is particularly significant to help cross validate data produced in analytically focused ways (such as interviews), that is, produced to generate research data for the research questions posed by this study.

In addition, annual class plans are records of how the three groups of research participants in this study systematically interact in writing through time. This can help the researcher understand the ways in which teachers and head teachers in the studied institutions share understandings of the set of educational practices carried out in ESOL classrooms under the prescribed curricular policies. The fact that these documents are a source of a shared insight among school agents also becomes relevant to the research questions in that it shows how institutions record their educational practices and make them available to other educational agents during periods of educational innovation, thus revealing how changes are adopted, adapted or even rejected in specific institutional contexts.

3.4. Sampling Strategy.

3.4.1 Sampling teachers and head teachers.

The sampling strategy used with teachers and head teachers was purposeful and followed a maximum variation sampling approach. Such sampling aimed at showing a "range of people and sites from which the sample is selected" (Seidman, 2006: 52) to be fair to the larger population the sample belongs to.

The first decision was to select the sample from educational region 1 (La Plata and surrounding districts – see map in chapter 1) since it is representative of the provincial system of education. There are three main reasons for this representativeness: variety of teacher education institutions and provisions, variety of institutional profiles and diversity of school populations. Firstly, La Plata is the third biggest educational region in the province and has four Initial teacher education institutions with different ITE provisions (university, tertiary, private/ public) catering for a range of teaching profiles and being representative of the academic cultures of the province. Secondly, La Plata has a diversity of urban/semi rural/rural institutions with school populations containing a mix of ethnic and social backgrounds. Finally, the region has hundreds of primary and secondary educational services with differing institutional sizes and intakes.

The sample group consisted of seven teachers and the head teachers of the main institution where these teachers work in terms of teaching hours. The sampling strategy considered the following aspects: variety of educational backgrounds, teaching experience/ school management experience (for teachers and head teachers respectively), urban/rural context, age range, gender, private/public institutions, location of the institution. All selected teachers and head teachers have attended compulsory professional development sessions provided by the ministry of education. The tables 6, 7 and 8 below show the sampling carried out which considers schools, teachers and head teachers.

Table 6: Sample schools

	Condition	Private/ State	Enrolment	Socio- economic background students	N ^o levels	N ^o courses per level	N ^o students in observed course
School 1	Urban	State	900	Working middle class	6	3/4	21 out of 23
School 2	Urban	State	500	vulnerable & working lower class	6	3/4	16 out of 25
School	Rural	State	120	vulnerable	3	1 /2	18 out of

3				& working lower class			23
School 4	Semi urban	State	60	vulnerable & working lower class	3	1	12 out of 17
School 5	Urban	Private	700	Working middle class	6	2	26 out of 31
School 6	Urban	Private	78	upper middle class	6	1	5 out of 6
School 7	Semi urban	State	300	vulnerable & working lower class	6	2	17 out of 25

Table 7: Sample Teachers

	Age	Gender	Graduate from	Years of working experience	Time in this position	Academic background
School 1	35	Male	Tertiary	7	4 years	INSET courses
School 2	46	Female	University	24	10 years	INSET courses
School 3	47	Male	University	22	15 years	Postgraduate studies
School 4	27	Female	State Higher Education	4	2 years	In service teacher education
School 5	50	Female	Private Higher Education	20	12 years	In service teacher education

School 6	39	Male	University	17	4 years	In service teacher education
School 7	41	Female	State Higher Education	15	8 years	In service teacher education

Table 8: Sample Head Teachers

	Age	Gender	Graduate from	Years of management experience	Time in this position	Academic background
School 1	49	Female	Higher Education	8	8	Postgraduate studies
School 2	56	Male	University	14	3	In service teacher education
School 3	50	Female	Higher Education	7	10	In service teacher education
School 4	47	Female	University	4	2	Postgraduate studies
School 5	41	Female	University	1	1	In service teacher education
School 6	48	Male	University	6	2	Postgraduate studies
School 7	53	Female	Higher Education	12	8	In service education

3.4.2. Sampling policy makers

With policy makers I interviewed four key government officers in central policy making positions with the power to direct educational innovation. In this particular case, the sample was developed considering the strategic data that could be drawn for my research purpose. In all cases the sample consisted of government officers who have

participated actively in the policy making process and who were in power positions to lead policy changes. The sample policy maker group was composed of: Policy Maker 1 –PM1- (Leading curricular design officer of the provincial system), Policy Maker 2 - PM2- (Head of Continuous Teacher Education Department), Policy Maker 3 –PM3- (Head of the Initial Teacher Education Department) and Policy Maker 4 – PM4- (Curriculum design and development officer for primary and secondary education). The sample represents a variety of profiles in terms of academic and political trajectories and accounts for the leading ministerial staff involved in the policies design and development of the last seven years in the province. All four have been involved in devising the ideological skeleton of educational innovation strategies in formal schooling levels both working with policies for teachers and students. Two of them are members of the leading political party as well as being academic staff of the ministry while two of them do not hold any liaison with the governing political party. In all cases, they hold solid academic trajectories and have teaching experience at several Universities of the Province of Buenos Aires.

3.5. Data collection strategies.

The process of data collection required a comprehensive process of reflexivity on my part as a researcher in the two main dimensions of reflexivity as described by Hennink et al (2011: 20), personal and interpersonal. Since I hold a position of power in my role as Head of the Programme of Plurilingual Education, all the research participants know me from the work context, either because they work with me as colleagues at the ministry or because they have attended mentoring sessions with me (as students in ITE or as colleague teachers in INSET *Aulas Abiertas*) or because they have attended my lectures or heard speeches in ministerial institutional settings (as heads of schools). For this I took special care to make explicit in different ways that this project is not part of my work at the Programme of Plurilingual Education but part of my doctoral studies. At a personal level, I took care not to disclose my assumptions and ideas when collecting the data, restricting myself to asking questions and recasting participants' answers when these were not clear enough. This, I reckon, has its limitations since people who know me from the work environment know what my pedagogic perspective is. However, some of the areas covered in the interviews, for example, are not part of my daily milieu at work since my work deals namely with the teaching of languages specifically and with technical issues related to the field of ESOL methodology.

As regards the interviews I carried out with ministry officers, I went in person to their offices and asked them informally if they would mind me interviewing them for my doctoral research. I hold a fluid relationship with most of my colleagues in the Ministry which anticipated they would accept to be interviewed although I am fully aware of the time constraints most of them are subject to, in particular, in times of political turmoil - as 2012 turned out to be due to financial constraints in the Ministry and a set of related political problems. All of them agreed to have a scheduled interview and kindly accepted at once. I believe their knowing me from work made the contact much easier, I understand they trusted me, above all. I believe this would not have been the case with a different interviewer. In all cases I explained what the research was about, I advanced the topic areas that I was going to ask about and I also explained the anonymity conditions of the interview. The interviews took place in the officers' offices round their desk. All the interviews started with a personal chat on our daily chores at work to break the ice before the interview itself, being this an uncommon situation for most of them. Strikingly enough, most of them had never before been interviewed by researchers. The in-depth interviews lasted between 30 to 40 minutes.

In schools I took special care with the way I dressed, and the way I approached the participants. In all cases I wore plain clothes following dressing norms of etiquette in schools and I followed the expected protocol when a stranger needs access to school for research purposes. I first asked the teacher via my personal email if he/she would mind participating in the project, I briefly explained the purpose of the research, what the data collection process involved and the ethical considerations taken into account for the study (see Appendix 5 with the text of the first email I sent to them)

This way of approaching teachers was culturally the best strategy to avoid coercion of any type. If they did not want to participate they would simply not answer the email or write back providing an excuse without losing face. I also expected that this personal email approach was respectful enough of their time –most of them work long hours and do not want to be disturbed by inconvenient phone calls- and would also be welcome by most of them as a recognition of their work by showing my interest in them and their schools as research participants. Culturally, it is well viewed to be part of educational research since it is not often done in schools, especially in the poorest areas. When teachers agreed (all of them did enthusiastically!!), I asked the teacher if she/he could ask informally the head teacher if they would agree to participate in my research project. This aimed at avoiding coercion with head teachers. Since teachers know their heads interpersonally more than I do, they would be the best informants on their

Heads' willingness to participate. If they said yes (only one refused) I asked for an appointment with the head teacher to explain in person what the project consisted of and to provide a letter of authorisation from the Head of Secondary Education to carry out the interviews, observation and collection of data from school documents. The letter of authorisation once again explained that this research project was part of my doctoral studies and by no means a study conducted by the ministry. This was an important part in terms of the social setting of the research and helped establish a good rapport with heads of schools. Heads of schools need to have ministerial authorisations to receive researchers in schools. I could have got into the school with no other authorisation than my own ministerial seal; however, I believe this was a good strategy to move myself away from the role of the Head of the Programme into the role of the doctoral student. Some of the Heads appreciated this and explicitly thanked me for "following the rules and regulations" without "showing off my credentials" –as one of them said to me.

I agreed on an interview date with the Head teacher and each Head teacher determined when the class observation would be carried out. I followed their directions. The interviews to the Head teachers were conducted in the schools, in their own offices for two reasons. On the one hand, the setting helped the Head teachers provide answers in their role as Heads. Culturally, the office of a Head teacher also provides a very good atmosphere for interaction on their role, since most of the offices contain photos of school cohorts, posters of children's works, administrative papers, books, ministerial books and documents, etc. It also helps provide an account of the school cultures present in the institution and the social situation of the students attending it. In some schools Heads treasure food and basic needs toolkits for students in their office cupboards. Even though I might have run the risk of being interrupted during the interview, I believe the setting helped elicit much richer data from Heads.

As regards teacher interviews, I agreed on a date and place for the interview which deemed convenient to the teacher. Although it would have been better to have all the interviews before or after the observation of the class, the working conditions of teachers in the Province make that difficult to attain. Due to personal and professional constraints most of the teachers have difficulty meeting outside work and they usually prefer to take advantage of some extended breaks between lessons which sometimes last 60 minutes. Most of the interviews were carried out in the school setting inside an available room, the library or office during these extended breaks or in some cases the Head teachers authorised teachers to leave students working with a planned task

supervised by a monitor during lesson hours while the interview was taking place. In two cases, the teachers preferred to have the interview at a café nearby their schools after the lessons. Teachers decided what language they preferred to use while interviewed, some used English, others Spanish and others used both languages. The purpose of this was to make sure they felt confident to focus on the content of the interview and not the language of it, since some teachers tend to be self-conscious when speaking with other bilingual speakers due to the monolingual tenet most of them seem to have as a model, in particular, those of older generations educated with the image of the native speaker as a goal. The free choice of language helped the data collection process on many occasions since these bilingual subjects ended up using both languages, in most cases, to more effectively communicate their meanings. Even though this poses a challenge during the translation process after interview transcription (as will be explained in the next section), certain switches of language and certain terminology choices in Spanish and in English cast deeper meanings to their interview responses.

I recorded all interviews with my personal journalist recorder to be able to faithfully transcribe the interviews when processing the data. I asked all the interviewees if they minded my recording them, I explained that it was a way I found to be faithful to their contributions when data processing. They all willingly agreed to be recorded. I placed the recorder on the desk and I switched it on. The interviews proceeded as expected, lasting between 30 to 60 minutes each. The length of the interviews depended greatly on the answers provided. In some cases some teachers and Heads of schools expanded their answers considerably showing an involvement with the topics of the questions. I did not stop the flow of the answers so as to generate the most amenable interview environment as possible and I tried to bring them back to focus when they went off topic. I did not ask the same questions to all the respondents and did not follow the same order with everyone. I simply took advantage of previous answers and the non-verbal signals given throughout the interactions to make links with the following questions so as to make the interview as natural a conversation as possible while covering all the topic areas planned. Some of the respondents provided information that was not expected, either as part of the operationalisation of the research questions when devising the interviews or with the trial piloting of the interviews I had carried out. In those cases I just let their comments flow and every time the same topic turned up in successive interviews I elicited more details. This was the case with topics such as early teenage pregnancy and political indoctrination that I was not expecting but turned out to be recurrent ones in the head teachers' interviews.

An important aspect to point out is the fact that some respondents among teachers and head teachers, added relevant information while being off air. The teachers and head teachers made further comments once they knew the recorder was switched off, knowing this would not be used as research data. I understand they did so because some of their comments might be considered "risky" for them. Those data, though not included as research data for ethic reasons, helped me deepen my understanding on some of the explicit topics drawn by teachers and head teachers on air. Therefore, those informal chats after the interviews helped me refine my awareness of the setting and the wider social context and I became more aware of the constraints of the research I was carrying out. Also, these new understandings helped me refine my interview strategies in successive interviews at points where respondents were, I believe, "purposively" not clear enough, to elicit more explicit and clearer answers without running the risk of harassing the interviewees or placing their safety and anonymity at risk. This tension between what is implicitly meant and what is utterly said was by no means easy to manage with some issues that turned up.

The observations were conducted as scheduled by the head teachers of the institutions. I had to reschedule some of the observations due to weather impairments and teacher strikes. There were several teacher strikes during the months of September and October and as most teachers are unionised, they fail to go to work when there is a strike. Also, there were several Spring storms and when it rains it is customary for students in the poorest areas not to go to school. The reason for this was explained by one of the Head teachers in her interview, children need to cross very muddy areas on foot and sometimes walk ten streets or more under the rain and in the mud to get to the school. As the poorest areas are normally placed near ponds or water courses the neighbourhood gets flooded. They simply prefer to stay at home for safety reasons.

The observations consisted of me sitting at the back of the room and taking down a written account of the class with my "Connecting Equality" netbook for 40 minutes. The field notes consisted of recording "what happened" during the lesson as completely as possible using my observation sheet during and after the lesson to be able to complete gaps in the record. Most of the written records consisted of rich descriptive accounts although there were instances of overt analysis conveyed through a preference for recording specific bits of data with close connection to research purpose. I always observed the first 40 minutes of the lesson and tried to get into the room with the ESOL

teacher. In some cases, due to school organisation procedures, I was taken to the classroom by some other school authority once the teacher was inside the class with the students seated and ready to start. Nonetheless, I always observed the first part of the lesson.

In all cases the students were told by their teachers that I was doing research work, some of the groups asked me questions about myself such as my name, what my teaching area is and they even wanted to know if I spoke Spanish, since I spoke English with them. In most cases students ignored me during the observation, in some other cases they were really warm and helpful (facilitating a chair or a comfortable desk for me to write with my netbook) and I was even invited by one group to “come as many times as I want”.

Before observation or during teacher interviews, teachers provided me with the school documents I requested. In all cases I received annual plans of the courses being this a school document kept in the school and used for both pedagogic and administrative appraisal. I also got either student productions or a narrative account of a project developed with the students. In this particular case, teachers decided whether to hand in one or the other. Most of them were given to me in digital format, some were given to me in printed format.

3.6. Data processing.

Data processing turned out to be a painstaking stage of this thesis because of the diversity and richness of data gathered. Data processing involved three distinct phases: re-presentation in transcripts of all data, coding data through content thematic analysis and finally comparative analysis of themes in different bodies of data to examine commonalities, differences and relationships.

3.6.1. Re- presentations in transcripts.

A long process of transcription of interviews was involved though it was facilitated by digital technology tools. I used dictation software to listen and transcribe all the interviews myself. Since the digital recordings were of good quality in most cases, even though background noises were present in most of them, I found no difficulties re-presenting the data in the written mode. The transcriptions were done in full identifying the people speaking and what they said immediately after. No aspects of non verbal

communication were recorded, just verbal information from the recordings. These included pauses, reformulations, repetitions, interjections, laughs, interactional noises and plain direct speech. Since the focus of the transcription was placed on meaning rather than form, the use of punctuation in the transcripts was not a matter of analysis in itself even though it was considered at times as a device for revealing meaning of the discourse while transcribing the interviews (see example of interview in Appendix 6). In all cases, the interview transcripts developed can be defined as “unfocused transcripts” which “outline[ing] the basic intended meaning of a recording of speech or action without attempting to represent its detailed contextual or interactional characteristics” (Gibson and Brown, 2006: 116). To make sure that the transcripts were accurate and true to the participants’ contributions, I sent the digital versions of the transcript and audio files to each of the respondents for them to check whether there were any differences. Some of them replied, others did not. When participants did not respond, I considered their silence as informed consent.

When the interviews were in Spanish, I developed myself a translation of it for two main reasons. The first one is that I am a sworn translator myself entitled to do the job. The second reason is that I could recover more precisely the shades of meaning conveyed during the interviews by Spanish respondents since I was participating myself in the interaction. This means that I had paralinguistic information of relevance from the context of interaction that some other translator would not have had. Once translated, I sent the translations and the Spanish scripts to a fellow colleague to double check the reliability of the translations made and we made adjustments to the translated versions to make the translations as precise as possible –though it is an acknowledged fact that translation is never a totally accurate process of conveying exactly the same meaning in a different linguistic code. Some code-specific and culture subtleties might be lost in translation since “thinking is intertwined with language” as Seidman (2006: 105) notes. When there was such risk, the versions were kept in both languages.

Both with class observations field notes (see example of field notes in Appendix 7) and school documents, the texts themselves were considered as the transcripts to be processed as re-presentations of the data.

3.6.2. Coding data.

I used thematic analysis as the qualitative approach to code and analyse data in order to examine commonalities, differences and relationships among diverse features

present in the data gathered. All interviews were coded using Nvivo in the following order: first policy makers, then head teachers and finally teachers. Classroom observations and school documents were coded at a second stage using Nvivo as well.

For all the data, a set of a priori codes were established departing from the themes the research questions focused on. Since the data collected from the different sources resulted complementary, as will be explained more fully in chapter 4, I coded interviews with a different coding system from that used for school documents and classroom field notes. The reason for this can be traced in the focus of the information derived and generated from each of the sources. On the one hand, interviews aimed at collecting data of what respondents said and understood by educational policies and politics of knowledge, ESOL pedagogy and teacher identity in the present context of innovation. On the other hand, observations and documents aimed at collecting data namely on what actually happened in classrooms and educational institutions, that is, how those ideas were enacted in practice through specific classroom planning and practice. In brief, interviews aimed at collecting data on the “theory” held by respondents of educational change while the other sources –school documents and classroom field notes- focused on the “practice” of teaching to enact educational change in classrooms. Therefore, to start the coding process I used two different sets of a priori codes, one for interviews and the other one for documents and observations due to the difference in focus of each of the sources of data gathered.

The a priori themes for coding interviews were: literacy, knowledge, ESOL, technology, development agenda, teacher identity, teacher education, educational needs, institutional problems, strategies to support innovation, leadership in schools.

Yet, through the examination of the data, a set of other empirical codes were generated as well as distinct sub-codes and super codes requiring me to re examine entire bits of data several times before I could reach the final codes and sub codes as reported in chapter 4 of this thesis. The original codes expanded by the analysis into 14 main topics or themes raised and 57 codes as children subthemes of the topics identified.

For observational field notes and documents I departed from 6 a priori. The a priori themes for coding observations field notes and documents were: view of language, view of learning, interactional patterns, discipline, needs addressed, teaching aims. The codes expanded to 9 themes and the analytic framework raised 25 subthemes or nodes.

My decision to use Nvivo software was based on the quantity of data gathered. I found it fairly difficult to code pages of notes using pen and paper coding, in particular considering the versatility of digital technology which I am by now fairly used to and confident with. Also, the software became a very useful tool during re-examination processes and even allowed me to develop useful charts and diagrammes that kept the tasks of coding and analysis easy to visualise and grasp, in particular when comparing data from different instruments and sample groups. I found it particularly useful to be able to write down side notes while coding to generate preliminary hypotheses that became extremely useful during the analysis stage.

3.6.3. How the analysis of themes was carried out.

The process of analysing the data consisted of the two-way process described by Gibson and Brown (2009: 31-32) in that it involved both considering theory as "a resource for interrogating data" and "data as a source for interrogating theory." While categorising, describing, relating and interpreting data, I resorted to the conceptual framework developed in chapter 1 which helped me map out the data and find answers to the research questions bearing in mind the theoretical background. Also, I found new shades of meaning from the themes derived by coding data that helped me question certain theoretical positions and find more refined descriptions of concepts leading me to a more insightful engagement with the answers provided for the research questions. At all times my task was to explore themes to try to understand and generate meanings from the data. I used some of the tactics described by Miles and Huberman (1994 in Robson, 2011: 484). These involved: noting patterns and trends, seeing plausibility in the patterns, counting the frequency of occurrence, making contrasts and comparisons, building logical chains of evidence, finding intervening variables and making theoretical and conceptual coherence patterns, among others.

From the search for regularities and patterns in the data to gather information that would respond to the research questions I found commonalities and differences among different data sources and participant groups and compared and contrasted the information with the theoretical basis of the thesis. This helped me find gaps as well as differential patterns among themes, contrasting views and understandings and relationships of different kinds among concepts as defined by diverse bits of empirical evidence. Such a procedure helped me develop an overall picture of the research

problem and facilitated the theorisation process and the conclusions contained in chapter 5.

To assess the quality of the data analysis I checked for representativeness of the conclusions drawn and I weighed the evidence to identify data which were stronger than others to inform my conclusions. Also, I assessed the patterns found in the data looking for negative evidence seeking for disconfirmation, searching for exceptions, checking out rival explanations and trying to identify other factors intervening in causal relationships established among data. The comparative analysis of themes was carried out partly using NVivo software and partly analyzing the printed copies of data to facilitate this complex process of analysis and assessment of the data. The reader will find the report of the analysis in chapter 4.

Chapter 4: Analysis of data

This chapter explains in depth the ways in which the gathered data were analysed and coded. To show how the analysis was done I will first refer to the coding of classroom observation field notes and school documents and then I will refer to the analysis done with reference to policy maker interviews, head teacher interviews and teacher interviews. I will describe each of the codes and refer the ways in which different respondent subgroups conceptualise each of the topics presented in the data.

It is important to point out at this stage that the reason for using two different coding systems in the analysis of sources is concerned with the nature of the data generated by the research instruments which rendered complimentary rather than overlapping providing different analytical aspects of the same concepts. While interviews aimed at generating information on respondents' ideas and opinions on the nature of the educational change under study in this thesis, the other instruments gathered data on the actual practices carried out in terms of planning and teaching in real classrooms. Even though both, the "theory" of change provided by respondents' answers in interviews and the "practice" taking place in classrooms in the name of that change are both aspects of the same concepts studied (e.g. conceptualization of ESOL pedagogy, knowledge, etc) they are drawn differently in the data depending on the source they are generated from. For example, what in an interview might stand as the concept of knowledge explicitly stated by a specific respondent, can only be drawn from a classroom field note through a set of different observable classroom behaviours such as interaction patterns established in class, type of tasks developed, etc. that need to be interrelated and weaved together in the analysis –as will be shown later in this chapter and the next. This means that different aspects of the same concept were derived in the analysis through these complimentary sources and thus required distinct coding systems to compare and establish contrasts between the "theory" and "practice" of the educational change studied, as will be reported in depth in chapter 5.

4.1. Classroom observations field notes and school documents

4.1.1 How coding was developed

To start analysing the data from these two sources, I used the following a priori categories: *view of language*, *view of learning*, *interactional patterns in class*, *discipline*, *needs addressed and aims*. These pre established categories stemmed from different

interrelated procedures. I departed from what various academics (Kumaravadivelu, 2006; Canagarajah, 2011; Porto, 2012) refer to as aspects that help researchers understand teaching approaches from a context based perspective giving for example great emphasis to interactional aspects of the class and ways of conceptualising language. Secondly, my experience in the field of ESOL teacher education was also important to derive these categories since I resorted to my knowledge of the usual problematic areas that can be found in classrooms, for example, mismatches between teacher aims and needs addressed. Also, during the process of data collection I annotated in a notes book some aspects of observation and school documents that I was interested in analysing. For each, I wrote down an annotated initial entry explaining what each of these deductive initial categories comprised. I found these initial categories were comprehensive in scope and could help me focus on distinct aspects of lesson planning and instruction that could lead me into an array of other inductive categories during analysis. I also found they could account for aspects that I could in turn relate to my research questions as regards ESOL education.

These initial categories led me to the recognition of subcategories when analysing data as follows. On the one hand, some of the a priori categories resulted appropriate to code the data and find subthemes within it. From the theme *view of language*, two subcategories emerged: *discourse perspective* and *traditional notional functional*. *Needs addressed* was coded further into three subthemes: *linguistic*, *general educational* and *cultural social needs*. The theme *discipline* remained a single main category. The theme *aims* was subdivided into two children subtopics: *in agreement with curricular prescriptions* and *not in agreement with curricular prescriptions*.

On the other hand, some of the initial categories resulted inappropriate or insufficient to codify the sources. Firstly, the theme "View of learning" was initially coded into the subthemes: *social construction of knowledge*, *student autonomy*, *process based feedback*, *product oriented feedback* and *task based*. These initial subcategories made me focus on certain missing sources in the analysis that called my attention and led me into an additional reading of all the data to check whether I had made an omission when coding or whether the present subcategories were insufficient to code the missing source. The latter was in fact the case. I induced two other subthemes. These were *non task based* and *one directional construction of knowledge*, exponents of which I could find in the data provided by the source not mentioned in the previous coding. Once I had these subcategories I decided to re categorise these subthemes into a more analytic frame from which two main codes emerged: *View of learning* and *knowledge construction*. Out of *View of learning* three sub themes emerged: *student*

autonomy, type of activity and feedback to students. Further subcategories were developed in turn from the latter two: *task based and non task based* for *type of activity* and *process based and product oriented* for *feedback to students*. For knowledge construction two subthemes were induced: *social construction* and *one directional construction*.

In a similar way, the theme *interactional patterns in class* was coded giving way to a set of different subthemes and further sub categorisations. Once subthemes were induced, they were re organised in terms of hierarchy and focus for a better description of each of them. Four subthemes were induced: *metalinguistic focus, discipline management interaction, uses of English in class* and *scaffolding interaction*. The latter two were in turn subcategorised as: *English based interaction, T in English - S in Spanish, English interaction initiated by students* for uses of language, while *language learnt in use* and *non interactional scaffolding* were the subcategories devised for *scaffolding interaction* theme.

Finally, two new codes were inferred from the analysis. These a posteriori themes were: *resources* and *classroom setting*. These were considered important for comparison and analysis reasons in relation to several of the other themes in the analysis as will be referred to later in this chapter and in the conclusions presented in chapter 5.

The final coding of observations and school documents can be shown as follows in figure 1.

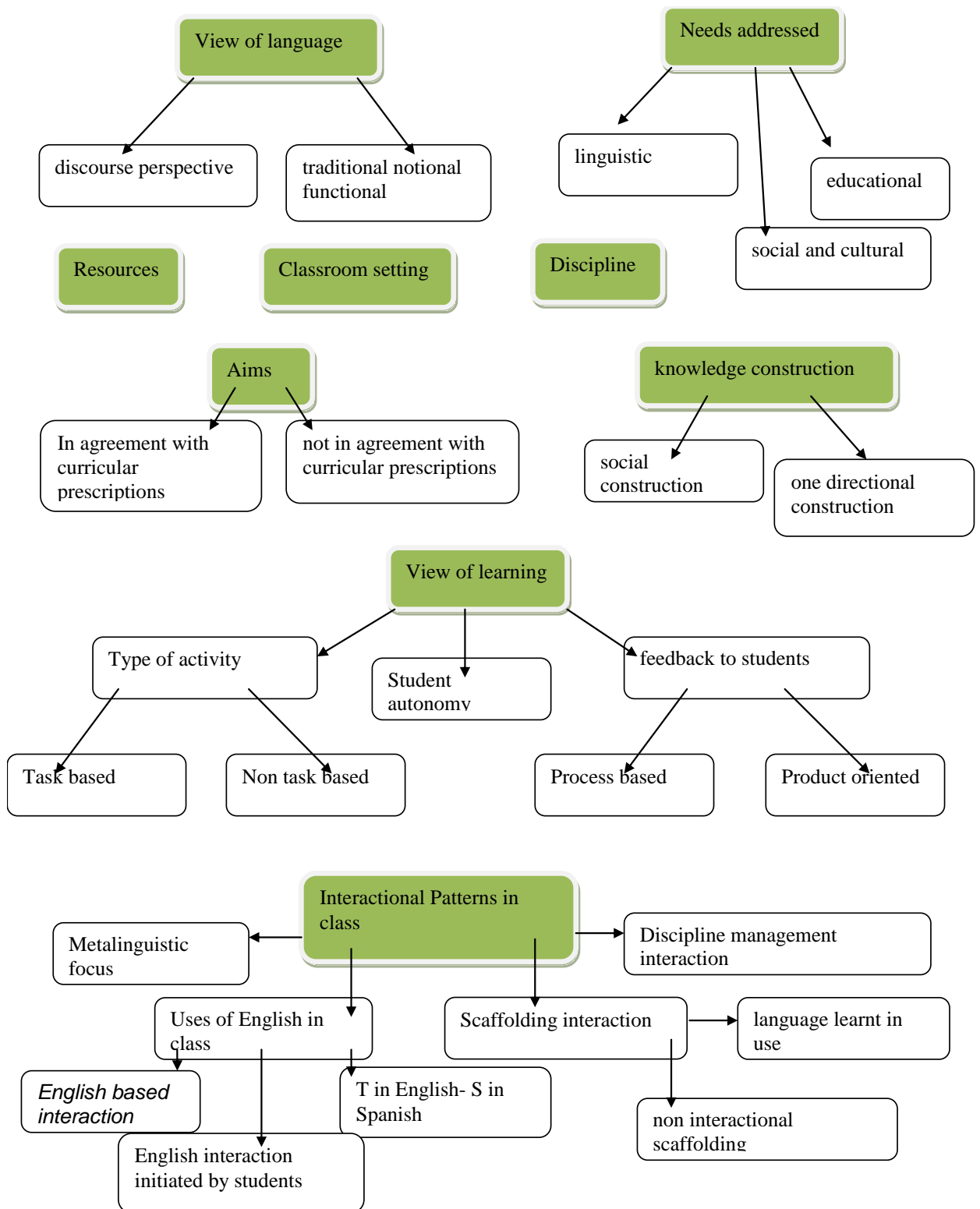


Figure 1

4.1.2. Code description and examples from the data.

a. View of language

It refers to the ways in which language is understood for teaching purposes. This understanding is supported by theoretical ideas and is made evident by the ways in which text selection and instruction takes place. Within this category, a discourse perspective subcategory refers to instruction which considers language as a means of communication within a multiliteracies project. As described in chapter 1, from this perspective language is a resource used to act upon the world before specific interlocutors in specific contexts using a set of diverse semiotic systems (Luke and Freebody, 2000; Anstey and Bull, 2006; Gee, 1999; Kern, 2001). In contrast, a traditional notional functional understanding of language is one in which certain grammatical structures are used to convey notions or functions at a pragmatic level (Richards and Rogers, 2001). Though it understands language in use, the scope of this perspective as used for ESOL is that it neglects the ways in which texts become traces of human activity through generic uses of language (Martin, 2009; O'Keefe et al, 2009). Most of the teaching occurring at this level considers texts that do not necessarily exist in the world while a discourse perspective selects texts which contain the generic features of those in the real world as exponents of genuine linguistic practices.

Although most of the sources reflect a discourse perspective, both views were identified in the sources showing a co-existence of different perspectives, not responding all to the curricular prescriptions. For example, the following extract from COS6 exemplifies a **discourse perspective** since students are developing oral presentations with the generic features of an academic school context.

T: Who's going to start with their expositions?

Alvaro offers to start.

His presentation is about Anorexia. The students seem to have been working on the topic for some classes.

"Anorexia is a disorder of eating behavior. It consists in that you see (how do you say espejo?)

T: mirror.

This is also revealed in the way annual plans are developed, for example, by the ways in which language elements are recorded in school documents. This is the case with SD S3 in which the teaching content and activity description are drawn considering

higher order and lower order features of genres. It is here possible to identify direct references to lexis, grammar and discourse features as well as the textual organisation and ideational framework of a set of genres to be taught in class.

Vocabulary related to the topic:

- *Different types of energy (pros and cons)*
- *Devices*
- *Linguistic exponents to talk about cause and consequence such as: as a consequence, therefore, because of, the reason for ...*
- *Revision of: there is/are, simple present*

Features of different genres: leaflet, magazine article, opinion piece, interview, “Did you know ...?” text.

[...]

In this part of the class, students share the information they got from the Town Hall.

At this stage, they start drafting the texts for the dossier writing the following types of texts (the class is divided into groups, and each group work on one genre)

The teacher will provide models of the different genres (text types) for analysis before drafting their own texts.

In contrast, a **traditional notional functional** understanding of language can be traced in SDS2 by the way language is reduced to grammar, lexis and the expression of notions and functions when recorded in the contents lists as this one.

Lesson	Communication	Grammar	Vocabulary
2. I like chocolate but I don't like vanilla	Preferences	I like...but I don't like...	Integration: food, animals, sports , likes

3. I'm sitting in my room drinking tea.	Expressing actions in progress	Subject+verb to be+verb-ing	Revision: verbos de acción, have, eat, feel, drink, watch, wear.
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This traditional notional functional understanding is also evident in the ways teacher intervention concentrates almost exclusively on short exchanges that focus on the way language conveys notions and functions. This is the case with COS2 when interaction focuses on students learning the notion of location: "The ... is... next to/ between/ in front of/.."

The hospital is.... (she elicits) a girl answers "in front of...." (Matías jokes on the girl having re attended school several times). T elicits two possibilities, she produces the sentences herself.

T asks: Where is the cinema?

b. Needs addressed

Needs have been described as those areas in students' knowledge base and socialisation that are identified as requiring diverse forms of intervention from teachers or other school agents by recognising that education is a public good and school staff are agents of the state. Needs are then characterised in relation to those stakeholders in educational institutions who are responsible for identifying student needs in order to address them in the long term planning of the curriculum or through specific strategies devised together with other state institutions such as hospitals, for example. The needs identified here refer to three different subgroups: linguistic, educational and social - cultural needs.

Linguistic needs have been conceptualised as the ones that school ought to address for students to achieve literacy in the languages taught. They are referred to as the linguistic resources students use when interacting both in English and Spanish. An example of this type of need is recorded in COS3 when the teacher is addressing a need in Spanish to then bridge the notion of the word in English.

The teacher mentions the word routine and says: Did you look up the word in the dictionary? Ss did not know the meaning of routine. Ss read the definition from a Spanish dictionary. The teacher asks ss to look for the routine. (COS3)

Educational needs refer to the curriculum content, the disciplinary knowledge learned at school. It is then conceptualised here as the set of conceptual, attitudinal and procedural content conveyed through schooling and considered as socially relevant content to be taught at school. This is the case with disciplinary knowledge but also with ways of using that disciplinary knowledge and the attitudes and values that any society understands as relevant for citizens. These are the knowledge needs assessed by teachers in the two dimensions discussed in chapter 1. The data show examples of this in COS4 when the teacher resorts to the Geography concepts students are learning at school:

There is one picture of the Moon Festival, Ss guess what picture it is. T explains what the moon festival is in Spanish. They are very attentive. A set of issues arise from the discussion in Spanish on the position of the moon in different parts of the world. T asks ss to ask their Geography teacher for a more detailed explanation.(COS4)

or in SDS3 in which the same information on energy is expected to be conveyed using different formats and thinking skills in the process of transferring information from one format to another:

- *Viewing information in multiple formats (e.g., text, graphics, video).*
- *Comparing and contrasting differing information on the same topic.*
- *Considering emerging and very recent information (e.g., interim reports of research studies in progress).(SDS3)*

or in COS7 in which an awareness on the dangers of global warming is being fostered:

T: ¿qué otras problemáticas podrían aparecer? (what other problems might appear?)

S: inundaciones. (floods)

T: floods. ¿Alguna otra cosa?(Any other thing?) (COS7)

Social and cultural needs are the ones related to housing, health care, access to schooling, access to community agencies and social problems in present societies such as crime, exploitation, discrimination. These needs relate to vulnerability rates in our context as described in chapter 2, in particular in schools with lower working class or vulnerable intakes.

An example of this type of need can be identified in COS2 with students naturalised comments on criminal activity:

T continues drawing a map on board. And says: “vamos a ubicar lugares, places (we are going to locate places)” one of the students makes references to places where drugs are sold. (COS2)

or on students re-attending school because they have dropped out several times:

T says: “Matías hace 4 años que esta en 3°” (Matías has been in 3° year for four years) (COS2)

The analysis of these sources show most of the teachers recognise and work with linguistic and educational needs by using differential strategies. However, they tend to neglect social and cultural needs when confronted with them in the classroom setting. This is an issue of relevance that will be focused on in the conclusions of this thesis in chapter 5.

c. Resources

They are different types of aids used in class by teachers. The term covers a set of different items from the most common class resources such as books to the most unusual ones such as real objects (e.g. animals). The importance of resources lies in the uses that they allow, fostering diversified teacher intervention patterns constraining or enriching teaching strategies.

This is the case for example of technological equipment such as netbooks and projectors which in school 6 allow for the use of technology to learn English.

There are 5 students in this course. They sit in a semicircle around the teacher’s desk. The teacher has prepared a projector. As he does he interacts in English with students on the way they will be presenting their works in the class. (COS6)

In contrast, the lack of resources is seen, for example, in class 2 where the teacher focuses her work on board due to lack of books or any other type of resource in class:

T asks students to open their books (only 3 students have got one).

She continues writing on board: The cinema is.... (COS2)

The analysis of all sources shows resources vary greatly from school to school but seem to be more limited in state schools, in particular the ones with the most vulnerable intakes, where teachers tend to bring their own resources to compensate for the absence of them.

d. Classroom setting

This theme refers to the environment in which the class takes place, this environment is the immediate one, the classroom, but also the school and the neighbourhood. The classroom setting accounts for the ways in which students find themselves in that setting, the difficulties presented by school buildings and the conditions of work all stakeholders are in. Setting also helps induce implicit information on social and cultural background of students and teaching conditions in schools. It also helps account for building restrictions that affect students learning.

Issues of lack of space, as in COS1, or lack of care for students' wellbeing, as in COS2 or the ways in which the setting relates to the neighbourhood communities attending school as in COS4 make themselves evident in the data coded under this theme. It is also evident from the data that most of the classrooms observed in public schools are complex settings where teachers face difficulties of different types in the face of the "real" trajectories (Terigi, 2007) described in chapter 2.

The room is very small for the group, students are crammed inside, it used to be the computer room. There are old computers piled up on one side of it. The board is a white board. Ss are sitting down in pairs. (COS1)

As I get in I learn that this part of the building is shared with the primary school and primary doorkeepers do not welcome secondary school students. I walk up the stairs; we hear shouts and curses from several students who are in the alley during the break. A group of students are playing with the food and they throw it

about. The walls and furniture are dirty and covered in graffiti. As we get into the room, there are bits of paper scattered around the class. The room is dirty. (COS2)

The school is located in the outskirts of Berisso, in the outskirts of La Plata, two streets away from the most important petrol company plant of the country. The school is located in a very poor neighbourhood, the street is paved, the surrounding streets are not. Children are getting into the school. I get in the school and the doorkeeper leads me to the classroom, the head of the school immediately comes to greet me. I get into the classroom and there are twelve 15 year old kids drinking tea and eating slices of bread placed on plates around the classroom. They come from a low social class by the way they are dressed. They are all clean and neatly dressed. There are some with strong ethnic features though not all. (COS4)

e. Discipline

This theme refers to aspects of behaviour of individual students or groups. Discipline accounts for implicit teacher - student agreements in class and sometimes relates to students' needs and how they are addressed by teachers' pedagogic intervention. It also includes information on how the school organisation understands and supports or punishes different types of behaviour.

Within this theme it is possible to identify both student behaviour, teacher attitudes to it and other people's attitudes to it in the same extract as in COS2 where student aggressive behaviour finds the class assistant's impolite gesture as a response and the teacher at a loss before the whole scene.

Three boys shout as the class begins, they swear each other. They seem to be over excited and use language related to the jargon used in jails. An assistant comes in and distributes a peanut bar to each student. One student claims his own bar and the assistant throws the peanut bar at the student. Teacher tries to begin the class several times, calls the roll and starts the class.(COS2)

Great variation in terms of discipline can be found in the data gathered through

classroom observation with close relationships with certain other aspects of teacher pedagogic strategies, namely the type of interaction established in class and the view of language and view of learning presented by teaching strategies. This correlation will be discussed in depth in the conclusions drawn in chapter 5 with important implications in terms of the objectives of this thesis.

f. Aims

This theme can be described as both the teaching objectives of the class and the learning goals established for students. Aims comprise objectives both in terms of teaching and in terms of learning. When these objectives align with the ones established in secondary education policies as described in chapter 1, they were described as **in agreement with the curriculum**. In contrast, when aims deviate from curricular prescriptions both in terms of learning and teaching they were categorised as **not in agreement with the curriculum**. Examples of these subthemes are the following extracts from SDS7 and SDS2 which respond to a literacy based post method proposal and a methods based pedagogic perspective respectively.

- *Use English departing from everyday social practices*
- *Organise teaching proposals that allow for the use of linguistic, discursive and social forms required in the production and interpretation of texts.*
- *Promote the learning of English through the development of projects involving content from other subjects of their school orientation.*

(SDS7)

- *Rehearsal of structures in pseudo communicative situations.*
- *Guided practice and adapted dialogic situations*

(SDS2)

While SDS7 presents a contextualized proposal through overt references to school orientation and students' everyday social practices, SDS2 presents a de-contextualised pedagogic proposal focused on the rehearsal of an established linguistic routine in which students are expected to practice the language without any specific reference to their own interests and lives. The sources reveal once again the co-existence of different approaches, some of which do not respond to curricular prescriptions.

g. Knowledge construction

This theme can be conceptualised as the ways in which knowledge is developed in class through the instructional strategies devised by teachers. These strategies comprise ways of organising classroom dynamics (ways of grouping students), sequencing class work (from examples to rules or vice versa) and managing interaction (e.g. student contributions and errors) among others. Two main ways of understanding knowledge construction could be traced in the data. On the one hand, some teaching strategies aim at an inductive socially achieved construction of knowledge in the class while on the other hand, a deductive teacher -student communication is also identified in the data. In the first case, COS5 shows how teacher inductively builds on a set of notions on fables leading to the character of Aesop and his biography through classroom interaction among students while COS2 shows an example of how teacher is "telling" students deriving herself the rules and producing the examples herself.

T: What stories do you like? Fables, science fiction,

SS answer in English

Look at these two pictures (T shows pictures of a tortoise and a hare).

T : Do you know a fable with these two characters?

Ss answer: Yes.

T: What's the fable? The tortoise and the hare. This is pronounced as your hair.

T asks What's the author? And characters?

T starts eliciting.

Ss do not know the author. T leaves the information incomplete on board

What is the setting? Ss answer: the forest

(COS5)

Teacher continues with the third city. She refers to different shops that can be found in the city. [...] T provides an example of how to describe the city: "There is a zoo" "There are supermarkets"(C OS2)

Differing patterns of interaction are made evident here. These patterns are based on different understandings of knowledge construction and distribution with serious educational implications, in particular, in public schools, as will be discussed further in

chapter 5. While the first example is an exponent of the social construction of knowledge in the English class, with students actively participating in its construction, the latter reveals a teacher “passing on” supposedly valuable knowledge to students who do not participate in its construction.

h. View of learning

This theme relates to the ways student knowledge building is perceived as part of a process that triggers development carried out at school. The theme builds on from different subcategories and these in turn are further coded into child categories.

The first subtheme stemming from this code is **type of activity**, defined in this project as the learning experiences teachers select and shape for students to learn which are based on distinct views of knowledge building mechanisms. Within this subcategory, two children themes emerge: task based and non task based. **Task based activities** are the ones in which language is used as a vehicle of communication to do something beyond the practice of language per se as explained in chapter 1. In contrast, **non task based activities** are the ones in which language is used to rehearse linguistic behaviour for future communicative purposes. While the former resemble real world tasks, the latter are exclusively developed for an English class and bear no resemblance with real world activities (Ellis, 2003; Ellis, 2009; Samuda and Bygate, 2008).

The following example from COS1 shows a task based type of activity in which students have to listen to a song and complete with the missing information they hear whereas the example provided from COS4 shows an exponent of non task based activities in which language structures are rehearsed completing blanks.

*T: Now listen to the song and write the missing words. Copy in your folders.
Teacher plays the song: “What a wonderful world” with a very old cassette
player. The song is a rock re made version of the Louis Armstrong original. The
Ramones.*

Song finishes. T asks: any words?

SS: two

T: two? Let’s listen and stop the tape.

*T plays and stops every ten seconds so that they can listen and spot the words.
They do without difficulty now.(COS1)*

T shows me a handout with which they will continue working the remaining hour. It is a fill in the blanks - completion - sentence building set of activities. (COS4)

Though most of the activities identified in the sources respond to task based curricular prescriptions, there is a co existence of non-task based methodologies that can be correlated to other themes in this framework such as view of language, knowledge construction and interactional patterns in class. What all this is showing is the persistence of different pedagogic approaches among teachers in different institutions with important implications in the face of the research questions of this thesis as will be discussed in the conclusions.

The second subtheme is **student autonomy**, that is, the ways in which teachers foster student independence and confidence building as part of learning. Such autonomy leads in turn to stronger levels of commitment towards self learning processes and helps students monitor and assess their own knowledge building. The data show a few exponents of this, namely in school documents as the examples below:

The student will record achievements and difficulties so that they can be their own mentors during the learning and teaching processes. (SDS1)

Dynamics: Whole class (for sharing the answers to the questions)

Small groups (for drafting the information in the different genres)

NB: students will continue working in groups as homework.

PROJECT SPACE:

My students will read and answer post by students from other schools.

They will also be able to ask questions about students' school, life, etc, to start an intercultural dialogue (apart from the post closely related with the topic of the project)

(SDS2)

The absence of student autonomy building strategies correlates with the type of interaction established which tends to be, as will be explained later in this chapter, teacher led and teacher centred.

The third subtheme identified in the data accounting for the theme view of learning is **feedback to students**. It is conceptualised as the ways in which teachers provide information on how learning is progressing to help students adjust their learning to teaching aims. Feedback is a valuable resource leading to other aspects such as motivation and commitment and is often equated to evaluation. Two main subthemes emerge as exponents of feedback, **product oriented** and **process based**. Exponents of both subthemes can be found in the data as in SDS1 where both are present. However, just two sources make explicit references to students' roles in process based assessment through self and peer feedback, being the teacher the one entitled to provide feedback most of the times, if not all, in some classrooms.

Process evaluation includes various facets of the development of the class such as: attention, participation, behavior, self-assessment, self-correction, the tasks, commitment and interest through which the teacher confirms where the student is in terms of their knowledge and the support that should be given through various strategies for further gradual progress. To establish the attainment of objectives, formal written evaluation as well as oral presentations and projects will be used to articulate and integrate knowledge developed throughout the academic year.(SDS1)

i. Interactional patterns in class

This theme can be defined as the ways in which interlocutors structure communication. It accounts for the diverse ways in which interaction is used by both teachers and students. Most of the interaction occurring in the classes observed is oral and relates to the pedagogic purposes of the classroom context. This is why a series of subthemes are derived from the analysis of data which relate to this pedagogic nature of the classroom interaction. These are: **metalinguistic focus, uses of English in class, scaffolding interaction and discipline management interaction**.

The **Metalinguistic focus** theme relates to the exchanges occurring in classroom interaction that aim at developing an awareness on how language is used. This metalinguistic intentionality can be traced in extracts of classroom interaction as in COS3 in which interactants are reflecting on the ways in which a poem is similar to another in structure or as in COS7 where the interaction focuses on finding out the meaning of a word by its constitutive elements.

T reads his poem. As he reads he makes gestures to explain words that might be new. He asks: "What is similar in my poem to Danny the cat?" T goes back to the poem, "Ok, what is similar in my poem?" Ss say some of the similarities.
(COS3)

*For "greenhouse" a student says: "casa verde" (in Spanish green house)
T makes a focus on the strategy of separating the words to find out meaning.*
(COS7)

All classes reveal a metalinguistic focus at some point of the class making an emphasis on diverse aspects of language learning (vocabulary, grammar, discourse organization, language learning strategies, etc.). Yet, it is important to note that this metalinguistic focus, as expected, is always in line with the pedagogic perspective of the teacher, being focused on isolated words or grammatical structures in the case of more traditional lesson structures (COS2 and COS7).

Discipline management interaction reflects the ways in which teachers use interaction in class to monitor student discipline and to establish agreements on classroom rituals and appropriate behaviour. It also accounts for the "telling off" interaction that may occur in class but also on the ways in which teachers make students behave according to standard norms of the class to be able to carry out instruction. An example of this can be traced in COS3 by means of which the teacher, who is telling about personal anecdotes on his pets, makes students highly attentive and well behaved to be able to teach them:

The teacher says that he is going to show some photos of his pets and then he is going to show them a poem he wrote about Rubino, one of his cats. The teacher starts showing photos of a cat, a sheep, etc. As they proceed the students look highly interested in the animals. Most of the students have a rural background, they listen attentively to Ruben's descriptions of his animals. He says for example: This is my sheep. He is called Moyano. You know why? Because he protests, like Hugo Moyano (a trade union leader in Argentina)" Teacher elicits vocabulary from students. As he opens up the files ss want Ruben to open specific files such as Kathy (Ruben's dog) He tells them that the head of the school gave it to him as a present. He finally shows the picture of Rubino, the cat in the poem. (COS3).

Also, the following extract from COS7 shows how the teacher manages inadequate behaviour by telling the student off and starting to request information on the task the student was expected to be doing:

A girl, Natalia, starts shouting at the student –Javier- who has been throwing paper balls. The verbal fight sounds very aggressive.

T tells Javier off.

T focuses on Javier.

T: Javier, if I say “air pollution” ¿a qué imagen está refiriendo? Es casi como en castellano. ¿a cuál hace referencia? (what image is it referring to? It is like in Spanish. Which one is it referring to?)

T: a esta? (this one?)

S: a esa profe (that one, teacher)

(COS7)

While some teachers use interaction proactively to avoid discipline problems in class, as shown in COS3, others resort to it reactively to tell students off. Even though in both cases teachers are using classroom interaction with an impact on discipline, reactive classroom interaction does not seem to motivate students to learning as proactive discipline interaction does.

The subtheme **Uses of English in class** accounts for the status English bears in interaction. The data suggest there are three main ways of structuring English in classroom interaction which are: **interaction based in English** -when both students and teachers mostly use English as a means of communication in the class being the teacher who initiates it-, **Teacher using English-Students using Spanish** and special occasions in which **Interaction is initiated by students**.

Examples of this subtheme can be traced in the data as follows, which are three exponents of the three ways in which English is used in the class as explained in the previous paragraph:

Who’s the winner? At the beginning of the story?

Ss: the hare

T: and at the end of the story?

Ss: the tortoise

T: and the rest of the animals, are they happy?

Ss: yes

T: they are happy. Is the end of the story fair?

Ss: yes /no

T: Why yes and why no?

S:

T: who works and works?

S: the tortoise

T: who is fast?

S: the hare

(COS5)

Students follow the teacher in English. They do not contribute in English. They follow what the teacher says. T asks: "What is your favourite festival?" S: My birthday.

T: What do you do in your birthday?

S: Me voy por ahí. (I gang around)

Another student: lo hechan (they dismiss him from home)

Cristina: ehh a quien lo hechan! (Who do they dismiss?!!!)

T continues asking.

Camila: "La fiesta del vino" (The wine celebration - this is a traditional celebration of Berisso)

T asks another student with dark skin and eastern features. "Takashiro?"

Takashiro: San Fermin (the student is from Peru)

T asks: what is that?

Takashiro: un festival de toros que se hace en Peru. (a Bull festival they do in Peru)

(COS 4)

S: Teacher, would you like to put the projector here?

T: No, it's ok. It's a bit distorted but it's clear. Alvaro, have you got your memory stick?

S: Yes.

The students finally convince the teacher to settle the projector in a better position. All this is done in English. (COS 6)

The interactions recorded in classroom observation field notes reveal that interaction initiated by students is uncommon. Just one of the classrooms shows examples of it. Most of the interaction is initiated by the teacher and half of the classrooms do not expect students to use English when interacting with the teacher. This also has implications for a multiliteracies project as will be noted in the conclusions presented in chapter 5.

Finally, the **scaffolding interaction** subtheme gathers those interactional patterns used by teachers to build up and facilitate language use and acquisition. These scaffolding strategies can be coded as those in which language is learned by using it and those in which language is learned by explaining how it works and not how it is used in actual conversation. These ways of scaffolding language respond to a social interactionism and a traditional grammar based perspective respectively (Richards and Rogers, 2001). While the former involves **scaffolding in use** for language use, the latter involves scaffolding to learn about the language being thus **non interactive scaffolds**

Anorexia is a disorder of eating behavior. It consists in that you see (how do you say "espejo")

T: mirror.

S: you see fat but you are not fat. The causes is unknown but the social cause is ...

T reformulates what the student says.

At times he questions what they are saying asking to expand.

Another student in the group continues with their power point presentation.

T: There are a lot of new words. Can you tell us about those words?

T: Is there anything else you want to say about physical symptoms?

S: Yes, debility all day

T: Ah! Weakness. The person is weak all day. Anything else?

S: Rigid personality

T: What do you mean?

S:

T: Is it connected to something else?

S starts reading from the power point some of the other mental symptoms.

(COS6)

T: ¿qué es water waste? (what is water waste?)

S: Agua derrochada (wasted water)

T explains in Spanish what water waste means. They continue with the rest of the words. They discuss the meaning of the phrases in Spanish.

For “greenhouse” a student says: “casa verde”.

T makes a focus on the strategy of separating the words to find out meaning.

T explains in Spanish what a greenhouse is.

T: ¿Qué es el efecto invernadero? Lo tienen que haber estudiado en otra materia. (What is the greenhouse effect? You must have studied it in another subject.)

S: Sí, en geografía (yes, in Geography).

T: y qué saben de geografía? (And what do you know about geography?)

S: nada (nothing)

(COS7)

The data show once again that some teachers scaffold the language for students to learn about it whereas others scaffold it for students to use it. Such a distinction is particularly relevant when considering that the former is to be found in the studied classrooms with the most vulnerable intakes, who do not seem to be making English their own as a resource for improved communication. In contrast, those belonging to the private sector are learning the language by using it and will eventually use English for their own communicational purposes.

4. 2. Interviews

4.2.1 How coding was developed

The analytic frame developed for interviews was based on a set of deductive themes that I derived from the research questions and the interview key concepts operationalised from the theoretical basis of my research.

The a priori themes for coding interviews were: literacy, knowledge, ESOL, technology, development agenda, teacher identity, teacher education, educational needs, institutional problems, strategies to support innovation and leadership in schools. I considered these the initial 11 codes for my analysis. As I started developing my analytical frame, new a posteriori codes emerged from the data, leading my coding to 65 Nvivo nodes in all.

After I had carried out an initial search by code to achieve a first overall description of the data, I refined my coding so that it would allow me to search the data by topic, exploring different related codes within the same topics so as to reach a thicker description of the main concepts raised by the interview participants. In this way I identified 14 main topics or themes raised and 57 codes as children subthemes of the topics identified (see Appendix 8 for a synthesis of the analytic framework of interviews). For example, I derived an inclusive topic that I operationalised as *Teachers* and from it I related a set of 7 subthemes or codes that describe different shades of meaning within the notion accounting for the ways participants from each sample group refer to the concept in question. The subthemes coded under the theme *Teachers* are: *work conditions in schools, role of teachers, salaries, profiles required, teacher identities, incoherencies between teacher discourse and practice and teacher knowledge*.

Once the topics and codes had been developed from all interviews, I compared and contrasted the data by subgroup, that is, I analysed how policy makers, head teachers and teachers referred to the topics and subthemes in the codes. This analytic strategy helped me compare and contrast the data and start deriving some relevant ideas and findings that I recorded in memo pads in Nvivo software to be able to interlace my final conclusions in response to the research questions as reported in chapter 5.

The process was highly complex for two reasons: the quantity of data analysed and the cyclical way in which I had to approach the data. It comprised two months of hard work in which I analysed interviews in the ways described above while I also analysed observations and school documents together after an initial approach to all the data. This flexible and sustained to and fro movement within data was extremely useful to develop and validate some of the concluding remarks of this thesis and to help me build up more complex understandings by relating participants' discourse with actual instructional work.

In the next section I intend to provide a description of each of the topics identified and an exploration of each of the codes so as to depict how I developed a detailed understanding of each of the topics while deriving the conclusions I will state in chapter 5.

4.2.2. Topic, code description and comparisons among participant subgroups

Topic 1: Teachers

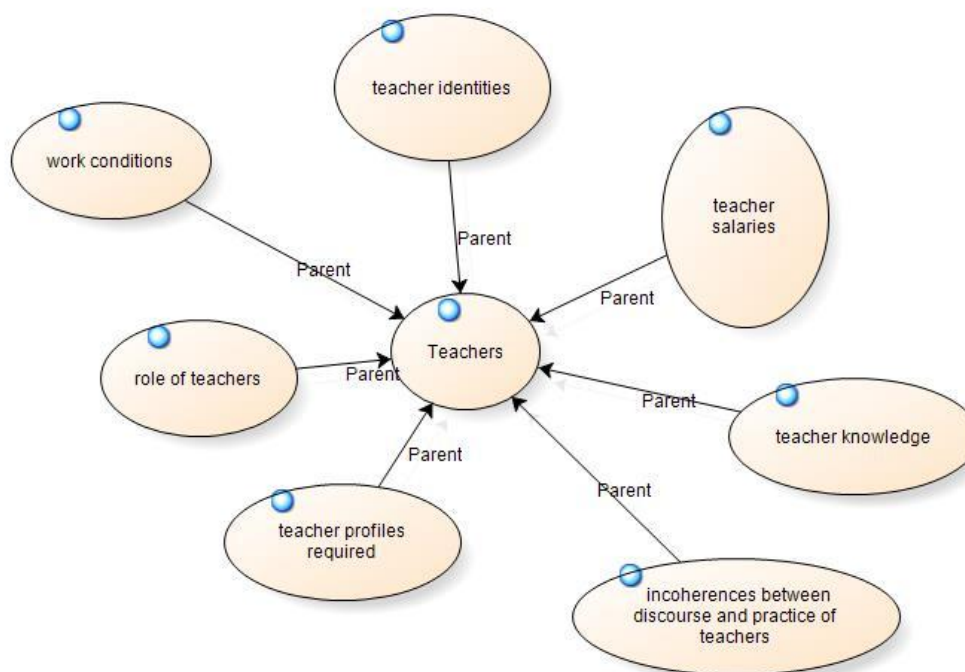


Figure 2

Around the notion of **teachers** as educational agents a set of notions are developed (see figure 2). Some of these notions relate to teacher identity aspects and often appear together in participants' comments. Roles of teachers, teacher identities and teacher profiles required in schools respond to different ways of explaining how teachers are looked at in terms of a set of issues. The first one is actually how their role in schools is conceived by other stakeholders and themselves in the present context of innovation. The second refers to the ways in which they hold an identity affiliation as members of a community of practice or in front of others. The issue of teacher profiles required presents an additional dimension to the question of their identity and role, which is, how their professional profiles match present school demands and student needs. Data show that different notions of teacher identities can be traced among participants. However, certain similarities are established among participant subgroups in terms of teacher roles and required profiles.

Role is often described extensively in the data, linking it to the pedagogic manipulation of knowledge, the assessment of student needs and that of a care taker among teachers and head teacher. The role is mentioned as a role of mediation, as a facilitator

in some cases making an emphasis on its professional features. In contrast, policy makers describe teacher roles in more idealistic ways as an engine of the institution, as the leader of innovation and even as a political agent.

In all cases participant subgroups describe **teacher profiles** required in schools in terms of the challenges of contextual application, teaching knowledge and policy innovation. They are systematically described with adjectives such as reliable, committed, flexible, adaptable, authoritative, resourceful always in relation to student needs, vulnerability in schools, knowledge evolution and contextual constraints and lack of resources. Policy makers also relate the profiles to ethical commitment to knowledge and teaching.

Different **teacher identities** are identified in respondents' answers. Yet, all of them are presented as dynamic and understood always in relation to the school and academic cultures they are in. On the one hand, policy makers relate identities to that of a social agent. One respondent even criticises the elite identity of some English teachers. On the other hand, teachers and head teachers tend to provide descriptions ranging from a technical view of teacher identity towards a modern professional one. A set of related issues are connected to the notion of teacher identity, namely the way different identities can give way to innovation and change in schools, namely those professional teacher identities while technical ones are often associated in the data to non innovative teachers. Most of the respondent teachers also relate identity to community of practice and identify different communal identities in relation to school contexts and their institutional constraints.

While these three categories are the most prevalent within the topic of teachers, the least prevalent ones are work conditions and teacher salaries. In fact, none of these is mentioned by the group of head teachers. **Salaries** are only mentioned by policy makers, perhaps because of the closer link at policy maker levels with trade unions and decisions on teacher salary. The comment is related to teachers' improved salary conditions. **Work conditions** is an aspect that some of the policy maker respondents and teachers highlight, namely when referring to feelings of isolation and neglect that teachers sometimes undergo in complex contextual circumstances. Interestingly enough, work conditions are associated in the data with the resources restrictions teachers find in schools both in the teacher and policy maker subgroups, not head teachers. While teachers tend to refer to conditions of work expressing different attitudes to it such as resignation, anger and even contempt, policy makers show a

thoughtful attitude as if referring to a controversial issue. Their comments are sensitive and sensible. However, they sound at times as if they are external observers rather than central decision making agents. This aspect is also related to other themes within this analytic framework.

Issues of teacher knowledge and incoherencies between the discourse and practice of teachers are important elements within the conceptualisation of the topic teachers. **By teacher knowledge** most of the respondents in the groups refer to the disciplinary and pedagogic knowledge base of teachers developed in Initial teacher education and through In service provisions. Teacher knowledge is often associated in all respondent groups with the missing theoretical background evidenced in teacher practices. Reference is made to deficiencies in teacher knowledge due to deficiencies in teacher training programmes which tend to be associated with static institutional tendencies and theory based educational provisions. Both teachers and head teachers perceive this teacher knowledge basis developed in initial teacher education as insufficient and inappropriate for the curricular innovation presented and the contextual complexity of classrooms. This is a shared view among all participants but with less strength by policy makers who relate it to ongoing processes of Higher education curricular debate, placing this as some kind of excuse for the delay in a reform of the teacher preparation legal framework. Also, the code is associated with communities of practice and the ways teachers' knowledge is affected by the communities where they teach. In relation to this idea, a few of the respondents in all three groups, teachers, head teachers and policy makers, also refer to **inconsistencies between discourse and practice** in teachers in relation to issues such as literacy and ESOL notions. As they say, some policy innovations are difficult to place into practice. Even though teachers have appropriated the pedagogic discourse they still find it difficult to devise interventions coherent with their pedagogic discourse. An intersecting code here is teacher knowledge development which is found in the next section as a child code of Teacher education topic. Also, this code intersects with others, for example, with the ones in the theme limitations in the present context.

Topic 2: Teacher Education

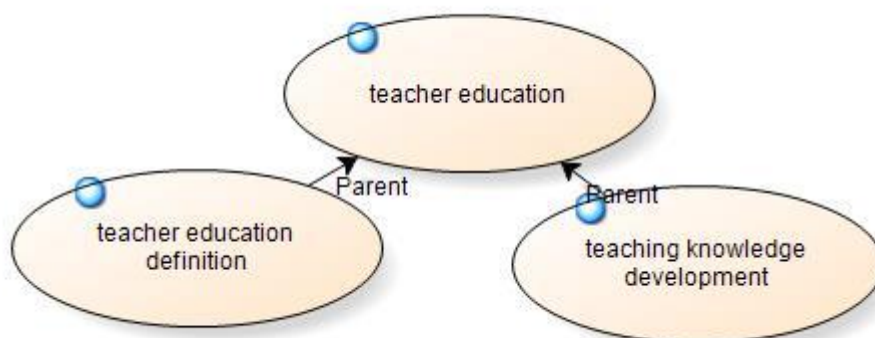


Figure 3

Teacher education is conceptualised in this analytic framework as the process of continuous professional development teachers are expected to have access to and to undergo as part of their rights in the system. Two main issues in connection to it are presented in the data (see figure 3). The first one relates to diverse understandings of what teacher education should be like. Teacher education is defined in completely different terms among the three sample groups. Policy makers describe teacher education as the right provided by the state to develop a professional identity which bears pedagogic responsibility in cultural transmission and democratization of knowledge. Teachers, in contrast, define teacher education as praxis, that is, the capacity to apply theory to context and build theory from practice in dynamic ways. In their conceptualisation of the **definition**, teacher education does not restrict to the development of disciplinary-pedagogic knowledge, teachers also refer to aspects of attitude and ethical commitment in establishing relationships with students. It is also described in collective terms, as a kind of knowledge that is composed of collective experiences in educational institutions. Head teachers provide a range of different notions of what teacher education should be like as extreme as liberal arts to highly practical skills. Yet, they all refer to a capacity to reflect on practice, an inquisitive reflexivity of pedagogic intervention. In all cases head teachers' responses relate to the contextual situations of their institutions and to the type of teacher profile they seem to expect to function adequately in their schools.

As regards the notion associated to the topic of teacher education, **teaching knowledge development**, all respondents agree that it should take place in contexts

of application among communities of practice, in particular head teachers and teachers. Yet, there are various proposals in terms of the structure of teaching knowledge development. Some relate it to mentoring systems, in particular when referring to In-service teacher education. Policy makers also refer to the need to develop digital literacy by actually mediating knowledge development with ICT. Policy makers also recognise the need for sheltered environments where teaching knowledge can be developed in interaction with colleges. In all cases respondents value interactional processes in teaching knowledge and head teachers also propose paid time off school programmes to study and athenaeum experiences among others. In all cases they assume a common feature of them all should be reflexivity.

Topic 3: Teaching

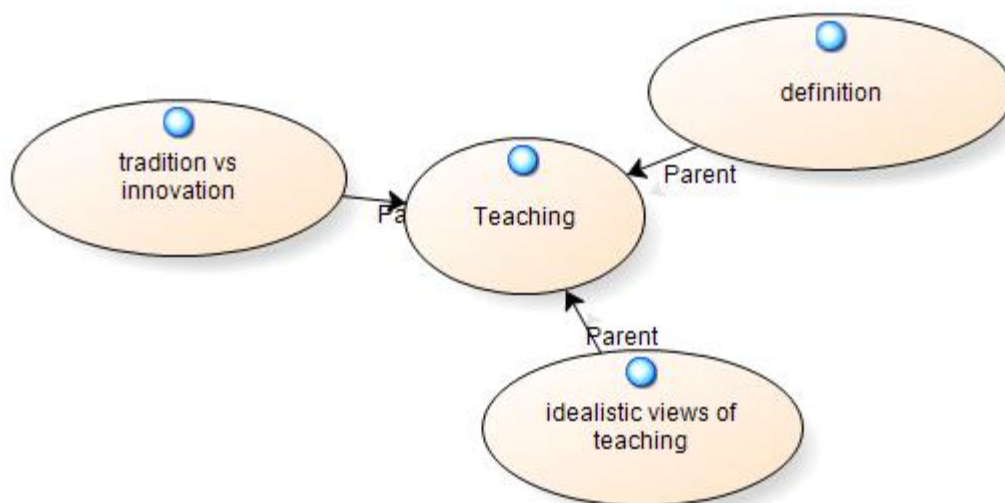


Figure 4

All the references made in the interviews on theorizations of what the job of the teacher involves were coded within the topic **teaching** (see figure 4). This topic was an important topic in teachers and politicians interviews as it appears repeatedly in focus for these respondents while it was only referenced a few times in head teacher interviews. Within the subtopics mentioned, three codes were developed: definition, tradition versus innovation and idealistic views of teaching.

The **definition** code was used in this analytic framework to code the conceptualizations made by respondents on how the job of teaching can be described in theoretical terms. It does not relate to specific contextual circumstances, it involves a theoretical description of the job to present. No descriptions are provided by head teachers on this subtopic. In contrast, both policy makers and teachers do provide theorizations of the task of teaching. Policy makers define teaching as the task of developing thinking by making people literate in the disciplines. They refer to the ways in which thinking and literacy development is done as a result of an activist role. Teaching is then conceptualized as a political activity for policy makers while teachers conceptualise it as a specific kind of professional activity by means of which a knowledge base is applied to solve contextual pedagogic problems. The notion provided by teachers is then more inclusive, less politicised and involves the presence of a conceptual framework, the knowledge on how to apply such a framework through planning, the implementation of techniques and the development of strategic interaction aiming at an integral development of the student. The more comprehensive notions are provided by those teachers whose practices inform more communicative lessons. The notion behind teachers' conceptualizations might be best described as scaffolding for students' integral development whereas the definition present in policy makers' interviews might be described as political and social activity committed to the development of critical literacy. Teachers seem to view their activity in more ethical terms whereas policy makers seem to understand it in more political terms.

Teachers also mention the relationship **tradition versus innovation** in teaching. Under this subtheme they refer to the theoretical changes in the knowledge basis of the profession leading to changes in practices. Teachers mention three main aspects in connection to the tension between traditional ideas versus innovative ideas. Firstly, they refer to the way applied theory of ESOL provides new ways of understanding planning and teaching by suggesting methodological changes in classroom strategies (e.g. project planning, more interactive classroom structures). Secondly, they refer to the ways in which technology needs to be introduced in classroom planning to aid digital literacy in contrast to a traditional analogical paradigm in the teaching of languages. Also, some of the teachers mention the need to experiment and introduce innovation. They seem to be open to "trying out" new ways as a means to find more motivating ways. Finally, a reference is made to the need to innovate due to the different strategies that students present today in contrast to the past. Head teachers, on the other hand, tend to focus almost exclusively on the relationship between changes in teaching that need to be brought about in the light of the new student

profiles present in classrooms. Their comments reflect concern on the way teachers need to “update” to motivate students that would have traditionally remained out of school. Strangely enough, there are no references in policy makers’ interviews on this tension between tradition and innovation.

Finally, **idealistic views of teaching** can be found in the responses provided by both teachers and policy makers. By such views I intend to refer to those conceptualizations that describe teacher activity as transcendental in society, as a key to any social process. Teachers refer, in a rather utopian way, to their activity as central to empower students to change the world and to transform reality. This view is shared by policy makers who also refer to teaching as an activity inherently good. In both sample groups, a mystic dimension is attributed to teaching expressed in assertive ways showing a deeply engrained belief. In contrast, this idea is not present in head teachers’ interviews making the researcher speculate on the more realistic down to earth ways in which they seem to regard teacher activity before other contextual variables. Also, speculations can be made in terms of the ways they assess teachers’ impact on student development at institutional levels. This is an aspect that will be explained further in the next topic.

Topic 4: Educational Institutions

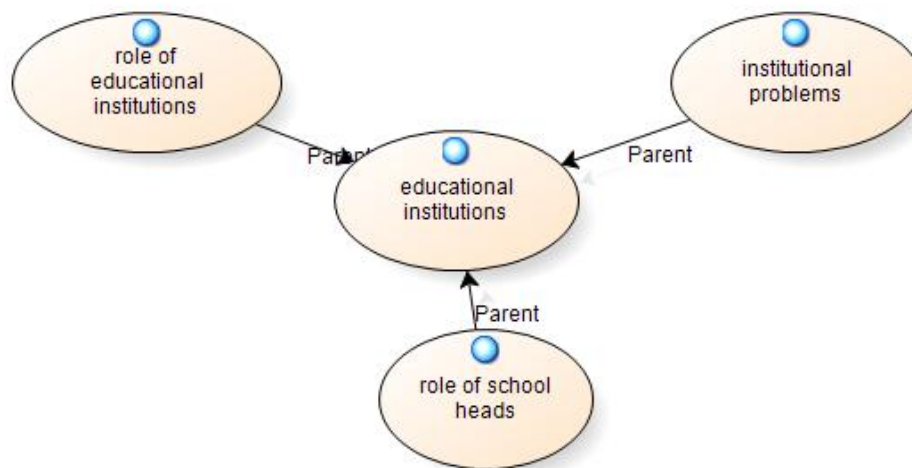


Figure 5

The analytic framework described for **educational institutions** relates to the aspects of schools, as the main educational institutions of the system, where pedagogic activity takes place as mentioned by interviewees in the data. These aspects are in turn coded within three subthemes: institutional problems, role of educational institutions and role of school heads (see figure 5).

The subtopic **Institutional problems** is the most frequently mentioned one within it. Different sample subgroups identify different institutional problems making this code particularly interesting and highly relevant to the conclusions that I will draw in chapter 5.

Policy makers mention four main institutional problems. They refer to teachers and students' absences hindering systematic teaching and learning. They also mention that schools face differing networking conditions with their stakeholders, an aspect that makes it difficult to guarantee a basic pedagogic standard among schools. Also, they explain that institutional organization tends to be quite rigid in its organization and functioning making innovation difficult. They describe institutions as resistant to new teaching paradigms but committed to present debates on questions of literacy. Finally, they inform lack of leadership agents in some institutions. In all cases, their references are dispersed in the data and there is no agreement among sample policy makers. Each one refers to one of the aspects separately.

In contrast, both teachers and head teachers show a common understanding of institutional problems each from their own position in the school. Most of the sample teachers agree on two main problems. The first one is the lack of organization of pedagogic work and interaction among teachers and head teachers. They refer to lack of agreed activity among teachers working in the same institution within the same discipline (ESOL in this case). They also disclose lack of interaction on pedagogic issues with head teachers; they refer to an interaction almost exclusively constrained to matters of clerical work embodied in administrative reports and school documents. Two head teachers mention this aspect but not as a focused institutional problem. The second problem reported by sample teachers is the limited capacity of institutions to carry out effective interactions with decision making levels on resources distribution to schools and thus solve their own infrastructure problems and material needs. This is a recurrent problem assessed by all head teachers. Both sample subgroups show varying levels of anger and anxiety when referring to this problem revealing a deep concern.

Head teachers, on the other hand, disclose three added problems. Firstly, they describe in depth the difficulty to strike a balance between the caretaking and the pedagogic roles of schools under the complex social problems populations bring to the educational setting. They show deep concern in their comments on the ways the

pedagogic role is often neglected at the expense of addressing the needs discussed in the needs theme of this chapter. Secondly, they reveal tensions between norm application and contextual constraints given by long standing school cultures, parent expectations on schooling and educational institutions and established stakeholder roles, among others. In relation to this aspect, they regret the lack of contextual sensitivity they say policy making sectors show when developing school norms and policies. They even refer to the sector as insensitive to institutional grammar. Thirdly, they refer to the disconnection between educational levels of compulsory schooling harming students' schooling trajectories.

As regards the subtheme coded as **role of educational institutions**, there is a shared understanding in all subgroups on two distinct roles. Educational institutions are described both as the "engine" of educational change and the distribution and democratization of knowledge and as institutions which provide a support to social needs in particular. While policy makers give strong emphasis to the first role, both teachers and head teachers make an emphasis on the second role. In particular, head teachers highlight the central role of school in the assessment of social needs to be addressed by other institutions (e.g. hospitals, the legal system, etc.). Also, policy makers tend to describe the role of schools in more idealistic terms while the other subgroups also show concern about the way the social support role may place at risk the pedagogic role.

In relation to code **role of school leaders**, the data reflect all respondents define the head teacher in the ideal role of a leader, the stakeholder responsible to lead educational change and to support others in the innovation process. They all expect the head to be "the orchestra conductor", especially among teachers and policy makers. Teachers and head teachers also refer to the authoritative character of the role to supervise pedagogic activity, to inspect teachers' work standard and to be an exponent herself of continuous professional development. This description of the role is conveyed as what the role "ought to be". Some respondents, though, both from the teacher and head teacher sample groups also refer to the roles they actually hold in institutions describing heads as clerks with large volumes of administrative work, as managers solving institutional problems and as authorities devoid of the material conditions and the pedagogic background to carry out a leadership role. Such descriptions focus namely on negative leadership profiles or limiting conditions of role embodiment, reflecting contempt in some of the teachers' responses and neglect in heads'.

Topic 5: Needs addressed



Figure 6

The topic **needs addressed** is conceptualized in this analytic framework as the those areas in student's knowledge base and socialization that are identified as requiring the intervention of school as an institution belonging to the state apparatus which aims at the satisfaction of citizens' rights and lifelong development. Two codes were established within this topic before the data gathered: student needs and social needs (see figure 6).

The code **student needs** compiles those linguistic, educational and social areas that all sample groups identify as specific of individual students. In contrast, the code **social needs** compiles those established at a collective level, referring to specific sectors of society and common among different school populations. Among these last needs, questions of literacy needs and social support needs (e.g. attention to criminality, drug abuse, teenage pregnancy, discrimination, undernourishment and other needs typicality related to vulnerable populations). Only a few of the teachers referred to students' needs. In contrast, all sample subgroups mentioned social needs in their responses while just one of the policy makers refers to the social support needs, they focus on literacy needs, in particular of working class and vulnerable sectors. In contrast, teacher and head teacher subgroups focus on social support needs as the main needs to be addressed by schools. This marked contrast becomes highly relevant for the conclusions of this thesis as presented in chapter 5 since it shows differing understandings of the focus of school activity and the ways schools address their populations and their own institutional aims. Also, this code relates to the way different sample groups will understand education in relation to productive sectors of society.

Topic 6: Relation to other sectors

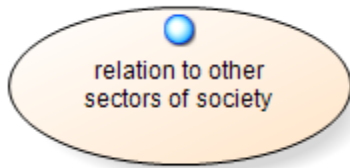


Figure 7

This topic (see figure 7) is conceptualized as the relationships that schools, as exponents of the system of education of the province, establish with productive, academic, scientific, social and political sectors of society. It is interesting to note that policy makers are the only sample subgroup who refer to the relationship of educational institutions with the productive system and the scientific and academic world. Their responses refer to the link between schooling and development and the ways in which liaisons are being fostered at central policy making levels with enterprises, trade unions and the academic and scientific world. References to conflicting relationships with political sectors of society are also made by one of the policy makers and one of the head teachers. No references are made to social organizations though there are many in the Province. In all cases teachers establish a more general understanding of students' futures after school without assigning direct links with other sectors of society.

Topic 7: Strategies to support innovation

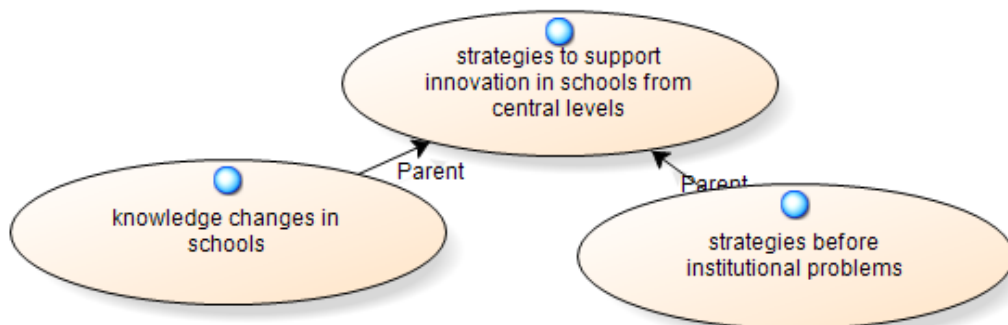


Figure 8

The topic **strategies to support innovation** (see figure 8) accounts for the strategies implemented by decision making sectors in education to support innovation in schools. The information gathered on this topic was analytically coded into two nodes, strategies to support knowledge changes in schools and strategies to support schools before institutional problems.

As regards strategies to **support knowledge changes**, the subtopic is mentioned by only two of the sample subgroups, teachers and policy makers. They refer to the development of curricular documents and the provision of continuous professional development courses. The sample groups hold contrasting views. While policy makers highlight the strategic development of a legal framework to acknowledge knowledge changes and pedagogic intervention of teachers, teachers refer to this strategy as insufficient to support change. In this respect they refer to the absence of strategies to develop coordination among schools and to help schools adapt the curricular content to specific contextual situations. This node relates to the topic policies described in this chapter.

In a similar fashion, while policy makers highlight teacher education provisions, teachers refer to their being insufficient and non context specific. Both teachers and policy makers also mention the existence of the *Connecting Equality* project as an important strategy to aid establish a closer relationship between knowledge and technology in schools and the development of digital literacy. This strategy is given great importance by policy makers and it is valued by teachers.

The code **strategies to support innovation in schools** was touched by all three sample subgroups. Once again this code presents contrasting views on what has been done. Policy makers refer to planned meetings with supervisors and head teachers as a way to interact and try to find agreed solutions to the problems faced by institutions (e.g. high dropout rates). In contrast, head teachers and teachers refer to the absence of dialogic strategies and only one head teacher points out as a positive strategy the presence of the *Universal Child Benefit*. Both head teachers and teachers present a very negative perspective and do not acknowledge any type of support as regards institutional strategies.

Topic 8: Policies

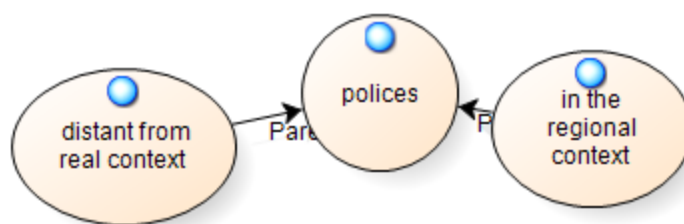


Figure 9

Policies in this analytic framework refers to those legal instruments developed by central authority officers which aim at establishing a common normative framework for institutions and school agents to follow or that aim at the satisfaction of rights. Data presents two main subthemes in connection to policies: their role in the regional context and their being understood as distant from real contexts (see figure 9).

As might be expected, policy makers, extensively refer to the role of **policies in the regional context**. They mention curricular innovation in the disciplines and the satisfaction of the right of teachers to continuous professional development as two of the main local policies accounting for a provincial project in line with national tendencies. Also the education budget policy is praised by one of the policy makers as outstanding in the international context and as part of a national policy favouring education. Teachers do not explicitly refer to the relevance of these policies while head teachers dispersedly refer to a Latin American trend in policy implementation and one even suggests doubts over the importance of the policy innovation introduced.

The sample head teachers refer to a **distance between policies and real contexts of application**. They describe different ways in which policies are inappropriate for the needs of students and their contextual circumstances and futures. They are strongly critical of the legal framework of institutional activity and in some cases of the content prescribed in the compulsory curriculum.

Topic 9: Knowledge

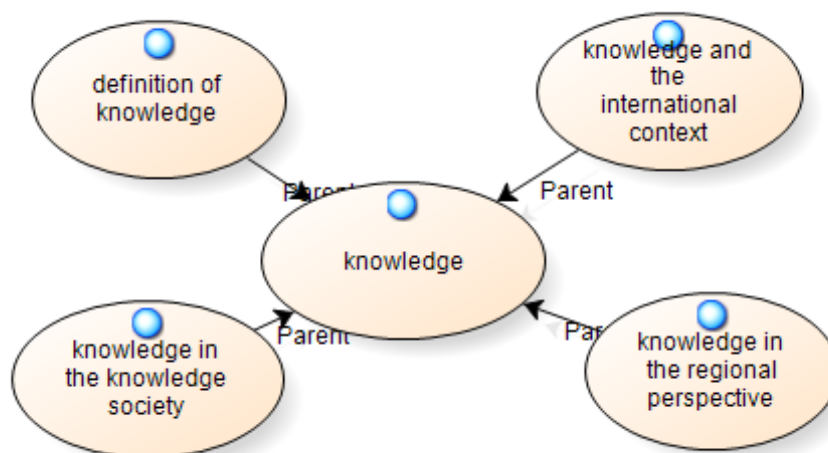


Figure 10

The topic **knowledge** in this analytic framework is conceptualized with four subthemes: definition of knowledge, knowledge in the international context, knowledge in the knowledge society and knowledge in the local context (see figure 10). Each of these nodes relates differing shades of meaning attributed to the concept and interrelated notions.

With reference to the analytic code **definition of knowledge**, differing descriptions are found among individuals in all three sample groups. Yet, there are some common understandings among them. All groups define knowledge both as the substance of the disciplines as well as the process of constructing and making it one's own through interaction with others. It is viewed as dynamic and multiple. It is considered relevant to students' lives, it is viewed as a social good, a right, a legacy of society and as such it becomes fundamental for students to make sense of their worlds. In all sample subgroups interviewees refer to the need for knowledge to be relevant to students by connecting new knowledge to students' knowledge bases and backgrounds. Social significance is also attributed to this thinking capacity and some informants also refer to the role of language in knowledge development and appropriation. In this sense, this node connects with the topic of literacy in this chapter.

Only policy makers allude to the concept of knowledge **in an international context**. They refer to the need to view knowledge in a globalised world requiring intercultural understanding. They also mention the ways in which this understanding of knowledge is not restricted to the Latin American context and they also refer to questions of knowledge colonialism by making explicit comments on the knowledge base selections

that historically drove curricula in Argentina. The lack of reference to the international dimension of knowledge in the other sample subgroups is suggestive and will be considered in the analysis presented in chapter 5 of this thesis.

In a similar way, policy makers are the only ones referring to the status of **knowledge in the knowledge society**. They speak of the ways knowledge is mediated by technology and how it is necessary to participate in democratic society, in contexts of work, study and the exercise and enforcement of citizenship rights. Also, knowledge is described as creating tensions between certainties and uncertainties.

The node **knowledge in the regional perspective** is, in contrast, mentioned by all four subgroups with overlapping notions. Policy makers refer to a knowledge basis that is being developed for all students at a national level under the name NAP, they also refer to similarities with neighbouring South American countries in terms of the knowledge base in compulsory schooling as part of an international tendency. Also, a reference is made to the possibility of voicing our own understandings in an international community as regards the knowledge basis that is relevant for our country and our development.

Unlike policy makers, teachers refer to this subtopic with a more negative perspective: they inform a lack of a common knowledge basis and a dispersion of knowledge levels of students in different contextual settings. Head teachers' views present matching references with both groups. While they acknowledge a common agreed knowledge base and similarities with other Latin American countries, they mention social needs and demands to schools as an aspect which hinders the development of a common knowledge basis at a regional level.

The presence of counter perspectives among sample groups and discouraged attitudes of teachers in contrast to enthusiastic ones on the part of policy makers renders this topic suggestive for the analysis in chapter 5.

Topic 10: Technology

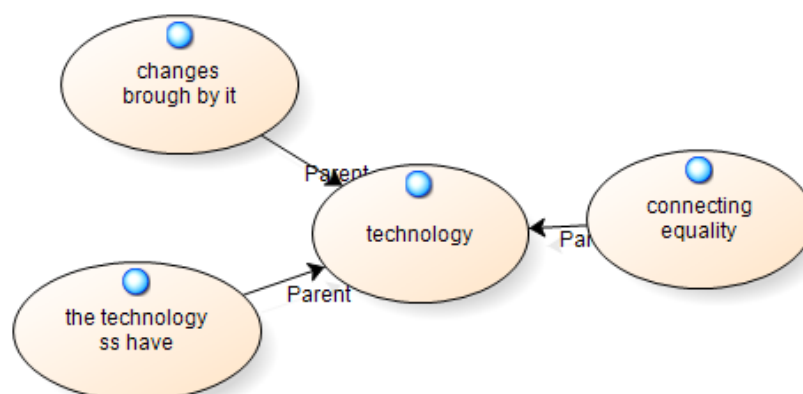


Figure 11

Interview data on the topic of **technology** was analysed under three codes within this topic: the technology students have access to, the changes brought by technology and the project *Connecting Equality* (see figure 11).

All sample groups depict youngsters surrounded by technology but namely mention cell phones as the **main technology students have** in their own environments being thus a source of access to the digital tools limited to them. Teachers, in particular, refer to the digital divide there is between those who own computers at home and those who do not. The same statement is presented by policy makers who relate it to citizenship rights in a knowledge society.

In this respect, all interviewees highlight the project **Connecting Equality** (described in chapter 2) as the opportunity to make computers and digital technology accessible to all. Both teachers and heads from state institutions refer to the problems presented in the distribution of netbooks in their own contexts, associating these problems to neglect from the state towards the most vulnerable students. This is a source of anger in their responses.

As regards the **changes brought by technology**, most respondents in all groups acknowledge deep changes in the ways knowledge ought to be constructed in schools and the challenges faced by institutions and teachers. Policy makers reflect, also, on the impact of technology at school in terms of social justice and inclusion.

The whole topic seems to bear high relevance to all sample groups with a clear implicit agreement that access to technology appears to be fundamental for citizenship building in schools today.

Topic 11: ESOL

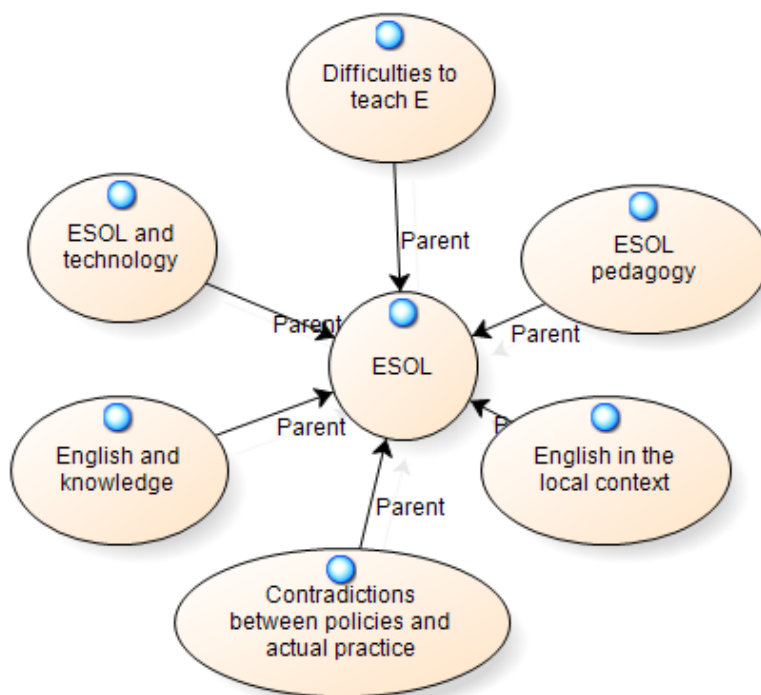


Figure 12

The topic **ESOL**, that is, the English language as learned by speakers of other languages in the context of Latin America, was conceptualized around a set of notions. These notions were: English in the local context, English and knowledge, ESOL and technology, difficulties to teach English, ESOL pedagogy and contradictions between policies and actual practices (see figure 12). The first three notions relate to the status of English while the latter three refer to teaching and learning dimensions of ESOL in the province of Buenos Aires.

English in the local context is understood in similar ways by both policy makers and head teachers. In both groups they refer to its status as a language of international communication, as a necessary resource for interaction in a globalised world.

Interestingly enough, teachers' conceptualizations do not reflect such definite understanding. In fact, various contrasting notions are found in teachers interviews. While some of the teachers refer to English as a resource for international communication, others refer to it as a resource to be able to read and understand, others refer to it as a non relevant school subject for vulnerable sectors of society. Such diverse ways of understanding the status of the subject matter of their lessons will bear relevance in terms of the teaching strategies implemented by teachers as will be concluded in chapter 5 of this thesis.

When relating **English to knowledge**, only three of the sample respondents refer to the relationship, one respondent in each subgroup. In all three cases they refer to English as a vehicle to access and participate in the construction of knowledge in times of collaborative participatory construction of that knowledge. This notion, which is intermittently present in the data correlates to the notions associated with the relationship between English and technology in its being neglected by most of the respondents. In this case, it is only the policy makers who make a note on the close relationship between **ESOL and technology** by explaining that English is pervasively present in the digital world. This fact will determine whether students will be able to gain access to circulating knowledge in the digital world. The absence of references to these two notions in most of the respondents' contributions will also be discussed in the conclusions drawn in chapter 5.

Under the code **ESOL pedagogy**, I included those references respondents made to the pedagogical approaches that ought to be used in the teaching of English. Both teachers and policy makers refer to communicative intercultural approaches by means of which interaction and communication become central in the English class. Some also refer to the need of a systematic approach and the use of project work. Head teachers do not refer to the approaches used in particular but they recognize a specific teaching method should be used in the English class, the one prescribed by policies. At the theoretical level there seems to be agreement over the ways English should be taught with a dangerous lack of explicit reference in head teachers' comments on what that approach should be like. This relates to the idea that there are **contradictions between policies and practices**. This is informed by most of the teachers and head teachers. Both subgroup samples refer to incoherent practices between teachers and also within the practices of a single teacher. Teachers, in particular, inform this aspect with concern and are strongly critical of it as one of the main reasons for the low attainment of students. With reference to the **difficulties teachers face when**

teaching English, a set of different aspects are mentioned by all subgroups. Among them it is possible to mention: few teaching hours, lack of teacher preparation, inappropriate methodology used, presence of different or contradictory teaching approaches in practice, discontinuities in students' learning trajectories, students' social and individual needs and lack of necessary resources for ESOL teaching (e.g. Audio players, books, etc.)

Topic 12: Literacy

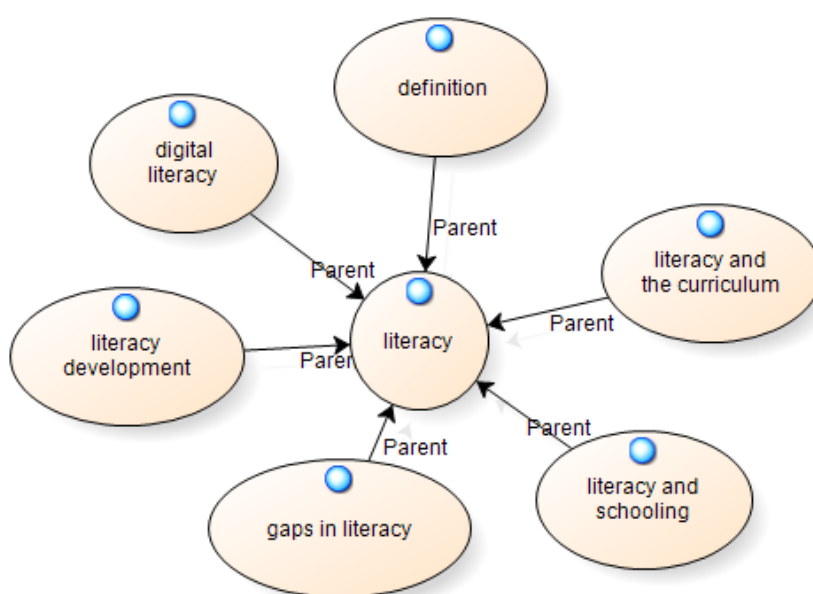


Figure 13

This theme **literacy** comprises the different notions around the idea of the ways in which schools support students' development of the capacity to interpret, use and produce texts for different purposes, in different contexts, using different semiotic systems with different interlocutors in different languages. A set of six notions were found in the data, some of which relate as well to other themes and subthemes such as digital literacy. The coded subthemes were: definition of literacy provided, literacy development, digital literacy, gaps in literacy, literacy and schooling and literacy and the curriculum (see figure 13).

The **definitions** provided for literacy are comprehensive in all respondent subgroups. All sample groups define literacy as the flexible and sustained mastery of a repertoire

of practices beyond the simple fact of reading and writing. They also relate the concept to knowing how to work with disciplinary knowledge in all fields, not restricted to the field of languages education. They all assume the concept involves much more than simply knowing how to read and write; they understand it as the capacity that will allow students to access to socially relevant content.

In connection to this notion, two other notions are present in respondents' contributions. The first one, coded as **literacy development**, refers to the ways in which sample groups explain how literacy is developed. All sample groups refer to a systematic process that is the basis of schooling. It is also understood as central to function and communicate in the world under the present circumstances. In all cases there is an emphasis on its procedural character and on its centrality for a person's development.

The second notion, **digital literacy**, relates to how respondents understand technology to create new conditions for literacy development. In all subgroups they refer to the changes digital texts present since they involve a repertoire of specific practices other than the analogical ones. Digital literacy is understood in particular by policy makers and teachers as fundamental in work environments and for the exercise of citizenship. Also, head teachers and teachers mention teacher illiteracy when faced with the challenge of developing digital literacy.

As regards the remaining codes, gaps in literacy, literacy and the curriculum and literacy and schooling, interesting connections can be made. These connections will be exploited further in chapter 5; however, the relationships established will be described as follows.

Only policy makers refer to literacy and the curriculum in the data gathered. According to these respondents, **literacy in the curriculum** is a controversial issue which has permeated all policy documents. They consider literacy as a central component of curricular policy since it is central for young people's full development. However, head teachers inform serious **literacy gaps** in compulsory schooling leading to difficulties to develop disciplinary knowledge in all school subjects. This poor **literacy development in schooling** is attributed to a lack of material resources, the mediational tools to scaffold literacy processes. All three codes together refer indirectly to low literacy attainments.

Topic 13: Inclusion and participation

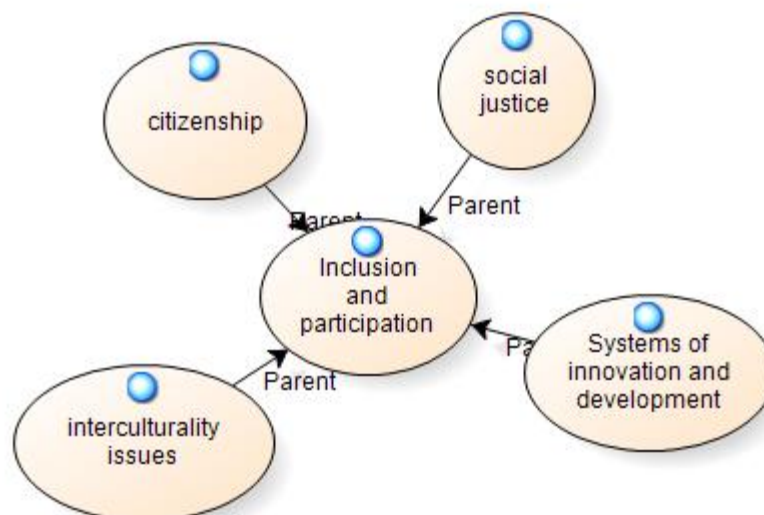


Figure 14

The theme **inclusion and participation** gathers a set of notions on the ways sample groups understand the social dimension of their educational activity in connection with the idea of social justice and democracy in processes of economic development. The analytic framework developed considers four recurrent notions in debates for inclusive policies in schools: citizenship, social justice interculturality issues and systems of innovation and development (see figure 14). Throughout the analysis of this theme and its constituent notions, profound contrasts and paradoxes are found among informant groups. This is an aspect of immense relevance for the conclusions drawn in chapter 5 of this thesis.

The **Citizenship** code is mentioned by all four policy makers in the sample group in relation to school as an institution with the power to help develop an awareness of the capacity to participate as a valuable member of a country and to peacefully negotiate and interact at an international level. Teachers also add to this notion the fact that educational provisions can help a critical understanding of reality. Both, teachers and head teachers, also suggest that education can help all social groups claim for their social and cultural rights. Unlike the other groups, policy makers and a few teachers also refer to the fact that all citizens can be given the same opportunities in school. For them, education provided by the state still is an equating factor for disadvantaged sectors of society.

However, what actually happens seems to be different for some of the respondents, as it was coded in the subtheme **social justice**. For both, teachers and head teachers school as it is today is not bridging the gap between social classes, much on the contrary, some of the respondents in these subgroups report an even bigger distance between those higher in the social scale and those in vulnerable sectors of society. They report, also, limited resources in the schools which need them most, teachers and head teachers becoming the main responsible parties to obtain resources on a personal basis. In contrast, policy makers view the whole process of policy implementation in schools as one which will guarantee that all children have access to the basic knowledge basis, even though they recognize there will be children (those higher up in the social scale) who will have the possibility of accessing to improved educational opportunities. They acknowledge the distribution of *Connecting Equality* netbooks and the presence of teacher education provisions as a strategy to guarantee the same resources in all schools and they consider schools as the institutions with the strongest responsibility to devise specific projects to support social classes with an equity horizon. This specific code will bear outstanding importance for the conclusions of this thesis when related to other codes and topics, since it anticipates deep contradictions between what “ought to be” and what it actually is.

Interculturality, in a similar fashion, is also conceived by the policy maker subgroup as a feature of present policies that will enable schools to manage differences, in terms of the social and cultural, for the enrichment of all. Yet, though both subgroups, teachers and heads, acknowledge this capacity in possibility terms, they report serious difficulties in practice. They inform problems of discrimination in schools due to ethnic, linguistic, social and other differences both in teachers and students. Moreover, while some teachers refer to strategies to help regard difference as a possibility for enrichment, discrimination and stigmatization are also dangerously made evident in the speech of some of the informant teachers as will be discussed further in chapter 5.

Finally, under the code systems of **innovation and participation**, this analytic framework includes data on the ways educational provisions are having an incidence in productive sectors of society. While most of the policy makers refer to this notion, only one head and one teacher mention it presenting opposed views to those of the policy makers. Policy makers refer to different strategies that are being devised to articulate the last years of schooling with productive systems so as to facilitate the insertion of students in the productive sectors and in higher education. Also, they mention an emphasis that is being given to the development of the hard sciences in schools to

motivate young people to choose that field of work. In contrast, teachers and heads, mentioning this subtheme, report there are limited experiences, in practice, that connect schooling with productive sectors.

Topic 14: Opportunities in the present context of innovation

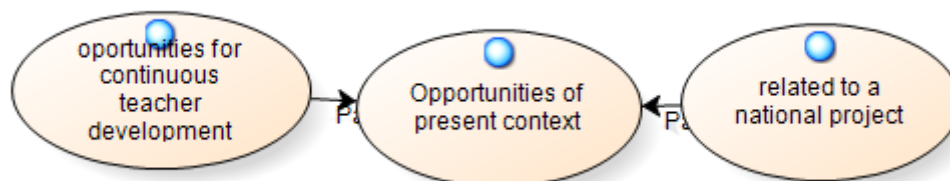


Figure 15

Data on what informants understand as the valuable possibilities opened up for change in schools is coded in the theme **opportunities of the present context**. It compiles ideas on how informants refer to two main aspects, opportunities within a national project and continuous professional development (see figure 15). Differences among policy makers and other informant subgroups are established here in terms of the ideological background of the former group with relevant implications for the conclusions in chapter 5.

In terms of **a national project**, all informant subgroups refer to the legal framework provided by the *National Education Act* and the *Universal Child Benefit Act* as two laws that establish the basis to guarantee the right to education and the financial resources for that to happen. They also refer to the possibilities these laws open for interculturality in schools. Policy makers also emphasise the ideological frame of the legal framework making it possible for neglected sectors of society to access certain material and symbolic resources. This is not mentioned by other subgroups.

Opportunities for continuous teacher development are mentioned by teachers and policy makers in different ways. While teachers refer to the content of those provisions for teacher education, policy makers refer to the politico-ideological frame of those provisions which, to them, guarantee teachers' rights to access to professional development under conditions of equality and justice.

Topic 15: Limitations in the present context

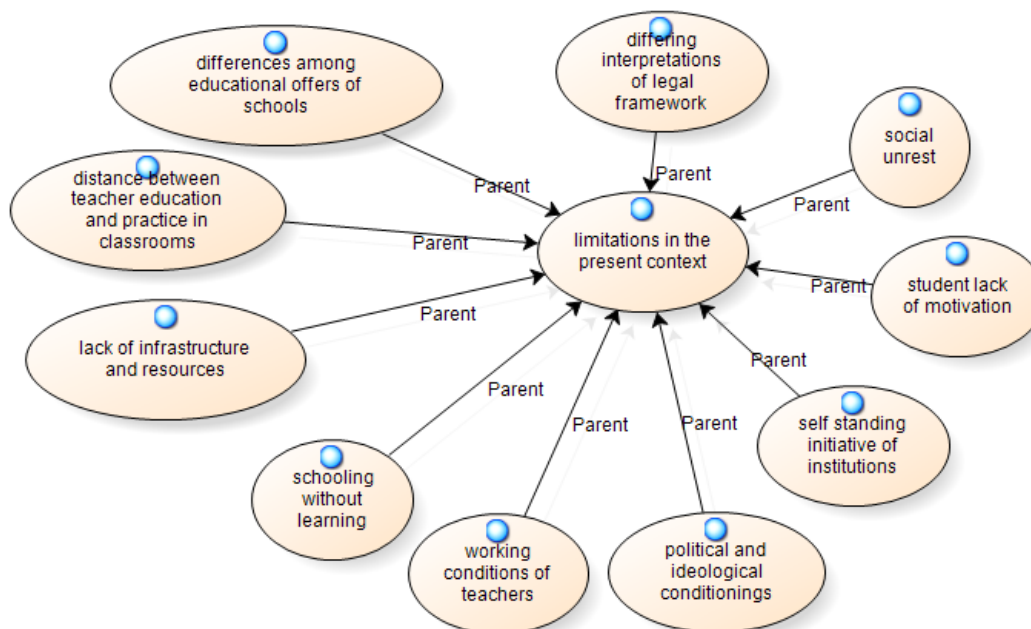


Figure 16

Under this theme, the **limitations** found by informant groups in present contextual circumstances of innovation are conceptualized into a set of ten associated notions which bear great relevance in the data (see figure 16). It is the theme with most references in all the data, 50 references in the teachers group, 42 in the head teachers group and 21 in the policy makers group. Such relevance makes this theme of central importance in our analysis as shall be seen in chapter 5 of this thesis, anticipating thus severe problems challenging this process of policy change.

The first associated subtheme with the most references among this topic is **lack of infrastructure and resources**. All teachers and heads from state institutions report very serious building deficiencies and absence or lack of materials to work in schools, ranging from chalk to books. All five heads from state schools inform the school building is shared with the primary school or lent by it or other institutions. This establishes a huge contrast with private institutions and generates feelings of anger, anxiety and even desperation in informant heads, in particular. Though the theme is considered by policy makers who acknowledge a lack of resources, their focus is

placed on the positive side, as a challenge for the future, making an emphasis on the budget that is being assigned for infrastructure and resources.

Student lack of motivation is also informed by heads and teachers though not mentioned by policy makers. Teachers refer to attitudes of contempt and neglect of school opportunities, some relate them to the social background students come from making links with students' needs and teacher education and role.

All informant sample groups refer to **self standing initiatives of institutions** when facing change. Policy makers report this as the opportunity of institutions to participate with their own initiatives in the system. Both teachers and heads also make a point on this but refer to the lack of support they find for these self standing initiatives making this possibility a further limitation since their projects are limited by the resources they can find themselves.

Social unrest is made evident in all informant groups and is understood as a limitation in the present analytic framework. All sample groups refer to social dispute between different sectors of society. Their comments make reference to a deeply classed society, with vulnerable sectors and the presence of immigrant minorities. There are also references to the difficulties teachers face in the light of this social unrest that is present in schools and the strain that this causes in them.

Schooling without learning is mentioned only by teachers and heads. These subgroups refer to the fact that certain circumstances in schools allow for students to remain in school without learning. These circumstances are namely attributed to *laissez faire* cultures among some and also to norms of permanence and promotion in schools as introduced by the latest legal framework. An attitude of utter rejection is observed in most of the informants who mentioned it.

Differences among school offers are present in the data coded as the notion that there are different educational offers in practice between private and state schools and also among state schools even though the legal framework is the same. Though policy makers recognize this difference between state and private institutions, teachers and heads make a point on the differences among state schools. This emphasis becomes of outstanding importance in particular among teachers who experience teaching in different institutions. Their comments report the presence of implicit prejudices before certain schools.

Though this notion is not present in policy makers' interviews, both teachers and heads acknowledge the presence of **differing interpretations of the legal framework**. In particular teachers relate it to the ways ESOL teachers work in different ways even though there is a single prescribed approach. They all mention the difficulty this presents for educational continuity and heads also refer to constraints in student mobility from one school to the other and from one year to the other. This aspect is also seen in the previous section of this chapter through classroom observations and school documents.

The **distance between teacher education and practice in classrooms** is reported by all informant groups. A point is made by all sample groups on the difficulty found for teachers to apply the theoretical ideas presented in teacher education to their actual contexts of work. Some suggestions are even made by heads who seem to find this distance one that requires different strategies from the ones implemented to present. They suggest different and sometimes opposed strategies such as partnership systems and appraisal systems.

The **working conditions of teachers** are mentioned by policy makers and teachers though only incidentally by one head teacher. Under this code a set of different aspects are mentioned. Among them it is possible to find: constraints to plan and give lessons caused by the resources limitations, isolation from other colleagues, lack of support from other stakeholders, little institutional help with student needs and absence of appraisal systems to assess performance, among the most important ones.

Political and ideological conditionings are reported incidentally by three informants making it a suggestive code for analysis. One head and one teacher inform their view that education is seen as a "trophy" in the political arena, with one explicit reference to a political movement within the *Peronist* party trying to make a direct incidence in the schools among youths. The issue is suggested by one of the policy makers who refers to political conditionings among policy making sectors and a complex interaction strategy required.

4.3. On summarising the analysis.

The detailed analysis carried out in this chapter comprised a huge number of topics and subtopics which show on the one hand, the diverse variables that need to be assessed when analysing the research problem of this thesis. On the other hand, it reflects the ways in which different aspects of what informants say can be confronted with what takes place in institutions to fully assess politics of knowledge, that is, the way in which institutional grammars carry out educational policies under contextual constraints of diverse kinds. Moreover, this analysis established relevant connections with the theoretical basis of this study revealing different ways in which the theoretical notions are understood by teachers, heads and policy makers and placed into practice in institutional contexts.

All in all, the findings of this analysis will be discussed in the light of the principles that can be derived from it in the following chapter, making it possible to find answers to the research questions stated in chapter 2 which motivated this thesis. The next chapter will delve into the principles that stem from this analysis.

Chapter 5: Conclusions

This chapter will explain the findings drawn from the analytic framework described in chapter 4 as the main contribution of this thesis. The data show inconsistencies between theory and practice levels that place at risk innovation and the possibility of inclusive education and democratic participation of vulnerable social sectors in a knowledge society. These inconsistencies are evidenced in teachers' ineffective strategies to embody those changes in their daily practice, when confronted with highly complex contexts of work, by ignoring students' needs, by structuring authoritarian interaction patterns in class and by neglecting curricular aims. Also, ideological clashes are disclosed through contradictions between policy makers' discourses and the strategies implemented top down to support policies in educational institutions with vulnerable intakes.

5.1. Including the excluded?

Policies promise equal opportunities for all students. Yet, classrooms reveal patterns of dominance in pedagogic communication (Bernstein, 1990) that are a relay of cultural reproduction of inequality (Slee, 2010). Although at the macro level policies aim at the creation of a participatory socio constructivist learning environment as discussed in chapter 1, the micro levels of classroom practice show heterogeneous forms of teacher awareness on policy prescriptions, differing strategies to scaffold the language based on often contradictory instructional approaches and varying levels of awareness on students' educational needs. These contradictions also account for the differing attainment objectives that teachers consider, making some teachers focus on students' passive recognition of English as an aim while others support a view of teaching for students' active use of English in an international context (García, 2009; Kern, 2001; Widdowson, 2007)

5.1.1. Needs to be addressed, gaps to be bridged, neglects that reproduce status quo.

The data show educational provisions for both students and teachers are addressing their needs only in part. The neglected needs are the ones associated with school as a

caretaking institution by means of which teachers enact care taker roles and students bridge socio cultural gaps through the educational strategies devised.

On the one hand, teaching strategies ignore social needs while they address students' linguistic and knowledge needs, in particular, in the most vulnerable contexts. For example, the linguistic gaps found in the knowledge base of students are used by TS3 as a resource for constructive scaffolding in the class. The challenge of multiliteracies development (Rowell, 2013; Anstey and Bull, 2006; Kress, 2010) from a plurilingual perspective (García, 2009; Canagarajah, 2013) is taken up by this teacher who intends to help students develop metalinguistic awareness from their linguistic gaps.

The teacher mentions the word routine and says: Did you look up the word in the dictionary? Ss did not know the meaning of routine. Ss read the definition from a Spanish dictionary. The teacher asks ss to look for the routine of the cat in the poem. (COS3)

When faced with the gap, TS3 sees a possibility for teacher intervention every time this happens in the class.

T reads his poem. As he reads he makes gestures to explain words that might be new. He asks: What is similar in my poem to Danny the cat? Qué te parece que querrá decir la palabra similar, X (What do you think the word similar means, X?)

S is silent. T writes the word on board. Similar. The word is exactly the same as in Spanish but the student does not respond. He doesn't know the word in Spanish. T asks him to look up the word in the dictionary.

T explains that similar is a transparent word. He asks one student to explain in Spanish what "transparency" means. One of the boys explains well the meaning.

T goes back to the poem, "Ok, what is similar in my poem?" Ss say some of the similarities.

This is the case with other teachers such as TS1 who accounts for this gap bridging strategy in his annual plan:

The Project topics will aim at linking topics related to a specific orientation of the institution with the aim of students applying the foreign language in real contexts at the same time they learn new linguistic aspects which are necessary to attain the outcome of the Project. (SDS1)

Teachers seem to recognise linguistic needs as part of their jobs as ESOL teachers. They understand their identity as language educators. Also, when noticing knowledge deficiencies (due to limited background experiences and socio economic resources from home) they bridge the knowledge gap, in particular when that knowledge relates to the school disciplines, as part of the role of education and their role as educators.

In these cases all the sample teachers did respond , though in diverse ways, some more effectively than others, to address the knowledge gap. As the following extract from observation field notes reflect:

There is one picture of the Moon Festival, Ss guess what picture is. T explains what the moon festival is in Spanish. They are very attentive. A set of issues arise from the discussion in Spanish on the position of the moon in different parts of the world. T asks Ss to ask their Geography teacher. (COS4)

In contrast, not all gaps are considered as part of the professional role. What types of gaps do teachers neglect? The most evident examples are the ones present in COS2 and COS7. The socio cultural gap that generates conflict is that in which extreme vulnerability or criminal behaviour are made evident. Data suggest that teacher strategies find limitations at the time of addressing student behaviour related to contextual problems of criminality, abuse and discrimination. Teacher responses show fear and lack of preparation when those behaviours are evident through indiscipline. This is the case with T2.

T says: “Matías hace 4 años que esta en 3°” (Matías has been in 3° year for four years)

The conversation becomes difficult to follow due to overlapping of speakers.

T draws three squares on board. She gives names of cities to these squares: Red city, blue city, pink city. T writes words on board related to places

(animals- children – Sunday / books – children – study) T asks: How many schools in red city? One student suggests 45 (in Spanish) She continues like that.

T asks: How do you obtain food from the supermarket?

S answers: robando. (stealing)

T: Let's now go to blue city

S says: "en la play hay una blue city" (in play (station) there is one blue city)

(COS2)

TS2 systematically continues as if she has not heard students, but she has. In fact, her interview comments show she is aware of those gaps and acknowledges that those socio cultural needs require intervention from school:

TS2: All kinds of needs, all , allmore than English... more... much more. English is just a means. (laughs) A lot of things. Today, for example, with the word factory, for them work is down in their lives. working.

R: so you are saying that for your students working is below in the scale of their priorities?

TS2: They didn't even mention it! At all! They mentioned ... I don't remember... animals or...

R: they even mentioned warehouses, prostitution and all that.

TS2: yes. (pause)

R: So what is the role of education in this context?

TS2: basic. Absolutely necessary , they need to come to school, they need to fulfil their basic needs, they need to know a model, they need to learn about to other things, different, they need to learn to speak and not to shout... they keep shouting! Because I suppose in their houses they shout. (TS2)

In a similar fashion, the same type of mechanism seems to be taking place in COS7. In this particular case, the teacher decides to tell the students off but it results in a cosmetic strategy that will keep them silent for some minutes but will not actually address the social needs made evident in the class.

Two boys, Timoteo and Javier, start bothering Natalia. The girl responds offensively.

Natalia: Basuras. Mugre (Rubbish. Grime)

One of the boys: estúpida (stupid)

They continue quarreling in an offensive way. They use slang vocabulary.

T tells the boys off.

[...]

As the class progresses, some ss sing at the back. T asks them to stop singing. Natalia is not copying the tasks. The two boys at the back continue bothering Natalia verbally. They make jokes concerning guns calibers (38 – 22).

Are teachers responsible for not knowing how to manage this gap that makes itself evident through discipline? Are teachers to blame when they generalise as TS2 and TS7 with stigmatizing comments as the ones that follow?

R: In this school context how would you describe knowledge?

TS2: Ahhh knowledge.... they are not interested in learning. they are not interested. they just come here to spend the afternoon, to socialise.

(later in the conversation)

TS2: At least I feel I try every class and I think I obtain some things. they come... some of them can trust me, they tell me lots of things I know lots of things about their families what happens to them, what happens to their parents who are arrested or in jail, who work all day all those things yes... or eventually if one of the girls becomes pregnant, they come to us.... they come to us... perhaps they don't know a lot of English but... they can trust us.

(TS2)

TS7: These kids have got parents who are in jail or with neighbourhood disputes or with drug problems or with family violence. There are all sorts of problems

you can think of. Those problems are here, in this type of school. Here we receive all the population from Villa Catela which is a camp site (asentamiento) which is near here. Many of them collect rubbish, others sell drugs, it is like that. (TS7)

A direct connection with teacher preparation and teaching roles needs to be considered at this point. As analysed in chapter 4, both teachers and heads are deeply aware of the caretaking, pastoral role involved in teaching activity. Even though they might refer to different ESOL teacher identities, either the technician or the professional, they all acknowledge the caretaking dimension of teacher roles, as is the case with TS2 above and TS5 below, holding technician and professional roles respectively.

Children need to be comfortable, at a social level they shouldn't have woken up early to go to work, they should not be undernourished, or with problems at home. A child who is badly nourished, in a place with no window panes, dying of cold, what concentration can you ask for? It is impossible for them to concentrate. What stimulus do you expect? Nothing. It is a whole thing. We live in a society. That is why all aspects affect teaching and learning, not only school. It would be obtuse to think it is only school. (TS5)

In contrast, this is neglected in the discourse of those in charge of policy development with dangerous consequences. For most of them, teachers are defined as “the engine” of social change or as a political agent as stated by PM1 and PM2 only in connection with knowledge and teaching associated only to knowledge development but not to caretaking in the light of the complex social needs of students.

I think the role of teachers is to teach, I think that to teach is to produce thinking in the other, I think that when teachers teach and make children think we have a clear road ahead. [...]

the teacher as a political agent, I think that this is one of the traces of this profile and we believe in continuous teacher education, we want a teacher to study all the time, that is why there is a great system of continuous teacher education in higher education, in ITE new curricular designs are being discussed now, teacher profiles for secondary education, but for secondary education we need teachers with the traits that I said before, with political

commitment , with a bond with students , teachers who study a lot and who like teaching. (PM1)

I am persuaded that in reality, the potentiality of teaching and the potentiality of teachers is key to think about any transformation

[...]

I think it is an engine, I believe the teacher is an engine (PM2)

This disregard of teachers needs made evident through a mismatch between policy maker views and teacher and head teacher views on what their role is like in schools, also emphasised in other related notions such as teacher identities and teacher profiles, generates a gap in teacher education provisions and the ways in which they are devised. No wonder why teacher education is perceived as insufficient and inappropriate, in many of the respondents' answers from the sample teachers and head teachers as is the case with TS1 and HTS7

I think a teacher today should continue learning, not only in terms of knowledge, also in terms of understanding how to construct a bond with students, that is fundamental, because from my experience, if there is not that, there is no way of developing knowledge, learning and vice versa. (TS1)

R: and in relation to teachers, what aspects should teacher education be involved with , what changes and innovations should it include?

HTS7: The group management part, they have lots of problems as regards group management, because I can tell they have huge difficulties. The difficulty to stand in front of a class, I see younger generations graduate and you see they do not tell a student off if they are in class and the student is doing something inappropriate. They ought to be told off. They [teachers] remain standing and they call the head, it makes me laugh and it calls my attention, I wouldn't have ever thought of calling the head for them to organise my class. (HTS7)

All in all, the education provided for both teachers and students is not addressing their needs in full. In the case of students, social needs are neglected. In the case of

teachers, needs of pedagogic knowledge on the caretaker role are being neglected. To sum up, neither students nor teachers have their needs satisfied, in particular those studying and working in the most vulnerable contexts placing social justice at risk.

5.2. What does interaction have to do with it all?

5.2.1. Better behaviours in English led lessons.

Patterns of behaviour in students do not seem to correlate to their social background. In fact, data show that students tend to behave adequately in most of the classrooms observed, that is, according to expected teacher standards, independently of their social or ethnic origin.

In four out of the seven classrooms observed, children come from vulnerable working class contexts as the following field notes reflect:

I walk up the stairs, we hear shouts and curses from several students who are in the alley during the break. A group of students are playing with the food and they throw it about. The walls and furniture are dirty and covered in graffiti. A girl talks shouting. Most of the students seem to belong to neighboring country communities with strong ethnic features. As we get into the room, there are bits of paper scattered around the class. The room is dirty. (COS2)

As I get into the school, classes are about to start. I meet the teacher of the course and we both go to the assembly. Students are lined up inside a big room because it is raining outside. They say the anthem to the national flag. They look serious and respectful, they are all dark haired and dark eyed. Most of them seem to have an indigenous ethnic identity. (COS3)

I get into the classroom and there are twelve 15 year old kids drinking tea and eating slices of bread placed on plates around the classroom. They come from a low social class by the way they are dressed. They are all clean and neatly dressed. There are some with strong ethnic features though not all. (COS4)

The break ends and students come into the classroom. They seem to belong to different social backgrounds, some seem to belong to a working middle class, others to poor lower classes. Most of them are 15 – 16 year old teens. A girl (Natalia) insults a boy (Javier) as they get into the room, she is over-age in the group (17 years old).(COS7)

In all four cases students come from the neighbouring school community, they hold strong ethnic features, they attend schools where spaces are shared with the primary school of the community and they are given a meal at school. And yet, their behaviour and engagement to school is completely different even though teachers are in all cases caring to them and have established a close relationship with the students.

All four schools seem to accommodate the same type of needs as informed by head teachers:

There are many Peruvian, Bolivian or Paraguayan youngsters in the school, who have their own culture, their own literacy and then discrimination turns up in the same classroom [...] and it is not easy to modify that rejection to some issues their classmates do not share. (HTS2)

Students come from distant places, we have two well defined groups, some come from the shanty town setting (asentamiento) from the oil factory. Those are nearer but they have many economic disadvantages, they are big families, assembled families. While the other group of students comes from “La Armonía”, a small village 5 km away... They cross the country side in the mud, we’ve got a great challenge. There is a strong will among students but there are many difficulties and lots of poverty of all kinds. (HTS3)

This community is very, very poor [...] There is no pavement in the neighbourhood. Last Thursday I had to take a student home and I got stuck in the mud with the car. That is why children cannot get out of home. This year, it has rained a lot. Think of the schooling days they have lost. Because all these issues interfere with the child being at school, that influences a lot. (HTS4)

HT: (referring to the problems students bring to school) Addiction to paco (a very dangerous illegal drug derived from cocaine which is used in very poor contexts in Argentina), we advise them to be careful, we give advice, we offer help: youth pregnancy, they start having sex at the age of 12 or 13, we advise them to use protection not just for pregnancy but for illnesses [...] they are lonely and are not heard by their parents, they are not cared for, they are in the streets and the street is dangerous. [...] You have a context of low social classes, working classes and unemployed people. Parents who have not attended secondary education, so they don't know what it is, it is the first secondary school generation that we will have, will be their kids, very young parents who do not establish standards. (HTS7)

Also, all four teachers seem to acknowledge the complexity of the students' backgrounds.

TS2: the people in this community, they work a lot...they maybe...their origin... most of them are greengrocers, and they work from very early in the morning and maybe late at night and maybe they do not have time. They do not come at all.

R: Do they come from neighbouring countries?

TS2: Yes, most of them.

R: Most of them are Bolivian or Peruvian.

TS2: Yes, they are from Paraguay too.

(TS2)

TS3: Another thing could be, again in the context of my school in Arana, it has to do with a question of... let's say... yeah, their family background. Most of my students in this school come from... let's say... I don't want to use a pejorative word but... but yes, from a cultural background... or knowledge background rather than cultural, very low. And this is reflected in the way students behave in the classroom. They think they cannot do it: that they cannot learn English, that they cannot learn History, etc.

R.:Do they come from a vulnerable background?

TS3: Yes, most of them.
(TS3)

TS4: Children come and the first thing they do is have breakfast. You need to give them time for tea and bread to be served. And they are eating and you want to give your class and you cannot start because it is their time to have breakfast. (TS4)

These children have their parents in jail or with neighbourhood disputes or with drug problems or family violence, there are all sorts of problems you can think of in this type of schools. We receive all the population from Villa Catela, which is a sort of shanty town settlement which is over here, with many rubbish gatherers, some sell drugs, it is like that. (TS7)

Yet, completely different patterns of behaviour are evidenced in their lessons. What is noticeable from the data is that indiscipline can be linked to non communicative scaffolds in class. In those teaching contexts in which English teaching does take place using an interactional discourse perspective, students seem to be more motivated to learn. As explained in chapter 1, an interactional perspective is that by means of which meanings are negotiated through the medium of English so as for language development to occur (Ellis, 2003; 2009; García, 2009). Interestingly enough, in all those classrooms with misbehaviour patterns, English is not the medium of communication as is seen in these extracts from the observation field notes:

T: Think about you, think of an example in your life. Yes?

S: vas estudiando de a poco (you study Little by Little)

T: in English

S: You study...

T (completes): little by little, you never stop.

T (completes on board): Never stop when you have problems.

(COS5)

Ss follow the teacher in English. They do not contribute in English. They follow what the teacher says. T asks: "What is your favourite festival?" S: My birthday.

T: What do you do in your birthday?

S: "Me voy por ahí. " (I gang around)

Another student: lo hechan (they dismiss him from home)

Cristina: ehh a quien lo hechan! (Who do they dismisss?!!!)

T continues asking.

Camila: "La fiesta del vino" (The wine celebration - this is a traditional celebration of Berisso)

T asks another student with dark skin and eastern features. Takashiro?

Takashiro: San Fermin (the student is from Peru)

T asks: what is that?

Takashiro: un festival de toros que se hace en Peru. (a bull festival they do in Peru)

(COS4)

T gives instructions in Spanish: "¿Qué estamos viendo? Donde están, la ubicación. Vamos a empezar con esta." (What are we doing? Where they are, the location) The teacher says "The station is ... ¿como decimos que está en la esquina? (how do we say that it is on the corner)The station is.... on the corner of Belgrano Street and 25th Street. T writes sentence on board. T asks: Matías now you read it. Matias reads. T asks: another... (COS2)

Students come to the front and start assembling the pictures.

T: ¿qué otras problemáticas podrían aparecer? (what other problems might appear?)

S: inundaciones (floods)

T: floods. ¿Alguna otra cosa?(Any other thing?)

Ss help one of the girls who is having trouble assembling the puzzle.

T: ¿Se llega a ver qué es? (Is it possible to see what it is?)

S: La tierra (The Earth) (COS7)

The first extract shows how the teacher signposts the English interaction required in the class with the comment “in English and elicits English versions of the utterances produced by students in the classroom interaction. When she receives responses in Spanish she elicits the English form by making a focus on the language used and helping students complete their ideas in English. The second extract shows how interaction on festivals proceeds with the teacher using English and students Spanish. The first exchange reveals that the student could respond in English and would have continued in English if interaction had been scaffolded by the teacher. In contrast, the last two extracts show that both teachers structure the interaction with a Spanish frame, all the English they use is the one constrained to the structure and lexis to be written down on board which are considered as the content of the lesson.

In these last two extracts it is possible to understand the teaching situation in two ways, either the class loses its focus on the subject of the course, English, and students start being disruptive or as a result of students’ misbehaviour, teachers feel they can manage discipline better if they structure the class with a Spanish frame. In any case, Spanish structures the class in groups with disruptive behavior, providing the students in those classes with fewer chances for exposure to English in real use and fewer chances to participate in interactional exchanges in English. In contrast, all lessons structured in English reflect better patterns of behavior, in particular those in which English is the medium of communication.

5.2. 2. The teacher in control.

Most of the interactional exponents found in the schools respond to teacher led interaction patterns. Though the level of students could be considered as the reason for a strong teacher presence in interactions, it is present in all lessons. Also, it is striking

to see that this "controller" role in interaction is more strongly marked when there are cultural and social needs and in more traditional teaching styles.

The following interactional extract recorded in field notes for COS5 shows in black and white how teachers tend to be in control of interaction almost all the time revealing a naturalised understanding of classroom interaction, based perhaps on the no longer valid model of analysis of classroom interaction of the 70s developed by Sinclair and Coulhart (1975) which described classroom interaction in their times as an Initiation-Response- Feedback pattern.

T: Who's the winner?...At the beginning of the story?

Ss: the hare

T: and at the end of the story?

Ss: the tortoise

T: and the rest of the animals, are they happy?

Ss: yes

T: they are happy. Is the end of the story fair?

Ss: yes /no

T: Why yes and why no?

S:

T: who works and works?

S: the tortoise

T: who is fast?

S: the hare

T: the hare is fast but lazy (T explains with gestures the word). And the tortoise is hard working.

You told me at the beginning there is a moral. You wrote that at the beginning of the class. What is the moral? What does it teach? Try to answer in English.

Ss do not answer

T: (insists) come on, come on! She cues: "Slow and"

She continues and writes on board: "Slow and steady" she explains: She doesn't stop.

This interactional pattern of teacher led exchanges is a common feature in all the interactions recorded. This becomes a significant feature if participatory approaches

are being fostered, that is, those English teaching approaches that consider dialogic relationships at their basis and which understand performative competence (Canagarajah, 2013) will be a necessary skill for communication with an international language. If students only respond to interaction initiated by the teacher, role reversal will never take place and linguistic development under performative conditions will be placed at risk.

Similarly, when patterns of interaction go beyond the Initiation-Response-Feedback structure, as is the case with COS6, teacher seems to remain in control. In fact, students have shown in this class that they can initiate interactions themselves at the beginning of the lesson through the following exchange:

S: Teacher, would you like to put the projector here?

T: No, it's ok. It's a bit distorted but it's clear. Alvaro, have you got your memory stick?

S: Yes.

The students finally convince the teacher to settle the projector in a better position. All this is done in English. One of the students is late.

There are students listening to the presentation as well as the teacher and yet, the teacher is the only one who asks questions, as if his role was to constantly ask questions. In this case, questions aim at scaffolding further, at helping students expand their comments. However, this could be achieved with the help of other students who are the audience of this presentation as well as the teacher. They could ask questions.

T: There are a lot of new words. Can you tell us about those words?

T: Is there anything else you want to say about physical symptoms?

S: Yes, debility all day

T: Ah! Weakness. The person is weak all day. Anything else?

S: Rigid personality

T: What do you mean?

S:

T: Is it connected to something else?

S starts reading from the powerpoint some of the other mental symptoms.

T: Did you see any of these symptoms with the Morgan film?

S: Yes, he was lazy.

T: Did he attempt to commit suicide?

S: No but the relationship with the girlfriend...

T: Was it good?

S: No, bad.

Another student comes to the front and says: "I'm talk about associations"

T: Ah, the institutions.

Interestingly enough, it is only in COS6 where students initiate interaction and this occurs just once. In all other field notes, teachers are the ones who initiate and manage interaction at all times. Interaction in control of the teacher occurs notwithstanding the languages used, since it occurs when the interaction is led exclusively in English (COS1, COS6), mostly in English (COS3, COS5), with teacher speaking English and students Spanish (COS5, COS3) or mostly in Spanish (COS2, COS7).

When referring to the school documents analysed, it is noticeable to find that only two of the documents register student autonomy strategies explicitly stated in the instructional plan of teachers as noticed in chapter 4, SD1 and SD3, in close relationship with the type of teaching approach fostered by the teachers of these classes.

What is the reason for this lack of autonomy building framework in most classrooms? What is the reason for this pervasive teacher led interaction and how does it affect the ways in which students appropriate English? Recurrent authoritarian patterns are seen in classroom. Interaction, as is built, places at risk all possibility of change in the ways knowledge is constructed (Daniels, 2012; Baker, 2012). As Mc Laren (1998) points out, language is a complex element in pedagogic interaction. It is the means whereby hegemonic practice can be conveyed. If those involved in knowledge building practices of a lesson cannot hold a voice in the construction of knowledge, no true learning communities will develop for the "south development" (Thomas et al, 2011; Thomas, 1995) purposes of policy implementation described in chapter 1.

5.2.3. Passive re cognition or active use? What does interaction reveal about contradictions between policies and politics of knowledge?

While policies suggest that language should be learned in use, only 4 out of 7 classrooms encourage language use on the part of the students and just one is exponent of student initiated interaction. Just one of the seven classrooms reveals students using English beyond the phrase level. This fact evidences deep clashes between policies and politics of knowledge. In chapter 2 a distinction was drawn between policies and politics. Mouffe's definition of politics was considered as the notion supporting the theoretical basis of this thesis. Such notion refers to politics as those practices and institutions that establish or create knowledge. In contrast, the term policy is used to mean "texts and 'things' (legislation and national strategies) but also [as] discursive processes that are complexly configured, contextually mediated and institutionally rendered" (Mouffe, 2005: 9). The way in which these policies are enacted, that is, interpreted and conveyed through actual practices, that is what we call politics. What I intend to say is that there are various politics of knowledge when contextualizing the single policy of knowledge, these being diverse forms of interpreting, translating or even ignoring these texts and discourses in actual practice.

In addition, while policies aim at including the most vulnerable and bridging the social divide, this social divide is maintained if we consider that students in school 6, with the highest social class intake, are the only ones of the sampled schools who show literacy in English to access and participate in the construction of knowledge as described in chapter 1.

This clash in what is expected to occur in different contexts becomes more evident, for example when comparing the types of tasks developed by different teachers from the sample irrespective of the state – private distinction. For example, while TS7 expects just recognition, TS3 is expecting active use.

T writes down more words on board placing them within six circles. Ss have to match the word circles to the previous pictures.

Heat climate change global warming

*Pollution carbon dioxide smog
e-waste rubbish litter
water shortage drinking water water quality
factories toxic chemicals industries
human activities deforestation environment*

*Some ss do not understand what they must do. T approaches and explains
in Spanish*

(COS7)

*T passes on to another poem, as he hands out the copies he goes about
and asks several students "Have you got a dog or a cat?" One of the
students, a girl, does not respond, T insists with a smile, S responds with a
word "Yes" T insists, "A dog or a cat" S finally says "dog"*

(COS3)

The sample lessons observed show that in some schools the teaching strategies of teachers aim at students only understanding English while in others, active production is fostered. This understanding is frequently called "passive recognition" in the ESOL bibliography and accounts for those teaching approaches focused on the development of the four skills as separated compartments within communicative competence. These approaches were often used in certain parts of the world, as is the case in Argentina, to teach students to read and understand texts from the disciplines. The teaching of English was focused on the development of reading comprehension, that is, language was learned for passive recognition when reading.

What is the result in terms of participation in the construction of knowledge in the knowledge society? Ideologically, teaching English for passive recognition bears a set of colonial associations since someone who can only understand cannot convey personal meanings (Canagarajah, 1998; 2013; Kumaravadivelu, 2003; 2006). Behind the notion of passive understanding there is an assumption that students will passively receive knowledge and will not participate in its construction. In literacy terms, it renders students illiterate since, as described in chapter 1, literacy is the sustained mastery of a repertoire of practices with oral, written and multimedia texts used for different purposes in different contexts (Anstley and Bull, 2009, Gee, 1999; Lankshear and Knobel, 2011; Rowsell, 2013).

Although all respondent teachers of the sample group define literacy development in the ways described above, their practices restrict the scope of literacy development to a reading and decoding understanding of literacy. Such assumption bears relationships with a self fulfilling prophecy of certain teachers working in the most vulnerable contexts with a low home educational climate (as described in chapter 2), where parents are in most cases illiterate. Teachers do not seem to expect the lowest social sectors to overcome their cradle fate. Even worse, they do not understand their neglect is a restriction in the satisfaction of their students' right to education in the terms and conditions established by international regulatory norms (e.g. UNESCO). The students are effectively disempowered, therefore. Yet, it is even worse when teachers acknowledge this restriction and even naturalise it coldly as is the case with TS7:

R: Do you think it is important for citizens to be fluid in English in this Argentine context?

T:No

R:What is it necessary to know how to do in English?

T: To be able to understand is important, even though they cannot produce, to be able to understand. What happens with this is the same as I was saying, I return to the same, I think there are two poles. There is one cultural group who, yes, it is important for them, to whom it is relevant , who will be able to use it, and another group who no, within state schools, within the same age group. I think so, that there are those who will be able more and those, like, those that we already know won't be able to, somewhat like they are predetermined, and these kids tell you , "what do I need it, I do not know how to speak Spanish, I do not know how to write in Spanish and you want us... that is, they make it explicit like that, in a very clear way.

Is this an isolated example? Not really. The data show a correlation between those teachers who expect passive recognition from their teaching practices in terms of their discourse. Even though they acknowledge literacy is the aim of schooling, they say they expect just reading understanding. They also act upon it in class as the ultimate aim of their teaching even though their annual plans report different aims -probably

parroting the legal regulations they are expected to comply with- as is evident in these extracts. However, they are not the only ones. Those who still work for active use do not expect students to be able to use productive skills. This is the case with TS3 who says:

How do you understand someone who is fluent?

TS3: *Well, that depends on the context where the foreign language is being used. If it is in Argentina, probably... well, it depends. It is more likely that students have to read English than speak in English for instance, so I think that a fluent reader is someone who can read a text here in Argentina, at school, or a magazine, adolescents reading a magazine in English about music, let's say, or if they go to the university, being able to read a text and understand the text. Probably not being able to speak fluently but reading fluently. So it depends... probably we can take the four ??? skills in this sense, so, perhaps not being fluent in the four skills but some of them, depending on their need.*

In our sample, three teachers out of seven expect passive recognition. Making matters worse, they are all teachers working in the vulnerable contexts. In brief, what I am reporting here is the devoicing practices that are to be found in many of the schools with vulnerable students while the students attending private institutions participate in English interaction and can even initiate the interaction themselves. Teacher intervention in the samples shows some students are likely to actively produce discourse while others will remain with a passive understanding of English in the best of cases.

The naïve picture presented by Gvirtz et al (2008) in their narrative of the contrasting lives of two school children in Argentina is much more sinister than the report of what children in different social sectors do depending on their schooling chances. It places at risk their rights today and their future as citizens. The divide between the included and the excluded widens.

What is the reason for such low expectations on the part of teachers? In what ways do they relate to a different cultural background? The clue seems to be in the distance between teachers' and students' cultural backgrounds. This distance that they themselves bring to the learning context cannot be neglected. They are exponents of a

different cultural identity, one which is professional middle class with a cultural knowledge capital and cultural practices that distance them from the students' cultural capital and their families in vulnerable contexts. Two worlds meet in school. These are the two worlds that TS2 refers to when she says:

T: It's not because it's state or private you can do different things, you do the same things, you have to adapt them and well the level you can reach is different but things can be used in both worlds, in both contexts, absolutely the same things.

R: You somehow feel they are two different worlds.

T: They are different, it should be one (laughs) it should be one... they coexist outside school they coexist.

R: So there is your idea of inclusion?

T: Yes... definitely. (TS2)

From a post method pedagogic perspective, these two worlds come together in educational institutions bringing about huge potential for social change. Yet, under the institutional conditions this occurs, change undertakes different forms other than knowledge changes for systems of innovation and development, inclusion or intercultural understanding. Why is this happening?

As regards ESOL, the long standing tradition of method based prescriptions in the ESOL community in Argentina is partly what makes postmethod pedagogies difficult to grasp for teachers in the local context. The conceptual framework that has traditionally guided ESOL teacher education in Argentina, as in most other parts of the world, has been based on the concept of method (Richards and Rogers, 2001; Holliday, 2005; Kumaravadivelu, 2003; 2006) developing an ESOL tradition difficult to overcome. However, that does not seem to be the only reason why postmethod is resisted in institutional contexts as analysed above.

With reference to this, Akbari (2008: 4) rightly argues that "by trying to include more of the realities of learners and learning context in its formulation (in the form of pedagogies of particularity and possibility), the postmethod discourse has lost sight of the reality of teaching and teachers' lives and has made the implementation of pedagogy of practicality (which is, in a sense, the practical culmination of the two other

pedagogies) problematic, if not impossible.” In his discussion, Akbari (Ibid, 2008) refers to some of the difficulties teachers face in the profession around the world. He mentions, among others, tight administrative frameworks (restricting teacher autonomy, decision making and authority), precarious hiring conditions (making teachers work long hours to earn a poor salary), rigid textbook accountability in many institutional settings (where teachers are forced to use specific textbooks in class) and lack of professional preparation and/or willingness to cover a postmethod agenda. What are the limiting realities of teachers and educational institutions in the province of Buenos Aires?

5.3. Two worlds meeting in anarchic circumstances.

Among the contextual circumstances of policy implementation, the data gathered reveal a set of interrelated problems in policy implementation as will be discussed in the following subsections. These interrelated problems are the ones I call the *NO possibility conditions* since they attempt against inclusive policies and allow for no possibilities in the most vulnerable environments. No possibility conditions are the ones traced in the analytic framework as those creating conditions for what Freire (1970) described as a banking type of education, with little space for real utopias, that is, the “transformation of structures in ways that challenge inequalities” (Flecha, 2011: 14).

5.3.1 NO resources.

A neglect of the material resources necessary for institutions to function adequately, namely infrastructure and teaching resources places institutions in very complicated situations at the time of actually managing their educational function. These material resources range from the necessary books and bibliography to the actual school building. State lack of support with infrastructure and resources aiming at the wellbeing and respect of basic human needs (eg. warmth in cold weather) opens up a bigger gap between state and private institutions. If a child comes from a shanty town home as some of these children do – as mentioned earlier in this chapter - where they lack glass panes on windows, or a heater in winter in their homes and school does not have heaters or window panes or depends on donations to function, school is the expression of vulnerability itself. As crudely as HTS2 says:

When school is constructed on the basis of donations, I am sitting on this chair, it was donated, but all of what there is here [has been donated]. And

any road taken by a school is taken on the donation way. That piece of furniture is a donation. If the Ministry of Education establishes a curriculum and a production for the 21st century and it hasn't got the resources, it hasn't got the means to implement that, then there is a failure, isn't there? Because good will is not always enough to cope with deficiencies of the system. They do not give us, not even chalk and dusters, not even the essential things, that is what parents and students claim for. (HTS2)

This pervasive absence of resources is present in all the state schools of the sample and becomes even more noticeable in the lower working class and vulnerable contexts. Out of five state schools three do not function in their own buildings and the remaining two require immediate construction of further spaces to work. In contrast, private institutions show impeccable buildings, with gardens and ball room like halls. No wonder why HTS3 does not feel accompanied enough and why HTS1 feels her dreams have been vanished.

This neglect of infrastructure and resources also distances teachers in terms of the material resources they have among institutions, some teachers will count on the latest technology to use in class while others will even lack chalk to write on board. As HTS2 adds to the previous comment, this will impact on the type of educational provision provided:

I think that what fails is this issue of resources. We are still with chalk when the way of teaching should be reformulated with means other than the chalk. (HTS2)

HTS2 is clearly referring to the issue of technology that the legal framework proclaims as central in schooling today and that policy makers highlight and connect with social justice, being this extract from PM1's contribution an example of it:

I think there is a great effort to access to technology, I think this is not for technology in itself but for the notion of citizenship because today it is a right as it used to be in its own historical time to know how to read and write, it is a right and it became so as from the printing press, now I think the access to present technologies is so.

In addition, the possibility to access and interact with different worlds other than the ones present in the class by means of technology is vanished in many of the classrooms studied due to lack of resources. When considering the relationship between ESOL - knowledge – technology , in the analytic framework of this thesis, only two of the teachers (TS 3 and TS6) reveal a fluent use of ICT in the class both through their class plans as well as the ways in which ICT is integrated as a classroom resource. Even though much has been invested in the distribution of *Connecting Equality* netbooks, most of the classrooms show those very much expected resources have not yet reached most of the sample schools studied in this research work.

5.3.2. NO support beyond individual endeavor and capacity.

A *lessai faire* strategy of project implementation is revealed in the analysis carried out in chapter 4, by means of which innovative projects are encouraged almost exclusively by teachers and head teachers when they are willing to, if they are willing to. This apparent freedom of choice can be understood as a dangerous neglect of children's rights to quality education from policy making sectors. When policy implementation depends on individual creativity of heads and teachers, inequality is the result. When head teachers acknowledge that it all depends on them, they are also acknowledging a *lessai faire* mechanism from central levels that will allow for some to do their best to find solutions to institutional problems of different kinds while others will not.

I believe that there are all sorts of possibilities, but it's because it is my personal hope, I think this is an individualistic issue, it is part of this of going out and looking for things to change. This is a very poor community, for students to go on a field trip we do raffles, there are many things to do but you have no resources [...] I would love to do much more. (HTS4)

The head teacher is seen at policy making levels as a leader of change and is dangerously placed in the position of the escape goat. Heads will be the ones to praise if things go well, and the ones to blame if things go wrong.

PM1: (when asked about leading changes in schools) I think that is the role of institutions and teachers and head teachers fundamentally, when you

have a leading team in the institution who know clearly what they want, it is much easier.

PM2: Many institutions have these conditions of work because there is an institutional leader, which in general is the managing team, they generate conditions, in spite of all, to carry out a different project.

While policy makers define head teachers as the ideological leaders of knowledge changes, HTS3's metaphor of the head of the school as the orchestra conductor is revealing. She is placing herself in a position of leadership. Yet, this leadership is exercised in contexts constrained by resources. This transforms the role of the head into the most exposed one of the institution. The head becomes the target, the visible face of school as an institution in front of the whole community and at the same time the head is a neglected partner of educational policies through limitations of resources allocated by central authorities.

I do not feel lonely but I don't feel very much supported, either. Because there are many things that are not OK here, I have been claiming them and I have not had any response. And one goes on with what one has, but one asks to central levels and central levels pay a deaf ear, they cannot solve it or I don't know what the matter is with them. For example, a clear concrete reality that we have here is that we haven't got our own building and we have asked endlessly and we haven't had an answer. We see there are money drips to other places where they are not in need and us, who are putting forwards something concrete for this community, which is, to have our own building, our own school, a secondary school of 6 years, we now have only 3. When children finish their third year they have to change school and they suffer, there is no response. (HTS3)

5.3.3. NO impact preview of policy application in schools.

School documents are passed and norms are generated without measuring the impact in actual contexts of application. This is noticed by heads, in particular, when they say:

We are constantly receiving communications, requests for statistics or reports of some of the things that we have to implement that are impossible

in practice, because undoubtedly those planning those things in offices are sitting behind their desks, they do not come to the field and that does not address the reality of schools [...] then, after having sent the form to fill in they say there was a mistake and they are all the time correcting mistakes because as I was telling you... planning is done inside an office and it is not always possible to apply it to the reality of schools. (HTS3)

Sometimes one has the feeling that the things they send you top down, they are theoretical, that is , that one who is sitting down develops a theory that then in practice is very unlikely to be instrumented, for example, the new academic regime.(HTS4)

This feeling HTS4 reports seems to question the ways in which policies are developed. It is evident that these curricular decisions are imposed, sent top down without adequate analysis of their impact in actual contexts of application. This fact shows political and ideological conditionings are translated into normative procedures by means of which central authorities in trying to comply with a global flow of ideas, most of them imposed by international agencies (Beech, 2009; 2006), develop a policy framework without much consideration of the contextual constraints of their application. Power relations are in consequence established, that is, those relations driven by symbolic force, not argumentation (Searle and Soler, 2004). In that power relationship heads perceive policies and norms as the result of authoritarian trends, distant from the dialogic relations required in social transformation (Flecha, 2011).

The consequence is then the natural one: resistance. Most of the heads acknowledge they “adapt” them to their own contexts when faced with the dilemma, as is explicated by HTS2:

Even though there is a doctrine prescribed within what is considered a law, this needs to adapt with huge particularity to the educational community to which it is being applied, it is not always a complete transposition of the law, that is to say, adaptation is required. (HTS2)

This leads us to think that the law, in a similar fashion to that of any speech act (Searle, 1969) will carry an illocutionary force, that is, a communicative purpose that will be understood differently by different heads in different contexts, being its perlocutionary force diverse as its interlocutors and contexts are. This mechanism operating in the way laws are considered by school agents resembles Hoyle and Wallace’s (2005)

notion of “working around” policies and Shain and Gleeson’s (1999) notion of “strategic compliance”.

5.3.4. NO co-ordination leading to NO common of objectives.

As shown by the data analysed in chapter 4, a diversity of teacher backgrounds and identities leading to diversified readings of policies, the coexistence of sometimes contradictory practices and objectives are the common features to be found in schools. Also, in the presence of those contradictory practices, little authoritative control can be exercised on the part of heads, as HTS4 explains:

One would expect a younger teacher was more reflexive, one would expect her to rethink things. If you keep giving classes in the way you always have, and you see it doesn't work, well... I think you have to restate your task and say: "well, something should be happening here that is not going on". In this context, I think that that is a moment of crisis, if that does not occur I think that it is like you play a cassette and go on and the ones who listen, fine! Those who don't, fine as well! I think that with that teacher it is very difficult to reflect, with others it is. Some things can be achieved with some, but not with all.
(HTS4)

This in turn leads to a deepening of differences among educational institutions as is noticed by several respondents. This view is shared by teachers, for example T3 says:

TS3: What I see is that probably there's no official coordination in the province of Buenos Aires, so this is also what teachers are demanding, a sort of coordination, so that all teachers plan in the same way, the same approach, and when students are promoted to another course, another level, they do not suffer this change. And there is a contradiction sometimes, because authorities highlight the importance of English in schools, the importance of knowing foreign languages, but in practice sometimes English is just an additional subject, not another subject in the curriculum as it is stated in the curricular design.

HTS4 refers to disconnectedness between policies and actual practices among institutions of the state to help develop systems of innovation and development from educational sectors. As a head of a school in a district area near one of the most productive petrol refineries of the country:

There is an idea of articulation with the university, with pre-employment experiences. For example, students have been doing practices in the lab of the school of medicine, what I do not know is whether there is a close relationship with the needs of the country or with how the country is developing and what type of students we are developing. I am not completely sure about that. Say, for example, OK, we need engineers, so let's work on that area. (HTS4)

A lack of educational coordination among schools beyond the administrative level with no evaluation of pedagogic teaching activity or student performance is embedded in this comment and is dangerously absent in the discourse of most educational agents interviewed.

An added issue that has been highlighted by its absence in the data is the little liaison of communities and neighbourhoods where schools are with the pedagogic action of schools and how their participation in coordinated action with schools can generate transformative conditions in marginalized places. As shown by latest research in the field of sociology of education (Aubert, 2011; Flecha, 2011) community participation in educational projects is fundamental to guarantee democratic socialization. The experience of municipal schools in Porto Alegre, as reported by Gandin and Apple (2002; 2012), shows that participation of school communities in the creation as well as the implementation of policies is crucial for a progressive education reform in a Latin American setting among vulnerable populations. This participation entails discussions on what counts as knowledge as well as on the needs to be addressed by the curriculum. Also, lack of participation in school councils is seen, in the light of this project, as a serious challenge that can “threaten the quality of the experience as a socially just educational system” (Ibid,2012: 633).

5. 4. A system of education walking in circles: signals of alarm

Bernstein points out that the pedagogic device “is a condition for the production, reproduction and transformation of culture” (Bernstein, 1996: 52). If contextual rules are required to understand the local communication that a pedagogic device has, these *NO possibility conditions* can be considered as those affecting contextual rules through which the meanings of the pedagogic device will be understood in the province of Buenos Aires by acquirers, that is, those stakeholders in contexts of policy application.

In the context of this research which focuses on educational change, those *NO possibility conditions* of application can count as the contextual conditions neglected by policy makers as reproducers or recontextualizers of the pedagogic device produced by international agencies. The analytic framework of this thesis shows that the recontextualisation of the pedagogic device as studied in depth for ESOL education in the context of this research, is far from problematic and needs to be understood within educational policies as a whole. The analysis developed rings signals of alarm for the policy innovation which aims at social justice and provides a crude response to the research questions posed in chapter 2.

The mismatch between policies and politics in the Province of Buenos Aires results in anarchic conditions of work in schools due to a neglect of the factors described by Levin and Fullan (2008) as explained in section 1.1. of this thesis. A neglect of the diverse conditions of application of educational reform results in its failure due to the inexorable reproduction of inequality evidenced in schooling without learning, the ghettoisation of schools and effective ESOL education restricted to upper social classes. Under these recontextualisation strategies which neglect those conditions, the ideological dimension of innovation is cancelled and with it, the possibility of creating activist identities (Souto Manning, 2010) among oppressed sectors of society. The data gathered to respond to the research questions of this thesis result appalling as will be synthesised as follows.

5.4. 1. What is the politics of knowledge in the present political context of the province of Buenos Aires?

- A set of incoherent and disconnected practices based on diverse perspectives on policy implementation among different stakeholders with little space for dialogic relations causing schooling without learning and transforming some schools into ghettos.

Such politics of knowledge work against the principles of the common framework for curricular policies mentioned in chapter 1 due to a failure in sustaining educational change to "reculture" (Fullan, 2007; Wedell, 2011) those agents involved in the change process. In consequence, school becomes a place of power relations constraining knowledge appropriation and production, devaluing participation, neglecting cultural diversity as a resource and reproducing discriminatory and stigmatization mechanisms.

5.4.2. How does ESOL teacher identity as an agent of the state evolve and change in a political context that places teacher enquiry and reflection at the foreground of school innovation in the province of Buenos Aires?

- Little changes are seen at ESOL methodological levels in contexts of application with reflexivity seen as a necessary asset in teacher knowledge but not being central to the roles enacted and the profiles required in institutional settings.

If English is *sine qua non* to participate in the construction and distribution of knowledge in the knowledge society, then the possibility of knowledge participation remains in the hands of those who always had the chance. In the samples of the study, ESOL multiliteracy development remains restricted to those who historically have accessed it. English, in the most vulnerable contexts, remains an instrument to passively receive knowledge rather than participate in its construction and distribution in an international context. The particularity, practicality and possibility dimensions required for an empowering approach to ESOL, as explained in chapter 1 of this thesis, are absent in the most vulnerable contexts. Postmethod pedagogies remain theoretical in most of the schools studied since little adjustment is made to the teachers' "day-to-day perceptions of ourselves and personal and professional relationships with others" (Fullan, 2011: 9). Also, teachers' theoretical knowledge is not guiding teachers' inquiry in actual contexts of application cancelling possibilities of strategic experimentation and risk taking beyond established routines of work (Padwad and Dixit, 2011).

5.5. And yet...

And yet, beyond the analysis of inequalities, some of these classrooms engrain the seed of change. Though in dispersed ways, sample schools show potential for change in students, teachers and head teachers as the key actors in educational reform. Some of the classrooms show great potential for real utopias to occur by breaking the logics of power relations reproduction as inexorable (Flecha, 2011) among different social sectors with diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

The seed of change seems to be in students in a plethora of forms. When TS5 is giving her class, students' fluid pronunciation makes the researcher suspect there is much more in students' competences than the capacity to utter isolated words. When students request TS3 to show a specific picture, they reveal a deep interest in sharing English to interact on issues that are of relevance to them and their communities. English becomes relevant to convey their own culture specific meanings, their own interests, their own needs:

The teacher starts showing photos of a cat, a sheep, etc. As they proceed the students look highly interested in the animals. Most of the students have a rural background, they listen attentively to Ruben's descriptions of his animals. He says for example: This is my sheep. He is called Moyano. You know why? Because he protests, like Hugo Moyano (a trade union leader in Argentina)" Teacher elicits vocabulary from students. As he opens up the files ss want Ruben to open specific files such as Kathy (Ruben's dog) He tells them that the head of the school gave it to him as a present. (COS3)

When the girl in Class 1 responds joking " Obviously, we are very intelligent (and makes a teenage gesture meaning "cool")" to TS1 who comments on their sitting next to the fan on a hot day... we know some students are making English their own in our system of education. They are using English to go beyond referential meanings towards representational language uses, to create effects with language, using English as a resource for communication rather than as a school subject to comply with:

Ss are very participatory. They respond all the time in English at the request of the teacher.

During the classroom interaction T points at some girls and says: You are privileged there with the fan. (It is very hot)

S: Obviously, we are very intelligent (and makes a teenage gesture meaning "cool") (COS1)

. These examples in student responses encourage me to think there is possibility.

Also, teachers engrain the seed of change in multiple ways. Even though constructing teaching identities from different theoretical standpoints other than the prescribed socio cultural one, they all remain to view their activity as an empowering transformative action (Giroux 1988). Transformative action identified in how teachers want to have an impact in their students' lives and possibilities as is the case with TS2 and TS3:

R: : In terms of the new ideas that have been around in teacher education and in the curricular designs, how do you as a teacher embrace these ideas as part of a political agenda?

T: The question of inclusiveness?

R: Ahh!

T: I think it's right. Absolutely, they have to have the same chances as the girl mentioned she will study Medicine and she will do it if she wants she will, but she has to have the chance, the opportunity, we have to give it to her [...]I hope to be sowing a small grain, to contribute for the students real life, that they have to study which is the only way out to get a good job, to have a good family and to have a life that can be really proud of. I think that I can contribute to that from English and in Spanish, too. sometimes I resort to Spanish because we need to do it and they listen, one talks to them and they listen, I think I can do that. (TS2)

T: I'm thinking about, well, thinking in... let's say in... ten years' time... those adolescents, what kind of persons are they going to be? Are they going to be well equipped to face life, to face a job?

R.: In the knowledge society.

T.: In the knowledge society. I mean...Will they be literate? So that they have... tools to face life, to face the government, to make their decisions when they vote. I'm very worried about this because probably we are not seeing the

consequences of it now, because this is happening now, but in the future? What kind of adults are we going to have? (TS3)

The data analysed also show most teachers not resigning their key role in social change and their capacity to withstand NO possibility conditions without losing hope as is the case with TS4:

T: The new curricular design proposes working with technology and with other resources children do not have the possibility to access to, for example to work with netbooks, to work with netbooks I bring my own netbook and show them videos for them to be able to see them even though there are no resources in the school.(TS4)

There is once again possibility in this appreciation of their identity as transformative practitioners in the responsibility they show towards student learning and future opportunities.

Finally, even though head teachers find their positions at stake with all the limitations they have, their ethical commitment to professional activity remains the same. This commitment to students' welfare and learning makes HTS7 say:

"Beyond all the inconveniences we have on a daily basis with specific cases of students who are at risk, we work out all that is possible, as if these were kids of higher social classes, for me there is no inequality in that, for me they are the best, and the best need to learn." (HTS7)

The seed for change seems to be there, for our society to sow it in fertile soil provided that key agents do what needs to be done. Policy makers are the recontextualising agents with the responsibility to create the *SI possibility conditions*, that is, those conditions in which supported interaction, based on dialogic relations generate the conditions for social interaction and transformation. *SI possibility conditions* acknowledge that human agency can challenge structure provided that participatory cultures are developed and supported. The task of creating the *SI possibility conditions* would demand:

- The prospective re-centering of identities as a main contextualisation strategy of policy implementation, empowering communities in the process of creating prospective identities grounded in the future, not the past.

As Bernstein (1996: 76) explains: “the narratives of constructing new becoming of prospective identities create a new basis for social relations, for solidarities and for oppositions.” This prospective re-centering of identities is possible if two crucial actions take place in institutional settings: if their problems and dilemmas are voiced through participatory bodies from bottom up, from schools to central level administration and if there is the participation of different sectors in the communities, enacting thus education as a responsibility of all.

These participatory bodies are not present in institutional settings today, as pointed out by several respondents and strongly emphasised by T1 when he says:

T: Lack of dialogue from the State makes me really angry. I can understand that sometimes there are too many claims and sometimes those claims are not fair, but still the lack of dialogue makes me angry, that is, the absence of a round table to sit down and say "well, let's try to solve the priorities"... and I am not thinking of teachers' salaries! (TS1)

This brings us back to Wedell's (2011) assertion cited in chapter 1 of this thesis when he points out the need to view educational change as a process that necessarily involves the interaction of different people in different roles inside and outside the system of education for it to be successful.

- The creation of context bound provisions with meditational tools sensitive to the everyday realities of educators in schools within communities of practice in which different institutional roles are enacted.

These provisions require thinking of the ways in which relationships, concepts and materials interact to bridge the zone of proximal development of teacher knowledge basis considering their present development in the social contexts in which they develop their professional activity. Such a strategy would require the creation of mentoring systems that would operate at individual and collective levels in institutions. It would also require facilitating materials that can challenge pedagogic thinking at the time of practice. As Apple (2011: 24) suggests, “one way of responding to this issue is

to publish books and material that provide critical answers to teachers' questions about 'What do I do on Monday?'.

Some of the respondents make explicit references to the need of a mentoring system developed in institutional settings to aid connect theory and practice, as is the case of HTS 6 when she says:

" What would I do in those teacher education courses? teachers would only pass the courses once they are observed and given feedback in actual classes, so as to see how much of what teachers have learned off school is applied in practice. They are not making the relationship between theory and practice at the moment, the knowledge they gain remains in abstract knowledge. " (HTS6)

Also, references to the development of context bound materials providing critical answers to teachers's questions, for example, in terms of appropriateness for our school audiences, is pointed out by TS7 who says:

" It is of no use to borrow something that is not useful for the place where I am (teaching)... for example, to incorporate people who speak Guaraní, for example, in the texts that are distributed in schools, there is a text that was distributed by the Programme of Languages where Guaraní is present... I work at a school where I have Paraguayan kids (whose mother tongue is Guaraní) ... I think it is important because they feel valued." (TS7)

5.6. Concluding remarks.

The main contribution of this thesis in terms of analysis of present educational change agenda in the Province of Buenos Aires is the notion that the mismatch between policies and politics of knowledge resulting from what I call the *NO possibility conditions*, create anarchic conditions of work in schools and the inexorable reproduction of inequality. The failures presented in educational change by neglecting key factors in a large scale reform agenda, as explained before in this chapter, are evidenced in schooling without learning, the ghettoisation of schools and effective ESOL education restricted to upper social classes.

As regards a further contribution of this thesis beyond mere analysis, I explored two central features required by *SI possibility conditions*, that is, those that would support interaction to create and sustain participatory cultures in schools and that would allow

for successful innovation and change. These conditions intend to be propositional in the belief that my research, as an exponent of academic work and the expression of my own agency in society, can contribute to attain the ultimate goal of those who, like me, believe utopias can help us invent new spaces, “as a matter of innermost urgency” (Zizek, 2005) in search of social justice.

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7. Appendices

Appendix 1



Appendix 2

Educational plans to compensate for non attendance to mainstream education.

Programme	Area in charge	Component	Addressed to
Provincial plan to finish studies and return to school.	Provincial Office of Secondary Education	Termination of Secondary School (Former COAs)	Young people and adults who have attended secondary education but have not finished because they have pending subjects. (2008)
		Returning to School (Former COAs)	Young people who have attended secondary school and have dropped out and want to compensate for pending subjects and finish school. (2008)
	Provincial Office of Adult Education	FinEs Secondary Education (second stage 2010)	Young people and adults over 18 who have not finished secondary school and in particular those working in "Argentina Trabaja" cooperatives or who are unionised in their jobs.(2010)
		FinEs Primary Education (second	Young people and adults over 18 who

		stage 2010)	did not finish primary school and want to finish this educational level through different educational modes (eg. distance learning) (2010)
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These differential educational provisions have the following objectives by law:

- *To introduce to the system of education those youths and adults who have abandoned their studies because they have pending subjects or curricular spaces so that they can finish their secondary studies.*
- *To develop possibilities for reentry to school, coaching those students in their school trajectories through a specific institutional and curricular space allowing the completion of their secondary studies.*
- *To define and implement school formats making existing institutional models more flexible to generate spaces for teaching and learning that address the diversity of situations presented by teenagers, youths and adults in the province of Buenos Aires*

(DGCyE, Resolución 4122/08)

Appendix 3

Levels of Attainment as established by the Common European Framework (2001) as expected in Formal Schooling in the Province of Buenos Aires.

<p>A1</p> <p>(By the end of Primary Education)</p>	<p>Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce himself/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.</p>
<p>A2</p> <p>(By the end of Basic Secondary education-Year BSE3)</p>	<p>Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of higher background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.</p>
<p>B1</p> <p>(By the end of Secondary Education)</p>	<p>Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.</p>

Appendix 4

A. Interviews for Heads of schools

As regards educational agenda in general:

- What are the needs of our society that we need to address from an institution such as yours?
- In relation to the social needs of citizens in the Province, what educational policies do you think are being fostered from the state? Which ones are the most relevant for you? Why?
- What relevant changes in educational policies can you identify in the last 5 years that have impacted at institutional levels? In what ways have they impacted on your institution?

As regards definitions of knowledge in relation to development

- What definition of knowledge is being embraced in educational institutions such as yours? Which one do you embrace as the head of the school?
- How would you define the politics of knowledge in the present political context of the province of Buenos Aires?
- What is the relationship between knowledge and schooling?
- How do you understand the relationship between knowledge and technology? Is this relationship an important issue in your institution? Why?
- How would you describe the relationship between knowledge, education and national development as seen from your institution?
- Is there a regional or international drive that is being addressed? What ideas are driving educational change in Argentina as part of a regional policy of knowledge in Latin America?

As regards literacy and ESOL

- How would you define literacy today in the provincial educational strategy in contrast to other definitions?
- How do literacy policies relate to knowledge distribution and construction in the knowledge society?
- How does literacy relate to an inclusive and intercultural policy?
- In what way do global ideas on literacy development impact on the work done in institutions such as yours?
- What innovations should be introduced with reference to literacy processes at institutional levels? Do you feel you have autonomy to apply?
- What global ideas on literacy development should be adopted and which ones adapted within such policy in the Province of Buenos Aires?
- What is the role of English in the educational institutions of the Province of Buenos Aires before this political agenda?
- How do you assess English teaching in your institution?
- To what extent, do you think, are innovative ideas on literacy and ESOL education developed in your institution? Why?
- What participation do other stakeholders have in the process of institutional change? (students, parents, supervisors)

As regards institutional contexts

- How do you think these ideas on knowledge and literacy change in specific contexts of application, in real classrooms?
- What role do you assign to educational institutions to lead the educational changes requested by central educational administration?
- How would you define your role as the Head of the school?

- What capacity for change do institutions such as yours have in the present context? Why?
- How is this capacity for change supported by ministry strategies? What strategies with institutions do you think are being fostered?
- What contradictions can you identify between the decisions made at central levels and the world of our institutions?

As regards teachers and teacher education

- How would you define the role of teachers in this political context?
- What teacher identities and profiles are required in this educational context? What is an ideal teacher like?
- What type of teacher education provisions need to be guaranteed by the state?
- What models of teacher education do you think important for your institution? Why?
- How can teacher education cultures be transformed in the light of the innovation requested?
- How do teachers understand and transform school cultures in the institutions where they work? What do you think?
- What are teachers' attitudes towards inquiry and reflection in the present political context?
- How do you interact with teachers and assess their work?

Visions of the present and the future

- What challenges do institutions such as yours face to address social needs?

- What possibilities for educational institutions can you identify with the present educational policies?
- what limitations do you identify for your institution in the present educational strategies implemented by the Province of Buenos Aires?

B. Interview for policymakers

As regards educational agenda in general:

- What are the needs of our society that we need to address in an educational agenda?
- In relation to the social needs of citizens in the Province, what educational policies are being fostered from the state? Which ones are the most relevant for you? Why?
- How does the ministry relate to other sectors of society before a national agenda of development?
- What relevant changes in educational policies can you identify in the last 5 years that have impacted on inclusion and democratic practice?

As regards definitions of knowledge in relation to development

- What definition of knowledge is being embraced at ministerial levels?
- How would you define the politics of knowledge in the present political context of the province of Buenos Aires from the ministry of education? from your
- How would you describe the relationship between knowledge, education and national development as seen from the system of education?

- Is there a regional or international drive that is being addressed? What ideas are driving educational change in Argentina as part of a regional policy of knowledge in Latin America?

As regards literacy and ESOL

- How would you define literacy today in the provincial educational strategy in contrast to other definitions?
- How do literacy policies relate to knowledge distribution and construction in the knowledge society?
- How does literacy relate to an inclusive and intercultural policy?
- What relationship would you establish between literacy, technology and education in the present national development project?
- What innovations should be introduced with reference to literacy processes at all levels in the system of education?
- What global ideas on literacy development should be adopted and which ones adapted within such policy in the Province of Buenos Aires?
- As regards ESOL education, what role does English teaching have in this political agenda?
- To what extent, do you think, are innovative ideas on literacy and ESOL education developed in educational institutions of the Province of Buenos Aires?

As regards institutional contexts

- How do you think these ideas on knowledge and literacy change in specific contexts of application, in educational institutions?
- What role do you assign to educational institutions to lead educational changes?

- What capacity for change do institutions have in the present context of change?
- How is this capacity for change supported by ministry strategies? What strategies with institutions are being fostered?

As regards teachers and teacher education

- How would you define the role of teachers in this political context?
- What teacher identities and profiles are required in this educational context?
- What type of teacher education provisions need to be guaranteed by the state?
- How can teacher education cultures be transformed in the light of the innovation requested?
- What models of teacher education do you think the ministry is fostering? Why?

Visions of the present and the future

- What would you describe as the challenges ahead from your role in the ministry?
- What opportunities do you acknowledge and what limitations do you identify in present educational strategies?

C. Interviews for Teachers of schools

As regards definitions of knowledge in relation to development

- How would you describe knowledge? What is knowledge? How do you understand the concept as a teacher?
- What is the relationship between knowledge and education today?
- How do you relate them to the development of our country as you understand it from your work as a teacher?
- What type of needs do you assess in students?
- What policies of education do you think are being fostered from the state to address the needs of citizens in the Province? Why?
- what is the role of education and educational institutions before the demands from different sectors of an inclusive and intercultural policy?

Literacy and Esol

- How would you describe literacy? How do we make students literate?
- In what way do ideas on literacy development impact on the work done in your classroom and the school you work in?
- What other ideas of literacy can you identify in your institutional work? Do all teachers understand it in the same way? Why?
- How do you relate literacy with technology?
- Do we need our citizens to become fluent in English in our context? Why?
- What is the role of English in the agenda of the Province of Buenos Aires before this wider political agenda of innovation and change?
- As regards ESOL education, what international ideas of ESOL that guide your work as an English teacher can you identify in curricular documents and political strategies?

Institutional context

- Do these ideas change in specific contexts of application, in educational institutions? How? Why?
- In this respect, what is the role of the Head of the school?
- What innovations and changes should be introduced in our institutions with reference to literacy processes in ESOL? What do you think?

Teacher education

- What do you reflect about in your daily practice as a teacher? What are you concerned about in terms of your practice as a teacher? Can you give me an example?
- How do you as an English teacher embrace new ideas as exponents of a specific political agenda?
- How would you describe the community of practice of English teachers?
- Do you think there are any contradictions in the political agenda in education?
- Do you think you are helping transform school cultures in the institutions where you work? How?
- How do you think your identity has evolved through teacher education provisions provided by the state?
- What is the role of teachers in this political context?
- What challenges do teachers face on a daily basis?
- What teacher dispositions (characteristics, attitudes, knowledge, expertise) are required by institutions in this educational context? Which are the most important?
- What opportunities do you acknowledge in our present context of work as regards classroom context, legal framework, institutional conditions?

- what limitations do you identify in terms of teacher professional activity as regards classroom context, legal framework, institutional conditions?
- What type of teacher education provisions need to be guaranteed by the state? What provisions would you like to have?
- What changes need to be done in teacher education? What curricular changes need to be included in teacher education in the light of the innovation requested in the classroom?
- What impact do you think your work has for the future of education and knowledge cultures in Argentina?

Appendix 5

Dear....

I hope everything is fine with you. I am writing for personal reasons to ask you for a favour if it is possible for you. I am working on my doctoral thesis and among the research instruments that I will use, I have to interview 7 teachers from different contexts and their head teachers. As regards teachers, I would also need to observe a class and to compile a portfolio with an annual plan and a student work/ teacher project for a class. The topic of my research is ESOL teacher education in the knowledge society and I am thinking of developing a proposal for improved teacher learning opportunities. Would you mind if I interview you as one of the seven teachers of secondary school? Your school context would be highly relevant for my work because it is an example of a school... (I describe the setting). The interview lasts approximately 30-40 minutes and the observation approximately 40 minutes and it follows a descriptive approach. I simply describe in writing what I see in the class.

I look forwards to hearing from you.

Best wishes,

Appendix 6

Example of interview transcription (extract)

TS3

Researcher: The first question concerns the relationship between education and knowledge. Now, as a teacher, how would you describe knowledge? What is knowledge for you? How do you understand this concept?

TS3: Well, a difficult question, but I think knowledge is more than what we find in books, is more what teachers can transmit in a classroom, is more what other can tell us about something, about certain concepts; I think it's something deeper that has to do with all these elements, all these interactions, but also going deeper in the sense of... becoming a sort of... taking responsibilities for what we are learning, what others are telling us, and also to be protagonists in that process of acquiring knowledge. We can see nowadays with all the new concepts such as global education, global citizenship, etc., that this means going beyond just a transmission model of knowledge.

R: Ok. Now, what is the relationship between knowledge and education today?

TS3: Well, I think it has to do more with... not too much with the traditional concept of education and the traditional concept of meaning of knowledge, so it has to do with a new recreation of the interaction of the synergy between both, in the sense that the world is evolving, students are evolving, teachers are evolving, developing constantly, and this demands new ways of interacting, new ways of planning our classes, but at the same time not leaving aside that traditional meaning of education, because we may run the risk of, let's say, focusing too much on new ideas, for example in the case of the ITPs, and forgetting what traditional education means, which also means that teaching students and students learning how to read and write and how to think critically. All the rest, all the new tendencies, the new method or methods probably are a complement of this basic means of education, because it's a way of empowering students. If they don't have the basic knowledge of reading, writing critically, then the rest is there, just there.

R: OK. So you are referring somehow to reading and writing as part of literacy practices that you conceive as central. You say reading and writing are central, key

practices in education to help students become critical. Now, in terms of this concept of literacy, how would you describe literacy today? How do we make students literate?

TS3: *Well, I will start with the negative: not just teaching them how to read or write, but teaching them -and students learning, I emphasize- how to read critically, understand texts, be familiar with different types of texts and be able to communicate meanings. Because we see in our context, both in foreign languages and in the mother tongue, that there is a lack of this emphasis on reading and writing practices, not only in primary or secondary level but also at university level, higher education. Students are not being able to produce good texts, let's say, or reading and interpreting well when they are reading academically.*

R: *Now, in what ways do these ideas that you have on literacy impact on the work done in your classroom and in your school?*

TS3: *Well, probably what makes a teacher a professional is having the background, the theoretical background to make decisions about what to teach and how to teach it, and how to empower students in those literacy practices, let's say, in general. So, the impact is that when I plan a class at any level I bear this in mind, I mean, the concepts, the theory I have, how can I transfer that theory into practice for the benefit of students learning, and probably in the case of teacher education, so that students can transmit or retransmit what their teacher would be to other students in primary or secondary level.*

Appendix 7

Example of field notes of classroom observation

COS3

As I get into the school classes are about to start. I meet the teacher of the course and we both go to the assembly. Students are lined up inside a big room because it is raining outside. They say the anthem to the national flag. They look serious and respectful, they are all dark haired and dark eyed. Most of them seem to have an aboriginal ethnic identity. Then students get into the course. There are 18 students present out of 23 because of the rain. I sit at the back while the teacher arranges the equipment he will use for the class (projector and computer). He introduces me to the students and refers to my identity as the head of the Plurilingual and intercultural programme, he asks them what languages they know.

The teacher switches into English and says: now in English.

He makes a reference to the poem they read the previous class "Danny the cat" by Benjamin Zephaniah. The teacher talks all the time in English. He reminds students about the poem:

What is the poem about? S responds in Spanish and teacher elicits the English form: "A life in day of Danny the cat". The teacher mentions the word routine and says: Did you look up the word in the dictionary? Ss did not know the meaning of routine. Ss read the definition from a Spanish dictionary. The teacher asks ss to look for the routine. "What does Danny do? Continue revising the actions of Danny the cat" The class is very attentive and hard working. All the kids are re reading the poem and some of them are interacting in groups to spot the routine". As they are working the teacher asks ss to open their folders suggesting that it is useful to have notes of previous class at hand. What are some of the activities of Danny the cat? What does he do?

S: eat

T: he eats, ok

S: sleep

T: remember sleeps?

S: dormir, tipico de gatos (typical of cats)

S: Inspects the garden

The interaction proceeds in that way, T elicits now personalizing. What about your cat?

T starts asking whether ss have a cat. One student says yes and T asks him questions about his cat: Does your cat....? What is your cat's name?"

Most students are silent.

The teacher says that he is going to show some photos of his pets and then he is going to show them a poem he wrote about Rubino, one of his cats.

The teacher starts showing photos of a cat, a sheep, etc. As they proceed the students look highly interested in the animals. Most of the students have a rural background, they listen attentively to Ruben's descriptions of his animals. He says for example: This is my sheep. He is called Moyano. You know why? Because he protests, like Hugo Moyano (a trade union leader in Argentina)" Teacher elicits vocabulary from students. As he opens up the files ss want Ruben to open specific files such as Kathy (Ruben's dog) He tells them that the head of the school gave it to him as a present. He finally shows the picture of Rubino, the cat in the poem.

T passes to a poster on board where he shows the poem. He anticipates that he is going to compile the students' poems in a book.

T reads his poem. As he reads he makes gestures to explain words that might be new. He asks: What is similar in my poem to Danny the cat? Qué te parece que querrá decir la palabra similar, Hector.

S is silent. T writes the word on board. Similar. The word is exactly the same as in Spanish but the student does not respond. He doesn't know the word in Spanish. T asks him to look up the word in the dictionary.

T explains that similar is a transparent word. He asks one student to explain in Spanish what "transparency" means. One of the boys explains well the meaning.

T goes back to the poem, "Ok, what is similar in my poem?" Ss say some of the similarities.

T passes on to another poem, as he hands out the copies he goes about and asks several students "Have you got a dog or a cat?" One of the students, a girl, does not respond, T insists with a smile, S responds with a word "Yes" T insists, "A dog or a cat" S finally says "dog"

The poem is called "My doggie". T reads out the poem from a poster and then asks students if they identify rhyme. Ss respond and give a couple of examples. Then T asks "What is the writer saying about the dog?" Ss contribute: the name, the colour, etc. from that T explains phrases and vocabulary that ss do not know using gestures, translation, s contributions.

At times ss translate appropriately the lines.

T elicits similarities between both poems.

Ss respond in Spanish and teacher reformulates in English.

T ends up the stage of the class saying that the poems show how animals are used in literature.

He refers to the Spanish class and he asks ss if they remember having read a poem or literature production about animals. Students respond.

T asks if they know what fables are. Ss respond.

T refers to list poems vs poems with rhyme.

T explains an activity in which ss have to finish a poem by filling in the rhyming words.

Ss repeat the poem after the teacher reproducing the rhyme.

Some of the students are very active and responsive, others remain silent. In all cases they are attentive. They follow the teacher with interest. The teacher smiles most of the time, seems to have a close relationship with students. The class presents variety and encouragement for the student. Language is used in context, with a clear genre at the basis of the class. Languages are used for distinct and different purposes in the class, Spanish is used by the teacher to check, to explain when the range is too high for ss level of English. He is all the time checking ss comprehension.

Appendix 8

