Qualifying Foreign Language Teachers: Is Teacher Training Enough?¹

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1. Introduction

The aim of teacher education is to enable students to work as professional teachers in everyday school life (Evans, 2008). Teacher education programmes must therefore offer students a broad range of relevant knowledge and skills, such as subject content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1986), teaching skills, and knowledge in general education. Ideally, teacher education programmes are both coherent and relevant; in other words, there should be close connections between subject studies, educational studies and the practice field, and what is taught must align with the content of current curricula and with the needs of schools and society.

As far as second (L2) and foreign (L3) language teaching is concerned, previous research has revealed a mismatch between curricular intentions and pedagogical practices, and highlighted that teachers' content and pedagogical content knowledge are factors that may hamper the implementation of curricular intentions (Orafi & Borg, 2009, p. 251; Roussi, 2012). Against this backdrop, the present study seeks to investigate how emerging foreign language teachers in Norway² perceive the relevance of the content of their university language teacher education programmes in relation to the academic demands they meet in their professional practice as teachers in secondary schools. Although an extensive amount of research has examined teacher education in general, few studies have systematically investigated the relation between the content taught in language teacher education programmes on the one hand and the subject-related challenges language teachers meet in the classroom on the other (Huhn, 2012).

The overall aim of this study is to identify potential gaps between university studies and school curricula that might influence emerging teachers' sense of preparedness for teaching their subject and, subsequently, to provide a basis for further development of language teacher education programmes. I am here concerned with content rather than modes of teaching. While I acknowledge the need in teacher education to constantly develop interactive, reflective and contextualized teaching practices, this article focusses on the content taught and the degree to which this content aligns with curricular demands (Fraga-Cañadas, 2010, pp. 395, 409; Tarone & Allwright, 2005, p. 12).

More specifically, this study aims to answer the following research questions (RQs):

- RQ1: To what extent do emerging L3 teachers feel that they have the content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge they need in order to teach different parts of the subject in alignment with current curricular intentions?
- RQ2: Where and how do L3 teachers acquire the relevant knowledge and skills?

In order to answer these questions, I used a combination of interviews and surveys to collect information from emerging and novice foreign language teachers about their sense of

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² In Norwegian educational political discourse, a clear distinction is made between second (L2) and foreign (L3) languages. The second language is always English, and this subject is compulsory for all students from the early years of primary school. The subject of foreign languages (typically French, German or Spanish) is offered from the secondary level onwards, but is compulsory only for students in the general study programme. The participants in this study were all L3 teachers.

preparedness for teaching their subject. For most of the participants, this subject was French, German or Spanish, while some taught less commonly taught languages, such as Chinese or Russian. For reasons of comparison, I included a group of experienced foreign language teachers in the study and gave them the same questions as the emerging teachers group.

The study was set in a Norwegian context. Since the Norwegian Curriculum for Foreign Languages and, hence, Norwegian language teacher education programmes are largely inspired by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (Council of Europe 2001), the study and its findings should be of relevance for the large number of other countries that are inspired by the CEFR or similar frameworks in their language education policies.

2. Theoretical Background

In order to shed light on the above mentioned research questions, I will first review what L3 teachers need to know to be able to teach in accordance with the current paradigm for foreign language teaching (section 2.1). I will then look at novice L3 teachers' challenges in the classroom (section 2.2).

2.1 The Knowledge Base: What Do Language Teachers Need to Know?

For many years, researchers have posed questions about the ideal knowledge base for second and foreign language teacher education³ (Faez & Valeo, 2012; Freeman & Johnson, 1998; Johnson, 2009; Tarone & Allwright, 2005). While all scholars in the field seem to agree that language teachers need subject matter knowledge and general and specific teaching skills, different researchers give primacy to different components. Freeman and Johnson (1998) and Johnson (2009) have criticized the traditional assumption that one can take disciplinary knowledge of language and second language acquisition and apply it to the language classroom (Johnson, 2009, p. 21). They have argued that language teacher education instead should focus more on studies of real language teaching practices. Tarone and Allwright (2005), conversely, have argued that theoretical studies of language and second language acquisition are crucial, but that these studies have to be made relevant for emerging teachers. They formulated the issue in the following terms:

The discontinuity between these academic content courses and the language classroom appears to set up a gap that cannot be bridged by beginning teacher learners. The content of these academic content courses either is or appears to novice language teachers to be irrelevant to the process of learning to teach languages more effectively to real students in real classrooms. Alternatively, it may be content that, however relevant in principle and in the long term, cannot yet be used by novice teachers in the context of their own teaching. (Tarone & Allwright, 2005, p. 12)

³ The research literature has generally used the term "second language teacher education" (SLTE) without distinguishing between second (L2) and foreign (L3, L4, etc.) languages. The distinction in Norwegian terminology (see footnote 2) mirrors the fact that the situation for L2 (i.e., English) in Norwegian schools is very different from that of L3. Students have significant exposure to English in their everyday lives, while exposure to L3 outside the classroom hardly exists. The number of teaching hours differs largely, in the sense that much more time is spent on L2. The knowledge base, however, would include essentially the same components for L2 and L3 teachers.

The quotation from Tarone and Allwright (2005) suggests that it might very well be a discrepancy between whatever *is* relevant in principle, and what is perceived or understood as relevant by newly qualified teachers.

Although the importance of different components of the language teacher knowledge base is debatable, what is certain is that this knowledge base is extremely rich and complex and consists of many different, though related components (Huhn, 2012). Richards (2010) has identified 10 core dimensions of skills and expertise in the language teaching profession: language proficiency, content knowledge, teaching skills, contextual knowledge, language teacher identity, learner-focussed teaching, specialized cognitive skills, theorizing from practice, joining a community of practice, and professionalism. Of particular interest for the present study, which focusses on subject-specific challenges, are the two first: language proficiency and content knowledge. As we will see in the next section, these two dimensions are closely interrelated and distinguishable mainly on a theoretical level. The other issues mentioned by Richards (2010), such as teacher identity, learner-centeredness or the ability to reflect upon practice, are more independent of the discipline taught, and are therefore not addressed in this study.

2.1.1 Language Proficiency

For Richards (2010), *language proficiency* refers to non-native speaker teachers' practical skills in the language that they teach. Language proficiency (i.e., communicative skills) is of utmost importance for L3 teachers today, insofar as the subject has evolved over the last four or five decades and has shifted from having a focus on theoretical knowledge about the language to having a focus on practical skills and communicative competence, where the ultimate goal is to enable students to communicate and interact with other users of the language in various situations (Council of Europe, 2001; Fraga-Cañadas, 2010, p. 395; Gjørven & Trebbi, 2004; Heimark, 2013; Huhn, 2012; Ministry of Education and Research, 2004). In fact, language proficiency is such an essential component that it is indistinguishable from parts of what is traditionally called *content knowledge*, more specifically the "knowing about language"-part (Freeman, Orzulak, and Morrissey 2009, p. 83). As Freeman, Orzulak, and Morrissey (2009, p. 77) have pointed out, teachers use language to teach language. Language thus functions as both the medium and the content of lessons (Freeman et al., 2009, p. 79). When the language of delivery is the language that students are learning, then methodology becomes content and vice versa (Freeman et al., 2009, p. 85). The result is a complex interplay between methodology and content that is not found in other subjects, and which might constitute a subject-specific challenge for language teachers. However, as Freeman et al. (2009) pointed out, much foreign language instruction presents the target language via the medium of the home or national language (Freeman et al., 2009, p. 83). Of the several reasons for this phenomenon, mere tradition and teachers' beliefs about target language use are important (Chambless, 2012, p. 154). Another possible reason may be that university education programmes do not offer students enough exposure to and training in the skills that they need in order to teach effectively; as a result, these teachers do not feel confident enough in their oral abilities to use the language in the classroom (Chambless, 2012, p. 154; Fraga-Cañadas, 2010; Freeman et al., 2009, p. 85; Moeller, 2013, p. 550). Previous research on language studies at the university level has been scarce, but has indicated that the development of skills is not a prioritized area. A quantitative survey among Danish students of German and French showed, for instance, that students wanted a

stronger focus on oral skills in their L3 studies (Andersen & Blach, 2010, pp. 148–151, 158–161).

Numerous scholars working within the field of language teacher education have stressed the fact that a native speaker-like level is not, and should not be, the goal for language teachers (Medgyes, 1994, as cited in Fraga-Cañadas, 2010; Roussi, 2012). According to Richards, teachers need to have acquired a threshold proficiency level in the target language in order to teach effectively, but it is not necessary to have a native-like command (Richards, 2010, pp. 103–104). Nevertheless, Roussi (2012) and Fraga-Cañadas (2010) have shown that linguistic insecurity constitutes a great challenge for teachers of French and Spanish, respectively. Moreover, when asked about their needs for professional development, in-service teachers have frequently identified language training as a priority area (Fraga-Cañadas, 2010; Lavender, 2002, as cited in Richards, 2010, p. 104). One possible explanation may be that teachers unconsciously or consciously set the native speaker norm as the standard they hope to achieve, and hence they set it too high. It might also be, as Fraga-Cañadas (2010) suggested, that many language teachers do not have the adequate level of communicative skills. Her survey among Spanish teachers in US high schools revealed that non-native Spanish teachers avoided speaking Spanish with their native speaker colleagues because they felt uncomfortable with their own level of language proficiency (Fraga-Cañadas, 2010, p. 408). Some teachers might never have acquired the threshold level necessary to feel comfortable in spontaneous dialogue, while others have acquired it once, but seen their skills deteriorate for lack of regular practice (Fraga-Cañadas, 2010, pp. 407, 409).

2.1.2 Content Knowledge

Content knowledge, according to Richards (2010) refers to “what teachers need to know about what they teach” (p. 104). There is no full consensus about what content knowledge should include, but it is common to distinguish between subject matter knowledge on the one hand and pedagogical content knowledge on the other⁴. Pedagogical content knowledge, which captures “ways of representing and formulating the subject that make it comprehensible to others” (Shulman 1986, p. 9) addresses topics like how to plan, conduct and assess teaching. It is often taught in one-year teacher education programmes, while disciplinary knowledge is acquired through university studies of the L3 in question. In Norway, as in many other countries around the world, these studies are often composed of courses in linguistics, literature and cultural knowledge. These course components reflect to a certain extent the subject areas mentioned in the Norwegian curriculum for foreign languages used in schools. For example, the curriculum developed by the Norwegian Directorate of Education and Training (2006) states that L3 pupils should have knowledge about “words, sentence structures and text connectors” (linguistics), “the language region’s geography and history” and “living conditions and current societal relations in the language region” (culture/civilization). In addition, the curriculum explicitly states that pupils should have knowledge about “daily life, traditions, customs and ways of living in the language area” and about “multicultural cooperation and understanding”. For these topics, it is harder to

⁴ Freeman, Orzulac & Morrissey (2009, p. 83) suggest that the concept of pedagogical content knowledge might not work as well with foreign language learning as it does with other subjects. The reason is the complex interplay between language proficiency and knowledge about language (discussed in section 2.1.1). This complex relationship leads the authors to suggest that there are two contents in foreign language learning: the language itself (content¹) and knowledge about language and its use (content²).

see an immediate correspondent in the university studies, but they may be partially covered in civilization courses or similar courses. The above-mentioned competence aims concerning issues such as “geography and history” on the one hand, and those concerning “daily life, traditions, customs and ways of living” on the other hand, reflects the traditional distinction between Culture with a capital C, or what Kramsch (2006, p. 13) calls “culture as a humanistic concept” (literature, history, geography) and culture with a small c, or what Kramsch (2006, p. 13) calls “culture as a sociolinguistic concept” (customs, beliefs, values, codes of conduct etc.). Thus, both these aspects of culture are to be included in the foreign language classroom, according to the Norwegian curriculum⁵.

In addition to these relatively traditional subject components, the Norwegian curriculum places a strong emphasis on the development of pupils’ awareness of the language-learning process. The L3 teacher is expected to teach the pupils how to learn languages, which involves strategy use, self-assessment and insight into one’s own learning process. In brief, it requires the development of learner autonomy. Previous research on Norwegian foreign language teachers has suggested that teachers feel insecure about how to develop learner autonomy, and that they have vague conceptions of what this topic actually means or includes (Heimark, 2013, pp. 213–214).

To sum up, the Norwegian curriculum for foreign languages is ambitious and requires a high level of teacher competence. In addition to good communication skills in the target language, L3 teachers need solid knowledge in a range of language- and culture-related areas, and they need competence to help their pupils develop language learner autonomy and intercultural competence. University studies do not necessarily develop with the same speed as school curricular changes, and it remains uncertain whether all these areas are sufficiently covered in language teacher education programmes. Research-based information on potential discrepancies between university studies and school curricula can make it easier to decide which issues need to be addressed in order to develop language teacher education programmes that are fully in line with the needs of society, schools and students.

2.2 Novice Teachers’ Challenges

Many researchers have studied novice teachers’ challenges in the first years of teaching (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Fantilli & McDougall, 2009), but only in the last few years have scholars started to investigate novice language teachers in particular (Farrell, 2009, p. 185; Farrell, 2012, p. 446). Faez and Valeo (2012), Farrell (2006, 2009) and Richards and Pennington (1998) are among those who have investigated the difficult transition phase between teacher education and the first years of teaching for this group. Richards and Pennington (1998) and Farrell (2006, 2009, pp. 182, 185) observed that, for language teachers as well as novice teachers in general, the ideals of teacher education are often

⁵ It is here interesting to note that Risager (2005) advocates another approach to the teaching of the cultural component, which takes a more global perspective. She stresses that “the empirical field in a geographical sense is not ‘the language area’, but the worldwide network of the target language” (Risager 2005, p. 194), meaning that foreign language teaching could focus on any situation where people speak, read or write the target language, be it as a first, second or foreign language, and whether it takes place in the “target language area” or not. Risager’s approach is perhaps better adapted to today’s globalized world where languages and cultures flow more than ever than is the more traditional approach based on the distinction between Culture and culture. However, the Norwegian curriculum is still based on this latter distinction and I will therefore stick to these terms in this article, which takes curricular demands as its point of departure.

replaced by the realities of the school context. Researchers have widely recognized that teacher education has failed to take into account student teachers' prior beliefs. Many researchers have stressed the importance of addressing such beliefs in order to facilitate the transition between theory learnt at campus and instructional practices adopted in school (Borg, 2003; Crandall, 2000; Richards, 2008). Another, more subject-specific reason for this discrepancy is that the content taught in teacher education and the practices adopted in schools do not align. In Richards and Pennington's (1998) study, these two fields conflict to such an extent that the authors proposed that teacher education should either "explicitly align itself with local practices...or work to change those practices" (p. 190, as cited in Farrell, 2009, p. 185).

Findings from Faez and Valeo (2012) are more promising. These researchers studied a group of novice English teachers' sense of preparedness to teach English as a second language to adults. They found that the new graduates felt moderately well-prepared for their teaching tasks. After having gained some teaching experience (up to 3 years), the same respondents felt even better prepared. This finding indicates that teaching experience in general enhances novice teachers' sense of preparedness (Faez & Valeo, 2012, p. 464).

Of particular relevance for this study are the subject-specific challenges that language teachers face. I have already mentioned the language proficiency challenge. There is no reason to believe that this challenge should be particularly demanding for novice teachers. On the contrary, one could imagine that these would be among the more confident L3 users because they have recently practiced the language during their education and/or possible exchange stays. Nevertheless, in a study among Greek L3 teachers, Roussi (2012) found that, while both experienced and novice teachers felt linguistically insecure in the classroom, only the novice teachers felt stressed by this experience. The experienced teachers accepted the feeling and went on with their teaching unconcernedly. The risk is that linguistic insecurity may make the novice teachers feel less confident and cause them to become textbook dependent and fall back on traditional methods of instruction (Kamhi-Stein, 2009; Moeller 2013, p. 550; Richards, 2010, p. 103; Roussi, 2012). Even though Fraga-Cañadas (2010, p. 409) has shown that teachers' lack of confidence in their speaking skills is detrimental also to more experienced teachers, since it keeps them from engaging in conversation with native speakers, linguistic insecurity might be even more detrimental to novice teachers.

Farrell (2009, p. 185) argued that the field needs more research on novice teachers in order to understand how language teacher education programmes could more effectively prepare teachers for the challenges they face in first-year teaching. In particular, he claimed that researchers should seek to answer the question of what aspects of language teaching should be emphasized in language teacher education programmes judging from the evidence reported from novice teachers (Farrell, 2009, p. 187). This study seeks to shed light on this issue.

3. Methodology

This study adopted a mixed-methods approach in which semi-structured interviews with four novice L3 teachers preceded a survey in which a questionnaire was distributed to a group of emerging L3 teachers and a group of experienced L3 teachers. The survey data constitute the main data source for this article, but quotations from the interviews are used to illustrate and deepen the understanding of findings from the survey wherever relevant. In the following, I present the data collection and analysis procedures for both stages.

3.1 Interviews

The goal of this stage was to gain insight into the challenges that novice L3 teachers meet in their everyday work, in order to be able to develop relevant questions and thematic categories for the subsequent survey. The four respondents were recruited partly through the Department of Teacher Education and School Research's network of partner schools and partly through personal networks and forums for L3 teachers in social media. The only criterion for participation was that of being a novice L3 teacher in secondary education. *Novice* is here defined as having worked in the profession for no more than 3 years (Farrell, 2012, p. 437). All interviews included questions on relevant background information, as summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Informants' Background in Terms of L3, Education, Teaching Experience and Stays Abroad

Interviewees	L3	ECTS ^a in L3	Other higher education	Teaching experience	Stays abroad
T1	Spanish	80-90	Master in English	2-3 years	More than 1 year in Spanish-speaking areas
T2	Spanish	80	Master in English	4 months	1.5 years in Spanish-speaking areas
T3	German	90	Master in Social Sciences	6 months	More than 1 year in German-speaking areas
T4	French	70	Bachelor in Journalism	3 months	More than 1 year in French-speaking areas
^a For teachers who completed their studies before the system with ECTS was introduced, I have "translated" the old credits into ECTS					

The interviews invited the informants to discuss (a) what they considered to be the most essential part of the L3 school subject and (b) what they had perceived as the most central part in the same subject when they studied it at the university. They were then asked (c) to what extent they would say the content of their education aligned with the needs they experienced in the teaching situation. Furthermore, they were asked about (d) where and how they had acquired their L3 competence and (e) how they assessed their own competence in various areas of the L3 teaching profession. Finally, they were asked (f) what they considered to be the biggest challenges in the L3 teaching situation.

A trained research assistant or I conducted each interview at the school where the participant worked, except for one interview which took place at campus. The interviews lasted for 30–60 minutes. All interviews were audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed by a research assistant. The main purpose of this stage was to form a basis for the development of the survey questionnaire. The interview data were therefore analysed through a careful and repeated reading of the transcripts in order to identify recurrent issues which were brought up by several of the respondents. Of particular interest for the research questions in the present article are answers to interview questions 3 and 4. A summary of

these are given in section 4.2. The article by Rødnes, Hellekjær & Vold (2014) provides a more detailed account of the findings from the interviews.

3.2 Survey

The purpose of the survey was to collect quantitative data that could provide answers to RQ 1 and 2. The questionnaire was built on the information gathered in the interviews (Dörnyei & Csizér, 2012, p. 77) and on the main topics stated in the subject curriculum for foreign languages (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2006). A preliminary version of the questionnaire was piloted with a group of 15 L3 student teachers at the end of their one-year teacher training course at the University of Oslo. The piloting phase led to some adjustments in the wording of certain questions in order to enhance clarity and avoid misunderstandings.

3.2.1 Survey Content

In addition to general background questions (summarized in Tables 3 and 4 below), the revised version of the questionnaire contained a mixture of closed and short-answer, open-ended questions (see Appendix). In the closed questions, respondents were asked to evaluate their perceived competence for teaching various parts of the subject on a 5-point Likert scale. The open-ended questions asked for information about where and how the respondents had acquired the relevant competence.

The closed questions were structured around established components of the L3 school subject, largely corresponding with the main areas in the curriculum: oral skills, written skills, culture and language learning. Respondents were asked to indicate to what extent they felt they had the necessary skills to teach and guide the pupils when it came to various aspects (measured by different items) of these components. Although the sample was relatively small, a principal component analysis was run to check whether items grouped together in the predefined categories. As a result of this analysis, the category of culture was split in two since the different elements patterned into two main components. Specifically, Culture1 includes traditional components such as history and geography, while culture2 refers to everyday culture. This corresponds well with the traditional distinction within the field between Culture with a capital C, and culture with a small c (see section 2.1.2). Table 2 presents the items for each construct and the results of the reliability analysis.

Table 2: Overview of the Survey Content in Terms of Constructs, Associated Items and Internal Consistency (Cronbach's Alpha) for Each Item Group

Construct (additive index)	Items	Cronbach's alpha
Oral skills	oral presentations, spontaneous dialogues, pronunciation, vocabulary, linguistic correctness, fluency, adapting language use to different situations, everyday speech, formal speech, listening skills	$\alpha = .93$
Written skills	orthography, grammar, vocabulary, text structure, text cohesion, genre features, adapting language use to different situations, reading	$\alpha = .92$
Culture1	history, geography, political and social systems, literature	$\alpha = .79$
culture2	everyday culture, intercultural competence, contemporary society	$\alpha = .82$
Language learning	language learning strategies, self-assessment, digital tools, plurilingualism and previous language learning, metalinguistic awareness	$\alpha = .78$

Responses to all categories were given on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("to a small extent") to 5 ("to a large extent").

The open-ended questions asked respondents to describe where and how they had acquired competence in the areas of oral skills, written skills and cultural knowledge (see question 13 in the appendix).⁶ The category of language learning was unfortunately not included in the open-ended questions, and the cultural knowledge category was not divided in two (see above). However, both concepts of culture were mentioned in the question, and some respondents divided their answer in two parts.

3.2.2 Participants and Data Collection

The paper-and-pencil questionnaire was distributed among two groups: a convenient sample of emerging foreign language teachers ($n = 47$) and, for comparison, a group of experienced L3 teachers ($n = 46$). The respondents in the emerging teachers group were recruited from the foreign language education studies in the one-year teacher education programme at the University of Oslo.⁷ This is a course that groups together future teachers of different L3s. The programme includes 12 weeks of mentored field placement. The trainee teachers were given time to fill in the questionnaire in an obligatory course in the final weeks of their initial teacher training programme. This gave a response rate of 100% for the emerging teachers group. The respondents in the experienced group were recruited through

⁶ As can be seen from the appendix, the open-ended question included separate categories for the competence areas of vocabulary and grammar knowledge. In the closed questions, however, these areas are subsumed under the larger categories of oral and written skills (items 7.4, 7.5, 8.2 and 8.3). In my analysis of the answers to the open-ended questions (see section 4.2), I have therefore chosen to leave out the answers specifically related to vocabulary and grammar and focus instead on the larger categories of oral and written skills.

⁷ The fact that all student teachers were recruited from the same teacher education programme does not mean that all the respondents had taken all their teacher education in Oslo. Students may apply for the one-year teacher qualification programme no matter the source of their subject studies background. Students come from many different parts of the country, and some come from abroad.

the Directorate of Education and Training's yearly course for assessors of the national written exam.⁸ The course organizer distributed the survey when I was not present. The response rate was 63%. Table 3 gives an overview of gender, age and language distribution in the sample.

Table 3: Background Characteristics of Survey Participants

	Emerging (<i>n</i> = 47)		Experienced (<i>n</i> = 46)		Total	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Gender						
Female	37	78.7	38	82.6	75	80.6
Male	10	21.3	8	17.4	18	19.4
Age						
20-30	16	34.0	2	4.3	18	19.4
30-40	22	46.8	5	10.9	27	29.0
40-50	9	19.1	21	45.7	30	32.3
50+	-	-	18	39.1	18	19.4
Language						
French	25	53.2	10	21.7	35	38.5
German	3	6.4	19	41.3	22	31.9
Spanish	13	27.7	16	34.8	29	24.2
Other	4	8.5	1	2.2	5	5.5

As Table 3 shows, the gender distribution was similar in both groups, but the distribution among languages differed in the sense that German teachers were overrepresented in the experienced group, while French teachers were overrepresented in the emerging teacher group. Table 4 shows participants' background in terms of teaching experience,⁹ number of ECTS and duration of stays abroad.

⁸ The experienced teachers may have their educational background from a range of different higher education institutions, in Norway or abroad. However, they will all have the obligatory Norwegian one-year teacher training course from one of the Norwegian higher education institutions which offer teacher education.

⁹ I here count the obligatory three-month field placement during the one-year programme as teaching experience. Since these respondents were asked to participate before they actually started in a proper teaching position, some of them have only these 3 months of experience. However, many of them have some teaching experience from earlier or from a part-time substitute teacher job. See the discussion section for further information.

Table 4: Survey Respondents' Background in Terms of Number of ECTS, Duration of Stays Abroad and Teaching Experience.

	Number of ECTS in L3									
	30		60		80-90		Master		Other ^a	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Emerging (<i>n</i> = 47)	2	4.3	25	53.2	11	23.4	9	19.1	-	-
Experienced (<i>n</i> =46)	-	-	7	15.2	18	39.1	19	41.3	2	4.3
Total (<i>N</i> = 93)	2	2.2	32	34.4	29	31.2	28	30.1	2	2.2
	Duration of stays abroad									
	None		< 6months		7-12 months		> One year		L1	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Emerging (<i>n</i> = 47)	4	8.5	6	12.6	15	32	15	32	7	15
Experienced (<i>n</i> = 46)	-	-	16	34.8	4	8.7	17	37	9	19.6
Total (<i>N</i> = 93)	4	4.3	22	23.7	19	20.4	32	34.4	16	17.2
	Years of teacher experience									
	< 1 year		1-3 years		4-9 years		10-19 years		20 years or more	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Emerging (<i>n</i> = 47)	32	71	11	24	1	2	1	2	-	-
Experienced (<i>n</i> =46)	-	-	1	2	11	24	15	32.6	19	41.3
Total (<i>N</i> = 93)	32	35.2	12	12.9	12	12.9	16	17.2	19	20.4
^a These are respondents who have taken their education abroad a long time ago, and it is hard to know what it corresponds to in terms of ECTS.										

Responses from native speaker teachers (*n* = 16) were excluded from the analysis of the open-ended survey questions. In addition, six other respondents did not answer these questions, and the total number of questionnaires analysed for the open-ended questions is thus 71.

3.2.3 Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to answer RQ1: how well-prepared the teachers felt (see Table 5 below). Non-parametric testing was run to test the difference between the two groups.

Pearson's *r* correlation tests were run to determine the relations between the background factors ECTS, teacher experience and stays abroad on the one hand with sense of preparedness on the other. While Pearson's *r* says something about the relationship between two variables, it does not say anything about causality (Pallant, p. 128). There is always the possibility of other confounding variables and additional tests might therefore be necessary. In this study, a partial correlation was run in order to control for the language variable (see below). The correlation tests, in combination with the analysis of survey respondents' answers to the open-ended questions and interviewees' utterances in the interviews, informed RQ2 about where and how the respondents have acquired the necessary competence.

Responses to the open-ended questions were analysed following a systematic categorization procedure (cf. Dörnyei, 2007 pp. 199–200). I read through the respondents'

answers for each of the competence areas and sorted the different segments into categories. These categories were partly predefined due to the broad categorization implied in the wording of the question (see Appendix). Other and more nuanced categories emerged from the respondents' answers. As new categories continually emerged, the responses were analysed in this way in several cycles, until all answers were suitably fitted into the existing categories. This sorting process resulted in a series of main categories (e.g., stays abroad, formal education, regular practice, reading and media), each of which had several subcategories, and some also had sub-subcategories. I further discuss the subcategories in section 4.2.

Each respondent could list several ways of acquiring one and the same type of skills, and the number of answers does therefore not coincide with the number of respondents. For example, in discussing the acquisition of oral skills, one respondent said: *I acquired oral skills through language courses and numerous vacations in Spain*. This response was counted as two elements and coded in the sub-subcategories courses in target language area and vacation/travel, respectively, both subsumed under the subcategory short stays abroad, which in turn belonged to the broader category of stays abroad. For each skill, the number of elements belonging to the different categories was counted. Some elements were counted twice. For instance, to the question of where and how s/he acquired written skills, one of the respondents answered: *university, both in France and Norway*. This answer was coded in the categories of formal education and stays abroad.

4. Findings

4.1 RQ1: L3 Teachers' Sense of Preparedness for Teaching Different Parts of the Subject

Table 5 gives the mean scores (M), the median (Mdn) and standard deviations (SD) for the different subject components for both groups, in addition to the results of non-parametric testing of group differences.

Table 5: Respondents' Sense of Preparedness for Teaching Various Parts of the Subject

	Emerging (<i>n</i> = 47)			Experienced (<i>n</i> = 46)			Group difference ^a		
	<i>M</i>	<i>Mdn</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Mdn</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>U</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i>
Oral skills	4.07	4.1	0.652	4.40	4.6	0.683	720.5	$p \leq 0.01$	0.29
Written skills	4.00	3.9	0.704	4.52	4.4	0.457	590.0	$p \leq 0.01$	0.39
Culture1	3.89	4.0	0.772	4.06	4.0	0.754	936.0	ns	0.12
culture2	4.16	4.0	0.712	4.15	4.3	0.734	1077.0	ns	0.00
Language learning	3.71	3.8	0.638	3.83	3.8	0.662	927.0	ns	0.07
All components	3.98	4.0	0.548	4.28	4.4	0.504	744.0	$p \leq 0.01$	0.27
Notes: ^a Test statistic, <i>p</i> values and effect size (<i>r</i>) for differences between groups, as measured by the Mann–Whitney <i>U</i> test.									

As Table 5 reveals, the emerging L3 teachers generally perceived their competence as solid, with a mean score of 3.98 out of 5 for all components taken together. This mirrors the findings from the interviews, in which all four participants said they felt well-prepared for the job. The experienced teachers reported even higher levels of sense of preparedness with a mean score of 4.28. The difference between the groups is significant. A closer look reveals

that the difference stems from the components oral and written skills. When it comes to the cultural dimensions and the language learning component, the emerging teachers felt prepared to the same extent as the experienced teachers. The component written skills for the experienced group stands out most, in that it has a high mean and median and a relatively low SD; thus, the experienced teachers felt very confident about teaching writing skills. Both groups felt the least confident when it came to the component language learning.

4.2 RQ2: Where and How L3 Teachers Acquire the Relevant Knowledge and Skills

The emerging teachers thus felt quite well-prepared for the language teacher role. Findings from the interviews suggest that stays abroad play an important role in building up competences for parts of the subject. All the interview informants had backgrounds with relatively long stays in the target language area. They all strongly stressed that their feeling of well-preparedness stemmed not only from their university education, but also from their stays abroad. In particular, the informants emphasized the value of these stays for the development of their oral language skills and for their knowledge about everyday culture in the target language area. They stated that these issues were far from adequately dealt with in their university studies. As for oral skills, they felt that, while the university studies provided them with a good mastery of an academic and mainly written language, the practice of everyday language use was virtually absent:¹⁰

Having lived in a German-speaking country and culture, that's incredibly useful [...] these everyday words and expressions that you don't learn so much of during your academic studies [...] the pupils are very interested in that. (T3)

I can follow academic teaching in Spanish; that's no problem, but the threshold to talk became very high [...]. It would have been good to learn some everyday language. (T2)

In the same vein, they stated that, during their academic studies, they learned about Culture (see above) but not everyday culture. To fulfil the curricular demands for this component, they drew on their experiences from stays abroad:

I'm thinking that my cultural understanding of Spanish and actually my practical skills stem from those stays. Apart from the literature part, but that's [...] very high culture [...]. The everyday culture part I had nothing of at the university. (T2)

Even though they strongly stressed the value of stays abroad, the interviewees also pointed out that their academic L3 studies constituted a highly relevant and necessary basis for their profession as L3 teachers:

The theoretical foundation in a sense I got that at the university. (T4)

There was a lot of thorough grammar teaching, so I felt I got that [...]. I think it's important [...] to have a lot of grammar knowledge, then you can select what's relevant for the pupils. We also went through several periods of German literature, and I found that very useful. (T3)

The interviewees' strong sense of preparedness thus stemmed both from their academic studies in the home country and from longer stays in the target language area. In order to see whether these findings also applied for larger groups, correlation tests were run to shed light on the relations between the different background factors (see above) and the sense of preparedness. In addition, as mentioned above, open-ended questions prompting the respondents to state where and how they had acquired the relevant competence were included in the questionnaire. Table 6 below presents the results from the correlation tests.

¹⁰ The quotations have been slightly changed for reasons of reader friendliness, but there has been no change of the content of the message.

Table 6: Correlations (in Pearson's r) Between Teachers' Perception of Competence for Teaching Various Parts of the Subject and Numbers of ECTS, Stays Abroad and Years of Experience (N = 93)

Perceived competence for teaching	ECTS	Stays abroad	Teaching experience
Oral skills	.293**	.415**	.313**
Written skills	.328**	.234*	.484**
Culture1	.167	.292**	.162
culture2 (everyday)	.076	.336**	-.024
Language learning	.119	-.024	.151
The subject as a whole	.289**	.329**	.345**

Notes: * $p \leq 0.05$ ** $p \leq 0.01$

The table shows that the sense of preparedness correlates strongly with the number of ECTS, with the duration of stays abroad, and with the amount of teaching experience. The strongest correlation is found between sense of preparedness and teaching experience. A partial correlation controlling for language was run since German teachers were overrepresented in the experienced group and French teachers in the emerging teachers group. A partial correlation test statistically removes the influence of a potentially confounding variable (in this case the language variable) and gives a clearer picture of the relationship between the two initial variables (in this case teacher experience and sense of preparedness) (see Pallant, p. 145). Controlling for the language variable, the correlation between sense of preparedness and teaching experience barely changed ($r = .319, p = .002$).

The three factors correlate differently with different parts of the subjects. While the number of ECTS and the number of years of teaching experience correlate strongly with the sense of preparedness for teaching written skills, the duration of stays abroad correlates only moderately with this component. In return, stays abroad correlate strongly with the sense of preparedness for teaching oral skills and for everyday culture. Also ECTS and teaching experience correlate with the sense of preparedness for teaching oral skills, whereas they do not correlate with everyday culture. This latter component correlates with stays abroad only. None of the factors correlate with the sense of preparedness for teaching the component language learning.

The analysis of the answers to the open-ended questions corroborates these findings. As mentioned in Section 3.2.3, these answers were categorized into main categories which in turn had a number of subcategories. Table 7 gives an overview of the categories for the different subject components as well as the number of responses falling into each of these categories for each of the two groups.

Table 7: Classification of Answers to the Open-Ended Questions: Categories and Counts

Construct	Main category	Subcategories	Em ^a .	Exp ^b .	Total
Oral skills	Stays abroad	Long stays: living (52), working (6), studying (5)	37	26	63
		Short stays: holiday (8), courses (4)	5	7	12
		Stays abroad total	42	33	75
	Regular practice	Private relations	7	6	13
		Professional relations	5	1	6
		Other/unspecified	4	3	7
		Regular practice total	16	10	26
	<i>Formal education</i>	Higher education	7	6	13
		School	5	1	6
		Formal education total	12	7	19
	Media	TV, Internet, radio, film	4	2	6
	Willingness to speak	Willingness to speak	1	1	2
	Teaching practice	Teaching practice	2	-	2
Written skills	<i>Formal education</i>	Higher education	23	31	54
		School	8	5	13
		In target language area	3	3	6
		Formal education total	34	39	73
	Stays abroad	Long stays: living (17), working (3), studying (6)	17	9	26
		Short stays: courses (3)	2	1	3
		Stays abroad total	19	10	29
	Regular practice	Emails, online chat, letters, etc	9	5	14
	Reading	Literature, newspapers, etc.	5	3	8
	Teaching practice	Teaching practice		3	3
	Stays abroad	Long stays: living (42), working (3)	30	15	45
		Short stays: holiday (9), courses (2)	5	6	11
		Stays abroad total	35	21	56
	<i>Formal education</i>	Higher education	15	16	31
		School	2	1	3
		Formal education total	17	17	34
Culture (1 & 2)	Intercultural encounters	Contact with people from target language area	7	7	14
	Media	Radio, film, Internet	6	7	13
	Reading	Literature	6	6	12
	Personal interest	Personal interest	4	4	8

^aem = emerging teachers group. ^bexp. = experienced teachers group

There does not seem to be any notable differences between the two groups when it comes to where and how they acquired their competence, except perhaps for the category of culture, where a larger number of the emerging teachers pointed to stays abroad as a source of knowledge.

For oral skills, the majority of answers fell within the main category stays abroad, and most of these referred to longer stays. The majority referred to longer stays in general (52), while 11 respondents referred specifically to having studied and/or worked in the target language area. Several of the respondents emphasized the value of, and need for, longer stays:

I acquired oral skills and knowledge about everyday culture by staying in this country. Longer stays in target language areas should be obligatory for foreign language teachers!

The second largest category is regular practice. Subsumed under the subcategory of private relations are answers which mention the acquisition of skills through dialogue with friends, partners, family (or family-in-law) and acquaintances:

I acquired oral skills because I was married to a Cuban and had Spanish-speaking friends.

I acquired oral skills when I had a German boyfriend.

The subcategory of professional relations includes answers that pointed to the value of working with native speakers of the target language:

Oral skills: I used to work in a Norwegian–German work environment.

Formal education comes third, followed by media. Two respondents mentioned willingness to speak, and two mentioned their own teaching practice.

For written skills, the pattern is quite different. The most frequently cited category was formal education:

I acquired written skills through school, university and reading.

Six respondents mentioned formal education in the target language area:

Written skills: university studies in Norway and Mexico.

Stays abroad comes second, with 29 answers including the six which specified formal education in the target language area. The third category, regular practice, groups together references to regular written communication like online chatting, emails or letter correspondence with speakers of the target language. Eight respondents mentioned reading (see the example above), and three referred to their own teaching as a source of acquiring written skills.

The two by far most cited categories for the question about acquisition of cultural knowledge are stays abroad and formal education. These are followed by contact with people from target language area, media and literature reading. In addition, eight respondents stated that they had acquired cultural knowledge through personal interest.

To sum up, the respondents seem to have acquired oral skills primarily through stays in the target language area, through traveling and through interaction with family and friends who are native speakers of the language in question. Written skills, on the other hand, have primarily been acquired through academic studies. When it comes to cultural knowledge, stays abroad and formal education both seemed to be important, with a few more respondents mentioning stays abroad. This duality is reasonable given the complexity of the category (high culture and everyday culture). In addition to the large categories of stays abroad and formal education, the categories of reading, media and the more

unspecified personal interest appeared as quite important for cultural knowledge, suggesting that a general interest in society and culture is important for language teachers' competence building in this area.

5. Discussion

This article started out by asking to what extent emerging L3 teachers feel prepared to teach their subject in alignment with curricular intentions. The findings revealed that the emerging teacher respondents felt relatively well-prepared for the teaching tasks, with a mean of 3.98 out of 5 points. This figure is similar to what Faez and Valeo (2012) found in their study (6.7 out of 10). It is possible that the novice teachers in the present study felt so well-prepared because they had not yet started their work as teachers; as such, they did not yet know what they were lacking when it came to relevant competencies and skills. However, the teachers in the present study had already had their "reality shock" (Veenman, 1984) during their field placement. Moreover, Faez and Valeo (2012) showed that, for the large majority of novice teachers, the sense of preparedness *increases* during the first years of teaching; however, one important distinction is that Faez and Valeo's teachers worked in adult classrooms.

Although the difference between the emerging teachers group and the experienced group is statistically significant, it is not very large. The participating experienced teachers were not only experienced, but were also what might be called "expert" teachers since they were recruited from the Directorate of Education and Training's yearly course for assessors for the national written exam¹¹. As a result, the two groups in this study represented two extremes of the scale when it came to experience; on one side were emerging teachers with hardly any experience in the classroom, while on the other were a group of very experienced and also highly recognized L3 teachers. It would seem reasonable to expect quite large differences between the two groups. However, in terms of pedagogical content knowledge, the groups might not be so very different, since we must assume that the experts kept up-to-date with new ideas in the field and the emerging teachers had all this fresh in mind, since they had just finished the teacher education programme. The intensive work with the subject that the teacher learners so recently had done might explain why their sense of preparedness did not differ greatly from that of the experienced teachers.

The fact that duration of stays abroad and teaching experience correlate more strongly with sense of preparedness for teaching oral skills than does the number of ECTS can be seen as a sign of the importance of regular practice for the maintenance of oral skills. This is also reflected in the open-ended answers (see Table 7). One of the respondents elaborated on this issue in her/his response by expressing a need for constant practice in order to maintain the skills at an appropriate level:

It is extremely demanding for foreign language teachers to keep up-to-date. Ideally, one should have regular stays in the target language area. This is hard to combine with a hectic family life. When you are not able to practice, your linguistic skills deteriorate.

It might seem surprising that, for written skills, teacher experience has an even higher correlation than university studies, which are traditionally writing-oriented. I would here like to point out that the question was about how well-prepared they felt to *teach* written skills, not how good their own writing skills were. This framing of the question was

¹¹ Teachers who are invited to the assessors' course are often highly recognized teachers with extensive experience.

chosen deliberately because I wanted to capture what the teachers perceived as relevant, not only the knowledge they possessed. This may explain why teacher experience, and not the university studies, correlates the most strongly with the component of written skills.

Another interesting finding is that the sense of preparedness for teaching everyday culture has no positive correlation whatsoever with teacher experience (see Table 6). Stays abroad, however, are strongly correlated with this point. One explanation for this may be that for the experienced teachers a long time have passed since they were young (exchange) students who travelled around and lived temporarily abroad. With steady jobs, family and children, people travel less and are generally less mobile. This, in turn, reduces the possibilities for direct impulses from other cultures, and it takes quite some effort and time to stay up-to-date through media and the Internet.

As we saw in section 4.2, none of the factors correlate with the sense of preparedness for teaching the component language learning. This is not necessarily a sign that this component is not satisfactorily covered through current teacher education programmes. This specific component, to the extent that it is covered, would be covered in the methods courses in the one-year teacher education programme rather than during subject studies. Since this year is obligatory for everyone who wants to become a teacher, it is normal that the sense of preparedness for this component does not correlate with the number of ECTS in the subject. Nevertheless, Table 5 shows that both teacher groups felt least confident with this component. This aligns with findings from previous research, stating that Norwegian L3 teachers have only vague ideas of what exactly this topic includes (Heimark, 2013) or they hesitate to work explicitly with it in class (Haukås 2012 and 2016, p. 13). However, even for this component, the teachers felt moderately- to well-prepared.

Returning to the knowledge base and the components of language proficiency and content knowledge, the respondents seemed to believe that they had this competence relatively well in place. They were quite confident in their own skills. In general, they felt that they had the necessary content knowledge, although some were a little hesitant about some of the aspects under Culture1, and quite a few admitted they felt insecure about the language learning component. However, it is clear from the findings in this study that this competence is not acquired through university studies alone. On the contrary, knowledge about everyday culture and to a certain extent the development of oral skills seem to be left primarily to the private sphere, through stays in the target language area and communication with friends who are native speakers.

These findings point towards a certain discrepancy between the university foreign language studies on the one hand, and curricular intentions and language classroom realities on the other. This gap between what teachers need to know in the classroom and what they learn at university has been noted before (Orafi & Borg, 2009; Roussi, 2012; Tarone & Allwright, 2005), and is clearly not specific to the Norwegian context. However, it seems clear that, whereas the Norwegian school curriculum gradually, and through many reforms, has gone from a theoretical and writing-based approach to language learning to a more practical and functional approach, university studies have not developed in the same manner (see also Huhn, 2012, p. 178). This means that, in order to fulfil the requirements of the school curriculum, where everyday language use and everyday culture are central issues, L3 student teachers need to supplement their education with other components, such as with stays in the target language area.

This study has some limitations which are worth noticing. Firstly, while the interviewees were novices who had started working as L3 teachers, the larger group which

filled in the questionnaire were emerging teachers in the final weeks of their teacher training programme. All had conducted their field placements, but they did not necessarily have any other teaching experience. As a result, many of the respondents in this group had very limited teaching experience. They might have answered differently if I had asked them some time into their first year of teaching in a “real job”. On the other hand, their answers were quite consistent with the opinions put forward by the interviewees. Secondly, there is no clear-cut distinction between stays abroad on the one hand and formal university education on the other hand, as many students take part of their formal education in the L3 abroad. It is possible that many of the survey respondents referring to the value of stays abroad also did some formal education in the language there, and it is hard to distinguish the value of the stay itself from the value of the formal teaching. Thirdly, the survey findings are based on self-reports and do not measure how well-prepared the candidates actually were. A combination of self-reports and studies of respondents’ actual practice could have given a fuller picture and might be an interesting avenue for further research. It might be that my respondents answered according to what they thought was expected of them, and/or that they felt they should give positive ratings since the survey was distributed by one of the teachers whose task was exactly to prepare them for teaching their L3 (see Haukås, 2016, p. 14). However, the anonymity and the fact that I strongly stressed that I needed honest answers for research reasons to some extent reduce the likelihood that this happened.

6. Implications for Practice

The discrepancy between university foreign language studies on the one hand, and curricular intentions and language classroom realities on the other might be met in several ways. Some would claim that L3 teachers themselves need to take responsibility for the development and maintenance of oral skills and everyday cultural knowledge. Just like a physical exercise teacher must stay fit and practice some kind of sports, a language teacher must keep speaking the language and practice her/his communicative skills. Such a stance, however, tends to trivialize the responsibilities of the education sector. Oral skills and knowledge of everyday culture are two essential parts of a language teacher’s knowledge base. Even if professional language teachers are expected to do what they can to keep up-to-date in their own subjects and to take responsibility for maintaining their skills (see Fraga-Cañadas, 2010, p. 411), the educational domain must take their part of the responsibility. The development and maintenance of such important skills and competences cannot be left to the private sphere alone. Pre- and in-service teacher education, as well as local educational authorities and school leaders, should independently and jointly enable and facilitate this process of professional development by offering regular opportunities to practice skills. For schools and in-service teacher education, this can be done by organizing informal conversation groups for speakers of the relevant language, by sending L3 staff on regular professional development courses in the target language area, or by offering the necessary time and equipment so that teachers can communicate with other speakers of the language through digital tools, for example in international collaborative projects. The role of constant in-service professional development becomes especially clear when we consider the fact that all teaching is situated and contextualized (Crandall, 2000; Faez & Valeo, 2012; Richards, 2010), and that the most relevant opportunities for professional reflection often spring out of concrete teaching situations and classroom experiences.

When it comes to pre-service teacher education, Fraga-Cañadas (2010, p. 410) has criticized the divide that exists between different parts of language teacher education and

that tends to hinder the maintenance of skills. Specifically, acquisition of content and skills are left to the language and literature departments, while methods courses are the responsibility of the educational departments. Language proficiency development thus tends to stop when teachers enter a teacher education programme. Fraga-Cañadas (2010) calls for a more integrated approach, where spaces for dialogue and cooperation are created, and in which students can continue to practice their language skills in the methods course. One important challenge for methods courses is that they often group together teacher learners with different L3s. It can therefore be hard to find good opportunities to practice oral skills. Different models for the organization of methods courses have emerged that aim to address this issue; for example, in the Oslo model, students with different L3s are together in some of the course seminars and divided into language groups in others (Vold, 2015).

Another issue that could be discussed is whether or not stays abroad should be an obligatory component for all future L3 teachers. Although stays abroad do not automatically lead to high oral proficiency levels in the target language (Di Silvio, Diao, & Donovan, 2016; Kinginger, 2008), research has shown that even short stays abroad lead to significant gains in language proficiency for most students (Llanes & Muñoz, 2009). Yet another issue for pre-service teacher education to consider is the assessment system; in other words, to what extent is the importance of solid oral skills and knowledge of daily life reflected in this system? The answer certainly varies between institutions, but should always be a question that university programme developers ask themselves.

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