

THE USE OF INTERVIEWS IN RESEARCH ON BELIEFS IN THE TEACHING-LEARNING OF LANGUAGES DURING INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION

O USO DA ENTREVISTA EM PESQUISAS SOBRE CRENÇAS NO ENSINO-APRENDIZAGEM DE IDIOMAS NA FORMAÇÃO DOCENTE INICIAL

EL USO DE LA ENTREVISTA EN INVESTIGACIONES SOBRE CREENCIAS EN LA ENSEÑANZA-APRENDIZAJE DE IDIOMAS EN LA FORMACIÓN DOCENTE INICIAL

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Abstract

We investigated the use of interviews as an instrument to produce data in studies about beliefs in the teaching and learning of foreign languages during the initial teacher education of student teachers in bachelor's of education degrees with a major in a foreign language. We intended to assist the process of conducting interviews related to this topic. We conducted bibliographic research and reported our experience in preparing and applying the tool. We used as theoretical framework authors such as Manzini (2003), Gerhardt et al. (2009), and Edwards and Holland (2013), among others. Five questions guided our investigation: 1) What are the advantages of using interviews in research on beliefs? 2) What are the disadvantages of using interviews in research on beliefs? 3) What type(s) of interviews is/are more appropriate for research on beliefs? 4) How should interviews be planned for research on beliefs? 5) How can we conduct interviews in research on beliefs? The results indicated that interviews could successfully be used in investigations about the subject through proper planning and use of the instrument. It is a complex task that demands effort and attention from researchers.

Keywords: Interview; Beliefs; Language teaching-learning; Initial teacher education.

Resumo

Investigamos a utilização da entrevista como instrumento para produzir dados em estudos sobre crenças no ensino-aprendizagem de línguas estrangeiras durante a formação docente inicial de alunos-professores em cursos de Licenciatura em Letras com habilitação em língua estrangeira. Tencionamos assistir ao processo de uso de entrevistas relacionadas a esse tema. Desenvolvemos pesquisa bibliográfica e relatamos nossa própria experiência em preparar e aplicar a ferramenta. Utilizamos como referencial teórico autores como Manzini (2003), Gerhardt et al. (2009), Edwards e Holland (2013), entre outros. Cinco perguntas norteiam nossa investigação: 1) Quais as vantagens de usar entrevista em pesquisas sobre crenças? 2) Quais as desvantagens de usar entrevista em pesquisas sobre crenças? 3) Que tipo(s) de entrevistas melhor se adequa(m) às pesquisas sobre crenças? 4) Como as entrevistas devem ser planejadas para pesquisas sobre crenças? 5) Como podemos conduzir entrevistas em pesquisas sobre crenças? Resultados apontam que as entrevistas podem ser utilizadas com sucesso em investigações sobre o assunto mediante planejamento e utilização adequados do instrumento. É uma tarefa complexa que demanda esforço e atenção dos pesquisadores.

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Palavras-chave: Entrevista; Crenças; Ensino-aprendizagem de idiomas; Formação inicial de professores.

Resumen

Investigamos la utilización de la entrevista como instrumento para producir datos en estudios sobre creencias en la enseñanza-aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras durante la formación inicial docente de los estudiantes-docentes en las carreras de Licenciatura en Letras con calificación en un idioma extranjero. Pretendimos asistir al proceso de uso de entrevistas relacionadas con ese tema. Desarrollamos búsqueda bibliográfica y relatamos nuestra propia experiencia en la preparación y aplicación del instrumento. Utilizamos autores como Manzini (2003), Gerhardt et al. (2009), Edwards y Holland (2013), entre otros. Cinco preguntas guían nuestra investigación: 1) ¿Cuáles son las ventajas de usar entrevistas en investigaciones sobre creencias? 2) ¿Cuáles son las desventajas de usar entrevistas en investigaciones sobre creencias? 3) ¿Qué tipo(s) de entrevistas se adapta(n) mejor a la investigación de creencias? 4) ¿Cómo se deben planificar entrevistas para la investigación sobre creencias? 5) ¿Cómo podemos realizar entrevistas en investigaciones sobre creencias? Los resultados señalan que las entrevistas pueden ser utilizadas con éxito en las investigaciones sobre el asunto mediante planificación y utilización adecuadas del instrumento. Es una tarea compleja que exige esfuerzo y atención por parte de los investigadores.

Palabras clave: Entrevista; Creencias; Enseñanza-aprendizaje de idiomas; Formación docente inicial.

First considerations

Beliefs constitute the development of teaching and learning any foreign language (FL). They are representations that those involved in language teaching-learning have regarding the process of teaching-learning a new FL or about other factors (e.g., stereotypes, social context, culture, etc.) that may influence it positively or negatively. These representations can be shared, maintained, constructed, and/or reconstructed between/by subjects throughout life, before the beginning of teaching-learning during the initial teacher education and/or after its end.

We aim that the guidelines presented here can help students, teachers, and researchers who wish to develop their own investigations involving beliefs about FL teaching-learning using interviews as a data production instrument.

To account for this, we conducted bibliographical research on the subject and reported our experience in preparing and conducting interviews with professors of a bachelor's of education in FL for our Ph.D. dissertation by the Faculty of Education of the University of São Paulo (USP), which dealt with beliefs about teaching-learning languages during the undergraduate degree.

We would like to answer the following guiding questions:

- What are the advantages of using interviews in research on beliefs?
- What are the disadvantages of using interviews in research on beliefs?
- What type(s) of interview is/are more appropriate for research on beliefs?

- How should interviews be planned for research on beliefs?
- How can we conduct interviews in research on beliefs?

This paper is organized into seven parts. The first is the introductory section, followed by others that deal with interview concepts, their various types, aspects relevant to it (advantages and disadvantages), how to plan it, ways to conduct it, and final considerations. In the sequence, there is a list of references used and, as an appendix, a model of interview themes guide.

Different interview definitions

Several authors have proposed definitions of interview as a research instrument. In this section, we explore several of these concepts.

According to Haguette (1997, p. 86), an interview can be a “process of social interaction between two people in which one of them, the interviewer, aims to obtain information from the other, the interviewee.”² Interview is treated as an instrument to produce specific information, which gives it more of a quantitative essence than a qualitative one. We could also consider a description similar to a closed dialogue between two subjects (interviewer and interviewee) and assume that only the interviewer has expectations, characterizing the interviewee as a passive agent who responds only to the questions asked. The genre here is already seen as an interactive process, but where interaction occurs mechanically.

For Manzini (2003, p. 13), “[...] an interview would be a way to seek information, face-to-face, with an interviewee. It can be understood as a conversation oriented towards an objective, this objective being established by the researcher”³. From this statement, it is possible to observe that the search for specific information remains. The figure of the interviewer is also maintained as an active subject (one who searches for information and establishes the aims) and that of the interviewee as a passive subject (one who only responds to what is asked). The author preserves the idea of interactivity

² Original text: processo de interação social entre duas pessoas na qual uma delas, o entrevistador, tem por objetivo a obtenção de informações por parte do outro, o entrevistado (Haguette, 1997, p. 86).

³ Original text: [...] entrevista seria uma forma de buscar informações, face a face, com um entrevistado. Pode ser entendida como uma conversa orientada para um objetivo, sendo esse objetivo estabelecido pelo pesquisador (Manzini, 2003, p. 13).

when comparing the interview to a conversation, but a conversation with a specific direction. It is worth mentioning that the interview needs to take place face-to-face, excluding telephone and internet interviews, for example.

We also consider that, according to Diccico-Bloom and Crabtree (2006, p. 315), “interviews are a data collection strategy used across many disciplines.” Here, we see a characteristic that until then had not been mentioned in the previous definitions: the fact that it is an instrument used in several areas of study. The idea of “data collection” rather than “data production,” is reflected, revealing the idea that, for the authors, data are present in the field, ready to be “collected” without it being necessary that they go through a “production” process.

Another possible definition is that of Moriarty (2011, p. 8): “a familiar and flexible way of asking people about their opinions and experiences.” A concept similar to the interpretation of Edwards and Holland (2013, pp. 3-4) that we used in our study:

[...] The interview is a social and potentially a learning event for both participants [...] Both interviewers and interviewees can learn more about certain aspects of themselves and the other, with or without this being an explicit part of the interactional exchange.

In both formulations, interview is no longer tied to the concept of “collecting information;” there is already the idea that what is produced through it will be constructed jointly between the interviewer and interviewee. The participating subjects are equally important in the process, and the relationship ceases to be one-sided in presenting itself as a way in which both learn from each other.

Multiple types of interviews

There are several ways to classify interviews by type. In our study, we decided to adopt structured, semi-structured, and unstructured nomenclature, as it was used by most of the authors we consulted (Dicicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Edwards & Holland, 2013; Gill et al., 2008; Manzini, 1991; Triviños, 1987). Initially, we describe each of the three types to justify our choice of one of them to study beliefs.

Structured interviews are verbally administered questionnaires (Gill et al., 2008) that contain a sequence of questions asked in the same order and manner for all research

subjects (Edwards & Holland, 2013). Questions are usually closed and related to “descriptive [...] data such as, for example: gender, age, educational level”⁴ (Manzini, 1991, p. 154). In this type of interview, all the care and little flexibility to maintain the same standard with all respondents are justified by the significance attached to differences not being between the questions but the answers of each participant. Despite being considered an instrument more focused on the qualitative production of data, Edwards and Holland (2013) think that, in the case of the structured one, it should be seen as quantitative because it generally produces quantitative data (Dicicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006).

Semi-structured interviews, on the other hand, are based on open questions (Moriarty, 2011) that define the areas to be explored (Gill et al., 2008), but neither the interviewer nor the interviewee needs to be stuck with them all the time, which serves only as a guide on what to talk about. The main characteristic is flexibility regarding when and how questions will be asked (Edwards & Holland, 2013). There is no longer a fixed order of questions or standardization of answers that should be followed in structured interview. However, there are limits to the existing flexibility, since there is a script with general topics selected and elaborated in such a way as to be addressed by all interviewees (Alves & Silva, 1992). Therefore, the interviews can be different but not completely dissimilar from one another.

In unstructured interviews, flexibility is greater, and the question serves only as a stimulus for the interviewee to continue discussing the relevant subject (Manzini, 1991). It allows the subjects to speak from their perspective using ideas and meanings that are familiar to them (Edwards & Holland, 2013). It usually involves only one or two topics as the number of topics discussed is smaller, but they are explored in detail (Moriarty, 2011) based on an initial response from the participant that will serve as a basis for both (interviewer and interviewee) to build the rest of the interview.

Among the three types presented, we used semi-structured interviews since they are quite common in studies that address beliefs (Barcelos, 2001). By using a type of instrument that is neither too open (non-structured interview) nor too closed (structured

⁴ Original text: dados [...] descritivos como, por exemplo: sexo, idade, nível educacional (Manzini, 1991, p. 154).

interview), we find a middle ground where we can provide the subjects with a space to reflect and talk about their beliefs because, together with the interviewer, respondents have the opportunity to elaborate and reflect on their experiences.

Semi-structured interview is ideal for this task as it flows naturally when the interviewer and interviewee face each other and share a conversation permeated with open questions, and the opportunity arises to investigate beliefs, feelings, values, reasons, and motives that are accompanied by facts and behaviors, capturing, in total, the speech of the subjects (Alves & Silva, 1992).

Therefore, this type of interview is an alternative that best contemplated our investigation of dialogue with FL teacher trainers.

Aspects relevant to the interview

To expose the different aspects relevant to the interview as a research tool, we organized the section into two parts. In the first, we deal with its advantages, and in the second, its limits.

Interview and its advantages

There are several advantages to using interview as a research tool. Here, we discuss some of them and how they can positively influence the development of a study about beliefs. Let us consider the following advantages:

- It does not require the interviewee to know how to read and write.
- It offers a lot of flexibility, as the interviewer can easily adapt to the characteristics of the people and circumstances in which the interview takes place.
- It enables to capture the interviewee's body expression, as well as the tonality of the voice and emphasis in the answers.
- It enables the respondent to clarify the questions.
- It allows obtaining data with a high level of depth.
- It offers a greater guarantee of answers than a questionnaire.
- It enables data to be analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively.⁵ (Gerhardt et al., 2009, p. 73)

⁵ Original text: - Não exige que o entrevistado saiba ler e escrever.

- Apresenta muita flexibilidade, pois o entrevistador pode facilmente adaptar-se às características das pessoas e às circunstâncias em que se desenvolve a entrevista.

- Possibilita captar a expressão corporal do entrevistado, bem como a tonalidade da voz e a ênfase nas respostas.

- Possibilita ao respondente o esclarecimento das questões.

We deal with each of the listed benefits, individually:

a) It does not require the interviewee to know how to read and write:

In the case of our research, this was not necessarily an advantage as all our subjects were sufficiently educated; thus, reading and writing were not barriers, given that the interviewees were university professors.

b) It offers a lot of flexibility, as the interviewer can easily adapt to the characteristics of the people and circumstances in which the interview takes place:

Flexibility is a hallmark of semi-structured interview. This aspect was very relevant for us, because, when we interview teacher educators, we need to consider that they are people who appear as research subjects in exams on beliefs with a lower frequency than we see in studies involving, for example, undergraduates, students, and/or elementary and/or high school teachers. Therefore, we can presume that there is a certain lack of habit of assuming the role of the sample population, since university professors are often only the authors of their own research and advisors of others, with their participation as a subject being rarer. This may, in some way, make it necessary to exploit the characteristic flexibility of the interview so that adaptations take place according to need.

c) It enables to capture the interviewee's body expression, as well as the tonality of the voice and emphasis in the answers:

Beliefs expressed through verbal discourse can be emphasized through the use of body language, tones of voice, emphasis, etc. Previous research, such as that of Pavan (2012), emphasizes the need to consider non-verbal language in the study of beliefs and, for this, the interviewer needs to "capture, through the circumstance of interaction that surrounds the interview (gestures, tone of voice, physical posture), the interviewee's reactions to the questions"⁶ (Manzini, 1991, p. 153).

d) It allows the respondent to clarify the questions:

- Permite a obtenção de dados com elevado nível de profundidade.
- Oferece maior garantia de respostas do que o questionário.
- Possibilita que os dados sejam analisados quantitativa e qualitativamente (Gerhardt et al., 2009, p. 73).

⁶ Original text: captar, através da circunstância de interação que cerca a entrevista (gestos, tom de voz, postura física), as reações do entrevistado às perguntas (Manzini, 1991, p. 153).

This is an aspect of essential relevance in research on beliefs because an inadequate understanding of the questions can even alter the subjects' representations. In addition, in the same way there may be a need to clarify questions; the answers can also generate doubts, and it is up to the investigator to request clarification in the face of ambiguous answers, but without completing or interfering with the opinions of the participants (Triviños, 1987).

e) It allows obtaining data with a high level of depth:

We believe "it is crucial to understand how students' personal experiences contribute to shaping their beliefs and actions in the social context of the foreign language class"⁷ (Barcelos, 2001, p. 86). Even if the author speaks specifically about students, we can also extend the statement to teachers and trainers, in addition to stating that, we need to develop an investigation with a high level of depth to reach such an understanding. The semi-structured interview allows us to do this because it has a dynamic that flows naturally (Alves & Silva, 1992) and because it is based on a script of questions that can be "complemented by other questions inherent to the momentary circumstances of the interview"⁸ (Manzini, 1991, p. 154), thus ensuring that the desired type of data is produced.

f) It offers a greater guarantee of answers than a questionnaire:

In our investigation, the questionnaire was applied beforehand, and only those who answered it were invited to participate in an individual interview. We intended only for some subjects to participate in the interview. We did not believe that it was necessary for all those who completed the questionnaire to be equally involved in the interview. Based on this guarantee, we had more chances that the guests would agree to collaborate.

g) It enables data to be analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively:

For our research, whose approach was both qualitative and quantitative, this advantage was essential because it could also be necessary to use closed questions whose answers are specific information that can be classified and analyzed

⁷ Original text: é crucial entender como as experiências pessoais dos alunos contribuem para moldar suas crenças e suas ações no contexto social da aula de língua estrangeira (Barcelos, 2001, p. 86).

⁸ Original text: complementadas por outras questões inerentes às circunstâncias momentâneas à entrevista (Manzini, 1991, p. 154).

quantitatively. The semi-structured interviews allowed us to work with open and closed questions, although the former are more common.

We presented seven advantages of using the interview as a research tool and related them to our investigation, emphasizing how beneficial its use could be for us, thus justifying the option for this research instrument.

Interview and its limits

The use of interviews is not devoid of negative aspects. We dedicate this subsection to the disadvantages that are resultant of using this research instrument and how we overcame them in our study. Let us consider the following limits:

- It incurs costs with personnel training and the application of interviews.
- It requires more time.
- It implies the absence of anonymity.
- It provides influence exerted by the interviewer's personal aspect.
- It allows the interviewer's personal opinions to influence the interviewee's answers.
- It causes difficulty in tabulating and analyzing data in the case of open interviews⁹ (Gerhardt et al., 2009, p. 73).

We explore each of the disadvantages mentioned above:

a) It incurs costs with personnel training and the application of interviews:

In the case of our research, there were no expenses for training, and we limited ourselves to studying the procedures for applying interviews and conducting pilot interviews. As for the costs of the application, in material terms, such as a recorder, nowadays, it is a feature easily found in almost all mobile phones available in the market. There were no expenses in terms of physical space, since all our subjects were linked to a public educational institution with favorable environments for conducting the interviews that could be used, at no cost, by prior appointment.

b) It requires more time:

⁹ Original text: - Acarreta custos com o treinamento de pessoal e a aplicação das entrevistas.

- Requer mais tempo.
- Implica ausência de anonimato.
- Propicia influência exercida pelo aspecto pessoal do entrevistador.
- Permite influência das opiniões pessoais do entrevistador sobre as respostas do entrevistado.
- Acarreta dificuldade na tabulação e na análise dos dados, no caso das entrevistas abertas (Gerhardt et al., 2009, p. 73).

Interviews are instruments whose application and data transcription require more time. However, only five professors were working on the undergraduate degree during the field research period. Therefore, even if all of them participated in the questionnaire response stage (a mandatory prerequisite for being interviewed), the small number of existing professors would make it possible to conduct individual interviews with each of them.

c) It implies the absence of anonymity:

The absence of anonymity exists only between the interviewer and the interviewee. It is possible to maintain secrecy regarding the identity of the participants during public disclosure of data, which can be guaranteed by replacing names with acronyms, abbreviations, or even fictitious names (pseudonyms). It is important to note that this was made clear to the subjects from the beginning of their participation.

d) It provides influence exerted by the personal aspect of the interviewer:

The interviewer can inhibit or influence the interviewee. More things can cause this effect, such as the researcher or the position he/she occupies, the situation, the topic, the environment, the people involved in the interview, or the lack of privacy (Stewart & Cash Junior, 2015). The same authors provide some suggestions on what to do when these situations occur:

- Begin the conversation by talking about topic(s) other than the focus of the research;
- Start with easy-to-answer questions;
- Be less formal;
- Use closed questions if the person has difficulty answering open questions.

If interviewer inhibition or influence occurred during the interviews, we intended to use one or more of the suggested tactics until the participants felt more comfortable talking. It is always remembered that there are naturally shy people who do not really talk much, regardless of the strategy used. However, none of these were necessary.

e) It allows the interviewer's personal opinions to influence the interviewee's answers:

Triviños (1987) believes that the researcher needs to not:

- Get distracted;
- Correct the subjects' answers;
- Complete the subjects' opinions.

By following these rules, it was possible that our personal opinions did not influence the participants' responses, also because it was not our intention to express them, and consequently assumed the risk of modifying any of the subjects' beliefs.

f) It entails difficulties in tabulating and analyzing data in the case of open interviews:

The type of interview chosen (semi-structured) was neither completely closed nor completely open to produce more qualitative than quantitative data. Qualitative data are indeed more laborious to tabulate and analyze, as they do not follow a response pattern. However, we used the software Quirkos to support the qualitative analysis that helped overcome the difficulty in question.

We indicated six limitations to the interview when using it as a research instrument, and we explained how we faced each of the difficulties during the course of our study, demonstrating that, despite the disadvantages, it represents an adequate option in the investigation of beliefs about FL teaching-learning.

Planning interviews

To help us conduct the interview, we prepared three documents:

- Guide for conducting the session;¹⁰
- Themes guide (see Appendix A);
- Consent form.¹¹

The guide for conducting the interviews was a script used to guide us during each session. It is structured into eight parts:

- Previous organization;
- Preparation on the day of the interview;
- Reception;

¹⁰ Not included as an appendix due to the maximum number of pages established by the journal.

¹¹ Same as the previous footnote.

- Explanation of the technique;
- Reading and signing the consent form;
- Discussion;
- Synthesis;
- List of materials and resources.

The script is a plan for how we intend to conduct the interview. It is possible to conduct interviews without using it, but this is not an advisable practice. We recommend doing one, especially when the interviewer is inexperienced and/or more than one will be developed, as this guarantees organization, standardization, and (to a certain extent) avoids surprises and forgetfulness. We can say that the importance of a guide is equivalent to that of a teacher's lesson plan.

The themes guide was divided into six categories to which the 33 questions were related:

- Foreign language learner;
- Foreign language teacher;
- Foreign language teacher trainer;
- Teaching-learning in the bachelor's of education in a foreign language;
- Curriculum;
- Apply theory to practice.

Themes and questions were considered in light of the theoretical framework that composed our study, intending to confirm and/or better understand the data produced in the questionnaires. As in our case, the interviews were carried out after an initial data production, it was advisable to always consider what was previously asked and answered to judge what had already been sufficiently explored and what still needed to be worked on, what it is only possible after, at least, a previous analysis of the data.

The type of interview (semi-structured) we chose was aimed at producing essentially qualitative data. Therefore, in an ideal situation, the questions are open and on topics that generate space for discussion. The elaboration of questions regarding beliefs is a task that requires care. It is necessary to prevent the question from

influencing the subject's answer (or even modifying any belief). The more straightforward and direct the question, the better.

Questions should not lead the respondents to modify their beliefs; hence, there is the need for careful work of prior planning and revision by a second researcher. We understand that it is almost impossible for the interviewer to interact with the interviewee and remain completely neutral, since even a gesture or look can bring evidence of a belief. However, when researching beliefs, one must be aware of them.

The consent form was prepared with the intention of having a document that would guarantee the participants' consent for the use of the conversation in our study. In it, there were:

- The theme and general objective of the research;
- Names and contacts (e-mails and telephone numbers) of the researcher and her supervisor;
- Explanation of the guarantee of anonymity and privacy of the participants;
- Guidance on how to proceed if the subject no longer wishes to participate in the study;
- Clarification that participation would not imply any financial compensation;
- Declaration that the subject agrees to participate;
- Place and date;
- Name and signature of the researcher.

The characterization of what consisted of the participation of individuals was "granting interview(s) to the researcher on the subject of the investigation in question." Along with this, we included the observation that "the interview(s) is(are) individual(s) and recorded in audio."

The recording was exclusively audio because, there is only the speech of the interviewer and the interviewee in the individual interview. Therefore, it is possible to recognize and differentiate between them without needing to see who is speaking. Even though we know that visual resources can be sources of information, in our investigation, we chose to study only beliefs expressed through the participants' speech,

not focusing on non-verbal language, given that we were interested in examining the representations that they were able to express verbally.

Choosing recording resources is also critical in the planning phase. As we explained earlier, in the case of individual interviews and according to our objectives, recording only audio was sufficient. However, we recommend that the recording be performed by more than one device simultaneously to guarantee that the other will continue to record normally if there is any problem in one of them. Today, there are several alternative mechanisms that can be used for such a task, such as cell phones, cameras, computers, and tablets. We suggest that the researcher opts for alternatives that he/she can operate with greater familiarity and ease, always being able to train even more with videos and tutorials available on the Internet. We used cell phones and computers in our research.

We should also test recording resources beforehand to verify that there is enough space or memory in each of them to save what will be recorded and ensure that cables, extensions, adapters, and other necessary materials are available and working properly, besides charging battery-operated devices.

When planning, it is essential to define the number of interviews required. In our investigation, we conducted only one study with each of the subjects who volunteered to participate in this research phase. This was possible because the number of questions we proposed (33) could be adequately and sufficiently explored in a single meeting, and due to the profile of the public interviewed (university professors) and the fact that we had previously applied a questionnaire to the same individuals, which saved us from having to repeat what had already been asked.

During planning, we also needed to schedule the interviews in advance. Contact to define the date and time with the interviewees can be made in person or by phone, e-mail, social networks, etc. In the case of our study, appointments were made via e-mail.

In the content of the message, we introduced ourselves and explained, in general terms, what the research was about and what the subjects' participation would consist of, granting individual interviews at a distance through the means that the person preferred. We even suggested Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp, or Skype, and let them

express their preferences in terms of other social networks. We did not express how many or which professors we would like to interview. We emphasize that the invitation was addressed to everyone who received our e-mail and that we would like the expression of participation to be voluntary. Therefore, we asked those who wanted to collaborate to respond by declaring their interests so that we could clarify doubts as well as schedule a day and time to interview them.

Conducting interviews

Our interviews had to be conducted online because we were abroad doing a joint Ph.D. when they took place. They were carried out using Google Hangout, with Facebook Messenger and Skype as the second and third options, respectively. As agreed, we recorded only audio using our mobile device and the QuickTime Player application on our computer.

The steps that we suggest for conducting an interview are similar to the items in the guide for conducting the session:

- Organize in advance;
- Prepare the recorders;
- Welcome the subject;
- Explain the technique;
- Read and sign the consent form;
- Discuss the issues;
- Synthesize the discussion;
- Order and store the materials used.

Most of what goes into organizing in advance was explicit in the previous section when we explained the planning phase. In addition to what has already been said above, it is still necessary to add each subject to your network in the resources chosen to conduct the interview, both of which will serve as the first, second, and third options.

Another step was to prepare the recorders. Resources for conducting the interview and recording it should be tested on the day of the interview, preferably hours or minutes before, so that if necessary, they can be replaced in time.

We consider welcoming the subject as an effective way to start the interview instead of going directly to the questions. We suggest thanking the respondents for participating, asking if they prefer to use their own name or a pseudonym, writing down the chosen pseudonym (if they choose to use one), and placing the paper with a pseudonym written in plain view to remember to use it when referring to the individual.

Next, we recommend taking a moment to explain the technique, when it will be possible to guide the dynamics of the work (e.g., individual interviews recorded only in audio with an average duration of 1h 30 min), expose the topic under discussion, explain the research and its relevance, inform the topics that will be discussed (the same ones in the themes guide), mention that they are not closed and that the interviewees can also suggest others that they consider relevant, as long as they are within the same theme, and emphasize that adding more topics, in addition to those proposed, implies increasing the duration of the interview.

Reading and signing the consent form is simpler if the interview is conducted in person, which was not the case in our study. However, there are methods to perform this remotely. We recommend starting the audio recording, letting the interviewee know that (from that moment on) the audio is being recorded, reading the document, clarifying any possible doubts, asking the individual to say whether he/she accepts the terms (to be recorded in audio), asking if the subject received the term sent by e-mail, remembering that the term needs to be printed, signed, and returned, and asking the participant to reply to the e-mail attaching the scanned signed form.

Only then we can move on to discussing the questions by talking to the interviewee about the subject based on the topics suggested in the themes guide and taking a written note of any occurrence relevant to the investigation.

After finishing the questions, the interviewer should not forget to summarize the discussion by resuming the topics discussed based on the notes taken, asking if the interviewee has any further considerations to make, thanking the individual for participating, advising the subject that (from that moment on) the audio recording will be stopped, and ending the recording.

Finally, it is necessary to order and store the materials used. To do so, we suggest checking whether the recordings were properly saved on the devices and, if possible, saving them in more than one format and backing them up to a flash drive and/or online drive to avoid loss.

Final considerations

At the end of the study, we believe we have achieved our objective of exposing the guidelines that can contribute to interested parties who would like to develop their own investigations regarding beliefs about teaching and learning FL during initial teacher training using interview as a tool for producing data.

We also answered the research questions that were initially proposed:

- What are the advantages of using interviews in research on beliefs?

It does not require the respondent to know how to read and write, is flexible, enables the capturing of body expression, voice tone, and emphasis on the respondent's answers, provides the respondent with clarification of the questions, allows obtaining data with a high level of depth, offers a greater guarantee of answers than the questionnaire, and allows the data to be analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively.

- What are the disadvantages of using interviews in research on beliefs?

They incur costs with personnel training and the application of interviews, requires more time, implies a lack of anonymity, favors influence exerted by the personal aspect of the interviewer, allows the influence of the interviewer's personal opinions on the answers of the interviewee, and causes difficulty in tabulating and data analysis.

- What type(s) of interviews is/are more appropriate for research on beliefs?

Only those of a structured type would not be appropriate for the study of beliefs, as they are aimed more at producing quantitative data than qualitative data. We suggest opting for semi-structured or unstructured interviews that align with the characteristic aspects of beliefs.

- How should interviews be planned for research on beliefs?

This should be done by elaborating three documents (session conduction guide, theme guide, and consent form), choosing and testing recording resources, defining the number of necessary interviews, and scheduling them.

- How can we conduct interviews in research on beliefs?

This can be done by organizing it in advance, preparing the recorders, welcoming the subjects, explaining the technique, reading and signing the consent form, discussing the questions, summarizing the discussion, and ordering and saving the materials used.

The results indicated that, despite the advantages and disadvantages that were discovered, the use of interviews to produce data on beliefs about the teaching-learning of FL is feasible if there is adequate planning and use of the instrument.

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Appendix A – Themes guide for interviews on beliefs in initial teacher education

Foreign language learner

Considering language learning in your undergraduate degree with a foreign language major:

- 01. Does it make any difference to begin the degree when already proficient in the language? Why?
- 02. Should there be minimum proficiency to commence the degree? Which one? Why?
- 03. Does the minimum proficiency requirement influence the number of entrants?
- 04. What entails a good foreign language learner?
- 05. What entails a bad foreign language learner?
- 06. What type of learners are most of your undergraduate degree students majoring in a foreign language?

Foreign language teacher

07. What entails a good foreign language teacher? What are his/her characteristics? What is he/she trained in?

08. What entails a bad foreign language teacher? What are his/her characteristics? What is he/she trained in?

09. What are most of the ones in your undergraduate degree with a foreign language major like?

10. Is it possible to learn from either of the two? Why? How?

11. Will anyone who takes your undergraduate degree with a major in a foreign language be a good teacher? Why?

Foreign language teacher trainer

12. What entails a good foreign language teacher trainer? What are his/her characteristics? What is he/she trained in?

13. What entails a bad foreign language teacher trainer? What are his/her characteristics? What is he/she trained in?

14. What type of trainer is most professors in your undergraduate degree majoring in a foreign language?

15. Is it possible to train good teachers with any of these types of trainers? Why?

16. Can anyone who has never been a foreign language teacher be a good trainer for teachers of this language? Why?

Teaching-learning in bachelor's of education in a foreign language

17. What does an undergraduate student need to learn during the degree to be a good foreign language teacher?

18. In addition to the language, what needs to be taught-learned during initial teacher education?

19. How should this be taught-learned? Whereby? Using what?

20. Does the heterogeneity of proficiency levels among students in each class influence their training? How?

Curriculum

21. Are there specific courses for teaching-learning the foreign language in your undergraduate degree? Which ones?

22. Are these courses sufficient?

23. Can courses that are not specific to language learning help language learning? How?

24. Why are the courses taught totally/partially in the mother tongue in your undergraduate degree?

25. Should/need they really be taught in the mother tongue? Why?

26. How would they influence the teacher education (positively and negatively) if taught in the major language?

Apply theory to practice

27. Are you or have you ever been a foreign language teacher? If yes, which courses have you taught?

28. Are you or have you ever been a teaching placement professor? If yes, which courses have you taught?

29. During teaching placements, can/were students able to apply what they study at university to teach the language? How? How did you notice this?

30. What difficulties would the students of your undergraduate degree with a major in foreign language face when being language teachers?

Considering what is proposed to be taught according to the curriculum:

- 31. What is relevant/useful/necessary to use/know to be a foreign language teacher?

- 32. What is not relevant/useful/necessary to use/know to be a foreign language teacher?
- 33. Will the students of your undergraduate degree with a foreign language major be (or already are) good language teachers? Why?