Through their own words: A corpus based description of the secondary student teachers’ worries and challenges during their practicum studies at the Madrid Region.

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AELINCO Valladolid
March 7th 2015
• To present UAM-ETNA, the corpus of English Teachers’ Narratives.

• To illustrate the potentialities of UAM-ETNA for teacher training.

• with a corpus based discourse study about the main successes, demands and challenges faced by 20 EFL pre teachers during their practicum in different Secondary schools across the region of Madrid.
ETNA- UAM

The Corpus of English Teachers’ NArratives

Specialized corpus on teaching narratives

2010-2014

5 000 000 words so far

- “Análisis de Estrategias Discursivas en inglés y castellano: Interacciones Socio-Cognitivas y Funcionales”
  - (FFI2012-30790)

- Research Team: 10 members
- Period: 1/01/2013-31/12/2015
A teacher’s narrative is any oral or written text in first person singular which makes reference to his/her activities and knowledge as teacher and to his/her beliefs and attitudes related to teaching.

(Cortazzi, 1993; Cortazzi & Jin, 2000)

Reflection strengthens the connection between theory (learned at the University) and practice (at school).
## ETNA-UAM DESIGN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ETNA-UAM</th>
<th>Newly qualified EFL teachers</th>
<th>EFL Student teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Written narratives (80%)</td>
<td>Written diaries (40%)</td>
<td><strong>Written diaries (40%)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spoken narratives (20%)</td>
<td>Meeting and post observation interviews with school mentor (10%)</td>
<td>Post observation interviews with school mentor (5%); Peer coaching sessions (5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ETNA- UAM WRITERS

- Student teachers at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education (UAM).
- Specialism in Primary and Secondary EFL teaching.

- Both native and non native speakers of English
- High linguistic competence
- Highly trained as teachers, but inexperienced
• What do EFL student teachers speak about in their written diaries?

• How do they evaluate the different events and participants mentioned in their written narratives?

• What is the role of the different participants mentioned (mentors, students, University) in shaping the EFL student teachers’ professional identity as teachers?
### Sample characteristics

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Length</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of segments</td>
<td>329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Words in segments</td>
<td>99619</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Text complexity</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Av. Word Length</td>
<td>4.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Av. Segment Length</td>
<td>274.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max. Segment length</td>
<td>707</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lexical Density</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lexemes per segment</td>
<td>118.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lexemes % of text</td>
<td>43.24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DATA: SAMPLE (2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>NUMBER OF STUDENTS</th>
<th>GENRE</th>
<th>NATIONALITY</th>
<th>TEACHING CONTEXT</th>
<th>TEXT NO.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>MIXED</td>
<td>EFL</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>SPANISH</td>
<td>EFL</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>F/M</td>
<td>MIXED</td>
<td>CLIL/EFL</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>SPANISH</td>
<td>EFL</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13 WEEK ALTERNATE PRACTICUM
METHOD: ANALYSIS PROCEDURE

- **TOPICS** (inductive analysis)

**UAM CORPUS TOOL (3.1.1.3)** (O’Donnell, 2007)

Keywords, wordlists, subjectivity data etc.
1. **Comprehensibility**: how comprehensible or easy, or how incomprehensible or difficult, does this appear?
2. **Emotivity**: how positive or how negative does this appear?
3. **Expectedness**: how expected or unexpected does this appear?
4. **Genuineness**: how real, true, and authentic, or how fake, false, and artificial, does this appear?
5. **Importance**: how important or how unimportant does this appear?
6. **Necessity**: how necessary or how unnecessary does this appear?
7. **Possibility**: how possible or how impossible does this appear?
8. **Reliability**: how likely or how unlikely does it appear that this will happen?
9. **Causality**: what are the reasons and what are the consequences?

(Bednarek, 2006)
As students were doing their final exams, I could not keep on analysing the group I will be working with. As they can program their exams as they want to, few students were in class. I am worried because I am noticing now that doing a research with this group is going to be very difficult as I can never know how many students are going to attend the class. That is, they can program their exams whenever they want to, the number of my students will always vary. I think I will have to speak with my tutor to see how we can solve this situation, maybe telling the students that certain days they must be in class. I hope it works.
RESULTS: Professional relationships at school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main topics</th>
<th>N: 8675 sentences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABOUT STUDENTS</td>
<td>2948 (33.98%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERSONAL</td>
<td>2608 (30.06%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABOUT SCHOOL ISSUES</td>
<td>1758 (20.27%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABOUT COLLEAGUES_TEACHERS_AT_SCHOOL</td>
<td>695 (8.01%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABOUT THE UAM (I.E.UNIV. MENTOR, M.A.)</td>
<td>82 (0.95%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHER</td>
<td>24 (7.29%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RESULTS: Degree of explicitness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expliciteness</th>
<th>N: 8675 sentences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Explicit</td>
<td>1865 (63.26%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implicit</td>
<td>1078 (36.57%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambiguous</td>
<td>5 (0.17%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“To engage these students is a real challenge” (J_RJ7b)

“It is the best job and it has a lot of good things” (E_RJ13b)

“I was very happy” (E_RJ3c)

“She has been teaching for 25 years” (AM_RJ10)

“Obviously, reading and writing are also very fundamental” (S_RJ5b)
About students

OUR SUBJECTS REFLECT ABOUT THEIR STUDENTS’ CAPACITIES, THEIR PSYCHOLOGICAL DISPOSITION AND THEIR BEHAVIOUR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluative parameters</th>
<th>N: 2948</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive-negative</td>
<td>1320 (44.78%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected-unexpected (comparison: not, no hardly, only)</td>
<td>683 (30.06%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Necessity-unnecessary</td>
<td>223 (7.56%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“He is not that good at English” (AMT_RJ12)

“In 4th students are shier and hate public speaking” (AMT_RJ10a)

“Students anwered correctly” (ELM_RJ1b)

“Students need help with their oral exams” (L_RJ13)

“They were all complaining, questioning why they had to do exams and misbehaving” (AR_RJ2a)

“They did not do the activity very well” (AMT_RJ11)
Key terms for students

- Understood (P=100)
- Participative (P=59.50)
- Advanced (P=54.54)
- Engaged (P=29.75)
- Interest (P=22.31)
- Motivated (P=21.25)
- Low (P=75.86)
- Disruptive (P=55)
- Tired (P=44.62)
- Eager (P=22.31)
RESULTS: Getting personal

OUR SUBJECTS SPEAK ABOUT:
1) THEIR PERSONAL EXPECTATIONS AND FEELINGS CONCERNING THEIR STUDENTS.
2) THEIR OWN TEACHING PERFORMANCE.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluative parameters</th>
<th>N: 2608</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive-negative</td>
<td>985 (37.77%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected-unexpected (comparison: not, no hardly, only)</td>
<td>602 (23.08%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliability (high)</td>
<td>251 (9.62%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posibility (can, be able to)</td>
<td>198 (7.59%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“I have learned a lot of things from my students I could have never imagined” (AM_RJ13)

“I knew teaching teenagers was not going to be an easy task” (AR_RJ2a)

“It is a bit disappointing to realise that what you prepared does not work as planned” (J_RJ10a)

“If a teacher creates a good atmosphere, students will feel comfortable and feel free to express themselves and ask questions” (CS_RJ8)

“I realised I was not going to be in control of the situation” (ELM_RJ9b)
Key terms for personal diaries:

- Nervous (P=124.75)
- Stressed (P=73)
- comfortable (P=33.47)
- pleased (P=33.47)
- happy (P=23.33)
- confident (P=15.21)
- feeling (P=20.86)
## Mental states (peripheral evaluative parameter)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mental state</th>
<th>N: 2608</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>expectation:-expectations</td>
<td>979 (37.54%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>knowledge:-know,-recognise</td>
<td>814 (31.21%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>state-of-mind:-alert,-tired,-confused</td>
<td>358 (13.73%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>emotion:-scared,-angry</strong></td>
<td>221 (8.47%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>process:-forget,-ponder</td>
<td>84 (3.22%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>belief/disbelief:-accept,-doubt</td>
<td>42 (1.61%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>volition/non-volition:-deliberately,-forced-to</td>
<td>41 (1.57%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RESULTS: Worried about some school issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main topics</th>
<th>N: 1758</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom activities</td>
<td>1003 (57%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaviour and discipline</td>
<td>247 (14%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textbooks &amp; materials</td>
<td>100 (5.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (ICT, teaching techniques, assessment, bilingualism, etc.)</td>
<td>407 (23.15%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Student-teacher ratio?
- Disadvantaged students?
- Bullying?

Teaching methods? Theory?
“The listening exercise was too long and boring” (JC_RJ6)

“The warm up activity with the 1st of ESO student did not work” (J_RJ2b)

“They were chatting all the time” (AMT_RJ3)

“I could have included more interactive activities in the teaching unit” (VF_RJ11b)

“Textbooks reinforce gender stereotypes too” (ELM_RJ10b)

“Activities are repetitive and mechanical” (ELM_RJ5a)
Key terms for school issues

**BEHAVIOUR AND DISCIPLINE**
- misbehaving (P=35)
- behaved (P=27.64)
- quiet (P=20.43)
- properly (P=16.54)
- talking (P=11.91)

**CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES**
- disaster (P=40)
- digital (P=25)
- boring (P=25)
- original (P=19)
- interactive (P=15)

**TEXTBOOKS & CLASS MATERIALS**
- useful (P=25)
- appealing (P=17)
- simple (P=16)
- lack (P=15.23)
## About the school mentor

### SECONDARY ROLE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluative parameters</th>
<th>N: 388</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Positive-negative</strong></td>
<td>162 (24.47%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected-unexpected (comparison: not, no hardly, only)</td>
<td>97 (14.65%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Posibility</strong></td>
<td>26 (3.96%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Necessity-unnecessary</strong></td>
<td>22 (3.32%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- busy (P=13.23)
- friendly (P=8.16)
- advise (P=6.38)
“She is helping me a lot and I do think I am learning” (AMT_RJ8)

“My mentor does not prepare her lessons in advance” (AM_RJ8)

“She does a very POOR evaluation” (VF_RJ11b)

“He won’t use my teaching materials” (MA_RJ6a)

“She is really busy and I do not want to disturb her” (MER_RJ1a)
SUMMARY

• EFL student teachers’ diaries mainly focus on their students and on the variables that affect their learning process.
• They do not reflect much on the school context or about their relationship with other participants in their training process.
• They have high expectations and speak about positive results concerning their teaching process (Alonso Belmonte, 2012, 2014).
• Their only complaint is about their students’ behaviour.
• Student teachers’ personal reflections are not very emotional but are dependant on the relationship established with their students.

At the average UAM student teacher’s public self is well balanced and hints at stable degrees of self-worth and self-esteem, basic characteristics of a solid professional teaching identity (Rodgers and Scott, 2008).
DISCUSSION

• Students play an important role in shaping their professional identity. They serve as a source for motivation to improve the trainees’ professional practice:

“I can see they are unmotivated (...) they do not see any benefit from studying (...) topics chosen are old fashioned and boring. (... ) How can they think of learning as an enjoyable activity?” (DB_RJ1)

“They are lovely and I have to confess I do not want to leave the school” (AMT_RJ10)
DISCUSSION

• Mentors are expected to provide inspiration for procedural aspects of teaching in early stages of participants’ careers. However:

  “My mentor continues to be as friendly as usual but she has large piles of notebooks and exams to correct so she does not have the time to teach me her method” (DB_RJ1)

  “My mentor is extremely busy and it would be very complicated to prepare a class together before hand” (Sa_RJ9a)

• Supervisors fail to exert an exemplary role for their students (Zanting, 2001).
DISCUSSION

• It is notable that student teachers do not reflect much about the theory-practise connection:

“My mind is constantly shifting from the MA to the practicum and I cannot focus on a single thing” (AR_RJ9)

• Their reflections remain superficial through lack of adequate theoretical knowledge.

• Some **prevention and action strategies** for language teacher education programs and university supervisors: strengthening the link between theory and practice// mentor orientation & training.
CONCLUSIONS

• Corpus based discourse analyses are relevant for EFL teacher training.

• The extent to which the activities of students match the goals of training will partly depend on the level and type of cooperation between training institute and practice school.

“The university should take on the task of helping learners integrate and transform their knowledge by theorizing practice and particularizing theory.” (Leinhardt et al., 1995, p. 404)
REFERENCES (I)


Thank you!

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