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# DISSERTATION

Titel der Dissertation

„Affordances for Teaching in an International Classroom:  
A Constructivist Grounded Theory”

Verfasserin

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angestrebter akademischer Grad

Doktorin der Philosophie (Dr. phil.)

Wien, 2014

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt:

A 792 343

Dissertationsgebiet lt. Studienblatt:

English and American Studies

Betreuerin / Betreuer:

Ao. Univ.-Prof. Mag. Dr. Ute Smit

## Abstract

This study focuses on disciplinary teachers' perceptions of International Classroom Affordances (ICA) during English-medium education in a multilingual university setting (EMEMUS) in Austria. The main aim is to generate a conceptual model grounded in the data that points to the perceptual mechanisms of disciplinary teachers involved in this particular case study. Another aim is in line with the research identity of the author who seeks to exercise activist agency by facilitating a shift in perspective by those engaged in English-medium teaching.

This research falls under the constructivist-interpretive paradigm within the boundaries of an ecological context and draws on the works of the perceptual psychologist Gibson (1986; 1977) and the sociologist Giddens (1984) who take organism-environment reciprocity as a central element of their theoretical foundations. Constructivist Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 2014, 2008, 2006), enriched by crucial elements of Nexus Analysis (Scollon & Scollon, 2013, 2004, 2002) has provided the methodological underpinning for this research.

The systematic application of research methods anchored in the qualitative tradition and their subsequent analysis has resulted in the ICA model as the final outcome of this Constructivist Grounded Theory. By raising the agents' descriptive accounts to the analytical level required for grounded theory research, it was sought to identify various contextual layers that allow for the generation of inductive and middle-range theory (Charmaz, 2008).

Findings leading to the ICA model suggest that teachers perceive ICA on four analytical levels (at the framing, reacting, appropriating and embracing stage). They were found to appropriate their classroom practices in line with the emergent action possibilities they were able to perceive. The sequential affordance-based perception process largely depended on their subjective grounds for action and reflection, but was also stimulated by the researcher in form of itineraries of transformation. Personal agency coupled with hardened internalised societal patterns and the positivist conception of institutional rules were identified as the biggest defordances in EMEMUS.

## Zusammenfassung

Die vorliegende Dissertation an der Schnittstelle von Hochschulforschung, Sozio-Linguistik und Kulturwissenschaften versucht Handlungen mit Aufforderungscharakter, sogenannte Affordanzen, im Internationalen Klassenzimmer zu identifizieren, die von Lehrenden, die Informatikfächer an einer österreichischen Fachhochschule unterrichten, wahrgenommen werden. In Anlehnung an die partizipative Aktionsforschung werden die Akteure aktiv in das Projekt eingebunden, um situative kognitive und affektive Handlungsaufforderungen reflektiert verorten zu können, mit dem Ziel das gewonnene Wissen in den internationalen Lehrbetrieb rückzuführen.

Eingebettet in einen psycho-ökologischen Rahmen und im konstruktivistischen Ansatz der Grounded Theory verankert, bezieht die gegenständliche Forschungsarbeit wesentliche Zugänge einer Nexus Analyse ein. Durch systematische Auswertung von qualitativen Daten wurde versucht, mittels komparativer Analyse und komplexer Analyseverfahren ein realitätsnahes, in der Empirie verankertes Modell zu generieren, das für die sozialen Akteure von Relevanz ist.

Mittels einer Längsschnittanalyse wurde in einem Zeitraum von mehr als drei Jahren ein Grounded Theory-Modell konzipiert, welches zeigt, dass Lehrende Affordanzen im Internationalen Klassenraum mittels multipler Wirklichkeiten in vier unterschiedlichen Zyklen kontext-sensibel wahrnehmen können. Die gemeinsame Konstruktion der Daten in Interaktion mit allen sozialen Akteuren weist darauf hin, dass die von der Forscherin reflektierte und dokumentierte Rückmeldung von Transformationspfaden als Affordanzen kapitalisiert wird, während sich individuelle Persönlichkeitsfaktoren, sozialisierte und internalisierte Muster der Gesellschaftskultur und Professionskultur als hemmende Faktoren für die Wahrnehmung von Affordanzen erweisen können.

Die positivistische Konzeption von institutionellem “wertvollen” Wissen wirkt sich nachteilig auf die subjektiven Wirklichkeitsdeutungen sozialer Akteure aus, was die Wahrnehmung für soziale Handlungen mit Aufforderungscharakter negativ beeinflusst. In diesem Zusammenhang wurde festgestellt, dass die Entwicklung von Reflexionsfähigkeit wesentlich zur Wahrnehmung von Handlungsmöglichkeiten für die Unterrichtsführung im internationalen Klassenzimmer beiträgt.

## Acknowledgements

To begin with, I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor, Prof Dr Ute Smit for her ongoing support, valuable academic advice and flexible time management in all stages of the project. This thesis would not have been possible in its current form, if she had not taken me on as a doctoral student at the first place, as a person who not only came from another university, but also had a somewhat different disciplinary background. I am particularly indebted to her that she provided me with the opportunity to embark on this educational journey which was transformational for my own teaching and learning, but has also yielded incremental value for those involved in this research. Many thanks also go to Prof Dr Christiane Dalton-Puffer who has provided me with useful hints and ample food for thought.

Equally important have been all the participants of this study. I feel that I have been immensely privileged by my emic position and I am most grateful for their active intellectual engagement, but also for easy and unbureaucratic access to their classroom practices for the sake of my research. Thank you, guys!

Thanks go also to my highly appreciated colleagues from the higher education research department who in their role as sociologists have provided me with valuable insights into grounded theory. Since my thesis is written in LaTeX, a tool I have not been familiar with before, I most appreciate the support from my IT colleagues who have spent hours helping me out.

Finally, I want to give heartfelt thanks to my wonderful husband Franz who for many years now has managed all kind of family business. His “taking-over” has allowed me to stay focused and withdraw in the Ivory Tower for nearly every free minute. I mostly thank him for his patience to listening to my endless conceptual and theoretical considerations that I was constantly throwing at his head despite the knowledge that his own technical background would neither allow him to understand my conceptualisations nor to create any genuine interest in my scholarly field.

Special thanks go also to my great sons, Wenzel and Laurenz who did not see their mother much during the last years and nearly never without her laptop around. There were many times where I was so absorbed in my work that I stayed behind when they were leaving on vacation or other family events. But despite all ups and downs, it was crystal clear to me that they were the reason to keep going.

## List of Abbreviations

CGT	Constructivist Grounded Theory
CI	Curriculum Internationalization
CLIL	Content and Language Integrated Learning
CoP	Community of Practice
ELF	English as a Lingua Franca
EMEMUS	English-medium Education in Multilingual University Settings
EMI	English-medium Instruction
ESP	English for Specific Purposes
HCI	Human-centred Interaction
HEI	Higher Education Institution
IaH	Internationalisation at Home
IC	International Classroom
ICA	International Classroom Affordances
ICL	Integrating Content and Language
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IoC	Internationalisation of the Curriculum
IT	Information Technology
L2	Second Language
NA	Nexus Analysis
NofEP	Nexus of Educational Practice
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
UAS	University of Applied Sciences



# Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction and Structure</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1	Introduction . . . . .	1
1.2	Definition of key terms . . . . .	2
1.3	Motivation of the study . . . . .	4
1.4	Research aims and structure of the thesis . . . . .	6
1.5	Research journey . . . . .	8
<b>2</b>	<b>Internationalisation of Higher Education</b>	<b>11</b>
2.1	Introduction . . . . .	11
2.2	Curriculum internationalisation . . . . .	13
2.2.1	Internationalisation at Home (IaH) . . . . .	13
2.2.2	Internationalisation of the Curriculum (IoC) . . . . .	14
2.3	Implementation strategies . . . . .	15
2.3.1	Add-on strategy . . . . .	16
2.3.2	Infusion strategy . . . . .	18
2.3.3	Transformative strategy . . . . .	20
2.3.4	Synopsis of discussed strategies . . . . .	22
2.3.5	Selected models of internationalisation . . . . .	25
2.4	Disciplinary perspectives and internationalisation . . . . .	29
2.4.1	The university and its disciplines . . . . .	29
2.4.2	Disciplines and internationalisation . . . . .	30
2.4.3	Computer science revisited . . . . .	32
2.5	Chapter summary . . . . .	36

<b>3</b>	<b>EMI in European Higher Education</b>	<b>37</b>
3.1	Introduction . . . . .	37
3.2	ELF in higher education . . . . .	40
3.2.1	English as a lingua franca of science . . . . .	42
3.3	Cultural aspects with regard to ELF . . . . .	44
3.3.1	ELF and approaches to culture . . . . .	44
3.3.2	ELF and lingua-cultural realities . . . . .	47
3.3.3	ELF and intercultural communication . . . . .	49
3.3.4	ELF and ROAD-MAPPING . . . . .	50
3.4	Chapter summary . . . . .	55
<b>4</b>	<b>Teachers in an International Classroom</b>	<b>57</b>
4.1	Introduction . . . . .	57
4.2	Key skills for internationalist teachers . . . . .	58
4.3	Teachers and internationalisation . . . . .	59
4.4	Teachers and English-medium instruction . . . . .	61
4.5	Teachers and intercultural education . . . . .	63
4.6	Teachers and change . . . . .	66
4.7	Teachers and pedagogy . . . . .	68
4.8	Conceptual gap . . . . .	73
4.9	Chapter summary . . . . .	76
<b>5</b>	<b>Ecology and the concept of affordances</b>	<b>77</b>
5.1	Introduction . . . . .	77
5.2	Ecology from a historical perspective . . . . .	78
5.3	Affordances and fields of applications . . . . .	79
5.3.1	Ecological psychology . . . . .	80
5.3.2	Human-computer interaction . . . . .	82
5.4	Categorisation of affordances . . . . .	85
5.4.1	Structuration Theory . . . . .	90
5.5	Affordances of learning ecologies . . . . .	92
5.5.1	Affordances and multilingual studies . . . . .	92
5.5.2	Affordances and learning sciences . . . . .	94

5.6	Chapter summary . . . . .	95
<b>6</b>	<b>Paradigm position</b>	<b>97</b>
6.1	Introduction . . . . .	97
6.2	Committing to a research paradigm . . . . .	98
6.3	Constructivist approaches to social research . . . . .	99
6.3.1	Researcher's role . . . . .	103
6.3.2	Activist stance of the researcher . . . . .	108
6.4	Theoretical considerations on CGT . . . . .	110
6.5	Theoretical considerations on nexus analysis . . . . .	113
6.5.1	Nexus-analytical cycles . . . . .	114
6.5.2	Nexus of practice . . . . .	116
6.6	Common ground . . . . .	120
6.7	Chapter summary . . . . .	122
<b>7</b>	<b>Methodology and Research Design</b>	<b>125</b>
7.1	Introduction . . . . .	125
7.2	My CGT research story . . . . .	126
7.2.1	Measure of rigour . . . . .	126
7.2.2	Theoretical sensitivity . . . . .	128
7.2.3	Theoretical sampling . . . . .	129
7.2.4	Treatment of the literature . . . . .	131
7.2.5	Constant comparative method . . . . .	132
7.2.6	Coding . . . . .	134
7.2.7	Concurrent data collection . . . . .	138
7.2.8	Memo-writing . . . . .	139
7.2.9	Meaning of verification . . . . .	140
7.3	Data collection and research instruments . . . . .	140
7.3.1	Discourse analysis . . . . .	141
7.3.2	Ethnographic accounts . . . . .	142
7.3.3	Intensive interviews . . . . .	144
7.3.4	Questionnaires . . . . .	145
7.3.5	Focus group interviews . . . . .	145

7.4	Chapter summary . . . . .	146
<b>8</b>	<b>Positioning of the International Classroom</b>	<b>149</b>
8.1	Introduction . . . . .	149
8.2	Nexus-analytic cycles . . . . .	151
8.2.1	Engaging the nexus . . . . .	151
8.2.2	Navigating the nexus . . . . .	154
8.2.3	Changing the nexus . . . . .	156
8.3	Positioning in the ROAD-MAPPING model . . . . .	158
8.4	Chapter summary . . . . .	163
<b>9</b>	<b>The ICA model</b>	<b>165</b>
9.1	Introduction . . . . .	165
9.2	Coding paradigm . . . . .	165
9.3	Classroom management . . . . .	169
9.3.1	Stage one: Framing . . . . .	172
9.3.2	Stage two: Reacting . . . . .	174
9.3.3	Stage three: Appropriating . . . . .	175
9.3.4	Stage four: Embracing . . . . .	179
9.4	Chapter summary . . . . .	181
<b>10</b>	<b>Analytical application of ICA model</b>	<b>183</b>
10.1	Introduction . . . . .	183
10.2	Dr Alpha . . . . .	186
10.2.1	Framing . . . . .	186
10.2.2	Reacting . . . . .	188
10.2.3	Appropriating . . . . .	192
10.2.4	Embracing . . . . .	194
10.3	Dr Beta . . . . .	196
10.3.1	Framing . . . . .	196
10.3.2	Reacting . . . . .	197
10.3.3	Appropriating . . . . .	199
10.3.4	Embracing . . . . .	201
10.4	Reflection . . . . .	202

10.5 Chapter summary . . . . .	204
<b>11 Conclusion</b>	<b>205</b>
11.1 Synopsis . . . . .	205
11.2 Significance of the study . . . . .	206
11.3 Boundaries and limitations . . . . .	207
11.4 Suggestions for future research . . . . .	208
11.5 Epilogue . . . . .	209
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>213</b>
<b>A Appendices</b>	<b>275</b>



# List of Figures

2.1	Approaches to curriculum internationalisation (author's own illustration) . . . . .	17
2.2	Ideological rationales for internationalisation (author's own illustration)	23
3.1	The ROAD-MAPPING framework (Dafouz and Smit, 2014) . . . . .	51
3.2	Roles of English in relation to other languages (Dafouz and Smit, 2014)	52
5.1	Descriptions-of-Affordances Model (Pols, 2012) . . . . .	84
5.2	Disciplines and selected studies that focus on the theory of affordances (author's own illustration) . . . . .	87
5.3	Model of affordances categories (Rozycki et al, 2012) . . . . .	89
6.1	Approaches to social research (author's own illustration) . . . . .	100
6.2	Phases of Nexus Analysis (Scollon and Scollon, 2004) . . . . .	114
6.3	Common ground between Nexus Analysis and Constructivist Grounded Theory (author's own illustration) . . . . .	121
6.4	Overview of research hierarchy (author's own illustration) . . . . .	123
7.1	Overview of selected action codes (author's own illustration) . . . . .	133
7.2	Extract of quotations for meta-level code (author's own illustration) .	136
7.3	Overview of selected action codes (author's own illustration) . . . . .	137
7.4	Overview of research methods (author's own illustration) . . . . .	142
8.1	Unit of analysis in context (author's own illustration) . . . . .	150
8.2	Historical development of unit of analysis (author's own illustration) .	152
8.3	Position in the ROAD-MAPPING model (author's own illustration) .	159

9.1	Coding paradigm for ICA model (author's own illustration) . . . . .	168
9.2	Classroom management of an International Classroom: the ICA model (author's own illustration) . . . . .	170
9.3	Perception of International Classroom Affordances in EMEMUS (au- thor's own illustration) . . . . .	172
9.4	Dynamic process of perception of International Classroom Affordances in EMEMUS (author's own illustration) . . . . .	182
10.1	Extracts of codes (author's own illustration) . . . . .	185

# Chapter 1

## Introduction and Structure

### 1.1 Introduction

Bearing in mind that the vast majority of researchers enter the field with the intention to test previously defined hypotheses, a holistic investigation of perceptions of International Classroom Affordances may appear to be a somewhat overambitious goal. Nevertheless, this thesis seeks to take up this challenge and explore affordances as they are perceived by disciplinary teachers of computer science in the context of an Austrian higher education institution.

At the risk of oversimplification, the present study aims to develop theory grounded in the data that helps to explain international classroom practices in line with the participants' perspectives. More accurately, it seeks to identify the process that academic staff pass through when perceiving, acting and reacting on opportunities for action in a multilingual university setting.

To begin with, this chapter sets down a general outline of the thesis, situates and contextualises the topic and provides some definitional groundwork and analysis. I start by discussing those experiences and reflections which have eventually led to this doctoral study, then sketch the research aims and the structure of the thesis before presenting the underlying assumptions for this doctoral research journey.

## 1.2 Definition of key terms

This section sets out to define some of the terminology used throughout this study to provide a common understanding of the technical terms between the researcher and the readers. It is recognised that these definitions are located within a particular paradigm and might be perceived quite differently in other fields of research. Although some of the concepts are dealt with in more detail later on, it is still considered appropriate to provide some definitional clarity from the outset.

**Internationalisation** is defined as “the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education” (Knight, 2004, p 11). While internationalisation is per se considered as something neutral, or even positive, the following definition of globalisation reflects a much more critical view.

**Globalisation** is not generally considered to be a neutral concept. More often than not it is “laden with implications of political, social, and economic turmoil, it engenders strong reaction, both supportive and critical of its process and impact” (Odin & Mancias, 2004, quoted in Knight 2008, p 4). This clearly shows that globalisation impacts each nation differently due its individual culture and historical development.

**Higher education institutions** (HEI) seek to prepare students for a profession in a certain sphere of activity, imparting to them the particular knowledge, skills and methods required in a way appropriate to each course (Klumpp and Teichler, 2008). In this study the term embraces all post-secondary institutions, universities and universities of applied sciences that grant academic degrees.

**Internationalisation strategies** relate to institutional initiatives that are taken on a curricular and organisational level to “make systems and institutions more globally engaged and competitive” (King et al., 2011, p 15). Chapter 2 provides a synthesis of such attempts.

**Internationalised curricula** seek to provide “international and intercultural knowledge and abilities, aimed at preparing students for performing (professionally, socially, emotionally) in an international and multicultural context” (Nilsson, 2000, p 22).

**International Classroom** refers to a setting where members of an educational

community neither share a common language nor draw on the same socio-cultural backgrounds. In this regard, English typically not only acts as a lingua franca but also serves as a “connective glue”. Such an environment is believed to enhance appreciation for other cultures and lead to an improved ability to communicate and interact with people from different backgrounds given that its potential lies in the “added value that the intercultural dimension of the teaching and learning can bring” (Teekens, 2000, p 28).

**Disciplinary teachers** are also referred to in this study as lecturers, faculty or academic staff. These terms relate to disciplinary experts that teach computer science in an English-medium programme.

**International students** are defined as those students who travel to a country different from their own for the purpose of tertiary study (Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), 2010, p 52). In the present study, only those international students were included that took an entire Master degree course at the investigated school.

**English-medium instruction** can be defined as the global trend in secondary and tertiary education where non-language subjects are taught in English (for a comprehensive account of this phenomenon see chapter 3, where the role of English-medium teaching in European higher education is explored in more detail).

**English as a lingua franca (ELF)** is described as “any use of English among speakers of different first languages for whom English is the communicative medium of choice, and often the only option” (Seidlhofer, 2011, p 7). Smit further points to the relatively little shared background interlocutors in lingua franca interactions draw on and adds that “communicating in the sense of making meaning in the specific interactional situation is usually at the forefront of the participants’ concern” (2010a, p 66). As chapter 3 outlines, the definitions and conceptualisations of English as a lingua franca (ELF) are highly debated. For some common understanding the above-mentioned definitions shall provide a first basis.

**Intercultural competence** can generally be described as a multidimensional learning process that integrates transcultural expertise on a practical, cognitive and affective level. It is the “extent to which an individual has embodied the skills and knowledge necessary to live, survive, and thrive in a particular culture” (Chao et al., 2011, p 264).

**Affordances** are frequently referred to as opportunities for action, action possibilities or invitational opportunities that the environment offer the perceiver (for an in-depth analysis see chapter 5). This study defines affordances as products of interactions between social agents and their context, “each of which potentially alters their knowledge, competencies and identity, and potentially alters the (micro)-environment” (Williams et al., 2008, p 11).

### 1.3 Motivation of the study

It was five years ago when English-medium instruction was introduced at the university where I had been teaching English and intercultural competence as a full faculty member. This move was triggered by the internationalisation efforts which had been politically encouraged in this region for some years. Not only has English in general become the undisputed “international language of science” (Mazak and Herbas-Donoso, 2014, p 27), but, more importantly, given the very nature of this particular School of Informatics as an institution which undertook all research in English, the language of instruction seemed like a logical choice.

Interestingly, the first international Master course started without any English or intercultural coaching, neither for the students nor for the teachers. Despite my expertise in the fields, it was not considered necessary to involve me in the conceptualisation of the modified curriculum or in any language planning procedures. Hence, it was only in the second year when I became actively involved in this changed educational setting. After I had been asked to offer a so-called orientation week for the students as part of an intercultural competence training, I started to grasp the scope of this project.

After several informal talks with the teachers concerned and first experiences with this International Classroom, I felt highly motivated to dig deeper into this particular educational setting. Since “a genuine and strong curiosity about their topic” (Dörnyei, 2007, p 17) was found to be the basis for good researchers, my evolving scholarly interest appeared to point in the right direction.

What particularly spurred my interest in this topic, though, was how the relevant disciplinary teachers dealt with this task and how little awareness they appeared to have about concepts such as internationalisation, English-medium instruction in an

ELF setting and intercultural competence.

In fact, their attitudes and initial reservations served as a main motivational factor to identify those incidents and settings that are crucial for the perception of International Classroom Affordances. An additional aspect that may have contributed to my decision to undertake this PhD project was that the research focus was an interplay of three selected variables that had already played a major role in my previous teaching and research track record.

First, it had to do with English-medium instruction in an ELF setting which proves to be a natural field of interest for an English teacher. Then, it had to do with social and cultural studies, both central elements to my professional work. In contrast to the United States - where intercultural communication has been related to behavioural sciences, psychology and professional business training - in Europe it is mostly associated with anthropology and the language sciences (Kramsch, 2001, p 201). Owing to my degree in translation studies and transcultural communication, it was only a question of time before the stakeholders of the faculty where I had previously only been teaching English asked me to unlock my dormant potentials and teach intercultural competence. And thirdly, it was concerned with internationalisation in higher education, a topic that has developed into a key research area at our university, leading to the establishment of a specific research group that I belong to.

Recognising that personal interests in the investigated area are certainly a driving force in the process of continuous knowledge creation, it is, however first and foremost, a central aim for each researcher to contribute to the relevant field of inquiry. This also applies to the present study that seeks to make a contribution to the overall understanding of social practices in an educational setting. Such a process where knowledge generation of the investigated social world is foregrounded is often referred to as an *intellectual journey* (Delamont, 2002), a term that will be consistently used throughout this research.

Hence, the next sections spell out the aims and structure of the thesis, the boundaries and the significance of this study and the research journey which had dominated my being and thinking for almost four years.

## 1.4 Research aims and structure of the thesis

This study aims to produce a Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT) as proposed by Charmaz (2006) by conducting a qualitative, applied linguistic study embedded in an ecological and activist framework. Informed by the tenets of a constructivist-interpretive paradigm, this investigation seeks to identify International Classroom Affordances as they are perceived by disciplinary teachers during English-medium instruction in an English as a lingua franca (ELF) setting. The disciplinary community at hand consists of domestic and internationally mobile students and local teachers of an international, two-year Master course of computer science located in Austria. By mapping the experiences and perceptions of the teachers as they attempted to manage and adjust to the transitions involved in this changed educational environment, it was hoped to gain deeper insights into issues of importance and their underlying social processes with regard to the area of interest. Based on the premise that the approaching “Conceptual Age”<sup>1</sup> (for a detailed discussion, see chapter 4.8) will require people with a non-linear, intuitive and holistic understanding of the world, it appears that knowledge workers of the “Information Age” are increasingly becoming obsolete. Hence, this societal evolution points to a number of challenges, many of which will have to be met by academic staff, especially when teaching in an International Classroom. To holistically understand the student’s demographics will become a key requirement for this new era (Pink, 2005). For this purpose, it is attempted to generate a theoretical model grounded in the data that helps to better understand how faculty perceive, react and act upon International Classroom Affordances.

The dissertation is structured into 11 chapters. While **Chapter 1** sets the stage for the research, outlines a brief sketch of the respective investigative approach and provides definitions of key terminology, **Chapter 2** gives an in-depth understanding

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<sup>1</sup>This thesis identifies a conceptual gap between the requirements of the “Information Age” and that of the upcoming “Conceptual Age” which might have crucial impact on teachers in higher education. While the “Information Age” with its advances in data acquisition, analysis, and sharing was placing particular focus on an analytical mindset, this new era will require creative education and “reward those who can see connections between seemingly unrelated areas”(Shuaib and Enoch, 2013, p 58) and push the limits of accepted practices; or in Teekens’ understanding: borders are only in our heads, but to overcome them “may well present the most difficult journey we have to make” (2000, p 34).

of the concept of internationalisation of higher education by providing a comprehensive literature review. Competing labels and implementation strategies are discussed and different approaches to curriculum internationalisation are revealed. To provide a historical perspective, the process of three selected internationalisation studies is presented. Further, disciplinary perspectives are scrutinised in relation to internationalisation efforts with a particular focus on computer science education. **Chapter 3** directs the reader's attention to English-medium instruction in an English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) setting with a particular eye on lingua-cultural aspects. A model is introduced that allows for a holistic ELF investigation at the tertiary level by incorporating social discourses at an intersection of six dimensions which are described in detail. **Chapter 4** builds on the discussed concepts and challenges of internationalisation, and provides an overview of key skills required for internationalised teachers. Further it sheds light on teachers' perceptions with regard to international and intercultural education, pedagogical approaches and change processes. By doing so, a conceptual gap is identified that provides the underlying rationale for the study at hand. **Chapter 5** presents an overview of the concept of ecology and discusses the affordances theory in light of the fields of applications in which it has proven to be particularly useful. A literature review is presented and a model of affordances categories is introduced. Limitations of various perspectives of the affordances theory are discussed and an enriched view that incorporates Giddens's (1984) structuration theory is proposed. **Chapter 6** gives an outline of the paradigms and approaches used in this study, sets the scene for the researcher's positionality and sketches the reasons for choosing an eclectic approach. **Chapter 7** sets out the research design and describes the process of data collection and analysis in line with the principles of Constructivist Grounded Theory. The applied research methods are spelled out and the rationale behind the choice of instruments is explained. **Chapter 8** sheds light on the historical dimension of this nexus of educational practice by positioning it in two major frameworks. One is embedded in the nexus-analytical framework as proposed by Scollon & Scollon (2013) and gives account of the respective context, stakeholders, and setting by relating it to the current literature on internationalisation. The second frame makes it possible to set the educational scene on a micro, meso and macro-level. The so-called ROAD-MAPPING model with its six different dimensions introduced by Dafouz & Smit

(2014) seems ideally suited for a comprehensive investigation of the multilingual university setting at hand. **Chapter 9** presents a synthesis of the findings with regard to the broad research question asked at the outset of this study. It presents the coding paradigm as well as the generated conceptual ICA model that was grounded in the data. **Chapter 10** sets out with a case analysis and attempts to position two social agents that participated in this research within the four stages of the conceptual model introduced in chapter 9. Then the transformational trajectories of the investigated nexus of practice are discussed and the educational implications of the results are outlined. **Chapter 11** rounds up the thesis by outlining the conclusions drawn from this work and by stating both limitations and further suggestions for research.

## 1.5 Research journey

From the outset, I have been interested in an approach that did not define the exact scope of the research problem, but rather focused on the emergent nature of a nexus of interrelated relationships. Additionally, I found it more challenging to generate a theoretical framework grounded in the data than describe some themes, test some hypotheses or confirm pre-defined concepts.

It soon became obvious that such a stance required a non-linear and multilevel perspective to grasp the intertwined and dynamic emergence of a gradual process taking place at the investigated unit of analysis. This also meant that I had to accept a rather inherent vagueness and ambiguity during my early research stages which presupposed a high degree of sensitivity and openness. On a positive note, this high level of uncertainty went very much in hand with a good portion of (self-)reflexivity, an element that I also sought to examine later on among the investigated social agents.

Consequently, grounded theory seemed to be a natural fit for my research endeavour. For one, owing to its inherent potential to build a theoretical framework, and for another due to the fact that this field has been little discussed in the literature.

Arguably, although this methodological approach appears best-suited for “study populations marginalized or ignored in the building of the traditional theoretical canon” (Holman, 1996, p 75), it needs to be stated here that academic staff per

se do not fall into this category. However, what can be said with a fair degree of certainty is that within the previously described constellation there has been no specific study looking at this defined area of interest in a holistic way.

As such I had hardly any pre-conceived framework of ideas that would point to a linear direction which was reinforced by my stance as a constructivist; for it is my firm belief that data is neither collected nor discovered, but co-generated due to a constant interaction between the researcher and the investigated social actors.



## Chapter 2

# Internationalisation of Higher Education

After providing a short introduction to the concept of internationalisation at tertiary education and its gradual transformation, competing labels are discussed that describe long-term undertakings towards internationalised universities. In a next step, a brief synopsis of micro, meso and macro strategies is given to grasp how the movement to internationalisation is carried forward. Constraints and challenges of each of these internationalisation approaches are outlined and the role that teaching staff play within the so-called add-on, infusion and transformative strategies is examined.

### 2.1 Introduction

Internationalisation, a term widely used in post-secondary education to add an international dimension to higher education, lacks both linguistic and conceptual clarity and is thus employed in multiple ways. Hence, it stands to reason to set the scene and provide a short literature review on the global dimension of higher education in its many different guises.

Over the past 30 years, the impact of internationalisation has left its traces on higher education in Europe, transforming “gradually to the American standard” (Borghans and Cörvers, 2009, p 1). Accordingly, internationalisation has become

a hallmark indicator for quality in higher education, and, at the same time, debate about the quality of internationalisation itself is in full swing. Remarkably, internationalisation has gradually moved from “a pro-active strategic issue, from added value to mainstream, and also has seen its focus, scope and content evolve substantially” (De Wit, 2010, p 5).

Concepts that have kept resurfacing over these years are those related to cross-border delivery of education and curriculum internationalisation with the twin terms “Internationalisation at Home” (IaH) and “Internationalisation of the Curricula” (IoC) which will be addressed below.

Before further discussion, some basic assumptions about the notion of internationalisation itself need to be addressed. The original and most widely used definition describes internationalisation as “the process of integrating an international dimension into the research, teaching, and services function of higher education” (Knight, 1994, p 4). Acknowledging the growing interconnectedness of the world, Knight incorporates this dimension in a more recent definition where internationalisation is referred to as “the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education” (2004, p 11). In a similar vein, Beelen and de Wit argue that internationalisation in European higher education has developed over the last 20 years, from “a marginal point of interest to a central factor” (2012, p 5) which is frequently referred to as “mainstreaming of internationalisation” (de Wit, 2011, p 1).

Such an overall vision has led others again to expand on Knight’s (2004) understanding and refer to a “comprehensive internationalization” as an institutional imperative that not only impacts all aspects of post-secondary institutions, but also shapes the institutional ethos and values and, as such, touches the entire education enterprise (Hudzik, 2011). Characterised by the triad of international, intercultural and global components, it seems that nowadays internationalisation relates to the universal diversity of cultures that “not only impacts all of campus life, but the institution’s external frames of reference, partnerships, and relations” (Hudzik, 2011, p 6).

Research findings clearly indicate the transformation process that institutions of higher learning have been exposed to over the past years (Borghans and Cörvers, 2009; Cloete, 2006; Maassen and Cloete, 2006).

More recently, a substantial body of research (Beelen and de Wit, 2012) has emerged documenting educational change processes in a more complex and competitive organisational environment where calls for a shift from activities to competences are getting increasingly louder. It is readily apparent that such claims lend further weight to genuine transformation processes at tertiary education, which were found to occur at a rather restricted scope. More often than not, change is based on activity-oriented measures only and employed within the narrow confines of internationalisation efforts that are most frequently synonymous with internationalisation itself. Due to this persistent adherence to instrumental approaches, a broader conceptualisation of internationalisation is needed; one that goes beyond economically-driven student recruitment and transnational courses. Such a broader framework helps to enhance the multicultural experience of education which, in turn, appears to facilitate employability of graduates.

For this reason, the following section deals with the key concepts that govern internationalisation approaches and seeks to unveil their underlying rationale when it comes to curriculum internationalisation.

## 2.2 Curriculum internationalisation

In general terms, it can be noted that there are three similar and often overlapping, however regionally preferred, concepts that frequently emerge when talking about curriculum internationalisation. Namely, **Internationalisation at Home (IaH)**, a concept coined and used in Europe, **Internationalisation of the Curriculum (IoC)**, a term commonly used in the UK and Australia and **Campus Internationalisation (CI)**, a notion predominantly employed in North America. Since this chapter seeks to give a snapshot of the internationalisation efforts within Europe, I shall sketch the first two political labels in more detail.

### 2.2.1 Internationalisation at Home (IaH)

The concept of Internationalisation at Home (IaH) coined by Bengt Nilsson and introduced at Malmö university in 1999 puts particular focus on the “intercultural and international dimension in the teaching learning process, extracurricular activities,

and the relationships with local cultural and ethnic community groups” (Wächter, 2003, p 6), and as such seeks to make students interculturally competent without the necessity of leaving their own city for study-related purposes. Consequently, IaH refers to “any internationally related activity with the exception of outbound student and staff mobility” (Crowther et al., 2000, p 6). Although a slippery concept whose definition appears to be a matter of negotiation, IaH is essentially understood as a change process of internationalisation that goes beyond mobility and puts “a strong emphasis on the teaching and learning in a culturally diverse setting” (Wächter, 2003, p 5).

From this perspective, then, IaH not only seeks to bridge the international and intercultural dimension of higher education teaching and learning, but, more importantly, to “promote broad-mindedness and understanding and respect for other people and their cultures” without necessarily focusing on activities that are “far away and for others” (Teekens, 2007, p 5).

Despite abundant rhetoric around “internationalising the experience of all students and staff” (Welikala, 2011, p 15), there is limited evidence to show that this is actually taking place, and if so, what effect it has on both student body and faculty. This is the reason why so far IaH appears to be political talk rather than a practical path to be followed.

Knight (2008, p 23) adds an additional dimension to ‘IaH’ by emphasising the importance of the “Internationalisation of the Curriculum” as a further key concept of internationalisation strategies of higher education. Taken together, they are referred to as the two pillars upon which universities’ endeavours to internationalise their activities rest (Beelen, 2011, p 261).

### **2.2.2 Internationalisation of the Curriculum (IoC)**

Although IoC is a concept that is frequently discussed in the literature (Leask, 2013; Clifford and Montgomery, 2011; Jones and Killick, 2007; Webb, 2005), it appears to be characterised by both terminological and conceptual inconsistency (Clifford, 2009; Green and Mertova, 2011). Consequently, Mestenhauser sees the often reluctant and resistant attitude towards tertiary internationalisation as a result of “conceptual confusion about what international education means” (1998, p 4).

When examining the literature, it becomes obvious that here again terminological clarity is missing and the definitions of IaH and IoC were found “to frequently overlap” (Beelen, 2011, p 262) and are hence “in need to be further explored” (Bell, 2004, p 51). Understandably, then, that Curro & Mc Taggart claim that internationalising the curriculum is just “a construct, not a clearly defined set of ideal or best practices” (2003, p 1).

Still, the underlying purpose appears to be clear, since it states that an internationalised curriculum should provide domestic students with the opportunity to first reflect on their own identity before embarking on uncharted waters of foreign cultures (Leask, 2009). In other words, IoC is not just about content, it also requires fresh pedagogical approaches that help to “encourage students to develop critical skills to understand forces shaping their discipline and challenge accepted viewpoints” (Zimmitat, 2013, p 143). Since there is no doubt that good teaching lies at “the heart of internationalizing the curriculum” (Schuerholz-Lehr and van Gyn, 2006, p 13), it is yet to be seen how this political construct can be truly put into practice. While both IaH and IoC are laudable goals that have attracted much scholarly attention, they still remain rather abstract notions with only few guidelines given as to how to put them into practice.

## 2.3 Implementation strategies

In other words, much of the research on internationalisation has sought to identify what the concepts of IaH and IoC should incorporate and how they could be defined. However, when it comes to implementation strategies, studies remain relatively scarce (Restad, 2012). And yet, as the number of international students increases, so the demand grows to address the internationalisation agenda through various means, one of which is to define what implementation approaches and regulatory mechanisms institutions of higher learning shall draw on to reach the intended effects.

After extensive review of the literature, a grid was set up (as shown in figure 2.1) to provide an overview of the most commonly employed implementation strategies in terms of their characteristics, constraints and effects.

In general, it can be said that approaches that aim at market-driven strategies

with strong recruitment of internationally-mobile students without any sustainable accompanying measures can be grouped into **add-on** strategies. Such an approach seeks to add some international content, concepts and perspectives to the curriculum without “changing its structure” (Banks, 2004, p 246). By adopting an **infusion** strategy an across-the-curriculum internationalisation goal is pursued with the primary aim to induce international students into the expectations of the local teaching methods and Western cognitive learning styles. The **transformative** approach as the third internationalisation strategy is identified as the most challenging one, because it requires both a genuine reform of the curricula and a strong commitment of all teaching staff to contextualise locally established knowledge. Such an approach then requires teachers that act as transformative intellectuals who are willing to educate future graduates holistically to become global citizens.

As shown in figure 2.1, IaH, IoC and IC are constructs which have been referred to in none of the strategies employed. Since both the role assumed by teaching staff and the challenges met when implementing one of these strategies are of particular interest for this study, a brief synopsis of each approach is offered in the following sections.

### 2.3.1 Add-on strategy

The earliest and most basic approach to internationalisation is characterised by adding some international and intercultural content to existing curricula; however, without any structural or pedagogical changes to the curriculum. Such an additive or what Qiang calls “ad hoc approach” (2003, p 259) where institutions of higher learning take on board international elements in a “sporadic, irregular, often knee-jerk way, with many loose ends in terms of procedure structure” (2003, p 259) which aim at incorporating some global perspective into the institutional context. Yet, this is done by adopting an exclusive Eurocentric lens.

This restricted strategy has been subject to extensive criticism, even more so as it appears to provide “no basis for educational guidelines for practice and policy-making” (Beck, 2012, p 143). As such it tends to add to the confusion rather than dispel reservations. In this respect, Harari casts a negative light on the reluctance to genuine curricular reforms emphasising the necessity for more than just “adding

Internationalisation at Home/Internationalisation of the Curriculum/Curriculum Internationalisation								
labels	strategies	described as	characterised by	approaches	constraints	effects	role of teachers	challenges for teachers
micro	add-on	minimalist, instrumental, static, discipline-reductionist, ad hoc, restrictive, introductory, underdeveloped, economic, fragmented	strong recruitment policy, massive influx of internationals, addition of random intercultural and international content, establishment of international partnerships, export of tertiary education	activity-oriented as a response to external factors, covert	no perceived need for internationalisation beyond routine practices, lack of confidence expressed by teaching staff, student outcome receives too little attention	HE as market place is subject to market-driven agendas where economic benefit and enhanced prestige and visibility are top priority	in view of unawareness of the significance and scope of the internationalisation process, teachers do not feel addressed and only reluctantly react - often only through random activities taken by some individuals	content-focused and teacher-centred pedagogies of hard disciplines become increasingly challenged by interest in inclusive pedagogies
	infusion	rather narrow vision, pragmatic, piece-meal, fragmented, most common and pervasive approach, short term expedient means of dealing with internationalisation, simple favour of global elements	permeation of international elements in teaching practices, induction of international students into the expectations of Western teaching methods, classroom behaviour and assessment practices, mission statement of institutions	across-the-curriculum approach tailored to the structure and mission of the particular institution of higher learning	exclusively Western cognitive learning styles, in need of intercultural pedagogy; hardly any critical reflection on educational beliefs	aims at better graduate employability and seeks to contribute to local and regional economic development, creation of some space for critical reflection is seen as first attempt to move beyond one's own culturally embedded frames	commitment of staff to implement across-the-curriculum policy; awareness of required knowledge and skills to understand and interpret institutional policies, skills to create safe environment for all students to participate in group discussions	recognition of diverse needs and backgrounds of all students that allow developments of multiple avenues of international learning
macro	transformative	most difficult to implement, critical and counter-hegemonic, explicit, frightening, evolved out of growing dissatisfaction	genuine curriculum reform due to clear institutional strategies, critical pedagogy and socially inclusive pedagogy, recognition of cultural biases, student-centred pedagogy of recognition	overt and pro-active internationalisation approach for all students	lends itself more easily to humanities; difficult to replicate in hard sciences - because contextualised knowledge appears troublesome and academically weak	aims at global citizenship and a high degree of critical knowledge of oneself; key factors are awareness of one's culture and socio-historical positioning	lecturers serve as transformative intellectuals and teach in accordance with paradigm change, pedagogy of discomfort seeks to expand students' comfort zone	holistic, personal and academic development of students, contextualisation of local engagement within a wider frame of reference, usage of cultural capital of students and staff, perceived need for cosmopolitan identity of teaching staff

Figure 2.1: Approaches to curriculum internationalisation (author's own illustration)

a course here and there, more than repackaging of old courses” (1992, p 54). In a similar vein, it is claimed that an add-on approach to internationalisation without a comprehensive plan and without elements of criticality is likely to be of little effect and has “greater potential to be mis-educative” (Lamers, 2010, p ii). It is thus hardly surprising that the add-on strategy has been referred to as “minimalist, instrumental, introductory, conceptually simple, discipline-reductionist and static” (Mestenhauser, 1998, p 7), especially since it seems to neither touch dominant theoretical and conceptual underpinnings, nor shift locally established cultural frames of reference. Similar criticism is voiced by Wright and Lander who dismiss the add-on approach as “delusion” (2003, p 251) and question whether the presence of international students alone might be sufficient to contribute to the internationalisation of higher education. The fact that Troia (2013, p 20) sees this minimalist strategy in line with a strong recruitment policy where a massive influx of internationals should bring the desired output seems to be further evidence for a market-driven agenda. Such a view compares higher education with a market place where economic benefits for and enhanced prestige and visibility of each institution of higher learning take top priority. This might partly explain why teaching staff whose institutions take on an add-on approach tend to be unaware of their significant role in internationalising the curriculum. This unawareness is further reinforced by an often discipline-reductionist view according to which add-on modules are to be complemented by language or cultural experts only. A general reluctance to change established pedagogic approaches and incorporate some elements of contextualised knowledge in their teaching practices is particularly perceptible among teachers of hard sciences (Clifford and Montgomery, 2011). In this context, Meyer and Land talk of “troublesome knowledge” (2005, p 373)<sup>1</sup> which, in view of its high unfamiliarity, is perceived as “academically weak” (Busch, 2009, p 432) by hard scientists.

### 2.3.2 Infusion strategy

The second and most common approach to IoC is the one of infusion with the aim to “permeate both the teaching methodology and content of subjects and the struc-

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<sup>1</sup>Troublesome knowledge is referred to as alien and counter-intuitive knowledge which appears to be even intellectually absurd at face value. It mainly emanates from a foreign culture or a different discourse (Perkins, 1999).

ture and organisation of courses” (Leask, 2001b, p 390). This strategy of weaving international perspectives across-the-curriculum is often included in institutional policies and mission statements with a strong commitment to incorporating an international, intercultural and interdisciplinary component into the curriculum and pedagogy (Skidmore et al., 2005).

Although the concept of infusion is often characterised by considerations of cultural pluralism with the aim to encourage students and faculty to engage in critical reflections of their own cultural values and biases (Warren, 2005), it gradually emerges that the infusion approach is still “too narrow a vision” (Skidmore et al., 2005, p 190). Unlikely to develop an inclusive learning experience, it is rather a “short term expedient means of dealing with internationalisation” (De Vita and Case, 2003, p 384), desperately in need of what has been referred to as a “pedagogy of recognition”<sup>2</sup> or “international pedagogy” (Hellstén, 2013, p 79).

One question that has yet to be resolved, however, is the extent to which this often pragmatic approach practically differs from the previously discussed add-on approach. One indicator for an infusion strategy might certainly be a mission statement as a key aspect of the strategic plan issued by the institution of higher learning to internationalise content and structure of teaching methods. Despite established institutional policies, implementation appears to be piece-meal and fragmented, rather than across-the-curriculum. What is more, simple stand-alone modules were identified to exclusively reflect Western views and philosophies of learning, and as such tend to justify the majority ideology to ensure “its continued dominance” (Brookfield, 2007, p 560).

It comes therefore as no surprise that concerns are echoed as to the inadequacies of the infusion approach to curriculum internationalisation and critical voices comment that “simply flavouring curricula with ‘international’ or ‘global’ elements fails to address more fundamental issues of the educational process posed by multicultural recruitment and teaching” (De Vita and Case, 2003, p 383).

Thus, to be useful, this strategy must ultimately be coupled with innovative approaches of intercultural pedagogy as the one proposed by Haigh (2009). He

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<sup>2</sup>An infusion approach towards internationalisation needs to embrace a pedagogy of recognition which is not only student-centred, but more importantly, seeks to engage students in a critical relationship with theories without causing discomfort or anxiety within culturally diverse groups (Caruana, 2010; Caruana and Spurling, 2007).

examined the engagement of international perspectives in the domestic student curriculum within his experimental course 'the Ethical Geographer' that sought to shift conventional European perspectives. A further fundamental success factor lies in a genuine across-the-curriculum implementation that goes beyond stand-alone courses offered by individual teachers. To do so, it is vital to obtain the commitment of the entire faculty to acquire the necessary skills that allow for adequate understanding and interpreting of institutional policies (Giroux, 2012).

Taking all these factors together, it stands to reason that graduate employability can be enhanced by applying pedagogical strategies that challenge the student body in terms of identity formation and global awareness without causing discomfort or anxiety within culturally diverse groups. An across-the-curriculum pedagogical approach that is student-centred and renders differences visible to deconstruct one's own world view may be a key instrument for institutions of higher learning to educate "its graduates to be culturally inclusive individuals" (De Vita, 2007, p 163).

### 2.3.3 Transformative strategy

Based upon the tenets of critical pedagogy<sup>3</sup> (Nainby et al., 2003) and socially inclusive pedagogy (Robson and Turner, 2007), the most recent approach has emerged due to increasing dissatisfaction with the shortcomings of the previously discussed approaches to internationalising the curricula (see Trowler, 2008, p 185). Probably the most difficult approach to adopt, this transformative strategy explicitly seeks to produce genuine reform and appears to have "the potential to involve many more people, and change, in fundamental ways, how faculty and students think about the world and their place in it" (Bond, 2003, p 6). Recognising that the intellectual and disciplinary skills that universities impart to their students are culturally biased (Mestenhauser, 2002; Robson and Turner, 2007), advocates of the transformative strategy primarily seek to embrace a student-centred pedagogy of recognition while at the same time refraining from falling back on exclusive Euro-centric views. Instead, additional methodological approaches are explored and incorporated, different epistemological orientations are considered and taken-for-granted assumptions are

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<sup>3</sup>In critical pedagogy both teachers' and students' voices and lived experiences need to be included in the learning process which requires collective, and critical self-reflection (McLean, 2006).

constantly questioned.

Consequently, this overt and pro-active approach of internationalisation which is aimed at both internationally mobile and domestic students requires teachers that are willing to act as “transformative intellectuals” (Giroux, 1992, p 15) and are prepared for a paradigm shift (also see Clifford and Montgomery; Clifford, 2011; 2009). By engaging in what is called a “pedagogy of discomfort”<sup>4</sup> teaching staff has to (have the ability to) call into question their dominant societal and educational values that typically frame their teaching approaches. By doing so, they need to reflect on their cherished assumptions and engage in critical thinking. One potential restriction of this approach is that it lends itself more easily to the humanities and appears to be difficult to replicate in the hard sciences (Clifford and Montgomery, 2014).

One reason for this might be that hard scientists generally deal with knowledge that is considered to be universally valid. Engaging in critical discourse on societal and ethical aspects may seem strange and of minor relevance. Another reason may lie in the values attributed to specific contents. Among engineering disciplines a broad technical expertise is highly significant and urgently sought for whereas generic skills that require personal involvement and emotional commitment appear to be low on the agenda and are dismissed as professionally irrelevant or intuitively acquirable.

This explains why another major challenge for this all-encompassing internationalisation strategy lies in building sufficient understanding among **all** faculty for the need of global citizenship and the added value of a holistic, personal and academic development of **all** students. To ultimately succeed in providing a transformative education, it is vital that teachers start using the cultural capital of the entire student body in their International Classrooms, but also, perhaps even more importantly, develop a “cosmopolitan identity” (Clifford, 2009) to reshape higher education and produce graduates that are well-prepared to cope with the challenges of the approaching “Conceptual Age”<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup>This is an educational approach that aims at understanding the production of norms and differences. It seeks to uncover the hidden curriculum by engaging students in a collective, critical discourse through which their sense of self in relation to others becomes the groundwork for their professional and moral development (Aultman, 2005).

<sup>5</sup>For a detailed description of this era, see section 4.8.

### 2.3.4 Synopsis of discussed strategies

In sum, one could posit that the three approaches represent an evolutionary process from an economic add on approach to a pragmatic infusion approach that is followed by a critical and counter-hegemonic transformative approach (Troia, 2013, p 21). Similarly, this process can be viewed as a continuum reaching from an instrumental mentality to a culturally and ethnically driven ethos (De Vita, 2007, p 166). Again, others regard it as a transition model from an underdeveloped concept to a developing one, resulting in a somewhat broader vision of internationalisation (see Turner and Robson, 2008, p 52). Hanson (2010) talks of different types of social transformation models of internationalisation pointing to the need for a radical reform of curricula to foster engaged global citizenship.

On the face of it, the approaches sketched above appear to be in a development continuum, however, there is lacking consensus on which approach to use when and for what purposes (Caruana and Spurling, 2007). What is clear is that the driving forces behind the implementation strategies vary and that a number of universities have already drawn their lessons from an insufficient awareness of the international issues at hand. What can be said with a degree of certainty, is that with regard to implementation approaches post-Bologna Europe is far from being harmonised. Not only are the Netherlands and the Nordic countries providers of the greatest number of English-medium courses and programmes (Wächter and Maiworm, 2008), they also appear to be the ones adopting the most progressive approaches. They were found to pursue a “broader vision” (Turner and Robson, 2008, p 52) towards international and professional development, one that goes beyond monetary concerns only and embraces cooperative networks where faculty may operate as agents of change.

To provide a clearer picture of the ideological approaches that drive institutions of higher learning to adopt a specific strategy, figure 2.2 zooms in on both the added-values and risks involved when focusing on one of the previously discussed strategic approach.

Strategies	Ideological Rationales	Added Value	Risk
<b>add-on</b>	instrumental, political, practical, financial, economic, market-driven activity approach	foster an intercultural dimension, economic growth, enhanced prestige, increased visibility	insufficiently beneficial due to uncoordinated nature of internationalisation activities and lacking awareness of their impact by students and faculty
<b>infusion</b>	competency approach, educationalist, social	across-the-curriculum development of required skills and values among students and faculty to become internationally knowledgeable	insufficient commitment of entire faculty, efforts only taken by some individuals (often those with strong internalised control)
<b>trans-formative</b>	ethos and process approach, idealistic, cultural, academic	fundamental mission statement to create supportive institutional culture that values long-term intercultural and international initiatives; integration of sustainable dimension into all university-related activities aiming at genuine reforms	resistance by teachers of specific disciplines (hard sciences) that attach low priority to soft and generic skills; duration and intensity of such an overarching process

Figure 2.2: Ideological rationales for internationalisation (author's own illustration)

As can be seen from figure 2.2, internationalisation efforts are guided by often contradictory and divergent ideologies and entangled with pragmatic and commercial ideological motives in line with the evolving institutional mission of the cultural players within academia (Stier, 2004).

By critically reviewing the literature, Quiang (2003, pp 250-51) identified four different approaches with regard to internationalisation that are consistent with the stances taken by academic stakeholders. The **activity approach** points to a series of rather fragmented international activities intended to foster an intercultural dimension. Yet, they might run the risk of not being beneficial due to their uncoordinated nature. Such an approach tends to have much in common with the add-on strategy.

The **competency approach** focuses on the development of skills, knowledge, attitudes, and values among students and faculty that are crucial to become more

internationally knowledgeable and interculturally skilled for the globalised world. In a similar vein, the six-step framework identified by Ellingboe (1998) serves as a roadmap to assess intercultural sensitivity at tertiary education. Based on Bennett's (1993) Developmental Model of Intercultural Competence, she sought to explore how to foster intercultural competence in an educational enterprise with the aim to reach an ethnorelative perspective. Starting at stage one with a general indifference and unawareness towards international affairs, the second stage still reflects a rather resistant stance towards change. Stages three and four are characterised by the teachers' increased awareness for the need to change and implement an international dimension and thus pave the way for the future international path with all the required ingredients for an internationalised campus. The final step, then, would represent, what she calls, the "total integration of internationalization in the curriculum" (Ellingboe, 1998, p 214) and corresponds to the pro-active transformative strategy resulting in genuine reform.

The **ethos approach** tends to be in line with a fundamental mission statement of a university that is dedicated to a supportive institutional culture and puts emphasis on an organisational climate that values and supports intercultural and international perspectives and initiatives across-the-curriculum. When drawing parallels with the aforementioned internationalisation strategies, the ethos approach appears to be at the threshold between the infusion and transformative approach. Much more systematic than the additive strategy, it is committed to an agenda of educational reform with the aim to transform the prevailing institutional climate from a product to a process-oriented perspective towards quality (Banks and Banks, 2009). In doing so, the foundations are laid for the forth approach.

The **process approach** emphasises the integration of a sustainable international and intercultural dimension into all university-related activities, policies, and procedures. Teachers working in such an environment most likely seek to "construct meaningful pedagogy, cocreate transformative knowledge with their students, and develop critically literate citizens" (Banks and Banks, 2009, p 195).

De Wit (2010, p 9) identified four broad categories of rationales for internationalisation, namely, **political**, **economic**, **social** and **cultural**, and **academic** rationales that all call for a different set of strategies or interventions. Arguably, the previously discussed implementation strategies are all based on these criteria. Yet,

foregrounding the socio-cultural ones appear to be the best option to foster a sense of global citizenship among students and staff.

Wilkinson (2013, p 9) reports on five different groups of motives, namely, **practical**, **survival**, **financial**, **idealist**, and **educational**, stating that they change over time in line with the respective phases of development and challenges posed to course design.

Others like Stier (2010; 2004) suggest that higher education institutions draw on three intrinsic ideologies that reflect desired learning outcomes and the ideological rationales for international education: they either take an **instrumental**, **educationalist** or **idealistic** stance. While **instrumentalists** consider HEI largely as a means to ensure economic growth in line with ideologies of governments and transnational corporations, an **educational** stance facilitates “personal growth and self-actualization” (Stier, 2004, p 92) taking a wider perspective on education where learning itself is a valuable commodity. **Idealistic** imperatives, on the other hand, are driven by ideologies that appreciate internationalisation as something “good per se” (Stier, 2004, p 88), particularly because it effects positive social change and enables domestic and internationally mobile students to extend their cultural knowledge base. This ideology seems to be generally pervasive among humanities disciplines, but less common in the sciences (based on Stier, 2004).

What still needs to be clarified is where the technical faculty and the stakeholders of the case study at hand are positioned in terms of their strategic orientation and what ideological rationales are employed to incorporate the international and intercultural elements in line with the institutional mission statement. This is attempted in chapter 8 where the nexus of educational practice is positioned in a number of frameworks that help to gain a holistic picture of the investigated case. To also provide a historical dimension of internationalisation strategies attempted at HE institutions, the following section sketches some selected models.

### 2.3.5 Selected models of internationalisation

While much of higher education research has focused on internationalisation on a macro-level, some scholars have elaborated theoretical models on a meso-level that are geared towards identifying specific phases within institutions when incorporating

an international dimension. This section seeks to sketch three internationalisation models that appear to be most interesting for this research, since they shed light on the internationalisation process as a long-term endeavour.

The first one goes back to Knight who, by exploring that “expressed commitment in the form of a policy statement is needed to stimulate and inform practice” (1994, p 8), elaborated a conceptual six step framework within a cycle of internationalisation. According to her, these cycles are passed in sequence, preceding through phases of **awareness, commitment, planning, operationalising, review** and **reinforcement**. She identified the institutional need to firstly raise sufficient awareness and generate some overall commitment and develop plans for internationalisation efforts, and then, in a second step, start with their operationalisation, preferably embedded in an environment of supportive culture.

On a rather critical note, Childress adds that these phases may not be sufficiently reflexive and that “institutions may not necessarily proceed sequentially through the internationalization phases as indicated by Knight” (2009, p 292). In other words, such a step-by-step implementation might be wishful thinking rather than the current reality of internationalisation of higher education.

The second model that I wish to discuss deals with the internationalisation process of a particular institution of higher learning, namely Maastricht University. When implementing English-medium courses as one element of internationalisation efforts, Wilkinson (2013) identified five crucial phases. The first one, called **cross-border period**, started in 1987 where geo-practical, idealist and educational motives for EMI dominated the academic mindset at Maastricht. The second phase started around 1991, and is labelled **Europeanisation**, since it falls in the period of the Maastricht Treaty where recruitment of internationally mobile students was generally a major concern, but considered particularly crucial for the small Dutch University that was eagerly trying to establish new (international) programmes. Phase three falls under the name **Consolidation** and started around 1995 where the range of existing courses was further extended and the bilingual profile of the University established. This was also the time where Internationalisation at Home started to be promoted. The fourth phase named **Globalisation** started around 2002. This was the time when the rapid increase of English-medium Masters started to attract numerous international students, which earned Maastricht a reputation

of being a truly international university and, as a result, led to the implementation of even more degree programmes. The last and current phase started around 2007 and was identified as the **Monitarisation** stage, which seems to be predominantly driven by financial and practical motives to not only attract international fee-paying overseas students but also to score higher on the ranking lists. This was found to be the phase where idealist and educational purposes for English-medium teaching were becoming less and less relevant. Acknowledging the dynamic interplay of motives for establishing EMI programmes, Wilkinson (2013) nonetheless feels that survival and financial rationales have increasingly dominated institutional strategies, most probably fuelled by the fierce competition among universities around the globe.

What is particularly interesting in this well-documented historical review is that Maastricht University seems to have chronologically drawn on different ideological motives than the ones previously described. In contrast to what has been identified as an “evolutionary process” (Troia, 2013, p 21) that ranges from an “instrumental mentality to a culturally and ethnically driven ethos” (De Vita, 2007, p 166), this Dutch HE institution started the other way round and appears only now to pay special attention to economic growth and enhanced prestige.

A further understanding of the progressive growth of international activities comes to the fore in a study where student mobility, staff development, curriculum innovation, and organizational change were identified as key elements when dealing with internationalisation (Rudzki, 1995). In this context, Rudzki (1998, pp 216-218) distinguishes between **reactive** and **proactive** models of internationalisation.

The **reactive** model, which seems to be far more commonly found within institutions of higher learning, consists of the following five stages: **contact**, **formalisation**, **central control**, **conflict** and **maturity** or **decline**. The first phases of this model are certainly in line with the add-on strategy where an activity-oriented stance is predominant among faculty in order to respond to external factors. While in stage one international activities lack clear formulation of purpose and duration, the formalisation stage seeks to do so within institutional agreements. Stage three reflects growth in activity and response by management to gain control of activities. Stage four seems to be the most critical step, as it most likely leads to organisational conflict and possible decline in activity and disenchantment. Stage five then either results in maturity and a potential move to a more coherent and proactive approach

or in total decline.

The **proactive** model of internationalisation which appears to be much in line with advanced stages of the infusion strategy embracing an ethos approach, consists of the following five stages: **analysis**, **choice**, **implementation**, **review**, and **redefinition** of objectives, plans and policy. Starting with a sharp awareness of what 'internationalisation' constitutes and what it entails, stage one frequently involves pragmatic SWOT and cost-benefit analyses. In stage two strategic plans and policies are established in mutual interest of all stakeholders and resources are allocated. Stage three seeks to implement previously defined internationalisation measures. The **review** phase aims at assessing performance against policy and plan. In this model, the **redefinition** phase as the last step of the process tends to be most crucial. In an attempt of continual improvement, the institution might be forced to return to stage one and start from scratch.

Arguably, the latter model not only presupposes a core interest in internationalisation activities, it clearly reflects an overt approach with the aim to explicitly set up a defined strategy. Yet, despite an already advanced awareness of the significance of internationalisation across-the-curriculum, little focus is placed on intercultural or international pedagogy. What is striking about this model is the strong emphasis on economic benefits and financial constraints.

The three models sketched above present different approaches and their explanatory power can certainly be found in the specific setting they are placed. While Knight (1994) sequentially describes institutionally informed procedures within a cycle of internationalisation, Wilkinson (2013) reports on internationalisation phases of one particular Dutch institution of higher learning, namely Maastricht University. The third model seeks to draw a line between reactive and proactive models of internationalisation, pointing to accompanying development stages. What all three models have in common, though, is a long-term perspective on the internationalisation cycle of tertiary education.

In chapter 8, it is attempted to incorporate such a historical dimension with regard to the case study at hand. Acknowledging that a variety of issues come into play when considering internationalisation efforts, it is obvious that disciplinary perspectives have a major impact on the dedication of faculty to engage in international activities. As such the following section takes a closer look at the university and its

disciplines in general, and on computing education in particular.

## 2.4 Disciplinary perspectives and internationalisation

If we are to frame disciplinary discourse communities in the context of a rapidly changing and increasingly complex world, we need to be fully aware that most challenges do not simply emerge as distinct subjects, but within transdisciplinary and, most frequently also international settings, thereby calling for attributes that go beyond internalised socialised knowledge. Arguably, if members of a certain discipline transcend epistemic boundaries and are concerned with issues that force them to extend their academic frames of reference, be it due to interdisciplinary or intercultural encounters, their traditional views are frequently challenged (Becker, 2007; Becher and Trowler, 2001; Aikenhead, 1996).

Against this background, it is quite understandable that Kreber describes disciplines as “not just a body of knowledge, but a set of conceptual and methodological tools employed in creating and critiquing this knowledge” (2008, p 11), which goes far beyond relentless acquisition and accumulation of a vast array of scholarly and social knowledge.

### 2.4.1 The university and its disciplines

Much of the current understanding of disciplinary differences and categorisations is based on Biglan’s (1973b; 1973a) classification of academic disciplines. By identifying cognitive and cultural structures of academic disciplines, he adopted one of the few conceptual approaches to studying the diversity of the academic disciplines and identified **hard/soft**, **pure/applied**, and **life/nonlife** systems.

Building on Biglan’s classification, Becher (2001; 1994; 1989; 1981) convincingly demonstrates that knowledge structures also draw on a social dimension. By doing so, he not only distinguishes between **urban** and **rural** disciplines, but also draws a line between **convergent** and **divergent** knowledge structures. While the close-knit epistemological structures of urban communities are “mirrored by the fast-moving, competitive, densely populated research fields” (Becher, 1994, p 153), rural research

generally refers to loosely-structured intellectual arenas that seem to be reflected in the “leisurely uncompetitive pace and scattered rural societies of the related specialist groups” (Becher, 1994, p 153). It was found that **convergent** disciplines tend to have uniform standards and a relatively stable elite, while **divergent** ones frequently attempt to shift standards with relatively little intellectual control over the field (Trowler, 2008, pp 182-83).

Based on this perspective, but more importantly, in view of the constant spread of interdisciplinarity, Becher and Trowler (2001) advocate a more dynamic classification of disciplines and update the categorisation in the following four disciplines: (a) the pure sciences, (b) the humanities, (c) technologies, much like the hard-applied disciplines in Biglan’s model, and (d) applied social sciences, like Biglan’s soft-applied areas. In a similar vein, Clifford comments that the rather static view of disciplines is no longer appropriate and the “increasing fluidity of disciplinary boundaries” (2009, p 140) makes classification more and more difficult.

Although Becher’s taxonomy of academic communities has not been accepted without criticism (Braxton and Hargens, 1996), it still seems useful to shed some light on where computer science taught at a University of Applied Sciences is situated within this frame. Before doing so, however, the next section gives a general outlook that may help to reveal the willingness of members of different “academic tribes and territories” (Becher and Trowler, 2001) to engage in international activities.

## 2.4.2 Disciplines and internationalisation

As previously stated, the initial driving force for most universities and research institutions to go international is primarily instrumental with a pronounced focus on economic growth and increased visibility. Such a stance translates into strong recruitment policies, often without little thought given to accompanying curriculum development. Yet, the significance of student outcomes and knowledge content (Leask, 2001a) and the relevance for inclusive curricula and pedagogy has been established by numerous findings of higher education research concerned with internationalisation (Curro and McTaggart, 2003; Haigh, 2002; Jones, 1998). Some researchers like Ellingboe even talk of a “great divide between attitudes of curricular and systemic change” (1998, p 214), suggesting that unless this resistance to

internationalisation will be overcome, internationalisation efforts might not only be perceived as inappropriate, but even reveal a negative impact on the integrity of the discipline.

In an attempt to explore disciplinary understandings of the concept of internationalisation, Clifford (2009, p 133) identified that **hard pure** disciplines are more resistant to engaging in the discourse of internationalisation. One explanation lies in the universal perception of knowledge which appears to be international by nature in the pure sciences and maths. Another one can be found in the general feeling that the way of teaching and learning is culturally neutral and based on value-free principles (Mertova and Green, 2010; Clifford, 2009; Bell, 2004; Bond et al., 2003). A further reason why teachers in natural sciences adopt a skeptical view with regard to IoC may lie in the perception that international and intercultural knowledge is counter-intuitive contextualised knowledge which per se appears to be “troublesome” (Meyer and Land, 2005) among hard pure disciplines.

Interestingly, it was found that although in **hard applied** subjects, such as information technology, lecturers equally believe in the concept of culture-neutral “international science”, they still recognise the need for the acknowledgement of different belief systems and ethical standards (Clifford, 2009, p 137). Hence, teachers in hard applied sciences were found to have “a high awareness of cultural difference among students and of cultural difference in professional practice” (2009, p 138). It is certainly true that good problem solving skills are crucial for future graduates of applied sciences, yet cultural sensitivity and flexibility were found to be of similar importance. Teachers’ awareness of the complexity that prevails in International Classrooms calls for interactive pedagogy and the creation of “safe environments for all students” (Clifford, 2009, p 139) to ensure equitable participation in classroom practices. Consequently, I would claim that teachers in the applied hard sciences tend to be more open to include some generic elements in their teaching practices and, for the sake of graduates’ future careers, put greater emphasis on a meta-level development of both domestic and internationally mobile students.

In view of the differing instructional beliefs and attitudes towards internationalisation between hard and soft disciplines, Mertova and Green (2010) advocate a framework for IoC that accounts for disciplinary differences and a diverse student body. The next section examines how the culture of the academic community rel-

evant for this study, namely computer science, is positioned within the discussed classification system, and to what extent the profound changes of the university landscape in terms of internationalisation efforts have affected this “academic tribe” (Becher and Trowler, 2001).

### 2.4.3 Computer science revisited

Although some scholarly debate has been devoted to computer science education in general (Sahami, 2014; Koffman et al., 2003; Denning, 2003; Fincher and Petre, 2004), insufficient attention has been paid to internationalisation issues of this young discipline. This is why this section intends to revisit this discipline with regard to its international positioning.

Despite terminological divergences as to the name of the discipline which is equally referred to as computing, computer literacy, information technology (IT), information and communications technology (ICT), informatics and computer science and, acknowledging that already its standardisation would be a “worthwhile global task” (Micheuz, 2006, p 373), there is no doubting that English is the language most strongly dominating ICT. This can partly be explained by the fact that most hardware and software products originate from English-speaking countries, which is why it is also “quite natural for the systems and their documentation to be in English” (Rozan et al., 2005, p 53).

Hence, offering computer education in English seems a logical step, which was also taken by the investigated University of Applied Sciences (UAS). Since the major aim of the International Master Classroom at hand is to equip future graduates with a practical orientation of software development, this computer science education is **hard** and **applied** by nature (also see Becher and Trowler, 1989).

Further, computer scientists teaching at a UAS are socialised into a **convergent** and **urban** academic culture where closely focused exams, hard facts and logical reasoning, extensive ICT applications, a linear progression in curriculum and small group work on predetermined problems are part of the daily agenda (Kreber, 2008, p 185). As previously stated, teachers in hard applied disciplines were found to have increased interest in graduate employability, which is undoubtedly enhanced by generic skills, such as proficiency in English, intercultural competence

and teamwork skills. This might lend explanatory power as to why lecturers of computer science share a common understanding that apart from the acquisition of hard facts and skills, there are further elements that embrace science culture such as values, beliefs, expectations, communicative codes and conventional actions (Aikenhead, 1996). The fast evolution of knowledge in ICT, further reinforced by global expectations of technical innovations, forces computer scientists to be “cognizant of a variety of domains of expertise” (Shao and Maher, 2011, p 915). One of which might certainly include heightened awareness of the increasingly global industry and its accompanying requirements to meet the needs of an ever-expanding business environment.

These rapid changes leave no doubt that computer experts, probably more than any other professional group, will have to be successful in coping with the growing socio-economic challenges of the emerging “Conceptual Age” (Pink, 2005). In light of this observation and also due to recent developments, there is a pressing need for internationalised computer science education that embraces “awareness, knowledge and skills of professional life in a global environment” (Douglas et al., 2010, p 411) to teach future ICT graduates the skills they will require to perform increasingly complex tasks.

Such an integrative view makes clear that for educational institutions an “isolated, self-perpetuating, parochial environment” (Bartell, 2003, p 49) is an outdated social model that can no longer serve as a basis for tertiary education. It becomes increasingly obvious that timely and effective adaptation to the requirements of this new era is a decisive element of success, even more so as computing professionals are expected to possess a far “broader range of skills than in the past” (Teague, 1998, p 156). For further evidence on this, see Chydenius and Gaisch (in process) (2015). Further factors that play into the hands of advocates of a transformative internationalisation strategy is the increasing dissatisfaction of ICT students with acquired knowledge that hardly goes beyond technical expertise (Teague, 1998). With respect to gender and diversity issues it was found that internationalisation of computer science curricula leads to an increased uptake by female students (Komoss and Black, 2003), which is an additional step towards a more diversified version of tertiary education.

Despite the high demand for a broader educational outlook for future ICT grad-

uates and the identified willingness of lecturers teaching in applied hard sciences to “go international” and engage in English-medium instruction, it was found that computer science education has remained “largely parochial in both course content and student experience” (Douglas et al., 2010, p 411). By applying what Douglas et al (2010, p 411) call the concept of “**transformation internationalization**”, or in short **i18n**, the borrowed abbreviation for internationalisation from the software development community, it is sought to take account of the growing globalisation of computing and the international nature of the workforce. While some highlight the growing importance of soft skills for the international environment future ICT graduates will have to operate in (Cassel et al., 2008), others explore the trend towards lifelong learning for all students and faculty, no matter which discipline, and the rising need for the internationalisation of education in general (Lee, 2012).

Acknowledging that English is the lingua franca of global IT, Douglas et al (2010, p 412) identified that further aspects such as cross-cultural accommodation and heightened awareness of lingua-cultural characteristics and identities need to be addressed. Once sufficient awareness is raised, it is hoped that “internationalization will move the discipline towards the maturity and recognition it deserves” (Douglas et al., 2010, p 415).

Interestingly, while some studies identified a high level of attitudinal consistency among all IT professionals, regardless of national culture (Carmel, 1999), others point to distinct national differences within the same professional culture (Hofstede et al., 1997). In his research conducted among IBM employees who draw from a similar educational and vocational experience and hold comparable ICT positions, Hofstede (1997; 1984; 1980) obtained data of 40 countries gathered during 11 years which allowed him to create a model of cultural value dimensions along the lines of power, identity, gender and uncertainty. This IBM study made it possible to identify the following four bipolar dimensions; **power distance**<sup>6</sup>; **individual-**

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<sup>6</sup>Power distance reflects the extent to which unequal distribution of power and wealth is tolerated. One way to determine this is the level of hierarchy in work places (see Hofstede, 1993, p 89).

**ism/collectivism**<sup>7</sup>; **masculinity/femininity**<sup>8</sup> and **uncertainty avoidance**<sup>9</sup>. The last value dimension also speaks to the degree of explicitness according to which cultures tend to express themselves. In this respect, Hall & Hall (1990) introduced the terms **high-context** and **low-context** culture to indicate cultural differences in communicative patterns. While the first group tends to use more implicit messages which are contained in the physical environment and in non-verbal communication, the latter group values more explicit forms of communication in form of direct, textual and analytical argumentation.

For Hofstede, these patterns of thinking and acting reflect the “collective programming of the mind which distinguishes one group from another” (1980, p 25). In this context, it needs to be stressed that *groups* are referred to in terms of their societal backgrounds, since all managers belonged to the same organisational culture. This investigation of only one professional culture was also identified as a major limitation of Hofstede’s work (Mintzberg et al., 2005).

Other research again stresses the large variability between non-Western countries and the rest of the world in terms of the current status and perception of ICT (Walsham, 2008, p 199).

In sum then, it can be assumed that teachers socialised into a hard applied discipline are more amenable to internationalising curriculum initiatives than those working in hard pure sciences. At the same time, however, they still appear to be very much in need of tackling “the ethnocentric predisposition” (Fitch and Desai, 2012, p 64) prevalent in their societal and institutional cultures.

Although the majority of graduates who will be working in the ICT industry may be looking to obtain employment in the local area first, they still need to be acutely aware that they most likely will deal with a “global audience” (see Breit et al., 2013, p 131). The controversial comment made by Tonkin according to which “scientific

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<sup>7</sup>This is a measure of whether people prefer to work alone or in groups. These constructs indicate the degree of community integration and refer to the form of relationship between the individual and the collectivity (see Hofstede, 1997).

<sup>8</sup>This dimension has to do with the degree to which masculine traits like authority, control, assertiveness, performance and success are preferred to female characteristics like personal relationships, quality of life, service, care and welfare (Jones, 2007).

<sup>9</sup>This is a measure of whether people feel threatened by a lack of structure or by uncertain events. People scoring high on the scale are rule-bound, pay more attention to written procedures, and require a clear structure and order with stable and formalised procedures and guidelines (also see Hofstede, 1997).

advancement circumscribed by the English language is erroneously equated with scientific advancement in general” (2011, p 105) appears to be particularly true for a discipline that is highly socialised in the American research paradigm.

## 2.5 Chapter summary

In this chapter competing labels dealing with internationalisation efforts of institutions of higher learning were introduced. In a second step, the literature concerned with internationalisation of higher education was reviewed and the major implementation strategies were scrutinised. In framing their added value and constraints, a grid was set up which also depicts ideological rationales for engaging in international activities. To gain a historical understanding of internationalisation processes over an extended period of time, findings of three longitudinal studies are presented. Further, general disciplinary differences were examined, and specific disciplinary stances taken towards internationalisation efforts were sketched. By placing special emphasis on computer science, it was attempted to paint a comprehensive picture of the relevance of international education and graduate employability.

Despite a seemingly progressive continuum reaching from reactive and pro-active to added value and mainstream (see Beelen and de Wit, 2012, p 1) approaches, I would claim that for many universities it is still a long way to reach an inclusive understanding of internationalisation in all its facets. Or to put it in the words of Schorman, there is still a considerable “gap between the rhetoric that endorses internationalization and its implementation” (2000, p 3). This is all the more true in view of the significant amount of inconsistencies among institutions of higher learning with regard to their engagement in internationally minded activities.

Since English-medium teaching is a major component of the internationalisation process at the tertiary level, the next chapter provides an overview of English-medium instruction with a specific focus on the European higher education landscape. This is of particular relevance with regard to Phillipson’s pointed observations of the development of the Bologna process where he comes to the conclusion that “internationalization means English-medium higher education” (Phillipson, 2009, p 37).

# Chapter 3

## EMI in European Higher Education

### 3.1 Introduction

In the global debates, the “accelerating Englishization of European Higher Education” (Coleman, 2006, p 1) has prompted differing reactions, many of which are emotionally charged. They range from welcoming English as a means of communication with the potential of overcoming the global tower of Babel (Wasserman, 2002, p 304) and its acknowledgement as the “international lingua franca” in European higher education (Coleman, 2006, p 1) or “hub of the linguistic galaxy” (De Swaan, 2013, p 6) to its “pragmatic function in border-crossing communication” (Gardt and Hèuppauf, 2004, p 71). Others again dismiss it as a pandemic (Phillipson, 2009, p 35) or “lingua franca trap” (Breidbach, 2003, p 19) and are concerned that the dominance of English might threaten social inclusion and political participation.

While some major studies on the use of English as a medium of instruction in higher education have derived from the Nordic countries and the Netherlands with a particular focus on domain loss<sup>1</sup>, parallel language use and language policies and ideologies (Airey, 2011; Hellekjaer, 2010; Klaassen, 2008; Wilkinson, 2005; Vinke et al., 1998), others are concerned with multilingual education such as the linguistic landscape of the Basque country and actual language practices in a specific context

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<sup>1</sup>It can be defined as loss of ability to communicate in a language on all levels in a field of language for special purposes (LSP) due to insufficient further development of the necessary LSP resources. It occurs when a language community fails to develop suitable means of communication (Laurén et al., 2002).

(Dafouz, 2011; Cenoz, 2005, 1998).

One general assumption that these investigations have in common is that the use of English as a medium of instruction in higher education is clearly on the rise all over Europe (Brenn-White and van Rest, 2012), yet with a perceptible north-south divide. While the Nordic countries, and the Netherlands in particular, are in the vanguard of English-medium instruction given that most languages spoken in this European area lack international appeal (Van Splunder, 2012), the attraction of English-medium instruction appears to be less salient in the south of the continent (Unger et al., 2014). Consequently, it comes as no surprise that northern European universities are “more anglicized compared to the universities in southern Europe” (Björkman, 2011a, p 82).

Hence, this chapter seeks to address the spread of English throughout the European landscape of higher education, looking at a wide array of motivations, sources and challenges to grasp the major stimuli for the use of English-medium instruction (henceforth EMI) in English as a lingua franca<sup>2</sup> (henceforth ELF) settings. Being aware that “the two research undertakings into English-medium education and ELF have developed more or less independently from each other” (Smit, 2010a, p 60), I still wish to mesh them at this place given their substantial overlap.

To begin with, it is vital to state that EMI is a term generally used to describe non-language subjects taught in English (Hellekjaer, 2010; Tella, 2005), while ELF refers to “the micro-level of English as means of communication amongst multilingual social actors, thus foregrounding the discursive dynamics of specific communicational settings” (Smit, 2010a, p 59). Scholarly interest in ELF can be traced back to the 1980s and research into EMI has taken its full swing in Europe during the last two decades when an increasing amount of institutions of higher learning started to adopt English as medium of Master’s, and more recently, also Bachelor’s programmes in mainland Europe (Wächter and Maiworm, 2008; Wilkinson et al., 2007). Interestingly, it was found that despite a fast-growing research body on ELF, and the central role of ELF interaction in today’s HEI, most of EMI in higher education research has not incorporated ELF research and its findings (Hynninen,

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<sup>2</sup>Seidlhofer defines ELF as “any use of English among speakers of different first languages for whom English is the communicative medium” (2011, p 7). In ELF talk form takes shape in line with “the contexts and participants in an interaction” (Canagarajah, 2007, p 928).

2012, p 6). One study that attempted to bridge this gap was the one of Hynninen (2012) who examined the micro-level of ELF interaction in EMI settings by placing particular focus on the construction of language expertise in such interaction.

It is certainly true that in European tertiary education ELF exchanges represent a new linguistic form of instruction, one that points to the following four key areas (Smit, 2010b, p 49): a) the linguistic repertoire(s) of the participants; b) the lingua culture of the setting; c) the communicative purpose of the interaction and d) the (socio) linguistic status of ELF.

When relating these areas to EMI, it has to be noted that English-medium teaching generally takes place at institutions of higher learning where English is used as a shared linguistic resource. As a form of “institutional discourse” (Hynninen, 2013, p 59), English-medium teaching is an institutionally regulated and pre-defined way of interaction in line with socialised practices.

ELF interactions are predominantly set at International Classrooms where social practices go hand in hand with a fluid and dynamic understanding of both societal and lingua cultures. Given that ELF speakers generally share few expectations of cultural knowledge and linguistic norms, academic conventions allow for common ground, even more so as academic practices are “inherently international, and consequently less connected to a national basis” (Hynninen, 2013, p 59).

While it is certainly true that faculty heavily draw on “English for specific purposes” during EMI, they also use English for general purposes and ELF interactions. As to the (socio)linguistic status of ELF, Smit (2010b, p 61) proposes to leave old terminologies behind, and in line with Dewey (2009), calls for new and more appropriate conceptual frames. Since both EMI and ELF are truly new phenomena shaped by constantly changing parameters, such novel ways of conceptualisations need to take account of current developments. One way to deal with the complexity of the ELF concept, is Smit’s (2010b, p 63) suggestion of conceptualising the nature of ELF more dynamically.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>For a more detailed overview, see Smit’s adaptation to the trichotomous approach to “social language” adapted from James (2005a) where she replaces the labels used with the ones of individual repertoire, established practice and communicating.

## 3.2 ELF in higher education

As a branch of research, ELF has been identified by applied linguistic researchers as a major area since the 1990s. Driven by the steadily growing significance that universities attach to the internationalisation agenda, partly translated into the substantial increase of English-medium courses, research on ELF has taken off, with many hundreds of publications appearing since then. Given that a *Lingua Franca* relates to “any form of language serving as a means of communication between speakers of different languages” (Swann et al., 2004, p 184), English as a *Lingua Franca* then has emerged as a way of referring to “communication in English between speakers with different first languages” (Seidlhofer, 2005, p 339) transcending all national boundaries. Since ELF conversations generally contain “elements from many different linguacultures” (House, 2013, p 281), ELF speakers most frequently neither share a common language nor a common culture. Such language practices are substantially shaped by non-native speakers that use ELF as a contact language. Research undertakings into ELF and English-medium education have covered a wide array of topics and settings.<sup>4</sup> A comprehensive literature review (Jenkins et al., 2011) has revealed that there are basically two domains that spur particular scholarly interest, namely business and higher education.

For the purposes of the present research, only studies concerned with ELF in European tertiary education are taken into consideration (Björkman, 2013; Hyninen, 2012; Suviniitty, 2012; Mauranen, 2012; Knapp, 2011; Kuteeva, 2011; Smit, 2010b; Björkman, 2010, 2008b; Erling, 2007; Coleman, 2006). Strikingly, European universities have just recently started to identify the benefits of an increased use of ELF for internationalising tertiary education, whereas foreign study has been big international business in the non-European Anglophone world for years. So, although “English-medium education is a novelty for mainland Europe’ (Smit, 2010a, p 61), this relatively recent phenomenon has been on a constant increase and has giving

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<sup>4</sup>Main research interests lie in ELF phonology (Jenkins, 2000) corpora of spoken ELF (Seidlhofer, 2013; Mauranen, 2006; Seidlhofer, 2001) including ELFA, VOICE and ACE (Kirkpatrick, 2010), casual conversation (Kordon, 2006; Pölzl and Seidlhofer, 2006) and business encounters (Ehrenreich, 2010a; Nickerson, 2005). Over the past years an increasing amount of scholars (House, 2013; Murray, 2012; Björkman, 2011b; House, 2010; Hülmbauer et al., 2008; Klimpfinger, 2007) focused their description of ELF on pragmatics turning their attention to ways of achieving communicative effectiveness.

rise to the fast implementation of English-medium degree programmes, predominantly at a Master level. Across Europe, the subject areas most frequently offered in English and therefore being most anglicised are engineering and technology (27 %), closely followed by business-related studies (24 %) (Wächter, 2008; Maiworm and Wächter, 2002; Skudlik, 1990). A further indication for the significance of English as a scientific code constitutes the fact that the number of courses offered in English has tripled over five years in Europe (Wächter and Maiworm, 2008, p 31).

It appears that socio-linguistic studies investigating international universities that use English as a medium of instruction in academic lingua franca settings, also referred to as “EMI institutions” (Kirkpatrick, 2014, p 11), generally take either a corpus-based or ethnographically-informed approach.

A recent corpus-based study (Björkman, 2013) focuses on form and pragmatic issues and uses authentic spoken data from a university in Sweden to investigate communicative effectiveness. Also Björkman’s previous research (2010; 2008a) uses corpus-based findings to investigate common ground between grammatical and lexical features of academic ELF and “general ELF” looking at morphosyntax and pragmatics. Another corpus-based approach is adopted by the ELFA<sup>5</sup> project where a 1-million word corpus of English as an Academic Lingua Franca on ELF interactions is being investigated (Mauranen, 2012; Turunen, 2012; Mauranen et al., 2010; Mauranen and Ranta, 2008; Mauranen, 2006).

With regard to ethnographically oriented studies on ELF in higher education, two major investigations deserve emphasis at this point. The first one is a detailed longitudinal study of student teacher interaction where a discourse-pragmatic ethnographic approach is adopted to undertake a dynamic analysis of an Austrian English-medium Hotel Management programme. When investigating this course in which English functions as additional language, Smit found that the social actors started to engage in a community of practice with its own “interactional expectations and communicational conventions” (2010b, p 225). Her findings suggest that processes of (language) learning depend on English in its roles as professional language and lingua franca.

The second study worth noting here is Hynninen’s (2013) investigation of the

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<sup>5</sup>The acronym ELFA stands for English as a Lingua Franca in Academic Settings. The corpus focuses on spoken academic ELF and is compiled at the University of Tampere.

negotiation of acceptability and correctness in language in academic lingua franca interactions. This ethnographically informed study collected data from EMI settings at the University of Helsinki to explore the different roles assumed by students and teachers in the process of language regulation. Already in a previous study, Hynninen (2012) looked into the construction of language expertise in L2 speakers and found that “language expertise authority” (Dafouz Milne and Sánchez García, 2013, p 145) cannot automatically be expected from lecturers. In a similar vein, Dafouz (2011; 2007) points to a shift in the traditional hierarchical roles of lecturers in higher education settings. In sum, an increased need for a reduced display of language authority and a more democratic stance of teachers was identified within overall less hierarchical EMI classrooms (Hynninen, 2013; Smit, 2010b).

Of particular relevance to this study are ELF investigations that look into tertiary education dealing with disciplinary teachers’ attitudes towards ELF (Airey, 2013, 2011) or university lecturers’ views of English-medium instruction in International Classrooms (Jensen and Thøgersen, 2011; Pecorari et al., 2011). It was found that attitudes towards EMI correlate strongly with age and the length of English-medium teaching, indicating that also younger teachers may “grow more sceptical” over time (Jensen and Thøgersen, 2011, p 28). A more detailed account on teachers’ perceptions of ELF, EMI and internationalisation in general is given in chapter 4.

### 3.2.1 English as a lingua franca of science

The global spread of English as the international language of scientific communication has been so amply documented (Ferguson et al., 2011; Ferguson, 2007; Ammon, 2007; Crystal, 2003; Ammon, 2001) that only a brief descriptive account is required at this place. After World War I, the significance of German as the predominant international language of science (Von Gizycki, 1973) increasingly fell into decline (Ammon, 2004; Ehlich and Graefen, 2001), further intensified by the development of the Cold War stimulus to US scientific research and the US-based computer technology (Ferguson, 2007, p 12). Since then, the prominent role of English in the research world has been hotly debated (Airey, 2004; Gunnarsson, 2001; Swales, 1988), especially in view of the current scientific pecking orders which have considerably contributed to a linguistic shift towards, in some disciplines, an English-only

approach.

This holds particularly true for the Germanic world of applied sciences and engineering where English nowadays dominates the “communication of research findings in Germany” (Gardt, 2004, p 69). Further findings (Ingvarsdóttir and Arnbjörnsdóttir, 2010; Björkman, 2008a) point to a constantly growing use of English to disseminate results of basic and applied research. This European move towards English as the language of scholarly discourse had already been predicted twenty years before with Viereck’s statement “publish in English or perish” (1996, p 20).

In a similar vein, Crystal (2003, p 111) reports that 85 percent of scientific<sup>6</sup> publications are in English, which clearly shows that since the advent of big science spearheaded by research in the US, former potent competitors such as German and French have been increasingly out of the game. On a similar critical note, Gunnarsson (2001) in her investigation of the language situation at Swedish universities points to the growing dominance of English as a language of science and the loss of specific registers in the Swedish language. A number of studies (Kuteeva, 2014; Bolton and Kuteeva, 2012; Leppänen and Pahta, 2012; Kuteeva, 2011) reveal the dangers of a distorted perception where English might be regarded as an official “high” code of science, whereas the local language might be viewed as a “low” code of popularisation not worth fostering. An extensive review of domain loss in Nordic countries can be found in Höglín (2002).

The language of computer science, however, and particularly the scientific discourse of this relatively young discipline have always been dominated by English. It was not only found to be “the language of ICT” but also “the very infrastructure of the knowledge-based economy” (Huh et al., 2000, p 20) driven by US-American interests. As such it seems only logical that American English has been referred to as the “lingua franca of computing” (Carmel, 1997, p 128), even more so as many languages have been extensively borrowing computing terminology from the US-American code.

It is readily apparent that this unidirectional transfer is not welcomed by all speech communities. The one-sided development resulted in a number of critical discussions as to whether some languages underwent domain loss in specific registers and to what extent the powerful presence of English in higher education can

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<sup>6</sup>This percentage also includes applied sciences and engineering disciplines.

be held responsible for language attrition, loss of cultural identity or “surface approaches to learning”<sup>7</sup> (Airey, 2004, p 3). By exclusively drawing on established (linguistic) methods for conducting research, the scientific community contributes to an impoverishment of the diversity of academic languages. In doing so, it adds to the decrease of language terrain at the societal level and loss of scientific transparency within non-English speaking countries for the benefit of a stronger language (Ehlich and Heller, 2006; Ammon, 2001).

One of the most critical arguments put forward is that among the strongly anglicised engineering community, disciplinary fluency in English plays a crucial role in understanding, and in the case of higher education, in processing and conveying high-order thinking in L2. The capacity to do so effectively, allows the user to show evidence of proficient membership of the international discourse community. In this context, it was found, however, that the overall quality of English-medium teaching decreases in line with student results as a consequence of the increased workload required for such a course (Sercu, 2004b, p 547).

### 3.3 Cultural aspects with regard to ELF

Given that the present study seeks to identify International Classroom Affordances perceived by teachers as a prerequisite to effectively navigate the “Conceptual Age” (see chapter 4.8), a number of factors have to be taken into consideration. Apart from internationalisation issues, and challenges with regard to English-medium teaching in an ELF setting, there are also cultural aspects that need to be addressed in more detail.

#### 3.3.1 ELF and approaches to culture

As previously stated, literature focusing on academic ELF generally examines specific linguistic features of lingua franca communication in a university context, often with particular focus on comprehensibility and speakers’ strategies for achieving

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<sup>7</sup>Such learning approaches are characterised by passive engagement and the use of memorising and mechanical rote learning strategies to reproduce the factual contents of the study (Diehm and Lupton, 2012). Findings (Valk and Marandi, 2005) suggest that surface approaches to learning are negatively related to quantitative and qualitative learning outcomes.

mutual understanding. Hence, the role of international norms when using ELF in a multicultural setting has been approached from a variety of perspectives. However, until recently, there has been little research looking into how local identities are culturally negotiated by means of a global contact language (Baker, 2011; Virkkula and Nikula, 2010; Canagarajah, 2006; Pözl and Seidlhofer, 2006). Some studies identified the need for hybridity, creolization, and codemeshing as an essential mode of representing local identities (Canagarajah, 2005), others refer to the “habitat factor” pointing to the variety of local realisations of ELF (Pözl and Seidlhofer, 2006, pp 151-176) or suggest “three forms of cultural knowledge” (Holden, 2002, p 256) - a creation of an additional culture where interactions contain discursual features of both lingua-cultural socialisations - while others again warn against linguistic changes likely to influence the cultural identity developments of emerging adults (Jensen et al., 2011).

It is safe to say that understanding the impact of cultures on educational systems is a key factor to successfully implement English-medium instruction in an ELF setting. For the purpose of this exploration it is vital to distinguish between macro and micro-level approaches to culture. While the quantitatively approached macro-level paradigm is concerned with cultural dimensions (House et al., 2004; Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1998; Hall, 1997; Hofstede et al., 1997; Hofstede, 1980) and, more recently, with cultural standards<sup>8</sup> (Thomas, 2010; Schroll-Machl, 2013), micro-level studies deal with particular settings in which agents create cultures on the basis of their emic cultural understanding. The argument being made here is that macro approaches to culture seem to have reached their limits (d’Iribarne, 2009), while at the same time paving the way for more interpretive micro studies that leave room for adopting a contextualised and dynamic cultural lens that not only takes societal, but also organisational and professional cultures into account. In other words, to investigate a person’s ability to behave adequately and in a context-sensitive way when being confronted with representatives of foreign cultures appears to be a much more timely approach than a generalist and broad sketch of how cultures differ.

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<sup>8</sup>Cultural standards are generally described as all sorts of perception, thinking, evaluating and action, which is personally accepted by the majority of members of a specific culture and considered as normal, typical and binding for others. Based on the values in a given culture, they additionally refer to traditional norms of behaviour in a given context-sensitive environment that comply with these values (Thomas, 1993, p 381).

From a macro-level perspective, then, societal culture and its nationally-rooted and deeply seated cultural values that subconsciously inform actions of the stakeholders take central stage not without running the risk, though, that such generalisations of ethnic cultures might create “oversimplified images of national sameness” (Cope and Kalantzis, 1997, p 254). Macro examples of ELF studies foreground socio-cultural dimensions such as power distance (Björge, 2007), the concept of face (Knapp, 2011) or emotional display of pride and shame (Nizęgorodcew, 2013).

In the present case, the host country, and as a result, the teachers of the investigated International Classroom belong to the so-called “Germanic cluster” embracing Germany, Austria, Switzerland and the Netherlands (House et al., 2002; Gupta et al., 2002; Hofstede, 1984), all countries that are reported to have low power distance (Van Meurs, 2003, p 114). GLOBE<sup>9</sup> researchers (House et al., 2004) found that performance orientation, uncertainty avoidance, future orientation and assertiveness score relatively high, while humane orientation, institutional and in-group collectivism take a rather low priority in the Germanic cluster.

Consequently, representatives of this cluster tend to have a shared established understanding of the visible institutional rules and regulations as well as the deeper values, patterns of interactions and ethics of the societal context. In this light, the Germanic culture is defined along the lines of standards and orientation patterns that embrace task orientation, high esteem for rules and regulations, directness and low-context communication style<sup>10</sup>, interpersonal distance, time management, separation of the public and personal domains and internalised control (Thomas, 2010; Schroll-Machl, 2013, p 23).

Taking as a base understanding that internalised control is displayed by a strong identification with one’s professional role where reliability, professionalism and efficiency are highly valued, it stands to reason to examine how, from an objectivist comparative view, these patterns are translated into an International Classroom. In an English as a business lingua franca investigation in a German multinational corporation Ehrenreich (2010b, p 35) found culturally hybrid discourse rules that

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<sup>9</sup>The GLOBE study of 62 societies is the most comprehensive cross-cultural research project, to date, designed to conceptualise how leadership is perceived by cultures in terms of values and practices.

<sup>10</sup>Individualistic cultures tend to communicate in direct and straight-forward patterns where the “mass of information is vested in the explicit code” (Hall, 1976, p 79).

were still strongly shaped by internalised and culture-bound discursive frames of the local actors.

On a micro-level, then, cultural investigations are more interested in how new temporal, spatial and interpersonal inter-cultures are created by transcending institutional, professional, structural and ethnical boundaries without necessarily prescribing differences, but acknowledging that individual perceptions are reflected through macro-level cultural socialisation. Such studies frequently draw on qualitative investigations into lingua franca communication with a strong ethnographic element (Ehrenreich, 2010a; Cogo and Dewey, 2006; Cogo, 2005).

### 3.3.2 ELF and lingua-cultural realities

An overview of research publications stemming from the ELF arena reveals perspectives that span across often opposing lingua-cultural assumptions. Whilst some macro investigations hold the view that international standards are strongly influenced by the dominant American English code (Phillipson, 2009; Modiano, 2004), others consider the hybrid ELF talk as a rather culture-free encounter (Risager, 2007; House, 1999) emptied of cultural reference. In a similar vein, Seidlhofer & Widdowson question whether “ELF might be so linguistically and culturally reduced that it is inadequate as a resource for personal self-expression” (2003, p 8). And also Jenkins states in her latest book that linguistic resources are deployed so “dynamically in ELF settings that nativization as such does not have time to take hold” (2014, p 36). Such a view implies that users embrace the “culture a speaker wants to construct in a particular conversation” (Meierkord, 2002, p 129). At the same time, it is stated that ELF interactions take mainly place among non-native speakers of English who seek to “create their own temporary culture” (Faber, 2010, p 21).

Such a creation of a “new cultural space” (Mackenzie, 2007, p 242) which partially overlaps with native socialised patterns, and partly with differing and shared perceptions of the English languages and their related cultures appears to be most crucial for lingua franca interactants (Mackenzie, 2007; Smit, 2003; House, 2003; Meierkord and Knapp, 2002) who establish a unique set of rules for interaction (Meierkord, 2013; Smit, 2010b).

In this context, Pölzl (2003, p 6) points to the territorial imperative of one's own cultural coding that it "motivated by the individual's need to preserve his/her identity" and thus emphasises the co-operative imperative to co-create a new inter-culture. Interestingly, and in contrast to the view of culture-free ELF conversation, Pölzl and Seidlhofer (2006) identified that in contexts where the majority of speakers draws on the same lingua-cultural backgrounds local interactional norms were foregrounded. This is in accordance with the findings that in ELF talk "differences in interactional norms, standards of politeness, directness, values, feelings of cultural and historical tradition tend to remain intact" (House, 2013, p 59). This accounts to a large extent for the claim that a culture-less perception of ELF would ignore the fact that its speakers draw on a diversity of backgrounds including a cultural one (Meierkord, 2002, p 110).

In that regard, I confer with House that ELF speakers develop creative strategies to achieve the threshold of understanding and, by doing so, "intentionally appropriate, locally adapt and communicatively align the potential inherent in the forms and functions of the English language" (2013, p 59). And although ELF talk can promote "culture-free varieties of English use for international communication" (Yano, 2001, p 130), it is still marked by the underlying societal values of the speakers, especially with regard to the preference of high- or low-context communication styles. It may be correct that ELF is a useful "language for communication" (2003, p 138) which does not lend itself well to emotional and affective identification, but it needs to be remembered that also a "native-culture-free" (Pölzl, 2003, p 5) language such as ELF that appears to have the potential of creating one's own temporary culture is spoken by citizens that are characterised by internalised communication patterns. Since local identities give evidence of personal self-expression, I doubt whether ELF communication can ever be culturally reduced in ways that allow for a genuine culture-free zone.

Convincingly, Seidlhofer (2004, p 222) argues that "proficiency in the language code only accounts for part of the success or failure of intercultural ELF interactions" pointing to the significance of both accommodation skills and communicative capabilities beyond ethnocentric boundaries which is much in line with the conceptualisation of ELF users as multilingual speakers that constantly cross borders as "a sign of a hybrid culture in operation" (House, 2007, p 17).

### 3.3.3 ELF and intercultural communication

Despite the acknowledgement that ELF communication is basically intercultural communication (Knapp, 2011, p 980), the research foci of the ELF community and those of intercultural communication have gone rather different paths. Even though intercultural communication was rooted in anthropology and linguistics, it became quite different from either in the decades following 1955' (Rogers et al., 2002, p 10). While linguistic inquiry was embedded in theoretical frameworks from the beginning, intercultural communication was primarily driven by hands-on activities in the professional business training and behavioural sciences. In the United States, this interdisciplinary field of research was predominantly associated with training of corporate executives, growing out of the practical requirements of international diplomacy (Kramsch, 2001).

In Europe, however, the field of intercultural communication was edging closer to sociolinguists, anthropology, pragmatics and discourse analysis (Blommaert and Verschueren, 1991). This explains why this concept coined by the American cross-cultural researcher Hall (1959) has only recently emerged in Europe as an academic discipline in its own right (Rogers et al., 2002).

Initially, Hall (1959) did not intend to create a "new academic field with a novel research tradition" (Leeds-Hurwitz, 1990), but rather sought to draw heavily on applied work to serve the specific purposes of training American diplomats. Despite his somewhat practice-oriented focus, he still seemed to have laid the intellectual foundations upon which current research in fields as diverse as psychology, anthropology, sociology, linguistics and communication have built.

Interestingly, although the original paradigm for intercultural communication was based on joint studies with the linguist Trager (1954), European linguistic scholars have nonetheless backgrounded intercultural communication<sup>11</sup>. After decades of placing heavy emphasis on verbal interactions with low interest in non-verbal language and proxemics (Rogers and Steinfatt, 1999), the linguistic community has now rediscovered the concept of intercultural communication, most probably influenced by insights from studies of intercultural ELF interactions.

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<sup>11</sup>It is certainly true that the Scollons (1995; 1981) devoted much attention to interethnic communication. Yet, they did so predominantly from an American perspective where research had primarily been inspired by practical implications rather than theoretical considerations.

Given these realities, the notion of intercultural communication re-emerged in the 1990s in the debates on European higher education. Since then, this young scholarly discipline has started to mature as an academic field in its own right with its own theoretical underpinnings (Kramsch, 2001). In view of the current complexities of the upcoming “Conceptual Age” where shifting spaces and the need for multiple identities take centre stage, this field will need to draw on networks that go well beyond group boundaries, not only in terms of societal cultures but also with regard to professions, class or gender.

So far, and despite the highly interdisciplinary underpinnings of this “reluctant discipline” (Bennett, 1998, p 528), there seems to be hardly any dialogue between scholars of different scientific orientations. To open a window that allows to synthesise this network of different approaches, Dafouz and Smit (2014) developed a model that seems to be well-suited for the purpose of a holistic ELF investigation at the tertiary level incorporating social discourses at an intersection of six dimensions which will be shortly outlined below.

### 3.3.4 ELF and ROAD-MAPPING

In an attempt to provide a holistic picture of **English-medium education** in **multilingual university settings** or, in short, EMEMUS, Dafouz and Smit (2014) conceptualised a promising theoretically grounded framework. This new label of the object of interest incorporates current approaches to language and content integration such as EMI (English-medium instruction), ICL (integrating content and language) and LoLT (language of learning and teaching) in multilingual university.

By regarding EMEMUS as a social action that takes discourse as an entry point to explore contextually bound settings, they draw on sociolinguistic theory (Scollon and Scollon, 2013; Hult, 2010; Scollon and Scollon, 2007) that looks at fluid discourse processes across scales of time and space. By doing so, it is sought to fully grasp key aspects of the social mechanisms involved in a multilingual university environment.

In light of the growing multilingual realities of higher education, this model is articulated as an elaborate six-component Venn-diagram that places discourse at the centre of interest. The overlapping and dynamic intersection of the components of the diagram are **Roles of English, Academic Disciplines, (language)**

**Management, Agents, Practices and Processes, Internationalisation and Globalisation** (ROAD-MAPPING) (Gustafsson and Jacobs, 2013, p iv).

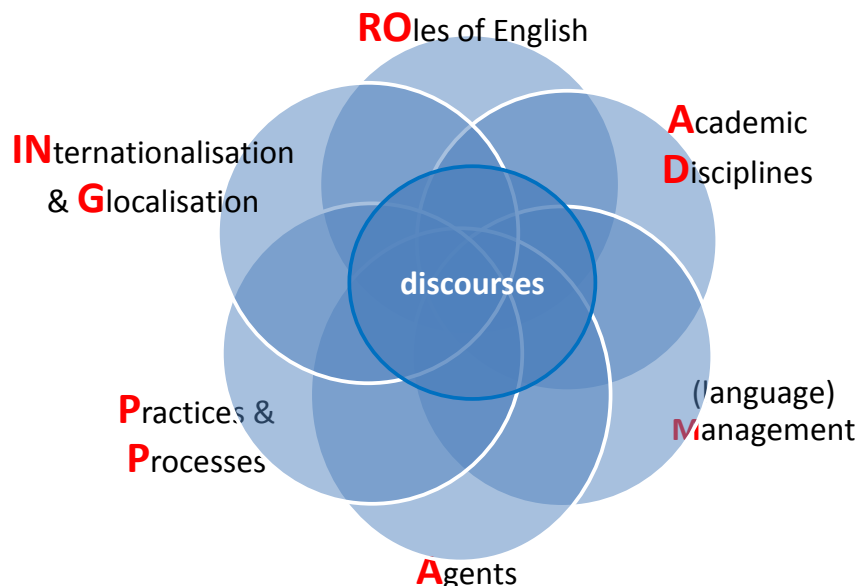


Figure 3.1: The ROAD-MAPPING framework (Dafouz and Smit, 2014)

Conceptual orientations that underpin the framework range from ecology of language (Hornberger and Hult, 2008) over expanded language policy (Shohamy, 2006) to ecolinguistic language research (Hult, 2010). Such an overarching perspective takes the “functional breadth of English” (Dafouz and Smit, 2014, p 7) into account and relates it to the complete linguistic repertoire of the higher education institution under investigation. By applying this multi-layered framework then, it is intended to perform a context-sensitive interpretation of discourse processes within a specific university site. To illustrate the complexity of the dynamically intersecting factors each dimension is discussed individually below.

- a) **Roles of English** in relation to other languages: according to priority, English can act as a societal, pedagogical, communicational and institutional interface. Whilst the societal value of English lies in its international orientation, the institutional focus is frequently in line with discipline-specific requirements. Whenever language as a learning objective is considered to be an added value and used as an assessment criteria either for the purposes of a

stand-alone subject or as a mediator tool, the pedagogical aspect comes into play (Unterberger and Wilhelmer, 2011). The communicational factor refers to the linguistic codes used in a multilingual setting and takes account of a shared medium of communication. Both the linguistic repertoire of the users/learners and the pursued purposes in terms of instructional, institutional, or occupational relevance add to the role of English as language of communication.

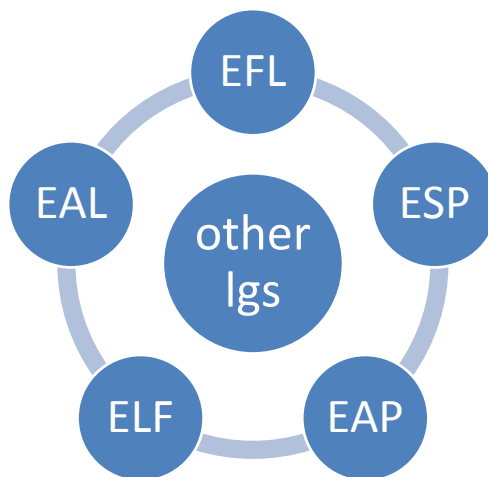


Figure 3.2: Roles of English in relation to other languages (Dafouz and Smit, 2014)

Figure 3.2 shows this interplay of the roles assumed by the English language with other languages. In such a dynamic context as the one of an International Classroom, English is used in multiple ways, be it as General English (EFL), English for Specific Purposes (ESP), English for Academic Purposes (EAP), English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) and English as an Additional Language (EAL).

- b) **Academic disciplines:** From an ecological point of view, discourse is always correlated to socio-cultural practices in a given historical environment. It is precisely this interplay of linguistic practices, agents and environment that culturally shapes environmental practices. This reciprocity between what is given and what is constructed generally rests on a variety of assumptions that constitute the ideological backbone of a community. When it comes to disciplinary practices it is widely acknowledged that “teaching and learn-

ing regimes”<sup>12</sup> are mainly governed by implicit taken-for-granted principles of academic socialisation. In this context, Dafouz and Smit (2014) point to two issues that need to be tackled when dealing with EMEMUS. The first one is the need for heightened awareness of different discourses that flow through diverse academic communities, the second challenge deals with an unreflected stance taken by numerous institutions of higher learning towards an English-only teaching approach.

- c) **Language Management** basically refers to language policy statements and declarations issued by social actors at an institution of higher learning. Such measures can take multiple forms and either be translated in binding, de-facto, de jure, conflicting or implicit language policies (Kristinsson, 2012). Arguably, teachers are at the heart of educational language planning and thus have considerable impact on how different discourses are applied throughout micro classroom practices. Therefore, it is particularly interesting how agents accommodate language management in terms of individual choices. To understand what kinds of linguistic spaces are used for which purposes, also in view of ideological, educational or political agendas (Spolsky, 2009; Shohamy, 2006; Menken, 2008) is key for grasping a comprehensive picture of EMEMUS.
- d) **Agents** and the notion of agency can be understood in connection with the lingua-cultural profiles of the interactants, the stakeholders in charge of planning, implementation and assessment of language policies in institutions of higher learning or along the lines of individual social actors that assume shared responsibility for language use. From whatever angle agency is approached, there are always issues in line with certain agendas, be they political, economical, educational or occupational.
- e) **Practices and Processes:** In general, social action is characterised by a close interaction of macro-level dimensions such as a broader social context and setting (society, social categories or structure) and micro-level dimensions such

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<sup>12</sup>These are aspects of socially constructed local teaching and learning cultures that have been gradually reified into social structures within a given setting. Trowler and Cooper (2002) identified a constellation of mutually supporting components that are in constant need of renegotiation. These include tacit assumptions, implicit theories of teaching and learning, recurrent practices, conventions of appropriateness, codes of signification, discursive repertoires, subjectivities in interaction and power.

as particular linguistic interaction and specific lingua-cultural acts (agency, choices) (Scollon, 2002; Giddens, 1984). This interplay of agency and society manifests itself in the form of practices and processes. Social practices, especially in the context of higher education learning in multilingual settings, seem to occur in a repeated site of engagement with just a relatively consistent set of social processes, often within a loosely connected nexus. Such a setting, then, is what the Scollons (2004) call a “nexus of practice”. It is a “broader cultural conception of particular ways of thinking” (Leung and Street, 2012, p 9) and yet, in view of an International Classroom, both practices and processes tend to be rather adaptive and in need to be consciously or unconsciously renegotiated and agreed upon.

Taking the view that social practice produces structure that flows “simultaneously into the constitution of the agent and social practices, and exists in the generating moments of this constitution” (Giddens, 1979, p 5), Giddens takes account of dynamic and context-sensitive settings. As such, social practices have to be reinforced over an extensive period to allow for a tradition to unfold, expressed in stable patterns of social interactions. Since they are “local social-historical conventions” (Hosking, 2000, p 151) it seems logical that changes in linguistic practices lead to profound transformations in social practices as well. Such discursive interventions then transform all agents that are involved in collective interaction into social constructors. In this context, social practices are considered as “units of value creation” (Holttinen, 2010, p 95) that co-evolve with established social institutions that constantly change and evolve over time (Farrell, 2007). In view of the approaching “Conceptual Age” where boundaries are becoming increasingly permeable, I would claim that localised social practices are bound to give way to models of variations.

- f) **Internationalisation and Glocalisation** refer to two phenomena that are often used as interchangeable concepts. While internationalisation describes an enhanced dialogue between mainly institutions on a nationalised level and within the public domain, glocalisation has a particular focus on economic structures and seems predominantly concerned with how local cultures adapt or resist global forces from outside the context (Backhaus, 2003). While knowl-

edge frequently seems to be “the product of complex negotiation between global ‘theory’ and local ‘practice’” (Scott, 2011, p 70), it brings tensions and synergies together and sheds light on the versatile functions that institutions of higher learning adopt on an international, national and local level. In view of the many dynamic forces institutions of higher learning are exposed to, Dafouz and Smit (2014) point to both synergies and tensions that need to be reconciled within local and global driving forces.

It appears that by taking all these dimensions as interrelated variables, this model serves as a useful framework that lends itself readily to position the present case study. For the purposes of a clearer understanding of the constitutive factors involved in this particular EMEMUS, chapter 8 seeks to relate all elements of the ROAD-MAPPING frame to the nexus of educational practice at hand.

### 3.4 Chapter summary

This chapter has attempted to provide an integrative review of the literature that deals with the role of English-medium instruction in Europe. First, the globalisation issue was addressed and put in perspective of the ELF research community interested in tertiary education. Then it was looked at how English as a lingua franca of science and engineering has spread across Europe to boost dissemination of research findings. The chapter has also identified the crucial role of culture played in ELF encounters by shedding light on both macro and micro-level approaches to lingua-cultural realities. In a next step, a historical review of intercultural communication was presented and the interface to ELF interactions was explored. Finally, a theoretical framework was introduced that allows for a more holistic and contextual presentation of English-Medium Education in Multilingual University Settings. This model was found to be promising to serve as a basis for the positioning of the case study outlined in more detail in chapter 8. In the next chapter, I address internationalist teachers in the context of EMI in an ELF setting and demonstrate how their perceptions, expectations and challenges are reflected in their daily professional activities.



## Chapter 4

# Teachers in an International Classroom

### 4.1 Introduction

Not only is the International Classroom (IC)<sup>1</sup> increasingly becoming the norm, the growing international academic community also seems to set new quality standards for teaching and learning. Composed of three interacting agents, namely domestic students, international students and academic staff, an IC generally hosts members that neither share a common native language nor the same socio-cultural and academic backgrounds. An International Classroom can thus be regarded as an educational space that needs to encompass “a broader array of perspectives on the topic taught or learned about, which, in turn, is seen as a source for improving reflection and learning” (Mattisson, 2012, p 117). To these ends, the role assumed by faculty appears to be the main ingredient for creating an inclusive environment where “internationalist teachers” are synonymous with academic staff that pro-actively “seek to pursue the aim of internationalisation in their teaching practices, curricula and delivery of courses” (Trevaskes et al., 2003, p 4). With this goal in mind, Teekens (2000) points to the necessity of highly responsible faculty in international education and thus opens the debate about a set of competencies described as the “profile of the ideal lecturer” (Teekens, 2003, p 111) in the international classroom.

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<sup>1</sup>For a definition of the term, see chapter 1.

## 4.2 Key skills for internationalist teachers

Concepts of key competencies for academic staff have spurred an international debate on teaching and learning for years. Yet, in Europe, discussions about linguaculturally diverse educational settings are becoming increasingly prominent, pointing to an ongoing agenda which has to continuously redefine effective teaching in an ever-changing environment (Devlin and Samarawickrema, 2010; Teichler, 2004; Teekens, 2001; Yershova et al., 2000). Against this backdrop, Teekens (2001) drew up a rather normative profile to measure levels of competencies in terms of disciplinary, educational, linguistic, cultural and generic skills. By doing so, she was the first to centre both linguistic and intercultural competence as prominent features required for contemporary teaching in international settings. The identified need for such a focus clearly outlined the previous lack of attention paid to teacher training for the International Classroom (Harman, 2005; Teekens, 2003). By stressing the importance of English-medium instruction in an ELF setting and by raising awareness of the corresponding challenges, she highlighted an issue that, until recently, had been largely ignored, predominantly by the Anglophone educational research community. The eight identified clusters are as follows (Teekens, 2003, p 111):

- 1 Issues related to using a nonnative language of instruction
- 2 Factors related to dealing with cultural differences
- 3 Specific requirements regarding teaching and learning styles
- 4 Insight into the cultural implications of using media and technology
- 5 Specific requirements connected with the academic discipline
- 6 Knowledge of foreign education systems
- 7 Knowledge of the international labour market
- 8 Personal qualities

Since then, however, a number of studies have highlighted the urgent need for a more comprehensive professional development in HE, especially for internationalist faculty (Sanderson, 2008; Olson et al., 2001). Recalling the position taken by tertiary teachers as both discipline experts and international role models, Sanderson (2011;

2006; 2008) provides a conceptual framework for reflection aimed at illuminating personal and professional characteristics underpinning teachers' internationalised outlooks and classroom practices. Building on Teekens' understanding of the ideal lecturer, he narrowed down the original frame while at the same time incorporating additional perspectives such as **cosmopolitanism** and the **academic Self**. In doing so, he paid special attention to the increasingly perceived demand of academic staff to become internationalised on a more personal level. Understanding the academic Self through self-reflective processes is what Sanderson calls the "building block in an institution's response to global forces affecting higher education" (2008, p 276). Taking as a base assumption that an ideal lecturer is an experienced one with a "well-developed knowledge base and a comprehensive repertoire of skills related to good teaching practice" (Sanderson, 2006, p 44), it is also a prerequisite for a good internationalist teacher to acknowledge and accommodate different perspectives on cultures, knowledge claims, and world views.

Influenced by both Teekens' (2001) and Sanderson's (2008) conceptual considerations on key skills for international educators, Van der Werf (2012) developed an international competences matrix as part of the human resources appraisal cycle. Bearing in mind that work in an international educational setting requires new and additional skills, he draws particular attention to social skills which he calls "weak competencies" (2012, p 99) intended to make institutional internationalisation policies a success.

### 4.3 Teachers and internationalisation

In a critical review of studies on internationalisation in the tertiary sector, Harman (2005, p 131) identifies a distinct void in the literature as to the "active involvement of academics in internationalization" and therefore concludes that perceptions of internationalist teachers appear not to be high on the research agenda. This is in line with the previously outlined add-on approach to internationalisation where faculty is only little, if at all, involved in internationalisation activities.

What is more, so far, most research on internationalisation has been traditionally conducted to gain insights into student experiences (Caruana and Spurling, 2007), paying little attention to teachers' concerns.

Still, those studies which have been devoted to the subject (Leask and Carroll, 2011; Caruana, 2010; Robson and Turner, 2007; Bell, 2004; Bodycott and Walker, 2000; Ellingboe, 1998; Harari, 1992) paint a reasonably coherent picture of how academic staff approach internationalisation. There seems to be general agreement that resistance to internationalisation frequently stems from a “conceptual confusion about what international education means” (Mestenhauser, 1998, p 4). Further elements like lacking confidence in their own abilities, little interest in curriculum reforms and systematic change and uncertainty as to learning outcomes seem to have additional explanatory power as to why many teachers adopt a position of resistance and cynicism (Bell, 2004; Robson and Turner, 2007). Other reasons for teachers’ reluctance to go international are perceived extra effort, insufficient development support and the low level of relevance allotted to teaching in general. From this perspective, then, it is scarcely surprising that little evidence was found for the willingness of international staff to adapt neither classroom management, nor content (Stone, 2006; Ward, 2001).

What makes it all the more regrettable is that “internationalist teachers” often pave the way for a more global academic outlook, which is why institutions urgently need lecturers that “can serve as cultural translators and mediators” (Cushner, 2008, p 172). By assuming such a role, it is hoped that teachers place high value on discourse about pedagogical development and practical innovation, and are keen on sharing their best practices as means to achieve conceptual change in order “to develop a broader vision of internationalization” (Robson and Turner, 2007, p 5). In this sense, findings suggest that given the high significance placed on internationalisation, institutional commitment to enhancing key competencies for future teachers within Europe is constantly growing (Persson, 2004), especially since Internationalisation of the Curricula “affects all faculty, not just those who teach internationally” (Green and Olson, 2003, p 57). By developing a strong international mindset within higher education institutions, it is hoped that all faculty start drawing on international students as a resource for intercultural learning, shifting their views on students “from market resource, to teaching resource” (Spiro, 2014, p 70). Such a perspective then would be an integral part of the transformative internationalisation strategy that was sketched in chapter 2.

## 4.4 Teachers and English-medium instruction

As sketched in chapter 3, English is the most dominant L2 medium of instruction in Europe, with its position forecast to strengthen further. Despite its appeal on an institutional level, a number of concerns were identified as to teachers' perceptions on EMI (Cots, 2013; Klaassen, 2008; Smith, 2004; Sercu, 2004b). These are frequently unwillingness to teach through English due to inadequate language skills, perceived loss of confidence and ideological objections arising from a sensed threat to cultural and linguistic identity.

So far, voices raised in favour of ELF-aware teaching have mainly come from within socio-linguistic research communities (Dewey, 2012; Blair, 2012) who are acutely aware of the necessity to incorporate an ELF perspective in teacher education and to move beyond a norm-driven approach. However, it seems that such a stance is only slowly reaching a wider scope with recommendations for L2 lecturers to use accommodation strategies to enhance their pragmatic and intercultural competencies and to gain a deeper understanding of inherent language variability and diversity (Jensen et al., 2011). While linguistic input of language teachers for both staff and students in form of traditional lecturing in secondary English-medium instruction was identified as a crucial enabler within an International Classroom (Dalton-Puffer, 2008), often encouraged by regional governments as a top-down strategy (Dafouz Milne and Sánchez García, 2013, p 129), there is yet insufficient evidence for such an effect at the tertiary level. It was found that in higher education linguistic strategies are often in line with ambitious internationalisation plans where the promotion of English as medium of instruction is a major driving force behind internationalisation policies. One pilot implementation of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)<sup>2</sup> at a Spanish University found that, at the one hand, teachers were most interested in practising and improving their English spoken fluency, and on the other hand, they exhibited great reluctance in receiving any form of CLIL methodological training (Aguilar and Rodríguez, 2012).

An EMI investigation of a Physics tertiary classroom in Sweden (Airey and Linder, 2006) revealed that among "hard scientists" language is generally seen as a

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<sup>2</sup>For terminological definitions with regard to CLIL, EMI and ICL, see Smit and Dafouz (2012, pp 4-5).

simple vehicle for meaningful communication. Further, it was found that students' willingness to ask questions and the lecturers' readiness to answer them were greatly reduced. Despite - or perhaps precisely because of - the lack of awareness allocated to EMI, Airey and Linder (2006) provide a number of recommendations for L2 lecturers such as addressing the topic of EMI in class, creating more space for discussions, assigning readings prior to the lecture, and giving as much multi-representational support as possible. In a similar vein, de Vita (2000) points to the need for a reduction of instructional pace and avoidance of slang and metaphors when teaching in culturally diverse classes.

Another study on linguistic perceptions of Finnish ELF lecturers of engineering (Pilkinton-Pihko, 2010) identified speaker credibility and a clear communication of ideas to be major drivers of EMI which lends support to the assumption that linguistic form is secondary to the ability to communicate and teach in English effectively and achieve the communicative purposes in ELF interaction. Similarly, Klaassen points to clarity as a "pre-condition for interaction to take place" (2001, p 169) in her investigation of a Dutch English-medium engineering programme.

Many lecturers for whom internationalisation seems to be synonymous with English-medium instruction in an ELF setting (Jensen and Thøgersen, 2011) are simply unaware of the implications and thus tend to have a rather simplistic view on the changed educational environment. One reason for this biased view might be that "content teachers simply do not have the linguistic abilities to include language learning in their lessons" (Troia, 2013, p 28). For this reason they tend to downplay linguistic input and place particular emphasis on "content rather than form" (Cullen, 2002, p 120).

Not surprisingly, then, the general stance taken by most lecturers teaching in an International Classroom is that there are no significant differences in their overall teaching performance (Soren, 2013, p 21) and that their English language skills only need a bit of a refreshment, dismissing all other skills as secondary (Klaassen, 2008, 2003). Interestingly, and in contrast to the perception of faculty, a number of studies identified the relevance for additional pedagogical skills for internationalist teachers (Ball and Lindsay, 2013; Doiz et al., 2011; Vinke, 1995). In this context, it was found that in addition to lack of accuracy of linguistic form (Pilkinton-Pihko, 2010), lecturers also had a restricted vocabulary (Vinke, 1995), and displayed a

substantial decrease in redundancy, clarity and accuracy of expression and speech rate (Hellekjaer, 2010; Tange, 2010).

When reviewing the literature on EMI teachers' perceptions of their English skills and classroom management, a rather diversified picture emerges. While some studies identified that lecturers assess their language proficiency in English as native-like without being aware of the poor evaluations received by their students (Vinke, 1995), others point to an acute awareness of their language limitations (Airey, 2011; Tange, 2010). Further, it was noted that teachers perceive the need to invest more time for preparation and classroom management (Gürtler and Kronewald, 2013; Vinke et al., 1998) or seem to predominantly draw on formal task-oriented communication (Thøgersen and Airey, 2011; Costa and Coleman, 2013); others again found that teaching styles result in more monologic stretches, fewer interactions and less humour (Francomacaro, 2011; Tange, 2010; Suviniitty, 2010; Airey and Linder, 2008; Klaassen, 2008; Airey and Linder, 2006; Sercu, 2004a), or revealed a widespread lack of awareness for the need of pedagogical support in English-medium instruction or found a general acceptance for non-standard linguistic forms (Francomacaro, 2011).

To improve English-medium instruction, heightened awareness of the complex interplay of language, culture and pedagogical skills needs to be engendered within European higher education institutions and as Klaassen puts it “English language proficiency is therewith an appetiser for the improvement of lecturing behaviour relevant for an English-medium instructional setting” (2008, p 41).

## 4.5 Teachers and intercultural education

Although international and intercultural education are usually linked (Cushner, 2013; Knight, 2008; James, 2005b; Gudykunst and Mody, 2002), and both concepts seem to be frequently associated with International Classrooms, they are, as Crichton points out “neither synonymous nor clearly understood” (2004, p 3). Understandably, and in stark contrast to the non-Anglophone world, where a strong focus is placed on teachers' capacity to use English effectively in the International Classroom, the research community in English-speaking countries is mainly preoccupied with intercultural learning and teaching. The Anglophone community not only considers academic staff as “core players in the process” (Teekens, 2000, p 26),

but it also holds internationalist teachers responsible for creating conditions that favour intercultural learning (DeJaeghere and Zhang, 2008; Killick and King, 2007; Carroll and Ryan, 2005).

Arguably, much has been written on the necessity to incorporate an intercultural dimension in the internationalisation of learning and teaching (Knight, 2004; Crichton et al., 2004; Teekens, 2000; Knight, 1994). And still, up to now, a vast majority of European faculty tends to solely attribute the responsibility for an inclusive International Classroom to the willingness and ability of internationally mobile students to “adapt to the cultural context in which they are studying” (Bodycott and Walker, 2000, p 92). Thereby, they ignore the fact that a self-reflective and adaptive process is also required from their part. Such an attitude seems to be much in line with the add-on approach where “meeting the needs is restricted to behavioural change, not one that challenges entrenched attitudes of lecturers” (Troia, 2013, p 24).

Research into the contact hypothesis<sup>3</sup> or intergroup contact theory (Pettigrew, 1998; Allport, 1979; Amir, 1969) has shown that intercultural encounters do not automatically improve intergroup contact, nor is intergroup contact alone a sufficient means for reducing intergroup biases (Pettigrew and Tropp, 2000). Rather, for intercultural groups to be effective, the intergroup experience needs to be reflected to transform the social experience of otherness into personally relevant learning experiences (Otten, 2003; Paige, 1986).

On a positive note, evidence suggests that the simplistic assumption that just by “changing the complexion of the population positive effects of internationalism has been achieved” (Hermans, 2005, p 2), has become more and more outdated. What is more, it was found that the “rather passive tolerance of exotic others” (Troia, 2013, p 31) is about to lessen. Such a change in mindset seems to be particularly gaining ground in Anglophone countries, gradually resulting in a more reflective and critical perspective among “internationalist teachers” who appear to become increasingly aware that “intercultural learning does not simply happen” (Teekens, 2003, p 110). Rather, it requires a learning environment where intercultural learning can flourish on the basis of institutional policies that allow for an across-the-curriculum culture

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<sup>3</sup>The contact hypothesis describes the effects of personal contact between members of different lingua-cultural groups on their prejudiced opinions and discriminatory behaviour (Forbes, 2004). Contemporary studies on higher education distinguish between the frequency of inter-ethnic contact (Chang et al., 2006) and their quality of contact (Saenz et al., 2007).

to unfold.

One indication for such a gradual attitudinal change is the growing concern for issues related to the concepts of IaH and IoC (for a more detailed account, see chapter 2) according to which “domestic teachers and students should be included in international programs as intercultural learners” (Otten, 2003, p 13), another one the call for culturally competent teachers as an ethical professional requirement, not just a personal choice (Rogers-Sirin and Sirin, 2009). However, even in Australia, a country where international and intercultural concerns have been on the teaching agenda for many years<sup>4</sup>, Gallagher recalls that teachers still “have a long way to go” (2002, p 4) to successfully implement international, intercultural and global perspectives in International Classrooms.

What is more, an “asymmetric intercultural communication” (Otten, 2003, 2000, p 17) serves as a reminder that academic staff draw on substantial insider knowledge and are perfectly familiar with domestic academic conventions while only few students new to their campus understand institutionalised patterns in terms of rules of appropriateness or codes of signification. This is why teachers have some sort of obligation to “identify and make explicit the local culture that prevails at the institution” (Schröder, 2001, p 50). This necessity is further reinforced by the often implicit linguistic frames and discursive repertoires of teachers which are frequently perceived by students from non-mainstream linguistic backgrounds as “impermeable and confusing structures” (Stevens et al., 2008, p 292).

To challenge myopic cultural perspectives, McLean and Ransom suggest culturally inclusive classroom practices that make faculty “aware of their own culturally influenced teaching and learning styles and ‘value add’ their teaching by explicitly sharing this ‘insider’ knowledge with their students” (2005, p 16). Such a culturally responsive classroom management should thus go beyond the lecturers’ ethnocentric frames of reference and incorporate awareness of international practices both in teaching and professional contexts (Chan, 2012; Leask, 2011; Weinstein et al., 2004). Arguably, a culturally-responsive approach to science instruction calls for a paradigm shift in the way ‘experts identities’ are perceived to open up “rigidly-bounded areas of ‘science’ or ‘language’ or ‘culture’ and take on interdisciplinary

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<sup>4</sup>Given that in Australia, education services rank as the third largest export earner (Foskett, 2010, p 85), commercialised student recruitment has become a big international business.

identities” (Stevens et al., 2008, p 291).

## 4.6 Teachers and change

“The profession of teaching requires two fields of expertise: that of the subject a teacher teaches and that of the science of teaching” (Gossman, 2008, p 166). In recent years, however, not least as a result of the growing complexity of multicultural higher education, the teaching portfolio has become increasingly diverse, designed to engage students with life-long learning (Knight and Yorke, 2013; Knapper and Cropley, 2000), global citizenship (Shiel, 2007; Bourn et al., 2006; Gacel-Avila, 2005), meta-cultural competence (Sharifian, 2009) and constructively aligned outcomes-based teaching results (Biggs and Tang, 2011). Hence, Barnett (2004; 2000) talks of the changing face of academia in an age of super-complexity, suggesting that the university has to deal with multiple competing narratives where trans-disciplinary teaching and learning needs to become the norm.

This paradigm shift not only changes higher education on a macro-level, but also implies change processes in education on a meso and micro-level, often leaving lecturers in an uncertainty of change (Fullan, 2001) where enhanced quality of education most probably “requires teachers to change their classroom practices, sometimes radically” (James, 2005c, p 105).

In an attempt to categorise academic staff’s responses to changing environments, Trowler identified four broad, but not mutually exclusive clusters which he named **sinking**, **swimming**, **coping** and **reconstructing** (1998, pp 114-126). While **sinking** basically represents mute acceptance of worsening job conditions that lead to intensification in workload, decline of resources, increase of student intake and general degradation of the labour process, a **swimming** strategy is employed in line with the institutional paradigm of change, which eventually results in an acceptance of the spirit of the school. Such a stance not only leads to “swimming” with the current transformations, it was also found that a number of academics thrive in this environment. **Coping** strategies often relate to administrative or other pressing demands which lead to retreat from innovation and are perceived as compromising professionalism. Consequently, a “working to rule” approach with minimal engagement to invest extra hours was found to be a frequent response.

What **sinking** and **coping** categories seem to share is “a strong sense of the ‘burden’ associated with quality monitoring” (Newton, 2002, p 15). The largest and most intriguing category though, is the one of **reconstruction** which faculty proactively engage in when they reinterpret and reconstruct policy on the ground, using strategies to effectively change institutional policies, sometimes resisting change, sometimes altering its direction. Interestingly, some academics seem to be firmly rooted in one of these four categories and have little awareness of the existence of the others (Curtis, 2005; Newton, 2002).

In line with the rapid increase of internationalisation efforts in tertiary education, there has been a considerable growth in the number of studies that investigate how teaching staff as practitioners, institutional policy makers and educational developers cope with an increasingly diverse student body in higher education (Sursock and Smidt, 2010; Turner and Robson, 2008; Trowler et al., 2005)

Where changes in teaching approaches take central stage, it becomes apparent that academics generally draw on three domains: firstly, the subject discipline, secondly, the conception of teaching, and thirdly, the reflected practice associated with teaching itself (Trowler and Cooper, 2002). This is what learning organisation literature calls “**personal mastery**” (Garcia-Morales et al., 2007; Senge, 2014) defined as the ability to “take account of the environment and work out what you as an individual can do to make things better - for yourself and for others” (Martin, 1999, p 52). This complexity makes clear that substantial curriculum development and changes or adaptations to teaching practices do not occur until academic staff are ready to actively implement and reflect on them (Clifford, 2009; Bell, 2004).

When relating these considerations to the internationalisation strategies outlined in chapter 2, it appears that teachers that are predominantly concerned with their expertise in the corresponding subject discipline are most likely to favour an add-on approach. For such academics, the top priority lies in creating disciplinary-relevant experiences as a basis for future professional careers. By contrast, those who also include the conception of teaching and the relevant know-how for efficient classroom management into their teaching practices tend to advocate an infusion approach while the last, and most probably smallest group that is also prepared to reflect on these practices most likely opts for a transformative strategy to internationalisation.

In this respect, beliefs related to both the respective discipline and its pedagogical

underpinnings tend to play a key role in determining the relevance of knowledge for a particular setting, and are hence in line with the lecturers' unique professional reality (Pajares, 1992) and their ability to perceive need for action to adopt change. Further, it appears that the conception of teaching or pedagogical stance of academic staff not only emerges from socialised learning experiences, but is often an implicit, taken-for granted notion that determines the willingness of academics to take up new ways of operating as teachers and change recurrent practices, codes of significations, or even their personal and professional identity (Savin-Baden et al., 2008; Trowler et al., 2005; Trowler and Cooper, 2002).

In turn, reflective practice seems to lead to educational change for positive action (Ghaye, 2010; Loughran, 2002; Schön, 1983) or metalearning development (Linder et al., 1997), often by exploring “**learning spaces**” which can be physical or mental and allow for reflection and critical exploration of one's unique learning and teaching position. In such spaces staff first tend to “recognize their perceptions of learning, teaching and knowing” (Savin-Baden et al., 2008, p 132) and then decide on the context-specific significance of adopting new approaches to their teaching and learning repertoire. On a more critical note, Green & Whitsed (2013) in line with Pollard (2002) claim that too often reflection does not lead to learning but “operates rather to legitimize self-referential, uncritical practices” (Green and Whitsed, 2013, p 159).

## 4.7 Teachers and pedagogy

Stressing the classical dichotomy of science and scholarship and side-lining a broader approach that includes concepts such as academic research or post-academic science (Østreng, 2006), researchers in hard science seem reluctant to accept that all fields share one common methodological approach, namely interpretation. Despite the development of a different set of interpretative matrices, both ends of the disciplinary spectrum tend to appeal to intuition as a basis for academic judgement (Shay, 2003, p 95).

According to Kuhn (1970), the way how scientists judge contributions and agree on their reliability and universal truth results in a shared perception of the world, leading to visible outcomes and considerable headway in science in general. By doing

so, hard scientists seldom venture into foreign research territory, mainly restricting themselves to objective issues that are more easily tractable.

With this knowledge in mind, it is not surprising that science teachers heavily rely on their epistemological coding when it comes to pedagogical practice that informs their classroom management in International Classrooms. Lecturers most frequently draw on their own preferred learning modality, internalised throughout their own school careers (Bogod, 1998). By doing so, they differ in their understanding of what lens to adopt; the one that allows a view on “what the **student** does”<sup>5</sup> or on “what the **teacher** does”<sup>6</sup> (Biggs and Tang, 2011, pp 18-20).

While the first approach is mainly concerned with transmitting information where teachers are “let off the hook” with regard to accountability and the blame is placed on the students’ deficits (Samuelowicz, 1987), the latter focuses on a deficit model of teaching where lecturers are in need of sharpening their pedagogic skills to come to an understanding that instead of confronting students with “loads of information at too great a rate for many of them to handle” (Biggs and Tang, 2011, p 146), they would be better advised to obtain an “armoury of teaching skills” (Biggs and Tang, 2011, p 19) that allows them to get the message across, however abstract it may be.

In other words, while the *blame-the-student* approach concentrates on knowledge being transmitted from expert teacher to inexperienced learner without consideration of the teaching process, the *blame-the-teacher* approach focuses on the teachers’ ability to get complex understandings and concepts across. Having said that, it is important to stress that Biggs (1999) refers to both models as “additive” without any systematic expert teaching approaches that concentrate on “what the student does; on what learning is or is not” (Biggs, 1999, p 63). This implies that lecturers should ideally draw on a “route map” toward reflective teaching (Biggs and Tang, 2011, pp 17-20) and reflect on three levels, namely what the **student** is, what the **teacher** does or what the **student** does. Such a systematic and strategic approach seek to

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<sup>5</sup>In this “*blame-the-student* theory of learning”, the teachers’ responsibility is to be the content expert and to expound this expertise clearly to the students. As such “variability in student learning is accounted for by individual differences between students” (Biggs, 1999, p 62).

<sup>6</sup>Still conceived as a transmission process, this *blame-the-teacher* theory of learning puts the responsibility of a successful learning experience on the teachers who need to possess a “bag of competences” (Biggs, 1999, p 63) to ensure effective classroom management.

bring about conceptual change in students' understanding of the world by placing them and their learning experiences in the spotlight (Trigwell and Prosser, 2004; Biggs, 1999; Prosser and Trigwell, 1999, 1998). This shift in focus from teaching to learning goes hand in hand with the distinction of teacher-focused and learner-focused strategies identified by Prosser & Trigwell (1998). Traditionally, lecturers teaching in hard disciplines such as engineering tend to be more inclined to apply a teacher-centred approach, whereas teachers socialised in the soft sciences were found to take a more student-centred teaching perspective (Lueddeke, 2003).

Since students entering an International Classroom come from increasingly diversified socio-linguistic and academic backgrounds, it seems that such a diverse student body is best approached by culturally responsive teaching drawing on inclusive and student-centred strategies (Chan, 2012; Gay, 2010; Brown, 2007; De Vita and Case, 2003) and a “pedagogy of recognition”<sup>7</sup>. (Crosbie, 2013; Nixon and Walker, 2004; Nixon et al., 1997) sometimes also referred to as “international pedagogy” (Eaves, 2011; Hellstén, 2008). The connection between a more student-centred approach and pedagogic experience is also in line with what Dreyfus & Dreyfus (2000) identified in their five step progress model of teacher development. They found novice teachers to be initially teacher-centred and claim that more experienced academics gradually develop a student-centred perspective in the course of their teaching career. In an attempt to provide some key design elements of student-centred higher education classrooms, Hoidn (2014) stresses the following concepts for a successful contemporary educational approach:

- 1 relevant course content and objectives
- 2 flexible course structures
- 3 activating learning activities and course material
- 4 established routine and clearly negotiated norms
- 5 challenging assignments
- 6 formative and summative assessment

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<sup>7</sup>By questioning the rather ethnocentric western didacticism (De Vita and Case, 2003), this new form of pedagogy seeks to offer a genuinely inclusive curriculum by taking a holistic teaching perspective of an international pedagogical approach.

Although such measures sound reasonable as well as easily implementable, critical voices (Otten, 2003) claim that the level of tolerance to otherness can quickly vanish if teaching requires more time, energy and patience. An increased workload might not only restrict the willingness to change pedagogical approaches, it is likely to even harden entrenched, often deficiency-oriented teaching methods that are rooted in assimilationist models of pedagogy (Li and Kaye, 1998). Further challenges for such constructivist classroom approaches lie in the class size, academic culture, lack of flexibility, experience, and reflective and critical stances taken by both instructors and students (Hoidn, 2014).

In view of the many challenges involved in a shift of teaching paradigm, it stands to reason that “a parochial learning environment creates a no-risk climate among teachers” (Otten, 2003, p 15) and that entrenched “practice architectures”<sup>8</sup> (Kemmis and Mutton, 2012; Kemmis, 2009) are rather reluctantly changed. In many instances, teachers tend to stick to their ingrained teaching patterns (Chua and Dziallas, 2012) where they happily take the role of the “**Sage-on-the-Stage**” (King, 1993), the content authority that traditionally has all the knowledge and transmits it to the students. In recent years the paradigm shift in teaching practices from an instructional to a learner-centred approach has stressed the constructivist facilitator role of a teacher as the “**Guide-on-the-Side**” with active and collaborative learning approaches that move the classroom culture towards students’ construction of knowledge (Stewart and Walker, 2005; Northedge, 2003).

The newly emerging concept of the “**Meddler-in-the-Middle**” introduced by McWilliam as a combination of pedagogy and reflective inquiry, is a metaphor that describes the teachers’ dedication to a “**low threat, high challenge**” pedagogy (2009, p 290) that seeks to make active student engagement the norm in their classrooms to prepare them for professional careers in which they will perform fewer routine tasks and hence need to draw more on their creative potential and adaptive problem-solving ability (see also section 4.8).

This might be a promising and holistic approach for internationalist teachers. By embracing the identity of a “**Meddler-in-the Middle**” who takes on the role

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<sup>8</sup>They are embedded within a wider set of meta-practices and “densely interwoven patterns of saying, doing and relating that enable and constrain each new interaction, giving familiar practices their characteristic shapes’ (Kemmis, 2009, p 463).

as involved co-learner and co-producer in the learning process, an internationalist teacher knows “what content is considered worthy of engagement, how the value of the learning product is to be assessed, and who the rightful assessor is to be” (McWilliam, 2009, p 287). Thereby, students are invited to become “prod-users in action” (McWilliam et al., 2008, p 229) who dynamically process disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge, rather than being passive recipients of the knowledge of academic staff (Hearn, 2005).

What can be said with a certain degree of confidence is that the “**Sage-on-the-Stage**” approach is no longer regarded as an effective methodology of instruction in today’s collaborative, interconnected and information intense world. Although it still appears to be an efficient means of putting information across to a large audience, it has generally given way to the concept of the “**Guide-on-the-Side**” (Williams and Goldberg, 2005), an approach that will most certainly fit in well with the one of the “**Meddler-in-the Middle**”. The latter positions teachers and students in a mutually constructed nexus of educational practice<sup>9</sup> within in which they act as “co-directors and co-editors of their social world” (McWilliam, 2008, p 263). The current trend in higher education research which represents a shift from cognitive and social constructivism towards a situative perspective where knowledge is seen as an integral component of context, culture and product, further underlines the significance of student-centred learning environments (Hoidn, 2014).

With this context in mind, it is reasonable to assess how academic staff act and interact in culturally-diverse classroom settings where learning opportunities have to be created that foster self-regulated learning and conceptual understanding. What is more, cognitively activating teaching and learning activities need to be embedded in a supportive nexus of educational practice that cultivates rapport, enthusiasm and informality (Murray, 2007, 1997). In view of the multitude of teaching challenges faced by academic staff, the question arises whether the time-consuming investment for a change in classroom management really pays off and how pressing the need for such a structural change may be. Below, a number of reasons are given that point to the significance of a reflective stance in relation to contemporary teaching approaches in international higher education classrooms.

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<sup>9</sup>For a detailed definition of this concept look at section 6.5.

## 4.8 Conceptual gap

Since the advent of the new millennium, voices have become louder that just as we have begun to grasp the requirements for knowledge workers in the Information Age, this era is drawing to an end. Interestingly, it seems that we are approaching a far more complex era, one that is referred to as the “Conceptual Age” (Pink, 2005)<sup>10</sup>. Pink believes that the prevailing left-brain domination of logic, linear and reasoned thinking will soon be replaced by this brand-new age with key properties such as comprehensive and contextual thinking-based approaches rapidly to emerge. This assumption is reinforced by today’s tendency of outsourcing and automating left-brain functions such as linear and analytical work flows (Franzese, 2013) and by the high appreciation assigned to T-shaped knowledge<sup>11</sup> and holistic solutions.

Against this background, it seems even more likely that we are entering a new world of “right brain dominance” where qualities like inventiveness and empathy will dominate a world that increasingly acknowledges creativity and innovation as a source of business value (Johnston and Bate, 2013). Key issues in this context are no longer questions as to “how do I get from point A to point B”, but a keen interest in how these points interrelate and enhance the utility of X, Y and Z.

This societal evolution seems to be driven by three overarching forces, namely, abundance, Asia and automation, all elements that facilitate the development from an information base to a conceptual base (Pink, 2005). The urgent demand for fresh approaches such as “**high concept**”<sup>12</sup> and “**high touch**”<sup>13</sup>, all the more manifests that the upcoming “Conceptual Age” no longer requires people who “live in the sequential, logical and analytical order of information age, but rather a nonlinear, intuitive and holistic world” (Shuaib and Enoch, 2013, p 56).

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<sup>10</sup>By some researchers it is referred to as the “Innovation Age” (Scatliff and Meier, 2012; Aburdene, 2005), “Dream Society” (Jensen, 1999) or ‘Dream Society 2’ (Jensen, 2005).

<sup>11</sup>T-shaped experts are identified as people possessing both functional/disciplinary expertise and ability to apply knowledge across different contexts (Barile et al., 2012). Such knowledge allows for deep problem solving in the relevant home discipline as well as interaction with and insights into a wide range of disciplines and functional areas.

<sup>12</sup>The ability or capacity to detect patterns and opportunities, to create artistic and emotional beauty, to craft a satisfying narrative, and to combine seemingly unrelated ideas into something new (Pink, 2005, p 51).

<sup>13</sup>The ability to empathise with others, to understand the subtleties of human interaction, to find joy in one’s self and elicit it in others, and to stretch beyond yourself in pursuit of purpose and meaning (Pink, 2005, p 70).

To successfully navigate the “Conceptual Age”, a number of innovative skills are needed that go far beyond those required for the Information Age. Two key competencies embrace that of “expert thinkers” who can creatively meet unprecedented challenges and that of “complex communicators” who can effectively analyse, clarify, persuade, and convey multiple and conflicting interpretations of information, suggesting that creative thinking will become at least as important as critical thinking. The capability to use English as a means of self-expression, but also the ability to make powerful use of a range of literacies that allow its speakers to “handle disciplinary variation in academic discourse” (Bhatia, 2002, p 27) appear to serve as a key determinant of the globally diverse, multilingual enterprises many future graduates will work for.

For Pink (2005), the future belongs to the creative “idea hamsters”, to those who predominantly draw on the right side of the brain. He convincingly argues that the new era needs creators, meaning makers and pattern recognizers that are geared towards a more integrative, empathic, intuitive and non-linear thinking. In other words, the reductive and intensively analytical products of the knowledge workers of the Information Age are increasingly becoming obsolete, not least due to globalisation, outsourcing and technological achievements (Franzese, 2013). What counts today is the ability to create meaningful narratives and synthesise the seemingly divergent into a cohesive whole. The increasing demand for such creative competencies points to the shortcomings of a narrowly linear mindset.

This implies that HEI in general and teachers in particular need to adapt to these changed circumstances. Understanding the students’ demographics will soon become the key challenge for teachers and the ability to bond with the so-called “Generation Y”<sup>14</sup> will certainly be a critical factor of success.

Not surprisingly, then, this new era is one in which “knowledge, learners and learning are profoundly different, and it is a difference for which our educational institutions have been, and still are thoroughly unprepared” (McWilliam and Daw-

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<sup>14</sup>Generation Y (1978-1994) is described as creative, ambitious and difficult to manage (Sheahan, 2005) as “always in a hurry to get things done in a short term” (Tulgan, 2009, p 102). This generation, also referred to as “millennials” (Parment, 2013, p 190), nexters, Generation www, the Digital Generation, Generation E, Echo Boomers and N-Gens (Martin, 2005, p 40) has brought its values to educational and professional practices, and by doing so, has been modifying “attitudes towards careers” (Parment, 2011, p 134).

son, 2008, p 2). By indicating how content and learning are constantly being transformed, McWilliam & Dawson warn that universities need to adapt to a generation that derives meaning from context “rather than cling to the wreckage of traditional instructive content” (2008, p 1).

Although context is shifting so rapidly and unpredictably today, it still seems that an overwhelming majority of teaching institutions hold on to entrenched structures and pedagogical principles pertinent to the Industrial and Information Ages (Philip, 2007). The more obvious this becomes, the louder will be the call that schools and higher education institutions need to react to these transformations and find suitable strategies capable of leading “the way into the future rather than constantly reacting in a limited way to the ever-increasing complex demands made by students” (Huitt, 2007, p 10).

This is where the present study comes into play. In light of the current realities with regard to globalisation and internationalisation forces within HEI and in view of new requirements set forth by generation Y and the upcoming “Conceptual Age”, it appears vital to understand what affordances are perceived by lecturers teaching in an International Classroom. By pointing to their perceptual processes, it is sought to identify those ingredients that allow internationalist teachers to successfully navigate the “Conceptual Age” and cope with a student body that not only becomes increasingly diverse but also belongs to a generation that is “difficult to deal with” (Cairncross and Buultjens, 2007, p 5). Since exponential change is currently testing our education systems to the limits, the biggest challenges for teaching staff are yet about to come.

In providing a process-oriented model grounded in the data, this study seeks to shed light on how teachers perceive, act upon and capitalise affordances within the nexus of educational practice in which they operate. It is certainly true that academics, above all, count among those stakeholders that will have to possess proficient skills to navigate the “Conceptual Age” and effectively deal with the Generation Y. Lecturers of computer science are certainly bound to keep abreast of the times. But when they also teach an International Classroom and manage a multicultural student body, they require a skill set that transcends culturally framed subjectivities to ensure that all stakeholders develop an “international mindset” (Paige and Mestenhauser, 1999, p 502) and engage in critical and reflective academic debate.

To acquire a knowledge base that goes beyond disciplinary boundaries, internationalist teachers need to perceive certain “invitational opportunities”<sup>15</sup> that “determine if and how a particular learning behavior could be enacted within a given context” (Kirschner et al., 2004, p 14). By rendering the implicit more explicit, this research is intended to contribute to the affordances debate in that it offers an ICA model in the constructivist grounded theory tradition.

## 4.9 Chapter summary

This chapter sought to define today’s prerequisites for lecturers teaching in an International Classroom and capture the complexity involved with regard to educational change processes by relating them to teachers’ perceptions of international and intercultural education, English-medium instruction and pedagogical practices. Further, the conceptual gap identified throughout this research endeavour was outlined.

The increasing demand for broad-minded individuals that are able to “initiate groundbreaking changes in economic and life-crucial areas” (Marek, 2014, p 114) has given rise to the “Conceptual Age” within which “Generation Y” seems to be best prepared to navigate this highly complex and globally interconnected world. It was argued that the digital generation has learning preferences, expectations and needs that differ widely from those of their teachers, raising the question as to what extent teaching staff is capable of perceiving their increasingly diverse needs. This is all the more relevant in an International Classroom where additional factors such as English-medium instruction, differing socio-linguistic socialisations and learning backgrounds come into play. Teachers’ possibilities for goal-oriented action are illustrated in chapter 5 which is devoted to the concept of affordances. Fundamental properties of affordances are defined in line with its many application fields and considered from an ecological perspective.

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<sup>15</sup>The concept of affordances can be explained in multiple ways; one of which is the reference to invitational opportunities (Lloyd, 2010). For a more detailed account of this concept, see chapter 5.

## Chapter 5

# Ecology and the concept of affordances

### 5.1 Introduction

Although abundant literature exists on English-medium instruction in an ELF setting and perceptions of faculty with regard to classroom management in an L2 environment, there is a distinct void in higher education and sociolinguistic literature as to studies that examine social affordances in an International Classroom. Since the main purpose of this study is to address this gap by shedding light on how teaching in such a setting takes place through perception of, and interaction with affordances, the following section sketches the concept of affordances and its underlying ecological ideas in more detail.

Apparently dissatisfied with the inappropriate frame of reference that physics could bring to bear on visual perception, Gibson (1977) introduced the affordances concept to explain how inherent action possibilities in the environment are available to an individual, independent of their ability to perceive them. Such a dynamic interaction of perception and action is embedded in an ecological framework where animal-environment reciprocity takes central stage. To gain a clearer understanding of the impact of such an ecological position, the following presents a brief overview of the concept of ecology from a historical perspective and discusses the fields of application with regard to affordances.

## 5.2 Ecology from a historical perspective

The concept of ecology as the “study of organism-environment relations” (Haley, 2011, p 37) goes back to the German evolutionist Haeckel (1873) who regarded organisms in their environment as inseparable parts of a whole. This notion was taken up by psychologists (around 1950) as a theory of perception who, unhappy with contemporary approaches and influenced by Gestalt theorists (Wertheimer, 1938; Vygotsky, 1965; Lewin, 1931), the tradition of pragmatism (Mead, 1969; Dewey et al., 1917), and symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969; Cooley, 1926) started to embrace a more dynamic view of the world by incorporating holistic approaches to the study of development.

Particularly with the advent of the theoretical orientation of symbolic interactionism (around the 1930s), the reciprocal nature of person-social environmental relationships gained remarkable momentum. As a result, humans were increasingly understood as creators of a joint symbolic world, shaped by their socially constructed environment (Stryker, 1980; Blumer, 1986, 1969). This new form of social constructivism placed particular focus on the way people take on the attitudes of the groups to which they belong “in their immediate and broader cultural environment” (Van Leeuwen, 2007). The view that humans are not just passive recipients of influences of their social environment to which they merely respond has further prepared the ground for an “ecological turn” in research.

The growing perception of this interplay also explains why research paradigms that had largely and consistently dominated educational research were suddenly critically scrutinised. Positivist perspectives and value-neutral and context-free research that were believed to be unshakable values suddenly started losing their previously distinctive appeal. Understandably, then that, in such an intellectual climate, the ecological outlook was rapidly gaining ground, further intensified by the constantly growing urge for social relevance in research.

Thus, in this line of reasoning, Gibson (1979; 1977; 1961; 1955) was the first psychologist that focused on direct perception of learning by providing an ecological alternative to cognitive approaches. For some (Reed, 1997; Reed and Jones, 1979) this was considered as the ecological revolution to psychology. While some researchers like Gibson himself or Reed (1980) were more concerned with the physical

environment, others placed a stronger focus on the social context (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). Despite those differences, however, the major emphasis on this reciprocal perspective still seems to be a key aspect for all ecological theories.

In a similar vein, the sociologist Giddens (1984) points to the mutually constitutive character of structure and agency. It was found that the synthesis of human agency and social structures has much in common with the mutual and reciprocal notion of affordances brought forward by Gibson (Kugler and Shaw, 1990). One of the central ideas of this reciprocity then is the close link between theory and action, translated in the **affordances concept** which describes the possibilities for goal-oriented actions in a meaningful environment. Similarly, Giddens (1984) sought to explain the linkage between the individual and the structures within which he or she operates to analyse social change. In Giddens's **structuration theory** (1984) the close interrelatedness of agency and structure forms part of a duality in a sense that "whatever happened would not have happened if that individual had not intervened" (Giddens, 1984, p 9). He points to both intended and unintended consequences of the agent's action and outlines "practical consciousness"<sup>1</sup> as a crucial factor for social interaction.

After a brief sketch of the historical development of the concept of ecology and some parallels drawn between Giddens' structuration theory and Gibson's affordances theory as to the compatibility of the duality of structure concept and the notions of mutuality and reciprocity brought forward by Gibson (Costall et al., 1995a), the following section provides an overview of its fields of applications.

### 5.3 Affordances and fields of applications

The continuing discussions of how to describe the notion of affordance have created a variety of both partly overlapping and confusing definitions, none of which is consistently used (Singleton and Aronin, 2007; Norman, 2004; Scarantino, 2003; Gaver, 1991; Greeno, 1994; Gibson, 1977). And even though affordance is a term commonly deployed in contemporary sociolinguistic studies, its meaning is rarely

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<sup>1</sup>Practical consciousness can be understood as the agent's in-depth knowledge of tacit social rules reproduced in the social structures of everyday life which cannot be expressed by means of "discursive expressions" (Giddens, 1984, pp xxiii).

specified to the extent of furnishing an explanation of what exactly is provided by this notion (Aronin and Singleton, 2012).

Since the definition of affordances that is most frequently referenced goes back to its founding father, it might be advisable to explore his underlying assumptions when coining this concept and proposing the following definition (Gibson, 1986, 1979, p 127):

The affordances of the environment are what it offers the animal, what it provides or furnishes, either for good or ill. The verb to afford is found in the dictionary, but the noun affordance is not. I have made it up. I mean by it something that refers to both the environment and the animal in a way that no existing term does. It implies the complementarity of the animal and the environment.

The complexity of the affordances concept is well reflected by the fact that even his own understanding of the term evolved over time (Jones, 2003). Yet, Gibson's original understanding of the theory of direct-perception seems a useful place to start. The following section introduces the Gibsonian perspective of a concept that is based on social ecological realism and elaborates on both its potentials and limitations for studies interested in social activity.

### 5.3.1 Ecological psychology

Initially, an affordance was specified as a “combination of the properties of its substance and its surfaces taken with reference to an animal” (Gibson, 1977, p 77). Given that in Gibson's understanding an organism and its environment complement each other, his claim that studies on the organism should be conducted in its natural environment rather than in isolation is just a logical consequence.

In the Gibsonian perspective of perceptual psychology there are basically three fundamental properties of an affordance:

- 1) an affordance exists relative to the action capabilities of a particular actor
- 2) the existence of an affordance is independent of the actor's ability to perceive it while the ability to perceive may well depend on the experiences and cultural socialisation of the actor

3) an affordance does not change in line with the needs and aims of the actor (also see McGrenere and Ho, 2000, p 179).

Strikingly, Gibson's stance has been heavily criticised for its emphasis upon fixed and pre-existing action opportunities that just wait for the right kind of animal to come their way. It is argued that such an animal-centric perspective not only rejects any social dimension but, what appears to be even more problematic, without the slightest attention paid to the social world, such a view most likely only applies to the most primitive kinds of behaviour. In view of a discipline that has its roots in the naturalistic sciences, it seems to me that Gibson's concerns and reservations of embedding a relativist dimension outweighed the need for a relational perspective of action, perception and interaction. This might partly explain why Gibson does not take any cultural variations into account. Such a perspective also adds explanatory power as to why the idea of socially constructed affordances seems to be entirely ignored, just like the question of how the social construction of a physical environment influences the practices afforded by this particular setting. The fact that humans are regarded as just another animal species, which in itself reflects ignorance of cultural and social realities, is increasingly perceived as a fundamental limitation of the theory of affordances in the Gibsonian tradition. Quite rightly, some authors raise criticism with regard to the lacking links between action, perception and interaction (Valenti and Gold, 1991) or the neglect of the role of language in social life (Schmitt, 1987; Noble, 1981).

Another issue that seems to play a marginal role in the original conception is the one of learning. The question of how exactly people learn to perceive a new affordance is basically avoided (Kaptelinin, 2006). In an attempt to fill this gap, his wife Eleanor Gibson (Gibson and Pick, 2003) devoted some research to perceptual infant learning, asserting that affordances do not automatically present themselves to the actor, rather they need to be discovered. Yet, perceptual analysis about how adults learn to perceive opportunities for action, be it through undertaking collective actions or individual discovery, is given by neither of them. In other words, insufficient research has been reported on how actors acquire the ability to directly perceive new affordances and how they get replaced by old ones (Kaptelinin, 2013).

In order to make the concept applicable to the social environment as well, it

would have to be enriched by social structures and systems that both enable and constrain human actions. Consequently, a number of scientists (Good, 2007; Schmidt, 2007; Hodges and Baron, 2007; Costall et al., 1995b) sought to acknowledge the role of interaction and refrain from a static picture of a passive receiver.

Since its inception in 1977, this hotly debated concept has influenced a wide range of disciplines including human-computer interaction (HCI) (Pols, 2012; Kirschner et al., 2004; Gaver, 1991; Greeno, 1994; Norman, 1988), design (Kannengiesser and Gero, 2012; Norman, 2002), robotics (Montesano et al., 2008), neuroscience (Humphreys, 2006), and, most recently, also language learning (Järvinen, 2009; Harjanne and Tella, 2007; Tella, 2005), and ecology of language (Hornberger and Hult, 2008; Blackledge, 2008; Creese et al., 2008; Scarantino, 2003; Hornberger, 2002; Mufwene, 2001). Thus, it is only logical that interpretations of this notion are becoming increasingly diverse, extending well beyond the original Gibsonian meaning. One field where the theory of affordances has proven particularly useful is the one of product design and human-computer interaction. Arguably, this is a broad research area with an entirely different focus than the one of socio-linguistics. But given that cognitive usability approaches of HCI have given rise to a blossoming research agenda which deserves closer attention, the next section will look at it in more detail.

### 5.3.2 Human-computer interaction

Building on the initial concept of affordances, the cognitive scientist and usability engineer Norman (2002; 1988) further develops this notion in the context of user-centred design. Since his main concern is to manipulate and design the environment so that utility can be perceived easily (McGrenere and Ho, 2000), he started to apply the concept to everyday artefacts, leaving aside what he deems secondary, such as issues like aesthetics. Hence his main focus was to investigate those factors that are decisive for the perception of affordances.

By linking it firmly to the experiences and past knowledge of an actor, Norman (1988) defines affordance as both an action possibility and the way that it is conveyed to the user of the object. As such he deviates from Gibson's original conception in that he differs between actual and perceived properties of an affordance. From

such a standpoint, the agent is not just a mere observer, but rather an actor who seeks “to find out what already exists” (Shotter, 1983, p 20). In doing so, he/she discovers what is “made possible and facilitated and what is made difficult and inhibited”(Bearne and Kress, 2001, p 91). Such perceived affordances then arise from cultural, logical and physical constraints.

Interestingly, just like Gibson’s interpretation of the concept, also Norman’s understanding of affordances has evolved over time. When he introduced affordances to the design community in 1988, he referred to both the possibilities for action that are provided to the actor and the way how such an “offering”(McGrenere and Ho, 2000, p 6) is perceived by the actor. Eleven years later, Norman (1999) made clear that when he had talked about affordances, he actually referred to “perceived affordances”. To avoid further misunderstandings, he started to describe “real affordances” in the Gibsonian tradition and “perceived affordances” as an action that users perceive as possible which might either be real or not presupposing context, aims, and past experiences.

In a third step, Norman (2010; 2008) drew a clear line between **real** and **perceived** affordances and the information about them which he then called “**signifiers**”. A signifier can be understood as some sort of indicator, some “signal in the physical or social world that can be interpreted meaningfully” (Norman, 2008, p 18).

This perspective according to which design is the information that specifies a set of affordances (Gaver, 1991) is an interesting avenue to explore. Arguably, research on affordance-driven design is heavily biased towards the design of physical artefacts. Yet, in view of a broader conceptualisation of design, one that incorporates also classroom design, the following model might have the potential to address issues related to psychological and social affordances. In the following, I seek to identify some affordances as they come with an International Classroom and position them within the descriptions-of-affordances model (Pols, 2012) outlined in figure 5.1.

### Descriptions-of-Affordances Model

Despite varying views on affordances, it is widely acknowledged that they exist independently of perception. Such a perspective presupposes that affordances are only

waiting to be “picked up” (Gibson, 1966, p 50). However, not all action possibilities are directly perceivable, nor are they perceived in the same ways by all individuals. This is why in Pols’ affordances model (2012, pp 113-125) perception is tightly linked to the prior experiences made by the actors. By acknowledging that all artefacts offer opportunities for action, she categorises affordances into four groups of complexity. These various levels address the question of what kinds of descriptions can be applied to what kinds of affordances.

Figure 5.1 demonstrates the interplay of affordances, action theory and required knowledge for the intended action.

The descriptions-of-affordances model (Pols, 2012, p 120)		
Affordance	Action Theory	Required Knowledge
<b>Opportunity for manipulation</b>	basic action	low cognition neuropsychological
<b>Opportunity for effect</b>	action involving some effect or consequence	neuropsychological cultural knowledge
<b>Opportunity for use</b>	plan	mental models for putting plan into practice
<b>Opportunity for activity</b>	social action	abstract institutional and social knowledge

Figure 5.1: Descriptions-of-Affordances Model (Pols, 2012)

While **opportunities for manipulation** refer to the interaction of physical body affordances and the physical environment, **opportunities for effect** are characterised by actions that can be described with regard to their consequences. By gaining knowledge about the mechanisms of action and effect, actors learn how to act upon such opportunities. The **opportunities for use** relate to multiple actions that actors can engage in. These actions can either be internalised or newly implemented. The most complex set of affordances is what Pols (2012) calls **opportunities for activity**.

**tunities for activity.** This form of high-level affordances mainly embraces a social action which is intentional under the terms of its social consequences and requires abstract, institutional and social knowledge.

Using e-readers as an example, Smith et al (2013) identified action opportunities in line with the corresponding knowledge required to perceive the set of affordances of artefacts at each level of description.

- a) **opportunity for manipulation:** turning on the device, pressing a button
- b) **opportunity for effect:** change the font, colour, highlight, bookmark
- c) **opportunity for use:** installing a book
- d) **opportunity for activity:** collaborating with other readers via social bookmarking

While Smith et al (2013) successfully illustrated how a digital artefact can be positioned within this model, it might prove difficult to position social practices and activities within this model and demonstrate how social agents teaching in a Nexus of Educational Practice react on the four different forms of opportunities for action. Although this model provides an important starting place to examine physical artefacts and identify what knowledge the artefact user would need to perceive affordances under each kind of description, it has its limitations when it comes to the investigation of social action. In view of the huge variety of action possibilities that come with teaching in an International Classroom, the expanded notions of affordances need to be more clearly defined and categorised. In an attempt to deal with the complexity and variety of affordances, a short overview is provided below and the fields of application where the concept has proven to be valuable are explored in more detail.

## 5.4 Categorisation of affordances

Theoretical explorations of the concept of affordances were undertaken by numerous scientists of various disciplines (Kannengiesser and Gero, 2012; McGrenere and Ho, 2000; Gaver, 1991), expanding well beyond Gibson's initial categorisation affordances (Gibson, 1986). While Gibson used this concept merely in the context of

visual perception aimed at a physical phenomenon, voices grew louder to also study the relevance of agents' social contexts.

Hence, categorisations of affordances were made in accordance with their inherent nature, as to whether they are contingent or planned (Cameron, 2004), or in line with the ability to perceive an opportunity which seems to determine if an affordance is either weak or strong (Ohashi, 2005) and dormant or dominant (Tella, 2005). Then again, other scholars suggest a division between social and individual affordances (Good, 2007) or, in the tradition of multilingualism, differentiate between social language and individual language affordances (Aronin and Singleton, 2012). Utilising a language learning perspective, the features of linguistic affordances are described by Van Lier (2004, p 95) as "action potential" or "relation of possibility" between a person and the linguistic expression waiting to be picked up. Those affordances that are capitalised on help the learner to promote more action and engage in a higher degree of interactional flow.

To take this point a little further, Williams et al, in their attempt to identify affordances for learning, define them as "the capacity for effective action within context, and the capacity to weigh up, select, and if necessary create new affordances for new contexts" (2008, p 7). As such they form the basis for learning and for developing one's identity as a professional. A repertoire of affordances that makes it possible to recognise different requirements of different contexts and discourses is categorised as **meta-affordance**. The ability to create super-ordinate categories for related opportunities for action (see Williams et al, 2008, p 21) which can be seen as a strategic affordance helps to organise, group, and structure choices between action possibilities.

As can be seen from figure 5.2, a wide range of studies was identified that explore and categorise affordances and constraints in various sectors. In doing so, the concept of affordances is enriched and diverse social contexts of human action are explored. There is no attempt here to provide an exhaustive analysis of post-Gibsonian developments. Rather, the major fields of application that take an ecological approach to action and perception are introduced and the key literature referred to. This overview is unavoidably selective and incomplete since a comprehensive coverage of this broad field is beyond the scope of this study.

Despite the endeavour to identify and then classify opportunities for action, these

Fields of Application	Studies	Fields of Interest	Affordances
<b>Ecological Psychology</b>	Gibson, 1977; 1979; 1986; Bronfenbrenner; 1977, Stoffregen, 2000; Jones, 2003	action capabilities of the actor; ecological approach to perception and action	social, individual, physical
<b>Social Psychology &amp; Social Knowing</b>	Heft; 2003; Good, 2007	ecological psychology on context and culture	social, individual, cultural, psychological
<b>Product Design HCI &amp; Robotics</b>	Norman, 1988; 2002; 2004 Gaver, 1991; Greeno; 1994; McGrenere and Ho, 2000; Kirschner et al, 2004; Pols, 2012	user-centred design, mediated action approach, human-computer interaction, socio-technical interaction, human-virtual interaction	technological, social, educational, nested, sequential, functional, hidden, perceptible, false, real, perceived
<b>Educational Studies</b>	Watson, 2004; Williams et al; 2008; Gresalfi, 2009;	affordances, constraints and attunement in learning activity, pedagogy	affordances for learning and identity, meta-affordances; strategic, de-fordances, didactic, conflicting, cultural
<b>Ecology of Language</b>	Haugen, 1972; Scarantino, 2003 Hornberger, 2002, 2008; Blackledge, 2008 Creese, 2008	language policies, language ideology, ecology of language	probability, happening, goal, interactional, linguistic
<b>Foreign Language Teaching</b>	Harjane, Tella, 2007; Järvinen, 2009; Tella, 2005	didactics; content and language integrated learning; transition	transdisciplinary, learning, educational, social, linguistic pedagogical
<b>Second Language Aquisition &amp; Multilingualism</b>	van Lier, 2000, 2007, Segalowitz 2001; Lantolf; 2000; Dewaele, 2010; Smit, 2013 Kramsch; 2003; 2008; Singleton & Aronin 2007; Aronin & Singleton; 2012 Otwinowska-Kasztelanic 2009, 2011; Ziglari, 2012	multilingual contact; language awareness, action-based learning; social-interactive learning; educational linguistics	linguistic; societal language, individual language affordances; cognitive, evaluative, emotional, natural, cultural; direct, indirect

Figure 5.2: Disciplines and selected studies that focus on the theory of affordances (author's own illustration)

studies - most certainly because they have different objectives - remain insufficient to provide a holistic account of the “affordance landscape”. Some descriptions appear somewhat sketchy and overall lack the big picture, others are highly contextualised, conducted within the restricted confines of the specific area of research. For the purpose of this study, it is relevant to undertake a more systematic analysis of this concept.

Encouragingly, such a holistic overview has been attempted by Rozycki et al (2012, p 3) after conducting a thematic analysis of the literature. They developed a conceptual model (see figure 5.3) that consists of two overarching dimensions, namely the human and the environmental axes. While the human dimension is divided into individual and group components, the environmental dimension consists of physical objects and abstract human activities.

This two-dimensional model of affordance categories provides some promising directions for my own research. Firstly, it makes a clear distinction between physical and abstract affordances, and thus accounts for the different fields of application. Both the **physical body** and **physical environment** affordances determine what humans are physically able to do in the Gibsonian tradition. The **psychological affordances**, on the other hand, are much in line with Norman’s understanding of perception while the **functional affordances** seem to well reflect the ideas of the design community, relating to human-made artefacts.

What I find particularly inspiring are the **social affordances**, as they relate to social identities within specific communities. Such relational properties embrace cultural-historical affordances with regard to the adaptation of objects to suit social needs and interaction affordances which include social relationships. They also relate to instrumental affordances in terms of a common goal (Barentsen and Trettvik, 2002) and practice affordances related to the practices used within the group (Vyas et al., 2006). Although the model was set up for a conference on information systems, it incorporates a relatively broad outlook with a pronounced focus on business process design. While a further refinement of this model is certainly required in order to take account of affordances for language policies and multilingualism, it still provides a useful framework for action possibilities that go beyond physical phenomena. It also lends structure to the often widely dispersed research on affordances stretching from psychology over sociology and applied linguistics to online learning

and human-computer interaction.

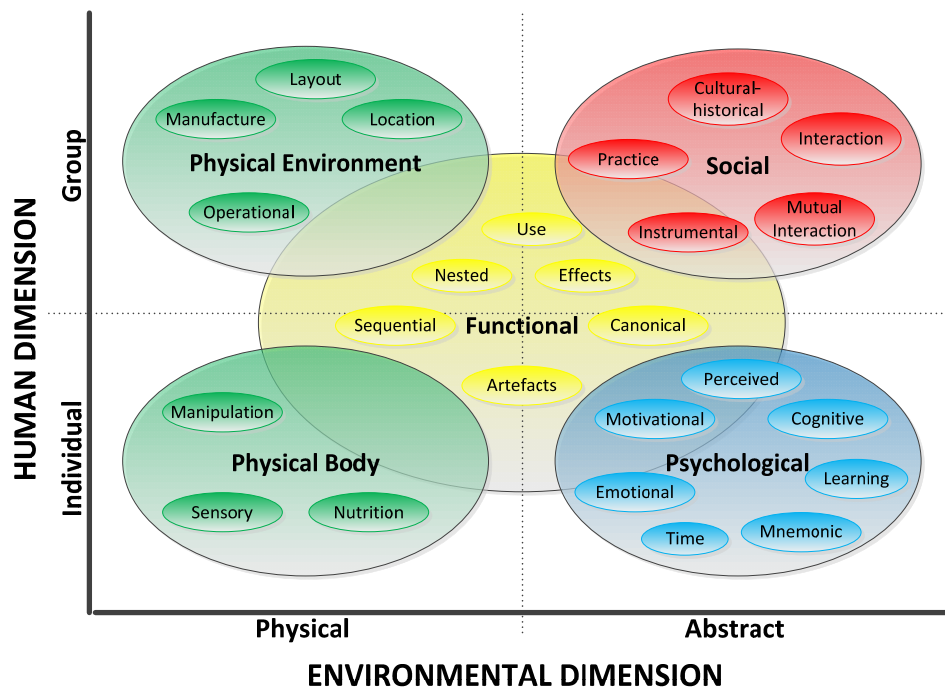


Figure 5.3: Model of affordances categories (Rozycki et al, 2012)

One of the main shortcomings in the relevant literature is that emergent affordances that are perceived within the context of social group constellations are rarely discussed. Rather, the focus is placed on the one-to-one relationship between the agent and the (often physical) structure. From a socio-cultural perspective then an enlarged view of affordances needs to take human-human interactions into account and place them within a continuous process of social practices (Van Lier, 2000). One way to account for their variety, is to look at social interactive learning by drawing on “ecological-semiotic frameworks based on the works of Bakhtin, Bronfenfelder, Gibson and Pierce” (Van Lier, 2000, p 257). Another way to do so is to look at the mutually constitutive duality of structure and agency in a social environment as expressed in the structuration theory. It is encouraging to note that Giddens (1984) offers such a perspective that determines the individuals’ “potential for action” (Giddens, 1984, p 258) and thus lends itself well to a more detailed analysis of emergent affordances.

### 5.4.1 Structuration Theory

To bridge micro-macro perspectives of sociolinguistic analysis it is vital to use some intermediary between structure and agency<sup>2</sup>. In this sense, structuration theory<sup>3</sup> appears to be a suitable tool, since it regards structure as a set of rules and resources which collective or individual agents draw on to enact social practices.

Giddens' theory of duality of structures and agency in the social world appears to be consistent with Gibson's theory of perception and action in the physical world (Davis and Broadhead, 2007, p 59), even more so as both theories fit well into an ecological frame (Vermeer et al., 1995).

To grasp the essential elements of the structuration theory, an outline of Clark's (1990) synopsis is sketched as follows (also see Rose, 1998):

- a) The main focus of social theory is not individual action and the experience of the individual actor, nor the existence of societal totality. The major emphasis is placed on social practices that lie at the root of the constitution of individuals and society.
- b) Social practices are accomplished by knowledgeable human agents that have a capacity to self-reflect their interactions. They possess a practical, often tacit consciousness of their actions.
- c) Social practices are ordered and stable across space and time, rather than voluntaristic and random. As such they are routinized and recursive and are performed in line with institutionalized structural properties such as rules and resources.
- d) Structure is activity-dependent. As such it constitutes the medium as well as the outcome of a process. It is the production and reproduction of practices

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<sup>2</sup>Human agency is the capacity to bring about difference. By exploiting authoritative and allocative resources the human agent has transformational capacity. Actors are viewed as purposeful, reflexive, knowledgeable, and active. For further details, see Giddens (1984).

<sup>3</sup>It is outside the scope of this thesis to provide a detailed account of the structuration theory. In short, it represents a sociological concept based on the synthesis of human agency and social structures. By focusing on human interaction, it is acknowledged that social structures (signification, legitimation and domination) are not directly perceivable, but are still real. Lacking inherent stability outside human action, structures are socially constructed during interactions and can hence be reinforced or changed. For more information, see Jones (1999), Bryant (1991) and Giddens (1984).

across time and space.

Despite the above mentioned similarities between Giddens' and Gibson's theories in terms of the duality concept, there are also major distinctions. As already stated, Gibson's affordances concept is embedded in the physical environment where objects are "spontaneously apparent in the observable pattern of events" (Bhaskar, 2010, p 2). By contrast, Giddens' (1984; 1993) concept points to social environments where social structures, systems and institutions constrain human actions that involve motivation<sup>4</sup>, rationalization<sup>5</sup>, and reflexive monitoring<sup>6</sup>. What is more, while Gibson's perspective of direct perception seems universal and environmentally deterministic, it does not sit well with Giddens' conception that "agents are constructively engaged with an environment that is constantly reshaped" (Schofield and Szymanski, 2011, p 146).

Precisely because action possibilities within an International Classroom do not exist a priori waiting to be discovered, but are perceived, reacted and acted upon by teaching staff and students throughout classroom practices, structuration theory appears to be a useful framework. By enriching the concept of affordances with elements of Giddens' structuration theory, the nexus of teachers, students and perceived potential for actions can be brought into sharper relief. As a result, knowledgeable teachers are empowered to act in ways that impact structures (opportunities), and, more importantly, become capable of reflexively observing the impact of their actions. In doing so, they create potential for action that reinforces, modifies or generates new opportunities.

For the purpose of an eco-linguistic understanding of this concept, focus will now be placed on those types of affordances that were identified in particular sociological and socio-linguistic environments.

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<sup>4</sup>Instead of talking of affordances, Giddens uses the concept of "potential for action" (1984, p 258) whereby motives supply the overall plans within which a range of conduct is enacted.

<sup>5</sup>Rationalization of action is a routine characteristic of human conduct, carried out in a taken-for-granted fashion. It is the principle basis upon which the generalized 'competence' of actors is evaluated by others (Spiegel, 2013, p 124).

<sup>6</sup>This is the human capacity to routinely observe and understand what is done while doing it. By constantly monitoring the flow of activities, actors reach a theoretical understanding of the physical and social world around them. This reflexivity leads to continuous adjustment of one's actions (Giddens, 1984).

## 5.5 Affordances of learning ecologies

Although, as previously stated, affordances can be of physical or social nature or both, an increasing number of scholars concerned with learning ecologies are predominantly interested in how socially constructed action possibilities are embedded in and shaped by the learning setting in which it occurs. As such, Järvinen (2009, p 166) notes that even though, in general, the majority of post-Gibsonian research focuses on physical affordances, recent socio-linguistic studies allow for “artefacts (such as language) to mediate between the object and its perception”. Such a perspective, then, views a mediated affordance such as learning, not solely as immediate perception but as a process.

When it comes to affordances of learning ecologies that go beyond ecological psychology and human computer interaction, there are basically two strands that devote increased attention to this concept. One is concerned with second language acquisition, multilingual studies and language learning in general, and the other one is digital learning and teaching sciences in general. Both approaches deserve to be pointed out briefly below.

### 5.5.1 Affordances and multilingual studies

The initial notion of language ecology goes back to Haugen who describes the now wildly used concept of ecolinguistics as the study of “interactions between any given language and its environment” (2001, p 57), pointing to the interplay of a language, the sociological and the psychological background of its users. Such a focus puts particular emphasis on the people who learn, use and transmit a language to others within their social environments. Since ecolinguistics comprises a holistic approach where “language is not studied as an isolated, self-contained system, but rather in its natural surroundings” (Kramsch and Steffensen, 2008, p 18), the concept of affordances lends itself readily to obtaining a contextualised and situational view on the topics investigated. The contextual properties of the language and the community that uses it seem to be very much in line with the interconnectivity that characterises opportunities for action.

By virtue of the all-encompassing understanding of ecolinguistics, it appears only

comprehensible that ecology of language is best conceived not as a separate field or discipline, but rather as a transdisciplinary endeavour where the key concept of emergence takes central stage (Halliday, 2001).

Research identifying affordances with respect to teaching and learning in multilingual settings is in its full swing and evidence of its purpose is reflected in a number of socio-linguistic studies drawing on ecolinguistic frameworks by either adopting a psychological (micro-ecological) or sociological (macro-ecological) lens (Ziglari, 2012; Hult, 2012; Dewaele, 2010; Järvinen, 2009; Otwinowska-Kasztelanic, 2009; Hornberger and Hult, 2008; Williams et al., 2008; Kramsch and Whiteside, 2008; Van Lier, 2007).

In this sense, the notion of affordance has proven to be a fruitful concept that is widely applicable to socio-linguistic studies. Firstly taken up by Segalowitz (2001), the concept was applied to bridge psychological research on attention focusing and linguistic research concerning language constructions. Since then, affordances were examined with regard to action-based learning and teaching (Van Lier, 2000, 2007), in reference to multiple language learning (Aronin, 2014; Aronin and Singleton, 2012; Singleton and Aronin, 2007) and second language acquisition (Ziglari, 2012), content and language integrated learning (Järvinen, 2009) and foreign language didactics (Harjanne and Tella, 2007) and, most recently with regard to awareness of cross-linguistic lexical similarities (Otwinowska-Kasztelanic, 2011) and learning affordances in English-medium teaching (Smit, 2013).

What appears to be missing in the socio-linguistic discourse on affordances though is a similar critical analysis of the initial affordances concept brought forward by Gibson as the one going on in other research fields. Arguably, the concept has rapidly come into fashion as a promising avenue to explore the linkages between agents and their linguistic expressions. Yet, it appears to me, that in the socio-linguistic field the origins of the affordances theory lack a thorough scrutiny similar to the one taking place in the research areas of design, psychology or HCI.

It is certainly true that numerous definitions of the affordances concept were provided by van Lier (2008; 2004; 2000), all of which refer to the Gibsonian idea of relations, opportunity, immediacy and interaction. Also Järvinen's observations reinforce that socio-linguistic discussion has mainly dealt with the original definition of affordances with a particular eye on physical properties (2009, p 166).

Although the present research does not focus on the acquisition of linguistic structures per se, it is still very much concerned with communicative affordances and seeks to identify how languages are used within the International Classroom to perceive and interpret linguistic social practices. I am convinced that perception and the effective use of affordances within social action are the “first steps on the road toward meaning making” (Spolsky and Hult, 2010, p 598). This is all the more true given that “affordances speak a language of their own. Some actors can understand this language better than others. Others can be completely deaf to that language” (Tella and Harjanne, 2007, p 502). The capacity to perceive International Classroom affordances, act upon them and eventually embrace them seems to be closely linked to an ongoing process of reflective practice; one of which this study seeks to promote.

### 5.5.2 Affordances and learning sciences

According to St Onge and Armstrong (2004, p 8) learning can roughly be defined as either the acquisition of knowledge or “the capacity to take effective action”. While prescriptive learning tends to be rather predictable, emergent learning seems to arise out of the interaction between learners and their context. Such an emergence, it is claimed by Williams (2011), potentially adds to the affordances for learning.

As previously stated, the Gibsonian concept does not lend itself readily to address issues of emergent social affordances for learning. Yet, it seems to me that framing, coping, appropriating and eventually embracing a new affordance during social action is a dynamic learning process<sup>7</sup>. There is no doubt that such a process requires an analytical lens that goes well beyond the initial affordances notion.

By including the duality of structure and agency from a sociological standpoint as put forward by Giddens (1984), the post-Gibsonian discussion, I claim, can be truly enriched. Therefore, this review will take, amid this jungle of terminological ambiguity, the definitions that serve the purposes of this study best. Accordingly, the following definition seems promising:

An affordance is the product of interactions between a person and

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<sup>7</sup>The stages mentioned here derive from the constructivist grounded theory conducted for this study. A detailed account of the process-oriented model is given in chapter 9.

their environment, each of which potentially alters their knowledge, competencies and identity, and potentially alters the (micro-) environment (Williams, 2012; Williams et al., 2008, p 11).

In this sense, affordances are understood as relational opportunities for action that go well beyond the physical environment. In my understanding, action and perception are closely linked and agents need to detect those properties that point to potentially new ways of effective action within a given setting.

## 5.6 Chapter summary

In chapter 5, a literature review on the concepts of ecology and affordances was presented. After providing some definitions and sketch major fields of application, a closer look was taken to explore fundamental properties and categorisations of action possibilities to identify affordances as they appear in ecological and perceptual psychology, human-computer interaction and learning ecologies. It was briefly sought to indicate some overlaps and potential synergies between different schools of thought before sketching my own understanding of the concept.

The conceptual framework for the present study is illustrated in chapter 6 where research paradigms are discussed that form the foundation of this work.



# Chapter 6

## Paradigm position

### 6.1 Introduction

In this chapter I first elaborate on my understanding of the nature of knowledge and theoretical concepts on which this research rests. I take the view that it is vital for researchers to understand the philosophical underpinning of each methodology (Speziale et al., 2011), since the paradigm position leads to informed decisions that not only determine methodological principles, but also criteria by which research methods can be evaluated (Kuhn, 2012). As such, I sketch the philosophical orientation of the paradigm that seems to be best suited for my research, namely constructivist grounded theory (henceforth CGT) which I seek to combine with essential concepts of nexus analysis (NA). I then outline why such a blend appears to be fruitful for answering the crucial research question as to **what international classroom affordances are perceived by disciplinary teachers**. Finally, I illustrate my activist stance and the rationale behind. The detailed empirical process is mapped in chapter 7.

## 6.2 Committing to a research paradigm

Bearing in mind that epistemology informs the theoretical perspective<sup>1</sup>, I briefly outline the research paradigms or the constellation of beliefs and world view that inform this study. I concur with Jiao (2010, p 53) in that a constructivist framework is well-suited to reveal intersections between various aspects of scholarly work that seek to identify a multiplicity of influences on social actions without clear-cut boundaries. Rather than treating labels independently, such an approach tends to capture a holistic and inclusive picture, ideally leading to an in-depth understanding of the case under investigation. Such a view then often requires the lenses of multiple paradigms, be it a constructivist-interpretive approach to human inquiry (Schwandt, 1994) or a critical theory drawing on postmodern thinking. A subjective lens helps researchers cope with large amounts of complex data collected in a world of a socially constructed reality with a specific sensitivity to the implications of particular circumstances.

Having said that, however, qualitative research also comes with a caveat: qualitative researchers have to choose from a vast array of options, ranging from various inquiry traditions (Creswell et al., 2007) to differing inquiry strategies (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005), from research approaches (Lichtman, 2012) to multiple designs, methods and techniques of data analysis (Garner and Scott, 2013). In order to canvass such a broad field of approaches proficiently, qualitative researchers require a comprehensive and often well-conceived research agenda from the outset. They have to be prepared for large investments of time given the prolonged engagement in the field. They need to be familiar with sound qualitative research methodologies and practices and bring heightened awareness and reflexivity to the field (Finlay, 2002). But most important of all, they have to be capable of handling an array of meaning-centered theories in order to contribute to their academic discipline.

Given the nature of my research, instrumentation, illustration, sensitisation and conceptualisation take central stage, as they are what Boyd identified as the “salient shared purposes of qualitative studies” (2001, p 68). Hence, it is sought to unveil the motives and perceptions of the social actors involved by predominantly answering

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<sup>1</sup>Each theory is based on a set of assumptions that researchers draw upon when considering methodological approaches before deciding on particular methods (Crotty, 1998).

“what’, ‘why’ and ‘how’ questions, rather than ‘how often’ or ‘how many’ questions” (Buston et al., 1998, p 197). What is foregrounded is to gain insight into the investigated phenomenon and paint a picture of this specific setting from an emic position to help develop conceptual frameworks.

I see it thus as the researcher’s responsibility to “elucidate the process of meaning construction and clarify how meanings are embodied in the language and actions of social actors” (Schwandt, 1994, p 118). It follows from this that my study is neither embedded in a rigidly set agenda, nor is my intention to adhere to a single prescriptive paradigm. Rather, I concur with Charmaz (2014; 2007) that the way a researcher interprets and constructs realities is just as crucial as how respondents construe their worlds. As a result, I recognise reflexivity and openness as the main driving forces of my research, which shall help me to raise the analytical level of my work and to increase the theoretical reach of my analysis without, however, losing sight that “mixed methods may divide, collide, or cohere” (Charmaz, 2012a, p 127). To counteract reservations, but also to enhance cohesion and clarity of my line of reasoning, the following sections lay out the groundwork on which my study rests.

Generally, researchers interested in reality that is socially constructed through the subjective experiences of its members draw on a number of interpretive paradigms. For the purposes of this study, I have chosen to focus on paradigms of inquiry that are premised upon constructivist-interpretive and critical social theories. The reason for this particular interest is outlined in the next section.

## 6.3 Constructivist approaches to social research

It is certainly true that the choice of the research design is predominantly based on the nature of the intervention, the area of investigation and the objective of the research. But to some extent, it is also influenced by the researcher’s theoretical perspectives. So, in view of my educational and professional path, the rationale behind my philosophical positions are to be found within two specific disciplinary frameworks, namely sociolinguistics and sociology. Figure 6.1 shows how their paradigms of inquiry inform each other. The boxes in the middle display the paradigms and methods that were used for the present study.

In what follows, I provide the rationale for the two approaches used in this study,

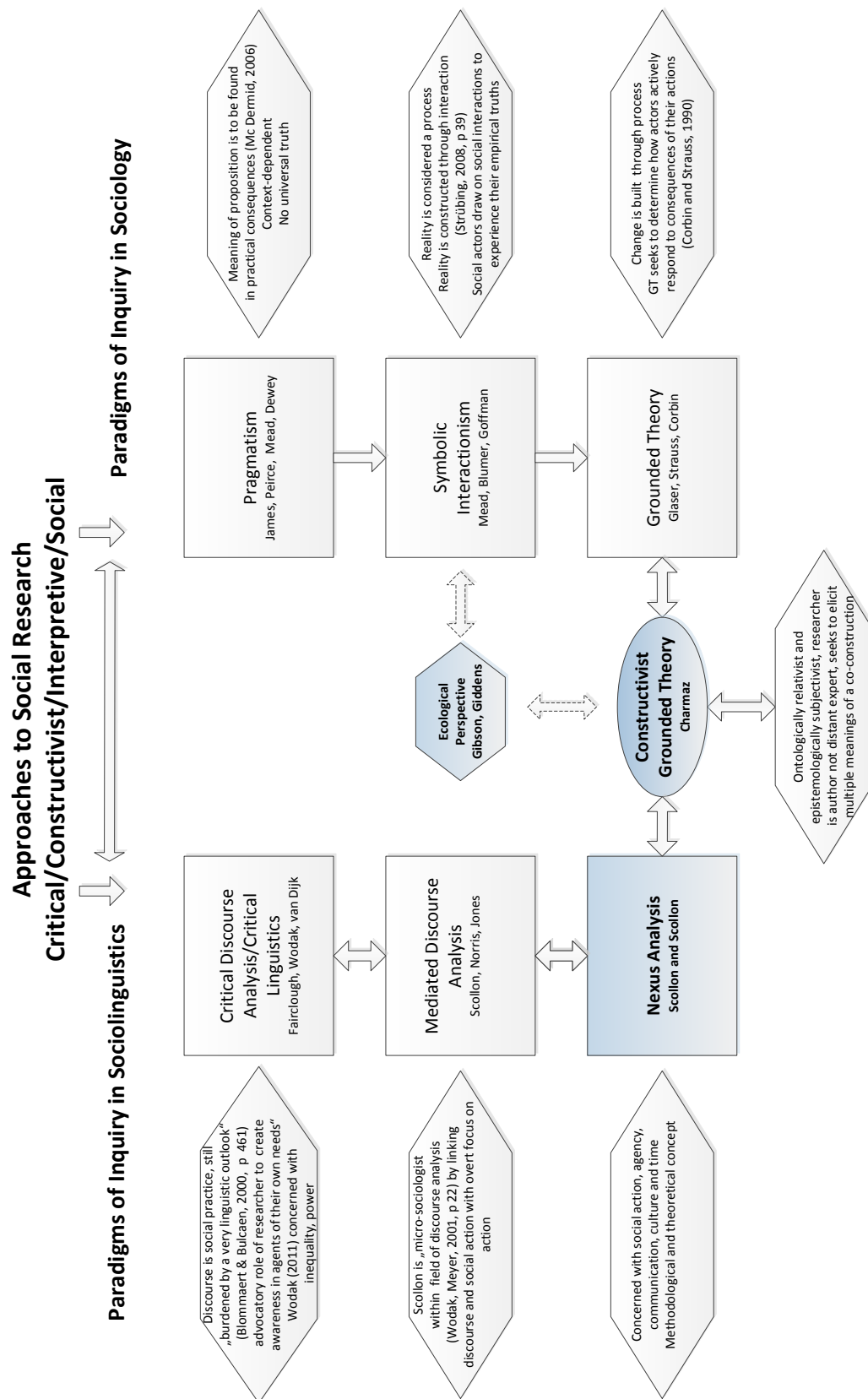


Figure 6.1: Approaches to social research (author's own illustration)

namely Constructivist Grounded Theory (henceforth CGT) and Nexus Analysis (NA) as well as the reasons for adopting an ecological lens.

As illustrated in figure 6.1, this research is embedded in an ecological framework drawing on the works of the perceptual psychologist Gibson (1986; 1977) and the sociologist Giddens (1984) who both consider organism-environment reciprocity as a central facet of their theoretical underpinnings.

Since I hold the view that the ecological debate triggered by Gibson with his affordances concept (1977) and Giddens (1984) with his structuration theory have brought the fields of language, society and psychology closer together, their research seemed to be a promising avenue to pursue.

CGT appeared to be best suited for this scientific endeavour because it recognises that meaning comes from the experiences of participants as they share them with the researcher (Charmaz, 2014, 2008). This is an argument that I strongly support, especially in view of the fact that reality is socially constructed and shaped and re-shaped by social actions and practices.

The following definition of CGT (Creswell et al., 2007, p 238) covers crucial elements that have contributed to making it my paradigm of choice:

Constructivist grounded theory is a form of grounded theory squarely in the interpretive tradition of qualitative research. As such it is less structured than traditional approaches to grounded theory. The constructivist approach incorporates the researcher's views; uncovers experiences with embedded, hidden networks, situations, and relationships; and makes visible hierarchies of power, communication, and opportunity.

Since CGT is an evolved form of grounded theory that, in contrast to the initial orientation, is agentic and relativist in orientation and shifts its focus on "ontological and epistemological grounds" (Charmaz, 2009, p 129), a short historical development of this research approach needs to be given.

Essentially based on symbolic interactionism, grounded theory<sup>2</sup> emerged (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) as "a qualitative research method that uses a systematic set of procedures to develop an inductively derived grounded theory about a phenomenon"

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<sup>2</sup>For a more detailed explanation on grounded theory, see Glaser and Strauss (2009), Corbin (2008), Charmaz (2006), Glaser (2005; 1978) and Strauss (1997).

(Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p 23). Developed in response to the critical voices raised by positivist researchers who evaluated qualitative research as unscientific because of its alleged lack of rigour and controlled experiments (Smith and Biley, 1997), grounded theory started to take shape as a research methodology that was ontologically and epistemologically neutral.

So, while classic grounded theory has its foundations in critical realism and symbolic interactionism and is ontologically positivist, the evolved form of CGT supports a relativist ontology with multiple realities based on a subjectivist epistemology and hermeneutic methodology (Mills et al., 2006a).

Such a stance is in line with rising expectations in researchers to make their philosophical positions explicit (Grix, 2002). On the face of it, however, differing paradigmatic dimensions of multiple schools appear to be rather problematic. Especially in view of the fact that grounded theory methods have become increasingly fashionable (Morse et al., 2008; Strauss and Corbin, 1994), it appears that researchers engaging in this kind of research run the risk of applying them imprecisely and uncritically (Annells, 1996). Especially because grounded theory has developed from a post-positivist position to a constructivist/interpretive one which largely affects the researcher's role within the process, it was critically noted that a number of scholars do not position themselves explicitly enough, and frequently seem to neglect conflicting perspectives due to different schools of thought, methodologies and intellectual foundations.

However, applied correctly and in line with its rigorous methods of induction in the process of generating empirically based data, grounded theory is a valuable research method, most appropriate when existing theories appear inadequate. In view of the scant literature on International Classroom Affordances (ICA), but also because of the previously discussed reasons, I have taken this challenge and opted for a CGT approach advocated by Charmaz (2001; 2006) as my major paradigm of choice. I found the idea of generating a theoretical framework that is constructed by the descriptive accounts of the agents a promising avenue to explore.

The second approach adopted in the study is the one brought forward by Scollon and Scollon (2004) (see figure 6.1 for the wider context). Developed as a methodological and theoretical framework which they call 'nexus analysis', it is intended to trace pathways and trajectories of texts, actions, practices, and objects of social

actors and communications across time and space and multiple modes. By taking all these factors into account, they acknowledge that “nothing happens in a social and political vacuum” (Scollon and Scollon, 2007, p 615), but rather in a “**Nexus of Practice**”<sup>3</sup> (this concept will be discussed in greater detail in 6.5).

In framing this social phenomenon, it seems to me that the Scollons (2004) captured a particularly fruitful concept which enables a close-up examination of complex, yet loosely connected communities of nexus. A further interesting element of their research approach is the three-step nexus analytical process (**Engaging**, **Navigating** and **Changing** the nexus) which has also proved to be a valuable heuristic tool for my field research.

In the next sections I describe how I have built on their work to develop a methodological framework that served the purposes of my research best. This approach is presented below, followed by a detailed account of the research process and design in chapter 7. I also outline both the researcher’s role and stance and discuss why CGT seems to be well-suited to build a conceptual bridge between sociolinguistics and social studies. Enriched by elements of NA, it was found to be a powerful tool with which to investigate ICA perceived by disciplinary teachers.

### 6.3.1 Researcher’s role

One crucial reason for employing CGT (Charmaz, 2014, 2008, 2006) as one of the two major approaches for this project is that participation and active engagement in the research process are essential features that rest comfortably with the researcher’s subjectivity. Epistemologically, constructivism places particular focus on the subjective interrelationship, the co-construction of meaning, between the researcher and the participant. Clearly, such a stance positions the researcher as an “author” or as Charmaz (2014) sees it a co-producer of knowledge who pro-actively reconstructs meaning throughout the research endeavour. This is in clear contrast to traditional grounded theory where the researcher took the role of a “distant expert” (Glaser, 1992) and presumed to be a “neutral knower” (Strauss and Corbin, 1998; Glaser, 1978) rather than an agent of social change.

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<sup>3</sup>A nexus of practice is defined by Scollon (2002) as a network or matrix of linked practices that forms the foundation for produced and claimed identities.

Given that CGT is “easier to use when the researcher is sensitive, through having professional experience or knowledge, to the field under study” (Fernández, 2004, p 57), my insider position at the investigated school provides a helpful vantage point from which to examine the educational setting. In view of recurrent issues of the researcher’s stance, my level of involvement with the investigated context needs to be explored together with potential sources of bias arising from my own agenda and personal perspective.

### **Positionality and fieldwork relation**

As laid out in the introduction, I am a teacher of English and intercultural competence at the investigated school and have a research track record of investigations that deal with cross-border encounters at university settings. I feel that my previous experiences and research skills have had a beneficial impact on the study. I believe that these aspects of my background assigned me with a status of credibility which was further enhanced by my professional contacts and friendly ties with my colleagues. Yet, this familiarity and the amicable relationship have turned out to be a mixed blessing. On the one hand, they proved to be a gate-opener that allowed me to easily engage with the participants. On the other hand, it required a change of perspective on the part of the institutional members. It made it harder for them to see me in the role of a researcher instead of a colleague.

To begin with, I wish to recall that the present study essentially looks at International Classroom Affordances (ICA) as they are perceived by disciplinary teachers during classroom management. This required me to participate in classroom practices of the social group where I positioned myself as a “participant-as-observer”,<sup>4</sup> entering the field “with an openly acknowledged investigative purpose” (Lindlof and Taylor, 2010, p 147). By doing so, I assumed a role as a fully functioning member of the community without at the same time subscribing to their values, goals and perspectives (Adler et al., 1994; Spradley, 1980). I felt that such a stance would be most suitable to authentically learn alongside the social actors while still have

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<sup>4</sup>This is a role frequently adopted in classroom-based research where educational researchers are likely to engage in every day interactions with the aim to “discover participants’ interpretations of situations they are involved in” (Becker, 1958, p 652) when undertaking observations. For more detailed information on participant/non participant observation, see Wragg and Wragg (2012); Moyles (2002) and Gold (1958).

different reasons for taking part in the social action in the first place.

In this respect, it needs to be added that any kind of observational activity necessarily leads to some form of reactivity. Mostly, the sheer presence of the analyst might impact the findings, often resulting in minor behavioural changes (Moyle, 2002). Yet, due to my identity as teacher of English at a school of informatics where hard sciences are at the core of knowledge transmission, it could be argued that my presence did not influence the classroom dynamics to an extent that would produce artificial or 'researcher-provoked' data.

On a critical note, it may be assumed that my dual role as researcher and teacher at the investigated school may lead to over-familiarity with the research context and investigated community. This is all the more relevant with regard to the length of this investigation (over three years), which suggests that a prolonged immersion in the International Classroom might lead to a "going native phenomenon"<sup>5</sup> (Kanuha, 2000). To allay the concern of over-identification with the insiders and, as a result, the loss of objectivity (Gold, 1958, p 221), let me briefly sketch my emic<sup>6</sup> position taken within both the institution and the investigated community.

The explored International Master courses start each year in September with a student intake of 25, a third of which are internationally mobile students. After four semesters graduates are supposed to work as computer experts, mainly for the local ICT industry. During the first year after the introduction of the English-medium course I did not assume any official role in this educational enterprise. It was only in the second year when I was asked to teach a block course of international competence at the beginning of each new English-medium Master. Embedded in the so-called orientation week during the first days of their arrival when students are taught the ropes of the institutional requirements, my course was designed to bring the heterogeneous group in line in terms of intercultural awareness. Since all students were required to attend this 20-hours course prior to the official start, I was the first teacher they became familiar with in a classroom setting. This "gate-

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<sup>5</sup>There is a danger of losing objectivity when social researchers of any kind go native. Therefore, a short distance from immediate engagement requires sufficient reflective distance (Eikeland, 2006).

<sup>6</sup>Anthropologists define the emic view as the insiders' understanding of the culture in which they are emerged, including beliefs, values, customs, mores, political ideologies, explanations for why and how things work - in short, how they make sense of the complexities of the world (Danquah and Miller, 2007, p 72).

opening experience” proved to be most useful to grasp a broad picture of the scene and get some first localised understanding of the investigated group.

Hence, when starting the project my position not only facilitated the identification of a social issue, crucial social actors and social arrangements that warrant addressing, but also provided me with an entrance ticket to the social scene without lengthy negotiations and long-winded discussions with the stakeholders. What is more, when **Engaging the Nexus of Practice**<sup>7</sup>, my emic understanding of the institutional level was clearly beneficial to construct the “zone of identification”<sup>8</sup> and to gain understanding of where and how the interests of the participants and the interests of the analyst overlap and can be merged (Scollon and Scollon, 2004; Jones and Norris, 2005; Scollon, 2002).

This position of relative involvement (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995) with a clear commitment to form relationships throughout my research project has lent support to a more effective course of action. The main advantage of this observer role was hence to limit social distance and decrease the level of researcher disturbance.

By observing naturally occurring social action, it was hoped to gain data that is not subject to observational constraints. Making no secret of my intentions to observe classroom interactions was particularly helpful when the issue of language authority was raised. Since my professional role as an English teacher was a matter of common knowledge at the faculty, the initial reaction to my classroom presence was one of reluctance and reservation. In hindsight, this was mainly due to concerns about linguistic matters and a great deal of deficit thinking among teachers anchored within a positivist tradition - where the most urgent issue is to “maintain and establish authority structures of academic worlds” (Scollon, 2003, p 71). After clarifying that my investigative focus was much broader than they had assumed and did not target at a micro-analysis of linguistic patterns, I observed that classroom practices started to become more authentic.

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<sup>7</sup>For an overview of the nexus-analytical steps, see section 6.5.1.

<sup>8</sup>This is a crucial concept in nexus analysis pointing to the fact that there is no study from afar. Identification in a nexus analysis means that the researcher must be recognised by the social agents as a full-fledged participant (Scollon and Scollon, 2004).

### Potential bias

In what follows, I discuss the “researcher’s lens” from an emic perspective by outlining my axiological position<sup>9</sup>.

The wide gap between the socialised values of my education of humanities and the ones encountered at the School of Informatics where I have been working as an educator of English and intercultural competence for many years has left me trapped between different worlds. More often than once, I found myself faced with an internal conflict between these competing views, sometimes questioning my own relativist stance.

In view of the disciplinary socialisation of the hard scientists at hand, it comes as no surprise that they prefer hard facts over soft skills, content over form, and place little, if no, value on reflection of socially constructed processes. The **value** of my study was not perceived, especially in the light of ‘evidence’ that could not be proven in a hypothetico-deductive way and in view of research tools that were either unfamiliar to them or not considered to be robust scientific methods. For them, evidence that is discursively constructed through social interaction was regarded to be limited in significance, scope and applicability.

Yet, the on-going reflective discourse on different aspects of a paradigm, on multiple perspectives and on varying value systems opened up a new window through which to look at the world, and helped me to gain confidence among scientists for whom a strict hypothesis-testing approach was the only feasible way of doing good research.

One bias that might have become problematic if not reflected was my own embodied subjectivity. I concur with Narayan in that all researchers are “simultaneously insiders and outsiders of varying degrees” (1988, p 27). I had to be careful not to over-rely on my emic perspective, but to deepen understanding of various standpoints and differing individual layers. Favouring one view over the other would necessarily lead to research that is biased and susceptible to distortion. To counteract such a bias, I used triangulation techniques such as peer reviews where informants were asked for corrective reactions. A further research tool employed throughout

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<sup>9</sup>Axiology, which stems from two Greek words—axios or worth, and logos or reason, is the study of value that dictates the judgements that researchers recognise. It is grouped with “basic beliefs and fundamental elements in the inquiry process” (Guba and Lincoln, 2005, p 197).

the study was the use of double journaling<sup>10</sup> to manage preconceptions related to observed incidents. Consequently, I have grown critically reflective of my own assumptions and the frames of reference of my informants.

One strong personal belief that has come to the fore during my investigation was that internationally mobile students require support and cultural sensitivity from the outset. My dynamic knowledge about their needs comes from my own past as an international student in France and the UK where I experienced culture shock phases and ethnocentric reactions from teaching staff and domestic students. Such lessons made me particularly perceptible to socio-cultural affordances and may have been a gate-opening experience, also for my future professional life. It is most certainly for this reason that I have taken on the role to act as advocate for the international student body.

In sum, then, these issues determined me to bring together perceived ICA in an International Classroom with activist research and reflective practices. Such a stance is very much in line with qualitative research in general, and CGT and NA in particular, where sensitising concepts are the point of departure from which to engage in a research journey that is transformative for both the participants and the researcher. How this activist-oriented approach ties in to the current study is presented in the next section.

### 6.3.2 Activist stance of the researcher

Informed by literature on activist research (Hale, 2008; Bevington and Dixon, 2005; Hale, 2001) I came to understand that by embracing a hybrid activist-academic position I took a stance that sought to produce movement-relevant theory, that is “research that is useful and accountable to movements” (Bevington and Dixon, 2005, p 186).

Such a stance is in line with the philosophical underpinnings of the two employed approaches adopted in this study. First, with CGT which is agentic and relativist in orientation, recognising both the multiplicity of truths that make up participants’ and researchers’ lives and their ability to effect change (Mills, 2009; Charmaz, 2006).

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<sup>10</sup>One column is used for notation of observed incidents and one column to record preconceptions related to those incidents. By applying such a method the researcher has substantial impact on the developed concepts and eventual substantive theory (Wolodko, 2011).

During the process of building “inductive middle-range theories” (Charmaz, 2008, p 204), researchers of CGT take an activist position in the reporting of the research (Charmaz, 2014, 2009, 2008). Secondly, it sits well with NA which is described as “an activist approach to ethnography that takes as its starting point some social issue of interest to the researcher with the ultimate goal to effect some change regarding this issue” (Soukup and Kordon, 2012; Scollon and Scollon, 2004, p 317). According to Wortham (2006) nexus analysts embrace their embeddedness in the places they study and try to improve those places. This willingness to initiate transformative action is clearly reflected by the nexus-analytic cycles. Chapter 8 provides a historical account of the educational enterprise by positioning it in these cycles (for a detailed description, see section 8.2).

Despite the growing acknowledgement that all research is somewhat positioned (Scollon and Scollon, 2013; Garrett, 2009; Hale, 2001) and that scholars inevitably approach the field of investigation with their “interpretive frame of reference” (Charmaz, 2008, p 206), there still tends to be a general uneasiness in mainstream academia when research is done with the very specific aim of creating social change (Esterberg, 2002).

On this note, it is crucial to stress that the desire for change in itself does not yet define activist researchers (Kouritzin et al., 2008, p 108). In addition, they need to assume responsibility for critical and continuous assessment of both their own and the informants’ changing perspectives (Fine and Vanderslice, 1992) and, by doing so, write “with” rather than “about” their informants. Further, activist researchers need to critically question their double identity of activist and researcher and reflect on their disciplinary contribution to social change.

Given that one of my aims is to encourage informed decisions on the part of the teachers that help to improve their IC management, I see myself as fitting into the category of an activist researcher. I seek to produce movement-relevant theory that creates social change. To do so, I have made an early and overt commitment to my research agenda and have become explicitly and heavily immersed in the educational setting that I have been investigating. Moreover, I have been committed to listening to my participants’ voices to produce knowledge from within their experiences, while at the same time maintaining a critical focus during the analysis of their social environment.

Having made explicit both my role and fieldwork relation as well as the activist stance that I have brought to this study, the next sections aim to clarify why the CGT approach is particularly compatible with my research and elaborate on how I intend to blend it with crucial elements of NA.

## 6.4 Theoretical considerations on CGT

A theoretical perspective of CGT appears fruitful given that a comprehensive discussion of grounded theory in general, and CGT in particular, is outside the scope of this study. In light of the popularity of grounded theory methods, it may be useful to identify major methodological challenges that especially researchers insufficiently familiar with this method of inquiry are faced with. In doing so, it is hoped to raise awareness for its distinctive nature and also to spell out how I dealt with them when envisioning my conceptual framework.

To begin with, it was found that a number of grounded theory investigations are only descriptive accounts without raising the analytical focus to a conceptual level (Snow et al., 2003; Katz, 2002; Gubrium and Holstein, 1997). In this context, Charmaz makes clear that in order to conduct a CGT, researchers need to “go beyond descriptions of incidents and routine actions identified in ethnographic observations” (2012b, p 4). The aim must be to generate conceptual theory through analysis of findings to interpret and explain processes, especially if current theories about a phenomenon are either inadequate or non-existent. In other words, grounded theory is more the study of a concept, and not a descriptive study of a descriptive problem (Glaser, 2010).

While it is indeed true that the present study widely describes the teachers’ process of perceiving ICA (see chapter 10), it has primarily attempted to generate a theory grounded in the accounts of the social agents involved. For clarity, this process of theory development is discussed in chapter 9 where the particular set of conditions within which the social actions are taken is presented and the subsequent coding paradigm together with the conceptual framework are laid out.

Another critical aspect concerns the development and design of sampling strategies. It stands to reason that emerging theory cannot be in line with a formal pre-determined sampling strategy. Hence, it seems reasonable to commence data

collection with a fairly random group of people that is rich in the phenomena under investigation (Charmaz, 2006). In accordance with the development of the research and emergence of the theory, sampling schemes then tend to change dynamically and in context-sensitive ways. Such an approach contrasts sharply with the frequently employed selective sampling strategy where researchers decide from the outset of the study whom to interview and where to collect data.

It is certainly true that the starting point for this investigation were disciplinary teachers that had some experiences with managing International Classrooms. However, the descriptive needs of the emerging concepts clearly dictated my sampling strategies and goals (Charmaz, 2014, 2008, 2006), which is why the sampling scheme was constantly adjusted. In doing so, it was ensured that those social agents were incorporated who would yield the most promising results and thus contribute to further refine the evolving theory. In that respect, both domestic and internationally mobile students as members of International Classrooms proved to be further valuable sources of data.

A third potential stumbling stone for the correct application of CGT is the way how researchers enter the field. CGT does not take tightly defined research questions as a point of departure, nor does it rely on theoretical concepts or seek to impose pre-existing theory onto data. Hypothesis testing is not the goal. Charmaz clearly states that the method favours fresh categories over preconceived ideas and extant theories (2006, p 187). Rather, conceptual content has to be situationally discovered and narrowed down in accordance with the emerging theory.

This was very much in line with my approach since I went into the field with a broad, yet well-motivated research idea. I wanted to explore what ICA are perceived by disciplinary teachers. My intention was to pursue this exploratory process as a whole unit and since there was a limited body of literature on this phenomenon, the best way to get data was to immerse myself in the field of investigation. It needs to be acknowledged here that I have not been completely devoid of assumptions with regard to the investigated social world, yet I entered the field with an open mind (Charmaz, 2007), much curiosity and, above all, a strong determination not to force any categories on the emerging data.

Unlike most approaches to qualitative inquiry, grounded theory requires concurrent data collection and analysis, “rather than one in a linear sequence” (Dunne,

2011, p 111). Such a simultaneous process of collection, coding and conceptualisation of data has been referred to as a “zigzag process” (Creswell, 2012, p 86) using “constant comparative method” (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, pp 101-102) which translates in a “circling spiral” (Glaser, 2001, p 117) of action and reflection.

So, from the outset of my study, I was circling and zigzagging between slices of data. In this context, I am in agreement with Charmaz (2000, p 524) that data alone can not provide a window on reality, but that the “discovered reality arises from the interactive process and its temporal, cultural, and structural contexts”, often supported by the researcher’s reflective capacity. This constant comparison provoked questions for further investigations which were reflected on and refined to inform subsequent data collection. Already the first interview findings in 2010 have been useful to attune my range of questions for subsequent empirical analysis. An analytical step that has been continuously repeated throughout the study to narrow the focus and to ultimately arrive at a conceptual level of understanding.

Finally, I would like to conclude with some considerations about the usage of computer software packages as helpful tools for organising the data. It certainly holds for all qualitative research that specialised software needs to be complemented with a great portion of researchers’ creativity, reflexivity and ability to make sense of the data. However, these abilities are particularly crucial when employing CGT given its strong focus on a rigid and “systematic qualitative data analysis” (Timmermans and Tavory, 2007, p 494) which translates in a well-defined process stretching from basic description over conceptual ordering to theory-building (its typical package of research methods is described in chapter 7). In the present case, Atlas ti. was used as a powerful workbench to sort and manage the large bulk of information. Undoubtedly, the refinement of the codes and categories and the clarification of emerging themes and concepts always remains the ultimate responsibility of the researcher. In this respect, I have to admit that there were times where I had the feeling to drown in the “sea of data”. In such situations, however, my previous research experience proved to be a valuable asset and since I was well accustomed to de-constructing qualitative research, I succeeded in keeping track of the data.

After pointing to key principles informing a CGT research design, I now turn to the second approach that appears to be well suited for my investigative focus, namely Nexus Analysis. After outlining the principle ideas of NA, I turn to those

concepts that serve the purpose of this research best and elaborate on how I seek to blend them into my research hierarchy.

## 6.5 Theoretical considerations on nexus analysis

Before elaborating further on how I have blended elements of NA into my own research hierarchy, it may be useful to get a general understanding of Nexus Analysis<sup>11</sup>. Described by Hult as a “meta-methodology in the ethnographic sociolinguistic tradition” (2010, p 10), the Scollons (2004) set forth a systematic approach to integrating methodological tools from a variety of well-established research streams that have informed linguistic ethnography. As such NA can be understood as a multidisciplinary discourse analytical theory grounded in mediated discourse analysis (MDA) that draws on wide-ranging and eclectic perspectives from the fields of linguistic anthropology, psychology and sociolinguistics. By placing social actions in the centre of interest, NA always starts at a micro-level with a sharp interest in the historical trajectories of the social actors.

Scollon (2001) employs NA as both a theoretical and methodological framework. Arguably, the methodological guidebook offered by the Scollons (2013) does not provide a full methodological or theoretical account of how to conduct a NA. What it does offer, however, are strategies for discourse analytical and ethnographic approaches that point to a clear activist agenda. In line with research approaches that are generally grouped under the umbrella of “qualitative inquiry”, NA supports scholars’ intentions to give their methods a new twist, add ideas and further develop their own techniques (Bitsch, 2005). This flexibility might explain why no firm methodological guidance is given with regard to interview structures or discourse analyses. It further appears that by giving their approach this name, the Scollons suggest that simple “discourse analysis will not suffice” (Wortham, 2006, p 130) and that a mixed method and eclectic approach tends to be more suitable to capture a nuanced and contextualised understanding of social actions.

Since the objective of a NA is to navigate the broader discourses circulating the social actions in question, parts of this methodological strategy appear well-suited

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<sup>11</sup>It is beyond the scope of this research to provide an in-depth account of this meta-methodology. For a detailed description, see Scollon and Scollon (2004).

to capture the fluid movement across time and space. This is why I take the nexus-analytical process set forth by the Scollons (2004) as a guiding approach in which to position my project. Below, these nexus-analytical steps are described in more detail.

### 6.5.1 Nexus-analytical cycles

Basically, the application of this research framework is centred on the analytical departure as composed of three strategic phases of a NA which are **Engaging**, **Navigating** and **Changing** the nexus.



Figure 6.2: Phases of Nexus Analysis (Scollon and Scollon, 2004)

The sequencing of activities begins with the first cycle which zooms in on the “zone of identification”<sup>12</sup> to identify social issues that warrant addressing. **Engaging the nexus** amounts to simply “being explicit about how the researcher himself or herself is located in the social world or being explicit about the social issues the researcher wants to address through this research” (Scollon and Scollon, 2004, p 83). Hence, in this stage, researchers seek to engage in key mediated actions and become acknowledged and legitimate members of the investigated community.

They then continue to **navigate the nexus of practice** by drawing on the entire methodological repertoire to solve analytical puzzles while at the same time selecting key informants that actively engage in knowledge creation to enrich the analysis in ways that could be useful for their own purposes (Hale, 2001). This second phase normally constitutes the actual moment of data collection where “the bulk of data gathering and analysis takes place” (Lane, 2009, p 455) and is the centre of the “analytical process” (Lewis and Tierney, 2013, p 293) where analysis of the social actors, of mediational means, of timescales and histories of participation and

<sup>12</sup>By establishing the zone of identification, the central social actors are identified, the interaction order observed and the most prominent cycles of discourse within the nexus of practice under investigation are identified (Scollon and Scollon, 2004).

the distribution of actions among social actors over time and space take central stage (Jones and Norris, 2005). In this regard, and in contrast to the usual data collection procedure, it needs to be noted that the analytical process for the present study has already started with the engaging phase - much in line with the requirements of CGT.

The navigating task is referred to as the mapping process during which a broader understanding of the investigated setting should evolve that allows to “sketch out a map of the many semiotic and discourse cycles that are circulating through the moment of social action we are studying” (Scollon and Scollon, 2004, p 87).

A second activity that is performed during this cycle is the one of *circumferencing*,<sup>13</sup> which looks for crucial elements that give meaning to the action and relevant timescales that point to semiotic transformations.

The final step in this nexus-analytic process is reflected by the researcher’s commitment to **changing the nexus** which involves “transformations in meaning, practices, and identities that social actors bring about and reflect upon” (Tierney, 2013, p 76). Bringing the researcher’s emerging understanding then back to the semiotic ecosystem is what Scollon (2008, p 233) calls “itineraries of transformation” assuming that discourse inherently operates along historical trajectories.

The changing nature of this process is primarily triggered by my endeavour to record activities, navigate and map cycles of people, discourses and mediated means and by constructing new courses of action (Scollon and Scollon, 2004, p 152). Through on-going research activities, it was attempted to bring about a semiotic transformation across events, spaces and time which ultimately led to positive social change.

The second element that I wish to borrow from the nexus analysis approach is the one of nexus of practice which is dealt with in more detail in the next section.

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<sup>13</sup>An examination of each of the semiotic cycles allows for the identification of different circumstances. As such it brings the kinds of cycles and their interactions into sharper focus and spells out how discourses, objects and actions are transformed (Scollon and Scollon, 2004).

### 6.5.2 Nexus of practice

In view of the variety of “modes of belonging” that go well beyond communities of practices and can be expressed in engagement, imagination and alignment<sup>14</sup>, it becomes apparent that a key feature to distinguish different types of communities lies in the way how practices have been developed within these aggregates of people. From such a perspective, then, a community of practice is just “one specialised form arising from the more general fluidity of social interaction” (Scollon, 2002, p 16). In this regard, Scollon brought forward another term which he calls “community of nexus” defined as (2001, p 150):

the intersection or linkage of multiple practices such that some group comes to recognize ‘the same set’ of actions. Nexus of practice is in this sense a recognizable grouping of a set of mediated actions.

Interestingly and in contrast to the need for a sharper definitional focus, Scollon (2001) points to the versatility of both concepts emphasising their ability to accommodate a broad range of definitional variations. By stating that “what one person might treat as a nexus of practice - a loosely linked set of practices - another might try to produce as a community of practice” (Scollon, 2001, p 180), it appears to me that he is watering down his own concept. For this reason, it is sought to flesh out this concept more fully.

In contrast to a community of practice (Wenger, 1998) (henceforth CoP) where social actors engage in a joint enterprise which is continuously re-negotiated through mutual engagement which then results in a shared repertoire, a nexus of practice does not place such high priority on commonalities. It is qualified at a ‘lower’ level of social organisation in being rather loosely structured and unbounded. Hence, the structure of a relatively fixed and bounded social group with explicit membership status in a shared enterprise does not apply to a nexus of practice. For Scollon, practice is “a narrowly defined count entity” rather than “a loose, large and ambiguous mass noun entity” (2002, p 147) whereas a nexus is understood as a comprehensive term that links the large number of separate practices together, so to be recognised in the performed actions.

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<sup>14</sup>For a more detailed account, see Wenger (1998, p 148).

This is one explanation why a nexus of practice should not be taken as “simply an alternative to a community of practice” (Scollon, 2001, p 150). Another reason may lie in its strong emphasis on **practices** and not, as in the case of CoP on **persons** (Scollon, 2002, p 155). The main focus is not placed on how they are related to each other, identified by the community, and achieve a legitimated membership status. I also claim that a CoP strongly foregrounds how practices arise from engagement between *persons* that are bounded in time and space, *persons* that contribute to the pursuit of a joint enterprise, *persons* that negotiate meaning and *persons* that develop shared practices (Wenger, 1998, p 184). Arguably, practices as markers of in-group membership affiliation are again defined and manifested by *persons*. In sum, it seems that people act within a nexus of practice, but they express explicit and (discursive) reified membership of exclusion and inclusion via a community of practice.

When defining CoP 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 et al., 2002, p 4), one may be inclined to believe that an educational enterprise such as the one at hand falls into this category. However, at second glance, it becomes obvious that the concept of a joint enterprise where members hold each other accountable to a collective negotiation of the nature of their community could give rise to some difficulties. Indicators of such a joint enterprise are (Wenger, 1998, p 125):

- a) substantial overlap in participants’ descriptions of who belongs,
- b) knowing what others know, what they can do and how they can contribute to an enterprise,
- c) mutually defined identities and
- (d) the ability to assess the appropriateness of actions and products

From a constructivist standpoint, I would argue that such a perspective tends to reify communities of practice as groups of people who operate within defined boundaries and established behavioural rules of a bounded social group. Such a view might have something in common with the realist ontological perspective (Lave and

Wenger, 1991) which regards a community of practice as a social object rather than a fluid social process. On a similar note, Gherardi (2009, p 161) advocates a shift of focus from pre-existing practices to “communities of practitioners”, thus giving priority to a post-modern constructivist gaze.

In view of the many studies that provide rather “condensed or abridged definitions” (Murillo, 2011, p 33) about this concept or establish competing labels for essentially the same social phenomenon, it is not my intention here to propose yet another definition. Rather, I shall point to some critical aspects when applying this umbrella term, especially to a community that displays a relatively short-term collaboration.

A four-semester Master course as the one of my investigation has its temporal limits and is unlikely to become a permanent community. I therefore doubt whether it is capable of developing into a stable and tightly knit group which is longitudinal in scope. Arguably, over time it might display an increased degree of mutuality, shared understanding and repertoire, but there is also a great deal of individualisation. Such individualised practices are partly expressed by the extended use of cultural tools that are constantly adapted to existing practices or mediate new ones.

In this regard, Lindkvist refers to such a group as “collectivity of practice” (2005, p 1189) <sup>15</sup> by providing the example of a project-based team. For him, such a setting is not sufficiently developed to qualify as a CoP given its fleeting and quickly established nature. Although such a reclassification appears to be useful for conceptual clarity, it is still predominantly rooted in business studies literature with a powerful management discourse and hence seems to contribute little to educational enterprises.

Presumably, at the beginning of an International Master class, the highly diverse student body neither exhibits tightly knit structures nor draws on a high degree of shared understandings. Given their different lingua-cultural socialisations, both students and teachers require an extended period of time to develop a shared (socio-cultural) repertoire, a time span that is unavailable to them. What is more, many of such students work part-time, more often than once for various companies, and

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<sup>15</sup>This is a temporary group or team, assembled to accomplish concrete tasks that embrace knowledge exchange and creation. Typically in project settings, members draw on highly specialised expertise, but a low degree of shared understandings and knowledge base due to different previous experiences (Lindkvist, 2005).

are thus faced with loose membership boundaries in webs of complex groupings. Additionally, I doubt that they “know what others know and what they can do” (Wenger, 1998, p 125), since they build on partly highly divergent backgrounds.

Such a view presupposes that social agents in comparable settings shuttle between different communities and can hardly be pinned down to “totalising entities of communities of practice” (Scollon, 1998, p 13) with “an immutable set of values” (Canagarajah, 2002, p 35).

For this reason the concept of “nexus of practice” appears to be particularly fruitful and widely applicable to individualistic and independent “migrators”. Actors within a “nexus of practice” are not only more loosely connected, their vague membership boundaries are also frequently transcended. Scollon (2002, p 5) defines this concept as “unbounded” and takes account of a vast majority of practices that are linked variably to different practices in different sites of engagement and among different participants not without acknowledging the emergence of some recognisable bundles of practices.

Instead of rather sharply defined social relationships, a nexus of practice takes social action as a liaison between individual actors in a highly permeable setting without prior assumption of a shared set of practices. Such a perspective corresponds well with the dynamic underpinning of constructivist philosophy, since it avoids assumption of membership boundaries and shifts the focus on social action.

Also in Wortham’s definition of a “nexus of practice” which constitutes “a repeated site of engagement where some type of social action is facilitated by a *relatively* consistent set of social processes” (2006, p 3), the word ‘relatively’ indicates that a fixed social relationship in a bounded setting is not a typical ingredient to this mode of belonging.

Building on this concept, I take the view that a “**nexus of educational practice**” (henceforth NofEP) in a multilingual university setting as the one at hand forms the basis for the emergence of a shared set of ethno-relative practices. It allows for a flexible understanding of internalised social practices to unfold where cross-border encounters are assessed and negotiated by the participants from a third-culture perspective based on their expanding intercultural and de-contextualised understanding. I take that a NofEP is the point of departure from which to start when students and teachers seek to become aligned and engaged a through a shared

practice.

In other words, a NofEP is a recognisable grouping of a set of mediated actions where a “matrix of linked practices” (Pietikäinen et al., 2011), flows in repeated real-time educational sites of engagement. Such a constellation of interrelated educational actions serves as a nexus point for a multitude of discourses (Hult, 2010) that are facilitated by a relatively consistent, yet evolving set of social processes and network of relations of an academic discourse community. In line with a “collectivity of practice” (Lindkvist, 2005), a NofEP takes mediated action as a unit of analysis, but accounts for the short-time collaboration and lack of common knowledge base of a group that intersects in particular spaces.

## 6.6 Common ground

In the following, I set forth why I believe that elements of the approaches of CGT and NA lend themselves well to being pulled together.

Both grounded theory building and NA favour data collection methods that gather rich data directly from the social actors experiencing the phenomenon under investigation. Both approaches start out by adopting an inductive lens without taking a hypothesis as a starting point (Lane, 2009, p 455), but rather begin with specific observations that map the relevant discourse cycles which circulate social actions. Further similarities can be found with regard to the high demand on the researchers’ reflexive interpretations and the broad scope of surveillance.

There is also common ground in their sampling techniques that enable “a comprehensive description of the trajectories of the phenomena over time” (Bryant and Charmaz, 2007, p 229), which is a crucial ingredient of both paradigms. Further, the historical and ethnographic nature of NA appears to be highly compatible with CGT. What is more, both approaches are found to be well suited for studies that focus on the interconnectivity of actions, discourses, objects, places and times (Scollon and Scollon, 2013; Lane, 2009). The main reason why I “fell for” these paradigms, though, was that they appeared robust for the non-linear dynamic flow which was required for this reflexive and integrative theoretical process. Figure 6.3 reveals both similarities and differences between these meta-methodologies.

**Similarities and Differences of NA and CGT**

Dimension	Nexus Analysis	Constructivist Grounded Theory
<b>Disciplinary roots</b>	sociolinguistics	sociology
<b>Research paradigm</b>	constructivist-interpretive approach to human inquiry	
<b>Goal</b>	study discourse cycles through interaction order, discourses in place and historical body (Scollon, 2003)	develop exploratory theory of social practice grounded in data from the field
<b>Unit of analysis</b>	social process, action or interaction involving a number of agents	
<b>Approach to field</b>	engage, navigate and change the nexus	sensitising concepts, initial and advanced memos, theoretical sampling, integration
<b>Positioning of researcher</b>	agent of social change, activist stance	author and participant, active engagement
<b>Sampling</b>	social actors that are engaged in nexus of practice	theoretical sampling, open and flexible process in line with emerging theory
<b>Data collection</b>	eclectic, multiple methods, ethnographic accounts,	eclectic, multiple methods (e.g. ethnographic accounts, intensive interviews) to reach saturation
<b>Analytic approach</b>	recursive and iterative process	recursive process, constant comparison, open, axial and selective coding
<b>Product</b>	change of nexus	theoretical model

similarities

Figure 6.3: Common ground between Nexus Analysis and Constructivist Grounded Theory (author's own illustration)

## 6.7 Chapter summary

As a summary for this chapter, figure 6.4 reiterates the relationships between key variables of the employed research hierarchy. I have taken constructivist-interpretive theory as my research paradigm and a qualitative research methodology as the main framework for this study.

By adopting two similar approaches, namely CGT and NA, I have attempted to make a blend and pull those elements together that appeared to be best suited for my research. Before identifying common ground between them, I provided some theoretical considerations on CGT and NA, so as to give the readers a sufficient understanding of those approaches.

I opted for the research steps that are typical of CGT and took the nexus-analytical cycles as one factor that allowed me to sketch the historical development of the NofEP. The second component that proved to be useful was the notion of “nexus of practice” which was placed in relation to other concepts with respect to their understanding of social practices and further extended to nexus of educational practice.

I embedded my study in an ecological framework and gave reasons why this step was considered appropriate. Both my positionality and fieldwork relation were discussed and my desire to contribute to social change as an activist researcher was outlined.

So, in trying to identify affordances that are perceived by lecturers teaching in an International Classroom over time and space, both CGT and NA were found to be analytical approaches that, albeit rooted in partly different epistemologies, are well-suited to inform each other.

Apart from subscribing to these two paradigms I have also advocated for a focus to be placed on ideas that migrate disciplinary boundaries (socio-linguistics, sociology, cultural studies and higher education research). In doing so, drawing from a wide range of eclectic methods spanning from interviews, introspection, self-reflection, observations and questionnaires seemed to be the natural choice. I came to understand throughout my research journey that qualitative inquiry is inherently subjective and the paradigms, models and theories employed by researchers of any given discipline are inevitably one of many possible combinations of methods.

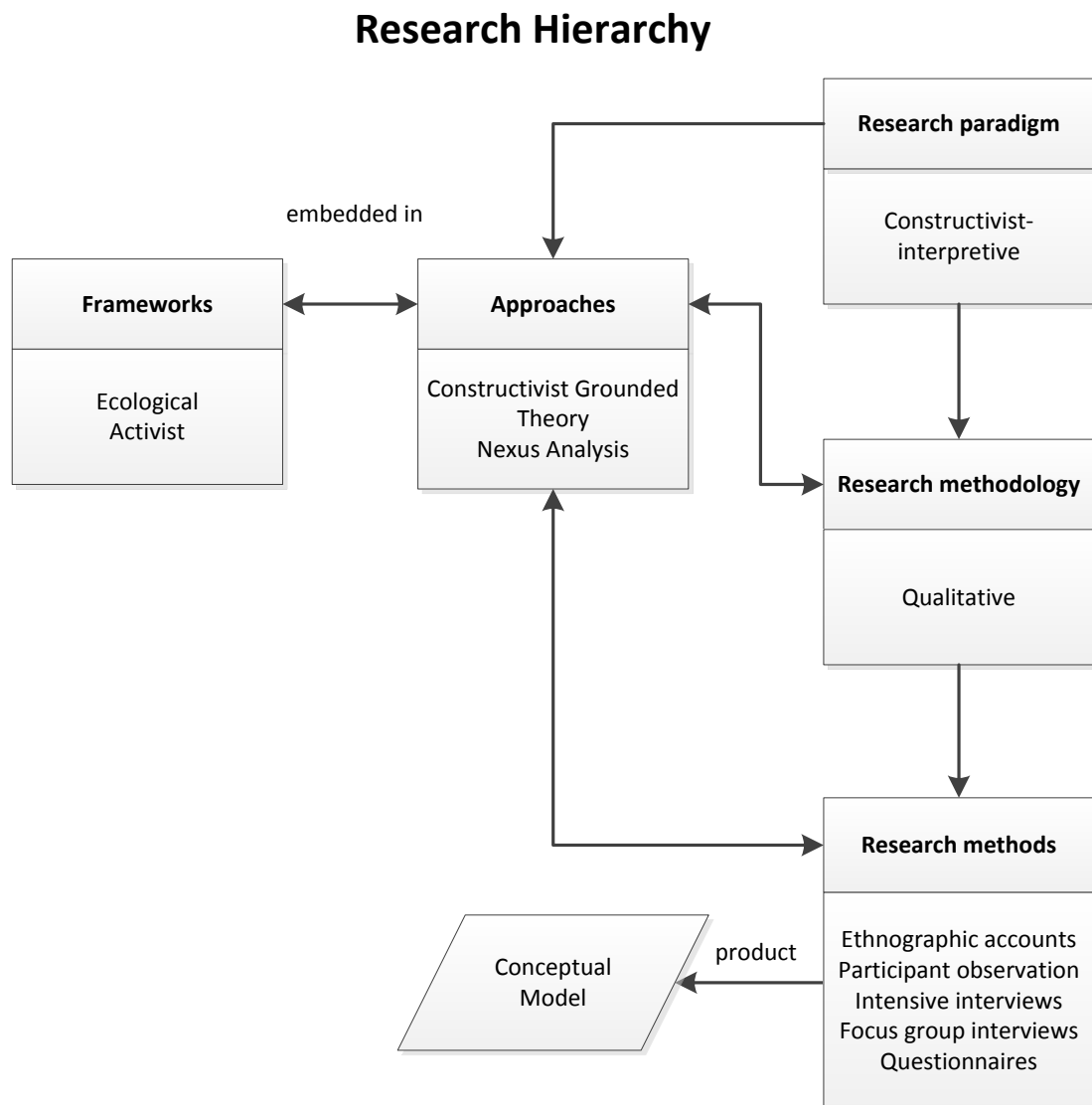


Figure 6.4: Overview of research hierarchy (author's own illustration)

Despite an often bewildering array of diverse methodological tools it is ultimately each researcher's own informed decision how to systematically navigate the research process with all its complexities.

In sum, my approach could be described as a methodological, interpretive, narrative and theoretical bricolage (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, pp 167-171) that borrows ideas from different disciplines and seeks to bring them together in innovative ways.

While the methodological bricoleur is adept at performing a broad variety of diverse tasks that span from interviewing to intensive self-reflection and introspection, the interpretive bricoleur understands that research is an interactive process shaped by one's personal history and biography. As a narrative "bricoleuse" I am aware that researchers all tell stories about the worlds they have studied. And finally, I have come to understand that a theoretical bricoleur is prepared to read widely to become knowledgeable about the many interpretive paradigms (based on Denzin and Lincoln, 2011).

I claim that throughout my research journey I have come to define myself as a "scientific bricoleuse in all respects". To give an account of this, chapter 7 lays out the research process in methodical terms and describes the typical package of research methods that are used in CGT.

# Chapter 7

## Methodology and Research Design

### 7.1 Introduction

To generate theory in an inherently complex field such as the one of the educational nexus at hand, it is certainly best to use multiple research tools. Given the benefits of combining qualitative and quantitative methods to gain a more comprehensive picture of a social phenomenon and to verify one set of findings against the other (Sandelowski, 2003, pp 321-350), it has become increasingly common to use a mixed methods approach<sup>1</sup>. It was found that a combination of qualitative and quantitative research is particularly appropriate for analysing educational settings where content, function and development of shared meaning are explored. Whilst qualitative methods embrace a set of data collection and analysis techniques to either build or test theory, quantitative research generally provides a high level of measurement precision aimed at understanding the statistical correlations among different variables. Dörnyei (2007, p 164) has quite rightly added an additional purpose to the list of the main rationales for mixing methods, namely to “reach audiences that would not be sympathetic to one of the approaches if applied alone”.

Among qualitative methods there is particularly one wide-spread form of classroom analysis which is also employed in this study. This is the usage of ethnographic accounts aimed to gain rich and in-depth description of observed events through the

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<sup>1</sup>Investigations using a mixed method approach collect and analyse both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study with some attempts to integrate the two approaches at one or more stages of the research process (Dörnyei, 2007, p 163).

researcher's immersion into the site of study or, as Charmaz calls it, "area to probe" (2008, p 142).

In the following section I reflect on my intellectual journey of CGT that, at times, was perceived as an odyssey into uncharted waters, but eventually allowed me to generate the inductive framework outlined in chapter 9.

## 7.2 My CGT research story

At this point, it needs to be clarified that the nexus-analytical steps as a vital part of the research process are sketched in chapter 8 together with the historical development of this case study. It appeared more appropriate, also in view of the highly structured agenda of grounded theory research, to present first a detailed account of - as I would like to call it here - my "constructivist grounded theory research story".

To begin with, it is crucial to understand that when engaging in any form of grounded theory investigation, researchers need to adopt specific lenses in which the following aspects have to be addressed: 1) the measure of rigour, 2) theoretical sensitivity, 3) theoretical sampling, 4) treatment of the literature, 5) constant comparative methods, 6) coding and sorting 7) the meaning of verification, 8) identifying the core categories, and 9) memoing and diagramming (Mills et al., 2006b; McCann and Clark, 2003).

I hold the view that research claiming to produce theory that is grounded in the data must therefore also employ its typical package of research methods, including the use of concurrent data collection, constant comparative analysis, and its narrative tools. This is why the following section provides an overview of how this package was applied throughout this study to ultimately obtain some conceptual theory.

### 7.2.1 Measure of rigour

When it comes to setting rigour criteria for qualitative studies, it seems that the ones that reflect the interpretivist paradigm best are **credibility**, **transferability**, **dependability** and **confirmability** (Guba and Lincoln, 2005, pp 191-216).

Although it seems possible to draw some analogies with the positivist paradigm (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, p 13) where credibility in interpretivist research is said to correspond to internal validity in quantitative approaches, transferability to external validity or generalisability, dependability to reliability, and confirmability to objectivity, the two approaches differ substantially in their knowledge claims.

To start with, **credibility** refers to the idea of internal consistency and validity indicating that the researcher is obliged to disclose the complexities of the entire research journey. Since the present study falls in the activist paradigm that seeks local understanding rather than universal truths, the claim to generalise the obtained findings for a general application of my grounded theory cannot hold water. Rather, a “thick description” (Ponterotto, 2006, p 538) of the setting is provided and an extensive account of the conceptual development of the process is given to facilitate subsequent judgements about **transferability**. Although **transferability** is generally increased by means of triangulation, I still wish to stress here that given the small sample size, it cannot be implied that the grounded model can be generally transferred to other samples. As to **dependability** and its claim of a transparent tracking of the research process that clearly reflects how findings were derived (often through an audit trail), it seems that grounded theorists are generally more open to scrutiny due to constant memo-writing and the rigorous documentation of incidents and concepts which enable other researchers to largely follow their decision trails. **Confirmability** as the last criterion looks for logical and coherent judgements that can be traced back to the sources. Whilst a major concern of grounded theory lies in the development of the findings derived from the data independently of the researcher’s subjectivity, it can never be totally assumed that a researcher is always aiming to be objective. As such **confirmability**, frequently driven by a positivistic paradigm, has to account for testability, be it through an audit trail, the management of subjectivity or the findings themselves. Arguably, admitting one’s predispositions is a helpful point of departure. At the same time, the researcher’s constant reflections and introspection are also essential ingredients for a non-prejudiced and non-judgemental dialogue with the data.

Before moving on to the data collection section, it is important to state at this point that qualitative researchers are also advised to meet the so-called “**authentic-**

**ity criteria**”<sup>2</sup>. I concur with Lincoln’s and Guba’s (1989, pp 245-250) indications that in order to do quality interpretivist studies, researchers not only have to be **fair** and **ontologically authentic**, they also have to contribute to **educative authenticity** by appreciating alternative views. Further, they need to be capable of assessing their resulting action which is described as **catalytic authenticity** and enable empowerment of individual stakeholders to act, which is referred to as **tactical authenticity**. Throughout my study I sought to apply these quality features of fairness, knowledge sharing and social action to enhance integrity, quality and trustworthiness of my inquiry process and to ultimately make a worthy scholarly contribution.

### 7.2.2 Theoretical sensitivity

Theoretical sensitivity can be defined as the researcher’s ability to grasp subtleties and nuances in the data that help him or her to sensitise to those issues that are essential for the development of theory. Although interpersonal perceptiveness and conceptual thinking play a crucial role in CGT given that they allow for the identification of patterns in the emerging theory, it is acknowledged that prior knowledge and theoretical preconceptions may constitute additional inputs to the analyst provided that they are subject to “rigorous scrutiny” (Charmaz, 2008, p 402).

Hence, in the following, some evidence for such a scrutiny is given. While I entered the research field with some broad ideas of how the teachers felt about teaching in English and the institutional stance on internationalisation, I had few “a priori assumptions” (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, p 3) about how those teachers perceive International Classroom Affordances. Given the breadth of the topic, I did not want to start with any hypotheses about this phenomenon of interest. I wanted to enter this largely uncharted field with an open mind and not squeeze my thoughts into hypothetical constructs. What supported this approach was the limited research body on this specific area which left me no other choice but conduct empirical research and ground emerging categories in the data. Yet, it would be naive to claim that I did not have certain research interests and a general set of

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<sup>2</sup>In line with constructivist ideas, these intrinsic criteria are valuable tools to evaluate research quality that goes beyond methodological considerations.

concepts that guided me through my research agenda.

Building on Blumer's (1969) understanding of **sensitising concepts** that give users "a general sense of reference and guidance in approaching empirical instances" (Blumer, 1954, p 7), Charmaz suggests that such concepts serve as reasonable "points of departure" (2003, p 259) for the development of ideas and guidance of general disciplinary perspectives.

In the first phase of my research, the **engaging** cycle, I employed a number of "sensitising concepts" as some kind of conceptual guidance. These were: discourses in place, teaching practices including meaning-focused activities and group cohesion, codes of signification, tacit assumptions and habitus. Acquired through acculturation into certain social groups (Bourdieu, 2005), habitus refers to personal habits or what Scollon and Scollon (2004) call the "historical body" of a social agent.

Apart from such vantage points from which to enter the field and engage with the social actors in an unbiased manner, Charmaz (2006) includes further factors in her understanding of theoretical sensitivity. They embrace the researchers' level of insight into the research area - so to say their "attunement process", and the extent to which they are capable of capturing the complexity of the social actors' utterances and actions.

In order to meet such expectations, I claim, that some previous awareness and underlying knowledge on the part of the researcher is both helpful and useful to promote the development of an "emergent fit" of grounded theory. From this point of view, my broad spectrum of professional expertise, my interdisciplinary background, age and emic understanding of the setting have proved valuable in revealing nuances in the data.

### 7.2.3 Theoretical sampling

Since sampling decisions are to be grounded in the emerging concepts and thus evolve during the process (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) as a vital component in the development of grounded theories, my choice of sample was guided by the methodological underpinning of CGT. When **engaging the nexus** I was well aware that data collection in grounded theory studies is an open ended and flexible process likely to be modified over the course of the investigation. Whilst the initial stages

require maximum openness, theoretical sampling seeks to refine and expand on analytic categories and, ultimately, reach saturation. It is also intended to challenge the on-going analysis through alternative points of view, achieved via member checking<sup>3</sup>.

In line with qualitative studies that seek in-depth understanding of some local community by recruiting social actors that have experienced the phenomenon under investigation, I started with purposive sampling<sup>4</sup>. This is a frequently employed technique in qualitative research where the number of participants is less crucial than the criteria used to select those social agents. It is sought to recruit informants that are relevant and involved in the phenomenon being investigated.

In order to reach an appropriate fit between the theoretical constructs and the investigated social reality, it has proved to be useful to expand the initial sample of key participants. This is why, already at an early stage of my research, I watched out for further prospective informants that would meet my requirements to explore multiple dimensions of the social process and help me to become saturated with information on the field of inquiry (Padgett, 2004).

Clearly, my choice for data sources was neither a random selection, nor a totally a priori determination, and so it is only logical that my sampling schemes changed dynamically and in line with the development of my research endeavour throughout the **navigation**. My goal was to refine my ideas and not to increase the size of the original sample which explains why throughout my study I selected informants in accordance with the descriptive needs of the emerging theory rather than by predetermined population. After identifying what data sources are most likely to yield the richest data, I constantly redefined my emerging concepts and tentative ideas to gain empirical indicators for further development. This iterative process of “data mining” (Nyaupane and Poudel, 2012) not only allowed me to obtain data from new participants (domestic and international students), I also underwent a recursive process of discovery and questioning by building on previously conducted interviews to create a “conceptually dense” (Schwandt, 2007, p 132) theory that

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<sup>3</sup>Member checking or respondent validation is a technique that consists of testing with informants the researcher’s data, analytic categories, interpretations, and conclusions (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) with the aim to increase the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings.

<sup>4</sup>Purposive sampling is the initial stage of theoretical sampling and often used interchangeably (Wilmot, 2005). It is the stage at which researchers sample agents and incidents on the basis of their potential contribution to the development and testing of theoretical constructs (Richie et al., 2003).

would help to extend the conceptual categories and hence advance the theory (see also Charmaz, 2014; Strauss and Corbin, 1994).

What proved to be difficult was the documentation of this iterative process of discovery, questioning and theoretical sampling, since it was time-consuming and non-linear. I came to understand that to unveil hidden and taken-for-granted assumptions within the data, interview questions needed to be refocused to gain specific information regarding emerging concepts. Then again interviews had to be redirected, especially if some categories became saturated and informants introduced new concepts. In sum, newly emerging ideas constantly dictated subsequent data collection and were persistently pursued until a conceptualisation was sufficiently enriched to understand the emergent concepts.

To conclude, it should be reiterated that it was not my aim to achieve representativeness or verification when applying theoretical sampling. Rather, I concur with Charmaz (2006) in that interpretive work and inductive inquiry can not be entirely replicable. Since representativeness and verification are both concepts that are inherently positivist in the way that they presume a theory of truth, a case study in the present setting can certainly not live up to this claim. In other words, my approach to theoretical sampling was not to expand upon any preconceived theory or to test the subsequent emerging theory, but to generate or rather suggest a middle-range theory to help understand processes that - in an optional step and external to the primary concern - might be verified if appropriate.

#### 7.2.4 Treatment of the literature

A highly contested area among grounded theorists is whether the researcher should pro-actively engage with the literature already at the start of the research process or approach their study with “a Blank Slate” (Urquhart and Fernández, 2006, 2013, pp 224), hence assuming a neutral and dispassionate role without theoretical integration of literature in the discipline. It is argued that the imposition of pre-defined knowledge might impact or even distort the discovery of theory. I concur with Bryant (2013) that researchers can not wholly postpone the literature review, but can adapt it to their chosen research strategy, especially against the backdrop that grounded theory should speak for itself (Corbin and Strauss, 2008; Stern, 2007).

Nevertheless, it was useful to review the literature throughout my study and read widely in other disciplines. Not only did this approach allow me to enter in an inductive/deductive interplay, but it was also a recommended means of enhancing theoretical sensitivity (Glaser, 2005, 1998). By doing so, I sought to link existing models and theory with the emergent concepts of the new theory. The insights gained from the literature review certainly helped to stimulate my theoretical sensitivity, directed my theoretical sampling and provided supplementary validity (Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

### 7.2.5 Constant comparative method

Constant comparative methods constitute the “the core of qualitative analysis in the grounded theory approach and in other types of qualitative research” (Boeije, 2002, p 391) with the ultimate aim to discern conceptual similarities, to refine the discriminative power of categories, and to discover patterns (Tesch, 2013). The ability to do so is considered a creative, even artistic process (Strauss and Corbin, 1998) with very few guidelines are provided by the literature.

The way I approached my analysis consisted of basically two activities, namely **fragmenting** and **connecting** (Dey, 1993, pp 175-178) (also see Boeije, 2000, p 394). While this continuous back and forth comparison between moving in and out of the data is referred to as fragmenting data into coded chunks, connections among a variety of categories and sub-categories can be regarded as a connecting step in analysis similar to “putting mortar between the building blocks” (Dey, 1993, p 47).

Applied to my study it meant that the fragmented data was decontextualised from the interviews and transcripts as a whole and a focus was placed on an ordering process. In a second step, I reconnected subsets of data-rich parts to their original context to interpret sections in their entirety. This process of inter-and intra-comparison of data helped me to describe salient patterns or falsify evidence and refute the emerging theory.

Throughout the process, the software package Atlas.Ti served a valuable tool for the analysis of the data. It allowed me to manage the bulk of data which took the form of transcripts of interviews, participant observation data, discussion group postings and memos. To illustrate this, some examples are listed in figure 7.1.

Action Codes	Illustrative Quotation	Transcript	Participant
Column1	Column2	C 3	C 4
perceiving need for adaption	They come off a bit cold, but I guess that is really the culture, we never really had the chance to form a bond. So we just tuned in.	P 4	IS
feeling left out	I don't wanna feel like that I'm a special needs, like he needs to make extra steps, but I kinda felt left out.	P 3	IS
making assumptions explicit	I think the better I speak German, the more they will communicate with me or discuss other topics, until now it is only small talk, no personal talk	P 10	IS
avoiding uncertainty	I can deal with jokes and irony very badly in English. So before I do something wrong, I leave them out.	P 7	DT
assigning significance	the teachers restrict themselves to everthing that is non-cultural. That is typical of technical communciation. Facts are on the radar screen. Trivial issues such as cultural differences are ridden over.	P 16	DS
braving the gap	to establish cross-references and see the big picture that is what they need, but that requires the courage to leave gaps, create loopholes and set a different focus	P 18	DT
following rules of appropriateness	They come here to study. Why should we change, they have taken the decision to come to Austria. They will soon find out how we tick, how it is done here.	P 8	DT
sticking to entrenched practices	nope, nothing is different in an international classroom. I try to tell the same stories, I have the same handouts, I am the same person. So what? I don't have any problems.	P 8	DT

Figure 7.1: Overview of selected action codes (author's own illustration)

For clarification it should be noted that column 4 shows the source where the vignettes come from. The abbreviation IS refers to international student, DT stands for disciplinary teacher and DS for domestic student. Column 2 provides some extracts of “illustrative quotations” which are defined as “examples sentences that provide extra denotative and connotative information” (Dalgish, 1995, p 335).

### 7.2.6 Coding

In general, there are several sequential phases of coding. All of them are theoretically bounded with the ultimate goal to find patterns in the data. Strauss and Corbin (1990; 1997) refer to their identified coding procedures as open coding, axial coding and selective coding.

In contrast, Charmaz (2014; 2006) advocates a two-stage approach of open and focused coding. Far from providing any prescriptive recipes, however, she leaves it to the researchers to opt for a coding process that is best suited for their purposes. Since the coding paradigm (see chapter 9) as part of the axial coding procedure includes causal and contextual conditions, strategies, and consequences it appeared useful to map the dynamic interplay of the relevant factors involved. This is why I chose a three-level approach of coding.

Open coding as the first analytical step implies a preliminary identification of concepts. Such assigned codes (Bryant and Charmaz, 2007) are used to connect relationships between recorded concepts and the study participants. Axial coding helps researchers to systematically develop and relate categories to their subcategories and to progressively aggregate and condense codes into broader categories. The final step of a grounded theory investigation consists of selective coding, which focuses on the unit of analysis and provides the basis for the emerging theory by identifying a story line (Creswell et al., 2007).

#### Open and focused coding

Identification of specific portions of transcripts that result in greater understanding of categories is per se an interpretive process and requires creative strategies that allow the researcher to integrate the voices of their informants. The process of “breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing, and categorizing data”

(Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p 61) is usually done through a line-by-line coding.

Throughout this first analytical step I used “action codes”<sup>5</sup> to keep my coding closer to the informants’ experiences. Using gerunds to code for actions makes individual and collective processes visible (Charmaz, 2011, 2006) and also helps to “provide the grist to write memos” (Charmaz, 2012b, p 9). By analysing “what is happening in the setting” (Charmaz, 2014, p 43) and by adhering to the line-by-line coding strategy, I sought to stay more redolent of their language. In addition, it really mattered to me to preserve the authenticity of the evidence, which is why I did all the coding and sampling by myself.

Since the aim of open coding is to generate as many conceptual codes as possible or necessary to fit the data, this initial procedure produced over 400 synoptic labels containing a verb as illustrated above in figure 7.1.

Each transcript that was completed with the recommended action wording scheme was then followed-up by an analytical memo process on emerging themes. This focused coding aimed at elevating the initial action codes and to develop relationships among them by selecting the most useful ones and “test them against extensive data” (Charmaz, 2006, p 42). In a next step, all memos and data were revisited and analytically scrutinised to arrive at a set of nearly 100 codes (see appendix for the code hierarchy in form of a cloud).

What I found particularly worthy of more scrutiny where the use of in vivo codes<sup>6</sup> so as to prevent a complete sinking into my own categorising schemes. One of these codes was referred to by teachers as the “meta-level” to express the significance attached to see the greater picture when it comes to teaching in an International Classroom. It was possible to assign 14 quotations to this code. For an illustration, see figure 7.2.

Another in-vivo code that enriched my conceptual understanding of the scene was translated as “braving the gap” (in German “Mut zur Lücke”). This expression taken from the teachers’ discourses was frequently used when they referred to their

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<sup>5</sup>Essentially, action codes are synoptic labels that contain a verb and provide the matrix to write analytical memos aimed at the identification of processes. By allowing insight into what people are doing, action codes lead to a deeper understanding of multiple layers of meanings of their actions (Charmaz, 2008).

<sup>6</sup>Categories may consist of in vivo codes directly taken from respondents’ discourse (Charmaz, 2006, p 92) where conceptual names and personally formulated terms take central stage.

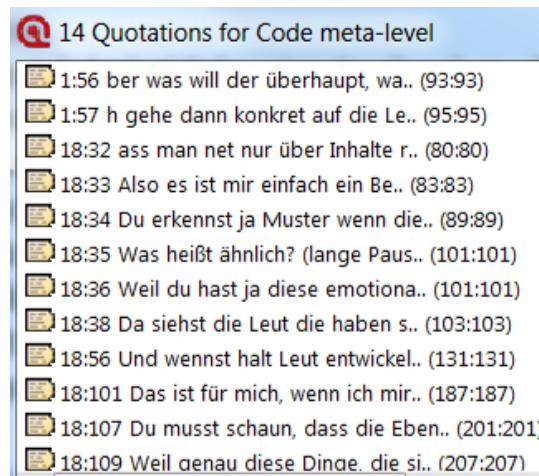


Figure 7.2: Extract of quotations for meta-level code (author's own illustration)

entrenched classroom practices and their internalised control which translated in their perceived responsibility of conveying the subject content to its full extent. While some teachers used it to express their identified need for “braving the gap” in terms of disciplinary knowledge, others admitted that they did not dare this gap for fear of not corresponding to their role of the Sage-on-the-Stage.

### Axial coding

Although axial coding is considered optional by Charmaz (2006), it might still be a good idea to opt for this highly structured step and develop a coding paradigm. This process of linking the categories of concepts to grasp their connections is a valuable tool to enhance “density and precision” to the grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p 99). Since axial coding puts data back together in new ways by making connections between a category and its sub-categories (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p 97), it helps to grasp a more holistic picture of the scene and hence enhance the level of abstraction.

While the coding paradigm developed for this study is presented in chapter 9, figure 7.3 provides deeper insight into how broad analytic themes emerged from category codes.

Examples of such codes are self-reflection, discursive repertoires, internalised control, rules of appropriateness, low-context communication, lack of awareness or

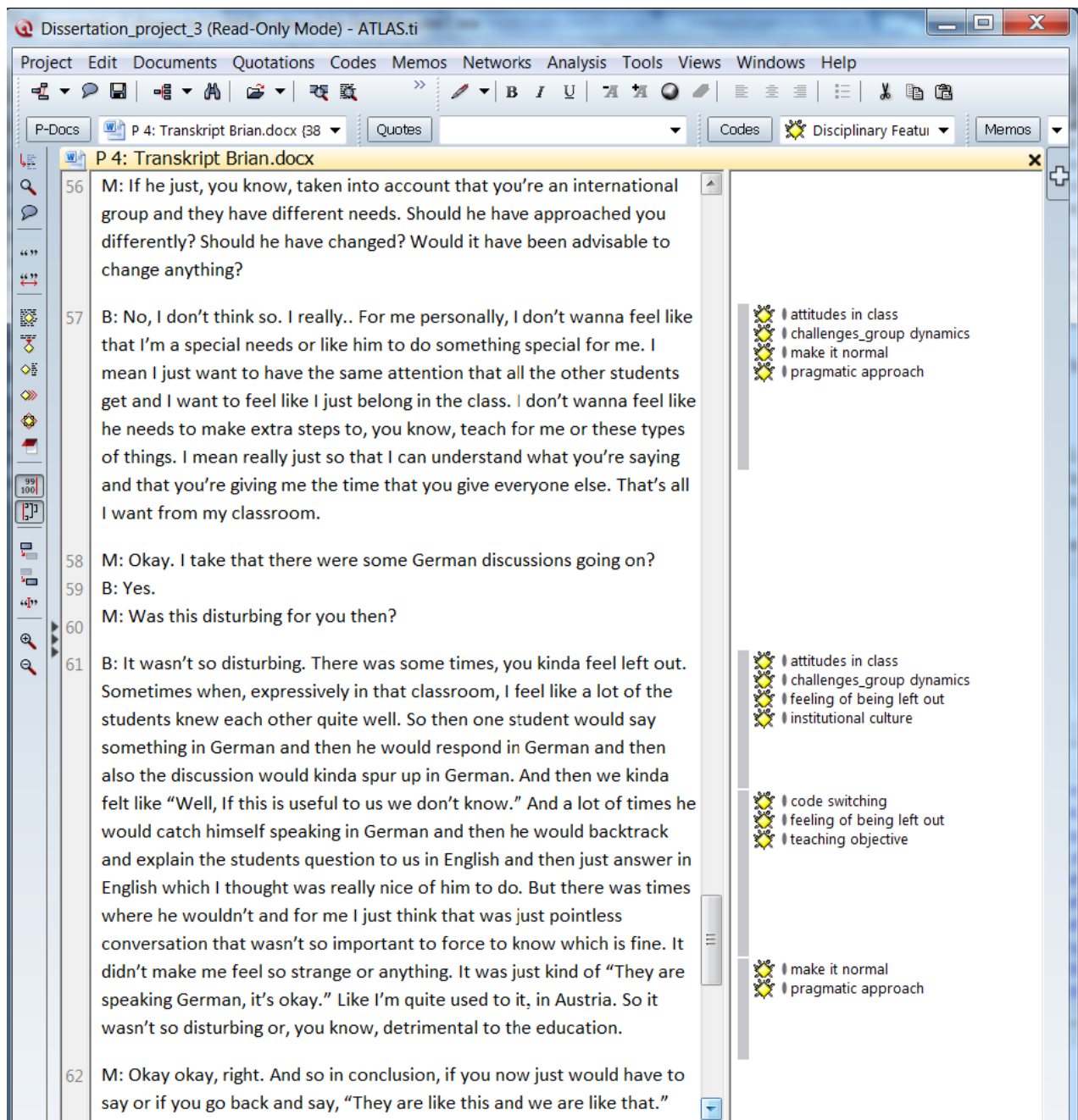


Figure 7.3: Overview of selected action codes (author's own illustration)

self-perception (also see Appendix). These category codes were compared across transcripts and data and eventually helped to put the data back together in new ways and find the overarching themes relevant for the coding paradigm. This coding step is done at a higher and more abstract level of analysis (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). The integration of all factors takes the shape of the conceptual model outlined in chapter 9.

### **Sorting**

As a crucial step in the coding process, sorting constitutes an analytical procedure where data are sorted into parts to allow conceptualisation and categorisation. This process then provides the foundational framework between raw and analysed data with the ultimate goal to find various theoretical codes for a possible fit (Charmaz, 2014, 2008, 2006). Obviously, far from chronological ordering, sorting is done dynamically throughout the research assisted by memos to help to raise descriptive accounts to a more conceptual level. In other words, sorting is an essential ingredient in identifying different categories and relating them to the emerging theoretical framework.

#### **7.2.7 Concurrent data collection**

It goes without saying that both coding and concurrent data collection facilitate a reflexive analysis grounded in the data. Since recursive and cyclical coding allows for concurrent data collection, these two steps inevitably go hand in hand. As such concurrent data collection and analysis was done throughout the study where each iteration of analysis informed subsequent data collection and coding procedures. Relying only on transcripts would be insufficient, even more so in view of the fact the joint production of data between the informants and the researcher takes central stage in CGT.

After informed consent from the participants, this research was started with a purposeful sample (Cutcliffe, 2000) consisting of lecturers teaching in an International Classroom of the investigated setting. Emergent themes guided theoretical sampling during this longitudinal study leading to observations, interviews and questionnaires of additional groups of interest such as domestic and international

students, both of which were prepared to give broad consent to have their samples used in the present study.

I opted for a design in which quantitative surveys, qualitative in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were conducted and ethnographic notes were simultaneously taken during September 2010 to May 2014.

### 7.2.8 Memo-writing

Throughout my study I was keenly aware of the need to be reflexive in my approach to data collection and analysis. Unlike field notes which are mainly descriptive, analytical memo-writing plays a key role in the development of the theory (Montgomery and Bailey, 2007, p 76). This is why I started to tape-record parts of my field notes and developing ideas about their interconnections which were partly transcribed and coded. In doing so, I sought to transform field note descriptions and chronicles of my observations into theoretical accounts.

Bearing in mind the impact of prior professional and academic experiences, memo-writing reminded me of my own biases and agendas. Whilst openness and creativity are undoubtedly a prerequisite for the emergence of categories, they still need to be inductively derived from the social actors' beliefs and perceptions and not forced into the shape of preconceptions harboured by the researcher. I thus considered memo-writing as a dynamic distillation process that allowed me to transform my data into theory. Unfortunately, the relative invisibility of theoretical memos and field notes (Glaser, 1998) contributes to the fact that documentation of ideas seem to frequently go unnoticed, especially when the reader is confronted with the end product.

Despite this obvious drawback, these narrative tools served as an analytical and intellectual conversation with myself and although some were initially abductive and lacked cohesion, they still served as a gate-opener for my own informed decisions and, as a result, led to an increasingly refined understanding of the lecturers' perceived action possibilities in an International Classroom. In the course of my research I increasingly came to appreciate the value of theoretical notes that I used more and more frequently to relate back to the literature.

### 7.2.9 Meaning of verification

My meaning of verification and verifiability as a form of validation has already been sketched in the previous chapter. While for Glaser (1992; 1978) verification is only possible after development of theory in line with a real and objective social world, Strauss and Corbin (1997) and Charmaz (2014; 2008; 2006) assert that verification is already done throughout the research process. In any event, it seems that grounded theory has “a built-in mandate to strive toward verification through the process of category saturation” (Goulding, 1998, p 52).

In this regard, I confer with Charmaz (2006) and her constructivist understanding of CGT that truth as an absolute value does neither exist nor is it possible to reach verification only through follow-on quantitative analysis. With this knowledge in mind, it stands to reason that generalisability cannot be a goal for my study. Rather it is sought to establish theory that is amenable to subsequent verification.

## 7.3 Data collection and research instruments

In what follows, I spell out the methods used to make the research process as transparent as possible. Whilst I have given the rationale for my theoretical underpinnings in chapter 6, it is my intention here to define my steps in operational terms.

As previously stated, the qualitative research traditions that loomed large were ethnographic accounts and the methodical package of CGT. The systematic application of its methods was resulting in the end product of my research, namely the conceptual model applied to the case study<sup>7</sup> at hand.

I am in agreement with Charmaz that methods alone do not generate good research, what really matters is “how researchers use methods” (2006, p 15). For this reason, I sketch how I have employed and adopted methods that were holding a promise of advancing my emerging theory.

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<sup>7</sup>In contrast to traditional forms of case study research, the present case study turned out to be rather a product than a method of my inquiry. This is even more important against the background that case study research needs “theory development prior to the collection of any case study data” (Yin, 1994, p 28) as it is generally guided by concepts that may be understood from the literature which is contrary to the fundamental principles of grounded theory.

My primary data collection methods were ethnographic techniques such as participant observations, in-depth interviews<sup>8</sup>, informal talks, narrative descriptions in form of daily logs, field notes and discursive data, but also the use of key informants in focus groups.

This was complemented by quantitative methods such as surveys to gather some numerical data and enhance data triangulation. At the beginning of my study in the academic year 2010/11 no questionnaires for quantitative assessment were handed out to students. At that time my research endeavour was neither clearly defined, nor elaborated enough to sufficiently specify questions. A year later, however, I started to distribute questionnaires and used quantitative and qualitative scales simultaneously.

An overview of the data collection process can be seen in figure 7.4. The numbers correspond to the amount of social actors that participated in the data collection procedure. While the ethnographic observations were predominantly made on teachers and their classroom management, the questionnaires were intended to provide data on students' perceptions in terms of internationalisation, English-medium instruction and classroom management in general.

### 7.3.1 Discourse analysis

I confer with Pidgeon (1991) that grounded theory is distinct from classical content analysis (Krippendorff, 2012) where the aim is to systematically explore textual data aimed at grouping together similar types of utterances. Although (or actually due to the fact) that grounded theorists examine concepts to provide a contextual and explanatory framework, they refrain from generalised observations when doing line-by-line coding.

In this regard, Charmaz points to the relevance of language during the coding process by stressing that “in vivo codes serve as symbolic markers of participants' speech and meaning” (2006, p 55). In fact, in vivo codes have the potential to direct the analyst's attention to the participants' meanings of their personal views, which makes them crucial discourse-analytic features. At this point, I would like to recall

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<sup>8</sup>Charmaz (2006, p 85) refers to this form of direct conversation as “intensive interviewing” (see section 7.3.3).

Academic Year	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Ethnographic classroom data Number of teachers	3	5	4	3
<b>Three core teachers were observed throughout the research process</b>				
Questionnaires with students		25	25	25
<b>Targeting the entire cohort of the International Classroom</b>				
Interview data students		2	3	2
<b>Five internationally mobile students were interviewed</b>				
Interview data teachers	2	7	5	5
<b>Consecutive interviews were conducted with five teachers</b>				
Focus group interview with five teachers			Occasion: Teaching Day	
<b>Including the three core teachers</b>				

Figure 7.4: Overview of research methods (author's own illustration)

that those codes were also integral parts of my study (such as *meta-level* or *braving the gap*). By probing for intertextual meaning and identifying how discourse shapes identities and social reality, the method of discourse analysis takes central stage in grounded theory. At this point, I would argue that drawing firm lines between interpretive methods of discourse analysis and CGT is certainly problematic, which makes clear that this iterative process of decontextualisation and recontextualisation appears to be fairly similar across grounded theory and discourse analysis (Starks and Trinidad, 2007, p 1375).

### 7.3.2 Ethnographic accounts

As already noted, grounded theory, and CGT in particular, can and often do employ ethnographic methods. Yet, this has to be done with an informed eye on raising the analytical level and in line with the relevant research traditions. It is precisely for these reasons that differing views on the “discovery of grounded theory during fieldwork has been the subject of much debate” (Seale, 2004, p 248). In this context,

I agree with Charmaz (2006) that ethnographic accounts can suffer from a lack of focus. In addition, it is common practice that a subsequent mass of data is analysed near the end of the fieldwork phase. A third difference can be found in that ethnographic researchers tend to focus on only one “aspect of the scene, rather than an entire setting” (Charmaz and Mitchell, 2001, p 161). This is certainly a viable option, especially in view of their aim to grasp cultural meaning of the specific environment rather than generating theory.

Having said that, Charmaz (2001) nevertheless advocates ethnographic techniques such as participants observation and intensive interviewing. On this note, she appears confident that researcher that conduct CGT adhere to analytic procedures such as memo-writing with the aim to raise the empirical data from a descriptive to a more theoretical level. This holds certainly true for this study. I take that a combination of ethnographic methods and grounded theory is fruitful under the premise that the theorist is aware of how to effectively combine them to achieve the best results for the sake of scholarly rigour.

With this intention in mind, I entered the field in the academic year 2010/11 and began to study people in their natural settings with a keen interest in their socio-cultural constructions of realities. Figure 7.4 provides an overview of my research activities. In the summer semester 2011 I started to conduct ethnographic observations and recordings of classroom practices of three disciplinary teachers during a time span of three weeks (six hours each). A semester later I extended my sample to include two more lecturers who were all teaching in an International Classroom. All in all, I observed classroom practices of about twenty hours between November 2011 and January 2012. In the academic year 2012/13 I continued my endeavour with nearly the same sample. Since there was one teacher who stopped teaching in an International Classroom, there were four lecturers left who granted me access to their classes in October 2012 (about five hours each) and between March and May 2013 (about eight hours each). In the academic year 2013/14 I narrowed down my focus to the three core teachers that yielded the most promising results. I gathered ethnographic classroom data between October and December 2013 (four hours each). Overall, I observed and analysed more than 100 hours of International Classroom practices. Since my focus was not on a micro-linguistic analysis and given the fact that recording proved to be rather problematic (no informed consent), I only

recorded the focus group interview during the Teaching Day in May 2013. Each observation was accompanied by classroom observation protocols, field notes and subsequent informal talks with the teachers.

### 7.3.3 Intensive interviews

The type of interviews that appear best suited to yield rich data and reveal tacit assumptions is what Charmaz (2006, p 85) calls “intensive interviews” (also see Charmaz, 2014, p 85). This form of direct conversation allows for detailed exploration of a particular setting with individuals that are most familiar with the investigated environment. Since naturalistic settings can be “open ended yet directed, shaped yet emergent, and paced yet unrestricted” (Charmaz, 2006, p 26), they seem perfectly tailored to grounded theory investigations.

The open-ended format of intensive interviews has much in common with narrative analyses as regards the meaning-making components followed by a largely micro-substantive theorisation. In applied linguistic research it is common practice to develop broad questions about the topic in advance and then encourage interviewees to “elaborate on the issues raised in an exploratory manner” (Dörnyei, 2007, p 136).

Since interviews are perfectly suited to the exploration of beliefs, values and perceptions of social agents, they appeared the ideal setting to uncover the tacit knowledge that I was looking for during my investigation. Consequently, I started to elaborate an interview protocol which had been piloted in advance. These trial runs helped me to opt for probe questions most promising to elicit sufficiently rich data which were accompanied by an interview log with additional comments and notes of the setting and the lengths of the interviews.

In sum, 15 selected individuals were interviewed by the researcher between the academic years 2010/11 and 2013/14. The overall sample consisted of seven disciplinary teachers, five internationally mobile students and three domestic students. Among the internationals, two interviewees were female, all others were male. The average age of the students was 23 years and that of the teachers was 40 years. The disciplinary background of all interviewees had to do with computing. The interviews lasted between 60-80 minutes each. With five teachers consecutive interviews

were held, resulting in a total interview time of up to four hours per informant.

### 7.3.4 Questionnaires

In the course of my study I gained in-depth knowledge of both perceived and hidden ICA affordances. Yet, to also acquire a comprehensive and systematic understanding of those being taught, I adopted a twofold approach. First, I intensively interviewed 3 domestic and 5 internationally mobile students about their perceptions of the factors involved in the social action at hand.

In the second year of my investigation process I found it most useful to explore students' answers to specific questions in a more disciplined matter. To not just use an "ad hoc" instrument and to ensure that my questionnaires "yield scores with sufficient (and well-documented) reliability and validity" (Dörnyei, 2007, p 102), I paid close attention to the guidelines provided by Dörnyei as to the scales, the format and the administration of the questionnaires (2007, pp 95-123).

As can be seen from figure 7.4, between the academic years 2011/12 and 2013/14, questionnaires were completed by all students<sup>9</sup> of the International Classroom. They were given the questionnaires (which were all in English) in presence of the author during the first lessons of the so-called orientation week. After receiving information both orally and in written form about the study, they were invited to fill in the questionnaire anonymously at the end of the first block course which was held by myself in my function as a teacher of intercultural competence. After completion, the questionnaires were immediately collected. To ensure both confidentiality and anonymity for all students, they were put in a sealed envelope. In a later step the questionnaires were analysed in detail which also helped to establish the reliability and further establish the validity of the subsequent questionnaires and interview guides.

### 7.3.5 Focus group interviews

The focus group interview was carried out in May 2013 during an in-house teaching day that was partly organised by the researcher herself. Since "Teaching in an

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<sup>9</sup>The annual student intake for the investigated International Classrooms is 25 each.

International Classroom” was one of the key topics during this event, it was sought to give expert advice to newcomers in the international educational enterprise.

As outlined in figure 7.4, the focus group interview was conducted among five disciplinary teachers, all of who had been previously subject to a close-up investigation of two years. In contrast to Dörnyei’s (2007, p 144) recommendation of a group size of minimum 6 to 12 participants, I confer with Morgan who states that the ideal number of people per group depends on the purpose of the study and can also “vary in the degree of structure” (2002, p 155) which, in my case, were the three key informants previously interviewed and two additional informants who were also familiar with teaching in an International Classroom.

The focus group format was chosen in a way that allowed me to present my preliminary findings which then were collectively reflected upon in a brainstorming session that provided sufficient room for a reflective practice to unfold. The within-group interactions yielded information-rich data allowing for “collective wisdom” (Dörnyei, 2007, p 144) to be released, which was further utilised for subsequent intensive interviews. This focus group interview was recorded after informed consent of the participant.

To counteract statements that might reflect socially acceptable opinions rather than individualised views, follow-up questions were elaborated, embedded in the subsequent interview schedules and individually clarified with each participant. This theoretical coding proved to be useful, since the concepts and categories that emerged during the dynamic exchange of ideas also informed the subsequent analysis.

## 7.4 Chapter summary

With my epistemology, strategy, and methodological outlook in place, I started my research endeavour with this broad research question as to what affordances are perceived over time by lecturers teaching in an International Classroom. I felt the best way to answer this complex and multi-faceted question was to go inside the studied phenomenon and observe the social agents’ actions while at the same time capturing their views in detail to obtain rich data. This would allow me to gain thorough empirical grounding even more so as the relevant literature only provides

inconsistent information about this phenomenon of interest. I felt that the lacking literature even facilitated my methodological stance. This stance was reflected in my openness to unanticipated interpretations of data and my wish to not only describe but, more importantly, to acquire new understanding of a phenomenon of interest (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) which has the potential to foster some change.

Hence, this chapter sought to summarize the empirical methods employed in this study and outline the rationale behind the choice of research instruments to capitalise on emergent concepts that further inform subsequent data. The sketched grounded theory research story served as a clarification in that it elaborates on the integrated package of methods designed to serve this approach.

By outlining the variety of methods used, I intended to give a deeper insight into the study and comply with the growing requirement of making one's research steps transparent.



## Chapter 8

# Positioning of the International Classroom

### 8.1 Introduction

In this chapter, it is attempted to outline the nexus of educational practice (NofEP)<sup>1</sup> at hand and position it within a number of frameworks. First, the historical development of the institution involved and its EMI Master courses is illustrated in terms of internationalisation efforts. In a second step, the major stages of this process are highlighted. Then the NofEP is mapped onto the ROAD-MAPPING model (see Dafouz and Smit, (2014) for a detailed discussion) to get a more holistic understanding of the dimensions that shape English-medium education in this diverse lingua-cultural university setting.

To get a comprehensive overview and the broader context of how the unit of analysis is positioned within this research, figure 8.1 illustrates the investigated NofEP at the centre of interest and sketches the interpretive methods employed and the ecological perspectives taken to provide a visual narrative, whereby symbolic interactionism acts as a link between the paradigms and methods used. At this point, I would like to recall the research hierarchy outlined at the end of chapter 6 and extend the perspective by positioning the unit of analysis, namely the Nexus

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<sup>1</sup>An in-depth description of the author's understanding of this term is provided in chapter 6, section 5.

of Educational Practice, at the centre of interest. The NofEP is embedded in the ROAD-MAPPING model which seeks to analyse English-medium education in multilingual university settings (EMEMUS). The constructivist-interpretive paradigms that were used for this study are the ones of CGT and NA, more precisely the nexus-analytical steps. This research draws on the work of the perceptual psychologist Gibson (affordances theory), the sociologist Giddens (structuration theory) and the socio-linguists Scollon and Scollon (nexus analysis).

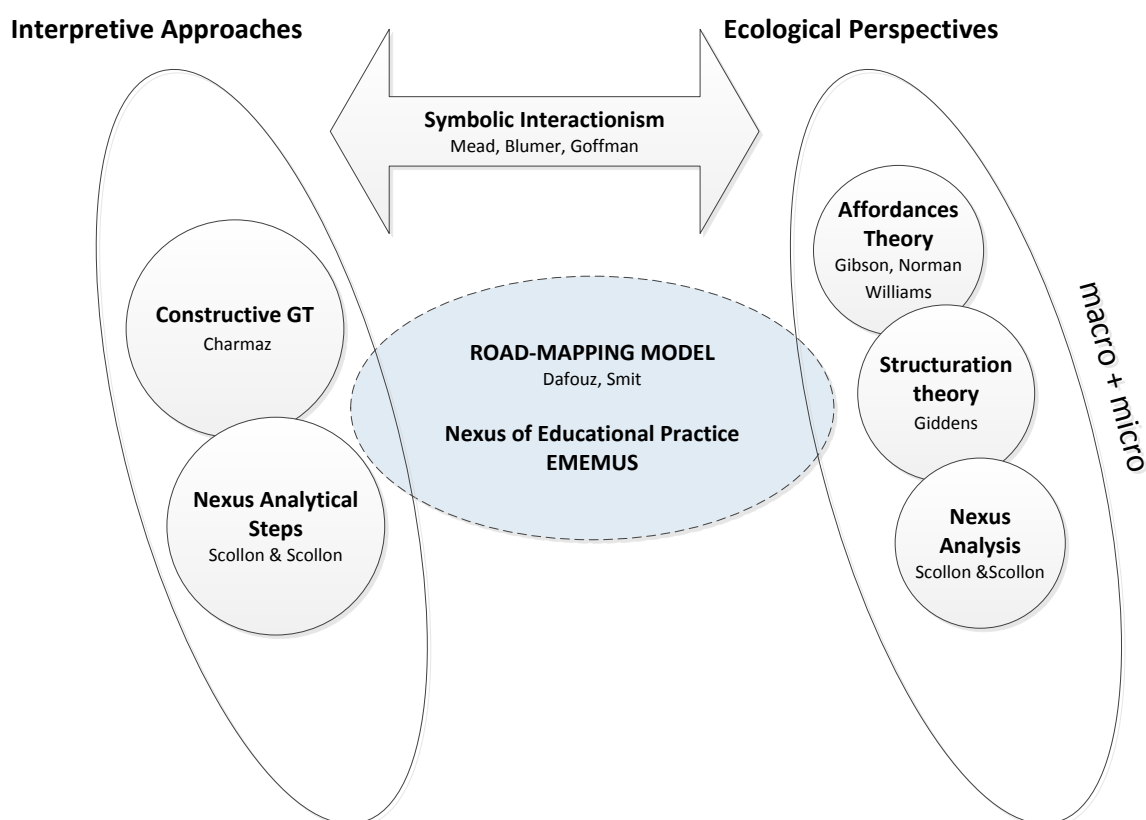


Figure 8.1: Unit of analysis in context (author's own illustration)

By coining the acronym EMEMUS, Dafouz and Smit (2014) not only intended to bring together the multitude of approaches to language and teaching, but they also succeeded in bridging CLIL<sup>2</sup> and EMI research.

<sup>2</sup> Content and language Integrated Learning (CLIL) combines second language education with other content subjects and can be understood as a truly European approach that seeks to integrate

Although my main concern is not language per se, the starting point of my inquiry is still English-medium teaching in a European higher education institution. For this reason, it is first attempted to provide a historical dimension of the internationalisation efforts taken at the school at hand, which all started with the introduction of the first EMI Master course.

Figure 8.2 gives an account of four academic years during which a number of cycles were identified. In the following, it is shown how the historical development of the EMI courses is influenced by institutional ideological rationales, individual priorities and lessons learned.

## 8.2 Nexus-analytic cycles

To get a more in-depth understanding of the scene, the next sections sketch the nexus-analytical cycles<sup>3</sup> taken throughout this study. In doing so, it is also crucial to set the scene and provide a comprehensive and coherent picture of the investigated multilingual university setting.

### 8.2.1 Engaging the nexus

Introduced in the academic year 2010/11, the English-medium Master class initially served one major purpose, which was a sufficient intake of students willing to take an international degree in computer science. At that time, the institutional approach towards internationalisation was clearly manifested in an instrumental and market-driven add-on strategy with no intent to change the structures of the curriculum. Rather, it was sought to add some international elements, and by changing the language of instruction, it was hoped that the Master course would benefit from enhanced prestige and visibility and eventually lead to a larger influx of international

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language and content in the curriculum as part of the international mosaic of multilingualism (Dalton-Puffer et al., 2010; Dalton-Puffer and Smit, 2007).

<sup>3</sup>As previously stated, nexus analysis provides a methodological and theoretical frame of reference employed for process-oriented studies that seek to address dynamically emerging social questions. In their pursuit of nexus-analytic answers, researchers pass through three cycles, with the aim to complete the following tasks -**engagement**, **navigation** and **change** of the nexus. For more information, see section 6.5 or Scollon & Scollon (2013).

Academic year	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
<b>Historical development</b>	introduction of first EMI Master, lack of accompanying measures	second year of same EMI Master, this time with orientation week	third year of EMI Master + orientation + aptitude test, introduction of second EMI Master	both Master courses start with orientation week (compulsory for all students), entry exam for externals
<b>Identified phases</b>	taking the plunge	sensitising	biased cultural view	partial commitment
<b>Internationalisation strategy</b>	add-on approach, reactive	add-on approach, reactive	early stages of infusion, reactive	early stages of infusion, reactive
<b>Ideological rationale</b>	instrumental, market-driven	instrumental, market-driven	instrumental, market-driven and practical	instrumental, market-driven and practical
<b>Main concern for school</b>	student intake	intake of <b>good</b> students; sufficient previous knowledge	intake of good <b>and</b> inclusive international students	intake of good <b>and</b> inclusive international <b>and</b> domestic students
<b>Main concern for academic staff</b>	sufficient proficiency in English	sufficient proficiency in English, group dynamics	proficiency in English, intake of good <b>and</b> inclusive international students	proficiency in English, group dynamics that facilitates learning
<b>Impact of strategy and rationale on IC</b>	student attrition partly due to ethnocentric perspective	lacking group dynamics, ethnocentric blocking of domestic students	uncultural perspective of both domestic students and staff	increased lingua-cultural awareness among all students and staff
<b>Lessons learned</b>	in need of orientation week to streamline international students	in need of orientation week for international <b>and</b> domestic students, aptitude test for incomings	necessity to make requirements and expectations <b>explicit</b> , perceived need for Internationalisation at Home	increased reflection on lingua-cultural issues during classroom practices
<b>Identified steps</b>	framing	reacting	appropriating	appropriating
<b>Nexus cycles</b>	engaging	navigating	navigating	changing

Figure 8.2: Historical development of unit of analysis (author's own illustration)

students. This initial phase could be described as “taking the plunge”, where in view of the reactive climate emergent requirements were simply met on demand.

Initially, EMI was approached with a certain reluctance by the teaching staff; however, those concerns were dismissed with pragmatic statements such as “we only need to refresh English a bit” or “my English has got a bit rusty over the years, that will quickly change, though”. Other issues than the one of proficiency in English were not on the teachers’ radar screens during the first year. Basically, classroom management went on as usual, with the lecturers’ drawing on their recurrent practices without hardly any (perceived) need for changes or adaptations.

It was in March 2011 when I entered the zone of identification and was predominantly perceived as a language authority who sought to assess the teachers’ English language proficiency. Understandably, then, that my research endeavour was confronted with a certain reserve when I first approached them with my research agenda. On the whole, the engaging phase lasted for some months during which I sought to gain the stakeholders’ confidence and break down initial mistrust. In view of my emic role, it was a relatively easy task to identify both the social action that warrants addressing and those individuals that seemed to yield the most promising results. All in all, there were about ten disciplinary teachers who ventured into the relatively new terrain of English-medium instruction and from the academic year 2012 on there were two Master classes that started with an intake of 25 students each. About 70% of the intake was composed of domestic students, the rest was complemented with individually mobile students coming from all over the world.

Since the purpose of this study is to gain a holistic picture of the scene, it was vital to establish a zone of identification which went beyond one single class, requiring fieldwork of real-time moments throughout different semesters, various course groups and a variety of stakeholders. In this phase I primarily sought to become recognised by the social actors as a participant in their NofEP. My aim was to shed light on the set of affordances that was furnished to each disciplinary teacher by building a large and diverse body of data in which to ground my theory.

Being keenly aware that it was most crucial to grasp discourses germane to the issue at hand, significant cycles of discourse were identified throughout this phase that needed to be mapped and clustered in the following order: Discourse on the In-

ternational Classroom itself, on English-medium instruction, on internationalisation efforts taken at the faculty, on the relationship between English and Computer Sciences, on the teachers' perception of different cultures and the disciplinary culture in particular, and on perceived cultural features that were thought to be typical of the historical bodies of the faculty members. Whilst these cycles had already been identified at an early stage during intensive interviews, informal talks and questionnaires, there was an additional focus placed on classroom discourses, with a particular eye on recurrent practices adopted by disciplinary teachers during English-medium instruction. Such an ethnographic lens was helpful to reveal communicative patterns, lingua-cultural features and the repertoire of genres both the academics and students were familiar and acquainted with. After preparing the ground for examining the intersections through which these discourses flew, the second nexus-analytical step needed to be taken.

### 8.2.2 Navigating the nexus

Given that this phase aims to “map dominant cycles of the actors, places, discourses, objects, and concepts circulating through the investigated micro-semiotic ecosystem” (Scollon and Scollon, 2004, p 157), it is only natural that most of the data gathering and analysis occurs in this period. In the present case, this sequence stretched from March 2011 to March 2014.

In the following, I outline the central events that were identified through narrative analysis to find out how the social actors themselves assign meaning to the experiences embedded in context and how these events unfold over space and time. During the first academic year the English-medium course faced substantial student attrition, mainly as a consequence of inadequate cultural and academic integration and a differing previous knowledge base. As a consequence, some (re)action was needed to avoid drop-out of the subsequent cohorts. Here again, it was a reactive add-on approach driven by economic considerations that led to the introduction of the so-called orientation week. It was basically established to raise awareness of issues outside the disciplinary thinking box, and it was my task to stream-line students and enable a smooth transition to the Master course. Further, as a result of the high drop-out rate due to open admission, an on-line aptitude test was in-

troduced for internationally mobile students to keep the academic level in line with the skills of the domestic Bachelor graduates. This cycle can be described as the “sensitising” period, where first lessons learned were put into practice.

Despite some signs of improvement, there was common agreement that further measures needed to be taken, particularly with regard to the ethnocentric blocking of domestic students who were most unwilling to engage in international contact and, by sticking among themselves, kept their habitual institutional and societal practices implicit. It became increasingly obvious how useful it would be if they started to share their tacit knowledge with their international fellow students. A high level of what I call - “unicultural literacy”<sup>4</sup> was required from the part of the international students, and it was taken for granted that they adopt and adapt to the societal and institutional culture to eventually allow continuation of the friction-free internalised teaching practices.

Initially, an ethno-relative perspective was not considered necessary, neither by domestic students nor by local disciplinary teachers whose main concerns were to bring students in line and enable classroom management in such a way that the lowest possible adaptation was needed and internalised teaching practices could be pursued without time-consuming adaptations. This cycle can be described in line with a “biased cultural view” where the major focus was placed on inclusive internationally-mobile students with good previous academic achievements. Little thought was given to the added value of generic competence development for all students or how the diverse student body may serve as a resource for teaching.

It was in the course of the academic year 2012/13 that, after numerous informal talks and intensive interviews, a number of teachers started to engage in reflective practice and discourse by drawing on their historical body to make meaning of their ethno-centric classroom practices. Gradually, voices were growing louder that an infusive across-the curriculum approach to internationalisation might be beneficial for all students, no matter what programme they were taking. A number of teachers

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<sup>4</sup>I use this term to express that societal practices are imposed on an international student body by the inherent factors of socialised classroom practices that are determined by local agents. In an effort to transform deeply entrenched thinking and behavioural patterns as well as value positions due to constant exposure to the dominating indigenous culture, it is hoped that their interpretation of the social world will soon comply with the expectations of the host country. Such an approach requires no effort taken by the domestic agents since it is based on unidirectional cultural flows.

started to consider intercultural competence as a module that should be incorporated into all Master classes.

The academic year 2013/14 was characterised by a “partial commitment” which was expressed by some individual teachers that became increasingly aware of the advantages of an international outlook. Topics such as graduate employability and global citizenship started to have practical implications for both domestic and international students.

### 8.2.3 Changing the nexus

As previously stated, my role as activist researcher allowed me to make my research agenda explicit and take a transformative stance that assumes that knowledge is heavily influenced by human interests. Pursuing such a strategy also involved critical engagement with the nexus of educational practice which was not always valued by the stakeholders and even led to contradictions and some negative emotions, but never to conflict. At the same time I sought to step back to a more distant position, allowing for the creation of reflective space. This is in line with the third nexus-analytic cycle brought forward by Scollon and Scollon (2004), since the analyst ideally changes the nexus as a result of his/her activities, discourses and joint reflections with the participants of the study. This engagement then is supposed to construct new courses of action.

So, on this note, it would be interesting to map the discursive cycles that were most likely to have triggered social change. Yet, it has to be acknowledged that such resemiotization from discourse into action is far from linear, and the shift of semiotic cycles is a gradual process of “enskilment” (Blommaert and Huang, 2009, p 8), where teachers, in a step-by-step development and in an apprentice mode of informal learning, acquire cultural knowledge through skilful activities. This continuous fine-tuning of “perception through observation and imitation” (Gieser, 2008, p 299) required for the changed educational setting was certainly accelerated by the analyst’s engagement. Yet, it was mostly a question of the agency and ability of the participants to get involved in a transformative process. The fact that some agents have engaged in critical reflection already at an early stage of the “navigating-the-nexus” phase shows that the nexus-analytical steps are not necessarily taken in

a chronological sequence.

This certainly applies to the present case. While some agents pro-actively sought to understand the underlying rationale for this study, and, from the outset, engaged in a reflective conversation, others seemed to put up with my presence in the classroom without any apparent interest in my research. A similar picture emerges with respect to the intensive interviews during which some interviewees were rather reserved, creating the impression that they were properly executing a task allocated to them in line with their internalised control. It would even seem that they were afraid of touching social issues in order not to endanger their neutral position as hard scientists by dealing with questions off the beaten track of objective knowledge. It became obvious that their main concern was effective transfer of disciplinary knowledge, practice and discourse. Yet, epistemological considerations that diverge from their shared internalised practices and go beyond their knowledge fields and intellectual terrain, apparently threatening their professional identity, seemed to be discarded because of the inherent unpredictability of human action. Bearing in mind the historical bodies of the social actors, it seems only logical that the strong emphasis on linear teaching content, quantitative precision, causal clarity and outcome-oriented working leaves only little room for personal growth and intellectual breadth where social action and substantial relationships take centre stage.

Interestingly, however, it came to the fore that although some faculty members appeared to have little interest in generating reflective discourse with me, they nevertheless did so with their disciplinary colleagues. This inevitably led to changes in relationships over the course of time, be it between the participants themselves or between me and the investigated agents. In hindsight, it became apparent that I have been successful in triggering change already by entering the nexus of educational practice, but also by participating in its social actions. Throughout the research it was then attempted to point to those practices in the nexus that could transform into new discourses and social actions.

After providing a short history of this educational setting by touching on the three nexus-analytical cycles, the next section seeks to position it in the second framework, the one brought forward by Dafouz and Smit (2014).

### 8.3 Positioning in the ROAD-MAPPING model

In line with the descriptive frame suggested in the ROAD-MAPPING model, this multilingual educational setting is described in detail by touching on six identified components separately. In the present case, the physical environment in which social actions are taken and looked at can be described as a rather remote and rural setting where about 1,500 students are educated to become computer experts. The semiotic aggregate of the investigated school is made up of multiple discourses at the micro-level - the classroom, the meso-level - the institution, and the macro-level - beyond university.

Figure 8.3 displays English-medium Instruction at an International Classroom at different levels of analysis.

Whilst the micro level perspective is concerned with the nexus of educational practice per se, looking into classroom management with a particular eye on linguistic practices, the meso analysis looks at the school of interest and how EMEMUS affects the institutional stance. Such a meso view takes account of the internationalisation ethos of the institution, the academic disciplines that dominate the departmental structures and further decisive factors in terms of education, location and strategic positioning. The macro level goes beyond university boundaries and positions the case study in a broader context.

In a logical sequence, I start with the **Roles of English**, since English-medium instruction not only served as an entry point for my own study but also reinforces the significance of English at the investigated university and its four different schools. Within the last three years English has become the language of instruction of five Master degree programmes serving both as a promising marketing tool for future students and a unique selling proposition for future graduates that will require proficient English language skills for their professional careers. Given that the disciplinary focus of these programmes is either informatics or business, the trend towards English-medium teaching is even less surprising if one considers that the globalised worlds of marketing and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) operate in multilingual worlds with a close affinity to English.

When adopting a micro lens and looking into the classroom discourses of the relevant computer science classroom, it becomes obvious that German as the societal

**Case Study Embedded in ROAD-MAPPING Model (Dafouz, Smit 2014)**


ROAD MAPPING	Micro (classroom)	Meso (faculty)	Macro (beyond university)
			
<b>Roles of English</b>	EMI in an ELF setting, no teaching of ESP or EAP; functional classroom language for users (no conventional ENL encodings) German functions as unmarked language of intra-ethnic spoken communication	marketing and recruitment tool, added value for graduates, IaH, highly valued as international language of science, ESP prerequisite for professional expertise (US-norm dependent), no language proficiency test	ELF in higher Education, language for internationalisation, add-on or infusion strategies at universities, increased use of English as corporate language at local/regional and national level
<b>Academic Disciplines</b>	micro classroom practices in line with epistemological socialisation: content over form, highly consistent, codes over words	University of Applied Sciences, school of informatics, hard, applied, urban, convergent, but educates for national market	informatics is a highly Anglified discipline, traditionally anchored in US-American language
<b>(Language) management</b>	non binding, context-dependent and context-appropriate tacit rules	unwritten de facto policy, English-only approach as source for competitive advantage	explicit recommendations for linguistic diversity in line with Bologna agreement
<b>Agents</b>	teachers as disciplinary experts and researchers; domestic and internationally mobile students	academic heads keen on international recruitment	socio-political stakeholders, interested in brain gain
<b>Practices and Processes</b>	social rules of appropriateness, recurrent, tacit and internalised classroom practices	implicit, (locally) shared institutional repertoire	societal socialisation, priority given to hard scientists that enter job market
<b>Internationalisation and Glocalisation</b>	mainly education for local market, yet also domestic students are in need of international mindset	follow the trend of higher education, multiplier effect, USP for faculty since EMI benefits local and international demands	societal prerequisite for Conceptual Age, intercultural competence, broader range of graduate attributes

Figure 8.3: Position in the ROAD-MAPPING model (author's own illustration)

language of the country of investigation and also the first code of the key informants and domestic students is heavily drawn upon and translanguaging plays a crucial role outside, but also within the classroom. While teaching is done in English only, individual questions especially during skills practices are answered in either German or English (depending on the lingua-cultural background of the students, which underlines that specific codes serve specific purposes. Throughout the entire Master, no English instruction is given by language teachers - neither in form of general English classes nor English for specific or academic purposes. Teachers are faced with a similar situation and did not receive any English coaching as a preparation for this changed educational setting.

This might partly explain why during classroom practices the focus of English is explicitly placed on content, not form, with an eye on the effectiveness of the (inter-cultural) ELF communication. Yet, another factor that accounts for this pragmatic approach might be found in the second dimension of the ROAD-MAPPING model, the **Academic Disciplines**. In this context, I would like to remind the reader of chapter 2, where the disciplinary culture of computer scientists was elaborated. With the knowledge of this “academic tribe” in mind, it seems reasonable to define the International Classroom at hand as a hard, applied, urban and convergent disciplinary community with teachers and institutional stakeholders that despite a rather pronounced international orientation still predominantly educate for the local market. Given the practice-oriented educational goal of a University of Applied Sciences, and in view of the strong ties with the local economy, the career path of the average graduate seems readily sketched out. The majority of students tends to already join a local enterprise during their studies, others set up their own business within the area. Working for a local IT company with a global outlook appears to be a particularly feasible solution for internationally mobile students. Since most of them do not acquire any German skills during their Master’s degree owing to either time and/or motivational constraints, their lacking German language proficiency prevents them from working with small-scale, locally operating companies. However, many are encouraged to work for bigger firms that operate on the international market and thus frequently have English as a working language.

Bearing in mind that the discourse of computer science is strongly anchored in the Anglophone world and that the latest trends in ICT often originate from the United

States, it seems only natural that concerns regarding an all-encompassing English-only approach towards internationalisation are largely ignored or down-played, be it on a micro-, meso- and micro-level. What is more, such an approach is fully justified by the disciplinary requirements which leads directly to the third dimension of this model, namely **(Language) Management** which is concerned with language policy statements and declarations. For the reasons given above, an institutional need to set up binding language management measures does not appear to be justified. It seems that in the prevailing policy understanding of the school, language is simply a vehicle for meaningful transfer between individuals that seek to finish a technical degree, perceived, at best, as a by-product of social interactions during classroom practices. It is therefore not surprising that the discourse on linguistic diversity generated by the European Union is of no relevance for the relevant stakeholders.

In this regard, it is also no surprise that internationally mobile students that take their computing Master's degree in one of those International Classrooms are not exposed to any German lessons. Given the absence of policy declarations, it seems likely that - unless they pro-actively engage in extracurricular German classes - they will work for international companies only (with English as a working language) or leave the country after graduation without sufficient command of German. Despite the explicit recommendations triggered by the Bologna process to "promote linguistic diversity as a European value" (Kjær and Adamo, 2011, p 5), it does not seem that this vision goes beyond mere lip service. In the present case, it appears that diversity is supported and upheld only if it is practicable and compatible with domestic and institutional values and objective and goes in hand with regulations of the free (university) market.

Such decisions go back to what Dafouz and Smit (2014) in their model refer to as the **Agents**, namely actors that are capable of reacting to multi-faceted societal changes - be it on micro-, meso- or macro-levels - while at the same time striking a balance between power, hierarchy, conflicting viewpoints and personal interests. The agents that take centre stage in the present investigation are disciplinary experts that teach in an International Classroom, and, to a lesser extent, domestic and international students and institutional manager-academics that decisively co-determine language and internationalisation policies but also social practices within this institution of higher learning. Two stakeholder groups are particularly inter-

ested in the (financial) success of the International Classrooms at hand. On the one hand, these are the heads of degree programmes that are keen on international student recruitment. On the other hand, socio-political expectations are high with regard to the brain gain of international students that are urgently needed in the local (engineering) industry. There is a clear political prioritisation given to degree programmes that educate hard scientists which - in the event of the funding of the Austrian UAS system - is translated in a higher financial support for technical students.

Such **practices and processes** are ways of doing and thinking (Dafouz and Smit, 2014), and are partly reflected in discursive and recurrent practices of every day teaching and learning. More often than not, however, they remain hidden as tacit assumptions, implicit codes of signification and localised rules of appropriateness (Trowler and Cooper, 2002). This implies that this nexus of educational practices develops a shared and multi-codal repertoire and, mostly implicitly, agrees on how to draw on which code in which setting for which purpose.

Perhaps the greatest barrier to the perception of ICA is attributable to the interplay of epistemological socialisation into computer science that largely forms the historical body of the stakeholders, the highly pragmatic approach of the agents towards teaching practices in general, and EMI in particular, and the blind eye turned to lingua-cultural issues that might impact classroom practices. It was found that internalised social practices and habitual assumptions are not only taken for granted, they constitute the institutional norm at this School of Informatics, where lingua-cultural reflection is simply not on the radar screen of content teachers that are challenged by the temporal durability of knowledge in a discipline that appears to reinvent itself every few months.

Benefits of a “transdisciplinary collective of tertiary educators” (Jacobs, 2007, p 59) comprising disciplinary specialists of a wider range of subjects including languages and cultural studies are only beginning to emerge and had to be learned the “hard way”. Such engagements are, if at all, characterised by rather reluctant approaches due to lacking insights into the epistemological and ontological underpinnings inherent in the respectively other disciplines. On a more positive note, first tentative steps triggered by this nexus-analytical investigation are being taken by individual key actors.

The last dimension highlighted in the ROAD-MAPPING model is what is called the **internationalization and glocalization** aspect. From this perspective, the integration of international and intercultural elements into International Classrooms is considered to be a vital component of effective internationalisation strategies. At the same time, it is argued that such implementations have to be done in accordance with local and national interests. The latter is particularly relevant for Universities of Applied Sciences as they operate in close cooperation with the domestic industry and are designed to contribute to regional growth and innovation in line with labour market needs. Arguably, this also applies to the school at hand where despite the highly anglicised discipline of informatics, the majority of graduates find themselves employed by the local job market.

Although, at first glance, these two agendas seem conflicting, they are, in fact, complementary of each other. Closer scrutiny of the professional requirements for future IT graduates revealed that even if they work locally, they need to effectively operate in an international environment. Undoubtedly, such settings require graduate attributes that go well beyond task-focused specialist knowledge and disciplinary expertise. Contextualisation of one's own knowledge base coupled with an ethno-relative mindset and the ability to step out of context-dependent environments seem to become increasingly relevant for all graduates, no matter where they intend to work later on (also see chapter 2).

## 8.4 Chapter summary

This chapter provided an overview of the historical development of this multilingual university setting and, by doing so, gave an account of the nexus-analytical cycles which were passed during the research journey.

In a second step, it was attempted to position this particular EMEMUS in the ROAD-MAPPING model argued for in Dafouz and Smit (2014). To get a comprehensive picture of the scene, the six identified elements proved to be a helpful lens for a holistic conceptualisation. To accommodate an additional component, the setting was looked at from differing analytical levels. Thus, the location of the descriptive accounts in a micro-, meso- and macro-level framework further contributed to the clarity of the presentation.



# Chapter 9

## The ICA model

### 9.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the International Classroom Affordances (ICA) model as the final outcome of my study as well as the findings leading to this conceptual framework grounded in the data. The description of the findings are given in chapter 10 to demonstrate the analytical application of the model by positioning two agents within the ICA framework.

In hindsight, I realised that generating grounded theory involved two major challenges. One was to establish a heuristic framework of concepts that served the purpose of mapping the crucial cycles identified in the social action. The second one was to resist the temptation of forcing pre-defined theoretical concepts on the data. Hence, to generate a model that is relevant and goes beyond the obvious of the initial grand tour question, I sought to provide meaningful accounts that are enriched by thorough conceptualisation and extensive literature review from multiple sources (see chapter 7). In the following, the underlying coding paradigm for this thesis is presented and the reasons for its value are outlined.

### 9.2 Coding paradigm

The present study is based upon a framework along the lines of a coding paradigm that also decisively impacted the methodological organisation of the literature re-

view. This theoretical paradigm not only lends structure to the analytical meta-process, it also places the unit of analysis at the centre and relates it to the wider context, conditions, strategies of action, intervening conditions and consequences for the purposes of establishing corresponding relationships and coherences.

I am well aware that such a systematic procedure is a somewhat traditional approach that originates from the early days of grounded theory research. The reason why I used it nonetheless is twofold. First, it was most helpful to illuminate causal links between the categories and thus helped to advance the conceptual development of my research. Second, it agrees well with CGT given that Charmaz (2006) has a fundamentally positive attitude towards the application of a conditional matrix as long as it helps the development of the substantive theory. Consequently, the coding paradigm was continually developed throughout the analysis and applied in a dynamic and flexible way to allow a presentation of the *whole* before zooming in on the core category that describes the integrated strategies of the classroom management in form of the ICA model.

Figure 9.1 illuminates the conceptual skeleton of the developing theory and fleshes out how it is linked to the specific perspective taken on the social phenomenon under investigation. The crucial question of interest is the **phenomenon**, described as the “central idea, event or happening about which a set of actions or interactions are directed” (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p 96). My unit of analysis is the one in the middle, dealing with the grand tour question of “what affordances are perceived by academic staff teaching in an International Classroom” and is related to a number of context-sensitive variables.

To begin with, the relevant **context** or - how I would like to call it - **trigger** is provided. It is the “particular set of conditions within which the action/the interactional strategies are taken” (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p 96). In the present study, the context in which the phenomenon is placed, can also be regarded as the major driving force behind this investigation. It was precisely because of student attrition, lack of group interaction and ethno-centric blocking that the academic stakeholders of the investigated International Classroom decided to look into the phenomenon in more detail and also approached me in my capacity as intercultural teacher. In brief, contextual factors are all components of the phenomenon and the capacity to understand those challenges goes hand in hand with the perception of

International Classroom Affordances.

Then the **causal links** are explored, so to say, those categories and conditions that led to the investigated phenomenon under study. In fact, a phenomenon is not affected by one single cause; on the contrary, it is influenced by a number of multifaceted links that describe the specific properties of the interplay of causal conditions. In this case, the causal links are embodied in the current trend of the internationalisation of higher education (see chapter 2), and as a result, English-medium instruction in an ELF setting (see chapter 3). So, the causal conditions have ultimately driven this particular Institution of Higher Learning to establish International Classrooms and venture into this new dimension of teaching.

The **intervening variables** define which properties belong to the phenomenon under investigation and shed light on the wider structural context pertaining to the social action. They are defined as the “broad and general conditions bearing upon action/interactional strategies’ (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p 103). In other words, intervening variables can be understood as causal processes and factors brought to the setting by the relevant agents. As can be seen from figure 9.1, the factors relevant for this study include the societal, disciplinary and professional backgrounds of the investigated stakeholders that work to either facilitate or constrain the agents’ actions (for a detailed description of teachers in an International Classroom, see chapter 4). Such intervening variables exert a decisive impact on goal-oriented **action and interactional strategies** which requires a context-sensitive and comprehensive lens to understand the reasons for specific strategic approaches. Interactional strategies generally refer to the purposeful activities that agents engage in to respond to a specific phenomenon. Hence, a set of strategies is employed to solve and manage a social action under certain perceived and predictable conditions. Finally, the **consequences** refer to the outcomes of the (intended or unintended) applied strategies adopted to manage the phenomenon. In the present case, it is argued that teachers’ perceptions of ICA lead to enhanced teaching practices, resulting in a quantitative improvement of the study programme (more graduates) and/or in a qualitative improvement (increased graduate employability and a broader focus on a generic skills set in form of T-shaped experts)<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup>In contrast to I-shaped experts that are highly specialised, T-shaped professionals combine the benefits of deep problem-solving skills in one area, with broad complex-communication skills

In sum, it can be said that the **trigger** is modified by intervening variables (in the present case, it is influenced by the teachers' societal, disciplinary and professional backgrounds) that lead to action and interaction strategies. Inspired by the coding paradigm introduced by Strübing (2008), the following figure shows the structured and systematic coding scheme used for the development and analysis of the investigated categories and their relationships.

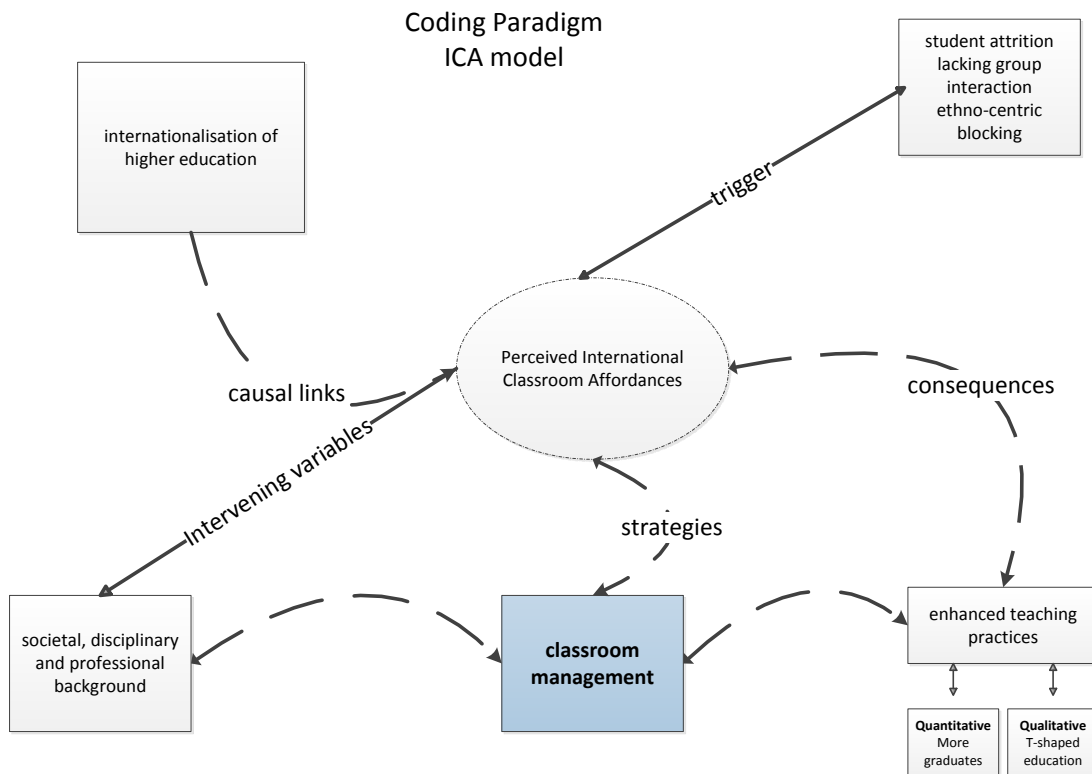


Figure 9.1: Coding paradigm for ICA model (author's own illustration)

After having defined the broader context, it is now attempted to zoom in on the strategies that are employed by internationalist teachers when being confronted with the nexus of educational practice at hand. In order to perceive, react and act upon ICA, lecturers need to draw on various behavioural patterns and strategic approaches to respond to the social action. The linking of action/interactional sequences over time is grouped under the name classroom management. This category across many areas(Donofrio et al., 2009).

serves as the foundation for the conceptual ICA model presented in this chapter. To highlight the importance and distinctiveness of “classroom management”, it is marked in bold in figure 9.1.

### 9.3 Classroom management

Since classroom management is an umbrella term that describes efforts being made by academic staff to oversee a number of classroom activities, it appears well-suited for a generic perspective on learning, social interaction, procedures, rules and discipline concerns. Classroom management is not only concerned with instructional issues, including daily routines and recurrent practices but it also deals with people and their perceptions, views and tacit assumptions of each other. In other words, classroom management can be defined as “the process by which teachers create, import and maintain an environment in the classroom that allows students the best opportunity to learn” (Taylor, 2009, p 3) In the present case, the investigated setting embraces students and teachers with different socio-cultural and ethnical backgrounds - which constitutes an additional challenge for internationalist teachers.

Hence, in order to facilitate a learning environment where academic, social and cultural learning can take place, teachers require skills and knowledge to organise the instruction and communication design in the classroom effectively. Such abilities are all the more relevant for an International Classroom, where teachers need to be aware of and appropriately react to and act on linguistic and socio-cultural affordances in order to successfully adapt their classroom management to the needs of the relevant student body.

In the following, the ICA model of the investigated unit of analysis is presented in more detail. Figure 9.2 illustrates the identified process of perceiving, reacting to, acting or capitalising on International Classroom Affordances over an extended period (of at least two years) and maintains that in view of the opportunities to experience ICA throughout the Master programme, a number of internationalist teachers undergo a development process that impacts their classroom management.

When being confronted with the reality of English-medium teaching in an International Classroom for the first time, - in the ICA model referred to as the **framing**

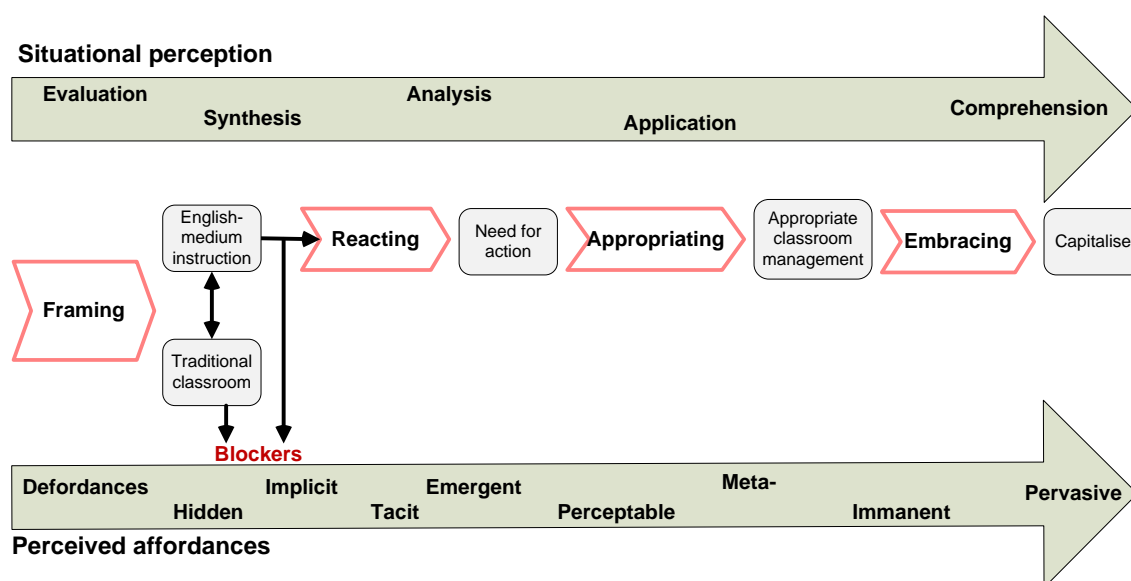


Figure 9.2: Classroom management of an International Classroom: the ICA model (author's own illustration)

phase - disciplinary teachers were found to evaluate the situation either with a resistant stance towards EMI, resulting in a total denial, or with a sink or swim attitude (see section 4.6), leading to an often mute acceptance of an increased workload. In the event that teachers failed to perceive IC affordances as something worth engaging in, they acted as blockers and defordances and outweighed potential benefits, which resulted in a total standstill of the evaluation process. In such cases, the synthesis of the analytical process did not bring teachers to the next level.

The substantive theory claims that the **reacting** phase is only entered by teachers who have already ventured (even if only for a very short time) into English-medium education in multilingual university settings (EMEMUS). This is the stage where hidden and implicit IC affordances gradually emerge and awareness of the need for action is developed. It was found that although the entire reflective process (see figure 9.2) may be passed through by teachers during one Master programme of four semesters, certain stakeholders remain stuck in one of the identified phases. The reasons for this are many and varied, ranging from ethno-centric blocking to poor levels of awareness of the complexity of the task at hand or insufficient reflective practices on the part of the teachers.

Once the need to initiate action is identified by faculty, they move to the next phase, namely the **appropriating** stage where they react to and act upon emergent and perceptible affordances. In doing so, they start appropriating their classroom management and customise it to the requirements of a culturally diverse student body and changed educational setting. This is also the period where meta-affordances (super-ordinate categories for related action possibilities) are continually acquired and awareness is developed of how individual actions and personal mastery can change the nexus of educational practice. Such strategic meta-affordances, defined as the “capacity to choose between different possible affordances with a single context, and to choose which affordance to apply to a new context” (Williams et al., 2008, p 5) are key components of the final stage.

The **embracing** phase is reached when meta-affordances are optimised and capitalised on due to their immanent perception by the teachers so as to make them potentially valuable for the changed classroom management. Consequently, pervasive ICA allow lecturers to embrace educational change for positive action and to distinguish between different types of adaptations by adopting a multidimensional situative perspective for understanding teaching and learning in context. At this stage, such higher-order affordances then become ubiquitous for disciplinary teachers throughout all classroom practices, as they become capable of reading the setting in a context-sensitive way. Teachers in the embracing phase are particularly successful in organising and grouping choices between IC affordances and manage to master them in ways that are most fruitful for the interplay of content, culture and language. Such knowledge is key to becoming a proficient internationalist teacher (see chapter 4.3).

In an attempt to zoom in even further, figure 9.3 provides a diagrammatic representation of defordances and affordances perceived by disciplinary teachers in EMEMUS. In the following, each core category is addressed individually.

I hold the view that by providing the big picture first, they are best understood in relation to the general coding paradigm and subsections of the grounded theory.

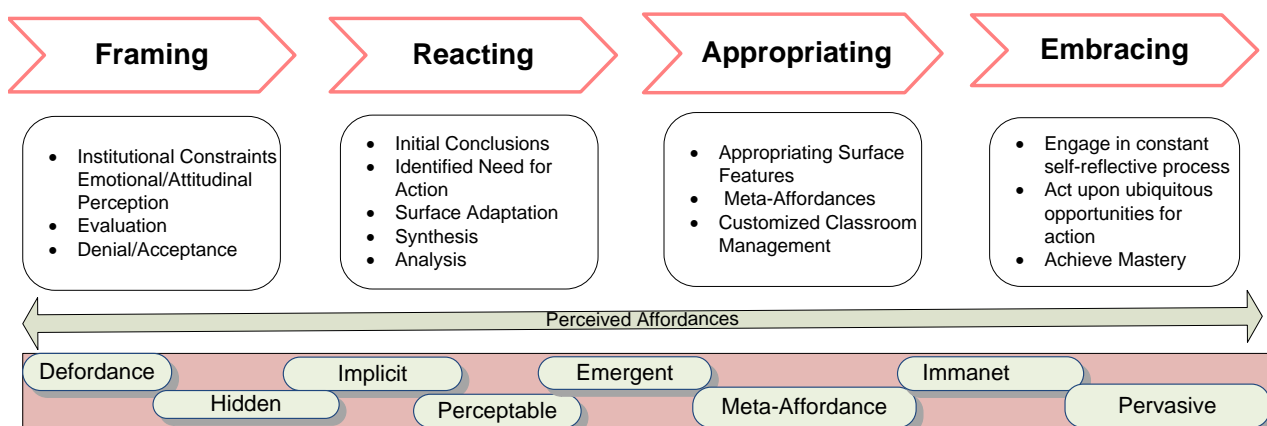


Figure 9.3: Perception of International Classroom Affordances in EMEMUS (author's own illustration)

### 9.3.1 Stage one: Framing

Framing can be defined as the initial stage in which internationalist teachers find themselves when being confronted with the new educational environment. Given that no shared nexus of practices is available for the agents to align to, they need to operate with an expanded frame of reference. It was found that in many cases, academics do not perceive the need to go beyond their comfort zones and refuse to venture into a new territory where counter-intuitive contextualised knowledge may be a crucial element of teaching practices. In such cases, IC affordances are rarely perceived, and if so, they are not considered as something positive to act upon. Rather, they are seen as a threat, barrier or blocker and tend to further reinforce hardened ethnocentric views.

During this study, a number of disciplinary teachers were identified that fit well to this description. Admittedly, those academics hold a secure professorship at study programmes with a traditional classroom setting that only offer a few stand-alone modules in English. They do not - as in the case of the investigated International Classrooms - work at programmes that are entirely taught in English where teachers have no other choice but venture into English-medium teaching.

It was found that a vast majority of the respondents<sup>2</sup> had no intention to re-

<sup>2</sup>At this point it needs to be recalled that my emic position allowed me to get a comprehensive

construct their internalised knowledge or engage in meta-learning development, be it due to institutional constraints or their own attitudinal perceptions, and as a result, reacted with great reluctance to the internationalisation efforts taken by their institution of higher learning. Consequently, in the evaluation process such teachers were found to be less prepared to take the step of delivering the disciplinary content of their classes in English. If possible, they opted for a German-only approach of classroom management. Not only did they have no intrinsic motivation of teaching in a language different from their mother tongue, they also seemed to be most concerned with losing face.

From a researcher's perspective it appeared that teachers at this stage were unable to capitalise on the hidden and implicit IC affordances due to a number of reasons. The most striking ones were lack of experience, high uncertainty avoidance, a low level of frustration tolerance and a high degree of internalised control which did not leave any room for failure. These cultural reactions were mostly coupled with a strong deficit orientation that did not allow any deviation from socialised norms of behaviour.

Interestingly, since English-medium teaching was largely perceived as the ability to teach in English in norm-providing varieties of the Inner Circle<sup>3</sup>, teachers felt that the inability to correspond to these standards would be a **face-threatening act** likely to undermine their academic Self and expert identity. It became apparent that in the framing stage content was foregrounded as the sole learning goal, which made language (learning) aspects a minor and negligible aspect. Additionally, it was found that **face**, **internalised control** and the **subjective sense of control** were major blockers to engage in English-medium instruction.

As shown in figure 9.2, the framing phase either resulted in a total denial of EMEMUS or allowed for acceptance of English-medium teaching as a genuine option. The latter particularly applied for full-time teachers employed at degree programmes that offered entire EMI Masters and not just some stand-alone modules in English. This suggests, however, that the “teaching in an International Classroom *option*”

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overview of the faculty's perceptions of and readiness to undertake English-medium instruction. As head of the international office I was responsible for a sufficient amount of disciplinary courses offered in English and thus had to frequently address teachers with internationalisation issues.

<sup>3</sup>For more information on world Englishes and Inner, Outer and Expanding Circles, see Kachru (1992).

was primarily externally imposed to them and not necessarily triggered by intrinsic motivation. At the same time, it needs to be pointed out that the study also revealed some intrinsically motivated academics who were eager to engage in English-medium teaching, mainly due to their perceived proficiency of English and their **personal mastery** translated in their commitment to lifelong learning.

### 9.3.2 Stage two: Reacting

Reacting is the stage where faculty is faced with the reality of teaching in an International Classroom. What is foregrounded here, is the initial phase of such an educational endeavour and the clash between ICA that gradually come to the fore and, yet seem to be only reluctantly perceived by the stakeholders. The ICA model maintains that teachers that find themselves in the synthesis stage see the local ethnicity as norm-providing and regard it as the internationals' duty to adapt and conform to the socio-cultural and educational frames of the host country. Although a certain norm discrepancy is perceived that calls for action in form of surface adaptations, it is not considered necessary for teachers and domestic students to engage in ethnorelative practices. Rather, international students are obliged to do intercultural training and ensure sufficient and effective cross-cultural interactions during classroom practices.

Despite such asymmetric views, some tentative steps were observed with regard to classroom management. In contrast to the framing phase where only linguistic issues appeared to be “on the radar” of the teachers, the reacting stage reflects growing awareness of socio-cultural differences and initial concerns for culturally-responsive teaching. Although these concepts were mainly **used as a label**, most probably due to ongoing talks with the researcher, they still became more and more perceptible. Another indicator of increasingly perceptible affordances is that genuine lingua-cultural considerations became more salient. Especially the first lessons learned (see figure 8.2) served as eye-opening experiences for internationalist teachers, which brought them closer to the appropriating phase. The teachers started to realise that culture clash, **ethno-centric blocking** of domestic students and lacking intercultural sensitivity on their own part proved to be harmful for a learning environment in which all students can thrive. This, in turn, meant that teachers

might be endangered to lose their classroom authority, especially if they failed to perceive the socio-cultural norms and contextual constraints of the nexus of educational practice. In this regard, this study revealed that **reflective monitoring** was especially beneficial to raise teachers' awareness of their own entrenched practices, tacit assumptions and internalised rules of appropriateness.

On a positive note, some academics started to reflect on context-sensitive teaching methods that allowed for a more inclusive classroom management. They became increasingly aware of their low-context communication style which, at times, was perceived<sup>4</sup> as face-threatening by internationally-mobile students. On a more critical note, others appeared to cling on to their traditional ways of teaching with some **surface adaptations** only and no intention to change their classroom practices apart from tinkering around the edges of some content modules.

Subsequently, it was found that those teachers that remained stuck in the reacting stage did not succeed in identifying the potential of such a multilingual educational setting. What is more, their responses to the changed environment translated into a **sinking attitude** with a perceived degradation of their working conditions and a considerable increase in workload. This theory maintains that the latter did not succeed in “**seizing up**” during the process. It was identified that only those teachers that entered into a liminal space<sup>5</sup> of reflection and action were prepared to shift their local frames of references and ready to take the next step. The others were found to settle with surface adaptations without any genuine changes, and - more often than not - concluded that teaching in an International Classroom was not something they would be eager to pursue.

### 9.3.3 Stage three: Appropriating

Appropriating is the stage where teachers of an International Classroom, most probably (but not exclusively) informed by experiences made during framing and reacting, start acting upon affordances that are provided by the changed educational

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<sup>4</sup>This process of recognition was reinforced by reflective loops with the researcher.

<sup>5</sup>It is designed to “accommodate reflective interactions and perceptions, with the intention of acknowledging this space as the place where individual(s) become reflective and aware of performances that support or resist the status quo, whether personal or societal” (Kredell, 2009, p 53).

setting. In this context, I wish to recall the social affordances put forward by Rozycki et al (2012) (see section 5.4). While instrumental affordances are most likely perceived by the stakeholders in terms of the common goal of teaching and learning, both interaction and practice affordances have to be picked up from an educational and socio-cultural environment which varies greatly from the localised practices that teachers have previously been accustomed to.

Practically speaking, rather than sticking to their traditional classroom management, a number of teachers actively began to transform recurrent practices and connotative codes into contextualised approaches where they were taking account of the fluidity of the setting at hand. In doing so, they sought to reconstruct internalised knowledge and started exploiting the diversity in the classroom as a resource. Initial concerns as to their ability to teach in English in norm-providing varieties (British or American Englishes) could be clarified with the researcher and were more and more backgrounded. It became increasingly obvious throughout the appropriating stage that teachers encouraged the **creation of a new lingua-cultural space**.

One indicator for this was that the nexus of educational practice started to use its **shared set of rules for interaction**. Another one was that the standards of directness gradually appeared to shift towards a more **high-context communication style** and that elements of **humour** during classroom practices seemed to be employed more **situatively** in line with the transformative intellectual journey of the internationalist teachers involved. It was commonly acknowledged that although humour made the learning environment more relaxed, it also put strain on interpersonal relationships, as it was at times perceived as offensive and face-threatening. One factor why avoidance of humour was used as a protective shield lies in the perceived linguistic ability of the teachers. Many feared that they would not deliver the notions of humour in English as intended and therefore refrained from doing so altogether. One teacher started to appropriate his expert identity and through a meta-learning development process started to also convey some “troublesome” knowledge that opened up the rigidly-bounded area of science. By touching on alien knowledge that was perceived as conceptually difficult since it emanated from another discourse, he challenged the students to adopt perspectives that conflicted with their previously internalised world views and to elaborate alternative perspectives. By doing so, he succeeded in provoking intensive discussions that went beyond

narrowly defined disciplinary debates and included temporary societal issues.

When entering the appropriating phase, most teachers still felt that negotiation of meaning was a sign of language deficiency and lacking accuracy, a perception that changed throughout this stage, though, and became increasingly obsolete. Throughout the process, teachers have grown more and more comfortable with ELF and by enhancing their **interactional and pragmatic strategies**, they developed norms of their own which served their purposes best. By drawing on the multi-faceted linguistic repertoire of the new interculture in the International Classroom, they started to select the most effective forms for the task at hand (for specific examples, see chapter 10).

Given that the ability to perceive IC affordances improves with experience (see chapter 5), the present findings suggest that faculty members seemed best prepared to act upon emergent IC affordances, once they had experienced an urgent need for action (see figure 8.2). Undoubtedly, a number of teachers came across situations where they found no shared and well-established understanding of those invisible institutional and societal rules that they had been taking for granted. They came to understand that internalised practices had to be (re)negotiated locally since they were defined, constructed and modified through an on-going interaction process. Hence, this substantive theory maintains that the appropriating phase is the stage where teachers are most likely to enter into a **reflection process** that goes beyond their disciplinary knowledge. At the same time, it was found that teachers tended to increasingly employ corner-cutting coping strategies to manage the extensive workload and the greater responsibility that had been forced on them. Such behavioural responses and their tendency to “work-to-the-rule” may partly be explained by the perceived burden that (also internalised) quality monitoring brings with it, leaving too little time for certain core activities such as research. Another reason for on-the-fly actions might be that teachers experienced a feeling of inadequacy due to the changed setting where lingua-cultural competences become suddenly a major part of their job profile.

Yet, it became clear that this strategic approach was primarily pursued because of a perceived lack of alternatives which, at best, resulted in a positive adaptation that was permanently incorporated into the normal cycle of activities. Such behavioural responses then translated into reconstructing strategies which were mostly

found in the embracing stage. On a more critical note, teachers expressed some level of discontent and lack of power, and despite some commitment to change policy at the institutional level, they described themselves as toothless. Findings suggest that the appropriating stage is the threshold level where latent constraints can be translated into affordances once the stakeholders find time and space to step back from the excessive demands of their professional lives and start engaging in reflective practice.

From a researcher's perspective, it appears that "internalised control" - as a crucial part of the teachers' cultural coding (see chapter 3.3) - served as a powerful resource since it reinforced their strong drive to perform proficiently. Further, it became apparent that the researcher's engagement with the participants triggered some critical reflection which led to increased willingness to turn tacit knowledge into explicit information. It also emerged that discourse on reflective practice was not valued as an important aspect of professional development. Rather, a "learning through doing" aspect was foregrounded where critical examination of the learning outcomes was considered as only one part of the broad set of cognitive capacities required for internationalist teachers. Nevertheless, it became clear that the interplay of (trial-and error) experience, positive attitudinal stance, reflective practice and informal talks with colleagues and the researcher had a decisive impact on the teachers' capabilities of identifying and categorising critical incidents during classroom management. By drawing on these factors, teachers increasingly developed meta-affordances that allowed them to customise their practices to the needs of the diverse student body.

This substantive theory maintains that in order to re-interpret opportunities for action, teachers **need** to enter into a process of critical reflection across different locations and times. They need to develop a heightened awareness of the interactive significance of the emotional and cognitive context in order to enable shifts in knowledges. At this point, it is to be questioned whether the ability to acquire the skills of critical reflection - especially among hard scientist who might see their professional identity being threatened - can be developed "in passing" or whether the acquisition of such a knowledge requires explicit instruction and the consultation of a liminal space. Such a creative void that allows for safe exploration of uncertain and complex themes may have the potential to replace usual practice by new rituals

and eventually enhance personal and professional development.

### 9.3.4 Stage four: Embracing

Embracing is the stage in which internationalist teachers draw on a sound and well-defined conceptual underpinning of their pedagogical and socio-cultural practices while at the same time engaging in a continuous process of self-reflection of their classroom management attuned to the lingua-cultural IC affordances. During the analysis of discourse from interviews, informal talks and classroom management, I began to understand that those teachers that entered the embracing stage had a high degree of intrinsic motivation, and, most importantly, were prepared to take an unconventional path.

What was identified as “braving the gap” can be explained as the courage to dare some gaps in disciplinary knowledge for the benefit of meta-level skills. Such a **didactic reduction** is made in line with the individual perception of what is useful knowledge within a specific context. Instead of cramming their courses full of facts and figures, these academics left some room for independent thought processes and creative space. They appeared capable of shifting their frames of reference and by exploiting ubiquitous IC affordances, they offered all students the opportunity they needed for their personal and academic development.

It was found that skills to perceive, react to, act upon and eventually capitalise on the range of IC affordances need to go hand in hand with a number of reflection processes. First, teachers have to engage in **content reflection** and question both their existing knowledge and assumptions to be able to interpret social action in context-sensitive ways. In this respect, the substantive theory maintains that the best way to do so during classroom practices is the Meddler-in-the-Middle approach (see section 4.7) where teachers develop a repertoire of activities that challenge students to enter in thinking processes by means of a learning partnership. Second, teachers need to become involved in **process reflection** with regard to problem solving strategies and constantly question their perceptions, assumptions and rules of appropriateness. Additionally, it was found that special attention has to be paid to the necessity to make tacit (institutional) knowledge explicit and embed separate reflective incidents into a cyclic progression of a cohesive whole. Thirdly,

**premise reflection** turned out to be an essential element for the perception of meta-affordances. Heightened awareness of the underlying mechanisms that control thinking and behavioural patterns help to critically review existing belief systems and suppositions. Such critical reflection occurs when the social action in its existing form is called into question and new and creative ways of approaching the phenomenon are explored.

This substantive theory maintains that teachers that engage in all three reflective processes employ reconstruction strategies to change. By determining the potential of the International Classroom, they develop robust and proactive attitudes towards their professional environment and act as “‘movers and shakers” (Trowler, 1998, p 126) within their institutional structures. In doing so, they also promote the transformative strategy of internationalisation, shifting the perspective on students away from market resource to a meta-level where global citizenship becomes a goal. What is more, internationalist teachers in the embracing stage were found to thrive in context-sensitive lingua-cultures where participants dynamically decide to construct their own cultural spaces depending on the conversational setting. By employing metacognitive strategies designed to monitor their own process to learning, such culturally intelligent<sup>6</sup> teachers were identified to possess a high level of self-efficacy and internal motivation. In addition, findings suggest that teachers that capitalise on pervasive IC affordances are eager to share their knowledge to promote conceptual change.

In addition, it was found that teachers in all four stages value pedagogic discourses mainly on an informal and interpersonal level. The identified resistance to attend pedagogical training may be twofold. One reason for this may lie in the specific set of principles and strongly held beliefs by which hard scientists are apprenticed (see sections 2.4.3 and 4.7). Another one can be found in the institutional values of a University of Applied Sciences where strong ties with the local industry call for practice-orientated transmission practices. On a critical note, it needs to be highlighted that such a stance generally acts as a blocker in all stages of the ICA model, but the degree of this reluctance is particularly relevant in the embracing stage where teachers are supposed to act and capitalise on ubiquitous opportuni-

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<sup>6</sup>A culturally intelligent person “suspends judgement until information becomes available beyond the ethnicity of the other person” (Triandis, 2006, p 21).

ties. In order to achieve mastery<sup>7</sup>, internationalist teachers need to be willing to engage in a constant self-reflective process that also relates to pedagogical content knowledge.

## 9.4 Chapter summary

This chapter has discussed the “conditional matrix” of the investigated phenomenon to present the integrated findings of the developed grounded theory. While the outlined coding paradigm provided a means to trace the contextual, conditional and consequential paths through different levels of investigation, the ICA model zoomed in on the set of strategies employed during classroom management to explain disciplinary teachers’ perceptual processes of International Classroom Affordances. Such an explanation may help to understand which circumstances lead to informed decisions and which blockers are responsible for the failure to perceive opportunities for action.

Framing, reacting, appropriating and embracing as the four identified stages within EMEMUS are the building blocks for this conceptual ICA model. It is demonstrated that in order to pass through the four steps, internationalist teachers need to perceive, react to, act upon and capitalise on opportunities for action as they emerge from their efforts to understand the changed educational setting.

To provide further clarification, it needs to be stressed that the embracing stage is identified as the final step in the ICA perception process. This model does not reflect an iterative loop, but a sequential, uni-directional perception process which always starts with the framing phase of EMEMUS triggered by either externally imposed requirements or by intrinsically motivated factors that lead to English-medium instruction. After familiarisation with the changed educational setting, the agents involved were found to progress at their own individualised pace and in accordance with their individually perceived grounds for action and reflection.

For a final overview of the dynamics involved in this process, see figure 9.4.

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<sup>7</sup>This is the stage where teachers go beyond appropriation of social practices and employ a broad set of strategies to enhance their classroom management across contexts.

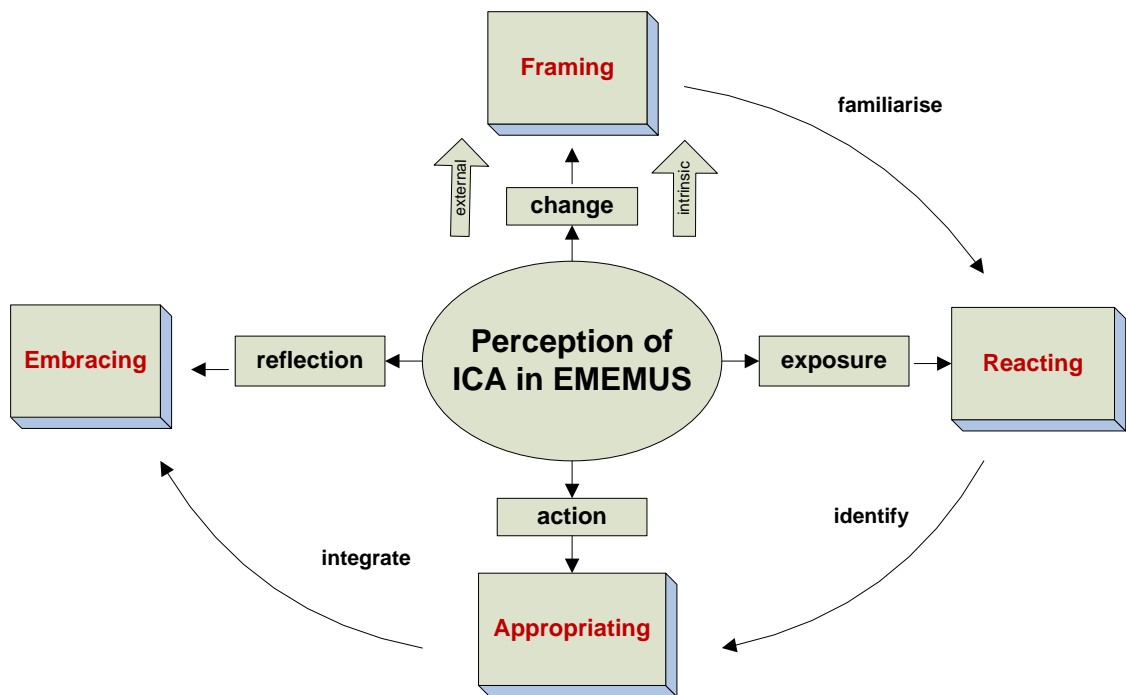


Figure 9.4: Dynamic process of perception of International Classroom Affordances in EMEMUS (author's own illustration)

# Chapter 10

## Analytical application of ICA model

### 10.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter has discussed the Constructivist Grounded Theory generated with regard to teachers' perceptions of ICA in EMEMUS developed during three years of empirical research. Evidence leading to the ICA model pointed to the diversity of multifaceted factors that accounted for differences as to the ability to perceive, react to, act and capitalise on action possibilities in an International Classroom. It also indicated the degree of fluidity between the different stages in view of the transitional power furnished by IC affordances. Once perceived and acted upon, they allowed internationalist teachers to initiate the afforded action that was required to embrace the NofEP in a more context-sensitive way and develop a heightened awareness of how their teaching competences and classroom management can be enhanced through reflective practice.

The next sections provide an account of two specific agents, namely Doctor Alpha<sup>1</sup> and Doctor Beta who are positioned in the conceptual framework to demonstrate the analytical application of the ICA model. It should be reiterated here that it was primarily sought to give an emic account from within the investigated culture (see chapter 6). This bottom-up approach resulted in extensive analyses that not only translated into this conceptual model but - as will be shown in the next section - was also intended to give a voice to the participants to explore how they construct

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<sup>1</sup>Pseudonyms are employed to protect the participants' anonymity.

their realities. By presenting multiple perspectives, also a few etic considerations are being made to avoid a one-sided view that only applies to single aspects of one specific culture. Hence, in relating certain behavioural patterns to societal and professional cultures, it was tried to examine whether etically established theory can find confirmation in emically embodied subjectivities.

Further, it shall be noted that the descriptive and prescriptive interplay of the following accounts is fully intended and much in line with the principles of CGT. Inevitably, building of theory relies on descriptive analyses of real-world events which eventually results in some kind of prescriptive theory to explain the past and predict future developments (Christensen and Carlile, 2009, pp 241-246). As stated elsewhere, the aim of grounded theory is to generate a conceptual frame rather than a purely descriptive representation of the social phenomenon. To provide a combination of both, the present investigation led to a case study which, by nature, does not lend itself to generalisation. Yet, it is built upon well-researched categories of analysis that help to predict what social actions will and will not lead to the desired outcome within the given setting.

## Positioning of two agents

The four identified phases offer a frame of reference for understanding some of the teachers' dynamic responses to ICA. Not all agents go through the identified stages sequentially and at the same time, or even complete them at all. It was found that some teachers were able to move ahead quickly, while others "lingered" at one specific stage with little prospect of advancing any further in the near future.

By analytically applying this model to two investigated teachers, it will now be demonstrated how their perception process of ICA unfolded. In each phase there are some examples or vignettes provided to illustrate this perceptual journey. The labels in capital letters are illustrated in figure 10.1. They reflect parts of the open coding process and consist of theoretical codes which are derived from the literature, in vivo codes which are rooted in the agents' language and substantive codes which reflect identify patterns found in the empirical substance of the data.

In order to protect the agents' anonymity, I decided to minimise the amount of direct quotations even at the risk of providing too few linguistic findings. In view

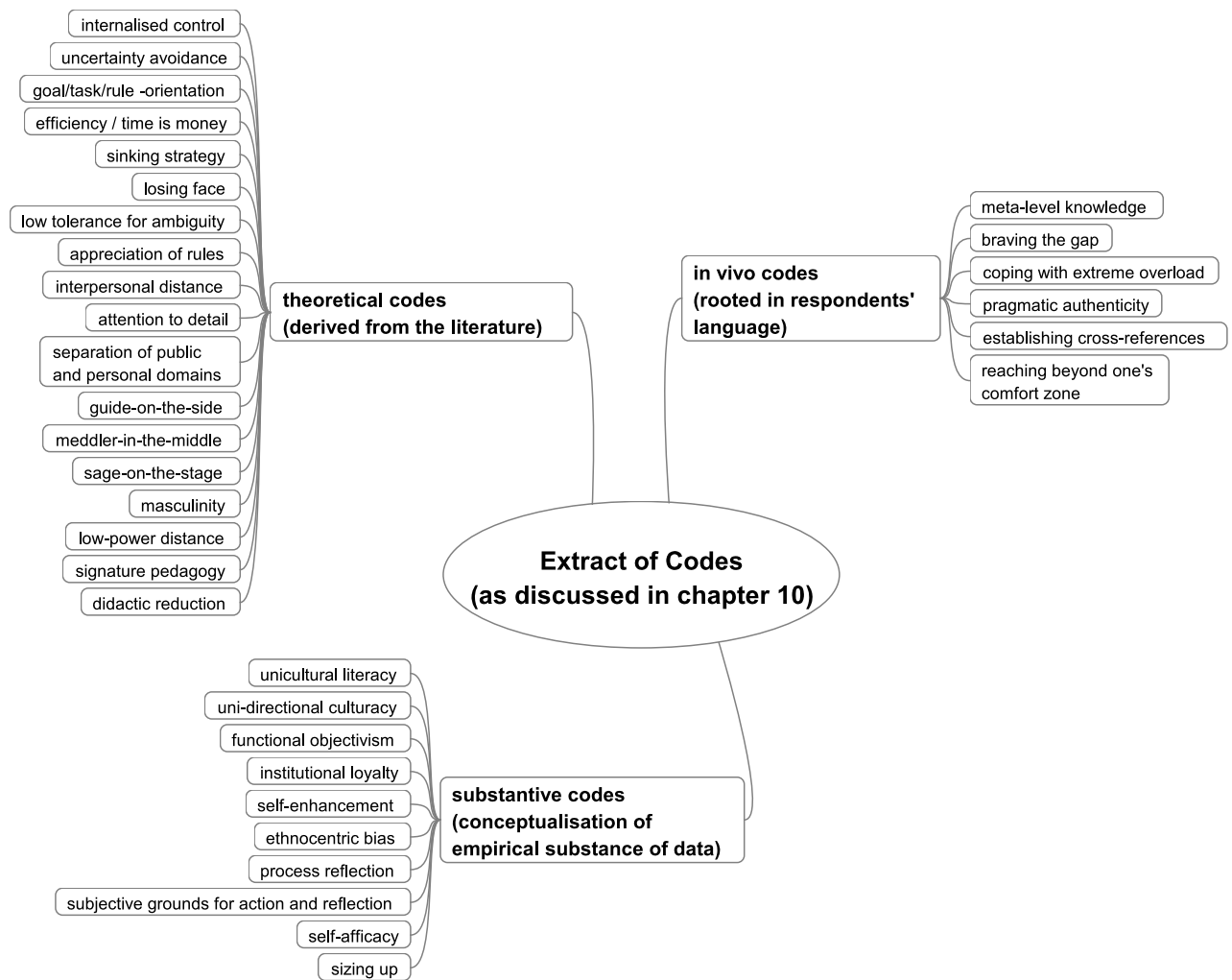


Figure 10.1: Extracts of codes (author's own illustration)

of the small sample size, I was very cautious to avoid face-threatening accounts or disclose sensitive information.

## 10.2 Dr Alpha

Dr Alpha is a teacher for computer science who had worked at the investigated Austrian University of Applied Sciences as a full faculty member for several years. Before the language of instruction of the relevant Master programme was changed into English, he had given IT classes in German-medium taught Bachelor and Master programmes. Drawing on his emic understandings of the explored social action gained during the introduction of the English-medium Master in 2010/11 and the academic year 2013/14, the following accounts seek to position him in the outlined conceptual model.

### 10.2.1 Framing

When Dr Alpha was first confronted with the director's idea to change the language of instruction and offer the Master's programme in English, he, in hindsight, rather reluctantly got used to this decision. His English had grown rusty and his German slides had just reached the level of proficiency, he was eager to display in class (INTERNALISED CONTROL).

When prompting to think about his perception about how effectively he would deliver English-medium teaching and what genres he would most likely draw upon, Dr Alpha noted that given the international world of ICT, he was most familiar with reading scientific papers and doing research in English. However, when he had to communicate in general English, he perceived his poor language skills as a major stumbling block in a classroom of the given nature, which is underlined by the following vignette (all quotes were translated from German to English by myself):

What will be most challenging for me is to retrieve the phrases between the jargon words that I am well familiar with. To actually tell some stories and build analogies in English, that is my major concern.

What is more, changing the medium of teaching would mean to translate everything and that would be an “extreme overhead” <sup>2</sup> which he was not yet prepared to take on, given the insecurity of whether this endeavour would be really worth it and lead to the desired outcome of a higher student intake. (UNCERTAINTY AVOIDANCE). Another element which was deeply ingrained in his societal coding came to the fore in terms of GOAL-ORIENTATION, EFFICIENCY, TIME IS MONEY.

What if it did not work out and we would not get those excellent international students were are thriving at, after all? We would all invest much time for nothing in return.

At this stage, Dr Alpha could not perceive any affordances worth acting on and thus foregrounded a rather “de-fordable” view of the scene. His emotional and attitudinal perception is reflected in the following vignette which was labelled UNICULTURAL LITERACY (this code was used whenever an agent foregrounded his own cultural background as inherently superior to others)

We are in Austria, we speak German here and have well-established societal rules and regulations. We have extraordinary standards, also in terms of education. So, clearly, they want to come here and take a degree in this country, but for us it means much extra work and the question remains if it will also pay off for us

This unidimensional culturally biased perspective was displayed by Dr Alpha throughout a number of interviews and follow-up discussions where Dr Alpha strongly contested any efforts taken from his side to accommodate either culturally-specific learning styles or lingua-cultural affordances by pointing out that

If **they** come to **us**, they should be at least prepared to adapt to **our** mind-set and take on **our** way of living and get accustomed to **our** way of doing things here. There is no need that **we** make an effort. Rather, **they** need to integrate and adjust to **our** practices

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<sup>2</sup>This expression is another example of an in vivo code.

This rigid stance of upholding one's own ethnocentric perspective with the broad expectation that international students naturally adapt to locally established practices translated into a further code which was labelled *UNI-DIRECTIONAL CULTURACY*.<sup>3</sup>

At that time, Dr Alpha made very clear that he had no intention to reconstruct his internalised knowledge, but, given the institutional realities, he had basically no other option but put up with an intensification in workload. This was in line with Trowler's (1998) identified *SINKING STRATEGY* (see chapter 4.6):

we had already been snowed under with work before the introduction of the English-medium Master, so why open a can of worms? Anyway, we gradually need to grow accustomed to this change. That is just the way it is.

At the same time, he acknowledged that the influx of (international) students into engineering fields had been an institutional and political issue for years. The endeavour to attract motivated students had been accompanied by a number of activity-oriented measures (marketing, press releases, company project, educational fairs) which eventually culminated in the decision to offer the Master entirely in English. However, this strategic move did not trigger any perceived need for internationalisation beyond routine practices (*ADD-ON APPROACH*).

### 10.2.2 Reacting

At the outset of the English-medium course, Dr Alpha was still absorbed in prescriptivism of standard English and concerned that due to the lacking presence of native speakerism his expert identity might not be skillfully negotiated. This feeling of losing face was reinforced when he stated:

what happens if any natives are present? What if they can tell that my linguistic skills are not strong enough to maintain professional teach-

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<sup>3</sup>This term should express that the host culture is perceived as the central world view by its societal members (also see Bennett's (1993) ethnocentric and ethnorelative stages) and, more importantly, that cultural adaptation is regarded as a uni-directional process of literacy in which exclusively foreigners are required to adapt and accommodate their socio-cultural behaviours in multilingual settings in order to meet the societal expectations of the host country in terms of locally established norms, practices, values and conventions.

ing? Or even worse, what if I can not make my point in English and convey the content of my lecture effectively? Will the students be at a disadvantage?

This vignette demonstrates two aspects, one is LOSING FACE and the other one reflects a clear commitment to TASK-ORIENTATION. Interestingly, Dr Alpha could not perceive any affordances in the event of having native speakers in the classroom. Opportunities for action such as opting out or acting as a language support remained tacit for him.

Confronted with the significance of cross-cultural perspectives and the advantage of - even if only theoretically - adopting an ethno-relative view, Dr Alpha most frequently insisted on his “pragmatic authenticity”<sup>4</sup> and was persistently outlining that, apart from the language of instruction, he did not need and want to change anything when teaching in the International Classroom, and that there was nothing different whatsoever (LOW TOLERANCE FOR AMBIGUITY).

This attitude also became apparent during his classroom practices where he seemed to hold on to his internalised set of structures and avoid bias in his objectivity (APPRECIATION OF RULES).

Especially, during lectures he appeared much like the SAGE-ON-THE-STAGE, as the one who has the knowledge and transmits it to his students, yet with very little variety of metadiscursive devices to structure his lessons. His most frequently used expressions were “first” and “as can be seen here”. What was missing, though, was explicit frame talk and the usage of interpersonal resources for the sake of audience rapport. This was further intensified by the students’ reluctance to ask (content-related) questions.

By conveying what he called “*value-free knowledge*” he did not only draw on hardly any other discourses, but also stayed on the safe side with regard to internalised ESP (UNCERTAINTY AVOIDANCE). His way of reacting to this new social setting was to cling on to the narrow confines of the disciplinary boundaries which provided, in his view, the highest common denominator. He was eager to project

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<sup>4</sup>Here again, this label was taken up as an in vivo code to express the agent’s authentic preservation of the fundamental elements that belong to his cultural and epistemological socialisation, which are much in line with adopting a pragmatic attitude towards life.

a highly proficient, yet reserved, (INTERPERSONAL DISTANCE) image and display his professional identity (INTERNALISED CONTROL) by providing loads of technical information, at times with great substance and complexity (ATTENTION TO DETAIL).

At the same time, he regretted that crucial elements like humour and anecdotal narratives that he reported to frequently use during German-medium teaching were entirely backgrounded for the sake of face-saving acts, but also due to his perceived linguistic deficiency. Understandably, then, that he also associated the students with their disciplinary knowledge and bonded with them based on their interest in the subject. He was holding the view that technical understanding was an independent variable of societal culture and that the same epistemological socialisation acted as a “glue” between national backgrounds as this vignette demonstrates:

It is really striking that this international guy still has not abandoned his mentality yet. But anyway, despite his somewhat strange behaviour, his technical understanding is alright. We, IT guys, just tick the same all over the world.

Although this example shows how (disciplinary) commonalities can help to bridge cultural divides between agents in multilingual settings, it became increasingly obvious that Dr Alpha expected the international students to take ethno-relative steps to ensure a “frictionless” continuation of his internalised teaching practices. A policy of “leaving everything as it is” appeared to be the most suitable strategy that he adopted in the reacting phase. Not only did he feel comfortable with his rather distant role of classroom authority, he also made very clear that his professional duty ended at the premises of the seminar rooms and his office. This statement illuminated that he was not interested in students’ private matters, nor was he keen on attending any international gatherings organised by the school. Such events were perceived as outside his public sphere where he had to assume the role of a formal professional (SEPARATION OF PUBLIC AND PERSONAL DOMAINS).

I don’t have any clue what they do outside the classroom and it really does not matter to me. I am their teacher and have to provide them with sufficient disciplinary knowledge so that they can be competitive in the job market. And that’s that.

By analysing Dr Alpha's instructional practices in terms of language policy, it became evident that he was keenly advocating his authentic classroom management and, here again, displaying his so-called "pragmatic authenticity". Since there was no institutional language management in place, he was forced to implement his own context-sensitive practices with code-switching whenever convenient to handle linguistic gaps or when it helped the communicative purpose.

It was found that although the technical content conveyed appeared to be emptied of cultural reference, he still widely drew on a Germanic linguistic socialisation with a heavy use of low-context expressions. One example of this was not only a typical German transfer error, but it also reflected a high degree of directness "I want that you understand" and "I want that you do that". This reminded me of the "territorial imperative" indicating membership in a particular speech community (Pitzl, 2009, p 300).

In the present ELF setting, the differences between low-context and high-context communication styles not only created problems for mutual understanding, it also was problematic in terms of linguistic norms of politeness and face. For the sake of confidentiality and anonymity, specific details are not provided at this place but rather a synthesis of the analysis is given.

A number of face-threatening acts occurred, especially in terms of disapproval and criticism, which were wrongly interpreted by those international students who were socialised into a high power distance culture. What also came to the fore were misunderstandings due to some irony and sarcasm expressed on the part of the teacher. Given that the students from high power cultures appeared to rigidly adhere to their internalised hierarchical structures and moral order according to which teachers have an unshakable classroom authority, they were not able to handle the locally established (institutional) cultural practices appropriately.

Interestingly, such critical incidents furnished some transitional power and allowed Dr Alpha to receive and react to perceptible ICA. He started to "appropriate" his classroom management and did away with ambiguous discursive elements that he had previously used.

In sum, it was found that Dr Alpha took a rather resistant position towards this changed educational setting. This is why he was found to linger much longer in the reacting phase than some of his colleagues. Far from taking, or even attempting to

take an ethno-relative view, but quite on the contrary, by persisting on his ethno-cultural frame of reference, he was running the risk of hardening his entrenched practices without questioning the need for a culturally-responsive teaching approach.

One of the reasons why he was turning a blind eye to lingua-cultural factors might have been in his conception of his role as a teacher. Guided by the principles of objective foundations, his aim was to convey hard facts and disciplinary-relevant knowledge which he genuinely considered worth exploring whereas these “soft skills issues” might not lend themselves to serious discourse and therefore be discarded. Another reason was found in his moderate level of self-efficacy which translated in low expectations in himself as to the navigation through new cultural settings. Not only did he perceive them as stressful and threatening, he also tended to focus on negative outcomes and dysfunctional processes.

### 10.2.3 Appropriating

Informed by the sobering experiences made during the initial period where no or only very few amendments to the conventional classroom and organisational management were considered to be necessary and, as a result, a substantial attrition rate was recorded, Dr Alpha started (considering) some action. It needs to be stated here that although a number of adaptations to his classroom management could be identified, Dr Alpha still perceived his teaching practices as doing “business as normal” and did not recognise any obvious changes in his classroom management. Consequently, it can be derived that action happened without his conscious and deliberate reflection. Rather, it appeared that his subconscious processing of decision-making enabled him to respond quickly and spontaneously to the socio-linguistic requirements. While some action was externally initiated by the institutional stakeholders, other forms of classroom appropriation can be attributed to his growing perception of meta-affordances.

We were given the brief to integrate the international students in the class by looking at group dynamic processes. That is all fine, but there are more things involved. We need to provide them with the institutional rules and socialise them into our structures and patterns.

In line with his internalised control, he not only displayed strong commitment to perform the task effectively and in accordance with the superior's pre-determined guidelines (RULE ORIENTATION), he also started to identify social variables relevant for an effective classroom management in EMEMUS. During classroom practices his strict adherence to English for specific purposes (ESP) and his initial reluctance to venture outside his linguistic comfort zone gave way to a more dynamic and context-sensitive use of varieties, including ELF which was hardly drawn upon in the reacting phase. In terms of his code-switching practices, it became apparent that although he was holding on to his habit of explaining difficult issues in German, heightened awareness contributed to a more context-sensitive approach resulting in attempts to explain the task at hand also in English in more depth. The following considerations provide some evidence of this shift in teaching practice.

If there are highly complex issues, it is extremely hard for me to explain them in English. So far, I have preferred explaining them in German, so that students **really** understand them in depth. But sometimes the internationals wonder what we talk about when a domestic student asks a question in German. Now I try to provide at least the answer in English, so that they can plot some parts together, even if they are deprived of the initial question.

In the appropriating phase, his initial attitude towards his “task portfolio” where only delivery of content appeared to belong to his scope of duties, was gradually shifting to a more extensive perspective on classroom management. It appeared as if he was slowly turning into the “GUIDE-ON-THE-SIDE” with a more inclusive learning approach where issues like group cohesion, team work and social connection were increasingly becoming an issue. Through collaborative learning tasks where he acted as a facilitator he was actively contributing to an enhanced classroom environment.

In addition, it was found that although Dr Alpha was determined to stick to his traditional role, and also in this stage, tended to downplay potential differences of culturally-patterned behaviour or challenges with regard to EMI, he was increasingly appropriated his practices to the emergent IC affordances. Interestingly, though, he perceived them at a much slower rate than his colleagues and was most reluctant

to look at the diversity within the classroom as a resource. Although Dr Alpha persistently denied any reason for taking action in front of the researcher, he still started to use his liminal space which allowed him to step back from educational demands and reflect on his classroom management. As a result, when engaging in informal conversations with his colleagues, he started to make tacit assumptions and underlying codes of significations explicit. In doing so, he entered in a reflective loop that allowed for meta-affordances to unfold and trigger appropriate action.

#### 10.2.4 Embracing

Although Dr Alpha has engaged in some reflective practice vital for the perception of immanent and pervasive affordances, he will still have to go on appropriating a number of his practices and react to and act on further meta-affordances that allow him to advance to the embracing phase. For one, an ethno-relative perspective has not yet been crystallised. Such a view goes hand in hand with personal insights into one's own cultural biases and agendas and was found to be a crucial prerequisite for the pervasiveness of the wide range of IC affordances. In order to account for them in classroom practices, teachers in the embracing stage need to be capable of capitalising on ubiquitous opportunities for action and, by doing so, rely on a sophisticated set of pedagogical and socio-cultural practices.

What was found to be missing from his reflective process was the **premise reflection** that enables social agents to understand why and how they perceive pervasive affordances and according to which complex mechanism they operate and interact.

It was also found that he has not yet “dared the gap” insofar that he allowed for creative capacity to unfold without having a bad feeling of not conveying enough disciplinary content. Such a didactic reduction, however, is an integral part of the last step of the ICA model. The same goes for the concept of the MEDDLER-IN-THE-MIDDLE - which was found to form the basis for creative and cooperative learning partnerships - where teachers of the twenty-first century draw on an interactive repertoire of activities that engages students actively in learning processes.

On a positive note, it was found that he has already developed into a GUIDE-ON-THE-SIDE by perceiving a number of meta-affordances in order to appropriate

his teaching practices. But it needs to be stressed that for the perception of pervasive ICA, a further paradigm shift in teaching is required; one that embraces culturally-responsive pedagogy and capitalises on the diverse student body as a resource for learning. In this respect, a further vignette should illustrate Dr Alpha's perception of his role as educator:

In my understanding, I need to provide the students with all disciplinary knowledge essential for the professional tasks outside the university setting. I am neither responsible for their level of motivation nor for their level of social competencies. Generic skills do not belong to my task portfolio.

Arguably, it is specifically this description that calls for a wider conception of the teaching profession appropriate for the "Conceptual Age" and the concept of life-long learning. Such a new role perception goes beyond mere content knowledge by acknowledging that know-how flows across disciplinary boundaries and thus requires interdisciplinary and generic perspectives. Once this knowledge is internalised, internationalist teachers that capitalise on pervasive affordances will pass to the final step of the ICA model; a step that Dr Alpha has not taken yet.

At this point, I would like to underline that it is very likely that a number of teachers do not want to shift their pre-existing understanding of teaching science and refrain from imparting knowledge that goes beyond their disciplinary expertise and technical knowledge. In such cases, these academics most probably do not engage in English-medium teaching at all, and, if they do, adhere to their repertoire of internalised teaching skills, or - as in the case of Dr Alpha - only reluctantly appropriate their entrenched classroom practices. It was found that some "reacted" to the constraints of what they called "experiment of teaching an International Classroom" by leaving this educational enterprise altogether. One reason for opting out was that they did not perceive the tacit ICA provided by this changed social setting. Others were more successful in exploring them, which allowed for intangible propositions to be processed.

In what follows, is the process description of a second teacher to allow for some comparison of the identified sequences of the ICA model.

## 10.3 Dr Beta

Before Dr Beta embarked on his teaching career, he had worked with an international group for several years and did not, like Dr Alpha, look back at a career path that was exclusively anchored in academia.

### 10.3.1 Framing

From the very beginning, Dr Beta maintained a highly positive stance on EMI and the option of going international. The reasons for this optimism were twofold. For one, they were found in his analytical attitude that he adopted towards the introduction of an International Classroom; for another in his personal affinity for English.

We received numerous inquiries from students outside the German-speaking world and since the ICT scene is clearly anchored in the English language, it might not be a bad idea to offer the Master entirely in English. We would get more students, create a larger workforce and hopefully contribute to the generation of well-qualified computer experts that eventually stay in Austria.

On this note, his functional focus on content-related aspects revealed a high level of purpose orientation and rational thinking (FUNCTIONAL OBJECTIVISM). Further aspects that impacted his evaluation phase were considerations such as the profiling motive and the competitive advantage of the school (INSTITUTIONAL LOYALTY).

A second reason for his enthusiasm was found in this passion for English, particularly for the American English variety. He reported strong interest in American movies that he watched in English only, and that he exclusively read scientific papers in English, not just out of necessity, but mainly due to interest. This stance also translated into his general classroom practices, particularly as the majority of his slides were in English despite German-medium instruction.

Interestingly, and in contrast to what was identified, he perceived such an “English-mostly approach” as the instructional rule for academics of computer science by claiming that the global discourse community of IT is based on English.

English is the language of IT. So clearly, everyone teaching informatics, is familiar with the English language and should be, and certainly is, capable of teaching effectively.

He also conveyed the impression that he looked forward to using his linguistic dormant potential in an effective way (SELF-ENHANCEMENT).

This proactive attitude makes clear that, in hindsight, his evaluation of the framing phase was not characterised by defordances. Rather, he immediately started to sense the hidden IC affordances as something worth exploring. Hence, his framing phase was significantly shorter than that of Dr Alpha and marked by “imaginary anticipation” of what his academic future might hold in store.

### 10.3.2 Reacting

It was in this phase that Dr Beta started to realise that apart from linguistic issues, there were also other factors that accounted for the success of an International Classroom.

I get paid to basically provide good teaching. I would have never thought about all those administrative and other things, you know, those aspects required for the internationals to settle in. But isn't it actually their business to get prepared and also to learn the ropes here?

This statement reflected a high degree of autonomy and self-reliance on the part of the teacher, but also equivalent expectations towards the students. Such a stance demonstrated lacking awareness of socio-cultural differing needs, especially of students drawing from a collectivistic cultural background (INDIVIDUALISM). His particular way of reacting to such differences was to impose his own value system as it is embedded in his practices and by regarding his own in-group as central, he implicitly rejected unfamiliar ones (ETHNOCENTRIC BIAS).

A further element that called for reactive responses was the differing previous knowledge base identified among international students. Dr Beta particularly pointed to these shortcomings and, on a critical note, stated that a vast majority of internationals appeared to have another understanding of academic achievement.

This was manifested by the fact that many left the programme prematurely in the first year. This results-oriented approach was undermined by the introduction of an aptitude test which - informed by the initial experiences made during the framing phase (as described in chapter 8.2) - was strongly advocated by Dr Alpha. All in all, in the reacting phase Dr Beta was generally perceived as performance-driven and “latently” competitive and assertive (MASCULINITY).

Similarly to Dr Alpha, his way of reacting to the new educational setting was clinging on to his extensive expertise as a teacher of computer science. Consequently, by focusing on disciplinary and content-related issues exclusively, he was playing it safe (UNCERTAINTY AVOIDANCE). Yet, he displayed a higher proficiency of English and, as a result, more confidence to meet his culturally derived standards manifested in his internalised control. Despite his outstanding English skills, it did not appear adequate to take on the role of a language authority. Firstly, because his instruction stressed content over form with detailed information and conceptual clarity, and, secondly, because both his role conception and expert understanding would not allow him to intervene. As a result, no language correcting and meta-lingual commenting took place. The following vignette illustrates his assumptions:

If I rely on my technical knowledge, nothing can go wrong. Why should I leave my comfort zone and enter unknown territory? There is no need for that. It is particularly specialist know-how that is sought after; this is the basis for everything. And if it is claimed that graduates also need this other stuff, then yes, this might be true, but the basis for everything is still their technical expertise. That is why they are here for, that is what they expect to get.

In sum, it can be concluded that while being exposed to the specific set of requirements of an International Classroom, Dr Beta started to perceive some emergent ICA. They were all geared towards effective measures to maintain a high educational level during his classroom practices. Crucial elements of social knowledge, however, remained tacit for him during the reacting phase. It is particularly encouraging that Dr Beta acknowledged that due to the ongoing reflective loops with the researcher, he received the stimulus required for the perception of emergent action possibilities and meta-affordances. In doing so, he became increasingly aware of how the

choice between a variety of possible ICA impacted the success of the investigated educational enterprise.

### 10.3.3 Appropriating

One major stumbling block for effective IC interaction turned out to be what Dr Beta called a “one-sided process”. He gave lectures, explained facts and figures and tried to convey the disciplinary content in English as best as possible. However, the students, relatively independent of natural culture, hardly raised any questions and only made rare comments. This inactivity combined with EMI caused a certain uneasiness in him as to whether they were capable of grasping the content beyond a surface learning approach. He suggested three reasons for their passive stance. For one, it often lies in the nature of “IT guys” to be rather introverted. Another factor can be found in EMI where receptive skills of listening and reading appear to be more quickly enhanced than productive competence in English. Hence, lacking conversational proficiency may prevent students from expressing their thoughts. He also critically noted that it appeared to him that many students were far from improving their linguistic competence. Rather, students stabilised their English language skills in line with the dominant language practices of the setting. This observation is shared by the findings of this study according to which particularly the development of ELF was strengthened by his practices.

The third issue raised was concerned with “face”. Both linguistic difficulties and problems with cognitive processing constitute potential face threats that warrant attention during classroom interaction.

Consequently, driven by strong internalised control and reflective thought, he started with the appropriation of his classroom practices. By granting more interactional space and allowing for more room to engage in informal interactions, he succeeded in bringing them out of their shell. Analysis of video-taped classroom discourse revealed that he also began to give more force to his rhetorical questions, at times, by self-answering them in other words and not just relying on comprehension and confirmation checks, so typical of pedagogic discourse. His discursive appropriation was much in line with what Dalton-Puffer (2007) at the secondary level and Smit (2010b) at the tertiary level identified as a shift from display to referential

questioning. By starting to ask more qualitatively higher referential questions, he succeeded in triggering responses with longer stretches, more authentic value and increased complexity. As a result, he received more student response and was faced with a higher level of interaction.

What is more, during coding practice, he addressed the students individually in both their language and cognitive needs. In this way, he also increasingly recognised the added value of student-centred learning approaches such as problem-based learning to raise students' awareness of their own responsibility of what, how and when things are learned. This "low threat, high challenge" strategy allowed the students to build creative capacity while at the same time feeling safe to take risks and shaking them out of their passivity. This also had some positive impact on the ethnocentric blocking of the domestic students who became increasingly aware of the benefit of adopting ethnorelative perspectives.

Hence, Dr Beta was increasingly appropriating his teaching practices in line with the perception of meta-affordances that pointed towards active student engagement in a social space for learning to prepare "Generation Y" for the major challenges of the less predictable and less routinised requirements of the "Conceptual Age". With the perception of immanent ICA, he began to "brave the gap" and realise that by overwhelming learners with truckloads of content, crucial competencies may not be able to unfold.

Further appropriation of his classroom management manifested in a more context-sensitive use of humour. In contrast to Dr Alpha who banned most elements of anecdotal narration for fear of face-threatening acts, Dr Beta continued using his pattern of humour coupled with a heavy use of US-American slang words and informal discourse as a recurrent practice of his lectures (LOW POWER DISTANCE). At the same time, he paid more analytical attention to the contextual features of his jokes informed by both previous experiences made in the classroom and informative conversation with the researcher (PROCESS REFLECTION).

Interestingly, he attributed the perceptible shift of the borders of his own personal bubble to EMI, and the use of the American variant in particular, where more informal stretches of speech tend to be part of the cultural code. In this regard, he clearly showed a reduced display of authority (INTERPERSONAL DISTANCE)

Dr Beta stated that given the prolonged engagement with the researcher, he

began to engage in a more reflective teaching practice with continuous cycles of self-observation to enhance professional development. Further, he confirmed that the investigated agents started to link “informal theory”<sup>5</sup> with their “implicit theory” - the tacit propositions or personal constructs that each teacher holds - to explore those codes of signification that they operationalise in their daily classroom practices. Hence, the informal space of interaction where appropriation of ICA during classroom management was regularly discussed and reflected upon, proved to be a valuable promoter for meta-affordances.

### 10.3.4 Embracing

In order to be best poised to contextualise perceived ICA, teachers need to value cultural identities and acknowledge alternative ways of knowing that all students bring with them to classroom. It was found that Dr Beta has not yet exploited the cultural capital brought to the IC by the entire student body, which prevented him from embracing pervasive opportunities for action. Although he has gradually evolved in a “meddler” that starts to become comfortable with daring the gap and co-directing a joint social world with problem-based approaches, he still appears to be incapable of capitalising on ubiquitous ICA that allow for dynamic social knowledge to unfold. His epistemological beliefs about the nature and the acquisition of knowledge are still much aligned with traditional approaches of the Industrial Age, which can be describe as “nested epistemologies” (Tsai, 2002).

Creating culturally-responsive approaches to computer science instruction calls for a paradigm shift in the way expert identities are perceived. In this context, it may be helpful to overcome rigidly-bounded “academic tribes” and give way to the development of “interdisciplinary identities” in order to prepare both teachers and graduates for the upcoming “Conceptual Age”. Unless Dr Beta perceives the added value that such interdisciplinary spaces bring in terms of innovative conceptual frames that allow for the synthesis of different disciplinary, academic and cultural approaches, pervasive ICA may lie dormant for him.

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<sup>5</sup>It can be defined as the “theoretical understanding that practitioners have of student learning and development based upon their interpretations of formal theories through the lenses of their own experiences” (Kimball, 2012, p 17).

## 10.4 Reflection

It would be appropriate to reiterate at this point that in total five disciplinary teachers participated in this study over an extended period of time. But in view of my emic position, it was possible to capture a general institutional picture regarding the commitment of academic staff to engage in EMI. Such an insider perspective allowed me to draw valid conclusions for the framing and reacting stages which were regularly synchronised with institutional stakeholders. This knowledge led to valuable insights into tacit assumptions and codes of signification with regard to internationalisation strategies and ideological rationales for the shift towards EMI.

The provided examples of Dr Alpha and Dr Beta demonstrated that both appropriated their classroom practices in line with the emergent ICA they were able to perceive. It was found that the perception of such ICA was largely mediated by their **subjective grounds for action and reflection**. Thus, rather than responding to external stimuli associated with teaching and learning, they acted on intersubjective meaning structures and interpretive approaches acquired from the societal and disciplinary worlds they have been inhabiting.

It was found that especially in view of their institutionally shaped subjectivities which are deeply ingrained in their national and professional identities, regular feedback on teachers' **itineraries of transformation** was helpful for uncovering deeper meaning structures. In doing so, the researcher's understanding of their transformation of meaning and classroom practices was laid out to the participants with the intention to positively impact and further stimulate the self-reflective process of their personal reality. "Collective wisdom" from the field revealed that their strong paradigmatic focus on life systems did not leave much room for context-transcending aspects of teaching that also incorporated a social dimension.

During the investigation the significance of **personal agency** and **self-efficacy** became increasingly obvious, especially in a cultural environment where a high level of internalised control and performance orientation displayed dominant societal patterns. The self-beliefs about one's own abilities to achieve control in situations or to produce a desired change (Bandura, 1994) was found key for the capacity to perceive ICA in EMEMUS, but also to overcome linguistic and socio-cultural deformances that acted as blockers.

A further important factor that contributed to the teachers' perceptions of ICA or IC defordances was found in their **positivist conception of institutional culture**. It is certainly true that in all academic worlds the maintenance of professional integrity is of primary importance. However, it appeared that in this specific "academic tribe" the establishment of authority structures was perceived as particularly important which was further intensified by the internalised comfort zone of disciplinary teaching and need for behavioural regularities. In this regard, it was found that all participants were holding on to a shared "**signature pedagogy**"<sup>6</sup> when socialising their students into the discourse community of their future profession and prepare them for the distinctive features of professional practice.

Stepping out of this zone of implicit structure by engaging in English-medium teaching or incorporating elements in the classroom management from outside their disciplinary box was associated with face-threatening moments which many of the teachers were not prepared to risk. In addition, the moral dimension of teaching was found to be at stake in that a coherent beliefs system that has formed the teachers' conception of professional values and dispositions for years suddenly was becoming a locus of change.

In conclusion, it can be noted that the nexus of educational practice dynamically interacts with the historical bodies of the teachers by providing a set of International Classroom Affordances to react to and act upon. Depending on the teachers' perceived imperatives, they allowed for multiple subjectivities to unfold and coexist dynamically in the social setting or restrained them by foregrounding the perception of defordances that block a perspective transformation towards more hybrid academic identities. It was found that teachers in the reacting stage respond to ICA in an ad-hoc manner, in most cases without a scholarly perspective on teaching and learning in EMEMUS. Consequently, individually created, often inadequate interim solutions did not furnish a basis for effective teaching practices in an International Classroom. Rather, they laid the foundation for the perception of emergent opportunities for action pointing to the need of reflective practice with regard to their historical bodies and discourses in place. Once the need for action was identified,

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<sup>6</sup>Signature pedagogies were identified as modes of teaching and learning that are not unique to individual teachers, programmes, or institutions. They define the functions of expertise, locus of authority and value of knowledge and determine how knowledge structures are analysed, criticised, accepted, or discarded (Shulman, 2005, p 52).

teachers were found to enter the appropriating cycle where they started to perceive the incremental value of meta-affordances and their transformative potential.

Teachers' immanent perception of such higher-order ICA ultimately paves the way for the embracing stage where content, process and premise reflection processes were found to act as multilayered enablers. Through the perception of pervasive ICA, teachers were able to locate cross-border and transdisciplinary elements in their teaching practices and embed a global outlook in the classroom management. It appeared that such teachers had sufficient **meta-level knowledge** to shift the nature of their academic self-concept. In doing so, the willingness to embrace a **transformative pedagogy** where teachers acted as "**Meddler-in-the-Middle**" turned out to become an integral component for internationalist educators that are ideally prepared to teach "Generation Y" how to become successful employees for the upcoming "Conceptual Age".

Such a stance presupposes both a **reconstructive** attitude towards changing environments and the adoption of a **transformative strategy towards internationalisation**. Further, it was found that the courage to "brave the (disciplinary knowledge) gap" for the sake of context-sensitive and innovative teaching approaches is essential to navigate the embracing stage effectively. Hence, **didactic reduction** combined with a **high level of self-efficacy** appear to be further vital ingredients for educational transformation of this kind.

## 10.5 Chapter summary

This chapter sought to lay out an explanatory analysis of two social agents and their affordance-based perception process through an analytical application of the ICA model. It concludes with a consolidation of the findings by positioning their itineraries of transformation within the four identified stages of the ICA model. After a discussion of critical incidents that triggered perceived need for action among the investigated internationalist teachers, a brief discussion on subjective ground for action and reflection is provided.

# Chapter 11

## Conclusion

### 11.1 Synopsis

This research project was devoted to the exploration of International Classroom Affordances (ICA) with the intention to further my own understanding of how internationalist teachers learn to perceive, react to, act upon and capitalise on ICA and also with a view to making a scholarly contribution to the affordances debate from a sociolinguistic perspective.

In doing so, it was attempted to narrow the conceptual gap identified in view of the upcoming “Conceptual Age” where lecturers that face an increasingly diverse student body with a highly differentiated range of needs, will require a much broader variety of lingua-cultural competencies to effectively teach in an International Classroom. It was further argued that “Generation Y” with its varying expectations, learning preferences and aspirations has started to bring its differing values to educational practices, resulting in an ever-growing divide between knowledge, learners and learning.

It is for this reason that this ethnographically informed study analytically scrutinised both classroom discourse and the descriptive accounts of the investigated internationalist teachers in order to identify the perceptual mechanisms involved when teaching in a nexus of educational practice shaped by a complex blend of lingua-cultural factors. By raising the analytical level of the findings, a model was generated that lends itself to the investigation of ICA affordances.

Based on a constructivist-interpretive paradigm and embedded in an ecological and activist framework, this research sought to blend a nexus-analytical approach and the constructivist grounded theory method to, on the one hand, create this ICA model as the final outcome of this study, and, on the other hand, exercise activist agency by facilitating a shift in perspective among internationalist science teachers.

To demonstrate the analytical application of this ICA model, two agents were positioned within this conceptual framework with the aim to show its potential for the extraction of lingua-cultural and pedagogical parameters that are vital for a better understanding of a context-sensitive classroom management in EMEMUS.

## 11.2 Significance of the study

Research investigating affordances perceived by teaching staff is rare and non-comprehensive (see chapter 5 for a general overview). To my knowledge, this research project was the first one that examined International Classroom Affordances in a longitudinal analysis, which shed light on how disciplinary teachers of computer science perceive, react to and act on opportunities for action. It is also the first investigation of a multilingual university setting that generated a conceptual model of this kind grounded in the data. The proposed ICA model appears to offer not only a potentially fruitful vantage point from which to engage further educational research, it also entails important practical, theoretical, and methodological implications.

A third contribution of this thesis is that it brought the fields of language, society and psychology closer together by blending Nexus Analysis with Constructivist Grounded Theory on the one hand, and by drawing on structuration and affordances theory on the other hand. In addition, it contributed to the sociolinguistic debate on affordances by stimulating a critical exploration of the affordances theory, especially in view of a post-Gibsonian ecological perspective.

A further aspect why this research is significant can be found in its discussion to extend the boundaries of the existing scholarly debate on community concepts by integrating an additional one that is particularly fruitful for educational enterprises of the present kind. By introducing and defining the concept of “Nexus of Educational Practice” as a recognisable aggregation of a series of mediated actions where a matrix of interconnected practices flows in repeated real-time educational sites of

engagement, it was sought to account for such new educational phenomena.

It is anticipated that the findings of this investigation will lead to increased awareness among disciplinary teachers in EMI environments. It is hoped that by a change of perspective, social practices of International Classrooms can be improved for the benefit of all stakeholders. Such a shift of awareness will hopefully not only increase micro practices such as classroom management but also allow for more informed decisions on a meso-level, be it with regard to internationalisation strategies or the introduction of English-medium courses. Such a shift in focus may help to grasp an overall picture of the educational landscape; one that not only embraces the broader context of higher education, including graduate employability and global citizenship, but also develops a wider discourse on the purpose of internationalisation and eventually leads to policies in the best interests of all students.

With reference to multicultural classroom management, the current study is potentially significant as it has practical value for internationalist teachers' perceptions of lingua-cultural and pedagogical challenges in multilingual university settings. It can be supportive to the development of teacher training courses at higher education institutions that seek to raise awareness of the multidimensional requirements for teaching in International Classrooms. Finally, it may have the potential to urge other educational researchers or applied linguists to engage in a similar process and serve as a reference to further expand this area of research.

## 11.3 Boundaries and limitations

Although this study provides implications, it is not without limitations. It is generally recognised that the ability to appreciate both strengths and corresponding limitations of any research endeavour (Repko, 2011) may contribute to a broader understanding of the investigated scene. In that spirit, the following limitations are identified as most problematic.

First of all, all participants in this investigation had a **Germanic** background. One could argue that the findings might have been different had I conducted the study in another geographical area. Second, this study was solely investigating **teachers'** perceptions of classroom affordances. Thirdly, the fact that they all have a background in the **hard sciences** and additionally have very similar profiles in

terms of age and work experience may be seen as a boundary for the generalisability of the study. In this context, it needs to be added, however, that constructivist-grounded theory as the research approach adopted for this thesis generally gives precedence to the internal validity of the case study over its generalisability.

What is more, the availability of experts of computer science who were teaching in the investigated International Classroom was rather restricted and thus led to further limitations. In view of the small sample size, it was not possible to provide the breadth of data to represent ICA perceived by Austrian lecturers teaching informatics. Another element that needs to be taken into account is the disciplinary content, which may have had an impact on the perception of classroom affordances.

Finally, the fact that this thesis is based on the tenets of **constructivism** and uses a rather **eclectic** approach might be seen as another limitation. While constructivist theory is generally viewed as a highly complex endeavour which, at times, “lacks clarity and coherent organization” (Gordon, 2009, p 40), there are some that even discard it as a current fashion in the Western research world with the “most dangerous contemporary intellectual tendency” (Baghrarian, 2013, p 102). Yet, it needs to be added that constructivism as a philosophy of learning was established on the premise that “by reflecting on our experiences, we construct our own understanding of the world we live in” (Brooks, 1999, p 4). This is a view that I share and sought to explore throughout this thesis.

## 11.4 Suggestions for future research

First, students’ perceptions of ICA could be a possible field awaiting further investigation. Studies could look more closely into language and socio-cultural requirements of students through their own perspectives and explore the mechanisms that trigger the perception of opportunities for action in an International Classroom.

Second, the range of disciplines could be extended as well as the lingua-cultural backgrounds of the participants. With regard to the English-medium aspects of the study, it could be useful to carry out similar research with an eye on universities of different types. This could also shed light on the various approaches adopted by disciplinary teachers and allow for comparisons among those teaching in different medium institutions.

Further studies may also investigate whether there are any differences with regard to the level of education and explore if teachers and students perceive similar ICA in Bachelor degree programmes. Another fruitful avenue for research may be to explore in more detail to what extent the professional background of the disciplinary teachers influences the perception of ICA. In addition, the sample could be increased by including a greater number of social agents and by incorporating more classrooms to obtain a broader range of multidimensional findings.

## 11.5 Epilogue

This research endorses a view of English-medium science teaching that is in line with a continuum between individually-construed perceptions and socially-driven needs. Teaching in an International Classroom is a process of enculturation where both lecturers and students are apprenticed into a nexus of educational practice with a view to sharing a common social space, history, body of knowledge and discourse.

Such a process of meaning making requires a high degree of reflexivity, especially on the part of internationalist teachers who are constantly reshaping the educational world in which they are operating. But it also needs heightened awareness of how locally developed discourses that had previously been developed through mutual engagement between teachers and domestic students can be made accessible to internationally-mobile students that claim membership in this local “community of academic transformation”.

The mutually negotiated evolution of a shared repertoire and localised practices needs to unfold to allow all members of the nexus of educational practice to rely on socio-cultural routines that are translated into a common understanding of localised practices. It was found that the investigated community has taken on a number of traits that can be found in a community of practice, be it with regard to shared cultural routines and recurrent practices or in view of a common understanding of locally established interactional conventions. At the same time it was hard to label it as a well-developed community - one that “performs” the International Classroom by drawing on recognisable practices that also pre-date the current educational enterprise in attenuated ways. Arguably, in the present case, norms to achieve mutual accountability of codes of signification and tacit rules needed first to be negotiated.

It appeared that although all persons involved strived for expert membership from the very beginning, they were confronted with differing power structures and degrees of explicitness that prevented some potential members from exercising their personal agency in ways that can lead to full participation. Hence, it seemed that both the existing societal norms and prevailing institutional rules made equal participation difficult for all members.

In view of the hierarchical structures nested in multicultural university settings in which certain stakeholders are found to hold a peripheral membership status, the label of nexus of educational practice was found to be more appropriate.

## Curriculum Vitae

Martina Gaisch took a degree in translation studies and transcultural communication (working languages German, English, French, and Spanish) at the Karl-Franzens University Graz, graduating in 1997. She obtained additional qualifications in intercultural competence and interpersonal communication across cultures during her studies and working experiences abroad. For one semester each she studied at the cultural institute at the Universite de Valenciennes (F) and the department of language and intercultural studies at Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh (UK).

Since 2005 she has been working as certified ESOL examiner for the University of Cambridge. In 2007 she took a double-degree in blended learning at the Universities of Oldenburg and Munich to become a qualified e-learning teacher.

She has been working at the University of Applied Sciences Upper Austria since 2009. Before she became a full faculty member at the School of Informatics, Communications and Media in Hagenberg, she had worked as head of International Office and part-time lecturer for English and intercultural competence at the same school.

In 2012 and 2013 she was an invited guest lecturer at Laurea University, Helsinki (FIN) and Hanze University, Groningen (NL) where she gave presentations on intercultural competence and cross-cultural negotiation.

Her research interests are classroom discourse and ELF (English as a lingua franca), English-medium education in multilingual university settings, higher education research, intercultural competence and design thinking.

For the last three years she has been the Austrian coordinator of the EU project “Creating Knowledge through Design & Conceptual Innovation” which aims to foster design ability and creative thinking among students and professionals. Further, she has been appointed scientific chair of the International Cross-cultural Conference in Steyr during 2012-2015.

She is currently the head of the Gender & Diversity Management Conference of the UAS Upper Austria.



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Appendix A

Appendices



## **Appendix 1**

## **Participant Information Sheet**

### **Project Title**

International Classroom Affordances: Perceptions and Experiences of Disciplinary Teachers

### **Personal Information**

Apart from being a teacher of English and intercultural competence, I am also undertaking research in the fields of socio-linguistics, higher education and intercultural competence. I am currently doing my PhD at the interface of these topics. You are therefore invited to take part in this project. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you can withdraw from the process of data collection any time.

### **Purpose of Research**

This study seeks to identify International Classroom Affordances, as they are perceived by disciplinary teachers during a Master's course of four semesters. The findings of this research shall contribute to informed decisions made by those teachers in order to enhance their classroom management and meet the needs of the entire student body in the best interest of all stakeholders.

### **Privacy Issues**

Your anonymity, confidentiality and privacy will be protected. It is not intended to give any names of participants in any scientific contributions.

If you agree to participate in this study, please complete and sign the Consent Form.

### **Researcher Contact Details**

Martina Gaisch

e-mail: [martina.gaisch@fh-hagenberg.at](mailto:martina.gaisch@fh-hagenberg.at)



## Appendix 2

## Consent Form

### Project Title

International Classroom Affordances: Perceptions and Experiences of Disciplinary Teachers

**Researcher: Martina Gaisch**

- ☐ I have read and understood the information provided in the participation information sheet.
- ☐ I have had an opportunity to clarify all open questions.
- ☐ I understand that I may withdraw from this research at any time prior to the completion of data collection.
- ☐ I agree to take part in this questionnaire.

Participant's signature: .....

### Researcher Contact Details

Martina Gaisch

e-mail: [martina.gaisch@fh-hagenberg.at](mailto:martina.gaisch@fh-hagenberg.at)

## English as a Lingua Franca

[Umfrage beenden](#)

The purpose of this questionnaire is to elicit information about how students and lecturers cope with the challenges of an International Classroom. Please note that there are no wrong or right answers and that your responses will be collected anonymously. Thank you!

### 1. Rank the reasons for taking a Master`s degree in English.

(1=not at all; 2=very little; 3=a little; 4=quite a lot; 5=a very great deal)

- ☐ interest in this particular degree programme
- ☐ seek to improve my English skills
- ☐ have already taken a Bachelor degree at this very school and want to stay on
- ☐ computer science is mainly in English and thus it is only a logical step to do so
- ☐ English is no big deal for me and so it does not make any difference

### \*2. Does IT and English have a logical connection for you? Would you have also studied law in English?

### \*3. How important is it for you to improve your English skills during your Master`s? Please elaborate.

### 4. What expectations do you have regarding the English skills of the lecturers?

- ☐ very high expectations, they need to be perfect
- ☐ high expectations, they need to communicate proficiently
- ☐ average expectations, they have to get their points across
- ☐ low expectations, they are not natives, so they will certainly have troubles
- ☐ no expectations, we want to become IT experts and not linguists

### \*5. Would you want teachers to correct your English and if so, how and when?

\*

**6. Do you expect to have certain interests in common with all fellow students irrespective of their national background? If so what would that be?**

**\*7. Do you think you will easily find a job in Austria- even without knowing the German language. If so, why?**

**8. Who is mainly responsible for the group dynamics of an International Classroom?**

- ☐ the teachers
- ☐ the international students
- ☐ the domestic students
- ☐ some individuals
- ☐ all of them together

**\*9. What influence, in your view, do different cultural backgrounds have on the group dynamics of the International Classroom?**

Thank you for taking your time to complete this questionnaire. Your input is most appreciated. Rest assured that your answers will be kept confidential.

Fertig

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✖ abstract {1-0}	✖ coping strategies {4-0}	✖ let it pass {2-0}
✖ added value_International Classroom {16-0}	✖ courage of leaving gaps {7-0}	✖ low-context communication {3-0}
✖ amelioration process {2-0}	✖ dare the gap {0-0}	✖ make explicit {8-0}
✖ application procedure_intercultural {2-0}	✖ deficit orientation {22-0}	✖ make it normal {3-0}
✖ application procedure_previous knowledge {1-0}	✖ detect pattern {2-0}	✖ meta-level {14-0}
✖ assumptions {2-0}	✖ Didactic Knowledge {11-0}	✖ mut zur lücke {0-0}
✖ attitudes in class {5-0}	✖ Didactics_Gut Feeling {51-0}	✖ NO courage of leaving gaps {3-0}
✖ AUT culture_power distance {7-0}	✖ different socialisation {2-0}	✖ no perceived need for change {1-0}
✖ challenges_application {31-0}	✖ Disciplinary Features {16-0}	✖ no perceived need for training {1-0}
✖ challenges_comfort zone {12-0}	✖ discursive repertoire {23-0}	✖ orientation week {5-0}
✖ challenges_disciplinary prerequisites {6-0}	✖ discursive repertoire_EAP {6-0}	✖ out of control {1-0}
✖ challenges_English {47-0}	✖ empathy {10-0}	✖ perceived need for adaptation {1-0}
✖ challenges_face {12-0}	✖ english classes {2-0}	✖ personality traits {2-0}
✖ challenges_future {15-0}	✖ expectations towards students {2-0}	✖ pragmatic approach {7-0}
✖ challenges_group dynamics {16-0}	✖ face-to-face communication {1-0}	✖ priority list {13-0}
✖ challenges_humour {5-0}	✖ fait accompli {2-0}	✖ recherchékompetenz {1-0}
✖ challenges_intercultural {36-0}	✖ frustration level {13-0}	✖ reflection of process {11-0}
✖ challenges_internal communication {28-0}	✖ generic skills {3-0}	✖ role {16-0}
✖ challenges_motivation {13-0}	✖ hierarchy {5-0}	✖ rules of appropriateness {5-0}
✖ challenges_negotiation of meaning {10-0}	✖ historical account_MC {21-0}	✖ rural physical surroundings {2-0}
✖ challenges_preparation workload {8-0}	✖ independent learning {3-0}	✖ self reflection {12-0}
✖ challenges_recurrent practices {23-0}	✖ institutional culture {2-0}	✖ self-perception {11-0}
✖ challenges_tacit rules {5-0}	✖ instruction mode {3-0}	✖ strategic vision {5-0}
✖ challenges_technology {3-0}	✖ internalized control {14-0}	✖ tacit assumptions {26-0}
✖ challenges_terminology {7-0}	✖ internationalisation strategy {14-0}	✖ teaching objective {12-0}
✖ change management {18-0}	✖ introduction of EMI {25-0}	✖ think big {1-0}
✖ change of nexus {1-0}	✖ kurzlebigkeit des wissens {2-0}	✖ UAS_teaching {6-0}
✖ classroom management {4-0}	✖ lack of awareness {18-0}	✖ uncertainty avoidance {6-0}
✖ code switching {7-0}	✖ lack of communication {10-0}	✖ unilateral cultracy {3-0}
✖ codes of significations_teaching {59-0}	✖ lack of knowledge {1-0}	✖ ways to cope with problems {2-0}
✖ content versus form {8-0}	✖ learning theory {4-0}	

abstract {1-0}	added value_International Classroom {16-0}	amelioration process {2-0}	application procedure_intercultural {2-0}	application procedure_previous knowledge {1-0}	assumptions {2-0}
attitudes in class {5-0}	AUT culture_power distance {7-0}	challenges_application {31-0}	challenges_comfort zone {12-0}		
challenges_disciplinary prerequisites {6-0}	challenges_English {47-0}	challenges_face {12-0}	challenges_future {15-0}		
challenges_group dynamics {16-0}	challenges_humour {5-0}	challenges_intercultural {36-0}			
challenges_internal communication {28-0}	challenges_motivation {13-0}	challenges_negotiation of meaning {10-0}			
challenges_preparation workload {8-0}	challenges_recurrent practices {23-0}	challenges_tacit rules {5-0}	challenges_technology {3-0}	challenges_terminology {7-0}	
change management {18-0}	change of nexus {1-0}	classroom management {4-0}	code switching {7-0}		
codes of significations_teaching {59-0}	content versus form {8-0}	coping strategies {4-0}			
courage of leaving gaps {7-0}	dare the gap {0-0}	deficit orientation {22-0}	detect pattern {2-0}	Didactic Knowledge {11-0}	
Didactics_Gut Feeling {51-0}	different socialisation {2-0}	Disciplinary Features {16-0}	discursive repertoire {23-0}		
discursive repertoire_EAP {6-0}	emphathy {10-0}	english classes {2-0}	expectations towards students {2-0}	face-to-face communication {1-0}	falt accompli {2-0}
frustration level {13-0}	generic skills {3-0}	hierarchy {5-0}	historical account_MC {21-0}	independent learning {3-0}	institutional culture {2-0}
instruction mode {3-0}	internalized control {14-0}	internationalisation strategy {14-0}	introduction of EMI {25-0}	kurzlebigkeit des wissens {2-0}	lack of awareness {18-0}
lack of communication {10-0}	lack of knowledge {1-0}	learning theory {4-0}	let it pass {2-0}	low-context communication {3-0}	make explicit {8-0}
make it normal {3-0}	meta-level {14-0}	mut zur lücke {0-0}	NO courage of leaving gaps {3-0}	no perceived need for change {1-0}	no perceived need for training {1-0}
orientation week {5-0}	out of control {1-0}	perceived need for adaptation {1-0}	personality traits {2-0}	pragmatic approach {7-0}	priority list {13-0}
recherchekompetenz {1-0}	reflection of process {11-0}	role {16-0}	rules of appropriateness {5-0}	rural physical surroundings {2-0}	self reflection {12-0}
self-perception {11-0}	strategic vision {5-0}	tacit assumptions {26-0}	teaching objective {12-0}	think big {1-0}	UAS_teaching {6-0}
uncertainty avoidance {6-0}	unilateral cultracy {3-0}	ways to cope with problems {2-0}			

