Professional Teacher Language: Its Contexts, Functions, and Potential to Further Teachers' Professionalism

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Abstract: Much attention has been dedicated to the professional development of teachers and how their professional knowledge base is formed in teacher education, but little attention has been paid to the surface level of such measures, that is the professional language used and developed within teacher education. The first part of this article presents a definition of professional teacher language and provides overviews for its contexts and functions in order to conceptualise its role for teachers' professional development and its potential for teacher education. To further illustrate this potential, a cognitive-linguistic perspective is applied to discuss the relationship of practical teacher knowledge and its verbalisation. This touches on the fundamental question of what proportion and aspects of teachers' professional knowledge base can be made explicit through language and how language can help to form this knowledge base. The second part contextualises and discusses results from an empirical qualitative study of practitioner teachers' discussing their practice in a professional learning group. This illustrates one methodological approach to exploring how practitioners verbalise their decision making in practice within professional discourse in a professional learning community.

Keywords: professional language, professional development, language teaching, strategic knowledge, PCK

Language plays a fundamental role in teachers' professional development (PD). Much of what teachers do in order to systematically advance their practice is mediated through language. Before, after, and around teaching practice, language is – naturally – the foundation for all professional discourse of teachers. It permeates teacher education as a tool of acquisition, explication, reflection, communication, and evaluation. Maybe because it is such a natural, omnipresent tool it has been paid little attention in teacher education research. Professional teacher language is often conceptualised as the "surface phenomenon" of what is under investigation in areas like reflection, professional vision, teacher beliefs, and the professional knowledge base of teachers using interviews, written texts, and discourse as a basis, all of which consist of language-mediated data. But as a phenomenon in its own right, teachers' professional language and its relevance for teacher education and PD is under-researched. The aim of this contribution is to put this excellent tool of professional language right at the centre of attention and explore its role and functions for teacher education and the PD of teachers. This is also adequate as language is already often being used very deliberately and thoughtfully in teacher education, when formulating tasks, asking questions or it is evaluated critically in reflective tasks, exams, or seminar papers, and yet is rarely reflected upon itself.

1 Rationale

Teacher education and PD have both been intensively researched. For this reason, the initial literature review serves two purposes: firstly, the scarce research literature on language aspects of teacher education and teaching practice are discussed. Secondly, connections to major research areas and questions of teacher education and teaching practice are identified. With a general angle on English language teacher education, much research from general educational studies and other subjects is included. In the main part, a definition of professional teacher language is provided before the contexts in which teachers use language professionally are discussed. After sketching where teachers use language, the question as to what purposes such language use can serve is dealt with. Three figures about the contexts and functions of professional language are proposed to offer a concise overview of the truly broad field of focus that opens when looking at professional language use in teacher education and the PD of teachers.

2 Literature Review

Professional teacher language is not yet researched in Educational Sciences. Occasionally, it is discussed as a defining feature of the status of professionalism in teaching, in stark contrast to other professions like medicine (Bryson, 2016). In the discourse on teacher professionalism in the United Kingdom, professional language is occasionally mentioned but not defined or researched further. For example, Swann et al. (2010) list professional language as one of their defining features (Swann et al., 2010, p. 564). It is also mentioned but not explored further by Pollard (2010). Carr (2000) only touches on it within a critical appraisal of power play in professional discourse but does not offer a discussion of professional language either. There are no chapters with a title relating to professional language in recently published handbooks on general teacher education or second or foreign language teacher education (Burns et al., 2009; Loughran & Hamilton, 2016; Walsh & Mann, 2019).

Most educational research that includes an explicit focus on linguistic aspects has investigated discourse settings as in teacher collaboration (like professional learning communities, Bausmith and Barry 2011), mentoring and supervision (Copland, 2010; Donaghue, 2016; Waijnryb, 1994), post-teaching conferences (Knorr, 2015), post-observation feedback (Copland & Donaghue, 2019), or reflective writing (Knorr, this issue). But there is hardly an explicit analysis of the language used in those settings of teacher education. One exception is Hedgcock (2002, 2009), who calls for a "socioliterate approach" (Hedgcock, 2002) acknowledging the fact that novice teachers need to learn about text genres within teacher education and teaching practice. But, even for this area, he states that "little research has examined the role of genre awareness in language teacher development" (Hedgcock, 2009).

General Linguistics does dedicate research to subject-specific technical languages, analysing the form and role of technical terms within a system-linguistic approach (cf. Gunnarson, 2016; Roelcke, 2010). Such a system-linguistic perspective is occasionally used in research on teachers' professional vision (Seidel et al., 2011), albeit without discussing the cognitive-linguistic dimension and thus coming to partially problematic conclusions about teachers' professional skills (cf. Wipperfürth, 2015, p. 73). Other research on professional vision has yielded results on discourse patterns or the use of different discourse functions (Knorr; Uličná; both in this volume). Despite it being called "vision", professional vision was originally conceptualised as the discourse practices of experts and novices in a professional field, in Goodwin's case of lawyers and archaeologists (cf. Goodwin, 1994).

The research field of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) offers many insights into genre pedagogy and its effectiveness in language teaching and literacy education in the context of ESP (Flowerdew, 2015; Hyland & Shaw, 2016). However, its potential for language teacher education itself has hardly been discussed (Hüttner et al., 2009). One exception is Hedgcock and Lee's (2017) study in which they apply approaches from ESP to language teacher education and aim for genre awareness in student teachers. However, Hedgcock (2002) and Hedgcock and Lee (2017) do not take a cognitive-linguistic view and thus does not explore the relationship between the linguistic surface level of professional language and the professional knowledge base that is being verbalised.

The following considerations are based on a cognitive-linguistic perspective on professional teacher language, discussing the interrelations of professional knowledge and professional language (cf. Roelcke, 2010, p.14). Cognitive Linguistics focusing on second language classrooms offer insights into cognitive processes during language acquisition (e.g. Holme, 2012), yet lack a focus on its relevance for teacher education. This is why, very briefly, relevant research from the field of teacher cognition (e.g. Borg, 2018; Li, 2019) is considered here. Neuweg (2011) argues that differences need to be drawn between applied professional knowledge ("Handlungswissen"), that is knowledge actually used while teaching on the one hand, and practice-guiding knowledge ("handlungsleitendes Wissen"), which is used when planning, reflecting, or communicating about teaching on the other hand. While it is debated how much of applied professional knowledge can actually be verbalized, Wipperfürth (2015) suggests applying the iceberg model of communication to professional discourse: without practice and a deliberate effort, only a certain portion of teachers' professional knowledge base can be explicated verbally. But by deliberately developing professional language as a tool to explicate teacher decision making and by cherishing professional discourse, we can increase the portion of what can be verbalised and discussed (Wipperfürth, 2015, p. 83).

As this study focuses on verbalisations of teacher knowledge, the focus lies on practice-guiding knowledge (Neuweg, 2011). Such practice-guiding knowledge is what allows for discourse about decision making in teaching. And teachers need to make many decisions when teaching. There is no current research on this, but

Borko et al. (1990) speak of 1500 decisions per day. When investigating the such practice-guiding knowledge, many studies refer to Shulman, who posits that the professional knowledge base of teachers involves different sources of knowledge or "categories" (Shulman, 1987, p. 9) of knowledge. His concept of pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) has inspired intensive academic debate and much research (Kunter et al., 2009; Park & Oliver, 2008; see Berry et al., 2016, for an overview).

3 Part I: Phenomenology of a Professional Language of Teachers

As there is no definition of professional language of teachers to date, the present article wants to present such a definition based on a cognitive-linguistic under-standing of it. Such a cognitive-linguistic perspective examines the relationship of professional language and professional teacher knowledge.

3.1 Defining Professional Teacher Language

When teachers use language during teaching practice, their language becomes a tool and as such it is an expression and result of professional decision making: they make professionally situated decisions on how they phrase questions, explain a concept, give feedback, or set tasks. Teaching practice involves intensive online decision making which, due to its complex and dynamic nature, cannot happen explicitly (Neuweg, 2011). It is, thus, before or after teaching that teachers can enter a dis-course about teaching. It is this temporal, spatial, and situational distance from the necessity to make decisions during classroom practice that allows teachers to reflect on, explicate, and exchange teaching decisions and experiences. These com-munications about teaching are what the concept of professional teacher language focuses on (Box 1).

Box 1 Professional Teacher Language

Professional teacher language is defined as the language teachers use to inform them-selves, learn, document, plan, evaluate, reflect on, or communicate about teaching and related teacher decision making. It is a professional language in the sense that it aids individual acquisition of professional concepts, the reflection of, collegial discourse on, and further development of teachers' responsible, effective, and appropriate decision making in the interest of successful educational and subject-related learning processes in the teachers' professional work contexts.

This language might be used in oral, written, or multimodal form as well as in self-re-ferenced or interactive settings. Professional teacher language thus includes readings, discussions, presentations, texts, audios and videos which teachers read, participate in, listen to, view, produce, or view with the aim of furthering their professional deve-lopment and their teaching practice.
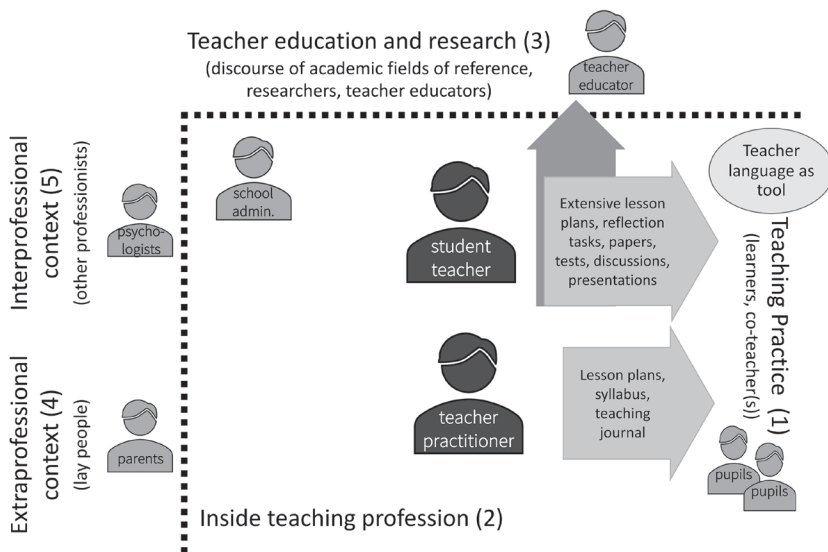

Figure 1 Contexts of professional language use

The content and aim of such language use can refer to all areas of teachers' practice. Figure 1 serves the purpose of visualising and distinguishing between those different contexts of language use of teachers, which are then explained below. This first step covers the surface level of language use and asks in which context, in which modes, and with whom teachers communicate about their professional work.

There are five main contexts in which teachers use language professionally: the core context includes teaching practice within the classroom (1) and the wider intra professional workspace "inside the teaching profession" (2), which includes, for example, school conferences, collegial cooperation, or mentoring. One major source for professional language lies in teacher education and research (3) with its academic fields of reference like the subject domains, subject-specific teaching methodology, pedagogy, or learning psychology. It is not only the context in which teachers learn about relevant concepts in the field but also one in which they acquire profession-specific text genres and discourse skills. The extraprofessional context (4) includes communicating with lay people, especially parents, while the interprofessional sphere (5) comprises all communication with professionals from other domains like psychologists or social workers, for example. The extra- and interprofessional contexts (4) and (5) are not further discussed in this article.

Within teaching practice (1) language is used as a tool. This form of professional language use is well researched, also because it is the main and most important aspect of teacher work, that is teaching practice for the sake of successful instruction and education. This use of language is called teacher language as a tool or teacher language within teaching. Due to is pivotal importance, it is an important point of reference when applying professional teacher language in reflections or

post-teaching conferences, for example. After all, any measure for the PD of teachers aims at improving the teaching and learning situation.

The second sphere is that inside the teaching profession (2). Physically, this is typically the school context that teacher practitioners work in. More generally, this sphere includes all intraprofessional communication about and for teaching. Teachers write and communicate for teaching when reading for, researching, planning, evaluating, or reflecting on teaching practice. This can be in the form of lesson plans, syllabi, or teaching journals, when it is carried out in written, monologic form and with the main aim of writing down one's own thoughts and making plans for oneself, which is thus called the self-referenced use of professional teacher language. All those texts can, of course, become part of collegial exchange and interaction when teachers collaborate with colleagues or serve as mentors for student or novice teachers.

Interactive communication also includes written forms such as reading or writing blogs, books, reports, material, or comments, which, due to modern technology, also allows for multimodal communication using videos, pictures, podcasts, or multimodal social media interaction (Fütterer et al., 2021), etc. Teachers can be both readers or authors of such material and thus use language to research for material, exchange with colleagues, or offer their expertise in the form of reports, teaching materials, comments, videos, or presentations to a wider audience.

Teaching is a profession that requires a high level of responsibility (Furlong et al., 2000; Helsper, 2011; Wipperfürth, 2008) as it covers a sensitive area of a functioning society, that is the education of the younger generations. Such education serves core societal purposes such as qualification, enculturation, allocation, and integration (Fend, 2009). As a profession it is consequently characterised by the autonomy of teachers in their decision making which needs to be based on a professional knowledge base (Furlong et al., 2000). Analogously to doctors or lawyers, teachers thus undergo an intensive teacher education programme which ideally continues in the form

Table 1 Modes and contexts of professional teacher language

Mode	Teacher education	Teacher PD and practice
Oral	*Monologic*: e.g. presentations *Interactive*: e.g. discussions, oral exams, post-teaching conferences	*Interactive*: e.g. planning meetings, post-teaching conferences
Written	*Productive*: e.g. extensive lesson plans, papers, portfolio and reflective tasks, transcripts, forms *Receptive*: e.g. academic texts, research reports, lesson plans, tasks	*Productive*: e.g. lesson plans, syllabus, reports *Receptive*: e.g. academic texts, research reports, lesson plans, blogs
Multimodal / interactive	E.g. (multimodal) texts in social media and blogs/vlogs, visualised presentations, video annotations and analyses	E.g. video study clubs, intervision (peer coaching), supervision

of PD and adequate measures throughout their teaching careers. Therefore, the third sphere of teacher education and research with its academic fields of reference (3) is a key field of professional discourse and the acquisition of the relevant skills for it.

In order to systematize and give examples for possible forms of professional teacher language use or discourse, Table 1 a Table 2 give an overview of modes and contexts of professional teacher language.

Table 2 Contexts of professional teacher language

| Collegial – Individual	Evaluative – Non-evaluative	Descriptive – Analytical – Reflective	Formal – Informal
Collegial e.g. video study clubs, post-teaching conferences, intervision, planning co-teaching	*Non-evaluative* e.g. supervision, collegial exchange, mentoring, coaching	*Descriptive* e.g. reports	*Formal* e.g. reports, certificates
Individual e.g. lesson plans, certificates, blogs, teaching journal	*Evaluative* e.g. feedback or assessment in teacher education or collegial feedback	*Analytical* e.g. action research, lesson study, diagnosis *Reflective* e.g. teaching journal, tasks in teacher education	*Informal* e.g. Twitter, blogs, forums, hallway talk, staff room, telephone, or video conversations
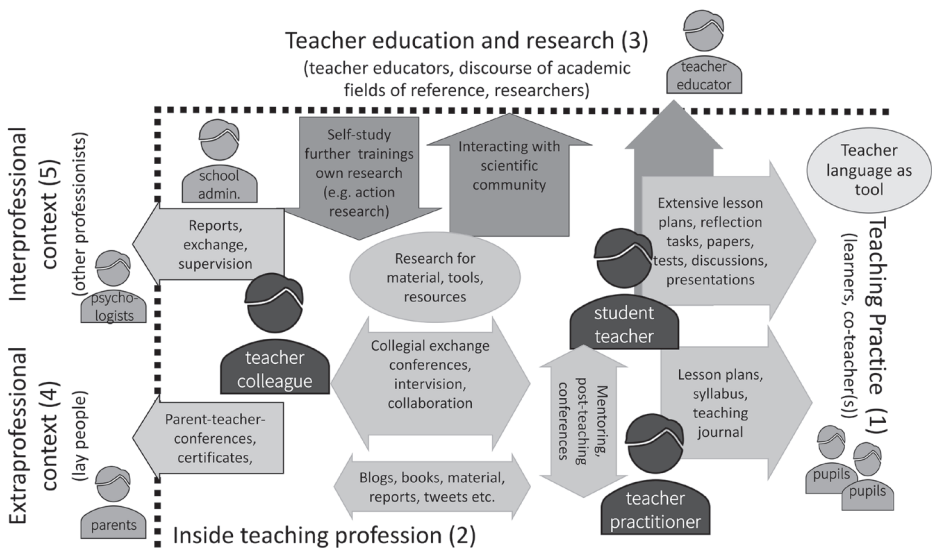
Figure 2 Examples of using professional teacher language in different contexts

Figure 2 brings together these examples of professional language use and the contexts described above and in Figure 1.

3.2 Functions of Professional Teacher Language

According to linguistic research in this field, a professional language in any profession should be unambiguous, comprehensible, and economical; it should strengthen professional identity and allow for anonymity (cf. Roelcke, 2010). Through the process of communicating about teaching practice, professional knowledge becomes analysable, reorganisable, and communicable for professional discourse and PD (cf. Neuweg, 2008, p. 208). Similarly, Freeman and Cazden (2003) and Simons and Ruijters (2004) describe the role of collegial exchange for awareness raising and PD, although they do not explicitly refer to the role of professional language and verbalisation.

Three fundamental assumptions need to be made explicit at this point:
1) Teaching is not about applying rules that will solve the challenges or problems of teaching (cf. Shulman, 1986) as that would constitute a craft but not a profession. Teaching is rather about professional decision making within the often conflicting requirements of specific teaching situations (Helsper, 2004). As Shulman wrote, "What distinguishes mere craft from profession is the indeterminacy of rules when applied to particular cases" (Shulman, 1986, p. 13).
2) As a consequence of this assumption, interested researchers need to position practitioner teachers as highly valuable informants and partners in research, listening carefully to their conceptions and interpretations of teaching processes as well as their weighting of conflicting requirements and the principles and norms they base their decisions on.
3) Researching teachers' decision-making processes can, thus, not pursue the aim of formulating principles that would solve problems of teaching, as teaching will remain a complex, often ambiguous field calling for professional judgement rather than the application of rules. Rather, research can deepen our understanding of the complexity of professional teacher decision making and allow us to understand what aspects teachers take into account, what they base their evaluation on, and how they reach decisions they consider appropriate and good for the aim of successful learning processes and education for their learners.

This is in line with how Shulman defined PCK: "PCK was not to be construed as 'something' that teachers had in their heads but was a more dynamic construct that described the processes that teachers employed when confronted with the challenge of teaching particular subjects to particular learners in specific settings" (Shulman, 2015, p. 9). When we analyse the use of professional teacher language it is this understanding of decision-making processes within the professional practice of teachers that we seek. During classroom practice, teachers apply this professional knowledge base ('Handlungswissen'), but it is through language that it becomes

analysable, reorganisable, and communicable and thus productive for professional discourse and PD (cf. Neuweg, 2008, p. 208).

3.3 Professional Discourse Within Professional Learning Communities

Much has been said about the role of critical friends and collegial exchange in professional teacher development, e.g. for professional learning communities (Bausmith & Barry, 2011). Gruber et al. (2008) argue that critical friends alone do not suffice; instead it is the professional experience of those friends that makes the difference. They analyse the potential of what they call persons in the shadow, which is an extension of the idea of critical friends. They argue that – on an advanced level of expertise – only experienced fellow·professionals can give feedback that promotes PD. This is because they share· an understanding of the problems and only because of their own advanced level of expertise can they judge where there are mistakes or room for improvement in other professionals' practice. It is because they have experienced the same hurdles and have developed solutions and alternatives that they can share. At the same time if both professionals share a similar level of expertise, it is also easier to take on new interpretations and alternative practices in their own professional judgement (cf. Gruber et al., 2008). As previously discussed, such an exchange between critical friends or persons in the shadow is mediated through language, that is professional teacher language. At the core of Figure 3 below of the
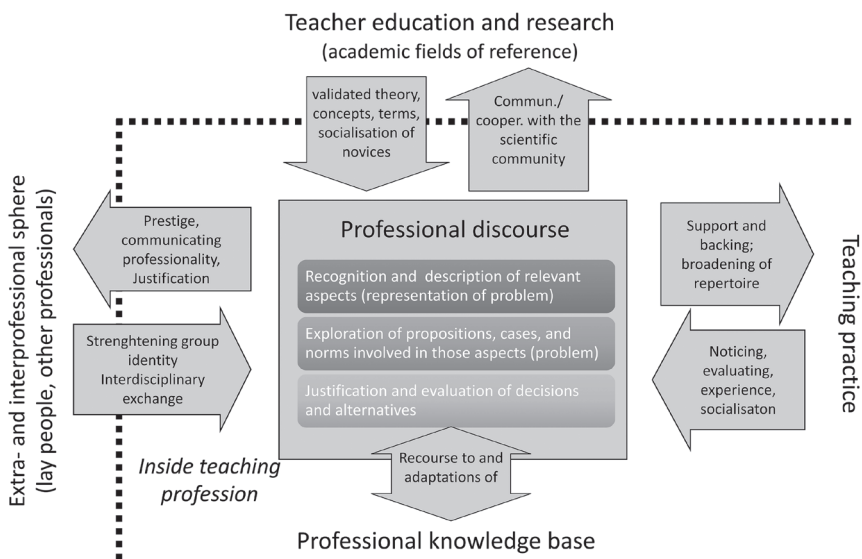

Figure 3 Functions of professional teacher language

functions of professional teacher language stands the treatment of relevant aspects of teaching – identified "problems" of teaching.

From a cognitive-linguistic perspective, such verbalisations link back to the professional knowledge base of teachers: teachers express their knowledge base or use it to make sense of what they hear or read or view from other teachers or texts about teaching (arrow at the bottom). Teaching practice is the point of reference for professional discourse. In their practice, teachers notice and, consequently, interpret relevant aspects of their teaching that can be further explored in professional discourse (arrow on the right pointing left). At the same time, an enhanced understanding or a broader or deeper understanding of those aspects through professional discourse has the potential to support teachers' practice (arrow on the right pointing right). Finally, it is through the use of professional language when reading and writing, and in discourse, that (student) teachers acquire and integrate validated theories and concepts from research in their professional knowledge base (arrows on top). And lastly, professional language has a social function (prestige, group identity) and allows for interprofessional discourse (arrows on the left).

4 Part II: Professional Language Use in a Heterogenous Interactive Setting of Post-teaching Collegial Exchange Between English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Practitioner Teachers

In order to listen to teacher practitioners and their perspectives on challenges and decision-making processes in their actual practice, a special research setting was created. The aim was to approximate an authentic, situated, and focused use of professional teacher language by experienced and novice teacher practitioners. The "learning teacher network" project brought together four experienced and four novice EFL teachers from secondary schools in urban and rural areas of Greater Munich, Germany. Of course, there was positive selection in the sense that all of those teachers were motivated and open to participating in a voluntary, unpaid year-long project which involved them being filmed and their teaching being discussed by the group; for some it even involved a two-hour journey for each meeting.

For 12 months, that is in the summer semester of one school year and the winter semester of the following school year, this group of teachers met 8 times, roughly every 6 weeks, to discuss a 10-minute video-recorded sequence of one participant's EFL practice so that every teacher had the opportunity to get feedback from and discuss their teaching with the group. This setting is thus as close as possible to that of professional learning communities. Two weeks before each meeting, the participants were provided with a DVD containing three camera perspectives, a transcript, and a filled-in questionnaire containing information on the general content and structure of the lesson, background information on the class, and particular wishes for feedback from the teacher recorded. They also received a two-page observation

grid with six guiding questions and introductory guidelines asking them to focus on observable learning processes and learning outcomes. Two guiding questions asked for a general evaluation of the sequence and its structure. The other four directed the teachers' attention to core elements of EFL like teacher-student interaction, grammar and vocabulary teaching, adaptations of teacher language, and corrective feedback. This grid should scaffold and direct discussions towards subject-specific aspects. The meetings were audio recorded and lasted about 90 minutes, starting with a short introduction by the teacher recorded, and were not moderated by the researcher, who was present but remained a passive observer.

The effectiveness of the learning teacher network was meant to be supported by and allow for the following aspects (cf. Wipperfürth, 2015, p. 118):

– situated learning through video-taped classroom practice of the participants;
– relevance to their own teaching by discussing their practice;
– focused exchange between colleagues with heterogenous experience (four /highly/ experienced teachers and four novices);
– the communicative situation is familiar to English teachers as they experienced debriefings or post-teaching conferences during their teacher education
– absence of inhibiting factors like assessment by third parties, e. g. superiors or teacher educators;
– teachers can experiment with new ideas and understandings in their practice between each meeting and can discuss their experiences (deliberate practice).

The project was not designed to measure growth in teacher knowledge but to explore whether teachers can verbalise relevant teacher knowledge in collaborative settings and to analyse this sample setting of collegial exchange. The situated context of their discourse is particularly relevant as Berry et al. (2016) have called for "treating PCK essentially as a knowing-to-act that is inherently linked to, and situated in, the act of teaching within a particular context (Cochran et al., 1993; Hodgen, 2011; Mason, 2008; Petrou & Goulding, 2011)". Generally, the methodology of the study discussed here and the study by Knorr (2015) "represent […] a general shift in research methodology within the topic of language teacher professionalisation. […] While German research has an established tradition of working with retrospective data elicited through questionnaires or interviews and focusing on the emic perspective of teachers' professional identities or their subjective theories, recent studies are increasingly directed towards praxeological methodology helping to understand in-situ data, for example from videography" (Heine et al., 2020, p. 231).

4.1 Verbalised Professional Knowledge Within Professional Discourse

According to Shulman (1987), there are various categories of teacher knowledge which include content knowledge (CK), PCK, knowledge of pupils (KofP), knowledge of contexts (KofC), knowledge of the curriculum (KofCu), and knowledge of educational ends, purposes, and values, and their philosophical and historical grounds (KofVal). It is argued here that when investigating teachers' decision making, it is more revealing to analyse the various subcategories in which all of the above-mentioned categories (CK, PCK, KofP, KofC, KofCu, KofVal) can be represented. These subcategories are summarised in Table 3 using definitions from Shulman (1986):

Table 3 Forms of teacher knowledge as described in Shulman (1986, pp. 12–13)

Subcategory	Short description of subcategories
Case knowledge	*Prototypes* exemplify theoretical principles. *Precedents* capture and communicate principles of practice or maxims. *Parables* convey norms or values.
Propositional knowledge	*Principles* (from "disciplined empirical or philosophical inquiry") *Maxims* (derived from "practical experience") *Norms* (derived from "moral or ethical reasoning")
Strategic knowledge	Deciding for the most appropriate option when two or more conflicting options can be chosen in a specific question of teaching: "When strategic understanding is brought to bear in the examination of rules and cases, professional judgment [...] is called into play." (Shulman, 1986, p. 13)

According to Shulman (1987) these "are 'forms' in which each of the general domains or particular categories of knowledge previously discussed – content, pedagogy, and curriculum – may be organized" (Shulman, 1987, p. 10). For reasons of space, the following discussion only focuses on strategic knowledge, which according to Shulman equals professional judgement as "the hallmark of any learned profession" (Shulman, 1986, p. 13). Strategic knowledge is understood here as professional judgement that solves a concrete teaching situation which – for the teacher – causes a conflict between equally applicable principles, maxims, norms, or cases. It is these conflicts that make underlying principles, maxims, and norms particularly tangible and concrete. It is only because those principles are considered important and relevant that strategic knowledge comes into play in the first place (Wipperfürth, 2015, p. 56).

How practitioner teachers verbalise strategic knowledge was researched in the "learning teacher network" project (Wipperfürth, 2015). For analysing the verbalized strategic knowledge, all verbalisions of professional teacher knowledge is treated as one entity. This is based on the fact that the teachers viewed their discussions as very open and stated in the individual interviews, conducted after the project end, that they did not hold back with opposing views or criticism and appreciated

critical comments from the others. As argued above, colleagues can serve as "persons in the shadow" (Gruber et al., 2008) having a high level of shared understanding. Indeed, the participants agreed that the level of mutual understanding and the effectiveness of communication was very high (Wipperfürth, 2015, p. 161).

Every subject has areas that are particularly challenging for practitioners as they are complex and often create situations that cause a conflict between equally applicable principles, maxims, norms, or cases. These situations require teachers to apply strategic knowledge. A summary of principles of instructed language learning is provided in Ellis and Shintani (2014). To select one relevant example within the network project, the particular teaching setting was considered: German EFL classrooms are characterised by a rather homogenous group of learners and teachers that are predominantly non-native speakers and share the main language of education with their learners. Consequently, one area that requires strategic knowledge is opened by the question of target language use, especially with beginning learners. The underlying challenge can be described as follows: how can we teach a language through the language when the learners still have low proficiency in it? (cf. Butzkamm, 1993)

All network meetings were audiorecorded, transcribed and analysed using summarizing qualitative content analysis (Mayring, 2014). The following summary combines discussions from five sessions in which the participants discussed the issue (cf. Wipperfürth, 2015, pp. 246–250). In total, 31 codings were identified for the aspects of monolingual spoken classroom interaction and language use in group speaking tasks in the eight network meetings. The following rule was applied for coding passages as "strategic knowledge": all passages, in which teachers discussed solutions for conflicts in teaching situations, if previously they had identified two or more conflicting principles, maxims, norms, or cases that could be applied to justify a teaching decision. After paraphrasing and summarising (Mayring, 2014, p. 10),

Table 4 Examples for strategic knowledge for monolingual EFL teaching with beginning learners

Conflicting principles, maxims, norms, or cases	Strategic knowledge
Learners' desire to communicate effectively with each other (normally in their L1) ⇔ maximum degree of relevant use of target language in pair or group work	Careful task design; Sufficient amount of previous language and content scaffolding; Monitoring pair and group work
Learners' lack of linguistic means to express themselves correctly in the target language and a resulting high level of mistakes and errors ⇔ aiming for accuracy in L2 input	Planning for and clearly marking accuracy-based and fluency-based activities; Cultivating a positive and constructive attitude towards errors and mistakes
Codeswitching by learners in classroom interaction because of lack of linguistic means ⇔ classroom interaction as valuable L2 communication	Teach classroom phrases early and extensively; Establish routines and rules for target language use early; Use non-verbal communication to remind learners of target language use

16 verbalisations of strategic knowledge were identified out of which three examples are summarized in Table 4.

To first identify the conflicting principles, maxims, or norms, or cases (as defining strategic knowledge), all EFL-specific areas mentioned within these codings were identified and are summarised in the following. The participants discussed considerations around questions of lesson planning, task design, task authenticity, task complexity, relevance, instruction giving, monitoring pair and group work, code-switching by learners, treatment of errors and mistakes, accuracy- and fluency-based activities, adaptations of teacher language, the quality of teacher questions, the importance of language and content scaffolding, the proficiency level and age of the learners, using non-verbal teacher communication, expectations of learners, and last but not least, classroom management. One indicator that monolingual EFL teaching is particularly relevant for strategic teacher knowledge is the high number of interrelated areas of EFL that the participants discuss in relation to monolingual teaching. As a baseline, all participants agreed on various occasions that using as much English as possible requires a high degree of attention and discipline on the part of the teacher both, during lesson planning and teaching. This is another indicator that monolingual EFL teaching is particularly relevant for strategic teacher knowledge.

To shed more light on normative considerations within the participants' strategic reasoning, metaphoric use of language as analysed. Two participants stated that they discipline themselves to not "slip back into German" or "fall back on German". Both expressions use the metaphoric space of up and down, which is often related to a positive (up) or negative (down) evaluation (cf. Lakoff & Mark, 2003).

For reasons of space, it was not possible to include a more extensive discussion of this example of professional discourse around strategic knowledge, analysed in more detail in Wipperfürth (2015). Still, the EFL-specific example of monolingual teaching illustrates the potential of looking at the *forms* of professional knowledge (cf. Table 3) as a valuable extension to previous discussions focusing rather on the *categories* of professional knowledge (CK, PCK, etc.). What could also be briefly illustrated was that analysing verbalisations of conflict in teacher decision making, and analysing the interconnected considerations of teachers as well as analysing metaphoric language use, are possible methods to take a cognitive-linguistic perspective on professional teacher discourse.

5 Conclusion

There is great potential in acknowledging professional language as a powerful instrument of PD to expand discussions of teacher professionalism, teacher education, collaboration, and development. It needs to be stressed that despite a lack of explicit examination of professional teacher language, there is an extensive, ever-growing field of research on moments, contexts, and the efficacy of measures of teacher

education and teachers' PD where professional language is, of course, being used. This research is naturally and necessarily language-mediated as we cannot directly research teachers' decision-making processes but have to rely on observations or forms of expressing such processes in oral or written texts. Conceptualising and researching professional teacher language is thus both a supplementary reflection on previous research and a starting point for a more language-sensitive approach to teacher education and research.

This article has argued that a stronger focus on the use of language has potential to improve teacher education and PD. Especially professional learning communities can be framed as effective settings to cherish "reflective best practice in dialogue" (Wipperfürth, 2016). As Gunnarsson (2016) highlights, the focus on a more complex view of professional communication also opens up a whole range of research foci and methodological approaches.

As language pervades almost all processes of teacher education, teaching practice, and much of teacher development, it is time to move this aspect into the limelight. A language-sensitive approach to teachers' PD and related research can help establish focused and efficient professional communities of practice and research. Further studies can explore when, how, what for, and with whom language teachers use professional teacher language in different school contexts and research processes and stages of acquisition of professional language within teacher education. This can help probing ways of scaffolding the acquisition of professional discourse skills and language. Following a cognitive-linguistic perspective, researching processes and stages of acquiring both professional concepts and language for teacher education offer still open research fields. It would be desirable to examine the role of technical terms more critically for different participants and phases of teacher education. To that end research needs to explore and validate methods for analysing professional language use and its relation to the acquisition of professional concepts and professional knowledge. Different contexts can be analysed for their likelihood to promote or inhibit focused professional discourse. Taken all together, looking at teachers' professional language use and acquisition processes of professional language and discourse skills can inform a language-sensitive approach to teacher education.

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