"As a teacher, you have to take the initiative": An intertextual study of the enactment of subject-specific professional development for teachers of Modern Languages/Spanish

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SAMMANFATTNING

Denna studie undersöker genomförandet (Ball et al., 2012) av spansk ämnesspecifik lärarfortbildning i det svenska skolsystemet. Med utgångspunkt i policytexter på nationell nivå undersöks två olika typer av data från en pendlingskommun nära en storstad: texter på kommunalnivå och skolnivå samt intervjuer med lärare i ämnet. Materialet analyseras med hjälp av intertextualitetsanalys för att förstå översättningsprocesser till texter och praxis. Studien visar att spansk ämnesspecifik fortbildning är frånvarande på skolorna när det gäller översättningsprocesser till texter. Med undantag för en fristående skola nämns ämnesspecifik fortbildning överhuvudtaget inte i texterna. När det gäller översättningsprocesser till praxis visar studien för övrigt att det är enstaka lärarinsatser som ger upphov till fortbildningstillfällen, i många fall på lärarnas fritid. Analysen av översättningsprocesser till texter ger inte tillräckligt med information om ämnesspecifik fortbildning. Utifrån detta faktum kan man dra slutsatsen att en modell som kombinerar analysen av dessa processer med analysen av översättningsprocesser till praxis samt jämför båda ger fördjupad information om ämnesspecifik fortbildning. Detta tyder på att analysmodellen med fördel kan tillämpas för att studera andra kommuner och även andra ämnen för att bättre förstå genomförandet av ämnesspecifik fortbildning.

Keywords: lärarfortbildning, moderna språk, spanska, genomförandeteori, svensk kommun.

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INTRODUCTION

The shortcomings of teachers' professional development in Sweden have been pointed out at different levels. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2015 Ch. 3), there is a need for a life-cycle approach to human resource development. The OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) reported that only 59% of teachers in Sweden, compared to 73% in other TALIS countries, participate in professional development that promotes knowledge and understanding in their teaching subjects. Moreover only 45% of teachers in Sweden, compared to 68% in other TALIS countries, participated in education that promotes better didactic competence in their teaching subjects (OECD, 2014).

Furthermore, national actors have stressed the need to develop the teaching profession in order for students to achieve better learning results (Swedish Government Official Reports, 2017, 2018). In fact, in Sweden, the time dedicated to professional development – 3.6 days per year (Swedish Government Official Reports, 2018) – has mainly been spent on school development and not on teachers' subject-specific development (Swedish Government Official Reports, 2014, 2018).

In addition, 51% of the teachers interviewed by The National Union of Teachers in Sweden (2016b) stated that lack of relevant professional development was the main reason they had considered quitting during the past three years. In fact, 53% of the teachers commented that they had not received any subject-related professional development during the past five years.

Many surveys (The National Union of Teachers in Sweden, 2016a, 2016b, 2017) have revealed teachers' lack of influence on the design of existing professional development, even though development of professional knowledge and competence is easiest to achieve when personal needs and ambitions are taken into consideration (Swedish Government Official Reports, 2018).

The case of professional development for teachers of Modern Languages is quite unique. The subject faces many difficulties because it is non-compulsory, as pointed out by both the Swedish Schools Inspectorate (2010) and the Swedish National Agency for Education (2013). The fact is that between 20 and 25% of students quit their studies in Modern Languages. However, schools rarely investigate why this happens inside their own organisation. Instead, many principals and teachers maintain that quitting is related almost exclusively to the students and not to the course. Consequently, many schools do not work with professional development as a way to increase teachers' capacity to satisfy students' various needs (Swedish Schools Inspectorate, 2010, pp. 23-24), to the point that many schools lack professional development plans and do not allocate funds for that purpose (Francia & Riis, 2013). Coincidentally, teachers of Modern Languages report not having enough time for subject-related professional development, pointing out the lack of resources for participation in language-specific courses or conferences (Hellqvist & Thegel, 2020).

PURPOSE AND AIM

The present article is part of a larger research project aimed at generating new knowledge regarding subject-specific professional development for teachers of Modern Languages / Spanish (henceforth, Spanish), in the Swedish education system. The term subject-specific refers to education that includes specific subject contents and subject didactics.

One point of departure for this research study is the observation that some municipalities may not be particularly concerned with professional development issues. This conclusion stems from a project in which a Swedish university offered eight municipalities the opportunity to map their teachers' previous experiences of different professional development programmes as well as their current needs; this mapping was intended to form the basis for teachers' further professional development. Four municipalities rejected the offer of mapping (Karlberg, 2018). Therefore, it is of interest to investigate what professional development looks like in these municipalities as teachers working there may not have been asked about their preferences very often and may have had fewer opportunities to receive professional development.

The aim of the present paper is twofold: (1) to present a pilot study analysing the policy enactment of Spanish subject-specific professional development in one of the above-mentioned four municipalities and (2) to propose a model for studying *how* policy concerning subject-specific professional development is done in schools in Sweden that can be applied to other municipalities.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH

There is a long tradition of research on teachers' professional development. Kirsten (2020) distinguishes seven research areas. Next, these areas are illustrated with examples from recent Swedish studies.

1. "Teachers' professional development in relation to governance" includes studies of professional development in relation to policy and teacher professionalism, for example, Wermke (2013) and Kirsten (2020).
2. "Effects of teachers' professional development" comprises studies that explicitly focus on the effectiveness of professional development, for example, Lindvall (2017).
3. "Close studies of teachers' learning within the framework of professional development" deals with how teachers learn or change in connection with professional development, for example, Widén (2016) and Andersson et al. (2018).
4. "Teacher collaboration" is related to the study of how teachers work together to develop their practice, as well as the relationship between such collaboration and teachers' or students' learning, for example, Bergmark (2020).
5. "Leadership for professional development" deals with how leaders at different levels can provide the conditions for productive competence development.
6. "Reports on individual professional development initiatives" deals with evaluations of individual projects, for example, Hajer and Norén (2017).
7. "Partnership between school and university" includes studies that focus on projects where researchers and teachers collaborate, for example, Karlberg and Bezzina (2020).

As the present study relates to Karlberg and Bezzinas (2020), it will be summarised here. It is the result of a partnership between the university, as a teacher education institution, municipalities and schools directly addressing the recommendations put forward by the OECD (2015), which is the requirement for enhanced co-ordination and collaboration between these types of entities so that continuous professional development better meets the learning needs of teachers.

Karlberg and Bezzinas (2020) aim at identifying the perceptions of teachers on continuing professional development. The study draws on the data from an internet-based survey conducted during

the autumn of 2017. The respondents were recruited from four municipalities in Sweden and consisted of teachers from preschools (1–5 year-old children), primary schools (6–12), secondary schools (13–15), and high schools, including vocational schools (16–18). Unqualified teachers (11.2 %) were also included in the study.

The study shows that the majority of respondents identified university courses, informal discussions and sessions run by the National Agency for Education as the most effective forms of professional development. The majority of teachers favoured professional development opportunities that bring teachers together in order to learn from each other through more school-based initiatives.

The respondents perceived the most positive impact in previous professional development sessions that were related to pedagogical- and subject-content knowledge, and special education. Even if pedagogical- and subject-content knowledge have the most positive impact related to previous experiences, teachers identify four main areas in which they require training, namely special education, technology-enhanced learning, handling behaviour concerns, and teaching migrant children. Subject- and pedagogical-content knowledge come in the fifth and sixth place in professional development needs of teachers.

It is worth pointing out that there are no previous studies on the enactment of Spanish subject-specific professional development in Sweden. The National Agency for Education (2014) called attention to the fact that there is little focus on professional development of teachers of the subject, stating that in many cases teachers have difficulty finding relevant professional development and opportunities to attend courses. However, the National Agency for Education did not provide any details about what Spanish teachers consider to be relevant professional development.

THEORY

The present paper starts from a theoretical conception of policy as both text and action (Ball, 1994). Policy is understood as "texts and 'things' (legislation and national strategies) but also as discursive processes that are complexly configured, contextually mediated and institutionally rendered" (Ball et al., 2012, p. 3). Policy is intricately encoded in texts and artefacts that are not automatically implemented but are decoded and recoded in complex ways. "Policy 'making' is a process of understanding and translating" (Ball et al., 2012, p. 3).

Thus, interpretation and translation are two key parts of the policy enactment process. They are occasionally closely interwoven and overlapping, as they work together to inscribe discourse into practices (Ball et al., 2012, p. 47). Interpretation is an initial reading, a making sense of policy that is situated. It is a meaning-making operation that tries to grasp what policy texts mean to a certain institution and what that institution has to do. It is a decoding that is both retrospective and prospective (Ball et al., 2012, p. 43). Interpretation is "an institutional political process, a strategy, […] a process of explanation, elucidation and creation of an institutional agenda" (Ball et al., 2012, p. 45). The authoritative interpretations that emerge from this initial process are presented to staff as "frames within which practice is to be thought about and constructed or objectives to which practice is to be oriented" (Ball et al., 2012, p. 44). Translation, in turn, is a process of making institutional texts and putting those texts into action. Translation is a recoding process of making policy into materials, practices, concepts, procedures and orientations in relation to the specific conditions of each institution (Ball et al., 2012, p. 45).

METHOD

Data

A pilot study of the enactment of subject-specific professional development offered to Spanish teachers in a commuting municipality near a major city in Sweden (Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions, 2016) is the basis for the present paper. The study has been designed to develop a model to apply to the other three above-mentioned municipalities (or beyond).

The point of departure to analyse the enactment processes at the municipal level is the policy texts at the national level that concern professional development. In order to analyse in what ways policies concerning subject-specific professional development offered to Spanish teachers are translated into texts and practices in the municipality's schools, two types of data were considered. The first type included documents at the municipal and school level.

The second type of data included interviews with Spanish teachers. The notion that "policy is done by and done to teachers […] they are actors and subjects, subject to and objects of policy" (Ball et al., 2012, p. 3) is highly relevant to professional development and the reason for using this type of data in the present study.

Data collection procedure

The relevant documentation at the municipal level is available on the Internet. In order to collect school documents, all school principals (18 in total) were contacted by e-mail to enquire whether their schools had specific professional development documents. Only three of them responded that their schools did not have any specific documents.

Regarding contact with teachers, correspondence with the municipality showed that they lack information on which individuals actually teach Spanish (Lindgren, 2018). Thus, all schools in the municipality were mapped. During the academic year 2019-20, there was a total of twenty schools that could potentially offer Spanish: three upper secondary schools (one municipal and two independent), three schools from 7th to 9th grade (two municipal and one independent), one school from pre-school level to 8th grade (municipal), eleven schools from pre-school level to 6th grade (ten municipal and one independent) and two schools from pre-school level to 9th grade (one municipal and one independent). Telephone calls made to all of the schools showed that Spanish was offered by all but two, both independent schools: one a primary and lower secondary that offered French and German, and the other an upper secondary that only offered the introductory programme and vocational programmes in Swedish and English. In the municipality as a whole, there were nineteen Spanish teachers.

Once the schools offering Spanish had been mapped, their websites were examined, but the names of the teaching staff were not stated. Thus, telephone calls were made to obtain teachers' contact information to invite them to participate in an interview. Fourteen of the eighteen schools have only one teacher in Spanish. The schools did not want to give out teachers' telephone numbers, but the e-mail addresses of seventeen teachers were obtained.

In the case of one of the teachers, the e-mail address could not be obtained; the principal refused to disclose it, arguing that the individual worked on an hourly basis. In the other case, the principal

said the school had a Spanish teacher who was not certified. Even when our interest in getting in touch with every person teaching Spanish was explained, the principal said it was a small school with very few educators who are busy all the time. Despite this, a teacher in *German* could be contacted. It is unclear why this teacher would have had more time than the Spanish teacher.

Thanks to the e-mail addresses, teachers' names and surnames were obtained. Teachers who appeared in the Swedish telephone register, Eniro, were called and asked to participate in an interview. Those who did not answer the phone or did not appear in Eniro were contacted by e-mail, in some cases up to five times and even via LinkedIn.

Of the seventeen teachers contacted, eight agreed to be interviewed, six primary and lower secondary school teachers and two upper secondary school teachers. Our response rate of 42% is higher than the 35% which, according to Statistics Sweden, is typical of school surveys (Granfeldt et al., 2019). The possibility that more answers could have been obtained if the teachers had been contacted in a normal school year, without an ongoing pandemic cannot be rejected.

One earlier study (Francia & Riis, 2013) had particular difficulties in studying Spanish teachers: when a survey was conducted, the response rate was below 15% (Francia, 2020). Using another data collection method could increase the chances of acquiring information about Spanish teachers' perspectives, which are largely unknown to date and are invaluable when studying professional development in practice.

The interviews

Teacher interviews took place between October 2019 and June 2020 and were both structured and semi-structured in nature (Bryman, 2016). The questions were based on three considerations: (1) teachers' background, (2) their previous and present experiences of professional development and (3) their preferences for future subject-specific professional development. As for their answers, some of the categories from which the respondents were to choose were suggested in advance.

All of the interviews were in person, except one that was conducted by telephone, and another that was conducted via Zoom after the pandemic had broken out. The interviews were audio-recorded, if the respondent consented, and then selectively transcribed. In other cases, the researcher took notes on the responses during the interviews.

The present research follows the principles of research ethics as stipulated by the Swedish Research Council (2017). Before the interview starts, the researcher (1) explains what will be studied and how, (2) seeks informed consent to conduct the work, (3) grants confidentiality when requested by using pseudonyms to protect the identity of the participating individuals as well as (4) certifies that the information collected about individuals in the interviews will be used for research purposes only. Due to the low number of participating teachers and in order to ensure anonymity, it was decided that data on teachers' background, such as age, native language, number of working years, type of certification or type of school, would not be reported in the results. Moreover, in order to protect the individuals involved in the study, the documents at the municipal and the school level do not appear in the list of references.

Analyses and discussion

The analytical approach rests on the concept of intertextuality, which understands each text as immersed in a social context and in dialog with other texts, so-called intertexts (Kristeva, 1981 [1966]). Even if this concept originated outside educational research, its appropriateness to social sciences has been highlighted by Fairclough (1992) and even specifically to the field of education by Ball et al. (2012, p. 123), Lemke (1992) and Francia (2008).

As suggested by Fairclough (1992), within critical discourse analysis, discursive events such as interviews can be analysed linguistically as texts, as instances of discourse practice, and as instances of social practice. Thus, in the present study, the discursive event constituted by the interviews was considered a set of texts produced by the interviewees in dialogue with the interviewer.

The analysis shows the processes of translation, which are the result of previous processes of interpretation. In the case of the documents at the municipal and the school level, the processes of translation are from policy texts into institutional texts. However, in the case of the interviews, the processes of translation are from institutional texts into practice as far as practice is described by the teachers.

Documents at the national, municipal and school level were written in Swedish, whereas the interviews were in Spanish or Swedish, depending on the teacher's preference. Thus, all of the quotes presented below have been translated into English.

TRANSLATION INTO TEXTS

The point of departure: policy documents at the national level

Documents at the national level steer and regulate responsibilities and rights in relation to professional development for teachers. According to the Swedish National School Law (The Swedish Parliament, 2010), the municipalities and the responsible authorities at non-municipal schools, that is, the management board according to the Swedish National Agency for Education (2019), have a common responsibility: "The principal organizer shall ensure that staff at preschool and school units be given opportunities for professional development" (The Swedish Parliament, 2010, 2 Ch. 34§). Also, "Every principal organizer in the school system must systematically and continuously plan, follow up and develop instruction" (The Swedish Parliament, 2010, 4 Ch. 3§). At the school level, this task is the school principal's responsibility: "The pedagogical work at a preschool or school unit shall be led and coordinated by a principal. The principal shall work, in particular, to develop instruction" (The Swedish Parliament, 2010, 2 Ch. 9§).

The National School Law is at the origin of an intertextual chain, shaped together with other text types that transform it. One of the links in the chain is the Collective Agreement between Municipalities and Municipal Teachers, which explains that "Professional development [that] concerns efforts aimed at developing teachers' ability to create good conditions for students' learning" (Public Employees Negotiating Council, 2020, p. 4). According to this agreement, teachers who work full-time have the right to 104 hours of professional development per school year, time distributed among the workers (Public Employees Negotiating Council, 2020, p. 4). Already here, one can see that there is no guaranteed number of hours for an individual teacher (Hellqvist & Thegel, 2020). Instead, the employer is free to distribute the time between the teachers. Another link in this inter-

textual chain is made up by the Free School Agreement (Almega – the Employers' Organisation for the Swedish Service Sector & Teachers' Cooperation Council, 2017), in size the largest teacher agreement in the private sector, which does not contain any guidelines on professional development. Instead, it is stated that "the employer and the employee have joint responsibility for professional development" (Almega – the Employers' Organisation for the Swedish Service Sector & Teachers' Cooperation Council, 2017, p. 44).

So, an intertextual reading that contrasts the situation of municipal and independent schoolteachers allows us to conclude that teachers covered by the former agreement have clearly stated rights to professional development. In contrast, teachers covered by the latter agreement are responsible for getting that education; they have no expressed rights. in theory, however, it is more in the hands of the principal organisers.

According to Fairclough (1992), one can conceptualise intertextual processes as hegemonic struggles in the sphere of discourse that have effects on and are affected by hegemonic struggle in a broader sense. One can say that there is a great deal of struggle for independent schoolteachers, both in the broader sense and in the sphere of discourse at least in theory.

Translation into texts at the municipal level

The Municipality has a school development document that governs the municipal educational sector during the period 2017-2023. Its aims are continuously followed up during the year, resulting in a quality account document. None of these documents mention any subject-specific professional development projects regarding any of the school subjects. On the contrary, the municipality invests in three general approaches to pedagogical work: assessment for learning, language development approach and ICT.

According to the school development document, continuous collaboration with universities and colleges contributes (1) to teachers following knowledge development, (2) to pedagogical development and (3) to encouraging students to continue their studies. Intertextuality with the quality account document shows that the aim of these joint actions is to develop teachers and their work in pre-school and school, based on current research. However, there is no mention of any concrete activities planned for the period 2019/2020.

The quality account document states that, for the period, the municipality has planned (1) to take measures to develop and enhance competence within digitalisation, as also stated in the school development document and (2) to promote teachers' leadership by administering professional development for school principals and other "key people" (p. 84).

In the same quality account document, three aims are stated for the period 2017-2023 and for the primary school. One of them is to have "engaged employees with the right qualifications" (p. 86), which includes having dedicated employees, who are motivated in their work and think "it is fun to go to work [sic.]" (p.86) and to increase the proportion of certified teachers qualified to teach at least one subject (the document does not state whether this is for each school or for the whole municipality). It is not stated whether the certified and subject-qualified teachers are new staff to be hired or whether some of the teachers working at the moment without sufficient qualifications would be given the opportunity to participate in professional development to acquire the required qualifications.

Regarding upper secondary schools, the Municipality has no website on school quality that is equivalent to the one for primary schools.

Translation into texts at the school level

All primary and lower secondary municipal schools' websites have a hyperlink under the heading *Quality Work* that redirects to the municipality's quality page. None of the schools has its own section on quality or mentions any quality programme for professional development for teachers.

There is another section on the schools' websites, *Work with us,* which links to the municipality's website. In many cases, the recipients of this section are teachers who can apply for work. Nonetheless, it does not mention professional development, even though such an opportunity could appeal to candidates who are keen to develop their future career.

In any case, the intertextual chain formed by the school development document and the quality account document has other links formed by individual schools' texts on their respective websites. Under the link *How we work,* the schools provide information to the students' parents and sometimes to the students themselves. These texts are rich in embedded intertextuality (Fairclough, 1992), with direct citations from the curriculum for the compulsory school system (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2011) and with allusions to the municipal quality documents. Even though this section considers topics such as students' knowledge, development and learning, there is no information about teachers' knowledge development.

Furthermore, all of the schools have a section entitled *The principal has the word*, which contains a few formal texts written by the principals in the first person, a feature of private discourse. The discourse type is a hybrid between information and publicity: they provide information and try to convince parents to choose the school for their children. There are no mentions of teachers' professional development in these presentations either.

Regarding the independent schools, two of them lack information about teachers' professional development, whereas the third school affirms that it is characteristic of their work that they believe that the entire staff needs the opportunity for professional development.

TRANSLATION INTO PRACTICE: TEACHER INTERVIEWS

Teachers' previous and present experiences of professional development

To begin with, the teachers were asked whether, at the time of the interview, they were attending any professional development within the framework of their work, that is, professional development arranged by or in agreement with their employer and during working hours. Only one teacher answered affirmatively. She felt the professional development in classroom leadership she was attending was irrelevant. She was also attending another professional development programme, offered by the Swedish National Agency for Education, on language development approach. The teacher said she would rather watch a film in Spanish than attend those courses (interview 3).

Then, the teachers were asked whether they had attended any Spanish subject-specific professional development in the period 2015-2019. Seven answered affirmatively and one negatively, a much higher proportion than the 47% who had received subject-related professional development in the study by The National Union of Teachers in Sweden (2016b). It must be said that LR's study is not entirely comparable with the current study, as it has the limitation of having a special sample, namely the interviewees were exclusively union members, whereas the present study addressed all teachers.

The teachers gave a total of 15 examples. Four of them were evening university courses that were not comprised within the framework of their work. The subjects treated were Assessment and Grading (4 cases), Culture, Society or Politics (4 cases), New technologies (3 cases), International Baccalaureate's guides (2 cases), Pronunciation (2 cases), Grammar (2 cases), Sociopragmatics (2 cases), Literature (1 case), Song in Spanish teaching (1 case) and Spanish as a school subject: theory and practice (1case). The reason the number of subjects is greater than 15 is that some professional development occasions treated many different subjects.

The organisers were Uppsala University, Centre for Professional Development and Internationalisation in Schools, (5 occasions, 3 courses and 2 Spanish teacher days), the Cervantes Institute (4 cases), the Spanish Teachers' Association (2 cases), Skolporten (2 cases), International Baccalaureate (2 cases) and Dalarna University (1 case). The reason the number of cases is greater than 16 cases is that one of them was a collaboration between the Cervantes Institute and the Spanish Teachers' Association. One conclusion that follows from both the interviews and the above-analysed documents is that "the municipality does not organize any professional development in Spanish" (interview 1).

Concerning the modality, eleven examples concerned physical presence; three were web-based and one had a blended format. Regarding the extent, seven examples were 2-day courses. Five of them involved five or six 2-hour sessions (three of them were 7.5-credit university courses), and three were 2- to 3-hour-long conferences.

When teachers were asked whether they had acquired new subject-specific knowledge in Spanish or in its specific didactics, they answered affirmatively for all fifteen examples. Then, they were asked whether these specific professional development occasions led to changes in their teaching. They answered affirmatively for eleven of the cases and negatively for the remaining four. Teachers said they felt more certain about their knowledge; they had begun working with new methods, activities, materials and resources. Some specific examples are provided below:

(1) As a consequence of attending a 2-day professional development on culture, one teacher had begun working with her students with the topic of love and with the poetic genre. "The students wrote their own poems, to a person, a tree or whatever" (interview 2). Then they took pictures of the poems and published them on the web. Thus, the teacher integrated a new topic and a new type of activity that the students found meaningful.

(2) After taking a course on singing in Spanish teaching, one teacher said:

> I could build a bridge of melodies from Swedish songs to Spanish songs. Recognising the songs was very helpful for the students and there was a strong aha-effect. The melody is important! I also got the idea to use the students' names to work with

rhymes: Gabriel - miel, Lisa - misa / tiza. I also used my own name as an example (interview 4).

(3) After having done an exercise with proverbs at a professional development occasion, a teacher said:

> I adapt the material to my style and after I get to know my students better, I present it to them. Now I use proverbs as exit tickets or entrance tickets. […] At the end of the lesson, students must say the key word to leave the classroom. I try to use a proverb for a few weeks, starting in the eighth grade. Now, with the sixth and seventh, I started using rhymes and the students like it (interview 4).

All of these examples are centred on poetry, song lyrics, puns and other kinds of wordplay. As they put the signifier in focus, they help students to develop phonological awareness, "a basic ability to identify characteristics of one's own language sound system and contrast them with characteristics of other languages" (Riad, 2018, p. 2)– one of the elements that form the basis of correct pronunciation (Riad, 2018), facilitate word decoding and affect reading speed (Wolff, 2017). The last example, work with paroemiology, is based on the notion that "idiomatic expressions cause problems even for advanced learners" (Abrahamsson & Hyltenstam, 2009). Thus, the given examples that produce changes in teaching are cases of *research-based professional development*. The combination of research-based education and ludic activities seems to be the reason why teachers considered these examples useful to their students' learning of Spanish.

Teachers were also asked why in some cases they did not make any changes in their teaching. Of the four examples where no changes were made in the teaching, two teachers answered. One explained that in the professional development in which she participated, the suggestions presented sounded like fun, but there would not be enough time to put them into practice. The teacher thought that what had been proposed were "quite advanced things" that she did not believe the students could do, e.g. projects. "Students do not have the tools" (interview 3).

In this particular case, it seems that the teacher did not get the tools either. The suggested activities were presented at a 2-day professional development covering a diversity of topics. It probably did not incorporate *active learning*, a feature of effective professional development and an approach that "moves away from traditional learning models and environments that are lecture based and have no direct connection to teachers´ classrooms and students" (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017, p. V). A closer connection to praxis could have given the teacher some tools allowing the advanced and fun things that were presented to be put into practice.

In the second case, the teacher said: "even if it was interesting to listen to all the presentations [about culture and politics], you could tell their content wasn't directly related to the content of the school's Spanish. Thus, I didn't feel the need to make any changes to my teaching" (interview 5). This professional development was not *content focused*. "Professional learning that has shown an impact on student achievement is focused on the content that teachers teach" (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017, p. 5). As shown above, this is not always the case for Spanish subject-specific professional development in Sweden.

Teachers were also asked whether they thought the specific professional development given as an example had been useful in their students' learning of Spanish. They answered affirmatively for thir-

teen of the cases. Among the ways it had been useful, teachers mentioned (1) feeling more certain about contents, teaching methods or assessment, something that indirectly affected students in a positive way (3 cases); (2) making changes in their way of teaching or structuring courses, which was appreciated by the students (3 cases); and (3) learning new strategies (2 cases). In one teacher's words: "They opened my eyes to applying these new strategies to reach students in a better way" (interview 4).

The answers given in this section show that the teachers in the study found that most of the professional development programmes they had attended were relevant both for them and for their students, a result that differs from that obtained by the National Agency for Education (2014).

Then, teachers were asked whether they had been given the opportunity to participate in Spanish subject-specific professional development within the framework of their work to an extent they found sufficient and in accordance with the respective collective agreements. Half of the teachers reported having support and commitment from school leaders regarding access to professional development. Three of them said they had the school's support. One of them said: "As a teacher, you have to take the initiative" (interview 4). It is clear from the interview analysis that teachers at one of the schools were encouraged to participate in professional development. The school differs from all the others in that it is a school targeting the elite. The other half of the teachers said they could not participate in any subject-specific professional development. One teacher stated: "My work promotes nothing" (interview 7). The teacher commented that when she was hired, the principal said they were only buying teachers' teaching, nothing else. This comment is especially interesting when it is intertextually related to the fact that the school homepage affirms that they believe that the entire staff needs the opportunity for professional development.

Teachers made some comments on this point:

(1) Resources in Modern Languages do not go to further education. There is an amount allotted to the subject, but it mostly goes to textbooks.

(2) If a teacher participates in professional development, he or she needs to look for a substitute and prepare the lessons anyway. "One does a double job." There is a budget for professional development, but the school's economic problems mean that it does not compensate for participating in programmes. "You assume you'll get a no before you even go and ask. You also need time" (interview 2).

(3) Schools do not hire substitutes even for sick leave, even less so for teachers to leave the classroom for professional development.

(4) The teacher did not know about the right to professional development stipulated in the collective agreement.

It seems that professional development located at the schools could be part of a solution to the problem, in that it would be easier to accomplish and more in line with quality professional development, which often *takes place in job-embedded contexts* (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

Teachers' preferences

To better understand practices of policy enactment, teachers were asked whether they would like to participate further in professional development within the framework of their work. Six of them answered positively. One of the two who answered negatively was retiring, and the other was leaving teaching. These answers show that teachers' non-participation in in-service subject-specific education is not something they have chosen.

Teachers were also asked what they would need to be able to participate in subject-specific professional development initiatives within the framework of their work in cases where this was not possible today. One of them answered that "it would not work in any way" (interview 7). Only two teachers thought of some possibilities. One commented "that the courses would be free, that it would be in the evenings or that the schools would hire substitutes" (interview 1). In contrast, another stated that "financial resources would be needed for further training. And time. There is no time to get away" (interview 3).

To determine whether teachers' position as objects of policy enactment was similar to their position as subjects, some questions were posed about their preferences. Thus, they were asked to describe what knowledge and tools they would like to acquire so that their teaching would lead to better mastery of Spanish among students. Their answers varied greatly.

(1) Two teachers coincided in their interest in learning more about ICT: how to use network-based platforms. Not only being able to make PowerPoint presentations, but to use social media. These teachers felt that using technologies used by youths might motivate students. "The kids know more than I do" (interview 1).

(2) One teacher expressed interest in learning how to work with games. She wanted to learn about activities that would motivate students and free her from having to follow the book. The teacher felt that if they played during the lesson, she would not know whether the students were or were not mastering what they were supposed to and, thus, stagnating.

(3) Another teacher thought she needed more knowledge and practice in every aspect of *Spanish*. "Didactics of oral production, developing how to get students to speak. Didactics of grammar. Everything, most of the subject" (interview 3). This teacher believed she could learn a great deal from other teachers of Modern Languages who were more advanced in the profession.

(4) Another teacher was interested in four different areas: (a) assessment: "how to assess concrete cases, how to design your own tests, which aspects to take into account", (b) planning: "how to relate knowledge requirements and what you do in the class with your planning", (c) contents: "how to elaborate the contents and not just use the textbook" and (d) vocabulary learning: "how to increase students' vocabulary and quit asking questions about vocabulary lists they have as homework" (interview 4).

(5) Another teacher wanted to learn more about motivation. The teacher was interested in increasing students' motivation. She was looking for something that could be applied, not heavily theoretical, but practical and related to subject didactics.

(6) Lastly, one teacher expressed the need to better understand steering documents. In the teacher's own words:

> I would like to study ... as the syllabi in Modern Languages are based on the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR), so there is a lot to learn from the CEFR and because I still feel that together with my colleagues in Modern Languages, we continually try to understand the syllabi and try to make them as clear as possible to the students. But I have not ... I have to admit, I still have not fully understood them. So, I think that if you read the CEFR and work with it based on it, then I think you can learn a lot, but it is extremely thick, it is very compact, you know. It's very long to read, and I think it would be good to do it together with other Spanish teachers with maybe someone from the university who is researching the subject or something like that. That's what I would like. Then, I could set a goal: here's where I want to come with the students […] Now, maybe I go through things that the students ... that I might not have to go through. Do you understand? That I may be spending time on what is not essential, and I may be spending too little time on what is essential. […] I'm still lost in space, I'm afraid (interview 8).

One could summarise these varying responses by saying that the teachers wanted to understand the steering documents and, based on them, find ways of working and assessing that better meet the requirements of both those documents and the specific characteristics of their students. It can also be seen that many teachers wanted to put aside traditional teaching, such as textbooks and vocabulary interrogation, and instead include ICT, games and other types of motivational activities.

A comparison of the examples of professional development already attended and the knowledge and tools teachers wanted to acquire shows that there is some overlap between what is offered and what teachers wish, a result that once again differs from the National Agency for Education (2014), which affirms that it is difficult for Spanish teachers to get relevant professional development.

Regarding collaborating with other colleagues, teachers were asked whether they were interested in attending professional development together with:

(1) Other Spanish teachers from their schools. As 50% of the teachers work alone as Spanish teachers, the question was not applicable to them. Regarding the rest, 50% of them found it interesting and 50% did not; (2) other Spanish teachers from other schools in the same municipality: 100% of the responses were positive; (3) other teachers of Modern Languages from their schools: two-thirds were positive and one-third was not; and (4) other teachers of Modern Languages from other schools in the same municipality: over 80% of the responses were positive.

Even with this small number of teachers, it is quite clear that the Spanish teachers were eager to attend professional development, even if they had to do so with teachers of other Modern Languages. Naturally, this willingness means they saw many common aspects that could be considered. This is in line with the teachers' previous responses on knowledge and tools. Given that the syllabi are the same across language of instruction, many of the contents, activities and assessment forms are similar.

The interviews showed that the teachers attached great value to interacting with other teachers, sharing experiences, and learning how others work and deal with various difficulties, consistent with Karlberg and Bezzinas (2020). This finding confirms one of the characteristics Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) showed to be typical of quality professional development, education that *supports collaboration with other professionals*.

Afterwards, teachers were asked to rate different types of professional development on a 4-step scale: very bad, bad, good and very good. Seventy per cent of the teachers considered university courses that give credits to be very good. Nearly 70% considered university courses that do not give credits to be good. Regarding processes of collaborative learning with other colleagues, 60% considered them to be very good and 40% good. Finally, nearly 70% considered development projects to be bad. These answers make it clear that the teachers did not feel completely at ease with working on their own; they preferred working with colleagues or, even better, in a university course, which entails *coaching and expert support*, a feature of quality professional development (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). These results are also congruent with Karlberg and Bezzinas (2020).

All of the above responses show that the teachers did not participate in designing any of the education programmes mentioned. This lack of influence is confirmed by the findings of The National Union of Teachers in Sweden (2016a, 2016b, 2017). However, it must be said that the teachers in the present study did not choose forms of professional development that involve participation in the design. None of them expressed a desire to participate.

Finally, teachers were asked whether they had any suggestions for how Spanish teachers could be continuously involved in systematic subject-specific professional development. Some of the answers were as follows:

(1) You have to find a routine, to get into the habit of taking at least one day for your subject, for example, in June. "Today it is: if you have time, then do it" (interview 3).

(2) That the municipality organises meetings for teachers once a month, so you can meet other colleagues, "like the Municipality of Sollentuna does" (interview 4).

(3) "The National Agency for Education could organise professional development. When new curricula are developed, you could have professional development about them: how does the National Agency for Education think?" (interview 7).

(4) Teachers need to be informed about professional development: "Different courses would be interesting online or at the school, in the municipality. There is a lot on the Internet, so advertising is needed" (interview 8).

Teachers' observation that the municipality does not organise any Spanish subject-specific professional development – together with the fact that many of them would value participating in professional development with colleagues, even in Modern Languages, who work in other schools – could be intertextually related to the fact that the municipality has no guidelines on subject-specific professional development. It would probably not be particularly difficult to organise meetings for teachers of Modern Languages that could support their professional development. Indeed, a couple of interviewees mentioned that Music teachers do have meetings, so something similar could be organised for other subjects.

Other teachers' comments

At the end of the interview, teachers were asked whether they had anything to add. Two of them said that Modern Languages are not a priority. One of them talked about a large workload and colleagues who have been on sick leave due to the work situation. This teacher's story concerns the need to revise the situation for the subject *Spanish*:

> The groups are very large, 30-36 students. In the end, you have to lower the level and pass the students. Not passing a student involves a lot of administration: you need to document the process and draw up a study plan. Setting an F is considered wrong by the principals. If a student is about to be failed, the student will talk to the principal, and the principal will decide to move the student to a parallel Spanish class, in the hope that the student will be passed in the other group. This is systematic. The principals care immensely about statistics. The teacher gives a passing grade as a gift, knowing that he/she is doing the students a disservice. Students are given a false signal. There is grade inflation, and this can be seen in the difference between the national tests and the grades. Parents call and complain if a student has not been passed. The principals urge the teachers to pass the students. The bad thing is getting to a point where you as a teacher no longer care. Students are terrified of getting an F. They don't see that a failure could help them. Students are overprotected. Teachers are involved in the game because we give students passing grades they do not deserve. Spanish is the last subject to be prioritised in school: the students say outright: 'I don't have time to study *Spanish*'. The biggest problem is that the subject is non-compulsory. Swedish-English classes are scheduled at the same time as Modern Languages (interview 2).

The picture given by this teacher goes beyond the problem of Spanish subject-specific professional development and suggests that the situation for the subject, including teachers' working conditions, is a delicate one, which is ultimately related to its non-compulsory status.

CONCLUSIONS

At the beginning of the present paper, two aims were proposed. The first concerned how policy on subject-specific professional development offered to Spanish teachers is enacted in schools in the Municipality. Regarding the municipal level and the school level, one can conclude that the processes of translation into texts do not deal with the issue of subject-specific professional development as there is no mention of it in any of the documents, with the exception of one text from an independent school.

Regarding processes of translation into practices, one can conclude that teachers, as the objects of policy enactment, are subject to an absence of Spanish subject-specific professional development initiatives on the part of the municipality. Teachers are primarily subjects of desire. They have many ambitions and few institutional conditions allowing them to fulfil these ambitions. However, in some cases, their individual initiative and determination have resulted in attending professional development programmes, sometimes even during their leisure time. Hence, in nearly all cases, the enactment of subject-specific professional development activities – not arranged by the municipality or the schools – is the result of teachers' individual actions. As shown in the analysis, they are actors and agents who know what relevant professional development, that is, quality professional development, means. The situation is different for the independent schools, as one of them has many professional development activities, as shown in the analysis of interviews with teachers.

The second aim related to whether the pilot study could serve as a model that can be applied to other municipalities in future studies. In this respect, the analysis of the translation processes of national policy texts into texts at the municipal and the school level would not have given enough information about Spanish subject specific professional development. In fact, the intertextual method – which

involved relating the analysis of translation processes both into texts and into practices as the result of considering the actors' perspectives – was useful in analysing the policy enactment processes. This is especially clear in the cases where there is a contradiction between what the schools state they do and what they really do, exemplified by two cases. In the first one, the school affirms on its website the importance of professional development, whereas teachers affirm that they were explicitly denied the possibility of attending any professional development activities. In the second case, the school does not mention anything about professional development in texts, while it organises many professional development activities as teachers explain in the interviews.

Thus, one can conclude that the approach taken in the present study could be applied to different municipalities in the future, as well as to different school subjects. Note that, for the purpose of obtaining a more complete picture of the situation, future studies could benefit from including interviews with school principals as well as school managers at municipal level, who could also provide valuable information.

The present study shows the difficulty of achieving a high response rate when interviewing teachers, thus suggesting the need to consider broader sectors if one wishes to collect a larger amount of data. Such an approach could allow publication of teachers' background data and enable statistical analyses relating some of these data to teachers' preferences. In this way, an overall picture of the enactment of Spanish-specific professional development could be obtained.

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