# The core-peripheral belief dynamic and its impact on teaching speaking in English as a foreign language (EFL) in grade 8 in the Faroe Islands.

## Kjarnu-perifer sannføring dynamikinuna og ávirkan av tí í frálæruni á enskum sum annað mál (EFL) í 8. flokki í Føroyum

**Kalpana Vijayavarathan-R,** ph.d., adjunktur, Námsvísindadeildin Fróðskaparsetur Føroya[1]

### Abstract

The objective of this qualitative parallel case study was to elicit the teacher cognition of grade 8 teachers in the Faroe Islands about teaching speaking in English as a foreign language (EFL). Teacher cognition and actions were studied in context based on data from semi-structured interviews, mixed questionnaire and observations. Manual thematic analysis through using a priori and post priori codes was adopted to parse data and establish the influence of teacher cognition on teaching in the classroom and identify any common trends among participants. The results show that teacher cognition has a marked influence on teaching speaking. Congruence between cognition and teaching is apparent, with some instances of incongruence. Congruence between teacher cognition and teaching speaking rests on two factors – the marked influence of 'apprenticeship of observation' i.e., the influence of teachers' personal experiences from years of education that shapes their thoughts and teaching and teacher understanding of teaching speaking as 'doing' speaking i.e., providing opportunities for students to speak in the classroom. Incongruence stems from the core-peripheral belief dynamic, where the predominance of core beliefs over peripheral beliefs affects the efficacy of teaching speaking.

### Úrtak

Endamálið við hesari javnfjaru kvalitativu stakkanning var at kveikja lærarakognitión hjá lærarum í 8. flokki í Føroyum at undirvísa enskt á enskum sum annað mál (EFL). Lærarakognitión og tað árin, tað hevði við sær, varð kannað við bakstøði í data frá hálvskipaðum samrøðum, samansettum

---

[1] E-mail: kalpanav@setur.fo; ORCID ID 0000-0002-6715-9732

spurnabløðum og eygleiðingum. Tær leiðbeinandi tematisku greiningarnar vórðu gjørdar við at velja at brúka a priori og post priori kotur at kanna data gjølliga, ið sóust grundfest í ávirkanini, sum lærarakognitión hevur í frálæruni í floksrúminum, og við at eyðmerkja eina og hvørja felags kós, sum sást millum luttakararnar. Úrslitini vísa, at lærarakognitión hevur sjónliga ávirkan á frálæruni við talu. Tað er eyðsýnt samsvar millum kognitión og frálæru, og í summum førum er ósamsvar. Samsvar, sum er millum lærarakognitión og frálæru við talu, byggir á tveir tættir – ta sjónligu ávirkan av 'læring við eygleiðing', t.e. týdningin av útbúgving og persónligu royndunum hjá lærarum yvir tíð, sum skapa teirra hugsanarhátt, og frálæru og tað undirskilda hjá lærarum at frálæra við talu við 'veruliga' at tosa, t.e. at skapa møguleikarnar hjá næmingunum at tosa í floksrúminum. Ósamsvar stavar frá dynamikkinum í kjarnu-perifer sannføringina, har kjarnu sannføringin stýrir periferu sannføringina sum ávirkar virknaðin av frálæru við talu.

**Keywords:** EFL, teacher cognition, teaching speaking, core-peripheral beliefs, pedagogical content knowledge.

**Leitorð:** EFL, lærarakognitión, frálæru við talu, kjarnu-periferisannføring, kunnleiki um námsfrøðiligt innihald.

## Introduction

The article is based on a collective parallel case study conducted amongst seven grade 8 teachers from the compulsory schools in the Faroe Islands in 2017 as part of my PhD project. The study sought to elicit grade 8 teachers' cognition with regard to teaching speaking in English as a foreign language (EFL). Interviews, observations and a mixed questionnaire were used to identify teacher cognition on teaching speaking in EFL and the impact it had on their teaching.

The research questions designed to fulfil the aims of the study were: What is the grade 8 teachers' cognition about teaching speaking in EFL, and how do they teach speaking? How does Teacher cognition influence teaching speaking? This case study attempted to add to the significant field of teacher cognition on teaching speaking. The importance of teacher cognition research is derived from the fact that "it is not simply an academic undertaking but needs to speak in transparent and concrete ways about the connections between what teachers do, how they learn and change, and their mental lives" (Borg, 2019, p. 9). As language teacher cognition has not been researched at all in the Faroe Islands, this article might highlight key issues that deserve consideration in the context of teaching speaking in EFL.

### *Contextual background to the study*

Teachers are an important variable in student learning and are central to it (Hattie, 2012; Darling-Hammond et al., 2005) and their actions are instrumental to the creation and management of the learning environment. The significance of teaching to the fulfilment of student learning outcomes means the way teachers teach becomes vital. It is therefore important to understand how Faroese teachers teach speaking in EFL as it is a crucial aspect of foreign language teaching and learning with learners wanting to be able to speak the language, this being a clear requirement in the curriculum with 50% of the annual assessment being awarded for the spoken language.

In the Faroe Islands, education is compulsory up to grade 9, and English is mandatory from grades 4 to 9 – grade 8 students would be around 15 years of age. Teacher education, which is responsible for preparing pre-service teachers to teach grades 1 – 10, underwent a reform in 2008. In the pre-reform period, the English curriculum in teacher education consisted of literary analysis, teaching grammar and translation. Post 2008, the curriculum for pre-service teachers was restructured with the introduction of Teaching English as a Foreign Language grounded in Second Language Acquisition theories, theories of language, approaches to teaching EFL, the teaching of the different language skills and the teaching of language through literature. The first post reform teachers graduated in 2012.

## Theoretical underpinnings

Teacher cognition and the teaching of speaking in EFL provided the foundation for this study. Research in teacher cognition has contributed significantly to EFL teaching (Borg, 2003) and has attracted much interest in recent times (Gao et al., 2020; Li, 2017; Yu et al., 2020). The value of eliciting teachers' cognition lies in the fact that it may offer glimpses into the complexity underlying pedagogy, promote professional self-reflection on why, as a teacher, one teaches the way one does and encourage change if need be.

Speaking is a key skill for EFL learners' communicative competence in the 21st century. Displaying critical thinking, problem-solving, innovation, collaboration and cross-cultural communication in English are prime assets for education and employment in the globalised society (Goh, 2014). The teaching of speaking is considered pivotal in foreign languages because learners prioritise speaking (Khoshima and Shokri, 2016). Despite this, teachers fail to concentrate on teaching speaking (Bueno et al., 2006). EFL teaching and learning is successful when learners are able to communicate in English within or outside the classroom (Mart, 2012; Burkart and Sheppard, 2004).

In the National Faroese curriculum for Spoken English (2017), it is clearly stated that one of the aims of teaching English is to ensure that students can communicate in the language when they deal with both native speakers and the

international community. They should have communicative competence that facilitates their participation in international affairs –the emphasis is on spoken English being used actively.

### Teacher Cognition

Teacher cognition is 'the study of what teachers know, think, and believe, and how these relate to what teachers do' (Borg and Burns, 2008, p. 457). Borg (2019) explains '… how becoming, being, and developing as a teacher is shaped (& in turn shapes) by what teachers (individually & collectively) think and feel about all aspects of their work' (p. 4). In this article, teacher cognition and teacher beliefs are used interchangeably. Teacher cognition is perceived as tacit, personal and dynamic as it shapes the educational and professional experience of teachers throughout their careers (Borg, 2006; Kubanyiova and Feryok, 2015). It is influenced by the way teachers themselves were taught in school, i.e., what has been termed their 'apprenticeship of observation' (Lortie, 1975). Borg's (2012) current perspectives on language teacher cognition go beyond what "teachers think, know and believe" (p. 11) and include "attitudes, identities and emotions" (p. 11), emphasising that "identity (. . .) should be recognized as an important strand of teacher cognition research" (p. 11). Teaching speaking has not received the attention in research given to grammar teaching and writing (Borg, 2015; author, 2018).

Phipps and Borg (2007) indicate that 'apprenticeship of observation' shapes teacher beliefs, provides filters for teachers to process new input, and that beliefs are resistant to change as they have become embedded in teachers' cognition over time. Beliefs may be core beliefs – built over time and based on experiential knowledge or peripheral beliefs - usually originating from theory-based beliefs. Core beliefs have a higher hierarchy within an individual teacher's schema and influence decision-making in the teaching environment (Freeman, 2002; Borg, 2003, 2019). Borg (2006) and Buehl and Fives (2009), using Shulman's (1987) classification of the kinds of knowledge, identify content knowledge (knowledge of the subject matter) and pedagogical content knowledge (knowledge of the specifics of teaching a subject) as instrumental for teacher competence and impact on student achievement. Furthermore, a sense of teacher agency (Beauchamp and Thomas, 2009), where one acts based on one's beliefs also underpins teacher action in the classroom.

Congruence may or may not exist between teacher cognition and praxis. Contextual barriers to a one-to-one correspondence between teacher cognition and praxis may affect congruence between cognition and teaching (Lee, 2009; Olafson and Schraw, 2006; Smith, 2005). A study of teachers' cognitions may offer insight into rationales behind teacher pedagogical decision-making and action.

*Teaching speaking in English as a foreign language (EFL)*

Chen and Goh (2014) identify that teacher challenges in teaching speaking are mainly the classroom environment, the speaking skill, making students understand its relevance, and paying attention to individual students. Teachers must understand the concept of oracy, which is the ability of using the oral skills of speaking and listening to be able to teach speaking (Goh, 2013).

For Goh and Burns (2012), a combination of the direct approach (focus on language forms and accuracy of structure) and the indirect (focus on fluency and use of functional language through communication in the target language) is the optimal approach to teaching speaking. They believe teaching speaking should comprise fluency, accuracy, complexity, knowledge of language and discourse, core speaking skills and communication strategies illustrated through their 'Teaching-speaking cycle' model. It is a holistic approach to teaching speaking and subsumes the direct and indirect approaches to teaching speaking that have long dominated EFL and combines other aspects delineated in the following paragraph to offer an overarching perspective for teaching speaking based on research into teaching speaking in the field (author, 2018). No such systematic model has been subsequently proposed in EFL for teaching speaking.
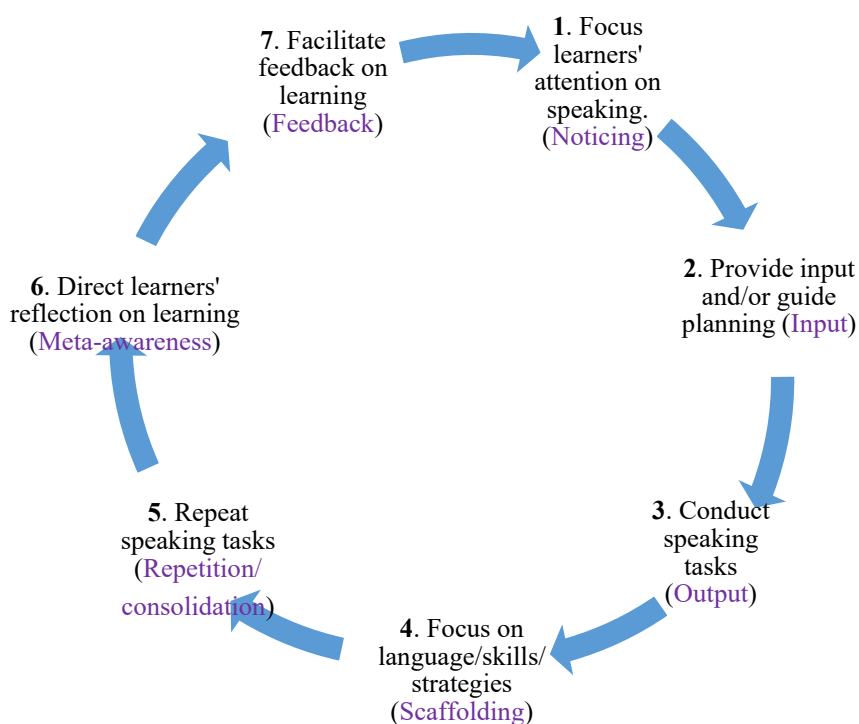


**Fig. 1**
The modified 'Teaching-Speaking Cycle' of Goh & Burns (2012)

(author, 2018, p, 169)

Goh and Burns (2012) envisage a 'Teaching-Speaking cycle' with seven phases which would give students opportunities to focus on fluency, form and use of language. The teaching speaking cycle incorporates focus on accuracy and fluency combined with meaningful input for language learning (Krashen, 1981; 1982), forced output for learning with negotiation of meaning (Swain, 1985), noticing in second language learning (Schmidt, 1990) and the roles of meta awareness and feedback on learning making for a systematic approach to teaching speaking. Metacognitive awareness can aid student performance when teachers proactively build it into teaching (Rahimi and Katal, 2012).

If the characteristics of the direct and indirect approaches to teaching speaking are placed onto the 'Teaching-Speaking cycle' (in blue in fig.1) it demonstrates that both approaches find their place. In the model, Goh and Burns (2012) draw a clear distinction between what they define as 'doing' speaking, which is giving students opportunities to speak in class and 'teaching' speaking, which is using specific strategies to teach students how to speak.

## Materials and Methods

From the qualitative paradigm, the case study was chosen as an appropriate framework to study phenomena in context to afford dynamism through real-time observations in classroom contexts. Case study is interpretative as it facilitates a deep understanding of the phenomena in context with the researcher functioning within the environment (Devetak et al., 2010). 'Thick description', a hallmark of case studies, offers a kind of external validity (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) affording depth to perspectives.

This study is a parallel (conducted simultaneously), collective case study as it uses seven cases, and participants are chosen based on the assumption that their perspectives may offer insight and a better basis to theorise about more cases in the same environment (Stake, 2005). Emphasis is on the role of individual participants within the shared experience of all participants which makes the approach idiographic (Vogrinc 2008, in Starman, 2013), where the unique experience of the individual gives meaning and is important within the ethos of teaching EFL in grade 8.

The study used various research instruments which comprise three face-to-face semi-structured interviews of about 1-2 hours with each of the seven grade 8 teachers; mixed questionnaire — quantitative and qualitative sent to yet another seven grade 8 teachers, who had key roles in being examination paper setters and members of the curriculum committee for English; and extensive classroom observation of 6 x 45 minute-sessions for all seven teachers.

In case studies, triangulation is a conjunction of various perspectives on the phenomenon being studied (Farquhar and Michels, 2016) and offers internal

validity to establish academic rigour (Gliner,1994). It identifies 'patterns of convergence' (Meijer et al., 2002, p. 146) to facilitate a comprehensive and in-depth multi-faceted perspective of the phenomenon. This multiple case study can be described as fulfilling the criteria for multimethod triangulation of sources and method in its use of multiple data sources from various participants through interviews, questionnaire and observations and construct validity in its use of three different data types.

### Study participants

The rationale for choosing grade 8 was that learners would have had English for four years. It is the first of the two-year study of English at the high school level, which comprises grades 8 and 9 with external examinations for grade 9 only. This may allow teachers greater flexibility and time to prepare students to fulfil learning outcomes and make room for any possible researcher disturbance of the learning environment. Research indicates that teachers who are non-native speakers of English do not always have spoken English efficacy (Ghasemboland and Hashim, 2013; Chen and Goh, 2011) — I felt grade 8 teachers would more likely have self-efficacy in speaking English in class as high school teachers with most of them teaching grade 9 too. The assumption was that they may be able to offer relevant insights into teaching speaking.

Purposive sampling was used for both interviews and questionnaire. Interview participants comprised seven teachers based on balanced gender representation, given the keen debate about it in Faroese society, formal qualification, i.e., if they had had English as a specialised subject in teacher education, representation for large and small schools, a judicious mix of teachers from rural and urban areas and inclusion of both pre- and post-reform participants. As mentioned earlier, questionnaire participants were seven English teachers with key responsibilities as exam paper setters or curriculum designers and sat in various committees for teachers of English. So, 14 of the 44 grade 8 English teachers comprised the sample.

### Data Analysis

When analysing data, the cases were studied individually before conducting a cross-case thematic data analysis (Schwandt, 2001; Creswell, 2007). Though qualitative analysis is mainly inductive, it does not negate the use of predetermined codes chosen from theoretical assumptions in the study (Duff, 2008) before field research, thereby including a deductive aspect as well. This is considered an exploratory method (De Witt, 2013), and based on the research in the field, it supplied the provisional *a priori* codes. According to De Witt (2013), this is a useful method when working with data sourced from several participants where theme/category-based approach enables the inclusion of the microcosm of the individual participant beliefs within the macrocosm of the

sample. Conceptual or content-based phrases for specific research questions from teacher cognition and teaching speaking were used to parse data from various sources. The relationships between the cases were established to delineate a comprehensive picture of the phenomenon under study. It is relevant to add that there were no unique cases with uniformity present to a high degree in all 7 cases.

The coding approach was a blend of the exploratory and elemental coding methods. The elemental coding method is a primary one that involves basic, focused theoretical filters, which give the foundation for successive coding cycles (Thomas, 2003). Structural coding is a research question-based coding method within the elemental methods, where phrases from the concepts/content under exploration form the basis of analysis for interview data or other data sets (De Witt, 2013).

Manual coding of data from interviews, questionnaire and observations combining exploratory and elemental coding method was undertaken, which meant the exploratory codes were expanded and modified to include *a posteriori* elemental codes. Thematic analysis was conducted using the codes for close textual reading to identify the relevant themes that could establish patterns and provide explanations for the phenomenon under study (Duff, 2008). When new relevant themes emerged from the data, new *a posteriori* elemental codes were created to ensure thorough data mining and analyses from various perspectives.

Data from the interviews and questionnaire served as 'stated beliefs' i.e., what teachers stated overtly when asked about their beliefs on what teaching speaking was, and the transcripts of the classroom observation and questionnaire identified the teaching activities for teaching speaking, seen as the 'enacted beliefs' i.e., belief in action, where teaching in the classroom is seen as manifestation of teacher cognition. Classroom observations also identified incidence of the core-peripheral beliefs dynamic as elucidated later.

Verbal data and reported data have inherent weaknesses as participants may be keen to present themselves in a different light and cognitions are not easily expressed. Their responses may be tuned to what they perceive the interviewer wants or is acceptable norm (Collins, et al., 2005). My presence in classrooms may well have resulted in 'observer paradox' i.e., 'by observing people's behaviour we often alter the very behavioural patterns we wish to observe' (Labov, 1972, in Spencer, 2015, p. 448), which may have impacted teacher actions during observation thereby distorting the data. These effects may have been mitigated by triangulation of data from different sources.

## Findings

The findings are presented below in table 2 under the categories 'stated' and 'enacted' beliefs to show the impact of these on teacher cognition, and some of

these are dealt with in detail in the discussion section to highlight the focus of the article.

**Table 1.**

Findings from data

| Stated beliefs from Apprenticeship of observation | Stated beliefs from interviews/questionnaires | Enacted beliefs from Classroom observations |
|---|---|---|
| The study participants had not been taught speaking in primary, secondary & higher secondary schools. Teaching speaking was not included in pre-reform teacher education. Teaching speaking was included in post-reform teacher education. | Teachers have a clear definition of what teaching speaking is (see table 2). Teachers give priority to teaching other language skills than speaking. Teachers believe in 'doing'. speaking' than 'teaching' speaking. Error correction and feedback indicate the dominance of implicit teaching. Error correction and feedback approach indicate teacher focus on fluency over accuracy. Teachers are aware that teacher talk predominates in the classroom, which they regard as meaningful input for their students to learn English. Teachers acknowledge that student talk helps in speaking English. Some teachers identify that they have self-efficacy in spoken English. Teachers are deeply committed to providing a safe, secure and low-anxiety environment for students. | See table 2. Classroom observation revealed talk as interaction, which would promote dialogic communication in teaching speaking, is not present. Talk as transaction, which conveys message is used as one-way or monologic communication by teachers when they use display (closed questions) and is used extensively. Talk as performance is seen when students make presentations using PPT or otherwise as individuals or in a group. |

**Table 2.**

Teachers' definition of how they teach speaking (author, 2018, p. 169)

| Activities mentioned by teachers as TS (m)  Stated beliefs | |
|---|---|
| Activities observed in teachers' classes (o)   Enacted beliefs | |

| Teachers: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. Grammar exercises | m/o | m/o | m/o | m/o | m/o | m/o | m/o |
| b. Grammar teaching in context | | | m/o | m/o | m/o | | |
| c. Reading aloud | m/o | m/o | m/o | m/o | m/o | m/o | m/o |
| d. Display questions on texts | m/o | m/o | m/o | m/o | m/o | m/o | m/o |
| e. Display questions on lyrics | m | | | m/o | m | | m/o |
| f. Reporting on pair/group work on texts | m/o | m/o | m/o | m/o | m/o | m/o | m/o |
| g. Pair/group presentations | m/o | m/o | m/o | m/o | m/o | m/o | m/o |
| h. Using a film as a 'hook' for discussion | m | m/o | m/o | m/o | m/o | m/o | m |
| i. Dictation | | | m | | m/o | | |
| j. Discussion of current affairs | | m | m/o | m | m | | |
| k. CALL (computer assisted language learning) | | | o | | o | | |
| l. Peer interviews to encourage speaking | | | | | m | | |
| m. 'Speed dating' | | | | m | | | |

The data revealed that Grade 8 teachers define teaching speaking and teach speaking through reading and writing (and to a lesser degree listening), reading aloud, games, grammar exercises, dictation, student talk in pairs/group work, presentations followed by question answers and discussion. Teacher talk and listening to multimodal texts in English is viewed as 'meaningful input'. Teachers give importance to students speaking English in class, which they define as 'meaningful output' achieved through 'learning by doing' and identify their duty as preparing students for speaking because it is assessed in the exam. They perceive feedback and error correction as important but are wary about it hindering student talk. All of them underline the importance of a safe EFL environment to ensure mitigation of student anxiety to promote learning and believe that fluency is more important than accuracy.

### *Congruence between 'stated' and 'enacted' beliefs*

The findings from the interviews and questionnaire reveal a high degree of congruence between teacher cognition and praxis when it is 'doing' speaking. The 'stated beliefs' from the interviews and questionnaire reveal that teachers do not value the speaking skill as highly as other skills. Interestingly, 95 % of English teachers also teach Faroese or Danish or both, and one of them said he/she was more focused on student competence in Faroese as English is 'only an L3' (teacher 3). All of them said they used writing and listening as the platform for speaking. Teacher 6 concentrated on teaching grammar and writing more than speaking, "because mistakes in the written language reflect badly on individuals." He/she mentioned that "grammar and reading were given priority and that teaching writing was easier compared to teaching speaking". Several

teachers indicated that they focus more on writing and reading than speaking "because students should have confidence when writing for success in examinations" (teacher 1).

These trends could be a result of exposure to the Grammar Translation Method with its primary focus on decontextualised grammar teaching and emphasis on literary analyses, which was the preferred mode of teaching according to the teachers' descriptions of how they were taught. This 'apprenticeship of observation' has contributed to how they perceive teaching speaking should be implemented. They identified their exposure to EFL in compulsory and higher secondary schools and teacher education (prior to 2008) as being "very grammar and literature-oriented with grammar exercises and translation" (teacher 4) being the mainstay of teaching. As students, "they only spoke English if they were making presentations" (ibid). The findings underline that teachers' 'stated beliefs' comprise 'doing' speaking instead of 'teaching' speaking.

### Teaching speaking as defined and practised by grade 8 teachers

All fourteen teachers described their approach to teaching speaking as follows: as teacher or student reading aloud in class, grammar teaching in context or per se, translation, teacher-led display questions (closed questions with a 'right' or 'wrong' answer) on written materials read in class or at home, pair/group work on texts in class, listening to texts/ music lyrics, film appreciation, dictation, and individual/pair student presentations. Their identification of what is teaching speaking and their teaching of the skill show considerable deviation from the aspects highlighted in figure 1. "There are traces of the various theories integrated into the model of the 'Teaching-speaking cycle' (fig 1) in the chequered approach of grade 8 TS in EFL" (author, 2018). There are hints of Stage 2 in the vocabulary input teachers provide in class, Stage 3 with a hint of focus on fluency seen when students report back from group work, Stage 4 in the focus on pronunciation and Stage 7 in the limited practice of feedback and student error correction. Grade 8 teachers exhibit an eclectic, diffused approach to TS with primary emphasis on 'doing speaking'. The classroom observations reinforced their description of teaching and made it clear that teaching speaking appears to have a set form in grade 8 as seen in table 1 above. It also reinforces the close correlation between 'stated' and 'enacted' beliefs in this context.

All teachers acknowledged that they adopted an implicit approach to teaching speaking, i.e., not specific teaching of speaking. Occasionally, in giving feedback to students for a presentation or answers to questions, teachers resorted to explicit teaching of grammar to provide input for students to understand their mistakes. Three teachers spoke of recasting student sentences with explanations of the contrast between Faroese and English syntax, and this was evident in their classes.

All teachers speak English in their classes to a greater or lesser degree with varying reasons for doing so. Eleven teachers mentioned that they were giving meaningful input by doing this. Teacher talk dominated more than student talk in the classroom indicating a mainly monologic set up and reinforced already stated teacher beliefs. Teachers claimed that they spoke too much, and this was "between 50-65 % of the time" (teacher 3). A few teachers spoke English 60-80 %, some 50/50 English and Faroese and others 25 % English. The reason for using Faroese was to ensure that the needs of various students were met based on their competence in English. One teacher said that if "I do not speak English, then the students would not be motivated to do so either" (teacher 7). Teachers believe students must speak English in class as this will "equip them to speak English in a real-life situation" (teacher 7). Though their emphasis was on speaking being 'learnt by doing', there were only a few instances of student talk to be seen in the classroom observations.

The 'enacted beliefs' from classroom observations of six sessions for each teacher reveal the activities used in class (table 1). These activities are what teachers defined and identified as their teaching of speaking in EFL.

The high degree of congruence between teacher cognition and teachers' interpretation of teaching speaking as 'doing' speaking through 'stated' and 'enacted' beliefs has been established to identify the teaching of speaking specific to these teachers when analysed in the light of the teaching-speaking cycle. These findings place the Faroese teacher participants as typical when it comes to findings on teaching speaking in EFL based on the few studies that have directly dealt with the relationship between teacher cognition and teaching speaking. This is because 'teaching' speaking is often interpreted as 'doing' speaking by EFL teachers.

### The Core-peripheral beliefs dynamic

There were some instances of incongruence in the core-peripheral beliefs dynamic. Teachers stated the importance of students speaking in the class. They designated error correction and on-the-spot feedback as useful input during student talk to improve speaking. Almost every teacher spoke of the importance of this input, but observations demonstrated its rarity in the classroom.

Post-reform teachers called student talk 'meaningful output'/ 'learning by doing', in the interviews, but these again appear to be peripheral beliefs as dialogic communication was minimal. Extended discourses were few with display questions dominating teacher-student exchanges.

Teachers were apprehensive that error correction would affect the already rare production of spoken English in the classroom by shy students and students with various challenges. Another concern was that students would "be bullied if they did not speak correctly" (teacher 3). Post-observation discussions with the teachers revealed that the core belief in the importance of student security

undermined the peripheral belief of the relevance of immediate feedback for student learning.

The core belief taking precedence among the teachers was wanting a safe and secure learning environment for their students, and this core belief appears to have significantly influenced their teaching speaking.

### 'Doing' speaking or 'teaching' speaking

The teachers believe teaching speaking should empower students to use "English during travel, communication with native English speakers and real-life situations" (teacher 1). Their teaching did not appear to be focused on these goals. There was no independent, extended dialogic exchanges in the classroom. While this too could be attributed to the core belief of wanting a safe and secure environment for the students, it may also be an indication of teachers not always being cognizant of their actions in the classroom as identified by Lockwood (2007).

### Teacher talk as 'meaningful input'

Teachers regard teacher talk in English as 'meaningful input' for the students and modelling language for them in the classroom. This belief was seldom transferred to praxis. Some teachers admitted in the interviews that they spoke more Faroese than English as they it might otherwise demotivate some students or pose challenges to weak students. The belief dichotomy is evident - the core belief that students should feel they belong in the classroom and thereby thrive in the environment is more powerful than the peripheral belief of the efficacy of 'meaningful input' in teaching speaking.

### Teacher efficacy in speaking English

Nearly 75 % of the teachers in the study mentioned in their interviews and questionnaires that they perceived the spoken proficiency of their students in the classroom as superseding their own. This impacted their sense of self-efficacy and may be a reason why they are not comfortable teaching speaking, even though, on average, quite a few teachers spoke English atleast 50 % of the time in the classroom. Nevertheless, they focused on getting all students speaking in the classroom, which they clearly stated was quite a challenge.

## Discussion

The literature review indicated that 'stated beliefs' are teachers verbally expressing their beliefs about teaching. These may be complete or partial, and in some cases, teachers may be unable to articulate their beliefs (Sahin et al., 2002). In my study, the teachers have clear specific 'stated beliefs' about teaching speaking in EFL which are nearly identical in the data from semi-structured

interviews and questionnaires and fit the definition of 'doing' speaking. Therefore, the 'stated beliefs' of the grade 8 teachers of English match what Goh and Burns (2012) define as 'doing' speaking, where students are given the opportunity to speak rather than specifically being taught speaking.

The teachers appear to use elements of Grammar-Translation Method and elements of Communicative Language teaching (CLT) in some independent student activities in small projects. Facilitating group work, using language for communicative activities like discussions, and student presentations indicate some aspects of the CLT approach. Activities that facilitate student spoken performance in class alone do not fulfil the criteria for teaching speaking as the process of speaking is highly complex comprising physical, cognitive and socio-cultural interplay in real-time (Goh and Burns, 2012). It may be fair to argue that a focus on 'doing' speaking is a lost opportunity for explicitly teaching speaking, which research indicates is crucial for students' mastery of this skill.

What is thought-provoking and relevant is to analyse the Faroese situation to arrive at possible indicators for this status quo. Based on how teacher knowledge influences decision-making, Guerriero (2017) says 'making good pedagogical decisions hinges on the quality of the pedagogical knowledge held by the teacher' (p. 6). Interviews, questionnaire and observation data reveal that teachers have general pedagogical knowledge but appear not to fully know how to teach EFL speaking, and thereby lack content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge of it. This is not unique to the Faroese teachers as other studies on the subject show similar challenges (Chen and Goh, 2014).

If knowledge of how to teach speaking is to be acquired, it could come from three possible sources: 'apprenticeship of observation', being formally taught in teacher education, or from experiential knowledge and dialogue with colleagues. The influence of the 'apprenticeship of observation' can be deduced in grade 8 teachers' perceptions of teaching speaking as data from interviews/questionnaire showed the predominance of the Grammar-Translation method in their own education. While their teaching approach is not solely through Grammar-Translation, some tendencies like teaching grammar in isolation, reading aloud and doing translations predominate as elicited from their interview data appear to reflect their experiences as students themselves.

Knowledge of what speaking is, what teaching speaking involves, how it is to be taught in EFL all require some input. A source of formal teaching of speaking could have been teacher education, but pre-reform teachers made it clear that they had not been taught second language acquisition or the teaching of English as a foreign language (TEFL), but they had what approximated to Grammar-Translation and literary analysis of different genres. They were all educated in the only teacher education available in the islands and had no access to in-service training within TEFL. Therefore, to expect them to have knowledge of or reflect the theoretical principles of teaching speaking in praxis is unrealistic as would also be learning from peers as highlighted by Kleickman et al., (2013, p. 64)

'Several studies suggest that teaching experience needs to be coupled with thoughtful reflection on instructional practice, with non-formal learning through interactions with colleagues, and with deliberative formal learning opportunities'.

The two post-reform teachers showed awareness of the theoretical framework for teaching speaking but had not observed explicit teaching of speaking during their practicum as pre-service teachers. These teachers know teaching speaking theoretically i.e., content knowledge, but their short teaching experience may mean that their 'apprentice of observation' overshadows the teacher education input. This could be the result of having declarative knowledge (knowing that), but not enough time as beginners to convert it to procedural knowledge (knowing how).

The 'deliberative formal learning opportunities' (Kleickman et al., 2013, p. 64) could encompass professional development courses for teachers. The interviews revealed that teachers had not attended courses for many years. Three of them had been sent on one course and that was a specific course in using the 'Pitstop' textbooks. One teacher had 19 years of experience and said, "I have not been to a single course in all my 19 years of teaching (teacher 7). All the participants were vehement about the desperate need for professional development. Wyatt and Borg (2011) suggest that professional development of teachers must be 'distributed over time rather than intensively' (p. 249) using action research, development of teachers by the organisation and through individual commitment, supportive mentoring and tutoring, which may prove necessary and relevant to the Faroese context.

The reasons for congruence or incongruence highlight the complex relationship between 'stated' and 'enacted beliefs'. When it comes to the core-peripheral belief dichotomy, the incongruence in beliefs may originate from teachers' 'apprenticeship of observation', lack of pedagogical content knowledge for teaching speaking, or just an unconscious/individual style of teaching which views student talk as belonging in activities like presentations and reading aloud activities and the initiation-response-feedback sequences.

Congruence is influenced by teacher expertise and level of development (Basturkmen, 2012; Buehl & Beck, 2015), but in grade 8 English teaching, this cannot be the case because of the lack of content knowledge of pre-reform teachers and of pedagogical content knowledge. On the other hand, it matches a situation described by Barnard & Burns (2012):

... where access to explicit theories was quite limited, the teachers' beliefs were rooted in their personal and collective experiences. Their teaching practices were regulated by normative ways of teaching and learning which were historically embedded in their local context, and into which they were socialised (p. 97).

Therefore, grade 8 teachers in not having benefitted from theory-informed teaching have created their own approach to it. This is perhaps a convincing

reason for why teachers 'do speaking' and not 'teach speaking', and for the high degree of congruence in the understanding of the concept of teaching speaking as 'doing speaking' which has become the default practice.

## Implications for research and practice

This case study has confirmed the impact of teacher cognition on teaching speaking in EFL. It has showcased the effect of the 'apprenticeship of observation' on teacher cognition and established the congruence between teacher cognition and teaching speaking in grade 8, which is true to research in the field. It has also explored the limited dissonance between core and peripheral beliefs and reasoned that the underlying cause may be due to the hierarchical nature of beliefs and the effect of teachers' lack of content and pedagogical content knowledge of teaching speaking in EFL.

The study could lay claim to breaking new ground in a limited sense as no research has been conducted on teacher cognition and EFL teaching in general or teaching speaking in particular in the Faroe Islands. Given that 31.8 % of grade 8 English teachers participated in the study, with many of them teaching grade 9 as well, the picture that emerges of teaching speaking could be cautiously viewed as collective English teacher cognition. This is because 68.2% of the English teachers who were not part of this study, and form the majority, match my sample with regard to national, socio-cultural, and educational backgrounds up to teacher education, which is some justification for assuming that it may be a fairly reliable representation of teaching speaking in English. While the findings share similarities to other, this study might be significant in the EFL context for systematically revealing the impact of lack of content and pedagogical content knowledge on teacher cognition and teaching as also the in-depth analysis of the reasons for the high congruence between grade 8 EFL teacher cognition of 'teaching' speaking.

## Conclusion

The 'apprenticeship of observation' has shaped a teaching toolkit for teaching speaking in English for grade 8 Faroese teachers leading to an almost complete congruence between teacher cognition and 'teaching' speaking. Lack of content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge and little or no opportunity for professional development for grade 8 teachers present complex challenges to the effective teaching of speaking in EFL. The core-peripheral belief dynamic in the study underscores that teaching settings are unique and have a marked influence on the teaching approach and environment.

There are lessons to be learnt for teacher training and professional development of teachers in this context and underlines the importance of continued professional development for teachers. The article offers valuable insight into an instrument that can be used for optimising teaching speaking in

the Faroese context in its highlighting of the Teaching-Speaking Cycle. In mapping the status quo in teaching speaking in EFL in grade 8 in the Faroe Islands, it offers a potential point of departure with regard to language teaching as part of the Faroese compulsory school reform, which is in the pipeline.

### Future Research

As there is no current research on teacher cognition and teaching of EFL in the Faroe Islands, this study may provide useful insight into studying other foreign languages as well. Further, it could inform teaching of Faroese as a second language, which commenced in autumn 2021.

### Acknowledgements

I thank the school principals for giving me permission for the observations and the teachers for their kind and willing participation.

### Declaration of interest statement

There was no conflict of interest.

### Ethical declaration

All participants in this study gave their informed consent to it and signed the relevant form – "Declaration of Confidentiality and Consent in Research Participation" to endorse it.

## References

Barnard, R., & Burns, A. (Eds.) (2012). Researching language teacher cognition and practice: International case studies. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Beauchamp, Catherine & Thomas, Lynn. (2009). Understanding teacher identity: An overview of issues in the literature and implications for teacher education. Cambridge Journal of Education. 39. 175-189. 10.1080/03057640902902252.

Borg, S. (2003). Teacher cognition in language teaching: a review of research on what language teachers think, know, believe, and do. Lang. Teach. 36, 81–109. doi: 10.1017/S0261444803001903.

Borg, M. (2004). The apprenticeship of observation. ELT Journal, 58(3), 274-276.

Borg, S. (2006). Teacher cognition and language education: research and practice. Continuum, London: Continuum.

Borg, S. (2012). Current approaches to language teacher cognition research: a methodological analysis. In: Barnard R, Burns A (eds) Researching language teacher cognition and practice: international case studies. Multilingual Matters, Bristol, pp 11–29.

Borg, S. (2018). Teachers' beliefs and classroom practices. In: Garrett, P., Cots, J. (Eds), The Routledge handbook of language awareness (pp. 75–91). London: Routledge.

Borg, S. (2019). "Language teacher cognition: perspectives and debates," in Second Handbook of English Language Teaching, ed. X. Gao (Cham: Springer Nature).

Borg, S. and A. Burns. (2008). Integrating grammar in adult TESOL classrooms. Applied Linguistics 29(3), 456–482.

Buehl, M. M. & Fives, H. (2009). Exploring teachers 'beliefs about teaching knowledge: Where does it come from? Does it change? Journal of Experimental Education, 77(4), 367–408.

Bueno, A, D. Madrid & N. McLaren, (Eds.) (2006). TEFL in secondary education. Granada: Editorial Universidad de Granada.

Burkart, G. & Sheppard, K. (2004). A descriptive study of content-ESL practices. Retrieved from http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/pubs/cal/contentesl/index.htm.

Chen, Z. & Goh, C. (2011). Teaching oral English in higher education: Challenges to EFL teachers. Teaching in Higher Education, 16(3), 333-345.

Chen, Z., & Goh, C. (2014). Teacher knowledge about oral English instruction and teacher profiles: an EFL perspective. Teacher Development, 18(1), 81–99.

Collins, M., Shattell, M., & Thomas, S.P. (2005). An exploration of problematic interviewee behaviors in qualitative research. Western Journal of Nursing Research, 27(2), 188-199.

Creswell, J. W. (2007). Qualitative inquiry and research method: Choosing among five approaches (2nd Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Darling-Hammond, L., Holtzman, D. J., Gatlin, S. J., & Heilig, J. V. (2005). Does teacher preparation matter? Evidence about teacher certification, Teach for America, and teacher effectiveness. Education Policy Analysis Archives, 13(42). Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ846746.pdf.

De Witt, N. (2013). Coding - an overview and guide to qualitative data analysis for integral researchers. IRC Resource Paper. No. 1 Version 1.0.

Devetak, G. and Vogrinc, J. (2010). The role of qualitative research in Science. Education Eurasia Journal of Mathematics, Science & Technology Education, 6(1), 77-84.

Duff, P. (2008). Case Study research in applied linguistics. Mahwah: Lawrence Earlbaum.

Farquhar, J. & Michels, N. (2016). Triangulation without tears. In M. Groza & C. Ragland (Eds.), Marketing Challenges in a Turbulent Business Environment (pp. 325-330). Heidelberg: Springer.

Freeman, D. (2002). The hidden side of the work: teacher knowledge and learning. Lang. Teach. 35, 1–13. doi: 10.1017/S0261444801001720

Gao, L. X., Zhang, L. J., and Tesar, M. (2020). Teacher cognition about sources of English as a foreign language (EFL) listening anxiety: a qualitative study. Linguist. Philos. Investig. 19, 64–85. doi: 10.22381/LPI1920203

Ghasemboland, F. & Hashimb, F. (2013). Teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and their English language proficiency: A study of nonnative EFL teachers in selected language centers. Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences 103.

Gliner, J. A. (1994). Reviewing qualitative research: proposed criteria for fairness and rigor. The Occupational Therapy Journal of Research 14(2), 78–90.

Goh, C. & Burns, A. (2012). Teaching speaking: A holistic approach. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Goh, C. (2013). Globalization and teacher development for spoken English instruction. Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics, 3(1), 29-38.

Goh, C. (2014). Reconceptualising second language oracy instruction: metacognitive engagement and direct teaching in listening and speaking. The Asian Journal of English Language & Pedagogy, 2, 1-31.

Guerriero, S. (2017). Teachers' pedagogical knowledge and the teaching profession: background report and project objectives. OECD Directorate of Education and Skills Centre for Educational Research and Innovation. Retrieved from http://www.oecd.org/edu/ceri/Background_document_to_Symposium_ITEL-FINAL.pdf

Hattie, J. (2012). Visible learning for teachers: Maximizing impact on learning. Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.

Khoshima, H. and Shokri, H. (2016). The effects of ESA elements on speaking ability of intermediate EFL learners: A task-based approach. Theory and Practice in Language Studies 6(5), 1085-1095.

Krashen, S. (1981). Second language acquisition and second language learning. Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Krashen, S. (1982). Principles and practice in second language acquisition (1st Ed.). Oxford: Pergamon.

Kubanyiova, M., & Feryok, A. (2015). Language teacher cognition in applied linguistics research: Revisiting the territory, redrawing the boundaries, reclaiming the relevance. Modern Language Journal, 99(3), 435-449.

Kleickmann, T., Richter, D., Kunter, M., Elsner, J., Besser, M., Krauss, S., & Baumert, J. (2013). Teachers' content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge: The role of structural differences in teacher education. Journal of Teacher Education, 64(1), 90-106.

Lee, I. (2009). Ten mismatches between teachers' beliefs and written corrective feedback practice. ELT Journal, 63(1), 13-22.

Li, L. (2017). Social Interaction and Teacher Cognition. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Lincoln, Y.S. & Guba, E.G. (1985). Naturalistic Inquiry. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.

Lockwood, J. (2007). An interdisciplinary approach to teaching adults English in the workplace. In J. Cummins & C. Davison (Eds.), International handbook of English language teaching (pp. 403-412). New York: Springer Science & Business Media.

Lortie, D. C. (1975). Schoolteacher: A Sociological Study. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Mart, T. (2012). Developing Speaking skills through reading. International Journal of English Linguistics, 2(6), 91.

Meijer, P., Verloop, N., & Beijaard, D. (2002). Multi-method triangulation in a qualitative study on teachers' practical knowledge: an attempt to increase internal validity. Quality & Quantity 36(2), 145–167.

National Faroese curriculum for English. (2019). https://namsaetlanir.fo/folkaskuli/kravdar-laerugreinar/enskt-4-10/

Olafson, L. & Schraw, G. (2006). Teachers' beliefs and practices within and across domains. International Journal of Educational Research, 45(1-2), 71–84.

Phipps, S. & Borg, S. (2007). Exploring the relationship between teachers' beliefs and their classroom practice. The Teacher Trainer, 21(3), 17-19.

Rahimi, M. & Katal, M. (2012). Metacognitive strategies awareness and success in learning English as a foreign language: an overview. Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences 31, pp. 73-81.

Saunders, W. M. & O'Brien, G. (2006). Oral language. In F. Genesee, K. Lindholm-Leary, W. Saunders & D. Christian (Eds.), Educating English language learners (pp. 14–57). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Schmidt, R.W. (1990). The role of consciousness in second language learning. Applied Linguistics 11(2), 129–58.

Schwandt, T. A. (2001). Dictionary of qualitative inquiry (2nd Ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Shulman, L. S. (1987). Knowledge and teaching: Foundations of the new reform. Harvard Educational Review, 57, 1-22.

Smith, L.K. (2005). The impact of early life history on teachers' beliefs: In-school and out-of school experiences as learners and knowers of science. Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice, 11(1), 5–36.

Spencer, H. (2015). The paradox from within: research participants doing-being-observed. Qualitative Research, 16 (4), 446-467.

Stake, R. E. (2005). Qualitative case studies. In: N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), The SAGE handbook of qualitative research (3rd Ed.) (pp. 443-466). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Starman, A.B. (2013). The CS as a type of qualitative research. Journal of Contemporary Educational Studies / Sodobna Pedagogika, 64(1), 28-43.

Swain, M. (1985). Communicative competence: some roles of comprehensible input and comprehensible output in its development. In S. Gass & C. Madden (Eds.), Input in Second Language Acquisition (pp. 235-253). Rowley: Newbury House.

Thomas, A.D. (2003). A general inductive approach for qualitative data analysis. School of Population Health, University of Auckland.

Author. (2018). Teacher cognition of grade 8 teachers on teaching speaking in English as a foreign language in the Faroe Islands and its impact on teachers' pedagogical praxis: seven case studies. doi: 10.7146/aul.287.201.

Wyatt, M. & Borg, S. (2011). Development in the practical knowledge of language teachers: a comparative study of three teachers designing and using communicative tasks on an in-service BA TESOL programme in the Middle East. Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching, 5(3), 233-252.

Yu, S., Hao, X., Jiang, L., and Chan, I. (2020). Understanding Macau novice secondary teachers' beliefs and practices of EFL writing instruction: a complexity theory perspective. J. Second Lang. Writ. 48, 1–13. doi: 10.1016/j.jslw.2020.100728.