

# Identity of the Teacher-Researcher in Collaborative Action Research: Concerns Reflected in a Research Journal

La identidad del docente investigador en la investigación acción colaborativa:  
preocupaciones reflejadas en un diario de investigación

**Darío Luis Banegas\***

University of Warwick, UK & Ministry of Education of Chubut, Argentina

In this paper I report the insights of my personal research journal as part of a collaborative action research project I facilitated in a secondary school where I teach English as a foreign language. I kept a journal so as to offer the natural history of my research towards my doctoral degree. In this project I worked together with four participating teachers but I assumed a complex identity as I was a teacher-researcher i.e. doctoral researcher and a teacher. This entailed different roles and interests which generated opportunities and tensions. Qualitative analysis of my journal reveals complex concerns at different levels which signal the individual struggles of a teacher-researcher involved in collaboration.

*Key words:* Collaborative action research, journal writing, teacher-researcher identity.

En este artículo presento un reporte de mis reflexiones sobre mi diario de investigación, que usé como parte de un proyecto de investigación-acción colaborativo que propicié en una escuela secundaria donde enseñé inglés como lengua extranjera. Llevé un diario con miras a ofrecer la historia natural de mi proyecto de doctorado. En este proyecto trabajé junto a otros cuatro docentes participantes y asumí una identidad compleja ya que fui docente investigador y docente participante. Esto implicó diferentes roles e intereses que generaron tanto experiencias positivas como tensiones con mis colegas. El análisis cualitativo de mi diario revela preocupaciones complejas en diferentes niveles y señala las luchas individuales del docente investigador involucrado en colaboración.

*Palabras clave:* escritura de diarios, identidad del docente investigador, investigación acción colaborativa.

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\* E-mail: dariobanegas@hotmail.com

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## Introduction

In educational research, there are usually tensions between university-based researchers and teachers. Such tensions may widen the gap between theory and practice or the feelings of lack of applicability that educational research may put forward for those in the classroom (Kiely & Davis, 2010). This perceived gap may be bridged if the classroom becomes a space of convergence for academics' as well as teachers' interests and needs through which educational reforms and implementations may be seen as a negotiated agenda (Wedell, 2009). Teachers should not be perceived as mere implementers but as knowledge generators (Johnson & Golombek, 2011; López-Pastor, Monjas, & Manrique, 2011). Therefore, classrooms within classroom research (Vergara Luján, Hernández Gaviria, & Cárdenas Ramos, 2009) could be regarded as ideal laboratories to test educational theories and produce new insights (Borg, 2010; Pica, 2005; Stenhouse, 1981). Furthermore, Action Research (AR) may become a powerful research methodology to encourage teacher research as well as collaborative work among teachers and researchers (Banegas, 2011; Borg, 2010; Ellis, 2010; Swantz, 2008) in order to promote reflective practice and collaborative professional development (Burns, 2005b; Elliot, 2009; Glenn, 2011; Koshy, 2010; Mann, 2005; Somekh, 2006). Such a socially constructed stance implies that AR is participatory by nature (Jones & Stanley, 2010; Koshy, 2010; Reason & Bradbury, 2008).

Nevertheless, this collaborative process towards reflective and effective practices rooted in classroom research may generate tensions among participating teachers and researchers as their dynamic identities may challenge naturalised practices or institutional relationships. In this paper I will report the insights of my personal research journal as part of a collaborative action research (CAR) project I facilitated in a secondary school

where I teach English as a foreign language. This project of one academic year aimed at developing and implementing language-driven CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) through teacher-developed materials and context-responsive contents. In this project I worked on a team of four participating teachers but my identity was more complex than that of the others as I was both a teacher and a researcher pursuing doctoral studies. Needless to say, this identity entailed different roles and different interests which generated opportunities and tensions between the participating teachers and me.

I kept a journal so as to offer the natural history of my research (Silverman, 2010, pp. 334-336) towards my doctoral degree and development as an independent researcher. I was interested in answering two questions based on my journal:

- What kind of entries did my journal feature?
- In what ways did my identity as a teacher-researcher appear in the journal?

## Collaborative Action Research

In theory, Collaborative Action Research (CAR) is expected to be a bottom-up process in which research demands and issues emerge from teachers rather than from researchers wishing to impose their own agendas (Dörnyei, 2007, pp. 191-192; Locke & Riley, 2009). After all, CAR aims at overcoming the distance between researchers, reform-makers or policy makers (Banegas, 2011; Frederiksen & Beck, 2010, pp. 136-139) and teachers (Allwright, 2005; Ellis, 2010, pp. 184 -185; Freeman & Johnson, 1998) or the Western body-mind divide (Somekh & Zeichner, 2009). However, in practice we may find constant negotiation and compromise for a common goal since teachers and researchers must act within their institutions and therefore negotiate with institutional gatekeepers as well (Gewirtz, Shapiro, Maguire, Mahony, & Cribb, 2009; Waters, 2009).

When the results derived from these opportunities are fed back into educational systems, CAR empowers not only teachers but also the institution as a whole (Burns, 1999; Rainey, 2011) with the aim of renewing programmes and broader curriculum changes (Altrichter & Posch, 2009; Burns, 1999, 2005a, 2005b). Put simply, CAR is crucial as teachers are not only the best people to carry out research on their own practices (van Lier, 1994) but also the vital agents of change in any educational policies to be implemented regardless of their scale. The changes initiated by teachers may start with a socio-constructivist approach which affects their local context but then extends to other domains thus becoming a more socio-political approach which may underpin the renewal of educational systems (Burns, 2005b).

In relation to CAR projects and personal experience, these share common aims: teacher reflection, reflective practice (Burns, 2010; Taylor, Rudolph, & Foldy, 2008, pp. 658-662) and professional engagement (Burns, 2005a; Goodnough, 2010; Moloney, 2009; Pérez, Soto, & Serván, 2010) for improvement of classroom settings (Brooks-Lewis, 2010). Collaborative partnerships may be formed by (1) teachers at the grassroots level, that is, teachers with or without knowledge of research methodology (Feldman & Weiss, 2010, pp. 31-32), (2) teachers linked up with university-based researchers to delineate and develop a project together (Bruce, Flynn, & Stagg-Peterson, 2011; Gewirtz et al., 2009; Rainey, 2011, Stewart, 2006), and (3) a group of school-based teachers in which one has a dual identity of teacher-researcher (Li, 2006; Somekh, 2006; Wiesemes, 2002) due to postgraduate studies, personal interests, or a part-time position in higher education. Whatever the research group formation, teachers' professional development and their active role should lead all actions in order to ensure the democratic validity, acceptance and commitment over

time of any CAR project (Somekh, 2010; Somekh & Zeichner, 2009; Wells, 2009).

### **Identities Among Teachers and Teacher-Researchers**

In situations where the collaborative partnership occurs in a group of teachers where one is also a PhD researcher, as it was my personal experience, it may be argued that initially there may be no issues of power or dominance since the researcher is also a teacher, more specifically, a colleague who is part of the institution in which the CAR project is put into motion. Under these circumstances, teacher identities may not need to be re-examined. We may agree that teacher identity is usually granted when colleagues, students and other members of the community regard a teacher as a professional of teaching constantly developing and investing in teaching (Clarke, 2009; Norton & Toohey, 2011). From this stance, a teacher who is perceived as such i.e. as a teacher may become a co-constructor of his/her own professional development through individual and collective actions (Benson, 2007; Ding, 2009, pp. 66-67) which will enhance teacher autonomy (Benson, 2010). For example, Wyatt (2011b) provides an account of a teacher whose practical knowledge in materials design, autonomy, and confidence grew as a result of an action research experience which enhanced his identity as a professional teacher.

Through a three-year action research project, Goodnough (2010) aimed at understanding teachers' modes of belonging and how they construct and deconstruct their identity when they become engaged in teacher-centred action research. In her study 50 teachers became part of a wider project which sought to improve Science across the curriculum. Results showed that the participating teachers saw themselves as creators of knowledge. These teachers realised how their

teaching improved through CAR, a point noted in van Lier (1994), thus taking responsible ownership (Kiely & Davis, 2010) of CAR findings and implications. Goodnough (2010) notes that her role was multi-faceted ranging from teacher to researcher; however, she stresses her role as a facilitator of the action research process. I compare her role to mine as I intended to be a teacher-researcher facilitating the generation of knowledge for and from our classrooms.

The need to investigate the teacher-researcher identity could be carried through narrative accounts such as journals as a tool for knowledge building and professional development. Focusing on teacher enquiry, Johnson and Golombek (2011) explain that narrative as a mediator has three functions: (1) as externalisation, (2) as verbalisation, and (3) as systematic examination. In other words, teachers start to mean a concept when it has entered into a dialogic relationship with their teaching experiences, thus understanding the concept on the one hand, and making sense of teachers' practices on the other. A multi-case study carried out by Wyatt (2011a) investigated the benefits of teachers researching their own practices through AR. Results derived from observations, interviews, and participants' narratives showed that teachers became conscious of their achievements in helping others while simultaneously developing research skills. In addition, the narratives collected also indicated the rewarding and motivating nature of the research experience. All in all, teachers' self-awareness of their potential, internal theories and naturalised practices helped them become more autonomous and reflective with others thus strengthening their identities as teachers looking into their own teaching. Similarly, Bruce et al. (2011) found out that teachers involved in CAR experienced shifts in their teaching perspectives and practices, increased their efficacy

and developed an ability to overcome challenges. These studies seem to indicate that teacher identity is revitalised when teachers are involved in teacher research.

In a similar vein, teachers who aspire to become researchers may also want to be perceived as such by their colleagues, not only at school but also in other educational spheres without losing the identity of being teachers. I may contend that teacher-researchers may not want to be seen as teachers doing research but as teachers and researchers in their own right. Teacher-researchers may assume the identity of facilitators in the sense that they may organise meetings, lead CAR cycles and stages, provide input materials for their colleagues with which to create knowledge (Avgitidou, 2010; Goodnough, 2010) but simultaneously ensuring that research standards and methodologies are observed. In addition, these teacher-researchers are also teachers and therefore may be part of the teachers wishing to introduce changes locally. The question is to what extent these teacher-researchers behave like teachers and to what extent they prioritise their personal agendas and aims as researchers. Therefore, I was interested in investigating my own journal to see how my reflections about being a teacher and a teacher-action researcher (Jove, 2011) shed light upon my identities in tandem.

### **The Study**

In 2011, a group of four English language teachers and I decided to explore the benefits of language-driven CLIL (Coyle, Hood, & Marsh, 2010; Dalton-Puffer, 2011; Kiely, 2011) through CAR at the secondary school where we worked together in Argentina. Our aim was to develop context-responsive pedagogies that met the demands of our students by employing our own developed materials and relevant topics the students had suggested. Due to our aim of reflecting and acting on our

practices, I suggested CAR as the most meaningful research methodology to use. As I was a teacher and had started my doctoral studies, we agreed that this project would be my PhD research and the basis of other studies and publications. Due to my own studies, I was on a study leave, which meant that I would teach only those lessons related to our CAR project. In terms of identities, I was the researcher and one of the participating teachers at the same time. Therefore, our personal interests, time availability, and gains were different. While my colleagues would grow professionally as teachers, I would obtain a doctoral degree. In addition, while my fellow teachers still taught all their regular classes plus the new language-driven CLIL lessons, I only taught the latter in just one class as it was the only possible way which could allow me to observe my colleagues' lessons.

The CAR project spread over one school year (March-December 2011) and it included three cycles. Each cycle consisted of the following stages: problem identification, action (lesson planning and materials development), intervention (teaching CLIL lessons with our own materials), and evaluation. As regards data collection methods, we concurred that I would obtain data through audio-recorded individual and group interviews, classroom observations, staff meetings, and student surveys so as to evaluate our classroom performances and suggest possible paths for exploration. In addition and following Burns (2010), I also kept a personal research journal so as to record my own insights, questions, and reflections. This paper is based on that journal.

### The Research Journal: First Approximations

I kept my journal in English even though Spanish is my L1, and as a Word document. I believe I used English as I was engaged in teaching and on-going

data analysis simultaneously and therefore felt more comfortable if all my writing was in English. Although I re-read the journal several times during the research process, I never edited my entries and therefore many entries (e.g. Extract 4) contain language mistakes.

Initially, I sought to write a daily entry as I believed that being systematic was a key element in my own development and teacher-researcher identity. Nevertheless, my journal featured only 48 entries which amounted to 6,661 words. As I explained above, the CAR project consisted of three cycles. Following each cycle I wrote 36 entries during Cycle 1, 6 during Cycle 2, and 6 again during Cycle 3. I first classified these entries formally (a) as a teacher, (b) as a researcher, and (c) as a teacher-researcher. Each classification was represented by 15, 23, and 10 entries, respectively.

In general my entries as a researcher were the most dominant in Cycle 1 only. This may be due to the fact that my identity as a teacher was strong from an institutional point of view after having taught for 10 years. However, I was a novice researcher and thus I needed to find spaces for exploring and understanding the responsibilities and implications of this new identity in relation to my PhD research and my colleagues. In addition, Cycle 1 was a novelty to everyone involved in the project and I had not started analysing data yet.

I felt that once I managed my 'underconstruction' identity as a researcher, I stopped writing journal entries as I must admit that my teaching interests and commitments increased. It may also be said that my journal entries decreased because I had started analysing the data collected and therefore spent more time as a researcher drafting the different chapters of my doctoral thesis. At the time I felt that I did not need to continue writing in my journal because my reflections and analyses were in my drafted chapters.

However, I then noticed that this classification did not explore the contents of my journal further as I could not split the organic relationship within my teacher-researcher identity. When I revisited my journal for the writing of this article, I felt that many of my accounts as a teacher had been informed by knowledge from my formal education as a PhD researcher. On the other hand, many of my decisions as a PhD researcher had been determined by my classroom experience as a teacher.

I then noticed that my journal entries could fit into three categories according to entry functions: (a) as event reminders (e.g. Extract 1), (b) as reflections on action (e.g. Extract 2), and (c) as concerns for action (e.g. Extract 3). Category (a) included factual information of events which took place in the classroom during my roles as a teacher and as a classroom observer as well as factual information about time and place of interviews. In category (b) I grouped those reflections and examinations of my own lessons and initial thoughts about data as I was involved in the process of transcribing interviews or typing field notes. Last, category (c) comprised those entries which helped me focus on my concerns so as to plan future courses of action regarding data instruments of the CAR project and lessons.

Extract 1:

Topics:

Year 1: Drugs

Year 2: Nazis

Year 3: Abortion (15 June 2011)

Extract 2:

The lesson started off OK, but as time went by the debate got diluted and I could see that I was losing them and I couldn't react. Finally the voting sort of attracted their attention. I skipped the table and the note-taking thing as I had noticed that it hadn't quite worked the previous lesson. Therefore, I just let each rep talk and I would sum up their ideas on the board. (12 September 2011)

Extract 3:

I'm beginning to think that one of the issues we will have is this clash of interests, between teachers and students, to what extent do we need to compromise in coming cycles? How to teach them responsibility, agency, that is, active participation (you can have your say, but you need to do sthg once we accept to give you a more active role, more interesting lesson involve that you participate more). (12 April 2011)

I was surprised to see how my mind worked in the sense that my entries were either reminders of events or reflections on action, or concerns about the future development of the CAR project. Table 1 shows the number of entries for each cycle.

Table 1 may show that in my constructing identity as a teacher-researcher, I felt inclined to write about my reflections and concerns about the overall project and data analysis. I noticed that most of my entries, and written concerns in particular, emerged during Cycle 1 probably because I was at the beginning of my PhD project. In this sense, the journal became a powerful supporting tool. However, once I was happy with the CAR project and I started with my data analysis, I stopped feeling the

**Table 1.** Categorisation of Entries According to Function

	As event reminders	As reflections on action	As concerns for action	Total
<b>Cycle 1</b>	5	10	21	36
<b>Cycle 2</b>	1	2	3	6
<b>Cycle 3</b>	1	3	2	6
<b>Total</b>	7	15	26	

need to resort to my journal to remember, reflect, or think ahead.

While my entries as event reminders and reflections on action were part of my thesis write-up already, I became interested in examining my concerns for action and how these constructed my identity as a teacher-researcher.

### The Research Journal: Concerns as a Teacher-Researcher

I believed that my teacher-researcher identity was mostly characterised by my concerns for action and therefore my journal was a scaffolding tool to express my worries and anxieties. In order to discover the most relevant themes within category (c), that is, concerns for action, I resorted to inductive coding paying attention to common patterns, recurrent themes and words (Nunan & Bailey, 2009, p. 416). I then elaborated thematic categories and networks for thematic analysis (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Riessman, 2008, pp. 53-76). I used Mindmeister software ([www.mindmeister.com](http://www.mindmeister.com)) for thematic network visualisation. The following figure (Figure 1) illustrates my thematic analysis:

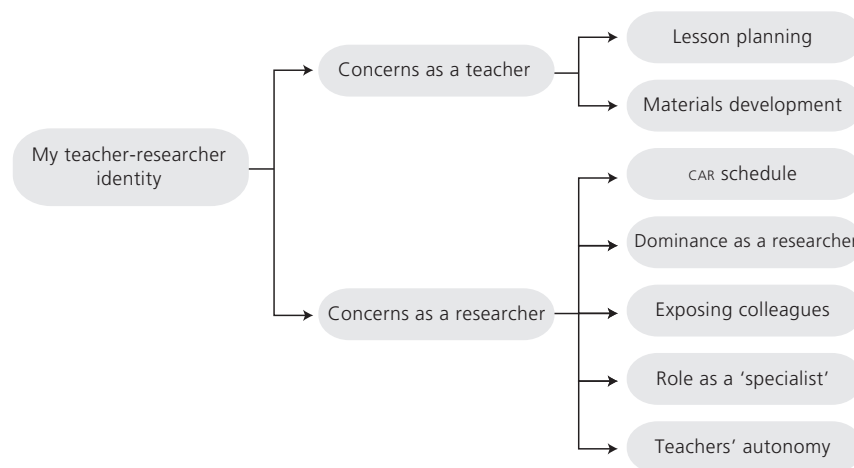
As I suggested above, I believe that my journal was a collection of concerns about my complex identity as a teacher-researcher. Although it was impossible or contrived to separate my identities and match them to specific entries, my concerns could still be placed along a continuum which showed whether these were more teacher/classroom-driven or researcher/PhD-driven. In some of my entries, I wrote 'now, in my PhD mode' particularly when I was concerned about data collection and analysis.

As a teacher, I was concerned with reinforcing my identity as a successful and effective teacher given the fact that I was the 'specialist' in CLIL and therefore felt that my lessons had to be models, especially for the participating teachers observing my performance in the classroom. However, this concern was also influenced by my PhD studies since I wanted to show that my doctorate research did have a direct impact on my classroom practice:

Extract 4:

In my lesson for next week I need to show C that in CLIL activities have to follow Bloom's taxonomy and that content can't be trivial. How? Maybe I need to do more research about what the students know and don't know about rock music and the Cold War. Need

Figure 1. Thematic Network Derived from my Research Journal



to make sure that I provide her with good examples of activities based on authentic input. She doesn't know CLIL. She has to see that thru me ☺. (10 May 2011)

On the other hand, whether my entries referred to lesson planning or materials development (Extract 5), my reflections aimed at planning my future actions based on self-evaluating my past performances and bearing in mind my time availability (Extract 6) and stress (Extract 7):

Extract 5:

I've spent and enjoyed two days finding sources, selecting them, planning activities, calling R to provide me with more insights about American Rock. Of course all this is wonderful but it's not real. I can personally do it because I'm almost doing this and that's all. I'm a comfy position now, I don't have to be running from one school to the next and spending my day marking exams. I'm at home sipping coffee, enjoying my place and working leisurely and if I want, I can devote a whole day to doing this only. (19 May 2011)

Extract 6:

Today I've started planning the lessons I've got to teach next week and I wonder whether I should plan them as if I were a full-time teacher or not. My point is that now I've got more time to devote to planning, adapting the coursebook, selecting and I can't help it, I mean, I want to deliver 'the' lesson. However, I then need to bear in mind that the situation is not that normal in the sense that I'll teach these two lessons ONLY. Something to definitely consider when analysing the data from observations and feedback from stu. (6 April 2011)

Extract 7:

Today it was my lesson 1 of the second cycle. I don't know, I didn't feel the same drive as in cycle 1. Maybe I'm getting tired. Overworking? Maybe... The song was OK; however I noticed that the gaps were rather difficult for them. Discussion was OK among groups and this idea of a representative was good for better organisation within each group. The activity about Dr Thomas was OK for the students realised about the issue themselves with little intervention from my part. Good! (5 September 2011)

Firstly, the extracts above show the rather natural concerns of any teacher in relation to professional development and good practices. As a novice researcher, secondly, I was becoming aware of the influence of my PhD researcher identity on my teacher identity. Because I was on a study leave to pursue my doctoral degree, I had more time available for lesson planning than the other participating teachers. More importantly, I had invested interests since my belief was that the better my lessons, the more positive the data would be so that I could provide evidence of language-driven CLIL effectiveness. In other words, I needed to be alert to my personal motivations when analysing my classroom data.

One concern was related to some unavoidable issues which forced me to reschedule and modify the data collection methods. In some cases, teachers' limited free time (Extract 8), teacher absences, national holidays, school meetings or my first experience with transcribing and coding recorded interviews (Extract 9) required that some stages be extended because I had to postpone interviews and classroom observations:

Extract 8:

Now, I've got another challenge, to arrange a time for us three teachers to meet for my first focus group interview. I hope we can do it this week, let's see how that goes. I'll try to shut up. (4 April 2011)

Extract 9:

After lunch I started with the transcription. Panicked and some decisions to make. Checked the different templates κ. had given us and decided to use the one with numbered lines, names, text and room for comments. It's taking me way longer than expected as there's too much overlap and broken sentences. I'm trying to jot down some ideas just in case I lose them. Transcribing, I feel more at ease now. There might be problems with my classroom observations next week as there will be general school meetings to discuss the new secondary



education system to be implemented from next year. I will have to reschedule observations. (8 April 2011)

My journal also revealed personal concerns in my role as a teacher-researcher and the imposition of my own agenda and personal beliefs over my colleagues, a feeling that I also sensed in Extract 4. The following extracts (Extracts 10 and 11) may be an example of my reflections on not trying to influence my fellow teachers so that their actions would not be replications of my own, even when I felt that my practices had to be taken as models for theirs (Extract 4). In addition, I did not want them to feel that I would evaluate or assess their performance i.e. I had to refrain from being judgmental:

Extract 10:

Don't know now whether to follow them [participating teachers' opinions] up in the one-to-one interviews. What if my asking for clarification/unpacking makes them change their mind or say something different because I may be signalling that I don't agree with them? Hmm. (8 April 2011)

Extract 11:

We don't think the school is a good place to actually produce the materials. We'll work at home and then get together for a round-up of how we want to do them. I tried not to influence them, that is, I said that the materials could take any form, they could be a worksheet (my style) or like loose activities like the ones they developed. (12 May 2011)

In relation to my concerns and dominance as a researcher, I sometimes felt that there existed a personal struggle within my teacher-researcher identity about power control at an internal, intramental level since my classroom-driven concerns would in fact determine many of my PhD concerns. I also felt that my researcher-driven concerns influenced my teacher identity in my lessons (Extract 6). Conversely, I also felt that my established teacher-self took over and I experienced internal conflicts

in my own professional development. On two occasions, I wrote entries which seemed to indicate my belief that I could keep my teacher and researcher interests separate rather than viewing my teacher-researcher identity as a complex and rich opportunity for personal and social development. In this struggle I thought that my teacher identity had won over my researcher identity (Extracts 12 and 13), thus impeding systematic data collection as planned:

Extract 12:

Today's mistake: entered the classroom with my teacher's mind rather than my researcher's mind and I forgot to switch on the recorder. I missed the recap section of my lesson where the stu [students] provided a summary of the main things we had done previously. (13 June 2011)

Extract 13:

Lesson 1: today I taught this lesson which I forgot to record. Quack. (17 October 2011)

The inherent tensions of being a teacher-researcher generated dissonance with one of the participating teachers. As Extract 14 shows, 'C' started the project willingly and was happy to observe my own teaching performance and provide me with constructive feedback following the pro forma document I had developed for data collection:

Extract 14:

C offered to observe me and she asked me whether we could meet some time this week so that we talk more about this stage of the AR. (4 April 2011)

However, after the second lesson that she observed, I noticed that she had become distant and avoided observing my lessons. At some point I asked her whether there were any issues but she limited herself to say 'con vos trabajan mejor' [The students work better with you]. Simultaneously, the

students began to voice their concerns about C's practices and compared hers to mine. I felt that my presence and teacher-researcher identity had originated ethical issues as I was exposing C or perhaps making my lessons look better than hers. This was partially due to the fact that I had invested interests in the project and more time available. At the end of Cycle 1, I wrote:

Excerpt 15:

I told Eand this is an issue I'll need to raise later, that my presence in a class which is not mine, I mean, where I don't teach regularly is causing tension with the regular teacher. She uses the mainstream coursebook and follows the syllabus. I teach with my own materials now and then and now the students think I'm great and that their teacher is not great. She's being criticised. It's not her fault, it's just that I have the time and it's part of the CAR. (17 June 2011)

Before the beginning of Cycle 2, this teacher withdrew from the project and avoided all staff meetings as we used them to socialise our students' evaluations of our practices. This situation affected me as I was going through a personal struggle. I wanted to be seen as a regular teacher but, after all, my professional development signalled that now I was a teacher specialising in CLIL and working towards a doctoral degree in Applied Linguistics. When we started developing our own materials, I wrote:

Excerpt 16:

As I was going thru it, I began to observe my let's say selfish, extra-scientific interests in this CAR project. Because I want things to go right I went to the first meeting armed with sources: Wikipedia, articles from magazines, print outs for everyone, videos. My role is input/sources provider which is fine as I've got more time than my colleagues to do this and to be honest we've usually worked this way, why shouldn't I do it now? My second intervention was that all handouts and photocopies for our students will be paid by me as I want to make sure money so to speak is not an issue. This is NOT USUAL but I don't care as long as we know it's for a good cause and everyone's happy with it. (15 May)

This personal development generated internal tensions in me, which became major concerns for action. On the one hand, I did not want to influence my colleagues for the sake of our CAR project's success and personal gains (Extracts 10-11), but on the other hand, I felt that I had to pursue my own motivations. Furthermore, I believed that I was ethically supposed to guide them and voice my opinions more freely as an ordinary teacher but also as a specialist. In so doing, I would be helping my colleagues develop professionally and thus become, in my eyes, a true facilitator (Extract 16). When I lived these tensions I decided to stop refraining myself from participating and began to feel the need to be more active in our recorded staff meetings (Extracts 17 and 18):

Extract 17:

This time I talked more. Somehow I also need to record what I think and I must share it with the others so that they know what I think. (4 May 2011)

Extract 18:

I shared my own reflections about developing materials because A wanted to know my views as a CLIL man. S did the same too. (2 June 2011)

Lastly, another aspect of my concerns about tensions in my complex identity arose when I mistakenly believed that my colleagues' autonomy could affect the arranged development of the CAR project. Under this view, my concerns as a teacher-researcher signalled that their autonomy, which in fact reflected the collaborative, democratic and bottom-up nature of our project, could limit my own autonomy and personal plans:

Extract 19:

To some extent, s's plan sort of advances what I have in mind for May and June but I'm not sure to what extent it's intimate to the AR project as this is more of an individual endeavour to fight this lack of motivation and interest s perceives in her class. (19 April 2011)

These reflections and entries helped me understand CAR in practice. More importantly, the journal acted as a supporting tool particularly at the beginning of the project as I experienced concerns about being a teacher and a PhD researcher at the same time, at the same place, and through the same practices. I feel that the absence of data from Cycles 2 and 3 coming from my own journal may indicate that I had started to develop and that I was comfortable with the process and products achieved and, therefore, the journal was not needed any more.

### Discussion

According to the literature reviewed in this article, CAR promotes professional development 'with others' provided issues and needs to improve classroom practices derive from teachers and interests. However, when a CAR project is run by a group of teachers in which one of them acts as a teacher-researcher and has other interests and other personal gains, participation and development create tensions in the complex identity as a teacher-researcher. Such a development and investigation of the teacher-researcher identity may be recovered if the teacher-researcher who acted as a leader in the CAR project kept a personal research journal. In this article I put forward two questions I sought to answer by examining my own journal as part of a CAR project.

In relation to my first question, my research journal featured only 48 entries (less than 7,000 words altogether) which I categorised as: (a) descriptive accounts of classroom practices, observations, meetings, and interviews with the participants, (b) reflective accounts on action from the classroom, observations, and interviews, and (c) concerns about aspects related to my teaching practices as well as my PhD research responsibilities. These latter were the most important

for me as they seemed to reveal that in fact the construction of my teacher-researcher identity was the purpose of the journal (Figure 1). The entries I examined showed that I moved from externalisation of CAR research procedures and CLIL pedagogies to their verbalisation and full understanding of what they entailed (Johnson & Golombek, 2011). This process was made evident as I needed to write about them (e.g. Extract 10). Once I internalised these concepts, I stopped writing the journal.

As regards the ways in which I delineated my teacher-researcher identity, my entries seem to stress that I was a concerned teacher-researcher interested in developing professionally, thus supporting Clarke (2009). Not only were these concerns related to my classroom practices or the research project at a personal level, but they were also related to the extent that I was promoting professional development in an institutional or broader perspective by helping the participating teachers in the CAR project (see Extract 18). These concerns were also linked to the inherent tensions of my complex identity. My major concern seemed to be how to balance my own interests and investment as a PhD researcher and the interests and needs of the school and participating teachers. I was aware of the fact that success in the project and CLIL implementation depended on teachers' and students' constant participation. In this aspect, I needed to avoid coercive actions which showed that the teachers were working *for* me rather than *with* me (e.g. Extracts 4, 10, and 15). I was aware that if the CAR project became contrived or staged, professional development at a personal or institutional level would have failed. Overall, my concerns and tensions may signal that knowledge was generated through CAR (Johnson & Golombek, 2011; López-Pastor et al., 2011) to overcome them as entries decreased.

Last, I am not sure of the extent to which my journal reflected the natural history of the CAR project as Silverman (2010) recommends. This may be due to the fact that I was not consistent with writing entries on a daily basis and only reflected descriptive accounts, reflections on action (mostly triggered by less successful experiences as Extract 2 and 9 show), and concerns for action mostly related to me. The journal does not offer systematic reflections about the central concepts of my PhD project or achievements. However, the absence of these may signal that the lack of entries reveals that the project produced a positive impact and therefore there was no need to write about that in the journal but in the thesis.

### Conclusion

When teachers pursue postgraduate studies through CAR as a research methodology, issues of identity will arise, but these should be taken as instances of reflection on the role of research in teaching and on the bridges that need to be built between schools and higher education institutions for the common good as Kiely and Davies (2010) hope.

When teacher-researchers engage in CAR as facilitators and participants who also generate invaluable data, it is vital that they keep a journal. The journal may reflect the natural history of the CAR project and also the professional growth of the teacher-researcher both as a reflective and committed teacher working with others and as a researcher concerned with conceptualisations and practical implications from and for the classroom. In this view, a journal becomes a rich source of data for investigating the interrelationships between identities and their development through CAR.

While keeping a research journal is a must for the teacher-researcher, I suggest that every participating teacher could keep a journal too. If all

participants involved are happy with sharing them or at least providing a brief account of the contents, recurrent themes or writing styles for socialisation, it could help one understand how identities are explored personally and socially. This act could serve as a fruitful opportunity to discuss how identities shape and are shaped by the complex and necessary dynamics underpinning classroom research in collaboration to exercise change and improvement from the bottom-up.

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### **About the Author**

**Darío Luis Banegas** holds an MA in ELT and is a PhD candidate at Warwick University (UK). He teaches EFL at secondary schools in Esquel (Argentina). He is involved in curriculum design and teacher education programmes in Argentina. His main interests are: CLIL, materials development, and action research.