

Knowledge about Language in English Language Courses for Future Language Professionals

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Abstract

This article reports on a study focusing on KAL (knowledge about language) in language courses in English Studies, the training of future language teachers and other professionals. Language is key in the professional competence of future graduates, who need to know the language and know about the language. Apart from promoting students' proficiency, language courses also transmit certain views of language that will become part of the knowledge of future language professionals. Using ethnography and discourse analysis, this study looks at the development of a language course over a semester, through classroom observation and interviews with lecturers and students.

1. Introduction: Context and aims of the study

Over the last two decades, attention has been paid to knowledge about language (KAL) in language teaching and learning both for language learners as well as for trainee teachers (e.g. Carter 1990; Hawkins 1984; James and Garrett 1991). This interest in promoting reflection on language, communication, and learning among language learners arose in the 1980s as a result of the need to reach a balance between focus on form and focus on meaning. In the literature, we can find a variety of related terms such as “knowledge about language”, “language awareness”, “explicit knowledge”, or “focus on form”. The editorial to the first issue of the journal “Language Awareness”, drawing on the debate initiated in the previous decade, proposed a deliberate broad definition of the concept, embracing attitudes and knowledge about language, thus setting the framework for the main concerns that may be addressed

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in relation to the role of language and of reflection upon it as an inherent aspect of human activity,

Language awareness has the great advantage of being a cover term for almost anything to do with language. Who would not be “language aware”? Who is not aware of language? It is an ideal term for a grass-roots movement with a shared gut feeling that gradually clarifies itself as more and more attention is paid to it. For example, it has to do with finding things out about language, with becoming conscious of one’s own and others’ use of it in speech and in its written forms, with developing a sensitive relationship to it, with being able to talk explicitly about one’s insights into it (1992: 1)

The term “knowledge about language” (KAL) is defined by Mitchell et al. (1994: 2) as “a new title for an old concern: that pupils learning languages in formal settings should acquire some explicit understandings and knowledge of the nature of language, alongside the development of practical language skills”. On the other hand, Ellis (2004: 244) defines explicit knowledge as “the declarative and often anomalous knowledge of the phonological, lexical, grammatical, pragmatic, and sociocritical features of an L2 together with the metalanguage for labeling this knowledge. It is held consciously and is learnable and verbalizable”. Promoting KAL is considered beneficial for language learners, and it seems even more so in the case of those university students who are training as future language teachers and experts. Not only do they need to acquire sophisticated metalinguistic skills to make professional judgments, but they will be responsible for explaining language phenomena to non-professional language users. Besides, language teachers will also be responsible for the language education of future generations of learners, and in their professional practice they will project their own views and models of language and learning, largely influenced by their own educational background. In particular, university students have a dual role as language learners and trainee language professionals, since they are gradually acquiring expertise in language (Szestay 1996).

Therefore, this research focuses on the language education received by future language teachers and experts during their university studies, the first stage in their professional training, and more specifically, it explores how KAL is approached in language

courses. According to the definitions above, in this study the term KAL is understood in a broad sense, encompassing any implicit or explicit references to language, communication, and learning.

These university language courses form part of English Studies (ES), the relevant degree for prospective English language teachers in Spain. The ES degree includes different types of courses: linguistics, literature, and language development courses. This research focuses specifically on language development courses. In contrast with linguistics and literature courses, language courses are less clearly defined and are basically oriented to developing students' proficiency in the foreign language as well as to equip them with metalinguistic skills. In this regard, the official state curriculum for the core subject "English Language" provides the following: "English language: Basic training in the description of the English language. Theory and practice of English". This dual orientation of the subject towards explicit declarative knowledge (reflected in words like "description of the language" and "theory") as well as towards procedural knowledge (reflected in "practice") deserves further attention in how it is implemented in the context of a course addressed to students of English Studies (ES). Despite this dual orientation, the recommendations for syllabus design place special emphasis on language use, with the ultimate aim of helping students develop their proficiency ("course planning and assessment must be designed in such a way that students' practical command of the language is ensured"). These language courses deserve special attention as they are open to multiple interpretations within university departments as to how they can be approached to meet students' academic and professional needs.

The scope and role of language development courses in ES degrees have been addressed in previous studies. For example, Kormos et al. (2002) refer to the broad scope of ES which leads to a certain indefiniteness in the design of language courses, which should address students' specific academic and professional needs. Other studies have focused specifically on the Spanish context. Cots (1996) suggests adopting a discourse perspective on language study, as well as incorporating a contrastive and a socio-pragmatic approach. Stone et al. (1997) make a proposal oriented towards

present EAP needs, combining content-based tasks with a learner training component, so as to help students cope with the sophisticated academic needs posed by literature and linguistics courses taught in English. Beyond language improvement and considering the ES degree as a whole, Posteguillo and Palmer (2000) advocate for a stronger orientation towards teacher education, relating linguistics and methodology courses so as to make them more relevant to students' professional needs.

The motivation for carrying out the present study derives from the central role that the development of language proficiency plays in the education of non-native ES students. On the one hand, since English is the vehicle of communication in their academic context, students have to reach a high level of proficiency in order to cope with the demands of specialised courses taught in English. On the other hand, the English language is in itself the subject matter of many of the courses that form part of the curriculum (i.e. linguistics and language teaching methodology courses). In addition, ES graduates will become language teachers and experts, with the English language at the core of their professional careers. Therefore, language development courses deserve special attention, and more specifically, it is worth looking at how KAL is approached.

2. Theoretical framework

This research draws on several theoretical strands. One of the key concepts is that of KAL. In the last two decades in the UK, proposals have been made regarding the role of explicit focus on language in education, from a broad socio-cultural perspective. Authors such as Carter (1990), Hawkins (1984), and James and Garrett (1991) stressed the importance of developing “awareness of language” and “knowledge about language” (KAL), especially among secondary school students and trainee teachers. As they point out, becoming aware does not mean learning facts about language, but exploring the potential of language from the experience of each language user. From the perspective of second language acquisition, researchers have investigated the role of explicit language knowledge (e.g.

Bialystok 1978, 1982; Doughty and Williams 1998; Ellis 1990, 1994, 2004; Long 1991; Sharwood Smith 1981). In this context, we should consider not only KAL for ordinary language learners, but also the specific needs of students who are training to become language teachers and professionals. Therefore, it is especially relevant to take into account the concept of teacher language awareness (TLA) or teachers' KAL. Several studies have addressed what teachers and trainees know or need to know about language and learning and the influence of this knowledge on teachers' practice (see e.g. Andrews 1997, 1999, 2001; Borg 1998, 2003). This study takes into account the needs of learners who are academically and professionally oriented towards language. Another concept that is relevant to this study is that of "LSP (language for specific purposes) for teachers" (Wright and Bolitho 1997). It is based on the development of two parameters, "proficiency" and "awareness", which should enable non-native speakers to cope with academic and professional needs related not only to the language used in the classroom, but to language description and analysis, and to the development of skills for participation in academic and professional forums.

The concept of KAL for future language teachers and professionals is closely related to linguistics, given students' academic orientation. Therefore, relevant concepts to KAL for future teachers include applied linguistics in language teacher education, educational linguistics (Spolsky 1978), and questions related to the integration of linguistics for language teacher education (e.g. Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford 1997; Bartels 2002, 2005; Johnston and Goettsch 2000; van Lier 1996). From a broader perspective, this study also draws on the development of teacher knowledge and the formation of views on language and learning. In the context of language learners who are in a training process, another concept that is particularly relevant is that of the "apprenticeship of observation" (Lortie 1975). It refers to the intuitive knowledge about teaching acquired from one's own experience as a learner and its influence on the development of teacher knowledge, which leads to a tendency to imitate the models one has been exposed to as a learner (Bailey et al. 1996; Bardovi-Harlig 1994; Gutiérrez Almarza 1996; Johnson 1995).

In sum, the notion of KAL for future language professionals is central to this study and its definition draws on the concepts outlined above. While there are many points in common with KAL for learners, future language teachers and experts need to develop their KAL at a professional level, which derives from a solid knowledge base. First of all, non-native speakers who are being trained as future language teachers and experts, as is the case of the students in this research, should develop their proficiency as language users to a professional level. Language courses play an important role in this respect. Besides, they are also expected to acquire expertise in linguistics and in language teaching and learning, through linguistics and ELT methodology courses that form part of the degree program.

In this sense, it seems appropriate to look at the notion of KAL from the perspective of teacher knowledge. Taking as a point of departure the language-related components of the English Studies degree (language, linguistics and teaching), it is useful to consider Edge's (1988) framework for the integration of applied linguistics in language teacher education, in terms of different types of competences that future non-native professionals need to develop: as "language users", as "language analysts", and as "language teachers". This framework – further developed and expanded by Wright (1991, 2002) and Wright and Bolitho (1993) – seems appropriate for ES students, given that these three types of competence are promoted through different courses in the degree programme, namely language, linguistics, and methodology courses. The view of professional KAL adopted in this study is based on the integration of these competences, i.e. to the domains of language use, language analysis and language teaching. Specifically, this study focuses on the presence and approach to KAL in language development courses. Because of their situation in the ES degree, language courses may provide the opportunity to integrate professional KAL. According to their definition in the curriculum, these courses are mainly oriented towards the development of the "language user" role, but also incorporate an introduction to language analysis. In addition to these two roles that are explicitly addressed in the curriculum, there is also a teaching dimension, understood in a broad sense, which should not be overlooked. As part of a degree programme for future teachers of English, language

courses may become part of students' "apprenticeship of observation". Thus, the models of language and learning that are more or less explicitly transmitted through these courses may also have an impact on the formation of future teachers' views and knowledge. This framework for approaching professional KAL can also be related to the competences of ES graduates who, apart from teaching, may engage in different language-related professions—e.g. translators, editors, linguistic consultants—and thus need to possess the necessary skills to analyse language as well as to explain language phenomena to other users.

3. The study

The aim of this research is to analyse the scope and role of KAL in language development courses addressed to undergraduate students of ES, the relevant degree for future language teachers. First, language courses have a dual orientation towards language use and language analysis and, second, students are undergoing a transition from a learner to a teacher or expert position (Szestay 1996). In this context, this study examines how lecturers and students focus on matters related to language and learning. How do they approach their classroom practices? What are their views and models of language and learning? How do these views relate to students' academic and professional needs?

The general aims of the study were framed using the following research questions: (i) In classroom discourse, what references can be found to the domains of language use, analysis, and teaching?; (ii) What areas and topics do participants focus on?; (iii) What approach do they take to KAL?; (iv) What models and views of language and learning are transmitted through the classes either implicitly or explicitly? What are lecturers' and students' views of language and learning? Within the framework of this broader research study, this paper focuses specifically on participants' approach to KAL and how they relate it to the professional knowledge that an ES graduate should acquire.

3.1. Data collection

In order to find out about participants' classroom practices and views on KAL, this study was approached from a qualitative perspective, drawing on the tenets of ethnography. Thus, through classroom data, this research focuses on understanding participants' actions in their social context. Accordingly, classroom data are combined with other data sources that can shed light on the context and on participants' own perspectives (i.e. combining an emic with an etic perspective). This research was guided by the methodological principles of data collection and interpretation in ethnography (Heath 1982; van Lier, 1988, 1990; Watson-Gegeo 1988; Allwright and Bailey 1991; Silverman 1993; Edge and Richards 1998; Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2000). In turn, the analysis of classroom observations was approached mainly from the perspective of discourse analysis, widely used as part of ethnographic studies (see e.g. Watson-Gegeo 1988; Duff 2002).

Data collection involved the immersion in a university course in Catalonia (Spain) over a term. The students were in the second term of their first year of the ES degree and took a language course called "English Language 2", which involved two 90-minute sessions every week. Two lecturers, Lisa and Monica, were in charge of teaching the course to two different classes (morning and afternoon).¹ The researcher attended class sessions regularly from both classes. A total of twelve sessions were observed, video- and audio-recorded, and transcribed. Besides, regular contact was kept with lecturers and students as part of the immersion in the research site. Apart from field notes, other data collected for this study included the syllabi and classroom material, and information about the overall context of the degree programme, especially the different types of language-related courses it included (linguistics and language teaching methodology). A pilot study with sample data from this corpus is reported in Cots and Arnó (2005).

¹ Lisa and Monica are pseudonyms to identify the lecturers.

Participants' views were gathered through semi-structured interviews, one individual interview with each lecturer, and four group interviews with students—coded A1, A2 (from Lisa's class) and B3, B4 (from Monica's class). These interviews took place towards the end of the term, after having had informal contact with participants during the term. This constant interaction with participants allowed the researcher to interpret their practices (thus incorporating an *emic* perspective) and also helped design the schedule for the semi-structured interviews. The choice of a semi-structured interview (see Nunan 1992; Silverman 1993; Richards 2003), with a schedule of general topics to be raised, would allow participants to express their views with a high degree of flexibility. More specific questions were expected to arise as the interaction developed, and the researcher asked participants to clarify or expand on some of the topics raised. The interviews, which were carried out in the participants' first language, Catalan, were audio-recorded and transcribed.

3.2. *Data analysis*

In keeping with the principles of ethnography, the analysis of the data was based on the triangulation of data and methodology, so as to gather multiple perspectives and obtain a richer picture of the context being investigated (see Allwright and Bailey 1991; Cohen and Manion 1989; van Lier 1988). The analysis of classroom data, in combination with the analysis of course material and documentation, was first approached holistically, looking at the general aims and structure of the course. The aim of this first analysis was to capture a general picture of the course observed, focusing on the structure of the lessons, types of activities, lecturers' practices, students' roles and, in general, on the most relevant aspects of the organisation of the different lessons. Based on this overall approach to the orientation of the lessons, attention was paid to the instances of KAL in the course and participants' approach to it. This analysis relies on the broad view of KAL that a future graduate, as a language teacher or expert, should develop, based on the integration of the domains of

language use, language analysis, and language teaching. Thus, classroom data were explored looking at how these domains are approached and interrelated. It constitutes an open framework that can serve to gain insights both into participants' practice and into the relationship between these practices and their views, the latter being transmitted more or less explicitly through classroom practices or explicitly declared through interviews.

In order to identify the presence of KAL in classroom practice, the analysis looked at those instances of interaction in which participants focus on language-related matters. The unit of analysis adopted was that of the "metalinguistic episode", i.e. a segment in classroom discourse in which the speakers focus more or less explicitly on aspects of language or learning, which constituted the focus of the interaction (based on "language-related episode", or LRE (Swain and Lapkin 1995). The analysis focused on the linguistic objects of reflection and the processes through which metalinguistic activity is carried out. Metalinguistic episodes were identified by paying attention to elements such as topic and activity (van Lier 1988), and especially to participants' orientation to them and their use of discursive devices to mark such orientation, like boundary markers, for example.

Interviews were approached with a twofold aim. On the one hand, as participants being observed, lecturers and students were asked about their specific practices and experience both in the language courses and in the broader context of the ES degree programme. Given this perspective, the interviews dealt with the language-related competences that are promoted in the overall degree programme and the professional needs of future ES graduates. Emphasis was also placed on the lecturers' particular practices. On the other hand, the interviews with students focused on their own experience as university students as well as on their views on the academic and professional knowledge that they should develop as ES graduates.

4. Results

The results of the study are presented below, according to the specific focus of this paper, the approach taken to KAL in a language course, and its relationship to the needs of future ES graduates. First, an overview of the course is offered, outlining its general aims and contents, as well as the structure of the teaching units. The following section deals with the approach to KAL in the classroom and how participants carry out metalinguistic activity through discourse. It is followed by participants' views of language and learning, and especially, students' perceptions of the professional knowledge that they need to acquire as future language professionals.

4.1. Characterisation of the course

The language course observed is organized in terms of teaching units devoted to grammar and textual cohesion. Course materials consist of a pedagogical grammar with exercises. The teaching units are centred on the presentation of explicit grammar knowledge and class activities have a metalinguistic focus. Both the observation of classroom practices and the interviews with participants indicate a distinction between the two main components of each unit, which they refer to "theory" and "practice". In the classroom, the lecturers follow a presentation-practice model and each teaching unit (which spans over several sessions) consists of the same sequence of stages. First, there is an introduction to the unit, focusing on the language topic to be covered, followed by the presentation of declarative knowledge by the lecturer (i.e. "theory"), "practice" (exercises at whole class level), a summary by the lecturer, and a review of the unit. Extract 1 corresponds to the beginning of the unit on "word formation". In a lengthy turn, the lecturer announces the topic and describes the procedures that will be used, by going through the typical elements in the development of a unit.

T: so the next unit is word formation and xxx doing this | what we are going to do in this unit we are going to read the theory (...) what I'm going to do is read the theory in class but of course we are going to read the theory

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just in case you have problems or things that you don't understand | right? | but again what you have to do with this unit is study it | **it's very very theoretical | extremely theoretical** | yes | so I cannot do anything else for you | and the outline that I always give you for the units I have not given you one for the other unit | the multiword verbs | because the only thing you have to do is to create a list | yes | so in unit 13 what you have to do is copying these xxx | so the outline is already done | yes | so what **I have prepared for you in this unit is lots and lots of exercises | so we are going to do lots of exercises which I think are more useful** |

(Extract 1 Monica – Session 4)

In their characterisation of the course during the interviews, both lecturers refer to the need to develop students' KAL. They point out that university language courses should provide students with a “good foundation” to cope with the academic demands of the degree programme. Specifically, according to Lisa, language courses should aim at “preparing students to pursue their academic courses in English”. The lecturers also establish a clear distinction between university language courses and regular EFL courses based on communicative approaches. The former are more “theoretical” (defined by Monica as “grammar explanations”) and focus on “language study”. Although they teach the same course, the two lecturers show two different styles, confirming the initial findings in Cots and Arnó (2005). These two lecturer styles can be characterised through the analysis of the classroom observations and the interviews. As regards their approach to grammar, Monica views grammar explanations as a tool to improve students' accuracy in language use. On the other hand, Lisa regards grammar as language study, and refers to the specific nature of this course which, in her view, clearly differs from EFL courses: “we're not doing instrumental language, we're doing grammar”, and “this is not a language school”. She describes her own teaching profile as that of a linguistics lecturer (“I have a style closer to the courses on syntax and morphology at higher levels than to first-year language courses” and “I feel more comfortable giving grammar explanations than doing skills work”). Therefore, both lecturers refer to the domain of language analysis from different perspectives. While Monica views it as a reinforcement of students' language user role, Lisa focuses on language as an object of study.

Through the interviews, students also give a detailed account of the scope of the course and the lecturers' practices. They compare this university language course and other EFL courses they have taken elsewhere. First of all, they clearly characterise this course as a grammar course ("*a hundred percent grammar*", group B4) and they describe its contents in the form of discrete units (by giving examples of grammar topics: "conditionals", "articles", "pronouns", etc.). Although they consider that this course is similar to other EFL courses in that it is oriented towards grammar, they distinguish this specific course in that it involves an explicit metalinguistic focus (i.e. theory), as shown in the comments below:

(1)

This year [we are dealing with] things that we hadn't done until now because there are many topics: the present, the past, which you have done every year, but there are things like infinitives and gerunds or when a verb is used; we hadn't done that before.

aquest any [fem] coses que no havíem fet hasta ara, perquè hi ha molts, de temes: el present, el passat, que tots els anys ho has anat fent però hi ha coses com infinitius, gerundis, quan s'utilitza un verb, nosaltres això no havíem fet mai.

(2)

It's good for me to delve into theory, it is very detailed and we do a lot of theory, and sometimes it is good to know that

Em va bé, em va bé ampliar-ho, no? ho ampliïem bastant i fas molta teoria, i això, bueno, a vegades va bé saber-ho, també.

(3)

It's very good, especially doing theory; I had... at school I could do things or...I don't know, I had a textbook, well an exercise book, and I did things, but I didn't know why I was doing them that way. I did them well because... of the mechanics, right? and this year I've really had theory about what I'm doing. Doing theory is very good for me

A mi em va molt, sobretot per això de la teoria; jo tenia... de bàsica sabia fer coses o... jo què sé, tenia un llibre de text, bueno sí, d'exercicis, i feia coses però no sabia ni per què les feia d'aquella manera. Em sortien perquè... de mecànica, no? i aquest any doncs és quan he tingut realment una teoria sobre el que estic fent. A mi em va molt bé això de la teoria.

(Extract 2 Students' interview – A1)

4.2. Approach to KAL in the classroom

The classes are managed by the lecturer, who selects the language topics to focus on, manages interaction, and does most of the talk. Thus, interactional patterns are highly predictable, consisting mainly of IRF (Initiation-response-feedback) exchanges (Sinclair and Coulthard 1975). Class sessions develop almost exclusively as sequences of metalinguistic episodes, each dealing with a discrete language point (as opposed to regular EFL courses which combine focus on form with focus on meaning). Thus, we can find that the information exchanged in the classes is exclusively on language matters. The episodes are planned and usually derive from course activities and materials. The lecturers tend to initiate the exchanges by presenting rules or providing language samples for manipulation, whereas students respond to the exercises or contribute to the construction of grammar explanations. The follow-up turns are used differently by the two lecturers, according to each teaching style. Monica takes a deductive approach and gives feedback on the correctness of the language produced, while Lisa often uses students' contributions to build up an explanation of a language point. The following episode (extract 2) exemplifies the inductive approach taken by Lisa, who takes the sample produced in a translation exercise for language analysis. After students have solved the task using their implicit knowledge, Lisa provides a metalinguistic explanation, which she expands by adding further points and eliciting other possible answers.

- 01 T: number nine x Silvia || tal va ser la força de la tempesta que centenars d'arbres van ser desarrelats
02 FS: such was the force of the rain that hundreds of trees were uprooted
03 T: did you find the verb in the dictionary?
04 FS: yes
05 T: ok [LAUGHS] yeah? that's the verb yeah <10> I x someone to help you xx this <3> ok | [WRITING ON THE BLACKBOARD] such was the force | what did you say? of the rain? *de la pluja?* | *com és la tempesta?* [ENG. Of the rain? How do you say 'storm']
06 S: storm
07 T: of the storm | *sí* | if this was one of those things that in the_ in the exam | if_ if instead of storm you write rain and not the xxxxx as long as you get to such_ xx you're right | so we have such | then we have the verb to be which is the one which is usually used with this type of so and such structures | and then

we have the force of the storm with the noun force here yeah? | remember that with the adjective we use so and then we would say to mean the same thing || so || we want to say the same thing | but now we want to begin with so || so

08 S: strong

09 T: so || so strong | yeah? this is the adjective equivalent to the noun force yeah? | so we place the adjective right after so whereas with such yeah? | we place the verb before | and then any article or premodification that we need before the noun | yeah? so strong was the storm all right? with was here verb to be again mm? | and the rest of it x is it hundreds of trees were | and Silvia's word was uprooted | yeah? root *d'arrel* | *desarrelar* [ENG. From 'root' | uproot] the idea is to go upwards all right and then the past participle for the passive voice uprooted yeah? very well

(Extract 3 Lisa – Session 4)

This study also looks at the specific operations through which metalinguistic activity is carried out through classroom discourse. In order to identify the cognitive processes linked to discourse operations, attention was paid to “those verbal moves by the instructor or the students through which it is possible to appreciate that the speaker is carrying out some cognitive activity or, especially in the case of the teacher, is eliciting this cognitive activity in the addressee(s)” (Cots and Arnó 2005: 62). Derived from the analysis of sample data, an initial framework was developed, which would be useful to approach the rest of the corpus. In the different stages of the research process, this taxonomy was further re-elaborated and refined through recursive inductive-deductive data analysis. The table below summarizes the processes identified. These processes refer to five main areas: (1) making judgments on the acceptability of language forms, (2) analysing language samples and referring to rules, (3) expressing intuitions about language and judgments related to meaning, (4) focusing attention on language forms, and (5) those processes related to managing learning.

Table 1. Identification of cognitive processes and the areas to which they refer (based on an initial categorisation by Cots and Arnó, 2005).

AREAS	PROCESSES	EXAMPLES
Acceptability judgments	Discriminating correct/incorrect	“what do you think about this? Is that right?” “do you like this?”
	Judging grammaticality/form	both both of them are possible yeah? that they didn't dare not there but dare say or to say a word mm?”
	Identifying errors	“try to identify the errors in the sentences”
	Prescribing form and/or meaning	we cannot say something like out were rushing yeah? we cannot say this mm? or out were running you cannot say this yeah?
Language analysis and language rules	Analysing and labelling	‘little’ is one of those words which require inversion we need auxiliary the subject and the lexical verb which is the one which gives us the meaning necessary to understand the sentence mm?
	Applying or working out a rule	so when we have ‘only’ with this meaning we do not have inversion yeah? so it should be only Mary knows who_ sorry only Mary knows the end of the story all right?
	Presenting rules as formulas or formulating rules	the first three yeah/ so this would be the answer yeah/ the first three_ first comes the ordinal and then comes the cardinal number

	Producing samples according to a model or rule	“the verb enter does not require a preposition right? to enter a room to enter a house to enter a place yeah?”
Intuitions about language and usage and judgments related to meaning	Judging according to use	“the most natural expression would be...” “that’s what most people would say”
	Translating	“what would you say in Catalan or in Spanish?”
	Referring to usage or meaning	“but if you want to emphasise the sentence you use for example ‘at no time’”.
Focusing attention on language form	Modelling	“use inversion structures whenever possible yeah ‘tot just la meva mare”
	Contrasting	“that would be the direct question and the indirect question would be like this”
Managing learning	Referring to a learning strategy	this is extra information for you but it is very good because it helps you with the grammar”
	Referring to teaching procedures	In order to (prepare) this list what I did was to look at different grammar books there was no grammar book in which I could find sixteen items
	Expressing perceptions of teaching and learning	[pronunciation] que costa do you find it difficult?

In the presentation stage, which involves an explicit focus on language, the lecturers usually carry out the following processes: presenting rules, producing samples to illustrate them, analysing and labelling, referring to usage/meaning, and expressing judgments on

use. In their responses, students usually act as language users, producing language samples according to rules and models. They engage in language analysis when elicited by the lecturer, as in those sequences in which they work out rules through an inductive process or as a follow-up in the case of incorrect answers. Extract 4 corresponds to a sequence in which the lecturer takes a student's response to an exercise as a language sample for further analysis. She elicits brief contributions from the students to work out rules.

01 T: [WRITING ON THE BLACKBOARD]we have subject and subject <5> we have verb and verb <5> we have on Sundays || and in xxx | mm? we have | hard in the garden | and by car | xxxx home | all right? so this is the same in both | obviously in English you place the subject first and then you place the verb | in second position | yeah? so this is the same for both | now || here | in the two examples | in final position again we have the same elements | yeah? we have an adverbial of time | we have another adverbial of time | indicating | when | right? so it's | [WRITING ON THE BLACKBOARD] when || xx when | right? indicating time | adverbial | of | time | *complement circonstancial de temps* | yeah? that's what we call adverbials | in English | in English | ok? now | have a look at this | and see what happens here | hard in_ in the garden | home in | by car <3> again | we have two elements | which are repeated | but in different order | yeah? xxx on Sundays | and in the xx | when? xxx to call in the garden?
02 FS: where
03 T: where | yes and that makes reference to | instead of travelling
04 S: =place=
05 T: =place= | all right? [WRITING ON THE BLACKBOARD] remember xx where here | and here || place | yeah? can you find the where place element | in the second sentence
06 FS: home
07 T: [WRITING ON THE BLACKBOARD] home | right? <5> now | if I call on Sundays and in the evening when | and if I call him xxx where? xxxxx?
08 FS: how
09 T: how | yeah? and here xxxxx? xx?
10 MS: manner
11 T: [WRITING ON THE BLACKBOARD] manner | yes? *manera* | right? || these are the question words that you would use in order to ask a question so as to hear these xx as answers | and these a:re the: terms which make reference to the type of adverbials | yeah? // *complement circonstancial de manera* | adverbial of manner | *complement circonstancial de lloc* | adverbial of place | *complement circonstancial de temps* | adverbial of time | all right? (...)

(Extract 4 Lisa – Session 3)

Related to the prominence of KAL in the classroom, the use of metalanguage has a central role. The lecturers observed use and promote standard linguistic terminology, which is consistent with the amount of attention devoted to language analysis. Not only is metalanguage present through the use of terminology at different layers of specialisation, but there are instances of explicit reflection on the importance and use of terminology. This situation is consistent with students' academic orientation. The two extracts below exemplify the use of terminology with different degrees of specialisation. In Extract 5, Lisa explains the nuances of different metalinguistic terms (direct/indirect object vs. prepositional object) to facilitate students' understanding and to achieve precision in her analysis. Similarly, in Extract 6—from a lesson devoted to exam preparation—Monica demystifies the use of specialised terminology, as she refers to the need to “give a title” to exam questions.

T: (...) van donar la clau | al seu pare | all right? the verb give | you give something to somebody | if you look it up in a dictionary that's what it will say | give something to somebody | yeah? show | ensenyar | show something to somebody | all right? <2> the other option | is to have subject | verb and the | indirect object in first position | without to | yeah? this is why it was wrong | you could maintain the same order | yeah? but you should get rid of to | yeah? you cannot have to here | mm? indirect object | and then here || direct object | all right? | mm? <2> some people call the object introduced by 'to' prepositional object but we'll just stick to what you know | yeah? complement directe complement indirecte | direct object indirect object | and that's it | yeah? and remember that it's the same thing which you have to remember with the passive voice | when you introduce it with by_ something similar | yeah? verbs which have two objects or xx have two objects | yeah? give | show | can you think of another one? (...)

(Extract 5 Lisa – Session 3)

T: (...) això és així senzillament per l'examen| però a veure| és fàcil la teoria no| xxxx| aquestes són les syntactic properties però we also asked for the lexical properties| i del lexical properties aneu amb compte amb aquests detalls a l'examen perquè a vegades us pregunten | us preguntem | ehm característiques sintàctiques o lèxiques o morfològiques i no sé que us passa que us bloquegeu i us perdeu | d'acord? | mm / lo que se us pregunta és lo que heu vist però s'ha de posar un títol per preguntar (...)

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[ENG. This is the way it is because of the exam| but let's see| the theory is easy| these are the syntactic properties but we also asked for the lexical properties| and as for lexical properties be careful with those details during the exam because sometimes they ask| we ask| uhm syntactic or lexical or morphological properties and I don't know what happens that you get blocked and you get lost| ok?] mhm / what you're asked is what you've seen but we need to give a title to the question (...)]

(Extract 6 Monica – Session 8)

Such instances bring to mind the specific profile of the students—language learners and trainee language professionals—as well as the relationship between language and linguistics courses in the ES programme. The lecturers refer to that relationship both in classroom discourse and in the interviews, although they establish a distinction between language courses, in which KAL is considered a tool for more accurate language use, and linguistics courses, which involve specialised analytical work. This idea is made explicit by Monica during the interview (Extract 7):

M:[In language courses] you present an overview of the language ... the aim is to reach a level to be able to use the language. Linguistics courses are obviously linguistics; you're talking about analysis...

M:[als cursos de llengua] Toques tota la llengua... la meta és assolir un nivell de llengua per poder-la fer servir. A les assignatures de lingüística és òbviament lingüística; estàs parlant ja d'anàlisi...

(Extract 7 Monica's interview)

While in the classroom there is focus on both language use and language analysis, in an interrelated manner, there are hardly any references to the domain of language teaching and learning. This is consistent with the aims of the course, as stated in the curriculum (“Basic training in the description of the English language. Theory and practice of English”). However, explicit references to teaching and learning are found in the interviews with lecturers and students, since teaching is an important professional prospect for ES graduates. Besides, some students also reveal that they are involved in language teaching themselves (e.g. giving private lessons to young learners).

4.3. Views on the professional needs of ES graduates

From the practices observed in the classroom and the interviews with participants, we can identify certain views and models of language and learning. In addition, through the interviews, participants relate language courses (and language improvement in general) to the broader academic and professional needs of non-native ES students, which gives a picture of the KAL that they need for their professional lives. First of all, both lecturers and students stress the importance of language improvement and that it should have a more prominent role in the ES degree. More specifically, they point out that students need a “good foundation” in order to pursue the ES degree, which students define as “delving into the study of a foreign language” (group B3). Monica gives a similar explanation, emphasising the metalinguistic skills that students need: “they not only need to develop language [competence] to understand the other courses [taught in English], but to study the language, which is why it is necessary to achieve a very high level”, and lists a series of specialised skills such as “to analyse texts, to be able to talk about language, to translate”. Monica emphasises the students’ need to cope with a language “that is not your own” as well as to learn the specialised uses of language that they will need in their profession, which in her view is what distinguishes the KAL that is presented in the ES degree:

even if you are exposed to English, that English is not the kind of English that a philologist needs in order to translate or in order to... I don't know... a thousand things

si que potser a lo millor l'anglès te'l trobes pel carrer, però l'anglès que et trobes pel carrer no és l'anglès que fa servir un filòleg a l'hora de traduir o a l'hora de... no sé... mil coses.

(Extract 8 Monica's interview)

Probably because of their view of the ES graduate as a language expert and of the challenges involved in developing such expertise in a foreign language, participants take a prescriptive approach to language learning at this level. In this extract, students describe the

language system with the metaphor of an enclosed space, to indicate a fixed pre-existing entity to be observed and analysed.

S1: Of course, but what happens is that you feel a bit limited. It's like a space; if you are in a room, you cannot get out of the room. Therefore, a language class is a language class, and you cannot get out of these four walls.

Clar, però és que et sents una miqueta reduït. És com un espai; si estàs en una habitació no pots sortir de l'habitació. Doncs una classe de llengua és una classe de llengua, i de les quatre parets no pots sortir.

(**Extract 9** Students' interview – A2)

An idea that appears throughout the interviews is that students must acquire a body of explicit KAL to achieve accuracy and that the source of knowledge comes from grammar books and is mediated by the lecturer. This idea is reflected in the following comment, in which Monica refers to the relationship between language analysis and language use. She gives examples of how students can apply the explicit KAL presented in language courses to become better language users:

If you don't explain the order of elements in a sentence, which is something that you assume they already know, but in practice they make many mistakes, what can you expect then? Good compositions?

és que si no els expliques l'ordre dels elements de la oració, que tu suposes que ja els saben però que a la pràctica fallen en moltes coses, després, què pretens? Que et facin la redacció bé?

(**Extract 10** Monica's interview)

With regard to the academic and professional domains, participants refer to ES students' need to possess a good command of the language as well as highly developed metalinguistic skills. Lisa places emphasis on the written language, pointing out that that ES graduates should be "good writers", whatever language-related profession they may engage in, adding that if they become language teachers they must also possess explicit knowledge of good writing standards.

If they become teachers, if they have to teach or give writing

Si han de ser professors, si han d'ensenyar o han de donar classes

lessons, they must know what good writing is. If they don't become teachers and do another job in which they are required to write, they must have those tools.

d'escriure han de tenir clar el que és un bon escrit. Si no s'han de dedicar a l'ensenyament i s'han de dedicar a altres feines on se'ls hi requereix que escriguin han de tenir aquestes eines

(**Extract 11** Lisa's interview)

From a professional perspective, Lisa views the ES graduate as a “philologist²” – i.e. a broad-ranging expert – rather than “specifically a teacher”, as opposed to those who associate ES only with language teaching. She defines ES as humanistic and cultural studies in addition to expertise in linguistics: “a degree programme that provides you with general humanistic education as a person, it makes you think”. Therefore, when outlining the competences a graduate should develop, she combines this broad definition of ES with specific references to language teaching. In this sense, we can identify certain ambivalence, as she rejects an outright equivalence between “philologist” and “language teacher” – which she considers too simplistic or restrictive – yet in all her examples of specific professional competences, she refers to teaching and to the impact of university studies on graduates' possible teaching practice.

Monica defines the professional preparation of graduates by emphasising their metalinguistic skills. According to her, an ES graduate should have a level that is “almost perfect”, and clarifies that, “when I say perfect I don't mean like a native speaker, because we're not native speakers and we'll never be”. In this sense, while she refers to an unreachable native-speaker model for language use, she emphasises the development of metalinguistic knowledge as one of the priorities for ES students, both as a future professional need and as a compensation for their lack of proficiency as compared to a native speaker. She gives specific examples of such level of awareness, like “knowing why you're using certain language forms”, “being able to reflect on them”, “understanding grammar books”,

² We should take into account that until now the ES degree has been called *Filologia Inglesa* (English Philology).

having “translation skills”, being able to “play with language”, “being able to use a lot of metalanguage” and “having a good knowledge of vocabulary and syntax”.

Students also refer to the specificity of university language courses in relation to KAL and their needs as ES students. Students in the A1 group compare this course with other EFL courses (“it is here that I’ve really studied theory”) in that university language courses provide them with “detailed explanations” of the language system. At a later point in the interview, they elaborate on this idea, establishing a clear distinction between the needs of an ordinary learner (“you don’t do ES then”) and the “specialisation” that is offered at university: “other learners do not need to delve into other topics, as a philologist does”. They present a series of arguments in relation to the specific language needs of a “philologist”, as opposed to those of an ordinary language learner:

- | | | |
|-----|---|---|
| (1) | maybe a philologist needs more why things are the way they are, why comparisons, why they are made this way, while others just need to know they are made this way and that’s it | Potser un filòleg necessita més el per què de les coses, per què... comparacions, per què es fan així, i als altres només els interessa que es fan així i ja està. |
| (2) | a philologist needs to know the roots (...) because s/he is supposed to know about language | El filòleg ha de conèixer les arrels (...) per que se suposa que coneix la llengua |
| (3) | usually, there is a reason for everything, past forms are made the way they are made for some reason. Laypeople are just interested in the way they are made and that’s it; a philologist should then be able to explain it | normalment totes les coses tenen un motiu; els passats es fan així per alguna cosa. A la gent del carrer pue l’interessa que es fan així i ja està, i al filòleg li hauria de... no sé, per explicar-ho després |

(Extract 12 Students’ interview – A1)

An outline of the profile of ES graduates is also provided by students in the A2 group, who describe the language-related

competences they should possess: A good command [of the language], to be able to teach it, to apply the rules”. So [an ES graduate] must have a thorough knowledge of the language and be able to apply it”. Thus, the ES graduate appears as someone who is not only a proficient user but also possesses an extensive body of KAL, and can teach the language, in a conceptualisation that can be related to the abovementioned roles of ‘users’, ‘analysts’, and ‘teachers’: “Because many people here will end up teaching and I guess they have to be able to explain the rules, not only to be able to speak the language”.

Apart from the possession of language-related competences, students draw a wide-ranging—and also rather indefinite—profile of the ES graduate, as someone with a background in cultural studies, which contrasts with the more specific professional prospects they envisage—i.e. teaching and, to a lesser extent, translation. This global competence of graduates is emphasised by students in group B4, who define the ES graduate as having “a lot of knowledge about everything, and it is very global, I don’t find it very specific”. They describe a “good philologist” as someone who “knows about literature, and a bit of everything, but especially language”. In this sense, although they appreciate the cultural background provided by courses focusing on literature and culture, they also feel that the curriculum for the ES degree should contain more courses oriented towards specific language-related professions, like translation and teaching, which they call “preparation for real life”. However, like their lecturers, they also reject an automatic equivalence between philologist and teacher. They refer to the indeterminate nature of a “philologist”, defined as “someone who studies language”:

S2: Maybe we don’t know what is there... what a philologist really is you know?

Ss: [laughter]

E: that’s a good way of saying what it really is

S2: or maybe you know he studies language, but I mean, you don’t know what prospects there are in the labour market; you don’t

S2: Igual no tenim el coneixement del que hi ha des... del que és realment un filòleg, saps?

Ss: [laughter]

E: Això és una bona manera de dir què és realment...

S2: O potser saps que estudia la llengua, però vull dir, no saps el mercat que hi ha de pràctica, després. No saps; vale, saps que hi

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know, ok, everyone knows that you can be a teacher, but a philologist is not only a teacher, right? he can be a teacher of course, but I guess there must be something else. A philologist is not, for example, somebody who translates only, it's more than that, isn't it?

S: No, of course, but the versatility of doing so many things, it should be that.

ha professor, però filòleg no és només un professor, no? Poden ser, pot ser-ho, no?, però vull dir, suposo que hi ha algo més. Un filòleg no és, per exem... algú que tradueix només, hi ha més coses, no?

S: No clar, però la polivalència de dir fas tantes coses, hauria de ser aquesta

(Extract 13 Students' interview – B4)

Some of the students interviewed are involved in language teaching themselves, usually giving private lessons to younger learners or to university students from other disciplines. This idea appears in the interviews, together with the acquisition of teacher knowledge. In particular, with the B3 group, in a discussion focusing on learning about teaching, one of the students reports to have learnt to to teach by herself: “it is something that comes from yourself”. Like students in other groups, her references to sources of learning can be related to the notion of the ‘apprenticeship of observation’. In this respect, she says that she has not received any specific training but that she has developed this capacity through her experience as a language learner:

it's something you've seen, you have had English teachers and they've all taught you the same, because you always do the same, and I guess you copy it from what you've learnt

són coses que has vist... has tingut professors d'anglès i sempre t'han ensenyat tots el mateix, perquè sempre fas el mateix, i suposo que ho copies del que has après

(Extract 9.4.3.7 Students' interview – B3)

This idea of learning by imitation could be related to Wallace's (1991) craft model of teacher training, which is based on observing experienced language teachers. This source of teacher knowledge is then complemented, according to this student's report, with what she calls “your personal techniques”—e.g. techniques for presenting

vocabulary. She reports to have acquired these techniques from a variety of sources, apart from her practice as a learner (“it’s a mix”).

In relation to the ‘apprenticeship of observation’, students seem to project themselves onto a teacher role, interpreting materials and actions from a teacher perspective. This awareness of a teacher role is also reflected through their articulated views on approaches and practices. For example, one of the students in the B3 group who teaches private lessons justifies the rationale for her teaching in that it should be “interactive” and “motivating”, and different from her own experience as a learner in that it should be “less analytical”.

5. Conclusions

We can conclude by referring to the research questions posed at the beginning of this study. (i) In classroom discourse, what references can be found to the domains of language use, analysis, and teaching? (ii) What areas and topics do participants focus on? (iii) What approach do participants take to language awareness work? (iv) What models and views of language and learning are transmitted through the classes either implicitly or explicitly?

As for the first question, we can see that in classroom discourse, the lecturers interrelate the domains of language use and language analysis, although language analysis is geared towards more accurate language use, which constitutes the ultimate aim of this course. There are hardly any references to language teaching and learning—only incidentally to questions related to classroom procedures or learning strategies. It is in the interviews, however, that the teaching domain becomes explicit, in the discussion of professional needs and competences. Regarding the second question, i.e. the language-related areas and topics that are covered in the classes, they are determined by the orientation of the course towards explicit grammar teaching. Thus, KAL is presented in the form of discrete points, each of which is taught systematically, using a presentation-practice model. In relation to this point, the use of metalanguage is also prominent in the lessons observed, in which lecturers combine the use of standard grammatical terminology with more sophisticated

terms, according to the specific profile of ES students. Regarding the third question, the approach taken to language awareness work, we can see that class sessions consist almost exclusively of sequences of metalinguistic episodes, which are largely determined by the structure of the teaching units and materials. The classes are highly teacher-centred, and aim at providing students with a body of explicit declarative knowledge with the expectation to help them improve their procedural knowledge. Classroom interaction is managed by the lecturer, who does most of the talk. Students' contributions are limited to brief responses within IRF exchanges.

Finally, the last question is related to participants' models and views of language and learning. The model of language awareness that can be identified in this course is restricted to the transmission of KAL—as opposed to language awareness as approach—in terms of the distinction made by Bolitho et al. (2003). Accordingly, the theory of language learning that underlies this model is that of a bottom-up approach, consisting in the systematisation of discrete items (as opposed to a top-down, exploratory and experiential approach that characterises language awareness as approach). Both the practices observed and the views expressed by participants indicate that the lecturer is seen as the provider of KAL, and language is seen as an object of study. The source of KAL comes from pedagogic grammars and the aims of university language teaching are to achieve higher accuracy and knowledge of standard grammar. In spite of teaching the same course in a highly coordinated manner, two distinct teaching styles can be identified, one oriented towards the teaching of linguistics and the other more similar to standard ELT. Students' views are also similar to those presented in the classes, oriented towards accuracy and the development of explicit KAL. For these students, proficiency at a professional level is based on highly fluent non-native models (those represented by their university lecturers) but highly reliant on the possession of metalinguistic skills.

As final remarks, we can point out that according to the participants in this study, language improvement is crucial in the ES degree to help students become better language users and develop their metalinguistic skills. Both lecturers and students emphasize that there should be more language courses in the ES degree, which

should cater for students' academic and professional needs. The curriculum establishes that language courses should be based on the "theory and practice of English", which is interpreted in the course observed as language study. Although participants agree with this approach, they express some tension between this focus on explicit KAL and the need to aim at a more communicative approach to develop fluency. In this sense, they refer to the specificity of language courses at university, which, in their view, are different from regular EFL courses. This specificity lies, on the one hand, on the development of metalinguistic skills as preparation for the specialized analytical work of linguistics courses and, on the other hand, on models that differ from current trends in ELT—i.e. different from language courses at other levels and from the models encouraged in ELT methodology courses that form part of the ES degree. The profile of the ES graduate depicted in this study is that of a rather indefinite language expert, with broad needs and a lack of a clear model for language teaching at this professional level (related to the pictures painted by Kormos et al. 2002 and Leaver and Shekhtman 2002). A further question that arises is related to the target model that students should aim at, as non-native speakers and language professionals. In this sense, acquiring a body of explicit KAL is regarded as crucial by participants in this study. It should give graduates confidence in dealing with language-related matters, considering that they are non-native speakers of the language and, at the same time, it should facilitate the development of language-related competences for their future professional life.

In sum, this study has explored a language course through immersion in the particular educational context of the training of future English language teachers and professionals. By looking at actual university language classes and talking to participants, its aim was to capture lecturers' and students' perspectives, so as to set the ground for future proposals. This study has limited its scope to a focus on the language classroom and has obtained a general picture of KAL with a small population of lecturers and students. In spite of this, two different teaching styles have been identified, which could lead to further research on different approaches to KAL at university as well as on their impact on students. On the other hand, extending

the study beyond classroom practices could lead to a greater focus on students' profiles (e.g. by collecting student data or drawing profiles of ES graduates). Other issues worth investigating would include the relationship between language development courses and other language-related courses, as well as the types of competence that are required of ES graduates in their professional practice.

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Appendix – Transcription Conventions

Short pause: |
Long pause: ||
Pause longer than a second: <number>

Overlapping:
=text speaker A=
=text speaker B=

Interruptions (unfinished utterances) text_

Lengthening of a sound: text:

Code-switching: *text*

Extralinguistic comments: [text]

Unintelligible: x (a symbol for every syllable)

Uncertain transcription: {text}

Closed questions: / (rising intonation) \ (falling intonation)

Open questions: ?

T: Teacher

FS: Female student

MS: Male student

S1, S2, etc.: Identified students

E: Elisabet (researcher)