



Language awareness in foreign language education

Exploring teachers' beliefs, practices
and change processes

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'Je gaat het pas zien als je het doorhebt.'

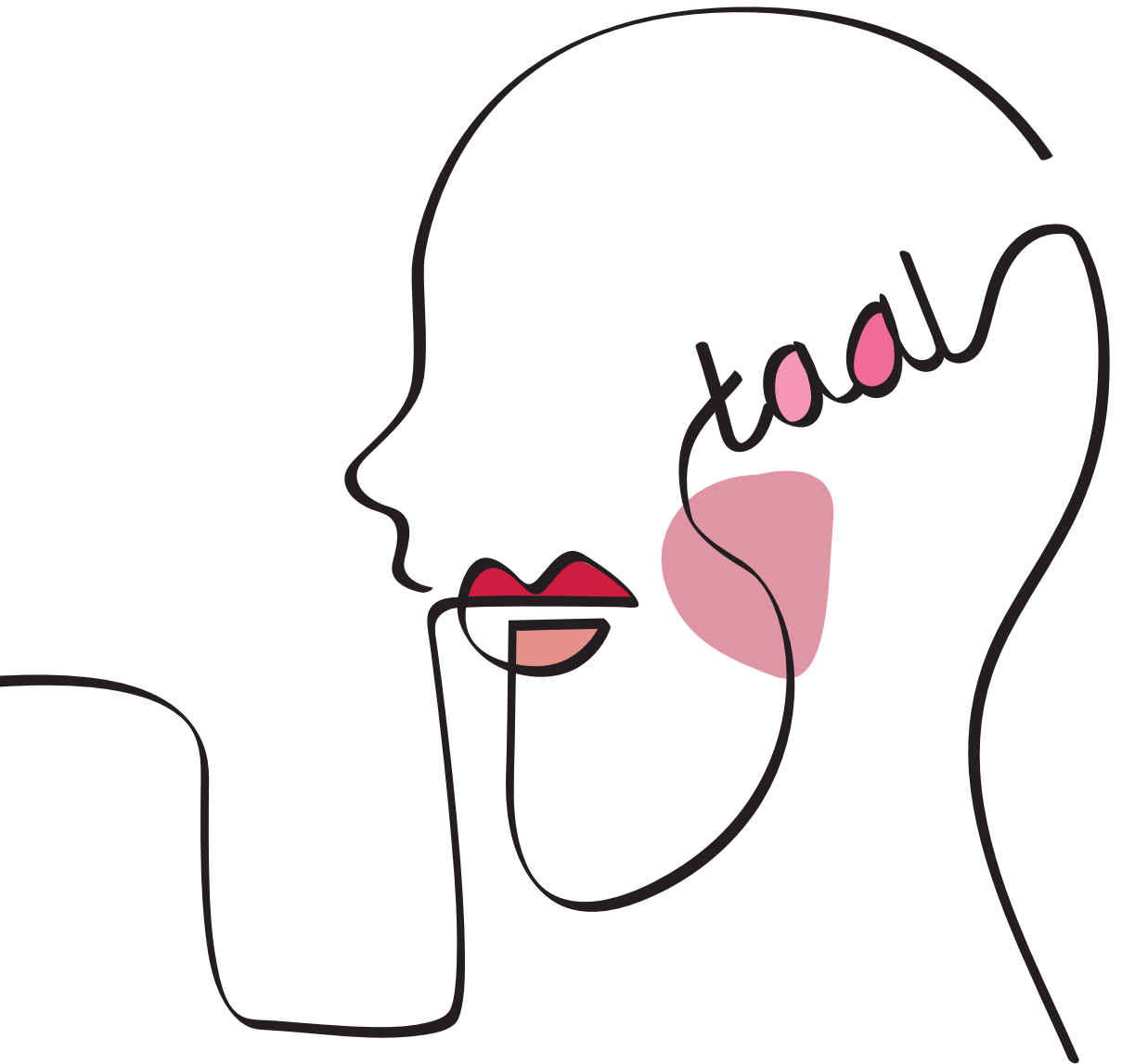
Contents

Chapter 1	General introduction	9
Chapter 2	Unravelling upper-secondary school teachers' beliefs about language awareness: From conflicts to challenges in the EFL context	31
Chapter 3	Stimulating language awareness in the foreign language classroom: Exploring EFL teaching practices	63
Chapter 4	Supporting curriculum reform in foreign language education: An examination of teachers' belief changes	89
Chapter 5	Small steps, big wins: Changing existing foreign language teaching practices using a language awareness approach	119
Chapter 6	General discussion	149
	Nederlandse samenvatting	175
	Dankwoord	187
	Biografie	191
	ICO Dissertation Series	193



1

General introduction



In a continuously changing society in which multilingualism, critical thinking and creativity become ever more important (Nieveen & Plomp, 2018), education should prepare students as best as possible for their role in contemporary and future society (Curriculum.nu, 2019b; Regieorgaan Geesteswetenschappen, 2014; WRR, 2013). Accordingly, numerous countries worldwide have reshaped their general education curriculum over the past decade in order to meet new standards associated with globalisation (Priestley & Biesta, 2013; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010; Yates & Young, 2010). In the Netherlands, the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science has initiated a debate about the development of a future-oriented curriculum, because they believe that the current curriculum, which has been in place since 2006, provides little guidance for student learning (Rijksoverheid, 2016). Foreign languages play a central role in national and international initiatives set up to develop curricula (Priestley & Biesta, 2013). Even though the Netherlands has a long tradition of successful foreign language education (Fasoglio et al., 2015; Wilhelm, 2018), learning a language involves more than just acquiring language skills (Bolitho et al., 2003; Jeffery & Van Beuningen, 2019). As such, the development of future-oriented and challenging foreign language education is indispensable (Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap, 2014; Tammenga-Helmantel & Le Bruyn, 2016).

Foreign languages are essential for people who want to participate in today's global society. In many European countries, multilingualism is or has become the rule rather than the exception, whether from an educational, societal, cultural, professional or political perspective. (Cenoz & Gorter, 2010; Lapresta-Rey & Huguet, 2019; Ziegler, 2013). Yet in many European countries (e.g., the Netherlands, Sweden, Austria, Denmark, Finland), foreign language education is going through a challenging time as it 'seems to have lost its content and orientation now that language proficiency has taken such a prominent role' (Wilhelm, 2018, p. 22). As a result, there are fewer students in secondary education choosing to study languages and fewer students transitioning to university decide to study a foreign language and, as a consequence, fewer students enrolling in a foreign language teacher education programme, resulting in a shortage of university-qualified foreign language teachers (Eurostat, 2019; Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, 2011; Regieorgaan Geesteswetenschappen, 2014; Svalberg, 2016; Swanson & Mason, 2018). This decline has sparked debates in many countries worldwide about the role of foreign languages and has led to the revision of foreign language curricula. Internationally, but certainly in the Dutch context as well, three major aspects underlie the current debate about the status of foreign language education. These are the status of foreign languages in society, the reputation of foreign language subjects in education and the role of the communicative approach.

The first aspect involves the changing status of foreign languages in society. English has become a part of daily life in the Netherlands and many other western European countries (De Houwer & Wilton, 2011; Jeffery & Van Beuningen, 2019) and the position of English is slowly shifting from foreign language to second language, something which once again underlines the necessity of valuable, appropriate and future-oriented education in this language (Edwards, 2016; Jeffery & Van Beuningen, 2019). In addition, English is the only compulsory foreign language in secondary education and thus plays a crucial role for all students in their educational career and professional development (Jeffery & Van Beuningen, 2019; Van Essen, 1997). Whereas the importance of English in society seems indisputable, languages such as German and French now lose ground and students' proficiency in these languages is declining (Wilhelm, 2018). Following these societal developments, foreign language education requires an investment. The subject of English requires continuous development in order to keep up with high societal, educational and economical standards (Jeffery & Van Beuningen, 2019). Subjects such as French and German require development in order to maintain their position in secondary education and to emphasise their intercultural and economical relevance.

The second aspect underlying the debate concerns the reputation of foreign languages. The overall reputation of foreign language subjects in secondary and higher education is declining. Students in secondary education report low levels of interest in French and German. English is still perceived as the most popular language, though reported interest levels are the lowest in eight years (Qompas, 2019). Furthermore, increasingly fewer secondary school students are opting for a language-oriented profile in the final years of their secondary school career. In the pre-university track of secondary education, the number of students with a language-oriented profile has halved over the past decade, and they now constitute just seven percent of the total pre-university secondary school population (CBS, 2019). Over the same period, the number of students opting for a science-oriented profile has risen, and is still on the rise, due to numerous governmental incentive programmes in STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) subjects (Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap, 2011). At the same time, a growing number of universities have recently eliminated (foreign) language degree programmes as an effort to cut costs (Funnekotter & Pauw, 2012; Looney & Lusin, 2018), and the Dutch government recently decided to direct governmental financial support for higher education from Arts and Humanities to technical universities and STEM-oriented degree programmes (Adviescommissie Bekostiging Hoger Onderwijs en Onderzoek, 2019). More meaningful, coherent and challenging content in foreign language education at the secondary level could be a first step in counteracting the continuously declining reputation of foreign language education (Jeffery & Van Beuningen, 2019; Meesterschapsteam Moderne Vreemde Talen, 2016; Pountain, 2019). Moreover, it would likely result in a better alignment between secondary school foreign language curricula and higher education foreign

language degree programmes, thereby putting the significance of foreign language degree programmes back on the agenda.

The third aspect concerns the communicative language teaching approach. This approach is currently the most commonly used approach to modern foreign language education (Fasoglio et al., 2015; Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Wilhelm, 2018). This utilitarian approach devotes much attention to the development and use of the four communicative language skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking), and to grammar and vocabulary, but considerably less to the cultural, analytical and (cross-)linguistic aspects of languages, and the language learning process itself (Denham & Lobeck, 2014; Jeffery & Van Beuningen, 2019). Consequently, for many pupils, (foreign) language education is perceived as uninteresting and not challenging enough (Jansen, 2016; Meesterschapsteam Moderne Vreemde Talen, 2016; Tammenga-Helmantel et al., 2017). At the same time, students regularly experience difficulties thinking about and reflecting on language and the process of their own learning (Grenfell, 2000), and teachers do not always possess the appropriate knowledge, skills and tools to transfer those language-analytical skills in their teaching practices (Bolitho et al., 2003; Hawkins, 1984). Consequently, the current approach to foreign language teaching may need to be reconsidered and a more holistic approach, which combines the development of linguistic and cultural knowledge, skills and attitudes, may be required. Pountain (2019) claims that modern foreign language education should be founded not only on the acquisition of and proficiency in the foreign language but should also include awareness of linguistic structures and varieties, and the study of sociocultural aspects. These aspects of foreign language education are interdependent and interrelated, and it has been argued that it is only by combining these three aspects that foreign language education ‘will survive as a distinctive academic discipline’ (Pountain, 2019, p. 247).

Taken together, these three aspects – the status of foreign languages in society, the reputation of foreign languages in education and the communicative approach – provide sufficient reason for the enrichment of foreign language education (Jeffery & Van Beuningen, 2019; Meesterschapsteam Moderne Vreemde Talen, 2016; Tammenga-Helmantel & Le Bruyn, 2016) and a holistic approach to foreign language teaching and learning (Gnutzmann, 1997; Hélot, Frijns, & Van Gorp, 2018). In order to meet present-day societal developments, many countries have recently implemented (e.g., Finland (FNBE, 2015) and Australia (ACARA, 2014)) a new general education curriculum, while other countries (e.g., Norway, Wales and the Netherlands) are in the process of curriculum reforms (Curriculum.nu, 2019b; NDET, 2019; Welsh Government, 2019). In each of these initiatives, the development of foreign languages education has received considerable attention, and the associated (foreign language) reforms are closely in line with (changes in) modern society, aiming to equip students with the

knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to successfully participate in that society (Larson & Miller, 2011; Moseley et al., 2005).

Within the particular context of foreign language education, a language awareness approach (ALA, 2017) has gained new momentum in present-day language educational research and practice (Denham & Lobeck, 2014; Derewianka, 2012). It has also been given a central role in shaping (foreign) language curricula in the Netherlands (Curriculum.nu, 2019a). A language awareness approach fits within a holistic view of language teaching and learning and could provide students, in secondary school as well as university, with a better insight as to what it entails to study a language, and what comprises a language (study). Furthermore, it could also support teachers in their ability to plan and carry out appropriate instruction that covers the full breadth of the language subject (Lindahl & Baecher, 2016). Curriculum development typically begins with identifying the content (Reaser & Adger, 2007), but recently, teachers are increasingly being positioned as agents of change (Priestley, 2011). The focus of this dissertation lies on these two aspects of curriculum development: language awareness as an approach to foreign language education and teachers' beliefs and practices with regard to this approach. More specifically, this dissertation investigates how teachers' current beliefs and practices with regard to language awareness can be characterised and how teachers' beliefs and practices change as they deliberately engage with this approach in the context of their everyday classroom practices.

Theoretical framework

Language awareness

In the past decade, language awareness as an approach to foreign language education has received renewed attention in various European countries as a response to the demand for more holistic and more future-oriented foreign language education (Frijns et al., 2018). Language awareness is a 'cross-curricular, holistic and inclusive approach to language education' (Sierens, Frijns, Van Gorp, Sercu, & Van Avermaet, 2018, p. 21). It 'covers a wide spectrum of fields' (ALA, n.d.) and is associated with a variety of definitions and terminology (Jessner, 2008). Hawkins (1984) was one of the first to introduce language awareness to a broader audience. He envisioned language awareness as a bridging element in the curriculum that could navigate between mother tongue and foreign language education, and could 'minimise intolerance and exclusion in society' (Svalberg, 2016, p. 5).

The characteristics of language awareness as described by Hawkins are also reflected in other definitions. Over the years, the concept has been (re-)defined several times and thus it appears

to be a complex endeavour to formulate an appropriate and clear-cut definition that resonates the multidisciplinary character of language awareness and also fits current developments in education and society (Svalberg, 2007, 2016). Donmall (1985) first defined language awareness as ‘a person’s sensitivity to and conscious awareness of the nature of language and its role in human life’ (p. 7). Van Lier (1995) emphasised a critical perspective on language learning and language use and defines language awareness as ‘an understanding of the human faculty of language and its role in thinking, learning and social life. It includes awareness of power and control through language, and the intricate relationships between language and culture’ (p. iv). In his definition of language awareness, Carter (2003) emphasised the role of the language learner: ‘Language awareness refers to the development in learners of an enhanced consciousness of and sensitivity to the forms and functions of language’ (p. 64). Thornbury (1997), on the other hand, accentuated the teacher’s role and defined language awareness as: ‘The knowledge that teachers have of the underlying systems of the language that enable them to teach effectively’ (p. x). The Association for Language Awareness, founded in 1992, employs a more general and overarching definition and states that language awareness is ‘the explicit knowledge about language, and conscious perception and sensitivity in language learning, language teaching and language use’.

All definitions presented above reveal the broad spectrum of characteristics that language awareness encompasses. On the one hand, structural aspects of language are emphasised, (e.g., ‘nature of language’, ‘forms and functions of language’ and ‘explicit knowledge about language’). On the other hand, sociocultural and influential aspects of language are included (e.g., ‘its role in human life’, ‘language use’, ‘power and control’ and ‘relationships between language and culture’). Despite these distinctions, all definitions focus, to a greater or lesser extent, on the development of awareness in the context of language learning, language teaching and language use. In this process of development, an important role is reserved for the users of language and a holistic and inclusive approach is given priority. Based on an extensive exploration of the conceptual literature, this dissertation adopts the following definition:

Language awareness is a person’s sensitivity to and perception of the forms and functions of language that enables him/her to use the language effectively in personal, educational and professional contexts. In the educational context this includes the perspective of the teacher and the student, and consequently involves processes of language teaching and language learning that aim for a gradual and conscious development of the various forms and functions of language.

Following the introduction of language awareness in the eighties and a revival in the nineties (Van Essen, 2008), language awareness has gained renewed interest in the last decade (Hélot,

Van Gorp, Frijns, & Sierens, 2018). In order to capture the breadth of the concept, James and Garrett (1992, 2013) specified five domains relevant to language awareness: the affective, cognitive, social, power and performance domain. The affective domain focuses on personal relevance and motivation, the cognitive domain focuses on (thinking about) the system of language, the social domain focuses on sociocultural integration, the power domain focuses on the influence of language and the performance domain focuses on the development of language skills. A review by Frijns et al. (2018) revealed that two main strands, the cognitive and the social-cultural, appear to be the most dominant in research and education regarding language awareness. In the present dissertation, these five domains are taken as a point of departure for the exploration of language awareness as a concept and for language awareness as an approach to foreign language education.

Teacher beliefs

Educational systems are constantly changing through reforms in order to improve, innovate and adapt to changing standards (Fullan, 2015; Priestley, 2011). Many studies point out that the implementation and success of curriculum reform largely depends on teacher beliefs (Farrell & Ives, 2015; Wallace & Priestley, 2011). Research has shown that the construct of teacher beliefs is broad and, consequently, subject of continuous debate (e.g., Basturkmen, 2012; Fives & Gill, 2015). A diversity of terms has been used to identify 'what teachers know, believe, and think' (Borg, 2003, p. 81), including, among others, teacher beliefs (Barcelos & Kalaja, 2011; Basturkmen, 2012), teacher cognition (Borg, 2003), teacher knowledge (Tsui, 2012), teacher conceptions (Liu & Fisher, 2006), teacher perspectives (Könings et al., 2007) and teacher perceptions (Yan & He, 2010). All these terms and (often overlapping) definitions have in common that they emphasise the cognitive dimension of (thinking about) teaching (Fives & Gill, 2015). In this dissertation, we adhere to the commonly used term 'teacher beliefs'. Teacher beliefs are defined as propositions which may be consciously or unconsciously held by a teacher, are accepted as true by that teacher while s/he also recognises that alternative beliefs may be held by others, and serve as a guide to thinking and action (Borg, 2001).

Since language awareness, as a topic of research as well as educational approach, encompasses a broad field 'allow[ing] for considerable flexibility' (James & Garrett, 2013, p. 4), covering a wide range of topics (Svalberg, 2016), it is important to explore what teachers believe in relation to this curriculum reform. Furthermore, investigating how their beliefs affect the implementation of language awareness to foreign language education is essential, because 'teachers interpret and respond to innovations only in the ways which relate to their existing beliefs and practices' (Kuzborska, 2011, p. 102). This implies that ignoring teacher beliefs is likely to hinder the implementation of the new approach and the assimilation of new ideas to teaching practices (Kuzborska, 2011).

Studies on language awareness often include the concept ‘teacher language awareness’. Teacher language awareness refers to teachers’ beliefs about language and the language they teach, and is important because of its potential impact on student learning (Andrews, 2007; Andrews & Svalberg, 2017). Teacher language awareness has three overlapping dimensions (i.e., user, analyst, teacher) which are all relevant to teachers’ professional expertise: 1) the teacher’s personal command of the language to be taught (user dimension), 2) the teacher’s understanding of linguistic rules and systems (analyst dimension), and 3) the teacher’s ability to plan instruction that will engage and support the language learner (teacher dimension) (Lindahl & Baecher, 2016; Wright, 2002). The main focus of this dissertation is on language awareness as an approach to foreign language education. Two aspects of this approach are investigated: teachers’ beliefs about the approach, and their related teaching practices. Though the teacher dimension of teacher language awareness is inextricably intertwined with teaching practices, the focus in this dissertation will be on these practices as such, rather than on teachers’ abilities to plan such a practice.

The relationship between beliefs and practices

A teaching practice is an activity undertaken by the teacher in order for students to acquire certain knowledge and skills (Carr, 1987). Research on teacher beliefs has shown that beliefs are inextricably connected with teachers’ practices and actions in the classroom (Basturkmen, 2012; Borg, 2001; Borg, 2015; Farrell & Bennis, 2013). Beliefs ‘influence how the teacher orchestrates the interaction between learner, teacher, and subject matter in a particular classroom context with particular resources (Breen, Hird, Milton, Oliver, & Thwaite, 2001, p. 472). Guskey (2002) claims that beliefs change as a result of changes made to teaching practices, whereas other studies found a dynamic and an interconnected rather than a linear relationship; beliefs may influence practices, but changes in beliefs may also come as the result of changes in practices (Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002; Poulson et al., 2001). Pratt (1992) identified a third element in this dynamic system of beliefs and practices, namely intentions. Intentions follow from beliefs, are related to what teachers try to accomplish and direct their teaching (Pratt, 1992). In recent years, the extent to which practices are influenced by beliefs, and vice versa, has become a topic of debate (Farrell & Ives, 2015).

Some studies have shown correspondence between beliefs and practices (Farrell & Lim, 2005; Kuzborska, 2011; Roehrig & Kruse, 2005), while others have reported a more limited relationship in which beliefs did not always, or only partially, correspond with classroom practices (Farrell & Bennis, 2013; Farrell & Lim, 2005; Kuzborska, 2011). When investigating beliefs and practices, however, several studies have emphasised that it is important to take into account that teacher beliefs are often individual constructs which are shaped and guided by a variety of factors (Basturkmen, 2012; Poulson et al., 2001), such as teacher experience (Farrell & Bennis, 2013; Kamiya, 2016; Roehrig & Kruse, 2005), the presence of conflicting beliefs

(Phipps & Borg, 2009), and teachers' educational background, the curriculum, the examination syllabus and the organisation of the school (Lam & Kember, 2006), and these may all influence teaching practices.

Changing beliefs and practices

Teacher change is described in terms of 'learning, development, socialization, growth, improvement, implementation of something new or different, cognitive and affective change, and self-study' (Richardson & Placier, 2001, p. 905). Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002) narrowed down this multi-interpretable description to several interrelated perspectives on teacher change, including adaptation (i.e., changing teaching practices) as well as personal change (i.e., changing beliefs).

A number of studies include claims that teachers' beliefs and practices are difficult to change (Chi, 2013; Duit & Treagust, 2003; Pajares, 1992) or that many reform initiatives fail to achieve the intended change in practice (Fullan, 2015; Le Fevre, 2014). These claims may result from differences in how change is defined, or in what constitutes change. Other studies on educational reform have observed more sustained changes when teachers' active participation, agency and ownership are facilitated (Imants & Van der Wal, 2020; Ketelaar et al., 2012; Petko et al., 2015; Pietarinen et al., 2019), bottom-up and top-down initiatives are integrated (Pietarinen et al., 2017), curriculum coherence is achieved (Pietarinen et al., 2017), professional and collegial support is provided (Eteläpelto et al., 2015), and experimentation is encouraged (Higgins et al., 2012).

When investigating reform and change, two approaches are generally distinguished: a top-down and a bottom-up approach (Fullan, 2015; Pietarinen et al., 2017; Richardson & Placier, 2001). In a top-down approach, teachers are supposed to implement a reform developed by policy-makers, while a bottom-up approach relies on teachers directing the reform themselves. In the context of curriculum reform, a top-down approach has been the most prominent, though its effectiveness has proven to be limited (Fullan, 2015). A bottom-up approach or a bottom-up approach coupled with top-down support appears to be more successful (Fullan, 2015; Petko et al., 2015; Pietarinen et al., 2017; Slegers et al., 2002), as this involves teachers in a process of sense-making of the intended reform (Biesta et al., 2015; Luttenberg et al., 2013; Pietarinen et al., 2019) and as actors in the process of change (Imants & Van der Wal, 2020; Priestley, 2011).

'The crux of change is how individuals come to grips with this reality' (Fullan, 2015, p. 18), both in terms of beliefs and practices. As teachers are generally not involved in the development of a reform (Ketelaar et al., 2012), the success of such a reform largely depends on how teachers

make sense of and engage with it (Ketelaar et al., 2012; Pietarinen et al., 2019), or rather what they believe about the new approach and how they put the approach into practice. Involving teachers in the reform process may ultimately lead to a better fit between the intended curriculum reform and teachers' needs, professional development, and ownership which could result in more sustainable changes in teaching practice (Pietarinen et al., 2017; Ramberg, 2014).

Rationale

Numerous studies in the context of foreign language teaching have addressed teacher beliefs and teaching practices. However, to date these have focused on specific aspects of language learning, such as grammar (Farrell & Lim, 2005; Liviero, 2017; Watson, 2015), pronunciation (Buss, 2016), writing (Crusan et al., 2016; Mao & Crosthwaite, 2019), reading (Farrell & Ives, 2015; Kuzborska, 2011), intercultural competence (Young & Sachdev, 2011) and the role of prior language knowledge (De Angelis, 2011). While these aspects can be covered by a language awareness approach, only few studies have addressed teacher beliefs and teaching practices in relation to the concept of language awareness and what it means to implement such an approach in a(n) (existing) foreign language curriculum. Given the scarcity of studies adopting a teacher's perspective on language awareness as an approach to foreign language education, it is now a timely endeavour to study teacher beliefs and teaching practices with regard to this approach in the context of Dutch foreign language education. The purpose of investigating foreign language teacher beliefs and teaching practices regarding language awareness is to examine what in-service teachers believe about an approach that might become part of their everyday curriculum, to investigate whether existing teaching practices fit the characteristics of a language awareness approach and to investigate whether beliefs and practices change as teachers engage with this approach over the course of several weeks.

Context of the study

All the research in this dissertation was conducted in the context of pre-university secondary (i.e., *vwo*) education in the Netherlands. Pre-university secondary education is a six-year course of which the first three years comprise lower-secondary and the final three years upper-secondary education. In this dissertation, all research was carried out in the context of upper-secondary education with students approximately 16 to 18 years of age. Students in the upper-secondary years are prepared for their future studies at university. To teach in the upper-secondary years of pre-university education, teachers must possess a Master's degree

in their subject matter as well as in education. The teachers who participated in this study taught either English, German or French as a foreign language. English is the only mandatory foreign language subject in the pre-university track of secondary education. Depending on whether students choose a science-oriented curriculum or social science-oriented curriculum in the final three years of secondary education, they decide for either German or French as the second modern foreign language or select both languages in addition to English.

Research questions and outline

The overarching research questions in this dissertation are as follows:

- 1) How can teachers' current beliefs and practices with regard to language awareness in Dutch upper secondary foreign language education be characterised?
- 2) How do teachers' beliefs and practices change as they deliberately engage with a language awareness approach in the context of their everyday classroom practices?

To address these questions, four empirical studies were conducted. These are presented in Chapters 2 through 5. **Chapter 2** focuses on teachers' beliefs about language awareness as an approach to secondary school foreign language education. This study aims to deepen our insight into teachers' beliefs about language awareness and addresses specific components of teacher beliefs. More specifically, it aims to investigate how experienced teachers perceive this new approach in the context of their own teaching. Qualitative interview data from ten EFL teachers were used to empirically investigate teacher beliefs, differences in teacher beliefs and conflicting teacher beliefs. **Chapter 3** studies teachers' self-reported teaching practices intended to stimulate students' language awareness. This study aims to investigate whether, and to what extent, awareness-raising practices are currently implemented in EFL education and how these practices can be characterised. In a qualitative interview, ten EFL teachers were asked to provide examples of teaching practices which they believed stimulated students' language awareness. Fieldnotes taken during an open lesson observation were used to support the interview data. **Chapter 4** examines changes in teacher beliefs regarding language awareness as a new approach to foreign language education. This study aims to investigate whether and how teachers' beliefs change as they engage with this new approach and whether belief changes were related to specific components of teacher beliefs (as described in chapter 2). Qualitative interview data from eight foreign language teachers were used to examine teacher beliefs prior to and six months after engagement with a language awareness approach. **Chapter 5** investigates changes to (existing) foreign language teaching practices. This study aimed to investigate whether existing teaching practices change as

teachers deliberately engage with a language awareness approach over the course of a month and which intentions underlie these changes. Qualitative interview and observation data, lesson plans and teaching materials from three purposefully selected teachers were used to examine these changes. Finally, **Chapter 6** presents a general discussion of the main findings of this dissertation, followed by a discussion of the theoretical and practical implications for students, teachers, curriculum developers and educational publishers, as well as directions for further research.

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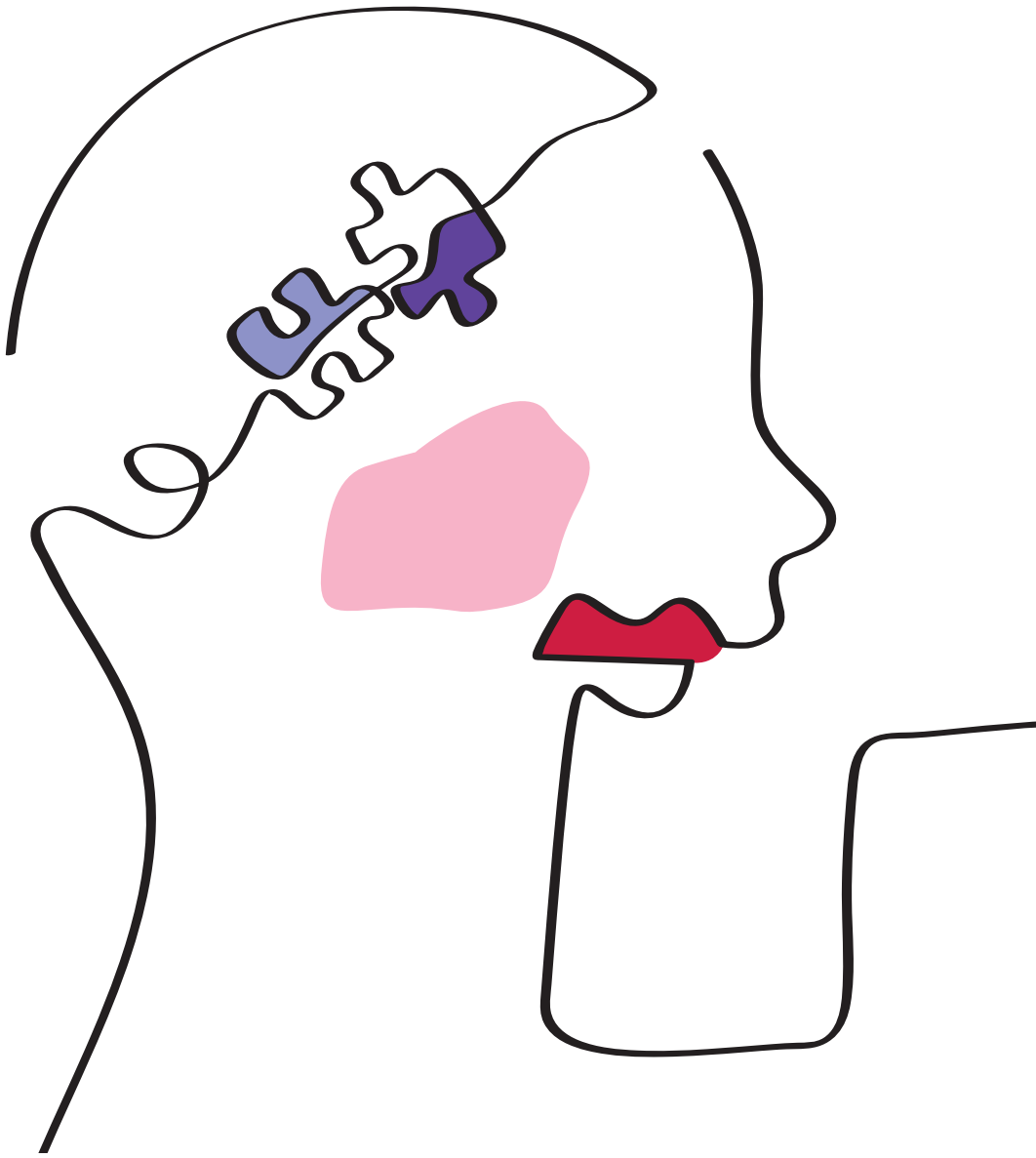
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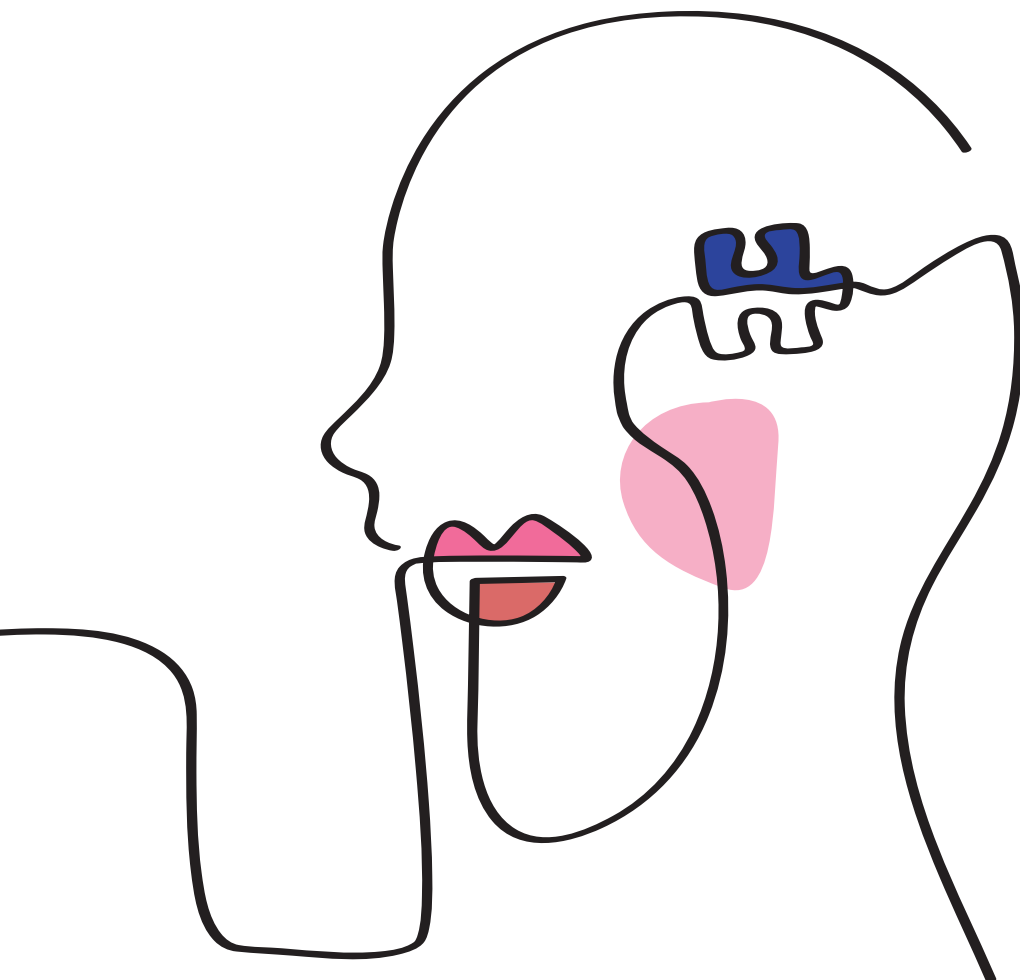
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Unravelling upper-secondary school teachers' beliefs about language awareness: From conflicts to challenges in the EFL context



This chapter is based on:

Van den Broek, E. W. R., Oolbekkink-Marchand, H. W., Unsworth, S., Van Kemenade, A. M. C., & Meijer, P. C. (2018). Unravelling upper-secondary school teachers' beliefs about language awareness: From conflicts to challenges in the EFL context. *Language Awareness*, 27(4), 331–353. doi:10.1080/09658416.2018.1523910

Abstract

This study presents an in-depth inquiry into teachers' beliefs about a language awareness approach to secondary school foreign language education. The study aims to deepen our insight into (the differences in) teachers' beliefs about language awareness and facilitate the discussion about including language awareness in foreign language curricula. Ten teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL) were interviewed about their beliefs about language awareness. Analysis of the interviews revealed that teachers do not have a shared understanding of the concept of language awareness as related to the five domains of language awareness set out by James & Garrett (2013). Furthermore, several beliefs could be characterised as conflicting. These conflicts were found in the context of student learning, teacher collaboration, the curriculum and the link with other languages. The results suggest a number of challenges that need to be addressed when including language awareness in foreign language education. These challenges could serve as a point of departure for a dialogue with and between teachers. Furthermore, they could support teachers to find out how language awareness fits best within the existing EFL curricula.

Introduction

The current demand for more challenging, creative, and future-oriented language education calls for a more holistic view on language teaching and learning. A holistic view on language education should take into account linguistic, sociocultural and personal aspects (Bell, 2003; Hélot et al., 2018) and should pay attention to 'real-life language using situations where listening, speaking, reading and writing interact and intertwine' (Harjanne & Tella, 2008, p. 59). Language awareness, defined as 'explicit knowledge about language, and conscious perception and sensitivity in language learning, language teaching and language use' (ALA, n.d.), fits with this holistic view on language teaching and learning. Language awareness aims to complement language learning by learning about language (Hawkins, 1984), it promotes linguistic reflection (Denham & Lobeck, 2014) and it stimulates the use of higher-order and creative thinking skills (Waters, 2006).

In learners, according to Bolitho et al. (2003), language awareness develops 'through paying motivated attention to language in use, and [...] enables language learners to gradually gain insight into how languages work' (p. 251). In teachers, language awareness is 'the knowledge that teachers have of the underlying systems of the language that enables them to teach effectively' (Thornbury, 1997, p. x). It includes language proficiency as well as knowledge about language. Language awareness, then, bridges the gap between language proficiency and knowledge about language. The foreign language teacher needs to be able to reflect on both aspects and to mediate subject matter knowledge through the foreign language (Andrews, 2007). In other words, teachers need to be able to shift from (academic) knowledge about language to the everyday classroom discourse, which can still be considered a challenge (Wright, 2002).

Research into language awareness has addressed a wide range of topics, ranging from language skills to collaborative learning to teacher strategies (Svalberg, 2016). This variety of topics mirrors the multi-faceted and versatile nature of language awareness and is also reflected in its definition. Whilst this versatility may open up many possibilities for including language awareness in foreign language education, concrete ideas about what to do in teaching practices are not always available. In their book *Language Awareness in the Classroom*, James and Garrett (2013) distinguish five domains of LA: 1) the cognitive domain, focusing on language as a system, 2) the performance domain, focusing on language command, 3) the affective domain, focusing on personal relevance, 4) the social domain, focusing on social harmonisation and 5) the power domain, focusing on the influence of language. Whilst these domains outline the scope of language awareness, the extent to which teachers share similar beliefs when thinking about language awareness, how teachers' beliefs about language

awareness fit in with these domains, and how language awareness can be included within (existing) language curricula remains unclear. The goal of the present study is therefore to explore these issues in order to gain a better understanding of the (potential) place of language awareness in the foreign language classroom.

Language awareness in the curriculum

Language awareness has already made its way into the national language curricula in some countries. In Australia, for example, the new Australian Curriculum for (foreign) languages (ACARA, 2016) has afforded knowledge about language and language awareness a central place in the curriculum. The key elements in the L2 curriculum include reflection on and analysis of the language to be learnt and the language(s) already known, building an understanding of the way languages work and 'noticing, questioning and developing awareness of how languages and cultures shape experiences and identity' (ACARA, 2016, para. 1). The Finnish national core curriculum for upper-secondary school (FNBE, 2015) has included language awareness, with a primary focus on multilingualism, culture and identity, as key elements in L1 and L2 education. These examples show that there are multiple ways to embed language awareness in (foreign) language curricula.

In the Netherlands, curriculum reforms in language education, as well as in a larger educational perspective, have attracted renewed attention (Curriculum.nu, 2019). The Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science recently initiated a debate about the development of a future-oriented curriculum. The current curriculum, which has been in place since 2006, is too comprehensive and provides little guidance for student learning (Rijksoverheid, 2016). Additionally, the current communicative language teaching approach (Richards & Rodgers, 2014) devotes much attention to the development of the four language skills, but considerably less to students' language learning process, and the analytical and (cross-)linguistic aspects of languages. Along with the curriculum reform debate, the role of language awareness has recently also attracted considerable interest (Tammenga-Helmantel & Le Bruyn, 2016), especially in the context of secondary education. In order to support the inclusion of a language awareness approach, however, it is essential to involve teachers, to find out their beliefs about language awareness, and to identify what they need in order to successfully include language awareness in their daily teaching practices and the wider curriculum.

Teacher beliefs

The success of curriculum innovations largely depends on teachers' beliefs about a particular topic. language awareness appears to be a broad field 'allow[ing] for considerable flexibility' (James & Garrett, 2013, p. 4) and covering a wide range of topics (Svalberg, 2016). This is why it is not only important to explore what teachers know and believe in relation to the topic of

language awareness, but also find out how their beliefs might affect the inclusion of language awareness in foreign language education. To our knowledge, only a few studies have addressed teachers' beliefs in relation to language awareness, but these studies examined beliefs with a narrower focus, such as grammar (Watson, 2015) and intercultural competence (Young & Sachdev, 2011), rather than beliefs about language awareness as an approach. In a broader perspective, studies on teachers' beliefs have also reflected on educational values (Lewis & McCook, 2002) and difficulties with communicative language teaching as a curriculum innovation (Li, 1998). An in-depth analysis of teachers' beliefs about language awareness as a concept, however, has not yet been carried out.

Research has shown that the construct of teacher beliefs is broad (Pajares, 1992) and that definitions of beliefs vary considerably (Basturkmen, 2012). In the context of language education, teacher beliefs are often described as a proposition held by a teacher which is true for that particular teacher, while s/he also recognises that alternative beliefs may be held by other teachers (Borg, 2001). In this study, we will follow Skott (2014), who describes beliefs as 1) referring to ideas which are considered to be subjectively true for a particular individual, 2) having cognitive and affective dimensions, 3) being stable and only likely to change because of relevant experiences, and 4) influencing teachers' engagement with practice.

Another reason why it is particularly important to identify teachers' beliefs in relation to the topic of language awareness is that teachers' beliefs might be difficult to change (Pajares, 1992; Tsui, 2003). Recognising those beliefs that require extra attention might help to successfully include this approach in foreign language education. With different teachers possibly holding different beliefs, it is useful to understand if and if so, how these beliefs differ. Teachers' beliefs are therefore central to this study to help indicate the possible challenges related to the inclusion of language awareness in teaching practices.

Aim and research questions

Our first research question is as follows:

- 1) How can teachers' beliefs about language awareness be characterised?

To answer the first question, we will use the five domains of language awareness (James & Garrett, 2013) as a starting point. Our second research question concerns differences in teachers' beliefs:

2) What differences can be observed in teachers' beliefs about language awareness and how can these differences be characterised?

Recent language awareness related research has mainly been carried out in university contexts (Svalberg, 2016), and most research has been conducted outside the Netherlands. This paper aims a) to gain a better understanding of teachers' beliefs about language awareness in the context of Dutch upper-secondary EFL education and b) to identify differences in teachers' beliefs about language awareness and formulate a number of challenges related to these different beliefs. Building on these challenges, this article also aims to facilitate the discussion about including language awareness in foreign language curricula.

Methodology

A qualitative, exploratory, multiple-case study approach was adopted, on the one hand, to collect multiple perspectives on the topic under investigation (Creswell & Poth, 2018) and, on the other, to capture the complexity of teachers' beliefs (Miles et al., 2013). Post-lesson observation interviews were used for data collection. A coding scheme was developed to analyse the interviews. Finally, the various cases were compared in order to explore differences and similarities in teachers' beliefs (Miles et al., 2013).

School context

This study was conducted in the context of pre-university secondary education in the Netherlands. Pre-university secondary education is a six-year course: the first three years comprise lower-secondary and the final three years upper-secondary education. This study focused on upper-secondary education with students 16-18 years of age. Students in the upper-secondary years are prepared for their future studies at university. Teachers in the upper-secondary years must possess a master's degree in secondary education.

Participants

Following Merriam and Tisdell (2015), we purposefully selected teachers interested in language awareness in order to identify as many factors as possible associated with the concept. Additionally, we used the following criteria: participants 1) were in-service teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL), 2) possessed a master's degree in EFL teaching and 3) had a minimum of three years of teaching experience. Participants were selected through the network of the teacher education institute and the main researcher's personal network. An informative e-mail was sent to numerous schools and teachers. Out of 18 teachers who had declared their interest and consented to participate, ten teachers from ten different schools

were selected, taking into account gender, age and teaching experience. The teachers selected were between 29 and 64 years old and had between 7 and 40 years of teaching experience. For a detailed overview of teacher characteristics, see Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 Overview of teacher characteristics

Teacher	Gender	Age (in years)	Teaching experience (in years)
1	M	63	40
2	F	56	19
3	F	29	3
4	M	56	28
5	F	43	8
6	F	29	7
7	M	58	33
8	F	58	34
9	M	45	19
10	F	40	18

Data collection and procedures

Data were collected through a semi-structured interview that built on class observation. Each teacher was observed teaching one EFL class in order to gain a better understanding of their teaching and to create a point of reference during the interview. Notes on awareness-raising occurrences or opportunities taking place in the classroom were reported during each observation and, if applicable, were referred to during the interview, for example to encourage teachers to elaborate more on what they find important or to stimulate teachers to further explain a particular coursebook exercise. The interview followed directly or shortly after the class. All interviews lasted approximately one hour. Each interview was audio-recorded and transcribed.

Five open-ended questions and a number of follow-up indicators formed the main body of the interview protocol. The protocol was designed based on previous literature on language awareness and the gaps identified in that literature. For example, the way teachers think about language awareness in relation to their classroom practice and what they consider as possibilities or challenges when it comes to including language awareness in their daily teaching practices were not sufficiently addressed in earlier work. The protocol was piloted with seven secondary school foreign language teachers and two teacher trainers and adjusted where necessary, for example by changing the order of the questions. Teachers were asked to reflect on the concept of language awareness in relation to their teaching practices.

The five main questions were as follows: 1) Could you give an example of what language awareness means to you in the context of upper-secondary EFL education? 2) How do you visualise language awareness in your own teaching practices? 3) Which examples of language awareness do you recognise in your own teaching practices? 4) If you were to include language awareness in your teaching practices, which difficulties would you expect? And 5) In what ways could language awareness contribute to innovation in EFL? See Appendix A for the full interview protocol.

Data analysis

Interviews were transcribed and analysed using Atlas.ti (version 7.5.16). In order to analyse the interview data, the five domains of language awareness (James & Garrett, 2013) as well as existing frameworks on teacher beliefs were used as the point of departure.

In the first phase of analysis, the main researcher developed a coding scheme integrating the five domains of language awareness with categorisations found in three qualitative language education studies: a schematic conceptualisation of language teacher cognition (Borg, 2003), an overview of key influences on teacher language awareness (Andrews, 2007) and a categorisation of teachers' practical knowledge (Meijer et al., 1999).

In the second phase, the process of coding scheme development as well as the meaning of the codes were thoroughly discussed with the co-researcher in order to reach a shared conception. Furthermore, the coding scheme was used to code two contrastive interviews. Any coding ambiguities were clarified through discussion and, where necessary, codes were removed, merged or new codes were added. After all ambiguities were resolved, a refined coding scheme with five main categories and 15 codes was developed. A summarised coding scheme can be found in Table 2.2 (see Appendix B for the full coding scheme).

In the third phase, the coding scheme was used by the main researcher and co-researcher to code approximately 10% of the transcripts individually. For this purpose, one transcript was randomly selected. Given that the semi-structured interviews often yielded complex responses, meaning units rather than individual phrases were used as the units of analysis (Campbell et al., 2013). Meaning units were demarcated as such by the main researcher and subsequently coded by both the main researcher and the co-researcher using the coding scheme.

In the fourth phase, codings from both researchers were compared in order to calculate the interrater reliability. Cohen's (1960) kappa is one of the most commonly used methods to assess interrater reliability. Cohen's kappa was calculated as $\kappa = .89$, which is considered a

strong agreement (McHugh, 2012). Any coding discrepancies were reconciled through discussion in which both researchers shared their views on the code assignment. Then, the remaining set of transcripts was coded by the main researcher.

Table 2.2 Coding scheme consisting of five main categories with accompanying subcodes

Main categories	Accompanying subcodes
1. Subject matter Teacher's description of language awareness or awareness-raising skills and possible link between language awareness and other language competencies (= knowledge, skills, attitude)	1.1 Description of language awareness, subdivided into five domains of language awareness: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive domain • Performance domain • Affective domain • Social domain • Power domain 1.2 Link with other EFL domains
2. Curricular programme Teacher's beliefs about and interpretation of the EFL curriculum, including course materials and team agreements	2.1 Course materials 2.2 Curriculum 2.3 Team 2.4 Link with other language subjects
3. Student learning Teacher's beliefs about students and student learning in the EFL context	3.1 Student competencies 3.2 Individual differences 3.3 Motivation
4. Instructional technique Teacher's beliefs about chosen strategy, preparation and structure of lessons or practice with a focus on language awareness (aspects)	4.1 Instructional strategy 4.2 Feedback 4.3 Assessment
5. Educational context Teacher's beliefs about influential factors at classroom, teacher, school level	5.1 School support 5.2 Time 5.3 Teacher collaboration

In the final phase, a data matrix was created in order to organise teachers' beliefs per code and perform a cross-case analysis (Miles et al., 2013). In order to answer the first research question, we focused on the code 'LA description', which is subdivided according to the five domains of language awareness (James & Garrett, 2013). All teacher utterances labelled with this code

were extracted from the coding scheme and compared and analysed in order to characterise teachers' beliefs about language awareness. In order to answer the second research question, the full list of categories and codes was analysed to uncover similarities and differences in teachers' beliefs. Analysis of the codes yielded insight into the variety of beliefs present across teachers. Furthermore, some of these codes yielded potentially conflicting beliefs across teachers. In order to better understand the differences, we selected four codes ('link with other languages', 'teacher collaboration', 'curriculum' and 'student competencies') for further analysis. Comparison of these codes yielded potentially conflicting beliefs, as opposed to the remaining codes, which, by and large, yielded fewer disagreements. Interestingly, some beliefs could be characterised as possibilities for language awareness, whereas others could be characterised as difficulties. We primarily looked at the differences in beliefs between teachers when analysing the data; however, in some cases we also found differences in beliefs within teachers for the same code (e.g., link with other languages).

Results

Teachers' beliefs about language awareness

Teachers hold a wide range of beliefs about language awareness. In the following section we will use interview quotes² to describe the beliefs held by teachers about language awareness in relation to their everyday teaching practices. Some domains, for example the cognitive domain, were referred to repeatedly and by all teachers, whereas other domains, for example the power domain, were only referred to once and only by a few teachers. The majority of teachers' beliefs about language awareness could be characterised as falling within the cognitive domain, and all individual teachers made reference to the cognitive domain when elaborating on their beliefs about language awareness. References to grammatical aspects, gaining insight into language as a system, and understanding the structure of the language to be learnt were evaluated as beliefs fitting within the cognitive domain. The following quote by TEA8 is an example of a belief characterised as fitting within the cognitive domain:

TEA8: Yes, the consciousness we talked about before, [students'] realisation that language is a system, a structure with rules and building blocks that you use in a certain way. Like the way you use bricks to build a house. And so, ehm, that a verb is not the same as a noun or an adjective.

In addition to cognitive reflection, many beliefs were related to the performance domain. Reading and writing were frequently mentioned skills in relation to language awareness, with writing being part of TEA5's belief about language awareness:

INT: What does language awareness mean to you?

TEA5: Being able to use language, real-life situations. [...] Knowing how to be comprehensible, produce a decent piece of text, but then on a slightly higher level than the typical 'Dunglish'¹.

Teachers' beliefs fitting in with the social, affective or power domain were less prominent. It appeared from the results that sociocultural matters were less often associated with language awareness. Beliefs fitting the social domain were brought up once or twice by half of the teachers and highlighted multilingualism, multiculturalism and immigration. TEA5 explained: 'the language you speak influences your thinking and influences your behaviour, so then the whole cultural aspect follows as well'. Descriptions of language awareness fitting within the affective domain were brought up by five teachers and referred mostly to students' everyday life, curiosity and motivation. TEA6 ties in the social with the affective domain by relating language awareness to students' lifeworld and in doing so, aiming to motivate them:

TEA6: [Language awareness is] curiosity. And I think they [students] should realise that language is very broad, that is what they should realise. Actually, the fact that language plays a role in all school subjects and in all aspects in life. And for me it would be really nice if they develop a certain curiosity towards languages.

The power domain was only referred to by two teachers. Both teachers included the aspect of critical thinking when they illustrated their beliefs and both teachers linked it to other aspects of EFL teaching. TEA7 explained how critical thinking about language goes hand in hand with the use of literature and the transfer to daily life:

TEA7: Look at 1984 by George Orwell, it is all about the power of language and the way language works, and hey it is a weapon of power, right. In some dictatorships, words or even languages are forbidden, the words that you can use or cannot use, it is a political game. How does that work? I try to make students aware of that, but it takes a lot of practice before they notice [...] How can I make them think about language, well, I try to let them think critically, that they do not just swallow it, believe anything [...] And how is it different nowadays? Big brother is watching you.

¹ Dunglish (a portmanteau of Dutch and English) is a term used for typical mistakes native speakers of Dutch make when speaking English.

Besides elaborating on their beliefs about language awareness, two teachers also expressed their doubts about the suitability of this approach in the EFL classroom. Two teachers, who both viewed language awareness as inherently cognitive, explained that they do not find it necessary to make the implicit explicit if students subconsciously apply the rules correctly. However, the acquisition of other aspects, as explained by TEA1, might benefit from such an approach:

TEA1: In general our students are linguistically very competent, so when it comes to language awareness, I would say it is more about the function of language, and also stylistic, the way you use language, the impression you leave in written and spoken words. [...] But whether I use this in my teaching depends. Many of the students [subconsciously] know it [the rules] already and then I am not sure whether you should also explicitly address this.

Overall, then, teachers' interpretations of language awareness resulted in a wide variety of beliefs. The examples revealed that teachers pay attention to students' thinking about language and that they do so in a diverse and varied manner. The cognitive and performance domains of language awareness were most prominently reflected in teachers' beliefs. The affective, social and power domain were referred to less often. In the next section we will discuss differences observed in teachers' beliefs about language awareness.

Conflicting beliefs about LA

The four codes 'link with other languages', 'teacher collaboration', 'curriculum' and 'student competencies' revealed different teacher beliefs. Moreover, the differences observed within these codes could be considered as conflicting beliefs between teachers. In the following section, we will illustrate these differences by using teachers' own quotes.

1. Beliefs about the link with other languages: Help vs. hinder

The link between English (L2), Dutch (L1) and/or other (foreign) languages (Lx) was raised multiple times. A distinction could be made between L1 and L2, and L2 and Lx and the results indicated that teachers seemed to struggle whether or not to bring up the link between L1 and L2 and/or L2 and Lx. Teachers who referred to the link between L1 and L2 most often did so in the context of reading, vocabulary and grammar. Some teachers chose to explicitly address the similarities and differences between these languages. TEA9 explained how he discussed the similarities and differences in order to stimulate students' awareness of grammar:

TEA9: [I emphasise] the links as well as the non-links. Students very much lean on their knowledge of Dutch. And the transfer they make, the incorrect transfer from Dutch

to English, that is what I see a lot. And then I will show them how, for example, here is a Dutch word order instead of an English word order, why is that incorrect, what do you think?

Not all teachers were convinced of the possible cross-linguistic benefits. TEA2 explicitly pointed out that she eliminated the L1 as much as possible from her lessons. She explained the following when she discussed students' difficulties with the passive voice in English:

TEA2: That [basic grammar knowledge] belongs to Dutch of course and if they [students] do not learn it properly there, then I can invest a lot of time in it, but I do not teach Dutch, I teach English. And I have the feeling that I have to deal with Dutch often, very often, while I actually think it should not be an issue in the English class. They should not translate, but think in English.

Interestingly though, TEA2 regularly compared the L2 with other foreign languages. Especially in the context of reading and vocabulary, she often paused at or pointed out those words that she thought could benefit students' learning process:

TEA2: For example the word 'xenophobia'. Then I ask them 'who is taking lessons in Greek?'. Many students raise their hands and then I ask them, okay, tell me. And then first they give me a glazed look. So I say 'xenos, what does that mean?', [and they say] 'yeah, stranger'. So you can derive it [...] But they do not establish that link themselves, I always point it out.

In sum, the interview examples revealed that teachers do not always agree about the role of prior language knowledge in their classroom, whether it is about the L1 or other foreign languages taught in school. Some teachers tried to make use of prior language knowledge wherever possible, whereas other teachers completely ignored it or preferred to only use other foreign languages and disregard the first language. Conflicting beliefs were mostly found between teachers, but some teachers themselves held conflicting beliefs about the role of the L1 as opposed to the role of foreign languages in the EFL classroom as well.

2. Beliefs about teacher collaboration: Success vs. failure

Teacher collaboration was often seen as relevant in the context of language awareness, yet was perceived as a difficulty by many teachers. Some teachers described examples of how they had started some form of teacher collaboration with other language teachers in their school. They did so, because they intended to 'bring the languages together' (TEA7) and believed it would stimulate students' language learning when the (foreign) language curricula were

better aligned. Unfortunately, none of the attempts described by these teachers had lasted long-term. TEA8 explained that she 'had tried to collaborate [with other foreign language colleagues], but it never really got off the ground'. They had not succeeded in establishing a durable subject-matter dialogue with other foreign language teachers in her school because it transpired that they all had different goals. She added that now the L2 teachers sometimes discuss grammatical aspects with L1 teachers in order to align L1 and L2 grammar, for example when analysing sentence structures, so that 'their [L1] programme connects with our [L2] programme'. However, she also commented that 'in practice it actually never works out'.

Other teachers emphasised how they particularly valued collaboration with colleagues. TEA6 said that she did not have many opportunities to work together with other EFL teachers. However, she gave examples of collaboration with the L1 teacher as well as other foreign language teachers. She said: 'I work together with other languages a lot, not necessarily in terms of subject-matter content, but we do exchange ideas. Writing an application letter is the same in like German, so we use the same formats'. And about her collaboration with an L1 teacher she said:

TEA6: We have discussed things over coffee break, we have some tricks, some things we do. For example, in Dutch we now say 'het huis is gebouwd' [the house is built]. We used to say 'het huis is gebouwd geworden' [the house is built been]. That comparison is easier to make if you want to relate it to the English 'the house has been built'.

In sum, many teachers have participated or still participate in some sort of teacher collaboration within their schools. However, the way they experience this collaboration differs greatly. The answers revealed a conflict in teacher collaboration between, on the one hand, the connection with daily practice and, on the other, the extent to which content is discussed in any detail. Teachers who experienced failure in collaboration often did so in situations where they tried to align the programmes of different language subjects. In-depth focus on and alignment of the content resulted in a reduced connection with daily teaching practice, as the various languages did not seamlessly fit in with each other and still evoked their own language-specific questions and issues. Teacher collaboration was experienced as successful when mutual alignment occurred on a more superficial level, for example when discussing less complicated aspects of language on an occasional basis or when discussing the use of cross-curricular formats.

3. Beliefs about the curriculum: Boundary vs. creativity

Another aspect that yielded conflicting beliefs across teachers was the EFL curriculum. The boundary between curriculum agreements and curricular creativity was perceived as complex

by many teachers. In the Netherlands, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science decides on the national examination programme and corresponding criteria. Within the boundaries of these criteria, schools are free to formulate their own curriculum and examination agreements for upper-secondary education. Although schools are allowed to decide about and fill in the agreements themselves, teachers often said they felt burdened by and forced to rely on these agreements. TEA1 elaborated on the tasks he planned to do in his next lesson: 'We will do that [exercise] tomorrow, because the book says so. Never heard of it, but anyway, I will do what they ask'. When asked if he could skip the exercise if he did not consider it very useful, he answered: 'No, I cannot skip it, because we have a common exam and every class gets the exact same exam based on the same two chapters. So I am supposed to prepare students for this'. At the same time, teachers expressed their wish to have 'space for more creativity' (TEA10) in their teaching and to not feel the pressure to act on the agreements. TEA3 criticised the type of exercises in students' coursebooks and explained that in order to stimulate students' language awareness, exercises need to be adapted and allow for more creativity. She explained how she has developed many creative lessons, but finds it difficult to fit them into the programme. As the format of the coursebook exercises is influenced by the format of the examination programme (SLO, 2009) she felt compelled to practice those types of exercises in order to prepare students for their exams.

TEA3: I understand that students should learn and know these words and that they can derive different word classes, such as verb, noun and adjective, but I also think that these [fill-in-the-gap] are dumb types of exercises, especially when the word or the affix is filled in already. Then it is a terribly dry scheme, so yeah. If it is in the coursebook I do use these kinds of exercises, but they [students] forget it again, I think. Unless, you know, you let them play with it and let them create a short story with at least ten of those words, for example. If they really have to apply the words, that is when it becomes useful, but these columns and schemes, nah, they really forget it again.

TEA5 acknowledged the role of reading in the curriculum. However, she also thought that the typical multiple-choice reading exercises were too passive and did not stimulate students to really think about the language and the message in the text. Consequently, she favoured more creativity in dealing with reading exercises and also put this into practice on a regular basis, for example by 'letting students work in smaller groups, this jigsaw classroom, and then they have to discuss the text, for example connections between paragraphs'. She also allowed students to summarise the text their own way, 'so they can use the text in a creative way: one group creates a world map with different pieces of paper on it, others create a book, those kind of examples, students really dive into the text then'.

To sum up, several teachers perceived language awareness as something extra on top of the existing curriculum. Although they believed language awareness would be useful and could add more depth to the subject matter, they expressed the opinion that they currently did not have sufficient time and space for it because of the curricular agreements. Other teachers saw more possibilities for language awareness and considered it a concept that could be intertwined with the existing curriculum. Those teachers tried to adapt certain exercises in a creative manner with the intention of stimulating student engagement and increasing students' awareness of the language skills they practised.

4. Beliefs about student competencies: Classroom vs. real-life

Teachers mostly referred to student competencies in terms of the four language skills. This is perhaps unsurprising, given that communicative language teaching revolves to a large extent around the development of these skills. Most teachers linked language awareness to one particular language skill they perceived as the most important for students to be competent in, for example in order to prepare them for their final exam or their future studies at university. In most cases this meant a focus on reading skills. TEA4 explained why he thinks students' awareness of language needs to be improved and why he thinks reading is the most important skill in that case: 'That students are better able to read, so they can read articles better, read their coursebooks better, but that they also develop a better insight in their own language, Dutch, or German or French.'

Other teachers expressed how they wanted students' competencies to be more connected. In school settings the skills are often taught and dealt with separately, whereas in daily life these skills are inseparable. According to some teachers, language awareness could support students to understand the connection between these skills. TEA9, thus, envisaged language awareness as a more holistic approach that could build students' awareness of the link between the skills. He wanted students to see the bigger picture and did not want to 'give them the idea that they are only practicing exam texts'. However, he added that 'students actually really like that, it gives them something to hold on to', because after all that is the way they will be examined.

TEA9: [Important for me is] that students start connecting the various language components. That they are not only connecting the different languages, but that they are also able to connect the various skills, that they are able to put these skills together. I realise that is difficult for them. Even how they can connect these skills within one language, so for instance connect their reading skills with their writing skills.

Taking the different beliefs into account, teachers seem to be torn between language awareness as a means to directly improve the language skills as taught and examined in school, and language awareness as a means to emphasise the connection between these skills and the use of skills in daily life. Reading skills, which make up (sometimes more than) 50% of the final secondary school grade for English, were referred to most as the key competence for students to improve. However, reading exercises were often evaluated by teachers as a teaching to the test procedure rather than exercises that led to a deeper understanding of the text. As a result, the transfer from coursebook to daily usage appeared to be a difficulty for students, yet it remained unclear for many teachers how to best support this transfer and make language relevant to students. Teachers who viewed language awareness as a holistic approach aimed at improving not just one particular skill, but rather students' competencies as a whole. They regularly focused on the connection between competencies learned in school and competencies necessary outside school.

Discussion

The aim of the study was to deepen our understanding of language awareness in the context of upper-secondary EFL education, to achieve a better insight into teachers' beliefs about language awareness and the differences within these beliefs, and to facilitate the discussion about the implementation of language awareness in (foreign) language curricula. One finding is that language awareness is not perceived as a uniform concept with a shared understanding among teachers, a concern that was also raised by James and Garrett (2013). Another finding is that the cognitive and performance domain were most prominently reflected in teachers' beliefs. The recurring references to these domains can probably be explained by taking into consideration the communicative language teaching approach and the EFL curriculum, in which grammar and the development of the four language skills receive much attention. Furthermore, EFL education in the upper-secondary years in the Netherlands is predominantly organised around the development of these skills. This way, students are prepared for their periodic assessments and final secondary school exam (Fasoglio et al., 2015).

The dominant focus on skills may have lowered the number of references to the social, affective and power domains. Even though a trend analysis of language education in the Netherlands recently underscored the societal impact of language and the importance of reflection on language and language as a crucial element in citizenship education (Fasoglio et al., 2015), teachers in this study felt an increasing pressure to prepare students for their exams by focusing on skills development. Social, affective and power domain-related aspects of language learning were consequently not prioritised and were less often associated with

language awareness. It should be noted, however, that the scale of this study did not allow us to report on any generalisable, quantitative insights into teachers' beliefs. Further research involving larger groups of teachers could possibly elaborate further on the occurrence of the five domains in relation to teachers' beliefs.

In addition to analysing teachers' beliefs in relation to the five domains of language awareness, we analysed the differences in teachers' beliefs about language awareness. Some of these differences could be characterised as conflicting beliefs and were found when teachers discussed the link with other languages, teacher collaboration, curriculum and student competencies. Conflicting beliefs may be understood better by setting them side by side and by evaluating the nature of the conflicts (Richardson, 1996). For that reason, we evaluated the conflicting beliefs and formulated four challenges stemming from these conflicting beliefs that are relevant and important for the inclusion of language awareness in educational practices. When discussing the role of language awareness in the EFL curriculum, these challenges could serve as a point of departure when initiating a dialogue with, for example, teachers, schools and teacher trainers. Such a dialogue could support teachers in developing a better understanding of their own and other teachers' beliefs about language awareness, help teachers and schools find out how language awareness fits best within the existing EFL curricula, and support teacher educators in drawing attention to these areas that require extra attention in pre- and in-teacher training.

Conflicting belief 1: Links with other languages

Our study shows that some teachers use the link between languages in order to stimulate students' learning process, whereas others refuse to emphasise the similarities and differences between languages because they think it will confuse students. Furthermore, the results indicate that underlining the cross-linguistic connection between linguistic forms seems to occur sporadically, rather than structurally. This suggests that it was seen as more relevant by teachers to explain the connection for the progress of the task at hand, rather than as the start of an in-depth discussion or better understanding (Ellis et al., 2002). However, emphasising the common form features could improve performance in both languages (Cummins, 2005).

Challenge 1: *How can teachers be made aware of the possibilities of cross-linguistic reflection, what tools do they need to stimulate this reflection and how can they support students to discover these similarities and differences themselves?*

Conflicting belief 2: Teacher collaboration

The results indicate that teacher collaboration yields positive associations for some teachers, whereas other teachers mostly experience failure in collaborating with colleagues. Establishing

cross-curricular collaboration was perceived as difficult when teachers aimed at equating the content of their subject with other language subjects. Few studies have described cross-linguistic teacher collaboration. Gunning, White, and Busque (2016) found similar difficulties in teacher collaboration, although at a grade 6-level in a Canadian context, and found that difficulties occurred because teachers were unfamiliar with each other's curriculum or the terminology used in another subject. In our study, many examples of collaboration provided by teachers fitted within the cognitive domain of language awareness. As teachers experienced difficulties within this domain, the question arises whether collaboration could possibly be more successful within another domain of language awareness, for example the social domain.

Challenge 2: *How can teachers be supported to discover common ground and find suitable and feasible topics to collaboratively work on in the context of language awareness development?*

Conflicting belief 3: Curriculum

This study reveals that teachers struggle with various aspects of the curriculum; they are either following curriculum requirements and carrying out the associated tasks as agreed upon with colleagues, or using the curricular freedom to add more creativity to their teaching. The results suggest that teachers experience a conflict in the space allowed by the curriculum and how to fill in that space. The perceived discrepancy between the intended and the implemented curriculum (Van den Akker, 2003) seems to account for this conflict and the possible role attributed to language awareness in the curriculum.

Challenge 3: *How can teachers include language awareness in (existing) language curricula without losing focus on the development of the language skills and at the same time generate more space for students' own creativity in language learning?*

Conflicting belief 4: Student competencies

The results show that conflicting beliefs about student competencies are based, on the one hand, on a sole focus on the development of students' language skills and, on the other hand, on finding connections between the skills acquired and used in school and the use of language in daily life outside the school context. Students' competencies are often framed in terms of their skills in school. However, many teachers also said that students were capable of doing much more if they had the opportunity to look further than the exercises in the coursebook, for example by completing assignments outside school that involve talking to people. Although the common objectives of communicative language teaching are to

prepare learners for real-life communication, with skills often being intertwined (Richards, 2006), teachers did not mention this when discussing students' competencies.

Challenge 4: *How can language awareness maintain the balance between language skills acquired and used in the classroom and language skills necessary and relevant in daily life, and what do we want students to be able to do, know or learn in the EFL classroom?*

Implications and conclusion

Overall, this study shows that language awareness is a complex and multi-faceted concept. Teachers have described the concept extensively, yet no shared understanding of its meaning exists among the Dutch secondary school teachers in our study. Nonetheless, discussing the topic during the interview led to new insights for many teachers, which seems a first step in raising teachers' awareness of the possibilities of language awareness in the EFL classroom.

Furthermore, this study indicates that language awareness is not a one-size-fits-all approach. We would argue that in order to make language awareness workable in EFL education, the approach requires closer inspection by and with teachers. It is important to realise that teachers may hold a wide variety of beliefs about language awareness, based on their own experiences and classroom practices. Hence, mapping teachers' beliefs about language awareness is essential to facilitate the practical implementation of such an approach.

This study has shown that when it comes to including language awareness in EFL education, the following aspects require extra attention: the link with other languages, teacher collaboration, curriculum and student competencies. Further studies are necessary to discover how this can best be accomplished. Nevertheless, explicating (the differences in) teachers' beliefs provides teachers with a common language to discuss language awareness and will facilitate the exchange of ideas. By collaboratively focusing on the topic, teachers will gain a better insight into their beliefs and the role language awareness could play in their teaching practices.

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Appendix A

Full interview protocol

Part A: Introduction to the interview and evaluation of classroom observation

(1) How do you look back on this lesson? What caught your attention?

- Did you prepare the lesson? And if so, how?
- Did you have a particular goal in mind? Did you reach this?
- What went well? What disappointed? Why?
- What went different than expected? Why?
- What would you have done differently? Why?

(2) Was this lesson a good example of how a typical lesson progresses or was it different because I was present?

(3) Referring to classroom example: Do you do these type of exercises on a regular basis? Why (not)?

Part B: Reflecting on LA in EFL education

(4) Could you give an example of what language awareness means to you in the context of upper-secondary EFL education?

- For example, when you think about the language skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking) or other aspects in education where language awareness could play a role?

Part C: Reflecting on LA example or opportunity in the classroom

(5) How do you visualise language awareness in your own teaching practices? Which examples of language awareness do you recognise in your own teaching practices?

- For example, when you think about: your class, your students, yourself as an EFL teacher, your school, your colleagues, the curriculum.

Part D. Including LA in EFL teaching practices

(6) If you were to include language awareness in your teaching practices, which difficulties/possibilities would you expect?

- For example, when you think about: your class, your students, yourself as an EFL teacher, your school, your colleagues, the curriculum.
- What would you need if you were to include such an approach in your teaching practices?

Part E. LA as innovative aspect in EFL education

(7) In what ways could language awareness contribute to innovation in EFL?

- For example, when you think about: your class, your students, yourself as an EFL teacher, your school, your colleagues, the curriculum, the transition from secondary school to university.
- Do you think LA could be of added value for EFL education? Why (not)?

Part F. End of the interview

- Now we have discussed all the questions, is there anything you would like to add? For example discuss something we have not discussed yet or elaborate more on a certain question?
- What did you think of the interview? Did it set you thinking?

Appendix B

This coding scheme is built around five main categories which are numbered 1-5 in the first column; a brief description of the main categories is also provided. The second column lists the subcodes that accompany each category. In the third column, a description of each subcode is provided. In the fourth column, an example of an interview quote is provided for each of the subcodes.

Overview of the full coding scheme consisting of five main categories, accompanying subcodes, descriptions and interview examples

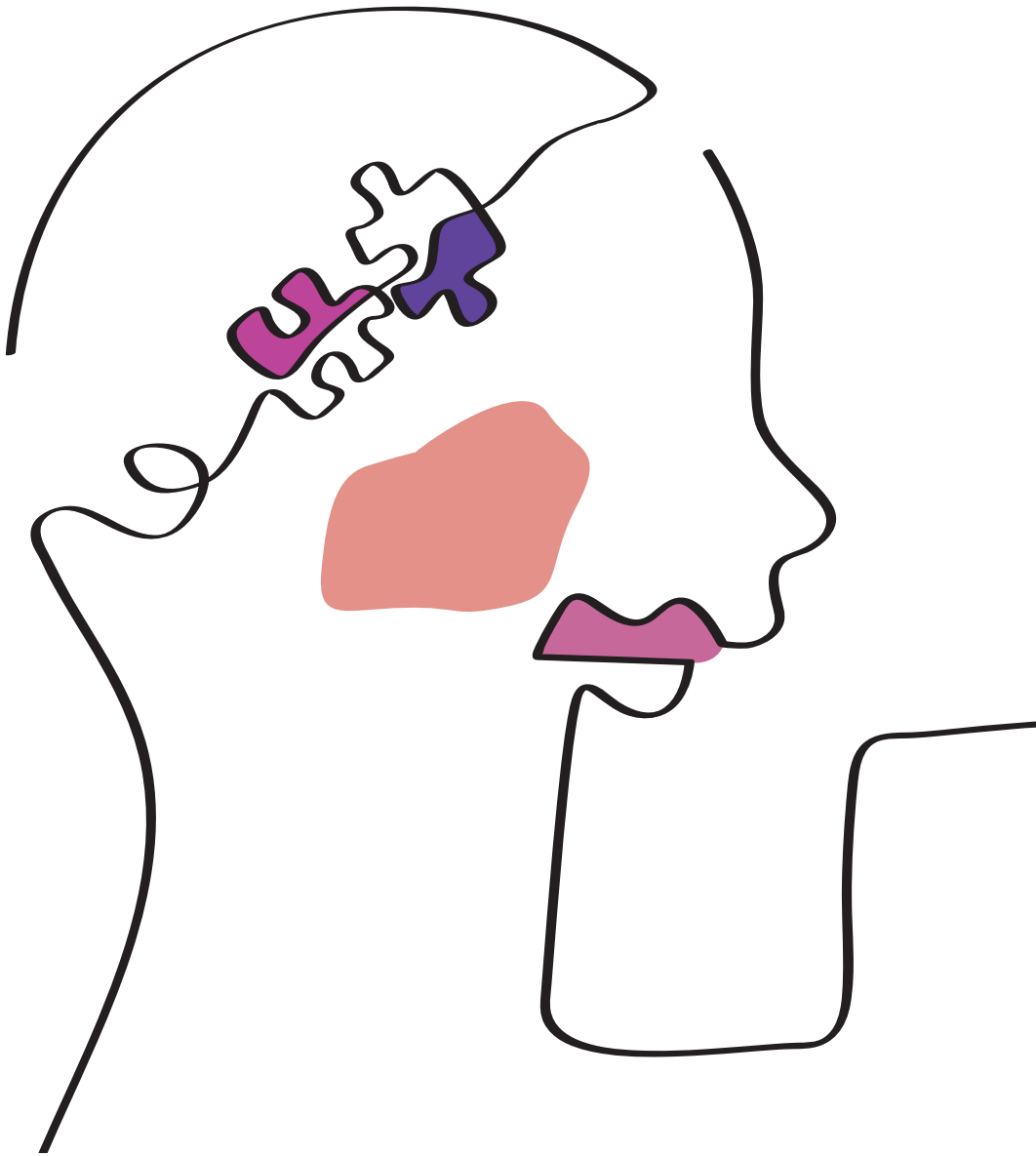
Main categories	Accompanying subcodes	Subcode description	Example of interview quote
1. Subject matter Teacher's description of language awareness (LA) or LA-related skills and possible link between LA and other language competencies (= knowledge, skills, attitude)	1.1 LA description, subdivided into: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive domain • Performance domain • Affective domain • Social domain • Power domain 	Teacher's description, characterisation or explanation of LA(-related aspects), subdivided according to the five domains of LA (James & Garrett, 2013)	'[LA is] curiosity. And I think they [students] should realise that language is very broad, that is what they should realise. Actually, the fact that language plays a role in all school subjects and in all aspects in life. And for me it would be really nice if they develop a certain curiosity towards languages' (This interview example was coded as affective as well as social).
	1.2 Link with other EFL domains	Teacher's beliefs about the connection between LA and other domains within the EFL curriculum	'The nice part about teaching English I think, is that literature is always referred to in articles, there are always references to elements from literature. Take newspaper headlines for example, all these wordplays. And all references in articles, for example from literature, general knowledge or knowledge about the language itself. I often point that out and ask 'why does the author do that', 'what does this reference has to do with'. I think it stimulates students if they notice it'.

<p>2. Curricular programme</p> <p>Teacher's beliefs about and interpretation of the EFL curriculum, including course materials and team agreements</p>	<p>2.1 Course materials</p> <p>Teacher's beliefs about course materials used in the EFL classroom in order to accomplish curricular goals, including teacher's opinion about the materials in relation to LA, suggestions for possible LA-related course materials and responsibility for the (re)development of course materials</p>	<p>'Yes, that [reflection] is very important. And the <i>Of Course</i> method is not that good, but I like it. The only downside is, students are afraid to let go of the method. Every unit is the exact same, five lessons, so and so many words and recurring grammar'.</p>
<p>2.2 Curriculum</p>	<p>Teacher's beliefs about the (intended) curriculum, including curriculum outline and continuity, examination, final exam and teacher's interpretation and/or implementation of the intended curriculum</p>	<p>'[Diverting from the programme] is impossible. As opposed to the start of my teaching career, we now have a common exam and every class gets the exact same exam based on the same two chapters. So I am supposed to prepare students for this'.</p>
<p>2.3 Team</p>	<p>Teacher's beliefs about agreements with EFL colleagues within the EFL department concerning activities performed and materials used within the EFL classroom, including teacher's opinion on these agreements in relation to opportunities? for LA</p>	<p>'I work here for about seven years now and in the pre-university track I am the only EFL teacher, so yeah, discussing with colleagues is a bit complicated then. Also because I realise that trying out new things, innovative activities, that often depends on the younger colleagues, and they are not there at the moment'.</p>
<p>2.4 Link with other language subjects</p>	<p>Teacher's beliefs about the link between the EFL subject and other (foreign) language subjects taught in school, including teacher's opinion on specific aspects of language that could be particularly useful when it comes to (raising students') LA</p>	<p>'[The difference between Dutch and English] and then especially that you can point out where things go wrong. For example a sentence as 'Ik heb die film gisteren gezien' [I saw that movie yesterday]. If you let them translate then they will translate it literally to *] have seen that movie yesterday. So okay, it is logical that, as speakers of Dutch, we translate it that way and that students translate it word for word'.</p>

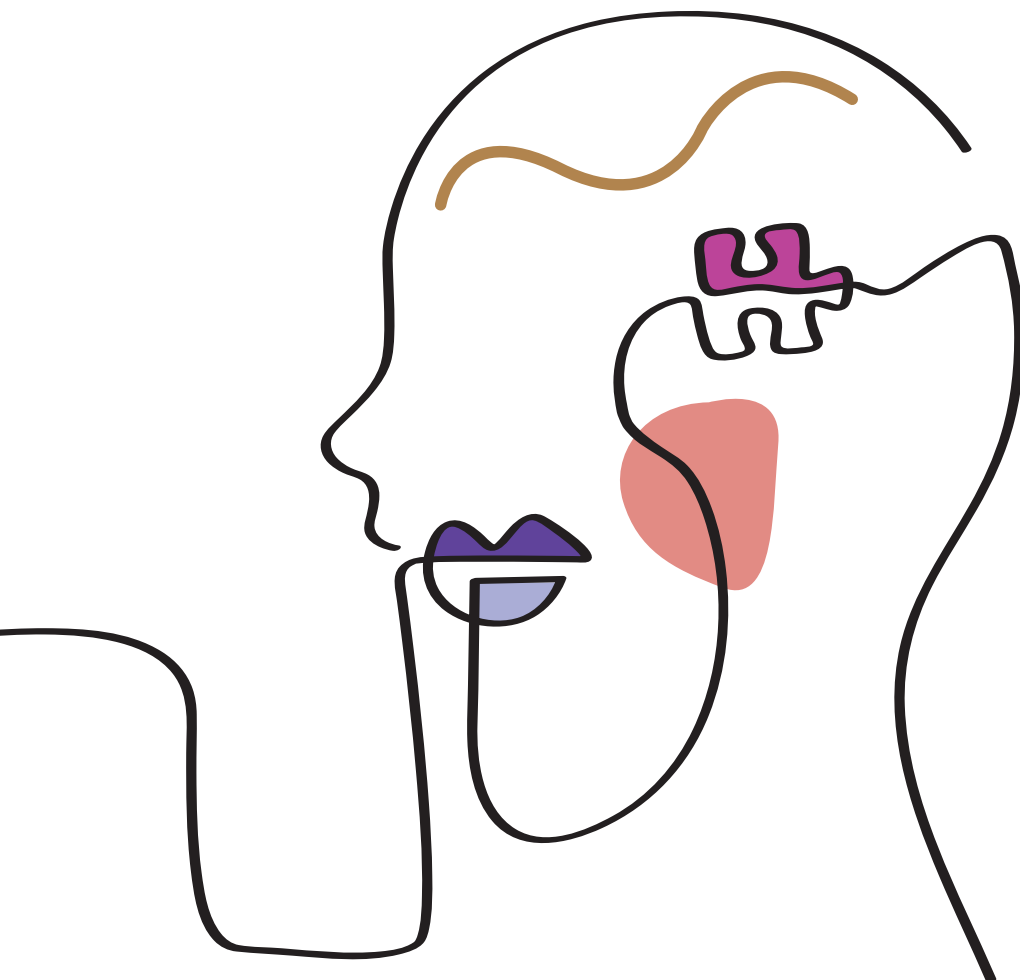
<p>3. Student learning</p> <p>Teacher's beliefs about students and student learning in the EFL context</p>	<p>3.1 Student competencies</p> <p>Teacher's beliefs about students' competencies (knowledge, skills, attitudes) relevant to and necessary for (success in) the subject of EFL, including difficulties experienced by students, competencies that could be improved by focusing on LA and the way in which these competencies could be improved</p>	<p>'Well, what I think, many students who obtain bad grades in English think 'I failed again, I am just bad at this'; but what I realise when they have been on holidays or in contact with family members who do not speak Dutch, then they realise that their English for every-day situations is actually quite good, also because then they dare to speak, they have to.'</p>
<p>3.2 Individual differences</p>	<p>Teacher's beliefs about inter-individual student differences, including differences on educational level, personal level and learning (pace) level</p>	<p>'I realise that some of my students, some weaker students, but also students with a migrant background, really have difficulties [...] particularly with the structure, really understanding what a text is about. It is not just vocabulary, but really structure and how do you deal with the language of a text.'</p>
<p>3.3 Motivation</p>	<p>Teacher's beliefs about aspects that motivate, interest and engage students within the subject of EFL, including intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, general motivation and interest, and motivation and interest for learning</p>	<p>'What I would find it really cool, and I would like to do this much more, is to make it more relevant, make it a necessity for students to use English. In the classroom for example by means of an 'Escape Room' in which they have to use English to solve a puzzle or something, so that it is relevant and not just 'it is a school subject and I just want to do the bare minimum to pass.'</p>

<p>4. Instructional technique</p> <p>Teacher's beliefs about chosen strategy, preparation and structure of lessons or class activities with a focus on LA(-aspects)</p>	<p>4.1 Instructional strategy</p>	<p>Instructional strategy, format or teaching activity deliberately chosen by the teacher prior to or during classroom practice with the aim of making students aware of certain aspects of language (learning), including examples of student involvement and LA-raising activities from teacher's own practices</p>	<p>'I understand that students should learn and know these words and that they can derive different word classes, such as verb, noun and adjective, but I also think that these [fill in the gap] are dumb type of exercises, especially when the word or the affix is filled in already [...] Then it is a terribly dry scheme, so yeah. If it is in the coursebook I do use them, these kind of exercises, but they [students] forget it again, I think. Unless, you know, you let them play with it and let them create a short story with those words, for example. If they really have to apply the words, that is when it becomes useful, but these columns and schemes, nah, they really forget it again.'</p>
	<p>4.2 Feedback</p>	<p>Type of feedback (e.g., individual/group, peer/teacher) chosen by the teacher during classroom practice with the aim of stimulating students' thinking about language and their own language learning</p>	<p>'With some assignments I will give them [students] feedback and then I will tell them 'okay, you have received feedback now, go through this feedback and incorporate it in a new version, so that you can improve your finale grade'. This way they are extra motivated to look at the feedback and really do something with it instead of just receiving their grade and throw the feedback into the trash bin.'</p>
	<p>4.3 Assessment</p>	<p>Types of assessment (e.g., formative/summative, individual/group/peer) described by the teacher relevant to assessing LA-related learning activities, including teacher's opinion on the quality and suitability of certain types of assessment</p>	<p>'If you do these type of [LA] exercises, then it is necessary to, the question is how do you assure the quality? Now you can assure quality because the standards for every exam are the same and also because the final exam is standardised and the same for everyone.'</p>

<p>5. Educational context</p> <p>5.1 School support</p> <p>Teacher's beliefs about influential factors at classroom, teacher, school level</p>	<p>School support (e.g., staff, department, principal) and approval experienced by teachers, including practical, financial, technical support</p>	<p>'Yeah, the science department in our school has an advantage over the language department. Look at our dictionaries for example, that is just sad. But we need budget and we do not have the money to buy new ones, but anyway, you know, eventually we will get there.'</p>
<p>5.2 Time</p>	<p>The influence of time on (the quality of) teaching practices as experienced by teachers, including classes per week, time per class, class preparation time</p>	<p>'I do not have the time to do that, the number of hours is just not enough. I only have two hours a week for the senior years and in those two hours I have to work on the exam programme, so practice listening, speaking, writing skills. And practice the final exam, of course.'</p>
<p>5.3 Teacher collaboration</p>	<p>Teacher's beliefs about collaboration with other (foreign) language teachers, within or outside his or her own school, including collaboration and alignment that could expose, to students, the link (e.g., similarities and differences) between the language subjects and support students' language learning process</p>	<p>'I work a lot together with other languages, not necessarily in terms of subject matter content, but we do exchange ideas. Writing an application letter is the same in like German, so we use the same formats.'</p>



Stimulating language awareness in the foreign language classroom: Exploring EFL teaching practices



This chapter is based on:

Van den Broek, E. W. R., Oolbekkink-Marchand, H. W., Van Kemenade, A. M. C., Meijer, P. C., & Unsworth, S. (2019). Stimulating language awareness in the foreign language classroom: Exploring EFL teaching practices. *The Language Learning Journal*. Advance online publication. doi:10.1080/09571736.2019.1688857

Abstract

This study reports on teachers' self-reported teaching practices aimed at stimulating students' language awareness. It investigates whether, and to what extent, awareness-raising practices are currently implemented in the teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL), how these practices can be characterised when taking into account awareness-raising instructional components, and how awareness-raising practices can be developed and further integrated into foreign language education. In a semi-structured interview, ten teachers were asked to provide examples of teaching practices which they believed stimulated students' awareness of language. A total of 41 teaching practices were collected. Analysis of teaching practices revealed that approximately half of all self-reported practices could be characterised as awareness-raising. These practices often integrated multiple topics, included authentic contexts, back-and-forth interaction and provided students with the opportunity to reflect on their own and other students' language difficulties. At the same time, numerous practices which were reported as awareness-raising could not yet be characterised as such, indicating that teachers' notion of what constitutes an awareness-raising practice may be incomplete. Nevertheless, these practices provide interesting leads for awareness-raising opportunities. In sum, analysis of practices presents a valuable opportunity for teachers to discuss their notion of awareness-raising practices. In addition, such analysis could support teachers in adjusting their own teaching practices.

Introduction

Numerous curriculum reforms are currently taking place across the world (e.g., Finland (FNBE, 2015), Australia (ACARA, 2014), Norway (NDET, 2019), the Netherlands (Curriculum.nu, 2019)). They all have in common that they are close-fitted with (changes in) modern society and that they aim to equip students with the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for their academic performance (e.g., Green, Hammer, & Star, 2009) and their post-academic professional development (e.g., OECD, 2018). In light of these changes, language curricula are also being adapted to meet the challenges of today's rapidly changing society. Similar to reforms in other international contexts, language awareness (ALA, n.d.) has gained renewed interest in the Netherlands and is also given a central role in shaping new foreign language curricula.

In this study, we will explore a language awareness approach in the context of Dutch upper-secondary teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL). As teachers play a significant role in the actual implementation and success of a new approach, it is important to investigate their practices with regard to such an approach (Li, 2016). The success of curriculum reforms often depends on the compatibility with the existing educational context and the amount of support teachers receive to implement such an approach (Waters & Vilches, 2008). Furthermore, teachers' understanding of the new approach constitutes a key aspect to successful change (Humphries & Burns, 2015). In this study, we will therefore explore teachers' self-reported teaching practices to investigate whether, and if so, how and to what extent, language awareness is present in the current EFL classroom in the Netherlands.

Thinking skills and foreign language learning

In order to advance students' thinking and learning within a particular school subject, a better understanding of how teachers (could) implement and stimulate such thinking skills in the domain-specific context of their everyday teaching is needed (Abrami et al., 2015; Ten Dam & Volman, 2004). Thinking skills involve processes such as interpreting, analysing, formulating thoughts, reasoning, evaluating and making decisions (Moseley et al., 2005). As such, these skills also play an essential role in the language learning process (Waters, 2006). Recent research places increased emphasis on the development of thinking skills in foreign language education (Wright et al., 2015). Such skills can support students' language development by helping them to communicate in the foreign language and provide opportunities to creatively use the language (Alnofaie, 2013; Carter, 2004). At the same time, they can facilitate the learning process by drawing inferences, considering other perspectives, reflecting on links between languages and the student's language learning process (Hawkins, 1984; Lin &

Mackay, 2004). These skills take centre stage in a language awareness approach which aims to stimulate students' thinking about language.

Language awareness

Language awareness, defined as 'explicit knowledge about language, and conscious perception and sensitivity in language learning, language teaching and language use' (ALA, n.d.), is an approach that 'attempts to develop learners' explicit understanding of language as well as an awareness of their own learning by involving them in discovery-oriented tasks' (Borg, 1994, p. 62). By doing so, a language awareness approach can contribute to the development of students' thinking skills within the foreign language subjects, can support students in gaining insight into their own language learning process, and help them connect the various aspects of language learning.

Language awareness covers a wide spectrum of fields, including cognitive, social, power, affective and performance domains (James & Garrett, 2013). Two of these domains, the cognitive and the social domain, appear to dominate language awareness research (Frijns et al., 2018). More recently, however, the scope of language awareness has been widened to the social domain, including a focus on multilingualism, linguistic and cultural diversity, and citizenship (Frijns et al., 2018; Svalberg, 2016). Topics fitting in with these domains and frequently concerned in language awareness research include the four language skills, language structure (grammar, vocabulary) and language varieties (Frijns et al., 2018; Svalberg, 2016).

Language awareness is operationalised by domain-specific processes such as analysing and reflecting on forms and functions of language, applying new insights and knowledge to new languages, sharing perceptions about language and discussing (other students') ideas (e.g., Bolitho et al., 2003; Garrett & Cots, 2018). Svalberg (2015) has named such processes 'engagement with language'. Whether engagement occurs in classroom practice is largely determined by the level of teacher language awareness (Andrews, 2007). In other words, the implementation of language awareness in the classroom depends on the teacher's ability to provide instruction that engages and supports students in their language learning process and to recognise possibilities to generate discussion about language (Lindahl & Baecher, 2016; Wright, 2002). It is for this reason that this study examines teachers' self-reported language awareness practices.

Language awareness practices

Successful language awareness practices can be identified by several instructional components (Borg, 1994; Svalberg, 2007; Wright & Bolitho, 1993), the most important of which include

talking (analytically) about language, verbalising ideas, engaging students, involving them in student-centred discovery and exploration, and autonomous learning. These instructional components can roughly be divided into a situational and an operational category. Situational awareness-raising components describe the learning environment in which a teaching practice is situated (Baeten et al., 2010; Cannon & Newble, 2000; Smit et al., 2014). An awareness-raising learning environment includes aspects such as authentic contexts, facilitating student-centred discovery and exploration, autonomous learning, and student engagement (Borg, 1994; Smit et al., 2014; Svalberg, 2007; Wright & Bolitho, 1993). Its counterpart, a non-awareness-raising learning environment, includes teacher-centred instruction, focuses mostly on the outcome and often includes working with typical coursebook exercises (Smit et al., 2014). In this study, an awareness-raising learning environment is labelled as 'student-centred', and a non-awareness-raising learning environment as 'teacher-centred'. Operational awareness-raising components describe the process of talking about language, also called 'linguaging'. Linguaging is defined as 'the process of making meaning and shaping knowledge and experience through language' (Swain, 2006, p. 89), that is by talking (analytically) about languages, verbalising thoughts, and through interaction and discussion (Abrami et al., 2015; Borg, 1994). In this study, linguaging is marked as 'present' for awareness-raising instruction and as 'absent' for non-awareness-raising instruction. Learning environment and linguaging as instructional components are further elaborated in the methodology section.

Aim and research questions

The aim of this study is to investigate teachers' self-reported language awareness practices in a secondary school EFL context. We aim to investigate, from a teacher's perspective, whether such practices are currently enacted in EFL education and if so, what type of practices teachers engage with. The study aims to answer the following research questions:

- 1) What language awareness examples do EFL teachers report from their own teaching practices?
- 2) How can these practices be characterised in terms of learning environment and linguaging as awareness-raising instructional components?

Methodology

A qualitative, interpretive approach (Creswell & Poth, 2018) was chosen to collect and analyse teachers' self-reported practices. This approach was chosen because it seeks to understand a phenomenon from an individual's perspective and best facilitates the construction of an

in-depth understanding of teachers' everyday classroom practices. The study focuses on teaching practices in Dutch upper-secondary pre-university level EFL classes with students aged 16-17 years old.

Participants

Ten in-service EFL teachers participated in this study. Teachers were recruited via the network associated with the main researcher's teacher education institute. An informative e-mail explaining the aim of the study was sent to numerous schools and teachers. Participating teachers were purposefully selected after declaring their interest in and familiarity with the topic of language awareness and their motivation to participate in this study. They were between 29 and 64 years old and had between 7 and 40 years' teaching experience. They all possessed a Master's degree in EFL teaching.

Data collection and procedures

Self-reported teaching practices were collected by means of a semi-structured interview. By collecting qualitative self-reported practices, we aimed to elicit examples that arose directly from teachers' own teaching context and were linked to their personal experiences. Each interview lasted approximately one hour and followed directly or shortly after attending a video-recorded open lesson. The lesson was used to get acquainted with the teacher and to obtain a first grasp of possible awareness-raising teaching practices in an upper-secondary EFL setting (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Fieldnotes were taken during each lesson. During the interview, we first asked teachers if an awareness-raising practice had occurred in the lesson, and if so, to describe this practice. After describing the awareness-raising practice(s) from the lesson, we asked the teacher to describe additional practices which had previously occurred in the same class. We used open-ended questions so that participants could best voice their experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Furthermore, we emphasised that the interview was not an assessment of their teaching practices but a means to gain insight into the way teachers who acknowledged the importance of language awareness portrayed awareness-raising practices. Notes were taken during each interview and each interview was audio-recorded and transcribed.

Data analysis

Selection of teaching practices

Teaching practices were selected from the interview data when a lesson, strategy or activity was described which, according to the teacher, was awareness-raising. Together, teachers reported 41 teaching practices with an average of four practices per teacher. A practice was only demarcated as such when a clear beginning (e.g., an interview question) and end (e.g., switch to a new topic or new question) was observed.

Analysis of teaching practices

Teaching practices were analysed by means of two instructional components considered fundamental to awareness-raising instruction: learning environment and languaging (e.g., Abrami et al., 2015; Borg, 1994; Smit et al., 2014; Swain, 2006). These instructional components were further subdivided into two categories and could be identified by means of five indicators with corresponding descriptors. Learning environment was subdivided into the categories student-centred and teacher-centred (see Table 3.1). Languaging was categorised as either being present or absent (Table 3.2).

Table 3.1 Learning environment characteristics (student-centred vs. teacher-centred) and corresponding descriptors

	Learning environment (LE)	
	Student-centred (s)	Teacher-centred (t)
LE1: Type of task	Problem-based, authentic context, input or activities, contextualised knowledge or content, open-ended questions	Decontextualised knowledge or content, focus on learning the content, close-ended questions
LE2: Student's role	Active role, responsible for learning process, explores content, provides input, autonomous	Passive role, knowledge transferred from teacher to student, dependent
LE3: Teacher's role	Coach, expert, facilitator during learning process, supports and monitors learning process	Teacher provides instruction, presents information, controls learning process
LE4: Materials	Teacher, coursebook, extra materials (e.g., Internet, YouTube, newspaper, music, personal experiences)	Teacher, coursebook
LE5: Assessment	Reflection on product and process with focus on possibilities for improvement	Focus on content or outcome

Table 3.2 Languageing characteristics (present vs. absent) and corresponding descriptors

	Languageing (LAN)	
	Present (p)	Absent (a)
LAN1: Type of task	Focus on thinking process, explaining thoughts	Focus on outcome, transmitting content
LAN2: Interaction	Back-and-forth interaction, (e.g., student-teacher, student-student, teacher-class)	No interaction or limited, uni-directional interaction (e.g., teacher-student)
LAN3: Student's activity	Stimulated to verbalise thoughts, discuss language, share ideas	Not stimulated to verbalise thoughts, work in silence
LAN4: Teacher's activity	Provides opportunities to students to discuss and talk	Provides answers, explanations
LAN5: Form	E.g., whole-class discussion, teacher-led discussion, individual teacher-student discussion, student-student discussion, peer-feedback	E.g., individual student work, group work, teacher-led instruction or explanation, self-feedback

Data analysis consisted of five phases. First of all, a list of learning environment and languageing indicators was composed in order to be able to systematically analyse teaching practices. Indicators were based on tangible characteristics, in generic thinking skills literature as well as domain-specific language awareness literature, relevant to awareness-raising instruction (Abrami et al., 2015; Borg, 1994; Moseley et al., 2005; Savery & Duffy, 1996; Smit et al., 2014; Swain, 2006). Then, descriptors for each of the indicators were composed. All indicators and descriptors were thoroughly and iteratively discussed with the co-researcher to ensure clarity and eliminate redundancy. Scientific rigour was maintained by the use of researcher triangulation (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Second, the main researcher and the co-researcher coded a random twenty percent of all teaching practices individually. Indicators were coded if they were described as such in a teaching practice. For instance, a practice in which an authentic activity was described was coded 'LE1:s', with LE1 indicating the first learning environment indicator and 's' indicating the student-centred category to this indicator. An indicator was not coded if it was not described in a practice (e.g., examples of 'LE5: assessment' were only mentioned in one-third of the practices, and were consequently not always coded). In case aspects of a teaching practice were insufficiently described in the interview, fieldnotes and videotaped lessons were used to determine the category. Finally, a teaching practice was assigned a certain category when the indicators of that category were dominant over the indicators of the other category.

Third, after individually coding the practices, the main researcher and the co-researcher compared and discussed the assignment of the codes. Cohen's Kappa (1960) was calculated

for both instructional components which resulted in a strong to very strong level of agreement ($\kappa = .83$ for languaging and $\kappa = .92$ for learning environment). Remaining ambiguities were resolved through discussion (for example, in case of code disagreement). All remaining practices were then coded by the main researcher.

Fourth, teaching practices were grouped according to their assigned categories, that is, learning environment could be categorised as student-centred or teacher-centred, and languaging could be categorised as present or absent. This results in four combined categories: 1) awareness-raising (LE:s + LAN:p), 2) awareness-raising learning environment (LE:s + LAN:a), 3) awareness-raising languaging (LE:t + LAN:p), and 4) non-awareness-raising (LE:t + LAN:a). All teaching practices could be assigned to any of the four categories. After categorisation, the content of each practice was also analysed.

Finally, four representative teaching practices, one for each of the four categories, were selected to be described in greater detail. All practices were chosen after thorough discussion with the co-researcher and provide an adequate reflection of each category. Teaching practices were narrated into a comprehensive summary using interview data as the primary source. Each summary was written based on the indicators as explained above. After creating the summaries, fieldnotes and lesson quotes were used supplementary to the interview data to complete the summary. The four chosen practices are elaborated upon in the results section.

Results

The first part of the results section focuses on the categorisation of teaching practices and the content of these practices, and thus seeks to answer the first research question. The second part of this section addresses the second research question by providing an in-depth analysis of four teaching practices categorised using learning environment and languaging indicators as essential components of awareness-raising instruction.

Categorisation and content of teaching practices

We asked teachers to report examples from their own teaching practices which they considered to be awareness-raising. Analysis of practices revealed that almost half of the practices could be categorised as awareness-raising (learning environment: student-centred & languaging: present). From all remaining practices, most did not meet the characteristics of awareness-raising instruction (learning environment: teacher-centred & languaging: absent). Some practices did, however, show partial awareness-raising characteristics, for either the learning environment (learning environment: student-centred & languaging: absent) or the

linguaging component (learning environment: teacher-centred & linguaging: present). This by no means implies that these teaching practices per se were inferior to the ones categorised as awareness-raising. Rather, according to our analyses, they simply did not include sufficient characteristics to be considered awareness-raising.

After categorising and summarising all practices, another noteworthy observation was revealed. Teaching practices categorised as having a student-centred learning approach almost always integrated multiple topics, whereas practices categorised as teacher-centred were generally concerned with only one topic. Student-centred practices mostly focused on language skills (reading and writing) or literature. These topics were then combined with additional topics such as vocabulary, history or another language skill. For example, literature formed the main topic of practice 6.3, but history, phonology and vocabulary were considered as additional topics because the literary piece was placed in a historical context and Old English was compared with present-day Dutch phonology and vocabulary. The connection between topics ‘helps students to connect the different aspects of language’ and by doing so, ‘these aspects make more sense to them’ (teacher 9). Teacher-centred practices predominantly contained grammar or reading as the only topic dealt with. For an overview of self-reported teaching practices and the topic(s) covered in these practices, see Table 3.3. Again, the categorisation in Table 3.3 is based on teachers’ own description and therefore reflects how each of them framed and implemented language awareness in his or her classroom.

Table 3.3 Overview of self-reported teaching practices ($n = 41$), divided into four categories, and topic(s) covered in each practice

1. Awareness-raising (Student-centred & linguaging present, $n = 17$)		
Practice	Main topic of practice	Additional topic(s) described in practice
1.1 ¹	Literature	Writing, reading, listening, speaking, grammar
5.6	Literature	Culture, reading, history
5.7	Literature	Vocabulary, reading
6.3	Literature	History, phonology, vocabulary
7.1	Literature	Vocabulary, grammar, semantics, phonology
2.2	Reading	Writing
4.1	Reading	Vocabulary
4.2	Reading	Literature, news
4.4	Reading	Literature

¹ Numbers (1-10) before period refer to a teacher; numbers after period refer to a particular practice (i.e., practice 1.1 refers to teacher #1 and the first practice described by this teacher)

6.2	Reading	Writing
9.1	Reading	Vocabulary
1.2*	Speaking	Reading, grammar, vocabulary
1.3	Speaking	Literature, history
5.1	Speaking	Writing
3.3	Speaking	
5.4	Vocabulary	Phonology, history, literature, media
5.5	Grammar	Speaking, reading, writing

2. Awareness-raising learning environment (Student-centred & languaging absent, n = 4)

3.1	Writing	Vocabulary, reading
3.2	Writing	Reading, listening, grammar
6.1*	Writing	Reading
9.4	Writing	Grammar, vocabulary, literature, history

3. Awareness-raising languaging (Teacher-centred & languaging present, n = 1)

4.3*	Reading	
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4. Non-awareness-raising (Teacher-centred & languaging absent, n = 19)

2.1*	Grammar	
3.4	Grammar	
5.2	Grammar	
5.3	Grammar	
6.4	Grammar	
7.2	Grammar	
7.5	Grammar	
8.1	Grammar	
8.4	Grammar	
7.3	Reading	History
7.4	Reading	
9.2	Reading	
9.3	Reading	
2.3	Vocabulary	
6.5	Vocabulary	
10.1	Vocabulary	
8.2	Vocabulary	Reading
8.3	Literature	Writing, listening
10.2	Writing	

*Selected teaching practices

Characterising awareness-raising practices: learning environment and languaging

In this section, we discuss four practices representative for each of the four categories given in Table 3.3. The four practices are narrated in a comprehensive summary below. Each practice is composed of numbered parts and is followed by an explanation. The first example illustrates an awareness-raising practice. The second is partly awareness-raising on learning environment components, whereas the third example is partly awareness-raising on the languaging component. The fourth example is characterised as non-awareness-raising.

Example 1 (practice 1.2): 'Bring the world into the classroom' (Awareness-raising: student-centred & languaging present)

Practice 1.2 exemplifies a grade 11 pre-university practice. Vocabulary played a central role, but several other topics were given attention as well.

1) The teacher described a practice in which the prescribed coursebook chapter focused on the theme 'happy'. The teacher, however, did not want students to just fill in coursebook exercises. Instead, a whole-class discussion formed the main part of class in which the coursebook's vocabulary, reading and grammar exercises were integrated throughout the discussion. 'The coursebook should only be a sourcebook. As a teacher, you choose your topic(s) and then you talk, read and write about it.' 2) The teacher explained that his approach was a key aspect in raising students' language awareness. 'The most important to me is the format I introduced a couple years ago, for example: change places, work in pairs, discuss in pairs and then discuss together. And also, bring the world into the classroom, personalise your classes.' 3) The teacher explained the importance of his role in guiding such discussions: 'By asking students particular questions, I prompt them to use certain words or structures'. He explained that the way you unwrap things in the classroom is essential: 'I presented 'happiness' as a more general topic and, as opposed to the coursebook exercises, the discussion questions then stimulate the academic way of thinking about language.' 4) In the final part of this practice, students explicitly discussed the use and meaning of affixes with their peer(s). Students had implicitly used those words in the discussion and were now stimulated to figure out the form and meaning themselves by means of an exploratory discussion. The teacher concluded by saying that he worked like this almost every class: 'We connect a topic to various skills and then initiate a discussion!'

Practice 1.2 was characterised as awareness-raising, because of a student-centred learning environment as well as the presence of languaging. Students were given an active role and were stimulated to discuss topics that were relevant and meaningful to them (part 1, 2). The

teacher facilitated the discussion by prompting the right questions, which led to back-and-forth interaction between students, and between students and teacher (3). On the one hand, the teacher controlled the learning process by deciding about the actions taken. On the other hand, he stimulated students' learning process by giving them an active role (2). Students' thinking was guided from thinking individually, to sharing ideas with another peer and eventually sharing ideas in a whole-class discussion. The teacher deliberately and consciously engaged in this type of teaching and learning (1, 4).

Example 2 (practice 6.1): 'Reflection in action' (Awareness-raising learning environment: student-centred & languaging absent)

Practice 6.1 is an example from a grade 11 pre-university class. The following excerpt illustrates a writing practice combined with aspects of reading and grammar.

1) The teacher described raising awareness of the content and structure of an application letter as the practice's main goal. Teacher's instruction was brief and students were given one hour to write the assignment: 'Guys, you are going to write an application letter today. Carefully read the assignment and deliberately think about the content and what you want to write. Do not talk through your hat'. 2) The teacher expressed that reflection on language is an important aspect in writing. 'What I usually do, when I have the time, is that I take in all the writing assignments and hand them out to other students who have to assess their peer's assignment. Then usually I tell them to look at the lay-out first, what do you notice? Then check the contractions, the verbs etc., do they spot mistakes? Then mark them. Then I will take all assignments again and hand them back to the student who wrote it'. 3) She added that, due to time limitations, this is not a practice she engaged in on a regular basis. However, she concluded by saying that she would like to do such practices more often, because she realised it helped students in the development of their writing skills. 'At some point, students then realise what they can improve, just by examining other students' work. Because they are consciously focusing on their peers' work, it suddenly catches their attention'.

Practice 6.1 illustrates how the teacher made use of authentic activities and made students responsible for their own learning process (part 1). The task itself, however, did not stimulate interaction and the teacher did not provide opportunities for students to discuss. Students, however, were stimulated to explore the content themselves, while the teacher acted as a coach on the side (2). The teacher encouraged students to reflect on the language in their own and their peers' work, yet the reflection was predominantly focused on the outcome and there was limited to no interaction between students or between the teacher and students

about the underlying thoughts or arguments (2). The teacher herself realised that such a task was beneficial for students' writing development, because they actively reflected on their own and their peers' writing (3). However, mainly due to time constraints, no discussion among or between students and teacher was included in order to reach a better understanding (3).

Example 3 (practice 4.3): 'Tackle a text mathematically' (Awareness-raising languaging: teacher-centred & languaging present)

Practice 4.3 is an example from a grade 10 pre-university class. Reading skills were given a central role.

1) The teacher aimed to raise students' awareness of linguistic elements when reading a newspaper article. Generally, the teacher starts text analysis by interpreting the larger picture, which he does by asking questions about the topic in a classroom discussion. Gradually, then, he narrows his focus: 'So I talk about the way a text is structured, per paragraph or per sentence. If you demonstrate that with positive and negative symbols in the margins, tackle it very mathematically, then you notice that students understand it more easily'. 2) Two exercises were provided: students individually completed exercises that belonged to the article and in the meantime, the teacher walked around and invited students over to his desk to discuss questions with him. 'I usually invite students over in pairs or groups of four. Then I ask them questions and they have to tell me what they think it is. So, for example, I point out a verb in the text and they have to tell me the derived noun or adjective form'. 3) He explained that he found it very important for students to understand the structure of a text, which is why he often discussed these aspects in class: 'I take a piece of text and then explain the structure and elements of a text. Why is this written here, where does this word refer to, why is it structured this way? I demonstrate this in class, so that they know how it works. Afterwards, I let them work in pairs, so that they can work together on a new text and discuss and explain aspects to one another. I want them to ask questions and discuss the same elements together'.

Practice 4.3 was typified as teacher-centred in which, overall, languaging was present. Generally, it was the teacher who controlled the learning process: the teacher started class by presenting students the bigger picture of the text (part 1), decided which exercises were done (2) and prompted students to focus on the correct content (3). At the same time, the teacher encouraged students to discuss and share their ideas about language and linguistic aspects with the teacher (2) and with their peers (3). Whereas it was the teacher who guided the interaction, the discussions were mostly characterised by back-and-forth discussions, sharing of ideas and focus on students' thoughts. Even though some questions were close-ended

and mostly focused on the outcome (2), discussion was focused on questioning, noticing and explaining thoughts rather than finding the correct answer.

Example 4 (practice 2.1): ‘Grammar is a necessary evil’ (Non-awareness-raising: teacher-centred & languaging absent)

Practice 2.1 exemplifies a practice in a grade 11 pre-university class. This following excerpt illustrates a practice that revolves around grammar.

1) The teacher illustrated a practice about the passive voice. Even though the teacher believed that teaching grammar should not be part of upper-secondary EFL teaching anymore, she described this practice as a topic that requires a lot of awareness-raising: ‘Grammar is a necessary evil and students really want to have that explained really well, so I spend ample time on this’. 2) She described a typical awareness-raising grammar practice as follows: ‘I have a PowerPoint presentation that I designed in such a way that I think I can explain the passive the best possible way. And I have noticed, because I have been explaining the passive for goodness knows how long now that this is the best way, for me at least’. 3) After completing the exercises, students remarked that they still experienced difficulties and did not understand what they had done. When the teacher reflected on students’ lack of understanding, she said: ‘It remains a question whether they understand it now, but again, this is grade 11, at some point they just have to understand. But even after explaining it eight times, they still find it difficult. Sometimes it seems like they have never heard it before and then I think, this cannot be true’. 4) She concluded by saying that she does not always understand where these difficulties come from. ‘You know what I find strange? When they have to write an essay in English, they actually already know the structure for an argumentative or analytical piece, because they have learned that in Dutch class, but then all of a sudden it seems as if they have forgotten it all, really strange, because it is the exact same as in Dutch... As if it is still different after all?’.

Practice 2.1 was characterised as a teacher-centred practice in which languaging was absent. The teacher explained how she used a PowerPoint presentation, which was predominantly focused on quickly transmitting content from teacher to students (part 1, 2). The content of this practice was decontextualised, the PowerPoint presented just the rule and an overview of the differences, and was presented from a teacher’s perspective (2). When talking about students’ difficulties the teacher explained that she was not thoroughly convinced whether students had understood the subject matter (3) yet at the same time she did not seem to understand where students’ questions originated from (4).

In sum, all teachers elaborated on several teaching practices which they believed contributed to the development of students' language awareness. Altogether, these practices included a wide variety of topics, ranging from reading to grammar to literature, and were often combined with other topics (most student-centred practices) or reported in isolation (most teacher-centred practices). The majority of practices focused on topics related to language acquisition, such as grammar and the language skills. Furthermore, enactment of practices in terms of learning environment and languaging differed greatly and determined whether a practice could be categorised as awareness-raising.

Discussion

Grounded in teachers' own practices, this study investigated whether awareness-raising practices are currently present in EFL education. A total of 41 teaching practices were collected by means of a semi-structured interview and analysed using learning environment (student-centred or teacher-centred) and languaging (present or absent) as instructional components. In general, the majority of practices could be categorised as awareness-raising (student-centred, languaging present, frequently containing reading, writing or literature) or non-awareness-raising (teacher-centred, languaging absent, frequently containing reading or grammar). Some practices were considered awareness-raising on one of the instructional components (either learning environment or languaging).

Content of teaching practices

The majority of practices described in this study focused on aspects of language acquisition. That is, about half of the practices included one of the four language skills as their main topic. In our study, 21 out of 41 teaching practices were related to these skills. Reading skills were most prominent, which might not come as a surprise considering that the final secondary school EFL exam in the Netherlands is a reading comprehension exam and therefore the development of reading skills is often prioritised and frequently practiced. Reading was followed by writing and then speaking, whereas listening, as a main topic, was absent. Beside these four skills, language structure (grammar and vocabulary) was addressed frequently. These findings are in line with reviews by Svalberg (2015) and Sierens, Frijns, Van Gorp, Sercu, and Van Avermaet (2018), who also found that most topics in language awareness research were related to language acquisition aspects, such as language skills, grammar and vocabulary. Even though language as a phenomenon is significantly broader than language acquisition alone and the field of language awareness also covers multiple domains, the practices as reported in this study seem to predominantly focus on aspects of language acquisition and,

as a result, conform to the cognitive and performance domains of language awareness (James & Garrett, 2013).

Linguistic variety, a topic frequently found by Svalberg (2015), was only marginally addressed in teaching practices in this study, which might imply that teachers in this study do not consider linguistic variety as an element of a language awareness approach. As opposed to other studies, literature practices were mentioned by some teachers in our study and were the only topic mentioned which did not primarily deal with the language acquisition process. As literature often provides multiple opportunities to connect to other EFL domains, it seems a valuable topic in awareness-raising practices. In our study, it was frequently combined with history, vocabulary, or culture (e.g., a Shakespeare piece which was not only analysed on its literary aspects, but also compared grammar and vocabulary to variants in modern English and Dutch translations).

Our findings reveal that the social domain of language awareness, which together with the cognitive domain forms the two main strands of language awareness research (Frijns et al. 2018), has received limited attention in awareness-raising practices so far. Moreover, this study elaborates on findings from an earlier study on teachers' beliefs about language awareness, in which teachers' beliefs also predominantly corresponded with the cognitive and performance domains (Chapter 2). More research into teachers' beliefs and existing or desired awareness-raising practices would be needed to uncover potential for the implementation of language awareness through domains other than the cognitive and performance domain in EFL teaching practices.

Instructional components

Two instructional components were analysed to evaluate teaching practices aimed at stimulating students' language awareness: learning environment and languaging.

Learning environment

Student-centred and teacher-centred practices appeared to be equally present (21 and 20 practices, respectively). Student-centred practices were characterised by authentic context, active student involvement and inquiry-based learning. Whereas a student-centred learning environment is claimed to be essential in awareness-raising instruction (Borg, 1994; Svalberg, 2007), student-centred and inquiry-based teaching approaches have to date mostly been investigated in the science subjects. Moreover, recent meta-analyses in the science subjects have shown that student involvement and inquiry-based teaching positively contribute to student learning (e.g., Furtak, Seidel, Iverson, & Briggs, 2012; Lazonder & Harmsen, 2016). These

results invite further empirical research on student learning in awareness-raising learning environments in the EFL classroom.

In this study, practices characterised as teacher-centred present most opportunities for change. Most teacher-centred practices included decontextualised fill-in-the-blanks exercises, were primarily focused on achieving correct outcomes, and were largely related to the teaching of grammar. Nevertheless, grammar is one of the most prominent topics in awareness-raising instruction and language awareness research and thus offers various opportunities for a student-centred approach (Svalberg, 2016; Watson, 2015). Accordingly, small adjustments to teacher-centred practices in this study could lead to such practices becoming student-centred, inquiry-based practices. Taking a closer look at the grammar practices coded as teacher-centred, we see that they generally adopted a form-focused instruction. Most grammar practices in this study involved the teacher-centred focus on forms (FonFs) approach, where linguistic structures are dealt with individually (Loewen, 2018). In this study, many teachers commented that students often produced correct forms in coursebook exercises, yet experienced difficulties in correctly applying these forms in context. A more student-centred focus on form (FonF) approach might then be a more beneficial awareness-raising approach to grammar teaching, as it draws attention to linguistic elements in a meaningful, communicative context (Nassaji & Fotos, 2010) actively involves students, and facilitates students' learning process (Gass et al., 2003). Additionally, it allows teachers to engage students in interactive classroom discourse and to encourage talking about language (Walsh, 2011), another important component for awareness-raising instruction.

Languaging

Teaching practices were rather evenly distributed for presence and absence of languaging (18 and 23 practices, respectively). Practices in which languaging was present were predominantly characterised by whole-class discussions in which the teacher posed questions and stimulated students to discuss these questions together. Practices in which languaging was marked as absent often included uni-directional instruction or explanation. Grammar, reading and writing exercises were frequently marked as practices containing little or no instances of languaging, while this study, in line with previous research, has shown that these topics are perfectly suitable for students to talk about (in fact, several reading practices in this study were categorised as containing languaging, see Table 3.3). Generally, the difference between presence and absence of languaging could be explained by the amount of guidance presented by the teacher. This is in line with other research on thinking and learning which confirms that teacher guidance, such as scaffolding and modelling, leads to better student performance (Lazonder & Harmsen, 2016; Van de Pol et al., 2010).

In this study, languaging practices often started with a modelling exercise in which the teacher demonstrated how to analyse and discuss linguistic aspects. For example, one teacher projected two essays on the whiteboard, and subsequently asked students to discuss the differences and reflect on these. Swain (2006) elaborated on a similar example and found evidence that learning effects of such languaging practices were found when students rewrote their original work based on the feedback exchanged. In our study, similar follow-up activities were sometimes observed as well, although teachers often claimed to have insufficient time to actually achieve this. Overall, most opportunities for languaging in this study, in spoken as well as written form, were related to the type of feedback provided. Reading and writing exercises that lacked (instances of) languaging did, for example, include peer-feedback, yet this feedback was often limited to error feedback. Minor adjustments in peer-feedback strategies could result in a collaborative dialogue among students. That way, more languaging opportunities are created that, at a later stage, could possibly increase students' reading or writing awareness (Swain & Lapkin, 2002).

In sum, this study provides a detailed insight into what Dutch upper-secondary EFL teachers perceive as awareness-raising practices and how they engage with these practices in education. Whilst the generalisability of the findings may be limited by the sample size (ten teachers and 41 practices), many of the examples highlighted in this study do reflect issues, topics and practices that are encountered and dealt with by many other EFL teachers. Analysing data from more teachers would offer more opportunities for in-depth analyses. Nonetheless, we strongly believe that this study constitutes a valuable contribution to the understanding of the occurrence of awareness-raising teaching practices in upper-secondary EFL education.

Our results revealed that approximately half of the practices could be characterised as awareness-raising. This seems to indicate that, despite the fact that teachers in this study were familiar with language awareness, their understanding of what constitutes an awareness-raising practice is not always adequate (Humphries & Burns, 2015). What might underlie our findings is a misconception of what comprises awareness-raising instruction. Therefore, more research into language teachers' (mis)conceptions about awareness-raising practices is possibly required. In line with studies on science teachers' misconceptions (e.g., Kumandaş, Ateskan, & Lane, 2019), this could lead to a better insight into misconception patterns and aspects that require further attention.

Previous research into teacher language awareness (Andrews, 2007; Lindahl & Baecher, 2016) identified three roles a foreign language teacher must possess: the language user, language analyst and language teacher. In this study, we have investigated the role of the language teacher, that is, we looked at the implementation of language awareness in the classroom.

Looking at practices that could not yet be categorised as awareness-raising, findings from this study cast doubt on the teacher's role as a language analyst, that is, their ability to understand linguistics rules and systems from a student's perspective. Additionally, the role of the language user, that is, teacher's command of the language, was not taken into account in this study, as all teachers possessed a Master's degree in EFL teaching. As all three roles influence teacher's instructional decisions, more research into the joint nature of these teacher roles in relation to the implementation of awareness-raising practices may be needed. Furthermore, insufficient knowledge about language and awareness of the language system might influence teacher's confidence and subsequently influence teaching practice. Inadequate understanding of the way language works could result in more teacher-centred practices, whereas a better understanding might lead to more confidence and more interactive and student-centred practices (Borg, 2003; Shulman, 1987).

Finally, these findings add to the current debate about curriculum reforms, in the Netherlands as well as in other countries. The implementation of awareness-raising practices seems to fit in with a general trend in education which aims to prepare students with thinking skills necessary for their academic and professional future. Our findings indicate that awareness-raising practices offer the opportunity for students to analyse language, formulate thoughts and reason about ideas, and in doing so, a language awareness approach could be a domain-specific interpretation of thinking skills development in (foreign) language education (Moseley et al., 2005). More research into actual student learning as a result of such awareness-raising practices would be necessary to reveal its effect. In addition, this study reveals that curriculum reform in general, and, more specifically, a foreign language curriculum, does not imply that such practices are not yet present in current teaching practices. It is therefore important to discover what teachers already believe (Chapter 2) and do (this Chapter). This may help teachers to realise they (unconsciously) engage with such practices already and could focus on those aspects that need further development.

Implications and conclusion

The present study investigated teachers' self-reported teaching practices aimed at stimulating students' language awareness. The purpose of examining teaching practices was not to look for best practices, but to investigate whether such practices are currently present and how teachers, who profess to familiarity with language awareness, integrate such an approach in their teaching practices. Our findings indicate that awareness-raising practices are, at present, integrated in almost half of the practices investigated. However, more than half of the practices examined in this study could not, or only partly, be labelled as awareness-raising. Changes to learning environment and/or languaging components could modify non-awareness-raising practices into an awareness-raising direction.

Our findings lead to a number of implications. First of all, we found that learning environment and languaging indicators were helpful to evaluate existing teaching practices. They served as a useful tool to provide insight into the extent to which existing practices include awareness-raising components. Furthermore, the indicators are a helpful tool to highlight those teaching practice aspects that require adjustment if the practice is aimed at raising students' language awareness.

Second, we found that teachers were not always aware of why they carried out a certain teaching practice. They mainly did so because they believed it helped students in their language learning process, but they could not always indicate why. As one teacher mentioned: 'I hope it has its effect. I just assume it works, but you should actually ask the students' (teacher 1). Teachers could improve their teaching practices by developing a better understanding of their own teaching and its implications. The indicators for learning environment and languaging can support teachers to reach a better understanding of their own practices. This is important, because the way a practice is implemented might not just be a matter of (a lack of) linguistic or pedagogical knowledge, but also a matter of becoming aware of one's beliefs and underlying reasons for carrying out a certain practice (Watson, 2015). Pre- and/or in-service teacher training might help to identify and reflect on teachers' notion of language awareness and what constitutes an awareness-raising practice (Farrell & Ives, 2015). Accordingly, this could support teachers to identify awareness-raising practices and to modify these practices where necessary, and could ultimately potentially contribute to students' language awareness development.

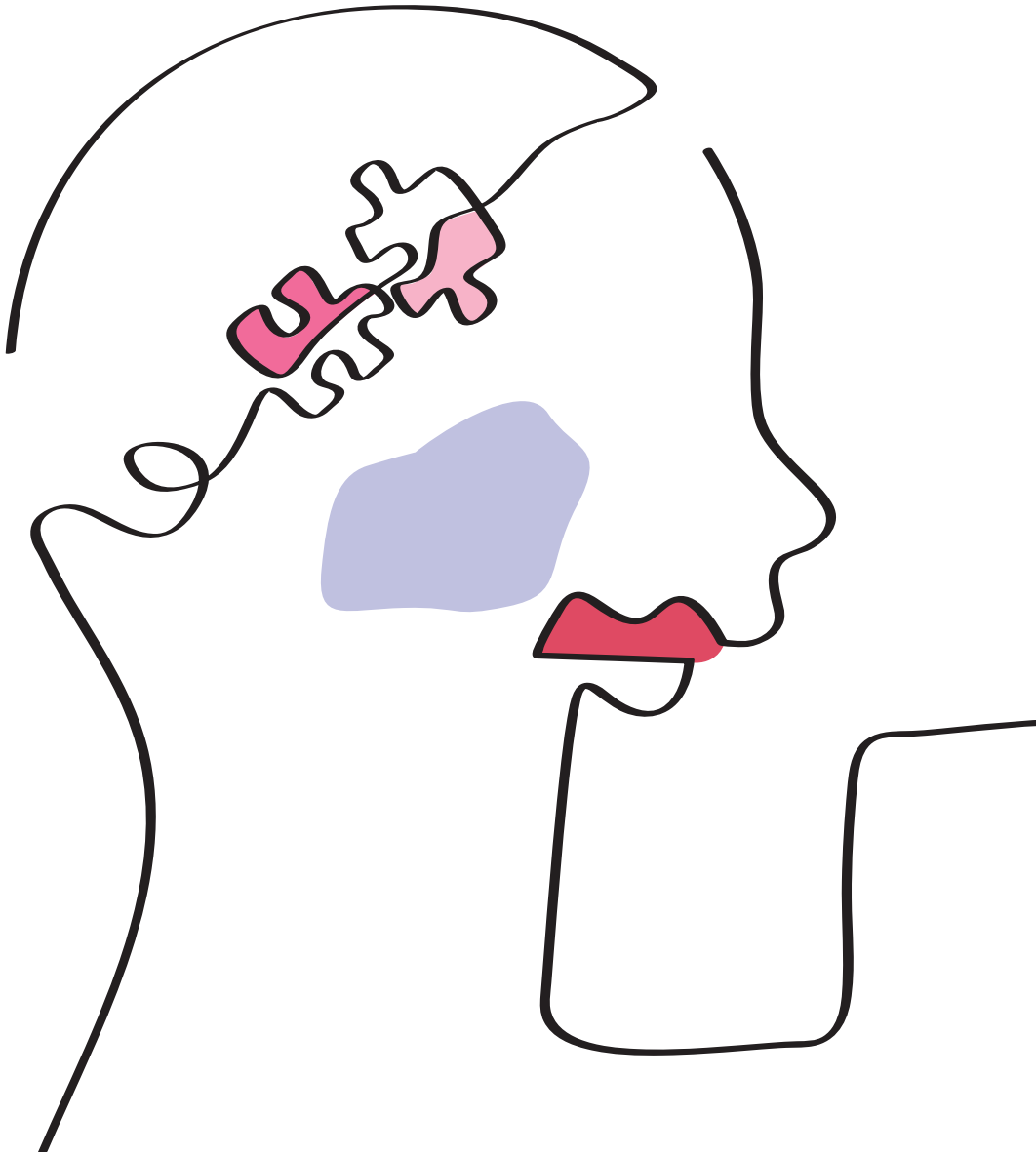
Finally, collaboration between researchers and foreign language teachers could support teachers to develop a better understanding of (the possibilities for) language awareness in the foreign language classroom and to deliberately implement language awareness in their classroom practice. All in all, analysing teaching practices offers insights into the way language awareness is currently integrated in existing foreign language teaching practices. By analysing their own practices and discussing their practices with colleagues, teachers could uncover students' learning needs, the topics most suitable for them to concentrate on, and which teaching practice aspects they could change. In other words, teachers can investigate which adjustments, which could be major or minor depending on the characteristics of a practice, could be made to advance an existing practice in an awareness-raising direction. This way, teachers do not have to completely change course when a new curriculum is being developed and implemented, but can gradually integrate language awareness in their existing practices. This might actually bring language-aware foreign language teaching closer than anticipated.

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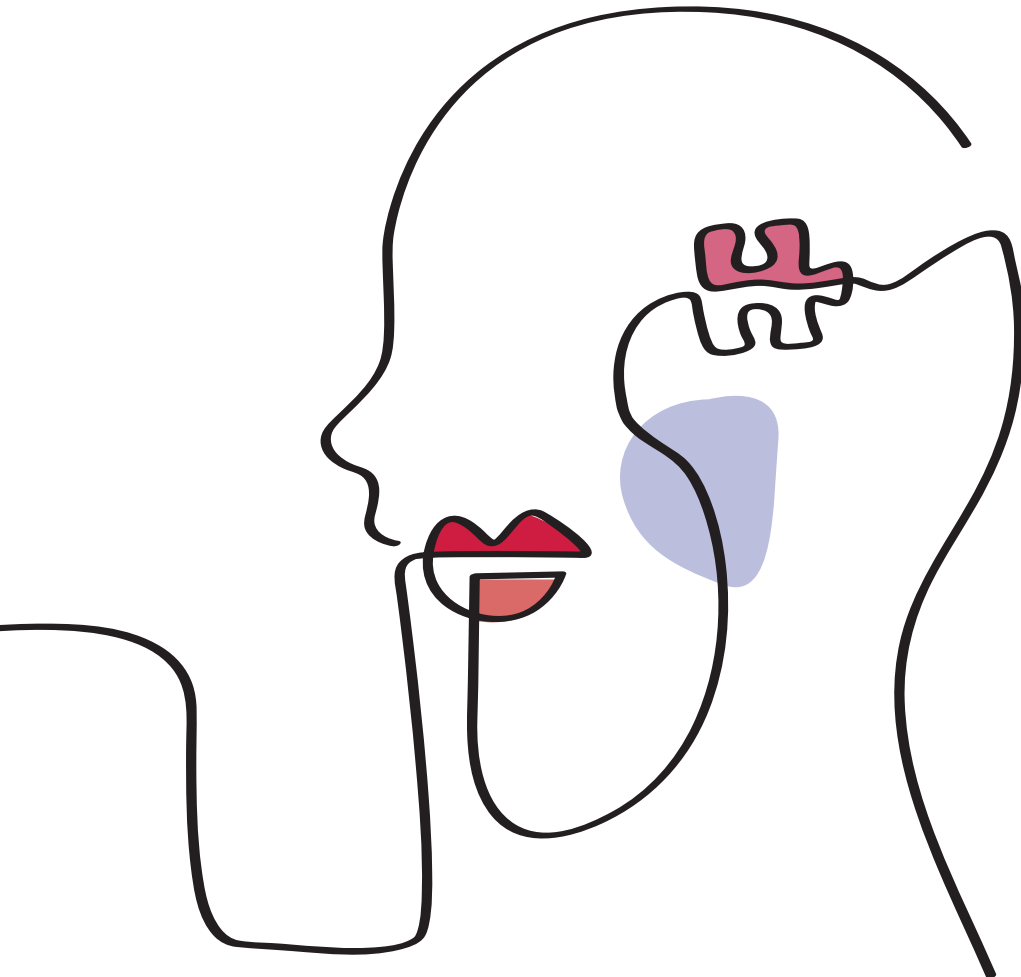
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Supporting curriculum reform in foreign language education: An examination of teachers' belief changes



This chapter is based on:

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Abstract

This study examines changes in teacher beliefs underlying an intended curriculum reform to foreign language education. A qualitative, interpretative approach was adopted to evaluate teachers' belief changes regarding language awareness as a new approach in the foreign language curriculum. Moreover, this study aimed to investigate whether and how teachers' beliefs change as they engage with this approach in their own teaching context, and whether these belief changes are related to specific components of teacher beliefs (subject matter, curriculum, student, teacher, school context). Eight Dutch upper-secondary foreign language teachers participated in this study. Results indicated that teachers' beliefs are open to change, that a variety of belief change processes can be observed and that belief change processes are interrelated with specific components of teacher beliefs, that is, changes in one component of teacher beliefs affect changes in another component. Examining belief changes based on the five components of teacher beliefs provides a comprehensive insight into the many aspects and challenges associated with the intended curriculum reform and presents a valuable resource towards the implementation of a new curriculum approach to education.

Introduction

It is widely accepted that teacher beliefs play an important role in teacher professional development and curriculum reform (e.g., Borg, 2003; Woolfolk Hoy, Davis, & Pape, 2006). Curriculum reform has played a major role in the educational context over the past decades, ranging from nationwide curriculum reform to smaller school-based initiatives (Wallace & Priestley, 2011). As a result, teachers regularly encounter and have to make sense of such reforms. It is argued that curriculum reform will likely be unsuccessful if it does not depart from the teacher's perspective (e.g., Levin & Nevo, 2009). For that reason, it is necessary for curriculum reform initiatives to build on teachers' beliefs in order to gain insight into how teachers make sense of such reform (Luttenberg et al., 2013). Investigating whether teachers' beliefs change over time is furthermore relevant in relation to the practical implementation of said curriculum reform. As teachers often struggle to translate new reforms to the specific context of their own classroom practice, teacher support is necessary to facilitate the implementation of curriculum reforms (Sjoer & Meirink, 2015).

In this study, teacher beliefs as well as possible changes in beliefs were investigated in the context of secondary school foreign language education in the Netherlands. The scope on foreign language teaching and learning has broadened and language awareness (ALA, n.d.) has been awarded a new place in the curriculum under construction (Curriculum.nu, 2019). In order to explore teachers' beliefs about this new approach, foreign language teachers' beliefs, changes in beliefs as well as the relationship between them were investigated.

Theoretical framework

Teacher beliefs

Research has shown that the construct of teacher beliefs is broad and, consequently, reaching consensus on terminology and definition is subject of continuous debate (e.g., Basturkmen, 2012; Fives & Gill, 2015). A plethora of terms has been used to identify 'what teachers know, believe, and think' (Borg, 2003, p. 81), including, among others, teacher beliefs (Barcelos & Kalaja, 2011; Basturkmen, 2012), teacher cognition (Borg, 2003), teacher conceptions (Liu & Fisher, 2006) and teacher perceptions (Yan & He, 2010). All these (often overlapping) definitions have in common that they emphasise the cognitive dimension of (thinking about) teaching (Fives & Gill, 2015). In this study, we adhere to the commonly used term 'teacher beliefs' which are defined as propositions held by a teacher and accepted as true by that teacher, while s/he also recognises that alternative beliefs may be held by others (Borg, 2001).

It is widely acknowledged that teacher beliefs influence teachers' teaching practices (Basturkmen, 2012; Farrell & Ives, 2015). Moreover, the relation between beliefs and practice can be seen as interactive; beliefs influence teaching practice, and (reflection on) practical experiences influence beliefs and can eventually lead to changes in beliefs (Basturkmen, 2012). Additionally, teachers tend to adapt curriculum reforms and associated practices according to their personal beliefs (Van Driel et al., 2001; Woolfolk Hoy et al., 2006). This further highlights the importance of addressing teacher beliefs in the context of future curriculum reforms. In order to capture the full scope of teacher beliefs, this study takes into account five components distinguished as relevant to teacher beliefs and teachers' pedagogical content knowledge: 1) subject matter (i.e., the concept of language awareness), 2) curriculum, 3) student, 4) teacher and 5) school (e.g., Shulman, 1987) (see Chapter 2).

Belief change

Beliefs underpin the implementation of teaching practices and curriculum reform. A new curriculum requires teachers to rethink existing beliefs and to adapt or discard old practices (Hammerness et al., 2005), to interpret new experiences through existing beliefs (Putnam & Borko, 1997) and to go through a process of enrichment, (re)organisation and refinement of existing beliefs (Van Boxtel et al., 2000).

Some studies claim that teacher beliefs might be difficult to change (e.g., Pajares, 1992), while others claim that beliefs are likely to change because of relevant experiences (Cabaroğlu & Roberts, 2000; Fives & Gill, 2015; Sosu & Gray, 2012; Yuan & Lee, 2014). Richardson and Placier (2001) distinguish two main approaches to change: an empirical-rational and a normative-reeducative approach. In the first approach, the change is set by someone else than the teacher, and a linear process of change is expected, in which ideas of others should lead to changes in teacher beliefs (e.g., policymakers inform teachers about a newly developed curriculum which must be implemented by teachers). In the second approach, emphasis is placed on teachers' beliefs and agency, and teachers reflect on existing and new beliefs, and direct the change themselves (e.g., teachers take part in a participatory professional development programme).

Belief changes can be distinguished through a variety of processes. Cabaroğlu and Roberts (2000), for example, presented a comprehensive overview of eleven belief change processes, ranging from 'no change' to 'elaboration' to 'reordering'. This fine-grained classification of belief changes is essential because it can distinguish between the smallest initial change to a bigger conceptual change (Vosniadou, 2007). For that reason, we take into account Cabaroğlu and Roberts' (2000) detailed overview of belief change processes in order to examine changes in teacher beliefs. We do not expect teachers in our study to have fully established beliefs

about the curriculum reform, but we expect them to shape their beliefs in an ongoing process of development fuelled by sense-making of personal experiences and practices. In order to examine possible belief changes, teachers were stimulated to explicate their beliefs prior to and six months after engagement with the new approach. Explicating beliefs could strengthen and encourage teachers' engagement with a new approach and could stimulate them to question, compare and evaluate their beliefs (Sjoer & Meirink, 2015; Tao, 2004; Van Boxtel et al., 2000). By doing so, new beliefs can be developed and existing beliefs can be challenged (Meirink et al., 2007). In the context of curriculum reform, this could inform curriculum policy-making, support the implementation of a new approach, and, eventually, could contribute to changes in teaching practices (Horn et al., 2017).

Language awareness

Recently, language awareness has gained renewed interest in the context of (foreign) language curriculum reform. Language awareness is commonly defined as the 'explicit knowledge about language, and conscious perception and sensitivity in language learning, language teaching and language use' (ALA, n.d.). The approach covers a wide spectrum of fields, including cognitive, social, power, affective and performance domains (James & Garrett, 2013), and can be operationalised by means of five instructional features: 1) it involves the ongoing investigation of language as a dynamic phenomenon rather than the internalisation of a fixed body of knowledge, 2) it involves talking about language, 3) it involves a process of student-centred exploration and discovery, 4) it engages students affectively and cognitively, and 5) it stimulates reflection and aims to develop skills for autonomous learning (Borg, 1994).

Language awareness is afforded a central place in the future foreign language curriculum in the Netherlands. Therefore, it is important to investigate teacher beliefs about this new approach, whether and what type of changes can be observed, how these changes relate to specific components of teacher beliefs and how these belief changes affect the implementation of the intended curriculum reform.

Aim and research questions

The aim of this study is to examine whether teacher beliefs about language awareness as an approach to foreign language education change as teachers engage with this approach for a short period of time and how these belief changes are related to specific components of teacher beliefs. This is important because teachers regularly face reform initiatives in their teaching context and investigating teachers' beliefs about such reform could support the practical implementation. Our study aims to answer the following research questions:

- 1) How do teachers' beliefs about language awareness as an approach to foreign language education change and how can these changes be typified?
- 2) Is there a relationship between belief changes and specific components of teacher beliefs and if so, how are these aspects related to one another?

Method

This study employed a qualitative, interpretive approach (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This approach was chosen because it allows for an in-depth investigation of a complex concept and the construction of understanding through interaction.

Context of the study

The study was conducted in the context of Dutch upper-secondary foreign language education. Over a period of four weeks, the main researcher visited the teachers three times. Each meeting, the researcher and teachers explored and discussed ideas and possibilities for the implementation of language awareness in teachers' own teaching practices by reflecting on Borg's (1994) instructional features of a language awareness methodology. Prior to the first meeting, all teachers were sent a brief introduction about language awareness and the aim of the study. This way, all teachers were provided with the same input prior to participation. As teacher guidance is seen as important when discussing subject matter (Sjoer & Meirink, 2015), the researcher structured each meeting and introduced the questions but also asked teachers to respond and react to each other. At the start of the first meeting and six months after the meetings, interviews were conducted to elicit teacher beliefs.

Participants

Eight Dutch pre-university upper-secondary foreign language teachers participated in this study. Teachers were purposefully selected (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). First of all, twenty foreign language teachers were approached through the network associated with the main researcher's teacher education institute. These teachers received an e-mail in which the aim and design of the study were briefly explained. In a previous study investigating teacher beliefs (Chapter 2), teachers valued the exchange of ideas with a colleague, because it provided them with the opportunity to learn from each other. Therefore, ten teachers who declared their interest in this study were asked if they could propose another foreign language teacher in their school who would also be interested. By doing so, we encouraged teachers to look beyond their own classroom context and to gain more insight into the topic of this study by learning from one another. Teachers who declared they had no colleague interested in participation were withdrawn from participation. In the end, eight teachers, one

dyad per school, were selected for participation. All teachers possessed a Master's degree in foreign language teaching. For an overview of participating teachers, see Table 4.1. All names provided are pseudonyms.

Table 4.1 Overview of teacher characteristics

Teacher	School	Language subject	Age	Teaching experience (in years)	Reason for participation
1 Emma	A	English	27	4	Learn how to support students to establish connections between (foreign) languages and between language skills
2 Laura	A	French	44	15	Learn how to support students to establish connections between (foreign) languages
3 Tess	B	English	25	2	Learn how to adapt existing teaching practices
4 Sara	B	English	35	13	Learn how to adapt existing teaching practices
5 Naomi	C	English	32	6	Learn how to add more content to existing teaching practices
6 Hannah	C	German	51	27	Learn how to adapt existing teaching practices to motivate and interest students, and how to add more content to motivate and challenge yourself as a teacher
7 Zoe	D	English	42	13	Learn how to adapt teaching practices to students' learning needs
8 Jenny	D	English	39	13	Learn how to provide more context and depth to the language subject in order to support students' language learning

Data collection and procedures

A semi-structured interview at the start of the first meeting as well as six months after the meetings was used to elicit teacher beliefs. The first interview served as a baseline interview in which teachers' initial beliefs were elicited. Approximately six months later, a final interview was conducted with each teacher individually. In both interviews, teachers were asked to explicate their beliefs based on the same set of questions. Thus, teachers were not explicitly asked if and how they experienced a change in beliefs, rather, they were asked to explicate their beliefs about similar topics at different moments in time.

An interview protocol including five main interview questions, based on five components of teacher beliefs and optional probes (see Chapter 2), was used to structure each interview.

Teachers were asked to explicate their beliefs with regard to the concept language awareness and with regard to instructional and contextual aspects related to language awareness. The five questions were as follows: 1) What does language awareness mean to you? 2) How does language awareness manifest itself in your classroom practice? 3) How does language awareness affect student learning? 4) How does language awareness affect you, as a teacher, and your instructional practice? And 5) How does language awareness affect the broader school context? The aim of each interview was not to reach consensus of beliefs between teachers or between researcher and teacher, but to offer teachers the possibility to explicate their beliefs. Each interview lasted 40-60 minutes, was audio-recorded and transcribed.

Data analysis

Data analysis included six phases. In the first phase, interview data were coded using a coding scheme describing five components of teacher beliefs (Chapter 2). All transcripts were coded by the main researcher.

In the second phase, a data matrix was created to organise all teacher beliefs (Miles et al., 2013). Beliefs from the first and final interview were then compared for possible changes. By comparing interview data, we aimed to find interview episodes that explain changes in teacher beliefs and to locate evidence of change (Little, 2002). A change was considered as such when the final interview presented an explicit change compared to the first interview, when the teacher explicitly mentioned something had changed or when the context of the interview episode indicated a belief change.

In the third phase, Cabaroglu and Roberts' (2000) framework of belief change processes was used in order to analyse the data. Through an iterative process of reading and examining the interview data, we identified seven out of eleven of Cabaroglu and Roberts' belief change processes as relevant. A more detailed description of the selected belief change processes can be found in the first part of the results section. Furthermore, the descriptions of all belief changes process were thoroughly discussed with the co-researcher and refined where necessary. An adapted version of the framework based on our data is presented in Table 2. Interview quotes are provided to characterise each belief change process. This framework was then used to analyse the interview data.

In the fourth phase, the main researcher and the co-researcher individually coded belief changes of three randomly chosen teachers. Then, assigned codes were compared to calculate the interrater reliability. Cohen's kappa was calculated as $\kappa = .87$ which is considered a strong agreement (McHugh, 2012). Any remaining ambiguities or discrepancies were thoroughly examined and clarified through discussion. The remaining set of interviews was then coded by the main researcher.

In the fifth phase, assigned belief changes were organised per teacher and per belief component. To answer the first research question, the type of belief changes that occurred in our data were evaluated and described using interview quotes.

In the sixth and final phase, the relationship between belief changes and specific components of teacher beliefs was further examined. A cross-case analysis revealed that certain changes occurred more frequently in relation to certain belief components. To answer the second research question, two cases were selected to present teachers' belief change processes as a coherent whole and to illustrate how the distinct belief change processes as discussed under the first research question are related to and affect one another. Interview quotes will be used to illustrate the changes and the connection between belief changes. The two cases selected are representative for the interrelatedness of belief change processes found in this study, yet they differ sufficiently in terms of starting situation and processes.

Results

Changes in teachers' beliefs about language awareness as an approach to foreign language education

Prior to the start of the project, all teachers were, to a lesser or greater extent, familiar with language awareness as an approach to foreign language education. Generally, teachers became acquainted with the approach through spontaneous interaction with a colleague and/or because of dissatisfaction with the current teaching content or method (Meirink et al., 2009). With this study, we aimed to gain insight into the complexity and variability of teachers' belief changes in relation to language awareness as a new approach to foreign language education. Using an adapted yet fine-grained form of Cabaroglu and Roberts' (2000) framework (see Table 4.2), our findings indicate that teachers' beliefs are open to change and that a wide variety of belief changes processes is present.

Four of Cabaroglu and Roberts' belief change processes were considered irrelevant for our study: 'addition', 're-ordering', 're-labelling' and 'reversal'. Sole addition of beliefs could not be found in our data; if beliefs were added, they were also linked with existing beliefs and thus we believed the category 'linking up' sufficed. Only one possible example of 're-ordering' and 're-labelling' was found; however, based on our data we could not conclude whether this was an actual re-ordering/re-labelling or an accidental change in order or label. As both examples only occurred once and were situated within another belief change process, we decided to remove these processes from our framework. Examples of 'reversal' were not found and as a result, this process was removed. Additionally, we opted to rename two of Cabaroglu and

Roberts' belief change processes because we believed this would better reflect the nature of these changes: 'pseudo change' was renamed 'disjoint' to better reflect the paradox between personal beliefs and reality, and 'no change' was renamed 'stability' to avoid a possible negative connotation. Table 4.2 presents an overview of all belief change processes. In the next section, all seven belief changes will be further illustrated.

Table 4.2 Overview of belief change processes (adapted from Cabaroglu and Roberts, 2000)

Belief change process	Characteristics of belief change process	Interview example of belief change process
Elaboration	Teacher refines existing beliefs with additional or more specific dimensions	<i>Start:</i> "Inductive grammar, that is it [...] that students realise that languages are no individual island" <i>End:</i> "I immediately think about grammar. That is the first thing that crosses my mind. But what I find important now as well is, like, the way grammar is taught and how students think about it. And that is not restricted to grammar only, it concerns language learning in general. So I don't immediately tell the answer or the meaning of a word, but I first ask questions to stimulate them to investigate it for themselves, so that they discover connections themselves" (Sara)
Stability	Teacher perceives no substantive change or development in beliefs; beliefs remain stable	"I have said this last time we met and I will keep saying this, because this is my thing" (Laura)
Disagreement	Teacher opposes or rejects existing beliefs	"The school has always had particular beliefs about teaching, for example that our school is an immersion school and that students are immersed in the foreign language. But I had my doubts, because that is simply not true. We are no immersion school, we are a Dutch school with Dutch-speaking children" (Zoe)
Linking up	Teacher establishes new connections (within or across domains) between existing and/or new beliefs	"I try to link it to cultural knowledge, to grammar, especially in writing exercises" (Hannah)
Confirmation	Teacher perceives strengthening of existing beliefs; existing beliefs become more established	"The fact that it contributes [to student learning] is a reason to continue this way" (Emma)

Awareness	Teacher becomes more aware of a belief	'I realise that now I have more background, more awareness, I can employ it to guide students differently' (Jenny)
Disjoint	Teacher perceives a certain belief as important but inapplicable/inappropriate to the current context; disjoint between personal beliefs and practical/contextual demands	'We also have to deal with the inspectorate of education, yes, the inspectorate wants us to produce certain results, so we continuously keep that in mind. That impedes us from letting go of the standard forms of teaching, while actually, we want to do it differently, but the tension between being innovative and ensuring quality remains' (Emma)

Note. All quotes are obtained from the final interview, unless specified otherwise

1. Elaboration

Numerous examples of elaboration of teacher beliefs were found. All but one of the teachers revealed an elaboration in their beliefs about language awareness. Two types of elaboration could be distinguished. The first type revealed an elaboration across language awareness domains (Excerpt 4.1), the second type involved an elaboration within the cognitive domain of language awareness in which a sole emphasis on grammar elaborated to a broader cognitive view which also includes (self-)reflection (James & Garrett, 2013).

Excerpt 4.1) 'First of all, grammar and a good mastery of the language. But now we also frequently discuss topics such as 'what is language', 'where does language come from' and 'who decides what is a language and what is not'. I actually find that really interesting. Yeah, so that involves much more awareness from what they [students] do. And additionally, we also discuss awareness of the context of language, so in which context is language being used, which impact does language have on its surroundings, the power of language, those kind of topics. For example, I had this student writing a speech and he had difficulties emphasising his message on paper without using his voice. So I told him that he had to make use of grammar, sentence structure and vocabulary to empower his message instead of using his voice' (Jenny).

2. Stability

Some teachers reported that their beliefs remained stable. Excerpt 4.2 presents an example of a teacher who appeared to have strong beliefs about language awareness which, in line with other teachers, also fitted the cognitive domain. Discussing language awareness over the course of several weeks did not change her beliefs and possibly settled her beliefs even more.

Excerpt 4.2) 'Well, what I always try and still try, and I have told you so last time and I will tell you again now, is that I aim to look across languages. So that you see a particular language as language, as an instrument. For example, that something is named *COI* [complément d'objet indirect] in French, *meewerkend voorwerp* [indirect object] in Dutch, and whatever it is called in English, but that that refers to the same aspect in every language. So that is language awareness to me. And I have said this last time we met and I will keep saying this, because this is my thing. It is a cross-curricular view on languages that hopefully helps students to see that languages have similar elements' (Laura).

3. Disagreement

Engagement with language awareness resulted in feelings of disagreement for some teachers. Excerpt 4.3 presents an example of a teacher who first acknowledged the added value of language awareness for the curriculum but who gradually came to realise that language awareness is a topic that can be integrated within the existing curriculum. Thinking about integrating language awareness within existing curricular domains raised a certain disagreement with the existing curriculum and, more specifically, with coursebook materials and the curricular programme.

Excerpt 4.3) 'My students have three hours of English classes per week, which is quite a lot. And I find it important that these classes contain content alongside form. I am very much against filling these three classes with 'empty' topics, for example only grammar explanation or something. That would be three hours wasted that they can also use to learn content. It is being said that languages are mostly focused on form, but I don't agree with that. I don't want it to be that way. I understand it, because that is the way they [students] are tested, but I don't want my lessons to be only language form. That is time lost. Therefore, I try to integrate it [language awareness] more with the existing curriculum now in order to provide students with more content while adhering to the existing curricular demands' (Naomi).

4. Linking up

Several teachers explained that as a result of their participation they had now established more within or cross-curricular connections. They did so by adding and integrating new topics and consciously linking these topics to relevant aspects in their own or other school subjects. Excerpt 4.4 presents an example of a teacher linking up elements from two different subjects.

Excerpt 4.4) 'The coursebook presents all kinds of random topics, while I know that in history class, for example, they discuss the medieval period. I actually try to integrate that

in English class then. I will show them how certain theories they learn in history class are applicable to aspects in English class. For example, that historical texts can be used to point out certain grammatical structures which then become more meaningful. So I do use the coursebook, but I also easily reject or adapt it so that assignments are placed in a richer context and become more meaningful to students' (Sara).

5. Confirmation

In some cases, positive personal experiences resulted in a confirmation of beliefs. Examples of confirmation revealed that teacher who adhered to certain beliefs were reassured about these beliefs. Excerpt 4.5 is an example of how thinking about beliefs in relation to teacher's teaching practices confirmed teacher's initial beliefs and the way the teacher enacted these beliefs in practice.

Excerpt 4.5) 'By approaching teaching this way, it strikes students differently. Or at least, I think it does. With reading assignments I use more context now because that increases the opportunity for students to reflect on it more consciously. For example, transitional words and phrases make much more sense in a text and by approaching such aspects differently now, I see that students start to think differently as well. I can see it provides structure to them. So therefore I do it more this way' (Laura).

6. Awareness

Numerous examples of awareness were observed in teachers' belief changes. This process of engaging with this new approach often led to new insights. Excerpt 4.6 provides an example of a teacher who gradually becomes aware of her role in the classroom.

Excerpt 4.6) 'I notice that I am able to connect more dots myself now, specially linguistically. For example, I am more aware now of the connections between Dutch and English, on several levels. They seemed obvious to me first, but I now really understand them. And if students say something in English that is actually extremely Dutch, I am now more aware of the underlying reasons and the processes that precede students' learning' (Tess).

7. Disjoint

Several teachers perceived a disjoint between their beliefs and the current context in which they had to operate. This sometimes curbed the progress of their belief development because they could not always fully apply their (newly developed) beliefs to classroom practice. Excerpt 4.7 presents an example of a disjoint between a teacher's beliefs and curricular demands as experienced in school.

Excerpt 4.7) 'So despite we all try to be innovative and try to work with assignments that include more language awareness, we also have to deal with the Inspectorate of Education, yes, the Inspectorate wants us to produce certain results, so we continuously keep that in mind. That impedes us from letting go of the standard forms of teaching, while actually, we want to do it differently, but the tension between being innovative and ensuring quality remains. We have to be able to justify all our decisions' (Emma).

Relationship between belief changes and specific components of teacher beliefs

A cross-case analysis revealed several dominant belief change processes per component of teacher beliefs. In order to provide a better insight into the interrelatedness of these aspects, an overview of belief change processes organised per component of teacher beliefs is presented in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Overview of belief change processes per teacher and per component of teacher beliefs

Teacher	Subject matter	Curriculum	Student	Teacher	School
1 Emma	<i>Elaboration</i>	Disjoint	Elaboration <i>Awareness</i> Confirmation	<i>Awareness</i> Elaboration	<i>Disjoint</i>
2 Laura	Stability	<i>Linking up</i> <i>Disagreement</i>	Confirmation <i>Awareness</i>	Stability	Stability Elaboration
3 Tess	<i>Elaboration</i> Linking up	Elaboration	<i>Awareness</i> Linking up	Linking up <i>Awareness</i>	<i>Awareness</i>
4 Sara	<i>Elaboration</i>	<i>Linking up</i> Disjoint	<i>Awareness</i>	Confirmation Linking up Disjoint Elaboration	Confirmation <i>Disjoint</i>
5 Naomi	<i>Elaboration</i>	<i>Disagreement</i>	<i>Awareness</i>	Elaboration	<i>Disjoint</i>
6 Hannah	<i>Elaboration</i> <i>Awareness</i>	<i>Awareness</i> <i>Linking up</i>	Linking up <i>Awareness</i>	<i>Awareness</i> Linking up	<i>Disjoint</i>
7 Zoe	<i>Elaboration</i> Confirmation	<i>Disagreement</i> <i>Awareness</i> <i>Linking up</i>	Linking up	<i>Awareness</i> Disagreement	Disagreement <i>Awareness</i>
8 Jenny	<i>Elaboration</i> <i>Awareness</i>	<i>Disagreement</i>	Disjoint	<i>Awareness</i>	Elaboration

Note. Dominant belief change processes per component of teacher beliefs are marked in italics

In the following section, we present two cases and characterise both teachers' belief change processes using synchronous belief change profiles (Luttenberg et al., 2018). Representative interview quotes from both teachers will be presented side by side to illustrate the multifaceted process of belief change and to shed light on the relationship between belief changes and specific components of teacher beliefs. First, we will introduce both teachers, Hannah and Sara:

Hannah has worked as a teacher of German for approximately twenty-five years. She became acquainted with language awareness about a year prior to the start of this project through participation in a workshop. Hannah decided to participate in this project because she believed this would support her in rethinking and reshaping her daily teaching which would motivate both her and her students.

Sara has worked as a teacher of English for almost fifteen years. She became acquainted with language awareness only shortly before the start of the project through interaction with a colleague. Sara decided to participate in this project because she believed this would give her more insight into the possibilities of implementing language awareness in her teaching practices.

Synchronous description of belief change processes

Subject matter

Hannah

'It is related to all aspects of language, nothing is completely independent. That is language awareness to me. I often have the feeling that students perceive a subject like mathematics differently than a language subject. Therefore, I try to show them that it is not only mathematics that has certain rules, connections and structures, but that languages such as English, German or French have these rules, connections and structures as well, and that they are also connected with Dutch. That is language awareness to me. Additionally, that cultural differences come across in languages as well really was an eye-opener to me. Also the insight that language is not something demarcated. It is continuously present in all kinds of things. It is much bigger than grammar, vocabulary and skills.'

Sara

'I immediately think about grammar. That is the first thing crossing my mind. But what I find important now as well is, like, the way grammar is taught and how students think about it. That is not restricted to grammar only actually, it concerns language learning in general. So I don't immediately give the answer or the meaning of a word, but I first ask questions to stimulate students to investigate it for themselves, so that they discover connections themselves. So what do you think? And why?'

Hannah explained how she still perceived the structure of language as a main part of what constitutes language awareness. Additionally, she mentioned that cultural aspects of language play an important role as well. The change indicates that her notion of language awareness has elaborated from a sole cognitive focus to a sociocultural domain as well (James & Garrett, 2013). Sara also expressed an elaboration of her beliefs about language awareness, but, as opposed to Hannah, her beliefs elaborated within the same domain of language awareness. In the final interview, her beliefs still fitted the cognitive domain, yet they had extended from a sole focus on grammar to more elaborated ways of stimulating grammar learning and teaching.

Curriculum

Hannah

'You actually know that language comprises much more, but in the curriculum it is usually restricted to the language skills. I find language something cumulative. You start with basic vocabulary and grammar in grade six and then you gradually increase the level of difficulty. In that sense language differs from subjects like science where you have demarcated subjects like electricity or gravity, for example. Language doesn't have such demarcated subjects and therefore students perceive language differently. With mathematics they think a topic is easy or difficult but in a couple of weeks a new topic will be introduced anyway. With languages they think something is difficult, grammar for example, and it becomes more difficult each year. You actually repeat the same elements from grade six to grade twelve, only the level of difficulty changes. Therefore, a broader perspective on language might be needed.'

Hannah's elaborated beliefs about language awareness made her aware of additional possibilities for the curriculum. It also raised her awareness of the coherence between the language skills (reading, speaking, writing, listening) which are continuously present throughout secondary education but continuously increase in their level of difficulty. Thinking about the curriculum raised her awareness of the importance of establishing links between the different language skills so that students realise that any improvements they make are not only in reading or grammar, but that these skills are linked to each other and can strengthen each other as well. Whereas Hannah's increased awareness resulted in more links established in the curriculum, Sara initially experienced several burdens in the curriculum. At first, this resulted in a disjoint between her beliefs and the standard curriculum. Nonetheless, her feelings of disjoint with the curriculum and the coursebook led her to use supplemental materials, and as a result, to also find alternative ways to establish links between different elements within the language subject (e.g., grammar and writing) as well as across subjects.

Sara

'As long as we continue to work with the standard methods, things won't change. It is almost impossible to do something differently with these methods. [...] For example, students were supposed to learn the past tense and the past continuous. The coursebook presents all kinds of random topics, while I know that in history class, for example, they discuss the medieval period. I actually try to integrate that in English class then. I will show them how certain theories they learn in history class are applicable to aspects in English class. For example, that historical texts can be used to point out certain grammatical structures which then become more meaningful. So I do use the coursebook, but I also easily reject or adapt it so that assignments are placed in a richer context and become more meaningful to students.'

Student**Hannah**

'I knew that students had learnt the passive voice in English, so I tried to trigger them. "What characterises this voice?" And I realised it triggered them. Not all of them, but some became aware that it always involves the verb 'be', that someone or something is being so-and-so. So then you realise that for those students the penny has dropped, because they see the connection. I think that they won't forget it anymore and that they will think about it differently now. I also think that this leads to an increased interest. And I have noticed that this is more effective than just saying that the subject is inactive, because students then think "yeah, whatever" and forget it again.'

Sara

'I really notice now that students think more deliberately about what they do. And that is what I try to reach, that they do not just accept things unquestioningly, for example, that they do not think about the similarities between the present continuous and the past continuous, or whatever. And I notice that now I have shown them what to look for, they start to establish these connections themselves. And then they feel relieved, because it becomes less complicated, less vague, and then they think "oh, this is it". It helps them to see the link between tenses or between skills, and that knowledge can be transferred from one skill to another. And then the next time they establish the link much easier. First, I had to make them aware of it, but now I place more responsibility on the students. And if students learn to take their responsibility and start questioning what they are doing, then that strengthens their learning multiple ways.'

Hannah's beliefs about student learning gradually changed because of her heightened awareness as a teacher (see next paragraph). This resulted in students establishing more links between linguistic aspects, which, according to Hannah, also increased students' interest in language learning because they better understood the underlying reasons. Sara became more aware of the way she could best support students in their learning process and, as a result, also became more aware of students' capacity to establish within and cross-curricular links. Nonetheless, she still believes that students, generally, are too passive to notice the resemblances. They are 'consumers' instead of learners who possess self-directive capabilities, show initiative and take responsibility over their own learning. According to Sara, students should 'develop and experience more agency'. She aimed to reach this by 'placing greater responsibility on students' and 'letting go of the false sense of security' provided by the standard procedures in the coursebook. By doing so, students gradually took more responsibility and thought more thoroughly about their tasks. By trial and error, she became aware that this involves a gradual process which is a shared responsibility by students and the teacher: 'As a teacher you need to raise students' awareness, especially in the beginning,

and then you realise that they start to draw connections, establish links between the different language skills or different languages.'

Teacher

Hannah

'At a certain moment I realised ... it was grammar, the passive voice. In German class, the passive voice is only offered from grade eleven. And all of a sudden, while I was teaching, I thought ... in Dutch it [the direct object] is called *lijdend voorwerp* and then I said hey, it is not called *lijdend voorwerp* for no reason [*lijdend* means suffering/undergoing], the object undergoes something, experiences something. And then all of a sudden I became very aware that I realised I have internalised this so much now that I can provide this information to my students. And I realised that they process it better now. I know that these students have learnt the passive in third-grade English class, but not all students establish that connection between German and English, so it goes in one ear and out the other. But now I am aware of these connections and the underlying ideas, I can establish these connections between Dutch, English, German and French in class and try to make students aware that it is called *lijdend voorwerp* for a reason; because it is undergoing something. And I know that a couple weeks ago when I explained this, all of a sudden I realised that I slowly start to do this automatically now. And it has brought me a lot, it makes it much more interesting. If only because it has taught me a lot and that I have started to think differently about language, why I do things the way I do them, whether I can do things differently and whether I can make students think differently.'

Sara

'I let students experience what they don't understand yet and then I stimulate them to investigate it further themselves. That is something I do more now because I see it works. I consciously ask questions and ask students what they think and why, and how things work. And I save the explanation until the end, if they require explanation. I will not explain what they can discover themselves, I only wrap up what they have found. So I deliberately aim for more student-centred classes rather than teacher-centred, but the guidance and questions play an important role, that is way I came to realise.'

In the final interview, Hannah indicated that her engagement with language awareness greatly motivated and encouraged her, something which she then realised was the most important first step towards the implementation of language awareness in her teaching practices. Through participation, Hannah realised that understanding the underlying principles of language is fundamental. For example, it allowed her to better communicate the form and function of a grammatical rule to students. As a result, she explained that more awareness in her teacher role led to more awareness in students' learning as well. She also indicated that thinking about (teaching) foreign languages helped her becoming a better teacher. Whereas Hannah experienced the development of teacher awareness as decisive in her beliefs about student learning, Sara explained that this worked the other way around for her. She explained that it was the students' role in particular that contributed to a revised interpretation of her role as a teacher. At the start of the project, Sara explained that she strongly favoured inquiry-based learning in which students were supposed to discover certain grammatical aspects themselves. Gradually, however, she realised that only stimulating students to discover linguistic features for themselves without any follow-up activity is not sufficient for successful learning. She clarified that this project confirmed but also elaborated her beliefs about inquiry-based learning. Moreover, she now became aware that inquiry-based learning implies not just student discovery, but also demands certain teacher responsibilities, such as guidance and questioning.

School

Hannah

'This year has been a huge rollercoaster to us. Just before summer, the inspectorate rated our pre-university track as weak, which means that you have to stake everything to reach a sufficient level again within one year. So then you realise, and we also expressed that to each other, that there is too little time to work with different approaches, because you have to complete so many other tasks that need to be presented to the inspectorate. And then the school demands you to teach and test in a certain way. But I notice that we don't have enough time to really sit together and discuss such innovative aspects. We agreed to exchange interesting practices but I hope that we will have more time for collaboration in the future.'

Sara

'If we, as a school, want to move in that direction, many colleagues have to switch over. That doesn't happen overnight. It is the safety they feel and want to adhere to. It is a false sense of security that you have to let go. I am now working on educational development together with colleagues. We mostly discuss our common view by critically examining our teaching, where we aim to go, what that demands from teachers and how we can bring out the best in students.'

Hannah explained that her changed teacher awareness cannot always be directly translated to teaching practices, because the school's priorities prevent her from organising her lessons differently and thus affect the practical implementation of the approach. She still exchanges ideas with colleagues every once in a while, although time constraints limit the amount of in-depth exchange. Sara, on the other hand, generally felt that her beliefs were valued in school because colleagues had inquired her about it. As a result, she felt confirmed in her beliefs. Additionally, she emphasised the necessity of school support, because it is almost impossible as a teacher to aim for a different type of learning and thinking within a particular subject when all other subject teachers remain committed to more traditional ways of teaching. As a consequence, she explained that a different approach also requires teachers to evaluate their own beliefs, about which she remarked that this is still a long and time-consuming process.

Overall, the synchronous presentation of teachers' belief change processes provides a comprehensive insight in the interrelatedness of the specific components of teacher beliefs and belief change processes. Presenting belief changes together shows that each teacher experiences many different belief change processes related to the specific components of teacher beliefs. Regardless of these individual differences, the synchronous presentation implemented here reveals that the interdependence of belief changes is present in both teachers, that is, changes in one component of teacher beliefs affect changes in another component. However, this is not necessarily a sequential process in which one component always follows or precedes another component. For example, Hannah experienced most growth in her role as a teacher which in turn influenced student learning and interest, while Sara experienced student behaviour as a trigger for an adapted teacher role. Additionally, different belief change processes may eventually result in similar outcomes. For example, Hannah's awareness of new possibilities for the curriculum led to more instances of linking up elements within and outside the curriculum, whereas Sara experienced a disjoint first before linking up curricular elements.

Discussion

This study aimed to find out whether and how teachers' beliefs change, how these changes can be typified and whether there is a relationship between belief changes and specific components of teacher beliefs. The first research question considered the type of changes that occur in teachers' beliefs about language awareness. Based on Cabaroglu and Roberts' (2000) framework, our data yielded seven belief change processes: elaboration, stability, disagreement, linking up, confirmation, awareness and disjoint. This adds to other studies which found changes in teacher beliefs after teachers participated in a (long or short-term)

teacher training programme (Polat, 2010; Sosu & Gray, 2012; Yuan & Lee, 2014) and indicates that understanding teacher belief changes is possible when employing an appropriate and fine-grained research method (Borg, 2019). Generally, a wide variety of belief change processes could be observed within and across teachers, indicating that individual teachers differ in how they experience a particular reform and do not reveal one particular change as a result of their engagement with language awareness (Ungar, 2016). With a variety of belief change processes found in this study, this fine-grained classification of belief changes has proven itself useful to analyse teachers' belief changes on a highly detailed level.

The second research question examined the connection between belief changes and components of teacher beliefs. Describing belief changes in coherence with components of teacher beliefs provides a well-informed picture of the interrelatedness of and interaction between different type of teacher beliefs and belief change processes (Zheng, 2015). Belief changes regarding the subject matter could mainly be characterised as elaboration. This elaboration revealed that current educational, sociocultural and political developments played a crucial role in shaping teachers' beliefs. By linking language awareness to realities inside and outside the school context, the topicality of language awareness became apparent in the social (e.g., linguistic diversity) and power (e.g., (inter)national elections) domain of language awareness (James & Garrett, 2013).

Belief changes regarding (the role of) the curriculum could largely be characterised as disagreement. Teachers often perceived a mismatch between the existing programme and course materials and their beliefs about awareness-raising instruction. Therefore, policymakers and curriculum developers should involve teachers in curriculum development to avoid effects of a mainly empirical-rational approach to the implementation of the newly developed curriculum (Richardson & Placier, 2001). This way, teacher beliefs could foster curriculum development and beliefs can be compared with the intended curriculum in order to explore any discrepancies that could lead to a future disagreement.

Belief changes regarding (the role of) the teacher could predominantly be characterised as awareness. A heightened teacher awareness will likely result in a better insight into the possibilities for awareness-raising instruction and student needs (Andrews, 2007; Lindahl & Baecher, 2016). This is interesting, because it shows that teachers are not only able to elaborate their own notion of what constitutes language awareness, but that, in a relatively short period of time, they are also able to reflect on how they believe their instructional practices can best be adjusted.

Belief changes regarding (the role of) the student are mostly characterised as awareness as well. Beliefs about the student and student learning repeatedly influenced teacher awareness

or were the result of a heightened teacher awareness (Andrews & Svalberg, 2017). As teachers gradually establish more connections between the notion of language awareness, student learning and their instructional practices, they also realised how they can better support student learning (Biesta et al., 2015). While it is said that awareness-raising instruction should involve student-centred discovery and inquiry-based learning (Borg, 1994), teachers in this study not only aimed for more student agency (Van Lier, 2008) but also came to believe that students actually require a certain level of instructional guidance in order to support their learning (Kirschner, Sweller, & Clark, 2006; Lazonder & Harmsen, 2016).

Belief changes regarding the school context generally showed more overall variation in belief changes. Nonetheless, a disjoint appeared to be most dominant here. School board support, time for professional and lesson development, and possibilities to collaborate with colleagues all unconstructively influenced teachers' beliefs. Therefore, these factors should be taken into account when implementing a new curriculum.

Overall, our study provides a deeper understanding of teachers' belief change processes and how belief changes are related to specific components of teacher beliefs. We found a wide variety of changes in teacher beliefs as well as an interesting relationship between belief changes and components of teacher beliefs. Additional research is necessary to investigate if and how teachers' beliefs further develop over a longer period. Despite individual differences, we found the interrelatedness of belief changes to be present in all teachers, suggesting that curriculum reform initiatives should take into account all belief components in order to gain a complete overview of the possibilities and challenges related to the intended curriculum reform.

In conclusion, solely focusing on the (renewed) subject matter as part of the curriculum reform is not sufficient in order to successfully implement a new approach. Taking into account the connection with the existing curriculum, the school context, the role of the students and the role of the teacher is just as important for a successful implementation, and departing from personal beliefs and experiences provides a valuable and multifaceted perspective on curriculum reform.

Implications and conclusion

Our study demonstrates that teachers' beliefs about language awareness as an approach to foreign language education are open to change and reveal a wide variety of change processes. In this study, teachers were asked to depart from their personal (teaching) experiences and

to reflect on their own beliefs in relation to the new approach. This is consistent with the normative-reeducative approach to curriculum reform (Richardson & Placier, 2001). Rather than presenting abstract theoretical approaches to curriculum development, teachers can advance curriculum innovation based on their own experiences. By instigating a discussion with and between teachers, teachers' interpretation of the new approach can be investigated as well as those aspects that require further consideration.

We did not find any noteworthy differences between the four teacher dyads or between different foreign languages. However, we did notice that the interviews generated several moments in which teachers explicitly mentioned that they had learned something from a colleague or that they wanted to learn more about a particular belief as expressed by a colleague. Additionally, discussing and explicating beliefs increased teachers' awareness of their own and other teachers' beliefs, and sometimes affected their attitude towards the reform (Zhao et al., 2016). Therefore, we see valuable possibilities for more research into teacher dialogue and reflective practice as a means to examine and develop teacher beliefs (Farrell & Ives, 2015), particularly when guided by a researcher, coach or knowledgeable colleague (Horn et al., 2017). Such discussion will likely yield a variety of belief change processes, especially when teachers' personal experiences and background serves as a point of departure. This variety, however, can strengthen curriculum reform, as it sheds light on the many aspects associated with the intended reform.

In order to keep track of the variety of beliefs and belief changes, the five components of teacher beliefs have proven to be valuable. Discussing teacher beliefs and curriculum change based on the five components of teacher beliefs provides a well-organised and comprehensive approach to curriculum reform as it does not only involve the content of curriculum change (i.e., the subject matter) but also encompasses pedagogical and contextual aspects related to the practical implementation of such an approach (e.g., curriculum, student, teacher, school). By mutually exploring, examining and discussing the major challenges in teachers' beliefs, significant next steps can be taken regarding the implementation of a new approach.

Finally, in this study we investigated changes in teacher beliefs about an intended curriculum change in the context of foreign language education. Our results not only provide insight into teachers' belief changes about a new approach to foreign language education but also provide insight into the occurrence of belief change processes in a broader educational reform perspective. As teacher beliefs influence teaching practice and vice versa, a focus on beliefs in relation to the possibilities of deliberately changing teaching practices would be a valuable next step towards the successful implementation of a new educational approach. This way, teachers' individual background will be recognised, challenges underlying the curriculum

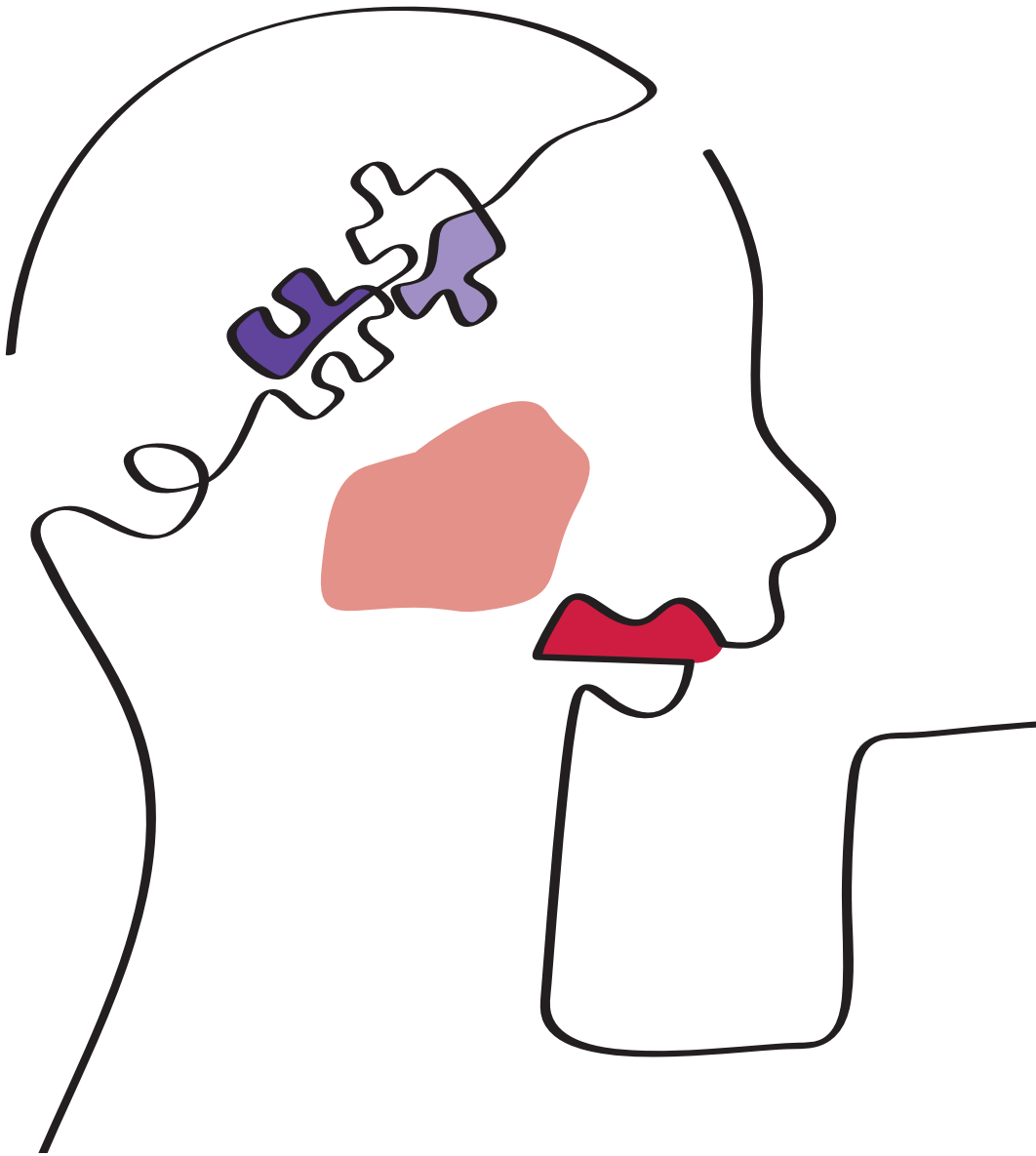
reform can be identified and addressed, and teachers can be provided with concrete leads for curriculum reform embedded in existing teaching practices.

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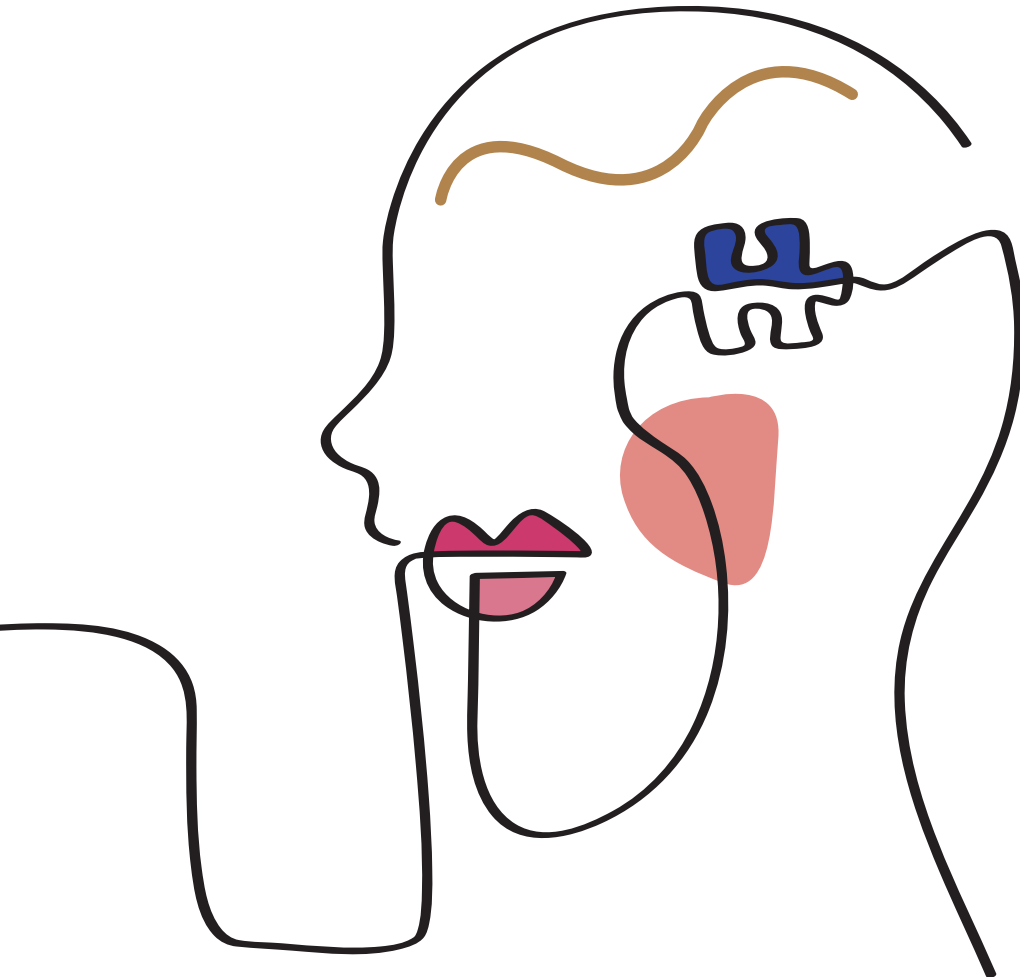
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Small steps, big wins: Changing existing foreign language teaching practices using a language awareness approach



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Abstract

This study presents an in-depth analysis of how foreign language teachers change their teaching practices using a language awareness approach. It investigates whether and how practices can be changed as foreign language teachers engage with this approach as part of a proposed curriculum reform, and which intentions underlie any such changes. Over the course of a month, three foreign language teachers iteratively planned, adapted, taught and reflected upon three related foreign language lessons. Pre- and post-lesson interviews, lesson plans, teaching materials and fieldnotes were used to study changes and the intentions underlying them. The results indicate that teachers were able to change their existing practices using a language awareness approach over the course of three lessons, and that the roles of both teacher and student were the most prominent characteristics addressed in these changes. The results also reveal several patterns of change with regard to two awareness-raising characteristics (learning environment and languaging). The differences could be ascribed to changes in teachers' own learning goals and the corresponding intentions guiding their lesson-specific changes. This study shows that teaching practices can be changed by making minor adaptations to specific aspects, bringing curriculum reform within reach.

Introduction

Ongoing changes in society call for the development of new curricula for compulsory education. As a result, numerous curriculum reforms have been implemented in the past decade or are currently in the process of development (e.g., ACARA, 2014; FNBE, 2015; NDET, 2019). In the Netherlands, a new and future-oriented curriculum for compulsory education is currently being developed (Curriculum.nu, 2019b). In the context of foreign language education, the scope of language learning has broadened from a communicative approach to a more holistic one that meets the challenges of today's rapidly changing society.

The Netherlands has a long tradition in foreign language teaching and learning (Wilhelm, 2018). Statistics reveal that 86 percent of the Dutch population between the ages of 25 and 64 claim to know at least one foreign language (Eurostat, 2019). However, learning a language involves more than just acquiring language skills (Bolitho et al., 2003). It is for this reason that the proposed language curriculum reform in the Netherlands emphasises the necessity for students to become linguistically and culturally aware of the language(s) they acquire and interact with, to develop thinking skills that will support their language learning process and to connect the various aspects of languages and language learning inside as well as outside school. Taken together, these ingredients constitute a language awareness approach (ALA, 2017) to foreign language education, which has been given a central role in shaping new foreign language curricula in the Netherlands (Curriculum.nu, 2019a).

This article presents a study of Dutch foreign language teachers incorporating a language awareness approach into their everyday teaching practices as a new element in the future curriculum. This is also an important first step in engaging teachers more fully and investigating how they make sense of a proposed curriculum reform, increasing the chances of successfully implementing such a curriculum reform in their everyday teaching practices (Drake & Sherin, 2006; Luttenberg et al., 2013).

Theoretical background

Curriculum reform

Societal changes have instigated curriculum reforms in many national educational contexts over the past decades (Priestley & Biesta, 2013). As a result, teachers regularly encounter such curriculum reforms and have to make sense of them (Barab & Luehmann, 2003; Drake & Sherin, 2006). The implementation of a reform is a complex and multidimensional process of sense-making in which innovative approaches, ideas and materials have to be translated by teachers

into new teaching practices (Luttenberg et al., 2013; März & Kelchtermans, 2013; Ramberg, 2014; Vermeir et al., 2017), and their practices are in turn situated in the society, culture, and educational system of the country in question (Pietarinen et al., 2017).

Curriculum reform is generally approached in two different ways: top-down or bottom-up (Fullan, 2015). A top-down approach considers teachers as the implementers of a new curriculum developed by others, while in a bottom-up approach, it is the teachers themselves who instigate curriculum innovation and make sense of it within the school context (Pietarinen et al., 2017). Due to its complex and multidimensional nature, curriculum reform is often hard to implement and sometimes fails (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006; Janssen, Westbroek, & Doyle, 2013). In order to increase the chances of successful curriculum reform, it is crucial to engage teachers in the implementation process of a new reform as this helps teachers to make sense of the reform and may provide in-depth and practical insight into the way teachers integrate curriculum reform into their everyday teaching practices as well as how curriculum reform changes their teaching practices (Drake & Sherin, 2006).

Changing teaching practices

Curriculum reforms are not self-sufficient entities (Squire, MaKinster, Barnett, Luehmann, & Barab, 2003), that is, the implementation of a curriculum reform involves teachers' interpretation and translation of new ideas into teaching practices (Hargreaves et al., 2009). Teachers are increasingly being asked to function as co-designers of new curricula and new curriculum materials in order to, on the one hand, support their own professional development and, on the other, contribute to curriculum innovation (Westbroek et al., 2019). Chances for successful implementation increase when teachers favour the intended reform and succeed in incorporating it in their everyday teaching practice (Fullan, 2015; Pietarinen et al., 2019).

Research has also shown that teaching practices are guided by teachers' beliefs (Basturkmen, 2012; Borg, 2001; Borg, 2015; Farrell & Bennis, 2013). Pratt (1992) identified another element and states that 'beliefs inform intentions, which in turn direct the process of teaching' (p. 208). Teachers' beliefs thus serve as a lens through which a reform is interpreted and evaluated, intentions are formulated and, eventually, translated into (changes to) teaching practices (März & Kelchtermans, 2013; Pietarinen et al., 2019; Spillane et al., 2002). In order to support the implementation process, it is necessary to investigate how teachers make sense of a curriculum reform by investigating their site-specific adaptation and implementation of these new ideas (Horn & Kane, 2015). In the context of this study, we will focus on changes to (existing) teaching practices and the intentions underlying them.

Curriculum adaptation 'refers to a purposeful effort to bring existing materials into alignment with new visions for learning by adding to, adapting, or transforming those materials' (DeBarger et al., 2016, p. 67). Nieveen and Plomp (2017) defined five guiding principles for curriculum adaptation. The implementation process 1) is a learning process for everyone involved (i.e., teachers, teacher educators, educational publishers and policymakers), 2) requires freedom but knows certain boundaries (i.e., teachers may opt for different emphases and choices), 3) needs time to evolve, 4) is a multidimensional process involving a variety of elements that may lead to successful change and 5) needs to take into account existing practices as well as proposed changes. In other words, when adapting practices in an existing curriculum, as opposed to developing a new one, elements already in line with the intended direction of the curriculum reform should be acknowledged (DeBarger et al., 2016). Furthermore, teachers are given an active role in the process of making sense of and adapting to new curriculum insights in their classroom context through interaction with, for example, colleagues, researchers or curriculum developers (Pietarinen et al., 2017; Shaver, 2010). Some basic direction should be provided by presenting and engaging teachers with the intended curriculum plans. In this study, we examine changes to (existing) teaching practices with regard to language awareness as a core element in the proposed foreign language curriculum.

Language awareness

Language awareness is commonly defined as the 'explicit knowledge about language, and conscious perception and sensitivity in language learning, language teaching and language use' (ALA, 2017). It covers a wide spectrum of fields (e.g., James & Garrett, 2013) and is characterised by the following five instructional features (Borg, 1994; Svalberg, 2007): 1) the ongoing investigation of language as a dynamic phenomenon rather than the internalisation of a fixed body of knowledge, 2) talking about language, 3) a process of student-centred exploration and discovery, 4) affective and cognitive student engagement, and 5) reflection aimed at stimulating the development of students' learner skills for continued autonomous language learning. As language awareness is afforded a central place in the future foreign language curriculum in the Netherlands, it is important to investigate foreign language teachers' beliefs about this approach (Chapters 2 and 4) and how they change and implement such an approach to their own (existing) teaching practices (this Chapter).

Aim and research questions

Most research into curriculum adaptation comes from the field of science (DeBarger et al., 2016; Forbes, 2011; Squire et al., 2003) and mathematics (Drake & Sherin, 2006; Taylor, 2013) education. This study addresses a gap in research on foreign language education and investigates curriculum adaptation in the context of foreign language teaching in a Dutch secondary school context. Taking into account recent (inter)national developments regarding curriculum reform, this study presents a timely examination of how teachers change existing teaching practices in the context of a proposed curriculum reform to foreign language education (i.e., language awareness). As this study is situated in an existing educational context, the results will provide a fine-grained insight into how to evaluate, assess and change teaching practices (Anderson & Shattuck, 2012). This line of inquiry is particularly fruitful because it may yield practical insights that could support teachers with the appropriate knowledge and tools to strengthen their foreign language teaching practices.

The study aims to answer the following research questions:

- 1) Which changes to foreign language teaching practices do teachers make as they deliberately engage with a language awareness approach?
- 2) Which intentions underlie these changes?

Method

This study adopted a qualitative, interpretive, research-based development approach (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Plomp & Nieveen, 2013). This approach allows for an in-depth investigation of a complex concept and the construction of understanding through interaction.

Participants and context

This study was situated in the context of pre-university upper-secondary education in the Netherlands. Dutch pre-university education is a six year course (three years lower-secondary and three years upper-secondary). This study focused on teachers teaching in upper-secondary classes with students aged between 16 and 18 years. The most commonly taught foreign languages in Dutch upper-secondary education are English (mandatory), French and German (both elective).

Participants were three Dutch foreign language teachers from a group of eight purposefully selected teachers (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). These eight teachers were previously recruited via the network associated with the main researcher's teacher education institute and had

consented to participate in a larger study investigating language awareness (see Chapter 4). We selected three teachers because our aim was to better understand teachers' adaptation sequence at a fine-grained level. The three selected teachers were chosen because they each had different reasons for participation and pursued different learning goals, and consequently, this would help us to better understand (the intentions underlying) specific changes. All teachers are qualified in their subject and work at different schools.

Teacher 1: Sara teaches English as a foreign language at a large-sized rural secondary school. Sara has a Master's degree in English language and culture, and civic education. She has taught English for 13 years. Sara's goal in employing a language awareness approach in her lessons was to learn how to adapt existing teaching practices in order to stimulate students' thinking. Sara selected a grade 10 pre-university class with 25 students for the purpose of this study. Three 50-minute lessons were selected for data collection.

Teacher 2: Hannah teaches German as a foreign language at a small-sized urban secondary school. Hannah has a Master's degree in German language and culture. She has taught German for 26 years. Hannah's goal was to learn how to adapt existing teaching practices to motivate and interest students in language (learning). Hannah selected a grade eleven pre-university class with twelve students for the purpose of this study. Three 50-minute lessons were selected for data collection.

Teacher 3: Lisa teaches French as a foreign language at a large-sized rural secondary school. Lisa has a Master's degree in French language and culture. She has taught French for 27 years. Lisa's goal was to learn how to help students establish connections between (foreign) languages. Lisa selected a grade eleven pre-university class with 20 students for the purpose of this study. Three 50-minute lessons were selected for data collection.

Context of the study

The main researcher visited each teacher four times over a period of four weeks, in which a three-lesson sequence was enacted with each teacher planning, adapting, teaching and reflecting upon three related foreign language lessons. Each lesson included a practice associated with the language awareness approach. Each practice largely corresponds with one lesson. The terms practice and lesson will be used interchangeably depending on the context.

The first meeting, involving a sense-making dialogue, took place before the three-lesson sequence. Each teacher discussed her beliefs about language awareness with a colleague and the researcher, using Borg's (1994) five features of awareness-raising instruction as a

starting point. This process of sense-making (März & Kelchtermans, 2013; Pietarinen et al., 2019) was aimed at exploring the notion of language awareness and at establishing a point of departure for the coming adaptation sequence. Following this sense-making process, each teacher was then instructed to select a teaching practice which she believed could be improved by adopting a language awareness approach. No specific requirements for practice selection were set, except that it should be a practice scheduled within two weeks of the first meeting as this would lower the threshold for teachers to participate (i.e., they did not have to adjust their programme). It would also make it more likely that the new approach would be integrated in other practices in the future as they would directly experience the possibilities for implementation.

Data collection and procedures

Data included semi-structured interviews, lesson plans, teaching materials and fieldnotes. This allowed the researcher and the teacher to iteratively adapt and evaluate a teaching practice in which they both played a role: the researcher asked (follow-up) questions, the teacher explicated her choices regarding the implementation and adaptation of each teaching practice. In all sources of data, the teacher's expertise served as the point of departure.

Semi-structured pre- and post-lesson interviews

Semi-structured interviews were used to elicit teachers' choices regarding the adaptation of a practice, and the rationale for these choices. At the first meeting, plans for the first lesson were discussed based on the teacher's initial beliefs about this particular practice. Each interview included six aspects (i.e., lesson description, aim of the lesson, teacher's role, students' role, teaching activity, and evaluation). The second meeting was about the first lesson and for reflection. Again, the researcher asked the teacher about the same six aspects, which worked well and which required more adaptation in the following lesson. Subsequently, the teacher prepared the next lesson using a new lesson plan. The third meeting discussed the second lesson and was for further reflection, leading to a plan for the next lesson. At the fourth and final meeting, the third lesson was taught and reflected upon and, once again, possibilities for (prospective) improvement were brought up by the teacher. Each interview lasted about an hour, was audio-recorded and transcribed.

Lesson plans, teaching materials and fieldnotes

Lesson plans completed by the teacher prior to each lesson were collected to evaluate how each teacher prepared the lesson and, when relevant, which adaptations were made. The six aspects as discussed in the interview were also used as elements of the lesson plan in order to justify and evaluate the practicability of a lesson sequence (Lijnse & Klaassen, 2004). Fieldnotes were taken during each lesson and each lesson was audio- or video-recorded.

Additionally, teaching materials, such as coursebook chapters, online tools, tests, and other course assignments, were collected for each lesson as well.

Data analysis

Data analysis included five phases. In the first phase, a data matrix was created to organise all data (Miles et al., 2013). Data were organised per teacher and per lesson by means of six practical aspects of the lesson plan and interviews: 1) lesson description, 2) aim of the lesson, 3) teacher's role, 4) students' role, 5) teaching activity, and 6) evaluation. A short summary was written for each lesson.

Second, in order to find out whether and how teaching practices had changed over the course of three lessons (RQ1), each teaching practice was analysed by means of two instructional components considered central to awareness-raising instruction: the situational component 'learning environment' (i.e., student-centred or teacher-centred) (Baeten et al., 2010; Smit et al., 2014) and the operational component 'languaging' (i.e., present or absent) (Abrami et al., 2015; Borg, 1994; Smit et al., 2014; Swain, 2006). Each component was identified by means of five indicators (see Chapter 3 for an elaborated overview). These indicators were used to code each teaching practice and subsequently assess whether a practice had changed over the course of three lessons taking into account the components 'learning environment' and 'languaging'. All practices were coded by the main researcher and discussed extensively with the co-researcher. Any ambiguities were resolved through discussion.

Third, a table was created for each teacher in which each practice was summarised and further illustrated based on the above-mentioned indicators for 'learning environment' and 'languaging'. This facilitated the comparison of each lesson's characteristics (see Tables 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3 in the results section). In order to reveal changes to teaching practices and to show which specific aspects were adapted, awareness-raising indicators were marked bold if they were present in a practice.

Fourth, in order to evaluate which intentions underlie the changes made to a teaching practice (RQ2), the written lesson plan as well as the pre- and post-lesson interview data were further analysed. Intentions were adaptations proposed by the teacher with regard to the following lesson. Some intentions were expressed during the interview but were not further addressed in the subsequent practice. In addition, not all adaptations could be linked back to a previously expressed intention. Furthermore, not all intentions were translated into an observable change in the subsequent teaching practice. These intentions and adaptations were not further investigated.

In the fifth and final phase, those intentions that guided a particular change and impacted the (subsequent) practice were selected to be described in greater detail. Ultimately, this led to a selection of three intentions per teacher (i.e., one intention per lesson) that were addressed by the teacher in the interview prior to the lesson and led to an observable change in the lesson following the interview.

Results

Results are presented in two parts. First, changes to teaching practices are presented followed by teacher's intentions underlying these changes.

Changes to foreign language teaching practices using a language awareness approach

Taking into account the indicators of two awareness-raising components ('learning environment' and 'linguaging'), our findings reveal several patterns of change. Initially, teaching practices included few 'learning environment' or 'linguaging' characteristics. However, by (gradually) adapting aspects of a teaching practice, each teacher's practice included multiple characteristics of 'learning environment' and 'linguaging' at the end of the sequence. Nonetheless, the pattern of change was different for each of the three teachers.

Teacher 1

Table 5.1 presents an overview of Sara's lessons, in which grammar took centre stage. Students were supposed to reiterate previously acquired tenses (present/past continuous, present/past perfect) and reflect on what they already knew about the tense, what they still had to learn and what they needed to improve their knowledge. Changes in Sara's practices revealed that the most prominent change from the first to the second lesson concerned the 'learning environment', resulting in a change from teacher-centred to student-centred, whereas the most prominent change from the second to the third lesson involved a shift regarding the presence of 'linguaging'. More concretely, the student's role changed from the first to the second lesson as students not only completed the assignments as instructed but also reflected on their knowledge, resulting in more responsibility in students' learning process. From the second to the third lesson, a change regarding the form of linguaging could be observed. Instead of individual reflection, group discussion and peer-feedback now contributed to students' learning process.

Table 5.1 Lesson description and characteristics for Sara's three lessons

Lesson 1	Lesson 2	Lesson 3
Students individually completed fill-in-the-blanks/close-ended coursebook assignments involving reading and grammar. The teacher only provided a brief instruction at the start of the lesson and gave students freedom to complete the assignments as they wished. The lesson ended when the bell rang.	Students individually completed a reading and grammar test. The teacher provided instruction at the start of the lesson and presented a few reflection questions. Based on these questions, students reflected on their strengths and difficulties via a Padlet. Some students shared their difficulties with the whole class at the end of the lesson.	Students worked in small groups to discuss grammatical aspects. The teacher provided instruction, walked around, asked questions and provided feedback in order to stimulate each group's discussion. Some groups reflected on (the relevance of) the group discussion at the end of the lesson.
'Learning environment' characteristics	'Learning environment' characteristics	'Learning environment' characteristics
1. Type of task: Close-ended, decontextualised 2. Student's role: Instructed to complete assignments individually 3. Teacher's role: Provides instruction 4. Materials: Coursebook 5. Assessment: Focus on outcome	1. Type of task: Close-ended, decontextualised 2. Student activity: Instructed to complete assignments individually 3. Teacher activity: Provides instruction, asks questions 4. Materials: Coursebook, Padlet 5. Assessment: Brief recap at the end of the lesson	1. Type of task: Decontextualised 2. Student activity: Active, explores/provides input 3. Teacher activity: Supports learning process 4. Materials: Coursebook assignments, test results 5. Assessment: Reflection on group discussion
'Languaging' characteristics	'Languaging' characteristics	'Languaging' characteristics
1. Type of task: Focus on outcome 2. Interaction: No 3. Student's activity: Work in silence 4. Teacher's activity: Provides brief instruction 5. Form: Individual student work	1. Type of task: Focus on outcome and thinking 2. Interaction: No 3. Student role: Verbalise difficulties 4. Teacher role: Provides explanations 5. Form: Individual student work	1. Type of task: Explaining thoughts 2. Interaction: Back-and-forth 3. Student role: Verbalise thoughts, discuss ideas 4. Teacher role: Asks questions, stimulates students to discuss 5. Form: Group discussion, peer-feedback

Note. Awareness-raising characteristics present in a lesson are marked bold.

Teacher 2

Table 5.2 presents an overview of Hannah's lessons. The lesson sequence was primarily focused on reading. Students had to read several texts that included metaphorical language and think about the meaning of metaphors and their role in the texts. A rather sudden change was observed in Hannah's practices. Her practice shifted from barely any awareness-raising characteristics in the first lesson to the presence of almost all characteristics in the second lesson; learning environment as well as languaging characteristics are met to a large extent. From the second to the third lesson, only a small adaptation regarding 'languaging' was

made. More specifically, a change regarding the teachers' role could be observed towards to the second lesson as the teacher not only provided instruction but also provided students with the opportunity to share their initial ideas about metaphors. Moving from the second to the third lesson, a change regarding the type of task could be noticed, as students were stimulated to express their thoughts rather than only formulate an answer.

Table 5.2 Lesson description and characteristics for Hannah's three lessons

Lesson 1	Lesson 2	Lesson 3
Students individually completed a mock reading test with close-ended questions that revolved around metaphorical language. The teacher provided a brief instruction at the start of the lesson. The lesson ended when the bell rang. The teacher asked some students to share their answers at the end of the lesson.	At the start of the lesson, a TV commercial in which several metaphors were present was shown as a teaser. The teacher asked questions about the commercial to prime students' metaphor understanding. Students then individually read a text that involved metaphorical language and completed the assignments. The teacher asked some students to share their answers at the end of the lesson.	Students finished their reading assignments. The teacher initiated a classroom discussion about metaphors. In order to let students gain insight about the function of metaphors, the teacher asked questions, students responded the teacher and one another and the teacher provided feedback.
'Learning environment' characteristics	'Learning environment' characteristics	'Learning environment' characteristics
Characteristics Learning environment 1. Type of task: Close-ended, decontextualised 2. Student's role: Instructed to complete assignments individually 3. Teacher's role: Provides instruction 4. Materials: Reading test 5. Assessment: Focus on outcome	Learning environment 1. Type of task: Authentic video; Close-ended, decontextualised 2. Student activity: Provides input 3. Teacher activity: Facilitates learning process; presents information 4. Materials: Video; reading assignment 5. Assessment: Checking for correct answers	Learning environment 1. Type of task: Authentic context 2. Student activity: Active, explores/provides input 3. Teacher activity: Supports learning process 4. Materials: A variety of texts (newspaper, recipe, book, sports report) 5. Assessment: Classroom discussion
'Languaging' characteristics	'Languaging' characteristics	'Languaging' characteristics
1. Type of task: Focus on outcome 2. Interaction: No 3. Student's activity: Work in silence 4. Teacher's activity: Provides brief instruction 5. Form: Individual student work	1. Type of task: Focus on outcome 2. Interaction: Back-and-forth 3. Student role: Share ideas 4. Teacher role: Provides opportunities for students to talk 5. Form: Teacher-led discussion	1. Type of task: Explaining thoughts_ 2. Interaction: Back-and-forth 3. Student role: Verbalise thoughts, discuss ideas 4. Teacher role: Provides opportunity for students to discuss 5. Form: Classroom discussion

Note. Awareness-raising characteristics present in a lesson are marked bold.

Teacher 3

Table 5.3 presents an overview of Lisa's lessons. The lesson sequence concentrated on reading. Students had to read a text and think about and reflect on (the function and meaning of) transition words. A gradual pattern of change was revealed in Lisa's practices. Both learning environment and languaging characteristics gradually increased from the first to the second lesson and from the second to third lesson. For example, the teacher's role changed from the first to the second lesson as the teacher explicated her choices rather than leaving all activities open to students' own interpretation. In the third lesson, students were divided into groups to stimulate discussion, which resulted in a focus on students' thinking rather than a focus on the correct answer.

Table 5.3 Lesson description and characteristics for Lisa's three lessons

Lesson 1	Lesson 2	Lesson 3
Students individually made a reading assignment with fill-in-the-blanks and multiple choice questions in order to recognise the role of transition words. The teacher provided a brief instruction at the start of the lesson. The lesson ended when the bell rang.	Students individually completed the first lesson's reading assignment followed by a game in which each student mentions a transition word, the next student repeats this word, adds another word and so on. At the end of the lesson, the teacher asked some students to explain the meaning of a specific transition word.	Students worked in small groups and talked about transition words they encountered in a coursebook text. The teacher provided several discussion questions to each group and walked around to ask students to reflect on particular words (transition words, but other words as well). At the end of class, students shared some insights.
'Learning environment' characteristics	'Learning environment' characteristics	'Learning environment' characteristics
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Type of task: Close-ended, decontextualised 2. Student's role: Instructed to complete assignments individually 3. Teacher's role: Provides instruction 4. Materials: Reading assignment 5. Assessment: Focus on outcome 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Type of task: Decontextualised 2. Student activity: Active role, provides input 3. Teacher activity: Asks questions, facilitates learning process 4. Materials: Reading assignment 5. Assessment: Brief recap focussed on outcome 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Type of task: Open-ended 2. Student activity: Active, explores content, provides input 3. Teacher activity: Asks questions, facilitates learning process 4. Materials: Coursebook 5. Assessment: Reflection on group discussion
'Languaging' characteristics	'Languaging' characteristics	'Languaging' characteristics
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Type of task: Focus on outcome 2. Interaction: No 3. Student's activity: Work in silence 4. Teacher's activity: Provides instruction 5. Form: Individual student work 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Type of task: Focus on outcome 2. Interaction: One-directional 3. Student role: Share ideas 4. Teacher role: Provides opportunity for students to talk 5. Form: Teacher-led discussion 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Type of task: Focus on thinking process 2. Interaction: Back-and-forth 3. Student role: Verbalise thoughts, discuss ideas 4. Teacher role: Provides opportunity for students to discuss 5. Form: Group discussion, peer-feedback

Note. Awareness-raising characteristics present in a lesson are marked bold.

To sum up, all three teachers were able to change their practices with regard to language awareness over the course of three lessons. However, different patterns of change with regard to the awareness-raising characteristics 'learning environment' and 'linguaging' could be observed. These differences may be ascribed to the differences in teachers' learning goals and the corresponding intentions that guide their specific adaptations. These intentions will be described in the next section.

Intentions underlying changes to teaching practices

The second research question addresses the intentions underlying the adaptations teachers made to their teaching practices. Each teacher's intentions are described below and illustrated using interview excerpts.

Teacher 1: Adaptations to increase learner independence

In awareness-raising foreign language education, students develop learning skills for continued autonomous learning (Borg, 1994). In other words, students develop a certain level of learner independence which helps them navigate through their language learning process independently. Sara's goal in participating was to learn how to adapt existing teaching practices to increase students' responsibility for their own language learning process. Results showed that Sara's intentions resulted in adaptations to her lessons that first increased the opportunity for students to think about and reflect on their learning process (more student-centred) and subsequently increased the opportunity for students to explicate and exchange their thoughts (more linguaging).

Intention prior to lesson 1

'In any case, I won't start explaining. I'll let them find out for themselves first. Just try and discover, and then they often find out what they don't understand. How does that work? And then figure it out for themselves.'

Sara's intention prior to the first lesson was related to the difficulty students experience when they have to explain the 'why' with regard to their language learning process, something that is, according to Sara, the consequence of the traditional approach to teaching and learning. This led her to first give students the freedom to formulate their own questions. In the post-lesson interview, she explained that students worked quite well; at the same time, she also realised students might have had too much freedom, which, for some, was counterproductive. Sara realised that she should have better facilitated students' learning processes rather than leaving it fully open to students, as 'not all students are able yet to take their responsibility'. She argued that her role as a teacher required some adjustment in the next lesson.

Intention prior to lesson 2

'So that requires me as a teacher to ... Sometimes I just have to take a step back with certain students. I really have to help them to consciously take that step towards the why of something. But you can see that when they eventually discover that, they really learn. And that is what my coming weeks will be about.'

Sara's intention with regard to the second lesson related to the active engagement of students in their learning process, increasing their sense of responsibility towards themselves and others, and enhancing the opportunity for herself to monitor students' learning process. Reflecting on the second lesson, Sara mentioned one important change in comparison with the first, where students were expected to take responsibility but they did not always do so. In the second lesson, Sara still insisted students should take the initiative when faced with difficulties, but she now adapted her role as a teacher to offer more guidance: 'Indeed, now my role is to ask questions, to give feedback, to jump in there where things are unclear'.

In the post-lesson interview, Sara acknowledged that her intentions led to more awareness-raising, because she deliberately generated more opportunities for thinking and reflection. Nonetheless, she hoped that students would, even more so, actively 'sink their teeth into the subject' in the third lesson.

Intention prior to lesson 3

'I want to make some kind of peer groups of students who are doing the same thing so that they can discuss [the following questions]: what have we done today, what have we learned, where do we stand and where do we want to go. But they find such reflection so difficult, especially to do that seriously, because only then does it yield something. It shouldn't be anything big, it's really about them talking about it and asking questions, such as why is it the way it is and how does it work?'

In the third lesson, Sara intended to stimulate both student engagement and students' ability to reflect on their own learning process. In order to do so, she decided to adapt the activity and divided students in groups of two to five students based on their reflection and answers from the second lesson. In doing so, she wanted students to question each other about certain grammatical features and explain the rationale of certain structures to one another.

In the post-lesson interview, she concluded that the lesson proceeded as planned. She evaluated the activity as useful and successful, because students took responsibility and discussed relevant grammatical features together.

'I see that they really try to help each other out. And what's very funny is that I see that when you let go and place more responsibility on students, they are going to take it and they become very enthusiastic about it. And that is what we [Sara and colleagues] have all discovered separately from each other. Because very often we say that students are not motivated and don't want to learn. But this [approach] really seems to have the potential to change that. And that's very nice, because in the end you want students to think about the language themselves – and I think that's the best thing you can achieve if I look at it this way'.

Aside from her positive experience, Sara suggested that there was still room for improvement. For example, she noticed that 'some groups are doing super well, while another group, for example those guys here, find it very difficult to start at all if I don't give a very clear instruction. I know that, but I deliberately refuse to do that, you know. But I have to find my way there'.

If she were to adapt the lesson again, she would use different materials, for example students' own writing assignments instead of coursebook assignments, and further adapt her teacher role in order to guide students in a certain direction when necessary. She is still adamant that students take responsibility. However, she thinks that students' group discussions can be further improved and the amount of social talk can be reduced if students receive slightly more guidance 'by giving them certain tools'.

Overall reflection

Sara aimed to increase students' responsibility for their own language learning process. By breaking down this goal into smaller steps, Sara experienced which adaptations were necessary in order to change her practice into an awareness-raising practice. Starting with an open lesson in which students were free to explore and question the content, followed by more teacher guidance and finally student collaboration, she supported and stimulated students in taking responsibility for their own learning process. Looking back on the three lessons, Sara experienced a feeling of accomplishment:

'I think that it might be the first time that I've really seen, very clearly, that sequence of thinking together, then sharing via the Padlet, and then forming those groups and that they start the discussion together. And above all, to see it succeed. It's in small steps and it's actually quite logical when you think about it, but you have to experience that it works'.

Teacher 2: Adaptations to involve students cognitively and affectively

Cognitive and affective student engagement is one of the instructional features relevant to awareness-raising instruction (Borg, 1994). Hannah's goal for participation was to learn how to adapt existing teaching practices to increase students' motivation and interest in language

learning, and also to motivate herself as a teacher by approaching the content differently. Results show that Hannah's intentions resulted in adaptations to her lessons that had an instant effect on the learning environment (more student-centred) and the amount of languaging.

Intention prior to lesson 1

'Now I can consciously tell students: if this happens, you are dealing with a metaphor. Then they have to carefully think what the text was actually about and what its message is. I have noticed that this helps students. First, I was never really aware of it. I did realise it was a metaphor, but I didn't mention this to students, because I didn't really understand what their problem was. It's clearer to me now. So it's also from my perspective, that you understand what might not be so clear to them. So these are things that I'm putting into practice right now'.

Hannah recently experienced that not everything that is obvious to her is as obvious to her students. She therefore started this lesson sequence by introducing explicitly the possible difficulties students could encounter in class so that they would be better prepared to tackle them. In the post-lesson interview, she explained that she expected students to be ready and to take an active role in exploring the metaphors in the text. However, they got stuck when they encountered the first metaphor and then waited for the teacher to finally explain the meaning. She realised that especially her role as a teacher, but also the role of students, needed further adaptation in the next lesson in order to better engage students with the phenomenon of metaphors: 'Sometimes you must give some more instruction and direct them to specific aspects'.

Intention prior to lesson 2

'What I'd like to do more with this class right now is work in pairs or in groups. Let them figure things out together and then let them convince one another. I consciously started the lesson with that video to make them think about what's going on here and why this video is also a metaphor, and then I moved on to the texts. I do that deliberately. I first let them think for a moment, then I give them a simple text which is below their actual level in which the metaphor is very clear, so that they see 'oh, this is what happens', and then I let them discover it for themselves'.

Hannah intended to 'amaze' students and raise their awareness of the every-day occurrence of metaphors by showing them a TV commercial. As a follow-up, she deliberately asked a few questions in order to let students experience the function of metaphors and look further than just the text with questions. Compared to the first lesson, students were now actively stimulated to think about the phenomenon of metaphors. However, Hannah would have liked

to see more interaction when they continued with the reading assignment. She concluded that the second lesson was focused too much on the outcome, which held students back from discussing the content. She also intended to use different text materials in order to better engage students: 'Often you tend to stay too close to the subject [in the coursebook], but this time I used a related subject in an out-of-the-box manner. I should see if I can use that more often, because it did have an effect'.

Intention prior to lesson 3

'What I want to get going now is 'choices'. If you offer students choices, their affectivity and their motivation can be stimulated as students like it to be able to choose, preferably more than just choose, in the hope of seeing the choose something they're interested in, so that they are even more motivated to make something of it. So in the context of these metaphors, I want to give them different texts they can talk about in pairs or groups'.

In the third lesson, students were free to select a text (newspaper article, sports report, literature, recipe). Groups were formed based on students' text selection. Each text contained at least one metaphor and was accompanied by some questions. Students were supposed to discuss the role, meaning and effect of the metaphor(s). In the post-lesson interview, Hannah explained that the lesson went very well as students discussed the topic together and asked each other questions. Hannah walked around and asked questions to nudge students in the right direction.

If she were to adapt her lessons again taking into account an awareness-raising approach, she would take more time to reflect on the lesson: 'Every class, time goes by so quickly and I always think: I should have done some evaluation. It would have been good to look back at what we have done and what we have learnt'. The group discussion is an aspect she would definitely keep in a next lesson, because she experienced that the group work added to students' understanding and motivation. However, in the future she would possibly initiate more active group discussions from the start.

Overall reflection

Hannah aimed to increase students' motivation and interest in language learning, and also to motivate herself as a teacher by approaching the content differently. By separating this goal into manageable steps, Hannah better realised how she could adapt a practice that included complex problems by offering choices. This, then, increased students' motivation, because they better understood what they were doing. Hannah realised that what was evident to her was not necessarily evident to her students. By changing her role as a teacher, followed by a change in students' role and finally a change in tasks, she motivated herself and also students

to explore the content differently and with more interest. Recalling the past weeks, Hannah felt 'very satisfied'. 'I notice that now I teach language more consciously, students' motivation has indeed improved, especially by offering choices.'

Teacher 3: Adaptations to involve students in an ongoing investigation of language

Involving students in an ongoing investigation of language is one of the features of awareness-raising instruction (Borg, 1994). In other words, students should explore and discover the bigger spectrum of what language and language learning entails, allowing for 'alternative answers and perhaps ambiguity' (Svalberg, 2007, p. 291). Lisa's goal in participating was to learn how to support students to establish connections between different foreign languages by letting them develop a cross-linguistic view on languages. Results indicate that Lisa made step-by-step adaptations to her lessons that simultaneously affected the learning environment and the extent to which languaging was present.

Intention prior to lesson 1

'A text about a specific subject is always embedded in something else. So I try to broaden the perspective by talking about language rather than talking about French. It isn't really that interesting to give it a name. In the end, students should know and become aware of the function of certain things. And what they take away from learning a language.'

Lisa's starting point for the first lesson related to the broader spectrum of language. According to Lisa, the communicative focus on language teaching and learning prevents students from noticing similarities and differences between languages. She therefore intended to lead students to cross-linguistic insights by following a broader view on language teaching and learning in her practices. In the post-lesson interview, she explained that she wanted students 'to grasp the function of transition words, what effect they have in texts, and to let students see the connections between paragraphs.' However, she did not explicate this goal and students did not ask her about it. When reflecting on the first lesson, Lisa wondered if students actually became aware of the function and meaning of the transition words. She recognised that given students' learning process 'a next step should be to make them explicitly aware of it'.

Intention prior to lesson 2

'So I'll introduce a text and then I'll play a game first and let everyone speak. Then I'll start discussing the link to other languages and the forms and functions of transition words in general. And then I hope that they have indeed picked up some linguistic insight, that it will stick with them, and that they will recognise it in the text again. So, what role do you have then: a coach, a facilitator?'

Lisa wanted to adapt her role as a teacher in order to advance students' thinking about cross-linguistic similarities and to be able to monitor students' learning in class. However, explaining how she had changed her role in the second lesson was a difficult question to answer: 'Those are types of questions that I don't usually think about'. The interview stimulated her to explicate the choices she made with regard to the teaching practice and also made her realise that she had a facilitating role in the second lesson compared to the first one. In the post-lesson interview, she acknowledged that the structure of the lesson as well as the questions she asked contributed to students' understanding: "I realise that it's getting a little easier now. I found students' responses very adequate. So you do notice that some things are paying off'. An aspect that required further improvement towards the third lesson was the type of interaction: 'Perhaps smaller groups, because that gives you the advantage to discuss more meanings and interpretations, which is impossible in a large group'.

Intention prior to lesson 3

'I'll do that [more interaction] in the next lesson with the discussion of the text. I never give anything away, and I always continue to ask questions. If someone says something that I know is not right, I ask whether the rest of the class sees it that way as well or has another interpretation. So that makes the previous lesson the preliminary work for this lesson, because now I can let them have a group discussion'.

In the third lesson, students were divided into small groups in order to stimulate the exchange of ideas. Lisa instructed students to think about the cross-linguistic similarities in transition words in the coursebook text and to discuss this together. After the lesson, Lisa mentioned that she found the group discussions very useful. Instead of only asking the questions herself, students were now stimulated to ask each other questions. This yielded an additional benefit for the teacher, because she now had more time to walk around and support the groups: 'I saw quite a lot of things that were wrong, for example that they had underlined time indications instead of transition words, but actually that's not so bad, because you can use it to clarify things and point out where they went wrong'.

Lisa was inspired by the way students discussed. However, if she were to adapt this practice again, she would develop the interaction further by having groups exchange ideas, in part because over the past few lessons she valued the exchange between students the most, and also because she believed it would be 'wise that they repeat it a few times, so that it sticks with them'. By having groups exchange ideas, students would encounter other words than those discussed in their own group and they would consequently be stimulated to directly apply reflection strategies to the set of new words.

Overall reflection

Lisa aimed to involve students in an ongoing investigation of language by establishing connections between different foreign languages. By dividing this goal into smaller aspects, Lisa experienced which adaptations were necessary in order to change her teaching practices. She started by engaging students in her stories and explanations in order to acquaint them with the overarching notion of language, followed by a more guided conversation in which she asked students specific questions and a free group discussion among students. This procedure allowed her to present them with more background knowledge which in turn enabled them to connect various language aspects.

Reflecting on the lessons, Lisa evaluated this adaptation sequence as very insightful because it forced her to think about her own lessons in a very detailed manner: 'It brings back some new dynamics'. Lisa believed students dedicated ample time to the discussion of transition words. However, she found it difficult to conclude that all students had now figured out how to use cross-linguistic strategies to determine the function and meaning of certain words, as this would probably require more repetition. She believed that continuously engaging in such practices would contribute to increased cross-linguistic insight among students.

In sum, each teacher's pre-lesson intention, related to one or more language awareness characteristics, contributed in its own way to the lesson adaptations. The role of the teacher and the student appeared to be the most prominent characteristics addressed in the three-lesson sequence, followed by the type of task and interaction. Nonetheless, the teacher-specific interpretation (and adaptation) of these characteristics differed.

Discussion

This study aimed to investigate changes to teaching practices in the context of Dutch upper-secondary foreign language education. We investigated which adaptations teachers make to existing teaching practices if they deliberately engage with a language awareness approach over the course of three lessons and which intentions underlie these adaptations. Teachers usually adapted a few smaller aspects to create an awareness-raising practice. Although each teacher took a slightly different course, their practices could all be considered awareness-raising in terms of the 'learning environment' and 'linguaging' characteristics present at the end of the adaptation sequence. Furthermore, various intentions explain the adaptations teachers have made to their practice, with instructional choices regarding the teacher's role and the students' role as the most commonly enacted adaptation.

The first research question asked which changes teachers make to their teaching practices when they engage with a language awareness approach over the course of three lessons. In line with other studies in the context of science and mathematics education (Barab & Luehmann, 2003; DeBarger et al., 2016; Drake & Sherin, 2006; Forbes, 2011; Forbes & Davis, 2010), our results show that teachers were also able to change existing teaching practices with regard to language awareness. Three aspects stand out:

First, all three teachers started their lesson sequence with a decontextualised, close-ended reading assignment in which they aimed to stimulate students' thinking by giving them freedom to complete the assignment the way they wished. Teachers believed this would stimulate students to reflect on their difficulties and formulate questions. However, students did not articulate any questions which left teachers unaware of students' difficulties. As a consequence, none of the first lessons could be labelled as awareness-raising.

Second, in their second lesson, teachers predominantly focused on the teacher's and students' activity as aspects that required adaptation. In retrospect, they evaluated their role as teacher as ineffective in the first lesson and concluded that more teacher guidance was essential in order to stimulate students' thinking. Instead of only providing instruction, the teacher's role now included asking questions, reflecting on students' answers and creating opportunities for students to talk. This often resulted in more student engagement, as students then saw more opportunity to ask questions about the subject matter (Forbes, 2011). Generally, most adaptation regarding the second lesson involved the 'learning environment', followed by some 'linguaging' characteristics. Overall, each teacher's second lesson could be labelled as (partially) awareness-raising.

Third, teachers focused mostly on 'linguaging' characteristics with regard to the adaptation of the third lesson. Aspects such as the presence and form of interaction were changed after aspects related to the 'learning environment', and thus seemed to be a result of changes concerning the amount of teacher guidance (Lazonder & Harmsen, 2016; Van de Pol et al., 2010). As a result, the third and final practice of each teacher could be labelled as awareness-raising.

The second research question examined which intentions underlie adaptations to teaching practices. Results from the first research question indicated that teachers generally adapted the 'learning environment' characteristics first, followed by 'linguaging' characteristics, indicating that a certain pattern seems to be followed. Despite a certain level of consistency across our three teachers in their change patterns, a site-specific interpretation of these changes is still visible (Horn & Kane, 2015), indicating that teachers' rationale for certain choices is guided by

their own goals and rooted in their everyday classroom context (Barab & Luehmann, 2003). Classroom composition, students' age and school level all contributed to the adaptations teachers made. For example, a change in student's role regarding 'linguaging' was carried out by Sara by using a Padlet to let students verbalise their difficulties because the class size was too large to immediately start a classroom discussion, whereas Hannah implemented this change by asking students to formulate and verbalise their ideas in a classroom discussion because of the small class size.

Findings also provide insight into how exactly teachers make sense of an intended curriculum reform and how they adapt their practices with regard to language awareness accordingly. A sense-making dialogue presented a valuable means prior to the adaptation sequence as teachers were able to become acquainted with the intended reform and match it with their own beliefs. Teachers' adaptation process could be characterised as 'assimilation' (Luttenberg et al., 2013). This means that teachers were able to adapt the reform in such a way that it fit with their own beliefs and practices. Teachers' own frame of reference remains predominant, and aspects of the intended curriculum reform acknowledged as relevant and important by the teacher are added to teachers' own frame of reference (Luttenberg et al., 2013). As teachers in this study were purposefully selected and favoured the new approach, more research involving other teachers would be valuable in order to investigate whether and how they change their practices.

The results also clarify how each teacher's personal goal for participation can be related to one of the instructional features as described by Borg (1994) (i.e., investigating language as a phenomenon, talking about language, involving a student-centred approach, engaging learners cognitively and affectively, and developing skills for continued autonomous learning). The adaptations made by teachers in this study may only serve as illustrations of possible adaptations, but they provide a detailed understanding of how and why teachers adapt their practices to their site-specific context (Forbes, 2011). As curriculum reforms are not self-sufficient entities (Squire et al., 2003), presenting Borg's (1994) instructional features can thus support teachers to link the intended reform to their personal beliefs, help them to extract those aspects that match their personal teaching context, and support them in assimilating and implementing a new approach to their (existing) teaching practices.

The results of this study also emphasise the importance of the role of the teacher and the role of students in awareness-raising practices. Simply engaging students by giving them the freedom and responsibility to ask questions regarding language or their language learning process is not sufficient. After the first lesson, teachers concluded that more instructional guidance was necessary in order to support students in their learning process (Forbes, 2011;

Kirschner et al., 2006; Lazonder & Harmsen, 2016). Consequently, they adapted their practices and provided more guidance (e.g., scaffolds or guiding questions) in order to stimulate students to inquire about language or their learning process. These changes with regard to guidance further corroborate the results reported in Chapter 4. Moreover, the findings with regard to teacher guidance seem to indicate a correspondence between teachers' beliefs and practices (Basturkmen, 2012; Borg, 2011). Further research is needed to establish whether teacher beliefs and teaching practices correspond in the context of other awareness-raising instruction.

Finally, the results of this study indicate that by implementing small changes to (existing) teaching practices brings curriculum reform within reach. All teachers were able to adapt their teaching practices step-by-step to such an extent that seemingly minor but nevertheless important changes were found in all lesson sequences and on several levels. Furthermore, adaptations were not of a one-size-fits-all kind but rather appeared to be context and goal-dependent. For example, Teacher 1 started with individual reflection, whereas Teacher 2 quickly initiated a whole-class discussion. Future research could address the long-term change effects on the teacher, the student as well as the practice itself and could shed more light on the reciprocal nature of these changes.

The relation between teachers' goals, underlying intentions and practical changes may be explained by the fact that interaction between student and teacher generated moments of awareness, and that these moments resulted in concrete intentions leading to concrete adaptations relevant to a specific context. In fact, in Chapter 3 we concluded that teachers did not have to completely change course when implementing language awareness in their teaching practices and this study has shown that, depending on the classroom context, step-by-step adaptations can lead to important changes in teaching practices with regard to language awareness. Teachers in this study each participated for different reasons, in all probability inspired by their personal beliefs. Through interaction, teachers can discover for themselves which changes are necessary and which intentions underlie changes to specific teaching practices.

Implications and conclusion

This study investigated Dutch foreign language teachers' changes to existing foreign language teaching practices. The aim was to investigate whether and how teachers were able to change their practices and which intentions underpinned these changes. Our results indicate that teachers were able to change existing teaching practices with regard to language awareness

over the course of three lessons. Teachers initially made changes with regard to the 'learning environment' component, followed by changes regarding the 'linguaging' component. Regardless of this general pattern, the specific adaptations made by teachers were determined by their personal goals and site-specific aspects of their teaching context (Horn & Kane, 2015).

Our findings have a number of implications. First of all, curriculum reform and change might at first appear to be intangible and abstract, especially when it comes unexpectedly. This study has shown that curriculum reform can be approached in manageable steps in which existing teaching practices are gradually adapted through interaction. By investigating possibilities for adaptation in a stepwise fashion and gradually applying small adaptations to (existing) teaching practices, curriculum reform subsequently becomes feasible. Moreover, this also leads to a feeling of ownership from the teacher's side, thereby increasing the chances of success (Ketelaar et al., 2012).

Second, teachers should be allowed to find their own preferred direction in the context of a curriculum reform. By employing guiding, theoretical frameworks on the one hand, and by using their site-specific classroom context, building on their own beliefs and experiences, and applying their own interests, teachers should be stimulated to gradually find their way within the language awareness reform. With a variety of domains and interpretations (James & Garrett, 2013), teachers should interpret the intended reform as a guideline and a source of inspiration that is to be developed further by teachers based on their everyday teaching context (Shkedi, 2009; Taylor, 2013). This way, processes of belief changes and changes to teaching practice can alternately contribute to any curriculum reform.

Finally, collaboration between foreign language teachers, between curriculum developers and teachers, and between researchers and teachers could support the implementation of a curriculum reform to (foreign language) education. Such collaboration is important, because it can support teachers' sense-making process and help them to implement an (intended) curriculum reform to their own teaching practices (Pietarinen et al., 2019). The challenge awaiting curriculum developers will no doubt be leaving room for teachers' interpretation and allowing them to customise the curriculum to site-specific circumstances (Barab & Luehmann, 2003; Horn & Kane, 2015). Accordingly, curriculum reform which departs from (existing) teaching practices seems a promising venue in the context of larger, nationwide curriculum reforms. This way, the chances of a successful and sustainable implementation of a new approach comes one step closer.

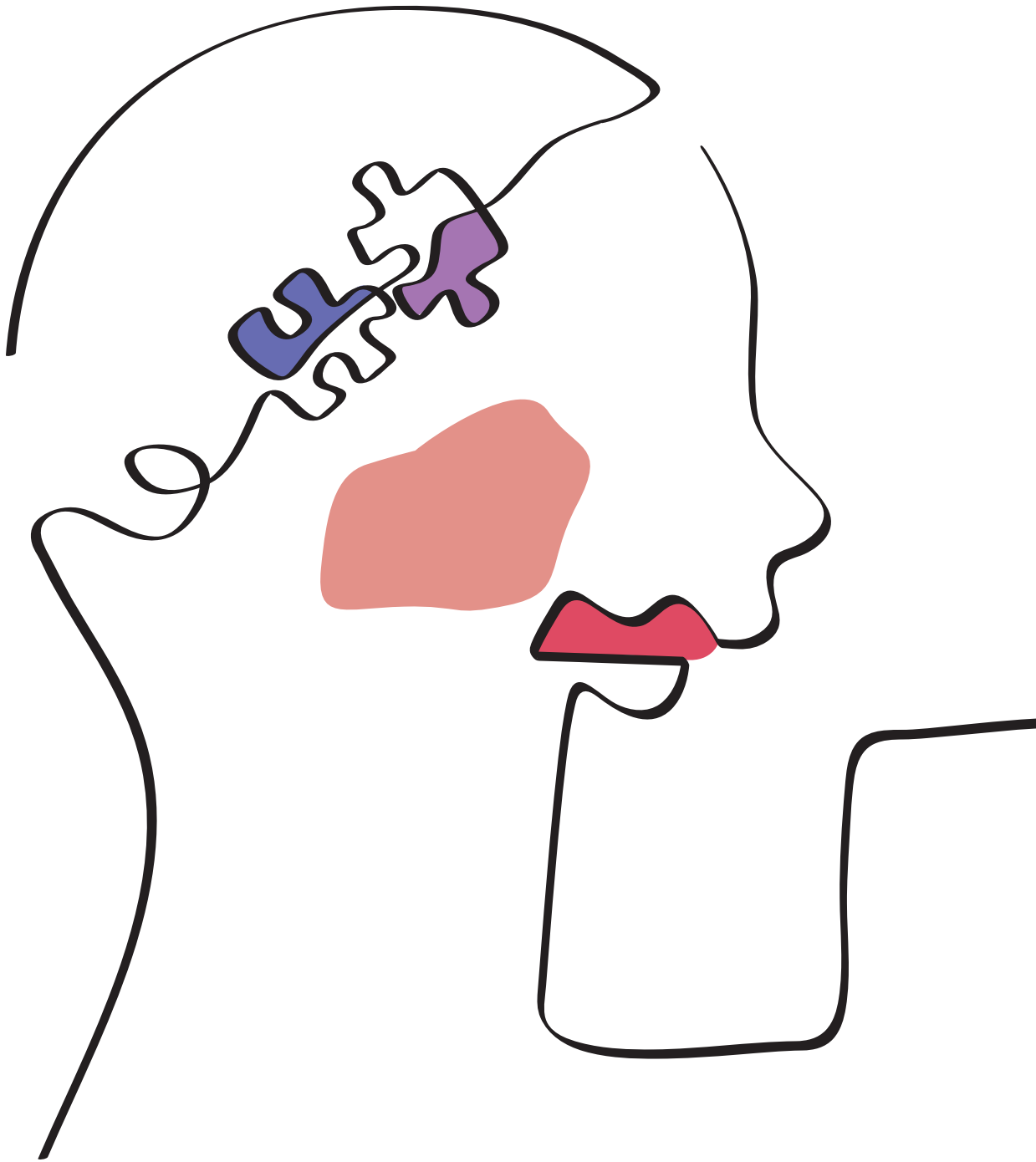
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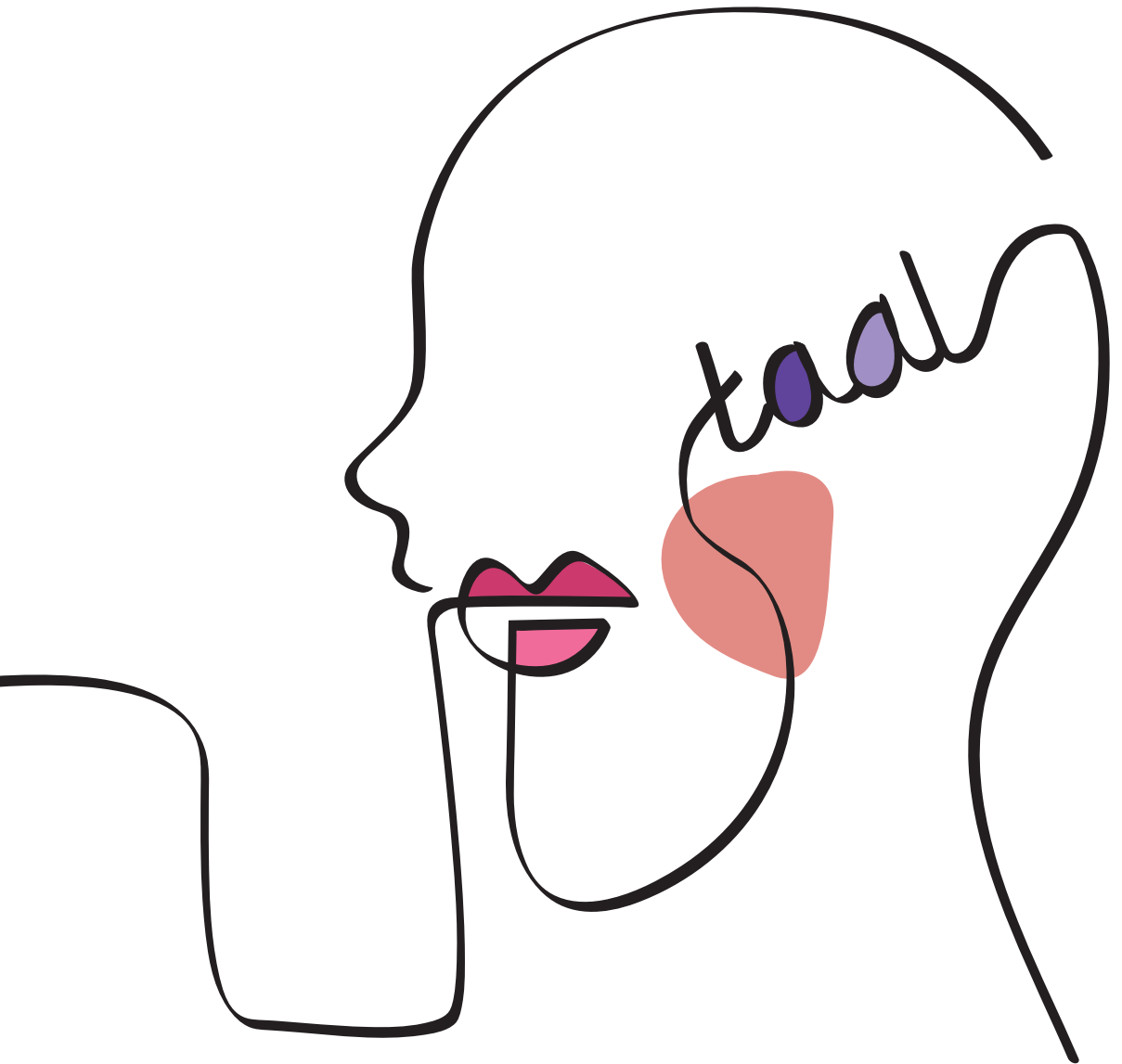
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6

General discussion



Introduction

Awareness of what it means to learn and use language has gained renewed interest in the field of foreign language education over the past decade. As a consequence, language awareness as an approach to foreign language education is gradually being implemented in many foreign language curricula around the world. The chances of successfully integrating such an approach into the foreign language classroom increase when teachers are able to make sense of and carry out the intended curriculum reform in their everyday teaching practice (Fullan, 2015; Pietarinen et al., 2019). In other words, teachers play a pivotal role in curriculum reform. With this dissertation, we aimed to gain a better understanding of language awareness as an intended approach to Dutch foreign language education by developing in-depth insights into teachers' current beliefs and practices with regard to language awareness in the context of their everyday classroom practice, and by gaining a fine-grained understanding of the way these beliefs and practices change as teachers deliberately engage with a language awareness approach in the context of their own teaching practices.

Two overarching research questions were addressed. The first question examined how teachers' current beliefs and practices with regard to language awareness could be characterised in the context of Dutch secondary education (Chapters 2 and 3). The second question investigated how teachers' beliefs and practices with regard to language awareness changed as they deliberately engage with this approach in the context of their everyday classroom practice (Chapters 4 and 5). This final chapter summarises the findings of the four studies conducted in this dissertation, before discussing them in light of recent educational developments and formulating implications for current and future foreign language educational policy and practice. Finally, this chapter concludes with limitations and suggestions for future research.

Main findings

In order to answer the first research question regarding the characterisation of language awareness in upper-secondary foreign language education, current teacher beliefs and practices were studied in a small-scale study, using semi-structured interviews.

Unravelling teacher beliefs about language awareness

In Chapter 2, we investigated how teachers' current beliefs about language awareness could be characterised, which differences could be observed in teachers' beliefs and, additionally, how possible differences in beliefs could be characterised. The results indicated that teachers

held a wide variety of beliefs about language awareness, ranging from beliefs about learning grammar to reading literature to intercultural communication. When taking into account the five domains of language awareness as set out in the literature (i.e., cognitive, affective, social, power, and performance), no shared understanding of the concept of language awareness between teachers could be articulated. However, teacher beliefs fitting the cognitive and performance domains of language awareness were most prominent. Furthermore, some teacher beliefs could be depicted as potentially conflicting, meaning that opposing beliefs were found between teachers and, in some instances, in individual teachers as well. These conflicting beliefs were found in the context of student learning (e.g., the interrelatedness of the language skills), teacher collaboration (e.g., finding suitable cross-curricular topics), the curriculum (e.g., freedom with the implemented curriculum) and the link with other languages (e.g., the possibility of cross-linguistic reflection). The results suggest that a language awareness approach is not a one-size-fits-all approach. In order to implement a language awareness approach to foreign language education, a number of challenges must be addressed to resolve the potentially conflicting beliefs between and within teachers. Doing so will help teachers better implement a language awareness approach within the existing curriculum.

Language awareness in the foreign language classroom

In Chapter 3, we identified which examples of language awareness foreign language teachers reported from their everyday classroom practice and how these examples could be characterised in terms of two components relevant to awareness-raising instruction: learning environment (student-centred or teacher-centred) and languaging (present or absent). A total of 41 self-reported teaching practices were collected. Results indicated that these could be classified into four groups: 1) fully awareness-raising (student-centred learning environment; languaging present), 2) awareness-raising learning environment (student-centred learning environment; languaging absent), 3) awareness-raising languaging (teacher-centred learning environment; languaging present) and 4) non-awareness-raising (teacher-centred learning environment; languaging absent). Almost half of all practices could be categorised as awareness-raising. Awareness-raising practices were characterised by the use of authentic contexts and back-and-forth interaction, typically focused on the language skills, they often integrated multiple topics (e.g., using a literary piece to study literature literary and historical period, and additionally practising vocabulary and grammar) and provided students with the possibility to reflect on their language learning process. The practices which did not include awareness-raising components, or did so only partially, generally dealt with grammar or reading (e.g., reading a text and completing the accompanying questions). The observation that only half of the practices which teachers labelled as awareness-raising did

in fact constitute examples of language awareness suggests that teachers' notion of what constitutes an awareness-raising practice may be incomplete. This incomplete understanding should be taken into account when implementing such an approach to foreign language education. Moreover, discussing these beliefs could further support teachers in recognising awareness-raising practices and adapting aspects of their own practices.

The first part of this dissertation (Chapter 2 and 3) investigated teachers' beliefs and practices at a particular moment in time. As a curriculum reform eventually requires teachers to make sense of and engage with the new curriculum, the second part of this dissertation (Chapter 4 and 5) focused on the development of teachers' beliefs and practices. In order to answer the second research question, teachers' beliefs and practices with regard to language awareness were studied while teachers deliberately engaged with the approach in the context of their everyday classroom practice. Semi-structured interviews, lesson plans, teaching materials and fieldnotes were used to investigate possible changes to beliefs and practices.

Examining teachers' belief change processes

In Chapter 4, we examined teachers' beliefs about language awareness as an approach to foreign language education prior to and after teachers' engagement with the approach, how these possible changes could be typified, and whether a relationship between belief changes and specific components of teacher beliefs (i.e., subject matter, curriculum, student, teacher, school context) could be observed. Results indicated that teachers' beliefs were open to change. A total of seven belief change processes were found (i.e., elaboration, stability, disagreement, linking up, confirmation, awareness, disjoint). For example, an elaborated belief was found when the teacher in question first depicted language awareness as something purely cognitive, while six months later the same teacher's beliefs could be characterised as fitting the cognitive as well as the social domain. Furthermore, initial changes in one component of teacher beliefs also affected changes in another component. For example, beliefs about students could trigger a change in beliefs about the role of the teacher. Moreover, this study indicated that examining specific components of teacher beliefs provides an in-depth insight into possible belief changes and provides additional insight into the many aspects and challenges associated with the implementation of a new approach. When engaging with a curriculum reform, it is important to not only consider the changes in the subject matter but also to take into account the existing curriculum, the school context, the role of the student and the role of the teacher. The analysis of specific components of teacher beliefs has shown to be a valuable means to evaluate belief changes. Accordingly, such evaluation can contribute to the development and implementation of a new curriculum to (foreign language) education.

Changing foreign language teaching practices using a language awareness approach

In Chapter 5, we investigated how teachers adapt foreign language teaching practices as they deliberately engage with a language awareness approach and which intentions underlie these adaptations. Three foreign language teachers iteratively planned, adapted, taught and reflected upon three related foreign language lessons. Results revealed that teachers were able to change their existing practices over the course of three lessons. Several patterns of change were revealed with regard to awareness-raising characteristics (learning environment and languaging). For example, one teacher presented a gradual change pattern from the first to the final lesson, while another teacher already showed a more radical change with regard to the awareness-raising characteristics towards the second lesson. Nonetheless, most first-step adaptations were related to the learning environment component (e.g., using authentic input rather than a coursebook exercise), followed by adaptations regarding the languaging component (e.g., a group discussion rather than individual work). Differences in adaptations could generally be ascribed to (differences in) teachers' own learning goals and their site-specific educational context. Moreover, teachers' intentions underlying the adaptations were mostly guided by their site-specific classroom context, with intentions and adaptations regarding the teacher's role and the students' role being the most prominent. Although all teachers in this study pursued different learning goals and taught in different classroom contexts, this study indicated that step-by-step adaptations can lead to significant changes in teaching practices with regard to language awareness. Thus, by investigating any possibilities for adaptation in a stepwise fashion and gradually applying small adaptations to (existing) teaching practices, it becomes feasible for teachers to make sense of and engage with a new or intended curriculum reform.

Discussion of the main findings

The aim of this dissertation was to better comprehend language awareness as a new approach to (Dutch) foreign language education by gaining an in-depth insight into teachers' current beliefs and practices and by acquiring a better understanding of how teachers' beliefs and practices change as they integrate a language awareness approach in their own teaching context. Accordingly, it ties in with recent developments regarding the implementation of language awareness as an approach to foreign language education and the current debate about the context and content of language awareness research (Curriculum.nu, 2019; Svalberg, 2016). It is within this broader perspective that the main findings of this dissertation are now discussed.

Teacher beliefs about language awareness

Researchers have claimed that the strength of language awareness is its holistic approach (Gnutzmann, 1997; Hélot, Frijns, & Van Gorp, 2018) and, as such, its ability to accommodate a variety of perspectives and domains (James & Garrett, 2013; Svalberg, 2007). With this dissertation, we aimed to find out what teachers believed about this approach. By adopting a qualitative approach to investigating teachers' beliefs and belief changes, we have demonstrated that defining language awareness is not a straightforward undertaking amongst Dutch foreign language teachers.

The results as presented in Chapter 2 revealed that language awareness is a uniform concept with a shared understanding. This is in line with other studies which have reported on the multiperspectivity of the concept (Hélot et al., 2018; James & Garrett, 2013; Svalberg, 2007). When taking into account the five domains of language awareness as defined by James and Garrett (2013), teachers' beliefs predominantly resonated with the cognitive and the performance domain: domains related to grammar, language skills and cross-linguistic similarities and differences. This finding implies that while all teachers hold a variety of beliefs about language awareness, most beliefs can be reduced to two dominant domains. The cognitive domain, which we found to be most apparent in teachers' beliefs (Chapter 2), also emerged in a review study as the most researched language awareness-related topic (Sierens et al., 2018). The predominance of these domains is not surprising, as the acquisition of grammatical form and communicative language skills constitutes the main part of the foreign language curriculum. Nevertheless, when implementing a language awareness approach in the new foreign language curriculum, teachers should be (made) aware of the possibilities such an approach has to offer, as this could further support them in recognising and evaluating its full scope, and it could additionally help them decide which aspect(s) or domain(s) are relevant in their particular teaching context.

Much has been written about the (im)possibility of changing teacher beliefs (e.g., Cabaroglu & Roberts, 2000; Fives & Gill, 2015; Pajares, 1992). The nature of teachers' beliefs about language awareness as an approach to foreign language education becomes clearer when beliefs are evaluated over a longer period of time (Chapter 3). The cognitive domain which we found to be most prominent in Chapter 2 was found to predominate once again in Chapter 4. Nonetheless, findings from Chapter 4 revealed that teachers' beliefs are not stagnant but are also open to change. With seven types of changes found, these changes had various implications. Each of the belief changes found in Chapter 4 related to one of the five components of teacher beliefs as described in Chapter 2. For example, belief changes regarding language awareness (i.e., the subject matter) could for a large part be labelled as an elaboration (e.g., beliefs elaborated from

the cognitive domain only towards beliefs fitting the cognitive and social domain), and beliefs about the curriculum could mainly be characterised by disagreement (e.g., engagement with language awareness raised a certain disagreement with aspects of the current curriculum).

By examining specific components of teacher beliefs, this dissertation contributes to the literature by showing that it is possible to change teacher beliefs over a period of only six months. This is in line with findings from Cabaroglu and Roberts (2000) who also found changes in teacher beliefs after less than a year of engagement with a teaching course and, additionally, follows other studies who found changes in teacher beliefs after a longer period of time (Sosu & Gray, 2012; Yuan & Lee, 2014). These findings suggest that in order to evaluate belief changes, it is particularly valuable to examine particular components of teacher beliefs as this shows that the large and abstract concept of teacher beliefs actually consists of clearly demarcated components such as the subject matter as well as the pedagogical and contextual aspects related to the curriculum reform (i.e., curriculum, student, teacher, school). As a consequence, the findings of this dissertation facilitate the discussion about beliefs in light of a curriculum reform or new educational approach. Our findings indicate that change is not a linear process in which changes in beliefs lead to changed practices but that beliefs and practices reciprocally influence and change one another (Guskey, 2002). That is, beliefs may also change because of experienced changes in student learning or teaching approaches which, in turn, may lead to changes in practices again.

Overall, Chapters 2 and 4 of this dissertation show that teachers hold a variety of beliefs about language awareness, but they also indicate that most of their initial beliefs fit the cognitive and performance domains of language awareness. The dominant focus on the cognitive and performance domains, which likely resulted from the current communicative language teaching approach to foreign language education, probably fed into the number of beliefs related to the social, power or affective domains of language awareness. As the strength of language awareness is claimed to be its holistic approach (Gnutzmann, 1997; Svalberg, 2007), teachers should be made more aware of this holistic perspective as well. This way, teachers can acquaint themselves with the full scope of the approach and elaborate their beliefs which will further aid them to implement the approach to their everyday classroom practice. Instead of a narrow, mostly cognitive perspective that induces an association of language awareness with only grammar, teachers need an awareness of 'the whole elephant' (Andrews, 1995) so that they can look at their classroom context through an awareness lens while using a particular filter when necessary. For example, more emphasis on the social domain of language awareness can be particularly useful in a multilingual class with students having a variety of linguistic backgrounds, while a focus on the cognitive domain might as well be

useful in the same class when discussing cross-linguistic similarities on a vocabulary level. In turn, such a contrastive approach might then affect the performance domain and lead to an improved language proficiency (Sierens et al., 2018). Emphasising the affective domain can stimulate motivation, for example by providing students with choices and presenting language in a broader social, cultural or historical context. The power domain was found to be useful when students were stimulated to develop a critical stance towards the use of language, for example when assessing the impact of language use on social media or the deceitful character of language in fake news articles.

By addressing language through these five domains, language awareness is not a blueprint set in stone, but a holistic concept that can further shape foreign language teaching and learning. As mentioned before, an important role here is reserved for teachers as they will have to make sense of the approach in the context of their own teaching. In addition, this dissertation adds to the debate about the definition of language awareness. As the definition is broadly interpretable and rather abstract, it is often perceived by teachers as complicated. However, by engaging teachers with the approach and by putting flesh on the bones of this new approach, teachers gradually experience how they can make sense of it and how they can implement it in their everyday teaching context.

Awareness-raising teaching practices

Numerous educational systems worldwide have faced or are currently facing curriculum reforms (Priestley & Biesta, 2013). The pivotal role of teachers in relation to such curriculum reform has long been recognised (Hargreaves et al., 2009; Priestley et al., 2012). A curriculum reform demands teachers to (re)interpret and make sense of the curriculum reform and to translate and implement such reform to the everyday classroom context (Pietarinen et al., 2019).

In Chapter 3, we presented a detailed overview of the presence and content of language awareness in existing foreign language teaching practices. The call for awareness-raising foreign language education appears to follow from a more general trend in secondary education which aims to train students in the thinking skills necessary for their current and future (academic) school career; language awareness can be seen as a domain-specific interpretation of the development of thinking skills in foreign language education. The findings of Chapter 3 revealed that approximately half of all teaching practices could be labelled as (partially) awareness-raising, whereas the other half of the practices could not be characterised as such. This suggests that while some teachers have already integrated a language awareness approach in their everyday teaching (be it consciously or subconsciously), a rather large group

of teachers might only have a partial understanding of what constitutes language awareness (Humphries & Burns, 2015). Such partial understanding can be explained by the absence of attention for language awareness in their studies or in their teacher education programmes or may indicate a misconception (e.g., Antink-Meyer & Meyer, 2017; Kumandaş et al., 2019). A misconception does not necessarily mean that teachers' beliefs are completely inaccurate but that they would benefit from modification or elaboration. In order to satisfactorily integrate such reform to teaching practices, it is important that any such misunderstandings are detected, for example by investigating teachers' beliefs (Chapters 2 and 4). Teachers then become aware of how they perceive a new approach, how they (unconsciously) already integrate such an approach into their everyday teaching practices or come to realise which aspects of their beliefs or practices need further development (e.g., when a teacher perceives only one domain of language awareness and might further elaborate his/her beliefs and practices by discussing and analysing the other domains).

Chapter 5 showed that over a period of one month all teachers were able to change their teaching practices as a result of their engagement with a language awareness approach. Although each teacher claimed to be familiar with language awareness prior to participation, none of the teachers' first lessons could be characterised as such. The lack of awareness-raising characteristics was mainly caused by the fact that teachers still adhered closely to traditional exercises while they also gave students more freedom than they were used to. Teachers expected to create favourable conditions for exploratory learning by providing students with plenty of freedom, yet this approach turned out to be counterproductive for many students.. Although each teacher followed a slightly different course after the first lesson in terms of adaptiveness, by the end of the three-lesson sequence all teachers' practices could be considered awareness-raising in terms of 'learning environment' and 'languaging'. Lessons at the end of the sequence were mainly characterised by more teacher guidance, more examples of modelling and varied types of interaction. This is in line with previous studies which found that exploratory, inquiry-based learning is more effective when students are sufficiently supported (Furtak et al., 2012; Kirschner et al., 2006; Lazonder & Harmsen, 2016). In addition, teachers' personal goals, classroom context and site-specific interpretation of language awareness played a major role in the actual adaptations made to their teaching practices. These findings suggest that in order to support teachers in adapting their teaching practices with regard to a curriculum reform, a certain degree of freedom within the boundaries of the reform should be granted, such that teachers' practices can take into account their site-specific classroom context, as well as the personal beliefs, goals and interests of the teachers themselves.

Towards language-aware foreign language education

This dissertation shows that teachers' beliefs (Chapters 2 and 4) and practices (Chapters 3 and 5) can provide valuable and essential insights with regard to the concept of language awareness and the possible integration of a language awareness approach to Dutch foreign language education. This dissertation adds to the existing literature on language awareness by taking the perspective of teachers while making sense of an intended curriculum reform and integrating this new approach to their everyday classroom context. Teachers' beliefs and practices put flesh on the bones of the language awareness concept, academically as well as practically. This dissertation also contributes to literature on curriculum reform by showing that teachers' contribution to curriculum reform should not be overlooked and that their beliefs and practices, although diverse and sometimes even contradictory, are invaluable. This further underlines that a curriculum reform should not be seen as either a top-down or a bottom-up approach but as an interactive and dynamic approach that integrates the strengths of both and, by doing so, results in more sustainable changes (Fullan, 2015; Petko et al., 2015; Pietarinen et al., 2017). The implementation of language awareness as a new approach to foreign language education should thus be supported by means of a guiding framework and resources (top-down) that may inspire teachers and give them a sense of direction which they can use to make sense of and act upon the new curriculum in their everyday teaching context (bottom-up) (Imants & Van der Wal, 2020; Kuiper et al., 2013; Pietarinen et al., 2017).

Instead of enacting a proposed curriculum developed by others, teacher agency plays a crucial role in the reform process (Imants & Van der Wal, 2020; Metcalfe & Greene, 2007). Following Eteläpelto et al. (2013), agency is practiced when a teacher 'influences, makes choices, and takes stances on their work and their professional identity' (p. 61) in interaction with and within specific contexts. In the context of a curriculum reform, teachers' experienced agency will then influence the way they make sense of and respond to the reform in relation to their own beliefs and experiences. This sense-making process, defined as 'the interaction between teachers' own frame of reference and the perception of the situational demands regarding the reform' (Luttenberg et al., 2013, p. 292), then results in a personal interpretation of the reform in which the teacher tries to integrate new beliefs with existing beliefs (März & Kelchtermans, 2013; Spillane et al., 2002). This, in turn, affects the implementation process (Ketelaar et al., 2012; Vähäsantanen & Eteläpelto, 2009). In this dissertation, we provided guidance to teachers through dialogue and interviews. Also, we provided a general framework and guidance when teachers engaged with the approach, while at the same time teachers were provided and experienced freedom to contribute their own ideas, beliefs and experiences and to make sense of this new approach in the context of their everyday teaching practices.

Practical implications

The findings of the current dissertation provide useful insights for teachers, teacher educators, policy makers and educational publishers. Moreover, they suggest that in order to change beliefs and practices, it is essential that all stakeholders contribute to curriculum development and change. Curriculum development is not a matter of either top-down or bottom-up, it is a matter of engaging everyone, from teachers to teacher educators, from policy makers to educational publishers.

Teachers

This dissertation showed that teachers hold a variety of beliefs about language awareness but that the majority of these beliefs could be characterised as fitting the cognitive domain (James & Garrett, 2013). Beliefs are shaped by emotions, personal values and experiences (Barcelos & Kalaja, 2011; Borg, 2001) and thus may have influenced teachers' notion of the concept of language awareness. As the strength of a language awareness approach is claimed to be its holistic character, it is important for teachers to develop a comprehensive understanding of what language awareness entails. This dissertation shows that a collaborative dialogue is a promising venue to further develop teacher beliefs. This could take shape by means of collaboration between foreign language teachers or between researchers and foreign language teachers (e.g., in dyads or in professional learning communities), and could be realised by means of a (collaborative) dialogue in which beliefs are discussed, challenged and related to (existing or new) teaching practices (Handelzalts et al., 2019). Such a dialogue can support teachers to develop a more in-depth understanding of the new approach, of their beliefs about this approach, and it might help them to identify those domains that are not on their radar yet. This could then inspire teachers to (further) integrate language awareness in their everyday teaching practices.

A language awareness approach does not present a one-size-fits-all approach for teachers. It can and should not be seen as a blueprint that can be similarly applied to all aspects of foreign language education. If teachers want to integrate language awareness, they can integrate it into their teaching practices in a stepwise fashion by first analysing existing teaching practices. A needs analysis using a framework for language awareness practices can help to identify which lessons could or must be adapted but can also help to identify which lessons already include awareness-raising elements. With the support of researchers, teacher educators or colleagues, teachers can evaluate their practices using the components of 'learning environment' and 'linguaging'. This allows teachers to easily assess their own practices and to gradually adapt their practices where needed. For example, teachers can provide more instructional guidance

when students have difficulty finding and discussing particular linguistic elements or teachers can initiate small group discussions in which students become acquainted with other students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds. This means that a language awareness approach is not a requirement for all lessons, but an approach that offers benefit when needed. In this way, one lesson might be tweaked with insights from the social domain of language awareness, while another could be tweaked by taking into account the cognitive domain. In other words, teachers have a certain degree of freedom at their disposal when implementing language awareness. It is up to the teacher to make sense of the new approach in the context of their teaching practice and to act upon those aspects that require adaptation.

Teacher educators

Curriculum reform undoubtedly has consequences for teacher educators and professional development programmes. Regardless of how exactly the current developments in the Netherlands end up being implemented in the foreign language curriculum, it is necessary to give teachers the opportunity to further professionalise themselves taking into account current educational developments. This means that in order to support pre- and in-service teachers with respect to language awareness, or any other new approach, it is necessary for teacher educators to integrate such an approach in their own professional knowledge base so that they can initiate and stimulate interaction (Swart et al., 2018) in pre-service as well as in-service teacher training. This can be done in a stepwise manner, in a similar fashion to the studies in this dissertation. Teacher educators can collaboratively evaluate their own beliefs and practices with regard to language awareness and subsequently assess which of their teacher education activities might need further development. This will likely not only improve existing teacher education programmes but will also strengthen teacher educators in their professional knowledge base.

When it comes to integrating language awareness in (teacher) education, pre-service teachers who are now in the process of obtaining a teaching degree or who will soon start their teacher training programme, should be given the opportunity to become acquainted with and gradually make sense of a new approach. This can be done in their undergraduate programme as well as their in their graduate programme in which they obtain their Master degree in Education. Although the new curriculum will not be in place for a few more years, the language awareness approach to foreign language education is timely and relevant. As such, current pre-service teachers should already be prepared to integrate these new developments in their teaching practices. For example, the domains of language awareness (or in a broader educational perspective: aspects of any new approach) could be discussed in pedagogical content courses and pre-service teachers could be asked to integrate characteristics of

awareness-raising instruction in their lesson design. To support in-service teachers, it seems advisable to develop and offer in-service teacher education to support secondary school foreign language teachers to make sense of and implement this new approach in their everyday teaching context. This dissertation has shown that some in-service teachers found it difficult to reflect on their beliefs because they were not fully aware of what a language awareness approach entails. Other teachers found it challenging to describe their lesson goals or intended learning outcomes with regard to language awareness because they were not used to reflecting explicitly on these aspects of lesson design. For example, dialogue and collaboration with colleagues and/or researchers or participation in a professional learning community can contribute to in-service teachers' professionalisation. Additionally, online platforms where examples of teaching practices and materials can be shared can further contribute to teachers' knowledge base (see for example recent professional development initiatives from the 'Nationaal Platform voor de Talen').

Curriculum developers

This dissertation contributes to the current debate about curriculum reform in the Netherlands (i.e., Curriculum.nu) and, more specifically, to the reform of the foreign language curriculum. As for all school subjects, a first proposal regarding curriculum reform was submitted to the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science in October 2019. These proposals included a vision of each school subject as well as a description of the essential elements. At this moment, however, there seems to be limited support from teachers with regard to the proposed curriculum reform as they are generally unaware of or uninformed about the new plans and especially about the implications for their everyday practice. The research presented in this dissertation showed that teachers felt supported with a guiding framework which helped them integrate language awareness into their everyday teaching practices. It supported and developed their beliefs, gave them inspiration, provided them with a sense of direction and left sufficient room for teachers' agency and sense-making (Kuiper et al., 2013).

Findings from this dissertation also suggest that curriculum developers should not aim to develop a prescriptive curriculum but rather develop a curriculum that is specified by feasible and concrete attainment standards and supported by practical suggestions and examples of how to adapt existing teaching practices within teachers site-specific classroom context. It is therefore advisable for curriculum developers to find a balance between input regulation (i.e., content prescription) and output regulation (i.e., teacher agency) (Kuiper & Berkvens, 2013) and further engage teachers in the process of sense-making and ownership.

With regard to the current debate about more meaningful, coherent and challenging foreign language education, a language awareness approach can support curriculum developers to put foreign language education back on the map. Results from this dissertation show that a language awareness approach supports teachers to translate ideas about foreign language education that were not part of the current curriculum and/or exam standards to their teaching practices. The approach furthermore helps teachers to put language education in a larger picture with more context, for example by making use of the five domains of language awareness when developing lessons or using instructional principles to further improve existing practices. Embedding language awareness within the curriculum thus provides a broader knowledge base and a broader perspective on language learning and teaching, in mother tongue as well as foreign language education and in the connection between them. This could help to further emphasise and defend the importance and relevance of (foreign) language education and could possibly condemn the weak reputation of (foreign) language education in the Netherlands.

Educational publishers

One potential consequence of the current curriculum reform plans in the Netherlands may be that educational publishers will be required to hold their current teaching methods against the light of the proposed reform and to adapt their methods accordingly. An evaluation of existing materials can help to assess whether current methods, chapters or exercises need revision with respect to a new approach. This dissertation has shown that approximately half of all teaching practices provided by teachers could already be characterised as awareness-raising while the other half presented concrete leads for change, for example with regard to changes in the teacher's role or the student's activity. As most of the practices analysed in this dissertation generally departed from coursebook exercises, this implies that educational publishers do not have to drastically change all content of their teaching methods. However, they will have to evaluate current methods and investigate which exercises require further development. For example, explicit connections can be drawn between (foreign) language subjects to support cross-curricular and cross-linguistic learning, additional questions may be added to stimulate students' thinking skills and sufficient space should be provided for teachers' own interpretation, sense-making, creativity and ownership that allows teachers to customise the method to their site-specific circumstances (Barab & Luehmann, 2003; Horn & Kane, 2015).

Limitations and suggestions for future research

The findings of this dissertation should be interpreted bearing in mind a number of limitations, each of which leads to suggestions for future research. First of all, it should be acknowledged that all studies presented in this dissertation concerned small scale studies involving three to ten teachers. This has resulted in highly detailed, fine-grained insights about teachers' beliefs and practices which could not have been found with large scale studies. As the aim of this dissertation was not to generalise the findings to the entire population of Dutch foreign language teachers but to gain an in-depth insight into teachers' beliefs and practices with regard to language awareness and whether these may change, purposive sampling was considered appropriate and highly informative. Consequently, all participating teachers were purposefully selected based on their interest in language awareness. In addition to the sample size sampling method, most teachers selected for participation taught in secondary schools in the southern or eastern part of the Netherlands and all teachers taught in upper-secondary pre-university level classes. This resulted in a rather homogeneous groups of students in terms of age (generally between 16-18 years old), ethnicity (nearly all had Dutch as their only mother tongue) and educational level (pre-university). For future research, it would be interesting to include schools in other parts of the Netherlands in order to provide a more comprehensive picture of how teachers in, for example, more culturally diverse areas, with a diverse student population, think about language awareness as an approach to foreign language education. Furthermore, incorporating different educational levels would also be informative, as teachers might implement a language awareness approach differently depending on students' needs, that is, language awareness will possibly look different in vocational education as compared to pre-university education because of differences in learning goals. Furthermore, the domains of language awareness may be applied to various language subjects but might look different in French than in English because of the difference in language skills.

The second limitation concerns the data collected with regard to teacher beliefs (Chapters 2 and 4) and teaching practices (Chapters 3 and 5). Data were collected at different moments and new insights gained in the first two studies led us to proceed differently in the final two studies. This resulted in more data collected which allowed us to evaluate beliefs and practices in Chapters 4 and 5 on a more in-depth level than in Chapters 2 and 3. Although we evaluated teachers' beliefs and practices in this dissertation, we did not, however, evaluate the direct link between individual teacher's beliefs and practices. As beliefs are found to influence teaching practices (Arnett & Turnbull, 2008; Borg, 2011), future research could further enhance our findings by investigating the possible correspondence between teachers' beliefs and practices. In a review study investigating the correspondence between language teachers'

beliefs and practices, Basturkmen (2012) found that some studies revealed a correspondence between beliefs and practices but that the majority of the studies reviewed only revealed a limited correspondence. In addition, belief changes in Chapter 4 and changes to teaching practices in Chapter 5 were investigated over a period of 6 months and 1 month, respectively. In future research, it would be interesting to evaluate changes to beliefs and practices over a longer period of time to gain a better insight into the long-term (change) effects.

A third limitation relates to our decision to focus on beliefs and practices with regard to language awareness from a teacher's perspective. This means that the student's perspective and student learning were not directly included in this dissertation. As professional development not only affects teachers in terms of changed beliefs and practices but also affects and interacts with students' learning (Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002; Desimone, 2009), future research should also consider students' learning effects as a result of changed beliefs and adapted instruction using a language awareness approach. As language awareness is a broad concept, we suggest evaluating student learning in terms of domains of language awareness, as this will be more delineated and will increase the chance of finding observable or measurable aspects (Sierens et al., 2018).

My role as a researcher

In this pre-final paragraph I will switch from plural to a singular in order to address my role as a researcher in this dissertation. My role in all studies in this dissertation can be described as a co-constructor of knowledge (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017). I did not only collect the data but I also had an active role in the process of data collection as I facilitated the dialogue with and between teachers and facilitated each teacher's change process. This meant that through interaction (new) knowledge, insights, beliefs and practices were constructed. For example, I supported teachers to clarify their learning goals and stimulated them to adapt and evaluate their own teaching practices using a theoretical framework. This resulted in a heightened awareness in teachers that they could translate a rather abstract concept into concrete adaptations relevant to their teaching context. I positioned myself as the researcher but simultaneously acted as an equal conversation partner who facilitated the discussion by asking guiding questions aimed at, for example, elaborating teachers' ideas or further specifying teachers' choices. Whereas this role undeniably influenced the research carried out in this dissertation, it also opened up possibilities for discussion that would otherwise not have been possible. For future research, co-construction between teachers and researcher(s) (or teachers and other stakeholders) would be a worthwhile and meaningful line to take when

further investigating, making sense of and engaging with language awareness or, on a more general level, an intended curriculum reform or new approach to education. Making this co-construction visible and explicit is then a challenging but necessary prerequisite.

Conclusion

To conclude, the results of this dissertation expand our knowledge of teachers' beliefs and practices with regard to language awareness as a new approach to foreign language education and as a proposed element in the current curriculum reform proposal. This dissertation adds new insights to the presence of existing beliefs and practices with regard to language awareness and discloses how beliefs and practices can change as a result of teachers' engagement with the new approach. Moreover, it reveals that by investigating beliefs and practices in a stepwise fashion and by gradually exploring possibilities for change, it becomes feasible for teachers to make sense of and engage with a new approach or curriculum reform. This dissertation hopefully inspires teachers, secondary schools, universities, policy makers, curriculum developers, educational publishers and other researchers to further explore the possibilities of a language awareness approach in the context of (foreign) language education. Additionally, this dissertation contributes to the current debate about the status and development of foreign language education and shows how language awareness can play an important role in the development of the foreign language curriculum and the school curriculum as a whole.

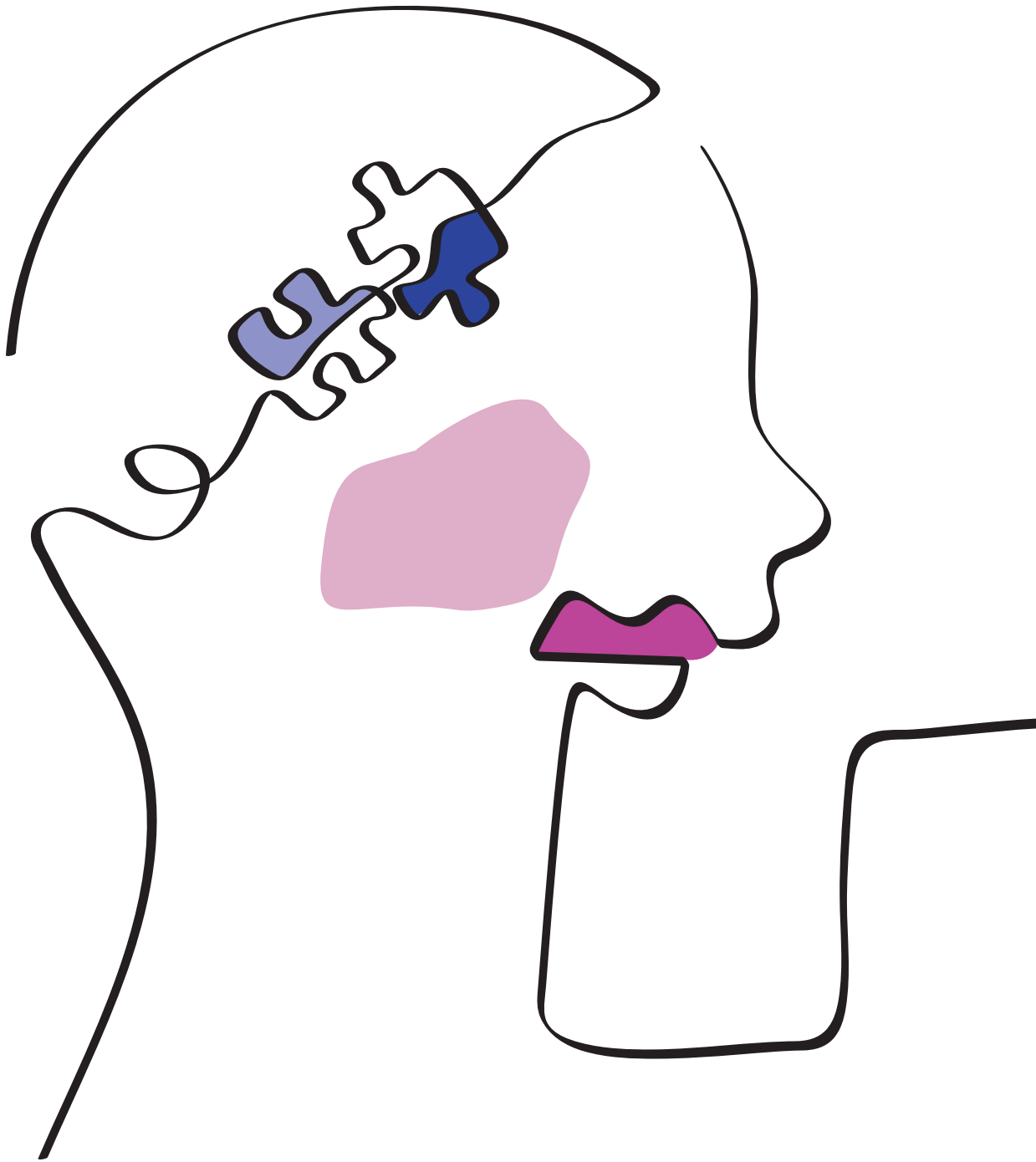
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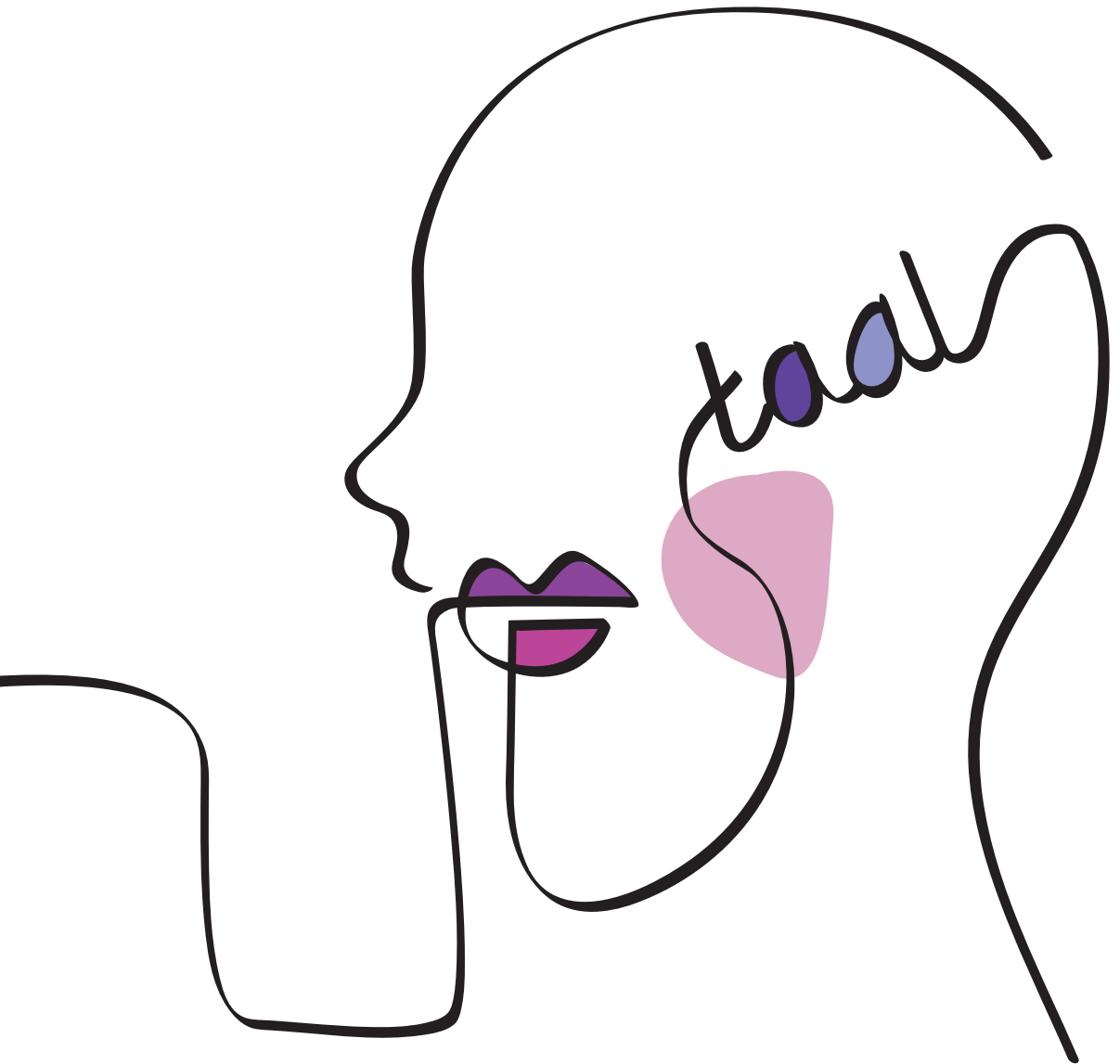


Nederlandse samenvatting

Dankwoord

Biografie

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Nederlandse samenvatting

Introductie

Taal is meer dan alleen een communicatiemiddel. Taal geeft inzicht in andere culturen, geeft een inkijkje in iemands gedachten en stelt ons in staat iets te leren over onze geschiedenis. Door het gebruiken en leren van taal ontdek je dingen die je misschien nog niet eerder zo zag. Het leren van taal is alsof je een deur opent naar een nieuwe wereld. Het onderwijs is er om leerlingen wegwijs te maken in die wereld om hen heen en om hen voldoende kennis en vaardigheden mee te geven om te kunnen functioneren in een maatschappij waarin taal een belangrijke rol speelt.

Maatschappelijke ontwikkelingen hebben er de laatste jaren voor gezorgd dat in steeds meer landen het onderwijscurriculum wordt herzien en aangepast om daarmee aan te blijven sluiten bij maatschappelijke standaarden en uitdagingen. Aanpassing van het (vreemde)talencurriculum ontbreekt daarbij niet. Ook in Nederland is een debat gaande over de status en de toekomst van het onderwijs en het curriculum. Onder andere binnen het vreemdetalenonderwijs wordt het curriculum flink aangepakt. Bestaande elementen worden herzien en nieuwe perspectieven worden geïntroduceerd. Dat wordt nodig geacht om een nieuwe balans te vinden in het taalonderwijs, waarin naast taalvaardigheid ook voldoende aandacht is voor het verwerven van kennis over taal, het taalbewustzijn. Meer aandacht voor kennis over taal lijkt onmisbaar gezien de belangrijke maatschappelijke, culturele en professionele rol van taal in onze maatschappij en biedt bovendien de benodigde fundering voor de inhoud en de toekomstbestendigheid van het vreemdetalenonderwijs. Het huidige vreemdetalenonderwijs gaat namelijk door een uitdagende periode waarin het aantal leerlingen en studenten dat kiest voor een talenpakket of -studie met het jaar afneemt. Deze daling voedt het debat over de toekomst van het vreemdetalenonderwijs in Nederland. Drie aspecten staan hierbij centraal: 1) de status van vreemde talen in de maatschappij: talen hebben een belangrijke interculturele en economische functie, 2) de reputatie van vreemde talen in het voortgezet en hoger onderwijs: steeds minder leerlingen en studenten kiezen voor een talenpakket of talenstudie, en 3) de rol van de communicatieve benadering in het voortgezet onderwijs: veel aandacht voor de taalvaardigheden, minder voor kennis over taal. Deze drie aspecten bieden voldoende aanleiding om na te denken over een inhoudelijke verrijking van het vreemdetalenonderwijs.

In de internationale onderwijs- en onderzoekscontext krijgt taalbewustzijn de laatste jaren steeds meer aandacht als het gaat om de verrijking en vernieuwing van het vreemdetalenonderwijs. Aansluitend bij maatschappelijke ontwikkelingen lijkt er, ook in Nederland, momentum voor deze benadering binnen het vreemdetalenonderwijs te zijn.

Taalbewustzijn richt zich op het bewust leren, gebruiken en ontdekken van taal, zowel in de schoolcontext als daarbuiten. Het integreren van zo'n nieuwe benadering in het vreemdetalenonderwijs gebeurt niet zomaar. Een belangrijke rol is daarbij weggelegd voor docenten, omdat zij betekenis en vorm geven aan een voorgestelde curriculumherziening in de context van hun eigen lespraktijk.

Dit proefschrift zal twee aspecten van de voorgestelde curriculumherziening belichten: taalbewustzijn als nieuwe benadering binnen het vreemdetalenonderwijs en de opvattingen en lespraktijken van vreemdetal docenten met betrekking tot taalbewustzijn. In het bijzonder wordt in dit proefschrift onderzocht hoe bestaande opvattingen en lespraktijken met betrekking tot taalbewustzijn kunnen worden gekarakteriseerd en hoe de opvattingen en lespraktijken van docenten veranderen als zij doelbewust aan de slag gaan met deze benadering in hun dagelijkse onderwijscontext.

Het onderzoek

Dit proefschrift biedt inzicht in de mogelijkheden en uitdagingen van taalbewustzijn als additionele benadering binnen het Nederlandse vreemdetalenonderwijs door te kijken naar bestaande docentopvattingen en lespraktijken en door veranderingen in docentopvattingen en lespraktijken in kaart te brengen.

Verskillende onderzoeken in de context van het vreemdetalenonderwijs hebben eerder al gekeken naar docentopvattingen en lespraktijken. De meeste van deze onderzoeken hebben echter gekeken naar specifieke aspecten van taalleren, zoals grammatica, uitspraak of taalvaardigheid (bijvoorbeeld lezen of schrijven). Deze aspecten van taalleren kunnen allemaal onderzocht worden in het kader van taalbewustzijn. Er zijn echter maar weinig onderzoeken gedaan waarin docentopvattingen en lespraktijken met betrekking tot taalbewustzijn als benadering binnen het vreemdetalenonderwijs werden onderzocht.

De studies in dit proefschrift bieden meer inzicht in de opvattingen van docenten rondom taalbewustzijn, de aanwezigheid van taalbewustzijn in bestaande lespraktijken, veranderingen in opvattingen over taalbewustzijn en veranderingen in lespraktijken met behulp van een taalbewustzijnsbenadering. Om inzicht te krijgen in de opvattingen van docenten rondom taalbewustzijn en de rol van taalbewustzijn in lespraktijken in het vreemdetalenonderwijs zijn in dit proefschrift vier studies uitgevoerd. De hoofdvragen van dit proefschrift zijn:

- 1) Hoe kunnen de huidige opvattingen en lespraktijken van docenten met betrekking tot taalbewustzijn in de bovenbouw van het voortgezet onderwijs worden gekarakteriseerd?
- 2) Hoe veranderen de opvattingen en lespraktijken van docenten als zij zich doelbewust bezighouden met taalbewustzijn in de context van hun alledaagse lespraktijk?

De studies

Docentopvattingen over taalbewustzijn

In hoofdstuk 2 van dit proefschrift hebben we ons om te beginnen gericht op de opvattingen van docenten Engels over taalbewustzijn. Taalbewustzijn is een breed concept dat vanuit verschillende domeinen benaderd kan worden: het affectieve domein (de houding en motivatie van leerlingen ten opzichte van taal(leren), het cognitieve domein (het systeem achter taal), het sociale domein (sociaal-culturele integratie en diversiteit), het uitvoeringsdomein (de taalvaardigheid) en het machtsdomein (de invloed van taal in de maatschappij). Door in kaart te brengen hoe docenten dit concept definiëren en inkaderen, kan worden nagegaan op welke manier(en) zij denken over de rol van taalbewustzijn in het vreemdetalenonderwijs, iets wat van belang is bij de uiteindelijke integratie van zo'n nieuwe benadering in de onderwijspraktijk. Door middel van een interviewstudie zijn de opvattingen van tien docenten rondom taalbewustzijn in kaart gebracht. De resultaten laten zien dat er een aanzienlijke variëteit is in docentopvattingen over taalbewustzijn. Dit impliceert dat er geen gedeeld begrip van het concept taalbewustzijn is onder docenten Engels. Echter, opvattingen passend binnen het cognitieve en het uitvoeringsdomein van taalbewustzijn waren het meest dominant (denk hierbij aan opvattingen over het reflecteren op grammatica of het aanleren van een bepaalde vaardigheid). Daarnaast kan een aantal opvattingen gekarakteriseerd worden als conflicterend. Docenten verschilden in hun opvattingen met betrekking tot het leren van leerlingen (bijv. focus op het leren van de taalvaardigheden vs. het inzetten van deze taalvaardigheden in de context buiten school), de samenwerking tussen taaldocenten (bijv. iedere taal zien als een apart vak vs. het vinden van geschikte vakoverstijgende onderwerpen), het curriculum (bijv. vrijheid ervaren binnen het curriculum vs. het volgen van de methode) en de relatie met andere talen (bijv. cross-linguïstische reflectie inzetten ten behoeve van het leren vs. cross-linguïstische reflectie vermijden omdat dit verwarring veroorzaakt). De resultaten laten zien dat docenten ieder hun eigen opvattingen hebben over taalbewustzijn en de betekenis van taalbewustzijn voor hun eigen onderwijspraktijk. De conflicten in docentopvattingen laten zien dat er diverse uitdagingen zijn wanneer het gaat om het integreren van taalbewustzijn in het vreemdetalenonderwijs. Dit suggereert namelijk dat het integreren van taalbewustzijn in het onderwijs geen one-size-fits-all benadering is. De uitdagingen kunnen een startpunt vormen voor een dialoog met en

tussen docenten, en kunnen docenten inzicht geven in en ondersteunen bij het inpassen van taalbewustzijn in het bestaande curriculum en de eigen onderwijspraktijk.

Taalbewustzijn in het vreemdetalenonderwijs

In hoofdstuk 3 is vervolgens door middel van een interviewstudie en een analyse van praktijkvoorbeelden onderzocht in hoeverre er in het huidige vreemdetalenonderwijs al lespraktijken te vinden zijn waarin het taalbewustzijn van leerlingen gestimuleerd wordt. Aan tien docenten Engels is gevraagd om een aantal voorbeelden van lespraktijken te beschrijven die volgens hen het taalbewustzijn van leerlingen stimuleren. Taalbewuste lespraktijken worden in deze studie geïdentificeerd aan de hand van situationele en operationele kenmerken. Situationele kenmerken hebben betrekking op de leeromgeving en –context (bijv. de rol van de docent of de leerling), operationele kenmerken hebben betrekking op de uitvoering (bijv. het type taak of interactie). Taalbewuste lespraktijken worden gekenmerkt door een leerlinggerichte leeromgeving waarin voldoende ruimte is of wordt gegeven om te communiceren over en te reflecteren op taal. Een analyse van 41 verschillende lespraktijken laat zien dat ongeveer de helft van deze praktijken gekarakteriseerd kan worden als taalbewust. Kenmerkend voor deze lespraktijken is dat ze vaak meerdere onderwerpen integreren, authentieke contexten gebruiken, interactie van docent naar leerling en van leerling naar docent laten zien en leerlingen de mogelijkheid bieden om te reflecteren op hun eigen en andermans vragen en moeilijkheden. Lespraktijken die niet als taalbewust konden worden aangemerkt, konden vaak worden gekarakteriseerd door een docentgerichte leeromgeving met veel eenzijdige interactie, het gebruik van gedecontextualiseerde opdrachten gericht op grammatica en een focus op het vinden van het juiste antwoord.

De resultaten van deze studie laten zien dat niet alle lespraktijken die door docenten voorgedragen worden als taalbewust dit ook daadwerkelijk zijn. Dit laat zien dat docenten niet altijd een volledig beeld lijken te hebben van wat taalbewustzijn is en hoe dit er in de lespraktijk uitziet. Echter, de lespraktijken die niet als taalbewust werden gekarakteriseerd, bevatten wel praktische aanknopingspunten om zich tot taalbewuste lespraktijk te ontwikkelen, bijvoorbeeld door met leerlingen in gesprek te gaan of leerlingen in groepjes te laten discussiëren over een onderwerp waar ze moeite mee hebben in plaats van leerlingen individueel extra oefeningen te laten maken.

Ten slotte laat deze studie zien dat een analyse van verschillende lespraktijken kan bijdragen aan de invulling en betekenis van taalbewust taalonderwijs en inzichtelijk kan maken welke aspecten van een bestaande lespraktijk aangepast kunnen worden om het taalbewustzijn van leerlingen te stimuleren. Dit betekent dat docenten hun onderwijs niet volledig hoeven te veranderen wanneer taalbewustzijn als nieuwe benadering binnen

het vreemdetalenonderwijs, of in een breder perspectief een curriculumherziening, wordt geïntroduceerd, maar dat ze stapsgewijs hun eigen lespraktijken kunnen onderzoeken en waar nodig aanpassen.

Veranderingen in docentopvattingen

In hoofdstuk 4 wordt voortgebouwd op hoofdstuk 2 en hebben we onderzocht hoe docentopvattingen met betrekking tot taalbewustzijn veranderen over een periode van zes maanden. Door middel van een interviewstudie waarin de opvattingen van acht docenten (zes docenten Engels, een docent Frans, een docent Duits) voorafgaand aan en zes maanden na een interventie zijn bevestigd. Hiermee werd onderzocht hoe opvattingen veranderen en of specifieke veranderingen in verband gebracht kunnen worden met specifieke aspecten van docentopvattingen, zoals het onderwerp taalbewustzijn, het curriculum, de leerling, de docent of de schoolcontext.

De resultaten van deze studie laten zien dat de opvattingen van docenten over taalbewustzijn aan verandering onderhevig zijn, dat verschillende veranderprocessen kunnen worden waargenomen en dat bepaalde veranderprocessen samenhangen met specifieke aspecten van docentopvattingen. Analyse van de data liet zeven typen veranderingen van opvattingen zien: 1) uitbreiding (persoonlijke opvattingen worden uitgebreid, bijv. van sociaal domein naar sociaal en cognitief domein), 2) stabiliteit (geen substantiële verandering), 3) meningsverschil (oneens met eigen/andermans opvattingen), 4) verbinding (verbinding van verschillende opvattingen), 5) bevestiging (bevestiging van bestaande opvattingen door ervaring), 6) bewustwording (bewustwording van eigen opvattingen) en 7) ont koppeling (scheiding tussen persoonlijke opvatting en context).

Uit de resultaten werd ook duidelijk dat bepaalde veranderprocessen samenhangen met specifieke aspecten van docentopvattingen. Veranderende opvattingen met betrekking tot de leerling en de docent konden bijvoorbeeld vaak worden gekarakteriseerd als 'bewustwording' (bijv. realiseren waarom een leerling een bepaalde fout blijft maken) en veranderingen met betrekking tot het curriculum lieten vaak een 'meningsverschil' (bijv. de invulling van het pta) of een 'verbinding' (bijv. het betrekken van andere onderwerpen of schoolvakken) zien. Bovendien hebben de specifieke aspecten van docentopvattingen ook invloed op elkaar, dat wil zeggen, een veranderende opvatting met betrekking tot het leren van leerlingen kan bijvoorbeeld leiden tot een vergrote bewustwording bij de docent met betrekking tot de leerstof. Dit is echter geen opeenvolgend proces waarbij het ene aspect altijd verandert als gevolg van een verandering in het andere aspect. Deze studie laat zien dat docenten ieder hun eigen veranderproces doormaken onder invloed van hun specifieke onderwijscontext en dat het uitsplitsen van docentopvattingen in verschillende aspecten veel inzicht biedt

in de manier waarop opvattingen veranderen en hoe dit stapsgewijs kan bijdragen aan de implementatie van een nieuwe onderwijsbenadering.

Veranderingen in lespraktijken

In hoofdstuk 5 wordt door middel van interviews, lesvoorbereidingsschema's en lesmateriaal onderzocht hoe lespraktijken veranderen als docenten zich gedurende een maand bezighouden met taalbewustzijn in hun eigen onderwijspraktijk. Voortbouwend op hoofdstuk 3 wordt niet alleen gekeken naar de inhoud van zo'n lespraktijk, maar ook naar de veranderingen in deze lespraktijk en welke intenties hieraan ten grondslag liggen. Verdeeld over drie sessies gingen drie docenten (Engels, Duits en Frans) ieder samen de dialoog aan met de onderzoeker en aan de slag met het voorbereiden, aanpassen en onderwijzen van en het reflecteren op een les. Interviews voorafgaand aan een les gaven inzicht in de intenties van een docent om bepaalde aspecten van de les te willen aanpassen. Interviews na afloop van een les gaven inzicht in het al dan niet in de praktijk brengen van deze intenties en, als mogelijk gevolgd daarvan, een daadwerkelijke verandering in de lespraktijk.

Resultaten van deze studie laten zien dat alle drie de docenten in staat waren om hun lespraktijk in drie sessies aan te passen met behulp van een taalbewustzijnsbenadering. Aan het eind van de sessies lieten alle lespraktijken voldoende kenmerken van taalbewustzijn zien. Met name de rol van de leerling en de rol van de docent veranderden het vaakst. Kijkend naar de leeromgeving en de mate van communiceren over taal (hoofdstuk 3) zien we dat de lespraktijken bij sessie 1 nog weinig taalbewustzijnskenmerken vertoonden en dat dit (geleidelijk) veranderde richting sessie 3, waarin alle lespraktijken meerdere kenmerken van taalbewustzijn bevatten. Echter, het patroon van deze verandering was voor alle drie de docenten verschillend en kon worden toegeschreven aan hun persoonlijke leerdoelen en onderliggende intenties. Deze intenties voorafgaand aan een les waren vaak contextspecifiek en verankerd in de alledaagse praktijk van de docent. Dat wil zeggen, een verandering gericht op het leren van de leerling betekende niet voor iedere docent hetzelfde; de ene docent liet leerlingen eerst individueel nadenken over een onderwerp, terwijl de andere docent direct een klassengesprek startte om uitwisseling van ideeën te stimuleren.

Deze studie laat zien dat docenten door de dialoog aan te gaan over hun eigen lespraktijken geleidelijk zicht krijgen op en betekenis geven aan taalbewustzijn in hun eigen onderwijscontext en zo stapsgewijs en waar nodig aanpassingen kunnen doen om een lespraktijk taalbewuster te maken. In de context van een curriculumherziening betekent dit dat het roer niet volledig om hoeft, maar dat een docent vanuit de eigen praktijk met behulp van contextspecifieke leerdoelen aan de slag kan met een nieuwe onderwijsbenadering.

Implicaties voor wetenschap en praktijk

De resultaten van dit proefschrift bieden relevante en bruikbare inzichten voor de wetenschap, docenten, lerarenopleiders, curriculumontwikkelaars en educatieve uitgeverijen. Bovendien suggereren de resultaten dat het voor het veranderen van opvattingen en lespraktijken van belang is dat alle partijen vanuit hun expertise en ervaring bijdragen aan curriculumontwikkeling en -verandering.

Wetenschap

Taalbewustzijn is een breed concept met een multi-interpreteerbare definitie. Dit proefschrift heeft ons begrip van taalbewustzijn binnen het vreemdetalenonderwijs geconcretiseerd door de dialoog aan te gaan met docenten en op die manier docentopvattingen en lespraktijken met betrekking tot taalbewustzijn te verzamelen en te bediscussiëren. Deze docentopvattingen en lespraktijken hebben ons laten zien dat taalbewustzijn niet als een eenduidig concept wordt ervaren. Taalbewustzijn als benadering binnen het vreemdetalenonderwijs zou daarom niet als een allesomvattend geheel moeten worden gezien, maar als een benadering die, afhankelijk van de onderwijscontext, geïnterpreteerd kan worden vanuit een affectief, cognitief, sociaal, uitvoerings- en/of machtsdomein. Op die manier wordt taalbewustzijn zowel als concept en als benadering concreter, waardoor het beter herkenbaar en toepasbaar wordt in de context van het vreemdetalenonderwijs. Ook laat dit proefschrift zien dat een dialoog met en tussen docenten inzicht kan verschaffen in de mogelijkheden en uitdagingen van taalbewustzijn in het Nederlandse vreemdetalenonderwijs en, in een breder perspectief, in docentopvattingen en lespraktijken met betrekking tot een potentiële curriculumherziening.

Daarnaast laat dit proefschrift zien dat docentopvattingen en lespraktijken wel degelijk kunnen veranderen. Door het benaderen van taalbewustzijn aan de hand van een aantal concrete domeinen en door het interpreteren van verandering aan de hand van een aantal specifieke veranderprocessen is het mogelijk om veranderingen in docentopvattingen in kaart te brengen. Ook is het mogelijk om bestaande lespraktijken te veranderen door aan de hand van een vraag uit de lespraktijk met een specifiek ontwerpprincipe van taalbewustzijn aan de slag te gaan en kenmerken hiervan stapsgewijs te integreren in een lespraktijk. Veranderingen in lespraktijken worden zo in een tijdsbestek van een paar lessen zichtbaar. Het onderzoeken van docentopvattingen en lespraktijken aan de hand van specifieke kenmerken draagt daarmee bij aan wetenschappelijk onderzoek met betrekking tot docentprofessionalisering en onderwijsvernieuwing, en laat zien hoe een nieuwe onderwijsbenadering stapsgewijs door docenten kan worden geïnterpreteerd, gekarakteriseerd en geïntegreerd in een bestaande onderwijscontext. Dit kan leiden tot meer inzichten met betrekking tot een curriculumherziening die vervolgens weer kunnen zorgen voor meer draagvlak van een nieuwe benadering binnen het onderwijs.

Docenten

De kracht van taalbewustzijn in het vreemdetalenonderwijs zit hem in het holistische karakter van deze benadering. Het is daarom van belang dat docenten kennisnemen van de mogelijkheden van taalbewustzijn als benadering binnen het vreemdetalenonderwijs. Dit proefschrift laat zien dat een dialoog een veelbelovende manier is om docentopvattingen en lespraktijken te onderzoeken en te veranderen. Een dialoog kan plaatsvinden in een samenwerking tussen docenten (bijv. in een projectgroep op school) of tussen docent en onderzoeker (bijv. in duo's of in een professionele leergemeenschap), en kan bijdragen aan het bespreken, onderzoeken en het uitdagen van (elkaars) opvattingen en het plaatsen van bestaande of nieuwe opvattingen in de context van de alledaagse onderwijspraktijk. Dit betekent niet dat docenten met ieder aspect van taalbewustzijn aan de slag zouden moeten in hun eigen onderwijs, maar een dialoog kan hen helpen bij het ontwikkelen van een beter begrip van wat deze benadering inhoudt en hoe deze benadering een rol kan krijgen in de eigen onderwijspraktijk.

Het integreren van taalbewustzijn is geen one-size-fits-all benadering en taalbewustzijn moet daarom ook niet worden gezien als een blauwdruk die op dezelfde manier kan worden toegepast op alle aspecten van het vreemdetalenonderwijs. Als docenten taalbewustzijn willen integreren in hun onderwijs, dan kunnen zij stapsgewijs hun opvattingen en praktijken analyseren en deze waar nodig door middel van (kleine) aanpassingen veranderen. Het veranderen van een lespraktijk kan bijvoorbeeld door meer begeleiding en sturing te bieden aan leerlingen die moeilijkheden hebben met bepaalde onderwerpen of door kleine groepsdiscussies te starten waarbij leerlingen in gesprek gaan over elkaars linguïstische en culturele achtergrond. Een taalbewustzijnsbenadering is daarmee geen vereiste voor iedere les, maar een benadering die op verschillende manieren en verschillende momenten kan worden ingezet. Op deze manier kan de ene les verfijnd worden met inzichten vanuit het sociale domein van taalbewustzijn, terwijl voor een andere les het cognitieve domein voor nieuwe inzichten kan zorgen. Hierbij moet vertrouwd worden op de professionaliteit van docenten, zodat zij een zekere mate van vrijheid kunnen ervaren bij het implementeren van taalbewustzijn en op hun eigen manier betekenis kunnen geven aan deze benadering binnen de context van hun eigen onderwijs.

Lerarenopleiders

Curriculumherziening heeft niet alleen consequenties voor docenten, maar heeft ook gevolgen voor lerarenopleiders en de professionele ontwikkeling van docenten en lerarenopleiders. Ongeacht of en hoe de huidige voorstellen voor curriculumherziening geïmplementeerd gaan worden in het talenonderwijs is en blijft het van belang dat docenten zich aan de hand van actuele onderwijsontwikkelingen kunnen blijven professionaliseren. Dat betekent ook

dat lerarenopleiders zichzelf blijven ontwikkelen met het oog op nieuwe ontwikkelingen en dat zij aandacht schenken aan deze ontwikkelingen in de lerarenopleiding en (post-initiële) professionaliseringsactiviteiten. Dit kan stapsgewijs worden aangepakt, net als in de studies in dit proefschrift. Lerarenopleiders in de (vreemde) talen kunnen bijvoorbeeld gezamenlijk hun opvattingen en praktijken met betrekking tot taalbewustzijn in kaart brengen en bediscussiëren. Dit zal enerzijds bijdragen aan de professionele kennis van lerarenopleiders en anderzijds bijdragen aan de professionele ontwikkeling van docenten (in opleiding).

Ook voor het integreren van taalbewustzijn, of iedere andere nieuwe onderwijsbenadering, in het (vreemde)talenonderwijs is een belangrijke rol weggelegd voor lerarenopleiders. Zij kunnen studenten in de lerarenopleiding al kennis laten maken met zo'n nieuwe benadering, bijvoorbeeld door het bespreken van deze benadering bij vakdidactische colleges of door het inpassen van deze benadering bij het ontwerpen en ontwikkelen van een lessenreeks. Daarnaast kunnen lerarenopleiders nascholingsactiviteiten aanbieden voor docenten die al voor de klas staan, zodat ook zij zich verder kunnen professionaliseren met betrekking tot actuele onderwijsontwikkelingen.

Dit proefschrift heeft laten zien dat dialoog en samenwerking veelbelovende manieren zijn om met curriculumherziening aan de slag te gaan. Het schetsen van kaders biedt hierbij de nodige houvast, maar eigen ervaring en interesse geeft vervolgens betekenis en invulling aan deze dialoog. Een dialoog kan bijvoorbeeld plaatsvinden in een professionele leergemeenschap en door samenwerking met collega's, maar er zijn ook verschillende digitale platforms die ruimte bieden aan docentprofessionalisering en het uitwisselen van praktijkvoorbeelden en lessenreeksen (zie bijvoorbeeld de recente initiatieven van 'Nationaal Platform voor de Talen').

Curriculumontwikkelaars

Dit proefschrift draagt ook bij aan het huidige debat rondom curriculumherziening in Nederland en, specifiek nog, aan de herziening van het vreemdetalencurriculum. De huidige voorstellen bevatten een visie op het schoolvak en een beschrijving van de essentiële elementen van het (toekomstig) schoolvak. Op dit moment lijken deze voorstellen echter nog niet te leven bij docenten, enerzijds omdat de inhoud als abstract wordt ervaren en docenten niet direct zien hoe ze deze voorstellen in hun bestaande lespraktijk kunnen integreren, anderzijds omdat er andere urgente problemen spelen, zoals het lerarentekort en de grote werkdruk.

Het onderzoek in dit proefschrift laat zien dat docenten wel degelijk in staat zijn om de voorgestelde curriculumherziening, in dit geval specifiek de focus op taalbewustzijn, te integreren in hun onderwijs. Het bespreken, integreren en evalueren van taalbewustzijn

aan de hand van een aantal ontwerpprincipes uit de literatuur hielp docenten om deze benadering te integreren in hun dagelijkse lespraktijk. Het creëren van een kader, op basis van een aantal vragen en kenmerken, ondersteunde docenten bij het ontdekken en ontwikkelen van hun opvattingen, gaf hen inspiratie en liet tegelijkertijd voldoende ruimte voor het betekenisgeven aan deze curriculumherziening en de stuurkracht van docenten om de benadering te integreren in eigen lespraktijk.

Dit proefschrift laat daarmee zien dat het doel van curriculumontwikkelaars niet het ontwikkelen van een voorschrijvend curriculum moet zijn, maar juist een curriculum dat bestaat uit concrete en haalbare einddoelen die worden ondersteund met behulp van praktische voorbeelden van de manier waarop docenten hun onderwijs kunnen aanpassen en vormgeven in hun specifieke onderwijscontext. Voor curriculumontwikkelaars is het daarom raadzaam om een balans te vinden tussen input (bijv. het voorschrijven van content) en output (bijv. de stuurkracht van een docent) en docenten de ruimte te bieden om betekenis te geven aan en eigenaarschap te ontwikkelen rondom een curriculumherziening.

Kijkend naar het huidige debat rondom meer betekenisvol, samenhangend en uitdagend vreemdetalenonderwijs laat dit proefschrift zien dat taalbewustzijn een benadering is die het vreemdetalenonderwijs een nieuwe impuls kan geven. Het heeft eraan bijgedragen dat docenten hun taalonderwijs in een bredere context zijn gaan bekijken, waarbij ze verschillende ideeën over taal en vreemdetalenonderwijs zijn gaan integreren in hun lespraktijk. Het opnemen van taalbewustzijn in het vreemdetalencurriculum draagt daarmee bij aan de ontwikkeling van een bredere kennisbasis en een bredere kijk op het leren en onderwijzen van taal. Het draait niet alleen om taalvaardigheid, maar ook om het creatief kunnen omgaan met taal, het bewustzijn van de verschillende systemen van taal en de rol van verschillende talen en culturen in de samenleving. Dit benadrukt en onderstreept eens te meer het belang en de relevantie van (vreemde)talenonderwijs en kan mogelijk een bijdragen leveren aan het tegengaan van de kwetsbare reputatie van het (vreemde)talenonderwijs in Nederland.

Educatieve uitgeverijen

Educatieve uitgeverijen ondervinden ook gevolgen van de huidige curriculumherzieningsplannen. Zij zullen hun methoden tegen het licht moeten houden van de voorgestelde curriculumplannen en waar nodig aanpassen. Een analyse en evaluatie van bestaande materialen kan duidelijk maken of de huidige methoden, hoofdstukken of oefeningen aanpassing nodig hebben met het oog op de voorgestelde curriculumherziening.

Dit proefschrift heeft laten zien dat ongeveer de helft van de geanalyseerde lespraktijken al voldoende kenmerken van taalbewustzijn omvat. De lespraktijken die nog niet als taalbewust konden worden gekarakteriseerd lieten wel concrete aanknopingspunten zien waarop verandering zou kunnen plaatsvinden, bijvoorbeeld met betrekking tot de rol van de docent of de leerlingactiviteiten. Daarnaast vormde de lesmethode in veel van de geanalyseerde lespraktijken het uitgangspunt van de lespraktijk. Het veelvuldig gebruik van een lesmethode in combinatie met concrete aanknopingspunten voor verandering impliceert dat educatieve uitgeverijen niet drastisch al hun methoden hoeven aan te passen, maar betekent wel dat het waardevol kan zijn om bestaande methoden te evalueren en zo te inventariseren welke onderdelen om doorontwikkeling of vernieuwing vragen. Hierbij valt te denken aan het expliciteren van de connecties tussen verschillende (vreemde) talen, het toevoegen van vragen om de denkvaardigheden van leerlingen te stimuleren en tegelijkertijd het bieden van voldoende ruimte, zodat de docent op een eigen manier betekenis en invulling kan geven aan een lespraktijk binnen de contextspecifieke kaders van de school, klas of leerling.

Conclusie

Tot slot, de resultaten van dit proefschrift verbreden onze kennis over taalbewustzijn als nieuwe benadering binnen het vreemdetalenonderwijs en als onderdeel van de huidige curriculumherzieningsvoorstellen. Door naar docentopvattingen en lespraktijken te kijken hebben we nieuwe inzichten opgedaan over de aanwezigheid van taalbewustzijn in het huidige onderwijs en hebben we laten zien hoe docentopvattingen en lespraktijken kunnen veranderen wanneer docenten zich gedurende een korte periode doelbewust bezighouden met deze benadering in hun eigen onderwijspraktijk. Bovendien laat dit proefschrift zien dat betekenisgeven aan en integreren van een nieuwe onderwijsbenadering haalbaar is voor docenten als dit stapsgewijs en contextgericht gebeurt, waarbij docentopvattingen en lespraktijken in kaart worden gebracht en doelgericht wordt geëxperimenteerd met de mogelijkheden tot verandering van deze docentopvattingen en lespraktijken.

Hopelijk inspireert dit proefschrift hiermee niet alleen docenten, maar ook lerarenopleiders, beleidsmakers, uitgeverijen en andere onderzoekers om de mogelijkheden van taalbewustzijn voor het (vreemde)talenonderwijs verder te ontdekken en onderzoeken. Samenwerking is hierbij essentieel en vergroot de kans op een duurzame integratie van een nieuwe onderwijsbenadering. Daarnaast laat dit proefschrift zien hoe taalbewustzijn een belangrijke rol kan spelen in de inhoudelijke ontwikkeling van het vreemdetalenonderwijs en draagt het bij aan het huidige debat rondom de doorontwikkeling van het vreemdetalencurriculum en het schoolcurriculum als geheel.

Dankwoord

Hier ligt het dan: mijn proefschrift! Vijf jaar werk samengevat in een boekje. Toen ik in januari 2015 aan dit avontuur begon, kon ik me maar nauwelijks voorstellen wat me allemaal te wachten stond en waar ik aan het eind van de rit zou uitkomen. Maar hier zijn we dan, aan het eind gekomen van mijn promotie-avontuur. Een avontuur dat deed denken aan een reis waarvoor je alleen een ticket hebt: het vertrek en de eindbestemming staan vast, de weg daartussen is een verrassing. Soms weet je niet wat er komen gaat, soms weet je niet of je de volgende dag wel verder kunt en soms moet je weer omkeren en je tocht opnieuw in een andere richting starten, maar bovenal doe je de mooiste ontdekkingen, leer je het meest door soms van de gebaande paden af te wijken, geniet je het meest van de onverwachte dingen en ontmoet je de leukste mensen. Een aantal van deze mensen wil ik hier bedanken.

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Groet!
Ellen

“It’s funny how it’s the little things in life that mean the most
Not where you live, what you drive or the price tag on your clothes
There’s no dollar sign on a piece of mind this I’ve come to know
So if you agree have a drink with me
Raise your glasses for a toast”
- Zac Brown Band (“Chicken Fried”)

Biografie



Ellen van den Broek is op 18 november 1988 geboren in Nijmegen. In 2010 heeft ze de bachelor Taalwetenschap afgerond aan de Radboud Universiteit gevolgd door de master Linguistics in 2012. Tijdens haar studie werd haar interesse voor het leren van taal, meertaligheid en het vreemdetalenonderwijs gewekt. Een stage bij het Expertisecentrum Nederlands resulteerde in een masteronderzoek rondom vroeg vreemdetalenonderwijs in Nederland. Tijdens haar master heeft ze ook een half jaar aan de Universiteit van Stockholm gestudeerd, waar ze extra cursussen over (taal) onderwijs volgde en als student-assistent les gaf aan Zweedse studenten in de bachelor Nederlands.

Na haar afstuderen werkte Ellen mee aan enkele kortlopende onderzoeksprojecten naar meertaligheid in het voorschools en basisonderwijs aan de Universiteit Utrecht en deed ze een traineeship bij het European Centre for Modern Languages in Graz, Oostenrijk, waar ze meewerkte aan projecten die zich richtten op docentprofessionalisering en het inzetten van een meertalige benadering in het talenonderwijs.

In 2015 startte Ellen haar promotieonderzoek naar de rol van taalbewustzijn in het voortgezet onderwijs bij de Radboud Docenten Academie en de Faculteit der Letteren van de Radboud Universiteit. Tijdens haar promotietraject heeft ze verschillende afstudeeronderzoeken en masterscripties begeleid van studenten in de master Engels en in de educatieve master. Daarnaast was Ellen ook lid van de onderwijscommissie van de interuniversitaire onderzoeksschool ICO (Interuniversitair Centrum voor Onderwijswetenschappen).

Sinds eind 2019 werkt Ellen als contentontwerper Engels bij educatieve uitgeverij ThiemeMeulenhoff in Amersfoort.

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