Intersections of Contexts and Concepts in Learning to Teach: A Qualitative Case Study of the Appropriation of the Communicative Language Teaching Approach by Pre-service Teachers of Spanish in the United States

DIsSERTATION

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Abstract

Taking a Vygotskian sociocultural theory approach to teacher learning in the form of activity theory, this qualitative case study examined how and the extent to which two pre-service teachers of Spanish in a university teacher education program interpreted and implemented the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach as a function of the goals and motives within the multiple activity settings (the university, elementary schools, and high school) in which they learned to teach. Data-gathering methods included classroom observations, post-observation interviews, in-depth interviews, and the analysis of coursework documents. Data sources were analyzed using the extended case method (Vaughan, 1992) and Engeström’s (2001) third-generation triangular model of activity.

The findings reveal that although the pre-service teachers were able to develop an understanding of the theoretical foundations that inform and motivate the practice of CLT (i.e., appropriating its conceptual underpinnings), in terms of implementing the conceptual underpinnings of this approach through classroom practice, they were not able to consistently execute lessons that reflect the tenets of a CLT curriculum as outlined in the relevant literature (Nunan, 1991; Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Savignon, 1997) as they transitioned from one activity setting to another. It was concluded, therefore, that the pre-service teachers appropriated CLT as a pseudoconcept (Vygotsky, 1994a, 1994b).
That is to say, there was some evidence of internal contradictions and inconsistencies in their implementation of CLT principles which were functions of the settings and subsettings in which they learned to teach. Primary, secondary, and tertiary tensions (Engeström, 1987, 2001) emerged as the pre-service teachers aimed to strike a balance among their own goals for teaching, the local realities of their activity settings, the goals and expectations of their mentor teachers, and the motives of their teacher education program. However, it was their working through these tensions that brought about learning opportunities which contributed to their theoretical understanding of CLT.

The findings suggest that concept appropriation, for the pre-service teachers in this study, was not a matter of merely transferring conceptual, physical, and practical tools from their university to their school settings, but a cyclical and interpretive process that consisted of role negotiation; expansive transformation; critical self-reflection; exercising relational agency; attempts to strike a balance of power; and aiming to resolve primary, secondary, and tertiary tensions within and between activity systems.
Dedication

To my dear son, Israel, and my beloved wife, Kimberly
Acknowledgments

“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths” (Proverbs 3:5-6). First, I must thank the only true and living God, my defense, my rock, my refuge my strength, and my deliverer for granting me the resilience and determination I needed to undertake this monumental task of dissertation research and writing.

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we possibly could. Now, Israel, the ball is in your court; and based on what I have seen so far, you are well on your way to great achievements in your future scholastic endeavors. Thanks for making me a proud dad.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The search for more effective language teaching methodologies has unquestionably been one of the most defining features of the language teaching profession (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). As Celce-Murcia (2001) emphatically affirms, the language teaching field can be aptly characterized as one wherein “fads and heroes have come and gone in a manner fairly consistent with the kinds of changes that occur in youth culture” (p. 3). For instance, the twentieth century saw the emergence of at least 19 language teaching approaches and methods (see Celce-Murcia, 2001; Hadley, 2001; Richards & Rodgers, 2001), some of the most influential being the grammar-translation method; the direct method; the audiolingual method; the natural approach; and the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach. Thus, it is apparent that “the course of second language teaching methodology has never run smooth, and the development of communicative language teaching in recent years is no exception” (Savignon, 1997, p. 15).

Despite the fact that CLT has been among the most dominant and influential language teaching approaches since its origin in the 1960s (Richards & Rodgers, 2001), there is still wide disagreement among researchers concerning its interpretation and implementation. Bax (2003), for example, calls for a replacement of CLT with what he
refers to as a *context approach*, arguing that its (CLT’s) dominance has had the negative effect of neglecting the context in which teaching takes place. Additionally, he asserts that the language teaching profession has been negatively influenced by “an almost unconscious set of beliefs” (p. 280) which he labels, the *CLT attitude*. According to Bax, the CLT attitude, held by many teachers, teacher educators, material developers, and native speakers, is founded upon the following points of view:

1. Assume and insist that CLT is the whole and complete solution to language learning;
2. Assume that no other method could be any good;
3. Ignore people’s own views of who they are and what they want;
4. Neglect and ignore all aspects of the local context as being irrelevant. (p. 280)

A context approach, on the other hand, recognizes that in adopting a teaching methodology, (1) the entire context of teaching must be considered; (2) methodology (including CLT) is only one of many factors in language learning; (3) other factors contributing to language learning might be more important; and (4) other methods and approaches might be just as valid as CLT.

In direct opposition to Bax’s (2003) stance, Liao (2004) takes an absolutist position regarding CLT, particularly as it pertains to the teaching of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in China. The notion that teachers should have the option to develop a methodology that is specific to, and appropriate for their local teaching contexts, Liao contends, is a culturally relative one—one which is more feasible in countries where the education system allows for a high degree of pedagogical autonomy as it relates to choice
of teaching methodology. However, Liao asserts, in the case of China, the education system is highly centralized: Teaching methodology and content are determined by the government, which requires teachers to implement CLT in EFL teaching. Liao contends that the question of what is, or is not appropriate is best answered with respect to the context of teaching in question. Therefore, “arguably, in the context of China, what is appropriate is for teachers to teach in accordance with government requirements” (Liao, 2004, p. 270).

From Liao’s (2004) point of view, abolishing CLT is a misguided way of addressing the appropriacy dilemma. The appropriateness of a language teaching method must rather taking into consideration the political constraints faced by teachers—the intersection between language teaching per se, and language educational policy. Bax’s context approach, Liao claims, is not practical in China for the following four reasons: (1) In China, not every school teacher has the requisite knowledge and time to carry out a valid and reliable needs analysis. (2) In cases where such analysis would be possible, teachers might not engage in such an undertaking because of well-established CLT guidelines. (3) Due to the fact that the context approach is relatively new, teachers would need to be trained on how to develop needs analysis skills, and contextual awareness: With over a million primary school teachers, and over half a million EFL teachers in secondary schools in China, it is not likely that the government would be supportive of such extensive teacher education reform which would take an inordinate length of time. (4) The eclectic nature of the context approach would make it challenging for teachers to adhere to. Liao maintains that “the western notion of ‘relativism’ does not work in China” (p. 272); therefore, concluding that “CLT is best for China” (p. 270).
Hu (2005), dismisses Liao’s (2004) absolutist claim (i.e., “CLT is best for China,” p. 270) as indefensible and inaccurate, contending that it is predicated on “a problematic assumption of CLT’s universal effectiveness or appropriacy, and ignores the diverse contexts of ELT [English Language Teaching] in China” (p. 65). He argues that Liao (1) fails to recognize that policy mandates do not make their way to the classroom in a linear, deterministic manner with teachers doing exactly what they are told; (2) does not account for teachers’ opposition to CLT in many EFL classes in China; (3) fails to recognize that CLT is a relatively new approach to a majority of Chinese teachers (one for which they would have to be re-trained); and (4) takes a limited interpretation of context. In regards to the notion of context, Hu asserts that the notion of “the Chinese context” [a term used by Lio] is nothing but a myth” (p. 67) as it misrepresents EFL teaching in China as a uniform context. He points to the fact that although CLT is somewhat evident in developed regions of the country, it is nonexistent in classrooms of poorer, rural areas. Hu attributes such regional variation in the application of CLT to contextual factors which include limited financial resources; lack of authentic language teaching materials; relocation of competent teachers to more privileged areas; teachers’ lack of sociocultural, and communicative competence in the target language; overwhelming impact of an established culture of learning in the Chinese society; lack of opportunities to utilize the target language in social settings; lack of student motivation toward learning the target language; and examination pressures.

The above debate regarding the conceptualization and implementation of CLT is a testament to Savignon’s (1997) claim that unfortunately, the development of CLT has not escaped the complexities and non-linear trajectory of the development of language
teaching methodology in general. It is evident that the single most crucial concern regarding CLT is how it is to be interpreted and implemented relative to its multiple activity settings or contexts such as the development of language education policies at the national and state level; pre- and in-service language teacher education programs; and language assessment and instruction in local schools.

Amidst the widespread confusion and misconceptions over the meaning of a communicative approach to language teaching, and how such approach is to be executed at the classroom level (Savignon, 2007; Thompson, 1996), it is somewhat startling that in the communicative language teaching literature, teacher education has not been adequately addressed (Savignon, 2002a). While there is an emerging body of work in the teacher education literature, in general, that investigates the learning and development of pre-service teachers in teacher education programs (e.g., Tsui & Law, 2007), in-service teacher learning within various school settings (e.g., Johnson, Smagorinsky, Thompson, & Fry, 2003; Pardo, 2006), and pre-service teachers transitioning from teacher education programs into various school contexts as in-service practitioners (e.g., Cook, Fry, Konopak & Moore, 2002; Newell, Tallman, & Letcher, 2009), when it comes to the literature on communicative language teaching, in particular, “teacher education has not received adequate attention” (Savignon, 2002a, p. ix). In an effort to gain more insight into the tensions that are evident in the previously discussed complexities of teachers’ learning and development within a communicative language teaching framework, it is clear that studies that examine those factors that shape teachers’ conceptualizations and implementation of communicative language teaching as they engage in the process of completing coursework and field experience requirements in their teacher education
programs are an absolute necessity. That is to say, our understanding of the process of learning to teach is incomplete, at best, without a robust body of literature that not only examines teacher learning as a function of the school settings of in-service teachers, but equally important, both the university and school settings of pre-service teachers.

From a methodological and theoretical standpoint, this process of learning to teach cannot be sufficiently understood through an over-reliance on inductive methods of data analysis. In combination with inductive strategies, there is a need for the utilization of established theoretical frameworks for consistent comparison of contextual influences on learning to teach. Zeichner (2005), in proposing a teacher education research agenda, emphasizes that by applying appropriate theoretical frameworks from fields such as anthropology, sociology, and psychology in empirical research on teacher learning, “teacher education can potentially contribute to the elaboration and refinement of these frameworks and to greater understanding of the process of teacher learning in different contexts” (p. 741), including various types of teacher education programs, and different subject areas.

Similar to Zeichner’s (2005) proposal, Grossman and McDonald (2008), in their recommendations on the direction that future research in teaching and teacher education should take, recognize the need for the application of “theories such as organizational learning, institutional theory, or activity theory to help explain the organizational complexity of teacher education” (p. 192). In other words, Grossman and McDonald are calling for a theoretical framework which allows for a clear description and analysis of the contexts of teaching and teacher education from an ecological standpoint (i.e., as socially and culturally situated practices). One of the fundamental goals of such
framework is to close the counterproductive theory-versus-practice dichotomy by applying the notion of praxis, or teachers’ making sense of theories based on their professional lives and work settings (Johnson, 2006).

Based upon the nature and significance of what I call the CLT problem, as discussed above, the primary purpose of this study was to develop an understanding of how pre-service foreign language teachers implemented and interpreted CLT relative to the conceptual, physical, and practical tools to which they were being introduced in their teacher education program; the extent to which these pedagogical tools were appropriated; and how such appropriation was mediated by the goals and motives of the elementary school, high school, and teacher education program activity settings.

1.2 Research Questions

This study sought to address the following research questions regarding pre-service foreign language teachers’ (two teachers of Spanish) learning of CLT in a university teacher education program in the United States:

1. How and to what extent do pre-service foreign language teachers appropriate the communicative language teaching approach?

2. How and to what extent do pre-service foreign language teachers use conceptual, physical, and practical teaching tools to mediate their learning of the communicative language teaching approach?

3. How do multiple activity settings mediate pre-service foreign language teachers’ appropriation of the communicative language teaching approach?
1.3 Introduction to Research Design

This research project was guided by a qualitative case study design with activity theory as the guiding theoretical framework, and the extended case method as the analytical framework. Recognizing that a case study is defined by its unit(s) of analysis—“what it is you want to be able to say something about at the end of the study” (Patton, 1980 p. 100)—as opposed to the topic of investigation (Merriam, 2002), identifying the cases to be investigated was based on the nature of pre-service foreign language teachers’ teaching and learning across space and time. As such, the learning and development of 2 pre-service teachers of Spanish as a foreign language was examined through an intense description and exploration of the particularities and complexities of each case, thereby, developing an understanding of the case as “a specific, complex, functioning thing” (Stake, 1995, p. 2). It is crucial to mention that although “the primary concern of interpretive research is particularizability, rather than generalizability” (Erickson, 1986, p. 130), inferences might be drawn from a comparative case study such as the one herein discussed. Nonetheless, it is of utmost significance to understand that “the process of inference from case studies is only logical or causal and cannot be statistical and that extrapolability from any one case study to like situations in general is based only on logical inference” (Mitchell, 1983, p. 200). By this token, one can therefore “infer that the features present in the case study will be related in a wider population not because the case is representative but because our analysis is unassailable” (Mitchell, 1983, p. 200).
1.4 Significance of the Study

Although multiple factors have contributed to our understanding of the practice of second language (L2) teaching, “none is more significant than the emergence of a substantial body of research now referred to as teacher cognition” (Johnson, 2006 p. 236) or teacher learning. Although studies of teacher learning among teachers of foreign languages (not including EFL) have been carried out recently (e.g., Almarza, 1996; Freeman, 1996b; Moran, 1996), they have not been located within a sociocultural theoretical framework, in particular, activity theory. On the other hand, those studies that have applied the Vygotskian brand of sociocultural theory (e.g., activity theory) to study the learning and development of both pre- and in-service teachers (e.g. Cook et al., 2002; Golombek & Johnson, 2004; Johnson, Smagorinsky, Thompson & Fry, 2003; Pardo, 2006; Smagorinsky, 1999; Smagorinsky, Wright, Augustine, O’Donnell-Allen & Konopak, 2007), have been mainly restricted to the teaching of English as a native, foreign, or second language.

An extensive electronic search for empirical research applying activity theory to the learning and development of foreign language teachers in the United States in the Teaching and Teacher Education journal as well as the Journal of Teacher Education for the past 17 years yielded limited results even with search terms as general as foreign language, foreign languages, Spanish, and French. Similar searches in the ERIC database also resulted in the same outcome. Although the number of studies taking a sociocultural approach to teacher learning is slowly growing in the area of the teaching of English as a first or native language (L1 English), one cannot blindly transfer their findings to the study of L2 teacher learning. As Zeichner (2005) affirms, “We cannot
assume that findings with regard to the preparation of teachers in one subject area hold true for teachers of other subjects” (p. 745). Why would such transfer of findings not be possible? In foreign language settings, the research problem is complicated by issues which L1 English teacher education is not forced to grapple with such as native versus nonnativeness; L1 versus target language use; student resistance to, and lack of motivation in learning a foreign language; the status of the dominant, versus the foreign language; political forces that advocate assimilation into the dominant language and culture at the expense of heritage language maintenance and development; and issues related to power and language ideology, among a host of others.

In light of the scarcity of research on the learning and development of foreign language teachers in the United States from a sociocultural perspective, it is important to ask how the knowledge base of foreign language teacher education programs (pertaining to teacher learning) has been informed. Language teacher education research can no longer be exclusively driven by the teaching of L1 English or the growing need for teachers of English as a second or foreign language, but must also be responsive to the voices of foreign language teachers in contexts where English is the dominant language such as the United States. It follows, then, based upon the above areas of concern, that the research questions answered through a sociocultural theory framework, and the implications of those answers for a foreign language setting, would, in many ways, sharply contrast with that of studies based on L1 English. This study, therefore, is a significant step in making a substantive contribution to the research base on foreign language teacher learning, teaching, and teacher education. It seeks to ensure that the
voices of foreign language teachers, particularly the experiences of pre-service teachers, are moved to the forefront of research in teaching and teacher education.

The significance of the study also lies in the fact that it sought to go beyond a superficial investigation of the theory-practice divide that is oftentimes bemoaned in teacher education by looking into the learning and development of pre-service foreign language teachers across multiple teaching and learning environments, examining their appropriation of teaching practices and theories, not separate from, but as a function of the social and cultural contexts of “communities of knowledge and practice” (Lave and Wenger, 1991, p. 29). Taking an ecological approach to teacher education research, this study responds to the call for research that examines teaching and learning as interconnected, complex, and situated activities located in manifold contexts such as state and national policies pertaining to teaching and learning; the school community and school districts; and teacher education programs (Grossman & McDonald, 2008). In addition, this approach to teacher education research aims to build the corpus of studies that examines how behavior and cognition are influenced by cultural and social conventions; temporal and spatial contexts (Clift & Brady, 2005) where “teaching practice is seen as a function of the individual and of the contexts in which he or she learns, works, and reflects” (Clift & Brady, 2005 p. 315).

Finally, implicit in the aforementioned potential contributions of this study is the connection between teaching and teacher education. This research project will contribute to closing the gap that continues to exist between research on teaching and research in teacher education (Grossman & McDonald, 2008). As Grossman and McDonald (2008) assert, “Despite its roots in research on teaching, research in teacher education has
developed in curious isolation both from mainstream research on teaching and from research on higher education and professional education more generally” (p. 185). This study, therefore, by making visible that connection between teaching and teacher education, aims to inform the knowledge base of teacher education programs. It is important to note, however, that although located within the body of literature known as teacher cognition or teacher learning, this study did not seek to explore this area of research in isolation, recognizing, as Borg (2003) cautions, that the concept of teacher cognition is best studied not as an isolated construct, but rather one that explores the interactions between teachers’ knowledge, beliefs, and thoughts; their prior language learning experiences; their education in teacher preparation programs; and their classroom teaching.

1.5 Assumptions of the Study

The study was designed based upon the following assumptions:

1. The participants were committed to the learning and implementation of a CLT approach.

2. The participants had language teaching and/ or learning experiences prior to enrolling in the M.Ed. teacher education program.

3. The participants assumed multiple roles and responsibilities across activity settings.

4. The participants utilized conceptual, physical, and practical tools in appropriating CLT.
1.6 Limitations of the Study

1. The results of the study will only be transferrable through naturalistic generalization (Stake, 1995).

2. The study is limited to pre-service teachers of Spanish as a foreign language.

3. Measurement of learning outcomes for foreign language students was not the focus of this study.

4. Observational data did not include lessons taught by mentor teachers nor university professors.

5. The results or scores of the preservice teachers’ formal assessments in the M.Ed. program were not used as a basis to draw conclusions about the extent to which CLT was appropriated.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

Activity system/setting: The temporal, spatial, and social context in which activity occurs (e.g., high school field experience and student teaching; elementary school field experience; university teacher education coursework). It includes a community and its division of labor, subject(s), object(s), mediating artifacts, rules, and outcome(s).

Activity theory: A theoretical framework under the umbrella of sociocultural theory, wherein, from a scientific perspective, the term activity does not refer to a reaction or sum of reactions, but rather “a powerful dialectic rooted in contradictions such as thinking and doing, knowing and performing, individual and society, … internalization and externalization” (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006, p. 210).
**Appropriation:** An activity theory construct that describes “the internal reconstruction of an external operation” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 56) which involves a progression of transformations that occur genetically (i.e., developmentally—through the use of signs and tools). In particular, appropriation refers to “the process through which a person adopts the pedagogical and conceptual tools available for use in particular social environments (e.g., schools, pre-service programs) and through this process internalizes ways of thinking endemic to specific cultural practices” (Grossman, Smagorinsky, & Valencia, 1999, p. 15).

**Conceptual tools:** The frameworks, principles, theories, and ideas concerning teaching and learning (Grossman et al., 1999), for example, communicative competence, the affective filter hypothesis, the input hypothesis, negotiation of meaning, the output hypothesis, multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1993), etc.

**Input:** The spoken or written form of the target language directed to the language learner (e.g., the teacher’s oral target language production).

**Learning:** The process of the formation of higher psychological functions such as memory, voluntary attention, perception, thinking, and concepts through the process of mediation (Vygotsky, 1978). The term learning and its variants are used interchangeably with appropriation and its variants.

**Mediation:** A construct of activity theory used to describe the process of drawing upon conceptual, physical, and practical tools to facilitate learning and development.

**Mentor teacher:** A state-certified teacher in a local elementary or high school who oversees the pre-service teacher’s field experiences and student teaching. Some of the primary responsibilities of the mentor include, but is not limited to, assessing and
providing constructive feedback and advice on the pre-service teacher’s lesson planning, delivery of instruction, and assessment of student learning. She also oversees the pre-service teacher’s acclimating to the daily routine of full-time teaching and administrative responsibilities at the local school.

**Monitor theory:** An innatist view of language learning that is known to be the most influential, and one of the most ambitious theories in second language acquisition during the 1970s and early 1980s. It includes the following five hypotheses: (1) The acquisition-learning hypothesis; (2) the natural order hypothesis; (3) the monitor hypothesis; (4) the input hypothesis; and (5) the affective filter hypothesis (Krashen, 1982; Krashen & Terrell, 1983). I shall now define those hypotheses that are of direct relevance to this study:

A) **The acquisition-learning hypothesis:** The two ways in which adults develop competence in a second language, which are independent of each other: Acquisition and learning. Acquisition is defined as a subconscious process of language development in which learners are not cognizant of the rules and grammaticality of the language, but rather have a feel for what is correct or incorrect, a process that is similar to the manner in which children develop L1 competence. To acquire language means that the learner’s exclusive focus is on using language for communicative purposes whereas learning, on the other hand, involves conscious knowledge of the grammar and rules of the language to the extent that one is able to talk about these structural aspects of the language.
B) **The input hypothesis:** The acquisition—not learning—of a language occurs when learners are able to understand language that includes structures that are “a little beyond” their current level of competence. That is to say, the acquirer must be able to progress from level $i$ ($i$ representing current competence) to $i+1$ which includes those forms already familiar to the learner as well as those that are not. Language structures that are beyond the learner’s current level of competence are made comprehensible through contextual and extra-linguistic cues.

C) **The Affective Filter Hypothesis:** The relationship between the L2 acquisition process and affective variables such as motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety. Although comprehensible input is necessary for acquisition, it is not sufficient: The acquirer must be open to the input. However, (s)he may develop a psychological block that hinders full usage of comprehensible input. In cases where the language user is unmotivated, is lacking self-confidence, and has a high level of anxiety, the affective filter is high so that even if the input is understood, it will not be transmitted to the language acquisition device (LAD). The affective filter is at its lowest “when the acquirer is so involved in the message that he temporarily ‘forgets’ he is hearing or reading another language” (Krashen, 1985, p. 4).

**Physical tools:** Material resources (e.g., flash cards, pictures, realia, verb charts) that form the content of practical tools.

**Practical tools:** Instructional activities (e.g., reading activities, information-gap activities, task-based activities, games, role play) through which conceptual tools are implemented in the classroom.
Pre-service teacher: The individual who is enrolled in a university teacher education or preparation program (i.e., prior to entering the teaching profession as a full-time, state-certified teacher). This term stands in contrast to in-service teacher who is a state-certified, full-time practitioner teaching in a K-12 setting.

Sociocultural Theory: A theory of human learning and development that, at its core, “recognizes the central role that social relationships and culturally constructed artifacts play in organizing uniquely human forms of thinking” (Lantolf, 2004, p. 30-31).

Teacher Learning: An area of research that examines who teachers are; interactions between their knowledge, beliefs, and thoughts; prior learning experiences; education in teacher preparation programs; and their classroom teaching in multiple contexts (Borg, 2003; Johnson, 2006). For the purposes of this research, teacher learning is chosen over teacher cognition or teacher knowledge as it captures knowledge as both held and used.

1.8 Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation includes six chapters: In this chapter, I presented the statement of the problem as it relates to CLT; research questions; a brief introduction to the research design; the significance of the study; its assumptions and limitations; and definitions of terms that are relevant to the purposes of the study.

Chapter Two, the review of the relevant literature, includes three sections: Section 2.1 presents a review of the literature regarding both the conceptualization and implementation of CLT, while section 2.2 reviews the literature on the research trends in foreign language teacher education; its connection to general teacher education research; and teacher learning in foreign language teaching. Section 2.3 traces the development of
Vygotskian sociocultural theory (including activity theory) through a description and discussion of its core concepts as well as how it has been applied to the study of language teacher education.

Chapter Three, which outlines the research methodology, includes a portrait of each participant; descriptions of the target and accessible population; data collection instruments and procedures; the analysis, coding, and management of the data; and a brief discussion of my negotiation of dual roles as a researcher and university supervisor.

Chapter Four presents the analysis of the findings of each of the case study participants consecutively (i.e., Gloria – section 4.1; Linda – section 4.2) as pertaining to their learning of CLT, in particular, the role played by the activity settings and social contexts in which their learning and development occurred; and the manner in which they implemented conceptual, physical, and practical tools in their respective teaching contexts.

In Chapter Five, I present a cross-case analysis of patterns, themes, and relationships between Gloria and Linda’s case of CLT appropriation through the lens of activity theory. Additionally, drawing upon key evidence from the findings, this chapter, while highlighting the utility of activity theory in research on teacher learning, also makes a case for the elaboration of key components in Engeström’s (1987) triangular model of activity.

Chapter Six, the conclusion, includes direct responses to the research questions, implications for the knowledge base of foreign language teacher education, recommendations for future research, and a discussion of the contributions this study has made to foreign language and general teacher education research.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Communicative Language Teaching: Theory and Classroom Practice

Although there is no single text, model, or authority on CLT that is universally embraced (Richards & Rodgers, 2001), from a theoretical standpoint, it is widely accepted as a language teaching approach whose central goal is the development of learners’ communicative competence (Hymes, 1972). CLT emerged in response to new interpretations of language theory and language learning—which will later be discussed at length—in both Europe and North America during the latter half of the 20th century (Savignon, 2007). As European countries became increasingly interdependent, and the language needs of a growing immigrant population increased, the Council of Europe responded by spearheading the development of a notional-functional syllabus for language learners which emphasized notional concepts (e.g., time, location, frequency, sequence) and communicative language functions, for example, complaint, request, acceptance or denial (Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Savignon, 2007). This new alternative to the prevailing grammar-based syllabus, which became widely embraced by British language teaching specialists and curriculum planners, came to be known as the communicative approach or CLT.

CLT, as an approach, stands in contrast to other language teaching methods by virtue of the fact that its implementation is not based upon a rigid set of techniques and
strategies that the teacher must adhere to regardless of the sociocultural context of teaching, but rather hinges upon the teacher’s interpretation of how the concept of communicative competence translates into instructional activities that promote language acquisition. As Richards and Rodgers (2001) assert, “The CLT teacher assumes a responsibility for determining and responding to learner language needs” (p. 167) whether formally or informally. Unfortunately, however, it appears that the interpretive and context-bound features inherent to the implementation of CLT have carried with them a sense of uncertainty, even confusion, as to the meaning of CLT at both the theoretical and practical level (Savignon, 2007; Thompson, 1996). Hence, in order to develop a clearer understanding of the CLT problem, it is imperative that an examination of the relationship between the manner in which researchers have defined the approach, and teachers’ (both pre- and in-service) understanding and implementation of the same be undertaken. Toward this end, this section aims to address the following questions: (1) How is CLT conceptualized by language researchers? (2) What are language teachers’ perceptions of CLT? (3) To what extent do language teachers implement CLT practices? (4) What are the factors that influence language teachers’ implementation of CLT?

2.1.1 Communicative language teaching: Theoretical foundations

What is communicative competence? In order to capture the essence of this term, it is necessary to first place it within its proper historical context. Hymes’ (1972) coining of the term communicative competence sharply contrasts with, and can be seen as a response to Chomsky’s (1957, 1965, 1981) notion of competence as manifested in his
Universal Grammar theory. As a generative linguistic theory, Universal Grammar seeks to describe that which represents knowledge of one’s native language and the development of such knowledge. In other words, it seeks to explain the individual’s linguistic competence or knowledge, as opposed to their performance or their ability to utilize such knowledge in practical situations—Hymes’ primary area of concern—through listening, speaking, reading, writing or comprehension (Chomsky, 1965, 1981). Chomsky’s (1965) theory of generative grammars is based upon the following:

An ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogenous speech-community, who knows its language perfectly and is unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions as memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors (random or characteristic) in applying his knowledge of the language in actual performance. (p. 30)

The primary objective of Universal Grammar theory is, with descriptive adequacy, to produce a representation of knowledge of a language. This knowledge may be described as a system of rules which determines the specifications of the properties of an infinite corpus of linguistic expression, fittingly referred to as a (generative) grammar. For every expression, a grammar produces or generates representations of sound and meaning called phonetic form and logical form, respectively. What does Chomsky mean by the term descriptive adequacy? When a grammar is descriptively adequate, it accurately accounts for the mental representation of the system of rules in a language: In other words, it is a correct representation of the speaker-hearer’s internally-represented grammar or their intrinsic competence (Chomsky, 1981, 1965). Simply put, “a fully
adequate grammar must assign to each of an infinite range of sentences a structural
description indicating how this sentence is understood by the ideal speaker-hearer”
(Chomsky, 1965, pp. 4-5). Thus, one could say that Universal Grammar theory, in
actuality, is a theory of the syntax of a language which represents the individual’s internal
grammar.

The idea of a generative grammar might lead one to believe that it is a blueprint,
or model for the development of speaking or listening skills. However, this is not the
case. In fact, a grammar gives us no information on how to synthesize or analyze any
given utterance (Chomsky, 1957). It does not represent a model for flawless language
production or comprehension for any language user, but rather “attempts to characterize
in the most neutral possible terms the knowledge of the language that provides the basis
for actual use of language by a speaker-hearer” (Chomsky, 1965, p. 9).

The contrast, therefore, between a Chomskyan and a Hymesian interpretation of
competence is that Chomsky’s notion of competence entails the abstract, structural
representation or characterization of language ability, while the Hymesian view of
competence describes the linguistic knowledge which will allow for the practical and
contextually appropriate use of language in a speech community. Simply stated,
competence, which is “the most general term for the capabilities of a person…., is
dependent upon both (tacit) knowledge and (ability for) use” (Hymes, 1972, p. 284).
According to Hymes (1972), communicative competence, therefore, has to do with

1. whether (and to what degree) something is formally possible
2. whether (and to what degree) something is feasible in virtue of the means of implementation available

3. whether (and to what degree) something is appropriate (adequate, happy, successful) in relation to a context in which it is used and evaluated

4. whether (and to what degree) something is in fact done, actually performed, and what its doing entails. (p. 281)

Based on the preceding historical overview of the evolution of the concept of communicative competence, it is safe to conclude that Hymes’ (1972) theory of competence is one that bridges the gap between, on the one hand, a generative or structural linguistic conceptualization of competence and, on the other hand, a linguistic anthropological conceptualization of competence. As Hymes most adequately articulates, “The goal of a broad theory of competence can be said to be to show the ways in which the systematically possible, the feasible, and the appropriate are linked to produce and interpret actually occurring cultural behavior (p. 286).” Hence, the strict line of demarcation made by Chomsky (1965) between competence and performance becomes less distinct as “the ‘competence’ underlying a person’s behavior is identified as one kind of ‘performance’ (performance A, actual behavior being performance B)” (Hymes, 1972, p. 282). Furthermore, Savignon (1997) argues that the competence-performance distinction is only a theoretical one: From a theoretical standpoint, competence is used to describe what one knows, while performance defines what one does. “However, only performance is observable, and it is only through performance that competence can be developed, maintained, and evaluated” (Savignon, 1997, p. 15). Taking an even more
assertive stance on the competence-performance debate, Halliday (1970) declares that it is unnecessary to distinguish between “an idealized knowledge of a language and its actualized use: between ‘the code’ and ‘the use of the code’, or between ‘competence’ and ‘performance’” (p. 145) if its only purpose is to distinguish between what structural linguists have been able to describe in the grammar, and what they have not.

In light of the fact Hymes’ (1972) theory of communicative competence was not originally developed to inform the practice of language teaching, researchers in the field of applied linguistics have recontextualized the theory to this end. For instance, Canale and Swain (1980), and Canale (1983) developed a four-dimensional model of communicative competence:

(1) *Grammatical competence* – This type of competence refers to “knowledge of lexical items and rules of morphology, syntax, sentence-grammar semantics and phonology” (Canale and Swain, 1980, p. 29). This type of language ability is associated with what Hymes (1972) called the “systematically possible” or “formally possible”.

(2) *Sociolinguistic competence* – This form of competence has to do with one’s ability to not only produce, but also comprehend utterances in their appropriate sociolinguistic contexts based upon contextual attributes (e.g., the conventions and purposes of interaction, participants’ status). It is important to note that the appropriateness of utterances deals with “appropriateness of meaning and appropriateness of meaning concerns the extent to which particular communicative functions (e.g., commanding, complaining, inviting), attitudes (including politeness and formality) and ideas are judged to be proper in a given situation” (Canale, 1983, p. 7). Once again, this might be viewed
as an extension of Hymes’ (1972) theory of communicative competence as it relates to “whether and to what degree something is appropriate … in relation to a context in which it is used and evaluated” (p. 281).

(3) Discourse competence – This describes text cohesion and coherence, where cohesion refers to the structural linking of utterances through cohesion devices such as grammatical connectors (e.g., adverbs, transitional phrases) and pronouns; and coherence is defined as “the relationship among the different meanings in a text, where these meanings may be literal meanings, communicative functions and attitudes” (Canale, 1983, p. 9).

(4) Strategic competence – This involves the use of verbal, and nonverbal strategies of communication that serve two primary functions: (a) to compensate for communication breakdowns as a result of limiting conditions during communication (e.g., not being able to recall a grammatical form; lack of grammatical, sociolinguistic or discourse competence); (b) to increase the efficiency of communication.

Taking the concept of competence a step further, Bachman (1990) problematized the above model set forth by Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983) by dividing language competence into two overarching competencies, each of which is further subdivided into two types of competencies:

1. Organizational competence, which is further divided into grammatical and textual competence refers to “those abilities involved in controlling the formal structure of language for producing or recognizing grammatically correct sentences, comprehending their propositional content [grammatical competence], and ordering
them to form texts [textual competence].” Similar to Canale and Swain’s (1980) definition, grammatical competence has to do with one’s knowledge of morphology, syntax, vocabulary and phonology or graphology, whereas textual competence includes knowing the rules of cohesion and rhetorical organization that allow for the linking of utterances to form spoken or written text.

2. **Pragmatic competence**, on the other hand, includes both illocutionary, and sociolinguistic competence and has to do with the “relationships between utterances and the acts or functions that speakers (or writers) intend to perform through these utterances … and the characteristics of the context of language use that determine the *appropriateness* of utterances” (Bachman, 1990, p. 89-90). Illocutionary competence describes the ideational, manipulative, heuristic, and imaginative functions of language, while sociolinguistic competence refers to one’s awareness of differences in dialect and register; the ability to interpret figures of speech and cultural nuances implicated in the lexicon of a language; and sensitivity to interpret or form utterances as they would by speakers who are native to a particular language variety and culture.

It is important to note the distinction between Canale’s (1983) definition of sociolinguistic competence and that of Bachman’s (1990): In the former, sociolinguistic competence is influenced by extralinguistic constraints (e.g., gender, class, location, time) while in the latter, it is shaped primarily by linguistic constraints (e.g., vocabulary, figures of speech, register, dialect or variety).

In regards to the aforementioned types of competencies both in the case of Canale and Swain (1980), Canale (1983), and Bachman (1990), one might be led to believe that
the various types of competencies are considered to be separate components of language competence; however, embracing a theory of language as communication, the interaction among these components has been duly considered. In proposing a model of language use that recognizes the interaction among language competencies (i.e., organizational and pragmatic competence), strategic competence, and the context of language use, Bachman (1990) asserts that “it is this very interaction between the various competencies and the language use context that characterizes communicative language use” (p. 86). Similarly, Savignon (1997) also acknowledges the interaction among grammatical, discourse, strategic, and sociolinguistic competence, positing that prior to the acquisition of grammatical competence, sociolinguistic and strategic competence facilitates overall communicative competence.

Although both Bachman (1990) and Savignon (1997) agree that strategic competence is present at all levels of communicative competence, Savignon, in her model of communicative competence, sees an inverse relationship between strategic competence on the one hand; and grammatical, sociolinguistic, and discourse competence on the other hand: That is to say, an increase in knowledge of grammatical, sociolinguistic, and discourse competence results in a decrease of strategic competence. It is worth mentioning, however, that Bachman has reconceptualized Canale and Swain’s (1980) definition of strategic competence by going beyond the function of strategic competence to the mechanisms that allow for the operation of a broader definition of strategic competence which includes assessment, planning, and execution.
Taking a functional approach to a linguistic theory of communication, Halliday’s (1975) functional theory of language use has also significantly contributed to the theoretical base of CLT. Based on a descriptive case study of a child’s utterances between the ages of 9-18 months, Halliday (1975) developed what he refers to as a functional or sociolinguistic theory of early language development. The term functional, as used by Halliday, refers to the notion that the development of a child’s first language takes place as a system of meanings whereby (s)he acquires a semiotic system through multiple contexts of language use. Thus, the term does not merely describe what language does, or is used to accomplish, but also its meaning potential. Halliday postulated six functions of early language development: (1) The instrumental function which is used to express want or desire in order to satisfy a material need, or the goods and services one seeks; (2) the regulatory function which is used to influence, or control the behavior of others; (3) the interactional function which the child uses to interact with others in her environment such as her parents and those of significance to her; (4) the personal function which used to express self-awareness, and ultimately, personality development; (5) the heuristic function (or what Halliday calls the tell-me-why function) that comes into play once the child recognizes the difference between the environment and herself, and serves the purpose of requesting a name which the child then uses to categorize objects in the physical world; and (6) the imaginative function (which Halliday refers to as the let’s pretend function of language) which allows the child to create her own imaginary world (e.g., stories, poetry, and imaginative writing).
Based on the above discussion, it is evident that the concept of communicative competence has evolved from Chomsky's (1957, 1965) theory of syntax, concerned with the development of the generative grammar of a linguistic system (separate from how, and for what purposes such grammar is manifested in use or production), to one that is ethnographic and sociolinguistic in nature. That is to say, communicative competence that is (1) dynamic by virtue of the fact that its acquisition hinges on the continuous interpersonal negotiation of meaning; (2) context-specific; (3) includes both spoken, and written language as well as symbolic systems; (4) bridges the dichotomy between language that is grammatically accurate and language whose meaning is interpreted to be socially appropriate; (5) dependent upon the interaction between knowledge “held” and knowledge “used” in a speech community; and (6) sensitive to the interaction among various types of competencies (e.g., grammatical, strategic, discourse, and sociolinguistic competence).

2.1.2 Orthodox communicative language teaching: The practice of communicative competence in the language classroom

Notwithstanding the preceding discussion of the transformation, over time, of the concept of communicative competence (which forms the theoretical foundation for CLT), the following question remains: How does this theory translate into language teaching? As a matter of classroom practice, CLT (i.e., communicative competence in practice) is often defined by way of contrast with the audiolingual method—whose theoretical foundations can be traced to behaviorist psychology—which originated in the 1940s as
part of the Army Specialized Training Program in the United States prior to gaining widespread acceptance in academic programs in the 1950s and 1960s. Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983) developed an extensive list of contrasts between the audiolingual method and CLT, an adapted version of which is presented in Table 2.1.
Table 2.1: Differences between the Audiolingual Method and CLT (adapted from Finocchiaro and Brumfit, 1983)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audiolingual Method</th>
<th>CLT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The primary goal is linguistic competence.</td>
<td>The primary goal is communicative competence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure and form takes precedence over meaning.</td>
<td>Meaning is of great significance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To learn a language means mastering its phonology and morphology.</td>
<td>Learning a language means learning how to communicate effectively.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pattern drills and dialogue memorization are central techniques.</td>
<td>Drilling might occur to a limited extent within the context of meaningful communication. Dialogues are typically not memorized; and when used, serve a communicative function.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contextualization of language structures is not a necessity.</td>
<td>Contextualization of language structures is of paramount importance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native-like pronunciation and grammatical accuracy or correctness is crucial.</td>
<td>The goal is comprehensible pronunciation and fluency wherein accuracy is relative to the context of language use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controlled drill-like activities precede communicative activities.</td>
<td>Learners might be given the opportunity to communicate from the start of the course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native-language use is prohibited.</td>
<td>Prudent use of the learner’s native language is allowed when necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translation is not allowed at lower levels.</td>
<td>Limited translation might be utilized to the extent that it meets students’ learning needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading and writing instruction are delayed until speech is mastered.</td>
<td>Reading and writing may begin from the first day if the instructor so chooses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language structures and patterns are best learned through explicit means.</td>
<td>The target language system is best learned through the negotiation of meaning or “struggling” to communicate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linguistic variation, although, recognized, is not a priority.</td>
<td>Instructional techniques and materials reflect linguistic variation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The sequencing of instruction is determined by the complexity of linguistic structures.</td>
<td>The interests and needs of the learner drive the sequencing of instruction as it relates to content and function.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The language students will use during instructional activities is predetermined by the teacher so as to avoid student errors.</td>
<td>The teacher should not be able to make specific predictions as to the language students will use as trial and error is viewed as part of the language learning process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The nature of interaction is one in which students respond to pre-recorded speech and other controlled material.</td>
<td>Interaction occurs between individuals, whether face-to-face in the form of cooperative learning activities or through writing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In discussing the nature of teaching and learning activities in a communicative syllabus, the role of instructional materials, and the role of the teacher and the learner, Richards and Rodgers (2001) assert that the possibilities of activities in a communicative syllabus are infinite so long as learners are engaged in tasks that allow for information sharing, interaction, and negotiation of meaning. As regarding instructional materials, Richards and Rodgers identify three types of materials which are typically used in CLT: (1) text-based; (2) task-based; and (3) realia.

1. Text-based materials – These include materials that are centered around a structural or grammar-base syllabus, but with minor reformatting so as to support claims that the text is based on a communicative approach. On the other hand, there are those that organize units thematically, allowing for a more functional approach, including asking questions for clarification; requesting and presenting information; and note-taking.

2. Task-based materials – These include what Richards refer to as “one-of-a-kind items” such as cue cards; exercise handbooks; activity cards; pair-interaction practice materials; and student-interaction practice booklets. These materials are used in role plays, games, information-gap tasks, and simulations.

3. Realia – This refers to the use of real-life, “authentic” materials such as magazines, newspapers, advertisements, among other visual sources which may serve as the starting point for communicative activities.

In relation to the roles of the learner, due to the fact not every learner will be familiar with the cooperative approach to learning, methodologists recommend that
learners learn to see communication as a joint, interdependent endeavor wherein “failed communication is a joint responsibility and not the fault of speaker or listener” (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 166). In addition to the learner roles, teacher roles include (a) that of a needs analyst who determines and responds to the learner’s language needs whether informally (e.g., one-on-one discussion of learning style and objectives) or formally (e.g., needs assessment instrument such as a survey); (b) a counselor who has the responsibility of matching speaker intention with hearer intention through mediating devices such as feedback, clarification requests, confirmation checks, and paraphrase; and (c) a group process manager who sees to it that the classroom setting as well as group interaction, dynamics, and activities are established in ways that lend themselves to purposeful communication.

Savignon (1997), taking a broader, or more holistic approach to the implementation of CLT, in contrast to Richards and Rodgers (2001), proposed five components of a communicative curriculum:

1. **Language Arts** – This includes inductive, or deductive linguistic analysis which may be structural (i.e., syntactic rules of use) or functional (i.e., sociolinguistic rules of use), and, equally important, should target grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence. Savignon describes language arts games such as memory test, scrambled passages, and hangman, among others, as ways to practice grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation.

2. **Language for a Purpose** – This component refers to providing opportunities for learners to focus on message rather than form, as in the case of immersion programs.
(i.e., where the L2 is used in the overall curriculum to teach core subjects such as mathematics, science, and geography); and can be incorporated in foreign or second language programs (i.e., where the focus is on language instruction per se) through thematic instruction.

3. My Language is Me: Personal L2 Use – This component entails taking into account not only the cognitive, but also the affective needs of the learner as an integral aspect of developing communicative competence, whether their motivations are integrative or instrumental. Here, activities that foster self-expression (e.g. journal writing, creating a family tree, storytelling, etc.), and appeal to learners’ individual personalities and interests are encouraged. This component also recognizes the fact that native-like performance might not be the goal of some learners.

4. You Be, I’ll Be: Theater Arts – As part of a communicative curriculum, theater arts (e.g., in the form of scripted and unscripted role playing, play production, dialogues, improvisation, etc.) give learners the chance to play the roles they assume or would like to assume in real life as well as respond to situations that might not have occurred in the language classroom. Therefore, this component is crucial in providing opportunities for language use that mirrors real life.

5. Beyond the Classroom – This aspect of a communicative curriculum recognizes the fact that the single most important purpose for communicative activities is “to prepare learners for the L2 world beyond, a world on which learners will depend for the development and maintenance of their communicative competence once their classes are over” (Savignon, 1997, p. 198). This goal can be achieved by either bringing
learners to the L2 community through field trips, community projects, or study abroad programs, for example, or by bringing the L2 community to the classroom through texts from the target culture, guest speakers, or the limitless communication resources made possible through the internet.

In relation to the question of the level of interaction among the aforementioned components, particularly how the balance among them might be struck, Savignon (1997) cautions that this concern can only be addressed by individual language teachers’ taking into consideration the goals that have been established for their programs. In any case, however, she asserts that the complexities of the learner (i.e., a combination of families, cultures, learning styles, personalities) as well as teachers, administrators, and the community at large—which, in reality, will further determine the learning needs to be met—must be at the forefront of the extent to which each of the above components will be emphasized.

The primary reason I have chosen to label the above descriptions of a communicative syllabus or curriculum as orthodox is that although there is mention and recognition of the functional and sociolinguistic aspects of language use in the literature, discussion of the implementation of CLT is somewhat restricted to instructional tasks, activities, and techniques which are treated as entities that are separate from the target culture within which they are executed. For instance, in a communicative syllabus that takes a thematic approach to language teaching, the content (e.g., leisure activities, sports, art, shopping, seasons, household activities, etc.) is sometimes presented as though it holds a unitary meaning and interpretation with little to no intercultural or intracultural
distinctions (Swaffar, 2006). Rather, “the language content is … built on idealized
typifications of what native speakers may say and do in specified contexts” (Leung,
2005). This shortcoming of the orthodox approach has paved the way for what I refer to
as Modern CLT.

2.1.3 Modern communicative language teaching: Toward a rebirth of
Hymes’ notion of communicative competence in language instruction

If the goal of language learning is to have both knowledge and understanding of
what the cultural products and practices of a particular culture mean to its members, then,
the social, political, and economic implications of the linguistic content as well as the
mode of delivery used for practicing language features (e.g., dialogues, journals, skits)
must be interrogated and analyzed. Unfortunately, however, as discussed in the
preceding section, in the process of recontextualizing the concept of communicative
competence—as envisioned by Hymes (1972)—for purposes of language instruction, the
concept “has become fossilized in its most reductive sense, as functional language
more strongly asserts, “the transfer of this concept [CLT] from research to language
teaching has … produced abstracted contexts and idealized social rules of use based on
(English language) native-speakerness” (p. 119). In light of this quandary, there has been
a recent movement toward what I call Modern CLT, which is undergirded by
sociocultural and symbolic competence. Sociocultural competence, in this sense, refers
to one’s understanding of the social context of language use which includes (1) the roles
of participants; (2) the information which is shared among them; (2) the multiple functions of their interaction; (3) social conventions of language use, including turn-taking, content appropriateness, tone, and nonverbal cues; and (4) cultural sensitivity (Savignon, 2002a). As Savignon (2002b) firmly declares,

> Just knowing something about the culture of an English-speaking country will not suffice. What must be learned is a general empathy and openness toward other cultures. Sociocultural competence includes a willingness to engage in the active negotiation of meaning along with a willingness to suspend judgment and take into consideration the possibility of cultural differences in conventions of use. (p. 10)

As a central component of this newly articulated form of communicative competence, sociocultural competence highlights the ways in which the sociocultural dimensions of language in a speech community might be understood and interpreted. The concept of sociocultural competence, then, has come to redefine the CLT approach by virtue of the fact that there is no prescription of what techniques and activity types to utilize. In other words, communicative competence is seen as a more culturally relative concept in which “learners cannot be expected to anticipate the sociocultural dimension of every situation” (Savignon, 2002b, p. 9).

In addition to sociocultural competence, another type of competence referred to as symbolic competence (Kramsch, 2006)—what might be considered to be a component of sociocultural competence, more generally speaking—has come to define key features of Modern CLT. In this light, Kramsch (2006) argues that in its orthodox form, CLT (i.e., as guided by the goal of communicative competence) is not able to address present-day
issues of global proportion including ethnic identity; economic, and social inequality; and religious ideology. In regards to the second language acquisition concept of input, for instance, mere exposure to authentic and comprehensible input is insufficient in a world where the input becomes increasingly complex through marketing strategies, political propaganda, the internet, and the news media in general; genres are blurred; and the modalities of meaning making have been diversified. Knowing how to get one’s message across or communicate meaning is not enough for today’s learners. Rather, “they have to understand the practice of meaning making itself” (Kramsch, 2006, p. 251). Symbolic competence does not abandon the interpretation, expression, and negotiation of meaning in interaction, but rather compliments them by drawing attention to register, style, form, genre, and “how linguistic form shapes mental representation, that is, what word choices reveal about the minds of speakers” (Kramsch, 2006, p. 251).

Kramsch (2006) identifies three primary components of symbolic competence that can be fostered through works of literature:

(1) Production of Complexity: Literature adds complexity to the concept of symbolic competence because it depicts communication as transcending correctness; that is, saying the correct word to the right person in the most appropriate way. “Characters in novels get trapped by language into situations that offer neither good nor bad solutions, just tragic dilemmas” (Kramsch, 2006, p. 251).

(2) Tolerance of Ambiguity: Kramsch regards this component as one that is indispensible for achieving symbolic competence. Literary works can serve as the basis for dissecting
and critiquing myths and realities, words and actions, with the intent to illustrate how language can be manipulated to justify one’s claims.

(3) *Form as Meaning:* Whereas Orthodox CLT emphasizes form as the means of transmitting and receiving authentic content, modern CLT, as informed by symbolic competence, focuses on the meaning of form through multiple media (e.g., textual, visual, poetic, acoustic).

The three components of symbolic competence described above should allow teachers to see the inseparability of language and culture, thereby, helping language learners to understand that “communicative competence does not derive from information alone, but from the symbolic power that comes with the interpretation of signs and their multiple relations to other signs” (Kramsch, 2006, p. 252).

Although Richards and Rodgers (2001) state that CLT is more fittingly described as an approach versus a method, drawing the distinction between an orthodox and a modern form of CLT reveals that, in fact, it is the orthodox form which more resembles a method, and the modern form, an approach. That is to say, orthodox CLT is more prescriptive or technique-driven whereas modern CLT—by virtue of its responsiveness to sociocultural nuances both within and across linguistic systems, and its focus on the negotiation of the conventions of the use of words and their meanings in social contexts—does not stipulate specific teaching strategies and classroom procedures.

It is important to note that the purpose of making the distinction between Orthodox and Modern CLT is not to theoretically position one against the other, but rather to more aptly illustrate the evolution and metamorphosis of CLT since its
inception. While researchers continue to have debates concerning what should be the new face of CLT, language teachers continue to battle the multifaceted factors that impact the conceptualization and implementation of the approach, even in its most basic form.

2.1.4 Teachers’ perceptions and implementation of communicative language teaching

Despite the fact that both teachers and applied linguists recognize CLT as “the most effective approach among those in general use, there are still a number of misconceptions about what it involves” (Thompson, 1996, p. 9). Based on conversations with colleagues, foreign language teachers, M.A. and EFL course developers, Thompson (1996) outlines four misconceptions regarding CLT, and how they have come about: (1) CLT means that grammar is not taught. (2) CLT means only speaking is taught. (3) CLT means working in pairs, which is interpreted as role play. (4) CLT means too much is expected from the teacher.

Thompson (1996) argues that there are a number of reasons why these misconceptions exist. With respect to the first misconception (i.e., CLT means that grammar is not taught.), many applied linguists have made compelling theoretical claims against explicit grammar teaching (e.g., Krashen, 1988). The translation of these claims into classroom practice by means of language textbooks (many of which excluded explicit grammar teaching in the early years of CLT) and syllabi, have, to a large extent, impacted teachers’ implementation of CLT. Furthermore, instructional goals were
developed primarily based on a functional approach to language teaching (i.e., what learners would be able to do with the language) with little to no regard for the grammatical competence necessary to use the language in a task-oriented, or functional manner.

The second misconception (i.e., CLT means only speaking is taught.) has gained dominance given the fact that CLT, as were earlier approaches, came under the influence of a new effort in linguistics to prioritize speaking and listening over reading and writing skills. Furthermore, the main language needs of many learners outside of the classroom are usually oral, causing a misinterpretation of communication as only speaking. In the same vein, the emphasis in CLT for learners to receive adequate, meaningful, practice with language features, is often misconstrued as more student talking time and less teacher talking time, once again, deemphasizing reading and writing as modes of communication.

As regarding the third misconception (i.e., CLT means working in pairs, which is interpreted as role play.), the notion that pair work is limited to role play is a misguided one: It has been influenced, in part, by a limited interpretation of the notion that learners must have opportunities to make choices about how and for what purposes the target language will be used. In other words, it is important to recognize that pair, or group work for that matter, can also be used as the means to an end by taking the form of problem solving or information gap activities.

With respect to the fourth misconception (CLT means too much is expected from the teacher.), the fact that CLT, relative to other commonly used approaches or methods,
requires a broader range of language, and language teaching skills, and less predictable instructional activities (e.g., those that do not rely on dull repetitions and translation) might have inadvertently lend credibility to this myth. However, implementing the tenets of CLT should not be viewed as too high of an expectation for teachers, but rather an opportunity for them to reexamine their own beliefs and practices while embracing an alternative to the status quo that is adaptable to learners’ needs.

In addition to Thompson’s (1996) anecdotal, yet valid account of the misconceptions surrounding CLT, there is also empirical evidence that shed light on foreign language teachers’ perceptions of CLT; their teaching practices; and those factors that have played a role in shaping their beliefs and teaching. For example, in an effort to investigate teachers’ understanding of CLT as well as the similarities and differences between teachers’ and researchers’ conceptions of the approach, Mungubhai, Marland, Dashwood and Son (2005) looked into six foreign language teachers’ (four secondary school teachers, including one teacher of German; one teacher of Chinese, two teachers of Japanese; and two primary school teachers, one teacher of Indonesian and the other of Japanese) practical theories of CLT in Australia. The participants’ conceptualizations of CLT were compared to a list of 62 key attributes (referred to as criterial attributes) generated from the relevant literature and members of the research team with expertise in CLT and its classroom applications. Based on an analysis of in-depth interview data, there was a moderate difference between the teachers’ and researchers’ conceptions of CLT, wherein the teachers’ views of the approach included half to two-thirds of the criterial attributes. Teachers’ conceptions of CLT were a hybrid of the criterial attributes
and other aspects of general teaching. For example, five of the six teachers saw student enjoyment as a crucial goal in their implementation of CLT; teacher role as that of a disciplinarian; *chalk and talk* as an important teaching strategy; and tolerance for foreigners and their cultures as an instructional goal. Analysis of the questionnaire data, on the other hand, showed a high level of agreement between the teachers’ and researchers’ conceptions of CLT, with all six teachers agreeing with statements that represented 44 of the 62 criterial attributes. The researchers postulated that the differences in findings between the interview and questionnaire data were based on the fact that for each of these two methods, the teachers drew upon two separate conceptualizations: During the interviews, they drew upon their practical conceptualization of CLT, rooted in their personal use of the approach in their unique teaching contexts. On the other hand, they also held a theoretical conceptualization (which more closely resembles the questionnaire statements) formed through readings, and in-service courses.

Whereas Mungubhai et al. (2005) focused exclusively on conceptions of CLT held by teachers and researchers, Sato and Kleinsasser (1999), in addition to examining what in-service teachers knew and believed about CLT, also examined how such knowledge and beliefs were acquired and developed; and how the teachers implemented CLT in their classrooms. Participants included 10 teachers of Japanese as a foreign language in 10 high schools in Australia, seven of whom started teaching without any academic preparation in the teaching of foreign languages, but had experiences living in the target culture. The findings reveal that the teachers had four principal conceptions
regarding CLT: They asserted that (1) CLT means learning to communicate in the target language; (2) focuses mainly on speaking and listening skills; (3) uses minimal grammar instruction; and (4) makes use of instructional activities that are time-consuming. Based on the observation data, the extent to which the participants implemented CLT practices in their classrooms was limited. For instance, despite the fact that most teachers mentioned the use of activities such as simulations, games, and role-plays in their instruction, the classes observed were “heavily teacher-fronted, grammar was presented without any context clues, and there were few interactions seen among students in the classroom” (p. 505). Additionally, there was extensive use of English in explaining grammatical points and giving instructions; and L2 use among students was not as common as, according to the authors, one might conclude from the interview and survey results. In regards to those factors that contributed to the teachers’ understanding of CLT, their own L2 teaching and learning experiences played a more central role than in-service programs and observing other teachers.

On a larger scale, Sato (2002) studied the context, beliefs, and practices of 19 teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL) in a private senior high school in Japan under new CLT guidelines; the interrelationship among their teaching context, beliefs, and practices; and how they learned to teach within the context of their school, department, and classroom. Sato reported that the school norms and values (i.e., focus on classroom management, extracurricular activities, school events) allowed little time to tend to matters pertaining to instruction per se. According to one participant, those teachers “who make efforts to manage their homerooms, for example, collecting
signatures for a petition, selling tickets for a festival to parents, and writing many homeroom newsletters … are highly valued” (p. 52). Surprisingly, none of the participants used the term CLT, but spoke rather broadly concerning their views in favor of *communication-oriented English*. This conflicted with a (hidden) school culture that supported *exam-oriented English*. For instance, one of the participants’ personal learning objectives was for his students to “understand different cultures, but preparing students for university entrance examinations seemed to be a main goal” (p. 57). On the other hand, despite the teachers’ preference for communication-oriented English, grammar translation and explanation; teaching from the textbook; sentence memorization; and discrete point tests were the norm. Also noteworthy were the learners’ negative attitudes toward exam-oriented English. Sato reported that a majority of the teachers avoided attending in-service workshops, but rather learned through observing other teachers; their own L2 learning experiences; and trial and error teaching at the school. These sources, it is believed, “reinforced their routine practices, enabling them to adapt to the existing curriculum” (p. 67).

Shifting the focus from in-service teachers to teacher educators, Wang (2002) investigated teacher educators’ perceptions of the teaching and learning of English in Taiwan amidst recent reforms in English language education policy that emphasizes CLT. Participants included six university teacher educators who were, or had been in charge of the English teacher program in their respective universities. Survey and interview results revealed that in the context of EFL teaching in Taiwan, the grammar translation method was the most dominant. The teacher educators reported that many
teachers were strongly in favor of a grammar-based approach to language teaching based on the fact that this was the method through which they (teachers) were taught English. Furthermore, teachers lacked knowledge of language teaching methodologies, underlying language teaching theories, and a philosophy of teaching; some considered, for example, students’ level of intelligence or proficiency in English to be too low for them to profit from CLT. Reading materials were oftentimes beyond learners’ level of comprehension, in part, due to the manner in which they were selected: “What are considered good materials are often those adopted by the ‘star,’ or well-known, schools” (p. 137). In addition to teacher characteristics and views on the teaching of English, lack of institutional resources and support for changing the status quo, and a strong emphasis on test results proved to be a primary obstacle. Also, parental expectations proved to be a powerful force in promoting a grammar-based approach to language teaching: The routine and rigid practices inherent in a grammar translation approach provided parents with a more efficient way of monitoring their children’s progress. For instance, they may require “standardized answers to questions so that they can check their children’s understanding” (p. 137). Although the teacher educators’ teaching in both pre-service and in-service programs placed great emphasis on the CLT approach, the aforementioned factors (e.g., teachers’ personal views; school context; and parental demands) posed great challenges in implementing CLT practices.

The findings of the empirical studies discussed above have made noteworthy contributions to our understanding of how CLT is conceptualized and enacted in the classroom. First, the existence of both a practical and a theoretical conceptualization of
CLT was made evident, in addition to how a combination of multiple data collection methods can lead to more multifaceted conclusions (e.g., Mungubhai et al., 2005). What remains to be examined in light of this finding, however, is the extent to which foreign language teachers combine both their practical and theoretical knowledge of CLT; the specific purposes for which practical and theoretical knowledge are used; and those factors that influence how these two types of knowledge interact. Second, prior L2 learning experiences and the apprenticeship of observation appeared to have been influential in forming teachers’ beliefs regarding CLT (e.g., Sato and Kleinsasser, 2002; Mungubhai et al., 2005). Third, CLT practices were, at best, minimal: Grammar translation was the norm with limited opportunities for L2 interaction and negotiation of meaning (e.g., Sato, 2002; Wang, 2002). Many of the studies (e.g., Sato and Kleinsasser, 2002; Sato, 2002; Wang, 2002) underscore the crucial role that both the school and home contexts (e.g., emphasis on university entrance exam preparation, parental demands) play in the extent to which the CLT approach is implemented.

Notwithstanding the aforementioned contributions of the empirical studies herein examined, it is noticeable that the primary focus of the investigations was in-service teachers. Hence, the study of their learning and development was either limited to first order data gathered from their existing teaching contexts (e.g., observation field notes), or second order data reported by the participants regarding their learning to teach. While taking in-service teachers as the unit of analysis is certainly a valuable endeavor, a balanced perspective on teacher learning as it relates to CLT must also include the voices of pre-service teachers as they engage in the process of learning to teach across multiple
settings (e.g., university, K-12 institutions) within the larger context of teacher education programs. By this token, an explanation of their learning to teach would include, but not limited to, an analysis of those contexts (e.g., teacher education coursework, field experiences, student teaching) that mediate teaching and learning. Furthermore, the need for longitudinal studies that begin with pre-service teacher learning in teacher education programs, and continue into their first year of teaching is even greater. These types of studies would greatly add to our understanding of how an individual—both as a pre- and in-service teacher—interprets, negotiates, and responds to the challenges and tensions across activity settings, and how such process shapes their teaching in the classroom.

2.1.5 Section summary

I shall now address the questions posed at the beginning of this section on the theory and practice of communicative language teaching. First, how has CLT been conceptualized by language researchers? The above review of the literature shows that the approach is founded upon a theory of language which Hymes (1972) termed, communicative competence. The notion of communicative competence, Hymes postulated, is concerned with how the systematic or structural possibilities of language are connected to what is feasible, and appropriate so as to allow for the production and interpretation of human behavior as it unfolds. The term communicative competence, therefore, bridges Chomsky’s (1965) competence-performance dichotomy. Connecting the fields of linguistic anthropology with educational linguistics, Hymes’ theory of communicative competence has been recontextualized and elaborated for purposes of
language pedagogy as seen in Halliday’s (1975) functional theory of language use; Canale and Swain’s (1980), and Canale’s (1983) grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence; and Bachman’s (1990) organizational, and pragmatic competence. The literature reveals that the CLT problem came about as applied linguists began the process of translating the aforementioned concepts into classroom practice, resulting in what I have termed Orthodox CLT. CLT, in its orthodox form, presents methods, techniques, instructional activities, syllabi, and curricula without giving due consideration to their feasibility, appropriateness, and interpretation from one culture to another. Thus, Orthodox CLT has come under attack as having deviated from the essence of Hymes’ (1972) theory of communicative competence. Some have argued that, in its strongest form, Orthodox CLT is culturally biased in favor of a Western value system (e.g., Ellis, 1996). This critique has paved the way for what I have termed modern CLT which, by being less prescriptive, but more culturally relative, foregrounds the process of making meaning in interaction as a function of register, style, genre, form, as well as sociocultural, political, and economic contexts. In actuality, modern CLT represents an effort to return to the practice of communicative competence as Hymes (1972) defined it.

Second, what are language teachers’ perceptions of CLT? The literature reveals many misconceptions concerning the meaning of CLT. For example, some have misinterpreted CLT as not teaching grammar; teaching only speaking; limited to pair work; and overly high expectations from teachers (Thompson, 1996). With respect to the
nature of teachers’ perception, there is evidence that teachers hold both a practical and theoretical perception of CLT (e.g., Mungubhai et al., 2005).

Third, how is CLT practiced by foreign language teachers? Despite the overall ubiquity and dominance of CLT, studies show that it is not widely practiced in classrooms. Rather, minimal student interaction, extensive L1 use (e.g., Sato and Kleinsasser, 1999); and grammar translation (e.g., Sato, 2002; Wang, 2002) prevail.

Lastly, what are the factors that influence language teachers’ implementation of CLT? Some of the factors influencing the practice of CLT include L2 teaching and learning experiences (e.g., Sato and Kleinsasser, 1999; Sato, 2002); school norms and values (e.g., Sato, 2002); parental expectations, lack of institutional support and resources, and teachers’ pedagogical and practical knowledge (Wang, 2002). In order for CLT to maintain credibility on an international level, Orthodox CLT has begun to give way to Modern CLT wherein the approach is adapted to the context in which teaching and learning occurs. However, while the debate surrounding this transition is well underway in the academy, evidence is lacking regarding the process through which it is appropriated in teacher education programs, and how it is being implemented in the language classroom.

2.2 General and Foreign Language Teacher Education Research

In stark contrast to research on teaching, research on teacher education is still a relatively new aspect of educational research. As Grossman and McDonald (2008) strongly assert, “While research on teaching has reached adulthood, research in teacher
education is still in its adolescence, in search of its distinctive identity” (p. 185). In this search for identity, issues concerning teacher quality and the impact of teacher education programs have consistently drawn great attention in democratic societies that prioritize matters of teaching and learning for all its citizens (Levine & Grant, 2005). It is within this context of concerns regarding teacher preparation and teacher quality that research on teacher education began to emerge in the 1950s as a distinct field of inquiry in its own right (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2005). Since then, many of the most crucial debates in the field have been centered around research per se, specifically on the following question: Is there a research base that undergirds the field of teacher education, and if so, what does it suggest (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2005)? Unfortunately, as Cochran-Smith and Fries (2005) lament, between the late 1950s and early 2000s, teacher education research has traversed a path similar to research on teaching in general:

A confluence of events and blue-ribbon reports reveals that the schools are in trouble and teachers are failing in some way. Teacher preparation is condemned by both internal and external critics for its lack of intellectual rigor, selectivity standards, structural arrangements, research base and failure to achieve positive results in schools and classrooms. (p. 71)

Moreover, it is noteworthy that research on the preparation of teachers has not received equal attention in all content areas. That is to say, while much research has been dedicated to teacher preparation in the areas of mathematics, science, and (English) language arts, research on foreign language teacher education still remains on the fringes of the circle of inquiry in our field.
As evidenced in the above quote, while research has traditionally focused on the many failures and tribulations of the field, the time has come to engage in a rigorous interrogation of the intellectual tools of inquiry that are utilized in teacher education research. It is with such focus that we will be able to address disconcerting issues of the field in a systematic and meaningful way. In an attempt to undertake this formidable task, this section of the literature review will trace the history of general and foreign language teacher education research. In addition, the adequacy and utility of the theory and methodology applied in these areas of research will be discussed in addition to some of the major debates within the field. The review will also discuss empirical studies that look into teacher learning in foreign language teaching and teacher education. The principal purpose of this section of the literature review, then, is to describe and discuss the theoretical and methodological contexts in which pre-service teachers’ learning of CLT is located so as to more effectively and systematically address what is lacking in the literature as it pertains to both general and language teacher education research.

2.2.1 A historical overview of general teacher education research: What are the issues?

Language teacher education, as a component of general teacher education, has been, and still is heavily influenced by theoretical frameworks and pedagogical approaches in the broader field of teacher education (Freeman, 1996a). Thus, prior to discussing research trends in language teacher education, in particular, it is necessary to first examine the theoretical and methodological shifts relating to the development of
general teacher education research. In an effort to trace the evolution of teacher education research, Cochran-Smith and Fries (2005), based on an extensive review of the literature concerning the history of research on teacher education, looked into how the (research) problem has been defined and studied, the types of questions researchers asked, and the research designs employed. The researchers identified the periods 1950-1980, 1980-2000, and 1990-2000 as phases during which teacher education research was constructed as a training problem, a learning problem, and a policy problem, respectively. It is important to keep in mind that these terms are only indicative of the dominant research approach during the corresponding time periods, and not that the emergence of one trend excluded another. In fact, there is some degree of overlap among the different phases, which, it is worth noting, has been recognized by experts in both general and language teacher education.

From the late 1950s to the early 1980s, research on teacher education—defined during those years as a training problem, wherein the primary goal was to identify those personal traits or characteristics that were connected to effective teaching—had its roots in the process-product research paradigm (Cochran-Smith & Fries 2005). From this paradigmatic stance, the primary emphasis was on a presumed linear, causal relationship between teacher behavior and student learning outcomes (Cochran-Smith & Fries 2005; Freedman, 1996) wherein “teachers’ thoughts lead to their actions, which in turn trigger students’ thoughts, which lead to their actions” (Freeman, 1996, p. 353).

From the early 1980s to the early 2000s, a shift occurred in how the research problem in teacher education was defined: Teacher education research as a training
problem gave way to teacher education research as a learning problem (Cochran-Smith & Fries 2005), thus, a concomitant shift from process-product to hermeneutic research. As such, teacher education research began to examine teachers’ sources of knowledge; how such knowledge was used and developed over time; the teacher education pedagogies that laid the foundation for such development; their attitudes and beliefs prior to, and during their enrollment in teacher education programs, and as in-service employees; and the ways in which learning to teach developed over time (Cochran-Smith & Fries 2005). From this perspective, the teacher is viewed as a complex, socio-cognitive being as opposed to a mere transmitter or receptor of knowledge. It is this ecological view of teacher education research (i.e., as a learning problem) that forms the foundation for this study.

From the mid 1990s to the 2000s, teacher education research saw yet another methodological shift—from defining research in teacher education as a learning problem, to teacher education as a policy problem. Teacher education research as a policy problem focuses on the use of correlational or experimental studies to reform and create federal and state-level policies (e.g., those related to certification and licensure) with the hope of impacting student achievement. This research orientation bears much resemblance to the process-product paradigm that dominated the 1960s and 70s; however, the major difference is that whereas training research took as its focal point the internal practices of teacher education programs such as microteaching and other instructional methods, policy-oriented research has been centered around broader areas of teacher education (e.g., entrance and licensure exams, program accreditation) which are more within the
state or federal locus of control. It is important to note that the research in this period is also reflective of the broader professionalization agenda led by organizations such as the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), and the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE), whose primary goal is to ensure teachers are fully prepared and certified by meeting professional teaching standards.

Despite differences in their approach to teacher education research, there are many dominant themes that cut across all three of the above time periods with respect to theory and methodology. Grossman (2005), for instance, in her extensive review of empirical research between 1985 and 2001, examined the impact of pedagogical approaches (e.g., use of laboratory methods such as microteaching and computer simulations; video and hypermedia technology; case methods; portfolios; practitioner research) on teacher and student learning in pre-service teacher education programs as well as the contexts in which these instructional strategies proved effective. The review shows that early studies on microteaching were atheoretical. That is to say, these studies were not located within a clearly defined theory of teacher learning, but were rather motivated by the techniques that worked versus those that did not. Additionally, theories, when invoked, were restricted to single pedagogical approaches, and thus, were not geared toward exploring relationships between how professors teach in teacher education programs and what their students actually learn. In addition to these theoretical shortcomings, research methods concerning data collection and analysis were not made explicit. For instance, references were made to coding schemes and the constant
comparative method; however, there were very little details on how data analysis was actually carried out or illustration of such analysis with examples of coded data. Furthermore, in light of the fact that the majority of the studies reviewed were self-studies (i.e., university teachers studying their students and programs), the complexities of negotiating dual roles as a teacher and researcher were not thoroughly addressed as well as the instructional context surrounding particular pedagogies.

Similarly, Clift and Brady’s (2005) synthesis of 105 empirical studies of the impact, contributions, and limitations of methods courses and field experiences in English, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies, reveals that although many studies were theoretically and methodologically robust, there were many that were not. Similar to Grossman’s (2005) conclusion, Clift and Brady assert that “there is no well-developed theoretical framework for studying the long-term impact of teacher education components on individuals, or even less, on groups or institutions” (p. 332). Theoretical frameworks lacked coherence both within and across content areas. Additionally, quantitative analyses of the correlation among teacher education programs, teachers’ teaching, and student learning were unexplored. Most troubling, was the finding that descriptions of data collection and analysis “were often so sparse that repeating the studies would be impossible” (Clift & Brady, 2005, p. 333). For example, descriptions of research participants were limited to either gender or academic status (i.e., graduate or undergraduate).

Grossman and McDonald (2008), in foregrounding the importance of establishing connections across multiple research contexts in teacher education research,
assert that although research in teacher education is historically rooted in research on
teaching, “it has developed in curious isolation both from mainstream research on
teaching and from research on higher education and professional education more
generally” (p. 185). Research into how teachers enact, adapt, and reinterpret what they
have been taught in their teacher education programs in the early in-service years as well
as how this mediates student learning is an invaluable tool for informing the knowledge
base of teacher education programs (Zeichner, 2005). It is also important to recognize
that the relationship among teacher education, teaching, and student learning must be
positioned relative to policies at the federal and state levels; institutional contexts; and the
labor markets in local districts (Grossman & McDonald, 2008).

Besides the above concerns primarily relating to research design, there are a
number of topics which teacher education research has not yet addressed. These include
research on the preparation of teachers to teach students from diverse backgrounds; the
recruitment of a diverse teaching force; research on teacher educators, teacher education
students, graduates of teacher education programs; and research on teacher education
curriculum and programs of study (Zeichner, 2005). According to Zeichner (2005), with
respect to preparing teachers to successfully teach “diverse students … almost no
research has been done on preparing teachers to teach English Language Learners” (p.
746). Although the lack of research in this area has been recognized, and some have
started looking into interweaving the education of English language learners (ELLs) with
teacher education curriculum across content areas (e.g., Costa, Gary, Smith, & Brisk,
2005), it is regrettable that research concerning the preparation of teachers to teach
foreign languages (e.g., teaching Spanish, French, or German in the US) is absent from the literature reviews (i.e., Clift & Brady, 2005; Grossman, 2005) discussed earlier. To seek further insight into this issue, consider the following line of argument: Hollins and Guzman (2005) define diverse populations as “those presently underserved by the educational system, including students of color, low-income students, English-language learners, and students in rural and urban settings” (p. 477). It is noteworthy that the students taught by foreign language educators also include those referenced in the above definition. Furthermore, although the majority of teacher education students are White middle-class females (Hollins & Guzman, 2005), those in foreign language teacher education programs are in a unique position to contribute to the linguistic diversity of native English-speaking students as well as connect with heritage language learners in K-12 settings across the United States. It is therefore somewhat puzzling as to why, in the detailed and comprehensive report of the AERA panel on research and teacher education (AERA, 2005), no mention is made of foreign language teacher education research. Hence, it is an urgent necessity that we examine historical and current research trends in language teacher education.

2.2.2 A historical overview of language teacher education research: What are the issues?

As did Cochran-Smith and Fries (2005), Freeman (2002) identified three periods in research on language teacher education, particularly, teacher learning, which include
(1) the pre-1970s period; (2) the decade of change (1980-1990), and (3) the decade of consolidation (1990-2000).

Prior to the 1970s, as in general teacher education, the process-product method of research was the dominant methodology. Teacher learning was separated into the mastery of content (linguistically and meta-linguistically) on the one hand, and the mastery of pedagogy, on the other hand (i.e., practicing of effective teaching methods and techniques).

The decade of change, however, ushered in a marriage between the formerly separated pedagogy and content, leading to the formation of pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1986) which views the how of teaching as a function of the what of teaching; and both the how and what of teaching relative to the social, professional, and political contexts in which they are located. Additionally, the role of teachers’ beliefs, their apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975), and their personal practical knowledge (Elbaz, 1981) became more influential in studying teacher learning and development.

Freeman (2002) described the decade of consolidation as a period in which “the move away from the process-product paradigm … became more-or-less complete” (p. 8), giving way to interpretive research designs. Furthermore, the postmodernist view of the teacher (i.e., a sociocognitive view of the teacher in which teacher cognition is not studied as a unitary construct, but rather as one that is grounded in thinking as a reflection of social identity—“who you are, your background and experience, your purposes, and your social context” [Freeman, 2002, p. 9]) became well established and was articulated as a public policy stance in various educational policy commissions, debates, and
organizations. Moreover, a focus on the role of context (historically and spatially) as mediating teacher learning became increasingly significant such that the age-old theory-practice debate was no longer an issue of relevance, or a mere transfer of skills, but rather one of how theory gets reinterpreted through the lenses of the historical contexts of the academic institutions and communities in which teaching and learning occur.

Based on Freeman’s (2002) historical account of language teacher education, one can clearly see a correlation with Cochran-Smith and Fries’ (2005) characterization of the research trends in general teacher education—despite the absence of language teacher education in their discussion of the literature—as a training, learning, and policy problem. However, not mentioned in Cochran-Smith and Fries’ (2005) review of the literature on teacher education research is the fact that process-product research is still very much alive, not so much with respect to teachers, but more so in relation to educational policy initiatives, for instance, the implicit notion that higher standards will automatically lead to more accountability and higher student achievement.

As relating to research methodology and theory in language teacher education, Freeman (1996a), casting research on teacher learning in language teaching as an unstudied problem, critiqued that there is a lack of a formal and firm research base for language teacher education “by which to assess the accuracy or veracity of the various stories about language teaching that are told in teacher education, curriculum design, methodology, and so on” (p. 352). Additionally, a coherent theoretical framework and consistent research methodologies for the study of teacher learning are lacking. To this end, Freeman proposed that a hermeneutic research paradigm is most appropriate for
studying teacher learning, in that, from this perspective, the researcher would examine not only teachers’ mental processes, but also the interpretations they assign to their own actions, student behaviors, and their interpretations of students’ thinking and beliefs.

More specifically, in an effort to ground the study of teacher learning in a coherent theory of learning, others (e.g., Johnson & Golombek, 2003; Richards, 2008) have argued for the application of a sociocultural theory of learning which draws upon the works of Vygotsky (1978, 1981a, 1981b) and Leont’ev (1981). From this theoretical standpoint, constructs such as internalization, zone of proximal development (ZPD), and mediation would provide researchers with a systematic set of tools to study teachers’ cognitive processes as tool-mediated, goal-directed functions relative to the motives and division of labor within and across activity systems such as the university and the school.

In light of the sociocultural turn in the human sciences, Johnson (2006) identifies four primary challenges which L2 teacher learning must confront: (1) Closing the counterproductuve theory-versus-practice dichotomy by applying the notion of praxis, or teachers’ making sense of theories based on their professional lives and work settings; (2) legitimizing teachers’ ways of knowing by recognizing the importance of action research, reflective inquiry, and narrative analysis; (3) taking a new approach to professional development that goes beyond the typical workshops and seminars to include “alternative professional development structures that allow for self-directed, collaborative, inquiry-based learning that is directly relevant to teachers’ classroom lives” (Johnson, 2006, p. 243); and (4) recognizing that a quest for uniformity in the knowledge base of L2 teacher education is complicated by political, economic, and cultural contexts both locally and
globally that have further redefined, for example, what it means to be a native versus a non-native speaker, and the language variety which is taught as the standard relative to what is now referred to as World Englishes.

Above all that has been discussed thus far in regards to language teacher education research the most dominant debate in the field has to do with the knowledge base of language teacher education. Freeman and Johnson (1998), for instance, propose a reconceptualization of the knowledge base of TESOL teacher education, which foregrounds teachers’ learning to teach, the development of their pedagogical knowledge over time, and the contexts of their teaching and learning. This new epistemological framework “focuses on the activity of teaching itself—who does it, where it is done, and how it is done” (Freeman & Johnson, 1998, p. 405). From this perspective, the language, per se, is secondary to the teaching of the same. Additionally, the authors acknowledge, although knowledge of the process of second language acquisition (SLA) is important, it must not only include cognitive orientations to language learning, but also sociolinguistic perspectives. In the same vein, however, they critiqued that “much current knowledge in SLA may be of limited use and applicability to practicing teachers” (Freeman & Johnson, 1998, p. 411). Furthermore, they state, SLA must have direct implications for successful teaching. Freeman and Johnson assert that redirecting our attention to matters of pedagogy will bring an end to the ubiquitous notion that if one can speak the target language, (s)he can teach it.

Yates and Muchisky (2003), on the other hand, dismiss Freeman and Johnson’s (1998) proposal for placing teachers’ learning to teach at the center of the knowledge
base of language teacher education as being misguided. They argue that the
reconceptualization put forth by Freeman and Johnson undermines key issues such as
“what it means to be able to use English, how L2 are learned, and how these issues
influence what teachers do in the classroom” (p. 136). Moreover, Yates and Muchisky
propose that a model for the knowledge base of teacher education must take into account
the learner’s interlanguage (Selinker, 1972), which will impact the manner in which input
is converted to intake. They assert that although SLA, being a cognitive field of inquiry,
does not automatically generalize its findings to language pedagogy, this does not
undermine its significance in language teaching: It is teacher educators and not SLA
researchers who are ultimately responsible for making connections between SLA and
language teaching.

The debate concerning the knowledge base of language teacher education, as
exemplified in the above exchange, can be characterized as somewhat regressive and
adversarial, taking us back into an era where the knowledge-base line of demarcation was
drawn between content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge. Both learning to teach
as well as knowledge of subject matter are equally significant and mutually informing.
As such, questions such as the following must be the focus of our attention: How does
the linguistic and cultural competence of the language teacher (both native and non-
native speakers) shape their conceptualizations of what it means to teach a language?
Amidst the spread of English as a lingua franca, for instance, by what and whose
standards is the preparation of future EFL or ESL teachers guided? Is the teacher
education curriculum implicitly based on teaching the “standard” variety of the target
language or does it address the teaching of local varieties (e.g., in the case of World Englishes)?

Despite the methodological and theoretical shortcomings, and unresolved debates in language teacher education, the following is unquestionably apparent: There is an agreement that insights into how language teachers come to know what they know and practice what they do are best gained from research in teacher learning, which I shall now address in the following section.

2.2.3 Review of empirical studies on teacher learning

According to Johnson (2006), although multiple factors have contributed to our understanding of the practice of L2 teaching, “none is more significant than the emergence of a substantial body of research now referred to as teacher cognition” (p. 236). Borg (2003) emphasizes that the concept of teacher learning is best studied not as an isolated construct, but rather one that explores the interactions between teachers’ knowledge, beliefs, and thoughts; and their prior language learning experiences, their education in teacher preparation programs, and their classroom teaching. A number of studies aptly illustrate this context-sensitive perspective on teacher learning.

Moran (1996), through a narrative analysis approach, chronicled the many developmental phases in Katherine’s (pseudonym) efforts to learn Spanish, and learning how to teach Spanish after 13 years as an English teacher in New Hampshire. Katherine’s journey could be considered an alternative pathway to becoming a Spanish teacher, in that, she did not follow the typical route of majoring in Spanish as an
undergraduate, then enrolling in and graduating from a teacher education program. At the time of the three-month study, which included six hour-long interviews, classroom observations, and written reports, Katherine had been teaching Spanish for six years. Her journey began when her proposal to add Spanish to the high school curriculum was accepted. Quickly coming to the realization that her high-school-level knowledge of Spanish would not be sufficient for her new teaching responsibility, her first priority was developing a higher level of proficiency in the language by taking Spanish courses in multiple summer programs in the U.S., Spain, and Guatemala over a six-year period. Additionally, she listened to U.S. Army Spanish tapes and employed a Guatemalan tutor. However, feelings of incompetence in being able to teach the language that went beyond drills and practice exercises led her to complete a Master of Arts in foreign language education. By the end of the program, she developed a clear focus on developing students’ oral competence—which sharply contrasted with how she was taught Spanish in high school—and creating a positive learning environment. Moran concluded that Katherine’s story of learning to teach Spanish was motivated by a dynamic relationship among (1) core values relating to education as well as high expectations for herself as a teacher; (2) a focus on students and learning, which revolved around her view of language teaching as part of a moral obligation to connect students with people and cultures on a global level; (3) the goal of getting a feel for Spanish through assuming the linguistic and cultural identity of a Spanish-speaking person; and (4) seeking models of teaching in an effort to change her own teaching—models that were aligned with her students, her values, and knowledge of Spanish.
Whereas Moran (1996), through narrative analysis, examined one in-service teacher’s learning of the subject matter (i.e., Spanish) as well as learning how to teach, Almarza (1996), applied a cross-case analysis in investigating four foreign language teachers’ development of professional knowledge, in particular, how their pretraining knowledge interacted with their teacher education knowledge, and how both intersected with the practice of foreign language teaching during a pre-service teacher education program (Post-Graduate-Certificate in Education). The ten-month longitudinal study, carried out at the University of London, drew upon methods of data collection such as journals, semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and stimulated recall protocols. The findings reveal that during teaching practice, the student teachers relied on multiple sources of knowledge: A focus on form and grammaticality (based on their apprenticeship of observation) in combination with an emphasis on oral production, which was taught through the presentation of contextualized phrases in a question-and-answer format (based on teacher education methods courses). Transformations in pretraining knowledge, to a large extent, occurred during the teacher education program, but prior to teaching in field placements. Amidst these transformations, however, there was much variation in the extent to which student teachers accepted the teaching method learned in their teacher education program.

Shifting the focus from interaction among sources of knowledge in both teacher education course work and student teaching, Freeman (1996b), utilized the construct of renaming to examine how four high school French and Spanish teachers (pursuing a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) degree in an in-service teacher education program),
through the use of the shared professional discourse of their teacher education program, were able to reconstruct conceptions of their teaching practices. Primary data sources for the eighteen-month study included interviews, observations, and written work produced by the teachers. The findings show that whereas prior to their enrollment in the program teachers articulated their conceptualizations of their teaching through local or everyday language, they later developed additional ways of naming their teaching practices by using the technical language of the field. The process of renaming was not simply assigning a new name to tacit perspectives on teaching, but a tool that mediated a new understanding of previous and existing experiences through a unified professional discourse. For example, whereas Amy (pseudonym), a first-year teacher of Spanish, had perceived a student’s feedback (“how could we have known that?” [as cited in Freeman, 1996b]) on a difficult Spanish text as a control and classroom management issue, after taking a second language reading course she was able to gain new insight into the same incident by perceiving it through the language of the field. That is to say, the student’s concern was now interpreted with respect to her reading level, focus on decoding at the expense of meaning, and taking a bottom-up approach.

In addition to the studies discussed thus far, there are those which have paid specific attention to exploring the principles, beliefs, and values which impact teachers’ pedagogical practices, referred to in the literature as teachers’ practical knowledge (Elbaz, 1981); teachers’ personal practical knowledge (Golombek, 1998); teachers’ practical theory (Mangubhai, Marland, Dashwood & Son, 2004); and teachers’ maxims (Richards, 1996).
Based on a seminal case study of a high school English teacher with ten years of teaching experience, Elbaz (1981) developed the concept of practical knowledge which she defines as knowledge which is “dynamic, held in an active relationship to practice and used to give shape to that practice” (p. 48). She identified five areas of practical knowledge which include knowledge of curriculum, subject matter, self, instruction, and the school setting. Furthermore, practical knowledge is structured according to the rules of practice, practical principles, and images. Images are considered to be the foundational structure for personal practical knowledge, whereby, “the teacher’s feelings, values, needs, and beliefs combine as she formulates brief metaphoric statements of how teaching should be” (p. 61). Additionally, Elbaz posited, practical knowledge is not static, but rather displays situational, theoretical, personal, social, and experiential orientations or uses. It is “firmly grounded in the individual’s inner and outer experience, and open to change” (p. 67).

Applying Elbaz’s (1981) notion of practical knowledge to second language (L2) teacher education, Golombek (1998) looked into the characteristics of two L2 English teachers’ (Sonya and Jenny [pseudonyms]—L2 English teaching assistants in a two-year teacher education program) personal practical knowledge, and how such knowledge informed practice. By identifying tensions or competing demands in the participants’ teaching, and the strategies they used to resolve those tensions, Golombek was able to explore both the nature of their personal practical knowledge, and its relationship to practice. Furthermore, Elbaz’s notion of image was used to represent the teachers’ instructional tensions. Comparative analysis of observation field notes and interview
transcripts revealed that Jenny’s personal practical knowledge was shaped by her fear of being corrected on grammatical usage based on the constant error correction she received while learning Russian, an experienced she described as being traumatic. This fear further motivated her teaching practice in a moral sense: “I just wouldn’t want someone doing that [constant error correction] to me, so I can’t do that I guess” (as cited on p. 454). Sonya’s practical knowledge was also shaped by her experiences as a learner and an individual outside the school setting, a combination which further impacted her teaching experiences. She traced her strong appreciation for explicit rationales for instructional activities to “my philosophy of life in a sense” (as cited on p. 457).

Unlike Elbaz (1981) and Golombek (1998), Mangubhai et al. (2004) investigated one foreign language teacher’s personal practical knowledge of the Communicative Language teaching (CLT) approach. Doreen (pseudonym), an experienced teacher of German as a foreign language, taught high school students in Queensland, Australia. The findings indicate that Doreen’s personal practical knowledge included values such as being reliable, responsible, punctual, and independent; making her lessons student-centered; being sensitive to students’ backgrounds; being a mother and a friend to her students; placing grammatical competence secondary to communicative competence; emphasizing fluency over grammatical correctness; minimal focus on error correction; and activities that required negotiation for meaning and spontaneous student interaction.

Whereas other studies have termed the personal values and beliefs that give shape to teachers’ classroom practices as practical knowledge, personal practical knowledge, or practical theory, Richards (2008) refers to the phenomenon as teachers’ maxims. Based
on an analysis of teachers’ accounts of their teaching practice, in addition to analyzing empirical studies that looked into the nature of teachers’ beliefs, values, and perceptions on teaching, Richards concluded that teachers’ lessons were guided by maxims—“principles [that] function like rules for best behavior in that they guide the teacher’s selection of choices from among a range of alternatives” (p. 286). Maxims which were identified included the maxim of involvement, order, planning, accuracy, efficiency, conformity, and empowerment. Richards asserts that for any given lesson, teachers “choose the ones [maxims] which seem most likely to help them create a successful lesson” (p. 291).

Taken together, the findings from the above studies point to a conceptualization of knowledge in the process of learning to teach not only as one that is held, but also one that is used to give form and meaning to teaching practices implemented in the classroom. It is knowledge which is active, changeable, and dynamic.

2.2.4 Section summary

As has been discussed, research trends in general teacher education have shifted from teacher education as a training problem, to teacher education as a learning problem, to teacher education as a policy problem (Cochran-Smith & Fries 2005). Language teacher education, being a component of general teacher education, has come under the influence of the aforementioned research trends. These overlapping trends range from process-product research (corresponding to teacher education as a training and policy problem, though in different ways) to research located in the interpretive paradigm (used
to study teacher education as a learning problem). A close examination of extensive literature review articles and empirical studies reveals that teacher education research, in general, lacks systematic and coherent theoretical frameworks, a fact which is evidenced in widespread terminological quandary. In particular, there has been a lack of adequate descriptions and illustrations of methods of data collection and analysis in addition to research concerning the interactions among teacher preparation, in-service teaching, and student learning.

In general, the research base on foreign language teacher education trails far behind that of research on teacher education in other content areas such as math and science. While there are similar concerns shared by both general and foreign language teacher education, foreign language teacher education must build a distinct research base that addresses issues that are unique to foreign language teaching and foreign language teacher education such as the teaching of English as a lingua franca; implications of being a native or non-native speaker of the target language for both teacher learning and teaching; and the place of SLA in the foreign language teacher education curriculum. In light of these areas of concern, research on foreign language teaching cannot afford to depend solely on research in other content areas.

Notwithstanding the above critiques, the areas in need of improvement in general and language teacher education research are, in part, due to the relative of the youth of the field (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2005). Notwithstanding this fact, the field has come a long way: From a teacher-training approach to teacher education, which viewed the teacher as a passive recipient of effective techniques and methods which (s)he was then
expected to transfer to practice, to a teacher-learning approach where the teacher is seen as one who interprets and filters knowledge acquired in their teacher education program through their apprenticeship of observation, personal, and professional experiences, making decisions concerning teaching practices based on the motives and demands of competing political and institutional contexts across time and space.

2.3 Theoretical Framework: A Sociocultural Approach to Learning and Development

The term *sociocultural theory* (or the label, *sociocultural*), is one that has been used extensively by researchers in various disciplines, but is oftentimes not clearly defined based on the fact that there is still much debate concerning the term, its meaning, to whom it belongs, and its intellectual origins (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). Thus, in an effort to establish a foundation or context for the ensuing discussion concerning some of the most fundamental constructs of sociocultural theory (i.e., mediation, internalization, zone of proximal development), its associated methodological approaches, and the relevant literature concerning the application of the theory to research in teacher education, I shall first define the brand of sociocultural theory to which I shall refer throughout this section. The line of sociocultural theory which forms the theoretical framework for this study “is not a theory of the social or of the cultural aspects of human existence” (Lantolf, 2004, pp. 30-31), but rather a theory of human learning and development that, at its core, “recognizes the central role that social relationships and
culturally constructed artifacts play in organizing uniquely human forms of thinking” (Lantolf, 2004, pp. 30-31).

This line of sociocultural theory has its roots in Russian or Vygotskian cultural-historical psychology, the tenets of which were constructed and developed by its founder, the developmental and educational psychologist, Lev S. Vygotsky, in collaboration with others in his field such as Alexi N. Leont’ev and Alexander R. Luria. Vygotsky’s overarching quest was to undertake a comprehensive, ambitious theoretical approach that would allow for a description and explanation of higher mental functions (e.g., memory, voluntary attention, perception, thinking, concept formation), but in a manner that would not be disregarded by natural science (Cole & Scribner, 1978). Thus, the central question for Vygotsky was the theoretical and methodological means through which the genesis, history, or developmental trajectory of higher psychological functions might be explained, not as more complex principles of the mechanical or behaviorist stimulus-response laws based on animal psychology, or the tenets of classical reflexology (Cole & Scribner, 1978; Vygotsky, 1994c), but “as the history of the transformation of means of social behavior into means of individual psychological organization” (Vygotsky & Luria, 1994, p. 138).

What Vygotsky (1981b) hypothesized was that higher psychological functions make their initial appearance in social relations among people through the use of tool-mediated and goal-oriented activity in which the sign (e.g., psychological or symbolic tools such as language, maps, diagrams, mnemonic devices, counting systems, etc.), which is first used as a means of influencing others (i.e., toward a social end), is later
used as a means of influencing oneself. This phenomenon is referred to as the reversibility of the sign. In addition to psychological tools, physical tools (e.g., pens, smart boards, computers) also serve mediational purposes. Nonetheless, there is a crucial distinction between these two cultural artifacts. Whereas psychological tools, being internally and externally oriented (i.e., with respect to both the individual and his or her interlocutors), represent an instrument for the accomplishment of psychological activity, physical tools only carry an external orientation: That is to say, they can cause a change only in material objects, or, are aimed at mastering nature (Vygotsky, 1978).

Notwithstanding the above explanations, the following question still remains: How exactly did Vygotsky define, in explicit terms, the terms social and culture? According to Vygotsky (1981b), “in the widest sense of the word [social], it means that everything that is cultural is social. Culture is the product of social life and human social activity” (p. 164). It is important to note that the meaning of product, in the context of the above quote, signifies as a result of, and does not imply a static or deterministic view of culture. Vygotsky’s claim was that higher functions are not biologically developed. Rather, the structure of their development, their composition, and the means through which they are mediated, represent an internalized form of social relationships. To further illuminate Vygotsky’s definition, it is worthwhile to define the meaning of social relationships. The sociologist, Max Weber, cogently stated that “a social relationship may be said to exist when several people reciprocally adjust their behavior to each other with respect to the meaning which they give to it, and when this reciprocal adjustment determines the form which it takes” (as cited in Erickson, 1986, pp. 127-128). The above
definition adequately supports the Vygotskian lineage of sociocultural theory in that it foregrounds the significance of meaning as constructed, not solely by the individual, but through the activities of the collective. Thus, the terms social and cultural are presented as mutually-informing processes which form the undergirding mechanism for the mediation of higher order psychological functions.

Having defined sociocultural theory from a Vygotskian perspective, I shall elaborate on other fundamental aspects of the theory and its application in the remainder of this section. I will discuss the research method—most commonly referred to as the genetic or instrumental method—proposed by Vygotsky in investigating the development of higher order operations. In this section, I will also define the constructs of mediation and internalization, and their role in a sociocultural approach to cognitive development; discuss the central tenets of a theoretical framework under the umbrella of sociocultural theory (also referred to as sociohistorical activity theory); and define two key concepts which are particularly relevant to educational research: Concept development, and the zone of proximal development. Additionally, current literature in the field of language teacher education, teacher learning or teacher cognition, to be specific, will be reviewed. The overall purpose of this section of the literature review is, in addition to defining the primary tenets of sociocultural theory and discussing its evolution, to discover the adequacy with which it has been used to study the learning and development of language teachers so as to better inform the theoretical and methodological principles upon which this study is based.
2.3.1 The genetic method

The genetic method, also known as the historic or instrumental method, was the research methodology used by Vygotsky to study the development of higher psychological functions. It is primarily concerned with investigating the genetic origins and dynamic interactions at play in the development of higher mental functions as opposed to their external features: In other words, the genetic method, emphasizing process rather than product, is predicated upon the notion that “higher forms of mental functioning are mediated by culturally constructed semiotic artifacts and sociocultural practices that, when inwardly directed, serve a psychological function and thus bestow the ability to voluntarily control our biologically endowed mental processes” (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006, p. 29).

There are four developmental domains (Wertsch, 1985) which define the scope of genetic research as well as foreground the significance of historical analysis in this line of work: (1) The phylogenetic domain which examines how, throughout evolution, human thinking has come to be distinct from the mental processes of other primates through the use of meditational artifacts (i.e., symbolic and physical tools); (2) the sociocultural domain which has to do with the meditational role of symbolic tools developed in human cultures over the course of their histories, and the impact of such tools on thinking; (3) the ontogenetic domain which is concerned with the development of the individual across the life span, in particular, the appropriation and integration of meditational tools—mainly language—into their cognitive activities; and (4) the microgenetic domain which
focuses on how the development and reorganization of mediation occurs over a short time span (e.g., learning a grammatical concept in a language course).

To understand the genetic method, one must first grasp Vygotsky’s interpretation of the concept of cultural development, which is implied by the use of the term, cultural historical theory (which is used in some of the literature on sociocultural theory, particularly the works of authors from the former Soviet Union, for example, A.A. Leont’ev and A.N. Leont’ev). Cultural development, according to Vygotsky (1981b), is revolutionary, as opposed to evolutionary, wherein “development does not take place by means of gradual alteration or change, by the accumulation of small increments, the sum of which finally provides some kind of essential change” (p. 171), but rather involves a highly complex and dialectic relationship among multiple, overlapping stages. Thus, each successive stage of development in the formation of higher mental functions involves changes in the unique qualities of the preceding stage, qualities which are replicated, dismantled, and converted into a higher stage.

Vygotsky’s (1981b) view of cultural development contrasts with a quantitative or embryonic perspective on development, which is more characteristic of Piagetian cognitive development. In critiquing Piaget’s theory of cognitive development, Vygotsky (1994a) characterized it as defining children’s intellectual development as a process in which the distinctive features of a child’s thinking (e.g., egocentric speech), as (s)he becomes older, are gradually displaced by more abstract, adult forms of thought. In other words, childish thinking is replaced by more mature thinking, which enters into their intellectual development externally (i.e., learning from adults in their environment).
Hence, based on this perspective, “the developmental process is quite like the process of displacing one liquid already present in a container by forcing another into it from the outside” (Vygotsky, 1994a, p. 363). Contrary to Piaget’s conceptualization of cognitive development, Vygotsky (1981b) posited that a “genetic law of cultural development” (p. 163) states that functions in the cultural development of the child appears in two forms or on two planes: First, the social plane, or between individuals as an interpsychological activity; and second, within the child, or as intrapsychological processes.

In addition to the developmental aspect of the genetic method, there is also the instrumental aspect which Vygotsky (1994b) called the “functional method of double stimulation” (p. 208), a method which, he acknowledged, was created by his co-worker, A. N. Leont’ev.

Figure 2.1: The Functional Method of Double Stimulation (adapted from Vygotsky, 1981c).
In natural memory, for example, there is a direct association (A-B) that is established between the stimuli A and B due to conditioned reflex, as illustrated in Figure 2.1; however, memory, which is aided by a mnemonic scheme (i.e., artificial memory—a psychological tool represented by X), problematizes the direct A-B connection by forming an A-X and a B-X connection. The novelty, instrumentality, and artificiality inherent in this process is that the direct line between the A-B stimuli is now transformed into two new connecting lines: A-X and B-X. It is noteworthy that A and B coexist with X and do not function separate from it.

In sum, the genetic method is primarily made possible by the insertion of both physical or technical tools as well as psychological tools between external objects and human activity. It is crucial to note that these tools are not diametrically opposed. In the process of engaging in activity and labor, humans confront the forces of nature which are acted upon and changed, and in so doing, transform the nature of their own behavior and act on it simultaneously. In other words, “they come to govern their own natural forces. The subordination of themselves to this ‘force of nature’ (i.e., to their own behavior) is a necessary condition of labor. In the instrumental act, humans master themselves from the outside – through psychological tools” (Vygotsky, 1981c, pp. 140-141). This act, however, is only possible through the processes of mediation and internalization, which I shall now define.
2.3.2 Mediation and internalization

In this section, the concept of mediation will be discussed as it relates to the mediating artifact that is most central in a sociocultural approach to learning and human development (i.e., language). Additionally, the role of mediation in the process of internalization will be examined.

Mediation is unquestionably the foundational concept in a sociocultural perspective on cognition and development. This is revealed through a note written by Vygotsky, which first placed mediation at the center of the genetic or instrumental method:

The essence of the instrumental method resides in the functionally different use of two stimuli, which differentially determine behavior; from this results the matter of one’s own psychological operations. Always assuming two stimuli, we must answer the following questions: 1. How does one remember stimulus S1 with the aid of stimulus S2 (where S1 is the object and S2 is the instrument). 2. How is attention directed to S1 with the aid of S2. 3. How is a word associated with S1 retrieved via S2 and so on. (as cited in Vygotsky, 1978, no p.)

Through the above quote, it is clear that Vygotsky’s main areas of concern, in his efforts to problematize the construct of mediation, were the coexistence and reciprocity of objective and instrumental stimuli, memory, voluntary attention and recall, and the centrality of speech.

Vygotsky (1978) pointed out that the development of practical and abstract intelligence is as a result of the combination of speech and practical activity: Before
children are able to master their own behavior, they begin to master their surroundings through the use of speech, which in turn transforms the nature of their interaction with their environment, and also brings about a reorganization of the behavior, per se. Two key points are in order here: (1) In an effort to attain a particular goal, both the child’s speech and their actions play equally important roles. That is to say, not only do children speak about the actions in which they are engaged, but “their speech and action are part of one and the same complex psychological function” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 25) oriented toward resolving the problem in question. (2) As the action—determined by the nature of the situation—increases in complexity, and its solution becomes less direct, the role of speech becomes increasingly important to the entire operation. Speech is so significant that if the child is not allowed to use it, (s)he may not be able to carry out the assigned task.

The centrality of speech as a mediating tool is evidenced through the relationship between social and egocentric speech which, in essence, leads to a process of internalization. Children use socialized speech to communicate to adults their inability to accomplish a given task independently (e.g., asking the adult for help, which is indicative of the fact that the child indeed has a plan of sorts, but is not able to carry out the relevant operations). This form of speech is then inwardly directed later in their development (after repeated experiences of this process) when language, which was used for an interpersonal function, now assumes an intrapersonal one in which they learn to plan their activities mentally. Therefore, one can see that speech not only serves an interpersonal communicative function, but also an intrapersonal planning function.
With respect to the mediating function of speech, one must also investigate the means by which word(s) are recalled or remembered in the first place so as to later serve as mediating artifacts. In studying mediated memorizing, one of Vygotsky’s students, L. V. Zankov, presented children (ages 4-6) with a number of figures as memory aids to help them recall a specific word (as cited in Vygotsky, 1978). For example, to help them recall the word *bucket*, they were presented with the figure of a bucket turned upside down; however, this figure did not remind them of the word to be recalled until the children turned it in the correct position so that it resembled a bucket. Vygotsky drew the conclusion that in this case the word was recalled through the process of *direct representation*: The word could only be remembered when the auxiliary sign represented a meaningful and direct replica of the word.

In a similar experiment carried out by A. N. Leont’ev (as cited in Vygotsky, 1978), older children (10 -12 years old) were put to the task of recalling 20 words which were administered in three different ways: First, the words were uttered in three-second intervals. Second, they were told to use a set of 20 pictures (not copies of the words, but associated with them) to help recall the word. Third, 20 pictures with no apparent associations to the words to be recalled were used as memory aids. The results showed that the children were able to recall twice as many words by using the pictures than they were able to without them. That is to say, the words were recalled through a process called *mediated symbolization*.

From the above examples, mediated activity becomes even more nuanced: There is direct representation, associated with younger children; and mediated symbolization,
associated with older children. A Piagetian view of development would argue that the explanation of these results lies in the fact that, biologically, the younger children were at a different level of development referred to as the preoperational stage as opposed to the older children who were at the concrete operational stage. Vygotsky, however, would refute this explanation by stating that in both cases, memory was enhanced through mediating artifacts wherein older children’s use of mediated symbolization represented a higher and more internalized process of direct representation of the sign (object or word) to be remembered.

In further developing the construct of mediation—while continuing to highlight the crucial role of speech—Vygotsky (1981a) and his colleagues applied the functional method of double stimulation to investigate higher forms of attention and mediated memorizing. In this experiment, pre-school, school-aged children, and adults participated in a question-and-answer game wherein they were administered a series of questions, some of which they had to answer with a particular color name. For example, the researcher would ask, “Do you go to school? What color are the desks in school? Have you been in the forest? What color is grass” (Vygotsky, 1981a, p. 195)? The participants were not allowed to use two colors, in particular, and would lose points if they did. The second phase of the experiment introduced the use of colored cards to help mediate the child’s attention. Based on the results, mediated attention did not result in any significant decrease in error among preschoolers. However, among younger school aged children, the percentage of mistakes decreased almost twice; and for older school aged children,
the percentage of errors decreased almost ten times when attention was mediated with the cards in contrast to when it was not.

The implication of these experiments is that mastery of meditational processes gradually increased, becoming increasingly subject to the authority of the child. It is noteworthy that adults, who did not employ full use of the cards, did not show any significant decrease in mistakes when the cards were introduced. How can one explain this phenomenon? Vygotsky (1981a) concluded that the adults did not rely on external means of mediating attention due to internal processes which were highly developed, allowing them to mentally schematize both the forbidden colors and those colors that were named through the aid of a word or other mediational means. The findings from the aforementioned studies also reveal that “cognitive processes in individuals do not somehow magically emerge out of social interaction; rather, by coming to master the meditational means of social interaction, the child masters the very means needed for later independent cognitive processing” (Wertsch, 1981c, p. 191).

As regarding the process of internalization, Leont’ev (1981a) asserts that introducing the concept of internalization to psychology was quite monumental in the quest to develop a concrete psychological explanation of the genesis of internal higher order operations. What is internalization? Vygotsky (1978) defines the term as “the internal reconstruction of an external operation” (p. 56) which involves a progression of transformations which occur genetically (i.e., developmentally—through the use of signs and tools). An external activity, representing an initial operation, is restructured and then proceeds to take place internally as evidenced through higher mental functions such as
voluntary memory and attention. Additionally, there is a transformation of interpersonal processes to intrapersonal ones, where activities in the process of cultural development first appear on the social plane, between individuals (interpsychologically), then later on inside the individual (intrapsychologically), a process also evident in the development of voluntary attention, logical memory, and concept formation.

Leont’ev (1981a) concurs with Vygotsky (1978) in casting internalization, per se, as a non-linear, complex, and transformational process. In the transformation of external processes (being carried out with the aid of external material objects) to the intrapsychological plane, these processes are extended, truncated, verbalized, and most significantly, further developed. It is their further development that causes them to transcend the limits imposed by their natural environment. Leont’ev (1981a) further emphasizes that “the process of internalization is not the transferal of an external activity to a preexisting, internal ‘plane of consciousness’: it is the process in which this internal plane is formed” (p. 57). Furthermore, the process of internalization implies the process of automatization which Hutchins (1997) describes as one in which the performance or operation in question no longer makes use of those constraints which serve to organize its mediating structure. This concept of automatization explains why, in Vygotsky’s (1981a) experiment (see p. 12) on attention and mediated memorizing, the adults did not rely on the colored cards as mediating artifacts.

Vygotsky’s instrumental method, anchored in the constructs of mediation and internalization, has revolutionized the field of developmental psychology by theorizing that social relations are the starting point for the development of higher mental
functioning, which occurs through the use of psychological tools or signs, as well as
physical tools in a series of transformational processes. Although his theory was, in part,
influenced by Marx’s theory of historical materialism, the originality of his work lies in
the fact that he was the first in modern psychology to conceptualize “the mechanisms by
which culture becomes a part of each person’s nature” (Cole & Scribner, 1978, p. 6).

Notwithstanding the incredible impact this theory has had in multiple disciplines,
cultural-historical theory or sociocultural theory must not be viewed as a theory that was
entirely complete prior to Vygotsky’s passing (Leont’ev, 2002), but must rather be
subject to theoretical extension in order to explain historical change processes. One such
extension of Vygotsky’s work appears in the form of what is referred to in the literature
as cultural historical activity theory, also known as sociohistorical activity theory and,
simply, activity theory (hereafter referred to as activity theory).

2.3.3 Activity theory

Activity theory was primarily motivated by the fact that Vygotsky did not extend
his theory of learning as tool-mediated activity beyond interpsychological relationships
“among people” as he repeatedly stated in his writings. However, social relations among
individuals do not occur in a vacuum, but within, and through institutional frameworks or
communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) where individuals engage in practical
activity. As Wertsch (1997) so cogently states, Vygotsky did not give a

complete account of how individual (“intrapsychological”) and interpsychological
planes of functioning are tied to social institutional processes. It is only by
developing such an account that the Vygotskian approach can become a full-fledged analysis of mind in society instead of mind as it relates to microsociological, interpersonal functioning. (p. 228)

A. N. Leont’ev, the most prominent theoretician in Russian psychology since the mid-1950s, has been the scholar who is credited with extending the Vygotskian approach in the form of activity theory (Leont’ev, 2002). It is worth clarifying that he did not reject, deny, or oppose the basic principles of Vygotsky’s theory, but rather maintained constructs such as mediation, internalization, and voluntary control over higher psychological functions, while adding some of his own constructs (Leont’ev, 2002).

Just to give brief historical perspective, in the early 1930s, A. N. Leont’ev—who worked alongside Vygotsky and Alexander Romanovich Luria—began his own line of research due to the fact that he and Vygotsky were not able to come to agreement concerning further development of the cultural-historical approach: The primary areas of focus for Vygotsky were consciousness (Quoting Vygotsky, Leont’ev [1981a] defines consciousness as “co-knowledge” or knowledge that is co-constructed) and communication, which he sought to explain through the investigation of inter-individual relations, while Leont’ev emphasized the need to consider the explanatory context that underlies individual practical life, and practical activity (Leont’ev, 2002). This is not to say that Leont’ev was uninterested in studying consciousness, as he certainly was. The central point of departure for Leont’ev, however, was that he sought to explain consciousness and higher mental processes as functions of cooperative labor (i.e., the division of labor) and social interaction in the practical, collective activity of daily life.
What is activity theory? The answer to this question lies in the explanation of the conceptualization of *activity* as a theory. The concept of activity as used herein is a scientific concept which is not to be confused with the everyday concept of activity (i.e., the state of being active). In a scientific sense, “activity is not a reaction or aggregate of reactions, but a system with its own structure, its own internal transformations, and its own development” (Leont’ev, 1981a, p. 46). By this token, any random, discrete act or movement cannot be regarded as activity, owing to the fact that activity must be embedded in a system of social relations, and, above all, must be object oriented. The notion of activity in this sense, therefore, refers to “a powerful dialectic rooted in contradictions such as thinking and doing, knowing and performing, individual and society, … internalization and externalization” (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006, p. 210).

Learning takes place as a result of the transient resolution to these contradictions that further brings about a transformation in the conceptual, material, and social state of daily life (Lantolf and Thorne, 2006). As a subject of study, the concept of activity is usually investigated within the context of activity systems, which will be later discussed.

Leont’ev (1981a) posits that the defining feature of activity is its object orientation. The object of activity can be further defined as its motive which is the feature that provides not only a sense of direction for activity, but also serves to differentiate one activity from another. The motive of activity denotes a need which may be material or ideal. Although various activities can be defined by virtue of their structure, the means by which they are accomplished, as well as their temporal and physical contexts, it is important to bear in mind that the feature which is most definitive
of activity is its object. As Leont’ev emphasizes, “There can be no activity without a motive. ‘Unmotivated’ activity is not activity devoid of a motive: it is activity with a motive that is subjectively and objectively concealed” (p. 59).

Additional components to activity theory include action, goal, and operation, which I shall explain by way of contrast with the terms activity, and motive (Leont’ev, 1981a). An action may be referred to as such when it is oriented toward achieving a particular result (goal), meaning, “a process that is subordinated to a conscious goal” (Leont’ev, 1981a, p. 60). Herein exists the interrelationship or reciprocity between an action and a goal: The action is meaningless without a goal; and achieving the goal is not possible without the action or chain of actions. A distinction is to be made between an activity and an action. Both constructs are not one and the same, in that, the same action can bring about multiple activities. On the contrary, one motive might be achieved with different actions. With respect to the term operation, it refers to the method or tools utilized for executing a given activity. To more clearly illustrate, consider the example of the primeval collective hunt (Leont’ev, 1981b):

A beater, for example, taking part in a primeval collective hunt was stimulated by a need for food, or perhaps, a need for clothing, which the skin of the dead animal would meet for him. At what, however, was his activity directly aimed? It may have been directed, for example, at frightening a herd of animals and sending them towards other hunters, hiding in ambush. That, properly speaking, is what should be the result of the activity of this man. And the activity of this individual member of the hunt ends with that. The rest is completed by other members. This result, i.e. frightening of the game, etc., understandably does not in itself, and may not, lead to satisfaction of the beater’s need for food, or the skin of the animal. What the
processes of his activity were directed to did not, consequently, coincide with what stimulated them, i.e., did not coincide with the motive of his activity; the two were divided from one another in this instance. Processes, the object and motive of which do not coincide with one another, we shall call "actions". We can say, for example, that the beater's activity is the hunt, the frightening of the game the action. (pp. 210-213)

It is therefore evident that although Vygotsky’s unit of analysis was not practical activity as an object-directed collective system of actions, goals, and operations made possible through the social division of labor, his notion of tool-mediated activity serves to explain how operations are made possible in activity. Thus, despite the divergence between Vygotsky’s cultural-historical theory and Leont’ev’s activity theory on a macro level, they are in agreement concerning this aspect of the theories’ subcomponents.

Building upon the work of Vygotsky (1981c) and Leontev (1981a), Engeström (1987) created a model of activity theory which is referred to as second-generation activity theory—with Vygotsky’s model (as illustrated in Figure 2.1) representing the first generation—depicting what he calls an activity system, seen in Figure 2.2. This model is characterized by multivoicedness (i.e., the coexistence of multiple, competing points of view); patterns of division of labor; rules of social engagement; contradictions or tensions within and between activity systems; historicity, which recognizes the fact that that the transformation of activity systems occur over long periods of time; and expansive transformation, which is achieved “when the object and motive of the activity are reconceptualized to embrace a radically wider horizon of possibilities than in the previous mode of the activity” (Engeström, 2001, p. 137).
As defined by (Engeström, 1987), in the above model, the subject is the individual or group whose agency forms the focus of the analysis. The object, on the other hand, refers to the orientation of the activity—the “‘raw material’ or ‘problem space’ at which the activity is directed and which is molded and transformed into outcomes with the help of physical and symbolic, external and internal mediating instruments” (Engeström, n.d., para 4). The oval located beneath the object is indicative of the fact that object-oriented activity is, whether implicitly or explicitly, “characterized by ambiguity, surprise, interpretation, sense making, and potential for change” (Engeström, 2001, p. 134). The community may be described as those individuals sharing the same object “who construct themselves as distinct from other communities” (Engeström, n.d., para 4) whereas the division of labor consists of the horizontal allocation of tasks and responsibilities among
community members as well as the vertical division of powers and status, all of which are constantly negotiated. Lastly, *rules* refer to the manner in which the norms and practices that influence interactions in the activity system are implicitly or explicitly regulated.

Further expansion of second-generation activity theory has now formed what is labeled as third-generation activity theory (Engeström, 2001; Lantolf and Thorne, 2006) wherein, as depicted in Figure 2.3, the unit of analysis now becomes, at minimum, two interacting activity systems.

Figure 2.3: Two Interacting Activity Systems as the Minimal Model for Third-generation Activity Theory (Engeström, 2001, p. 136)

The utility of this model is that it foregrounds the changeability of the object. That is to say, the object as a socially constructed entity whose transformation is a function of the actions and operations within and between activity systems. As Engeström (2001) explains, Figure 2.3 shows the object moving.
from an initial state of unreflected, situationally given ‘raw material’ (object 1; e.g., a specific patient entering a physician’s office) to a collectively meaningful object constructed by the activity system (object 2, e.g., the patient constructed as a specimen of a biomedical disease category and thus as an instantiation of the general object of illness/health), and to a potentially shared or jointly constructed object (object 3; e.g., a collaboratively constructed understanding of the patient’s life situation and care plan) (p. 136).

2.3.4 Concept development

Vygotsky (1994a, 1994b) made a direct impact on educational research through his study of concept formation in both children and adolescents. Based on investigations with a sample size of 300, which included children, adolescents, adults as well as individuals with intellectual and speech disorders, Vygotsky concluded that there are two primary stages—which are further broken down into phases—that lead to thinking in concepts which can be defined as “an act of generalization” (Vygotsky, 1994a, p. 356) which subsume individual, concrete, elements or attributes which are internally consistent, hierarchically interconnected, and rule-governed.

The first stage of concept development is what Vygotsky called the formation of the syncretic image, the first phase of which multiple objects, corresponding to the meaning of a word, are selected through a process of trial and error. When the incorrect object is selected, it is replaced by another. In the second phase, there is a gradual lining up of the objects which are collected under a single general meaning. This alignment, however, is not based on any salient features inherent in the objects, but rather their similarities as determined by the child’s perception. The third and final phase, which also
represents the transition to the second phase of concept development, is one wherein the syncretic image is transformed into a more complex form as a result of being able to collect objects from multiple groups which were previously unified under a single meaning by the individual’s perception. However, the new syncretic series are still not intrinsically connected as in the first two phases.

The second stage in the development of concepts is referred to as thinking in complexes. The defining feature of this stage is the establishing of concrete, factual connections between separate elements, as opposed to a connection based on abstract and logical reasoning. There are five phases in this stage, which includes five types of complexes. The first may be described as associative complex. In this phase, in order for the individual to identify and understand the meaning of a word, (s)he assigns a family name to it—a family of interconnected elements which is associated with the word. The second phase, called a complex collection, involves gathering separate objects into a collection while selecting other similar objects based on practical and functional relationships. The third phase, a chain complex, can be explained as follows: Word meanings form a continuum along a link of complex chains. On one side, each link is connected with the prior link, and on the other side, with the link that follows. The defining feature in this phase is that the nature of the associations between the links can be completely different. There are no hierarchical relationships among the elements of the chain. That is to say, no particular relationship between the general and the particular. Diffuse complex, the term assigned to the fourth phase is one in which associative attributes that unify complexes and concrete objects become ambiguous and
isolated. For example, in matching a yellow triangle, a child would pick out other triangles in addition to blue and green objects shaped like a trapezoid, or, from the child’s vantage point, triangles with their apices cut off. The final phase in this stage of thinking in complexes is referred to as the development of a pseudoconcept. Externally, a pseudoconcept may resemble a concept; however, its internal structure is that of a complex. For instance, a group of students working together on a poster project, may, on the surface, give the appearance of the concept of cooperative learning. However, upon examining the internal dynamics of the group, each group member is working to fulfill one aspect of the project independently. A teacher who labels this activity as cooperative learning would be said to have developed a pseudoconcept of cooperative learning. Vygotsky (1994b) referred to this as “a shadow of a concept, its contours” (p. 229). Nonetheless, the significance of a pseudoconcept is not to be undermined, in that, “it serves as a connecting link between thinking in complexes and thinking in concepts” (Vygotsky, 1994b). “Owing to the contradiction inherent in it whilst it is a complex, it already contains the nucleus of a future concept which is developing inside it” (Vygotsky, 1994b).

With respect to the teaching of concepts, Vygotsky (1994a) drew a distinction between everyday concepts, which are as a result of life experiences; and academic concepts, which represent a body of academic knowledge. Most significantly, he cautioned that the complex and dynamic act involved in the development of concepts cannot be taught through the memorization of academic facts. Vygotsky (1994a) lambasted educators of his time by making the following assertion:
A straightforward learning of concepts always proves impossible and educationally fruitless. Usually, any teacher setting out on this road achieves nothing except a meaningless acquisition of words, mere verbalization in children, which is nothing more than simulation and imitation of corresponding concepts which, in reality, are concealing a vacuum. In such cases, the child assimilates not concepts but words, and he fills his memory more than his thinking. As a result, he ends up helpless in the face of any sensible attempt to apply any of this acquired knowledge. (pp. 356-357)

It is important to note that the genesis of concept formation is not linear, but, as Vygotsky (1994b) aptly described, is “complicated, twisting, and, at times, zigzagging” (p. 245).

2.3.5 The zone of proximal development

In addition to the study of concept development, the zone of proximal development, as a construct, has been widely used in educational research. In experiments that studied children’s school learning, Vygotsky (1978) hypothesized that in the case of two children who were 10 years old, chronologically, and eight years old, developmentally, with assistance in problem solving, the first child would be able to resolve problems at the same level as a twelve year old and the second child, at the level of a nine year old. Experiments showed that although, chronologically, the children were the same age, mentally, they were not the same: Hence, the path of their learning trajectory was different. It was concluded that the difference between eight and twelve, and the difference between eight and nine is what is called the zone of proximal development—“the distance between actual development level as determined by
independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). It is also this distance which defines what learning is—learning as process as opposed to learning as product. Learning, in this sense, defines those abilities, skills, or functions that, although currently in an embryonic state, will transform into a mature in the future. By this token, the concept of ZPD allows us to (1) understand what it means to learn; and (2) assess when learning has taken place: The important distinction to be made here is that the former defines the construct of learning whereas the latter operationalizes it. Operationalizing the construct of learning allows one to say, with a certain degree of confidence that “what a child can do with assistance today [sic] she will be able to do by herself tomorrow” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 87).

Although not mentioned explicitly in Vygotsky’s (1978) definition of ZPD, the term, per se, suggests that the constructs previously discussed such as tool mediation and internalization serve as motivating forces that establish the parameters or the distance within this zone. The very mention of the phrase “collaboration with more capable peers” in the definition above suggests that mediation is very much a part of the ZPD construct.

Notwithstanding the utility of the ZPD in helping us to understand the process of learning, from an activity theory standpoint it can only provide a partial explanation of learning: Its context is limited to relations between individuals as opposed to relations between individuals who live, act, and think, in temporal and spatial settings (e.g., the history of schooling, language pedagogy, and language teacher education, which is
connected to the policies and culture of the institution which preceded, but at the same time, includes the individual) that are discursively constructed, and whose relations are shaped and transformed by the inherent dynamics of the discourse—the “socially accepted association among ways of using language, of thinking, and of acting that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group or ‘social network’” (Gee, 1992, p. 22). This is the reinterpretation of a construct such as the ZPD that Leont’ev (2002) rightfully termed “Vygotsky in the present”. In a world that is becoming increasingly globalized, racially, linguistically and culturally, diverse—where the rules of discourse are constantly redefined by information technology communities and networks such as those on the World Wide Web—it is safe to say that the reconceptualization of the interpersonal plane of human activity (based on Vygotsky’s definition) is well under way. It is this reconceptualized form of ZPD within which this study is located.

2.3.6 Review of empirical studies that apply sociocultural theory to the study of teacher learning

Recently, Vygotskian sociocultural theory and Leont’ev’s activity theory have been utilized as theoretical frameworks for research in educational settings. For example, Lantolf and Thorne’s (2006) *Sociocultural Theory and the Genesis of Second Language Development* presents a well-organized, balanced description of the Vygotskian line of sociocultural theory; how it applies to the developmental processes in second and foreign language acquisition; and its pedagogical implications. In fact, it is said that “the largest
corpus of research on the nexus of issues indicated by the notions of context, culture, activity, and cognitive development has been conducted in educational settings” (Cole, Engestrom, Vasquez, 1997, p. 11). However, regrettably, with respect to language teacher education, this statement is not applicable, due to the paucity of research applying a sociocultural theory of learning and development in this discipline. Thus, a review of some of the empirical studies that have utilized a sociocultural framework (as explicitly stated by their authors) to address specific research problems in teacher learning is warranted.

Johnson and Golombek (2003) assert that the application of a Vygotskian sociocultural theory of learning to investigate the process of teacher learning has significant explanatory power as it opens the opportunity for researchers of language teacher learning “to trace how teachers come to know; how different concepts and functions in teachers’ consciousness develop; and how this internal activity transforms teachers’ understandings of themselves as teachers, of their students, and of the activities of teaching” (p. 735). They propose that constructs such as internalization, zone of proximal development (ZPD), and tool mediation, are of paramount importance in tracing the cognitive processes of teacher learning.

Drawing upon an activity theory framework, Tsui and Law (2007) studied how learning was mediated through a school-university partnership in Hong Kong, which involved two student teachers majoring in Chinese language and literature; two mentor teachers; and two university teachers who were teacher educators. Two activity systems served as the units of analysis: (1) Mentor teachers mentoring student teachers in school
settings; and (2) university teachers supervising student teachers in their student teaching practicum. In the first activity system of mentoring, the primary object was for student teachers to be able to teach competently and cover the curriculum content adequately. It was mediated by curriculum materials as well as mentor teachers observing student teachers, and providing them with feedback on their teaching through conferencing. The rules of the activity system included school regulations and classroom procedures, whereas the division of labor included student teachers’ execution of the lesson, and mentor teachers’ providing pedagogical advice. In the second activity system of the practicum supervision, the primary object was for the student teachers to make theory-practice connections, and was mediated by lesson observations and post-observation conferences. The rules of this activity system included both practicum and course requirements; and the division of labor entailed student teachers’ enactment of the lesson and the university teachers’ assessment of the extent to which student teachers were relating theory to practice. Mediating tools included teaching materials, and feedback provided to student teachers based on lesson observations. Both activity systems also shared the object of student learning. The mediating tool of a lesson study (practice lessons by the student teachers, which were observed by both university and mentor teachers who provided feedback) was applied to solve the tension between, on the one hand, facilitating student teachers’ learning in a supportive environment, and on the other hand, ensuring student learning. It was carried out in two cycles: In the first, the planned lesson was taught by one of the student teachers, and the revised version by the other. The second cycle followed a similar routine. However, the lessons were prepared
individually, instead of in collaboration with the mentor teachers. The data sources included two collective lesson planning conferences (including mentor teachers and student teachers); four lessons, which the student teachers taught over a four week period; four post-observation conferences; and five interviews.

The results from Tsui and Law (2007) indicate that in the process of attempting to resolve the contradiction between the student teachers’ learning and student learning the lesson study generated new contradictions. In the first cycle, the student teachers were strongly critiqued by both the mentor teachers and the university teachers who were highly disappointed over the gap between the revised lesson (based on the collaborative feedback from the mentor teachers and university teachers in the lesson study sessions), and how the lesson was actually executed in the school setting. From the student teachers’ point of view, they were caught between two worlds: (1) The extent to which they should strictly adhere to the suggestions of the lesson study team; and (2) the degree to which they should modify the lesson plan based on their students’ individual needs and their teaching styles. They were left feeling disempowered and demoralized. This unsatisfactory outcome forced the mentor teachers and university teachers to allow the student teachers to have more autonomy in terms of the selection of materials and lesson planning for the second cycle, which resulted in an increase in self-evaluation and reflection among the student teachers, and an improvement in their teaching: They were more confident, and were able to use teaching materials more effectively and strategically. The benefits for the university teachers and the mentor teachers were equally positive: One of the university teachers, for example, expressed that her initial
understanding of the lesson study was simplistic, and that she was now better able to comprehend the tensions inherent in this undertaking as well as the importance of resolving them. Additionally, one of the university teachers stated that he was motivated to reevaluate his own teaching strategies based on the ultimate success of the lesson study. Tsui and Law concluded that the contradictions that resulted from the lesson study were twofold: First, the student teachers perceived their relationship with the mentor teachers as one of master-apprentice, and their relationship with the university teachers as teacher-student. Additionally, the student teachers saw the mentor teachers and university teachers as assessors. This was in contrast to the university and mentor teachers’ perception of the lesson study as a partnership or collaborative effort—a formative as opposed to a summative activity. Second, the fact that lessons were collectively prepared and revised, but individually enacted, presented further complications: Critique of the effectiveness of the lesson was not only a critique of the student teachers, but also individual teachers. According to the researchers, resolving these contradictions were as a result of negotiating the lesson study: (1) The student teachers, in the second cycle, shifted their focus from enacting the expert advice of the university and mentor teachers and living up to their expectations, to how they could best help their students learn; and (2) the university teachers and mentor teachers placed less emphasis on student teachers’ strict adherence to the planned lesson and more focusing more on the effectiveness of instruction.

As did Tsui and Law (2007), Johnson, Smagorinsky, Thompson, and Fry (2003) used activity theory as their primary analytical framework to examine how an early-
career (L1) English teacher’s (Leigh) decision to teach the five-paragraph essay model was mediated by competing motives within key settings such as her university program, student teaching, and her first teaching position; and the mediational tools that supported these motives. Based on their analysis of observation field notes, interview transcripts, and artifacts from her teacher education program and teaching setting, they concluded that community expectations (high test scores on a statewide test) and pressure from colleagues to conform to the state-mandated standardized test inhibited the extent to which the teacher was able to break away from the traditional model of the five-paragraph essay and experiment with more creative forms of writing. According to Johnson et al., Leigh’s approach to writing was not developed as a scientific concept (through formal instruction), but rather through her interactions with colleagues and tutelage from mentors. Some of the tools that Leigh utilized in her teaching were the five-sentence paragraph, writing rough drafts, journal writing, and the state core curriculum.

Adding another spatial setting to the research design, and focusing particularly on concept development, Smagorinsky, Wright, Augustine, O’Donnell-Allen and Konopak (2007) studied an early career teacher’s (Laura) learning to teach grammar in four settings: University teacher education program, student teaching, first job of full-time teaching, and second job of full-time teaching. Data from Laura’s university program such as journals and coursework projects; interviews and observation field notes; and self-reports of her teaching were coded for the pedagogical tools that were employed. The findings showed that during student teaching, Laura’s attempts to enact a
communicative approach to teaching (L1 English) grammar (i.e. within the context of 
student writing—an approach advocated by her university program), was, to some 
degree, shaped by testing mandates that required her to teach students how to label parts 
of speech. Additionally, both Laura and her mentor teacher approached the teaching of 
certain grammatical concepts with much uncertainty. In contrast to student teaching, on 
her first job, Laura was able to apply more constructivist approaches to teaching grammar 
owing to the fact that there was no policy that mandated the teaching of mechanic and 
isolated grammar lessons. On her second job, her teaching of grammar became more 
traditional and textbook-driven due to the fragmented English curriculum. Nonetheless, 
to some extent, she was able to adapt her lessons to fit the communicative approach to 
teaching grammar. Thus, Laura’s conception of grammar instruction did not proceed 
according to a predictable path, but rather followed a twisting path that was a function of 
multiple institutional constraints. Her approach to teaching grammar represented a 
complex, as opposed to a fully developed concept.

In contrast to Laura, who’s conceptualization of grammar teaching was 
characterized as the development of a complex, Cook, Fry, Konopak and Moore (2002), 
in their study of how Tracy, an elementary school teacher, developed a constructivist 
approach to teaching, concluded that she had developed a pseudoconcept for a 
constructivist approach to teaching by the end of her first year of full-time teaching. Data 
sources which were analyzed based on an activity theory framework included interviews; 
observation field notes; course work; course syllabi; planning books; and state curricula. 
Tracy’s development of a pseudoconcept was shaped by the fact that the faculty’s
teaching either did not reflect a constructivist approach to teaching, or was highly inconsistent in its approach. Additionally, the discourse and teaching expectations of her school setting conflicted with those of her university setting: At the elementary school, Tracy was expected to adhere to a phonics approach to reading versus a whole language approach, while in her teacher education program, she was encouraged to follow a constructivist, versus a traditional approach. Tracy had no experience in teaching phonics; and the term whole language was not used at the university. Thus, Tracy was left to rename here conceptualization of teaching reading, resulting in her use of the terms whole language and constructivism interchangeably, ultimately resulting in a pseudoconcept for her approach to teaching within the constructivist framework.

Smagorinsky (1999) problematized the application of constructivist views of teaching advocated by many universities as in the above study by foregrounding the temporal implications of this approach, which is often overlooked. The nature of constructivist activities dictates that students be provided with sufficient time to develop and explore their ideas leading to the creation of a meaningful product. However, in examining Penny’s (pseudonym) approach to teaching language arts, Smagorinsky discovered that her personal approach to time was accommodating of the time implications of the constructive approach, in that, her lesson would extend beyond scheduled times so as to accommodate student learning. For example, she seized opportunities to engage students in discussion and questioning sessions to promote higher-order thinking. However, Penny was assigned to complete her student teaching in a school that was labeled traditional, with a rigid daily schedule in which lesson were
expected to proceed accordingly. This rigidity appeared to be problematic for Penny who felt as though she was constantly on a time crunch, feeling pressured to produce grades as opposed to ensuring that her instruction met students’ learning styles.

Although the studies discussed thus far did take into consideration the role of context in a sociocultural approach to teacher education, Pardo (2006) extended the spatial contextual boundaries by virtue of the wide range of contexts examined. In a yearlong case study of three early-career teachers, all within their first five years of teaching at the first, fourth, and second grade level in the United States, Pardo explored how they learned to teach writing in an urban school setting as they implemented specific facets of writing instruction which included modeling consistently; creating writing workshops; improving writing conferences; increasing emphasis on phonemic awareness; and teaching paragraph writing. Through a sociocultural theoretical framework, the researcher examined the extent to which these writing goals were influenced or informed by both the temporal and spatial contexts of identity, the policy environment, students, teaching tools, the community (i.e. the school community and surrounding neighborhoods), colleagues, as well as resources and materials available for the teaching of writing. The findings revealed that the extent of the aforementioned factors’ influence on each teacher’s leaning to teach writing in their respective contexts ranged from insignificant to slight, to moderate, to significant. Celina’s writing instruction, for instance, developed primarily through adopting and adapting ideas from other teachers, conferences and workshops, and implementing them through a trial and error process. With respect to developing a viable writing workshop, her decisions were guided by her
prior teaching experiences, previous years’ workshop, and teacher education courses. Additionally, she had the full support of parents, her colleagues, students, and the school community.

One of the most insightful examples of the application of Vygotskian sociocultural theory to teacher education research is that of Golombek and Johnson’s (2004). The researchers examined the use of narrative inquiry as a culturally developed mediating tool that shaped the professional development of three teachers of English as a second/foreign language in three different instructional contexts: University-level freshman composition, elementary-level science, and secondary-level language arts. Using a narrative analysis approach, Golombek and Johnson aimed to gain insight into the how and when of teachers’ internalization of an idea or activity; how and when they mastered it, bringing about change on both the interpsychological and intrapsychological planes; and the genesis of teacher-authored narratives, looking into those factors responsible for initiating this change. In essence, the authors investigated how the process of narrative inquiry served as a tool that facilitated the externalization of current understandings; the reinternalization and recontextualization of such understandings in order for them to assume new personal meaning; the interaction of new interpretations with former perspectives; and the formation of new conceptualizations of the activity of teaching. The findings reveal that the teachers’ emotional dissonance brought about the identification of a cognitive dissonance or their recognizing incongruities in their context of teaching. Through engaging in narrative inquiry, the teachers drew upon both expert, and experiential knowledge to name their teaching experiences and anchor their rationale
for developing new ways of understanding them. Narrative inquiry served as a semiotic tool that exposed the cognitive and emotional dissonance the teachers were faced with, and the resources they employed to resolve such contradiction. For example, Jenn, a teaching assistant in an undergraduate composition course, in reflecting on her perception of grading as a student and as a teacher, wrote that she felt “horrified” and “scared” to see what students had written on the final course evaluation in response to a question on whether the instructor promoted learning over grades due to her discovery that “grades seem to be such an intrinsic part of me that I can’t separate them from learning” (as cited in Golombek & Johnson, 2004, p. 313). In this instance, Jenn used other-regulation; that is, creating a temporary other by asking herself, “Have I learned anything since then” (as cited in Golombek & Johnson, 2004, p. 313)? The process of journaling, for Jenn, served as a mediational tool that made visible the disconnect between her beliefs and her instructional practices.

2.3.7 Section summary

The studies reviewed in this section show that there is still much work to be done in applying Vygotskian sociocultural theory to language teacher education research. In this light, three central points or themes are in order: First, the sample of studies reviewed reflects the fact that the application of sociocultural theory to foreign language (other than English as a foreign language) education programs and teachers is either severely underrepresented, or missing from the professional literature: The studies discussed were based on pre-service and early career teachers of L1 English, the only
exception being Golombek and Johnson’s (2004) study which was carried out in second, and foreign language settings.

Second, with the exception of Tsui and Law (2007), the definition of context in the studies reviewed in this section appears to favor a spatial or physical interpretation that restricts its definition to institutional settings such as the university versus the school. However, such definition undermines the dynamicity and the fluidity of contexts, hindering a view of how one context might almost seamlessly overlap with another. In defining the boundaries of the activity system, it is necessary to define contexts based on spatial, temporal, and, what I term as functional (what is actually taking place) levels of analysis. As Erickson and Schultz (1997) assert,

> Contexts are not simply *given* in the physical setting (kitchen, living room, sidewalk in front of drug store) nor in combinations of personnel (two brothers, husband and wife, fireman). Rather, contexts are constituted by what people are doing and where and when they are doing it. (p. 22)

Third, based on the literature review, there is a need for a clearer definition of conceptual and practical tools as well as the distinction between them. In the case of Johnson et al. (2003), as well as Pardo (2006), conceptual and practical tools are all presented together in a table format without distinguishing which tools are conceptual versus those that are practical. Furthermore, although their use of the term *conceptual* to describe tools may, on the surface, appear to align with Vygotskian terms such as symbolic, or psychological tool, closer examination shows that their use of *conceptual* does not carry the same meaning as Vygotsky’s use of *symbolic* or *psychological*. The
authors have adopted Grossman, Smagorinsky, and Valencia’s (1999) definition of conceptual tools which states that “conceptual tools are principles, frameworks, and ideas about teaching, learning, and English/ language arts acquisition that teachers use as heuristics to guide decisions about teaching and learning” (p. 14) which may include broad theories such as constructivism or concepts such as instructional scaffolding. Based on this definition, conceptual tools, unlike psychological tools (in the Vygotskian sense) change nothing in the object or the subject, and, by the same token are clearly not reversible in their orientation. Rather, they merely guide the subject. It is surprising that the authors have constructed such notions of conceptual tools while explicitly locating their work in the Vygotskian line of sociocultural theory.

Notwithstanding these shortcomings in the relevant literature on the application of sociocultural theory to teacher learning, much has been learned through drawing upon the fundamental tenets and constructs of Vygotskian sociocultural theory, including activity theory, in an effort to comprehend what it means to take a sociocultural perspective on learning and development. From this perspective, learning is the process of developing higher psychological functions such as memory, voluntary attention, perception, thinking, and concept formation. It is a process which begins on the social plane, in social relations among individuals engaging in practical activity within spatial, temporal, and social contexts, before making its way to the intrapsychological plane of consciousness. The process of learning occurs within a zone of proximal development wherein it is mediated by symbolic and physical tools. Learning within the ZPD foregrounds its relationship to development: Learning is not development; neither does it follow
development; and certainly, it is not the memorization of factual information. Rather, the process of learning sets developmental processes in motion: A type of development which is transformative, and revolutionary as opposed to evolutionary. It is non-linear, dynamic, and highly complex with a trajectory that resembles a twisting, meandering path.

When applied to language teacher education research, a sociocultural view of learning and development problematizes theory-practice and teaching methods debates due to the complexities inherent in processes such as tool mediation, internalization, as well as the tensions and sometimes conflicting motives between activity systems. Through sociocultural theory, teacher educators are able to be more attentive to how pre-service and early-career teachers conceptualize and make sense of the theories, concepts, language teaching methods and approaches they are taught as opposed to teaching what is deemed to be the best methods to be applied in a one-size-fits-all manner. This review of the literature reflects a shift in focus from language teaching methods or approaches, per se, to teachers’ conceptualizations of them; and how such conceptualizations are influenced by spatial, temporal, and functional contexts.
Chapter 3: Methodology

In addition to explaining the process through which Gloria and Linda were selected to participate in this study—and the rationale for their selection—I shall present, in this chapter, a brief portrait of each participant’s language teaching and learning experiences prior to enrolling in the M.Ed. program. I will also describe key contexts in which Gloria and Linda’s learning and teaching developed, namely, the university teacher education program, including its structure and sequence; local schools where field experiences and student teaching were completed; and the policy contexts, which includes the descriptions of the foreign language curriculum mandated by the state department of education. Detailed descriptions of data sources, data collection methods, data analysis, coding, and data management will be discussed as well as the theoretical framework that motivated the types of data collected and the manner in which they were analyzed. Additionally, I shall briefly discuss how I negotiated dual roles as a researcher and university supervisor by exercising critical self-reflexivity.

3.1 Participants

Participants for this study were solicited through purposeful sampling (Patton, 1990a). According to Patton (1990a), “the logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in
selecting information-rich cases for study in depth” (p. 169). Particularly, I applied the technique of maximum variation sampling (Patton, 1990a). This technique allowed for a more in-depth investigation of “unique or diverse variations that have emerged in adapting to different conditions” (Patton, 1990a, p. 182). Additionally, it allowed the researcher to identify and examine patterns that run across variations (Patton, 1990b). In light of the fact that one of the main goals of the project was to explore the impact of varying activity settings and their dynamics on learning to teach, maximum variation sampling was deemed to be most appropriate.

For the purposes of this study, the target population was defined as all pre-service foreign language teachers (n = 16) who were enrolled in a one-year (June 2009-June 2010) university teacher education program (in the Midwestern United States) leading toward a Master of Education (M.Ed.) degree and state licensure (grades K-12) in foreign language education. A total of 16 (3 males; 13 females) pre-service teachers were enrolled in the teacher education program. With only one exception, all were native speakers of English and taught Spanish (n = 10); French (n = 2); German (n = 3); and Chinese (n = 1) as foreign languages. In accordance with the goal of purposeful and maximum variation sampling, four primary criteria were used to identify the target population: (1) My knowledge of the goals, content, and structure of the teacher education program from which the participants were to be selected; (2) the use of CLT as the primary pedagogical approach; (3) The representation of at least two languages (in the foreign language teacher education cohort) taught in a foreign language context at any level (e.g., intermediate or advanced); and (4) the delivery of instruction in multiple
teaching and learning environments (e.g., the university, elementary schools, middle and high schools).

From the target population, consent to participate in the study was solicited from the accessible population, which consisted of one male and seven female pre-service teachers specializing in the teaching of Spanish (n=5), French (n=1), German (n=1), and Chinese (n=1) as foreign languages. The population was deemed accessible as these 8 student pre-service teachers were under my supervision for student teaching. In regards to the remaining eight pre-service teachers, they were under the supervision of a fellow Graduate Teaching Associate, and were solicited for participation in a concurrent research project. From the group of 8 pre-service teachers (one male, and three female teachers of Spanish; and one female teacher of German) 5 gave written consent to participate in the study. Of this group of 5, one pre-service teacher was not able to continue with the study, and another was not able to complete the requirements of the M.Ed. program.

Of the three remaining pre-service (two teachers of Spanish, and 1 teacher of German) who consented to participate in the study, the two pre-service teachers of Spanish—who student taught under the supervision of two different mentor teachers in the same high school—were selected for inclusion in this report of the findings based upon the analysis of the data for the following reasons:

1. To gain insight into how the motives, rules, and division of labor within two sub-settings of the larger high school activity system contributed to both differences and similarities in (a) the types of tools which were appropriated, (b) when they
were appropriated, and (c) the process through which such appropriation took place.

2. To examine how contrasting teaching methodologies were used to meet similar motives.

3. To illustrate the differences in the extent to which both participants were willing to expand the boundaries of their respective high school sub-settings by introducing pedagogical tools that would challenge the status quo.

4. To be able to paint a picture of how pedagogical tool appropriation unfolded in classes across four different levels of the same target language (i.e., Spanish I, II, III, and IV), including how the participants positioned the implementation of pedagogical tools (e.g., target language use) relative to varying levels of proficiency in the target language.

5. To illustrate the manner in which the participants’ prior teaching experiences in two distinct neighbouring activity systems (the teaching of ESL in elementary schools versus the teaching of Spanish as a foreign language in a pre-school) mediated their instructional planning in similar ways during their elementary school field experience.

6. To show (a) the similarities in the number and nature of pedagogical tools that were appropriated in activity settings (i.e., elementary schools) where the participants were fully in charge of establishing the rules and motives of the activity system as far as language teaching was concerned; and (b) areas of divergence between both participants in the number and nature of the pedagogical tools appropriated in an activity setting (i.e., the high school) where the rules of
engagement were already established, and where they were forced to negotiate and redefine their role as student teachers relative to the ascribed authority of their mentor teachers.

The number of participants was deemed sufficient (based on the nature of this study) for the following reasons:

1. One of the goals of the study was to compare results across multiple classroom settings in the form of cross-case analyses.

2. Given the relatively brief time span for data collection, and the fact that the researcher was the primary data collection instrument, the level of engagement that was necessitated by data collection procedures and the depth of information to be gathered from multiple sources would not have been feasible with a larger number of participants. Hence, a sample of three was considered to be sufficient in adequately providing rich and thick descriptions and comparative analyses of the phenomenon to be studied.

3. The goal of the researcher was not to statistically generalize findings to a larger population, in which a larger sample would have been more appropriate. Rather, the primary purpose was to explore the particularities of two cases of learning to teach Spanish as a foreign language based on the CLT approach, and their unique or shared complexities.

Permission to carry out the study was requested in writing from the director of the university teacher education program. Upon their agreeing to participate in the study, the participants read and signed a consent form, affirming that the researcher had explained
the purpose of the study; duration of participation; benefits of the study; the right to obtain additional information concerning the study; and the right to withdraw participation at any time.

3.1.1 Portrait of Gloria

In this section, I shall present a portrait of Gloria, discussing her language learning experiences as a high school and college student, as well as her early language teaching experiences as a pre-K teacher of Spanish (prior to entrance in teacher education program). In addition, this portrait of Gloria also delves into her developing philosophy of foreign language teaching and learning. By this token, it aims to provide a context or frame of reference for understanding the manner in which her learning and development took shape in the teacher education program.

Gloria, a 23-year old pre-service teacher of Spanish, completed a Bachelor of Arts degree in Spanish and International Relations (double major) at a Midwestern university prior to entering the M.Ed. program. In reflecting on how she came to be a Spanish major, Gloria stated,

I was more on the International Relations side. Spanish was something I loved: It was fun. So I just kept taking it, taking it, taking it. Then I did two studies abroad and it was like, “Well, you have a major” (In-depth interview: April 29, 2010).

During her freshman year of college, Gloria spent one quarter in Quito, Ecuador as part of her university’s study abroad program, an experience, which she claimed, plaid a vital role in the development of her oral skills in Spanish. As part of her own initiative, Gloria
also spent eight months in Madrid, Spain where she studied geography, Spanish history, and Spanish philosophy.

In sharp contrast to her passion for Spanish at the collegiate level, Gloria’s attitude toward Spanish at the high school level (her first exposure to the language in a formal learning environment) was one of indifference, “even though I was studying thoroughly and getting A's” (Perspective on Foreign Language Teaching and Learning: September 25, 2009). As she pensively described, “I mean, I took Spanish for those two years in high school; but I mean, I didn't really care about it” (In-depth interview: April 29, 2010). Despite this feeling of indifference, however, “I knew I wanted to learn Spanish; there was no doubt about that” (Perspective on Foreign Language Teaching and Learning: September 25, 2009). It is important to point out that the statement, “I didn’t really care about it,” was more in response to how the language was taught as opposed to a resentment of the language per se. As Gloria described in our first in-depth interview,

I sat in Spanish class for two years; but when I went there I was miserable and wanted to just die because I couldn't even say anything. I spent all those two years in Spanish class filling in blanks. She [Spanish teacher] never pushed us to make sentences—to produce. (April 29, 2010)

As a high school sophomore, Gloria was at the crossroads of her studies in Spanish, contemplating two alternatives:

As a very rebellious and adventurous 15 year old, I found myself sitting in a very "old school" Spanish 1 classroom wanting more: I figured that I could either [1] continue to copy and look up definitions for the new vocabulary list that was written on the
board every Monday, or I could [2] find a way to really surround myself with Spanish and to speak it whenever possible. (Perspective on Foreign Language Teaching and Learning: September 25, 2009)

Choosing the second alternative, Gloria completed a youth-exchange program through Rotary International in which she studied for a year in Argentina, taking content courses such as history and math (taught in Spanish). By Gloria’s own account, this decision paid off both linguistically and socially: “Miraculously, I left Argentina a year later talking a mile a minute in Spanish, and with lifelong friendships that were built on a Spanish foundation” (Perspective on foreign language teaching and learning: September 25, 2009).

It is crucial to note that Gloria’s teaching experience did not begin with the university teacher education program: During the period between graduating from college and matriculating into the teacher education program, Gloria was offered a permanent position at a pre-K school where she worked for a year with a pre-K teacher who served as her mentor during this period. In reflecting on the experience, Gloria stated, “She [pre-K teacher] got her degree in early childhood, so she taught me—that was my first experience in the classroom—about lesson planning and organizing things; organizing activities. That was my first experience with any of that stuff. (In-depth interview: April 29, 2010). In commenting on how her pre-K teaching experience contributed to her development as a teacher, Gloria asserted, “I was able to really get to know younger children and develop a deep insight into how they best learn, and I feel that really worked to my advantage during the elementary field experience and mini-
lessons” (Reflective journal: January 28, 210). She further described her pre-K teaching experience in the following manner:

That [working with preschoolers] was so much fun. … It was really cool to get to work with that age group. It was just great to see the kids. I mean, the kids at that age are so motivated. They’re just like little sponges. I know people say it all the time; but they have a million questions. They wanna know “why, why, why, why, why.” They get so into everything. It's just great. You can do so much with them and take things so far. It's kinda cool to experience things like Halloween again from the kids' perspective, and get to make all this cool stuff for them. We carved pumpkins together, and that was neat. It was just neat to see them go through the excitement of all the different activities. (In-depth interview: April 29, 2010)

Gloria brought with her to the teacher education program, an evolving philosophy of foreign language teaching and learning, which she outlined in her Perspective on foreign language teaching and learning paper (September 25, 2009). Her philosophy was built upon three areas: (1) Motivation, based on the conviction that “no real learning can take place if at least a piece of motivation is not there first” as it “provides a strong and sturdy foundation on which language learners can build knowledge and understanding.” (2) Immersion, which was based on the premise that “the Spanish classroom should allow students to get a taste of studying abroad for at least 40 minutes a day.” And (3) oral production, “which is what ultimately separates those who study a language from those who speak it.”

The above portrait reveals that although Gloria’s goal of developing her spoken proficiency in Spanish was not, in her view, facilitated by the traditional method of
language teaching at her high school. Rather, her study-abroad experiences as a high school and college student contributed significantly in this regard. On the other hand, however, this traditional method through which Gloria was taught Spanish played a key role, in that, provided her with a blueprint of how not to teach a foreign language. As she affirmed, “I try not to do the stuff [e.g., fill-in-the-blank items, and limited opportunities for oral production] that my [Spanish] teacher used to do in my [high school] classroom because I know that it didn't work” (In-depth interview: April 29, 2010). Additionally, not only was her pre-K teaching experience the single most influential factor in her decision to pursue foreign language teaching, but also one which laid the foundation for her elementary school field experience in the teacher education program. Taken together, her language teaching and learning experiences, including her studies abroad, served to inform her evolving philosophy of foreign language teaching and learning.

3.1.2 Portrait of Linda

This section chronicles Linda’s perceptions of and experiences with language teaching and learning across multiple academic settings including middle school, high school, and college. Additionally, her evolving philosophy of foreign language teaching and learning is discussed. Thus, this portrait aims to provide the framework through which Linda’s learning and development in the teacher education program might be understood.

Linda, a 25-year old pre-service teacher of Spanish, first started studying foreign languages as a middle-school student at the age of 12. She studied Spanish, French, and German for a total of six months (two months for each language), deciding thereafter to
pursue further studies in Spanish as “I remember at the time thinking that Spanish would be the most practical and useful of all three languages” (Personal Narrative: March 2, 2010). Linda gave a vivid description of the language teaching methodology used in middle, and high school as well as how it impacted her as a learner, and currently, a pre-service teacher:

It was fairly textbook-centered, I would say. I wouldn’t call it communicative. It was a lot of book work, and exercises in grammar activities with a good amount of translation. Target language use was probably less than 50% in class. I remember getting nervous for the speaking assessment—especially in high school—because it was rare that I would have to use the language. It was more grammar based, which I do feel gave me a good base, since I continued on with Spanish. I like that I have that base where I can think back, “You know, I learned how to conjugate every verb,” and that kind a thing; but it may not be the approach I would take in teaching a language. And honestly, in high school, I don't think I acquired that much Spanish. … I was not able to communicate at the level I expected to. (In-depth interview: April 12, 2010)

Notwithstanding these early experiences with language learning, Linda “first realized I had a passion for languages in high school when Spanish became my favorite part of the day, and the class that I looked forward to most” (Personal narrative: March 2, 2010) due to the fact that (1) “It came easy to me” (In-depth interview: April 12, 2010); and (2) “it was so different than my life in Cambridge Heights (pseudonym for Linda’s hometown). It was like this whole other culture—this whole other world that I felt like I was getting to know a part of.” (In-depth interview: April 12, 2010)
Linda completed a Bachelor of Arts degree at a large, Midwestern university prior to enrollment in the M.Ed. program. As she continued her undergraduate coursework as a Spanish major, Linda’s perception of her studies shifted from majoring in a foreign language because “I … really like it; and I don't know what else I would rather spend my time and energy on,” to one of channeling her “passion for languages” into meeting the needs of Hispanic immigrants, including ESL students: “I began to realize some of the hardships many new immigrants face, and noticed that I could use my knowledge of the Spanish language to help people who are new to town and need, or want to learn English.” (Personal narrative: March 2, 2010). With this goal in mind, Linda volunteered as an ESL tutor in local elementary schools (as part of her coursework requirement) which had a high Spanish-speaking population, assisting with individual assignments, and instructional activities, in particular, those related to reading. This experience proved to have been highly influential in Linda’s decision to enter the teaching profession. As she revealed in her personal narrative,

Something happened through this [ESL volunteer] experience: I fell in love with teaching. … I found the experience so fulfilling not only because of my cheerful morning starts, but because I realized I could really help these children with my knowledge of their native language and my care and support. (March 2, 2010)

In addition to Linda’s experiences with language learning in the classroom, in her view, her travel-abroad experiences—to various Spanish-speaking countries, including Mexico, Guatemala and Spain—have led to a deeper sense of global awareness, self-discovery, and the opportunity to establish a social bond with people from the target
Traveling to various Spanish-speaking countries is like task-based [language teaching] at its finest: For instance, I had to get a hotel room: That’s something I had to do. It was authentic language use; and I realized that I'm communicating things, and I'm getting stuff done with this language. At that point, I realized that you use Spanish to communicate. It really dawned on me that it was a communication thing. It wasn't just a language that you knew, or like a skill that you would acquire; but it's communicating with this whole population of people that you wouldn't be able to communicate with otherwise. So it kind of went from this learning thing to this communication thing. (In-depth interview: April 12, 2010)

Transitioning from language learning to language teaching, Linda brought with her to the M.Ed. program, a well-defined philosophy of teaching and learning that centered around four core principles, which were documented during the first week of her foreign language teaching methods course in her Perspective on foreign language teaching and learning paper (September, 25, 2009): (1) Building student-teacher relationships; (2) creating learning opportunities for awareness and understanding of contrasting worldviews and cultural norms; (3) focusing on fluency as opposed to accuracy during the initial stage of language learning; and (4) Creating a “positive environment” for language learning.

Linda’s interests in and experiences with language learning as an evolutionary process is best summarized through the following quote:
I feel like I've like realized a passion for the language at different points, in different ways: In high school, I realized that I had a passion for languages—“I like this. I'm good at this. It's really cool to learn a foreign language.” In college, I developed a passion for the Spanish-speaking community, and more like the stuff surrounding the language—not just the language itself. And then, through my travels, I developed a passion for communicating, and being able to know this group of people you would never know had it not been for learning Spanish. So in college, I feel like it was more based on the Spanish community. (In-depth interview: April 12, 2010)

3.2 Contexts of the Study

3.2.1 University and school contexts

Both Gloria and Linda were enrolled in a post-baccalaureate, teacher education program in the College of Education at a Mid-western university in the United States. This teacher education program was a one-year (four quarters: Summer – Spring) graduate program which led to a Master of Education (M.Ed.) degree and initial K-12 state licensure in 12 different areas of study, including foreign language education. The program director for the M.Ed. program in foreign language education was a university faculty member with a Ph.D. in foreign language education. The program structure was based on the philosophy of the university’s teacher education model: “To assist pre-service teachers in developing the knowledge, skills, and disposition needed to become effective leaders and advocates for social justice in the field of education” (University website, 2011).

Over the course of the year, pre-service teachers completed three content-specific courses in foreign language teaching methods; a classroom research methods course;
interdisciplinary courses related to literacy, classroom management, technology, and teacher efficacy; and reflective seminars. The courses were taught by university faculty members who were assisted by Graduate Teaching Associates. In lieu of a comprehensive or general exam, pre-service teachers completed a Capstone Project which consisted of a personal narrative, a position paper, video reflections, and a classroom action research study.

The program included an internship component in which the pre-service teachers completed 175 hours of field experiences; 480 instructional hours of student teaching or clinical practicum; and 20 administrative and extracurricular activity hours. Through a university-school partnership, each of the pre-service teachers in the 16-member cohort was assigned to a local elementary school, and high/middle school for the completion of field experiences. A total of 7 elementary schools, 10 high schools, and 2 middle schools (all located within the same county as the university) served as sites for the field experiences. Student teaching, however, was completed at the middle or high schools. Field experiences and student teaching were supervised by on-site mentor teachers (state-certified/licensed elementary school teachers, or high/middle school state-certified teachers of foreign languages); and three Graduate Teaching Associates (hereafter referred to as university supervisors), including the researcher of this project, who were pursuing Doctoral degrees in foreign language education.

Field experiences were completed over the course of the 2009-2010 academic year, and included attending departmental and school faculty meetings; consultations and conferencing with mentor teachers regarding lesson planning; getting familiar with school culture, routines, and administrative procedures; attending various school
functions; observing mentor teachers’ teaching; and teaching a total of eight lessons ranging from 15-20 minutes in length (hereafter referred to as mini-lessons). One week prior to the start of the school year (August 2009), pre-service teachers began their high school field experience which primarily included familiarizing themselves with their new setting, and meeting faculty and staff members. For the elementary field experience (September – October 2009), the pre-service teachers presented four consecutive mini-lessons over the course of four weeks, which marked their first time teaching in the program. After completion of the elementary field experience, high/middle school field experience resumed (November 2009 – February 2010). During this second half of the high/middle school field experience, pre-service teachers presented four consecutive mini-lessons over the course of four weeks. This marked their first time teaching in the high school/middle school setting. During field experiences, the pre-service teachers were required to produce a written reflection after each lesson, discussing its strengths and weaknesses.

Student teaching (March – June 2009) then followed the high/middle school field experience, and involved the pre-service teachers’ gradually assuming the instructional and administrative responsibilities of the mentor teacher over a twelve week period. That is to say, they assumed the role of full-time teachers at their respective sites. It is worth mentioning that coursework and field experiences were completed concurrently—the majority of coursework being completed prior to student teaching. During student teaching, the only course requirement was a reflective seminar (led by the program director) wherein pre-service teachers discussed both their successes and challenges faced during student teaching.
As regarding assessment of the pre-service teachers’ instruction in the program, lesson plans were evaluated by university supervisors based on the manner in which instructional objectives, learning outcomes, state standards for the teaching of foreign languages, instructional activities, and assessment procedures were articulated. With respect to instruction, per se, pre-service teachers were observed twice by university supervisors during the elementary school field experience; and once during the high/middle school field experience. Prior to the delivery of the mini-lessons during field experiences, practice sessions were held with the cohort in groups of 5-6 wherein pre-service teachers had the opportunity to give a simulated presentation of their lessons. During these sessions, they received feedback from their peers, university supervisors, and program director on lesson planning; instructional techniques; and classroom management. During student teaching, pre-service teachers’ delivery of instruction during a 50-minute instructional period was observed 8-10 times by university supervisors; and once by the program director. Following instruction, post-observation conferences were held during which written and oral feedback were given on lesson planning; instructional techniques; and classroom management. Pre-service teachers also met daily with mentor teachers to discuss lesson planning, and feedback on the delivery of their lessons. The delivery of instruction (with the exception of mini-lessons), lesson plans, and reflective journals were all assigned a letter grade based on a point system.

3.2.2 Policy context: State and school district

Based on state guidelines, although taking foreign language courses were not required for high school graduation, students had the option of taking them as electives.
However, since college admission requirements in many states include the completion of foreign language coursework, students were strongly encouraged to enroll in foreign language courses. The foreign language curriculum in the high schools where the pre-service teachers completed their field experiences and student teaching was guided by what is referred to as the Foreign Language Academic Content Standards. The term standard(s) refers to guidelines established by the state for kindergarten through grade 12 (K-12) curricula in various disciplines such as foreign languages, English language arts, social studies, mathematics, and science:

Standards describe the knowledge and skills that students should attain, often called the what of what students should know and be able to do. They indicate the ways of thinking, working, communicating, reasoning and investigating, and important and enduring ideas, concepts, issues, dilemmas and knowledge essential to the discipline (State department of education, 2010).

The Foreign Language Academic Content Standards adopted by the state were based upon standards for K-12 foreign language education developed by a group of national language organizations, which included the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages; the American Association of Teachers of French; the American Association of Teachers of German; and the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese. At the state level, the development of the academic content standards, not only for foreign languages, but also for the fine arts, English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies was spearheaded by a joint council, which included the State Board of Education, and the state Board of Regents. The standards
include what is known as the five C’s of foreign language education which are the following:

1. Communication—Interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational: Students should be able to communicate in languages other than English by initiating and sustaining spoken or written communication. They should be able to access, and provide information; express their feelings; and exchange opinions in the target language. Students should also be able to understand main ideas in authentic texts from sources such as children’s literature and the newspaper; and be able to present information to an audience. For example, in grade nine, students would be expected to use the target language to order food, shop at the mall or ask for directions; whereas in grade twelve, they would be expected to use the target language and gestures appropriately for role-playing in authentic, social or professional situations such as a family dinner, football game or job interview.

2. Cultures—Practices and Products: Students are required to examine the target culture’s practices such as acceptable or unacceptable behaviors; products such as historic edifices, literature and foods; and perspectives, which would entail values, beliefs, theories, and ideas. For example, eleventh graders, students would be expected to analyze and discuss the many ways in which the culture of the target language is reflected through words, idioms, and proverbs. This might be achieved by watching an authentic movie, comedy or play in the target language with the goal of identifying those language features that reflect the target culture. In grade twelve, they would be expected to discuss and analyze various literary texts and works of art from the target culture.
3. Connections—Integrated studies and new viewpoints: Students are expected to use the target language to build knowledge across disciplines by gathering information that can only be accessed through that target language. For instance, tenth grade students might be asked to research the economic trends of the target culture, and use authentic texts to learn more about things that might be of interest to them such as music, art, sports, and movies.

4. Comparisons—Linguistic comparisons, cultural comparisons, and concept of culture: Students should be able to compare the language features of the target language with those of the native language as well as compare the target culture with their own culture so as to develop a better understanding of language and culture. For example, students in grades nine to twelve would be expected to identify cognates, and similarities or differences in the sentence structure of the target language and their native language. Students would also be required to recognize the ways in which the target culture has impacted their own culture, and vice versa.

6. Communities—Outreach, enrichment and enjoyment, career exploration and skills. This involves students using the target language outside of the classroom to enrich their personal lives, and become active citizens in a multilingual and multicultural nation. For example, students in grades eleven and twelve might help organize and participate in a community service project, or become members of organizations that support a social or political cause in which they would have the opportunity to use the target language in real-life contexts.

Based on the above Foreign Language Academic Content standards, it is quite apparent that the dominant theoretical underpinning of this curriculum is CLT. The
curriculum explicitly states that in contrast to the traditional method of rote memorization and meaningless repetition, “today, communication is the organizing principle for foreign language programs and requires that we also consider the reasons we use language (why) with a variety of people (the whom) at appropriate times (the when)” (State department of education, 2010). In the academic content standards document, there are explicit references to many of the defining features of communicative language pedagogy as well as current research in second language acquisition such as the importance of comprehensible input and output; the negotiation of meaning through meaningful and purposeful interaction; achieving communicative competence; understanding the link between language and culture; promoting language acquisition versus language learning; using authentic materials; and creating an environment that lowers the affective filter. It is noteworthy that while the standards, as stipulated for each grade level, make no mention of the learning or acquisition of grammatical features, they do state that “in today’s classrooms, grammar and vocabulary flow naturally from the standards, …” (State department of education, 2010).

In relation to textbooks and other teaching materials, the state guidelines stated that the textbook should not become the “de facto curriculum…but one of many tools and resources to bring the standards to life. A variety of authentic texts, realia, multimedia and technology-based resources facilitate the development of linguistic and cultural competence” (State department of education, 2010). Foreign language programs typically required one principal text (which explicitly highlights grammatical points, but is not a grammar textbook) with an accompanying workbook. Other required materials might include literature books for more advanced levels. Decisions relating to the type of
textbook adapted for a particular language program, in many states, were usually made at the district level. The adaptation and development of materials were greatly facilitated by the state department of Education, which had a wealth of resources available for the professional development of its teachers, and for the academic growth of its students with respect to foreign language teaching and learning. In Addition, the state department of education provided a list of print resources on professional development, foreign language teaching, second language acquisition, and foreign language standards.

It is crucial to recognize that while the aforementioned standards offer general guidelines and examples regarding what foreign language students (K-12) should know and be able to do, they are not meant as substitutes for curricula and syllabi which must be designed according to language learning needs in local schools. That is to say, the standards are not a curriculum guide. While they suggest the types of curricular experiences needed to enable students to achieve the standards, and support the ideal of extended sequences of study that begin in the elementary grades and continue through high school and beyond, they do not describe specific course content, nor recommended sequence of study. They must be used in conjunction with state and local standards and curriculum frameworks to determine the best approaches and reasonable expectations for the students in individual districts and schools (ACTFL, 2010).

Furthermore, while the standards appear to be undergirded by CLT principles, they do not provide specific instructions about how teachers should teach. That is to say, there is no discussion of foreign language teaching approaches, techniques, or methodologies, per se. For instance, although the standards document states that “grammar and vocabulary flow naturally from the standards,” (State department of education, 2010), leading one to
infer that there is a preference for an inductive approach to grammar teaching, the
meaning of “flow naturally” in this context was not specified. In the same vein, based on
the fact that teachers’ understanding of the standards are mediated by their own teaching
and learning experiences, one cannot assume that they implement them in the same
manner. Thus, by looking into how pre-service teachers appropriate CLT, this study also
sought to address how they interpreted and implemented the state’s Foreign Language
Academic Content Standards, and the tensions that came about in their efforts to
negotiate state policy as well as university and school requirements regarding foreign
language teaching and learning.

3.3 Data Collection Instruments and Procedures

3.3.1 Interviews

Table 3.1: Timeline and frequency of Semi-structured interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Timeline and Frequency</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>March 2010</td>
<td>April 2010</td>
<td>May 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gloria</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4 +1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linda</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4 +1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1 shows the number of semi-structured interviews conducted for each
month of student teaching, and for each participant. Due to the fact that the study was
built upon the assumption that each interviewee’s story would be grounded in their
unique experiences, and representative of their perspectives, a semi-structured interview
method was chosen as opposed to a structured one, in that, it provided the flexibility (e.g.,
posing open-ended and follow-up questions) that would allow for the understanding of the “complex behavior of members of society without imposing any a priori categorization that may limit the field of inquiry” (Fontana & Frey, 2000, p. 653). A majority of the interviews (n=16) were post-observation interviews (Appendix A), ranging from 15-30 minutes in length. The remaining four in-depth interview sessions—which will be later discussed in detail—are represented in Table 3.1 as +1, and ranged from 45 minutes to an hour. Unlike the shorter post-observation interview sessions, these interviews were broader in scope, in that, the primary focus was not only on a single lesson, but rather the participants’ personal and academic history as well as their perceptions and implementation of CLT.

The post-observation interview sessions were carried out in two phases: The first phase (i.e., the debriefing phase) included questions regarding lesson planning, in addition to elaboration on, or clarification of some aspect of the lesson observed. The main goal of this phase was to trace the genesis of the particular instructional period by examining the source of decision-making in planning for the lesson; the nature of, and rationale for the physical, practical, and conceptual tools used for lesson planning; and to allow the participants to critically reflect on the planning and delivery of instruction. The second phase (i.e., the feedback phase) proceeded in a conference format wherein the researcher offered feedback on three aspects of the lesson, namely, (1) lesson planning; (2) instructional techniques; and (3) classroom management. As such, this phase was less structured than the first, as conversations with the participants were primarily in reference to one of the three aforementioned areas, which unfolded differently for each instructional period observed. During this second phase, at times, participants posed
questions, expressed concerns or frustrations regarding foreign language teaching. Thus, these conversations sometimes went beyond the observed lesson per se. The objective of this second phase was, in a co-constructive manner, to facilitate the participants’ learning to teach their respective target languages. Additionally, it gave the participants the opportunity to react to my perception of the lesson, especially in those cases where certain events during the lesson may have been misconstrued. The primary advantage to this two-phase sequence was that it provided the participants with the opportunity to first reflect on the lesson without the potential influence of the researcher’s feedback on their responses. Additionally, it positioned the participant as a co-constructor of knowledge as opposed to merely a research participant.

The majority of the post-observation interviews occurred in person, immediately following the observation of a 50-minute period of classroom instruction. However, there were a few instances in which it was not feasible to interview the participants immediately following the lesson, such as when there was a class immediately following the class observed. In those cases, the interview was conducted by phone at the end of the school day.

In relation to the extended interviews (Appendix B and C), each participant was interviewed twice over the course of three months (April, May, and June). These interviews sought to examine the participants’ history of language teaching and learning; and those factors shaping their enactment of the CLT approach in both the elementary and high school settings. As regarding the timing of the first interview (mid-way through student teaching), the earlier phase of student teaching was a transitional period in which the pre-service teachers were getting accustomed to school and classroom routine and
procedures, and were preoccupied with the gradual accumulation of a full course load and full day’s work. Hence, it would not have been timely to have requested a one-hour interview during that period. Nonetheless, this approach brought about a more informed interview protocol, in that, a third of the interview questions were generated based on my collection, reading, and preliminary analyses of observation field notes; class assignments that addressed their overall perspective on, and approach to language teaching; and reflective journals completed between September 2009 and March 2010. Thus, in the first interview session, the questions in the final section of the interview protocol (e.g., “In reading your personal statement, I see that you volunteered at various elementary schools in ESL settings prior to entering the program. How has this experience shaped your approach to foreign language teaching and learning?”) made the interview unique to the life history of the participant as opposed to a set of generic questions merely seeking background information. Additionally, the timing of this first interview allowed participants to (a) provide more substantive responses concerning those factors shaping their leaning to teach; (b) make comparisons across multiple activity settings such as their university coursework, elementary and high school field experiences, and student teaching; and (c) more adequately describe the challenges faced while transitioning from one activity setting to another. The central purpose of the first set of in-depth interviews was to clarify or solicit further information based on existing documents such as lesson plans, reflective journals, and autobiographical narratives; and to be able to know the participants’ personal and professional histories as learners, foreign language teachers, and participating members within their respective communities of practice.
The second in-depth interview (Appendix D) looked into the pre-service teachers’ overall perception of the teacher education program, in particular, their student teaching experience; the history of the physical, practical, and conceptual tools used in lesson planning during their elementary and high school field experience; their conceptualization of the CLT approach based on their teaching experience up to that point; and how they negotiated meeting the expectations of both the university and school activity systems concurrently. The content for this final interview protocol was generated from preliminary analysis of recordings from post-observation interview sessions, the first of the two in-depth interviews, and observation field notes. Generally speaking, however, the construction of interview questions for all interview protocols was guided by Maxwell’s (1996) insightful statement on interviewing: “Your research questions formulate what you want to understand; your interview questions are what you ask people in order to gain that understanding” (p. 74).

All interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed. The process of transcription was approached as one that was interpretive, socially, and culturally constructed (Lapadat & Lindsay, 1999), recognizing that “transcription represents an audiotaped or videotaped record, and the record itself represents an interactive event” (Lapadat & Lindsay, 1999, p. 81). In this light, it is hardly likely that researchers will ever agree on the same transcription standards. Thus, the guiding question for the transcription process was the following: “What is a useful transcription for my research purposes?” (as cited in Lapadat and Lindsay’s, 1999, p. 74). Acknowledging the representational nature of transcripts, therefore, allowed the researcher to pay close attention to the extent to which seemingly minute details such as punctuation and vocal
fillers, for instance, were represented in the text, and how such representations were consistent with the participants’ views of themselves.

3.3.2 Classroom observations

Table 3.2: Timeline and frequency of classroom observations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>March 2010</th>
<th>April 2010</th>
<th>May 2010</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gloria</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linda</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.2 shows the number of classroom observations completed for each participant during student teaching. Each observation was conducted during a 50-minute instructional period at the high schools where the participants completed their student teaching. It is important to mention that the objective of the observations was not to examine the correlation between the appropriation of a particular tool and student academic achievement, but rather when, how, and to what extent the participants utilized practical, physical, and conceptual tools that represented their practical and conceptual understanding of CLT. Prior the start of the instructional period, the researcher reviewed the lesson plan for the lesson which was to be observed. Whenever necessary, a brief pre-observation conference was held with the participants so as to discuss areas of the lesson that I might not have clearly understood.

As the researcher, I was on the observer end of the participant-observation continuum (Glesne, 2006) due to the fact that I did not be assist with the delivery of
instruction, student work, or in-class activities. The benefits of this form of observation was that it allowed me to inductively discover how the participants understood their setting (Hatch, 2002) and afforded me the “opportunity to see things that are taken for granted by participants and would be less likely to come to the surface using interview or other data collection techniques (Hatch, 2002, p. 72).

The first observation was guided by the question, “What is happening here, specifically” (Erickson, 1986, p. 124)? On the surface, this question might appear simplistic; nonetheless, it is an attempt to “make the familiar strange” (Erickson, 1986, p. 121), where the researcher, being an insider, problematizes what might seem ordinary or common; and what is occurring is made visible through systematic documentation (Erickson, 1986). Thus, this guiding question helped to guard against the problem of premature typification (Erickson, 1986), or rushing to premature conclusions. The focus of each observation was maintained through the use of guiding questions. On a general level, each observation was approached with the guiding question, “What is this lesson a case of?” The objective here is that at the end of the lesson, the researcher must have been able to have said, for example, “This lesson was a case of the intersection between CLT and deductive/inductive grammar instruction, culture, or vocabulary.” More specifically, in addition to the overall objective of the observations, the focus of each successive observation was also determined by the one(s) that preceded it. For example, the following two guiding questions came about as a result of my reading and preliminary analysis of the field notes from one of the initial observations conducted in March: (1) what is the distinction and interaction between practical and physical tools? (2) How do
these tools interact with conceptual tools to give meaning to CLT from the participants’ perspective?

As seen in Table 3.2, the majority of the observations were conducted midway through student teaching. This can be explained by the fact that the beginning phase of student teaching was a period in which student teachers were still in the process of gradually accumulating a full teaching schedule. Hence, there were fewer opportunities for weekly observations in March than there were in April when the number and sections of courses taught were more representative of full time teaching. Conducting the majority of the observations halfway through student teaching proved to have been beneficial as student teachers had the opportunity to place more focus on instruction, per se, as opposed to the challenges that came with transitioning into a full teaching schedule and assuming all the administrative responsibilities of the mentor teacher. Also, observations conducted in March provided a benchmark for comparing the growth and development with teaching that occurred prior to, as well as after that period. As with the first month of student teaching, fewer observations were conducted in the final month as end-of-year festivities and exams frequently interfered with the regular instructional schedule.

3.3.3 Field notes

Descriptions of temporal context, instructional content, student- and teacher-directed speech, actions occurring in the classroom as they pertained to the use of pedagogical tools (crucial data sources that later provided responses to the guiding questions mentioned in section 3.3.2) were recorded by use of Microsoft word processor
on a laptop computer. In contrast to hand-written notes, this method allowed for more efficient management of the data, particularly with respect to editing (i.e., additions and deletions; cutting and pasting, etc.). Field notes served the purpose of recording how and when the target language or the L1 was used as the medium of instruction; describing the manner in which practical tools were executed; notating my reflections on, and interpretations of observed phenomena during instruction; and, during post-observation analysis, identifying the relationship between classroom observation data, and data from written coursework assignments and interview transcripts. For all observations, the researcher sat in the back of the classroom so as to reduce the possibility of being a distraction. Note taking usually began with background information such as the date, time, location, and objective of the lesson and information written on the board prior to the start of the lesson. Once instruction began, teacher-student as well as student-teacher talk were documented verbatim as the observations were not audio-recorded. So as to make a distinction between observed phenomena and the researcher’s reaction to the same, the researchers’ interpretive comments, feedback, clarification questions, and tentative conclusions written during field-note taking were written in bold.

After leaving the field, the raw field notes were read and organized in a coherent manner, adding information that might not have been written during the field observation. For instance, the raw field notes were divided into multiple segments based on instructional activities and stretches of teacher-student or student-teacher talk that was audible to the entire class. Following the reorganization of the raw field notes, the researcher carried out direct interpretation (Stake, 1995) of events that occurred. The objective here was to question, understand, and explain, the meaning of the data using the
framework of activity theory as a guide. This interpretive act was primarily guided by the following overarching questions: (1) From the teachers’ perspective, what do actions they are engaging in mean to them? (2) How are the happenings within the setting of the classroom related to those outside of this particular setting (e.g. students’ daily lives; the school district; teacher education programs; the apprenticeship of observation)? The findings of this direct interpretation were recorded as interpretive memos.
### 3.3.4 Unobtrusive data: Coursework artifacts

Table 3.3: Coursework Artifacts: Autumn 2009 – Winter 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Elementary School Lesson Plans</strong></td>
<td><strong>High School Lesson Plans</strong></td>
<td><strong>Weekly Task Reflections</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson plan #1 (September 30)</td>
<td>Lesson Plan #1 (January 20)</td>
<td>Task #1 (January 13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson Plan #2 (October 7)</td>
<td>Lesson Plan #2 (January 27)</td>
<td>Task #2 (January 20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson Plan #3 (October 14)</td>
<td>Lesson Plan #3 (February 3)</td>
<td>Task #3 (January 27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson Plan #4 (October 29)</td>
<td>Lesson Plan #4 (February 17)</td>
<td>Task #4 (February 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Task #5 (February 10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Task #6 (February 17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Task #7 (March 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Elementary School Reflective Journals</strong></td>
<td><strong>High School Reflective Journals</strong></td>
<td><strong>Personal Narrative</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection #1 (October 8)</td>
<td>Reflection #1 (January 28)</td>
<td>(March 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection #2 (October 15)</td>
<td>Reflection #2 (February 4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection #3 (October 22)</td>
<td>Reflection #3 (February 14)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection #4 (October 29)</td>
<td>Reflection #4 (February 25)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Perspective on Foreign Language Teaching and Learning</strong></td>
<td><strong>Materials Development Project (January 31)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Assessment Project (March 12)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perspective #1 (September 25)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perspective #2 (December 4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Culturally Relevant Teaching Project (November 17)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.3 represents multiple (graded) assignments which were gathered by the researcher for analysis. These data sources are labeled *unobtrusive* in the sense that “they have been produced as part of the participants’ natural experience, not in response to requests from the researcher” (Hatch, 2002, p. 118). In regards to the context from which these assignments were selected as sources of data, they were completed in the following three graduate-level courses which I shall later describe in more detail: (1) Methods of Foreign Language Teaching; (2) Foreign Language Assessment and Materials Development; and (3) Reflective Inquiry on Foreign Language Pedagogy. The courses were completed by the pre-service teachers in the Autumn Quarter of 2009 and the Winter quarter of 2010. The dates listed next to each assignment are indicative of when the assignment was turned in. These courses were taught by university faculty members with expertise in foreign and second language education and research.

The purpose of using coursework assignments as data sources was (1) to identify the sources of pedagogical tools used by the participants; (2) to understand the nature of the relationship between teaching and teacher education (i.e., the relationship between instruction in the school settings; and planning for, and reflecting on the use of pedagogical tools in those settings); (3) to examine how the pre-service teachers interpreted or made sense of pedagogical tools relative to their classroom instruction; (4) and to trace the evolution of their experiences with, and beliefs about language teaching and learning both prior to, and during their teacher education coursework.
Methods of Foreign Language Teaching

Methods of Foreign Language Teaching was an introductory course that explored principles of foreign language teaching and learning in K-12 contexts, paying special attention to the teaching and acquisition of foreign languages in elementary schools; theories of second language acquisition; lesson planning and presentation techniques; the connection between theory and classroom practice; the place of culture in foreign language teaching; and the relationship between instruction and assessment as well as proficiency and academic content standards. As part of the course requirements, the pre-service teachers were required to create four lesson plans based on a particular theme to be presented during their elementary school field experience (i.e., Elementary School Lesson Plans in Table 3.3). The lessons were expected to be “age-appropriate, fun, and creative” (course syllabus, 2009); 15-20 minutes in length; and designed based on state foreign language proficiency standards. Prior to the presentation of the lesson at their respective elementary schools, the pre-service teachers received written feedback on their lesson plans. Additionally, they received oral feedback from peers, Graduate Teaching Associates, and the course professor in weekly group sessions during which they simulated presenting the lesson. Including lesson plans in the data set proved valuable in that I was able to identify the differences between what was planned versus what was actually done during instruction; and how the participants balanced lesson plans with changing or unexpected events during instruction, which in turn influenced the types of pedagogical tools selected.
For the *Elementary School Reflective Journals*, the participants wrote 4 journal entries after watching a video recording of their teaching. They were provided with the following instructions by their instructor:

> After teaching each mini-lesson, you are to reflect on the experience. How did it go? What could you have done to make it better? If it was not successful, why do you think that was? Support your reflection with theory and expert opinion. (Course Syllabus, 2009)

The reflective journals, by providing data that revealed the participants’ own interpretations and critiques of their teaching, were central to uncovering the challenges they faced in implementing CLT, and how they went about addressing them. Additionally, the reflective journals were key sources for the analysis of how the pre-service teachers used theories and concepts from foreign language pedagogy and second language acquisition to make sense of their instructional decisions and practices.

The assignments labeled, *Perspectives on Foreign Language Teaching and Learning*, required the pre-service teachers to write a narrative describing their beliefs “about how people learn languages and the best way to teach them” (Course syllabus, 2009). The first of the two narratives, completed during the first week of the course, was meant to discover the nature of the participants’ prior knowledge about language teaching and learning, while the latter was aimed at understanding how such knowledge had changed over a ten-week period. Unlike the aforementioned assignments, the Culturally Relevant Teaching Project was completed in groups. For this project, the pre-service teachers were asked to “create a culture lesson that incorporates principles of culturally
relevant teaching and present it to the class” (course syllabus, 2009). The inclusion of this data source was for the purpose of understanding how the participants went about addressing the sociocultural component of CLT, which then allowed the researcher to see the extent to which they appropriated modern CLT.

*Foreign Language Assessment and Materials Development*

Whereas Methods of Foreign Language Teaching introduced the pre-service teachers to a wide range of theories and topics regarding foreign language pedagogy and learning, *Foreign Language Assessment and Materials Development* required the pre-service teachers to create authentic forms of assessment for all four skills; craft original instructional materials guided by foreign language state standards; and develop a set of criteria by which these materials would be evaluated. Based on a unit from the textbook used in their high school placements, the pre-service teachers were asked to create a culminating authentic assessment project that measured their learners’ proficiency based on the state standards established for the unit. To that end, the following instructions were given by the course professor:

In addition to a final summative assessment, you are to incorporate a plan for formative assessment during the stages of the project. The design of the project must include connections to other disciplines (math, science, social studies, etc.) as well as strategies which support a diverse group of learners. (course syllabus, 2010)
The Materials Development Project involved two phases which were (1) materials selection; and (2) materials adaptation and creation. For the first phase, the pre-service teachers were asked to create a checklist which they would use to evaluate commercially designed texts geared toward foreign language learning at the elementary or secondary level. As stated by the course professor, “Your checklist should be guided by consideration of the state standards for foreign language, your school’s curriculum guidelines for foreign language, and the Five C’s” (Course syllabus, 2010). The pre-service teachers were also required to write a two- to four-page narrative that explained the contents of the checklist. For the second phase of the project, they were asked to do the following:

Select a unit from a commercially prepared text that you feel does not meet the criteria of excellent materials according to the checklist that you developed in Part 1 of this assignment. Determine how the unit could be adapted to more fully move learners toward being proficient users of the language and make those adaptations. (Course syllabus, 2010)

The participants were also required to submit a two- to four-page narrative that explained the rationale for their adaptations. These projects were included as data sources so as to gain insight into how the participants used their knowledge of conceptual tools (e.g., foreign language academic content standards) to transform the nature of both practical and physical tools, while taking into consideration students’ language learning needs.
In addition to these two projects, pre-service teachers were required to develop four lesson plans in preparation for a 15-20 minute (mini) lesson which they would present as part of their high school field experience. Not only were these lessons to be age-appropriate and in line with state foreign language proficiency standards, but, unlike the elementary field experience, also bear some relationship to the language and content being taught by the mentor teacher at that point in the academic year. Thus, in contrast to the elementary school field experience, a higher degree of consultation with the mentor teacher was expected in planning for the lessons. In preparation for the presentation of the lessons, the pre-service teachers participated in weekly group discussions led by the course professor during which constructive feedback was offered regarding their plans for the lesson. Following the delivery of the lesson, the pre-service teachers wrote reflective journal entries as they did for the elementary school field experience, following the same guidelines (see p. 14).

Although this research project is not a study of student assessment, per se, it was deemed necessary to include data sources from this course in light of the fact that in the literature on CLT (and based on preliminary analyses of the data for this study), the extent to which the approach was implemented in the classroom was at times constrained by test preparation activities that did not reflect CLT principles.

**Reflective Inquiry on Foreign Language Pedagogy**

Unlike the two aforementioned courses, *Reflective Inquiry on Foreign Language Pedagogy* focused on the development of research skills necessary to carry out classroom-based inquiry regarding the teaching and learning of foreign languages. The
first set of assignments, referred to as Weekly Task Reflections, were designed to give the pre-service teachers the opportunity to gain insight into a number of different topics relating to classroom inquiry and foreign and second language pedagogy, in general. Task #1 required the pre-service teachers to seek feedback on their proposed action research study from their mentor teachers, while task #2 involved interviewing the school’s principal primarily with respect to the importance of foreign language education. Tasks #3 and 4 provided the pre-service teachers the opportunity to practice data collection methods in their high school field placements through conducting observations of, and interviews with in-service (non-foreign language) teachers, respectively. For tasks 5, 6, and 7, the pre-service teachers were asked to discuss a number of topics—some of which included professional development, classroom management, teacher collaboration, ESL teaching, parent communication, extracurricular, and administrative responsibilities—with both their mentor teachers and non-foreign language in-service teachers. To document their experiences or the results of the weekly tasks, the participants were required to write a 1.5-page reflective paper.

These assignments provided opportunities to examine the role played by key players or subjects in the activity systems of high school field experience and student teaching in the appropriation of pedagogical tools, and how general areas of teaching (e.g., classroom management, professional development, teacher collaboration) intersected with their efforts to learn CLT.

The Personal Narrative assignment was a modified version of the Perspectives on Foreign Language Teaching and Learning assignment completed in the Fall of 2009 in Methods of Foreign Language Teaching. In this assignment, the pre-service teachers
were to discuss their personal experiences relating to languages and culture; explain their
decision to enter the foreign language teaching profession; and describe their personal
and professional development in the M.Ed. program. This assignment provided
opportunities for identifying and comparing transformations in the evolution of the
participants’ learning and development at various intervals over the course of the year;
the source of such transformations; and the mediating tools that made them possible.

3.3.5 Section summary

Taken together, the aforementioned data sources provided data on the historical
contexts and meditational tools within those contexts that played a fundamental role in
the participants’ appropriation of CLT. Second, they established the foundation for a
comparative analysis geared toward uncovering not only the process through which
pedagogical tools were appropriated within various activity settings over time, but also
underlying values, beliefs, and principles that undergirded the motives that might have
lead to the appropriation of particular tools over others. Third, these data sources allowed
further corroboration and interrogation of data collected through observation and
interviews, allowing the researcher to “see differently the patterns of behavior that were
evident from current data” (Glesne, 2006, p. 65), creating opportunities for the
identification of “a relationship of ideas or events previously assumed unconnected”
(Glesne, 2006, p. 65).
3.4 Data Analysis and Coding

3.4.1 The extended case method

The extended case method (Vaughan, 1992) was used for the analysis of the data sources described in the previous section. The primary utility of the extended case method is that rather than allowing a particular theoretical framework to determine the outcome of the analysis of the data, it provides for theory elaboration; that is, “the process of refining a theory, model, or concept through qualitative data analysis in order to specify more carefully the circumstances in which it does or does not offer potential for explanation” (Vaughan, 1992, p. 175). The primary theoretical framework used to guide the analysis of field notes, interview transcripts, and coursework artifacts was activity theory (Leont’ev, 2002).

Following the tradition of the extended case method approach in the analysis of qualitative data, activity theory was used in a flexible manner to guide the analysis. The data pertaining to the case study participants were analyzed sequentially, treating “each case independently of others, respecting its uniqueness so that the idiosyncratic details can maximize our theoretical insight” (Vaughan, 1992, p. 176).

Key the theoretical constructs from activity theory (e.g., community, rules, division of labor, mediating tools, subject, object, tensions) were revisited in light of new findings, leading to an elaboration of the theoretical framework in an effort to make it more relevant to the study of foreign language teacher education. Recognizing the fact that “the data can contradict or reveal previously unseen inadequacies in the theoretical notions guiding the research, providing a basis for reassessment” (Vaughan, 1992, par. 8), as each case was analyzed, the resulting elaboration of the original theoretical
framework was applied so as to identify areas of convergence and divergence both within and across cases. For example, While Grossman, Smagorinsky, and Valencia (1999), in their proposed sociocultural theoretical framework for studying teacher cognition, elaborated Vygotskian sociocultural theory by adding the construct of practical tools, preliminary analysis of observation field notes for one of the participants revealed the necessity of drawing a distinction between practical and physical tools (the latter, being a component of the former): By separating both constructs (i.e., adding another level of specificity to tool-mediated activity), I was better able to examine how the use of physical tools contributed to the overall operation of practical tools relative to other components of the activity system (e.g., the subject, object, tensions, division of labor).

It is crucial to note that “because more than one theoretical notion may be guiding an analysis, confirmation, fuller specification, and contradiction all may result from one case study” (Vaughan, 1992, p. 176), which would further assist with systematically and sequentially comparing one case with the next. Thus, the extended case method is well suited for this project as it possesses a double function—that of theory elaboration; and the explanation of similarities and differences in findings both within and between cases.
3.4.2 Analytical framework: Activity theory

Figure 3.1: Third-generation Activity Theory Framework (adapted from Engeström, 2001)

**Activity Setting A:**  
University Teacher Education Program

**Activity Setting B:**  
High School Field Experience and Student Teaching

**Activity Setting C:**  
Elementary School Field Experience

Third-generation activity theory was deemed to be most fitting as an analytical framework for this study due to its emphasis on inter-organizational learning or learning that results from the interactions between, at minimum, two activity systems. As seen in Figure 3.1, an adaptation of Engeström’s (2001) model for third-generation activity theory, three activity systems served as units of analysis that helped to explain the appropriation of the CLT approach by pre-service foreign language teachers as a function
of the contexts in which teaching and learning occurred: (1) The university teacher education program, depicted on the left; (2) The elementary school field experience, and (3) the high school field experience and student teaching, both of which are depicted on the right. Table 3.4 is a material or descriptive representation of all three interacting activity systems. It serves to describe each of the 8 components of each activity setting depicted in Figure 3.1., namely, subject, object 1, object 2, object 3/outcome, community, rules, division of labor, and mediating tools.
Table 3.4: A Descriptive Framework for the Analysis of Interacting Activity Settings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity Setting Components</th>
<th>Activity Setting A: University Activity Setting</th>
<th>Activity Setting B: High School Field Experience and Student Teaching Activity Setting C: Elementary School Field Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>Primary subject: University professors</td>
<td>Primary subject: Mentor and pre-service teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secondary subject: University Supervisors</td>
<td>Secondary subject: University Professors and Supervisors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Object 1</td>
<td>Primary object 1A: Graduate students</td>
<td>Primary object 1A: Elementary and high school students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secondary object 1B: K-12 students</td>
<td>Secondary object 1B: Graduate students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Object 2</td>
<td>Primary object 2A: Pr-service foreign language teachers appropriating CLT.</td>
<td>Primary object 2A: Elementary and high school students learning Spanish as a foreign language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secondary Object 2B: K-12 students learning Spanish as a foreign language.</td>
<td>Secondary Object 2B: Pre-service foreign language teachers appropriating CLT.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Object 3/Outcome</td>
<td>• State-certified foreign language teachers</td>
<td>• Pre-service teachers implement lesson.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Communicatively competent language users (i.e., students)</td>
<td>• Mentor teachers, university professors, and supervisors assess pre-service teachers’ instruction and provide feedback.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>University faculty and staff</td>
<td>Elementary and high school faculty and staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rules</td>
<td>Course requirements; field experience and student teaching requirements; university policies</td>
<td>Sequence and scope of lessons; school policies; classroom codes of conduct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Division of labor</td>
<td>• Assisted by university supervisors, university professors assess pre-service teachers’ assignments, and provide instruction on foreign language pedagogy, second language acquisition, and teacher action research.</td>
<td>• Pre-service teachers implement lesson.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Pre-service teachers complete course assignments.</td>
<td>• Mentor teachers, university professors, and supervisors assess pre-service teachers’ instruction and provide feedback.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mediating tools</td>
<td>• Physical tools: Material teaching resources</td>
<td>• Physical tools: Material teaching resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Conceptual tools: Concepts and theories about language teaching and learning</td>
<td>• Conceptual tools: Concepts and theories about language teaching and learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Pedagogical tools: Instructional activities</td>
<td>• Pedagogical tools: Instructional activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is worth mentioning that the three activity systems depicted in Figure 3.1 are primarily defined by their object orientation (i.e., primary objects 1A and 2A; secondary objects 1B and 2B; and object 3, the outcome, described in Table 3.4) as opposed to physical or geographic boundaries. By this token, the titles of the activity systems are for purposes of identification and not definition.

The analytical framework shown in Figure 3.1 depicts object1 (i.e., primary objects 1A; secondary objects 1B in Table 3.4), with the help of mediating tools, being transformed from an initial, raw material state—not yet shaped by the inner workings (e.g., tensions and multivoicedness) of the activity system—into object2 (i.e., primary objects 2A; and secondary objects 2B in Table 3.4), which is constructed as having collective meaning within each activity system, then to a co-constructed object (object3/outcome) which, in essence, epitomizes the product of the intersection or interaction among all three activity systems. It is noteworthy that the classification of primary subjects/objects and secondary subjects/objects does not mean that the former is more important than the latter—in contrast to Tsui and Law (2007) who views the primary object as more important than the secondary object—but is rather a system of classification determined by the division of labor in each activity system.

The analytic utility of this system of classification is that not only does it addresses subject-object relationship, but also how such relationship is constructed, reconstructed, and transformed relative to other components of the activity system. In general, this framework has been selected owing to the fact that it captures the dynamism and complexities in learning and developmental processes as they take shape across activity systems. That is to say, learning being interpreted as an expansive
transformation—as opposed to a mere transfer—that is achieved “when the object and motive of the activity are reconceptualized to embrace a radically wider horizon of possibilities than in the previous mode of the activity” (Engeström, 2001, p. 137).

The relationships within and between activity systems were examined based on Engeström’s (1987) four levels of contradictions. Contradictions in this sense, are not synonymous with problems or conflicts, but rather refer to “historically accumulating structural tensions within and between activity systems” (Engeström, 2001, p. 137). For purposes of this study, the term tension is used in lieu of contradiction.

(1) Level 1 - Primary contradiction within each component of the main activity system.

In regards to the input hypothesis (Krashen, 1982), the teacher’s aiming to strike a balance between “I” and “+1” in “i+1” would be an example of a primary contradiction within the component of mediating tools or artifacts.

(2) Level 2 - Secondary contradiction between the constituents of the central activity system. The teacher’s adjusting the input based upon the learner’s level of proficiency, for example, would represent a secondary tension between the subject and the object of the activity system.

(3) Level 3 – Tertiary contradiction occurs between activity systems when there are tensions between the object and motive in one central activity system; and the object and motive in another central activity system. The motive of traditional assessment in the high school setting, for instance, versus that of performance assessment of language proficiency (i.e., one of the principal motives of the university teacher education program) would be representative of tensions between two central activity systems.
(4) Level 4 – Quaternary contradictions between the central activity system(s) or the activity system(s) under investigation and “neighbor activities” which include instrument-producing activity systems of science and art; subject producing activity systems of education and schooling; and rule-producing activity systems of administration and legislation. For instance, the academic content standards of the state department of education (neighboring activity system of administration) establishes what (K-12) students should know and be able to do in foreign languages and other subject areas. Pre-service teachers, therefore, are required to document what standards are being targeted by their lessons. However, the standards which are written for high school students, for example, presupposes prior (uninterrupted) study of a foreign language since kindergarten, and, by this token, become irrelevant—not in themselves, but rather if the sequence were to be strictly adhered to—in the context of teaching students whose first exposure to the target language is in middle or high school.

3.4.3 Coding procedures

Prior to elaborating on the specifics of the coding procedures that were applied to the data sources collected for this project, it is important to explain the meaning of “coding” as used in the context of this research due to the fact that in qualitative nor quantitative research, the concept of coding cannot be assumed to be universally understood (Czarniawska, 2004). For the purposes of this study, coding is viewed as a means of constructing concepts with and from the data by identifying segments of the data that have common elements, and relating various instances in the data with one
another (Czarniawska, 2004). As such, it might be said that coding involves “a progressive process of sorting and defining and defining and sorting those scraps of collected data” (Glesne, 2006, p. 152) that are relevant to the purposes of the research. Far from merely applying a deterministic label to the data, or collapsing them into fixed, neatly packaged categories, coding, in this sense, reconceptualizes and problematizes the data, thus, increasing opportunities for uncovering the complexities within them (Czarniawska, 2004). It is crucial to note that “although coding may be part of the process of analysis, it should not be thought of as the analysis itself” (Czarniawska, 2004, p. 26). Rather, “the importance of the work lies in how we use the codings and concepts, not in whether we use computer software to record them or rely on manual ways of marking and manipulating the data” (Czarniawska, 2004, p. 27).

Appendix E and F represent the full list of codes which were generated based on the analytical framework of activity theory; concepts from the literature on CLT and second language acquisition; concepts used by the participants in describing and explaining their teaching and learning (which, in many cases, overlap with the professional language or terms used in the second language acquisition and CLT literature); and areas which are common to teaching in general (e.g., assessment; classroom management; time management; lesson planning) or language instruction in general (e.g., the four skills). X indicates codes that were not applicable to the observational data sources, and, therefore, were not coded in their analysis. The tables in Appendix E and F show five major codes, each of which includes multiple subcodes.
1. *Conceptual tool* refers to those concepts that mediated the pre-service teachers’ learning of CLT, most of which were used by the participants in describing, reflecting on, and making sense of their learning and development. By and large, they are also representative of core concepts in the second language acquisition and CLT literature (e.g., comprehensible input and discourse competence, respectively) as well as teaching in general (e.g., multiple intelligences [Gardner, 1993]).

2. *Physical tool* describes those material resources that were utilized in the actualization or execution of a lesson. The relevance of taking these tools into consideration lies in the fact that in the activity settings under investigation, their availability, the extent to which they were used, and their presence or absence, were oftentimes closely related to how the practical tools came into being or the motive behind their existence.

3. *Practical tool* includes those instructional activities which were used to foster language development. The manner in which practical tools were used provided evidence that served to explain how CLT was enacted in the classroom setting.

4. *Source of tool* represents those entities—both human and material—to which the participants attributed the origin of practical, physical, and conceptual tools. This code was useful in helping to trace the origins of these tools and their development across space and time.
5. *Object/problem space* describes the individual, goal, or phenomenon at which activity is directed. Identifying the object/problem space of activity was a necessary step in locating its motive.

It bears mentioning that, theoretically, a sub-code might be considered as part of multiple major codes although it might be listed under a single major code (for purposes of organization and clarity). For example, the sub-code, *target language/L2 use*, in addition to being considered a conceptual tool, might also be classified under the major code, *practical tool*, and *object/problem space*.

Frequencies for each code were calculated and represented based on data collected from the five aforementioned data sources, namely, (1) Methods of Foreign Language Teaching; (2) Foreign Language Assessment and Materials Development; (3) Reflective Inquiry on Foreign Language Pedagogy; (4) observations; and (5) Interviews. Based on Engeström’s (2001) strategy for determining frequency counts, the frequency counts for all data sources (except for the observations) were based on what he refers to as the *frequency of mentionings*. That is, how often reference is made to each code, whether explicitly or implicitly.

For the observation data, the frequencies were based on instructional activities in their spoken or written form (e.g., class discussion on the Spanish versus American perception of bullfighting, coded as sociocultural competence; or essay writing, coded as discourse competence). Frequencies for the five types of competencies under investigation (i.e., discourse, grammatical, sociocultural, sociolinguistic, and strategic competence) were based on the number of instructional activities that targeted each type of competence and not an assessment of the language learners’ level of competence.
Additionally, the frequencies for *codeswitching; L1-L2 translation; L2-L1 translation; L1 use; and L2/target language use* were based on the purposes for which each of these conceptual tools were used by Gloria and Linda (e.g., L1 use for classroom management; L2-L1 translation used for grammar explanation), as opposed to a calculation of the number of utterances whether at the lexical or syntactic level, or based on intonation contour. With respect to the aforementioned codes, therefore, coding was based on a qualitative (e.g., Polio & Duff, 1994) as opposed to a quantitative analysis (e.g., Duff & Polio, 1990). It is also important to note that coding was relational, rather than reductive. That is to say, the categories mentioned above were part of the process as opposed to the product—the analysis of the data. The patterns, relationships, and tensions both within and across these categories served as sources for data explanation and interpretation, and, in effect, the analysis.

### 3.4.4 Steps in data analysis and coding procedures

The model of qualitative data analysis procedure (i.e., outline of the step-by-step process of data analysis—not to be confused with *data analysis method* previously discussed) which I have applied to the coding, search for meaning, and interpretation of the data is what I have termed, *interpretive typological analysis*. This type of analysis is a combination and adaptation of Hatch’s (2002) model of *interpretive analysis* and *typological analysis*. The data set pertaining to each participant was analyzed sequentially as well as their corresponding data sources based on themes, patterns, and relationships identified. *Themes* refer to integrating concepts or general statements that are made to meaningfully combine separate parts of the data, while *patterns* describe...
regularities, which may include differences, similarities, frequencies, sequences, and causation (Hatch, 2002). Relationships refer to links or connections between various parts of the data (Hatch, 2002). The following coding and analytical procedures outlined below were applied with the aid of ATLAS.ti qualitative data analysis software:

1. Prior to the actual coding of the data, each data source was read so as to understand its meaning as a whole.

2. The data source was reread, highlighting data that pertained to the codes listed in Appendix E and F. This rereading followed a two-step process: (a) The data source was read with the five major codes in mind. (b) A match between the data and a major code then prompted the identification of associated subcodes. Interpretive and theoretical memos were written for each code with two goals in mind: (a) to understand its meaning in the context of the data to which it was assigned; and (b) to identify themes, relationships, and patterns within and between codes. As part of constructing the memos, relationships among preliminary assertions from the data source being analyzed, other data sources, and the relevant literature on CLT, teacher learning, and sociocultural theory were also documented.

3. The selected data were reread for evidence in support of the identified themes, relationships, and patterns.

4. The data source was reread for disconfirming or contradicting examples that might have disconfirmed prior themes, relationships, or patterns previously identified.
5. Quotations that supported the identified themes, relationships, and patterns were selected.

6. Like codes for all data sources were retrieved as well as the memos attached to each code; and frequency counts for each code were recorded.

7. With the aid of the interpretive and theoretical memos, a brief summary of the findings from the data analysis of the data source was written.

8. Using the results of the procedures completed in steps 1-7, the analyzed data sets for both participants were compared so as to identify themes, relationships, and patterns between them.

The following example, taken from Gloria’s reflective journal entry, illustrates the coding process used for course documents as well as interview transcripts, and represents the typical length of each coded segment:

I think that I was able to use the target language in a way that was not overwhelming, but exciting for them, and just beyond their comprehension level. When thinking about the words I would use and how I would approach constructing my lesson, I thought about an aspect of Stephen Krashen’s Monitor Model that’s tells us to strive for meaning first. Hadley (2001) describes comprehensible input as “language that contains structures that are a little beyond our current level of competence (I + 1)” (61). I tried to use this level of language with the students I was teaching.

(Reflective journal: October 8, 2009)
The above data excerpt was assigned a total of three major codes, five subcodes, and an interpretive memo in the following manner:

1. I first assigned the major code, *conceptual tool*, to the data. The subcodes, *affective filter, input hypothesis*, and *target language/L2 use* were then assigned.

2. After the major code, *object/problem space* was assigned, I then attached the subcode, *lesson planning*.

3. After *tool source* was assigned as a major code, I then assigned *literature on L2 acquisition* as its subcode.

4. After this instance of coding, I attached the following interpretive memo to the above segment of data: “It appears that Gloria is using the input hypothesis in a deliberate manner to determine the quantity and comprehensibility of the input, balancing such use with concerns for affective factors.”

In relation to the coding of observation field notes, the following excerpt, taken from one of Gloria’s culture lessons during student teaching (Spanish II class), serves as an illustration:

**Demonstration of tying the knots for the quipu**

**Gloria:** –*Ahora vamos a atar los nudos en el quipu. So vamos a cambiar [de lengua]. Vamos a hablar en inglés.* [Now we’re going to tie the knots on the quipu. So we’re gonna switch languages.]

–OK, we’re gonna do this one together.

–So how are we gonna express two hundred and twelve on our quipus?

(Observation field notes: March 24, 2010)
The above excerpt was assigned 1 major code, 5 subcodes, and an interpretive memo in the following manner:

1. I first assigned the major code, *conceptual tool*.

2. The following subcodes were then assigned: *Modeling, sociocultural competence, codeswitching, target language use, and L1 use*. Note that the code, *sociocultural competence* (or any other codes relating to communicative competence such as *grammatical competence*), signifies “teaching for the development of sociocultural competence”, and does not claim that students did in fact acquire this type of competence (As mentioned in Chapter One, the measurement of learning outcomes was not the focus of this study).

3. I then wrote the following interpretive memo:

   In this instance, the target language was used to transition into modeling the tying of the quipu; but the modeling per se was done in the L1. Question for Gloria: What was the rationale behind using the L1 for this purpose? Was it because this was a culture lesson? How does she explain the use of the L1 in the last two lines of this data segment where the L2 could have been easily incorporated?

3.5 Data Interpretation

My interpretation of the data was recorded as *interpretive memos* and coded according to the analysis produced from the data sets. It is crucial to bear in mind, however, that the process of interpretation was not a linear one, but was concurrent with data gathering and analysis. Thus, *interpretation* refers to my understanding and explanation of the analyzed data as a whole. The following general questions served as a
guide for this interpretive analysis (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2006): (1) What are the important elements of the data? (2) Why are these elements important? (3) What is to be learned from them? (4) So what? Additionally, my interpretation was based on my first-hand knowledge and understanding of the participants as well as the multiple contexts in which they have taught and learned to teach. Furthermore, the interpretive analysis was contextualized through findings in the literature and the theoretical framework of activity theory. This type of contextualization, however, did not determine, but rather, guided the interpretation produced from the data. Additionally, the data was read for both confirming and disconfirming evidence that both supported and challenged my interpretations and assertions.

3.6 Data Management

All written data, including transcripts and field notes, were stored on a laptop computer to which only the researcher has access (password required to access files/documents). Data sources were stored in electronic folders which were titled according to their sources (e.g., reflective journal, field notes, and interview transcripts). Any of the above mentioned data sources that were printed were stored in a secure file cabinet. Under no circumstance were the identities of study participants disclosed to anyone (pseudonyms used to identify all data sources). The participants were informed that confidentiality would be guaranteed. Both audio and written data were dated, titled, and stored as Microsoft Word or audio files. All data sources were stored in two locations—Microsoft Word, and the ATLAS.ti qualitative data analysis software.
3.7: Critical Self-reflexivity: Negotiating Dual Roles as Researcher and University Supervisor

As a university supervisor, my primary responsibility was to ensure that pre-service teachers under my supervision were working toward meeting the goals of the teacher education program, including the state Academic Content Standards, and to address the challenges they faced in learning to teach by providing constructive criticism and feedback in a number of areas which include, but were not limited to, lesson planning, instruction, assessment, student-teacher relations, and pre-service teacher-mentor teacher relations.

By engaging in the process of reflective journaling throughout this study, it became clear to me that although I did contribute to the participants’ learning and development through carrying out the aforementioned responsibilities, it was not my supervision per se that determined the nature of the reflective, interpretative, and critical lenses through which the participants strategically developed an understanding of the interplay between theory and practice in the process of CLT appropriation. Rather, employing the research methods discussed in this chapter was the primary means through which I was able to gain an in-depth understanding of how Gloria’s and Linda’s learning and development unfolded. For example, in my analysis of their reflective journals, I was struck by the manner in which they utilized their theoretical knowledge to make sense of their teaching practices (as will be revealed in the ensuing chapters), and vice versa. Additionally, through the data collection methods I employed in this study, I became aware of some of the most pressing concerns of the pre-service teachers such as transitioning from teaching in the elementary school setting to teaching in the high
school setting, learning how to balance conflicting goals and expectations, and negotiating their role as student teachers relative to that of their mentor teachers’.

It became evident, then, that the relationship between my supervisory role and my role as a researcher was mutually informing: Through my researcher role, I was able to unpack what might not have been apparent to me in carrying out my daily duties as a university supervisor. In other words, as I reflected on how I performed these two roles simultaneously, I discovered that this process of role negotiation was an effort to “make the familiar strange” (Erickson, 1986, p. 121), where I, as an insider, problematized what might seem ordinary or common. This process, in turn, contributed to my practical knowledge as a university supervisor and future teacher education professor.

Finally, as Glesne (2006) asserts, reflexivity means that in addition to asking yourself questions about the research process, “you ask questions of others … and listen carefully to what they have to say, noting their answers, and perhaps changing the course of inquiry” (pp. 125-126). Thus, the process of critical self-reflexivity was not only about how I perceived and negotiated my roles as researcher and university supervisor, but also one of giving participants the opportunity to critique the methods I utilized in my efforts to gain insight into their learning and development, as shown in the excerpt below, taken from my first in-depth interview with Linda:

**Adrian:** How would you rate the interview session?

**Linda:** You seem very organized with your questions, so it’s nice that you are able to think of something and easily apply it to the question that’s relevant to whatever we’re talking about. I think the more personal questions are kind of good to make me feel more at ease, and like I’m just kind of talking, rather
than being interviewed. So I think those were beneficial for me at least.

**Adrian:** Would you say you’ve learned anything about the interview process?

**Linda:** Yeah! Definitely! As far as the way I look at it, this hour of sitting here has been a really good hour of self-reflection for me. So that is beneficial. And I think I've thought about things that I wouldn't be thinking about if I were at home. But that's a good thing because it helps me develop along my teaching path. (In-depth interview: April 4, 2010)
Chapter 4: Findings

This chapter presents the findings of the analysis and interpretation of the data gathered from course assignments, classroom observations, post-observation, and in-depth interviews for the two case study participants, beginning with Gloria (pre-service teacher of Spanish) in section 4.1, followed by Linda (pre-service teacher of Spanish) in section 4.2. The presentation of the findings is structured according to the elementary and high school contexts in which each participant carried out her field experiences and student teaching; the pedagogical tools she utilized in her efforts to appropriate CLT; and the tensions (Engeström, 1987) she encountered in her learning to teach. I will discuss the findings for both Gloria and Linda separately, highlighting themes, patterns, and relationships within each case so as to capture the complexities and particularities involved in their pedagogical tool appropriation. However, in Chapter Five, I shall provide a cross-case analysis that will compare patterns, themes, and relationships between both cases.

To reiterate, the two case studies which I will present in this chapter were carried out with the following research questions in mind:

1. How and to what extent do pre-service foreign language teachers appropriate the communicative language teaching approach?
2. How do multiple activity settings mediate pre-service foreign language teachers’ appropriation of the communicative language teaching approach?

3. How and to what extent do pre-service foreign language teachers use conceptual, practical, and physical teaching tools to mediate their learning of the communicative language teaching approach?

4.1 Gloria

This section presents the findings for the first of the two case study participants, Gloria, a 23-year old pre-service teacher of Spanish who was enrolled in a one-year university teacher education program leading toward a Master of Education (M.Ed.) degree and state licensure (grades K-12) in foreign language education. This report of Gloria’s case of concept appropriation not only aims to reveal the extent to which Gloria’s teaching, per se, reflected features of CLT according to the professional literature described in Chapter Two (an area which will be more fully addressed in Chapter Five and Six), but primarily to engage in an analysis of (a) the process through which her model of CLT was developed, including the contradictions (Engeström, 1987) she faced as she progressed through various phases of her teacher education program; (b) the mediational role of the three central activity settings under investigation (i.e., the university, high school, and elementary school); and (c) the implementation of conceptual, physical, and practical tools in the classroom.
Appendix E shows the complete list of codes and their corresponding frequencies used to assist in the analysis and management of data sources (i.e., coursework documents, field notes, and interviews) for this case study. It includes those conceptual, physical, and practical tools that played a role in Gloria’s learning and development; the sources to which they were attributed; and the object or problem space to which they were directed. Sections of Appendix E that pertain to Gloria’s implementation of (a) conceptual tools; and (b) physical, and practical tools (in both the elementary and high school activity settings) are presented in Table 4.1 and 4.2, respectively, which appear in relevant sections of the text. The frequency scores (indicated in text by f) indicate how often the code term was reflected explicitly or implicitly in data sources from teacher education coursework, field experiences, student teaching, and interviews. X represents codes that were not applicable to the observation data sources. It bears mentioning that the frequency counts are not meant to be read in statistical terms—as figures used to compare the significance of one setting, code, or theme to another. Rather, they indicate general trends or tendencies in Gloria’s learning and development across multiple activity settings.

4.1.1 The elementary school setting

This section presents (a) a profile of the elementary school where Gloria completed her first field experience; (b) how Gloria drew upon the social context of teaching and learning to establish the content, scope, and sequence of instruction in a setting where foreign language teaching was not a part of the curriculum; and (c) the
manner in which she went about implementing conceptual, physical, and practical tools, including her evolving conceptualization of these tools relative to her classroom teaching.

**Springfield Elementary School: School profile**

Gloria completed her first field experience at Springfield Elementary School, a K-5 public school located in a large, suburban city of a Midwestern state. During the 2009-2010 academic year, Springfield Elementary School comprised of a total of 536 students, 29 fulltime teachers, and a student-teacher ratio of 18:1. The student population (6% being eligible for free/reduced lunch) was 83% White, 9% Asian/Pacific, 1% Black, and 2% Hispanic.

**The social context: Establishing the content, scope, and sequence of instruction**

At Springfield Elementary, Gloria taught a thematic unit which included 4 mini-lessons ranging from 15-20 minutes in length as part of the requirement for her Foreign Language Teaching Methods course. The lessons were taught over the course of four weeks during the autumn of 2009 to a group of 23 third grade students, and primarily focused on the teaching of vocabulary through the theme of “Animals and their Habitats in South America”. At Springfield Elementary, the teaching of foreign languages was not a part of the school’s curriculum; hence, Gloria’s thematic unit was the students’ introduction to the Spanish language at the elementary level. A state-certified third grade teacher (i.e., the classroom teacher) served as Gloria’s mentor during this field experience.
In the absence of a Spanish curriculum at Springfield Elementary school, and a mentor teacher whose expertise was not in the teaching of Spanish, this setting, by its very nature, imposed no limitations in regards to the content, scope, and sequence of the four mini-lessons taught by Gloria. That is to say, Gloria—in conjunction with input and feedback from university supervisors and her course professor—decided on the nature of material to be taught in each lesson, how much material would be covered, and the order in which it was presented. Gloria made this decision without objection from her elementary school mentor teacher who did not assume a central role in the planning of her (Gloria’s) lessons; and was not able to provide feedback concerning the teaching of the language per se. As she confirmed,

In the elementary level, we did what we wanted, when we wanted to. It was our unit; so everything followed our timeframe. We knew exactly where we were. … My mentor teacher wasn't a foreign language teacher: She was a third grade teacher. So it wasn't that easy to ask her about, you know, "What's the best way to do this?" or, “What do you want me to teach in Spanish?” She didn't have an opinion either way. She didn't really know anything about foreign language education. It was all completely new to her. (In-depth interview: July 25, 2010)

It is important to note that the above quote does not imply that the social context of the elementary school setting was one that inherently fostered an unprincipled or unwieldy approach to teaching: Despite the absence of a foreign language curriculum at Springfield Elementary, Gloria drew upon the teaching and learning that was underway in this setting in other subject areas, and the principle of backward design in planning the content, scope, and sequence of her lessons. In response to my inquiry as to how she
came up with the 4 lesson plans for the elementary school field experience, Gloria responded,

It was a thematic unit. I kind of used a little backward design. I thought about the end result and what I wanted them to know after all 4 lessons. So I thought about that first and then I kind of went from there. They [the students] are talking about continents in their Social Studies class, and they are conducting reports on animal habitats in Science class. They were really interested in it; and they were having fun with it. So I thought, “Why not go along with something they are doing in another content area, and something that I know they are interested in, [something that] they like, and bring Spanish in that way? So that’s how I thought of different habitats and the different animals. (In-depth interview: July 25, 2010)

Gloria, in essence, found a place for Spanish as a subject matter within the instructional context of Springfield Elementary as revealed through her conceptualization of the relationship between teaching and learning taking place both within, and beyond the walls of the third grade classroom. She perceived the relationship between Spanish and other subject areas as mutually informing: “I think that their foreign language lesson is definitely enhancing what they are experiencing in Science and Social Studies, just as Science and Social Studies are enhancing what they are experiencing in Spanish” (Reflective journal: October 22, 2009).

In planning for her lessons, Gloria also relied on her teaching experience in the pre-K setting, and her study abroad experience. For example, the idea behind the second lesson she presented during her field experience was based on a theme (Underwater Animals and their Habitats) she had used for a lesson in the pre-K context. Additionally,
Gloria’s pre-K teaching experience contributed to the high level of confidence she exhibited in the material she selected to be taught during the elementary school field experience. Her selection of subject matter content was based upon her prior knowledge of students’ language learning potential: In reflecting on a lesson taught as a pre-K teacher in which the objective was for students to be able to express emotions using the verb *estar* [to be] plus an adjective (e.g., *Estoy alegre* [I am happy.]), Gloria recounted with much elation,

I had taught them the emotions with *estar* [to be]. And I’ll never forget: One student knocked down another boy’s block, and the kid said, "*Estoy enojado*" [I am angry]. I was like, "Oh my god!" I mean, I knew they were getting it. It was amazing! So I knew what these kids are capable of doing when they are exposed to it [the target language]. I knew they’d be able to do it. (In-depth interview: April 29, 2010)

As relating to the impact of her study abroad experience on planning for the field experience thematic unit, Gloria stated, “I actually spent a chunk of time in the Amazon jungle, so that made me want to focus even more on that area and the animals” (In-depth interview: July 5, 2010).

Through an examination of how Gloria went about planning for the content, scope, and sequence of her mini-lessons at Springfield Elementary, it is evident that it was not a single setting, in itself, that brought about the development of a thematic, age-appropriate, and content-relevant unit that synthesized material across disciplines, but rather how Gloria perceived, analyzed, and strategically drew upon the following to set
the stage for the teaching of Spanish: (1) Key features of the elementary school (i.e., the absence of a foreign language curriculum; and a mentor teacher whose expertise was not in foreign language teaching); (2) the concept of backward design taken from her methods coursework; (3) student learning in other subject areas; (4) her pre-K teaching, and (5) study abroad experience.

The implementation of conceptual tools in the elementary classroom

Gloria’s primary source of conceptual tools were the literature on second language acquisition (see Appendix E; \( f = 13 \)), and to a lesser degree, state standards (see Appendix E; \( f = 5 \)). Table 4.1 represents the conceptual tools which played a role in Gloria’s efforts to appropriate of CLT. It includes not only the conceptual components of the theory of communicative competence (e.g., sociocultural competence, strategic competence, etc.), but also those that Gloria thought to have been crucial in her learning to teach. The table includes frequency of mentionings that correspond to the university, elementary, and high school settings, and, thus, will be referenced later in section 4.1.2 (i.e., Gloria’s tool implementation in high school setting). In this manner, the frequencies for each setting can be viewed relative to a broader context. For this section, however, the discussion, of the findings in Table 4.1 will be restricted to “Autumn 2009”. 
Table 4.1: Codes and Frequencies for Conceptual Tools – Gloria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Autumn 2009</th>
<th>Winter 2010</th>
<th>Spring 2010</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Methods of Foreign Language Teaching &amp; Elementary School Field Experience</td>
<td>Foreign Language Assessment and Materials Development &amp; High School Field Experience</td>
<td>Student Teaching Observations</td>
<td>In-depth and Post-observation Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conceptual Tool</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective filter</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background/prior knowledge</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Codeswitching</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discourse competence</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammatical competence</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Input hypothesis</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L1 Use</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L1-L2 translation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2-L1 translation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiation of meaning</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Output hypothesis</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociocultural competence</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociolinguistic competence</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic competence</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target language/L2 use</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In regards to teaching for communicative competence, during her field experience at Springfield Elementary, Gloria primarily focused on the implementation of three types of competencies as seen in Table 4.1: (1) Grammatical competence \( (f = 25) \); (2) sociolinguistic competence \( (f = 24) \); and (3) strategic competence \( (f = 17) \). Although sociocultural competence scored relatively high \( (f = 22) \), the source of this frequency of mentionings was from Gloria’s Culturally Relevant Teaching project (completed in her Methods of Foreign Language Teaching course), as opposed to actual lessons taught at Springfield Elementary.

In regards to the dynamics among the aforementioned conceptual tools, Gloria’s instructional activities typically provided opportunities for the acquisition of these competencies in combination with each other. That is to say, any one instructional activity targeted the development of one of the following combination of competencies:

(a) Grammatical, sociolinguistic, and strategic competence

(b) Grammatical and sociolinguistic competence

(c) Grammatical and strategic competence

(d) Strategic and sociolinguistic competence

Gloria’s lessons were primarily centered around the acquisition of grammatical competence, which, in this case, was restricted to the teaching of vocabulary. However, the vocabulary was not introduced nor practiced in isolation, but under a clearly defined theme (i.e., Animals and their Habitats) within a specific geographic context (i.e., South America). By that token, Gloria’s lessons addressed sociolinguistic competence by using a specific theme and geographic context as the primary medium for vocabulary acquisition. Although her lessons did not focus explicitly on sensitivity to variations in
dialect and register or appropriateness of language use, recognizing that it is contextual attributes that determine such sensitivity or appropriateness, it is safe to say that Gloria’s use of context was a first step in teaching for the development of sociolinguistic competence. Additionally, strategic competence was targeted in the form of nonverbal cues (e.g., hand gestures performed with each vocabulary item) during practice activities and the introduction of vocabulary, not to repair communication breakdown, but rather to contribute to the comprehensibility of vocabulary items.

With respect to the application of what was learned in teacher education coursework to classroom teaching, particularly in the elementary school setting, Gloria asserted,

We had the freedom to do what we wanted in elementary school placement. She [mentor teacher] just kind of like gave me the freedom to do what I wanted so it was very easy to just transfer what I was learning and what Dr. Johnson [pseudonym for foreign language teacher education professor] wanted us to do and practice in the classroom. It was very easy in the elementary [field placement] (In-depth interview: July 5, 2010).

Gloria’s comments in relation to the ease with which she was able to “transfer what I was learning” (In-depth interview2: July 5, 2010) should not impose the unrealistic expectation that all the conceptual and practical tools to which she was introduced were applied in the classroom setting at the elementary nor high school level. As Gloria explained, in regards to the teaching of theory in her teacher education coursework,
I think a lot of it [theory] is applicable. But I think a lot of it depends on circumstance as well. I think that they [theories] are a lot more applicable in the elementary level; and I think that in the high school [level] it's, I mean, not so much. I think that you really have to know how to balance theory and what's possible given the reality of the situation. (In-depth interview: July 5, 2010)

This conceptualization of the interplay between theory and classroom practice is reflective of Hymes’ (1972) definition of communicative competence as it relates to “whether (and to what degree) something is formally possible” (p. 172) and “whether (and to what degree) something is feasible in virtue of the means of implementation available (p. 172).

Not only did Gloria, through her instruction, draw upon those concepts that are directly related to CLT per se (i.e., grammatical, sociolinguistic, and strategic competence), but also, through the mediating tool of reflective journaling, critically interrogated other concepts related to foreign language teaching and learning, in general, that she saw as guiding principles in implementing a CLT-oriented type of instruction. As seen in Table 4.1, the leading conceptual tool for Gloria was target language use \( (f = 42) \). In addition, Krashen’s (1982) monitor model, namely, the input hypothesis \( (f = 14) \), and the affective filter hypothesis \( (f = 14) \), played key roles in Gloria’s conceptual tool appropriation. Gloria’s understanding of how teaching in the elementary school setting would be done through maximum use of the target language, beginning with the very first lesson, was mediated by her grasp of the input hypothesis, and the affective filter hypothesis:
I think that I was able to use the target language in a way that was not overwhelming, but exciting for them, and just beyond their comprehension level. When thinking about the words I would use and how I would approach constructing my lesson, I thought about an aspect of Stephen Krashen’s Monitor Model that’s tells us to strive for meaning first. Hadley (2001) describes comprehensible input as “language that contains structures that are a little beyond our current level of competence (I + 1)” (61). I tried to use this level of language with the students I was teaching. (Reflective journal: October 8, 2009)

Although Gloria, in principle, understood the significance of maximizing the use of the TL in the foreign language classroom, she lacked an understanding of how to go about achieving this goal until she was introduced to Krashen’s (1982) input hypothesis in her methods course—a construct which formed one of the theoretical bases upon which she planned her lessons. In our second in-depth interview, when asked, “Did you plan the mini-lessons you presented during the elementary school field experience with any particular concept or theory in mind?” Gloria responded,

In my reflections, I would reference Krashen's i + 1 a lot because I found that to be really effective in the elementary classroom. So I tried to become familiar with what that was and how it worked. I would definitely keep it in the back of my mind when I was thinking of my next lesson, and how I'm gonna use it; what language I'm gonna use to teach it. So that was always a big thing when I was planning my elementary lesson. (July 5, 2010)

In reflecting on her elementary school field experience, Gloria identified three primary contradictions (Engeström, 1987) or tensions which she was forced to confront regarding the input hypothesis and target language use, but nonetheless contributed to her
understanding of these concepts.

First, her efforts to make input comprehensible resulted in inconsistent use of the target language that could have been a source of confusion for a group of students who were formally learning Spanish for the first time:

After watching myself teach lesson number 2, I realize that I need to demonstrate more language consistency throughout my lessons. I realized that I was saying the same thing in sometimes 3 different ways. For example, to demonstrate "let's go swimming" I was saying things like, "Nadamos [We are swimming]. Vamos a nadar [We are going to swim]. Buscamos los animals [We are looking for the animals]." I need to pick one way of communicating meaning and stick to it if I want to stay in the (I+1) range and ensure student comprehension. (Reflective Journal: October 15, 2009)

It is noteworthy that Gloria’s attempt to communicate a single meaning through three different phrases was not an attempt to repair a breakdown in communication or negotiate meaning, but rather to ensure student comprehension.

Second, in making a connection between her use of the target language and strategic competence, Gloria acknowledged that, at times, there were inconsistencies between her nonverbal cues (hand motions that were supposed to correspond with the target vocabulary) and the vocabulary item being taught; however, she was able to address this tension as well as that of inconsistency of the target language input discussed prior:

I had been having a really hard time being consistent with both my language and my
hand gestures, but during this lesson [lesson 3], I think I really nailed them both. When I watched myself on video, I was consistent with both the words and phrases I chose, and my hand gestures that went along with the vocabulary I was presenting to the class. There was one time that I went to use a different phrase than I had been previously using, but I caught myself right away and I really made an effort to emphasize hand gestures to go along with the new animals we learned about. (Reflective journal: October 22, 2009)

Third, Gloria grappled with one of the most central concerns in CLT: Target language use versus L1 use. In general, Gloria managed to remain in the target language for the majority of the lesson, with the exception of brief introductions (i.e., announcing the day’s activities) and closures in the L1 (Field notes: October 12, 2009; October 26, 2009). However, Gloria had to balance her resolve to maintain target language use throughout the lesson with that of classroom management concerns. In describing some of the challenges she faced in implementing CLT in the elementary school setting, Gloria recounted,

It was challenging because when I was doing an activity, no matter what, I wanted to stay completely in the target language. If it was a communicative activity, I didn’t wanna speak English, even if there was a discipline problem; and I struggled with that in the beginning because I didn’t know when to break out of the activity to speak English to handle disciplinary situations. (In-depth interview: July 5, 2010)

In enquiring how Gloria addressed the target language-versus-L1 challenge, she acknowledged, “Well, in the elementary school I ended up just giving in and realizing that, ‘OK, there is a time when it's [L1 use] OK, as long as you keep them separate’” (In-
depth interview: July 5, 2010). This realization was made evident in her final lesson: As she passed out animal toys in preparation for the culminating activity, she sternly uttered, “English for a minute! You get what you get and you don’t throw a fit!” (Field notes, October 26, 2009).

Although CLT was the dominant approach reflected in the state Foreign Language Academic Content Standards, and encouraged by Gloria’s teacher education program (which introduced Gloria’s cohort to a broad sample of language teaching methodologies, approaches, and language learning theories), Gloria in no way felt restrained in experimenting with other approaches to language teaching. For instance, she frequently referenced implementing some of the basic principles of Tracy Terrell’s Natural Approach, such as TPR, yes/no, and either/or questions as listed by Curtain and Dahlberg (2004) (Reflective journal: October 8, 2009).

It is apparent that Gloria was selective, and strategic in her implementation of conceptual tools, constantly putting them to the test in the classroom setting. She positioned her use of conceptual tools relative to her knowledge of what was most effective for her and her students. As she clearly asserted,

One of my goals in these mini-lessons is to incorporate what I think are the best aspects of many theories, and to see what works for me and my students, and what does not. I think that this week I was able to more deeply investigate certain theoretical perspectives, and put some theory into practice. (Reflective journal: October 15, 2009)
The use of physical and practical tools in the elementary school setting

Table 4.2 represents the physical and practical tools which played a role in Gloria’s efforts to appropriate of CLT. It includes frequency of mentionings that correspond to the university, elementary, and high school settings, and, thus, will be referenced in section 4.1.2 (i.e., Gloria’s tool implementation in high school setting). By so doing, the frequencies for each setting can be viewed relative to a broader context. However, in this section, discussion of the results in Table 4.2 will be limited to “Autumn 2009”.
As seen in Table 4.2, the primary physical tools that Gloria employed during her elementary school field experience were (1) home-made, and real-life visuals (i.e., color pictures on PPT slides) \((f = 17)\); and (2) tangible realia \((f = 10)\) which she used to
establish the theme and context of instruction; the presentation, practice, or review of vocabulary; and to carry out formative assessments. For instance, in her second lesson, Gloria utilized 23 photographs—which included images of the three animals (el tiburón [shark], el pulpo [octopus], el delfín [dolphin]) to which students were introduced—as part of the game, Go Fishing, to practice use of the target vocabulary while formatively assessing students’ knowledge of the same (Observation field notes: October 12, 2009). This lesson also included a map of South America which students utilized to identify the surrounding ocean, el océano. This game also employed the use of a fishing poll which students took turns in using during the virtual fishing activity. Additionally, in her first lesson, Gloria used a globe to point out the location of South America along with three toy animals strategically placed in various locations around the classroom, which students would search for and identify on what Gloria called a “Safari checklist”.

Gloria drew extensively upon the literature on foreign language teaching methods (see Appendix E: f = 26), but far less on state standards (see Appendix E: f = 5) as sources for the implementation of practical tools. As seen in Table 4.2, Gloria implemented a wide variety of practical tools; however, by far, speaking activities (f = 31) were the most dominant. These types of activities were executed in a question-and-answer format where students were expected to respond with “Sí” [Yes], “No” [No], or the correct name of the animal being introduced or reviewed. To a lesser extent, basic reading skills were targeted, for example, when students were asked to match drawings of the animals to their corresponding names.

From Gloria’s point of view, the elementary school setting lent itself well to the execution of communicative activities, in that, she perceived that there was a high level
of motivation for language learning among her students. When asked to describe some challenges she may have faced in implementing CLT in both her elementary and high school placements, Gloria asserted, in reference to her elementary school field experience,

> It was definitely less challenging in the elementary placement. Definitely! The kids were much more open to it. They were much more excited. They didn't get scared. It was so easy to do communicative activities with them because it was like a puzzle for them and they weren't complaining. They were like, “How can I figure this out? What do I have to do?” (In-depth interview: July 5, 2010)

With respect to the interaction or interrelationship between pedagogical tools, Gloria utilized conceptual tools from her methods course to guide the selection of both physical and practical tools, a finding which was evident in both the presentation of, and reflection on her lessons. The finding that Gloria utilized conceptual tools from her methods to guide the implementation of physical and practical tools does not mean that this process was simply one of transfer from university coursework to the classroom setting. Rather, it proved to be one in which Gloria utilized select conceptual tools to establish parameters on the use of physical and practical tools. For instance, Gloria’s use of Krashen and Terrell’s (1983) natural approach (e.g., accounting for affective filter and comprehensible input hypothesis in her teaching) limited the extent to which oral production of the target language was required in the elementary school setting despite her strict emphasis on (oral) “production” as part of her language teaching philosophy at
the start of the program:

I will be the first to admit that I may have been a little "production pushy" at the beginning of the program. I wanted students to start talking right away. What the content of this M.Ed. program has taught me however, is that I need to first strive for comprehension amongst students before asking them to produce. I have also become aware of the many roadblocks that situate themselves in the way of student production that I did not even begin to anticipate before starting this program such as a high affective filter due to a variety of reasons. (Personal narrative: March 2, 2010)

Guided by the literature on foreign language teaching methods, Gloria encouraged oral production (practical tool) among her elementary students, while accounting for the concepts of the affective filter, and comprehensible input hypothesis (conceptual tools).

I was able to, as put by Curtain & Dahlberg (2004) "move students from the comfortable role of the listener, to the riskier role of language user" (p. 55) All of the students were volunteering to produce information, and I was able to apply Tracy Terrell's Natural Approach in my teaching, by first starting out by asking students a very easy question, and progressively increasing the difficulty of my questions throughout the lesson.

In sum, the picture that emerges from the above discussion is not one wherein Gloria blindly transferred the language learning theories, and language teaching methods from her university coursework—including those related to CLT—to the classroom context. Rather, these conceptual tools to which Gloria was introduced were constantly subject to her interpretation, evaluation, and interrogation. They were not implemented in isolation, but were used in a mutually informing fashion. Additionally, Gloria did not
perceive the primary contradictions she experienced in implementing the conceptual tools as failures, but opportunities to develop a fuller understanding of their application. The four mini-lessons presented by Gloria served as filters through which conceptual tools were put to the test. She did not isolate theory from the practice of teaching, nor undermine the crucial link between theoretical constructs and instruction, but rather drew upon a vast array of theories, concepts, and methods in her efforts to implement CLT in the elementary classroom.

**4.1.2 The high school setting**

This section includes (a) a profile of the high school where Gloria completed her second first field experience, and student teaching; (b) a discussion of how Gloria negotiated entry and role in the high school activity setting relative to its social context; (c) an analysis of the manner in which she implemented conceptual, physical, and practical tools, and her evolving conceptualization of these tools relative to classroom teaching practices. Additionally, relevant comparisons will be drawn with Gloria’s teaching and learning in the elementary school activity setting.

*Portland High School: School profile*

Portland High School, the site of Gloria’s student teaching and second field experience, was a public school (grades 9-12) located in a large suburb of a Midwestern state. For the 2009-2010 academic year, Portland High school’s student enrollment totaled 1,593. There were 82 full-time teachers, and a student-teacher ratio of 19:1. The student population—29% being eligible for free/reduced lunch—was 75% White (non-
Hispanic), 15% Black (non-Hispanic), 7% Hispanic, and 0.2% Asian/Pacific. The school’s foreign language department comprised of a total of 6 teachers: Four teachers of Spanish, 1 teacher of German, and 1 teacher of French. A state-certified teacher of Spanish with a Master’s degree in foreign language education and over thirty years of teaching experience served as Gloria’s mentor for both field experience and student teaching at Portland High.

As seen in Table 4.3, Gloria taught two levels of Spanish during her field experience and student teaching, both of which were year-long courses: (1) Spanish II, an elementary or beginner’s course; and (2) Spanish IV, an intermediate course. It is worth mentioning that terms such as elementary and intermediate used by the department did not necessarily describe the proficiency level of students as the minimum grade requirement for transitioning from one level of Spanish to the next (e.g., from Spanish I to Spanish II) was a D-.

During her high school field experience, Gloria designed 4 mini-lessons (lesson plans of 15-20 minutes in length) which were taught over a period of four weeks in the Winter quarter (January-March) of 2010. On the Monday of each week of field experience, Gloria taught each of these lessons in either her Spanish II or IV classes (with the exception of 1 Spanish IV class), totaling 9 lesson presentations (i.e., 6 lesson presentations in Spanish II classes; and 3 in Spanish IV classes). Four reflective journal entries were written for each of the 4 lessons presented. Immediately following her field experience, Gloria began a 12-week (March-June) student teaching practicum in the spring of 2010.

During student teaching, Gloria assumed the teaching schedule of her mentor
teacher (as seen in Table 4.3), with the exception of period 1 (Spanish IV), teaching 5 classes per day: Four at the Spanish II level, and 1 (period 6) at the Spanish IV level. Gloria’s mentor teacher continued teaching the first period class due to her (mentor teacher’s) concerns about low academic performance and student misconduct. Spanish II classes primarily comprised of 10th grade students while Spanish IV mainly included 12th graders. The first period Spanish IV class comprised of 22 students, while the 6th period Spanish IV class comprised of 5 students. The class size for the Spanish II classes ranged from 29-35 students.

Table 4.3: Gloria’s student teaching schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>8:00-8:50 a.m.</td>
<td>Spanish IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>8:55-9:45</td>
<td>Spanish II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>9:58-10:48</td>
<td>Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>10:53-11:42</td>
<td>Spanish II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>11:47-12:36</td>
<td>Spanish II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>12:14-1:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Spanish IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>1:35-2:25</td>
<td>Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>2:30-3:20</td>
<td>Spanish II</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The social context: Negotiating entry and role in the high school setting

Gloria’s transition from the elementary to the high school setting was filled with much anxiety as she struggled to redefine her role and status as a pre-service teacher relative to a setting that had an established history of foreign language teaching and
learning. At Portland High, Gloria was no longer in her comfort zone as she was at Springfield Elementary (given her prior experience working with younger learners in the pre-K setting). Her primary source of trepidation at this point of transition was that of relating to, or establishing a social relationship with older learners (i.e., teenage students), a task which she had never been confronted with prior to teaching in the high school setting. When asked what was most challenging about transitioning from teaching in the elementary to teaching in the high school setting, Gloria explained,

It's just completely different. It's like night and day. And I think the most challenging part was that I wasn't sure how to interact with the students. I was uncomfortable. I was scared. I know I keep saying that, but I was. I was scared. I remember [saying] like, "Oh my god! I'm never gonna do that. I don't see myself ever really coming into that role.” It was really challenging for me to just know how to interact with them, and how to make my presence known in the classroom. (In-depth interview: April 29, 2010)

Fortunately, Gloria was not left to overcome these anxieties and challenges alone. Her mentor teacher proved to be an invaluable resource in shaping her reconceptualization of the student-teacher relationship at the high school level. When asked how she went about overcoming her apprehensions about teaching adolescents, Gloria stated, quite definitively,

My mentor! She's great! She had told me, “Don't think of them as like your peers. You've got to look at them as,” she says, "even if it sounds weird, but almost as if like it's a mother-child relationship: Like you're there to help them unconditionally.
Things aren't personal.” I thought that was such great advice; to look at it from that standpoint. (In-depth interview: March 11, 2010)

In addition to learning how to relate to high school students, initially, Gloria was faced with the task of balancing competing expectations and motives between the teacher education program, on the one hand, and her mentor teacher, on the other hand—a situation which presented a tertiary contradiction (Engeström’s (1987):

It was difficult at first. I really struggled with it at first, and initially became frustrated. I wanted there to be more balance of power, but there wasn't; and I felt like I was getting pulled in different directions: From the [teacher education] program end I was hearing, "This is what you need to do. This will work. This is what will work.” And from the other end [mentor teacher] I was hearing, "No! There's no way. You can try it, but it's going to be a disaster.” Or, "I prefer if you wouldn't do that." Or, "I don't think that's a good idea.” Or, "Why don't you just stick to this?” And then I was hearing, [from teacher education program] "No! But do it. You have to try.” It was very very [sic] difficult. I think the key was learning how to balance that, and I think that my relationship with my mentor really helped me to do that because I was able to say, “I know it might be a disaster. I know it might not work. I know it might be easier to do your suggestion, but I really wanna try this.” She was usually pretty cooperative. So once I learned how to communicate those concerns with her, and what I wanted to do with her, and not be afraid of that, I think things got a lot easier. I was very fortunate. We [Gloria and the mentor teacher] didn't have any blow-ups or anything, or substantial arguments. We had a very good relationship where sometimes she would just say like, "This is what we're doing and it's not up for negotiation," but that was kind of rare. But when she did have a concern she would always tell me, "This is my concern. This is why I don't think it's gonna work. This is why I wouldn't do it,” but she would usually give me the freedom to go ahead and do it anyway and learn for myself. (In-depth interview: July 5, 2010)
Gloria’s negotiation of these competing expectations was achieved through three primary means: First, as the above excerpt illustrates, Gloria learned how to exercise a relational sense of agency that allowed her to assert her voice amidst the initial conflicting expectations of the university and the high school. Second, as also revealed in the above quote, although the content, scope, and sequence of Gloria’s lessons were primarily established by her mentor teacher (which stands in sharp contrast to her elementary field experience), when it came to the method through which the language would be taught, (i.e., types of practical and physical tools used to implement the lesson), with some exceptions, the mentor teacher exercised a fair amount of cooperation, and flexibility. Third, student response was a motivating force in guiding teaching decisions Gloria made that might not have been preferred by her mentor teacher, as illustrated in the following excerpt when Gloria was asked, “Is there anything else that helped you make a case for doing the things you wanted to get done even though your mentor teacher might not have agreed with it?”

Yeah! I think probably the student response overall. ... For example, I showed them pictures of different cities I've been to, and they picked out different vocabulary words they recognized from all these pictures. At first, my mentor teacher said, “I don't know that that's a very good idea for you to show them your personal pictures. I don't show them that stuff. I keep it out of the room. And I don't necessarily think that's a really good thing for you to do.” But the kids loved it: They kept asking, "Bring some more! Bring some more! Let's do Spanish to look at more of your pictures.” I actually handed out a final survey and a lot of them were like commenting on seeing all the places I've been and how that led them to really admire me. (In-depth interview: July 5, 20210)
Gloria’s relational sense of agency was not dictated by mere self-will: That is to say, the extent to which a “balance of power” would be achieved was concomitantly influenced by students’ response to her use of supplementary materials, and the extent to which the mentor teacher created spaces for her to experiment with the concepts and methods from her teacher education coursework.

What the above discussion reveals is that Gloria’s first concern regarding teaching at Portland High was not language teaching per se, but rather how to negotiate those contextual factors that would help to facilitate language instruction, namely, relating to her students, establishing a balance of power, and balancing competing motives between the high school and the university.

*The implementation of conceptual tools in the high school setting*

While teaching in the high school setting, Gloria made only 4 references to the literature on second language acquisition (compared to 13 in the elementary school setting), and 17 references to state standards as sources of conceptual tools (see Appendix E). As regarding teaching for communicative competence, Table 4.1 shows that at Portland High, Gloria placed a strong emphasis on grammatical competence ($f = 82$), which was reflected through (a) the teaching of vocabulary, and (b) the explicit teaching of grammatical forms (e.g., imperfect tense, present perfect tense), the latter of which was absent in her instruction at Springfield Elementary (Note that the frequency of mentionings for Gloria’s implementation of pedagogical tools in the high school setting is based upon the sum of frequencies for “Winter 2010” and “Spring 2010”). Sociocultural competence (see Table 4.1; $f = 47$), which also was not reflected in her teaching in the
elementary school setting, became a central feature of instruction in the high school setting: This was seen, for example, in lessons focusing on art history, which included the description and analysis of works of art from the target culture; and the creation and use of Quipus, a knot-tying system used by the Incas to record information.

Sociolinguistic competence (see Table 4.1; $f = 39$), as in the elementary school setting, was used as a tool to give context to the teaching of vocabulary, for example, staying at a hotel or dining at a restaurant. In stark contrast to her teaching at the elementary level, strategic competence was rarely reflected. However, unlike in the elementary school setting, whenever strategic competence was called into use, it was oriented toward the negotiation of meaning as a result of insufficient grammatical competence on the part of the language learner. As in the elementary school, teaching for the development of discourse competence was not a primary focus area for Gloria.

Based on the analysis of the degree of interrelationship among the aforementioned competencies, unlike in the elementary school setting, in most cases, teaching for grammatical competence was carried out in isolation from teaching for sociolinguistic or sociocultural competence. To a limited degree, however, teaching for sociolinguistic and grammatical competence was carried out simultaneously, wherein vocabulary items were taught in through a clearly defined sociolinguistic context.

In addition to the aforementioned types of competencies, Gloria’s teaching reflected other concepts which played key roles in her conceptual tool appropriation. For example, in contrast to teaching in the elementary school setting, Gloria’s lessons showed more frequent use of the L1; extensive use of codeswitching; and a more varied use of the target language. The extent to which these conceptual tools were seen in
Gloria’s teaching depended on the content of instruction, and the established learning objectives.

As in the elementary school setting, the conceptual tool with which Gloria was most preoccupied was the input hypothesis, taken from Krashen’s (1982) Monitor theory. Teaching in the high school setting provided her with the opportunity to problematize the construct of comprehensible input in a manner that teaching in the elementary school setting did not. In reflecting on her first mini-lesson during the high school field experience, she confessed,

I definitely think that the idea of using comprehensible input in teaching becomes more challenging at the high school level. For example, one class period understood the majority of what I was telling them, and all directions in Spanish, and one group forced me to basically do cartwheels across the front of the room to try to get them to understand instruction in the target language and still refused to do anything until I finally explained some things to them in English. How do I get to know what constitutes comprehensible input in Spanish II when all 4 of my classes of the same level are different? (Reflective journal: January 28, 2010)

For Gloria, the problem of comprehensible input was not only made visible upon analyzing its application across the four periods or sections of Spanish II classes, but also within her Spanish IV class:

Though I absolutely love the idea that I can use all target language with them, I also learned a very important lesson about comprehensible input. I learned that in order to take advantage of their high level of comprehension and maximize target language use, I must choose the words and expressions I use carefully. … I know that there
were definitely points in my lesson when I forgot to take I+1 into consideration, and the kids wanted me to repeat what I had just said. … I need to work on giving directions clear and simple manner, because it was in those moments that I saw the most confusion. (Reflective journal: February 4, 2010)

In other words, Gloria was careful not to overestimate the learners’ ability to comprehend the target language input based on the reasoning that they were in a more advanced class and “I can use all target language with them” (Reflective journal: February 4, 2010). Gloria’s new understanding of how to adjust the input based on students’ level of proficiency came about as a result of grappling with the secondary tension between the input hypothesis and students’ level of proficiency.

It is crucial to underscore the contrasting ways in which the social context at the elementary and high school level contributed to Gloria’s quest to appropriate the input hypothesis. At Springfield Elementary, Gloria’s efforts to implement the concept of comprehensible input was a matter of using multiple phrases to convey a single meaning as opposed to using comprehension checks to guide the extent to which the input might need to be made comprehensible. At Portland High, however, Gloria’s goal was not to apply a generic definition of comprehensible input from the professional literature, but rather to analyze its practicality relative to the proficiency level of students in all five classes at the novice (Spanish II) and intermediate (Spanish IV) levels.

Teaching in the high school setting also allowed Gloria to add, with much confidence, another layer of Krashen’s monitor theory to her learning—the learning vs. acquisition hypothesis. In planning her lessons, Gloria was under the impression that
“students would be more often than not, acquiring the language” (Reflective journal: January 28, 2010). However, she discovered the contrary:

Another aspect of teaching teenagers that was illuminated after the completion of this first lesson was the way and which the students feel they need to be actively aware of what is being presented in the classroom about the Spanish language. During all of my lessons the students were asking why this and why that. “How do we know when to use a reflexive verb? Why does this [verb] ending change?” In a summary of Krashen’s Monitor Theory as cited by Hadley, “Adults have two distinct ways to develop competence in a second language: acquisition which is a subconscious process and Learning, which is conscious” (p. 63). Hadley goes on to describe learning as “Conscious knowledge of rules” (p. 63). I definitely noticed the difference between these 2 paths toward competency. In elementary school, the students were obviously acquiring the language. No question about it. But teaching high school is like being in another world in that the students are not acquiring the language; they are learning it. They never just accept something as true. They want to know what, how, and why to further their understanding. (Reflective journal: January 28, 2010)

**The implementation of physical and practical tools in the high school setting**

As in the elementary school setting, the use of visuals (in the form of pictures, for the most part) (see Table 4.2; \( f = 43 \)) played a central role in Gloria’s teaching. She utilized real, colorful images depicting places and people from both the target and home culture; and cultural products such as food items and works of art. These visuals were primarily associated with the teaching of culture (including cultural comparisons between the home and target culture) and vocabulary, serving as a means of locating the target
language in a particular sociocultural context. For example, the following excerpt from my field notes shows Gloria introducing hotel vocabulary during student teaching:

- **Gloria**: *Vamos a tomar notas sobre las palabras nuevas.* [We are going to take notes on the *new* words]

- Pictures with sound files are shown on PPT slides with the following captions: (1) *Capítulo 7 - En el Hotel* [Chapter 7 – In the hotel]; (2) *Los mochilleros están llegando a un hostal en San Cristobal de las Casas en México.* [The backpackers are arriving at a hostel in San Cristobal de las casas in Mexico.]

- Picture is shown of receptionist and client at the reception desk.

- Clicks on sound file associated with the pictures, which plays the following target language vocabulary: *la recepcionista* [receptionist], *la recepción* [reception desk/front desk], *el cliente/el huésped* [guest], and *la llave* [key].

- Pauses periodically to check comprehension of vocabulary. (Observation field notes: April 3, 2010)

Although the use of personal photographs as supplementary instructional material in these Spanish courses was unprecedented (as the mentor teacher preferred to keep any materials or information relative to her personal life outside of the classroom, and respectfully advised Gloria against such practice), Gloria expanded the physical tool kit of this setting by using her personal photographs (e.g., pictures of family events and travels abroad) not only to facilitate language learning, but toward attaining her personal goal of socially connecting or identifying with her students:

She (mentor teacher) doesn't really talk about where she's been or things she's done, which is fine, because it works for her. She's very uncomfortable with that, whereas that was a huge part of me getting to know the kids and a part of my teaching. When
we’d be talking about a certain area or a certain vocabulary word, I would reference different experiences I’ve had in different Spanish-speaking countries. I’d tell them stories. I’d show them pictures. And they loved that; but that’s something she told me not to do. But, I can’t do it any other way because that’s how I formed my connection with them [students] and a lot of them said they respected me, and they trusted me in my knowledge of Spanish through those stories and through me showing them where I’ve been, and how I got here. (In-depth interview: July 5, 2010)

Thus, in this secondary tension between this new physical tool (personal pictures) which challenged the status quo of this high school sub-setting (mentor teacher’s class), Gloria’s goal of forming a social bond with her students took precedence over the long-standing practice of keeping personal information outside the classroom established by her mentor teacher. Furthermore, Gloria’s sharing her personal experiences with target language and culture legitimized her role as a foreign language teacher in the eyes of her students.

By far, the leading sources of practical tools in the high school setting for Gloria were her mentor teacher (see Appendix E; \( f = 72 \)), followed by foreign language course textbooks (see Appendix E; \( f = 23 \)). As she did in the elementary school setting, Gloria frequently mentioned state standards (see Appendix E; \( f = 17 \)) as a source of practical tools; however, there was a notable decrease in her mentioning of the literature on foreign language teaching methods—from 26 during her elementary school field experience to 14 during her teaching in the high school setting (see Appendix E).

Gloria’s limited reliance on M.Ed. coursework materials as sources of practical (and conceptual tools, as mentioned in the prior section) tools could be explained by the
fact that in planning for her lessons, “I didn’t sit there with the textbook open, looking through it, thinking about what I was planning” (Post-observation interview: March 10, 2010). However, her lesson planning was based on “what I’ve learned this year from the readings, from talking with Dr. Johnson [pseudonym for university foreign language teacher education professor], and the overall picture that has been painted for us throughout this program” (Post-observation interview: March 11, 2010). Furthermore, in reference to her reliance on her mentor teacher as a source of practical tools, Gloria asserted,

She's somebody. She's a real person—somebody who's been doing this for thirty years. She's seen it all. This is a real classroom. She knows what works in her classroom. She knows her students better than anyone else. It's not like the book's magic; and I can push the magic numbers and it spits out, "OK, this is what you do with this group of kids, in this school district, in this classroom. It would just seem so much more logical to me to involve her as opposed to the book at that point. (In-depth interview: July 5, 2010)

With respect to the practical tools or instructional activities employed by Gloria in the high school setting, as seen in Table 4.2, speaking activities were, by far, the most central practical tool, as they were in the elementary school setting, followed by writing. Relative to speaking and writing activities, listening and reading activities were emphasized to a lesser extent. Although not as frequently mentioned as the aforementioned practical tools, role plays, games, and verb-conjugation drills were reflected in Gloria’s teaching, the latter two carrying significant implications, as will be
illustrated below. The structure of the aforementioned practical tools was primarily in the form of group work—more so during field experience than during student teaching.

In regards to the manner in which Gloria executed practical tools or instructional activities, one of the most noticeable trends was related to her use of the target language versus the L1 based upon whether her focus was the teaching of (1) culture, (2) vocabulary (and its relationship to the phenomenon of “El día de español” [Spanish Day]), or (3) the teaching of grammatical form (and its relationship to assessment), each of which will be discussed below:

(1) The teaching of culture

In the Spanish II and IV classes, Gloria’s teaching of culture was marked by extensive codeswitching wherein both the target language and the L1 were used for different purposes at various points throughout her lesson. For example, during student teaching, in a lesson on the creation and use of quipus in her Spanish II classes, Gloria used the target language to generate a discussion about the purpose for which the Incas used quipus, after making an introductory statement in the L1:

-OK, we have a lot to get done today so can you take out your worksheet that you brought today and clear everything else off your desk.
-OK, hoy vamos a continuar con los quipus; pero primero, vamos a repasar la cultura. [OK, we are going to continue with the quipus; but first, we’re going to do a culture review.]
-Questions posed by Gloria on the Incas and the quipu:
  -¿Quién usaba el Quipu? [Who usually used quipus?]
  -¿Dónde vivían los incas? [Where did the Incas live?]
-¿Por qué, clase, usaban el quipu? ¿Por qué? [Why, class, did they use quipus? Why?]
-En español. Vamos a hablar en español. [In Spanish. We are going to speak in Spanish.]
-¿Por qué, clase? Por qué usaban el quipu? [Why, class? Why did they use quipus?]
-¿Qué hacemos para mandar mensajes hoy [en día]? [How do we send messages today?]

When Gloria transitioned into a more technical or hands-on aspect of the lesson, however (i.e., the demonstration of how to tie the knots to make the quipu), she transitioned into English:

-Ahora, vamos a atar los nudos en el quipu. [Now, we are going to tie the knots on the quipu.]
-So, vamos a cambiar [So, we are going to switch.]. Vamos a hablar en inglés [We are going to speak in English].
-OK, we’re gonna do this one together.
-So how are we gonna express 212 on our Quipus? (Observation field notes: March 28, 2010)

In explaining her rationale for using the L1, Gloria commented in the post-observation interview,

This was a physical, hands-on thing. It was very complicated; and the kids had a ton of questions. I mean, I’m sure it could be done [in the target language], but for time’s sake, and what we’re really trying to get them to do, I felt that it was definitely the time to use English. (March 24, 2010)
During an art history lesson with her Spanish IV students in which they engaged in an analysis of works of art from the target culture (e.g., comparing paintings of El Greco with those of Diego Velazquez), halfway through the lesson, Gloria’s use of the L1 increased dramatically. The manner in which she transitioned into such increased L1 use is also noteworthy, in that, she not only announced to the class that it was acceptable to use the L1, but also gave her rationale for such use: “OK, vamos a hablar en inglés porque quiero que ustedes hablen mucho.” [OK, we’re going to speak in English because I want you guys to speak a lot.] (Student teaching field notes: April 28, 2010). After mentioning to Gloria that the target language use for this lesson—in a Spanish IV class—was far less than that used in at least two of the Spanish II classes I had observed, she replied,

Gloria: Señora [mentor teacher] is like that too with them.  
Adrian: Was it because it was culture? 
Gloria: I think, for me, it definitely was. I wanted them to be into this. I wanted to tell them the story [behind the paintings], really getting into it and analyzing the art. … It was really challenging because it's kind of a high level stuff: A high level of thinking. (Post-observation interview: April 28, 2010)

For an elementary as well as an intermediate class, then, Gloria made a calculated decision as to the proportion of target language or L1 which would be used based upon the perceived complexity of the instructional activity.
(2) The teaching of vocabulary and the phenomenon of “El día de español”

[Spanish Day]

Based on the analysis observation field notes taken during student teaching (March 10, 2010; April 8, 2010), 2 of the 8 lessons observed during student teaching were focused entirely on the teaching of vocabulary, and occurred on what was called El día de español (Spanish Day). El día de español was a tradition which was started by Gloria’s mentor teacher in which it was mandatory for students to use the target language for the entire class period, the goal being 100% target language use. This phenomenon usually began toward the end of the school year, starting out with one day per week, and gradually increasing up to four days per week. As an incentive, students gained points for using the target language; and lost points for using the L1. Upon enquiring as to what the policy was on the use of the target language since the beginning of the school year, Gloria replied, “They didn’t. And they won’t, unless it’s for points. … If it’s not Día de español, it’s like pulling teeth getting them to form answers. And they can do it; but they need that incentive.” Gloria further commented that although her mentor teacher was consistent with target language use, “the kids don’t produce in the target language. They’ll respond, but it’s in English. Unless it’s Día de español and they know it’s for points” (Post-observation interview: March 10, 2010).

The first observed vocabulary lesson in which Gloria introduced technology vocabulary (e.g., la impresora [printer], teléfono móvil [cellphone], MP3) through the use of realia and role play in her 2nd period Spanish II class was conducted entirely in the target language with no observed instances of codeswitching. In Gloria’s second
vocabulary lesson (students were introduced to travel vocabulary) observed during student teaching,—besides a brief explanation at the beginning of instruction regarding how to make vocabulary flashcards on the internet, and two instances of L1 use to negotiate meaning—the vocabulary was taught and assessed in the target language: In a speaking activity, students worked in pairs, taking turns in asking and responding to questions (displayed on a PPT slide) such as the following: (1) “¿Quién lleva el equipaje a los cuartos?” [Who takes the luggage to the rooms?] (2) “¿Quién trabaja en la recepción del hotel?” [Who works at the front desk of a hotel?] (Student teaching field notes: April 8, 2010).

Based on analysis of field notes from Gloria’s teaching, then, it was not only the area of language teaching (e.g., culture, vocabulary) that determined the extent of target language or L1 use, but also the concept of El día de español. So powerful was this interplay between the area of language teaching and the concept of El día de español that on a day declared El día de español, in a Spanish II class, target language use by Gloria and her students—for lessons focusing on the teaching of vocabulary—far exceeded the target language use on a regular day (i.e., day that was not declared to be El día de español) in a Spanish IV class when culture was being taught. In essence, this locally instituted concept of día de español served as the motivating force behind the more universal concept of maximizing target language use in the foreign language classroom.

(3) Assessment and the teaching of grammatical form

Gloria’s teaching of grammatical concepts could be described as explicit grammar teaching wherein, as a practice exercise, students wrote sentences or conjugated
verbs at random outside of a clearly defined sociolinguistic or sociocultural context. In these instances, it was noted that the format of the verb conjugation activity mirrored the format of either an upcoming test or final exam, both of which were standardized across the foreign language department. These summative assessments produced a negative washback effect—the objective was for students to accurately conjugate verbs in various tenses based on a given subject pronoun as opposed to using the grammatical form for a communicative function. For example, after showing a video that gave an explanation (in the L1) of how to form the present perfect tense with the auxiliary verb, *haber* [to have] and the past participle, one of the instructional activities—which Gloria described as “a really fun game”—was a relay race, an activity recommended by one of her peers in the M.Ed. program. The following field notes (Student teaching: April 16, 2010) provide a clear image of how the game proceeded:

_Gloria:_ We’re gonna do a relay race; but if you get out of hand, we’re not going to do any more of these fun activities.

Class is divided into two teams. There’s complete silence: There is no chattering among students prior to game. Students from each team take turns to conjugate verbs. The first team to complete all 12 conjugations wins the game. Each student from the winning team is awarded 1.5 points, while each student from the loosing team receives ½ point. Students conjugate the following verbs based on the given subjects or subject pronouns:

- *La camarera* [maid]
- *Nuestra familia* [our family]
- *Él* [he]
- *Ella* [she]

* cambiar [to change]  
* viajar [to travel]  
* reservar [to reserve]  
* comer [to eat]  

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As a practice activity, prior to the relay race game, each student was required to write sentences based on a given subject and verb. Gloria announced a subject pronoun and verb to the class, for example, “Nosotros” y “reservar” [“We” and “reserve”]. On their individual white boards, students would then produce a response such as, “Hemos reservado dos cuartos.” [We have reserved two rooms.]

The above drill-like form of grammar instruction was motivated by multiple factors: First, its format was strongly influenced by the format of the tests usually given by the department. According to Gloria,

I want them to be able to identify the subject. A lot of them (test items) are fill in the blanks. And I noticed, when grading the tests, they may get the context but sometimes they just skip over the subject or they just go straight to the verb in parentheses and they miss them for that reason. So I wanted them to get practice with that because that's how we're testing. (Post-observation interview: April 16, 2010)

Second, Gloria perceived the relay game as a means of fostering student participation, which has been an area of concern for her. In fact, during our post-observation interview, when asked, “Did you design the lesson with any particular theory or concept in mind?” she replied,

Not specifically. I just knew that I wanted to see everybody participating, because it's been kind of a challenge for me to get everybody working. … I wanted everybody to
have a role in it, because if I have them do it at their seats, there are so many of them who just don't do it. (Post-observation interview: April 16, 2010)

Third, Gloria’s teaching of grammar also appeared to have been driven by the motive or her belief that “the students are not acquiring the language they are learning it,” (Reflective journal: January 28, 2010), hence, in her view, necessitating an explicit focus on form and grammaticality versus a more implicit approach to teaching grammar as was evident in the elementary school setting. In support of the above claim, Gloria made the following declaration, which also revealed her self-perception regarding teaching grammar: “My weakness is grammar. You can probably tell. I don't like teaching it. I don't like explaining the rules; but the kids want the rules. They wanna know” (Post-observation interview: April 16, 2010). Thus, with respect to the teaching of grammar, in the primary tension between (a) the types of activities that promote communicative use of grammatical forms versus (b) those that foster student participation, the latter took precedence over the former.

In contrast to Gloria’s lesson on the present perfect tense, which was guided by multiple competing motives, there was one overriding motive which was responsible for an extreme version of the grammar translation approach toward the end of student teaching —preparing students for the final exam. In this instance, Gloria presented a lesson in which Spanish IV students, as a review activity, were required to translate (For each sentence, the auxiliary and the main verbs, or only the latter were translated) from the L1 to the target language in 13 different tenses. For example, the first three sentence translations were as follows: (1) “John eats today” was translated as come [he eats]; (2)
“John is eating now” was translated as “está comiendo” [He is eating.]; (3) and “John has already eaten” was translated as “ha comido” [He has eaten.] (observation field notes (May 12, 2010)).

Unlike the majority of Gloria’s lessons presented during student teaching wherein she had much flexibility with respect to the teaching methods used to execute instructional activities, this type of grammar translation drill, although presented by Gloria, was not created by her, but was rather handed to her by her mentor teacher to present to students as is. When asked whether she had received input from her mentor teacher in planning for the lesson, she replied,

Yes. I was given like, “This is what you need to do. This is what I want you to do. This is the material.” They're taking final exams; and all the finals are [on] scantrons. And she said for the finals they should be able to change [translate tenses] from English to Spanish; and that she wants to get them ready for their college placement exams. (Post-observation interview: May 12, 2010)

This mandate given by the mentor teacher presented a secondary contradiction Engeström’s (1987) between the division of labor and the mediating tool (grammar translation) by which the lesson was to be executed. That is to say, not only did Gloria not have a say in the planning of this aspect of the lesson, but the manner in which she was expected to present it was far removed from her approach to introducing grammatical concepts.

During our post-observation conference session, Gloria was visibly distraught concerning the fact that she was required to teach in a manner that was inconsistent with
her pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1986) as regarding the teaching of grammar. Not only was she uncomfortable with the idea of teaching grammar using the grammar-translation method, but was overwhelmed by the sheer number of grammatical terminologies (13) that were required to complete the above described grammar drill:

"I just do not feel comfortable giving that [grammar translation activity]. I feel terrible. I can’t be myself. I don’t know how to teach like that; so I'm kind of just frustrated because I feel like, "How do I do this?" … When I try to think about things in terms of translating from English to Spanish, my mind is like, "Ah! I don't know what to do." I know what it means when I see it like this in español [Spanish]. I know what it means; but I don’t know this is this, and this is this [grammatical terminology or naming the grammatical form], and this is this [sic], and this translates to this, so I just get kind of flustered. My mentor teacher is awesome at that. She knows her English gramática (grammar) inside out so she could talk and talk and talk [sic], and is comfortable with that; but I'm just not. (Post-observation interview: May 12, 2010)

Even Gloria’s students were in agreement with her concerning the manner in which they preferred to review grammar points for the final exam—they requested to see how the forms might be used in sentences. Gloria related that “the students said it’s harder when it starts in English [translating from English to the target language]. They're very outspoken” (Post-observation interview: May 12, 2010). Thus, both Gloria and her students thought there should have been more focus on the contextualized use of the grammatical form as opposed to a grammar translation drill. To this end, prior to the grammar translation activity, Gloria assigned a Q&A speaking activity in which students, working in pairs, exchanged information using the future tense. In reference to this
activity, Gloria stated, “That's what I have to do to do grammar because I think it makes me more effective as a teacher and it makes the experience more effective for the students” (Post-observation interview: May 12, 2010).

Finally, Gloria’s field experience and student teaching in the high school activity setting allowed her to add another layer of meaning to, or engage in a reinterpretation of key conceptual tools which were applied in the elementary school setting such as the input hypothesis; strategic competence; the learning-acquisition hypothesis; and target language versus L1 use. Her conceptual tool kit not only expanded in depth, but also in breadth as she went from the elementary to the high school setting: Teaching for sociocultural competence became a main focus area as well as the explicit teaching of grammatical forms. This expansion of her conceptual tool kit also added more levels of contradiction (at the secondary and tertiary level) or tension in Gloria’s teaching primarily related to target language input, the division of labor or balance of power, and competing motives between the high school and university activity systems.

In stark contrast to the elementary school setting where conceptual tool guided the implementation of physical and practical tools, analysis of her teaching in the high school setting showed the reverse: That is to say, immediate, and practical concerns at the classroom level (e.g., student proficiency level; language learning objectives such as the teaching of culture, grammar, and vocabulary; the phenomenon of El día de español; and summative assessments such as chapter quizzes and final exams; and the nature of instructional activities) determined the nature of Gloria’s target language input (the conceptual tool).
While teaching in the Pre-K setting was primarily based on knowledge of the subject matter (Spanish language and culture), personal skills and attributes (e.g., designing age-appropriate visuals for instruction; persistent attitude; being “really good with kids”), and a whatever-worked, trial-and-error approach to instruction, teaching within the multiple activity settings of the teacher education program exposed her to a broader range of conceptual, physical, and practical mediating tools from which to draw upon.

In finding her own voice amidst the competing motives or tertiary contradictions between the high school, and the university activity systems, Gloria was able to redefine her role as a pre-service teacher, pushing, and expanding the boundaries of the activity systems in which she learned to teach. Therefore, to conceptualize Gloria’s model of appropriating CLT as transfer versus lack of transfer would be an oversimplification and undermining of her role as an active subject, exercising her agency relative to the social context in which teaching and learning occurred.

### 4.2 Linda

In this section, I will present the findings of the analysis for the case study participant, Linda, a 25-year old pre-service teacher of Spanish who was enrolled in a one-year university teacher education program leading toward a Master of Education (M.Ed.) degree and state licensure (grades K-12) in foreign language education. In addition to illustrating the extent to which Linda’s instruction, per se, reflected features of CLT (according to the professional literature described in Chapter Two—an area which I will more fully addressed in Chapter Five and Six), the ensuing discussion of the findings
will primarily examine (a) the processes through which her model of CLT was
developed, including the contradictions (Engeström, 1987) she faced as she progressed
through various phases of her teacher education program; (b) the mediational role of the
university, high school, and elementary school activity settings; and (c) the
implementation of conceptual, physical, and practical tools in the classroom both at the
elementary, and high school level.

The complete list of codes and their corresponding frequencies used to assist in
the analysis, and management of data sources (i.e., coursework documents, field notes,
and interviews) for this case study are shown in Appendix F. It includes those
conceptual, physical, and practical tools that played a role in Linda’s learning and
development; the sources to which they were attributed; and the object or problem space
to which they were directed. Sections of Appendix F that pertain to Linda’s
appropriation of (a) conceptual tools; and (b) physical and practical tools (in both the
elementary and high school activity settings) are presented in Table 4.4 and 4.5,
respectively, which appear in relevant sections of the text. The frequency scores
(indicated in text by \( f \)) indicate how often the code term was reflected explicitly or
implicitly in data sources from teacher education coursework, field experiences, student
teaching, and interviews. \( X \) represents codes that were not applicable to the observation
data sources. It bears mentioning that the frequency counts are not meant to be read in
statistical terms—as figures used to compare the significance of one setting, code, or
theme to another. Rather, they indicate general trends or tendencies in Linda’s learning
and development across multiple activity settings.
4.2.1 The elementary school setting

This section includes (a) a profile of the elementary school where Linda completed her first field experience; (b) the manner in which she drew upon the social context of teaching and learning in her instructional planning; (c) the process through which she implemented conceptual, physical, and practical tools; and (d) how her conceptualization of the aforementioned pedagogical tools evolved relative to her classroom teaching.

Hillcrest Elementary School: School profile

Hillcrest Elementary School was a K-8 private, parochial school (classified as a “regular elementary or secondary” institution as it housed both an elementary, and middle school) located in a large city of a Midwestern state where Linda completed her first field experience. During the 2009-2010 school year the school population included a total of 265 students, 13 full-time teachers, and a student-teacher ratio of 19:1. The student population was 99% White (non-Hispanic), and less than 1% Black (non-Hispanic). These were the only two ethnic groups represented at Hillcrest Elementary.

Drawing upon the social context of teaching and learning in planning for instruction

Linda’s field experience at Hillcrest Elementary included the teaching of a thematic unit comprising of 4 mini-lessons (ranging from 15-20 minutes in length) as part of the requirement for her methods course. Over the course of four weeks, during the Autumn of 2009, Linda presented the mini-lessons to a class of 26 second-grade students.
The focus of these lessons was the teaching of vocabulary through the theme of “Animals of the Amazon Rainforest”. For Linda’s field experience at Hillcrest Elementary, a state-certified second-grade teacher (i.e., the classroom teacher) served as her mentor. At the time of Linda’s field experience, her students were enrolled in a Spanish course with another elementary school teacher. Hence, Linda’s thematic unit was not the students’ first exposure to the Spanish language in the elementary school setting as it was already a part of the curriculum.

Given the fact that Linda’s mentor teacher’s expertise was outside the realm of language teaching, it is necessary to understand the sources of knowledge which Linda tapped into in deciding on the subject matter content to be taught and, to some degree, the practical tools that would be used to facilitate such teaching. As a starting point for planning the thematic unit presented at Hillcrest Elementary, Linda tapped into her prior knowledge of instruction (i.e., designing age-appropriate activities that were relevant to students’ interests) acquired through her volunteer work as a Spanish major with ESL elementary students in grades one and two:

I came up with the idea of animals because I thought it would be kind of a fun, interactive theme with gestures and that kind of a thing. I remember that I wanted to read a book because I've had experience with elementary classrooms before—mostly ESL classrooms—and I always really enjoyed reading books to the kids. I felt like the kids really enjoyed it too, and it was just a positive way to teach language and to get the kids involved. So I found this great book about jungle animals, then I tried to work from there; and each one [lesson] just kind a built on the other one. (In-depth interview: June 9, 2010)
In addition to drawing upon her prior knowledge of instruction as an ESL volunteer, Linda took students’ prior knowledge into consideration in planning the theme of her lesson, a decision which she perceived to have contributed to its success:

Another part of my lesson that was successful was the introduction to the lesson. I tied in previous knowledge by talking about the rainforest, since part of the book takes place in the rainforest, and they seemed to be able to connect to that. It is not surprising that this worked since Curtain and Dahlberg (2004) mention the importance of connecting your lessons with content areas, and they had recently learned about the rainforests (Curtain & Dahlberg, 2004, p. 248). (Reflective journal: October 8, 2009)

In planning her lessons, not only did Linda receive input and feedback from her methods course professor, university supervisors, and peers, but also her mother who was an ESL teacher at the time:

Actually I remember my mom helped me quite a bit with my elementary lessons because she is an elementary ESL teacher. She has experience with that age level, so I looked to her for guidance for those lessons. I would kind of have a general idea of what I wanted to do and she would help me kind of getting into the specifics of it: I'd be like, "OK, well I want them to practice writing the vocabulary. What's a good way that you have your kids practice new vocabulary in writing?" Then she would kind of give me more concrete examples. (In-depth interview: June 9, 2010)

In planning the content of instruction, therefore, Linda tapped into sources of knowledge across time and space such as her students’ prior knowledge of rainforests; her own knowledge of working with ESL students; her mother’s practical advice (based
on her experiences as an ESL teacher); and constructive feedback on such content from peers, methods course professor, and university supervisors.

Implementing conceptual tools in the elementary school setting

Table 4.4 represents the conceptual tools which played a role in Linda’s efforts to appropriate CLT. Not only does it include those constructs or competencies that define the theory of communicative competence (e.g., sociocultural competence, strategic competence, etc.), but also those that Linda deemed to have been crucial in her learning to teach. The table includes frequency of mentionings that correspond to the university, elementary, and high school setting, and thus, will be referenced in section 4.2.2 (i.e., Linda’s tool implementation in the high school setting). By so doing, the frequencies for each setting can be viewed relative to a broader context. For this section, however, the discussion of the findings in Table 4.4 will be restricted to “Autumn 2009”
Table 4.4: Codes and Frequencies for Conceptual Tools – Linda

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Autumn 2009</th>
<th>Winter 2010</th>
<th>Spring 2010</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Methods of Foreign Language Teaching &amp; Elementary School Field Experience</td>
<td>Foreign Language Assessment and Materials Development &amp; High School Field Experience</td>
<td>Student Teaching Observations</td>
<td>In-depth and Post-observation Interviews</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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<td>Affective filter</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>5</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Codeswitching</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discourse competence</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grammatical competence</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Input hypothesis</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L1 Use</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L1-L2 translation</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2-L1 translation</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>Sociocultural competence</td>
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<td>Sociolinguistic competence</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic competence</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target language/L2 use</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Linda’s primary sources of conceptual tools in the elementary school setting were the literature on second language acquisition (see Appendix F; \( f = 6 \)) and the state
standards (see Appendix F; \( f = 9 \)) (i.e., academic content standards for foreign language teaching). In regards to teaching for communicative competence, Linda’s lessons addressed three types of competencies to varying degrees as seen in Table 4.4: (a) Grammatical competence \((f = 32)\); (b) strategic competence \((f = 14)\); and (c) sociolinguistic competence \((f = 7)\). It is important to note that although the frequency of mentionings for “sociocultural competence” was relatively high \((f = 28)\), its source was Linda’s Culturally Relevant Teaching project (designed for intermediate-level foreign language students in the high school setting) completed in her methods course, as opposed to the teaching of the mini-lessons at Hillcrest Elementary School. Analysis of Linda’s teaching in the elementary school setting revealed that grammatical, strategic, and sociolinguistic competence were, for the most part, addressed in combination with each other. That is to say, for a given instructional activity, one of the following combinations of competencies was the primary focus:

(a) Grammatical, sociolinguistic, and strategic competence

(b) Grammatical and sociolinguistic competence

(c) Grammatical and strategic competence

(d) Strategic and sociolinguistic competence

Teaching for grammatical competence was synonymous with the teaching of vocabulary (i.e., six rainforest animals, namely, *el mono* [monkey], *el pájaro* [bird], *la rana* [frog], *el león* [lion], *el lobo* [wolf], *el cocodrilo* [crocodile]), while sociolinguistic, and strategic competence played supporting roles: That is to say, Linda addressed sociolinguistic competence in her teaching by contextualizing the presentation of the target vocabulary both thematically and geographically (i.e., animals living in the
Amazon Rainforest) as opposed to focusing on sensitivity to linguistic variation or the appropriateness of language use—the more dominant use of the term in the professional literature. Similarly, teaching for strategic competence was reflected in the form of nonverbal cues (i.e., gestures that were performed with the presentation and practice of vocabulary items) which were used in an effort to make the target language vocabulary more comprehensible as opposed to repairing communication breakdowns.

In addition to those conceptual tools or competencies discussed above, of importance to Linda’s conceptual tool appropriation in the elementary school setting were the following two concepts: (1) Target language use; and (2) Krashen’s (1982) input hypothesis. As evidenced in Table 4.4, second only to grammatical competence, target language use ($f = 21$) was a dominant feature of Linda’s teaching during her field experience: With the exception of a brief introduction to the day’s lesson (i.e., stating the objectives of the lesson), and a succinct closure, which typically included comprehension checks or students’ stating what they had learned from the lesson (both of which occurred in the L1), the target language was Linda’s primary medium of instruction. In fact, using the target language as much as possible was Linda’s guiding principle as she planned for the teaching of the mini-lessons as the following exchange illustrates:

**Adrian:** Did you plan the mini-lessons you presented during the elementary school field experience with any particular concept or theory in mind?

**Linda:** I think I was trying to go for an immersion approach. I tried to stay in the target language. I tried to stay in the target language pretty much the entire time. I was thinking like, “You know, these kids are young enough that they'll do this. They'll be willing to work with me; and they'll do fine if I'm speaking
in Spanish the whole time. So I kind of had like an immersion approach mindset. (In-depth interview: June 9, 2010)

Although Linda described her approach to target language use in general terms (i.e., trying to “stay in the target language pretty much the entire time”), as seen in the above exchange, the tensions embedded within such an approach became evident when analyzed through the lens of Krashen’s (1982) input hypothesis. There was a primary tension (Engeström’s, 1987) between the target language input per se, and the means through which such input was to be made comprehensible. As Linda revealed, in reflecting on her first lesson in the elementary school setting,

I showed them pictures of the animals that I was teaching and had them repeat the names of the animals and do the accompanying gestures. We did this a few times, and then I asked students to raise their hands and tell me which animal I was holding up. They were not really able to identify the animals and I later realized that the students needed more vocabulary intake before any sort of assessment. They really needed more repetition which according to Curtain and Dahlberg (2004) is very important for young language learners (Curtain & Dahlberg, 2004, p. 3). I think they needed to see the names of the animals and maybe do something more hands on with the animals and their names. (Reflective journal: October 8, 2009)

The above reflective journal entry shows that Linda was beginning to understand that the process of acquiring the target vocabulary goes beyond mundane repetition, targeting meaningful repetition that taps into listening and reading skills as well as tactile intelligence. Similarly, a primary tension was uncovered between target language use and the use of nonverbal cues:
Another thing I could have done better would be to be more consistent with the usage of the animal gestures. I intended on doing the animal gestures every time a student or I said the name of one of the animals, but there were times when I forgot. It is very important to be consistent with your teaching, since according to Curtain and Dahlberg (2004) it is another key factor in making the language comprehensible (p.36), and that is one thing I could have done better in my lesson. (Reflective journal: October 29, 2009)

In this case, Linda’s positioning of strategic competence, and target language use as interrelated concepts contributed to her noticing, and aiming to address areas of inconsistency.

Adjusting the target language input relative to the proficiency level of her students was a secondary tension (Engeström’s, 1987) with which Linda had to contend as relating to the input hypothesis. Nonetheless, she remained committed to taking on this “big challenge”. As she articulated in reflecting on her third lesson presentation,

Another thing that stood out to me in this lesson was that there were a few students who seemed to have mastered the vocabulary and they seemed a bit bored with the lesson. One girl really stood out as not being challenged, but the lesson seemed to be at a good level for the rest of the students. This is a big challenge as a teacher (being able to accommodate all the different levels of your students), and for my next lesson with the second graders, I want to have a challenge ready for this little girl if she seems not to be challenged again I want to try to be teaching every student at the i+1 that Krashen proposed (as cited in Curtain & Dahlberg, 2004, p. 2). (Reflective journal: October 22, 2009)
In her fourth, and final mini-lesson, this secondary tension appeared to have become even more complex as Linda, on the one hand, continued to strive for comprehensible input (the “i” in “i+1”), while, on the other hand, aimed to increase the quantity of the input (the “+1” in “i+1) relative to foreign language (Spanish) instruction being delivered in another class at Hillcrest Elementary. In essence, at this point, Linda began to position her target language use relative to a sub-setting in the larger activity setting of the elementary school:

I think that I actually could have used more target language than I did in my lesson. I tried to keep my use of Spanish very basic for the students, but since they also take Spanish with another teacher and since they were picking up on things rather quickly with me, I think I could have used a few more phrases in the target language. … even if they do not understand every word, with the help of gestures and other clues the students will still be able to comprehend the new language. (Reflective journal: October 29, 2009).

When Linda was asked about the challenges she might have faced in attempting to implement a CLT approach in the elementary school setting, she addressed the issue of target language use, in particular, expressing that “the elementary kids were pretty open to trying [to use the target language]” (In-depth interview: June 9, 2010). However, despite the fact that students showed no resistance to target language use, coupled with the fact that they were being exposed to the target language in another class, and the fact that her mentor teacher imposed no restrictions on her teaching, Linda’s primary motive of developing grammatical competence—mediated through sociolinguistic and strategic competence—precluded activities that might have allowed for more functional uses of
the language in its spoken or written form. In general, Linda was more concerned with the nature of the target language input, including its comprehensibility and quantity.

As evidenced in the above discussion, with respect to the theory of communicative competence, Linda implemented grammatical, sociolinguistic, and strategic competence in combination with each other as opposed to targeting each type of competence in isolation. Krashen’s input hypothesis served as mediating concept that assisted Linda in determining the quantity and quality of the target language to be used relative to her students’ proficiency levels. Furthermore, Linda’s strong emphasis on target language use through the lenses of Krashen’s input hypothesis was positioned relative to grammatical and strategic competence, allowing her to uncover, and respond to primary and secondary tensions in her teaching.

**The use of physical and practical tools in the elementary school setting**

Table 4.5 represents the physical and practical tools which played a role in Linda’s efforts to appropriate of CLT. It includes frequency of mentionings that correspond to the university, elementary, and high school setting, and thus, will be referenced in section 4.2.2 (i.e., Linda’s tool implementation in high school setting). By so doing, the frequencies for each setting can be viewed relative to a broader context. For this section, however, the discussion of the findings in Table 4.5 will be limited to “Autumn 2009”.

231
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes</th>
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<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pictures/Visuals</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realia</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verb charts</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fill in the blanks/Sentence completion</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Game</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group activity</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening activity</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pronunciation drill</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading activity</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role play</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking activity</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verb-conjugation drill</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing activity</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
By far, as seen in Table 4.5, the most prominent physical tool reflected in Linda’s teaching were visuals \((f = 14)\) which included large, colorful pictures of rainforest animals which she used for the presentation and practice of vocabulary. These pictures, in particular, did not show the animals in their habitats, but rather displayed each animal in isolation. As such, they, did not depict an authentic context (i.e., animals living in the Amazon jungle) through which the vocabulary was presented and practiced. Linda’s reading activity, however, included a book \((De paseo por la selva [Walking Through the Jungle])\) containing real-life, colorful images of animals in the rainforest. Additionally, the students were given the opportunity to draw their favorite animal, and color the animals in a teacher-made coloring book presented to each student. They also created puppets by gluing pictures of the animals onto popsicle sticks.

Linda’s sources of practical tools in the elementary school setting were, to a large degree, the literature on foreign language teaching methods (see Appendix F; \(f = 16\)), and, to a lesser extent, state standards (see Appendix F; \(f = 9\)). As seen in Table 4.5, Linda drew upon a wide range of practical tools in her teaching at Hillcrest Elementary. The key practical tools employed by Linda were activities that were based on the four skills—reading \((f = 16)\); listening \((f = 14)\); speaking \((f = 14)\); and writing \((f = 10)\). Listening, reading, and speaking activities were carried out as teacher-led, whole-class activities, while writing activities were usually individual activities. Among all the aforementioned activities, however, Linda considered reading activities to be the centerpiece of her instruction through which listening and speaking skills were also addressed. As such, for the first three mini-lessons, Linda read the book, \(De Paseo por la Selva [Walking Through the Jungle]\) to the students; however, the final lesson was a
choral reading session in which Linda and the students read *De Paseo por la Selva* together. During the second lesson, as each animal appeared in Linda’s reading of the book, students were required to identify them by holding up the animal puppets they had created, while performing the corresponding gesture and saying the name of the animal. As seen in the excerpt below, Linda described her success with reading *De Paseo por la Selva*, and a rationale explaining why she thought students connected so well with the text:

> Another part of the lesson that went well was when I read them the book. It was awesome to see them understand a book that was entirely in Spanish and they seemed really excited about it too. I used a lot of actions to help the children understand the story, which is something that Curtain and Dahlberg (2004) suggest, and it seemed to really work (Curtain & Dahlberg, 2004, p. 62-63). It was good to have feedback from the classroom teacher too, who does not speak any Spanish, and she understood the book. One thing that was good about the story that I chose was that it is a repetitive story which Curtain and Dahlberg (2004) assert makes it easier for the students to pick up on. (Reflective journal: October 8, 2009)

In regards to writing, students were asked to identify pictures of the animals in lessons 1 and 3 by writing their corresponding names. In Lesson 4, however, Linda moved from vocabulary identification to sentence completion by having students individually identify the animals in the teacher-made book using the verb *ser* [to be]. Thus, students were required to write, for example, *Yo soy un pájaro* [I am a bird.]. When Linda attempted to execute a spoken variant of this activity, however, a primary
tension occurred between the manner in which the speaking activity unfolded and the concept of authentic communication as seen in Linda’s self-critique:

While I was doing the *yo soy* [I am] modeling activity [Linda held up a picture of one of the animals while stating, for example, *yo soy un ____* (I am a ___)] in the front of the class with the five other students, the class began repeating what they were saying which was a bit artificial because *yo soy* [I am] means *I am* and for the whole class to be saying, “I am a lion, crocodile,” etc., wasn’t an authentic situation. I did not plan on having the class repeat after each student, but I did not stop them when they started doing it. According to Curtain and Dahlberg (2004), in thematic units, such as the animal unit that I have been teaching, it is important to have meaningful experiences with the language (p. 133) and having the class repeat, “*Yo soy ____*” [I am ___] was not an authentic, meaningful experience with the language. (Reflective journal: October 29, 2009)

In sum, the above discussion of Linda’s appropriation of conceptual, physical, and practical tools in the elementary school setting reveal that while Linda—in planning for the content of instruction—drew upon her prior teaching experience as an ESL volunteer, students’ prior knowledge of subject matter, and advice from her mother regarding possible instructional activities, it was her teacher education methods course that provided her with the conceptual and practical frameworks through which she planned for the execution of instruction in the classroom. Although Linda primarily focused on teaching for grammatical competence, she did so through the concepts of sociolinguistic, and strategic competence. Furthermore, even though Linda utilized her evolving knowledge of conceptual tools (e.g., target language use, input hypothesis) to assist in the implementation of practical tools, she came to the realization that the nature of practical tools is also driven by the linguistic realities of the language classroom which, in turn,
determine the extent to which a conceptual tool might be implemented. That is to say, Linda came to understand that implementing the input hypothesis must be done relative to the learner’s level of proficiency as opposed to an exclusive focus on aiming to make the input as comprehensible as possible.

In our first in-depth interview, when asked, “How did your elementary field experience impact your views of language teaching and learning that you had prior to entering the program?” Linda responded in the following manner:

I think it really made me realize that you can speak in another language, and that there are so many other things you can supplement it with to make it comprehensible. I guess part of it is the willingness of the students to really try to understand what you're saying, and to be engaged in the language when it is spoken to them. … I learned a lot about just teaching in general through the elementary placement. I learned about presenting information to them, and how that does not mean that they learn it. I think I just kind of assumed before I ever really had any experience teaching that you teach them something, they get it—that’s not the case. (In-depth interview: April 12, 2010)

4.2.2 The high school setting
This section consists of (a) a profile of the high school where Linda completed her second first field experience and student teaching; (b) a discussion of how she negotiated her role within the high school activity system relative to its social context; (c) an analysis of how she went about implementing conceptual, physical, and practical tools; and (d) the ways in which her conceptualization of these tools evolved relative to classroom teaching practices. In addition, relevant comparisons will be drawn with Linda’s teaching and learning in the elementary school activity setting.
Portland High School: School profile

As did Gloria, Linda completed her second field experience and student teaching at Portland High School, a public school (grades 9-12) located in a large suburb of a Midwestern state. At the time this study was conducted (March 2010-June 2010), Portland High school’s student enrollment totaled 1,593. There were 82 full-time teachers and a student-teacher ratio of 19:1. The student population (29% being eligible for free/reduced lunch) was 75% White (non-Hispanic), 15% Black (non-Hispanic), 7% Hispanic, and 0.2% Asian/Pacific. The school’s foreign language department comprised of a total of 6 teachers: Four teachers of Spanish; 1 teacher of German; and 1 teacher of French. A state-certified teacher of Spanish with a Master’s degree in foreign language education and over eight years of teaching experience served as Linda’s mentor for both field experience and student teaching at Portland High. Coincidentally, Linda’s mentor teacher was a graduate of the teacher education program in which she (Linda) was enrolled.

As seen in Table 4.6, Linda taught 2 levels of Spanish, which were both year-long courses: (1) Spanish I, an elementary, or beginner’s course; and (2) Spanish III, an intermediate course. It is important to note that terms such as “elementary” and “intermediate” used by the department did not necessarily describe the proficiency level of students as the minimum grade requirement for transitioning from one level of Spanish to the next (e.g., from Spanish I to Spanish II) was a D-. 
Table 4.6: Linda’s Student Teaching Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>8:00-8:50 a.m.</td>
<td>Spanish I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>8:55-9:45</td>
<td>Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>9:58-10:48</td>
<td>Spanish I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>10:53-11:42</td>
<td>Spanish I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>11:47-12:36</td>
<td>Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>12:14-1:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Spanish III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>1:35-2:25</td>
<td>Spanish III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>2:30-3:20</td>
<td>Spanish I</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For her field experience, Linda designed 4 mini-lessons (i.e., lesson plans of 15-20 minutes in length) which were taught in her Spanish I classes over a period of four weeks (one day per week) in the winter quarter (January-March) of 2010. On the Monday of each week of her field experience, Linda taught each of the 4 lessons in all 4 Spanish I classes (except for her third lesson which was taught in only 2 Spanish I classes), totaling 14 lesson presentations. Four reflective journal entries were written for each of the 4 mini-lesson plans which were implemented.

Immediately following her field experience, Linda began a 12-week (March-June) student teaching practicum in the spring of 2010. During her student teaching, Linda assumed the teaching schedule of her mentor teacher, teaching 6 classes per day, as seen in Table 4.6: Four at the Spanish I level, and 2 at the Spanish III level. Spanish I classes primarily comprised of 9th grade students, while Spanish III mainly included 11th graders. The number of students in the Spanish I classes ranged from 17-29 students, while the
Spanish III class sizes ranged from 18-23 students.

*The social context: Role negotiation and perceptions of attitudes toward language learning*

In transitioning from the elementary to the high school setting, some of the challenges Linda faced were in regards to student motivation, the nature of the student-teacher relationship, and how these related to language teaching and learning:

I prefer the elementary setting. I have an easier time like, reading a book and acting it out with elementary kids, which I think is great with language teaching. I think that kind of thing really compliments language teaching, which I found to be easier with the elementary kids. I think the difference in motivation was hard for me to deal with at first. I think there's more of an inherent motivation with the younger kids. You know, when kids are 7 years old they love learning: They haven't developed that attitude that I see in some high school kids where they just reject school. You have their attention almost automatically, whereas with the high schoolers, you have to work for it. And it's the same with respect: You have to work for it with high schoolers. It does not just show up. (In-depth interview: April 12, 2010)

Linda noticed a vast gap between teaching in the elementary, versus the high school setting as she began filtering her new experiences of high school foreign language teaching through the interpretive lens of her volunteer work as (a) an undergraduate student working with ESL students at the elementary level, and (b) her field experience at Hillcrest Elementary:
Anything that I knew related to teaching was with kids who loved me, who wanted to hug me every time I walked in the classroom, and loved anything I was teaching them. And I'm like "Oh, this is wonderful." And then I go into the high school and it's considerably different. They don't like me automatically. Well, some of them, maybe; but they don't hug me. They don't love Spanish automatically, I mean, overall. Some students do have kind of a love for the language, but I think it was just kind of the really the difference in kids at those two distinct ages. (In-depth interview: April 12, 2010)

Not only was Linda faced with the challenge of adjusting to individual differences in students’ attitudes toward language learning, and her, as a student teacher, but also the differences in approach to language teaching between her and her mentor teacher, and the extent to which she was willing to expand the boundaries of this activity system by introducing pedagogical tools which would challenge the status quo. In the following interview excerpt, Linda compared her approach to teaching with that of her mentor teacher’s:

Adrian: Based on your observation of your high school mentor teacher’s teaching, as well as your conversations with her over the school year, to what extent would you say your approach to foreign language teaching is similar to, or different from hers?

Linda: I think that we are similar in the fact that, in conversations we've had, we talked about getting to know the students and building a relationship with them. That has always been central to my teaching approach. I think in that way, we're pretty similar. I feel that I focus more on (or at least intend to [focus on]) communicative language teaching than she does. Her style is rather paper-and-pencil based. There would be several days where I would observe her—It was the Spanish 3s [both Spanish III classes]—and they
would be doing packets or something like that. So I think that differs from my intended approach. (In-depth interview: June 9, 2010)

Although Linda, as described in the above quote, had an “intended approach” of CLT, she expressed much reservation with respect to implementing language teaching methods that differed from those of her mentor teacher’s. As she revealed in her sixth week of student teaching,

At this point, I still take a lot of guidance from my mentor and I don't know how much I'll ever really be away from that. I feel like it’s still her classroom, and when she does things a certain way, and recommends me doing things a certain way, I have a hard time completely pulling away from it. (In-depth interview: April 12, 2010)

Linda wrestled with how to position herself as a student teacher relative to the ascribed authority of her mentor teacher, as well as the type of language instruction that she perceived to be the norm at Portland High. During our first in-depth interview, upon mentioning that I would leave the topic of her work relationship with her mentor teacher for our second interview, Linda interjected,

One small thing about that. My mom and I were talking about this the other day. To me, the student teaching experience is just a little strange because it is somebody else's class; and these are her students; and she has created an environment in this class; and I can come in; and I can do my thing; and I can try to work with it. And my mom was like, “Yeah! I’ve heard it being compared to like riding somebody else's bicycle but not being able to adjust any of the gears. And it's true! I was like, "That makes sense, mom.” You are kind of taking on somebody else's thing, and

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doing as much with it as you can, but you are kind of limited in some ways. (In-depth interview: April 12, 2010)

In one of our post-observation interviews, Linda and I discussed ways in which she could create more opportunities for practicing meaningful usage of verb forms as opposed to verb conjugation exercises. Although she was quite accepting of my advice, she remained hesitant:

I also struggle a little though because it is very different than what happens at Portland High. Sometimes I'm like, ‘What is my role? How much can I really differ from what I'm being taught to do in that high school setting? I am [just] a student teacher. (Post-observation interview: April 12, 2010)

Notwithstanding Linda’s hesitance in implementing an approach that differed from the language teaching norms at Portland High, she did attempt to strike a balance between the motives of her teacher education program and those of her high school (and elementary) setting. When I enquired as to how she went about meeting the expectations of both the university, and high school setting, she explained,

First, I would talk to the mentors and try to meet their expectations, and then I would go in and see different areas where I could tweak things to make them also meet the M.Ed.’s expectations more. I tried to do something that combined the expectations of both; but I feel like in the end, it was kind of like, “This is their classroom. I need to follow their wishes first of all, and then do as much as I can to insert different things that are more related to what we're learning in the M.Ed. program.” (In-depth interview: June 9, 2010)
More specifically, when Linda was asked how she handled specific instances where her teaching approach might have been at odds with that of her mentor teacher’s, she was very specific as to how she went about negotiating her stance:

I would just say, “You know, I wanna try this activity, or I wanna try this method.” Sometimes I’d even say that we’ve been learning about different methods or approaches in school that I’d like to try. And she's [mentor teacher] very supportive. It never seems like she felt like I was stepping on her toes or anything. So she was supportive of me trying new things. I would just say, "Oh! I'll give this a shot." (In-depth interview: June 9, 2010)

By examining the relationship between contexts of teaching and learning from a socially constructed viewpoint, it became evident that Linda’s transition from the elementary to the high school activity setting was mediated by her prior teaching experiences in elementary school settings both as an ESL volunteer and as a pre-service teacher. Once in the high school setting, however, a process of negotiating competing motives and redefining her role in the activity setting relative to that of her mentor teacher’s began to unfold—one which never occurred during the elementary field experience.

**Implementing conceptual tools in the high school setting**

In the high school setting, Linda’s main sources of conceptual tools were the literature on second language acquisition, and state standards. However, in contrast to 15 mentionings of the state standards during her field experience, Linda made mention of the state standards only three times during student teaching (see Appendix F). In terms of the
theory of communicative competence, as in the elementary school setting, grammatical competence ($f = 129$) was, by far, the most dominant conceptual tool implemented by Linda, as shown in Table 4.4 (Note that the frequency of mentionings for Linda’s implementation of pedagogical tools in the high school setting is based upon the sum of frequencies for “Winter 2010” and “Spring 2010”). This tool was reflected through the teaching of vocabulary and explicit grammar instruction (e.g., teaching grammatical forms such as the preterit tense and indirect object pronouns). Linda addressed sociolinguistic competence (Table 4.4; $f = 43$) by using it as a tool to provide a thematic focus for her lessons (e.g., dining in a restaurant, playing sports). In contrast to the elementary school setting, Linda’s teaching in the high school setting was responsive to the development of sociocultural competence (Table 4.4; $f = 35$) through the comparison, and presentation of cultural products (e.g., target culture cuisine) and practices (e.g., restaurant etiquette). Similar to the manner in which sociolinguistic competence was addressed, the concept of sociocultural competence also provided a thematic framework for Linda’s lessons. It is noteworthy that teaching for sociocultural and sociolinguistic competence, as described above, was far more evident during Linda’s field experience than in her student teaching. In sharp contrast to her teaching in the elementary school setting, which drew extensively upon strategic competence (Table 4.4; $f = 14$), Linda’s teaching showed a sharp decrease in the use of strategic competence in the high school setting, as seen in Table 4.4 ($f = 5$) which is a noteworthy observation in light of the fact that far more lessons were taught in the high school, than the elementary school setting. As in the elementary school setting, Linda did not target discourse competence in her teaching at Portland High.
Whereas the above-mentioned conceptual tools in the elementary school setting were used in combination with each other, analysis of the use of these tools in the high school setting produced a contrasting image: The concepts of sociolinguistic and sociocultural competence—although, on a theoretical level, were used to establish an underlying theme for her lessons, as previously mentioned—were rarely used as vehicles through which the presentation and practice, or use of vocabulary, and grammatical forms were carried out. This feature, however, was most descriptive of her student teaching: In comparing the use of grammatical, sociolinguistic, and sociocultural competence during Linda’s high school field experience versus her student teaching, it became evident that there was a greater degree of interconnection among these three conceptual tools during her field experience. In her first mini-lesson, for example, Linda took a bottom-up approach in reviewing vocabulary related to food and dining in the target culture. Students were required to read four restaurant menus (each taken from a restaurant in a Spanish-speaking country), and identify food and dining vocabulary to which they had been introduced. They were also encouraged to use reading comprehension strategies such as identifying cognates, and drawing upon contextual clues to assist in comprehending unfamiliar terms. Students’ comprehension of the material was assessed through their written response (in the L1) to the following questions:

1. What are some of the foods that you recognize on the menu?
2. In what Spanish-speaking region would you typically find the foods found in your restaurant’s menu?
3. Do you eat any of these foods in your own culture?
4. What different types of foods does your restaurant offer?
5. Do they offer appetizers or small plates? Dessert?
6. Do you see any American influence in any of the food items offered on your menu?
   (Lesson plan: January 20, 2010)

In her reflections on this lesson, Linda stated that “although the activity was not quite a communicative activity, it was definitely working towards the students being able to use the vocabulary they were acquiring in a communicative context” (Reflective journal: January 28, 2010).

As in the elementary school setting, the concepts of target language use (see Table 4.4; \( f = 101 \)) and the input hypothesis (see Table 4.4; \( f = 15 \)) remained major focus areas for Linda. However, as Table 4.4 illustrates, in the high school setting, Linda’s lessons were marked by extensive codeswitching (\( f = 51 \)) and more frequent use of the L1 in her instruction. Additionally, the conceptual tool of L2-L1 translation (Table 4.4; \( f = 16 \))—one which was not present in the elementary school setting—was often utilized in the high school setting. For Linda, L1 use was tied to explicit grammar instruction.

In contrast to the students in the elementary school setting, some of Linda’s high school language learners showed much resistance to using the target language. This can be attributed, in part, to the fact that Linda’s target language use in this setting contrasted with that of her mentor teacher’s. Nonetheless, she remained resolute in her efforts to maximize her target language usage:

Another aspect that I could improve is my use of the target language. I do know that it is possible to use the target language almost 100% of the time, but it is not used all
that much in the class by my mentor teacher and the students have a hard time when I use a lot of the target language. Omaggio Hadley (2001) refers to Krashen’s input hypothesis which emphasizes the importance of comprehensible input in the language learning process, and for this reason I know the importance of exposing the students to a high amount of comprehensible input in the target language. … I will also push for output on their part, but one thing at a time. (Reflective journal: February 4, 2010)

The above quote reflects a tertiary contradiction (Engeström, 1987) between one of the central motives of the university activity system (maximizing target language use), and the prevailing tradition in this sub-setting (Linda’s mentor teacher’s classes) of the high school activity system (i.e., minimal target language use).

In her third mini-lesson reflection, Linda documented some of the concerns she had in regards to implementing the construct of comprehensible input relative to students’ language proficiency, and her plan of action for addressing them:

I sometimes struggle with using Spanish that is comprehensible to the students, which I know the importance of, due to Krashen’s input hypothesis (Omaggio Hadley, 2001, p. 61). I try to speak slowly and use simple words and phrases, but sometimes I forget and begin to speak Spanish the way I would normally speak it. I really need to remember that these students do not know much Spanish and that I have to speak very slowly and have ample visual support when I am using the target language. This has been hard for me, but I know I will get used to it. (Reflective journal: February 14, 2010)

Although, in the above quote, Linda spoke of adjusting her target language input to her learners’ proficiency levels in somewhat general terms, evidence from our in-depth
interview (almost two months after the above reflective journal entry) revealed that she
did not simply have a normative standard for using the target language across all classes,
but rather adjusted her target language use according to the course level (i.e., Spanish I
vs. Spanish III):

With the [Spanish] 3s, I can speak Spanish to their level, and they'll get it. They
might be like, “Oh! What’s was that word?” But most of the time, they get it. But it's
fun because I was used to teaching the 1s [Spanish I classes] —that's really what I got
into [started teaching] first—and everything you say you really have to think about:
You have to think, “Is this gonna be comprehensible?” Rather than using the future
tense [iré - I will go.] I would say, “Voy a __” [I am going to __]; but with the 3s
[Spanish III classes] you can just kind a speak Spanish, which was nice. (In-depth
interview: April 12, 2010)

Implicit in the above quote is the assumption that, from Linda’s point of view,
there is an inverse relationship between course levels and input modification: That is to
say, for students in more advanced courses, less modification of the input is required,
whereas for students in lower-level courses, more modification, and conscious
monitoring of the input is necessary.

Linda’s positioning her target language input relative to her learners’ language
proficiency was a source of secondary tensions (Engeström, 1987): First, between the
more advanced nature of the target language used in her own daily speech, and the more
varied used of the target language needed to implement “i + 1” based on the course level
or students’ proficiency level; and second, between her motive to expose students to more
of the target language than what they were accustomed to, versus the perceived low
student motivation for target language use.

In her lesson planning, Krashen’s input hypothesis was a motivating force that
came with its own primary tension as it related to the use of the principal conceptual tool
of language. Linda was mindful of striking a balance between input containing structures
familiar to students, and input unknown to them, as she explained in a post-observation
interview when asked, “Did you design the lesson with any particular theory or concept
in mind?”

I try to keep Krashen’s i+1 theory [in mind]. As far as with my foreign language,
or target language use, I try to use as much Spanish as possible so that they are exposed
to it as much as possible—just at their level or maybe a little above. I'm not
scared of using words they don’t know, but I don't wanna overwhelm them with
bunch stuff they might not understand. (Post-observation interview: March 10,
2010)

In addition to the input hypothesis, Linda stated that her lesson planning was
based on the CLT approach, often using the term “communicative” in describing the
conceptual underpinning of her lessons, as she stated, “I feel like I always try to think
communicative. You know—CLT” (Post-observation interview: May 4, 2010). In our
first post-observation interview during student teaching, when asked, “Did you design the
lesson with any particular theory or concept in mind?” Linda responded,

I guess I try to design all lessons based on a communicative approach. I think that it
is important to have them practice written form, but I think the spoken aspect of it is
just as, if not, more important. So I guess my most important theory that I was thinking of was a communicative-based, or task-based approach. (Post-observation interview: March 10, 2010)

The above discussion on Linda’s conceptual tool appropriation shows that although Linda’s teaching during her high school field experience reflected grammatical, sociolinguistic, and sociocultural competence as interconnected concepts, this did not extend into student teaching wherein there was an almost exclusive focus on grammatical competence. As in the elementary school setting, the concepts of target language use and input hypothesis were key focus areas for Linda. However, the high school setting allowed Linda to acquire a more nuanced view of these concepts as they were positioned relative to the teaching of not only one class (as in the elementary context), but 6 classes of two proficiency levels (Spanish I and III).

The Implementation of physical and practical tools in the high school setting

As seen in Table 4.5, in the high school setting, the tools that were most central to Linda’s teaching were visuals (f = 21); flash cards (f = 9); and realia (f = 8). Visuals, the most utilized of all the physical tools used in this setting, were mainly in the form of real-life pictures shown on PPT slides, or drawings on overhead transparencies that accompanied the course textbook. These visuals were used primarily for the practice or review of vocabulary. In the high school setting, pictures were used to a lesser extent than in the elementary school setting, while flash cards—which were never used in the elementary school setting—were frequently utilized for vocabulary review activities.
Although Linda’s emphasis on the use of realia (i.e., artifacts from the home and target culture) was evident in lesson plans created as part of her materials development project, the implementation of this physical tool in the high school setting was restricted to her field experience. For example, for her second mini-lesson, Linda brought in props for students to utilize in their skits on dining in a restaurant. Her principal rationale for providing the props was to increase student engagement:

I . . . provided the students with props for their skits, which some of them seemed to be excited about, so this added another level of engagement for the students. Also, as Curtain & Dahlberg (2004) suggest, the use of props or hands-on material can help to engage the students and to better learn the language (p. 30). I was frustrated the previous week because the students did not seem as engaged in my activity as I had hoped, but they had fun with the skits this week and there seemed to be a higher level of student engagement. (Reflective journal: February 4, 2010)

Although the use of realia was seen only during Linda’s field experience, it was the means through which she gained deeper insight into the relationship between authenticity and comprehensible input. As a pre-service teacher, one of Linda’s principal goals was to create opportunities for authentic language input and use. In fact, when she was asked to give her own definition of the communicative language teaching approach, she did so relative to the notion of authenticity:

I would describe it I guess as like creating some sort of authenticity to the
language use and making so that it's not just like arbitrary activity but something meaningful to the students. They're actually communicating something authentic and real in the target language. (In-depth interview: April 4, 2010)

Linda, however, soon faced the task of balancing authenticity with comprehensibility. In reflecting on this primary tension (Engeström, 1987), experienced through teaching her first mini-lesson, Linda stated,

Another facet of the lesson that I was not thrilled with was the difficulty that some students had with understanding the menus [menus from restaurants in the target culture]. I realized that the materials, although authentic, might not have been fully comprehensible to the students, which can be a bit tricky when designing a lesson plan around them (Omagio Hadley, 2001, p. 140). … I think I may have overestimated their comprehension in the foreign language. (Reflective journal: January 28, 2010)

In the high school setting, Linda’s mentor teacher (see Appendix F; \( f = 39 \)) and foreign language course textbooks (see Appendix F; \( f = 34 \)) were the leading sources of practical tools. To a lesser extent, as in the elementary school setting, Linda drew upon the state standards (see Appendix F; \( f = 18 \)) as a source of practical tools—mainly during her high school field experience. Given the predominance of her mentor teacher and course texts as sources of practical tools, it is no surprise that the extent to which Linda drew upon the literature on foreign language teaching methods (see Appendix F; \( f = 14 \)) as a source of practical tools in the high school setting was relatively equal to that of her field experience’s (see Appendix F; \( f = 16 \)). The fact that there was no dramatic increase
in the frequency of mentionings for practical or conceptual tools between the elementary and high school setting—despite the fact that the overwhelming majority of Linda’s instruction occurred during student teaching—might be due, in part, to the fact that,

I feel like I have all that stuff [coursework materials such as class notes, textbooks, past assignments] in my brain. … Definitely, I take all of it into consideration when I’m planning, but I didn't directly open a book and refresh my memory on a concept or method; but I definitely keep a lot of them in mind. (Post-observation interview: March 10, 2010)

As seen in Table 4.5, Linda drew upon a wide range of practical tools while teaching in the high school setting. The primary practical tools Linda employed included speaking ($f = 57$), and writing ($f = 38$) activities which, in many cases involved students working in groups of 2, 3, or 4. As regarding the structure of the activities, as seen in Table 4.5, Linda placed a strong emphasis on group work as one of her central practical tools ($f = 43$). Most noticeable, in sharp contrast to her high school field experience, there were only 2 mentionings of reading comprehension activities during student teaching.

In contrast to Hillcrest Elementary—where there were no reservations on the part of the students to speak in the target language—at Portland High, Linda described students’ lack of target language use as one of the principal challenges in regards to implementing CLT. When she was asked to describe some of the challenges she might have faced in implementing CLT, she responded,
I would say with high school it was hard to get them to be OK with using the language without being scared of making mistakes. That was one of the initial challenges that I faced. And I think it was also hard to just get them thinking that they could speak Spanish; and that it isn't this impossible thing. So I think I kind of just had to work on changing their mindset a little bit. … I would always just state to them, "It's ok if you make mistakes and don't say things perfectly. That's part of learning a language." I wasn't going to be judging them if they weren't speaking perfect Spanish because I went through the same process when I was learning the language. (In-depth Interview: June 9, 2010)

As mentioned prior, Linda’s student teaching experience—which represents the majority of her classroom instruction, was dominated by a focus on grammatical competence, in particular, vocabulary and grammar instruction. Using observation field notes taken from Linda’s student teaching, I shall describe the nature of the instructional activities that were used to facilitate the implementation of grammatical competence, while highlighting their relationship—or lack thereof—to conceptual tools such as target language use, and sociolinguistic competence; and physical tools such as pictures and flash cards.

**Vocabulary instruction**

During her student teaching, Linda’s primary mode of reviewing chapter vocabulary in both her Spanish I and III classes (related to various themes, e.g., travel, sports) was by using an L2-L1 translation technique. This method of vocabulary review occurred in two forms: (a) as whole-class, teacher-led activities; or (b) pair work. For example, (to illustrate the former), Linda transitioned into one such vocabulary review by
stating, “Ahora, vamos a repasar el vocabulario” [Now, we are going to review the vocabulary] (It is worth mentioning here that using the target language to transition into an activity was common practice for Linda.). She then proceeded to orally assess students’ knowledge of a few vocabulary items, as seen in the excerpt below. With the exception of question 1 and 5, students were required to orally respond with the equivalent L2 translations:

1. ¿Cómo se dice ball? [How do you say ball?]
2. ¿Qué significa lanzar? [What’s the meaning of lanzar?] It could mean two things.
3. ¿Qué significa golpear? [What’s the meaning of golpear?]
4. ¿Qué es la red? [What’s la red?]
5. And how would you say “on top of”? (Observation field notes: March 10, 2010)

Vocabulary review that took the form of pair work was typically flash card, (L2-L1) translation activities. For this type of activity, each flash card had one vocabulary item (typically a verb or noun) in the target language on one side, with its English translation on the other. Working in pairs, students took turns in providing translations in the L1. For example, with a flash card in hand, student “A” would state, “La cama!” and student “B” would respond, “Bed!” This flash card activity—in which students were excitedly participating—was in the form of a game which involved a race between each student pair to produce the correct number of translations within a time frame of approximately 2 minutes. To a lesser extent, in subsequent lessons which were observed, as a teacher-led activity, Linda had individual students orally produce the vocabulary item that defined a picture displayed to the class.
In our 7th post-observation interview, it was clear that Linda preferred the flash card activity over the picture-word association activity (a method I suggested to her as an alternative to the L2-L1 translation exercise described above). She explained her motive for the activity in the following manner:

I think the flash cards might be more practical. I feel it's something every student would get more involved in—that it would be like, when you turn to your partner and you're doing the activity, you're engaged in what's happening right here. And I think that was kind of what attracted it to me—was that it seemed more like something that every student would really be involved in. (Post-observation interview: May 4, 2010)

Although it appeared that students’ L2-L1 translation (as opposed to L1-L2 translation) was by choice, and not as result of directions from Linda to that effect, she questioned whether her students—at the Spanish I level, in particular—were capable of producing translations in the L2:

Should they be able to do that? Like right away? You know what I mean? Cause to be honest, I don't think many of them spend much time outside of class with their Spanish homework … I would love to get to the point where I felt like they'd be comfortable with producing the Spanish, but I don't think they are right now. (Post-observation interview: May 4, 2010)

Based on the above analysis of these two types of vocabulary instruction, a secondary tension (Engeström, 1987) emerged between Linda’s motive of student engagement and the ideal motive of target language output, with the former taking
precedence over the latter. Additionally, in Linda’s view, oral production in the target language—for practicing vocabulary—was not an immediate goal. It is also noteworthy that Linda’s vocabulary instruction was exclusively limited to L2-L1 translation, or vocabulary identification in the L1. Furthermore, the structure of the vocabulary review activities was deemed to be a more efficient way of preparing for written assessments, including vocabulary quizzes (a topic which will be later addressed in more detail)—identifying or translating as many words as possible within a short space of time given the volume of vocabulary items to be acquired. As Linda stated, “Their vocabulary list is pretty extensive [up to 50 items per chapter] … I’m sometimes amazed at how much vocabulary they have to know” (Post-observation interview: May 4, 2010).

The teaching of grammar

Linda’s teaching of grammar was dominated by the use of the L1 for explaining, or formatively assessing students’ knowledge of the structure of grammatical forms. Following her instruction on the grammatical form, students typically completed written practice exercises with a follow-up speaking activity. The example below reveals Linda’s formative assessment of students’ (Spanish I class) knowledge of the formation of verbs that require the use of indirect object pronouns. This formative assessment occurred prior to a sentence completion exercise that required use of these types of verbs:

–Ahora, estudiantes, vamos a practicar con los verbos gustar, interesar, y aburrir. [Students, now we’re going to practice with the verbs to like, to be interesting, and to bore]
OK, un momento en inglés [OK, just a moment in English]. (a transitional phrase that usually preceded an explanation of grammatical forms)

–If you’re going to say I like something, which one of these [pointing to three verbs on board] would we use?

---[Correct response – gustar]

--And if you’re saying I like something plural, like sports, how would we end gustar?

---[Correct response: gustan]

--And if something is singular, how would we end gustar?

---[Correct response: gusta] (Field notes: March 10, 2010)

After this brief review, students completed a sentence-completion activity in which they supplied the correct form of the verbs gustar, interesar, and aburrir, and indirect object pronoun based on their likes or dislikes, for example, Me gustan los deportes [I like sports.]. For each of the three verbs given, there were 6 sentences to be completed. As a follow-up to this activity, students, (working in pairs) took turns in interviewing each other about their likes and dislikes, for example, Student A would ask, “Te gustan los deportes?” [Do you like sports?], to which student B would respond, “Yes! I like sports, or, No! I don’t like sports].

In another case of explicit grammar teaching in one of her Spanish III classes, Linda explained the use of the imperfect subjunctive, followed by a written grammar exercise:

–Ahora vamos a repasar el imperfecto del subjuntivo [Now we are going to review the imperfect subjunctive].
–En inglés [In English]: So yesterday, we learned the imperfect subjunctive [shows PPT slide with verb endings of the imperfect subjunctive].
–When we have the preterit, imperfect, or conditional in the main clause, that’s when we use the imperfect subjunctive in the dependent clause. (Observation field notes: April 10, 2010)

For the follow-up activity, students were instructed to convert sentences from the simple present tense to the imperfect subjunctive. For example, (a) Él quiere que pagues la cuenta [He wants you to pay the rent] would become (b) Él quería que pagaras la cuenta [He wanted you to pay the rent]. Shortly after the activity began, Linda explained that students will need to “change the first verb [e.g., “quiere” in the above example] to either the preterit, imperfect, or conditional tense” (Observation field notes: April 8, 2010). As soon as Linda made this statement, I recorded the following in my field notes, which applied to both Linda’s explanation of the formation of the imperfect subjunctive as well as the practice activity:

There is no context that would determine which one of these [tenses] to use. What is it that determines which [tense] it would be? There’s an exclusive emphasis on the rules and mechanics of the imperfect subjunctive per se that overrides emphasis on the sociolinguistic context which determines its meaning and use. (Observation field notes: April 8, 2010)

In fact, even Linda’s students questioned the nature of the grammar exercise, enquiring as to how they would know—given the three choices of preterit, imperfect, or conditional tense—which tense to change the verb to.
Following the above-described activity with the imperfect subjunctive, each student created a booklet of sentences (after Linda modeled how this was to be done) which contained the present subjunctive on one side of each page, and the imperfect subjunctive on the other, similar to examples “a” and “b” above. In our post-observation interview, when asked, “Did you design the lesson with any particular theory or concept in mind, Linda candidly stated, “To be honest, that wasn't exactly the lesson I feel the best about. But that's OK. You know what I mean? That happens! And sometimes that's when you learn the most; but I wouldn't say that I had a specific theory” (April 12, 2010). Furthermore, when I asked Linda how she came up with the PPT explanation of the imperfect subjunctive, she explained,

I realized that I should have a lot more examples for them to see how the language—or that part of the language—is used would have been a lot more beneficial because I felt like I was just standing up there telling them things, and they had nothing to connect it to. (Post-observation interview: April 12, 2010)

CLT vs. traditional assessment

For Linda, the role of department-created assessments in determining the content of instruction and how such content would be delivered was clear. In my seventh observation of Linda’s teaching, students (Level I) completed a grammar exercise that required them to change verbs from the present to the preterit tense. For example, “Yo estudio español [I study Spanish]” would be rewritten as, “Yo estudié espanol” [I studied Spanish]. Students also played a flash card/translation game, described in the prior section. In our pos-observation conference for this lesson, Linda described the tension
between her goal of CLT and assessments, which were standardized assessments across the Spanish department:

I feel like I always try to think communicative. You know, CLT, but I don't feel like I fit that into this lesson as much. I felt like my lesson was kind of driven by what they're gonna need to know for the quiz: It's amazing how tests can control what happens in the classroom. (May 4, 2010)

In describing the relationship between the assessment of her students’ language proficiency (at the departmental, or district level), and her goal of CLT, Linda asserted, “I would say that my goal and the assessment were fairy disjointed. The school where I was, the department was heavily focused on traditional, written assessments” (In-depth interview: June 9, 2010). In juxtaposing her language teaching goals with the types of assessments that was commonly used in the Spanish department, Linda explained,

My goal as a language teacher is for the kids to be able to use the language verbally or orally more so than written—conjugating verbs. I do think that all that is important. I think you do need the verb conjugation practice and there should be some sort of assessment with it at some point, but I don't really agree with it being the final assessment of the unit. And I think written language is very important as well, but I like to focus more on spoken language; but the tests really didn't ever focus on language use or authentic language communication. It was rather fill in the blanks and conjugation. … And the final exams were all multiple choice. (In-depth interview: June 9, 2010)
Notwithstanding this trend in the assessment of language proficiency at Portland High, Linda stated that she did have the opportunity to create—in collaboration with her mentor teacher—and administer one speaking assessment. In our interview, Linda described the task for this assessment while explaining how it related to her language teaching goals:

I gave them four different scenarios and they had to pick one for the speaking assessment and talk about how they would handle the scenario if it happened to them in their life. I felt like that was more consistent with the teaching approach that I try to take. I enjoyed that assessment a lot more than any other. It really showed me more of their actual communication skills. (In-depth interview: June 9, 2010)

The above discussion on Linda’s implementation of practical tools indicates that to a large degree, the structure of Linda’s instructional activities were determined by one of the central motives of the activity setting in which she learned to teach—preparing students for traditional forms of assessments. Furthermore, it was primarily this motive that determined the types of conceptual tools Linda would draw upon such as teaching for grammatical competence, L2-L1 translation, and codeswitching.

In sum, Linda’s pedagogical tool appropriation in the university, elementary, and high school settings could not be described as mere transfer of tools from one setting to another. Rather, as she was being introduced to a range of conceptual and practical tools in her methods course, the extent to which she was able to further develop her understanding of these tools was mediated by the motives of each activity setting as well as her own goals at various points in her learning and development. The manner in which tool appropriation occurred, as well as the types of tools that were appropriated,
varied from one activity setting to the next. Whereas her teaching in the elementary school setting reflected grammatical, strategic, and sociolinguistic competence, which were implemented in combination with each other, her teaching in the high school setting showed a transition from teaching for grammatical, sociolinguistic, and sociocultural competence during her field experience, to an almost exclusive focus on grammatical competence during student teaching.

As Linda made efforts to redefine and negotiate her role within the high school activity system while aiming to strike a balance among the goals of her mentor teacher, the motives of the high school setting, and the motives of the teacher education program, primary, secondary, and tertiary tensions began to emerge: While some of these tensions contributed to Linda’s goal of implementing a CLT-oriented pedagogy (e.g., positioning the input hypothesis relative to students’ proficiency levels) others challenged such goal (e.g., more L1 versus the target language as the medium of instruction). Furthermore, in the high school setting, the motive of test preparation along with student resistance to, and the mentor teacher’s limited use of the target language were closely related to the emergence of conceptual tools which were not in use during the elementary school field experience such as L2-L1 translations and codeswitching. The analysis of Linda’s case of appropriating CLT revealed that her learning to teach was responsive to the goals and motives of multiple activity settings, thus problematizing the notion of a unidirectional transfer of concepts from the university to the school settings.
Chapter 5: Discussion and Cross-case Analysis

This chapter consists of a cross-case analysis of themes, patterns, and relationships between Gloria and Linda’s case of appropriating CLT, and will be presented through the lens of activity theory. The primary purpose of this cross-case analysis—based upon the findings of each case—is (1) to foreground both the similar and distinct ways in which Gloria and Linda’s model of pedagogical tool appropriation was shown to be interpretive, cyclical, dynamic, and transformative in nature, and the factors that contributed to these qualities; (2) to highlight the fact that the ideal object of communicative competence was appropriated to varying degrees and in different ways by both pre-service teachers even though they were members of the same cohort in the university activity system and the same Spanish department in the high school activity system; (3) to account for differences in Gloria and Linda’s implementation of pedagogical tools despite their having similar goals in regards to the development of communicative competence.

The main purpose of presenting the cross-case analysis through the theoretical framework of activity theory is, in the tradition of the extended case method (Vaughan, 1992), to revisit the structural components of Engeström’s (1987) triangular framework for activity—based upon evidence from the findings of this study—in an effort to more fully account for concept appropriation in teacher learning in general, and more
specifically, foreign language teacher education. The findings of this study confirm that there are two simultaneous representations of the components within Engeström’s (1987) triangular depiction of the structure of human activity as illustrated in Table 5.1: (1) A descriptive account of the institutionally ascribed characteristics of the activity system, which I shall refer to as its *material representation*; and (2) an interpretive account of such characteristics that are socially-constructed, negotiated, and are constantly shifting, which I shall term its *symbolic representation* of the activity system. One might refer to the material representation as the *who* and the *what* of the activity system, and the symbolic representation as the *how* of the activity system.

The distinction and relationship between these two forms of representation—although implicit in Engeström’s (n.d., para. 4) definition of the components of the triangular model—have not been clearly illustrated in the literature on activity theory. The foregrounding of this distinction is a necessary step in understanding the dual nature implicated in the triangular structure of activity. While the utility of the material representation as an organizational framework for one’s analysis of an activity system (as I have done in Chapter Three) might be clearly understood, there is a need for further theorization and elaboration of the symbolic representation of activity. That is to say, further research-based illustration is needed as to how constructs such as the division of labor, rules, and mediating tools are perceived, constructed, reconstructed, interpreted, and contested within, and across activity systems.
Table 5.1: Material and Symbolic Representations of Activity Systems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components of the Activity System</th>
<th>Material Representation</th>
<th>Symbolic Representation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>The individual or group whose agency represents the focal point of analysis.</td>
<td>The relational agency and social identity of the individual.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Object</td>
<td>The individual(s) or raw material at which the activity is aimed.</td>
<td>The <em>problem space</em>, phenomenon, or human need for which the activity is intended.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Members of the activity system or sub-groups who, by and large, share the same object.</td>
<td>The motives of the group that distinguishes it from other activity systems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rules</td>
<td>The explicit and implicit principles and regulations that establish the parameters for actions and interactions in the activity system.</td>
<td>Interpretations and perceptions of the regulatory principles of the activity system which may pose a threat to its prevailing norms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Division of labor</td>
<td>The horizontal assignment of tasks among community members.</td>
<td>The vertical positioning of members of the community based on power and status.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mediation tools</td>
<td>Physical and practical tools that facilitate the transformation of the subject into an outcome.</td>
<td>Conceptual tools that facilitate the transformation of the subject into an outcome.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Engeström (n.d., para. 3) asserts that while it is important to analyze the multiple relationships among components in the triangular model of activity, the researcher’s principal task is to understand the functions of the system as a whole and not merely as separate components. However, an appreciation for the theoretical contributions of interacting activity systems as an analytical framework is equally dependent upon a deeper understanding of its individual components. Thus, in the remainder of this chapter, I shall discuss the following components or features of activity systems through the lens of both its material and symbolic representations: (1) Rules and division of
labor; (2) subject, object, and motives; (3) historicity and tension; and (4) physical, conceptual, and practical tools.

**5.1 Rules and Division of Labor**

The findings of this study illuminate the fact that in an activity system, rules and division of labor are not static concepts. Rather, “rules may be questioned, reinterpreted and turned into new tools and objects” (Engeström, n.d., para. 8). When it comes to division of labor, “tasks are reassigned and redivided” (Engeström, n.d., para. 7) based on deliberate shifts in the balance of power at various points in time, and based upon the perceived role and status of community members. Furthermore, the construct of relational agency, as used in the context of this study, places the actions of the subject as a function of the conventions of the community, its multivoicedness, motives, and mediational tools.

Based upon the findings of the study, the extent to which the pre-service teachers challenged the conventions of their activity settings varied based on a combination of temporal context, relational agency, and shifts in balance of power. While Gloria, for instance, requested, and successfully negotiated more “balance of power” at the beginning of student teaching regarding the rules on the implementation of physical and practical tools (e.g., mentor teacher’s stance against using family pictures as a pedagogical tool), toward the end of student teaching, there was a shift in the balance of power in favor of the mentor teacher due to a transformation of the object from one of language teaching to preparing for multiple choice final exams. At this point, Gloria had no input in deciding upon the selection of the pedagogical tools that would mediate this
newly formed object—nor the rules that would guide their implementation—but did not contest such power imbalance.

Linda, on the other hand, being less certain of the extent to which she, as a student teacher, could push the established boundaries of her high school activity setting, did not consider it appropriate to contest its rules at the start of her student teaching, but rather opted wait until she was further along in the 12-week practicum. Thus, during the 8th week of student teaching, Linda experimented with an inductive approach to grammar teaching—one which was not in keeping with the norms of this setting. It is not only the timing that is noteworthy here, but the fact that there was a relationship between her decision to implement this approach to teaching grammar and her mentor teacher being absent from school that day—in other words, a day when the balance of power shifted in Linda’s favor. As she stated, “My mentor was actually out that day so I kind a really felt like I had complete control of the classroom and it was really my thing—it was my lesson” (In-depth interview: June 9, 2010). For both Gloria and Linda, it appears that the more input they had in designing assessment instruments or in planning for instruction, the more they felt at liberty to implement those pedagogical tools that were more in sync with the motives of their teacher education program.

5.2 Subject, Object, and Motives

In his theorization of subject-object dynamic in activity, Engeström (n.d.) asserts that first, “the subject constructs the object” (para. 10), specifying “those properties that prove to be essential for developing social practice” (as cited in Engeström, n.d., para. 10). Then, the object, being propelled by those motives delineated
by the subject, “gains motivating force that gives shape and direction to activity” (Engeström n.d., para. 10) by determining the extent to which goals and actions might be achieved. Although this explanation brings together the notion of subject, object, and motive in describing the co-constructive nature of collective activity, the findings of this study suggest that further specification is warranted. First, it appears that Engeström (n.d.) is referring to a sequence or cycle of events in the subject-object relationship. Second, a necessary distinction is to be made between what I wish to label the ideal object and the actualized object. This reciprocal relationship, represented in Figure 5.1, might be explained in the following manner: (1) The subject first creates the ideal object by outlining key elements for the development of activity. (2) The subject is then regulated by those goals and actions that are actually possible (i.e., the actualized object) given the rules of the activity system, the division of labor, and the tools through which activity is mediated.

Figure 5.1: Subject-object relationship

1: Subject creates object.

2: Object regulates subject.

To further clarify, in the context of this study, the ideal object (established for pre-service foreign language teachers) of teaching for communicative competence was constructed—though implicitly—by subjects (e.g., professors and university supervisors)
in the university activity system as well as state policy makers. The actualized object, however, was not a mirror image of the ideal object—and thus the relevance of this distinction—in that, Gloria and Linda appropriated the concept of communicative competence to varying degrees and in different ways both within and across activity settings based upon the rules, division of labor, motives of the activity settings, as well as the affective and linguistic features of the object (i.e., the language learner).

As with rules and division of labor, the evidence from this study supports the claim that “the object of activity is a moving target, not reducible to conscious short-term goals” (Engeström, 2001, p. 136) based on the fact that its motives are constantly being shifted and transformed. Table 5.2 shows the frequency of mentionings for the object/problem space that corresponds to Gloria (G) and Linda’s (L) university coursework, field experiences, student teaching observations and interviews. It is important to note that the objects listed in Table 5.2 are broad or general representations of the problem space at which the participants’ activities were directed.
Table 5.2: The Object of Activity Settings – Gloria and Linda

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Autumn 2009</th>
<th>Winter 2010</th>
<th>Spring 2010</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Methods of Foreign Language Teaching &amp; Elementary School Field Experience</td>
<td>Foreign Language Assessment and Materials Development &amp; High School Field Experience</td>
<td>Reflective Inquiry on Foreign Language Pedagogy</td>
<td>Student Teaching Observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom management</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign language teaching</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional time management</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language learning/acquisition</td>
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<td>L</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson planning</td>
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<td>L</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making lesson/instruction relevant</td>
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<td>L</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student assessment</td>
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<td>G</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>G</td>
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<td>G</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student participation</td>
<td>G</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

For both Gloria and Linda, their learning and development was a process of balancing multiple competing objects, all of which (as ideal objects), they considered to be important. However, as Table 5.2 shows, three objects were of utmost concern for the pre-service teachers: (1) Foreign language teaching; (2) Lesson planning; and (3) student assessment. The data analysis revealed that the unstable nature of the underlying motives of these objects resulted in an inconsistent pattern of conceptual tool appropriation across
activity settings as seen in Table 5.3. The object or activity of foreign language teaching, for example, being motivated by the concept of communicative competence, took on multiple forms across the university, elementary, and high school settings, as Table 5.3 illustrates ($X$ represents those concepts that were least evident or absent from either the elementary or high school setting; frequency of mentionings are given in parentheses).
Table 5.3: Gloria’s and Linda’s Appropriation of Communicative Competence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity Settings &amp; Idiosettings</th>
<th>Gloria</th>
<th>Linda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grammatical competence</td>
<td>Grammatical competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sociolinguistic competence</td>
<td>Sociolinguistic competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strategic competence</td>
<td>Strategic competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discourse competence</td>
<td>Discourse competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sociocultural competence</td>
<td>Sociocultural competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grammatical competence (24)</td>
<td>Grammatical competence (30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sociolinguistic competence (24)</td>
<td>Sociolinguistic competence (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strategic competence (17)</td>
<td>Strategic competence (14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discourse competence</td>
<td>Discourse competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sociocultural competence</td>
<td>Sociocultural competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school field experience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grammatical competence (17)</td>
<td>Grammatical competence (20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sociolinguistic competence (13)</td>
<td>Sociolinguistic competence (21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strategic competence</td>
<td>Strategic competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discourse competence</td>
<td>Discourse competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sociocultural competence (20)</td>
<td>Sociocultural competence (26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school student teaching</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grammatical competence (30)</td>
<td>Grammatical competence (52)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sociolinguistic competence (8)</td>
<td>Sociolinguistic competence (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strategic competence</td>
<td>Strategic competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discourse competence</td>
<td>Discourse competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sociocultural competence (18)</td>
<td>Sociocultural competence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As illustrated in Table 5.3 (To illustrate the transformation of the object, note that the high school setting is divided into two idiosettings, namely, high school field experience, and high school student teaching), the ideal motive of communicative competence was introduced to the participants in all its forms in the university setting through a combination of course readings, model lessons, and course projects; however, this ideal motive was transformed into its actualized form in the elementary school.
setting wherein discourse and sociocultural competence were no longer a part of the object of foreign language teaching. During the high school field experience, sociocultural competence reemerged as a motivating force, but at the expense of strategic the competence, while discourse competence remained excluded from the object. During high school student teaching, discourse and strategic competence remained excluded from the object of foreign language teaching for both Gloria and Linda; however, while the object of foreign language teaching still consisted of sociocultural competence in Gloria’s case, it (sociocultural competence) was missing from the object (foreign language teaching) in Linda’s.

In shifting the analysis from the more general or encompassing level of activity to the more concrete level of action (i.e., “what is being done” [Lantolf & Thorne, 2006, p. 217]) there were still many areas of overlap between Linda and Gloria’s efforts to appropriate CLT. For instance, in the case of both participants, grammatical competence took similar forms in the transition from the elementary to the high school setting. That is to say, at the elementary level, the action that was oriented toward the goal of grammatical competence was the teaching of vocabulary, whereas in the high school activity system, in addition to the action of vocabulary teaching was that of the explicit teaching of grammatical forms.

Notwithstanding the similarities at the action level of analysis, examining the operations (i.e., “the actual doing” [Lantolf & Thorne, 2006, p. 217]) involved in Gloria and Linda’s teaching revealed a number of disparities in their approach to meeting the shared goal of grammatical competence. In the elementary school activity system, Gloria’s presentation of vocabulary was executed by drawing relationships between the
vocabulary items per se, and the context with which they were associated (e.g., stating, “El delfín vive en el océano” [The dolphin lives in the ocean] while showing a picture of a dolphin in the ocean). This approach is reflected in the alignment between sociolinguistic and grammatical competence see in Table 5.3. On the other hand, for Linda, the use of sociolinguistic contexts as a means for the presentation of vocabulary items in the elementary school setting was less evident. However, when it came to reinforcing or reviewing vocabulary items previously introduced, there was a close connection between Linda’s primary practical tool of reading, and sociolinguistic competence—the target vocabulary (names of animals that live in the jungle) was reviewed through Linda’s reading of the book, *De paseo por la selva* [Walking Through the Jungle] with students listening for orally identifying and vocabulary items which were introduced.

In looking at the high school setting, there were also differences in how vocabulary was taught. In Gloria’s case, vocabulary instruction was done primarily in the target language through clearly defined sociolinguistic contexts wherein groups of students practiced using the vocabulary through speaking activities in a question-and-answer format. Gloria’s consistent target language use in this form of vocabulary instruction was associated with the motive of *El día de espanol* [Spanish Day]—a day when the rules of the activity setting declared that target language use by both subject (teacher) and students (objects) was mandatory for the entire instructional period. In Gloria’s case, the teaching of vocabulary brought together (1) the local history of the concept of *El día de espanol* with (2) the more global history of target language versus L1 use in facilitating the development of communicative competence, a relationship
wherein the parameters of the latter was established by the former. Linda’s vocabulary
teaching, on the other hand, was primarily mediated by L2-L1 translations and
codeswitching. Additionally, students’ practice with vocabulary items was limited to
vocabulary identification through L2-L1 translation (e.g., flash card game activity) as
opposed to vocabulary use in meaningful sociolinguistic or sociocultural contexts.

The above discussion confirms Engeström’s (n.d.) conclusion that “different
subjects, due to their different histories and positions in the division of labor, construct
the [actualized] object and other components of the activity in different, partially
overlapping and partially conflicting ways” (para. 6). As Table 5.3 shows, analyzing the
object and action of Gloria and Linda’s activities revealed many areas of similarities.
However, in looking at the how of their teaching (i.e., at the operational level—how they
used practical tools), areas of divergence began to emerge. Thus, the utility of an activity
theory perspective for examining pedagogical tool appropriation across space and time is
clear: It provides a tripartite analytical framework that allows the researcher to dig
beneath the surface to uncover the divergent patterns of teaching practices for subjects
sharing similar symbolic objects. Additionally, the research findings have provided for a
clearer definition and illustration of the constructs of subject, object, and motive as well
as the relationship between them when understood within the context of the conventions
of interacting activity systems and the actions and operations unfolding within, and
between them.
5.3 Historicity and Tensions

According to Engeström (2001), activity systems must be studied relative to their local histories as well as the global history of the theoretical constructs and tools that have mediated the activity, a principle which he refers to as historicity. Another key principle in the study of activity systems is the pivotal role of contradictions as principal sources of change and development (Engeström, 2001). The term *contradictions* is used to describe “historically accumulating structural tensions within and between activity systems” (Engeström, 2001, p. 137) as opposed to problems or conflicts. Although the notion of *tension* has been frequently used in studies examining learning and development through the framework of activity theory (e.g., Johnson et al., 2003; Smagorinsky, Cook, Moore, Jackson, & Fry, 2004), the nature of the tension(s)—that is, primary, secondary, or tertiary (Engeström, 2001; 1987)—to which the authors refer is usually not explicitly stated. Based on their findings, however, the types of tensions being discussed were limited to tertiary tensions between the university and the school. However, as Table 5.4 shows, the tensions with which Gloria and Linda had to contend were not restricted to those at the tertiary level, but also included multiple primary and secondary tensions. In addition to specifying the type of tension encountered, the activity setting associated with each tension is also given with *ES* representing *elementary school* and *HS* representing *high school*. Each type of tension is further divided into categories based on the specific components of the activity system involved.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tensions</th>
<th>Gloria</th>
<th>Linda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(A)</td>
<td>Inconsistencies between target language use and nonverbal cues used in an effort to make input comprehensible. (ES)</td>
<td>Inconsistent use of gestures used in an effort to make input comprehensible. (ES)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(B)</td>
<td>Using the L2 Versus the L1 to address classroom management concerns. (ES)</td>
<td>(1) Striking the balance between comprehensibility and authentic instructional materials. (HS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(2) Finding a balance between “i” and “+1” in i+1 (Krashen, ). (HS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(C)</td>
<td>Overcompensating for “i” in “i+1” (Krashen, 1982) through paraphrasing, leading to multiple forms of “+1” to express the same meaning. (ES)</td>
<td>Instructional activities based on the motive of communicative use of grammatical forms versus those (e.g., verb conjugation race) based on the motives of student engagement and participation (HS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(D)</td>
<td>Instructional activities that promoted “authentic” language use versus those geared towards sentence repetition. (ES)</td>
<td>Instructional activities (e.g. L2-L1 translation game) guided by the motive of student engagement versus activities driven by motive of comprehensible output. (HS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Secondary</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(A)</td>
<td>Adjusting the input relative to students’ levels of proficiency. (HS)</td>
<td>Adjusting the input relative to students’ proficiency levels (ES, HS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(B)</td>
<td>Instructional goal of developing students’ oral proficiency versus foreign language department’s tradition of paper-and-pencil tests. (HS)</td>
<td>Instructional goal of developing students’ oral proficiency versus foreign language department’s tradition of paper-and-pencil tests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(C)</td>
<td>Use of family pictures as ancillary instructional material which challenged mentor teacher’s longstanding rule of keeping personal pictures out of the classroom. (HS)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(D)</td>
<td>Mentor teacher’s taking control of lesson planning, mandating Gloria to use grammar translation approach to prepare students for final exams. (HS)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tertiary</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(A)</td>
<td>Foreign language department’s culture of traditional assessment versus university’s goal of authentic assessment. (HS)</td>
<td>Foreign language department’s culture of traditional assessment versus university’s goal of authentic assessment. (HS)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In Table 5.4 primary tensions A, B, and C represent tensions occurring between various types of conceptual tools (e.g., the target language, L1, and nonverbal cues) while primary tension D depicts tensions between practical tools. With respect to secondary tensions, A represents a tension between the subject’s use of a conceptual tool (i.e., target language), versus the object’s acquisition of the same; B illustrates a tension between the goal of the subject versus that of the community; C represents the tension between a physical tool and a rule of the activity system regarding its usage; and D represents tensions between the subject and the division of labor. At the tertiary level, the most dominant tension was between a motive of the high school activity system and the university activity system regarding assessment.

It is no surprise that Table 5.4, in general, shows more tensions occurring in the high school activity setting than in the elementary school setting. This can be explained by the fact that learning to implement pedagogical tools in the high school setting required Gloria and Linda to position their goals relative to the community’s rules, division of labor, and its objects (all of which had their own histories within the activity system) whereas in the elementary school activity setting—as relating to foreign language teaching—there were no pre-existing rules on the division of labor or on the implementation of pedagogical tools which the pre-service teachers had to negotiate. As a result, the nature of the tensions in the elementary school setting were more related to target language use and the input hypothesis as opposed to matters relating to assessments, the division of labor, and conflicting motives between the school and the university.
In looking at the tensions outlined in Table 5.4, it is noteworthy that even in those cases where Gloria and Linda encountered similar types of tensions (e.g., those related to target language use and comprehensible input), they experienced them in different ways (e.g., primary tensions A and C). Furthermore, although the course sequences (including field experiences) were the same for Gloria and Linda—being members of the same cohort—the sequence in which they encountered some tensions varied. For example, Linda first experienced secondary tension A in the elementary school setting, whereas Gloria first encountered it in the high school setting based on the fact that in her (Gloria’s) elementary school placement, the teaching of foreign languages was not a part of the curriculum. Similarly, Gloria first experienced primary tension C in the elementary school setting, whereas for Linda, this tension did not emerge until she got to the high school setting.

Smagorinsky et al. (2004), in investigating the tensions a pre-service elementary education teacher, Sharon (pseudonym), experienced during student teaching found that her mentor teacher did not provide her the opportunity to implement the pedagogical tools associated with the university’s motive of a constructivist approach to teaching, but rather expected her to adopt a traditional approach—a situation which turned out to be a source of unproductive tensions in the sense that they did not allow for further appropriation of pedagogical tools through practice. In contrast to Smagorinsky’s study, however, the tensions Gloria and Linda experienced, for the most part, could not be regarded as unproductive, problematic, or frustrating, but rather cognitively transformative. For example, their understanding of how to apply the input hypothesis (Krashen, 1982) in their classroom instruction went from a general or normative goal of
simply making input as comprehensible as possible (a partial application of the hypothesis) to one of finding a balance between “\( I \)” and “\( +I \)” in Krashen’s (1982) “\( i+1 \)” formula relative to students’ proficiency levels. Their understanding of this concept in its totality was primarily mediated through the teaching of Spanish courses at multiple levels (e.g., Spanish II and IV in Gloria’s case; and Spanish I and III in Linda’s case) in the high school setting where they came to the realization that the input hypothesis was not a unitary construct that could be applied in the same manner across course, or proficiency levels, but as a function of the learner’s proficiency level.

In contrast to the findings of Smagorinsky et al. (2004), amidst the secondary tensions between the goals of the pre-service teachers and their mentor teachers or the foreign language department (e.g., secondary tension \( B \)), and tertiary tensions between the motive of the foreign language department and that of the university (e.g., tertiary tension \( A \)), there were instances in which both Gloria and Linda were given opportunities by their mentor teachers to safely resist the status quo. For example, Gloria, in taking advantage of this opportunity (in collaboration with a fellow teacher of Spanish in the department), implemented a performance speaking assessment which required students to respond to one of three given scenarios (e.g., making a hotel reservation by phone in preparation for a trip to Barcelona). Gloria was quite pleased with the results of this type of assessment that was unusual for this activity setting:

> Of course a lot of them freaked out because they like routine and they don’t like change. So when they didn’t get their multiple choice test, they just freaked out completely; but I think it was good. They ended up really liking it, even though they complained at first. Actually, we went back to the normal test [i.e., multiple choice
and sentence completion] the next time and they were all upset, they wanted to try to talk [through the speaking assessment] again. (In-depth interview: July 5, 2010)

Similarly, in collaboration with her mentor teacher, Linda designed a speaking assessment wherein students responded to one of 4 given scenarios in the context of traveling to, or in a Spanish-speaking country. She described this form of assessment as being more in line with her goal of developing students’ oral proficiency. Whereas Sharon (Smagorinsky et. al, 2004) felt constrained by possible student resistance to ways of teaching that parted with the conventions of her activity setting “even if I had the freedom to try out a lot of things” (as quoted in Smagorinsky et al., 2004, p. 18), neither Gloria nor Linda were concerned about such possible outcome, but took full advantage of opportunities given by their mentor teachers to utilize those conceptual, physical, and conceptual tools which were more in line with their goals.

It is noteworthy that the nature of the resistance in the examples given above of Gloria and Linda’s implementation of alternative assessment contrasted with the type of resistance described by Smagorinsky (2002) in his study of Andrea (pseudonym), a preservice teacher of (L1) English transitioning from her university teacher education program to her first year of full-time teaching—a quiet rebellion (carried out through alternative teaching practices within the confines of one’s classroom) against “a heavily scripted language arts curriculum tied to district standardized tests” (p. 188). On the contrary, Gloria and Linda’s mentor teachers were fully aware, and approving of their efforts to enact an untraditional form of assessment which was not carried out covertly or even singlehandedly, but openly and collaboratively.
The results of this study illuminate the fact that while terms such as *acquiesce*, *accommodation*, and *resistance* (Smagorinsky, 2002) are more descriptive of secondary, tertiary, and even quaternary tensions, their utility in describing primary tensions such as those seen in Table 5.4 is limited: In the case of this study, the source of primary tensions had little to do with mentor teachers or other community members in the high school setting or conflicting motives between school and university. Rather, these tensions were more related to target language use, the input hypothesis, and instructional activities. In other words, as revealed through reflective journaling, the primary tensions in Table 5.4 were based upon Gloria and Linda’s own internal dialogue of interpreting and dissecting the meaning of theoretical constructs from their teacher education program through reflecting on how, and the degree to which they were evidenced in their instruction.

With respect to secondary tensions, however, there was evidence of resistance (e.g., Smagorinsky, 2002) as seen in secondary tension C (Table 5.4). This tension, in particular, did not unfold or manifest itself in the form of a quiet rebellion as Smagorinsky (2002) concluded, but an open resistance wherein Gloria successfully negotiated with her mentor teacher a complete change in the rule of the activity setting regarding the use of personal pictures in the classroom. On the other hand, secondary tension D (Table 5.4) might be labeled a case of accommodation, but in a different form than that described by Smagorinsky (2002). Gloria’s form of accommodation was not an adaptation of the lesson (i.e., grammar translation drills) she was required to teach by her mentor teacher (toward the end of student teaching), but rather an accommodation wherein Gloria, in addition to grammar translation activities, implemented activities that
were more oriented toward use of grammatical forms. Thus, the potential for tensions to provide learning opportunities was related to (a) the extent to which the mentor teachers created safe spaces for them (tensions) to be addressed; and (b) the extent to which the pre-service teachers were willing to alter the rules of the activity setting.

5.4 Conceptual, Physical, and Practical tools

Although pedagogical tools has been proposed as an umbrella term for conceptual, and practical tools (Grossman, Smagorinsky, & Valencia, 1999), the findings of this study show that adding physical tools as another layer of classification within the construct of pedagogical tools uncovered primary tensions that may have otherwise gone unnoticed had these physical tools been considered as mere ancillary materials or as assumed components of practical tools. For example, in Gloria’s case, secondary tension \( C \) (see Table 5.4) was a result of a philosophical difference between Gloria and her mentor teacher that was directly related to the role of personal artifacts (e.g., family photographs) in foreign language teaching. Similarly, for Linda, primary tension \( C1 \) came about as a direct consequence of her use of artifacts (i.e., restaurant menus) from the target culture.

Based on the aforementioned examples that reveal the mediational functions of physical tools, and a case for their inclusion in the category of pedagogical tools, it is necessary to revisit the foundations upon which Vygotsky’s (1978) definition of physical tools as well as other activity theorists’ appropriation of the term was built. Vygotsky (1978) theorized that in contrast to the reversibility of psychological or symbolic tools (i.e., in regards to the transformation in higher order psychological functions, they are
first externally orientation toward the object, and then toward subject of activity in social interactions between the individual and his or her interlocutor(s)), physical tools only carry an external orientation, which is to say that they can only bring about change in material objects. This characterization of physical tools, however, was based on the fact that Vygotsky (1978) defined them in the strictest sense of the term—that is, as material tools such as shovels and hammers. Likewise, as Wells (2002) critiqued, in Leont’ev’s (1981a) conceptualization of activity theory, “the artifacts that provided the mediational means tended to be material tools, such as spears, gearshift, and computers” (p. 43), which did not account for spoken and written discourse per se. Furthermore, activity theory has been traditionally applied to studying the actions and operations of employees in, and between a myriad of workplace settings such as hospitals, health centers, manufacturing industries, and schools (e.g., Engeström, 1995, 2001) as opposed to settings in which the unit of analysis is students learning in the classroom or teachers learning to teach.

If one accepts the idea that there is a place for considering physical tools as a unit of analysis in studying the learning and development of pre-service teachers, a direct transfer of the above-mentioned characterization of physical tools would be of limited utility. Rather, a retooling or reconceptualization of physical tools for purposes of foreign language teacher education research must include instructional materials (whether in digital or tangible form) such as flash cards, verb charts, pictures, and realia. On the surface, these physical mediational tools might seem as though they lack the reversibility of signs (e.g., theories and concepts). However, secondary tension C in Gloria’s case, and primary tension C1 in Linda’s case prove otherwise. The findings show that the use
of pictures and realia, in particular, were not only used to facilitate the development of the object’s (students) grammatical, sociolinguistic, and sociocultural competence, but were also perceived by Gloria and Linda to have brought about transformations in their own learning. How was this possible? In Linda’s case, for example, the restaurant menus were not perceived simply as tangible items with pictorial representations, and syntactic descriptions, but also simultaneous representations of the concepts of authenticity and comprehensible input. A combination of her perception of the physical tool along with students’ response to using the same resulted in a practical awareness of striking a balance between cultural artifacts and comprehensible input as a fundamental consideration in foreign language teaching. Also, at both the elementary and high school levels physical tools were perceived as representing the concept of appealing to multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1993).

It can be concluded, then, that when physical tools were perceived as having not only physical, but also conceptual properties, they were not only oriented toward the students’ language development, but also the pre-service teachers’ understanding of central concepts in both foreign language teaching and teaching in general. Based on the findings, in the activity of foreign language teaching and learning it is possible for physical tools to simultaneously assume a dual nature—both material and symbolic. Wells (2002) draws a similar conclusion in regards to material objects of activity, stating that the importance of the dual nature of objects is founded upon the following premise:

The materiality of the object is critical in allowing it to become a focus of joint
activity—something that can be sensually perceived, handled, and acted on. At the same time, it is the symbolic aspect of the object that allows it to participate in the students’ progressive attempts to increase their understanding of the phenomena under investigation. However, it is when the two modes are combined that the value of the “improvable object” is most evident because its material presence enables the teacher to mediate between the abstract curriculum devised by “experts” outside the classroom and the interests and competencies of the particular students for whose “educational progress” he or she is responsible. (p. 45)

In addition to the need for the inclusion and redefinition of physical tools as mediating artifacts within the category of pedagogical tools, the findings from this study also highlight the need for a redefinition of conceptual and practical tools as put forth by Grossman et al. (1999) in their reconceptualization of activity theory for purposes of studying the learning and development of pre- and in-service teachers. Although the theoretical framework developed by Grossman et al. for the application of activity theory to teacher learning was a valuable resource in carrying out this study, their definition of conceptual and practical tools, being informed by the teaching of L1 English/language arts, was only partially applicable to foreign language teaching.

Grossman et al. (1999) define conceptual tools as “principles, frameworks, and ideas about teaching, learning, and English/language arts acquisition that teachers use as heuristics to guide decisions about teaching and learning” (p. 14), whereas practical tools are defined as “classroom practices, strategies, and resources that do not serve as broad conceptions to guide an array of decisions but, instead, have more local and immediate utility” (p. 14). However, when it comes to foreign language teaching, the findings show that conceptual tools do include, but are not limited to theories, constructs, and principles
about teaching and language learning: For the foreign language teachers in this study, a combination of the target language and the L1, in themselves (not just principles about their role in the foreign language classroom), was the overarching and most central conceptual mediating tool.

The goal of the pre-service teachers was to use the target language as the primary means through which instruction was to be delivered. That is to say, in addition to designing and implementing practical tools to provide learning opportunities for the development of communicative competence, one of their main goals was to model what it means to use the target language in spoken discourse. It is no surprise, therefore, that to this end, Gloria and Linda drew upon Krashen’s (1982) monitor model—in particular, the input hypothesis, to mediate both the quality and quantity of their target language use. Their goal of target language use, however, was complicated by their use of the L1 or codeswitching mainly as a way of ensuring that the input was comprehended. This primary tension between the target language and the L1 resulted in an additional primary tension: Increased used of the L1 meant less opportunities for negotiating meaning in the target language.

In contrast to studies that take the English/language arts teacher as their unit of analysis (e.g., Johnson et al., 2003; Smagorinsky et al., 2007), wherein the quantity and quality of the teacher’s use of English is usually not a focus of the investigation, research on foreign language teachers’ pedagogical appropriation must consider the input or the spoken discourse through which instruction is delivered as a part of the construct of conceptual tool.
Based on the findings of this study, there appears to be a need for a more expanded definition of the relationship between conceptual and practical tools as expressed by Grossman et al. (1999). The findings show that the relationship between conceptual and practical tools is not a unidirectional one where theories and concepts are solely used to guide decision making regarding instructional activities, strategies, and resources. Rather, the relationship is bidirectional as in the subject-object relationship seen in Figure 5.1. While both Gloria and Linda were highly focused on using the input hypothesis to mediate their understanding of using target language as a means of instruction—accounting for how they would use physical tools (e.g. pictures) and nonverbal cues (e.g., gestures) to make input comprehensible—they came to the following realization: While appropriating the input hypothesis as a conceptual mediating tool began with their introduction to the concept through course readings and lectures, its implementation was not based on a step-by-step guide from a manual or course texts, but as a function of their knowledge of students’ proficiency levels in the target language grammar. To a large degree, decisions regarding when and what practical tools would be implemented, particularly at the high school level, were based upon the local realities of their activity settings (e.g., traditional assessments; emphasis on the teaching of grammar and vocabulary; perceived lack of motivation to speak in the target language; classroom management concerns; and varying levels of proficiency from one class to the next).
Chapter 6: Conclusion

In this chapter, first, I will provide responses to the three questions that guided this study. Second, I will discuss the implications of the findings, specifically, in relation to the ongoing debate regarding the knowledge base of language teacher education. Third, I will make recommendations for future research by putting forth a research agenda for further investigation into pre-service teachers’ pedagogical tool appropriation. Lastly, I will specify the ways in which this study has contributed to the research base on foreign language and general teacher education.

6.1 Responses to Research Questions

In this section, I shall provide direct responses to the questions which were used to guide this investigation into Gloria’s and Linda’s learning and development across three central activity settings, namely, their university teacher education program; their elementary school field experience; and their high school field experience and student teaching.
6.1.1 How and to what extent do pre-service foreign language teachers appropriate the communicative language teaching approach?

Based upon the framework put forth by Grossman et al. (1999) for defining levels or degrees of appropriation, which includes (1) lack of appropriation, (2) appropriating a label, (3) appropriating surface features, (4) appropriating conceptual underpinnings, and (5) achieving mastery, the findings place both Gloria and Linda at the forth degree of appropriation—the appropriation of conceptual underpinnings. That is to say, they were able to develop an understanding of the theoretical foundations that inform and motivate the practice of CLT. However, in terms of implementing the conceptual underpinnings through classroom practice, as seen in Table 5.3 and Appendix E and F, Gloria and Linda were not able to consistently implement lessons that reflect the tenets of a CLT curriculum as outlined in the relevant literature (Nunan, 1991; Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Savignon, 1997). By way of theoretical triangulation, seeing the extent to which Gloria and Linda appropriated CLT through Vygotsky’s (1994a; 1994b) system of classifying concept development (i.e., from complex to pseudoconcept, to [scientific] concept), shows that Gloria and Linda appropriated CLT as a pseudoconcept as opposed to a fully developed, unified scientific concept. That is to say, there was some evidence of internal contradictions and inconsistencies in their implementation of CLT principles that was a function of the settings and subsettings in which they learned to teach.

Although the above-mentioned systems of classification proved useful in drawing conclusions about the pre-service teachers’ appropriation of CLT, it is crucial to note that they (the above conclusions) cannot be regarded as absolute declarations of Gloria and Linda’s appropriation processes, but as functions of their elementary school field
experience, high school field experience, and high school student teaching. I must point out that this research study was not merely a matter of asking, “Did they (Gloria and Linda), or did they not appropriate CLT?” Rather, the study was about the extent to which such appropriation occurred. Based on the fact that the findings clearly show a reciprocal relationship between conceptual and practical tools, conclusions about concept appropriation cannot create a divide between the two. Thus, it can be said that the participants’ appropriation of the conceptual underpinnings of CLT (or appropriating it as a pseudoconcept) was, to a greater extent, informed by the activity setting of the elementary school field experience, and to a lesser degree, by their high school field experience and student teaching where consistent adherence to CLT principles was more of a challenge. It is also noteworthy that those lessons that were more closely aligned to a CLT approach were more representative of Orthodox CLT as opposed to Modern CLT (as described in sections 2.1.2 and 2.1.3 of Chapter Two). In general, by far, teaching for grammatical competence was the centerpiece of Gloria and Linda’s instruction, followed by sociocultural, sociolinguistic, and strategic competence.

In addressing the how of Gloria’s and Linda’s appropriation of CLT, the findings show that the temporal sequence of appropriating CLT was not one of a unidirectional transfer of concepts from teacher education coursework to the settings in which they practiced teaching. Rather, it was a cyclical, interpretive, and reflective process wherein Gloria and Linda utilized constructs and theories learned primarily from their methods course to expand their conceptual and practical toolkits through the following process: (1) They were introduced to conceptual tools through their methods course; (2) formed a tentative interpretation of them through lesson planning; (3) implemented them (to
varying degrees based on the goals and the motives of the university and school settings) through classroom instruction; (4) reinterpreted or revisited them through critical reflection, identifying primary, secondary, and tertiary tensions and making plans for their resolution; and then (5) implemented their reconceptualized version of the conceptual tools through classroom instruction. Gloria and Linda’s model of concept development, therefore, confirms Vygotsky’s (1994b) characterization of the process as “complicated, twisting, and, at times, zigzagging” (p. 245).

6.1.2 How and to what extent do pre-service foreign language teachers use conceptual, physical, and practical tools to mediate their appropriation of CLT?

The findings show that Gloria and Linda’s primary conceptual tool employed in their attempts to develop a CLT-oriented approach to foreign language teaching (in other words, teaching for the development of communicative competence) was the target language, in particular, their own target language use as a means for the delivery of instruction. They were not merely teaching students how to use the target language for communication, but were themselves in the process of internalizing a pedagogical model of oral target language production—teaching target language use by modeling it. It is no surprise, therefore, that Krashen’s (1982) monitor model, in particular, the input hypothesis was appropriated as a means of striking a balance between the quality and quantity of their target language use. It is indeed noteworthy that although Krashen’s monitor model has been one of the most highly contested SLA theories (Gass & Selinker, 2008; Gregg, 1984; VanPatten & Williams, 2007), it was a conceptual tool that held very
practical implications for Gloria and Linda. Among SLA theories, it was the most influential in shaping their appropriation processes.

In terms of physical tools, the participants used pictures as a means of facilitating the comprehensibility of the input or for providing a thematic and sociocultural context for language instruction. As regarding practical tools, for both Gloria and Linda, speaking activities were the most dominant, a finding which is not surprising given the fact that their primary goal—in terms of the four skills—was to provide opportunities for oral production in the target language. This goal was motivated by their noticing that at the high school level, students were reluctant to use the target language. Speaking, however, was mainly at the word or sentential level. Additionally, although students were frequently required to work in groups, there appeared to have been limited opportunities for negotiation of meaning or negotiated interaction. As explained in Chapter Five, the relationship between conceptual and practical tools was proven to be a reciprocal one: While Gloria and Linda drew upon theories and constructs of language learning and teaching (conceptual tools) to determine what instructional activities (practical tools) would be implemented and how such implementation would occur, the nature of their instructional activities and the goals associated with them, in turn, drove the selection of conceptual tools.
6.1.3 How do multiple activity settings mediate pre-service foreign language teachers’ appropriation of CLT?

The findings show that in the elementary school setting, both Gloria and Linda had unlimited flexibility in making decisions regarding the implementation of pedagogical tools based on the fact that there were limited opportunities for secondary or tertiary tensions to challenge the execution of their goals or the actualization of the motives of the university. However, in the high school setting, the extent to which they were able to utilize pedagogical tools in their appropriation of CLT varied between field experience and student teaching. Additionally, opportunities for implementing CLT practices were restricted by a curriculum wherein teaching for grammatical competence (explicit teaching of grammatical forms and vocabulary) was the central focus as well as traditional assessments of such competence. Although Gloria and Linda stated that they, with—some exceptions in Gloria’s case—were given the freedom to implement pedagogical tools from the university, the aforementioned motives of the high school setting represented implicit rules to which they felt compelled to adhere. This resulted in their engaging in teaching practices that resembled those experienced during their apprenticeship of observation as foreign language learners.

It is crucial to point out, however, that the explanation for the extent to which Gloria and Linda appropriated CLT not only has to do with the motives of the university versus that of the school, but also the individual goals that they both had for teaching. That is to say, actions such as increased use of the L1 in the high school setting, L1-L2 or L2-L1 translation, codeswitching, the absence of teaching for sociocultural and discourse competence in the elementary school setting (despite the wide latitude for implementing
pedagogical tools), and the sharp reduction in teaching for strategic competence in the high school setting were not proven to be a result of conflicting motives or the expectations of their mentor teachers, but rather a result of Gloria’s and Linda’s relational agency. That is to say, in the process of learning to teach, the manner in which they implemented conceptual and practical tools was also a function of factors such as student feedback; the goals of instruction (e.g., the teaching of grammar, vocabulary, or culture); students’ proficiency levels; students’ prior knowledge of instructional content; and classroom management concerns.

6.2 Implications for the Knowledge Base of Foreign Language Teacher Education Programs

Over the years, there has been much debate regarding what the knowledge base of language teacher education should consist of. On the one hand, some have called for a reconceptualization of the knowledge base of language teacher education that, at its core, would emphasize teachers’ learning to teach, how teachers’ pedagogical knowledge develops over time, and the multiple contexts of their learning and teaching (Freeman & Johnson, 1998). On the other hand, others have sharply critiqued such proposed reconceptualization as misguided, arguing that a model for the knowledge base of language teacher education must foreground topics such as second language acquisition theory, including similarities and difference between L1 and L2 acquisition; the nature of the learner’s interlanguage; comparisons between language learning and learning in content area subjects such as geography, social studies, and mathematics; and language teachers’ knowledge of the target language (Yates & Muchisky, 2003).
In juxtaposing the findings of this study relative to the ongoing debate concerning the knowledge base of language teacher education, there is no evidence that a teacher education program would be best served by adopting one proposed model (e.g., Freeman & Johnson, 1998) over another (e.g., Yates & Muchisky, 2003). Rather, the findings point to the fact that it is necessary to combine the focus areas suggested in the aforementioned models of the knowledge base of language teacher education programs.

First, assessment of pre-service teachers’ level of target language proficiency (i.e., in listening, speaking, reading, and writing), and knowledge of the target culture should be among the requirements for acceptance into foreign language teacher education programs. Additionally, it is necessary that these programs encourage, and facilitate the continued development of pre-service teachers’ knowledge of the target language and culture. However, it must be recognized that such knowledge must be positioned relative to a broader framework of what Chochran, DeRuiter, and King (1993)—in their elaboration of Shulman’s (1986) concept of pedagogical content knowledge—refer to as pedagogical content knowing, which examines the interaction among knowledge of pedagogy, knowledge of subject matter, knowledge of students, and knowledge of the environmental contexts of teaching. In support of this assertion, the findings of this study show that in transitioning from the elementary to the high school setting, Gloria’s and Linda’s knowledge of using the target language as the medium of instruction, the role of the L1, and how to apply the input hypothesis (Krashen, 1982) was informed by a new set of motives such as test preparation, a grammar-based curriculum, and a wider variation of student proficiency levels.
Second, the findings suggest that learning to teach a language should not be separated from learning how such language is acquired. The pre-service teachers in this study frequently made connections in their reflective journals between theories and concepts from the second language acquisition literature, their classroom instruction, and student learning. Therefore, language teacher education programs should create opportunities for pre-service teachers to further evaluate and interpret the meaning of SLA theories and constructs through critical reflection on their relationship to their classroom instruction and student learning. More specifically, the topic of pre-service teachers adjusting their target language input relative to the learners’ interlanguage—one of the most central areas of concern for both participants in this study—deserves more deliberate attention in foreign language teacher education programs, and is one of the ways in which we might be able to bridge the divide between language pedagogy and SLA in the debate on the knowledge base of language teacher education. The findings of the study do not support the claim that “much current knowledge in SLA may be of limited use and applicability to practicing teachers” (Freeman & Johnson, 1998, p. 411). In fact, the contrary is true, as Linda asserted, “Our theory-based coursework gave us a really good background for going into the classroom” (In-depth interview: June 9, 2010).

Third, ironically, missing from the aforementioned proposed models for the knowledge base of language teacher education is the language teacher. Establishing the knowledge base of language teacher education programs cannot be restricted to what educational theorists or methodologists deem to be important or unimportant, but must also be responsive to the life histories of pre-service teachers by posing questions such as the following: 1(a). In what variety of the target language are pre-service language
teachers they proficient? (b) Is the target language their first language or an additional
language?  (2) What are the prior language learning experiences of pre-service language
teachers? How much time have pre-service language teachers spent in the target culture?
By seeking answers to these questions (e.g., through reflective journaling, narratives,
interviews, or questionnaires), language teacher educators might be better able to respond
to the learning needs of pre-service teachers.

Fourth, since the findings of this study point to mentor teachers (more so at the
secondary school level) as key sources of knowledge regarding methods of language
teaching, the larger debate concerning what language teachers should know and be able
to do must also take the following questions into consideration: Do mentor teachers and
program administrators have a mutual understanding of their respective roles or
responsibilities in the learning process of pre-service teachers? What are the language
teaching philosophies of mentor teachers? What are mentor teachers’ beliefs about
language acquisition? To what extent are mentor teachers committed to the goals and
philosophies of the teacher education program? If the school-university relationship is a
truly collaborative effort, then, it is counter-productive for mentor teachers to undermine
pre-service teachers’ efforts to implement those concepts, assessment, and instructional
methods to which they have been introduced in their university coursework, or to do so
when the stakes are high (e.g., preparing for quizzes, tests, or final exams). The
classrooms of mentor teachers should not be sites where a novice aims to imitate the best
practices of the expert, but rather sites of collaboration, inquiry, and critical reflection.
Toward this end, including the above questions as part of the selection process for mentor
teachers would be a useful strategy.
Fifth, as mentioned earlier, the participants of this study highly valued the role of theory in their learning as pre-service teachers. However, the findings—for both participants—suggest that what needs to be addressed is the sequence in which theory is taught. Even if the vast majority of theory relating to language teaching and learning is presented at the beginning of pre-service teachers’ coursework—as was the case in this study—further discussion of, and reflection on the relationship between theory and classroom instruction should be facilitated during field experiences, student teaching, and in coursework for the remainder of the program. For example, reflective journaling based on pre-service teachers’ analysis and critique video recordings of their instruction—including exemplifications of the extent to which their teaching is informed by theory—should not be a one-time event or be restricted to field experiences, but should be consistently practiced throughout all phases of their teaching practice, including student teaching. As Linda explained, in articulating her views on theory-practice connections,

If it (teaching of theory) were done more in combination with student teaching, it would have been more meaningful because as far as with me and the way I learn, if I am actually teaching and at the same time I’m learning some theory behind it, it kind of connects, and then makes a lot a sense (In-depth interview: June 9, 2010)

Lastly, given the fact that language teaching is rich with opportunities for making interdisciplinary connections by using content area subjects as the medium through which the language is acquired, foreign language pre-service teachers—in addition to observing the instruction of their mentor teachers—must be given the opportunity to observe the
teaching of educators in other subject areas, discussing with them the ways in which foreign language teaching could contribute to students’ knowledge in a particular subject and vice versa. Creating spaces for learning how to form such interdisciplinary connections not only serves to broaden the scope and mission of foreign language teaching, but is also a worthwhile endeavor in moving towards placing foreign language teaching on equal footing with content area subjects. Additionally, from this relationship, pre-service teachers would have the opportunity to gain insights into those issues that are of concern to teachers in general (e.g., lesson planning, classroom management, student engagement and motivation, instructional time management, assessment, etc.).

6.3 A Research Agenda for Pre-service Teachers’ Pedagogical Tool Appropriation

The theoretical framework of cultural-historical activity theory offers a number of research possibilities for gaining further insight into pre-service foreign language teachers’ tool appropriation processes as they attempt to balance competing motives across multiple activity settings and idiosettings, some of which I shall outline based on the findings of this study.

6.3.1 The function of dialogue in pre-service teachers’ learning and development

The use of dialogic inquiry within the framework of activity theory—wherein the joint construction and interpretation of spoken discourse is seen as a mediating artifact and/or the object of activity—has been a relatively recent phenomenon, which has been primarily restricted to studying dialogic interaction in classroom teaching and learning.
(Wells, 2002; Wells & Arauz, 2006). From the standpoint of a university supervisor, it was enlightening to see how articulate Gloria and Linda were in describing the dialogue between them and their mentor teachers as they negotiated the implementation of pedagogical tools—especially in light of the fact that they were not explicitly taught how to engage in this process. The findings of this study point to the fact that the application of dialogic inquiry to the investigation of pre-service teachers’ appropriation of pedagogical tools is a worthwhile endeavor, which might be addressed through the following questions:

1. (a) How do pre-service teachers position themselves relative to the status of their mentor teachers during lesson planning and post-observation conferences? (b) How are they positioned by their mentor teachers in these events?

2. (a) To what extent do pre-service teachers use spoken discourse to negotiate the use of conceptual and practical tools that may challenge the pre-established norms and rules of their activity settings? (b) What is the nature of such discourse?

3. (a) How is the appropriation of concepts by pre-service teachers mediated through the multiple conference or debriefing sessions—related to the planning and delivery of instruction—held with university professors, supervisors, and mentor teachers? (b) How do the motives of the university and school activity settings impact the manner in which they make sense of and translate such dialogue into classroom practices?
6.3.2 The role of narrative inquiry in concept appropriation

In terms of data sources utilized for this study, the narratives constructed by the participants through reflective journaling proved to have been a key source of understanding how they interpreted the meaning and use of the conceptual underpinnings of CLT, which suggests the necessity for further investigation through a narrative analysis methodology and a larger research sample. Possible research questions might include the following:

1. (a) What are pre-service teachers’ interpretations of the concepts to which they are being introduced in teacher education programs relative to the activity settings in which they are implemented? (b) To what extent do such interpretations inform the definition of various concepts presented in the professional literature?

2. (a) How and to what extent do pre-service teachers develop their understanding of concepts through the lens of prior teaching and learning experiences? (b) What are the factors that account for differences and similarities between pre-service teachers’ apprenticeship of observation (i.e., in regards to language learning) and the nature of their classroom instruction during field experience and student teaching?

6.3.3 The relationship between pre-service language teachers’ pedagogical tool appropriation and language assessment

Based on the findings of the study, it is clear that the types of assessments implemented in the high school setting, played a significant role in how the participants
went about implementing practical tools in the classroom, which carried far-reaching implications for me, as a university supervisor: In Gloria’s case, for instance, my assessment of her instruction (toward the end of student teaching) was complicated by her mentor teacher’s strict guidelines as to how she should teach a particular lesson (i.e., using the grammar translation method based on lesson plan designed by the mentor teacher) to prepare students for final exams. Along these lines, future studies might explore the following:

1. What is the impact of performance versus traditional assessments on pre-service language teachers’ implementation of pedagogical tools?
2. In those activity settings where pre-service language teachers have a high level of involvement in creating assessment instruments, what is the relationship between the method through which they implement practical tools and the method through which language skills are assessed?
3. What are the factors that contribute to narrowing the gap between pre-service language teachers’ instructional methods and the assessment of their students’ language skills?

6.4 Contributions of the Study to Foreign Language and General Teacher Education Research

This study has made a number of contributions to the research base in foreign language and general teacher education research in regards to the topic of teacher learning, which I shall now outline:
1. Whereas the majority of studies that have applied the use of activity theory to the study of the learning and development of pre- and in-service teachers have been limited to L1 English, ESL, or EFL (e.g., Cook et al., 2002; Golombek & Johnson, 2004; Johnson et al., 2003; Newell, Tallman, & Letcher, 2009; Pardo, 2006; Smagorinsky, 1999; Smagorinsky et al., 2007), this study, by applying activity theory to foreign language teacher learning, has revealed new interpretations and explanations of the process of pedagogical tool appropriation that are specific to foreign language teacher education. It has confirmed Zeichner’s (2005) assertion that “we cannot assume that findings with regard to the preparation of teachers in one subject area hold true for teachers of other subjects” (p. 745).

2. This study has answered the call for the use of a theoretical framework that approaches teaching and teacher education from an ecological standpoint (i.e., as socially and culturally situated practices), which examines teaching and learning as complex, dynamic, interconnected practices relative to the multiple contexts in which they unfold such as state mandates or policies; school districts and school communities; and teacher education programs (Grossman & McDonald, 2008).

3. By applying the notion of praxis (i.e., teachers’ interpreting and making sense of theories based upon the realities of their instructional settings) through the use of activity theory, this study has contributed to moving the field beyond the theory-versus-practice dichotomy (Johnson, 2006).

4. Through examining pre-service foreign language teachers’ appropriation of CLT, this study confirms the fact that the concept of teacher cognition is best studied
not as an isolated construct, but one that explores interconnections between
teachers’ prior language learning experiences; their beliefs, knowledge, and
thoughts; their learning in teacher education programs; and their classroom
teaching (Borg, 2003).

5. Although in some cases Gloria and Linda’s instructional practices (e.g., grammar
translation exercises, use of L1 as the medium of instruction, verb conjugation
drills) resembled the manner in which they learned the target language as middle
and/ or high school students, it is crucial to point out that these practices were not
as a result of their apprenticeship of observation as many other studies on the
learning of CLT have concluded (e.g., Sato, 2002; Sato & Kleinsasser, 1999;
Son, 2005; Wang, 2002). Rather, instances wherein their instructional practices
resembled their apprenticeship of observation was a result of (1) their attempts to
balance the implementation of a CLT curriculum with that of a grammar-based
curriculum—in other words, balancing the teacher education program’s motive of
communicative competence with the high school Spanish department’s motive of
grammatical competence; (2) the washback effect of the Spanish department’s
traditional assessments; and (3) their positioning the use of the target language or
the L1 based upon the complexity of instructional content or according to
students’ proficiency levels.

6. From a methodological standpoint, this study has made a distinction between
what I have labeled Orthodox CLT and Modern CLT as opposed to studying pre-
service teachers’ learning of the approach as a unitary concept. Furthermore, the
construct of communicative competence (i.e., grammatical, sociolinguistic,
discourse, strategic, and sociocultural competence) was used in an explicit and deliberate manner to guide the analysis of the data.

7. Although Gloria and Linda, in discussing their own learning and development, implied an exclusive association of the term *communicative* with speaking skills, it was not concluded that this association represented a misconception of CLT as has been reported in the relevant literature (e.g., Sato & Kleinsasser, 1999; Thompson, 1996). The single most telling evidence from the data in this regard was that their emphasis on developing speaking skills was in direct response to their conclusion that students were usually reluctant to engage on oral production of the target language. Furthermore, evidence from data sources such as lesson plans, observation field notes, reflective journals, and interview transcripts regarding the role of the four skills in CLT revealed that their conceptions of Orthodox CLT did not differ from that of the professional literature.

8. Whereas studies that have looked into teachers’ conceptualizations and implementation of CLT (e.g., Sato, 2002; Son, 2005; Wang, 2002) have primarily focused on in-service teachers, this study has contributed to building the research base on pre-service teachers’ appropriation of CLT.

9. This study has shed light on the importance of not only examining pedagogical tool appropriation per se within and across activity settings, but how teachers negotiate entry into an activity setting, and the obstacles they face in legitimizing, defining, and redefining their role within it.

10. One of the most significant contributions of this study is that, unlike other studies that have been conducted through the lens of activity theory, it has clarified and
redefined key components of this theoretical framework (as evidenced in the cross-case analysis in Chapter Five)—a process which was mediated through the use of the theory to gain insight into teacher learning in a subject area and a context that has received very little attention.

In conclusion, the findings of the study suggest that concept appropriation, for both Gloria and Linda, was not a matter of simply transferring conceptual, physical, and practical tools from their university to their school settings: Rather, their appropriation journey involved a cyclical and interpretive process that consisted of role negotiation; expansive transformation; critical self-reflection; exercising relational agency; attempts to strike a balance of power; and aiming to resolve primary, secondary, and tertiary tensions within and between activity settings.
References


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Appendix A: Post-observation Interview

Introduction: The questions I’m about to ask you are primarily in reference to your planning for this lesson.

1) Please describe how you came up with this lesson.

2) Did you receive input from anyone else besides your mentor teacher in planning for this lesson?

3) Did you design the lesson with any particular theory or concept in mind?

4) Did you consult any coursework materials from the M.Ed. program (e.g., class notes, textbooks, past assignments) in planning for the lesson?

5) In planning for this lesson, did you use any materials required for this course such as the textbook or workbook?

6) Did you draw upon any personal skills or life experiences in planning for this lesson?

7) Please describe what was most challenging about the lesson?

8) To what extent would you say your objectives were met?

9) Is there anything else you would like to add?
Appendix B: Gloria’s In-depth Interview #1

Introduction: For this interview, we will focus primarily on your academic and personal background, and how they relate to your teaching experiences.

Background Information

1. Please discuss your academic history as it relates to language learning.
2. Did you have any teaching experience prior to entering the M.Ed. program? If so, please describe.
3. What were the factors that contributed to your decision to become a Spanish teacher?
4. Besides English and Spanish, are you proficient in any other languages?
5. Is English your first language?
6. (a) How often do you use Spanish outside the classroom?
   (b) For what purposes do you use Spanish outside the classroom?
7. (a) How often do you use English outside the classroom?
   (b) For what purposes do you use English outside the classroom?
8. What is your level of proficiency in Spanish?
9. Please describe your views on foreign language teaching and learning prior to entering the M.Ed. program.
M.Ed. Program

10. Shifting gears to your experiences in the M.Ed. program, how did your elementary school field experience impact your views on language teaching and learning that you had prior to entering the program?

11. How would you compare teaching Spanish in your elementary school placement to teaching Spanish in your high school placement?

12. (a) What was most challenging about the transition from the elementary to the high school setting?
   (b) How did you go about addressing those challenges?

13. At this point in the program, how would you describe your approach to foreign language teaching?

14. In the M.Ed. program, there is a great emphasis on Communicative Language Teaching as an approach to foreign language education. In your own words, how would you describe this approach?

15. In your opinion, what role does each of the four skills (i.e., listening, speaking, reading, and writing) play in the communicative language teaching approach?

Background Information

The following two questions I’m about to ask you are primarily based on the two “Perspective on foreign language teaching” narratives (which I shall refer to as your narrative) you wrote in the fall as part of your methods course requirement as well as some of your lesson reflections.
16. In your first narrative, you stated, “Both of my parents are members of Rotary International and as a family we have hosted exchange students for as long as I can remember” How has this family tradition shaped your views on languages and cultures?

17. (a) In reading your reflective journal entries, I discovered you were a pre-K teacher, could you offer more details about this experience?

(b) How has this experience impacted your approach to foreign language teaching?

18. (a) In the second version of your narrative, you mentioned being a Rotary Exchange Student in Argentina. Can you tell me a little more about this experience abroad?

(b) How have your studies in Argentina impacted your approach to foreign language teaching and learning?

(c) Have you studied or taught in other Spanish-speaking countries?

19. In reflecting on your second lesson during your elementary field experience, you stated, “I think I was able to bring a lot of my creativity to this lesson” Please elaborate on what you meant by this.

20. Is there anything else you would like to add?
Appendix C: Linda’s In-depth Interview #1

**Introduction:** For this interview, we will focus primarily on your academic as well as your personal background, and how they relate to your teaching experiences.

**Background Information**

1. Please discuss your academic history as it relates to language learning.
2. Did you have any teaching experience prior to entering the M.Ed. program? If so, please describe.
3. What were the factors that contributed to your decision to become a Spanish teacher?
4. Besides English and Spanish, are you proficient in any other languages?
5. Is English your first language?
6. (a) How often do you use Spanish outside the classroom?
   (b) For what purposes do you use Spanish outside the classroom?
7. (a) How often do you use English outside the classroom?
   (b) For what purposes do you use English outside the classroom?
8. What is your level of proficiency in Spanish?
9. Please describe your views on foreign language teaching and learning prior to entering the M.Ed. program.

**M.Ed. Program**

Shifting gears to your experiences in the M.Ed. program, how did your elementary field experience impact your views on language teaching and learning that you had prior to entering the program?

10. How would you compare teaching Spanish in your elementary school placement to teaching Spanish in your high school placement?

11. (a) What was most challenging about the transition from the elementary to the high school setting?

   (b) How did you go about addressing those challenges?

12. At this point in the program, how would you describe your approach to foreign language teaching?

13. In the M.Ed. program, there is a great emphasis on Communicative Language Teaching as an approach to foreign language education. In your own words, how would you describe this approach?

14. In your opinion, what role does each of the four skills (i.e., listening, speaking, reading, and writing) play in the communicative language teaching approach?
Background Information (based on intern’s personal narrative)

The questions I’m about to ask you are primarily based on the two “Perspective on foreign language teaching” narratives (which I shall refer to as your narrative) you wrote in the fall as part of your methods course requirement, as well as the personal statement you wrote in the capstone course.

15. In discussing the issue of fluency versus accuracy in foreign language teaching and learning, you stated, “When I think of my own foreign language education, there was a strong emphasis on accuracy, and I know that has stuck with me, and affected me negatively in some ways.” Could you please elaborate on this “strong emphasis on accuracy” and the ways in which this has affected you?

16. In your narrative, you stated, “I want my students to feel very comfortable and safe in my classroom and I want them to feel like they can really be themselves … I want them to see different aspects of my personality so they feel comfortable showing different aspects of theirs”. In what ways have you brought different aspects of your personality to the foreign language classroom?

17. You mentioned in your second narrative that in your high school placement, “I overheard one student talking about her dance classes so I struck up a conversation about dance with her since it is also something that I enjoy.” How do you plan on bringing this side of your personality to foreign language teaching?

18. In reading your personal statement, I see that you volunteered at various elementary schools in ESL settings. How has this experience shaped your approach to foreign language teaching and learning?
19. Is there anything else you would like to add?
Appendix D: Gloria and Linda’s In-depth Interview #2

Introduction: For this final interview, we will be talking primarily about your overall impression of the teacher education program, your field experiences, student teaching, mentoring, and the communicative language teaching approach.

Student teaching and teacher education program evaluation

1. Congratulations for successfully completing the requirements of the M.Ed. program. First, since the student teaching practicum is the most recent requirement you have fulfilled, it is timely that I ask, how was your student teaching experience?

2. Please describe what you perceive to be the strongest components of the M.Ed. program.

3. Is there anything about the M.Ed. program that you would change? If so, please explain.

4. What are your thoughts on the student teaching practicum as one of the main requirements of the M.Ed. program?
**Elementary School Field Experience**

5. How did you come up with the lesson plans for the four mini-lessons you presented during your elementary school field experience?

6. Did you consult any coursework materials from the M.Ed. program (e.g., class notes, textbooks, past assignments) in planning for the mini-lessons you presented during the elementary school field experience?

7. Did you draw upon any personal skills or life experiences in planning for the mini-lessons during your elementary school field experience?

8. In planning for the mini-lessons during your elementary school field experience, who were your sources of input and feedback?

9. Did you plan the mini-lessons you presented during the elementary school field experience with any particular concept or theory in mind?

**High School Field Experience**

10. How did you come up with your lesson plans for the four mini-lessons you presented during your high school field placement?

11. Did you consult any coursework materials from the M.Ed. program (e.g., class notes, textbooks, past assignments) in planning for the mini-lessons you presented during the high school field experience?

12. Did you draw upon any personal skills or life experiences in planning for the mini-lessons during your high school field experience?
13. In planning for the mini-lessons during your high school field experience, who were your sources of input and feedback?

14. Did you plan the mini-lessons you presented during the high school field experience with any particular concept or theory in mind?

**Communicative Language Teaching**

15. (a) Please describe some challenge(s) you might have experienced using the communicative language teaching approach in both your elementary and high school placement.

(b) How did you go about addressing these challenges?

16. Based on your teaching experience in your high school placement, how would you describe the relationship between formal assessment of your students’ language proficiency whether at the classroom, departmental, or district level and your goal of communicative language teaching?

17. In the M.Ed. program, which courses contributed the most to your understanding of the CLT approach?

18. Which texts contributed the most to your understanding of the CLT approach?

**Teacher Education Program, Mentoring, and Foreign Language Teaching Approach**

19. As it relates to foreign language teaching, how did you go about meeting the expectations of the teacher education program while also meeting the expectations of your mentor teacher in your elementary school placement?
20. As it relates to foreign language teaching, how did you go about meeting the expectations of the teacher education program while also meeting the expectations of your mentor teacher in your high school placement?

21. Based on your observation of your high school mentor teacher’s teaching as well as your conversations with her over the school year, to what extent would you say your approach to foreign language teaching is similar to or different from hers?

22. If there was ever an instance in which your teaching approach conflicted with that of your high school mentor teacher’s, how did you go about handling that situation?

23. In the teacher education program, you received feedback from your professors, mentor teachers, supervisors, and peers about your teaching, in many cases, on the same lesson. How did you go about incorporating the feedback you received from these multiple sources?

Closing

24. How would you describe your growth with respect to foreign language teaching from your first day in your teacher education program until now?

25. Please describe a teaching moment or a lesson you are most proud of.

26. Is there anything you would like to add?
Appendix E: Codes and Frequencies – Gloria

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| Pictures                            | 17          | 11          | 1           | 16    |
| Realia                              | 10          | 1           | 1           | 4     |
| Student dry erase/white boards      | 0           | 1           | 0           | 2     |
| Verb charts                         | 0           | 0           | 0           | 0     |
| Total                               | 3           | 61          | 18          | 28   |

| Practical Tool                     |             |             |             |       |
| Fill in the blanks/Sentence        | 0           | 0           | 0           | 1     |
| completion                          |             |             |             | 1     |
| Game                                | 4           | 17          | 0           | 3     |
| Group activity                      | 7           | 9           | 0           | 10    |
| Listening activity                  | 2           | 6           | 0           | 1     |
| Pronunciation drill                 | 3           | 2           | 6           | 1     |
| Reading activity                    | 4           | 2           | 0           | 5     |
| Role play                           | 0           | 2           | 0           | 3     |
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