



BENEMÉRITA UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE PUEBLA

Facultad de Lenguas

Thesis:

**THE TRANSITION FROM TEACHING TO COORDINATING:
A Narrative Study of ELT Coordinators' Experiences**

This thesis has been read by
the members of the thesis committee of

Maria Eugenia Méndez Ramirez

And is considered worthy of approval in partial fulfillment
of the requirement for the degree of

Maestría en la Enseñanza del Inglés (MEI)
Master in English Teaching



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Table of contents

Chapter I: Introduction

1.0 Overview	1
1.1 Significance of the study.....	2
1.2 Context of the research.....	3
1.3 Aim and questions.....	3
1.4 The study	4
1.5 Conclusion.....	4

Chapter II: Literature review

2.0 Introduction.....	5
2.1 Vygotsky's sociocultural approach to learning.....	6
2.2 Understanding ELT coordinators' learning and development through the social and informal learning theories	9
2.3 Transitioning from teaching to coordinating.....	14
2.4 Competencies.....	16
2.4.1 ELT coordinators competencies.....	18
2.5 Previous research on ELT coordination.....	21
2.6 Conclusion	22

Chapter III: Methodology

3.0 Introduction.....	24
3.1 Methodology.....	24
3.2 Context.....	24
3.3 Participants.....	25
3.4 Instruments.....	26
3.5 Data collection procedures.....	27
3.6 Data analysis.....	28
3.6.1 CVs.....	28
3.6.2 Narrative Interviews.....	30
3.7 Research ethical issues.....	30
3.8 Conclusion.....	31

Chapter IV: Results

4.0 Introduction.....	32
4.1 From teaching to coordinating.....	32
4.2 Requirements to become an ELT coordinator.....	40
4.2.1 Education requirements to become an ELT coordinator.....	41
4.2.2 Required competencies from ELT coordinators in Mexico.....	42
4.3 Developing coordinating competencies.....	48

Chapter V: Discussion and conclusions

Introduction.....	56
5.1 Answers to research questions.....	57
5.1.1 How do ELT teachers from the private sector obtain a coordinating position?.....	57
5.1.2 What competencies do ELT coordinators need to develop and how do they develop them?	58
5.2 Limitations of the study.....	60
5.3 Suggestions for further research.....	60
REFERENCES.....	62
APPENDIX A.....	65
APPENDIX B.....	67
APPENDIX C.....	68

Chapter I: Introduction

2.0 Overview

“Globally, the field of language teaching has expanded rapidly over the past twenty years ...this expansion has created a demand for English language teachers and a concomitant need for managers of language teaching organizations” (Hockley, 2004, p.16). In light of the above, coordination training in the English Language Teaching (ELT) field started to become a topic of interest in the early 90s. White, Hockley, Van der Horst Jansen, and Laughner, 2008 argue that teachers moving from the classroom to a coordination position need to extend skills, competencies and a new managerial perspective. In recent years, some coordination training courses have been created as a result of the evident need to develop ELT coordinators’ competencies (Fowle, 2000). However, when formal training is not available, coordinators can draw on alternative resources in order to develop competencies and avoid isolation as they go through the transition process (Hockley, 2004). The author suggests to rely on face to face training, webinars, conferences, newsletters, articles and online communities. White et al. (2008) point out that ELT coordinators are commonly recruited from high performance teaching staff and are given little or no training to perform the responsibilities related to their new role (White et al., 2008). Therefore, new coordinators frequently learn and develop from direct experience and follow a trial and error model as they carry out their new job tasks and responsibilities.

Hockley (2004) carried out a study on the competencies required by ELT coordinators and the routes available for them to go through the transition. He states “just as teachers develop their competencies through a combination of training, experience, discussion and reflection, so, too, do managers” (p.17). In addition, Fowle (2000) claims that there may be skills that transfer from teaching to coordinating; however, there are areas where new coordinators require formal training. Financial management, marketing, long-term planning, conflict

management and leadership were reported as areas in which language coordinators need training. Fowle reports that coordinators considered informal learning was insufficient if it was not complemented with formal education.

Coordination of English language programs seems to be unexplored in the Mexican context, most research papers in the field focus on issues like teaching, learning and linguistics. This paper contests the claim that attention should be paid not only to professionals' role as language teachers, but also to their role as coordinators and leaders of language programs in schools. Zepeda (2012) claims,

For principals and other leaders, the direction is clear: schools that succeed are schools in which every participant is a learner. Atrophy and stagnation begin where growth ceases. Although no principal can “do it all,” the principal is the point of convergence for all the school is and does. The principal sets the tenor in all facets of the school. Students, teachers, and staff reflect the direction and motivation demonstrated by the principal (p.xxi).

As Zepeda states principals and leaders' growth and development are of crucial importance for programs and schools to succeed. Then teachers moving from the classroom to a coordination position need to develop new competencies. Development may be enhance through a combination of observation, mentoring, research, experience and formal training. Yet, since formal training on ELT coordination is not common in Mexico, analyzing coordinators' transition process may be way to learn from indirect experience.

2.1 Significance of the study

Language teacher education and development programs usually focus on developing teaching and language proficiency competencies (Johnson, 2009). Therefore, teachers moving from the classroom to a coordination or leadership role have no assistance in developing and

extending the competencies they need to carry out their new job responsibilities. As a result of focusing on content and pedagogical issues of teaching, there is a lack of research in the area of ELT coordination in the Mexican context. Then, the present project attempts to contribute to the field by exploring ELT coordinators' experiences as a way to give insights into the processes coordinators go through. Results from the current exploration could assist mentors, teacher educators and stakeholders to understand the kinds and ways of support/training teachers need when moving to a coordinating position. Becoming aware of the needs and shortages schools undergo in this regard could be the first step towards improvement. So, schools need to provide systematic support for continuing personnel development. In addition, policies and procedures need to be developed to align professional development activities with the school improvement goals (Darling-Hammond, 2004; *No Child left Behind Act, 2001* as cited in Zepeda, 2012).

1.2 Context of the research

ELT coordination has become an issue of interest in recent years (Hockley, 2000). Studies on the topic started to emerge in the past two decades and continues present. However, it seems that in Mexico there is relatively little research in the area if compared to other topics. There are some studies on coordination of schools in Mexico, however it seems that there is not solid research on ELT coordination.

1.3 Aim and questions

This research seeks to explore the experiences that ELT teachers have gone through the process of becoming schools coordinators. To accomplish this aim, one overarching research question is stated, and complemented by two leading questions:

RQ1: How do ELT teachers in private education become coordinators in Mexico?

RQ1.1 How do ELT teachers from the private sector obtain a coordinating position?

RQ1.2 What competencies do they need to develop as coordinators and how do they develop them?

3.1 The study

The present study was carried out in fulfillment of the requirement to graduate from a master's degree program in language teaching in a public university in central Mexico. I was a student in that program and became interested in the topic as I aspire to be an ELT coordinator in the future. Having this purpose in mind, I decided to carry out this research in order to understand the transition process, the competencies required and the routes available to develop as language school coordinator. In order to reach that goal the present study included seven language teachers who became ELT coordinators. All participants worked in private schools. Data was gathered through participants' Curriculum Vitae and a semi structured interview.

3.2 Conclusion

The present chapter provided an introduction to the research project, an overview of research that has been done on the area and finally it provided a brief description of the gap the present project attempts to contribute to and an overview of the whole research project. The next chapter provides the theoretical background supporting the study. Chapter three explains the methodology and instruments used to gather the data. Chapter four presents the analysis of the data as well as the results. Finally, conclusions, contributions and limitations are included in Chapter five.

Chapter II: Literature review

2.0 Introduction

The main purpose of this research was to explore language teachers' experiences in their transition from the classroom to a coordinating position in ELT. In this chapter the theoretical framework and literature review underlying the project are presented.

Traditionally, key words are defined at the beginning of research papers (Swales and Feak, 2004; Chechurin, 2016). I assume it is done with the purpose of assisting the reader to understand the writers' perspective, especially when terms are interpreted in different ways within the same field of study. Swales and Feak (2004) argue that definitions establish "the boundaries for a word's meaning" (p.65). Nevertheless, I have found this task challenging since relevant terms for this research are inherently complex to delimit. Then, my intention is not to define key terms, but instead to give readers a glance at how terms have been employed in previous research papers.

In the EFL literature, the terms *management*, *administration* and *coordination* have been utilized to refer to the position, tasks and responsibilities in charge of the English department head in educational organizations. I have gone through these terms in the ELT discourse from Europe, America and Mexico, respectively. It is important to notice that in the business area these terms regularly have different connotations, though preference in the use of these terms in ELT seems to be related to language variations. Formerly, I have decided to employ *coordination* in the present research project as it is the term most ELT specialists are familiar with in the Mexican context.

This chapter begins by laying out the theoretical framework of this research. It will then go on to discuss research on transitioning from teaching to coordinating. Then, the concept of competencies is presented in regard to ELT coordination. Finally, previous work on ELT coordination is presented.

2.1 Vygotsky's sociocultural approach to learning

The present study on ELT teachers' journey towards becoming coordinators adopts a sociocultural perspective to learning. The perspective is relevant to this study since it describes my understanding of how ELT teacher-coordinators learn and develop. Then, my interpretation of how ELT teachers turn into coordinators is explained through the sociocultural lenses. Wenger's (1998) social learning theory is presented like the backbone of my analysis and is complemented with Marsick, Watkins, Callahan and Volpe's (2009) informal/incidental learning theory. These two theories are rooted on Vygotsky's work. Vygotsky sees learning and development as constructed through the experiences and interactions learners have within the school context and beyond. In other words, it is by participating in social exchanges that humans, children and adults, develop and grow. The Vygotskian sociocultural theory of learning will be review in the following section. The social and informal/incidental learning theories will be presented in the section regarding ELT coordinators' learning and development.

“Sociocultural approaches to learning and development were first systematized and applied by L. S. Vygotsky and his collaborators in Russia in the nineteen-twenties and thirties” (John-Steiner and Holbrook, 1996, p.191). Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of learning is based on the premise that there is a connection between individual and social processes, which lead to development. Then, cognitive development is seen as internalized processes which result from the dynamic relation between individuals and society.

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of learning suggests the following interconnected elements:

Zone of proximal development

Vygotsky (1978) defines Zone of Proximal Development as “the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of

potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (p.86). Vygotsky proposes ZPD as the difference between what learners can accomplish on their own in comparison to what they may be able to achieve with the assistance of others. Older children, peers, teachers, care givers and other more capable people are considered agents of development. Vygotsky highlights that learning and development are linked since the moment a child is born. He claims that children’s learning start long before they enter school, however learning starts being systematic at school. In a Vygotskian’s perspective, the relevance of formal instruction relies more on the opportunity the child has to interact with more capable peers than on having systematic education. Vygotsky thinks that interaction creates the possibility for the zone proximal development. Vygotsky (1978) claims:

The zone of proximal development defines those functions that have not yet matured but are in the process of maturation, functions that will mature tomorrow but are currently in an embryonic state. These functions could be termed buds or flowers of development rather than the fruits of development. The actual developmental level characterizes mental development retrospectively, while the zone of proximal development characterizes mental development prospectively. (pp. 86-87)

Vygotsky sustains that they are two developmental levels: a) that actual developmental level that relates to what children can do on their own and b) what children can achieve with assistance or in collaboration with others. He states that what is in the zone of proximal development at a point of time will become a level of development in the future. He also claims that it is through interaction that language changes from being a tool for communication to internal speech. Internal speech is an organizing tool for thought which

later becomes an internal mental function. He suggests that only when the processes are internalized they “become part of the child’s independent developmental achievement” (p.9).

The ZPD concept is significant to this study since it could help understand how ELT coordinators’ learn and develop. As suggested in the introduction of this study, language school coordinators often learn and develop through direct experience. Formal training may not be commonly offered for those entering a coordination position. Thus, ELT managers learn from their interactions in different groups with assistance of other more experienced colleagues. New coordinators could probably start their coordination position having assistance from others and gradually become more independent. Therefore, as proposed by Vygotsky, it is through social interaction that managers find opportunities to learn and internalize processes to carry out coordinating tasks and dealing with new responsibilities.

Semiotic tools and signs

Vygotsky (1978) semiotic mediation is at the heart of our understanding of knowledge construction. As Wertsch and Stone (1985) have noted, Vygotsky proposes semiotic tools and signs as a bond between the learners’ internal and external worlds. That means that semiotic tools and signs function as a bridge between a human’s individual and social operations. Vygotsky (1997) lists language, charts, diagrams, algebraic formulas and pieces of art as examples of cultural signs. In Vygotsky’s view signs are a medium to organize behavior which influences the individual’s cognition and personality. Vygotsky argues that societal-historical development which is achieved through the mediation of signs results in cultural, higher, voluntary functions. In the introduction to Vygotsky's *Thought and Language*, Kozulin (1986) presents the role of semiotic mediation from the Vygotskian view. He writes “psychological tools are internally oriented, transforming the human natural abilities and skills into higher mental functions” (p.xxv). Vygotsky argues that higher mental functions, which are unique of

humans, progressively emerge of the lower functions (perception, attention and memory). Thus, according to Vygotsky human cultural development originates from social-cultural interaction through psychological tools. He states: “every function in the child’s cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people (interpsychological) and then inside the child (intrapsychological)” (p.xxvi).

As mentioned above, it is common that teachers and ELT coordinators learn from the collaborations they have with other more experienced people and colleagues. Common tools and signs used for teachers’ knowledge construction include: teachers’ books, lesson planning formats, boards, computers, notes, internet, technology, conversations, observations and so on. Semiotic mediation is a significant element to assist teachers and coordinators’ development. Johnson (2009), states “a novice teacher’s activities may be initially regulated by a teacher’s manual, but later become under her control as she internalizes certain pedagogical resources” (p. 18). Thus, just as teachers do, new coordinators can developed through assistance of others and by using a variety of tools and gradually becoming more independent as they internalize certain processes and develop new competencies.

2.2 Understanding ELT coordinators’ learning and development through the social and informal learning theories

This section presents a review of ELT coordinators’ learning and development from a sociocultural perspective. Two theories are used, Wenger’s (1998) *social theory of learning* which acts as the backbone of the review and Marsick et al.’ (2009) *informal learning theory* used to complement Wenger’s. These theories were chosen because they portray how coordinators’ learning is socially situated and constructed. I consider these two theories shed light on how new coordinators learn and develop from social interactions, as evidenced by previous studies (Hockley, 2004; White et al., 2012; Brown, 2014; Panferov, 2015; Avineri, MacDonal & Reppert, 2016). Wenger (2003) notes, a social theory of learning “locates

learning, not in the head or outside it, but in the relationship between the person and the world, which for human beings is a social person in a social world. In this relation of participation, the social and the individual constitute each other” (p.1). From this view, development is perceived as the result of the participation that the individual has in different *communities of practice*. Communities of practice are defined as “groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis” (Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, 2002, p.4).

Wenger (2003) points out that learning is not a simple trajectory into one community, but a complex trajectory through a *landscape of different communities*. In other words, learning is the outcome of the participations coordinators have within different groups. Wenger (2003) highlights:

The body of knowledge of a profession is not merely a curriculum. It is a whole landscape of practices—involved not only in practicing the profession, but also in research, teaching, management, regulation, professional associations, and many other contexts. (p.4)

Some relevant points appear in the excerpt above. When referring to learning, Wenger states that it is not limited to what individuals learn from classroom instruction. Wenger also states that engagement in different communities is significant, in asserting that learning is constructed via exchanges with others. Coordinators’ development happens beyond practices in ELT, in a wide variety of situations. Development seems to be defined by the interactions they have with other individuals, it emerges from their participations in society.

Having discussed learning, from a sociocultural perspective and the ‘communities of practice’ theory, I will present Wenger’s theory key concepts, particularly as they relate to ELT coordinators’ learning. To do this, I will use Marsick et al.’ (2009) *informal learning theory* to support my view on learning emerging from the interactions coordinators have. The following

lines present Wenger's key concepts and introduce Marsick et al.'s (2009) *informal learning theory* showing the interlocking relationship between them.

Practice

In Wenger's view, practice belongs to the community and it is what drives it. A community of practice is formed by members of certain field who understand the jargon, behaviors, habits, and usual or expected ways of doing something. More experienced and active members of the community may often contribute to the practice or even change it. On the contrary, new comers or nonmembers may find it challenging to make sense of the practice and engage in it.

The key concept above applies to the area of ELT coordination and can be pictured by the creation of IATEFL's SIG (*Special Interest Group*). This group was created and driven by practice and its practitioners [ELT coordinators, directors, leaders and others with similar roles] who have contributed to the field for almost three decades.

Community, informal learning and meaning

A community is a social system in which newcomers navigate in order to foster their learning. According to Wenger, learning might be generated by the learners' interaction with experts as well as with those who are slightly ahead from them. Then, learning is understood as the consequence of the *peripheral participation* a new member has in different communities of practice. Lave & Wenger (1991), state "legitimate peripheral participation provides a way to speak about the relations between newcomers and old-timers, and about activities, identities, artifacts and communities of knowledge and practice. It concerns the practice by which newcomers become part of a community of practice" (p.29). The author claims that becoming part of the community implies ongoing negotiation. This means, the newcomer does not necessarily have to blindly accept the community's practices. It is a process of acceptance and

rejection, a process of engagement with each other in the construction of learning. Over time, as newcomers become full participants, they might take part in producing knowledge, books, materials, artifacts, courses and procedures that are not just objects by themselves, but are part of the life of the community. “Artifacts without participation do not carry their own meaning; and participation without artifacts is fleeting, unanchored, and uncoordinated” (Wenger, 2013). A community is constituted by interrelated elements as people, tools and intangible elements such as behaviors, traditions and procedures.

Marsick et al. (2009), suggest that *informal learning* and *incidental learning* are closely related to adult education since it relates to learning from experience and focuses on the learner. According to them, “informal learning, a category that includes incidental learning, may occur in institutions, but is not typically classroom-based or highly structured, and control of learning rests primarily in the hands of the learner”(p.25). According to the authors, incidental learning differs from informal learning in the sense that it is unconscious and that “it is a byproduct of some other activity” (p.25). In agreement with Wenger, Marsick et al. suggest that learning may occur as the result of engagement in activities such as self-directed learning, networking, coaching, mentoring, and performance planning. In a similar fashion, Marsick et al., claim that informal learning methods include: reflection, trial and error, reading, observing, learning from others, as well as the development of certain attitudes. The authors state that informal learning occurs anywhere individuals have the necessity, stimulus and opportunities for learning. Some of the most salient characteristics of this kind of learning are: flexibility, adaptability of learning to context, rapid transfer to practice, resolution of work-related problems, social inclusion and economic productivity and a shift from the individual to collaborative learning.

It is important to mention that in order for learning to take place the learner must consider it relevant and meaningful. For Wenger, meaning is central to learning. He states that meaningful experiences are ahead of learning. In this view, the learner is not only a cognitive

entity but also a whole person whose negotiation of meaning is influenced by emotions, relationships, aspirations and all what constitutes the learner. Marsick et al., suggest that critical reflectivity, creativity, proactivity are the leading enhancers of informal learning. The authors claim that reflectivity is necessary to evaluate actions to be taken and to develop awareness of the reasons why certain results are reached or not. Creativity, relates to the ability individuals have to visualize ways of overcoming unpredictable situations. Resolution of situations might require individuals to reframe previous schemata or perspectives. Finally, proactivity requires disposition to take immediate action. In the authors' view, proactivity and autonomy are closely related. For them, autonomy is a core characteristic of self-taught learners and, "is characterized by independence within the constraints in which one finds oneself" (p.576). In other words, building upon Marsick et al.'s (2009) view of proactivity-autonomy, individuals have to be able to deal with challenges, maintain a positive attitude towards them, and believe in their abilities to overcome them regardless of the circumstances. What then, is what drives coordinators' actions and resilience in complex situations? How does a newcomer decide to keep on going and developing new competencies to deal with the responsibilities ahead? In the section that follows, I attempt to answer these questions by presenting Wenger's *identity* concept and its interconnectedness to *agency*.

Identity and agency

"Professional identity and agency are intertwined with workplace learning at the individual and social levels" (Eteläpelto, Vähäsantanen, Hökkä and Paloniemi, 2014, p.645). For Wenger (2003), identity is a complement to the concept of community of practice. Wenger affirms:

Without a central place for the concept of identity, the community would become 'overdeterminant' of what learning is possible or what learning takes place. The focus on identity creates a tension between competence and experience... the focus on identity also adds a human dimension to

the notion of practice. It is not just about techniques. When learning is becoming, when knowledge and knower are not separated, then the practice is also about enabling such becoming. (p.3)

In this perspective, learning entails a transformation of the learner and his/her agency is needed for such learning. Wenger claims that (2003) “learning is not just acquiring skills and information; it is becoming a certain person—a knower in a context where what it means to know is negotiated with respect to the regime of competence of a community” (p.2). To put it differently, identity is shaped by the relationship between the community and the individual. It is a trajectory defined by the individual within society. According to Eteläpelto et al. (2014), agency is a key element in the “renegotiation of work identities, and for the continuous and innovative development of work practice” (p. 645). According to the authors, the relevance of the renegotiation of work identities relies on the unpredictability of the practice. When identities are static, desired outcomes of innovation are hardly reached and new practices and development are constrained. Then, flexible identities are desirable in learning. In summary, agency is needed from ELT coordinators if they are to suggest changes, creative ways of working, influence practices and become members of a specific community of practice.

2.3 Transitioning from teaching to coordinating

In her article *Language School Evolution*, Evans (2003) claims that language teaching has been a “forerunner of the global industry”, which was extensively expanded by the end of twentieth century. White, Hockley, van der Horst Jansen, and Laughner (2008) add that English teaching is a worldwide phenomenon happening in almost every country of the world. The authors claim that there is a wide range of institutions offering language instruction which differ from each other since they are defined by a wide variety of characteristics, i.e. context, size, organization, model and so on. The authors point out “despite the diversity, there is one

unifying factor: all of these LTOs, regardless of size and context, have to be managed” (p.5). White et al. (2008) and Panferov (2012) agree on the fact that with the expansion of language teaching, schools necessity for competent coordinators emerged.

Hockley (2004) claims that “as often happens in other fields, managers are typically recruited from within, drawn from among employees within the LTO” (p. 16). Likewise Panferov (2012) points out that in the ELT field it is common that higher performance teachers take over a coordinating position unexpectedly, when a vacancy becomes available. Then, as suggested by Panferov, it is common that “first-time coordinators have not had professional administrative training prior to stepping into roles as coordinators” (p.5). In a similar fashion, Bailey et al., (2015) emphasize that often language teachers moving to coordinating develop competencies by trial and error. Fowle (2000) and Panferov (2012) claim that teaching and coordinating require similar competencies. Yet, teachers who transition into coordination will also need a new range of competencies which allow them to cope with unfamiliar responsibilities. Panferov states “the greatest challenge in transitioning from teaching to program administration [coordination] rests with the difficulties administrators face in meeting new leadership responsibilities”(p.5).

As has been noted, in recent years ELT coordination has become a possible career path for ELT teachers. As new language centers and English programs for institutions are created people to coordinate them are needed as well their training. Still, teachers often develop coordinating competencies by direct experience with the use of artifacts and or the assistance of others. Notably, competency is a relevant concept in the present research, different conceptualizations of it as well as desirable competencies from ELT teachers are further discussed in the next part of the present chapter.

2.4 Competencies

Competency or competencies (plural) have been understood and defined from different perspectives. Multiple aspects such as the country, the setting and objectiveness in evaluation influence how competencies are perceived (Tobon, 2013). When referring to professional development and growth the terms skill, ability, competence and competency are often used interchangeably. Throughout this paper, the term competency is used since it better describes what teachers need to develop when transitioning into a coordinating position. What, then, are competencies? Competencies are frequently defined as a set of knowledge, skills, abilities and values that allow an individual to perform a task successfully. Nonetheless, in the view of some scholars competencies entail more than the combination of the previously mentioned elements. For instance, Tobon (2013) states that competencies entail ethic commitment with the task being perform. The author underlines the tangible features of competencies, he proposes that there should always be demonstrable processes that influence either other people or the context. Levy-Leboyer (2000) provides a definition which incorporates higher performance as a relevant characteristic of competencies. He states that competencies are an array of behaviors that a group of people master better than others. Emphasizing the adaptive elements of competencies, Vasco (2003) claims that competencies are the capacity to perform new tasks which are encountered in contexts different from where they were developed, i.e. school or a specific job position. From the previous definitions, it seems that competencies are complex to define, understand and to adopt as the base for training/ education. Tobon (2013) concludes that although a lot has been said about competencies there are still many gaps and disagreement about what they involve.

Tobon is often cited as the source or founder of the competency movement in education in Latin America. In his book, *Formación Integral y Competencias*, he argues that through time different fields of study have contributed to the competency concept

formation. The involved fields of study include, philosophy, linguistics, sociology, cognitive and organizational psychology, labor education, quality management and pedagogy. Tobon states that competencies have been approached from a wide variety of disciplines since it is not possible to define them from a single field of study. The author points out that it is necessary to take into account the contribution of different disciplines in order to address human performance in different contexts. Tobon states that the concept of competencies has existed since a long time ago since societies have always been interested in competent performance of tasks. However, it was not until the 1960s that the concept of competencies started to appear in education; later, in the 90s competencies started to be used in all educational levels. Finally, at the beginning of the XXI century, with the introduction of the concepts of autonomous and significant learning, constructivism, metacognition and the new intelligence theories, competencies became part of educational policies around the world, i.e. *Definition and Selection of Competencies* (DeSeCo) project of the *Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development* (OECD).

Competencies appear to be a trendy concept in education and yet they are frequently vague for many teachers, stakeholders and governments in Latin America. As a consequence, competencies based approach to teaching has been questioned in all levels of education, especially in higher education (Barriga, 2005; Macchiarola, 2007; Tobon, 2013; Escalante, Ibarra and Fonseca, 2017). The authors claim that the competencies based approach to teaching has being adopted from the European context in an attempt to increase quality in education. However, there stills much to do in our educational systems as they are quite different from the contexts where competencies where initially adopted. Some researchers claim that competency is not a new concept, however it has been given renewed importance and attention in the last two decades. Competencies complex definition and set of characteristics are difficult to define

since they depend on many different aspects such as the setting where they are used, the field of study and the way in which they are evaluated. Researchers agree on the fact that defining a set of competencies that professionals from a specific field of study need is difficult since competencies vary among fields but also within the same context. Competencies are not only difficult to define but also difficult to understand and evaluate.

To conclude this discussion, it is key to highlight that competencies unfold in two important interconnected elements: a cognitive component, that includes knowledge, skills and values; and a social component, that implies demonstrable processes, higher performance drawing on others and constant change taking into account specific contexts.

2.4.1 ELT coordinators' competencies

The competencies required from ELT coordinators have been analyzed from different perspectives, including responsibilities (TESOL, 2007; White et al., 2008; Panferov, 2015; Bailey & Llamas, 2015; Garza, n.d), ELT coordinators' skills, knowledge, and personal qualities (Hockley, 2004; White et al., 2012, Bailey & Llamas, 2015), skills transferability from the classroom to coordination (Clarkson & Lodge, 199; Fowle, 2000; Panferov, 2015) and specific or technical competencies required for leadership or management positions (McClelland, 1976; OECD, 2005; Gliogliotti & Ruben, 2017). Although these studies define leadership and managerial competencies they are not specific to ELT coordination. Despite the amount research carried out in those topics, ELT coordination from a competencies perspective seems to be unexplored. Most studies have mainly focused on the individual, cognitive component of ELT coordination. They present ELT coordinators' competencies essentially as lists of responsibilities, skills, and knowledge leaving aside some relevant elements of competencies mentioned the section above.

The OECD's DeSeCo project, provides a framework that can guide the longer-term extension of assessments into new competency domains. This project was created when the

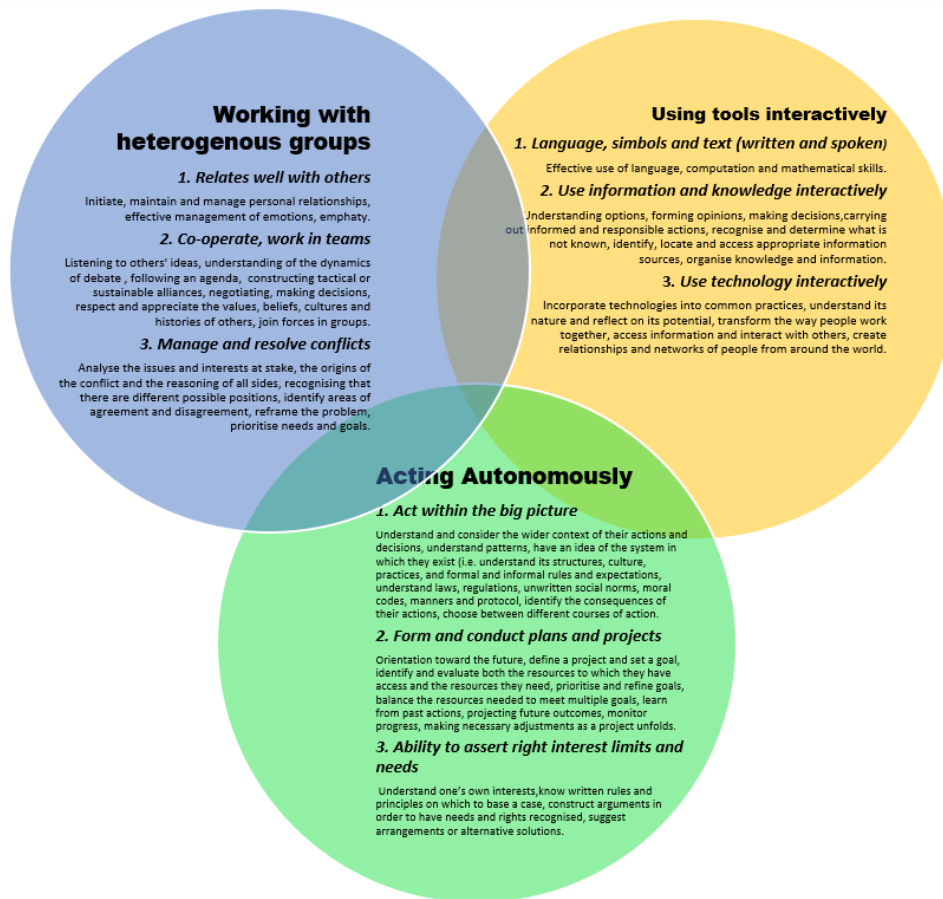
OECD realized that learners' success in life depends on big number of competencies that go beyond the knowledge and skills in the areas of reading, mathematics, science and problem solving. Thus, in 2005, the OECD provided a competencies framework which incorporates more social, interconnected view of competencies.

In the following except the OECD explains why competencies are of crucial importance:

Globalisation and modernisation are creating an increasingly diverse and interconnected world. To make sense of and function well in this world, individuals need for example to master changing technologies and to make sense of large amounts of available information. They also face collective challenges as societies – such as balancing economic growth with environmental sustainability, and prosperity with social equity. In these contexts, the competencies that individuals need to meet their goals have become more complex, requiring more than the mastery of certain narrowly defined skills. (p.4)

Through the *DeSeCo* project (*Definition and Selection of Key Competencies*), the OECD proposed a competency framework which incorporates a more holistic view of competencies which goes beyond taught knowledge and skills. In 2005 the *OECD* reunited a variety of scholars, specialists and organizations with the purpose of identifying a small set of key competencies that world citizens need to function successfully in the workplace and life. According to them, key competencies contribute to valued outcomes for societies and individuals, have multiple areas of usefulness and are needed by everyone. The *OECD* claims that key competencies allow citizens to interact successfully in a world of change, complexity and interdependence. The OECD states “the framework can be used to inform the assessment of educational outcomes and for wider purposes” (p.4). Key competencies are grouped into three categories as illustrated below.

Table. 2.1 OECD's Key Competencies



The DeSeCo's key competencies framework comprises: 1) using tools interactively that entails being able to use tools to reach personal goals. Tools, both physical and sociocultural, allow individuals to interact with society. These tools include different kinds of literacies, for example digital tools and written language; 2) working with heterogeneous groups involves managing personal relationships effectively with different kinds of personalities. Maintaining positive relationships with others requires: being good listeners, making connections and respecting others' ideas and interests; 3) acting autonomously, contrary to taking actions in isolation, implies acting taking into account social systems. Acting autonomously means visioning the future, planning, organizing and taking action of personal and group projects.

Central to the competencies framework are: interconnectedness, reflection, critical thinking and flexibility.

The studies presented in this section suggest that although the authors' ideas differ on the competencies ELT coordinators need to develop; all of them agree on the fact that the required competencies depend on a wide range of factors. Some of these are the size of the school, number of employees, whether it is public or private school, coordinators' responsibilities, or if it is an owner-created organization or a franchise, position hierarchy, among others. White et al. identify institutional contexts and the position of the management hierarchy as the major factors defining the competencies new coordinators need to develop. Bailey and Llamas (2015) draw on an extensive range of responsibilities to assess the required competencies. They argue that "certain responsibilities are central [for practicing and aspiring coordinators], regardless of the type of the language program involved. Other responsibilities are highly context-sensitive" (p.29). Then, the main goal of the current section was not to determine the specific competencies required from ELT coordinators but to shed light on the different approaches used to define them in different contexts.

2.5 Previous research on ELT coordination

In the last three decades, there has been an increasing interest in the field of language schools coordination. Panferov (2012) claims that the profession of language program coordination is being launched as a result ELT teachers who are willing to take this path as a profession and make the transition from teaching to administration. Bailey and Llamas (2015) argue that the emergence of special interest groups for language program coordinators, knowledge communities, associations [which serve teachers with administrative interests], publications, courses, professional networks and certificate programs are indicators that language program coordination is becoming a viable career path for language teachers. The

United States of America and The United Kingdom are two of the main contexts where activities mentioned above have been carried out.

The first sound studies regarding ELT coordination in the European context date back to the late 90s and early 2000s. These include publications on topics like: customer academic management, human resource management, marketing, quality, relations management. Some of the main authors are: Fowle (2000), Evans (2003), White (2003), Hockley (2004), White et al. (2008) and Brown (2014). There is also a special interest group for coordinators, managers, administrators, directors and all the ones involved in or interested in leadership and management in language teaching organizations. The group is called ELT Leadership and Management Special Interest Group part of IATEFL. The University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations (UK) and the University of Queensland (Australia) offer an International Diploma in Language Teaching Management (IDLTM) in many approved centers around the world.

In the United States there has also been an increasing interest in the field of ELT coordination. One of the most popular special interest group for language program coordinators is The Program Administration Interest Section (PAIS), which is part of TESOL. There is also a book (*A Handbook for Language Program Administrators*) by Christison and Stoller (2012) which was first published in 1997. Additionally, some diploma courses for language programs administrators offered by American universities for example, the Certificate in Language Program Administration by The Monterey Institute of International Studies and the Language Program Administration (Certificate NDP) by The University of Arizona.

2.6 Conclusion

This section presented the theoretical framework and the literature review underlying this project, a discussion concerning the most relevant issues to this work and an exploration

of previous studies in the area of ELT coordination. This review may help readers to have an understanding of the changes coordination in the area of ELT has gone through in the last decades. At the same time, the present review gives a glance of what language teaching could lead to beyond the classroom context. This chapter aimed to be the springboard for the whole thesis. The following chapter presents the methodology followed in this project.

Chapter III: Methodology

3.0 Introduction

Chapter three is concerned with the methodology used for this study. It provides a description of the procedures followed in conducting this project in order to answer the research questions. The methodological approach, context, participants, instruments, data collection procedures, data analysis and ethical issues will be presented and explained in detail.

3.1 Methodology

A qualitative narrative approach was adopted in this research. Merriam (2009) identifies exploration, understanding and meaning making of participants' self-experiences as the drive of qualitative inquiry. According to Lieblich et al. (1998), using a narrative inquiry approach enables us "to understand the inner or subjective world of the person, how he or she thinks about her own experience, situation, problems, life..." (p.172). A qualitative narrative approach to research was chosen because the purpose of this project was to explore and understand the transition processes of teachers who moved into coordination. Gray (2000, as cited in Bell, 2005), considers that narrative inquiry includes the collection and development of stories, as a method of data collection. She says that participants "speak in a story form during the interviews, and as the researcher, listening and attempting to understand, we hear their stories" (p.21). Story telling was enhanced in this study by letting participants narrate their experiences by answering open-ended questions. My role as a researcher was to listen to their narratives, analyze, and interpret them relying on both, data obtained from the interviews and CVs.

3.2 Context

This research project was carried out in central Mexico, in the state of Puebla. In this context, English teaching and learning has gained evident attention in the last decades.

Consequently, a large number of public and private educational institutions have implemented English classes as part of their curriculum to keep up with the demands of society. In addition, there has been a marked increase in the number of private language centers over the last two decades. Participants taking part in this study were ELT teachers who became coordinators in private educational institutions in the state of Puebla. I was a MA student at the Language Faculty of the Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla (BUAP). I had mainly worked as a language teacher for the private sector. I was transitioning to coordination while I was studying my master's degree. Because of this, I became interested on the topic.

3.3 Participants

Seven ELT teacher-coordinators who worked in the private sector participated in this project. The group consisted of five women and two men, ranging in age from thirty to forty-five years. Five out of seven participants were married. Most participants were Mexican. Of the seven, five were from Mexico; two emigrated from America. As seen in the table below, all participants had formal educational background in ELT. One teacher-coordinator held a MA in marketing. Another held a MA engineering from an American University. Participants worked in three private educational settings: universities, elementary schools and language institutes. All of the participants had been language teachers for some years before becoming coordinators. As for coordination experience, participants had been in the position for three years or more. In most cases, participants taught and coordinated at the same time. Participants of this study were selected based on the following criteria. First, they were ELT teachers who moved into an English program coordinating position. Second, they belonged to the private sector since it was the sector I was interested in. Third, participants had three or more years of experience as coordinators. Most participants were referred to me by colleagues and former

professors. I only knew one of them. In Table 3.1, I present participants personal and professional information.

Table 3.1 Participants personal and professional background information

PARTICIPANT	GENDER	AGE	CREDENTIALS	YEARS TEACHING	YEARS COORDINATING	NUMBER OF COORDINATION POSITIONS
MARIAN	Female (married)	35	* Technical course in languages *BA in modern languages *MA in applied linguistics *PhD language science (in progress)	17	5	2
MARIO	Male (single)	35-40	*BA in modern languages *MA in Education Sciences *MA in innovation in teachers' formation	12	7.5	2
DIANA	Female (married)	32	*BA in modern languages. * MA in Education Sciences	8	3	1
MONSE	Female (single)	30-35	*BA in modern languages *MA in human development	14	6.5	2
ISA	Female (married)	40-45	*BA in marketing * Certificate in administration of educational centers *MA in humanistic education *BA in primary education	14	18	6
HANNA	Female (married)	35-40	*BA in education *MA in administration of educational organizations	6	5	1
JOSH	Male (married)	40-45	*MA in engineering *COTE certificate	11	9	2

3.4 Instruments

Two instruments were used to gather the data of this study: a semi-structured interview and participants' CVs. Griffee (2012) tells us that the semi-structured interview is common in academic research because “it combines predetermined questions with the ability to follow up on leads and investigate insights when they occur in the interview” (p.160). The present study used a semi-structured interview which consisted of four open-ended questions. During the interview open ended questions were complemented with follow-up, probing and clarifying questions. In Griffee’s (2012) view, interviewing has two main advantages. The first is that it

entails “just talking” which is usual for most people and second, that data gathered “can be used in conjunction with other kinds of data” (p.160). The second instrument used to gather data was participants’ CVs. Participants were not required to provide a specific CV format. Then, these ranged in length from one page to twenty-four pages. Five out of seven CVs were written in Spanish; two were written in English. All CVs were analyzed in the same way because language did not seem to influence the results. CVs allow to gather and to triangulate data to avoid bias in the interpretation and reporting of results. Data from the CVs was summarized into charts (see Appendix D).

3.5 Data collection procedures

The first stage of the data collection procedures was to identify language teachers who had moved from the classroom to a coordination position and who met the selection criteria. Participants were contacted via e-mail, phone or Facebook messenger. Ten ELT teachers were invited to participate in the project but only seven of them accepted. Once teachers accepted to participate they were required to share their CVs with me by e-mail. CVs were analyzed and later used during the interview. Data gathered from the CVs allowed interaction between the participants and me. Knowing about participants before interviewing them allowed me to create a connection with them and it was an asset in co-creating data. Data gathered from the CVs gave me a better understanding of the participants’ formation, the contexts where they had worked, years of experience, in addition to experiences they had as coordinators before carrying out the interview. I carried out a pilot interview so that I could rehearse my interviewing skills. In addition, it enabled me to find out whether the research questions worked well to prompt the desirable data or not. The questions seemed to be effective since the expected data was obtained. Only a few changes were done concerning the order in which they would be presented to participants.

Over the period of one week I received participants' CVs. I analyzed them, and then I contacted the participants to ask them to participate in the interview. Participants were given freedom to choose the date, time and place to be interviewed. Before being interviewed, participants were informed about the purpose of the study in detail. In addition, participants were advised of ethical issues this research might implicate such as anonymity and confidentiality. All of the participants agreed on carrying out the interview and they signed a letter of consent (see Appendix C). Most of the participants were interviewed in their work places. Interviews took between 30 to 55 minutes. They were recorded and later transcribed to be read and analyzed.

3.6 Data analysis

The data analysis was carried out by following a narrative inquiry approach within a qualitative orientation to research. As previously mentioned, data was gathered from the participants' CVs and a narrative interview. I considered this approach was suitable for this research study since it allowed me to explore participants' experiences from their own perspectives and interpretation of their lived experiences. In the following lines the steps taken to analyze the data are presented and described.

3.6.1 CVs

The first step in the data analysis included scrutinizing the participants' CVs. This process consisted on first, reading the whole CVs to become familiar the content and format. The next step included identifying and highlighting evidence of the participants' experiences as coordinators. In looking for this information, attention was paid to the kind of contexts the participants have worked in, the number of coordination positions they had held, years of experienced they had as teachers, their credentials, training and whether they had belonged to

any support group or community of practice that might have influenced their development as coordinators. In addition to this data, participants' background information was also taken into account since it might influence participants' experiences. A chart was designed so that all data in the CVs could be synthesized and visualized during the analysis phase. Data gathered from the CVs provided the issues to talk about during the interview. A sample of how CVs were summarized and analyzed is provided in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 CVs analysis sample

MARIAN					
BACKGROUND INFO					
Age	Gender	Marital status	Languages	Credentials	Certifications
35	Female	Married	Spanish-L1 English-Advanced French-Intermediate German-Basic Náhuatl- Basic	* Technical Course in Languages * BA in Modern Languages * MA in Applied Linguistics * PhD Language Science (in progress)	CAE Diploma courses Spirituality Leadership Virtual projects Theology ELT for children and teenagers
TEACHING EXPERIENCE			COORDINATING EXPERIENCE		
Kind of institution		Kind of institution	*Coordinator/professor of the BA on modern languages; BA in Touristic Administration; MA on Interpretation and Translation and the Bilingual program for all the university majors.		
Public and private university		Private University	* Invited		
Private junior high school and high school					
Private language center					
Hotel					
Technical school		Private Jesuit university	*Coordinator of the English program for all majors. Professor of English and Spanish Language Teaching * Applied		
TOTAL YEARS		TOTAL YEARS			
17		5			
CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT					
Courses/ Workshops	Topics/ areas	Presentations	Papers	Publications	
47	*Leadership *Personal Development *Ed-Tech *Management *Tourism *Theology *Human development *TOELF iBT *Writing *Teacher Education *Spirituality	15	3	1	
Involvement in the ELT Community					
Evaluator of research proposals Judge in ELT events					

3.6. 2 Narrative interviews

Lieblich et al. (1998), state that narrative research “refers to any study that uses or analyzes narrative materials” (p.2). This study may be classified as narrative since it tells stories about others (Kim, 2016). Denzin posits that narrative research enables the researcher to explore past experiences and perspectives that people have of their everyday lives. These might include their past, present and future, concentrating on how participants tell their stories and how they give meaning and sense them (as cited in Kim, 2016, p. 125).

Data gathered from the narrative interviews was transcribed and analyzed following a categorical content approach. Analyzing narratives by means of categorical content is done by defining categories within the topic or issue of research. Then, utterances are extracted, classified, and gathered into these groups (Lieblich et al., 1998). Categories in this study were defined based on the theoretical framework and literature review as well as on the research questions. Some of these categories were transition mode, competencies and learning sources. The analysis and interpretation of categories were made taking into account the complete narratives participants provided to make sure relevant content from the whole stories was included.

3.7 Research ethical issues

Ethical issues were an important aspect to take into account in this research. These were considered as a crucial element to talk about with the participants since they were requested to share information that could be sensitive to them. Then, I considered creating trustiness with the participants as a very important issue before carrying out the interview. As mentioned above, during the data collection procedures, participants were informed about ethical issues and all the information they provided was used under their knowledge and consent.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter presented the methodological approach adopted to collect and analyze the data. The instruments and procedures were effective since they allowed to gather valuable data to answer the research questions. Analyzing participants' CVs allow me to have a complete picture of their experiences both, as teachers ELT teachers and as coordinators. In addition, it allowed me to take advantage of the interview to talk in depth about what was important and avoid making questions that were already answered by their CVs. The following chapter will present the results of the data analysis.

Chapter IV: Results

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the study. The organization of the results proceeds along the research questions proposed in chapter II:

RQ1: How do ELT teachers in private education become coordinators in Mexico?

RQ1.1 How do ELT teachers from the private sector obtain a coordinating position?

RQ1.2 What competencies do they need to develop as coordinators and how do they develop them?

In this Chapter I analyze how Mexican ELT teachers in private education became coordinators. In the first part I will specifically examine how participants obtained a coordination position. In the second part I present the competencies these coordinators needed to develop, which will finally lead to how participants –those who transitioned from teaching to coordinating, develop coordination competencies. Depending on the nature of the research question, data from one of the data collection instruments might be prevalent however, my intention was to combine and knit data obtained from both, the interviews and participants' CVs. As noted in Chapter 3, data from the interviews was transcribed and analyzed by means of categorical content analysis and data from the CVs was analyzed by means of content analysis. Data obtained from both instruments were taken into account to analyze the results. My purpose was that they complemented each other to show a more complete picture of ELT teachers' transition into coordination. I now present the results of the data analysis. At the end of the chapter, a brief conclusion is provided.

4.1 From teaching to coordinating

This section will give an account of how ELT teachers in this study obtained a coordination position. Four transition types were identified: 1) promotion, 2) invitation 3) self-

employment and 4) application. Promotion seems to be the most common way of obtaining a coordination position, followed by invitation, self-employment and application as the least common way of transition. Results showed that the kind of transition participants experienced was determined by the kind of institution they worked at, in addition to factors such as personal characteristics, for example, agency. As previously stated, results reported on this section were obtained from participants' interview and CV. Excerpts from the interviews that answer the research questions and illustrate significant participants' experiences were included in this section. Table 4.1 shows a summarized version of the data obtained from the CVs regarding participants' coordination positions. The table includes the number of positions participants hold, how they obtained the position(s), the kind of institution they worked at, the position they hold [role], and the time they spent in each of the positions.

Table 4.1 How participants transitioned into coordination

PARTICIPANT	POSITION NUMBER	TRANSITION KIND	KIND OF INSTITUTION	POSITION	YEARS
MARIAN	1	Invited	Private university	Coordinator/professor	3
	2	Applied¹	Private university	Coordinator/professor	2
MARIO	1	Promoted	Private university	Coordinator/professor	4.5
	2	Promoted²	Private university	Director	4
DIANA	1	Promoted	Private university	Coordinator/Professor	3
MONSE	1	Promoted	Private university	Coordinator/professor	6
ISA	1	Self-employed	Private company	Supervisor	3
	2	Invited	Private school	Coordinator	10
	3	Invited	Private university	Coordinator	1
	4	Self-employed	Private company	General director	1
	5	Invited	Public university	Coordinator/professor	8
	6	Self-employed	Private elementary school	General/professor	10
HANNA	1	Promoted	Private bilingual elementary school	Coordinator	6
JOSH	1	Promoted	Private language center	Coordinator/professor	2
	2	Self-employed	Private language center	General director/professor	12

¹ Applied for the position even though she was a professor at the institution.

² Became the director of the school after been the ELT coordinator.

Table 4.1 shows that three of the participants had one coordination position. Three had two coordination positions and one had six coordination positions. The three different contexts participants worked at included: universities, private language centers and basic education schools. Results show that most ELT coordinators taught while coordinating and a few of them

coordinated more than one program at the same time, within the same institution or in different ones. In two cases coordinators moved from ELT coordination to a general director position. Finally, the years of experience participants had in a coordination range from one year to twelve years. In the lines that follow I expand on each of the different kinds of transition.

Promotion

In the Mexican context, as in other countries, it is common that competent ELT teachers become coordinators with little or no formal training in coordination. Results show that most coordinators taking part in this study transitioned from teaching into coordinating. They were recruited from within the school's staff, as mentioned by Hockley (2004) rather than purposely hired or trained to take over the position. In this section I present some extracts from the interviews to teachers who were promoted to coordination.

I started my master's degree after the first year teaching and then, when a position became available they invited me to take over the English coordination.

Hanna- Experience 5

So, I was a teacher for two or three years and I did pretty well as a teacher and so that gave me the opportunity to be the academic coordinator. I was always in the 90s, I think it was a good renown, a good evaluation and so because I was very very consistent I think that's part of why they decided to make me an academic coordinator.

Josh- Experience 9

We [EFL teachers] were asked to go to a meeting to explain how this [the new English program] was working and I just started explaining... how we created

the program, what materials we were using, the techniques, everything like that... After six months working there... they called me to the office to ask me if I wanted to be the coordinator of the language academy.

Diana- Experience 3

The excerpts above illustrate how these ELT teachers moved to coordination after teaching for some time. A common characteristic among these coordinators is that they all were teachers in the same institution before becoming coordinators. Stakeholders considered these teachers were good candidates to become coordinators.

The coordinator in the first case above reported to have enrolled in an MA in administration of educational organizations while she was working as a teacher in a bilingual elementary school. She commented that when she finished her MA in administration there was not a coordinating position available at the institution however she expressed her interest in the coordination position to the stakeholders. She said,

I wrote to the superintendent and I told her, I think that I have ideas that I would like to share. And if there is a position available one day I hope you allow me the opportunity to interview, not just give it to me, not hand it to me, but allow me the opportunity to show my ideas.

Hanna- Experience 5

Certainly holding an MA in administration, expressing her interest in the coordination position and being a native speaker of the language were three important elements that made Hanna a good candidate to become the coordinator. She prepared for future opportunities and expressed the self-concept she had of a competent professional who would be successful as a coordinator. Formal education in administration, showing interest and agency, in addition to being a native speaker of English were seen as excellent assets since Hanna worked at an American bilingual elementary school in Mexico.

The coordinator in the second excerpt worked at one of the most prestigious private language centers in the city. In the excerpt the participant declared to have a natural talent for teaching which allowed him to have the highest scores in the evaluations the institution carried out at the end of each course. That gave him the opportunity to be promoted to a coordinating position. An interesting fact about this coordinator is that he was American and before immigrating to Mexico he used to work as an engineer. However, when he arrived to Mexico he started working as a teacher without having any previous experience in ELT. Josh said that he had a one-session training before teaching his first class. After a year working at the language center he took the COTE course (Certificate for Overseas Teachers of English) which “provide sound practical teacher training for teachers with a limited amount of previous experiences and/or training” (Lengeling, 2010, p. 103). In this case, it seems that the ease he had to teach the foreign language besides being a native language speaker influenced his promotion to a coordination position. Hughes (1996, as cited in Lengeling, 2010) states that in Mexico as in other settings, being a native speaker of English used to be the only requirement to become an EFL teacher [and coordinator, my addition].

The third excerpt evidences the kind of competencies stakeholders look for in a teacher who is to become a coordinator. She worked in a medium size, relatively new university. The participant explained that before she started working there, the university used to work with an external institution which was in charge the foreign language classes. Then, the university decided to have their own program and it was then when Diana was hired as a language teacher. As the university did not have their own English program, ELT teachers were in charge of creating everything. In the excerpt the participant explains how after six months working as a language teacher she became the coordinator. It is evident that besides the participant’s competence in the foreign language, she had qualities which were pertinent in an institution that was in the process of creating its English program. At the same time Diana showed her

competencies to lead other teachers and give follow up to the English program that was in the process of being created.

Invitation

The total number of cases in which participants were invited to coordinate was four (see Table 4.1). Three of these cases correspond to Isa and Marian. From their CVs, we can see that Isa and Marian were the two participants with more experienced in teaching, credentials, and certifications. There must be a significant positive relation between their academic formation and the job opportunities they were offered. Interestingly, these participants' CVs showed their active participation in ELT events. A positive result of their participation might be the key connections they had made which eventually led to having job offers. I present these coordinators narratives below:

She [a former professor] sent my information to the human resources department or whoever was in charge of hiring a person for this position [coordination]... I was interviewed by whom at the time was the director of academic affairs and I got the job.

Marian- Experience 5

The participant was offered the coordination position without having worked previously at this university. She stated that it was through one of her professors that she knew about the vacancy. She had an interview and she was hired. I would like to highlight two points in this teacher's experience: 1) that her professor recommended her because she knew Marian was a competent teacher and 2) that the university trusted her professor's recommendation since she was a respected scholar. That means that, she did not get the job by chance or luck but because she was recognized as a competent and active teacher.

The next excerpt describes the experience of Isa who also was invited to coordinate in a school in which she was not a teacher:

Some teachers didn't like the fact that somebody from outside was brought to school to coordinate instead of them, some had been working in the school for many years and the environment was really something difficult.

Isa- Experience 18

This narrative sheds light on the resistance and rejection coordinators may face when obtaining the coordination position as an outsider. As Isa comments, there were other teachers who had worked at this institution for several years and expected to be promoted to the coordination position. Nevertheless, the institution decided to invite someone from outside to coordinate.

Self-employment

Results show that another way of obtaining a coordination position was self-employment. Two of the participants started and ran their own school. Isa and Josh started their own school. Isa started a bilingual elementary school. Josh started a private language center that offers personalized classes for young learners and adults. It is interesting to see that these participants started institutions similar to the ones they had worked at for a long time. In both cases they were coordinators and then started their own institution with a program of the kind they had coordinated. The participants did not discuss the reasons why and how that decided to start their own institutions in depth. However, their previous jobs and experiences probably helped them to be successful coordinators since they had twelve and ten years, respectively, running their own schools. I shall expand on these teacher-coordinators experiences in the following sections.

Application

One of the participants experienced applying for the position. She applied in a large prestigious private university. From the results of this research and my own experience as an ELT teacher I can say that applying for the position in private institutions is less common in Mexico. The following excerpt portrays the process Marian went through to obtain the position.

There were five candidates... you have to turn in your RESUME, if they liked what they saw they would call you for an interview... if she felt pleased with the interview you would have to take the psychometric tests...the next stage was presenting a project of what you would you as a coordinator at the language center... what improvements, what proposal, what would be your goals, where would you focus like the attention of the whole working team... that was presented to ... those three people [stakeholders]... So, they gave you 20 minutes to present the project... if they liked your project, then you would have an interview... So, it was five people who interviewed me... at the end there were three candidates and I was the one who got the job.

Marian- Experience 5

In this case it is interesting to notice that although the participant was a teacher at the university she went through the process of applying for the position. The participant highlights that the process was complex since it was long and required carrying out different tasks to demonstrate her competencies. It was also a challenge because the vacancy was opened and several teachers were interested on it. Marian had to show that she was the best candidate. The extract describes how the participant's performance was evaluated by several people. Marian mentioned that she presented a project to a team of professionals who evaluated her. She comments that among the people who evaluated her were people from the institution as well as an invited scholar. Objectiveness in the hiring process was part the evaluation of this big prestigious university.

The participant found the hiring process quite challenging but at the same she recognized it as formative and enriching for her future performance as a coordinator.

This section dealt with the how teachers became coordinators, specifically with how they obtained a coordinating position. Four different patterns were identify: promotion, invitation, self-employment and applying for the position. The transition seemed to be determined by the kind of institutions these were and their hiring policies. In general terms, it appears that large prestigious universities 1) open the vacancy for the public in general, not only for the institutions' personnel and/or 2) invite recognized ELT teachers to take over the position. Whereas in schools, private language centers and smaller universities, it is common to transition from teaching to coordinating. Finally, self-employment as coordinator happens when teachers start their own schools or language centers. In these cases besides being the owners, ELT teachers might take the coordination among many other roles and responsibilities.

This part covered the administrative side of becoming a coordinator, in the next section I explore these teachers' experiences more in depth.

4.2 Requirements to become an ELT coordinator

The results of this study indicate that requirements to become an ELT coordinator in Mexico are of two kinds. On the one hand, coordinators need formal education and evidences of it such as diplomas or certificates. On the other hand, they need to show their competence to deal with the responsibilities of their new job. In other words, coordinators must demonstrate that they have the required credentials and that they are able to cope with the tasks a coordination position entails. In this section I report what the requirements to become a coordinator are according to data obtained from my participants' CVs and interviews. As previously noted, requirements and competencies are context dependent. This means that required competencies from a coordinator who works in a language center generally differ from

that who works in a university. Yet, there are similarities on the kind of preparation coordinators have as well as on their perceptions of the competencies they must develop.

4.2.1 Education requirements to become an ETL coordinator

Evidences of coordinators' formal education might include: bachelor's degrees, master's degrees, PhDs, diploma courses, language certifications, attendance to conventions and presentations, among others. Table 4.2 shows the formal education participants of this study had.

Table 4.2 Formal educational background of ELT coordinators

	DIANA	MONSE	ISA	MARIAN	HANNA	MARIO	JOSH
CREDENTIALS	* BA in modern languages * MA in educational sciences	* BA in modern languages * MA in human development	* BA in marketing * MA in humanistic education * BA in primary education * Specialization course on administration of educational centers	* Technical course in languages * BA in modern languages * MA in applied linguistics * PhD language sciences (in progress)	* BA in education * MA in administration of educational organizations	* BA in modern languages * MA in educational sciences * MA in innovation in teachers' formation	* BA in engineering
CERTIFICATIONS	* CAE * TOEFL	* CAE * TOEFL ITP * First Certificate * English SEP	* CAE * Certificate of Proficiency English * TOEFL * TOEIC * Certificat de Lange Française * GESE	* CAE	* Certificate in literacy for international schools	* CAE * TKT	* COTE
DIPLOMA COURSES		* Tutoring and educational orientation * Simultaneous interpretation	* CLIL * Emotional intelligence * Continuing education * ELT for children and teenagers * Philosophy for children	* Spirituality * Leadership * Virtual projects * Theology * ELT for children and teenagers		* ELT * Special education and differentiated instruction	
COURSES (topics)	* EdTech * Management	* English teaching * Teacher formation * Research * EdTech	* English teaching * Curriculum design * EdTech * Management * Professional development * Philosophy for children * Thesis mentoring * Bilingual education	* Leadership * Personal development * EdTech * Management * Tourism * Theology * TOEFL IBT * Writing * Teacher education * Spirituality	* Balance literacy * Teaching * EdTech	* English teaching * TOEFL certification * EdTech * Mentoring * Ethics * Management * Leadership	* On-line classes
NUMBER OF COURSES TAKEN	2	35	15	47	6	17	0

Table 4.2 illustrates that six out of seven coordinators hold at least one BA and one MA degree in ELT. One of them holds a BA in engineering, however he was a native speaker of the foreign language. Credentials range from one to four different degrees and include: specialization courses, PhDs and more than one BA or MA.

Certifications range from one to six, and most of them are certifications of English. Among the English language certifications coordinators have we find CAE, TOEFL, TOEIC,

First Certificate, and Certificate of Proficiency English. There is only one participant who has certifications of French. Regarding certifications on ELT we find COTE, TKT and Certificate of Literacy for International Schools. All participants reported to speak English and Spanish fluently. In addition, they had a basic-intermediate level of proficiency in languages like German, French and Náhuatl.

The table below illustrates that participants have taken variety of diploma courses or short courses. The number of these courses participants range from two the lowest to 47 the highest. Most courses belong to the ELT area but also include courses on topics like management, personal development, mentoring, leadership, EdTech, philosophy, writing, spirituality, among others.

As evidenced on table 4.2 there are some similarities as well as differences on the formal education coordinators participating on this study have. It is not surprising that they have similar preparation since all of them were ELT teachers who became coordinators. As noted at the beginning of this section differences in their education are context sensitive. This means that coordinators focused their education in the development of competencies they needed depending on the kind of institution they were working at. This section dealt with the formal education of coordinators. The section below presents participants' narratives of the competencies they needed to develop to coordinate an ELT program.

4.2.2 Required competencies from ELT coordinators in Mexico

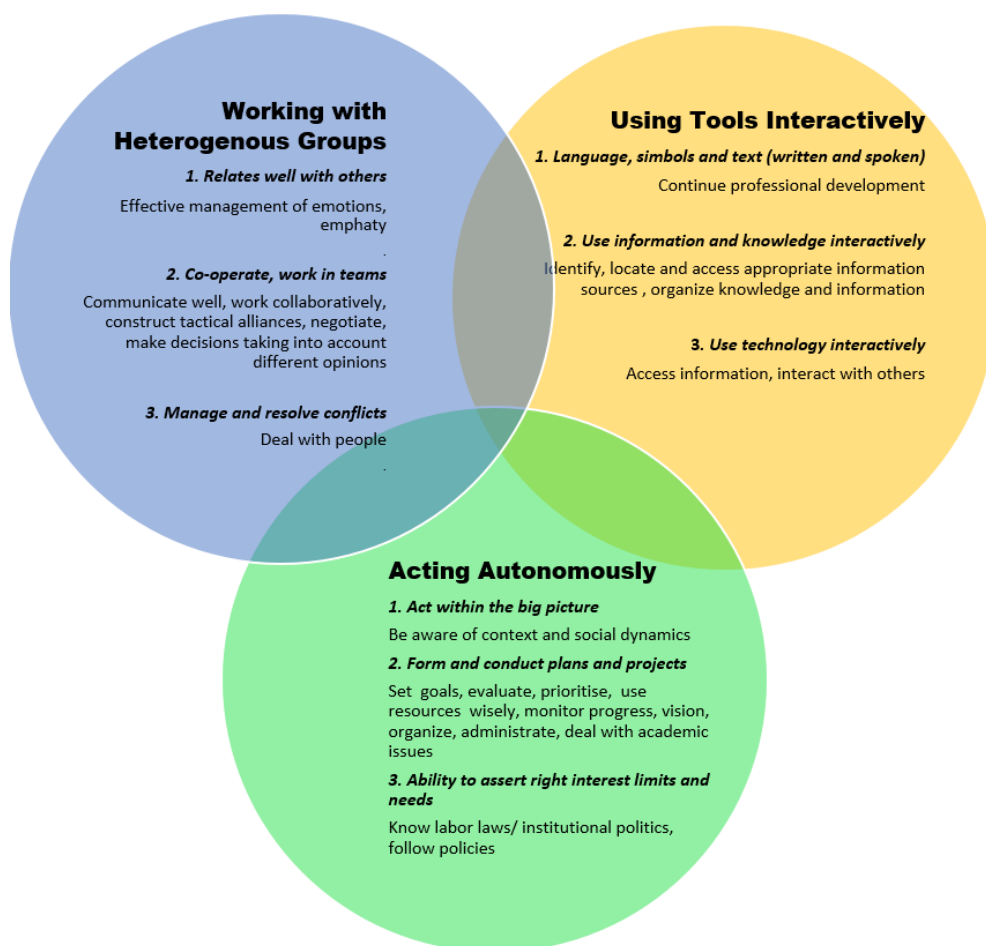
Some people who work in organizations aspire to someday hold a coordination/direction position. Employees see a coordination position as an opportunity to grow professionally and personally, as a new career path, a way to obtain power and status, and undoubtedly as a possibility to increase monetary benefits. However, the responsibilities and competencies required from people holding a coordination position tend to be overlooked

by people who have never held a position like this. Then, the purpose of this section is to shed light on the wide range of competencies aspiring ELT teachers need in order to successfully function as coordinators. The results of this research suggest that regardless previous experience in teaching and coordination, all participants needed to develop new competencies. In fact, results show that coordinators with more years of experience and more coordination positions, when asked about the competencies they needed, listed a wider range competencies in comparison to the ones who had less experience or less coordinating positions.

Competencies required from ELT coordinators have been studied from different perspectives, including: responsibilities; skills, knowledge, and personal qualities; skills transferability from the classroom to coordination and specific or technical competencies required for leadership or management positions (see Chapter II). Yet, ELT coordination from a competencies perspective seems to be unexplored in the ELT field. Previous studies present ELT coordinators' competencies as lists, overlooking the interconnectedness within them.

In this section I answer the question: What competencies do ELT teachers need to develop as coordinators? I present the required competencies from ELT coordinators according to participants' view. Results presented here were obtained from participants' CVs and interviews. Data was categorized and analyzed using the OECD's Key Competencies Framework (see Chapter II). This framework was used since it clearly shows the interconnectedness among competencies. The framework divides required competencies into three interrelated categories: 1) working with heterogeneous groups; 2) using tools interactively; and 3) acting autonomously. The group of competencies required, as reported by ELT coordinators, was synthesized and classified under the three general categories and will be explained in detail in the section that follows.

Table 4.3 Required competencies from ELT coordinators in Mexico



The results in this section will be explained in two parts. First, I present core competencies and then context sensitive competencies. Context sensitive competencies are categorized into three groups: competencies universities require coordinators to have; competencies required by in basic education and those required by coordinators who run their own school.

The number of competencies ELT coordinators require in Table 4.3 might seem a bit limited. Nevertheless, they are representative of the wide range of competencies that ELT coordinators of this studied reported. The wider range of competencies within each subcategory will be presented below. As previously noted, participants of this study worked in the private sector and coordinated ELT programs. Then there are some competencies all coordinators required (core competencies), regardless of their context. On the other hand there are some

competencies (context sensitive competencies) that were determined by factors like responsibilities, status, and school size and so on.

Core competencies

Core competencies are those competencies ELT coordinators need unrelatedly to where they worked. These were defined by coordinators. Once I had data from CVs and interviews I carefully analyzed it to identify which competencies were consistent in all of the cases. These competencies include: communication, flexibility, organization, knowledge about ELT academic issues and continuous professional development – that is driven by coordinators' *agency*. Developing communication competencies is crucial for coordinators if they wish the work with others effectively. By developing communication competencies coordinators are able to give feedback to teachers, hold meetings, gain respect, listen to others' opinions, communicate effectively with the school community: authorities, teachers, students and parents. This competency is closely related to flexibility. Flexibility is the base to the development of many other competencies. For example, learning new things, taking into account others' perspectives, being open to do things differently, dealing with different kinds of people. All participants stated that organization is another of the most relevant competencies for coordinators. According to the participants organization is needed in order to be able to cope with the many responsibilities a coordination position entails and to manage large amounts of information. One of the participants noted that organization is also important when it comes to balancing work and personal life. All participants said they needed to deal with academic issues and five reported to have administration responsibilities. It seems that stakeholders often took for granted that new ELT coordinators were able to deal with academic issues. ELT coordinators were usually expected to: train teachers – and identify needs, test, place and certify students, schedule classes, check teachers' exams, implement, revise and

evaluate programs, evaluate teachers, look for materials, hire and fire teachers, talk to students and parents, and finally to be constantly learn new things. The competency to constantly learn new things is a must for someone who moves into coordination. As noted in Chapter two, learning means becoming a different person. Then, coordinators identity is in constant change or reconstruction. Agency and identity reconstruction are at the heart of coordinators' learning and development. Without agency, learning would be limited and a lack of identity reconstruction might result in unsuccessful coordination practices. This view was supported by five coordinators in this study who considered that being a coordinator requires knowing the tendencies, keeping updated and developing new competencies in a world of constant change.

Context sensitive competencies

Context sensitive competencies are those defined by the context where participants worked. There were several elements that define these competencies, i.e. responsibilities, kind of institution, school size, position hierarchy, among others. In the lines that follow I present context sensitive competencies grouped according the three different contexts where participant came from.

Universities

Important competencies for coordinators who work in universities include: evaluating, relating well with others and constructing tactical alliances as well as scheduling classes. Testing, placing and certifying are subcategories of evaluation. For coordinators working in universities evaluation competencies were important because they were in charge of coordinating language classes and were often required to certify students. Certifications are often offered by private universities as a guaranty of their programs. Relating well with others was relevant for coordinators who worked with young adults and must keep a balance between

their expectations and students'. It is also important to relate well with others when coordinators have the responsibility of supporting students and teachers with the problems that encounter. This competency is close related to constructing tactical alliances. Constructing alliances was crucial for coordinators who were interested in bringing speakers to talk to their students, or when they are interesting in promoting students mobility. Finally, scheduling classes was a competency coordinators working in universities must develop.

Elementary schools

These results indicate that for private schools defining their own system and training teachers to put it into practice was of great importance. It seems that two of the most salient competencies for coordinators working in basic education were: knowing about the school approach to teaching, accompanying teachers' development and being a role model for children and their families. Isa commented on this:

... I think there is a higher impact in a ...when you deal with children and their families because they are still forming different values and they are still in the process of becoming what they want to become in the future both, parents and children.

Isa- Experience 18

The extract above shows that professionals working with young learners must have the competencies to deal not only with children's necessities but also with their parents'. Isa claims that she feels the responsibility to enhance her students as well as their parents' growth. It seems that positive attitudes and behaviors are important elements to develop with working with young learners.

Owner-run institutions

Among the most important competencies for coordinators who started their own institutions are dealing with marketing, sales, administration and dealing with different tasks at the same time. It is not surprising that coordinators who started their own schools mentioned administrative tasks as crucial for them. For coordinators who created their own schools these competencies are crucial because their employability depends on how much effort they put into marketing, the number of sales they make and how well they administrate resources. They are responsible of keeping the institution running and being able to pay teachers and other personnel's checks. Being able to deal with different tasks and responsibilities is basic for these coordinators since they were usually required to carry out different tasks. These tasks include: teaching, coordinating, checking that everything is working well (i.e. the cleaning, the air conditioner, printers, etc.).

These findings suggest that in general coordinators who came to an institution as an outsider considered that it was important to know the institutional information, for example: students, teachers, formats, processes, and institution's philosophy. The most salient group of competencies coordinators reported as important were the ones within the category of working with heterogeneous groups. This category includes: communicating, dealing with people, working collaboratively and dealing with emotions. All participants mentioned continuing professional development as crucial when holding a coordination position, however the most prepared and experienced coordinators gave great importance to it. To conclude, the relevance of context in this study is clearly supported by the current findings.

4.3 Developing coordinating competencies

The results, as shown in the section above, indicate that the requirements and competencies to become an ELT coordinator reported by the participants were numerous and challenging. Still, I consider that there is no one single professional that ever felt completely

ready to take on the responsibilities of a new job after graduating or obtaining certain degree. One of the most relevant insights I have gained through the development of this research project is that we learn on the way. This means that we learn and develop competencies at work, when facing challenges. I think that hardly ever we are able to prepare in advance. Evidence that supports this argument can be seen on participants' responses to how they developed coordinating competencies.

...but I think that well, obviously all those courses helped me but the main way I learnt I think it's the ... like being at the office and seeing what other people do...I think that that helps a lot.

Monse- Experience 6.5

I think that nothing prepares you to become a coordinator, like nothing prepares you to be a teacher than being in front of a group or being in front of a group of teachers and then learning a lot from experience.

Isa- Experience 18

It appears that the routes coordinators took to learn and develop were defined by the fact that most of them transitioned into coordination unexpectedly. This meant that they had to make use of the resources at hand to cope with the tasks of their new role. It is apparent from the data obtained that the paths coordinators took to learn and develop coordinating competencies were defined by a wide variety of factors such as the school size/kind, responsibilities, learning style, time disposition, interests, possibilities and so on. However, there is a unifying factor among these coordinators, they all reported to have learned while overcoming the challenges their new job's responsibilities brought. This is, they pursued knowledge that applied to their current work challenges. Then, they would voluntarily attend workshops, courses, or a certificate program of study once they identified the needed to learn

more. Besides formal learning participant also reported to have relied on people, usually more experienced colleagues who have gone through the same process.

The results of the data analysis of how new coordinators developed coordinating competencies is divided in two. Firstly, I present data obtained from participants' CVs which from my point of view reveals participants' development of coordinating competencies through formal education. Secondly, I present participants' narratives of how they develop coordinating competencies by their participation in different *communities of practice*. In other words, by means of informal and incidental learning.

Regarding coordinators' formal education we can referred to table 4.3 (above) on the *education requirements to become an ETL coordinator*. There is no doubt that all formal training coordinators have taken has somehow contributed to their formation and success as coordinators. Nevertheless, people might think, as I did previously to carrying out this research that new coordinators need training that is specific of and focused on coordination. Table 4.3 illustrates participants' formal training that relates specifically to ELT coordination as reported on *their CVs*.

Table 4.3 Coordinators' formal learning on coordinating competencies (CVs)

	DIANA	MONSE	ISA	MARIAN	HANNA	MARIO	JOSH
CREDENTIALS			* BA in marketing * Specialization course on administration of educational centers		* MA in administration of educational organizations		
COURSES	* Management		* Management	* Leadership * Management		* Management * Leadership	* On-line classes on marketing, sales and administration.

The table above shows the formal training participants have on coordination as reported on their CVs. As can be seen from table 4.3 only Isa and Hanna had formal education in coordination when they started coordinating. Isa had a BA in marketing and a specialization course on administration of educational centers. And Hanna holds an MA in administration of educational organizations. As seen from data in the table above, five out of seven coordinators reported to have coordination-related courses, but only Marian, Mario and Josh have more than

one course. This table might give the impression that participants had limited preparation on coordination. Nevertheless, in the section that follow I present an extensive list of the paths coordinators took to develop through informal learning.

Interestingly, when coordinators were asked to explain how they develop coordinating competencies all of them mostly referred to what they have learned by means of informal/incidental learning (see the table below).

Table 4.4 Coordinators' informal learning of coordinating competencies (Interview)

	DIANA	MONSE	ISA	MARIAN	HANNA	MARIO	JOSH
INFORMAL LEARNING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mentor-general director 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mentors-coordinators, colleagues Observing others Experience-being at the office Reading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mentors-coordinators Observing others Attending ELT events Experience Making mistakes Implementing new things Reading Institution's handbooks, formats Investigation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mentors: former coordinators, colleagues Modeling more experienced peers Professional associations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mentors from within the school: principal, colleagues, friends External mentors: school's association, consultant Courses-connections Facebook community Knowing the school's culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mentors: director, colleagues, ex-coordinators Conferences-talking to people, getting new ideas, listening to different perspectives Problems Investigation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mentors Experience-self-learning Listening to classes-ELT, marketing, sales, Business Reading
FORMAL LEARNING		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Courses- new ideas/ perspectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Courses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conventions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Masters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Masters-research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Previous studies-engineering

Table 4.4 indicated that by far the greatest source of learning in participants' views was the one that occurs outside of the classroom. This finding corroborates Marsick et al.'s ideas (2009), who suggested that adult learning is often informal. The results of this study suggest that new coordinators' learning was situated, constructed on practice and by taking a journey through a *landscape of different communities* (Wenger, 2003).

All the ELT teachers, in this study, who moved into coordination considered mentors a significant source of learning. Mentors were often former coordinators, directors, colleagues, more experienced peers, consultants, friends and even family. Participants considered mentors an indirect source of learning whose experience would provide the knowledge coordinators could not find in books. Mentors also fostered new coordinators' reflection and assist them in finding the way, and not just hand the solutions to them.

The excerpt below illustrates how a new coordinator developed and grew with the assistance of more experienced peers:

...our principal here, we meet once a week but we are in constant communication with each other and she has been one of the people within our school we I have used as a model and as a person who I go to consistently. Outside of the school ... I have contacts and resources at different schools around Mexico and in Central America and those are people who use similar approaches to teaching and the ones I can go to have a different perspective... and we have a person... he comes in as a consultant but I also talk with him. So that, and I think family were too. I come from a family of teachers so... my sisters and brothers in law as well and so I throw out questions to them to see what are they thinking as teachers, what do they thinking as parents too, to get their feedback and friends too, friends within the school community who have an understanding of how things work here and friends outside of this school community.

Hanna- Experience 5

Several important points appear within the excerpt above. First, Hanna illustrates the importance of creating a network of mentors not only from our own institution but also from outside. She looked for mentors in her school, within her school's association, and even from the Facebook community. This participant states that mentors provided a model to follow, feedback, and different perspectives.

Some participants expressed the belief that attending ELT events as conventions, conferences and courses as great opportunities to learn. Interestingly, what coordinators valued about these kind of events more than the formal instruction was the opportunity they had interact with more experienced peers. Coordinators mentioned that when attending these kind of events they found opportunities to observe others, talk to people, and listen to someone else's ideas and perspectives. In the extract below Isa explains the value of attending ELT events:

You can always get benefit from attending courses or talking to other teachers. That has always been helpful. Whenever teachers invite you to participate as a judge in a spelling be contest or to watch a demonstration or to talk to teachers at their schools... I always attend because I think you learn a lot from seeing what other teachers do and if you try to implement different things in your practice you can grow and grow.

Isa- Experience 18

Isa explained the dynamic co-relation between her growth and her participations within the community of practice. She claimed that social interactions provided opportunities for professional development. As shown in Isa's CV (see Appendix A), she was a very prepared professional, she has studied several formal programs, has certifications of the language and has attended a wide variety of courses. However, she values the knowledge, ideas and perspectives she can obtain from her participations in different communities of practice.

In addition to social interactions, participants reported opportunities for expanding competencies in-situ. Participants believed that they learnt by experience, when dealing with challenges encountered in their workplaces. These challenges required coordinators to take an active role in their own development. Participants thought they learnt by trial and error, by asking and looking for solutions to the problems they faced. In the following excerpts, two coordinators share their insights into how lived experience triggered their competencies development.

The main sources of development are problems. We call it a problem because it is probably the first time we face this situation and we need to look for the solution. There are processes... and there are procedures...but sometimes there are problems that don't fit into any of those...so what you do is to ask, to look for information, to go with your boss.

Mario, Experience 7.5

It should be things that I read and I listen to. I've never taken a business class, so those might be things that I absorb by myself and also from my own school in The States, you know, my own experiences.

Josh- Experience 14

Both excerpts above show how learning is not always systematic or planned. These findings corroborate the ideas of Zepeda (2012), who suggested that learning originates from “every day practice as people learn by doing, reflecting on the experience, the talk and the action of doing” (p.76). The kind of learning Zepeda talks about is clearly identify in the first excerpt, where Mario mentioned that as a coordinator he had to solve situations which were new to him. New challenges required the coordinator to look for ways to solve them. He said that there were processes for common problems, but sometimes he had to come up with solutions on his own. In a similar fashion, the coordinator in the second except stated that he has leant from his past experiences. His responses coincided with Panferov (2012) findings which showed that training from other fields of study can result in good coordinating practices.

Some coordinators have also found that that reading, investigating, listening to classes and research were beneficial for their growth. Reading, investigating and listening to classes were actions coordinators would use as a form self-teaching. In addition, coordinators suggested that doing research was a great asset in their developmental process. Doing research gave them the opportunity to integrate theory into practice. Coordinators mentioned that they did research as part of their graduate programs which usually require real-life projects. Thus, coordinators took advantage of this requirement and made research on issues that helped their coordinating responsibilities i.e. coaching teachers and developing administrative projects.

Finally, coordinators argued that knowing the school in which they were working was of great relevance in the process of becoming a coordinator. Isa and Mario commented that

some schools had handbooks, formats and procedures, all guidelines that were quite useful in their novice phase. This finding aligns with Vygotsky's view of knowledge construction by means of tools which represents a link between the coordinators' internal and external worlds. Additionally, participants considered that knowing the school provided a springboard to perform efficiently in the new position.

These findings suggest that there are several routes ELT teachers can take to become coordinators and develop new competencies. It is not surprising that participants used a wide variety of learning resources since their responsibilities and practices are constantly changing and thus require continuous learning. Results suggest that participants' chosen roads of competencies development were closely related to the kind of institution they worked in, their stage of development as well as their personal interests. Regardless of the development options coordinators decide to follow, it is imperative that they become lifelong learners to cope with their new role's responsibilities.

Chapter V: Discussion and conclusions

5.0 Introduction

This chapter has been divided into four parts. The first part presents a narrative of why I embarked on this research journey and what I have learnt. The next part deals with the revisiting of the research questions in relation to the findings, then the limitations of the present study and finally, the suggestions for further research.

The present research paper is one of the requirements to graduate from a master's degree program in ELT. When we were asked to decide on the topic of our projects, I did not have a clear idea of what I wanted to do. However, I knew I wanted to do something that benefited my development as a teacher and improved my practice. I have been an English teacher for almost a decade and an ELT coordinator for three years. A few months before starting the masters I had the idea of starting my own English language center. "My school" started in 2015 with three students, later they turned to be 45. As the reader can imagine, my responsibilities went far beyond teaching English. I had to start learning and developing new competencies. It was my experience of developing this language center that has driven my decision to study a master's degree in English teaching and to carry out this research study.

My view of how learning is constructed has changed during the process of writing this paper. I now believe that learning is socially constructed; it is not constructed in isolation (Vygotsky, 1978). Learning is not only the result of taking a course or a master's degree; but, the result of all the participations we have in different groups. This insight became meaningful to me when the participants of this research shared their experiences of how they learnt to be coordinators. This led me to reflect on my own leaning. I realized that over the last three years I have engaged in several communities of practice in an attempt to solve the challenges faced in my practice. In all of them I have certainly learnt something, it is hard to specify what, but definitely I am not who I used to be three years ago. Of course it is important to define what we desire to learn and develop and then choose the groups in which we want to participate in

order to develop such competencies. All the groups we interact with will have an influence on us, even if we are not aware of it (Wenger, 2003; Marsick et. al., 2009).

5.1 Answers to research questions

This section presents the discussion and conclusions of this study. The overall structure of this section follows the research questions. The central question of this study was: 1) How do ELT teachers in private education become coordinators in Mexico? This will be answered by giving response to the two leading questions: a) How do ELT teachers from the private sector obtain a coordinating position? and b) What competencies do they need to develop and how do they develop them? At the end, a brief summary of the findings and conclusion will be provided.

5.1.1 How do ELT teachers from the private sector obtain a coordinating position?

As noted above, the main reason for choosing the topic of this research is personal interest. This first question was conceived after revising the literature on the topic. Previous studies on the transition from teaching to coordinating (Hockley 2004; Panferov, 2012) stated that promotion was the most common reason of why teachers move to coordination however, this had not been my case. When working as an ELT teacher I had not seen any teacher being promoted. Thus, I became interested in knowing if in our context there were other ways to become coordinators. The findings of this study partly support what previous studies reported. Results in this study indicate that in Mexico good teachers are frequently promoted to a coordination position. This might occur because of two reasons. On the one hand, traditionally outstanding employees are believed to have the competencies to perform successfully in a new or different position. On the other hand, stakeholders in educational institutions would rarely bring an outsider from a different field to deal with academic issues.

The results of this study indicate that in Mexico there might be other reasons to become a coordinator besides being promoted. It was found that ELT teachers in Mexico become

coordinators because: a) they are invited to take over the position, b) they start their own school, c) they apply for the position. As mentioned in Chapter I, English teaching is a phenomenon happening all over the world (White et al., 2008). The demand of English learning is increasing in our country since more people is becoming interested in it. Thus, educational institutions of all kinds are integrating English to their programs and new language centers are created. As a result, ELT coordination has become a possible career path for language teachers.

The findings of this specific question are significant since they shed light on how the transition from teaching to coordinating happens in Mexico. It also provides language teachers who aspire a coordination position ideas on the routes to follow to pursue their goal.

5.1.2 What competencies do ELT coordinators need to develop and how do they develop them?

Personally, this was the most interesting question for me. I was very excited to know the answers to this question when I had the chance to listen to more experienced coordinators. I thought I would get a recipe to follow, kind of a user's manual to be used in case of emergencies at the work place. Once I had interviewed my participants I realized I had not reached my goal. In fact, it was not possible. The scope of competencies we need to develop as coordinators is enormous. One cannot imagine this, until we are in the position and in the necessity to solve problems. Not even then, because the competencies we need are not static, they change over time. Each day or week we might need to learn something new. It sometimes becomes overwhelming, however each time we overcome a challenge we feel ready for some more to come. It is an endless cycle (Wenger, 2003).

A number of studies have examined the responsibilities, skills, knowledge, and personal qualities needed by ELT coordinators. (e.g. Fowle, 2000; Hockley, 2004; TESOL, 2007; White et al., 2008; Bailey & Llamas, 2015; Panferov, 2015), but to date ELT coordination from a

competencies perspective seems to be unexplored. It is difficult to explain why this has happened, but it might be related to traditional theories of learning and approaches to teacher education. Thus, the major objective of this research was to study the topic from a competencies approach. As discussed in Chapter two, the relevance of this approach relies on the crucial importance competencies have in a world of globalization and modernization which are creating a diverse and interconnected world. As noted in the literature review chapter, the OECD (2005), states that citizens success in life depends on a wide range of competencies that go beyond knowledge and skills. Based on this premise the data of this study was analyzed using the OECD's key competencies framework which views competencies from a more holistic perspective. The results of this study corroborate the idea that ELT coordinators' competencies are interconnected. This means that the development of one competency allows the development of another (OECD, 2005). For example, in order for coordinators to make decisions on their future actions they need to firstly be aware of the context and social dynamics of the institution. Lack of awareness might result on taking wrong decisions. One of the anticipating findings was that there is a group of competencies essential to any coordinator regardless of the working environment there are immersed in. While, there are other that are context-sensitive. Another important finding was that participants have developed coordinating competencies by means of informal learning as well as by participating in a number of - communities of practice. These findings remind us of Marsick (2009) and Wenger's (2013) theories which suggest that most of adults learning occurs out of formal education when individuals engage in different groups. The reason why participants' development has had a tendency to embark in informal learning is probably due two three main reasons. First, it could be because of the busy agendas they have as consequence of the many responsibilities they have in charge. Second, it might be due to the nature of adult learning. According to Marsick, adults learning is often self-centered. In other words, adults usually focus their learning in

solving problems they currently have. Their learning and development is driven by the challenges they face in their work environments. Third, in Mexico formal instruction on ELT coordination is not very common. In addition, it is often inaccessible to many teachers due to costs or schedules.

To conclude, this project provided an important opportunity to advance the understanding of how language teachers learn and develop competencies to cope with the demands of their new role as coordinators. This research paper might be a useful tool for teachers who just started their journey into coordination. By making use of this thesis they can become knowledgeable of options they have to develop by means of formal and informal learning. They might also find valuable bibliography to refer to in case of crisis. There is at least one area where this study makes an original contribution: the way teachers' transition to coordinating.

5.2 Limitations of the study

This section presents the limitations of the present project. Firstly, the number of participants in this study was small. Thus, these results cannot be generalizable. Secondly, due to practical constraints it was beyond the scope of this study to use more data gathering instruments and to carry out the study for a longer period of time. This was due to the participants' busy lives and the available time to finish this research. Finally, the reader should bear in mind that the study was based on participants only from the private sector.

5.3 Suggestions for further research

In light of the limitations mentioned above, the suggestions for future research on this topic are presented. First of all, I would like to remind the reader that one of the main arguments in Chapter I was regarding the limited number of research studies on this topic. In contexts like the USA and UK, there has been an increased interest in exploring the experiences of ELT

teachers who transition into coordination. Yet, I did not find any research paper on the topic carried out in Mexico. In this light, the phenomenon of language teachers moving into coordination needs more attention. More research needs to be carried out in order to better understand this phenomenon. Having stated this, there is further research that can enrich the present study and then I propose research on the topic but following a slightly different line.

Regarding further research on this topic, there is a need to explore more in depth participants' experiences by adding more data gathering instruments. It would also be interesting to carry out a longitudinal study on the topic to see how coordinators' perspectives on learning change over time. This could include a comparative study of coordinators with a few years of experience and coordinators with more years of experience. Concerning research that could expand on this project, continue studying the transition process of ELT coordinators who work private sector with more participants. Researching the public sector is important in Mexico since most schools in our country belong to this sector. Another line research could be ELT teachers who have started their own institutions and explore in depth on their reasons and what the process to create a private language center entails. In conclusion, the results of this investigation show that there is abundant room for research on the area and so future studies on the current topic are therefore recommended.

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APPENDIX A

Participant's CV

Educación

- Licenciatura en Educación Primaria. 2012. Secretaría de Educación Pública y Centro Nacional de Evaluación (CENEVAL).
- Maestría en Educación Humanista. 2011. Universidad Iberoamericana Puebla.
- Licenciatura en Mercadotecnia. 1995. Universidad del Valle de México.
- Especialización en Dirección de Centros Educativos. 1999. Instituto para la Investigación y Desarrollo de la Educación A.C. (IIDEAC)

Certificaciones de idiomas extranjeros

- Certificat de Lange Française. Avec Merit. Janvier 1991. Alliance Française.
- Certificate in Advanced English. Grade A. December 1999. University of Cambridge.
- Graded Examination of Spoken English (GESE) level 12 Advanced Stage. Awarded with Distinction. June 2000. Trinity College London.
- Certificate of Proficiency in English. Grade A. June 2002. University of Cambridge.
- TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) October 2006. Total score: 653.
- TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication) November 2006. Total score: 990.

Experiencia laboral

- Colegio John Steinbeck A.C. (2007-a la fecha). Dirección general.
- Universidad Iberoamericana Puebla. CIDEL. (Ago. 2014 a la fecha) Maestra de inglés.
- Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla. Facultad de Lenguas. Coordinación de Licenciatura Abierta / Coordinación de Educación Continua. (2005-2013) Maestra en la Licenciatura Abierta y en el Diplomado a Maestros en Servicio.
- Universidad Cuauhtémoc. (2007) Maestra para la Licenciatura en Odontología.
- Proldea Educativa, A.C. (2006-2007). Fundadora. Dirección general. Consultoría para instituciones educativas públicas y privadas.
- Colegio Americano de Puebla. (2006-2007). Maestra de Literatura para el Middle Years Programme.
- Universidad Iberoamericana Puebla. Departamento de Educación y Psicología / CIDEL. (2006-2007) Coordinadora interina del Programa de Formación de Maestros de Inglés.
 - Noguera Consultores S.A de C.V. (2006) Consultora educativa para escuelas particulares.
- Instituto D'Amicis, A.C. (1988-1989 y 1997-2006). Coordinadora del Departamento de Inglés (Secundaria y Bachillerato) Coordinadora del programa de capacitación para el trabajo Initial Teacher Assistant Training Programme (ITAT). Coordinadora del Middle Years Programme del Bachillerato Internacional.
- Universidad Madero. (1996-1997 y 2007) Maestra en las Licenciaturas en Administración e Innovación de Negocios y en Mercadotecnia.
- Universidad del Valle de Puebla. (1996-1997) Maestra en las Licenciaturas en Mercadotecnia y en Publicidad.
- Instituto Angloamericano. (1996-1997) Maestra para las Licenciaturas en Lenguas Modernas y en Nutrición.
- United Parcel Service (1992-1995) Supervisora del departamento de mercadotecnia.
- SERTA. Analista de estudios de mercado. (1992)
- BIMSA. Asistente de estudios de mercado. (1991)
- Centro de Idiomas Dinámicos. Maestra para el programa de Ejecutivos en diferentes compañías (1991).
- Centro Lingüístico La Paz del Colegio Americano de Puebla. (1988-1990). Maestra de inglés.

Contribuciones

- Tallerista invitada: *Educación para la Autogestión. Instituto Universitario Puebla.* (2016-2017)
- Conferencista invitada: *Teaching and learning in the multi-level classroom.* MEXTESOL (2015)
- Conferencista invitada: *Administración de servicios educativos.* Semana del Emprendedor Universitario. Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla. Unidad Regional Atlixco. (2013)
- Participante en la mesa redonda: *Methods and approaches in language teaching in bilingual schools in Mexico.* Maestría en la Enseñanza del Inglés. Facultad de Lenguas. Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla. (2013)

- Participante en la mesa redonda: *Different perspectives of ELT in Mexico*. Maestría en la Enseñanza del Inglés. Facultad de Lenguas. Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla. (2011)
- Conferencista invitada: *La enseñanza del inglés en colegios bilingües en México*. Foro La Enseñanza del Inglés en las Escuelas en México. Programa de Formación de Maestros de Inglés. Departamento de Educación y Psicología. Universidad iberoamericana Puebla. (2004)
- Coordinadora de proyecto: Presentación de proyectos de investigación del programa ITAT Instituto D'Amicis, A.C. (2002 al 2004)
- Conferencista invitada: *Coordinación de proyectos educativos con integración de tecnología: Teaching and learning with computers*. Primer Simposium de Cómputo Educativo. Colegio Bilbao y Sistemas Integrales de Computación y Enseñanza SA de C.V. (2000)
- Coordinadora de proyecto: Presentación de proyectos de investigación en el VII Foro de Investigación. Universidad del Valle de Puebla. (1996)

Publicaciones y otros trabajos

- Autora del Manual para el Maestro del libro *La Letra con Arte Entra Vol. 1. Método misolar para la lecto-escritura*. Ed. Producciones Educación Aplicada. (2012)
- Diseño curricular para la carrera técnica de *Initial Teacher Assistant Training Programme* at Instituto D'Amicis, A.C. (2001)

Otros estudios y seminarios

- Diplomado en Lenguaje Integrado a través de la Enseñanza de Ciencias (CLIL). 2013. University of Dayton, Dayton, Ohio.
- Diplomado en Inteligencia Emocional. 2006. El Centro Integral de Formación Humana A.C.
- Seminario en Empresa y Gestión del Programa del Diploma. 2006. International Baccalaureate Organisation (IBO).
- Seminario para Coordinadores del MYP. 2006. IBO.
- Seminario en Monografía del Programa del Diploma. 2005. IBO.
- Seminario Introductorio en Áreas de Interacción Middle Years Programme. 2004. IBO.
- Diplomado en Fines de la Formación Permanente. 2002. Centro Internacional de Prospectiva y Altos Estudios. Escuela de Educación y Humanidades. (CIPAE)
- Diplomado en Enseñanza del Inglés a Niños y Adolescentes. 2001. Universidad Iberoamericana Puebla, Departamento de Educación y Psicología y Appalachian State University, Boone, North Carolina.
- Diplomado en Filosofía para Niños en Inglés. 2001. Universidad Iberoamericana Puebla. Departamento de Educación y Psicología.
- VI Foro de Lingüística Aplicada. 2001. Universidad de las Américas Puebla. Departamento de Lenguas y Maestría en Lingüística Aplicada.
- Seminario de Diseño Curricular. 1998. IIDEAC.
- Seminario en Micro-enseñanza. 1997. IIDEAC.
- Seminario Introductorio al Programa de Filosofía para Niños. 1997. El Centro de Filosofía para Niños de la Universidad Iberoamericana Golfo Centro, Federación Mexicana de Filosofía para Niños y el International Council for Philosophical Inquiry with Children.
- Curso de Formación de Asesores de Tesis. 1996. Universidad del Valle de Puebla.
- Professional development workshops (Mextesol, Houghton Mifflin, Simon and Schuster International, Cambridge University Press, Dayton Publishing, Oxford.

APPENDIX B
Interview Questions

Interviewee: _____

Date: _____

1. How would you describe your coordination experiences?
2. How did your coordination experiences differ from that of your time in the classroom?
3. What did you need to learn as a coordinator?
4. What were your main sources of learning? Did anybody support you in your transition?

APPENDIX C

Post-Interview Confidentiality Form

It is my goal and responsibility to use the information that you have shared responsibly. Now that you have completed the interview, I would like to give you the opportunity to provide us with additional feedback on how you prefer to have your data handled. Please check one of the following statements:

_____ You may share the information just I a provided it. No details need to be changed and you may use my real name when using my data in publications and presentations.

_____ You may share the information just I provided it; however, please do not use my real name. I realize that others might identify me based on the data, even though my name will not be used.

_____ You may share the information just as I provided it; however, please do not use my real name and please change details that might make me identifiable to others. In particular, it is my wish that the following specific pieces of my data not be shared without first altering the data so as to make me unidentifiable (describe this data in the space below):

_____ You may contact me if you have any questions about sharing my data with others.

Participant's Signature, date

Researcher's Signature, date

(Adapted from Kaiser, 2012, p. 462)