

A complex systems perspective on English Language Teaching:  
a case study of a language school in Greece

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### ***List of abbreviated terms***

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| <b>AHRC</b>    | Arts and Humanities Research Council   |
| <b>ARC</b>     | Authentic use-Restricted use-Clarification and focus   |
| <b>ASEAN</b>   | Association of South-eastern Asian Nations   |
| <b>BAAL</b>    | British Association of Applied Linguistics   |
| <b>CEFR</b>    | Common European Framework of Reference   |
| <b>CLT</b>     | Communicative Language Learning  |
| <b>CST</b>     | Complex Systems Theory   |
| <b>ECCE</b>    | Examination of Communicative Competence in English   |
| <b>EFL</b>     | English as a Foreign Language  |
| <b>EIL</b>     | English as an International Language   |
| <b>ELF</b>     | English as a Lingua Franca   |
| <b>ELFA</b>    | English as a Lingua Franca in Academic settings  |
| <b>ELT</b>     | English Language Teaching  |
| <b>ESL</b>     | English as a Second Language   |
| <b>ESOL</b>    | English for Speakers of Other Languages  |
| <b>FCE</b>     | First Certificate in English   |
| <b>GALA</b>    | Greek Applied Linguistics Association  |
| <b>GAPMET</b>  | Greek Association of Primary Music Teachers  |
| <b>GSEE</b>    | <i>Genikí Sinomospondía Ergatón Eládas</i> [General Labour Confederation of Greece]            |
| <b>L1</b>      | First, native, or mother language  |
| <b>L2</b>      | Second or foreign language   |
| <b>IELTS</b>   | International English Language Testing System  |
| <b>IRF</b>     | Initiation-Feedback-Response   |
| <b>INSET</b>   | In-Service Training  |
| <b>ITE</b>     | Initial Teacher Education  |
| <b>IWB</b>     | Interactive Whiteboard   |
| <b>KPG</b>     | <i>Kratikó Pistopiitikó Glossomáthias</i> [State Certificate of Language Proficiency]          |
| <b>LTE</b>     | London Tests of English  |
| <b>MATE</b>    | Multicultural Awareness Through English  |
| <b>NEST</b>    | Native English Speaking Teacher  |
| <b>NSE</b>     | Native Speaker English   |
| <b>OEDV</b>    | <i>Organismós Ekdóseos Didaktikón Vivlíon</i> [Educational Textbooks Publication Organisation] |
| <b>OHT</b>     | Overhead Transparency  |
| <b>PCK</b>     | Pedagogical Content Knowledge  |
| <b>PPP</b>     | Presentation-Practice-Production   |
| <b>RP</b>      | Received Pronunciation   |
| <b>SLA</b>     | Second Language Acquisition  |
| <b>TENOR</b>   | Teaching English for No Obvious Reason   |
| <b>TESOL</b>   | Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages  |
| <b>TEYL</b>    | Teaching English to Young Learners   |
| <b>TIE</b>     | Test of Interactive English  |
| <b>TOEFL</b>   | Test of English as a Foreign Language  |
| <b>UK</b>      | United Kingdom   |
| <b>UMI/ELI</b> | University of Michigan / English Language Institute  |
| <b>US</b>      | United States (of America)   |

## ***Abstract***

This thesis is a complexity-informed case study of a language school in Greece, which provides a rich description of how language pedagogy develops in the periphery of the English-using world. In addition, this study demonstrates the feasibility and potential of using Complex Systems Theory (CST) in the study of educational settings.

The thesis begins by describing English Language Teaching (ELT) in Greece, thus setting the scene for the empirical investigation. This is followed by a review of ELT literature, with particular reference to theories of language, pedagogy and society, and by an overview of CST, which pragmatically synthesises complex realism and post-modern ways of knowing, and defines a set of principles to guide complexity-informed empirical inquiry.

Having conceptualised the language school as a complex system, it is suggested that activity in the school was sustained by multiple intentionalities, i.e., collective, emergent, nested and generative drivers of activity. These included: (a) an imperative to provide certification to learners, (b) some learners' desire to integrate in transnational discourse communities, (c) the expectation that language learning should lead to increased awareness of 'English' culture, (d) competition against the state school system, and (e) the unstated aim of protecting the professional interests of the school's staff and stakeholders. Intentionalities were associated with specific pedagogical outcomes and cultural outlooks, and their synthesis is defined as a dynamic of intentions.

Next, the thesis looks into the learning materials used at the language school, and it is suggested that these generate affordances which impacted pedagogy. The distribution of learning activities in the books was associated with synchronic and diachronic changes in the dynamics of intentions underpinning activity in the school. Complexity-inspired conceptual instruments, such as an 'affordance landscape' and 'attractors', are developed to describe the influence of the learning materials, and it is suggested that the learning resources used at the language school made transmissive and communicative pedagogy more likely.

The empirical component of the study concludes by describing prototypical instruction sequences that typified ELT in the language school, which evidenced traces of transmissive and communicative pedagogy. Some sequences (e.g., Reading and Vocabulary, and Transmissive Grammar) evidenced transmissive influences, which were associated with local pedagogical traditions, whereas others, such as Process-Based Writing, were more closely aligned with the communicative ideology that is mainstream in ELT.

The thesis concludes by synthesising the findings with insights from the CST literature. In doing so, it demonstrates the theoretically generative potential of a complexity-informed inquiry, which can help to formulate understandings of ELT that are sensitive to the interface between systems and their environments, while providing ontologically coherent accounts of structure and agency, and of behaviours that are neither completely random nor entirely predictable.

## ***Declaration***

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

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# Chapter 1

## Setting the Scene:

### Motivations, Background, and Queries

Many years ago, I was entrusted with management responsibilities at a language school in Greece. I was already familiar with the school, where I had been taught English as a child, and it seemed to me that little had changed since in terms of the teaching methods that were used. However, with the technical knowledge acquired from four years of learning about English Language and Literature as a BA student, and the optimism and firmness of conviction of young age, I felt certain that I could bring the school in line with the “scientifically correct” way of teaching English. I quit that job some years later, frustrated that my efforts were failing to make much impact.

The research reported in this thesis is, in a sense, my way of coming to terms with that experience. It was motivated by a psychological need to understand why pedagogy at the language school took that particular form; why those pedagogical practices, which in my eyes seemed self-evidently wrong, nevertheless persisted; and maybe even to find how change might be possible. To do this, I needed to develop an understanding of how language schools operated, which went beyond obvious observations, and uncovered the concealed processes that impacted teaching and learning. I also needed an explanation of how these shaping influences operated in context of each other, and how pedagogical practices emerged from this interaction. I needed, in other words, both a description of the school and an explanation of why the school operated as it did.

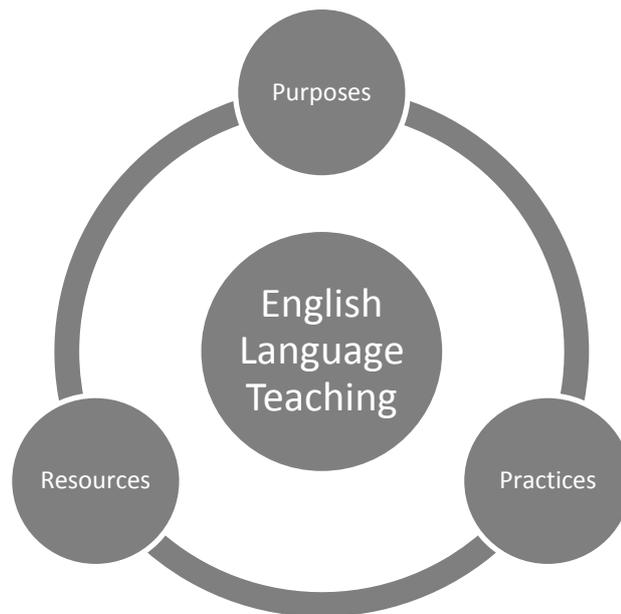
To address these needs, I conducted a case study in the school in question (hereafter, the *host institute*). This was conducted in two phases, an initial exploration of the field, which

aimed at teasing out salient themes for further investigation, and a main research phase that further explored the emergent themes. By embedding myself in the host institute, and by using observational and interactional techniques of data generation, and drawing on Complex Systems Theory as an analytical lens for interpreting the data, I achieved two goals. First, I described theoretically significant aspects of teaching and learning at the host institute, and secondly, from this description, I developed complexity-inspired conceptual instruments that are useful in understanding aspects of pedagogy. The rationale underpinning these two goals is described in the following two sub-sections.

### ***Describing a language school in Greece***

The descriptive aim of this thesis was encapsulated in the broadly-phrased question: “What are the salient features which might shape the teaching and learning experience in a language school?” This question was deliberately open-ended, to mitigate the risks of allowing my preconceptions to shape the developing inquiry. This initial question was refined and focused after my initial exploration of the field, in which I used grounded theory methods to identify three emergent themes (Section 4.2.2). By developing these emergent themes, I then further specified that the overarching descriptive question might be approached in three ways, namely by looking into: (a) the ways in which teachers, learners and other stakeholders conceptualised the purposes of instruction, (b) the learning resources available, and (c) the actual teaching and learning practices that took place at the host institute (Figure 1-1). I then articulated this understanding in three tentative sub-questions, which guided my study from that point onwards. These were:

1. ***Purposes:*** What motivates language teaching and learning at a language school?
2. ***Resources:*** What learning materials are used in a language school?
3. ***Practices:*** What pedagogical practices take place within a language school?



**Figure 1-1 A tentative descriptive framework**

As I engaged with these questions, I gradually became aware that the answers they pointed towards, however comprehensive and elaborate, could only provide me with partial and reductive descriptions of the language school. To generate the kind of description in which I was interested, I had to look at the interconnections *between* these aspects. So, for instance, it would not suffice to generate a list of purposes that motivated instruction. I also had to understand what happened when multiple purposes were present, I had to account for the ways in which these purposes emerged from their environment, and I had to find out how the environment was shaped as a result of their activity. In terms of resources, I had to move beyond a simple inventory of learning materials and to discuss why these resources had been selected from a range of possible options, and how they impacted teaching and learning. In other words, I had to look at the interfaces between the purposes and the materials, and between materials and activities. Lastly, it would be insufficient to produce narrative accounts of pedagogical activity. Rather, I would need to explain how such activity came into being from the interaction between purposes and resources. Returning to Figure 1-1, the lines connecting the three nodes (purposes, resources and practices) were just as descriptively significant as the nodes themselves.

To overcome this challenge, I realised that I was in need of an ontological and epistemological frame that would help me to connect a very large number of theoretically significant themes and variables, and to demonstrate how they operated together. This was provided by Complex Systems Theory, or complexity thinking. As I discuss at length in Chapter 3, complexity rejects the analytical method of approaching a problem by dissecting it into ever-smaller pieces and examining them in isolation, in favour of a holistic description. It is also sensitive to the multiple interconnections between a system's constituents, and the non-linear causal mechanisms that link the individual components of a system and its collective behaviour. Finally, Complex Systems Theory aims at the generation of descriptive and conceptual accounts that are particular to the local context and at the same time connect to broader knowledge structures, an affordance which aligned to my own foundational beliefs about being and knowing.

This holistic description of English Language Teaching (ELT), as manifested in a particular setting, complements existing literature about ELT in the Greek national context in two ways. To the best of my knowledge, the research reported in this thesis constitutes the only inductively-driven study of a private language school in Greece. To date, empirical work on ELT in this national setting has been scant, and it has generally focused on the state education system (e.g., Demace & Zafiri, 2009; Mattheoudakis & Alexiou, 2013; Sifakis, Lytra, & Fay, 2010) rather than private ELT providers (see Section 1.1 for more details about the two ELT systems that operate in tandem in Greece). By addressing this gap in the literature, this study provides insights into an under-researched, yet vibrant, ELT culture, and adds to a growing corpus of empirical work about the ways in which English is taught worldwide (e.g., Canagarajah, 1999; Häggblom, 2006; Richards, 1996).

The second way in which this description adds to our understanding of ELT in Greece relates to its holistic outlook. To date, empirical work in this national setting has usually

reported on specific aspects of ELT, such as teacher attitudes (Mattheoudakis, 2007), materials used to teach pronunciation (Kanellou, 2012), or vocabulary teaching practices (Scholfield & Gitsaki, 1996). This study complements such perspectives by focusing on the interrelationships between various aspects of ELT, and on the ways in which they relate to the broader context in which they are embedded. There have been suggestions for such ecologically sensitive descriptions of ELT in the literature (e.g., van Lier, 1988) but, as far as I can determine, this study constitutes the first attempt to apply such a perspective in this particular setting.

For these reasons, I argue that the descriptive aim of this study addresses gaps in the literature and can enrich our understanding of ELT. In addition to the intrinsic value of such a description, the most significant warrant that this study claims is provided by its explanatory aim, which I outline below.

### ***Using complexity to understand ELT***

This study has not only aimed to describe ELT in a specific language school (the host institute), but also to use this description for theory generation. The instrumental goal of this case study was to abstract, from the description of the language school, a set of theoretical insights that could inform understanding of ELT as a broader phenomenon. Such insights could include understandings about the co-activity of multiple heterogeneous entities with diverse agendas, which come together to shape the pedagogical practice of the school; understandings about how past activity becomes sedimented into the historicity of the school, and how such structure constrains and directs future activity; understandings about the roles of structure and agency, and about the nature of cause and effect. In keeping with the grounded theory tradition (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Glaser &

Strauss, 1967), I refrained from over-specifying the kinds of insights in which I was interested. Rather, I expected these to develop from my engagement with the data.

Although my theoretical goals were relatively open-ended, my study was ontologically and epistemologically grounded on complexity thinking, thus building on a promising strand of scholarship in education research and applied linguistics (e.g., Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008; M. Mason, 2008), which I describe in some detail in Chapter 3. My intuitions about the potential of complexity to inform my understanding of ELT were articulated in the following question:

4. How can an educational setting such as a language school be described as a complex system?

The second main aim of this study, then, was to demonstrate the feasibility and potential of a complexity-informed perspective in thinking about ELT. To that end, I drew on the epistemological traditions of ethnography, case-study research and grounded theory, and demonstrated that they are compatible with complexity thinking (see Chapter 4). For the interpretation of my data, I developed an array of conceptual instruments which helped me to theorise about the purposes, resources and practices at the setting where I was conducting my research (Chapters 5, 6 and 7).

In Chapter 8, I also present several theoretical insights that were made possible by bringing Complex Systems Theory to bear on the study of ELT. In presenting these insights, it is not my intention to claim that complexity thinking is, in some way, a superior way of theorising, compared to other theoretical frames that have been used to date. Rather, the claim made is that complexity, which I view as an ontological / epistemological frame of mind rather than as a rigidly defined theory, can inform the generation of descriptively valid and theoretically coherent findings that enrich our understanding of ELT.

In brief, this thesis develops a way of using complexity that is appropriate to the study of ELT. In doing so, I attempt an answer to recent calls in the discourse of CST for ‘nativising’ complexity (Mercer, 2014; Stelma, 2014), and demonstrating how complexity can productively inform inquiry into ELT.

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So far, I have focussed narrowly on the study reported in this thesis, by sketching the motivations that gave it impetus, outlining its aims and foreshadowing the contributions made. In the next section I broaden my focus and contextualise the study by describing the setting in which it was embedded.

## 1.1 The Greek ELT context

The discussion of the Greek ELT context serves the practical aim of acquainting readers with aspects of the local culture(s) with which they might not be familiar, so as to facilitate the interpretation of passing references throughout the text. At the same time, the overview of context is grounded on the ontological principle that a language school (viewed as a complex system) is integrated in its environment; and that, while it may be pragmatically necessary to distinguish the system from its environment for the purpose of studying it, contextual awareness is requisite to understanding the system.

Arguably, the most salient feature of foreign language education in Greece is the co-existence of two language teaching systems that operate in parallel: the ELT provision in state education and private foreign language schools. Although state and private education are different in many regards, and are most easily described separately, this is in some ways an artificial analytical distinction. Students, for example, tend to be part of both systems, and structural changes in one sector are often mirrored in the other. In practical terms this has meant that, although the language school in which this study was conducted

was part of the private education sector, the attitudes, beliefs and practices that were observed in it seemed to be shaped by outside influences that are more broadly valid. In the interest of a full contextualisation, both sectors are briefly described below.

### **1.1.1 ELT in state education**

The state education system consists of three main tiers that are of concern to this study.

The first tier, primary education, encompasses three main types of schools (Table 1-1).

Comprehensive Reformed Curriculum schools («Σχολεία Ενιαίου Αναμορφωμένου Εκπαιδευτικού Προγράμματος», *scholía eniείου anamorfoμένου ekpedeftikú prográmatos*) are large schools with a staff of generalist and specialist teachers, and the capacity to provide a variety of courses. In these schools, English starts at Year 1. During the first two years, English classes take place twice weekly, according to the provisions of the pilot Teaching English to Very Young Learners programme («Πρόγραμμα Εκμάθησης Αγγλικών σε Πρώιμη παιδική ηλικία», *prógrama ekmáthisis anglikón se próimi pedikí ilikía*) (Karavas, 2014). From Year 3 onwards, English courses take place with a frequency of four sessions per week. In addition, supplementary English tuition may be provided in the afternoon.

'Regular' primary schools, which focus on 'core subjects' such as first language education, mathematics and science, are generally staffed by six to ten generalist teachers and few specialists whose services may be shared by several schools. In these schools, English classes are held three times per week from Year 3 onwards, and supplementary afternoon classes may be offered, depending on the availability of staff. Rural schools («Ολιγοθέσια», *oligothésia*) are staffed by fewer than six generalist teachers, and they only have the capacity to teach 'core subjects' to mixed-age groups, so English is not normally taught in these schools. As can be seen from the discussion above, there seems to be a trend towards providing ELT instruction in the state system in increasingly younger ages, and in Section 5.5, it will be shown how this trend indirectly influenced the host institute.

|                        | Primary (Reformed) | Primary (Regular) | Primary (Rural) |
|------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Year 1 (Α' Δημοτικού)  | 2                  | -                 | -               |
| Year 2 (Β' Δημοτικού)  | 2                  | -                 | -               |
| Year 3 (Γ' Δημοτικού)  | 4 (+ afternoon)    | 3 (+ afternoon?)  | -               |
| Year 4 (Δ' Δημοτικού)  | 4 (+ afternoon)    | 3 (+ afternoon?)  | -               |
| Year 5 (Ε' Δημοτικού)  | 4 (+ afternoon)    | 3 (+ afternoon?)  | -               |
| Year 6 (ΣΤ' Δημοτικού) | 4 (+ afternoon)    | 3 (+ afternoon?)  | -               |

Table 1-1 ELT provision in primary education

The second tier of education, a compulsory three-year junior secondary school («Γυμνάσιο», *gymnásio*), follows a uniform curriculum throughout the country. With regard to ELT, learners are divided in 'advanced' and 'false beginner' streams, following a screening test that usually consists of reading, grammar and vocabulary components. The streams are taught separately, but (somewhat paradoxically) both streams in Form 3 followed the 'false beginner' curriculum, when this study was conducted. English language classes take place two or three times per week. Progression from one Form to another is conditional on satisfactory academic performance, which is largely determined by at least two informal tests and a final written examination. These examinations, of which the format is determined by law, consist of reading comprehension and grammar awareness tasks, as well as a dictation task in Forms 2 and 3.

|                       | Lower secondary | Senior secondary (academic) | Senior secondary (vocational) |
|-----------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Form 1 (Α' Γυμνασίου) | 3               |                             |                               |
| Form 2 (Β' Γυμνασίου) | 2               |                             |                               |
| Form 3 (Γ' Γυμνασίου) | 2               |                             |                               |
| Form 4 (Α' Λυκείου)   |                 | 3                           | 2                             |
| Form 5 (Β' Λυκείου)   |                 | 2                           | 2                             |
| Form 6 (Γ' Λυκείου)   |                 | 2 (+ project)               | 2                             |

Table 1-2 ELT provision in secondary education

The third tier of education comprises senior secondary schools, which are either academically or vocationally oriented. When this study was conducted, English was compulsory in both types of schools, although this is no longer the case. ELT classes were held twice or three times per week in academically-oriented schools («Γενικά Λύκεια», *geniká líkia*), and it was also stipulated that final-year students submit a research project in English, although it is unclear whether this legal requirement was uniformly implemented.

In vocational schools («Επαγγελματικά Λύκεια», «Επαγγελματικές Σχολές», *epangelmatiká líkia, epangelmatikés scholés*), English for Special Purposes courses were held twice a week. In both types of schools, student progress is monitored by at least one written test and a formal examination at the end of the school year. Similarly to lower secondary schools, there is a legal stipulation that these tests comprise tasks assessing reading comprehension, grammar awareness, and writing skills.

The aims of ELT provision in state education are set out in the Interdisciplinary Comprehensive Curricular Framework for Foreign Languages («Διαθεματικό Ενιαίο Πλαίσιο Προγραμμάτων Σπουδών Ξένων Γλωσσών», *diathematikó eniéo plesio proramáton spudón xénon glossón*), and the English Language Analytical Curriculum («Αναλυτικό Πρόγραμμα Σπουδών Αγγλικής Γλώσσας», *analytikó prógrama spudón anglikís glóssas*) (Pedagogical Institute, 2003). The main aims, according to these documents, include fostering literacy, multilingualism and multicultural awareness. In practice, curricular objectives are operationalised in textbooks which are commissioned by the Ministry of Education and distributed to schools, or (exceptionally) selected from a list of ‘approved’ commercially available courseware. Despite such attempts at regulation, the low specificity in the curricular documents and *ad hoc* commissioning practices have resulted in a very low degree of coherence in the learning materials used.

English language courses in the state education system are taught exclusively by English language specialists, who have completed a four-year BA in English language and literature. This academically-oriented degree can provide a comprehensive grounding in linguistics or North American and British literature, but the provision for language teaching education is minimal (Kostoulas, 2011b; Mattheoudakis, 2007, p. 1274; Mattheoudakis & Alexiou, 2013, pp. 103-104). In-service training for such teachers was found to be generally inconsistent in its aims and ineffective (Karagianni, 2012, pp. 60-92). On account of the above, it would

appear that the most salient influence in the professional development of English language teachers in the state sector is the apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 2002, pp. 59-67). Consistent with this hypothesis, it seems that their linguistic and pedagogical beliefs are largely conservative. For instance, it has been reported that they place a high value on the standard language and native-speaker pronunciation norms (Sifakis & Sougari, 2007), as well as teaching grammar (Nikolaidis & Mattheoudakis, 2008, p. 283). Similarly, research suggests that they tend to favour transmissive and behaviourally informed teaching (Agathopoulou, 2007), while older research, which appears to be still valid to date, has suggested that they placed a premium on grammatical accuracy (Hughes & Lascaratou, 1982).

On the whole, the state education system is typified by a largely conservative outlook, with a strong emphasis on the written modality and grammatical accuracy. The influence of this outlook on the host institute is discussed in Section 5.6. Although it would be unfair to make sweeping judgments about the quality of the state education system, it is widely perceived as ineffective, in part due to its inconsistent aims, low coherence and unimpressive educational outcomes. This perception has fuelled the growth of a vibrant ELT private sector, which is described next.

### **1.1.2 The private ELT sector**

The private ELT sector is a substantial industry in Greece. According to a recent study, tuition fees for non-state language education was slightly short of 0.9 billion Euros in 2013 (GSEE, 2014, p. 16), the bulk of which reflected expenditure for English language courses. It is estimated that there are over 7,000 private schools offering evening courses in English (Mattheoudakis & Alexiou, 2009, p. 102), ranging in size from institutes with nation-wide presence to small one-person, one-classroom enterprises. Their ranks are swelled by a substantial number of unregistered operations, and teachers offering tuition privately.

Although the private ELT sector is not academically regulated, the language programmes offered by these schools are, more or less, uniform. Table 1-3 presents a typical programme of studies, which has been constructed drawing on my own professional experience and literature sources (Mattheoudakis & Alexiou, 2013, p. 103). When fieldwork for this study was conducted, students generally enrolled in private language courses at the age of eight or nine, i.e., when ELT courses were introduced in the school curriculum, or slightly prior to that. There was, at the time, a growing tendency to enrol at even younger ages, in response to the introduction of ELT lessons in Years 1 and 2 at certain schools, but this trend appears to have been counteracted by the prolonged economic depression.

| <b>Class</b>         | <b>Typical age</b> | <b>Language level</b> | <b>Contact hrs / wk</b> | <b>Notes</b>                               |
|----------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|--|
| <b>Pre-junior</b>    | 6-8                | -                     | 1-2                     | Optional                                   |
| <b>Junior A'</b>     | 7-9                | A1                    | 3                       | Often merged                               |
| <b>Junior B'</b>     | 7-10               | A1                    | 3                       |  |
| <b>A' Senior</b>     | 9-10               | A1+                   | 3                       | May be offered as intensive summer courses |
| <b>B' Senior</b>     | 10-11              | A2                    | 3                       |  |
| <b>C' Senior</b>     | 11-12              | A2+                   | 3-4                     |  |
| <b>D' Senior</b>     | 12-13              | B1                    | 6                       | a.k.a. 'Pre-Lower', 'Pre-FCE'              |
| <b>E' Senior</b>     | 13-14              | B2                    | 6                       | a.k.a. 'Lower' or 'FCE'                    |
| <b>Proficiency 1</b> | 13-15              | C1                    | 6                       |  |
| <b>Proficiency 2</b> | 14-17              | C2                    | 6                       |  |

**Table 1-1 ELT provision in the private sector**

The majority of students attend six or seven year-long courses ("classes"), which led to certification at the B2 level of the Common European Framework of Reference, or CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001). Since the reputation of schools depends, in part, on the efficiency with which students are prepared for certification, sometimes these courses are conflated. Initially, three contact hours are offered per week, but this provision is usually doubled for older students in exam preparation courses. When fieldwork was conducted, between a third and half the students who completed the B2-level courses (the 'Lower' class) extended their studies by enrolling in advanced language courses (the 'Proficiency'). In Section 5.2, it will be seen that this credentialist ethos, which has typified Greek

attitudes towards education, is relevant to the discussion of the motivations sustaining activity at the host institute.

In addition to being differently structured, private ELT schooling differs from the state education system in terms of the emphasis placed on conditions that are associated with educational excellence. To begin with, classes are usually smaller: in state-run schools, classes with 20-30 students are common, but private language schools generally cap classes at eight to twelve students. Tuition is much more intensive: sessions span 50 minutes to an hour, rather than 35-45 minutes as is the case in state education. In addition, it is estimated that approximately one fifth of the contact hours described in the state school curriculum are cancelled in any given year for various reasons (Pedagogical Institute, n.d., p. 9), which is not the case in private education. Moreover, learning materials are frequently updated, and there is more extensive use of educational technology. Lastly, private language schools are more sensitive to the societal demand placed on certification and work closely with international certification boards to cater to such needs. In other words, it seems to be important for private EFL schools to compare themselves favourably against the state education system, a consideration which will be revisited in Section 5.5 with reference to the host institute.

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The opening move of this chapter introduced the considerations that shaped my research, and, following that, I described the context in which my study was conducted. Having thus presented the background of this thesis, I now go on to foreshadow the rest of the thesis by presenting a brief outline of the remaining chapters.

## 1.2 Overview of the thesis

In addition to this opening chapter, which serves to introduce and contextualise this study, the thesis consists of seven more chapters. Of these, Chapter 2 is the opening move in a process of theorising about, or making sense of, language teaching and learning in the host institute. To do this, I survey literature from the domain of ELT, with a view to sharing my understanding of the discourses that shape the field's professional literature. The chapter covers three thematic areas, namely understandings of language, views on pedagogy, and perspectives on the political implications of teaching English globally. In the final section of the chapter, these multiple viewpoints are synthesised into a conceptual framework that comprises three paradigmatic options: the technical, mainstream and critical paradigms. This framework is used to conceptually anchor the understandings that were generated through engagement with the data, and to connect them to the ELT literature.

The literature review continues in Chapter 3, which surveys Complex Systems Theory and positions this study within the complexity paradigm. The purpose of this chapter is to clarify the ontological and epistemological background of complexity, which functioned as an analytical lens in the process of theorising about the host institute. The chapter begins by tracing the development of CST, and by describing how complexity-inspired thinking has been used to inform scholarship in education, linguistics and ELT in particular. Following that, I define complexity, and develop my own understanding of CST, which I connect to theoretical treatises such as Byrne (1998), Cilliers (1998) and Morin (2006). In the next section, I discuss properties of complex systems which are of particular importance to developing a complexity-informed understanding of ELT, and in the process I describe a set of principles that guided my own process of meaning-making. The chapter concludes by juxtaposing various methodological options for carrying out an investigation of ELT that is

compatible with Complex Systems Theory, which foreshadows the justification for the methodological choices in this study.

Next, in Chapter 4, I describe how this study was conducted. After a brief exposition of the methodological considerations that shaped my research, I go on to narrate how my research questions were empirically derived through an initial investigation, and describe the research setting and my role in it. Following that, I describe how data were generated by means of questionnaire surveys, interviews, classroom observation and content analysis of learning materials. The next section describes my engagement with the data, which was done using inductive methods derived from grounded theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Glaser, 1992). Interspersed in the narrative, there are comments on the reflexive thinking that run through the research processes, and discussion of methodological challenges, such as the representation of multilingual data (cf. Kostoulas, 2012).

The next three chapters present the findings of the study. Chapter 5 focuses on the purposes of language teaching and learning at the host institute, i.e., the considerations, aspirations, agendas and purposes which motivated activity within it. To describe these purposes, I first develop the construct of 'intentionality', roughly understood as a collective, emergent force which drives activity within a system. This discussion connects to previous work on ecological psychology (e.g., Stelma, 2013; Young, DePalma, & Garrett, 2002), which it extends using inductive processes of theory generation, in order to make the construct of intentionality compatible with Complex Systems Theory. In doing so, I make a theoretical contribution that relates to Research Question 4.

Using this novel conceptual instrument, I then look into the language school, and trace five intentionalities in the data, namely: (a) a tendency to valorise the knowledge and skills of local ELT practitioners ('Protectionism'); (b) a preoccupation with language certification ('Credentialism'); (c) an aspiration to integrate in transnational discourse communities

(‘International Integration’); (d) cultural empathy with the Anglophone West (‘Cultural Awareness’); and (e) a desire to supplement state ELT provision and maximise learning outcomes (‘Competition’). By constantly relating these intentionalities the data, I argue that each of these drivers was associated with particular cultural outlooks and pedagogical practices. Moreover, I suggest that the intentionalities, which were not uniformly manifested in the system, come together to form differing ‘dynamics of intentions’, manifested in distinct pedagogical configurations at the language school.

In Chapter 6, I focus on the learning materials that were used at the host institute, in order to make a descriptive and a theoretical contribution. In the first part of the chapter, I describe the learning materials with reference to the intentionalities that were previously identified. It is noted that the influence of various intentionalities on the materials was not uniform, and that there multiple patterns of change were observed. For example, the influence of Protectionism was most easily discernible in the early years of instruction, whereas Certification seemed to impact materials more visibly in Upper Intermediate and Advanced courses. In the second part of the chapter, I use a complexity perspective to conceptualise the role of the learning materials as one of the aspects that shape pedagogy in the language school. I suggest that the learning materials were associated with affordances, which make certain forms of pedagogical practice likelier. I then use the visual metaphor of an ‘affordance landscape’ to conceptually map the affordances associated with the learning materials at the host institute. Using this metaphor as a conceptual aid, and drawing on the terminological toolkit of complexity, I note that the learning materials created dynamically fluctuating transmissive and communicative ‘attractors’, i.e., likelihoods that pedagogical activities were either transmissive or communicative.

Following that, in Chapter 7, I describe the pedagogical practices of the host institute. Using analytical induction, I abstracted seven prototypical instructional sequences from the data,

which can be roughly understood as seven ways to conduct a lesson. As predicted in Chapter 6, these patterns tended to be either predominantly communicative, or predominantly transmissive. After defining and succinctly describing these sequences, I then take an in-depth look at three of them, which were selected using theoretical criteria: a Traditional Grammar sequence, a Reading and Vocabulary sequence and a Process-based Writing sequence. The first two, I argue, mostly aligned with local pedagogy, and evidenced the influence of the protectionist agenda identified in Chapter 5. The last one, by contrast, was communicatively-oriented, and thus aligned itself with global ELT practices. I argue that this realignment was associated with the credentialism intentionality and with the washback effect of certification examinations set by international accreditation boards.

Chapter 8 concludes the thesis by making the case for complexity-informed inquiry in ELT. To that end, I re-visit the conceptual instruments that were developed in the course of this study, and critically review the understandings that they made possible. These inductively generated findings are synthesised with insights from the literature, with a view to developing a theoretically coherent, complexity-informed account of ELT. Finally, I place this study within a broader research agenda, and suggest some possible future directions for research.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Theories of Language, Pedagogy and Society:**

#### **A Conceptual Framework**

This chapter is a broad overview of the informing literature of English Language Teaching, as it relates to this study, and it is motivated by methodological and epistemological considerations. From a methodological perspective, this survey of the literature serves to explicitly articulate my understandings of the literature that informs the profession, and thus outline the theoretical backdrop against which this study developed. Such a description seems necessary for reasons of reflexive transparency, because my prior assumptions about language teaching would be impossible to eliminate, even though the study was data-driven and inductive (see Chapter 4). In addition, this chapter aims to synthesise the literature into a conceptual framework that serves to conceptually anchor the inductively derived findings in chapters 5, 6 and 7 against the corpus of theoretical knowledge that informs the profession. In doing so, connections are traced between the context-specific findings that were generated from this study and broader knowledge structures.

In the discussion that follows, I use the term ‘theory’ to describe implicit and explicit assumptions about language teaching and personal understandings of the literature. This is akin to Kneller’s (1971) definition of theory as “systematic thinking or set of coherent thoughts” about a topic (quoted in Stern, 1983, p. 25). Three important features of the theory that informs this thesis are that it is open-ended, practice-driven and politically sensitive. The first feature, open-endedness, means that the information that is presented below is not intended as a static set of universally accepted descriptors through which reality is to be interpreted, but rather as a point of departure in a process of developing

provisional, emergent, inductively-derived and contextually relevant sets of concepts and relations (cf. Kostoulas, 2011b), which are presented in Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

In the perspective that informs this study, this process of developing emergent understandings is practice-driven, i.e., it takes teaching practice as a primary point of reference, in order to remain contextually-relevant. This is akin to the process of theorising on practice, or systematic reflection on one's professional practice (Edge, 2008; Silberstein, 2008). What this means, in the context of this study, is that the analytical categories that I used were drawn from empirical data from the host institute, rather than the categories presented in this literature review. Despite this inductive outlook, the survey of the literature in this chapter serves to conceptually anchor the provisional understandings that the study generated against broader frames of reference. In the discussion of findings, therefore, I refer back to this literature, as needed, to establish theoretical connections.

The third feature of the theory that informs this study is a political sensitivity to the unique role of the English language, seen simultaneously as an instrument and as a product of globalisation. This does not necessarily mean being aligned with a particular way of thinking about language and social structure (as done in, e.g., Pennycook, 2001), but it does imply broadening the remit of ELT theory beyond the technical aspects of fostering linguistic competence, and the ensuing discussion of influences on ELT theory reflects this expanded scope.

The importance of theorising, or developing personally relevant theories about ELT, is axiomatically grounded on the belief that theoretical awareness is a requisite to initiating and sustaining change in education (e.g., Cumming, 2008, pp. 286-287; Stern, 1983, pp. 25-30; Widdowson, 2003, pp. 1-18). Put differently:

[T]heory often expresses a justified frustration with the ways in which the results of controlled experiments have frequently been touted as underlying truths which would be reliable if only applied properly, or if only one could learn to iron out

unfortunate human idiosyncrasies. At the same time, however, this line can also be used to excuse the speaker from moving on from unquestioned, conservative practices (Edge, 2011, p. 80).

To that end, the scope of the literature survey that follows has not been limited to theoretical influences which are manifested in the empirical domain; rather, it extends to the domain of what is possible.

Similar to Stern (1983), the theoretical framework developed in this thesis consists of three dimensions: a theory of language, a theory of pedagogy, and a theory of society. These dimensions, which correspond to the themes generated from inductive analysis of data from the field (see Chapter 4), provide the organisational categories along which the chapter is structured. Each of these dimensions comprises a number of theoretical positions. So, in Section 2.1, I discuss three linguistic positions associated with conceptualisations of the ‘target language’, namely the Standard Language ideology, World Englishes and English as a Lingua Franca. Following that, in Section 2.2, I explore the pedagogical dimension of ELT, by delineating the beliefs and practices associated with traditional teaching, mainstream ELT and critical education. Next, in Section 2.3, I discuss the political dimension of ELT, i.e., issues of language policy, the spread of English and the social effects with which they are associated. Three positions are identified in this dimension as well: a neutral position, an awareness position, and a position of resistance. Following that, in Section 2.4, I synthesise all this information in a conceptual framework consisting of three paradigmatic options, which I term the ‘technical’, ‘mainstream’ and ‘critical’ paradigms.

## 2.1 The linguistic dimension: understandings of language

Having made these opening remarks, I begin the exploration of the literature by discussing what the ‘target language’ for ELT is, or indeed, if the construct of the ‘target language’ is of continuing relevance to the profession in an era of globalisation. This discussion serves

to provide a background for discussing the continuing relevance of Anglocentric norms, in Chapter 5, while at the same time challenging these views.

The global spread of English is well documented (Crystal, 2003, 2008; Graddol, 1997; Mufwene, 2001), if not always welcome (Mesthrie, 2008; Mufwene, 2002; Ngũgĩ, 1986; Phillipson, 2009a; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). Despite its global reach, in the context of Greek education, the English language is predominantly associated with the United Kingdom and the USA, and it is suggested a “thorough grounding” in the linguistics, culture and history of these countries elevates English language teachers to the status of self-proclaimed language ‘custodians’ (Sifakis, 2009, p. 235). This section aims to challenge such narrow conceptualisations, by outlining an ongoing debate in the academic literature about how English is to be defined, used, and taught. This problematisation is achieved by critically juxtaposing three linguistic-ideological positions, which are defined with reference to their normative outlook: the Standard Language ideology, World Englishes, and English as a Lingua Franca (ELF).

### **2.1.1 The Standard Language ideology**

The Standard Language ideology acknowledges linguistic diversity, but holds that it is pedagogically desirable to teach to a clearly defined and socially acceptable standard. Although the ‘standard’ is often misconstrued as a geographical variety (e.g., British English), it is in fact the *social* language variety associated with the “social group with the highest degree of power, wealth and prestige” (Trudgill, 2002, p. 124).

An often-quoted advocate of the desirability of teaching the Standard Language is Randolph Quirk, according to whom:

The relatively narrow range of purposes for which the non-native needs to use English (even in ESL countries) is arguably well catered for by *a single monochrome standard form* that looks as good on paper as it sounds in speech. There are only the most dubious advantages in exposing the learner to a great variety of usage [...] all of

which is embedded in a controversial sociolinguistic matrix he cannot be expected to understand (Quirk, 1985, p. 6, emphasis mine).

This argument was re-iterated in Quirk (1990), who criticised recommendations for exposing learners to linguistic diversity in mainstream UK education (Kingman, 1988), and by extension in ELT. While acknowledging the “idealistic, humanitarian, democratic and highly reputable” motivations of what he termed “liberation linguistics” (p. 7), he claimed that:

It is neither liberal nor liberating to permit learners to settle for lower standards than the best, and it is a travesty of liberalism to tolerate low standards which will lock the least fortunate into the least rewarding careers (p. 9).

Quirk’s argument is underpinned by a hierarchical conceptualisation of linguistic diversity, in which non-standard forms are assumed to be sub-standard, and by the belief that low proficiency in the Standard Language impedes social mobility. This argument reflected widely held societal expectations, which appear to be as true today as they were at the time of writing (Jenkins, 2007, pp. 31-63; A. Williams, 2007).

More nuanced formulations of the Standard Language ideology have been put forward by Trudgill (2002) and Davies (1999). According to Trudgill, the Standard Language cannot be reduced to prescriptive rules, and the lines between standard and non-standard forms are blurred by language change. However, he states that “from an educational point of view, the position of Standard English as the dialect of English used in writing is unassailable” (Trudgill, 2002, p. 127). These remarks were made with reference to first language education, but – as was the case with Quirk (1990) – the reasoning can be, and has been, projected onto foreign language teaching as well. Writing specifically in the context of ELT, Davies takes a pragmatic stance. In his view, since the Standard is associated with those whom he describes as ‘the educated’, “we have no choice but to choose or to recommend others to choose Standard English in situations where learners are being educated” (1999,

p. 184). However, Davies is sympathetic to the use of regional varieties, as long as they are locally regarded as prestigious.

The Standard Language ideology lends itself to criticism on two accounts. Firstly, it seems to be sustained by narrowly linguistic underpinnings, since it acknowledges the connection between linguistic diversity and social inequality, but stops short of problematising it.

Rather, as can be deduced from the paragraphs above, education that is underpinned by the Standard Language ideology seems to aim at the reproduction, rather than the disruption, of the arguably inequitable social structures in which it is embedded. Secondly, when empirical or theoretical contributions carried out under the Standard Language banner do extend into social concerns, they seem to do so in ways that are at times superficial. Pennycook, for one, dismisses the belief that command of a standard variety can bring about social advantages as “sociological naivety” (2001, p. 48).

Without prejudice to the earnestness of concerns expressed about the liaison between social exclusion and non-standard usage, it seems that the demand for teaching a ‘single monochrome standard’ is difficult to sustain nowadays on either theoretical or political grounds. In fact, even though defending the Standard Language ideology, Davies (1999) hints at the increasing legitimacy of regional varieties, a point to which I shall turn now.

### **2.1.2 World Englishes**

The global spread of the English language has led to the development of multiple regional varieties, which are increasingly becoming codified and institutionalised (e.g., Adamo, 2007; Kuiper, 2003; Meyler, 2009; Phillipson, 2007). The proliferation of new ‘Englishes’ has challenged the normative function of the Standard Language. In place of what Widdowson sarcastically describes as “real English, *Anglais real*, Royal English, Queen’s English, or (for those unsympathetic to the monarchy) Oxford English, the vintage language” (2003, p. 35,

italics in the original), the notion of World Englishes, “a pluralised and pluricentric view of English in the world” (Saraceni, 2008, p. 22) in which multiple regional varieties of English have equal standing, has been put forward.

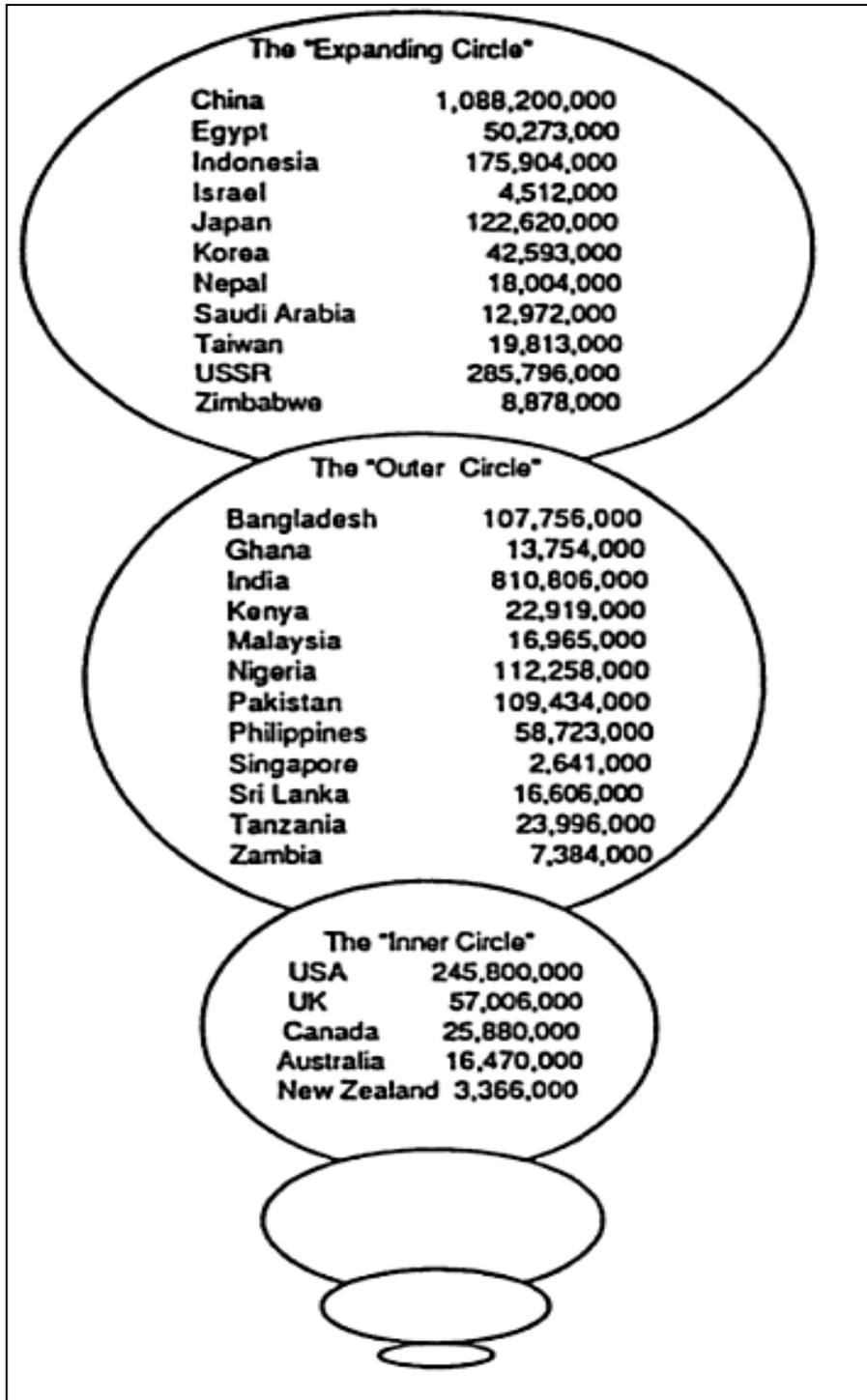


Figure 2-1 Sociolinguistic profile of English (B. B. Kachru, 1992, p. 356)

The linguistic legitimation of World Englishes stems from the proliferation of English varieties worldwide. There have been several attempts to theoretically model the diversity and relative status of these new 'Englishes' (B. B. Kachru, 1985; McArthur, 1998; Modiano, 1999a, 1999b; Strevens, 1992), of which the most influential seems to be Braj Kachru's 'three circle' model (Figure 2-1). Kachru applies historical and geographical criteria to distinguish between three categories of language varieties, or 'circles', as follows: The Inner Circle consists of 'norm-providing' varieties, used in countries where English has historically been a native language. The Outer Circle encompasses 'norm-developing' varieties, which are mainly used in post-colonial polities. These are settings where English performs a significant function (e.g., it is used as a language of education or administration), but is not the native language of the majority of the population. Finally, the Expanding Circle includes 'norm-dependent' varieties, used in the rest of the English-using world. The distinctions that Kachru draws are, at times, problematic (Bruthiaux, 2003; Schreier, 2009), and in light of increasing globalisation it may make sense to redefine the Inner Circle in terms of "functional nativeness" rather than geographical criteria (Graddol, 2006, p. 110). These limitations notwithstanding, the three-circle model provides us with helpful analytical distinctions on which I draw frequently in this thesis, and it highlights the power asymmetries between varieties of English, which World Englishes seeks to remedy.

In a response to Quirk (1990), Kachru (1991) argued that the Outer Circle varieties should be accorded canonical status alongside the Standard language. Kachru suggested that concerns about lowering standards ignored linguistic, sociolinguistic and cultural motivations for language innovation. He also claimed that such "deficit linguistics" (p. 4) overlooked the processes of linguistic institutionalisation that were taking place in post-colonial settings (pp. 5-6). Further, he challenged the assumptions implicit in Quirk's thesis, such as the belief that English is learnt worldwide for communication with native speakers:

This, of course, is only partially true. The reality is that in its localized varieties, English has become the main vehicle for interaction among its non-native users, with distinct linguistic and cultural backgrounds – Indians interacting with Nigerians, Japanese, Sri Lankans, Germans with Singaporeans, and so on. The culture-bound localised strategies of, for example, politeness, persuasion, and phatic communication transcended in English are more effective and culturally significant than are the 'native' strategies for interaction (p. 10).

Much of Kachru's argumentation is premised on a sharp distinction between the Outer and Expanding circles, and it appears that his main objective was to raise awareness of the legitimacy of Outer Circle (norm-developing) varieties, while the norm-dependant status of Expanding Circle varieties was not questioned. Nevertheless, in view of the blurring of the lines demarcating Kachru's circles that has taken place since the original formulation of the model, the same principles can be applied more broadly than Kachru may have intended (Canagarajah, 2006, p. 23).

In a similar vein, Canagarajah (1999) challenges the view that non-standard forms constitute evidence of imperfect learning. In his words:

...the unilateral movement towards native norms, and the uniform criteria adopted to judge the success of acquisition, ignore the positive contributions of L1 in the construction of unique communicative modes and English grammars for periphery speakers (Canagarajah, 1999, p. 128).

Likewise, Y. Kachru (1993) draws attention to the dynamism of regional varieties, and calls into question the belief that non-standard forms used by an entire community can be viewed as deficient forms of a standard.

Recent empirical work has confirmed the processes of linguistic change that underpin World Englishes, but the pedagogical impact of these suggestions has not been substantial, especially in the Expanding Circle. In Y. Kachru's view, this can be attributed to strong attitudes of antipathy towards regional varieties:

There are Indians or Singaporeans, who think their own variety is not as "pure" or "elegant" as British English [...] This however does not lead to questioning the existence of a standard variety [...] nor should it result in denying the status they deserve to the standard varieties of the Outer Circle (Y. Kachru, 2005, p. 159).

To provide some examples of such attitudes, Edwards (2010) documents the existence of a regional variety of English in the Netherlands, but finds that attitudes towards it are mostly negative. Similarly, Timmis (2002)'s survey of English language teachers and learners documented that most non-native speakers are more favourably predisposed towards native-like pronunciations and standard grammar than towards non-native equivalents. On the strength of this evidence, Timmis argues that "while it is clearly inappropriate to foist native speaker norms on students who neither want nor need them, it is scarcely more appropriate to offer students a target which manifestly does not meet their aspiration" (2002, p. 249). Analogous empirical findings have been reported by Murray (2003), Qiong (2004), and Zacharias (2005).

Although the norm-providing function of the Inner Circle varieties appears largely unchallenged (Leung, 2005, p. 128; Modiano, 2009, p. 219; Seidlhofer, 2002, p. 204), empirical and theoretical work in the World Englishes tradition has called into attention the diversity of the English language, and has brought about increased awareness that the selection of a 'standard' for teaching is a politically loaded act. In its drive to advocate equal standing among geographical varieties of English, however, World English has de-emphasised the relations between language and social class, and the way linguistic behaviour is impacted by social context. Another limitation of World Englishes is that as it emphasises codification of geographically defined varieties, it fails to provide an account of the linguistic creativity that emerges in encounters among users of English from different regions. This is the main concern of English as a Lingua Franca, the third ideological position to be examined in this section.

### **2.1.3 English as a Lingua Franca**

In more recent years, the debate about the linguistic content of ELT has shifted to what has been variously termed *English as a Lingua Franca* (Jenkins, 2007; Saraceni, 2008;

Seidlhofer, 2011) or *English as an International Language* paradigm (Jenkins, 2006d; Sifakis, 2004; Widdowson, 1997). English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) is defined 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). Within the ELF paradigm, it is claimed, “all English varieties, native or non-native, are accepted in their own right rather than evaluated against a NSE [Native Speaker English] benchmark” (Jenkins, Cogo, & Dewey, 2011, pp. 283-284). Some scholars (e.g., Firth, 1996; Pakir, 2009; Prodromou, 2008) have used a more restricted definition of ELF, which excludes native speakers, and sometimes ‘English as an International Language’ is used as an overarching construct that includes communication among both native and non-native speakers. However, since the theoretical affordances provided by such analytical distinctions are minimal in the context of this thesis, and terminological conventions are not consistent in the literature, such differentiations are ignored in the discussion that follows.

The ELF ideological position traces its origins to Jennifer Jenkins’ *Phonology of English as an International Language* (2000). In this seminal publication, it is suggested that mutual intelligibility, rather than accuracy (defined as proximity to native speaker usage), should be used as a criterion for pronunciation teaching. On the basis of robust empirical evidence, Jenkins differentiates between ‘Lingua Franca Core’ phonological features (e.g., most consonants and vowel length distinctions) and features of native speaker pronunciation which do not contribute to intelligibility, such as assimilation, weak forms or the distinction between voiced and voiceless dental fricatives (/θ, ð/). Jenkins argues for de-emphasising the non-core features in pronunciation teaching, and for eliminating the use of problematic native-speaker norms in pronunciation testing. Similar suggestions were reiterated in a number of publications since (Jenkins, 2002, 2006d), and though the pedagogical uptake of these suggestions has been unimpressive, Jenkins’ suggestions have enriched the academic and professional discourse with an empirically grounded and

theoretically coherent “demonstration of how things could be done differently” (Saraceni, 2008, p. 21).

Since the publication of Jenkins (2000) there has been a surge of interest in documenting ELF, usually by means of corpus-based research (Kirkpatrick, 2010, 2011; Mauranen, 2003, 2006; Seidlhofer, 2001, 2004). A non-exhaustive listing of ELF features that have been identified so far includes: reduction of ‘redundant’ features such as third-person singular markers and question tags, shifts in the use of prepositions and articles, and the use of forms with a high semantic generality in place of more specific ones (Jenkins, 2006b; Seidlhofer, 2004, p. 220; 2011, pp. 94-123). As regards its pragmatics, ELF communication evidences extensive use of communicative strategies, including code-switching and accommodation (Klimpfinger, 2007), as well as discourse explicitness (Mauranen, 2012, pp. 167-200), repetition and rephrasing (Mauranen, 2012, pp. 204-232). However, criticisms have been raised regarding the design of the corpora studies and their findings. Saraceni, for instance, questions whether the highly-educated, internationally mobile élites who contributed to the corpora are representative of the majority of English language users (2008, p. 22). Scepticism has also been expressed as regards the empirical strength of the linguistic claims reported by ELF researchers (Prodromou, 2007), and it has been argued that the distinctions between ELF and communication among native speakers are not as sharp as proponents of the former position make them to be (Sewell, 2013).

In addition to language description and codification, ELF research has aimed at legitimising ELF by researching issues of attitude and identity among English language users (e.g., Dewey, 2012; Kaloscai, 2009; Matsuda, 2003; Sifakis & Sougari, 2005), but the evidence from these studies is largely inconclusive and contradictory. Taking a more critical view, Jenks (2013) points at empirical data that showed that “the interactants do not see themselves as lingua franca speakers, world English speakers, or speakers of English as an

international language” (p. 105), and goes on to argue that the assignment of social categories in research must have at least some relevance to the social interactions and participants under investigation, which does not appear to be the case in much ELF research. ELF proponents have been quick to dismiss such scepticism as evidence of the “prevailing ‘ethos’ ... of misinterpretation of and negativity towards the concept of ELF” (Jenkins, 2007, p. 142).

A third strand of ELF scholarship has aimed to define and theoretically develop ELF, although it seems that many of these contributions have amplified rather than dispelled the confusion surrounding the construct (O'Regan, 2014, pp. 4-6; Sowden, 2012a, pp. 90-91). To begin with, in recent papers it is emphatically stated that ELF is not construed as a specific language variety (Jenkins, et al., 2011, p. 304; Seidlhofer, 2006), but a critical reading of much ELF scholarship suggests that ELF is often reified. For instance, in the context of a discussion of the defining features of indigenised varieties, it is claimed that “ELF will eventually fit all these criteria” (Jenkins, 2007, pp. 14-15). It is sometimes suggested that ELF is a dynamical language phenomenon (Dewey, 2013; Seidlhofer, 2011, pp. 189-190), elsewhere ELF is confusingly positioned in the World Englishes paradigm (Jenkins, 2007, p. 18; Seidlhofer, 2009), and in yet another contribution (Jenkins, et al., 2011, p. 284), ELF is related to ‘plurilithic’ Englishes (Pennycook, 2007), despite “a lack of familiarity with the theoretical fundamentals of what it means to occupy such a space” (O'Regan, 2014, p. 12). Some ELF scholars (Cogo, 2012; Jenkins, 2007, pp. 1-9; Seidlhofer, 2006) have attempted to address such inconsistencies, but the credibility of their contribution is by undermined a polemic discourse style, which focuses on addressing criticism rather than on articulating a position, and by a frequent failure to engage with nuances of criticism, which are readily reduced to strawman arguments (Prodromou, 2008, pp. x-xii; Saraceni, 2008).

When it comes to the pedagogical significance of the ELF programme, recommendations have been scarce (Jenkins, et al., 2011, p. 305) and somewhat nebulous. One line of reasoning is that ELF is a purely descriptive project, and as such does not concern itself with pedagogical prescription. Seidlhofer (2011) is categorical in this regard:

These chapters [...] are emphatically not intended to prescribe what forms of English people *should* use to ensure effective communication. It is important to emphasise this because the *descriptive* work on ELF [...] has sometimes been confused with the *prescriptive* proposals that have been made for the specifications of a simplified version of English (p. 154, original emphasis).

Such statements seem to represent a shift away from earlier ELF thinking (e.g., Jenkins, 2000), but this tacit repositioning has generated a certain degree of confusion about the aims of ELF. When venturing into pedagogy, ELF scholars have argued vaguely for moving beyond native speaker norms and for re-educating teachers (Jenkins, 2006a; McKay, 2006; Sifakis, 2004; Sifakis & Sougari, 2005). Strongly deontic arguments are sometimes encountered in ELF discourse, including the call to counter learners' reluctance to embrace ELF as linguistic model, since...

...ELT seems somewhat bizarrely to be the only educational subject where an important curricular decision (which kind of English should be taught) is seen as being to some extent the prerogative of the students or their parents (Jenkins, 2007, p. 105)

Elsewhere in the literature, the recommendation is made to raise students' awareness of sociolinguistic variety and provide them a balanced view of alternative linguistic options (Cogo, 2012; Jenkins, 2006c, p. 155), but even such moderately phrased suggestions seem to extend "beyond the duty of raising awareness to actual advocacy" (Sowden, 2012b, p. 106).

In summary, the ELF position seems to be a more inclusive form of the World Englishes position, in that it encompasses the Expanding Circle as well. However, closer examination reveals that it seems to be underpinned by a different, though not clearly defined, concept of language: lacking geographical or social anchors, ELF is variously

described as an ephemeral product of cross-linguistic encounters, as a reduced variety or as a set of mutually comprehensible varieties. It also departs from the World Englishes position ideologically, in that the liberal *laissez parler* stance underpinning of the former is replaced by thinly-veiled linguistic authoritarianism.

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In this section, I demonstrated that the questions about the target language for ELT cannot be answered in a straightforward manner. Whereas the Standard Language ideology recommends a single, socially defined target variety, the World Englishes position replaces this view with a multitude of regionally relevant targets. The ELF position, it seems, calls into question the very notion of a target language, although as seen in the paragraphs above, it is controversial, both because of the influence of entrenched linguapolitical ideologies and because of its internal inconsistencies. A similar pattern of competing perspectives will be examined in the next section, which focuses on the methods used to teach English.

## 2.2 The pedagogical dimension: beliefs about learning and teaching

In this section, I continue delineating the ELT literature by presenting an overview of different pedagogical methods that have been used to teach English. This discussion does not aim to provide a comprehensive listing of ELT methods, for which readers may want to consult Howatt (2004), Stern (1983), Richards and Rodgers (2001), or Soulioti's derivative account of ELT in Greece (2007). Rather, this section aims to provide a selective presentation of methodological options that are relevant to this study, either due to their continuing influence on the practice of the host institute, or because of their current prominence in the literature. Mirroring the discussion of the linguistic dimension, the

influences on pedagogy have been grouped in three positions: the transmissive approach, the communicative approach and the post-method approach.

### **2.2.1 The transmissive approach**

Under this heading, I present three pedagogical methods that have influenced ELT in Greece, namely the grammar-translation (or traditional) method, the oral method, and the audiolingual/audiovisual method. Despite differences between them, these methods are underpinned by the shared belief that language can be segmented into finite set of words and rules, and that language learning involves sequentially engaging with such components. Although my primary point of reference is ELT, in the discussion that follows I make occasional connections with the informing literature of mainstream Greek education, with which practices at the host institute often aligned, as will be seen in the empirical parts of the thesis (e.g., Chapter 7).

The grammar-translation method (Howatt, 2004, pp. 151-165; Stern, 1983, pp. 453-456) is an archetypical form of traditional, transmissive teaching. It is underpinned by the belief that language can be reduced to a set of lexical items and grammatical rules to be learnt. Grammatical descriptions provide educators with the scaffolding and building blocks for organising learning events. For instance, lessons may focus on a specific grammar rule or a verb paradigm. Most commonly, grammatical examples are presented in either a decontextualised way, or through literary extracts which are assumed to have intrinsic cultural value. The target structure is described using metalanguage and examples, and there is the expectation that learners should commit this information to memory, and demonstrate knowledge in formal exercises and translation activities. Although Soulioti (2007, p. 102) somewhat uncritically suggests that the grammar-translation method was phased out in the 1940s, there are very discernible traces of its influence on current learning materials marketed in Greece (Prodromou & Mishen, 2008).

The grammar-translation method constitutes an interesting link between ELT and mainstream education in Greece. Grammar awareness has traditionally been an important component of (first) language education in Greek schools, and the emphasis attached to it has been justified as follows:

Τὸ μάθημα τῆς γραμματικῆς  
μπορεῖ νὰ ἀποβαίνει μέσον  
ἐλέγχου καὶ διαρρυθμίσεως τῆς  
γλώσσας, νὰ καλλιεργεῖ τὴν  
ικανότητα στὰ παιδιὰ νὰ ὁμιλοῦν  
καὶ νὰ γράφουν ὀρθῆ καὶ σαφῆ  
γλώσσα (...) νὰ ἐφοδιάζει τὸ  
πνεῦμα μὲ πολλές καὶ ὀρθές  
μορφές γλωσσικῆς ἐκφράσεως καὶ  
νὰ διασφαλίζει τὴν ὀρθογραφία  
τῶν λέξεων (Kitsios, 1992, pp. 101-  
102).

The grammar lesson can become a medium for the control and regulation of language, [it can] cultivate the ability among children to speak and write in correct and precise language (...) [it can] equip the intellect with many and correct forms of linguistic expression, and [it can] safeguard the correct spelling of words (my translation).

Some features that have typified grammar teaching in mainstream Greek education include the use of contrived passages to contextualise linguistic structures, the pedagogical use of grammar compendia where traces of classical description survives (albeit in a ‘revised’ form), and the use of formal exercises (Vougioukas, 1994, pp. 228-245). The strongly conservative character of language education in Greece can be attested by the re-introduction, in 1991, of a dated grammar textbook (Tsolakis, 1978) to counter what were perceived as declining language standards, and by the outcry by educators and the members of the public that surrounded its withdrawal in 2011 (e.g., Chrysou, 2012; Tsangarakis, 2012).

Traces of the grammar-translation method are also very evident in the teaching of classical languages, which form a salient part of the secondary education curriculum in Greece.

Teacher training literature (Bezantakos, Papathomas, Loutrianaki, & Charalambakos, 2008; Revanoglou, n.d.) advocates teaching Ancient Greek using what is described as a text-centred/hermeneutical method («κειμενοκεντρική-ερμηνευτική μέθοδος», *kimenokentrikí-ermineftikí méthodos*). This seems to involve a four- or five-step procedure, which begins

with a presentation phase, during which a literary extract is read aloud by the teacher. This is followed by intensive reading for comprehension, and a 'synthesis' phase, when students take turns reading the text aloud and translating into Modern Greek, while the teacher explicates problematical lexis and flags grammatical phenomena for further study. The next step, which may take place in a second session, involves focus-on-forms work, during which the teacher describes aspects of morphology and syntax, with reference to substitution tables, tree diagrams and verb paradigms. There appears to be a strong tendency among teachers to describe grammar as comprehensively as possible, a practice which is reproved in the literature going back to Exarchopoulos (1962, pp. 45-46), and seems to have necessitated tactful reminders that the official curriculum is "sufficiently detailed" (Bezantakos, et al., 2008, p. 13). Finally, students engage with practice exercises which seem intended to stimulate recall of the formal features of the language. It is to be expected that the survival of such teaching methods, especially in subjects that are highly valued in the school system, has a continuing impact on language education, by creating expectations on what constitutes 'proper' language learning.

The oral method is another example of the transmissive approach to ELT. I use the term loosely, to describe a range of similar teaching methods, including the direct method (Howatt, 2004, pp. 217-227; Stern, 1983, pp. 456-460), the oral approach (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, pp. 38-39) and situational language teaching (Howatt, 2004, pp. 297-302; Richards & Rodgers, 2001, pp. 41-47). Apart from conceptualisations of language, the common ground shared by these methods is the priority attached to the oral modality. Within this pedagogical tradition, it is considered highly important to expose learners to the target language, or (conversely) to avoid the use of the first language as much as possible. Often, exposure is achieved by presenting learners with texts which have been contrived to contextualise a specific language pattern, and care is taken to select and grade language input so that structurally simple patterns are encountered before more complex

ones. Texts are often read aloud by students for practice, with an emphasis on pronunciation, and this reading is followed by display questions, which provide learners with the opportunity to produce language. Lessons often consist of presentation of new structures, followed by controlled practice in the form of drilling, and there is an expectation that, by progressively reducing teacher control, learners will eventually be able to use the target structures in non-classroom contexts.

In this case too, it is possible to draw parallels to mainstream Greek education, as the macro-structure of lessons resembles the 'tripartite' model («τριμερής μέθοδος διδασκαλίας», *trimerís méthodos didaskalías*), a mainstay of primary education in Greece (Chatzidemou, 1988, p. 86; G. Papageorgiou, 1993). The tripartite model is a simplified version of the teaching model suggested by Johan Friedrich Herbart and his students in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century (Christias, 1992, p. 95), which has exerted a formative influence on the techniques and beliefs that make up the "teaching culture" of Greek education (Matsangouras, 1995, pp. 47-48). It consists of a progression from information intake to the (re)production of content, which is divided in three stages. During the observation (or acquisition) stage, learners are presented with new content. For instance, a text might be read several times, for holistic understanding and for dealing with challenging parts. Following that, a paraphrase or a summary of the text might be generated by the teacher or students. During the manipulation (or inquiry) stage, students engage with the input in order to create mental representations, and finally during the production (or application) stage, learners are tasked with displaying the knowledge that they produced (Noutsos, 1983). As with the case of grammar-translation, it seems plausible that the prevalence of the 'tripartite' method influences the perceptions of language teachers and learners regarding effective lesson structures.

The final example of the transmissive approach that will be presented here is the audio-lingual method (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, pp. 50-69; Stern, 1983, pp. 462-468). As before, the method prioritises the oral modality, and aims at developing fluency through memorisation and mimesis. The method, which is grounded on extensive work in descriptive, structural and contrastive linguistics, as well as behavioural psychology, posits that language can be segmented into small, learnable units, which can then be acquired through habituation and conditioning. Typically, this might involve presenting learners with an example of the target structure (often in the form of a dialogue), which is modelled by the teacher or reproduced from recording. The learners initially listen to the input and repeat the target structures. This is followed by controlled practice (e.g., adaptations of the input text, pattern drills) and, eventually, free production.

The discussion above, which extends in time all the way back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century *Gymnasien* in Prussia, risks masking much of the diversity and creativity that typified language education. While mindful of this caveat, I believe that the methods described in the previous paragraphs share a number of similarities. A key resemblance is that language is, in all cases, understood in formal terms, as a system of rules, patterns or structures that can be taught sequentially. While the theories of learning that underpin each method differ, there are similarities in the ways in which the teachers' and learners' roles are conceptualised: teachers are, in general, responsible for providing or mediating input, whereas the learners' role is, by and large, that of passive recipients of knowledge. The learners' engagement is, for the most part, directed by the teacher, and it usually consists of a linear progression from exposure, through scaffolded practice, to independent use. As is shown in Chapter 7, teaching and learning patterns in the host institute tended to align with transmissive pedagogy, which continued to exert an influence on Greek education, even though its foundational assumptions were challenged in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. The following section, looks into these challenges.

## 2.2.2 The communicative approach

Confidence in the scientific principles that informed transmissive pedagogy began to be eroded in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, leading to their complete rejection in the late 1970s. The validity of behavioural psychology, and its relevance to linguistic behaviour was questioned by Noam Chomsky, who convincingly argued that the “astonishing claims” made by behavioural psychologists were “far from justified” (1959, p. 49). Not much later, distinctions began to be made between the formal structure of language and its performative functions (Austin, 1962), and between linguistic potential, or competence, and actual performance (Chomsky, 1965). Moreover, empirical work highlighted dialectal variation (Labov, 1966, 1973), hinting that acceptable linguistic behaviour depended on social context. Such thinking was formalised in the distinction between what was formally possible and what was communicatively appropriate (Hymes, 1972). At about the same time, descriptive linguistics shifted focus from formal features of the language to the notions that it conveyed (Wilkins, 1976) and to its functions (Halliday, 1973). In 1980, an influential model of communicative competence was put forward, which distinguished between grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic competences (Canale & Swain, 1980). The cumulative effect of all these breakthroughs, alongside widespread frustration with existing methods, was a paradigm shift in language teaching, and the development of the communicative approach to language teaching.

In the discussion that follows, I use a loose definition of the communicative approach to encompass a broad range of teaching methods, which primarily use linguistic interaction as a means to develop communicative competence. This is consistent with the definition provided by Richards and Rogers, who claim that the goal of Communicative Language Teaching is: “(a) make communicative competence the goal of language teaching and (b) develop procedures for the teaching of the four language skills that acknowledge the

interdependence of language and communication” (2001, p. 155). The key pedagogical principles that underpin this approach to language education are that the ability to communicate is not dependent on pre-existing meta-linguistic knowledge; that communicative competence can be fostered through engagement with communicative tasks; and that learning activities should be meaningful to the learners (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 161).

The theoretical justification of the communicative approach extends in three directions.

First, the belief that familiarity with linguistic form facilitates the ability to use language was challenged. According to Widdowson (1972, p. 17):

Knowing what is involved in putting sentences together correctly is only one part of what we mean by knowing a language, and it has very little value on its own: it has to be supplemented by a knowledge of what sentences count as in their normal use as a means of communicating. And I do not think that [transmissive methods used at the time] (make) adequate provision for teaching this kind of knowledge.

Taking a different, but complementary, approach, it has been suggested that exposure to linguistic input is a necessary but not sufficient condition for developing linguistic competence. Rather, it is necessary for learners to have ample opportunity to grammatically encode meaning through the production of output (Swain, 1985). Similarly, the claim has been put forward that actual communication can foster learning, as it provides scope for the negotiation of meaning and conversational adjustment (Long, 1985). A third strand of argumentation involves the affective impact of communicative language teaching, which is argued to be more motivating for learners, and seems to create conditions conducive to learning (Littlewood, 1981, pp. 16-17).

Some formulations of the communicative approach can be described as ‘task-supported pedagogy’ (Ellis, 2003, p. 29). An example of such pedagogy is provided by Littlewood (1981, pp. 85-87), who advocates the use of ‘pre-communicative’ as well as ‘communicative’ activities. The former category includes activities focussing on structure,

which familiarise learners with the target forms, and 'quasi-communicative' activities which "take account of communicative as well as structural facts about the language" (p. 86). The latter category includes functional communication (e.g., sharing, exchanging or processing information) and social interaction (e.g., role-plays, open-ended discussion etc.). These teaching methods are often associated with an attempt to identify, sequence and teach the components that make up communicative competence, using organisational principles that are not too far removed from structural syllabuses (Ellis, 2003, p. 29)

A different conceptualisation of the communicative approach involves a process-based syllabus, such as the one used in the Communicational Teaching Project (Prabhu, 1987). The project, which took place in schools in and near Bangalore, India, used cognitive tasks as a means for teaching English. Tasks were defined as "activit(ies) which (require) learners to arrive at an outcome from given information through some process of thought, and which (allow) teachers to control and regulate that process" (Prabhu, 1987, p. 17). For instance, learners might be tasked with finding and describing locations on a map, or extracting information from a railroad timetable, using English as a medium of communication (Prabhu, 1987, pp. 46-47). Typically, learning sequences consisted of a pre-task activity, in which the task was modelled by the teacher, and the actual task, which was carried out by the learners. The Bangalore Project, as it is alternatively known, has not been replicated, partly because it was finely attuned to the particularities of its social context, but it has provided impetus for pedagogical developments since.

A more recent outshoot of the communicative approach is the development of Task-Based Learning (Ellis, 2003; Nunan, 2004; Willis & Willis, 2007; Willis, 1996). Task-based learning events are structured around tasks, defined as "classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing, or interacting in the target language [...] in which the intention is to convey meaning rather than to manipulate form" (Nunan, 2004, p. 4).

Tasks might involve any or all skills, and have a clearly definable outcome (Ellis, 2003, p. 10). Examples include listing, ordering and sorting information, comparing, problem-solving, sharing personal experiences, or engaging in creative work (Willis, 1996, pp. 149-154). An influential model, put forward by Willis and Willis (1996) consists of: pre-task activities, intended to familiarise learners with the task; a task cycle, including interaction, preparation of a report and presentation of outcomes; and language work, focussing on language features that become salient during the task.

The communicative approach, broadly construed to include diverse variants such as the ones listed above, has attained the status of methodological orthodoxy in ELT, at least in terms of its representation in the informing literature, curriculum documents and official policy. Its key features, such as the primacy attached to meaning as opposed to form, the attempt to simulate authentic interaction within the classroom, and the specification of learning activities with reference to the process rather than their expected outcomes, are expounded in the professional discourse, and they are generally espoused, often uncritically, by educational authorities, publishers and ELT practitioners. In Chapter 6, it is shown that the learning materials in use at the host institute tended to be influenced by this communicative orthodoxy. However, it is not entirely clear whether actual practice always aligns with these espoused beliefs (Nunan, 2004, p. 14), and in Chapters 5 and 7 traces of the tension between communicative influence and transmissive practices are described. At any rate, in recent years, confidence in the potential of any method to universally inform practice has been eroded. This is a line of scholarship that will be examined in the next section.

### **2.2.3 The post-method approach**

Despite the apparent dominance of the communicative approach there is ample reason to believe that it has not always been attuned to local educational needs. To mention just a

few indicative instances of mismatch, it has been reported that communicative language teaching is incompatible with the Chinese culture of learning (Hu, 2002), and that it places unreasonable demands on overworked and under-qualified teachers in non-western learning contexts (L. Yu, 2001). Elsewhere in the literature, it is suggested that communicative language teaching may be inhibited by a variety of institutional and affective factors (Li, 1998). In the Greek context, it has been noted that language learning materials are, for the most part, incompatible with communicative principles (Kostoulas, 2007; Prodromou & Mishen, 2008). From a more theoretical perspective, there have been calls in the literature for greater sensitivity to contextual factors (Bax, 1997; Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 248), and for viewing aspects of the local culture “not as constraints to be overcome but conditions to be satisfied” (Widdowson, 2004, p. 369).

The compatibility between communicative language teaching and local context has been a key theme in a series of publications by Adrian Holliday (1992, 1994, 2005b). Holliday (1994, pp. 28-30) puts forward an understanding of learning environments as complex webs of overlapping cultures (e.g., student cultures, professional academic cultures, classroom cultures, and national cultures, etc.), and he argues that it is possible for cultural intrusion to occur when aspects of a ‘donor’ national culture (such as the Anglo-Saxon West) are incompatible with aspects of the ‘host’ national cultures in the periphery of the English-speaking world (1994, pp. 110-125). The evocative metaphor of ‘tissue rejection’ is used to describe how transplanted teaching practices might fail to take hold because their effect on local settings is disruptive (Holliday, 1992). To mitigate such problems, Holliday advocates using ‘appropriate methodology’, i.e., teaching methods that are grounded on ethnographically derived understandings of local practice (1994, pp. 195-218). He argues that communicative language teaching, in the prescriptive sense outlined in the previous section, may be culturally inappropriate in many settings, but the underlying principles of communicative ideology (“treat language as communication”, “capitalise on students’

existing communicative competence”, and “communicate with local exigencies”) are culturally transferrable and can therefore function as guidelines for the development of appropriate methodology (2005b, pp. 143-146).

The concept of ‘exploratory practice’ (Allwright, 2003, 2005; Allwright & Hanks, 2009) is another way of moving beyond methodological prescriptivism, which (like Holliday’s suggestions) foregrounds the importance of sensitivity to local conditions. It is premised on the belief that teaching practice should be informed by universally valid principles, but that teaching practitioners should be mindful of the implications of applying these principles locally (Allwright, 2003, pp. 115-116). To that end, exploratory practice is put forward as “an epistemologically and ethically motivated framework for conducting practitioner research in the field of language education” (Allwright, 2005, p. 361). Exploratory practice involves adjusting pedagogical practices to empirically derived understandings of the local context, through a process that consists of identifying ‘puzzles’, reflecting on them and monitoring them, taking action, considering the outcomes, and publicising one’s understandings. Although exploratory practice does not explicitly position itself in the post-method tradition, it seems to share its emphasis on making sense of context and adjusting pedagogy to it.

The post-method macro-strategic framework, developed by Kumaravadivelu (1994, 2001, 2003, 2006c) constitutes a comprehensive set of guidelines and principles that complement the previous recommendations. Central to this framework are the parameters of particularity, practicality and possibility (Kumaravadivelu, 2006c, pp. 171-176). Particularity refers to the need for local pedagogy to be attuned to local exigencies. Practicality is understood as the priority attached to practice-derived understandings that teachers develop. Finally, possibility refers to the aim of affirming personal identity and challenging social injustice. Kumaravadivelu suggests that practice should be informed by ten macro-

strategies (e.g., activating intuitive heuristics, promoting autonomy, raising cultural consciousness), which can be operationalised in a number of micro-strategies or teaching procedures (Kumaravadivelu, 2006c, pp. 199-214). By providing teachers with the flexibility to design and extend context-appropriate micro-strategies, while at the same time offering a set of universal principles that prevent unproductive relativism, it is suggested that this framework offers scope for the development of “a systematic, coherent and relevant theory of practice” (Kumaravadivelu, 2006b, p. 69).

Despite differences in nuance and emphasis, these three different instantiations of post-method thinking share a number of fundamental assumptions. First, they are underpinned by the belief that the universal application of specific methods without reference to the particularities of context is pedagogically inefficient and ethically questionable. Moreover, they all involve a distinction between contextually-sensitive ways of dealing with day-to-day teaching, and underlying principles which are argued to be universally relevant. Even though it has been suggested that the procedures described for operationalising these principles can be construed as a type of method (Liu, 1995), perhaps even tainted by (Western) ideology (Bax, 2003; Canagarajah, 2002), the post-method approach represents a paradigmatic shift from the approaches described in previous sections, by virtue of its readiness to engage with the social milieu in which teaching takes place. The discussion of social context is carried forward to the following section, which deals with the political implications of ELT.

### 2.3 The political dimension: visions of society

The third dimension of the conceptual framework pertains to the relation between ELT and the social settings in which it is embedded. This ‘political’ dimension encompasses multiple issues, such as globalisation and local identities, linguistic and cultural imperialism, the

tensions between universal values and cultural relativism, and aspirations of empowerment and equality, all of which had a bearing on the forces that motivated teaching and learning at the host institute, even though their relevance was sometimes only implicit. This discussion anticipates themes of native-speakerism (Holliday, 2005), cultural incursions from the Anglophone west and resistance against 'foreign' teaching methodology, which are examined in greater depth in Chapter 5. Reflection regarding the interface between ELT and social processes can be undertaken from multitude of perspectives, which I group under three headings: a neutral position, a position of critical awareness, and a position of resistance.

### **2.3.1 Neutrality: refraining from engagement with societal concerns**

The neutral position is typified by a sharp linguistic or pedagogical focus on how ELT is understood. As such, it does not concern itself with political and social implications of language teaching. This position is neatly summarised in the following response to concerns raised by Phillipson (2009a) about the spread of the English language:

What worries me is that, through your metaphors, human qualities are assigned to English which is, after all, *just a language*. It has no *ability* to do things by itself, nor does it bear the *responsibility* for its state of being (Dendrinos, 2009, p. 181, emphasis in the original).

Due to its emphasis on preserving disciplinary boundaries, such a position is unhelpful in uncovering the social effects of teaching practices, a point which I illustrate below with reference to the way ELT often deals with the constructs of 'authenticity' and 'culture'.

Narrowly-focused pedagogic approaches to ELT often prioritise 'authenticity' which "loosely implies as close an approximation as possible to the world outside the classroom" (McDonough & Shaw, 1993, p. 43), either through exposure to genuine (i.e., not pedagogically contrived) texts, or by simulating real-life communication. There are multiple examples in the literature of arguments for authenticity and of descriptions of pedagogical

practice which illustrate how authentic materials can be used (e.g., Guariento & Morley, 2001; Lee, 1995; Peacock, 1997; Wong, Kwok, & Choi, 1995). An extreme example is provided by Seargeant (2005), who describes attempts to replicate British culture in Japan, by creating learning environments which mimic British architecture and display realia imported from the UK. Staffed with native speakers, such 'English villages' provide opportunities for natural interaction in the target language. While such practices are not explicitly informed by a theory about the language-culture interface, they seem to conflate the teaching of linguistic form with the transmission of cultural imagery and cultural values from the Inner Circle communities outwards (Nault, 2006; Shin, Eslami, & Chen, 2011).

There are also recommendations in the literature for enriching the language curriculum with cultural information, 'culture' being variously construed as awareness of the literary and artistic heritage of the Inner Circle countries, or as information about everyday life in such settings (Byram & Feng, 2004). Sometimes such recommendations are justified on instrumental grounds. For example, it has been suggested that incorporating literature in the language curriculum can increase learner motivation (Ghosn, 2002), and similar claims have been made about other aspects of the target language culture (Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998). Similarly, the explicit study of cultural differences that are encoded in equivalent lexemes across languages has been pedagogically recommended (e.g., Cortazzi & Shen, 2001; Olk, 2002). Whether or not such cultural enrichment practices are pedagogically effective is debatable (Alptekin, 1993; Byram, Esarte-Sarries, & Taylor, 1991), but quite often they seem to be associated with superficial representations (Aliakbari, 2004; Kostoulas, 2011c) and essentialised understandings of the target language culture (Alptekin, 2002).

The examples above are indicative of either naiveté about the political implications of ELT, or cynical indifference to them, but a 'neutral' positioning might also be informed by

ideological aloofness. This stance is best exemplified by Widdowson (2003, pp. 13-15), who argues that it is possible to be committed to a belief in social justice, while at the same time preserving a boundary between personal convictions and academic work. Widdowson argues for an outlook that looks to linguistics for its “disciplinary point of reference” (p. 13), and he cautions against the dangers of confusing applied linguistics with “politics applied” (p. 14). After professing a belief in political agnosticism, Widdowson states that: “the applied linguistics that informs the kind of enquiry I undertake [...] does not impose a way of thinking, but points things out that might be worth thinking about” (p. 14). Implicit in this statement is a distinction between applied linguistics proper, and problematisation about ELT, which seems to belong to the domain of personal reflection.

The ‘neutral’ position that was outlined above stands in stark contrast to understandings of ELT that are informed by an explicit engagement with the political implications of English language education, which are discussed next.

### **2.3.2 Awareness: developing a critical understanding**

A second way of conceptualising the relation between ELT and the social contexts in which it is embedded involves problematising this relation, by drawing attention to its association with linguistic or cultural hegemony.

Central to this debate is Phillipson’s *Linguistic Imperialism* (1992), a landmark publication “unapologetically takes us out of the sheltered world of language teaching into more uncomfortable realities surrounding that language” (Holborow, 1993, p. 358). The main thesis of the book is that “the dominance of English [as an international language] is asserted and maintained by the establishment and continuous reconstitution of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages” (Phillipson, 1992, p. 47). According to Phillipson, the inequitable distribution of power between what he terms the

'core' and the 'periphery' of the English-speaking world is sustained by ideologies of Anglocentricity and professionalism (the latter term being defined as a narrow focus on the linguistic and pedagogical issues that face ELT). Phillipson further argues that the aggressive promotion of English by UK- and US-based international organisations prioritises resources of the core over those of the periphery, a claim which he backs up with a modest amount of empirical, experiential and historiographic evidence, and considerable rhetorical force.

Unsurprisingly, Phillipson (1992) has generated much controversy. Concerns have been raised, *inter alia*, about the empirical rigour of the book (Berns et al., 1998; Canagarajah, 1999, pp. 42-43; Davies, 1996; Fishman, 1993) and its authorial style which seems unhelpfully antagonistic (Berns, et al., 1998), and arguably invalidates possibly legitimate claims by overstatement (Crystal, 2000, p. 421; Davies, 1996, p. 485). While the use of analytical tools such as Gramsci's theory of hegemony enable Phillipson to probe deeply into social reality in ways that had not been previously attempted in applied linguistics, all too often it seems that much analytical prominence is given to instances where language spread can be explained with reference to power asymmetry, at the expense of phenomena that do not fit Phillipson's theoretical model (e.g., the role of English in Scandinavia or Japan, or the spread of Spanish in the USA). Despite such shortcomings, Phillipson (1992) has made a powerful impact on ELT. The linguistic imperialism thesis has been reiterated several times (Phillipson, 2001, 2003, 2004, 2009a, 2009b), the role of English as a global language has been debated (Crystal, 2000; Phillipson, 1999), and empirical data on the relation of English to local linguistic ecologies is increasingly being published, both supporting and refining Phillipson's thesis (e.g., Bisong, 1995; Canagarajah, 2005a; David & Govindasamy, 2005; Griffin, 2001; Lin & Martin, 2005; Mesthrie, 2008; Rajagopalan, 2005; Ramanathan, 2005a; Randall & Samimi, 2010; Riazi, 2005).

Broadening the debate regarding the social impact of ELT, critically-informed scholarship has called attention to the connections between language teaching and the forcible imposition of values that are alien to local communities. Edge (2003), for instance, decries the ancillary role of ELT in agendas of military conquest and religious conversion. Pennycook and Coutand-Marin (2003), and Pennycook (2005) raise similar concerns about the cultural politics involved in conflating ELT and evangelical work. Strong disapproval of the prosyletisation practices often associated with ELT in some settings has also been expressed by Varghese and Johnston (2007), who question the compatibility of the Great Commission (the imperative, in Christian doctrine, to spread Christianity) with core tenets of education, such as fostering “doubt and the capacity for changing one’s mind” (p. 27). On the other hand, there are voices in the literature for what is designated as ‘faith-informed’ (or more explicitly ‘Christian’) ELT (e.g., Dörnyei, 2009, Purgason, 2004, 2014; Smith, 2008; K.-M. Yu, 2007), and recent years have seen the publication of edited collections exploring the nexus between language education, faith and religious identity (Wong & Canagarajah, 2009; Wong, Kristjansson, & Dörnyei, 2013). While a discussion of the relative merits of each position lies outside the scope of this thesis, all these examples indicate an increasing awareness of the conduits for the transmission of cultural values through language teaching.

Kumaravadivelu (2006a) provides a theoretically elaborate account of such conduits. He suggests that the “dangerous liaison” between globalisation, empire and ELT can be analysed into four intertwined processes (pp. 12-13). To begin with, ELT promotes western knowledge over local understandings, thus furthering the vested interests of western scholars. Secondly, local languages are displaced from the ELT curriculum. Moreover, Western culture and English are fused with a view to creating “cultural empathy” towards the inner circle communities. Finally, from an economic perspective, ELT generates income and employment opportunities for members of the Inner Circle communities at the

expense of local economies. To counter these undesirable effects, a philosophical, pedagogical and attitudinal re-structuring of ELT is recommended (pp. 17-23).

Much of the scholarship quoted above seems to construe the globalising flows which sustain ELT (and are sustained by it) as unidirectional. A somewhat different view is presented by Pennycook (1994), who argues that the tensions between local languages and English are greater than what might be inferred by superficial analysis. Pennycook describes the co-existence of two conflicting educational agendas in colonial policy which advocated education in English (Anglicism) and local languages (Orientalism) respectively, and notes that:

First, both Anglicism and Orientalism operated alongside each other; second, Orientalism was as much a part of colonialism as was Anglicism; third, English was withheld as much as it was promoted; fourth, colonized people demanded access to English; and finally, the power of English was not so much in its widespread imposition but in its operating as the eye of the colonial panopticon (p. 103).

The formative discourses that emerged from these antagonistic orientations to education, he argues, are still traceable in the competing values and attitudes about English (“critical ambivalences”) that are encountered in post-colonial settings (p. 74). He also points out that while English has traditionally been associated with globalisation and imperial power, it has also been the language of protest (p. 262), and can therefore have empowering effects. In making these points, Pennycook shifts the debate from a discussion of social reproduction to a discussion of resistance, thus paving the way for the third position, which is presented below.

### **2.3.3 Resistance: empowering teachers and learners**

The theme of resistance is picked up by Canagarajah (1999), who uses ethnographic methods to provide an example of resistance-oriented critical pedagogy. Canagarajah notes that narratives such as the Linguistic Imperialism thesis are limited in two ways. First, they are overly deterministic and do not offer scope for the operation of individual agency:

Such evidence leads us to the conclusion that students come with a relatively independent consciousness that can display signs of opposition to domination; that the cultures they bring to them can clash with alien ideologies to resist domination; that human experience is of sufficient complexity and indeterminacy to override what impersonal institutions may predicate; and that students may enjoy some agency to challenge reproductive forces (p. 25)

In addition, they seem to overlook the fact that the dominant cultures display diversity, and may contain counter-cultural discourses, on which the disenfranchised may tap to resist reproduction. Canagarajah uses extensive ethnographic examples to illustrate how the imposition of dominant culture was resisted by students in Sri Lanka. In doing so, he adds a valuable empirically grounded perspective to the discourse about the interface between culture, language teaching, and identity.

A similar example of resistance is described by Holliday (2005b, pp. 169-174), drawing on an unpublished paper by Jacob (1996). Working at an Indian university, Jacob and her project team are said to have counteracted the encroachment of cultural values from the Anglophone West “through a conscious *resistance discourse*” (p. 168, emphasis in the original). This process consisted of a number of strategies, including ‘marking territories’, ‘reconciling with the past’, ‘speaking against the grain’, and ‘moving to centre stage from the periphery’. The actions of the project team led to the generation of a counterculture, i.e., “a small culture which asserts itself against a dominant small culture or cultures, but one which [...], tries to make sense of the dominant culture in different ways in order to survive and make itself known” (p. 171). Holliday goes on to argue that ELT practitioners ought to work with such locally emerging countercultures, with a view to bridging them with the dominant cultures.

The ideal of bridging cultures is prominent in Holliday (2005b), who proposes ‘cultural continuity’ as an alternative to difference-oriented understandings of culture. Cultural continuity is defined as “an appreciation of how cultural realities and practices connect and mingle to allow collaborative inclusivity”, and it is suggested that it can form “the basis on

which all ESOL educators can be equally represented and valued” (p. 157). Developing cultural continuity, according to Holliday, involves rethinking some of the fundamentals of the profession, such as the dichotomy between native- and non-native speakers, or the ways in which the periphery is represented in the curriculum. Within this framework, it is suggested that ELT can be usefully deployed...

...as an instrumental, though very rich resource, which does not have to represent the cultural values of the English-speaking West, but which can absorb and express the depths of whatever cultural values with which it becomes associated (p. 165).

Though empirically grounded on a number of interviews with English language teachers from over the world, Holliday’s proposal seems to be exploratory, rather than a fully worked out example of how cultural continuity might be achieved (p. 176). However, it does provide an articulate theoretical legitimation for practically oriented suggestions, such as the one that will be presented next.

The Multicultural Awareness Through English (MATE) approach to ELT (Fay, Lytra, & Ntvaliakou, 2010) is, in some respects, similar to the proposals outlined above. Described as a paradigmatic possibility for ELT in Greece, MATE involves English-medium communication among members of culturally diverse student communities, with a view to increasing their cohesion. Key to this approach is the development of intercultural space, to which participants bring unique sets of linguistic and cultural resources, and within which they can freely develop their identity repertoire. Because MATE was developed with reference to the Greek educational context, Fay et al. make frequent references to ‘pupils’ and ‘intrasocietal’ encounters. However, the underlying principle of equal participation in a neutral social space, akin to the ‘third space’ of language teaching (Kramsch, 1995), seems to have relevance to other instances of English-mediated communication. Thus MATE provides an example of how cultural diversity can be pedagogically exploited in language education for the purposes of empowering learners and promoting equality.

A common ground shared by resistance-oriented scholarship includes rethinking of the culture construct, which is understood as a property of small groups, rather than in reductive, essentialised terms (Holliday, 1999). Seen from this perspective, empowerment-oriented ELT entails raising awareness of how such groups emerge in the process of language teaching, and how they relate to dominant cultures. It also involves using language education to create small cultures where students are empowered.

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The previous three sections delineated some prominent linguistic, pedagogical and political themes in the ELT literature. This discussion was not intended as an exhaustive survey of the field's literature; rather, my criterion was to present strands of scholarship which exert salient influences onto the practices of the host institute, or which point towards the possibility of change. Having thus staked out the field, in the next section I attempt a synthesis.

## 2.4 Towards a synthesis

In this section I pull together the various themes that were reported in this chapter, and use them to generate a conceptual framework that synthesises linguistic, pedagogical and political considerations that can inform ELT. As stated in the beginning of the chapter, this conceptual framework serves both to outline the background of this particular study, and to provide theoretical scaffolding that connects the context-specific findings of this study to broader frames of reference.

The main structural components of the framework are three paradigmatic options, which I term the Technical, Mainstream and Critical paradigms. The paradigms bring together theories of language, pedagogy and society which function as points of reference for ELT praxis (Table 2-1). The Technical paradigm encompasses beliefs such as the Standard

Language ideology, transmissive teaching methods and a lack of problematisation over the political implications of ELT. It is predominantly associated with beliefs and practices that have currency in Greek education. The Mainstream paradigm, which has been thus named because of its dominance in the professional ELT discourse, is similarly neutral as regards the political implications of ELT. Like the Technical paradigm, it is broadly informed by the Standard Language ideology, but may accord canonical status to certain indigenised varieties of English. However, it differs from the Technical paradigm by virtue of its adherence to communicative language teaching. The last paradigmatic option, the Critical paradigm, challenges established theories of language, by replacing the notion of a ‘target language’ with the notion of competence in a repertoire of linguistic varieties. Pedagogical views are informed by post-method thinking, and a by readiness to defer to local knowledge. Most distinctively, the Critical paradigm is typified by an agenda that involves raising awareness of the political processes associated with ELT, and empowering teachers and learners.

|                              | <b>Technical</b>       | <b>Mainstream</b>                    | <b>Critical</b>         |
|------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Theory of language</b>    | Standard Language      | Standard Language<br>World Englishes | World Englishes<br>ELF  |
| <b>Theory of pedagogy</b>    | Transmissive           | Communicative                        | Post-method             |
| <b>Theory of society</b>     | Neutral                | Neutral                              | Awareness<br>Resistance |
| <b>Mainly represented in</b> | <i>Greek education</i> | <i>Global ELT</i>                    | <i>ELT literature</i>   |

**Table 2-1 Overview of the three paradigms**

It should be noted that, in the empirical world, these analytical distinctions are not as sharp as the above description may have hinted. To begin with, some ideological positions are broad enough to transcend paradigms. This is most evident in the case of World Englishes, which inform both the global and the critical paradigms, depending on how inclusively one defines the ‘target language’, and on where one positions oneself on the prescription-description continuum. Similarly, it is not suggested that educators who paradigmatically position themselves in the local or global paradigms are in all cases apolitical or naïve to

the implications of ELT, but the key consideration is whether their theory of society is integral or peripheral to their praxis. A second caveat refers to the way in which the paradigmatic options relate to each other. In the literature, the transitions from one paradigmatic option to another (e.g., communicative language teaching and post-method, Standard language ideology and ELF) are usually framed in a discourse of linear progress (Canagarajah, 2006; Kumaravadivelu, 2006b). In this framework, however, there is no assumption that 'newer' understandings have superseded 'older' ones, and no claims are made regarding the comparative merits of each position.

As is the case with all attempts to conceptually map a broad and complex social phenomenon, the analytical framework described above is open to charges of oversimplification, and if it were to be used as a definitive description of ELT, such a description would be reductive. Its function, rather, is to serve as a conceptual aid for refining the findings of this study and for connecting them to themes in the literature. As is discussed in Section 4.4.4, the analytical distinctions which were reported here were used as conceptual touchstones against which the emerging themes were compared for reasons of theoretical validity. Similarly, the connections among themes that were tentatively traced in the framework were compared against the empirical data, with a view to testing and strengthening the internal coherence of the findings. And finally, the technical vocabulary that was developed in this chapter was used to connect the empirical findings with the informing literature.

Another possible limitation of this framework is that it appears static. For instance, it does not provide an account of how the paradigmatic choices that inform individual praxis relate to the social structures within which praxis is embedded; and how transitions are made from one paradigm to another. To answer such questions, I turn to Complex Systems Theory, which is the topic of the following chapter.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Complex Systems Theory: A Complexity Primer**

In this chapter I present an outline of Complex Systems Theory (CST, or simply complexity), which provides the ontological and epistemological underpinning of the thesis. This discussion is motivated by the belief that a complexity-informed conceptual outlook can facilitate the kind of theoretical reflection about ELT that is undertaken in this thesis. Some key affordances of such an outlook, which are developed in this chapter and subsequently illustrated in the empirical sections of the thesis, include ways of understanding the interface between systems and their environments, theoretical explanations of mutually shaping relations between structure and agency, and ontologically motivated accounts of behaviours that are neither completely random nor entirely predictable. Moreover, by discussing complexity, it is my intention to show that it can be used as a connective tissue between contextually-situated understandings of ELT practice and broader knowledge structures.

Similarly helpful conceptual contributions have been made outside Complex Systems Theory, particularly by ecological theory (e.g., Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1989; Gibson, 1979; Young, et al., 2002), and insights from these studies have usefully informed ELT (e.g., Kramsch, 2008; van Lier, 2004a). The complexity-informed perspective that is developed herein does not make any claims to supersede such contributions, with which it is closely aligned. Nor is it intended as a critique of more established research paradigms, against which it stands as an alternative view. For such a discussion, readers may consult Byrne (1998). However, in the interest of tracing the contours of Complex Systems Theory as

visibly as possible, differences between complexity thinking and other ways of making sense of the empirical world are brought into focus.

There is, at present, no single authoritative definition of complexity (Mercer, 2014), so pending a more comprehensive discussion of how the theory is understood in this thesis, which I shall develop as I go along in this chapter, I shall provisionally use the following definitions as starting points. According to Mitchell, complexity...

...seeks to explain how large numbers of relatively simple entities organize themselves, without the benefit of any central controller, into a collective whole that creates patterns, uses information, and in some cases evolves and learns (2009, p. 4).

Similarly, Nicolis suggests that the aim of what he calls 'nonlinear science' is to generate concepts and techniques that are required for:

...a unified description of the particular, and yet quite large, class of phenomena whereby simple deterministic systems give rise to complex behaviours with the appearance of unexpected spatial structures or evolutionary events (1995, p. xiii).

The common ground shared by these two definitions is that complexity concerns itself with the holistic study of complex systems, i.e., systems that are made up of simple constituents but behave in unexpected ways. It is understood that the system constituents are intertwined to such a degree that separating them would be both empirically challenging and analytically unhelpful (Rosen, 1987, p. 324).

The definitional challenge is further compounded by terminological inconsistency in the literature: terms such as Complexity (Biesta & Osberg, 2010; Bogg & Geyer, 2007; Byrne, 2005; Cilliers, 1998), Complexity Theory (Byrne, 1998; Byrne & Callaghan, 2014; N. F. Johnson, 2009), Complex Systems Theory (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008) and Dynamical Systems Theory (de Bot, Lowie, Thorne, & Verspoor, 2013; Valsiner, 1998) have been used in the literature to refer to a very similar way of understanding the natural and social world. Such distinctions serve to highlight subtle theoretical differences, but in the context of this study their potential to generate confusion is greater than any analytical

affordances they might provide. Consequently, in this thesis I only use the terms complexity and Complex Systems Theory (CST), and do so interchangeably, for reasons of stylistic variety, but no theoretical differentiation between them is implied.

The discussion of CST in this chapter is wide in scope, as it attempts not only to establish how complexity informs the methodological aspects of the study, but also to present the foundational beliefs upon which the contribution of the thesis is made. In the first part of the chapter (Section 3.1), I present a theoretical overview of complexity, in order to provide epistemological and ontological grounding to the development of complexity thinking in this thesis. In this section, I relate complexity to the epistemological challenges it set out to address, narrate its development and position this study among competing traditions of complexity thinking. Following that, in Section 3.2, I describe applications of complexity in scholarship and empirical inquiry. I do this by briefly surveying the literature, to show how complexity has been used in ELT and affiliated fields, with a view to locating this study in a growing research tradition. Next, I draw on the CST literature to develop a set of methodological guidelines, which underpin this study. I conclude by critically juxtaposing various methodological options that have been put forward as alternatives for such inquiry, in order to develop the rationale underlying the empirical methods used in this study, and foreshadow the discussion in Chapter 4.

### 3.1 Understanding complexity

This section traces the development of CST, culminating in the presentation of the specific understanding of complexity that informs this study. This narrative begins by problematising what complexity thinkers perceive to be some of the main limitations of traditional science, which prompted the development of a new way of thinking (Section 3.1.1). It then proceeds to trace the development of CST from the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup>

century onwards, showing it to be a synthesis of conceptual breakthroughs in fields such as biology, mathematics, meteorology, and others (Section 3.1.2). It then goes on, in Section 3.1.3, to present strands of complexity thinking, which developed separately from this common stem, and differ in terms of ontological assumptions and scope. In the process of describing these ways of engaging with complex phenomena, I develop a pragmatic synthesis of distinct, yet compatible, perspectives on complexity, which serves as the epistemological and ontological background of this study.

### **3.1.1 Challenging assumptions**

In order to generate a full description of the host institute and understand how it functioned, I had to address three epistemological challenges. First, I needed to account for multiple heterogeneous influences, without losing sight of the whole. Secondly, I had to generate principled explanations of how these influences interacted with each other to produce phenomena that seemed to defy causality. Finally, I needed to account for the way in which my understanding of this particular setting connected to broader debates about ELT. Complex Systems Theory enabled me to address these challenges as it brings into question three foundational assumptions which have underpinned scientific thought from the Enlightenment onwards. In the paragraphs that follow, I interrogate what I call the ‘reductive premise’, the ‘predictive premise’ and the ‘integrative premise’. In doing so, I set the groundwork for a detailed discussion of how complexity eventually developed in response to the perceived limitations associated with these assumptions.

The ***reductive premise*** holds that any phenomenon can be best understood if it is disassembled (or ‘analysed’) into its constituents, which are then studied separately. This principle is explicitly evoked in the *Discours de la Méthode*, where the second and third steps of the scientific method are thus described:

De diviser chacune des difficultés que j'examinerais, en autant de parcelles qu'il se pourroit [...] de conduire par ordre mes pensées, en commençant par les objets les plus simples et les plus aisés à connoître [...] jusques à la connoissance des plus composes (Descartes, 1637 / 1966, pp. 69-70).

Dividing each of the difficulties that I will examine into as many parts as possible [and] arranging one's thoughts, beginning from the simplest and most easily understood objects [...] until one reaches the knowledge of the most complex (my translation).

This epistemological outlook is analytically powerful, and it has afforded considerable advances in the understanding of the natural world. However, we are increasingly becoming aware that understanding natural and social phenomena involves not just knowing their constituents but also the ways in which these constituents interconnect. With regard to the latter, Cilliers (1998) remarks that “the analytical method destroys what it seeks to understand” (p. 2). From this, it must follow that there is a need for adopting a more holistic perspective of phenomena under study, and that our epistemological outlook should be “at the very least interdisciplinary and probably post-disciplinary” (Byrne & Callaghan, 2014, p. 3).

The second foundational assumption of modern science, which I have termed the ***predictive premise***, holds that if we can somehow learn about natural or social entities and about the rules that govern their behaviour, we should in principle be able to predict their future states. This optimistic belief has been famously expressed by Laplace, who postulated that if a hypothetical entity (“une intelligence”) could, at any given moment, have knowledge of all natural forces and their composition, and if it were vast enough to compute the movements of celestial bodies as well as “the tiniest indivisible entity” (“du plus léger atome”), such an intelligence would have certain total knowledge of past, present and future (Laplace, 1814, p. 4). Such confidence in causal determinism was challenged early on. In 1889, Henri Poincaré demonstrated that the behaviour of systems

with three or more bodies cannot be mathematically determined using the laws of classical mechanics. He would later claim that:

Il peut arriver que de petites différences dans les conditions initiales en engendrent de très grandes dans les phénomènes finaux ; une petite erreur sur les premières produirait une erreur énorme sur les derniers. La prédiction devient impossible (Poincaré, 1903, p. 37).

It might be the case that small differences in the initial conditions produce great ones in the final phenomena; a small error in the former would produce an enormous error in the latter. Prediction becomes impossible (my translation).

A similar claim is attributed by Mitchell (2009, p. 20) to James Clerk Maxwell, and though it has been impossible to verify, it seems to indicate widespread intuitive awareness of the limitations of the predictive premise, well before they were empirically demonstrated by Lorenz (1972) (see below).

Lastly, the *integrative premise* indexes a belief in a “coherent metadiscourse that performs a general unifying function” (Cilliers, 1998, p. 113). From this perspective, science can be seen as a quest towards the generation of a single explanatory framework. Examples of such attempts include the Theory of Everything in physics, which seeks to describe the interaction of forces and particles from the sub-atomic level upwards, and dialectic materialism, where one might find claims such as:

Die Dialektik, die sog. objektive, herrscht *in der ganzen* Natur, und die sog. subjektive Dialektik, das dialektische Denken, ist nur Reflex der in der Natur sich *überall geltend* machenden Bewegung in Gegensätzen (Engels, 1883 / 2011, p. 159 emphasis added).

The so-called objective dialectics, determine nature *in its entirety*, and the so-called subjective dialectics, that is dialectical thought, is only a reflection of the movement through opposites, which *is valid everywhere* in nature (my translation).

Some complexity theorists, such as Mitchell (2009), have also adopted the integrative premise, as shown in the following extract: “we are waiting for the right concepts and mathematics to be formulated to describe the many forms of complexity we see in nature” (p. 302). Whether such optimism is well-founded remains to be seen, but in the meanwhile

we may have to do with an alternative viewpoint, which is articulated by Cilliers (1998, pp. 112-140), drawing on Lyotard (1984). Cilliers notes that “different groups (institutions, disciplines, communities) tell different stories about what they know and what they do” (p. 114), and that these diverse narratives defy integration. Rather, he goes on to note, “the postmodern condition is characterised by the co-existence of a multiplicity of heterogeneous discourses” (p. 114), and attempts to bring them together would be “impoverishing” (p. 118). The epistemological challenge, then, is not one of unifying but rather one of negotiating the multiplicity of local understandings.

The discussion of how the reductive, predictive, and integrative premises have, in some instances, hindered our capacity to theoretically engage with the natural and, particularly, the social world, hints at some challenges that I have attempted to address by drawing on complexity thinking in this study. In the next section, I continue the presentation of CST, by narrating how a succession of theoretical developments led to the emergence of this alternative way of meaning-making.

### **3.1.2 Establishing a new discipline**

The theoretical antecedents of CST can be traced to a series of scientific breakthroughs that took place independently in the second half of the previous century. The first of these developments was the publication of the *Outline of General Systems Theory* (von Bertalanffy, 1950). Writing in the context of biology, von Bertalanffy challenged the reductive view that individual organisms can be studied as a sum of their constituent parts, and proposed focussing on the relationships that connect these parts to the whole. Later, in the 1960s, the mathematician René Thom studied non-linear changes in the behaviour of systems, which he would eventually formalise as Catastrophe Theory (Thom, 1972, 1983). A key premise of Catastrophe Theory is that, even though systems are usually resilient, when

they happen to be near a 'tipping point', even minor perturbations can have disproportionate effects (e.g., when an already listing boat capsizes).

Another important antecedent of CST was the development of Chaos Theory, which was popularised by publications such as Gleik (1987). While Thom was working on theoretical mathematics, Edward Lorenz was experimenting with computer simulations of weather patterns, which led to the observation that even systems with few elements and straightforward rules could behave chaotically, i.e., in ways that were neither truly random nor fully predictable. More surprisingly, he discovered that minuscule changes in the input of his simulations could produce dramatic differences in their output. His observations on what was subsequently defined as "sensitivity to initial conditions" were published in a paper evocatively titled *Does the flap of a butterfly's wings in Brazil set off a tornado in Texas?* (Lorenz, 1972), from which the term 'butterfly effect' has been derived. The impact of Chaos Theory on complexity has been such that some authors occasionally use the terms 'chaos' and 'complexity' interchangeably (e.g., Larsen-Freeman, 1997), but in the interest of clarity it may be best to view chaotic behaviour as just one aspect of how complex systems might behave.

Even more recently, Ilya Prigogine studied what he called 'dissipative' systems, i.e., systems that create internal structures by absorbing energy from outside sources. Crucially, the structure of such systems is a product of self-organisation, rather than of external design (Prigogine & Stengers, 1984). Prigogine's research, for which he received the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1977, was instrumental in generating the conceptual toolkit of complexity, and he is credited by Mitchell for creating "a number of concepts that deal with mechanisms that are encountered repeatedly" in the empirical world, as well as technical vocabulary that has been extensively used in CST, such as 'bifurcations', 'equilibrium', 'homeostasis' and other terms (2009, p. 298).

All these parallel developments which contributed to the birth of CST culminated in the foundation, in 1984, of the Santa Fe institute, an interdisciplinary research centre dedicated to the study of complex phenomena in the natural and social world. In addition, recent years have seen the establishment of interdisciplinary journals focusing on complex phenomena (e.g., *Complexity*, and *Emergence: Complexity & Organization*), as well as the publication of theoretical treatises, such as Byrne (1998), Byrne and Callaghan (2014), Cilliers (1998), and Reed and Harvey (1992), which have outlined the developing theory. Within education, there have been edited collections on complexity including Mason (2008) and Osberg and Biesta (2010). In the domain of Applied Linguistics *Complex Systems and Applied Linguistics* (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008) constitutes a landmark publication, and more recently, the special issues focusing on complexity in *Applied Linguistics* (2006) and the *Revista Brasileira de Linguística Aplicada* (2013) evidence increasing interest in the potential of complexity to inform research and pedagogical practice in ELT-related fields. All these developments provide an epistemological warrant to using complexity as an informing paradigm for this study.

### **3.1.3 Positioning this study**

While Complex Systems Theory provides researchers with “effective ways to organize the world; logical structures to arrange their topics of study; scaffolds to assemble the models they construct” (2009, p. 34), it does not impose a pre-defined hermeneutical template onto the phenomena that are being studied, nor can it be thought of as a rigidly defined theory. There are two major fault-lines in complexity thinking: (a) the distinction between complexity-informed realism, mainly (and rather aggressively) advocated by Byrne (1998), and post-modern understandings, as described by Cilliers (1998); and (b) the distinction drawn by Morin (2006) between ‘restricted’ and ‘generalised’ complexity. Before bringing CST to bear on my study, it was therefore requisite to disambiguate my own ontological

and epistemological bearings. I do this in the paragraphs that follow, where I discuss the major differentiations between these perspectives, while gradually constructing my own position.

### ***Realist & postmodern complexity***

As hinted at the introduction of this chapter, CST constitutes an intellectual attempt to overcome some limitations of established ways of making sense of the world. This involves not just a pragmatic realisation of the impasses associated with 'naïve realism' and the 'scientific method', but also a refinement of foundational beliefs about being and knowing. This challenge is compounded by the diversity of ontological and epistemological positions in the complexity paradigm. This section describes the foundational assumptions underpinning the present study, which are presented as a pragmatic synthesis of 'realist' and 'post-modern' conceptualisations of complexity.

The 'realist' conceptualisation of complexity is best articulated by Byrne (1998). While distancing itself from reductionist accounts of reality, Byrne insists that complexity retains an ontological grounding on realism, which is epitomised in the assertion that "the natural world exists whether anyone signifies it or not" (R. Williams, 1979, p. 167, quoted in Byrne, 1998, p. 35). From this starting point, Byrne develops an elaborate realist framework, which one might call 'complex realism'. Drawing on Bashkar (1986), he distinguishes between "complex and contingent causal mechanisms" (the "real"), which produce "actual" outcomes, and the "empirical", i.e., the ways in which the actual is perceived (1998, pp. 37-38). Complex realism does not deny social construction, but it "insists on the reality of the real" (Byrne, 1998, p. 64), and concerns itself with the correspondence between real, actual and empirical. This is a point that is emphatically reiterated in Byrne

and Callaghan (2014), where one might also find the categorical assertion that “complexity is a realist programme or it is nothing” (p. 68).

While the critical realist position is intuitive and theoretically coherent, it seems that most scholarship on complexity in the social sciences have been informed by a post-modernist perspective (e.g., Cilliers, 1998; Rasch & Wolfe, 2000; Sawyer, 2005). Davis and Sumara make the case for a scientific paradigm that is concerned with developing coherent presentations of the social world, as opposed to an interest in the external fit between theoretical representations and reality (2006, pp. 33-34). In fact, complexity thinking is explicitly described as pertaining to “the philosophical and pragmatic implications of assuming a complex universe” (Davis & Sumara, 2006, p. 18). Taken to an extreme, such theoretical legitimation of post-modern complexity could encompass highly abstract treatises, such as the ones collected by Rasch and Wolfe (2000), for which the pragmatic warrant and impact potential are hard to discern. There is also a certain danger of falling back to analytically unhelpful relativism, or what Cilliers denounces as the “the view that a postmodern approach implies that ‘anything goes’” (1998, p. 112). Davis and Sumara are also careful in the way they position complexity vis-à-vis postmodernism: while rejecting the notion of universal truths, they acknowledge the existence of linkages between theoretical representations and grander knowledge structures (Davis & Sumara, 2006, pp. 34-35). However, the ontological nature of such linkages does not appear to have been addressed within the post-modernist tradition.

The position taken in this study is that the two views expressed above are not irreconcilable, despite differences in emphasis, and occasional rhetorical aphorisms. Theoretical work on complexity that is underpinned by postmodernist thinking has generally addressed epistemological concerns, such as how reality might be studied and how useful these representations are. Such a perspective does not appear to challenge the

ontological core of complex realism, i.e., the existence of complex and contingent causal mechanisms from which structures are actualised and subsequently perceived. Moreover, the discussion of linkages between local understandings and broader knowledge structures seems to offer scope for the operation of critical realist connective rules. Conversely, the ontological assumptions of complex realism do not deny the validity of contingent knowledge; rather they are entirely in line with “a notion of knowledge as local, contextual, specific in time and space” (Byrne & Callaghan, 2014, p. 62). Taking a pragmatic perspective, this study is underpinned by the assumptions about a complex realist universe, which might be knowable through post-modern ways of understanding.

### ***‘Restricted’ and ‘generalised’ complexity***

The second major fault-line that divides complexity-informed thinking has been traced by Morin (2006), who groups empirical and theoretical contributions into two distinct strands: ‘restricted’ and ‘generalised’ complexity. The aim of research carried out in the ‘restricted’ complexity strand is to develop formal mathematical descriptions of how complex systems behave. This task is complicated by the fact the relations between constituents of complex systems are constantly reshaped. To address this challenge, non-linear equations, formal mathematical algorithms, computer-assisted simulations and information network maps have all been productively brought to bear on the study of complex systems. Examples of research carried out in this tradition are reported by Mitchell (2009), N. F. Johnson (2009) and Barrat et al. (2008). These approaches, which rely on the toolkit of the ‘hard sciences’, lend themselves well for interdisciplinary work, and they can sometimes yield intriguing insights into diverse phenomena: examples include the behaviour of the financial markets or population fluctuations in an ecosystem.

On the other hand, work in the 'restricted' tradition does not depart radically from the epistemological traditions of science, and therefore tends to underutilise the potential of complexity. For Byrne and Callaghan, such an approach represents the encroachment of "hard science imperialism" into the social world, and consistently fails to address "the fundamental problem of complexity, which is epistemological, cognitive, paradigmatic" (2014, p. 40). Cilliers makes a similar, if more tactfully expressed, argument, noting that "algorithmic and information-theoretical approaches to complexity fail in their attempts to reveal the true nature of complexity" and point to the limitations of established scientific approaches, for which complex will remain "incomprehensible" (1998, p. 24). The position taken in this study is not one that seeks to undervalue the contributions of the 'restricted' complexity approach. Rather, echoing Cilliers (2010, p. vii), I wish to assert that such an approach is just one way to use CST. It is my further belief that while its application into a widening range of empirical phenomena continues to produce intriguing findings, such insights are perhaps not obviously useful in terms of their theory-building potential.

The 'generalised' (Morin, 2006) or 'complex' (Byrne, 2005) approach to complexity, which is closer to the premises that underpin my study, is more ambitious in scope. Whereas 'restricted' complexity tends to view shifting relations in a system as challenges which sophisticated research design might overcome, 'generalised' complexity raises their status to objects of inquiry: in this strand of complexity, the ever-changing relations between system components are viewed "not as epiphenomena, but as constitutive of complex systems" (Cilliers, 1998, p. 112). Ontologically, the two approaches differ as well. Restricted complexity posits straightforward rules that govern the behaviour of simple entities, and explain the bottom-up creation of complex structures. By contrast, generalised complexity argues that the connections between higher- and lower-order structures are themselves complex and multidirectional (Byrne & Callaghan, 2014, pp. 39-56). Pointing out that bottom-up activity is constrained by existing structure, and at the same time, rejecting "a

*solely downward deterministic* hierarchical arrangement” (Byrne & Callaghan, 2014, p. 44, original emphasis), a generalised complexity view posits “nested but interpenetrating systems with causal powers running in all directions” (Byrne & Callaghan, 2014, p. 45). As might be inferred, it is the generalised position that aligns itself more closely to the ontological underpinnings of this study.

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So far, I have narrated the development of Complex Systems Theory and developed an understanding of complexity as a pragmatic synthesis of complex realism (as an ontological backdrop) and a post-modern epistemology (as a way of knowing). This discussion is not intended as an authoritative view on what CST is, or ought to be; rather it is meant as an attempt to position complexity within the domains of scientific and philosophical thought, on the one hand, and to position the particular understanding of complexity that informs this study within the diverse, but overlapping, ways of using complexity thinking. After this positioning move, in Section 3.2, I move the discussion forward, to the ways in which complexity has been used to date in the domains of education, applied linguistics and ELT, and I outline how it is to be used in this study.

### 3.2 Using complexity

The discussion, in this section, of how CST might be used to inform scholarship and empirical inquiry is divided in three moves. I begin with a brief survey of the literature to outline how complexity thinking has been brought to bear in ELT and affiliated fields, such as education, linguistics, and psychology (Section 3.2.1). After presenting how complexity has been used, in Section 3.2.2 I discuss the defining properties of Complex Systems with a view to deriving a set of guiding principles that inform this study. I conclude with a discussion of how the study of complex systems has been approached in Section 3.2.3,

where I list methodological options that are compatible with complexity-inspired research, in order to foreshadow the discussion of my methodology in Chapter 4.

### **3.2.1 Complexity in ELT and affiliated fields**

A comprehensive description of how CST has been used to inform studies across disciplines lies outside the scope of this thesis, but readers may consult introductory texts such as Barabasi (2002), N.F. Johnson (2009), S. Johnson (2001) for a sampling. In the section that follows, I shall confine myself to discussing three ways in which complexity has been brought to bear on ELT and related fields, namely (a) to interpret complex phenomena within the boundaries of a discipline, (b) to theoretically integrate disciplinary fields and theoretical outlooks, and (c) to inform critical interrogation of practice.

A large number of studies have used CST as an analytical lens through which specific phenomena of interest to their respective disciplines might be interpreted. For instance, complexity has been used to describe child language acquisition (Tomasello, 2003), multilingual proficiency (Herdina & Jessner, 2002), and second language acquisition (Kortmann & Szmrecsanyi, 2012; Larsen-Freeman, 1997, 2002, 2011; Meara, 1997; Mellow, 2006). These studies generally attempt to deal with the variability, or 'messiness', of acquisition by replacing rule-based models with connectionist ones. Likewise, complexity has been used to account for language attrition (Meara, 2004), and to describe mental lexica (Meara, 2006). Other examples of this approach, from the field of linguistics, include a call to view language as a relational system (Hanks, 1996), descriptions of grammar as a complex system (Larsen-Freeman, 2001, 2003), and an attempt to re-conceptualise metaphors as emergent linguistic phenomena (Cameron & Deignan, 2006). The studies listed above have demonstrated the explanatory power and versatility of CST, and pave the way for novel conceptualisations of multiple phenomena across disciplines. However, this

piecemeal approach preserves disciplinary boundaries and entails a danger of underutilising the potential of complexity.

In response to the risks of reductionism inherent in the previous approach, a second line of complexity research has aimed at the generation of more holistic theoretical narratives.

Davis and Sumara (2006), Haggis (2007) and Mason (2008) are examples of such integrative accounts in the education literature. In the context of language education, Tudor (2001) suggests moving from what he describes as a “technological” view of education towards an ecological understanding, and uses a complexity perspective to describe teacher identity, learner identity and context (see also Tudor, 2003). In a similar vein, van Lier (2004a) makes a cogent argument for developing an ecological perspective of linguistics, which is sensitive to complex phenomena like emergence, diversity and dynamical activity. He further recommends shifting empirical focus from objects to relations, and developing increased awareness of context. The ‘Five Graces’ position paper (Beckner, et al., 2009) also makes the case for reconceptualising the entirety of language as a complex system. A more comprehensive argument about the potential of complexity to inform Applied Linguistics is made by Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2008) who provide a theoretical overview of CST, and explore its applications in language evolution, first and second language development, discourse and classroom interaction. Similarly, Mercer (2013) eclectically draws on ELT theory, ecological thinking and research on psychology learner autonomy and individual differences to advocate the relevance of complexity in language pedagogy.

In addition to theoretically integrating diverse disciplinary domains, it has been suggested that complexity thinking can strengthen the links among diverse theoretical narratives, e.g., by bridging the gaps between ecological, cultural-historical, socio-cultural, and psychological perspectives (de Bot, et al., 2013). It has also been suggested that complexity is compatible with scholarship in the traditions of Appropriate Pedagogy, Post-method

thinking and Exploratory Practice (see Section 2.2.3) and that it addresses the post-modern critique of theory being at a disconnect from practice, by bridging the gap between the two (Mercer, 2014). The research reported in the previous paragraphs did not, in all cases, explicitly invoke CST as an informing theoretical backdrop, but its ontological tenets are largely similar, and the findings reported are broadly compatible, thus lending credence to the belief that complexity can function as a flexible connecting theory, which strengthens the links across disciplines and epistemological perspectives, while at the same time preserving disciplinary and theoretical particularity. An explicit articulation of how CST might connect to other domains of knowledge, and to other theoretical perspectives lies outside the scope of this study, but I would argue that it forms a key priority for theoretical work in the complexity tradition.

A final strand of thinking which has been informed by complexity has been the development of what might be termed a critical complexity perspective in education. This is a subset of complexity-inspired research, which is particularly attuned to questions concerning values, voice and power. One way in which this critical outlook is manifested is by problematising the relative merits of pre-planned versus emergent curricula. It has been suggested, for instance, that an ecological perspective on education can foster “a spirit of inquiry and reflection” which “can erode, and to some extent counteract a deficit of rights and conditions in the democratic infrastructure” (van Lier, 2004b, p. 99). Similarly, Biesta (2010) argues that formal curricula are ‘complexity-reducing’, and disempowering. Another manifestation of a critical complexity perspective relates to the interaction between educational settings and the contexts in which they are embedded. On this topic Osberg and Biesta problematise “what kinds of meaning *are allowed to* emerge in the classroom” (2008, p. 313, emphasis added). They further point out that the ‘opening up’ or ‘narrowing down’ of the curriculum involve the exercise of political power, and suggest that:

...the question of the politics of complexity in education is not only about what we might call the promotion of complexity in education, but also has to do with the reduction of complexity in and through education (Biesta & Osberg, 2010, p. 3).

In summary, this line of thought views complexity both as a conceptual lens which affords a problematisation of political questions, and as an instrument for subversive education.

Compared to the two other functions of complexity in the literature, this strand of complexity thought is the one least explored, but arguably the one capable of generating most social impact.

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By presenting these three strands of complexity-inspired research, I aim to locate the present study in a small but growing research tradition, which has alternatively attempted to create new understandings to old puzzles, to integrate disparate domains of scholarship and to question established practices. In the next section, I discuss how such research might be carried out.

### **3.2.2 Guiding principles for complexity-informed research**

This section moves the discussion of how CST might contribute to research and scholarship forward, by looking into the properties of complex systems, and discussing the epistemological implications inherent in such conceptualisations. Simply put, systems are defined as collections of entities which interact in specific ways by virtue of their membership in the system (Juarrero, 1999, p. 109). For instance, a school system is made up of individuals who assume specific roles (e.g., student, teacher) and engage in specific behaviours (e.g., lecturing, requesting permission to speak) when acting as part of the system. Complex systems are systems which behave in non-linear ways, and are capable of adjusting to changes in their environment. This definition encompasses two aspects: the systems' structure, which is *heterogeneous*, *open* and *nested*, and the systems' behaviour,

which evidences *self-organisation and emergence*, *resilient dynamism* and *non-linear* causal mechanisms. In the paragraphs that follow, I discuss these properties and, in the process of doing so, I derive a set of principles that guided this study.

### ***Heterogeneity***

Complex systems are typically made up of heterogeneous components (or ‘agents’), such as objects, beings, collective entities or even other systems. Larsen-Freeman and Cameron exemplify heterogeneity with reference to traffic systems, which consist of “citizens, drivers and policy makers”, as well as “roads, vehicles of various sorts, and traffic laws” (2008, p. 28). What is of interest in their example is that the constituents of a complex system do not only differ in physical attributes (e.g., different types of cars) and role (e.g., pedestrians and drivers), but also in category membership (e.g., roads and laws).

With respect to language pedagogy, acknowledging the heterogeneous structure of complex systems has at least two implications. First, awareness of the multitude and diversity of agents alerts us to the fact that the activity within a complex system is driven by a multiplicity of perceptions and aspirations (Tudor, 2001, p. 32). In doing so, it casts doubt on the effectiveness of attempts to understand collective behaviour by reducing it to averages (Miller & Page, 2007, pp. 10-14). Secondly, it serves as a reminder that attempts to study the behaviour of a system by focussing on few, and often arbitrarily selected, constituents (e.g., by studying the attitudes of students in a class without reference to the activity of teachers) risk artificially reducing the system’s complexity.

#### **Principle 1**

*Complexity will be used to synthesise, rather than reduce, diversity in the host institute.*

## ***Openness***

A second structural property of complex systems is that they are 'open' (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008, pp. 31-33) or 'ambiguously bounded' (Davis & Sumara, 2006, pp. 94-99).

This means that their boundaries do not only serve to set them apart from their environment but also provide connections with it (Juarrero, 1999, p. 110). To illustrate, a school may be viewed as a more-or-less self-contained system, but it is nevertheless permeated by 'outside' influences in the form of societal beliefs that individual teachers and students embody. It is also part of a broader school system, operating according to externally defined rules and legislation. Moreover, it is part of a societal web, and thus subject to outside expectations about the operation and role of schools. In recent years, language pedagogy has been increasingly attuned to such contextual influences (e.g., Holliday, 1994; van Lier, 1988), and a complexity perspective may provide us with theoretically useful ways to account for them.

The way CST approaches the system-environment connection is by positing that the boundaries of complex systems are functional, rather than physical or topological perimeters (Zeleny, 1996). Acknowledging the openness of complex systems has both epistemological and ontological implications. With regard to how a system might be studied, it suggests that while one might have to conceptually isolate (or 'frame') a system from its context for the purposes of inquiry, it is nonetheless epistemologically requisite to be attuned to environmental influences. Ontologically, it reminds us that "the boundary of the system is neither purely a function of our description, nor is it purely a natural thing" (Cilliers, 2001, p. 141). Taken together, these two implications suggest that complexity-informed theoretical explanations need to account for the reciprocal interaction between system and environment.

## **Principle 2**

*Though it is necessary to 'frame' the host institute for the study to be conceptually manageable, Complexity will be used to show how it relates to the environment(s) in which it is embedded.*

### ***Nestedness***

Following from the above, the third structural property of complex systems is that they are 'nested', i.e., they exist within broader structures (Byrne, 2002; Haggis, 2008, p. 159).

Classroom mathematics, for example, has been described as a hierarchy of nested structures, consisting of subjective understanding, classroom collectivity, curriculum structures and mathematical objects (Davis & Sumara, 2006, pp. 90-94). Drawing on conversation analysis data from Cameron (2007), Larsen-Freeman and Cameron similarly describe discourse as a hierarchy of systems: discourse events are embedded within 'conversations', which form part of broader information exchanges (2008, pp. 166-169).

Nestedness can also be observed in systems that are more visibly grounded on the observable world. For example, a language lesson could be embedded in a school's curriculum, and a school providing English language tuition could be seen as being embedded in the local educational system and global ELT professional culture. Significantly, the rate with which the systems change is not uniform: lower-order systems tend to be more dynamic, whereas higher-order ones evolve in a relatively slower timescale (Davis & Sumara, 2006, p. 27).

Implicit in the discussion of nestedness is a tendency to view nested systems in hierarchical terms. Juarrero's description of top-down 'control hierarchies' in which higher-order structures delimit and constrain the operations of lower-order phenomena are typical of such a conceptualisation (1999, p. 114). While a hierarchical understanding of nestedness is intuitively appealing, an alternative way of thinking has also been put forward regarding how systems of different orders of magnitude interact. Cilliers advances an understanding

of complex systems that overlap and “interpenetrate” each other (2001, p. 142). Similarly, Reed and Harvey suggest that higher-order and lower-order systems operate in dialectically interacting layers (1992, p. 358). In such a view, a top-down conceptualisation of causality is replaced by reciprocal determination: activity in the lower-order systems is constrained by higher-order structure, and higher-order structure is shaped by patterns of activity in lower-order systems (Byrne & Callaghan, 2014, p. 44). This suggests a need for an empirical outlook that is sensitive to local behaviour, and a theoretical perspective that relates local action to broader structures in ways that go beyond top-down determinism. This latter conceptualisation is more consistent with the generalised view of complexity (Morin, 2006).

**Principle 3**

*Complexity will be used to account for reciprocal influences that develop between the host institute and the structures in which it is embedded.*

***Self-organisation & emergence***

Complex systems have the capacity to develop their internal structure spontaneously, as well as to modify it in response to changes in their environment (Cilliers, 1998, pp. 89-111; Juarrero, 1999, pp. 119-130). The property of self-organisation has been described as follows:

[A]s epitomised in swarms of bees and traffic jams, coherent unities can arise without the presence of a leader. The same seems to be true of many sorts of human collectivities in events that are sometimes described as “grassroots movements” or, more deprecatingly, “herd” or “mob” mentalities (Davis & Sumara, 2006, p. 84).

With regard to the study of second language education, what this property seems to suggest is that educational systems have the capacity to modify centrally planned structures in order to adjust to local conditions, or even generate structures which are independent of central planning.

The self-organised activity of agents in a complex system produces emergent properties, i.e., “unexpected spatial structures and evolutionary events” (Nicolis, 1995, p. xiii) that pertain to the system as a whole, and cannot be ascribed to any individual agent. In other words:

...as systems acquire increasingly higher degrees of organisational complexity they begin to exhibit novel properties that in some sense transcend the properties of their constituent parts, and behave in ways that cannot be predicted on the basis of the laws governing simpler systems (Kim, 1999, p. 3).

Reading comprehension, for instance, cannot be readily explained with reference to the mechanics of holding a document, eye movement, the typography of the text, or the biochemistry of the reader’s brain. The most obvious epistemological implication of the above is that it brings to the forefront the limitations of the reductive assumption, i.e., the belief that the study of simple activities can lead to an understanding of more complex phenomena (Section 3.1.1). This is not meant as a challenge to the validity or value of such research, but rather as a reminder that the laws governing lower-order phenomena are restricted in scope (Deacon, 2007, p. 93). Moreover, as emergent phenomena are often qualitatively different from the underlying structures, the analytical tools used for describing the latter may not be appropriate for studying the former. A third, less obvious, implication is that emergence should be understood as a recursive process, because the newly created higher-order phenomena entrain lower-order behaviour.

**Principle 4**

*Complexity will be used to account for how emergent phenomena are produced in the host institute, and for the ways in which they feed back into the structures that produced them.*

***Resilience and dynamism***

Another behavioural property of complex systems is their resilience, defined here as the ability to withstand change, and the tendency to exhibit regular, though not entirely predictable, behaviour (Mitchell, 2009, p. 38). While complex systems have the potential to

behave in many different ways, their architecture tends to constrain randomness (Byrne & Callaghan, 2014, p. 190; Mitchell, 2009, p. 182). For instance, the norms of a school, the layout of a classroom and the architecture of a building, all work together to restrict the degrees of freedom that individuals might otherwise enjoy during a lesson. Due to these constraints, systems tend to remain within 'preferred' states, and revert to them after being perturbed (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008, pp. 49-55; Miller & Page, 2007, p. 10). Examples of such preferred conditions, or 'attractors', include the healthy body temperature of 36.6° C, some people's daily routines, and institutionalised lesson patterns. However, the projection of concepts derived from formal mathematics, such as attractors, onto activities such as language learning is not always straightforward, and is the subject of ongoing debate.

While the resilience of systems may seem to preclude the possibility of change, complex systems in fact exhibit dynamical behaviour. Dynamic change can take place within a single, 'cyclical' attractor (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008, p. 57), in which case, the attractor is said to consist of multiple states, through which the system moves periodically. An example of such a cyclical attractor might be a recurring lesson pattern consisting of several phases, such as presentation, production and practice. More dramatic changes, or 'phase shifts' (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008, p. 45), take place when a system is dislodged from an attractor and settles in a different one, as might be the case when a traditionally-oriented curriculum is replaced by a communicative one. According to Delanda, these processes of dynamical change "[break] the link between necessity and determinism [...] making the particular end state a system occupies a combination of determinism and choice" (2005, p. 35).

**Principle 5**

*Complexity will be used to describe both the resilience of structures in the host institute and their potential for transformation.*

### ***Non-linear causality and morphogenesis***

Processes of change in complex systems are, by definition, non-linear (Byrne & Callaghan, 2014, pp. 173-191). To begin with, complex systems behave in ways that are overly sensitive to their initial conditions (Byrne, 1998, pp. 18-20; Mitchell, 2009, p. 38). While this does not, in principle, challenge linear causality, it does set practical limits to its usefulness as an instrument of prediction, because significant effects may be produced by variables that cannot be measured. As a result, the challenges usually associated with operationalising and quantifying variables are amplified. Moreover, the combined effect of the agents that make up a system is not additive. Rather, each agent's activity may reinforce or cancel out the activity of other system constituents, because they are connected by intricate feedback loops (Cilliers, 1998, p. 4). Such non-linear behaviour puts to the test the interpretative power of accounts that use unsophisticated versions of determinism to relate causes and results. Instead, as hinted in the previous section, causality is viewed as the setting of "limits and boundaries rather than direct and unmediated cause" (Byrne & Callaghan, 2014, p. 112).

Acknowledging the limitations of linear causality does not negate the role of historicity in shaping the behaviour of complex systems. Cilliers argues that in complex systems, the "past is co-responsible for their present behaviour" (1998, p. 4). This is a claim restated by Byrne and Callaghan, according to whom "structure-agency relationships involve both current and past actors, whose actions have become sedimented into structures" (Byrne & Callaghan, 2014, p. 111). Drawing on Bourdieu (1998), Byrne and Callaghan propose that the notion of 'habitus' can explain how systems come to be reproduced through the activity of individuals, which stems from "preconscious orientations to action", rather than rational choice or true agency (2014, p. 113). Such activity, they explain, is constrained by pre-existing structures, but leads to morphogenesis, an unintended and unplanned

generation of new constraining structures (Byrne & Callaghan, 2014, pp. 118-119). In other words, complex systems shape themselves through their activity, which is constrained by their past form. Chapters 5, 6 and 7 of this thesis will illustrate this process, by showing how certain pedagogical proclivities in a language school led to the emergence of structure (e.g., the selection of courseware, the standardisation of lesson patterns) which, in turn, appears to have shaped the beliefs and actions of teachers and learners.

**Principle 6**

*Complexity will be used to highlight non-linear relationships between the historicity of the host institute and its present state.*

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In this section, I described the properties of complex systems, by suggesting a number of guiding principles will be brought to bear on the study of the host institute. In addition to serving this practical goal, I attempted to address a epistemological call for ‘nativising’ complexity in education and applied linguistics (Stelma, 2014). In the section that follows, I turn to more practical matters, and look into some methodological options available for studying complex systems.

### **3.2.3 Methodological options**

As hinted in the first section of this chapter, complexity-informed attempts to understand the social world represent a break with traditional ways of thinking about science. This difference in perspective, along with optimism in the potential of the novel way of thought, resonates in the following comment:

[By using complexity,] we can dissolve old procrustean oppositions – ordered and random, for instance – and in the process reinstate useful old ideas such as freedom. New concepts, such as emergence become thinkable, and new methods [...] suggest themselves as legitimate modes of study (Turner, 1997, p. xii).

By ‘new methods’ Turner predominantly refers to the methodological toolkit of restricted complexity (Section 3.1.3), but the core of his argument seems valid even when extended

to more established modes of doing research. In the paragraphs that follow, I selectively discuss and appraise a range of methodological tools for complexity-informed empirical inquiry. These include relatively new research methods, such as simulations, time-series analysis and Retrodictive Qualitative Modelling, as well as familiar ones, like ethnography and case studies. This discussion serves to provide a rationale for the methodological choices that are discussed in more depth in Chapter 4.

Computer-assisted simulations, or **computational modelling**, are archetypically associated with early complexity research (cf. Lorenz's weather models). This approach involves using a computer programme to generate a simplified model of a complex system, which consists of semi-intelligent agents, rules that govern their behaviour and a set of initial conditions. By running the programme through several iterations, insights can be generated about the long-term behaviour of a system. A theoretical legitimisation of this approach is provided by Sawyer (2005), and extended examples can be found in Mitchell (2009, pp. 145-244).

Quantitative modelling has not been extensively used in Applied Linguistics, although some attempts have been made to model language evolution (Baxter, Blythe, Croft, & McKane, 2006; Reali & Christiansen, 2009). Despite the paucity of published research, it has been suggested that "modeling allows one to prove, at least *in principle*, that specific fundamental mechanisms can combine to produce some observed effect" (Becker, et al., 2009, p. 12, original emphasis).

The view taken in this thesis is that computational modelling is descriptively powerful and efficient, and shows great potential in helping us to understand complex social phenomena, especially when driven by empirically collected data (Byrne & Callaghan, 2014, p. 40), but its usefulness for theory generation is limited in at least two ways. Because they operate at a remove from the empirical world, simulations are prone to blurring the lines

between abstraction and fiction. Hedström's caveat, though not addressed specifically to this line of research, seems apt:

Theoretical assumptions are often seen as mere instruments that can be freely tinkered with until one arrives at simple and elegant models. [...] An explanatory theory must refer to the actual mechanisms at work, not to those that could have been at work in a fictional world invented by the theorist (2005, p. 3).

Another limitation of computer-based simulations is that they are informed by 'restricted' conceptualisations of complexity. Because they reduce the agents' activity to simple, rational, deterministic, and unchanging rules, they seem unsuitable to investigating issues of agency within a complex system, or the dialectic interaction between the system's structural and behavioural properties (Byrne & Callaghan, 2014, pp. 162-163).

Unlike computational modelling, *time-series analyses* have generally used empirical data to study complex phenomena. Time-series analysis involves measuring the values of one or more variables at regularly-spaced intervals, and using graphs to plot them, with a view to discovering regularities over time. The potential of time-series to generate insights into developmental issues has been acknowledged in the SLA literature (Mellow, Reeder, & Forster, 1996; Ortega & Ibarra-Shea, 2005) but few studies explicitly used this research design in SLA, and usually did so in ways that were unrelated to complexity thinking (e.g., Ishida, 2004). More recently, variants of time-series analysis which are sensitive to the timescales of a system's activity have been recommended as a way to study complex systems (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008, p. 245), and attempts have been made to interpret the patterns identified in time series with reference to complex systems theory (Baba & Nitta, 2014; Mellow, 2006). Although work in this research tradition is free from the kinds of epistemological caveats flagged in the previous paragraph, it is at times uncertain how complexity thinking has contributed to the development of findings, other than by providing a technical vocabulary for the description of phenomena that were uncovered by studying the time series. As was the case with computational modelling,

time-series research seems best suited to discussing the empirical epiphenomena of complexity, while its potential for uncovering underlying complex rules that generate them has not yet been demonstrated.

A different approach to studying complex systems, which addresses some of the limitations mentioned above, involves ***Retrodictive Qualitative Modelling*** (Dörnyei, 2014). The central premises of this approach are that (a) it is possible to associate particular states in a system with specific 'signature dynamics' from which the state emerged; and (b) that despite their limited generalisability, such dynamics can inform our understanding of different situations (p. 89). To investigate such dynamics, Dörnyei suggests a retrospective approach that consists of three steps. First, the system is studied holistically in order to identify specific states (e.g., a school might be observed to identify 'learner types'). Next, exemplars of each state are identified and subjected to empirical scrutiny (e.g., students representative of each type are identified and interviewed). Finally, salient system components and signature dynamics are identified, and the trajectory that led to the development of the exemplars is retrospectively traced. By synthesising the strengths of qualitative research and a complexity outlook, Retrodictive Qualitative Modelling appears to offer considerable potential for theory-building, which researchers in ELT are already beginning to tap (e.g., King, 2011), despite the theoretical and practical challenges of dealing with causality in a complex system. In this study, I did not avail myself of the entire set of methods suggested by Dörnyei (2014), but I did retain the methodological principle that present structure can be used to deduce the processes that historically shaped a system. This principle was instrumental in deriving the findings that are reported in Chapter 6.

***Ethnographic methods*** lend themselves well to the study of complex systems. The common ground between the ethnographic research tradition and a complexity outlook is summarised by Agar (2004) as follows:

For an ethnographer, what's interesting is the discovery of connections. The goal is to build patterns of many interacting things that *include* what was noticed, not to *isolate* what one was supposed to notice and *measure* it (p. 16, original emphasis).

Agar goes on to make a compelling case about the compatibility of ethnography and complexity. Among other points, he notes that anthropological research has dealt with issues akin to 'sensitivity to initial conditions', and that ethnographic challenges, such as the researcher embeddedness or the Hawthorne effect, can be helpfully informed by complexity thinking (pp. 19-20). Some other arguments put forward in the same article, which includes elaborate metaphors of ethnographic work as a search for fractals and fitness landscapes, are perhaps more peripheral to the present discussion, but overall Agar succeeds in investing ethnography with an alternative ontology and epistemology, and hence in providing complexity-inspired researchers with a well-developed methodological toolkit.

The lack of empirical substantiation is an important limitation of Agar (2004), which has been partly addressed elsewhere in the literature. Gomm & Hammersley (2001), for instance, also discuss the overlap between complexity and ethnography, and demonstrate its potential by reinterpreting previous work by Gomm (1986, 2000) from a complexity perspective. In the same vein, Davis and Lazaraton (1995), Holliday (1996) and Ramanathan and Atkinson (1999) are cited by Larsen-Freeman and Cameron as examples of ethnographic work in ELT which is compatible to complexity thinking (2008, p. 242). The position taken in this study is that there is considerable overlap between the foundational principles of complexity theory and ethnography, and that ethnographic methods of data generation can usefully inform the study of a complex system.

Another research tradition that can fruitfully inform the study of complex systems in ELT is **case study** research. Byrne (2009), for example, notes the similarities between cases and

complex systems, both of which attain an ontological ‘reality’ when they are defined (‘framed’) by the researcher. Byrne and Callaghan elaborate on this point as follows:

[In case study research] we are dealing with things that are both real and constructed, that are fuzzy realities with complex properties, that have a holistic element whilst being constituted from complex configurations, that are intersected with their environment with boundaries being not the things that cut off but rather the domain of intercommunication (Byrne & Callaghan, 2014).

Despite the intuitive overlap between case study research and complexity thinking, references to complexity-informed empirical case studies in the literature seem to be sparse and mostly relate to fields outside education (e.g., Anderson, Crabtree, Steele, & McDaniel, 2005; Bennett & Elman, 2006; Lyneis, Cooper, & Els, 2001; Thelen & Smith, 1994). A rare example of a case study in ELT that appears to have been implicitly informed by a complexity outlook is reported in Tudor (2001, pp. 196-205). This is a lacuna in the literature that this thesis aims to partially address.

This brief survey of possible research methods is of course not comprehensive. Larsen-Freeman and Cameron, for instance, list diverse methods such as formative experiments, action research and brain imaging among the methodological options available to researchers (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008, pp. 242-251), and it seems plausible that the only real limits are the ones imposed by the researchers’ creativity. To return to the Turner’s comments, with which this section began:

What the new science has done, in effect, is to place within our grasp a set of very powerful intellectual tools – concepts to think with. We can use them well or badly, but they are free of the limitations of our traditional armory (Turner, 1997, p. xii).

However, as was argued in this section, the theoretical affordances of each methodological option are perhaps unequal, and research methods such as case study and ethnography seem best suited to the development of rich descriptions that preserve contextual interdependence and situatedness, and from which theoretical insights might be generated.

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In summary, this study is informed by a perspective of complexity which pragmatically synthesises post-modern epistemological beliefs with critical realist ontological assumptions. This positioning is most usefully served by a 'generalised' way of engaging with complexity, which I operationalised with reference to six specific principles that will be brought to bear on the study of the host institute. I also argued that the toolkit sometimes used by researchers in the 'restricted' tradition (e.g., simulations, time-series analysis) seems unhelpful for the study of complex systems, and in the next chapter, I discuss how I approached the study of the host institute using a complexity-informed case study approach.

## Chapter 4

### Researching a Language School:

#### Methodological Remarks

The research reported in this thesis is a complexity-inspired case study which focused on a language school in Greece (the host institute). This study addresses a descriptive and a conceptual aim. Firstly, it provides a coherent description of the host institute, with particular focus on the themes of purposes of language teaching, resources used for it and practices associated with it. These themes, which emerged from inductive engagement with the research setting (see Section 4.2.2), have been operationalised as follows for the purpose of analytical and narrative convenience:

1. What considerations motivated and sustained language teaching and learning at the host institute?
2. What learning materials were used at the host institute?
3. What pedagogical practices took place at the host institute?

In addition to this descriptive focus, the study investigated the feasibility and potential of using Complex Systems Theory (CST) in the study of educational settings. Complex Systems Theory was expected to provide insights into questions such as how multiple motivations and purposes interrelated; how learning materials related to purposes and practices; and how practices emerged from the interaction between purposes and resources. This aim was expressed in the following question:

4. How can aspects of English Language Teaching (ELT), such as purposes for teaching and learning, learning materials and pedagogical practices, be described as complex phenomena?

This chapter discusses the methodological aspects of the study, and in doing so it provides an example of how a complex system such as a school might be empirically investigated. This chapter begins with a broad-strokes description of the methodological considerations that informed the design of the study: Section 4.1 develops the rationale for using a case study approach that blended elements of ethnography and grounded theory. Next, in Section 4.2, which focuses on the preparatory groundwork that preceded the study, I present the research site, and I discuss and my own role in it and I narrate how an initial empirical foray generated tentative findings which guided this study. In Section 4.3, I present the sources and methods that were used to generate data, and finally data analysis is dealt with in Section 4.4.

## 4.1 Methodological grounding

The abovementioned research questions were answered using a case study approach which drew on ethnographic and grounded theory methods. In the previous chapter, I hinted that these methods were compatible to complexity thinking; in the paragraphs that follow I provide a more extended rationale underpinning the research design, and argue that the methods were appropriate to the research problem and epistemologically compatible to each other.

### 4.1.1 Using a case study design

The decision to address the research questions by means of a case study was motivated by two considerations: the theory-building potential of this approach, and its compatibility with CST. In the paragraphs that follow, I expand on these considerations, and then go on to address common criticisms against using a case study approach.

Case study research, as implied by its name, aims at a comprehensive, in-depth description of a specific case, which is defined as a “phenomenon of some sort, occurring in a bounded

context” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 25). While some studies focus on cases that are in some ways unusual, and therefore have intrinsic descriptive value, this particular study focused on a language school that was, in many ways, typical of privately-provided language education in Greece. Research that focuses on such common ‘cases’ has been described as ‘instrumental case study’ research (Stake, 1994). Stake argues that such an approach is well-suited to generating new understandings of phenomena of interest and for theory development.

Moreover, a case study approach was considered compatible to the complexity outlook that informed this study. Case studies, argues Punch (2005), constitute “an explicit attempt to preserve the wholesomeness, unity and integrity of the case” while remaining sensitive to its complexity” (pp. 144-145). This is consistent with emphasis that CST places on holistic descriptions of phenomena (Byrne, 1998, pp. 14-15). Additionally, a case study approach was deemed epistemologically appealing due to its sensitivity to contextual influences (Punch, 2005, p. 144; Robson, 2002, p. 178). According to an authoritative definition:

[A] case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in its real life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clearly evident (Yin, 2003, p. 15).

Such an epistemological outlook was in line with conceptualisations of the host institute as a complex system that was in constant interaction with its environment (Davis & Sumara, 2006, p. 5).

The main counterargument against using a case study approach relates to the external generalisability (Maxwell, 2002, pp. 52-55) of the findings. Silverman (2005), in particular, argues that case studies risk generating insights that are trivial and cannot be projected to larger populations (pp. 125-126). While acknowledging the validity of such concerns, it should be noted that the objective of this study has not been to generalise from a sample to a universe. Rather, following Yin (2003, p. 10), this study aimed at theoretical

abstraction, i.e., the development of theoretical propositions through which ELT might be described. A similar argument has been put forward by Punch, who argues that “generalising abstract concepts and propositions raises the analysis above simple description and in this way a case study can contribute potentially significant findings” (2005, p. 147). In the same vein, J. Mason argues that a case study approach has the potential to formulate explanations that transcend the limited the empirical parameters of any single study (1996, p. 6). In summary, while the concerns expressed in the literature with regard to case studies serve a useful purpose of cautioning readers against uncritically projecting findings to other settings, they do not seem to challenge the contribution that this study set out to make.

#### **4.1.2 Blending ethnography and grounded theory**

Methodologically, this study drew on the traditions of ethnography and grounded theory. Following the example of Richards (1996), I mainly used ethnographic methods for data generation. In doing so, I aligned myself with recommendations in the literature pertaining to the study of complex social phenomena (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008, pp. 242-243), and of ELT settings (Canagarajah, 1999, p. 5; Holliday, 1994, pp. 181-183). Consistent with the ethnographical tradition, I aimed to research the activities of a social entity (a language school) in its natural setting, through prolonged exposure and by means of observational and interactional methods (Fielding, 2008, p. 269). That having been said, it should be stressed that ethnography was used instrumentally in this study, to inform aspects of the research process such as interviews and observations, rather than as a template for all aspects of the research design and representation. The data I generated, coupled with insights I already had on account of my semi-insider status (see Section 4.2.3), were synthesised in a description of the host institute, aspects of which are presented in Chapters 5 and 7.

The second methodological influence on the design of this study was grounded theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Dey, 1999; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The principal appeal of this approach was that it offered a structured method for engaging with the ethnographically generated data, and provided a safeguard against dispensing with analytical rigour. As noted by Punch, grounded theory...

...represents a coordinated, systematic but flexible overall research strategy, in contrast to the ad hoc and uncoordinated approaches that have sometimes characterized qualitative research (2005, p. 159).

The influence of grounded theory on my study can be seen in the data-driven nature of the research process. At a macro-level, the empirical focus of each research phase was determined by tentative findings that had been previously generated; similarly, at a micro-level, data generation was guided by strategies such as theoretical sampling. Another influence of grounded theory was that the analytical categories and conceptual tools used in this study were derived through structured engagement with the data, rather than from existing theoretical accounts (although these were subsequently connected to the literature, as discussed in Section 4.4.4.). This project, however, deviated from the recommendations of 'purist' versions of grounded theory (Glaser, 1992). Acknowledging that the interpretative account of the data could never be completely free of my pre-conceptions (Silverman, 2005, p. 180), I capitalised on these through explicit reflexive engagement.

By combining the complementary strengths of these two research traditions, I was able to develop a methodological toolkit which was well suited to conducting a case study. This is described in detail in Sections 4.3 and 4.4. Before doing this, however, I present the preparatory groundwork that preceded the actual study.

## 4.2 Preparing for the study

Before describing in detail how this study was conducted, in this section I present some background remarks on the research setting, including comments on my role in it (Section 4.2.1). A detailed account of how I selected the host institute as a venue for my study, how I negotiated access to it, and how I operationally defined the ‘case’ can be found in Appendix B. In addition, I discuss how the central themes of the study were inductively derived through preparatory empirical work (Section 4.2.2).

### 4.2.1 The host institute and my role in it

The host institute was a large private language school [«κέντρο ξένων γλωσσών», *kéntro xénon glossón*, or «φροντιστήριο», *frontistirio*], situated in a town in North-western Greece. As is typical for the private ELT sector in Greece (see Section 1.1.2), this school mainly provided afternoon and evening language classes which supplemented the state education system. When the study was conducted, the host institute operated three schools in different areas of the town. The institute was staffed by a number of senior teachers, many of whom had a long employment history there, in some cases exceeding twenty years. Most senior teachers were full-time staff, and they were often assigned responsibilities additional to teaching, such as course co-ordination or materials development. Their ranks were augmented with a fluctuating number of teachers on fractional fixed-term contracts as required by student enrolment. Many of the senior staff had been licensed to teach on the strength of entry-level qualifications («επάρκεια», *epárkia*), but younger members of staff tended to have additional formal qualifications.

When the study was conducted, there were between 300 and 500 students enrolled at the host institute (the precise number is withheld on account of its commercially sensitive nature). The majority were young learners and adolescents, between eight and sixteen

years old. There was also a large number of young adults, who tended to enrol in exam preparation courses, and a relatively small number of Very Young Learners (under eight years old) in pilot programmes targeted at that age group. The majority of students had Greek cultural backgrounds, and tended to come from middle-class families.

The host institute offered a variety of EFL courses with differing length and objectives, but the mainstay was the General English programmes, a series of consecutive year-length courses leading absolute beginners to mastery of the English language (Table 4-1). The first of the General English programmes was the ‘Junior’ programme, which spanned two years and catered to the needs of absolute beginners or false starters between the ages of nine and ten. This was followed by a three-year ‘Senior’ programme, which led to the Waystage level (A2) of the Common European Framework of Reference or CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001). When the study was conducted, the Senior programme was being redesigned: an older version of the programme, ‘Senior (Action)’, was being phased out and replaced by one called ‘Senior (Quest)’, which was considered more appropriate for younger students. The Upper Intermediate programme consisted of two years of study, and led to certification at the Vantage level (B2) of the CEFR. The final level, which was officially designated ‘Advanced Studies’, but was more commonly referred to as ‘the Proficiency’, spanned two years and led to certification at the Mastery level (C2) of the CEFR.

| <b>Programme</b>          | <b>Class</b>       | <b>Age</b> | <b>Target level</b> |
|---------------------------|--------------------|------------|---------------------|
| <b>Junior</b>             | Junior A           | 9          | A1                  |
|                           | Junior B           | 10         | A1                  |
| <b>Senior (Quest)</b>     | A Senior           | 10-11      | A1                  |
| <b>Senior (Action)</b>    | B Senior           | 12         | A1+                 |
|                           | C Senior           | 13         | A2+                 |
| <b>Upper Intermediate</b> | D Senior           | 13-14      | B1+                 |
|                           | E Senior (‘Lower’) | 14-15      | B2+                 |
| <b>Proficiency</b>        | Proficiency 1      | 15+        | C1                  |
|                           | Proficiency 2      | 15+        | C2                  |

**Table 4-1 Overview of the General English programmes**

As hinted in Chapter 1, my own connections with the host institute were substantial. The school had been founded and was run by close family members, and I had been employed there as a part-time teacher, senior teacher and Director of Studies for more than 10 years prior to commencing doctoral research. During my tenure as a Director of Studies, I had implemented an extensive programme of curricular reform, which involved the introduction of communicative teaching methods and the hiring and retention of teachers with advanced qualifications. As a result, at the outset of the study I had already developed intricate relationships with members of the school staff. This semi-insider status impacted my study in diverse ways, which I tried to address through heightened sensitivity to reflexivity, and through its transparent documentation (Canagarajah, 2005b; Finlay, 2002; Holliday, 2005a; Mauhtner & Doucet, 2003; Ramanathan, 2005b). Notes and comments on my relation to the teachers and on the ways in which it was influencing the research were noted in 'reflexivity memos' or reflexive sections that were appended to the interview transcripts or observation reports. These reflexive comments were included in the dataset, and they were subsequently subjected to coding along with other forms of data.

One of the most obvious ways in which my previous affiliation with the research venue impacted my study was my familiarity with the context. From the outset of the study, I already had intimate knowledge of many policies and curricular decisions which informed the operations of the school, as well as excellent knowledge of the institute's documentation (e.g., syllabus documents, test specifications), much of which had been produced by me or under my direction. Such familiarity helped me to address gaps in the dataset. For example, I was able to produce a sufficiently detailed description of writing lessons at the host institute drawing on lesson plans and learning materials, even though most participating teachers declined to be observed (Section 7.4). In addition, pre-existing knowledge enabled me to form a better appreciation of the 'deep action' of the school, i.e., phenomena that "are opaque to outsiders and perhaps only tacitly understood by insiders

to the culture” (Holliday, 1994, p. 40). To illustrate, the following background information was recorded in a reflexive memo attached to an interview transcript:

My professional relation with [name redacted] has been very close since the beginning of her tenure with us. [Name redacted] was hired at my recommendation, and was initially mentored by me. She shares with me a certain critical attitude with some of the prevailing practices at the school, and has actively challenged such practices with innovative teaching. As a result of this, she does not always see eye-to-eye with other senior teachers and cannot always rely on them for support and guidance.

In addition to highlighting how our pre-existing professional relationship generated rapport, these comments hint at the opportunity I had to identify implied meaning in the transcript by capitalising on our shared knowledge, in ways that researchers unfamiliar with the context would be challenged to do.

A less straightforward way in which the research process was impacted by my unusual role pertained to the power relations at the host institute. While conducting fieldwork, I became increasingly aware that my interactions with other research participants appeared to be influenced by status inequality, which stemmed from my academic identity, my developing reputation as a local ELT authority, and my close connections with the stakeholders of the host institute. For instance, I was informed that several teachers declined to be interviewed because they were apprehensive at the prospect of having their professional identity scrutinised by someone so closely affiliated to the school management. Furthermore, teachers who consented to be interviewed or observed often seemed nervous. Although obvious paralinguistic clues could not be captured in the transcript, the following extract provides some insights at how awkward interviewing sometimes felt:

Achilleas: Θα- θα μπορούσαν να μάθουν αυτό χωρίς να, δηλαδή μέσα από practice; άμα δεν τους δίδασκες explicitly τη γραμματική;

Teacher: (4 sec) Εμ, Όχι ιδιαίτερα.

Achilleas: Could- Could they learn this without, I mean through practice? If you didn't teach grammar explicitly?

Teacher: (4 sec) Erm, not really.

Achilleas: Όχι ιδιαίτερα. Γιατί το πιστεύεις αυτό;

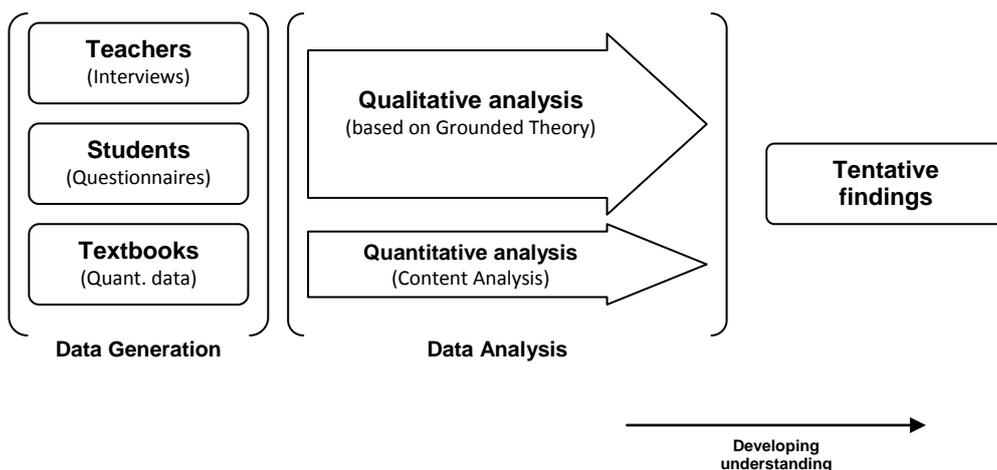
Achilleas: Not really. What makes you think that?

The teacher's apprehension, evidenced in terse replies and extended pauses signals hesitation, and it was probably due to her concern that I might be critical of her traditional teaching style. Although I was initially concerned that such attitudes posed a threat to the validity of my findings, by identifying and accounting for them, I managed to add depth to my understanding of the setting. In the example quoted above, for instance, I was able to trace tensions between different approaches to teaching grammar (the inductive methods which I was thought to advocate, and the transmissive methods with which the teacher was comfortable), and to hypothesise that the teachers' descriptions of their teaching philosophies might understate the influence of transmissive approaches, in order to avoid being labelled as anachronistic.

Taking a retrospective view, I believe that my 'semi-insider' status at the host institute created a number of challenges, but ultimately helped me to develop an understanding of the research setting that was both rich and insightful.

#### **4.2.2 Probing the host institute**

Between October 2008 and June 2009, I was required to conduct a number of small-scale empirical investigations, as part of my researcher training. These investigations were not, in a strict sense, part of the study reported in this thesis. However, in anticipation of the main study, I designed these studies in such a way that they cohered with each other, and with the PhD project as a whole. Consequently, this initial investigation served to enhance my research skills, pilot various data generation methods and instruments, and derive an initial set of findings which would guide the main study.



**Figure 4-1 Probing the host institute**

This initial investigation, which is schematically depicted in Figure 4-1, consisted of two sequential phases, involving data generation and data analysis respectively. During the data generation phase, two interviews with English language teachers were carried out, and a questionnaire survey with open-ended questions was distributed among language learners. The data generated from these instruments were subsequently processed using analytical methods based on grounded theory. In addition, courseware that was used at the language institute was subjected to content analysis (Krippendorff, 2004; Neuendorf, 2002): First, a sample of learning materials was disaggregated into individual activities, which were coded according to their content. Subsequently, cluster analysis was applied to the data, and a typology of lessons was empirically defined.

The findings of this investigation were then synthesised into a set of tentative theoretical insights (Figure 4-2), which have been reported in Kostoulas (2010a) and Kostoulas (2010b). In summary, it was hypothesised that ELT practices emerged from the interaction of two competing paradigms: a dominant form of ELT, which prioritised Anglo-centric resources and norms, and an emerging critical paradigm that valorised local alternatives. It was further hypothesised that the points of contact between these paradigms were the content of instruction, the pedagogical methods and the ends of ELT, which were termed ‘points of

methodological tension'. The argument was put forward that, despite the dominance of the former paradigm, "these globalising influences are neither monolithic nor absolute" and that "local circumstance can counteract global influences", thus calling into question deterministic accounts of ELT (Kostoulas, 2010a, pp. 398-399).

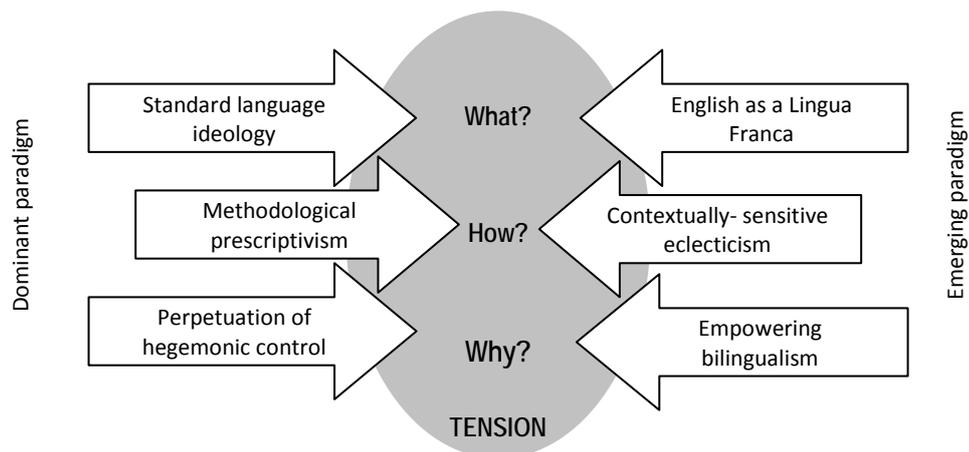


Figure 4-2 The tentative theoretical model

### 4.3 Generating data

In my initial research plan, provision had been made for a ten-month period of fieldwork, starting in September 2010. It was envisaged that the data generation period would be divided into four phases, which corresponded to the nine-week terms in which an academic year was divided at the host institute (Table 4-2).

Phase One (September and October 2010) built on the tentative findings of my preparatory fieldwork at the host institute (Section 4.2.2). During this phase I collected preliminary, broad-strokes information about the content, methods and ends of ELT at the host institute, which had been identified as 'points of tension' between the dominant and emerging paradigms (Figure 4-1). My aim, at that stage, was to identify how conceptualisations of content, methods and goals differed, depending on the informing

paradigm one subscribed to; and to then use this information in order to formulate an understanding of how the paradigms interacted. However, preliminary analysis of the data, which took place alongside data generation, suggested that the tentative model I had been using required refinement, because the ‘emerging paradigm’ conflated undertheorised modes of local pedagogy and critical views that were being articulated in the literature but not encountered in the field. In response to this insight, my interim model was reconceptualised and a ‘local’ or ‘transmissive’<sup>1</sup> paradigm was included in it.

| <b>Phase</b> | <b>Duration</b>              | <b>Focus</b>              |
|--------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>One</b>   | September – October 2010     | Content, methods, goals   |
| <b>Two</b>   | November 2010 – January 2011 | Transmissive paradigm     |
| <b>Three</b> | February – April 2011        | Intentionalities, context |
| <b>Four*</b> | May – June 2011              | Validation                |

*\*not implemented*

**Table 4-2 Data generation phases**

Phase Two (November 2010 – January 2011) aimed at developing my understanding of the newly-defined ‘transmissive’ paradigm. During this period, I focused my interviews and questionnaire surveys on traditional conceptualisations of language content and learning (e.g., views on grammar teaching). Similarly, I observed lessons which were likely to be informed by transmissive pedagogical approaches, such as lesson plans with explicit grammar awareness learning objectives. With regard to the documentary evidence, I traced the distribution of the three paradigms in the courseware used at the host institute. By the end of Phase Two, I was beginning to develop a richer understanding of the content and methods used at the host institute, albeit at a purely descriptive level.

Phase Three, spanning from February to April 2011, investigated the connections between the host institute and its context(s). The main issues that were raised in this phase included societal expectations, interactions with the state school system, certification and teacher training. This information led to the eventual development of the insights into

<sup>1</sup> This ‘transmissive’ paradigm broadly corresponded to what I described as ‘Technical’ paradigm in the literature review (p. 62). However, in the interest of tracing how my thinking developed inductively as I engaged with the data, in this chapter I have retained the interim terminology I used.

intentionalities, which are reported in Chapter 7. Since I was, at the same time, conducting preliminary analysis of the Phase Two data, I was also able to identify specific gaps in my dataset, which I addressed through focused information collection.

My initial data generation plan also provided for a fourth phase of fieldwork, which would serve to validate the developing findings. However, by the time Phase Three had been completed, I had become conscious that my presence was causing participant fatigue, and occasional frictions in my relation with the management of the host institute, among whom it was felt that by probing into policies and practices I was indirectly undermining their leadership. I was also conscious of an emerging polarisation between those members of staff who felt that my presence was disruptive and research participants who, in the course of our work together, seemed keen to report grievances and push for changes in the expectation that I could influence decision-making. In view of these tensions, and bearing in mind that my interim findings were not sufficiently developed for validation to be meaningful, I decided against implementing Phase Four.

To generate the data, four research strands were implemented in parallel throughout the three fieldwork phases. Each research strand used a different method, in order to elicit information from a different source, thus achieving source and method triangulation (Brown, 2001, pp. 228-229). Specifically, eleven semi-structured interviews were used to elicit data from teachers (Strand A). These data were recorded in interview transcripts and summaries, as well as methodological and reflexive memos, as described in detail in Section 4.3.1. In addition, four questionnaire surveys were administered to students at the host institute, from whom 60 completed questionnaires were collected (Strand B, Section 4.3.2). Moreover, twelve lessons from a variety of classes were observed in order to develop insights into the actuality of teaching (Strand C). Insights from the observations were recorded in observation forms and subsequently twelve narrative reconstructions of

the lessons were generated, as described in Section 4.3.3. Finally, documentary evidence, such as syllabus documents, reports and learning materials, were studied using qualitative and quantitative methods (Strand D, Section 4.3.4). These primary sources of data were complemented by secondary data, including substantive, reflexive and methodological memos and interim reports. Table 4-3 presents an overview of the data that were used in this study, and contains cross-references to tables where these data are described in more detail.

|                            | <b>Primary Data</b>   | <b>Additional details</b> |
|----------------------------|---|---------------------------|
| Strand A (Interviews)      | 11 transcripts/summaries<br>11 interview forms  | Table 4-4                 |
| Strand B (Questionnaires)  | 60 questionnaires   | Table 4-5                 |
| Strand C (Observations)    | 12 observation forms<br>12 reconstructed lessons  | Table 4-6                 |
| Stand D (Content Analysis) | 1.023 textbook activities<br>Non-structured corpus of learning and testing materials and syllabus documents | Table 4-7                 |

**Table 4-3 Overview of primary data**

In the research methods literature, the argument has been put forward that the combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods is epistemologically flawed, due to the incompatibility of their foundational beliefs: quantitative methods are usually associated with a positivist tradition, whereas qualitative ones fall under the constructivist paradigm (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). While such concerns are not without merit, it should be noted that the ontological and epistemological beliefs that underpin this study go beyond the positivist/constructivist dichotomy, allowing for the meaningful integration of those methods that are best suited to each data source.

In addition to the expectation that by combining methods I would eschew mono-method bias (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998, p. 40), the use of multiple research methods and data sources was motivated by three aims, as described by Greene, et al. (1989). Firstly, it was hoped that comparison of the data across sources would enhance confidence in the findings if the data converged, or it would lead to theory refinement if theoretically

significant differences between sources were observed. Secondly, it was expected that the minor differentiations in focus among the various research strands could highlight different aspects of the phenomena under study. Lastly, there was the expectation built into the research design that the findings from each strand would mutually guide and inform the further implementation of the other strands (cf. Alexander, Thomas, Cronin, Fielding, & Moran-Ellis, 2008, p. 132).

#### **4.3.1 The teachers' perspective**

The teachers' views were elicited through interviews for four reasons. Interviews are recommended in the research methods literature as appropriate for providing insights into the ways in which individuals perceive different events and processes within a social entity (Robson, 2002, p. 271). Moreover, it was my personal belief that by conducting interviews, I would be able to capitalise on pre-existing good rapport with many potential participants. I also felt that an interview format would provide me with flexibility to explore new topics, which was desirable on account of the inductive approach taken in this project. When designing my research plan, it was also my belief an interview format would be beneficial to teachers, as they would be provided with a 'safe space' where they could engage in non-judgemental discourse about their practice, in a way akin to Co-operative Professional Development (Edge, 1992, 2002).

Prior to the interview, potential participants were approached by an associate who invited their participation. During the meeting, teachers were given a letter which provided details about the interview, emphasised that participation was voluntary and that participants were free to withdraw for any or no reason, and asserted confidentiality and anonymity. A 'Demographics and Consent Form' was attached to the letter, for interested teachers to return to me after due deliberation. Both documents, which are reproduced in Appendix C.2, were written in English, as this was the working language in the host institute.

| Phase        | Participant | Duration | Language           | Recorded | Validation |
|--------------|-------------|----------|--------------------|----------|------------|
| <b>One</b>   | Martha      | ~70'     | English<br>(Greek) | 27'      | Summary    |
|              | Sarah Jane  | ~60'     | English            | 42'      | Transcript |
|              | Rose        | ~70'     | English            | No       | Summary    |
| <b>Two</b>   | Donna       | ~40'     | Greek              | No       | Summary    |
|              | Sarah Jane  | ~60'     | English            | 48'      | Summary    |
|              | Amy         | ~30'     | English            | No       | Summary    |
|              | Christina   | ~25'     | Greek              | 21'      | Transcript |
| <b>Three</b> | Addie       | ~50'     | English            | 48'      | Summary    |
|              | Mel         | ~50'     | English            | 31'      | Summary    |
|              | Amy         | ~60'     | Greek              | 46'      | Summary    |
|              | Rose        | ~30'     | English            | No       | Summary    |

**Table 4-4 Interview information**

Eleven interviews were conducted for this study, as shown in Table 4-3. In order to strike a balance between flexibility and structure, I opted for a 'semi-structured' interview format (Robson, 2002, pp. 270-278), in which the topics of discussion were pre-determined, but the wording of questions, sequencing of topics and time devoted to each topic were only loosely specified. That having been said, in the course of the study, my interview technique developed from a relatively rigid structure based on an interview guide (Appendix C.3) to a more informal, conversational style, which reflected my increasing competence and confidence.

Interviews began with a non-recorded pre-interview stage intended to establish rapport, confirm informed consent and ease any apprehensions that the participants might be feeling. This was followed by the main interview stage, where substantive information was elicited, and which was normally recorded using a digital voice recorder. In some instances, when participants were reluctant to be recorded, the interview content was recorded in notes. In the end, there was a (non-recorded) debriefing stage, during which comments were invited regarding the interview process itself.

Even though nearly all the staff at the host institute could speak Modern Greek natively, I had intended to conduct interviews in English. This was a decision which reflected my respect for the host institute policies, pragmatic considerations pertaining to the



me, in order to compensate for challenges that the teacher seemed to be having in expressing her views.

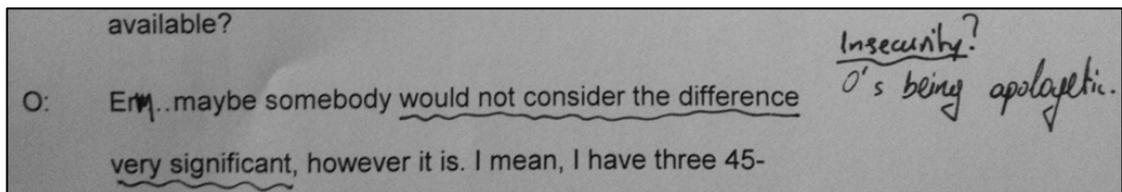


Figure 4-3 Sample marginal comments

Immediately after the interview, an 'Interview Feedback Form' was completed (Appendix C.4), with substantive comments regarding the content of the interview and methodological remarks about the interview process. Where available, recordings were transcribed and a summary of the interview was produced. Marginal comments (e.g., Figure 4-3) were made on the transcript early on, as recommended by Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 67). These served as an initial record of emerging analytical categories, and as meta-comments on the interview process. Finally, an unmarked copy of the transcript or the interview summary was made available to the participants for validation. At this stage, participants were asked to orally re-confirm their consent to have the interview data anonymously incorporated in scholarly publications, and they were given the opportunity to rephrase or withdraw remarks with which they felt uncomfortable.

The data from the teachers' interviews were primarily used to generate insights regarding the purposes of ELT instruction, which are reported in Chapter 5, and to a lesser degree its content and the practices. Moreover, the process of conducting the interviews appeared to be of some benefit to the participating teachers as well, as it seemed to provide an outlet for their problematisation, and to trigger reflection. The following statement, by one of the teachers, is typical of views many teachers shared at the conclusion of the interview: "it was helpful to put into words all the things that had been swimming around in my mind".

### **4.3.2 The students' views**

The second research strand focussed on the perspective of students at the host institute, which was elicited through a series of four small-scale questionnaire surveys. Self-report questionnaires were used for several reasons. Firstly, I was conscious that the power disparity between me and learners might have a coercive effect, which was ethically unacceptable, and also risked compromising the quality of data. While conscious that some self-reported questionnaire responses might be deliberately unhelpful or jocular, I felt that the lack of face-to-face contact and the inherent anonymity of questionnaire surveys made them a preferable option. In addition, I was keen to tap into the insights of as many students as possible in order to ensure the within-group generalisability of my findings (Maxwell, 2002, pp. 50-52), and questionnaire surveys provided the means to generate and process large quantities of structured data with efficiency (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000, pp. 246-247).

I had hoped to administer surveys to all or most of the learners at the host institute, but in the interest of minimising disruption to the students' academic work, it was decided that I would have access to one or two groups in each interview phase. The participating groups were selected through negotiation with the school management and their teachers. My preferences regarding the participants' ages and level of study were taken into account, but pragmatic considerations also weighed on the selection process.

To ensure informed consent, I visited the participating students' classes, where I briefly explained the purpose of my research, outlined what might be expected of participating students, and emphasised that I would not be able to identify individual students, nor would I divulge any potentially compromising information to their teachers. This briefing was conducted in English, on account of the monolingual educational policy of the host institute, but I capitalised on my experience as a language teacher in order to deliver the

information in ways that were appropriate to the learners' linguistic and cognitive maturity. As an added ethical safeguard, a letter was provided for the learners' parents, in which permission was requested for participation in the study. Attached to the letter was a form for recording consent. These documents were written in Greek, the mother language of most (though not all) participants, in order to minimise comprehension problems (translated versions appear in Appendix D.2).

Copies of the questionnaires were also administered to the students at that time. The deployment of the questionnaires involved addressing the tension between the policy of using English only to communicate with the learners, and the pragmatic challenges of eliciting conceptually complex information from young learners in a language that they had not fully mastered. As a compromise, parallel versions of the questionnaires in both Greek and English were made available to the students, and care was taken to ensure that the English language versions used language structures commensurate with the potential respondents' L2 proficiency. Potential student respondents were orally encouraged to respond in any language they felt most comfortable with, and they were reminded that neither their language choice nor any language infelicities would impact their academic record.

The students were asked to complete the questionnaires on their own time (assuming no objections from their parents), so that this activity would not infringe on the instructional time at the host institute. They were also instructed to place completed questionnaires and consent forms in a collection box that had been set up at the school lobby. A week after the initial meeting, class teachers provided the students with a reminder, in order to increase response rates. Finally, two weeks after the initial meeting, the survey was considered to be complete and the questionnaire collection box was withdrawn. Table 4-5 summarises information regarding the administration of the surveys.

| Phase     | Respondents' L2 proficiency      | Number of respondents | Response rate | Greek / English |
|-----------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| One       | Lower intermediate               | 8                     | 73%           | 4/4             |
| Two       | Upper intermediate               | 10                    | 42%           | 0/10            |
| Three (a) | Advanced                         | 13                    | 64%           | 0/13            |
| Three (b) | Intermediate, Upper Intermediate | 29                    | (n/a)         | 11/18           |

**Table 4-5 Questionnaires administration details**

The first questionnaire (Appendix D.3) was deployed to a class of eleven lower intermediate students in their early teens, of whom eight responded. Building on a typology of lessons which had been empirically generated during the pilot inquiry (Section 4.2.1), the questionnaire described various lesson sequences and asked learners to comment on their frequency and on their feelings about each lesson type (e.g., Figure 4-4a). This set of questions was followed by a series of quantitative prompts and open-ended questions regarding traditional and communicative teaching practices, and the role of the Standard Language and local variants (e.g., Figure 4-4b), Likert-type items and open-ended questions probing reasons for learning English (e.g., Figure 4-4c) and a short section collecting demographic information.

The second survey (Appendix D.4) was administered to two upper-intermediate (teenager) classes. This questionnaire focused on transmissive pedagogy: it began with of a series of Likert-type scales intended to elicit data on the students' practices regarding grammar and vocabulary learning. Interspersed among them were open-ended questions eliciting more elaborate factual information. This was followed by a series of quantitative prompts and open-ended questions eliciting the students' views on transmissive learning practices, a series of questions on testing practices, and a section on demographic information. Ten questionnaires were collected from 24 students, and judging by the exceptional quality of the responses (Figure 4-5), they seemed to have been completed by the strongest and most enthusiastic learners.

**Lesson type 1**

The teacher talks about a new grammar rule

The students do exercises to practice the new language

The students talk or write a story using what they have learnt

Usual  
 Not so usual  
  
 I like it! 😊  
 I don't like it! ☹️  
 I think this lesson is... \_\_\_\_\_

**a. Lesson Types**

## What do you think about learning English?

---

Now it's time for something different. Look at the pictures below: these are children who have very different opinions about English, and since they cannot agree, you must decide who's right! Put a tick (✓) under the child whose opinion seems more reasonable, and answer the questions that follow.



Our teacher never speaks in Greek and I don't always understand what she says. She must sometimes speak in Greek too. Does she think she's in England?

Thomas



Our teacher must always speak in English even if some children do not understand her. I don't like it when she speaks in Greek. This is not a Greek class!

Joanna

**How important is it to use English in class? Should we use Greek sometimes? If so when?**

**b. Attitudes towards English**

### Will English help you later in life?

Of course!

I think so

I don't think so

No!

Why (not)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**c. Reasons for learning English**

Figure 4-4 Questionnaire extracts

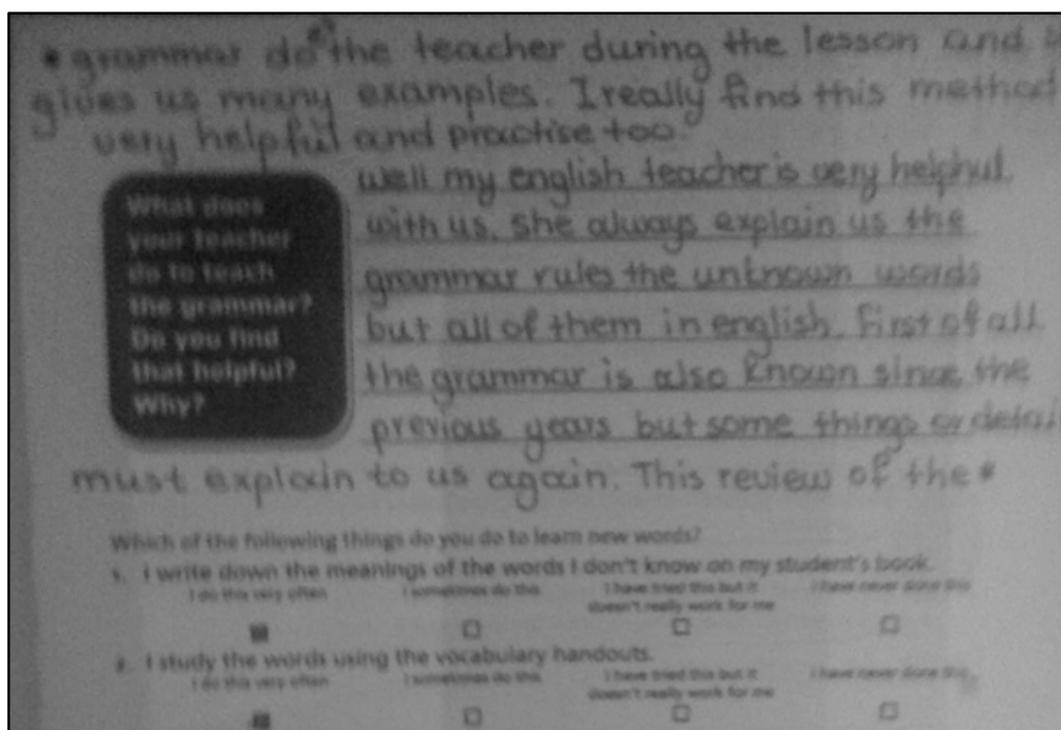


Figure 4-5 Completed questionnaire extract

The third survey (Appendix D.5) was deployed to two groups of advanced learners (adolescents and young adults) attending an exam preparation course. The questionnaire, which was similar in structure and form to the ones described above, contained questions on the students' reasons for learning English, the way private language centres compared against state school education, and the impact of certification. This questionnaire was completed by 13 out of 19 students in the two groups.

A fourth questionnaire survey (Appendix D.6) was conducted towards the end of Phase Three, in order to elicit additional information regarding Listening, Speaking and Writing activities, as the preliminary analysis of previously collected data indicated a need for more data about these issues. At the request of the host institute management, this questionnaire also included questions specifically designed to provide feedback on these aspects of instruction. The survey, which was addressed at students at the Senior and Upper Intermediate programmes, was administered by the host institute staff without my involvement, and was completed by 29 students.

| <b>Participant</b> | <b>Language</b> | <b>Comments</b>  |
|--------------------|-----------------|--|
| <b>Andreas</b>     | English         | Highly sophisticated answers; frequent meta-comments in the margins of the questionnaire.<br>Missing data: Likert scales in Section 3 (probable answers inferred). |
| <b>Vaso</b>        | English         | Negative case: tactfully critical  |
| <b>Georgia</b>     | English         |  |
| <b>Dimitris</b>    | English         | Missing data: Item 2.1   |
| <b>Eleni</b>       | English         |  |
| <b>Zoe</b>         | English         | Missing data: Binary choices in Section 2, Likert scales in Section 3 (probable answers inferred), demographic section.  |
| <b>Elias</b>       | English         |  |
| <b>Thanasis</b>    | English         | Very comprehensive responses to open-ended questions: uses up all the available space in the page including margins.   |
| <b>Ino</b>         | English         | Only partially completed; leaves out most open-ended questions.  |
| <b>Kostas</b>      | English         |  |

**Table 4-6** Sample questionnaire screening table

Pre-analytical work took place immediately after the completion of each survey. Each completed questionnaire was designated with a (fictional) name and subjected to initial screening, as shown in Table 4-6. Wherever possible, missing quantitative data was inferred from the open-ended questions. Notes on data manipulation were recorded in methodological memos (e.g., Figure 4-6), and memos were also drafted describing unusual cases (e.g., Appendix D.7). The responses were then transcribed, preserving as many features of the original as possible (e.g., non-standard orthography, strikethroughs, emoticons), and the answers to each open-ended question were collated in individual word processor files such as the one partially reproduced in Figure 4-7. Summaries of the responses were recorded in analytical memos (e.g., Figure 4-8 and Appendix D.7).

## Questionnaire Two

### Data processing comments

1. Questionnaires were assigned random names, based on the first 10 letters of the Greek alphabet.
2. Andreas Questionnaire is highly edited, with meta-comments written on various closed items e.g. on item 1.9 she has underlined the word *speak* to indicate additional emphasis. This highly mature behaviour may be explained by the fact that Andreas has indicated that he has participated in a similar research project in the past. This questionnaire is interesting enough to warrant a vignette.
3. Vaso's questionnaire was not entirely completed. The Likert scale in section 4 was not completed, and answers were inferred from the answers to the open-ended questions. In the same questionnaire, item 5.4 ('How long have you been studying English) was apparently misunderstood as Vaso answered '2 hours'. This may refer to the amount of time she spends preparing for class.
4. In her questionnaire Eleni indicated that she could speak Albanian and elementary Italian, so it's reasonable to assume that she's an Albanian immigrant. I considered replacing the name with something more Albanian-sounding (e.g. Elsa) but decided against this, as it could compromise the anonymity of responses. However, I am suddenly conscious that the exclusive use of Greek names as designations for the

Figure 4-6 Methodological memo extract

### What does your teacher do to teach the grammar? Do you find that helpful? Why?

She explains us the grammar and after she does some exercises in the blackboard. I found it helpful, but sometimes I don't understand everything because it's in a foreign language.

Well my English teacher is very helhul with us. She always explain us the grammar rules the unknown words but all of them in English. First of all the grammar is also known since the previous years but some things or details must explain to us again. The review of the grammar does the teacher during the lesson and she gives us many examples. I really find this method very helpful and practice too.

She tells and examples us the grammar. We write down it to the notebook. I find it very helpful because I understand much better the grammar in this way than to read it from the student book.

She gives us photocopies with the vocabulary of every unit. We copy it to our notebook and we learn it from there. In my opinion, this way is more helpful because if I copy something to somewhere else I learn it easier.

Figure 4-7 Collated responses document extract

### How do you feel about class tests? Why (not)?

The students' attitudes towards testing were quite pragmatic (e.g. '*You have to know things and the teachers must know if you know them*'). Most students (n = 7) stated that tests '*are OK*' although some were quick to point that '*nobody loves tests*' and '*we aren't in love with them*'.

Attitudes towards tests seem to be influenced by a perception that they are useful for learning (e.g. '*they help us*'; '*we practice by them*'; '*they ... are a way to review*') and for providing feedback to students and teachers ('*is a personal challenge for me to learn of my mistakes*'; '*our teachers want to see what we learn, so they can explain us*'). On the other hand, it was pointed out that '*sometimes they're boring*', and several students stated that tests generate unpleasant psychological states ('*sometimes I feel a lot of depress about them*'; '*I hate them. I'm extremely nervous at every kind of test*').

Figure 4-8 Analytical memo extract

The data elicited from the questionnaire responses informed findings pertaining to all the research questions, but especially the ones about the intentionalities of ELT at the host institute (Chapter 5). Throughout the fieldwork, I felt very conscious of the ethical implications of exploiting the time and effort of language learners, whose contributions I was unable to reciprocate. So it was very gratifying to read, in the questionnaires, comments such as the following:

I want to say [something]. It's about the communication [between] teacher and student. If you don't communicate with the teacher and he / she doesn't communicate with you, you can't have a successful lesson. [...] we're teenagers and you know that our mood isn't always good. Thank you that you listened me!

### **4.3.3 Classroom activity**

The third data generation strand involved non-participatory classroom observation, which aimed to generate insights into actual teaching practices, which would supplement the self-reported data from the interviews and questionnaires. This methodological choice was informed by Robson's recommendation that observation is "pre-eminently the appropriate technique for getting at the 'real life' in the real world" (2002, p. 310). Observational techniques primarily rely on the researchers' skill, and in the research methods literature one is cautioned that researchers cannot be expected "to function adequately as human instruments without an extensive background of training and exposure" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 195). However, I expected that my substantial experience in classroom observation, as part of my professional duties, and the fact that classroom observation strand was being used to complement several other research strands, both mitigated the possible risks of using observational methods.

| Phase        | Class                | Students                | Objectives                        | Purpose  |
|--------------|----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| <b>ONE</b>   | B' Class             | 10; YL / Early Teen; A2 | Reading (Vocabulary?)             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How does the lesson relate to the coursebook? What is homework integrated in the lesson plan?</li> </ul>  |
|              | B' Class             | 9; YL / Early Teen; A2  | Nominally writing, really grammar | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How is the class organised? What is the role of learners / teachers?</li> </ul>   |
|              | D' Class             | 12; Teen; B1            | Grammar                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How is grammar taught at this level? Are there any differences from the Senior levels?</li> </ul>   |
|              | FCE Remedial         | 1; Teen; B1+            | Exam practice Grammar             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What teaching methodology is used in 1-on-1 lessons? How does this differ from mainstream practice at the host institute?</li> </ul>  |
| <b>TWO</b>   | B' Class             | 13; YL / early teen; A2 | Grammar                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What transmissive practices are used in grammar teaching?</li> <li>What other practices are used in grammar teaching?</li> <li>How do learners seem to relate to these practices?</li> </ul>  |
|              | FCE Exam preparation | 7; young adults; B2     | Grammar & Vocabulary              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What procedures are used to teach grammar and vocabulary to adults?</li> <li>How do adult learners seem to relate to these practices?</li> </ul>  |
|              | D' Class             | 7; teen; B1+            | Reading, Listening, Grammar       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How are alternative (i.e. non-transmissive) practices implemented?</li> <li>How do learners relate to alternative (i.e. non-transmissive) practices?</li> <li>How do established transmissive practices influence this lesson?</li> </ul> |
|              | Junior A             | 11; YL; A1              | Reading & Vocabulary              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What aspects of vocabulary are taught at this level?</li> <li>How is vocabulary taught?</li> <li>How is vocabulary recorded?</li> <li>How is vocabulary tested?</li> </ul>  |
| <b>THREE</b> | A' Class             | 12; YL; A1              | Reading and grammar               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What methods are used to teach reading?</li> <li>Is reading taught as an independent skill rather than as language input?</li> </ul>  |
|              | C' Class             | 9; Early teen; A2+      | Reading, Listening, Writing       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How are the skills integrated?</li> <li>Are there deviations from communicative methodology?</li> </ul>   |
|              | D' Class             | 8; Teen; B1             | Writing                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What approach to writing is taken?</li> <li>What aspects of writing are emphasised?</li> </ul>  |
|              | B' Class             | 7; Early teen; A2       | Reading and Vocabulary            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent is reading taught as an independent skill rather than as language input?</li> </ul>  |

Table 4-7 Observation Information

Lessons were selected for observation using theoretical sampling criteria (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, pp. 144-157) and pragmatic considerations. Specifically, in Phase One I aimed for observing a variety of lesson types (reading, writing, grammar, and exam-preparation), in order to make broad inferences about pedagogical practices. In Phase Two, my research focus shifted to developing a better understanding of the transmissive paradigm, so I aimed to observe lessons with an explicit focus on grammar and vocabulary teaching across a variety of levels. In Phase Three, focus shifted to observing lessons that focused on communicative skills, because these lesson types were underrepresented in my data. Once I had decided on the type of lesson and learner level that I preferred to observe, I negotiated access with the teachers involved and the school management during staff meetings, where we identified lessons (a) which fulfilled my theoretical criteria, (b) in which the teacher was happy to be observed, and (c) where it was felt that my presence would not disrupt the academic work of the class. Twelve lessons were observed in total, as shown in Table 4-7.

The observation protocol consisted of three stages: Prior to the lesson, the class teacher and I held a brief discussion, using the teacher's lesson plan as a prompt. Information was recorded regarding the class, the learning objectives of the lesson, and any other comments the teacher wished to make. During this stage, I also volunteered to observe any other aspects of the lesson that the teacher felt appropriate for the purposes of their professional development. The following extract, from an observation report (see next paragraph), describes a typical example of such an exchange:

In our meeting before the lesson, I asked [the teacher] to talk to me about how she intended to approach the lesson. She explained that the class she was teaching differed from what the syllabus envisioned in two important ways: their grammar awareness was more than satisfactory (even if they continue to make mistakes in production), so it wasn't necessary to revise extensively, and their oral output left a lot to be desired. She explained that she saw it as her main priority to encourage more output, which she did in two ways: (a) by encouraging learner participation in class, and (b) by incorporating speaking tasks in her lesson plans. What she wanted from me was to help her with the assessment of a speaking task, by providing a

second opinion on their oral output. She also indicated that she would welcome any other feedback.

For the actual observation, I positioned myself in a relatively non-obtrusive place in the classroom, usually in the last desks, and used a form to make notes as the lesson progressed (Appendix E.2). A large field was provided for describing the lesson, and there was also space to record specific information on its content, methods and goals, i.e., information that directly informed Research Questions 1-3. After the observation, and a brief follow-up consultation with the teacher, I engaged in structured reflection regarding the lesson and recorded the outcomes in designated fields in the observation form.

Soon afterwards, an observation report, such as the one partially reproduced in Appendix E.3 was drafted. The report included information regarding the pre-observation meeting, an extended narrative (2-4 pages) reconstructing the lesson that had been observed, and any additional information provided in the follow-up consultation. Several extracts of such narratives can be found in Chapters 5, 6 and 7. Initial insights were also recorded, such as the following:

More broadly, I think this lesson illustrates both the potential for change, as exemplified by Rose's efforts to innovate, and the constraints within which this change takes place e.g. the coursebook, the need for standardisation, testing etc.

Methodological remarks, pertaining to the process of conducting the observation, and reflexive comments were also included as necessary:

It would seem that my own presence created some awkwardness. Although the teacher had initially agreed to being observed, I was given the impression that she'd rather I had not observed this particular lesson. I am not sure whether this was because she intended to experiment with a new lesson format, or whether the new format was a result of my presence.

Finally, a copy of the reconstructed lesson was provided to the teacher for participant validation. The reconstructed lesson narratives were primarily used to create a series of 'prototypical' instructional sequences, which are reported in Chapter 7. Moreover, the data

from the pre- and post-observation meetings informed my understanding of the teachers' views and attitudes, which are reported in Chapter 5.

#### **4.3.4 Documentary evidence**

Strand D was a content analysis of the textbooks in use at the host institute, which added a quantitative dimension to the methodology of the study. Content analysis has been defined as a “research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts [...] to the contexts of their use” (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 18), a definition which (despite its positivist overtones) was compatible with the aims of the study. In addition, the systematic study of documentary evidence has been argued to be particularly helpful in discovering “institutional realities” (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 77), while its unobtrusive nature reduces reactivity (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 40).

The content analysis aimed at generating a description of all the materials that were in use at the host institute (the ‘textual universe’), i.e., published materials such as coursebooks and workbooks, as well as materials prepared in-house (e.g., tests, worksheets etc.). These were to be unitised and coded, using categories that had been derived from the pilot inquiry. However, my initial attempts to design a coding scheme proved unsuccessful, as the tentative framework that had been generated in my preliminary study (Section 4.2.2) lacked sufficient descriptive power: the quantitative data seemed fragmentary and were difficult to compare with the findings emerging from the other data generation strands. In response to this challenge, during Phase One of fieldwork, I directed my efforts towards the generation of a holistic description of the materials, which focused on their overall structure and on salient qualitative features. This description, which was recorded in analytical memos, was used in conjunction with the insights from the other research strands in order to generate the coding scheme that will be presented in subsequent paragraphs.

| Programme                  | Length      | Designed | Books  | Notes   |
|----------------------------|-------------|----------|--|---|
| <b>Very Young Learners</b> | Two years   | 2010     | Class book,<br>Activity Book   | These programmes had been designed but not activated on account of insufficient enrolment.                    |
| <b>Junior</b>              | Two years   | 2006     | <u>Rainbow:</u><br>Class book A*, B<br>Activity book A, B*   |   |
| <b>Senior (Action)</b>     | Three years | 2004     | <u>Action:</u><br>Student's book B, C*<br>Workbook B*, C   | This programme was being phased out, and only the last two classes were on offer.                             |
| <b>Senior (Quest)</b>      | Three years | 2010     | <u>Quest 1:</u><br>Student's book*<br>Workbook*<br>Round Up*   | This programme was gradually deployed to replace the Action programme, and only the first class was on offer. |
| <b>Upper Intermediate</b>  | Two years   | 2010     | <u>Code Green (B1+)</u><br>Student's book* & workbook<br><u>Code Red (B2)</u><br>Student's book & workbook*<br>Practice tests* |   |
| <b>Proficiency</b>         | Two years   | -        | Practice tests   | This programme was constantly redesigned in response to learner needs   |

**Table 4-8 The reduced textual universe (asterisks denote inclusion in the sample)**

In order to adjust to the new timeframe, the textual universe was reduced by focussing on the 'core' materials used at the host institute, which were identified with the help of the management team. Typically, this included a coursebook and a workbook per level, and on some occasions a grammar book as well. Materials which were used at the teachers' discretion, and materials that were available for self-access, such as self-reference resources and supplementary 'skills' books, were excluded from the reduced textual universe. Also excluded were some materials such as tests, word-lists, grammar notes etc., which were being used consistently, but could not be unitised in ways that were comparable to those of the rest of the material. Finally, materials which were being piloted were also excluded. The reduced textual universe is highlighted in Table 4-8.

The reduced textual universe, which I began to study during Phase Two of fieldwork, was hierarchically structured in five levels, as shown in Table 4-9.

| Level           | Typical length                 | Typically provides material for | Role in the content analysis |
|-----------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>Book</b>     | 4-6 modules                    | One class                       | } Sampling units             |
| <b>Module</b>   | 2-3 units                      | One term (8-9 weeks)            |                              |
| <b>Unit</b>     | 3-5 lessons                    | One month                       | n/a                          |
| <b>Lesson</b>   | Two pages (double page spread) | One lesson                      | Recording units              |
| <b>Activity</b> | Several / page                 | Several / lesson                | Coding unit                  |

**Table 4-9 Structure of the textual universe**

Using this hierarchy as a guide, a two-tier strategy was used to create a sample that was commensurate to the scope of this study. First, one book of each type (coursebook, workbook, grammar book) was randomly selected from each programme. The sampled books have been marked with an asterisk in Table 4-8. Next, the selected books were divided into ‘modules’. A module was defined as the largest sequence of lessons whose structure was replicated more than once in the book. The following extract, from a planning document, describes the criteria used for the definition of modules:

**Organisation:** Often, a module consists of a number of ‘core lessons’, possibly preceded by an introduction and followed by a review or test of some kind.

**Thematic cohesion:** Frequently, the lessons in a module are thematically linked.

**Visual signposting:** Modules are often labelled as such (although alternative terms such as Unit are sometimes used). In the contents pages, visual devices such as brackets and colouring are sometimes used to identify individual modules. Often, the most distinctive feature is a visible discontinuity in the contents pages.

One module was then selected randomly from each book in the sample. On average, 22.1% of the pages in each book were sampled.

The sample was then disaggregated into lessons (‘recording units’ in Content Analysis terminology), which were used for processing data. Lessons were defined as series of activities that were apparently intended to be used in the space of a single class session. In defining the boundaries of lessons, I took into account the layout of materials (lessons tended to take up a double-page spread in the materials), as well as information in the contents pages (ignoring inconsistencies in the nomenclature used in each course). In total, the sample was divided into 112 recording units (Appendix F.2). Each lesson was assigned a

Recording Unit Identifier, and information about it was recorded in a Recording Unit checklist (Appendix F.3).

Each recording unit (lesson) was further subdivided into several activities, which served as the coding units of the analysis, i.e., the individual units to which properties were assigned. Activities, of which there were 1,023 in the sample, were defined as distinct sections that were to be used in a particular way in class, and broadly included what may be termed ‘exercises’, ‘tasks’ etc. in different books. Additional definition criteria for activities included layout (typically, activities occupied a visually distinguishable space in the materials) and visual signposting.

| <b>Variable A<br/>Level</b> | <b>Variable B<br/>Component</b> | <b>Variable C<br/>Methods</b> | <b>Variable D<br/>Outlook</b> | <b>Variable E<br/>Content</b> |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| A2: Junior                  | B1: Coursebook                  | C1: Transmissive              | D1: Anglocentric              | E1: Vocabulary                |
| A3: Quest                   | B2: Workbook                    | C2: Communicative             | D2: Pluricentric              | E2: Grammar                   |
| A4: Action                  | B3: Grammar                     | C3: Indeterminate             | D3: Hellenocentric            | E3: Writing                   |
| A5: Upper Inter.            | book                            |                               | D4: Neutral                   | E4: Reading                   |
|                             |                                 |                               |                               | E5: Speaking                  |
|                             |                                 |                               |                               | E6: Listening                 |
|                             |                                 |                               |                               | E7: Other                     |

**Table 4-10 Coding categories**

Each activity was considered to manifest five attributes, or variables, as summarised in Table 4-10. Variables A and B related the unit to the type of book and programme in which it was used, whereas the three remaining variables were derived from the refined theoretical model that had emerged from Phase One. Definitions of each category were recorded in a codebook which would be used for subsequent coding.

The activities that made up each lesson were listed in the Recording Unit Checklist (Appendix F3), and coded using the scheme that is presented in Table 4-9. Prior to commencing coding, a small corpus of activities was used for coder training and instrument refinement. A colleague and I used early drafts of the instrument and the codebook, and a concordance index ( $N_{\text{agreements}} / N_{\text{total}}$ ) was estimated for variables C, D and E. After successive iterations of piloting and category refinement, the concordance index

consistently approached 1.0, at which point the instruments were considered ready for deployment and the main coding phase began.

In order to ensure consistent application of the coding scheme, 10% of the recording units were re-coded at a later date and the checklists from the two iterations were compared. Krippendorff's  $\alpha$  (a chance-corrected metric that is used to estimate rater agreement) was found to be 0.93, which suggests a high degree of coding reliability (Krippendorff, 2009). Instances of variance were compared, but no obvious patterns were discernible, which seems to suggest that minor discrepancies must have resulted from carelessness or rater fatigue, rather than systematic problems in the coding scheme.

Phase Three of the content analysis focused on generating additional data regarding the Speaking, Writing and Reading activities. The Reading Activities checklist was used to record information regarding the content of reading passages, their length and their reading difficulty. The Listening Activities checklist was used to record information regarding the language varieties used in each text, and the Writing Activities checklist was used to designate the teaching approach used as well as more specific information on the focus of the activity. All these checklists have been reproduced in Appendix F.4. Similar techniques to the ones described in the previous paragraphs were used to ensure reliability. More detailed information regarding this phase can be found alongside the discussion of specific findings in Chapter 6.

Pre-analytical work that was carried out at this stage aimed to tease out preliminary findings through descriptive statistics: the distribution of various categories was measured using frequency counts, central tendencies were calculated, and bar charts were created as visual aids to facilitate further analysis (e.g., Figure 4-9). Appropriate statistical methods (e.g.,  $\chi^2$ ) were used to test whether differentiations in the distribution of categories

across the sample were statistically significant, and preliminary findings were recorded in analytical memos.

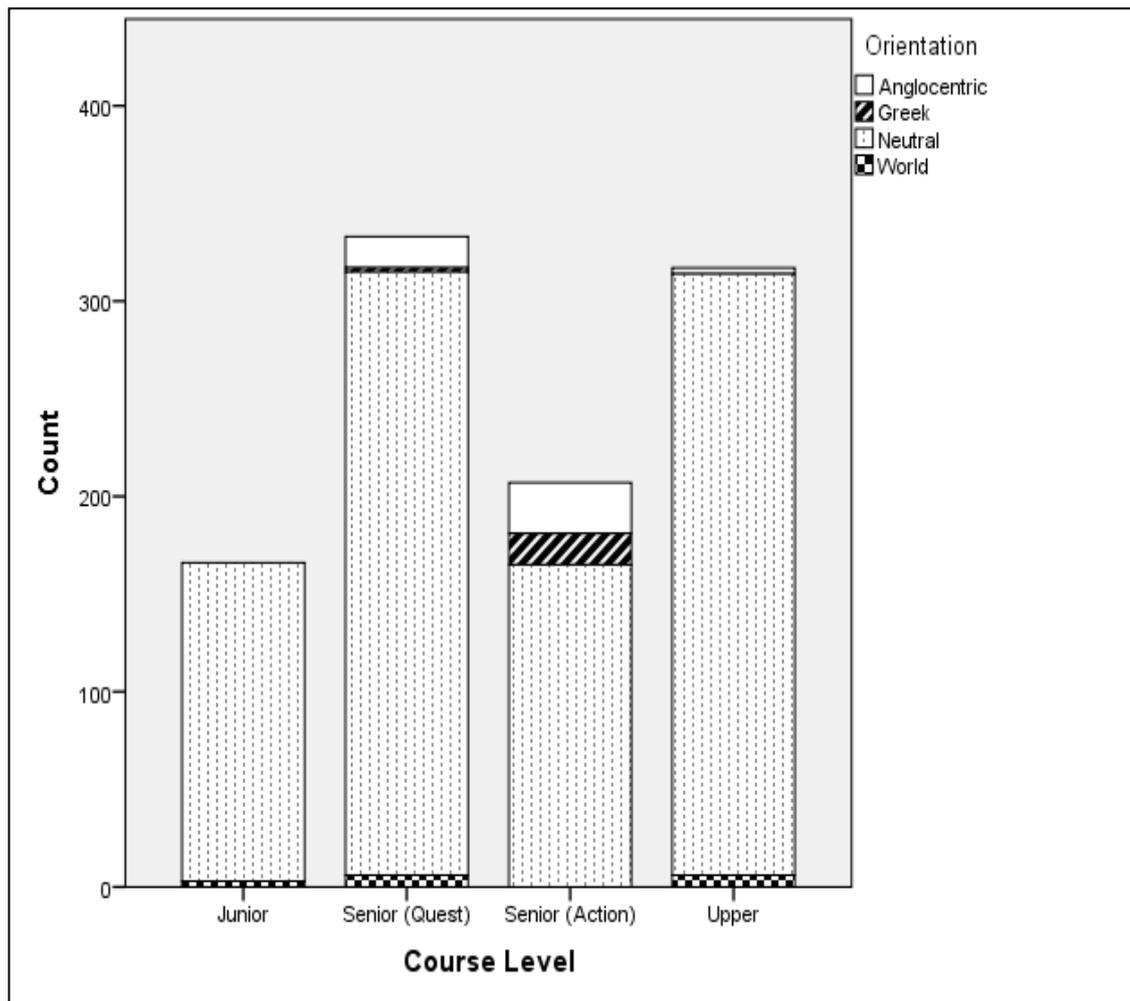


Figure 4-9 Sample SPSS-generated visual aid

The data generated in this strand were mainly used to inform the findings that are reported in Chapter 6, which discusses learning materials.

#### 4.4 Engaging with the data

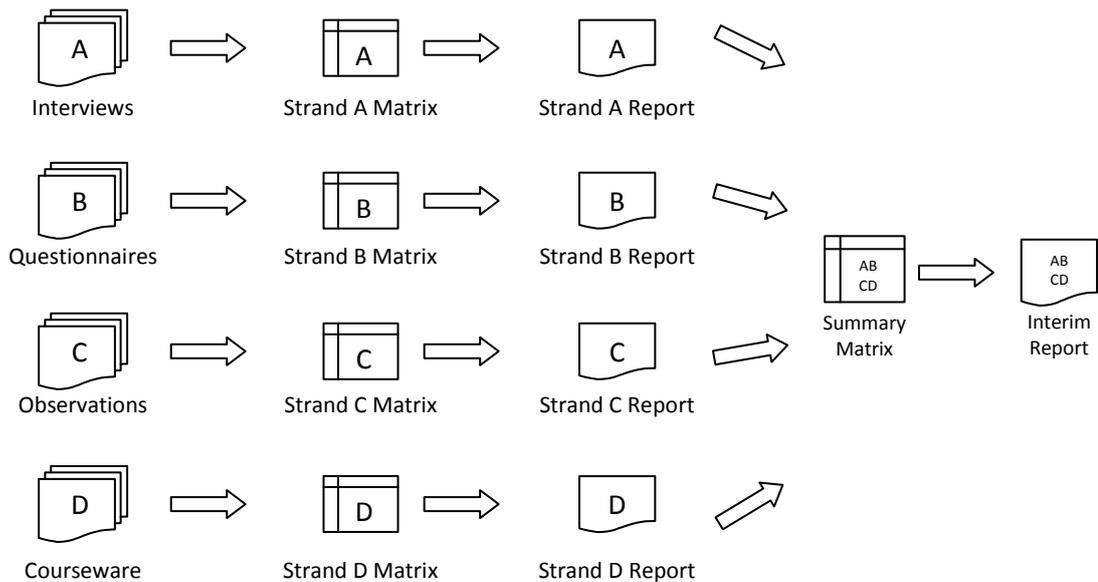
Data analysis was carried out in four main stages, which are described in the sections that follow: Section 4.4.1 deals with preliminary analytical work, which was conducted in tandem with data generation. The main principle that guided analysis at this stage was data reduction, which Miles and Huberman (1994), describe as a process of “selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming” (p. 10) qualitative data in order to derive

parsimonious descriptions. In Section 4.4.2, I describe the processes of open and axial coding, which formed the main analytical stages of the study. During these stages, the guiding principle was 'constant comparison': derived from grounded theory, constant comparison refers to a rigorous process of "comparing different pieces of data for similarities or differences" with a view to generating analytical categories (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 65). During the final stage of analysis, which I present in Section 4.4.3, analysis focused primarily on analytical induction, a bottom-up process of theory development during which early insights are constantly reformulated in the light of new evidence until a robust theoretical description has been generated (P. Johnson, 1998). It should be noted that the specification of guiding principles refers to differences in emphasis in each stage, as the processes of data reduction, constant comparison and analytical induction were difficult to view separately.

#### **4.4.1 Preliminary analytical work**

Preliminary analytical work was carried out alongside data generation between October 2010 and May 2011. The main analytical aim at this stage of analysis was to consolidate the data that was being generated from multiple sources, and to synthesise the emergent findings from the four different strands into a coherent description of the host institute.

This was achieved through alternating stages of data display and analytical text creation (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 101), as shown in Figure 4-10. At the end of every nine-week data generation phase, the information from each data source (i.e., teachers, students, lessons, documents) was entered into a matrix to facilitate comparison and contrast of emerging themes. Each matrix served as the basis for the creation of a report that summarised the data from that particular strand of the study. An example of such a matrix is presented in Appendix G.1.



**Figure 4-10 Overview of preliminary analytical work**

After the four strand-specific reports had been completed, the process was iterated in order to synthesise the emergent findings. A summary matrix was created, where findings from the different strands were displayed, and an interim progress report was then derived from it. The interim reports, extracts of which are presented in Appendix G.2, described the empirical work that had been carried out in the previous weeks, outlined tentative findings, contained reflective comments on methodology, ethics and reflexivity, and specified priorities for the next data generation phase. In addition to their analytical function, the interim reports, which were submitted to my supervisors, served as part of the internal audit of the study.

Being proficient in both Greek and English, I was able to analyse the data in their original languages, which – particularly in the case of Greek – helped me to comprehend nuances of meaning which a translation might have concealed. However, the data that appeared in the interim documents (e.g., memos, reports) were translated into English for obvious pragmatic reasons. In translating data extracts, I aimed for a functional rather than literal translation, due to the methodological impossibility of achieving isomorphic

correspondence between translated texts and the originals (Gonzalez y Gonzalez & Lincoln, 2006; Halai, 2007; Jagosh & Boudreau, 2009). To illustrate, I felt that a literal translation of the following student-generated comment, would have been rather cumbersome:

**Modern Greek**

Δε χρειάζεστε [sic] να κάνουμε κάποιες ασκήσεις που είναι μέσα από ένα κείμενο π.χ. Εγώ πάω σχολείο 1 φορά την εβδομάδα και από δίπλα λέει (Σ) σωστό ή (Λ) λάθος.

**Literal translation**

It is not needed to do some exercises which are from inside a text e.g. I go to school 1 time a week and, next to it, it says (C) Correct or (W) Wrong.

**Functional translation**

We don't really need to do reading comprehension exercises e.g. "I go to school once a week", followed by (T) True or (F) False.

The extract above, incidentally, illustrates a number of minor edits that were made for data representation: for example, quotation marks were added to the text to enhance clarity, and a spelling mistake in Modern Greek was unobtrusively suppressed, as it did not seem to be theoretically significant, and it unnecessarily stigmatised the respondent (see also section 4.4.3).

Through the preliminary analysis, I familiarised myself thoroughly with the dataset, and I was able to generate a tentative framework of conceptual categories which formed the starting point for the next stages of analysis.

#### **4.4.2 Open and axial coding**

During the second stage of analysis, which took place after the data had been generated, open coding was used to generate an initial set of categories from my dataset, which now included primary sources (Table 4-4.) and secondary sources (interim reports, analytical and reflexive memos etc.). In practical terms, this involved reading through the data and assigning one or more conceptual labels to various thematic units with the help of Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software.

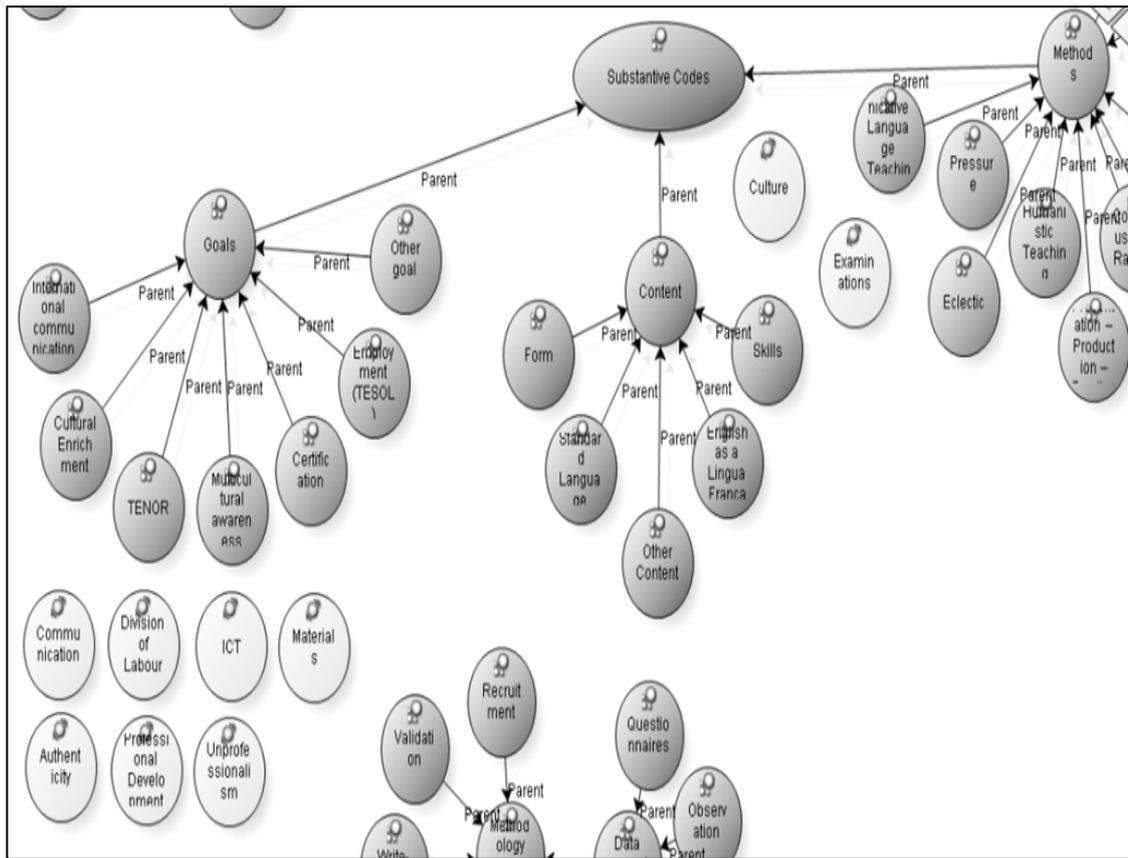


Figure 4-11 Initial coding scheme extract (a full version of the schematic is reproduced in Appendix G.3)

| Supercategory A: Substantive codes |                            |   |       |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------|---|-------|
| NVivo                              | Category Name              | Category Descriptor   | Notes |
| WHAT                               | Content                    | This is an umbrella category for various forms of curricular content.   |       |
| WHAT-SL                            | Standard Language          | This category refers to teaching English with reference to Native Speaker usage. There will be an emphasis on correctness (defined with reference to NS norms).                             |       |
| WHAT-ELF                           | English as a Lingua Franca | This category refers to teaching English as an International Language. There will be an emphasis on intelligibility, tolerance for L1 influences, compensation skills and simplified norms. |       |
| WHAT-F                             | Form                       | This category refers to teaching English with reference to form. It differs from WHAT-SL because there is an explicit emphasis to grammar awareness often in decontextualised form.         |       |
| WHAT-S                             | Skills                     | This category refers to teaching English through the development of various language and learning skills.   |       |
| WHAT-OT                            | Other content              | This category refers to other forms of curricular content.  |       |

Figure 4-12 Codebook extract

The distinguishing feature of open coding, in the sense used by grounded theorists, is that the coding scheme is not theoretically derived, but rather it emerges bottom-up from the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, pp. 160-164). In this case, a rough coding scheme (Figure 4-11) had already been derived, as a product of the preliminary analysis, and to ensure its consistent application, I gradually produced a codebook in which each category was described (Figure 4-12). During open coding, the scheme was constantly refined, as new categories were identified, and others were conflated, dropped or expanded with new subcategories. After several iterations, the coding scheme was stabilised, and short memos such as the one below were produced summarising the information in each code.

**NEST**

There is some reference in the data to the tension between native- and non-native speakers. e.g. look at [teacher's name] interview. I think that I could, perhaps see this as an instance of tension between global / local paradigms, though not as an instance of communicative / traditional. Connect to ITE?

These memos served as a permanent record of the process that led to the definition of the category, as well as a stimulus for further reflection. In addition to these 'substantive' memos, memos were also generated recording methodological decisions and reflexive comments.

One challenge that I frequently encountered during open coding pertained to responses that were ambiguous or unusually worded. To deduce the most likely intended meaning, I was often able to draw on my contextual knowledge as well as clues in the co-text. For instance, in one of the questionnaire responses, a student justified their desire to obtain a language certificate because "it is [something] that improves, you're good in English". Judging by the co-text, it seemed highly plausible that "improves" stood for "proves", and as a language teacher I knew this to be an error commonly encountered in learners' output. Consequently, I felt confident in assigning the designation "credentialism" to the extract, despite linguistic ambiguity. Other cases were less straightforward: elsewhere in the data, a typical lesson was described in the following terms:

Στο μάθημα των Αγγλικών πρώτα γράφουμε ορθογραφία, στη συνέχεια λέμε το μάθημα, μετά κάνουμε ασκήσεις... (emphasis added).

In the lesson of English, first we do the dictation, then *we say the lesson*, next we do exercises... (literal translation, emphasis added).

The highlighted phrase above was semantically ambiguous, as it might refer to a presentation of new content (see Section 7.3.2), or it could be a reference to a local pedagogical practice, which involves having nominated students recite the content of the previous lesson for consolidation and assessment (Giannoulis, 1980, p. 226). In such cases, where ambiguity could not be readily resolved, all applicable codes were assigned to the data.

| <b>Initial coding scheme</b>  | <b>Final coding scheme</b>   | <b>Chapter</b> |
|---|--|----------------|
| <u>Ends of instruction</u>  | <u>Intentionalities</u>  | 5              |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certification*</li> <li>• Integration</li> <li>• Culture</li> <li>• Supplementation</li> <li>• Protectionism</li> </ul>                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certification</li> <li>• Integration</li> <li>• Culture</li> <li>• Competition</li> <li>• Protectionism</li> </ul>  |                |
| <u>Content of instruction</u>   | <u>Coursebook content</u>  | 6              |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pronunciation</li> <li>• Grammar</li> <li>• Vocabulary</li> <li>• Speaking</li> <li>• Listening</li> <li>• Reading</li> <li>• Writing</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grammar</li> <li>• Vocabulary</li> <li>• Oral skills</li> <br/> <li>• Reading</li> <li>• Writing</li> </ul>   |                |
| <u>Methods of instruction</u>   | <u>Learning activities</u>   | 7              |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examinations*</li> <li>• Coursebooks</li> <li>• Language of instruction</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading and Vocabulary</li> <li>• Traditional Grammar</li> <li>• Inductive Grammar</li> <li>• Genre-based writing</li> <li>• Process-based writing</li> <li>• Integrated oral skills</li> <li>• Review</li> </ul> |                |

**Table 4-11 Coding schemes used for axial coding**

The third phase of analysis corresponded to the grounded theory process of ‘theoretical’ (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 261) or ‘axial’ coding (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 198), during which connections were drawn between the previously defined categories. Initially, fourteen major categories, or axes, were abstracted from the data, namely Pronunciation, Grammar,

Vocabulary, Speaking, Listening, Reading, Writing, Examinations/Certification, Coursebooks, Language of instruction, Integration, Culture, Supplementation, and Protectionism. In order to facilitate conceptual manipulation, these axes were grouped into three super-ordinate categories, which broadly corresponded to the themes that had emerged from my initial empirical probe at the host institute, namely the content, methods and ends of instruction (Table 4-11, left).

Using a variety of analytical tools and processes, such as data-display networks, cross-tabulations and 'conditional/consequential matrices' (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, pp. 90-94), hierarchical, associative and causal connections were drawn between these categories. These connections and other insights that emerged from analytical engagement with the data were recorded in eight extended analytical memos. Each memo, which ranged in length from 3,500 to 13,000 words, contained information on an axis or a super-ordinate category. The corpus of analytical text, spanning approximately 55,000 words, represented my first attempt to provide a comprehensive answer to the research questions.

Subsequent engagement with the analytical text indicated scope for improving on the initial coding scheme. The main issue that warranted attention was that several categories that had been listed under 'content of instruction' conflated information about teaching practices and about learning materials. Moreover, there was category overlap between 'methods' and 'ends of instruction', as the Certification/Examinations category could be equally assigned to both. In response, part of the dataset was re-coded using a refined set of categories (Table 4-11, middle). The revised categories were used as to provide organisational structure to the thesis: categories pertaining to the overarching construct of intentionality are discussed in Chapter 5, categories pertaining to coursebook content are presented in Chapter 6, and categories pertaining to learning activities are described in Chapter 7 (Table 4-11, right).

Through these analytical processes, an analytical framework was developed, which consisted of detailed conceptual categories that were firmly grounded on the data. By constantly comparing data within and across categories, I was able to move from a large set of recurring data patterns towards what Gilbert describes as “larger, more generalised categories, whose properties and relationship to one another will provide the beginnings of a theoretical explanation of the data” (2008, p. 87). This theoretical explanation was the focus of the final stage of data analysis, which is described in the following section.

#### **4.4.3 Articulating a theory**

This section describes the final stage of engagement with the data: in the paragraphs that follow I discuss the final processes of theory generation, along with issues pertaining to the presentation of the data that appear in this thesis.

Theory generation, which concluded the data analysis, consisted of two processes: conceptualisation and theoretical validation. Conceptualisation referred to the process of developing new concepts, or refining existing ones, in order to better account for my data (Punch, 2005, p. 146; Silverman, 2005, p. 128). Salient theoretical constructs, which emerged from the data, included drivers that motivated and sustained teaching and learning activity, the reciprocal influence between learning materials and learning activities, and regularly occurring though unpredictable patterns in the activity of the host institute. Theoretical validation involved using existing theory, predominantly from CST, as a conceptual touchstone for my emergent understandings. To illustrate, the inductively derived construct of ‘a driver that sustained the activity of a complex system’ was related to the construct of intentionality from the literature (Stelma, 2011; Young et al. 2002), whereas the ‘regularly occurring but unpredictable patterns of behaviour’ were related to the construct of attractors from CST (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008). This process of theoretical validation which helped to ensure the theoretical validity (Maxwell, 2002, pp.

50-52) of my findings, while at the same time demonstrating the explanatory capacity of CST in the domain of Applied Linguistics and ELT.

Both conceptualisation and theory validation were intellectual processes that took place concurrently with the writing up of the thesis, and were driven by prolonged exposure to the data, repeated engagement with the emerging description, and discussions with my supervisory team. The end product of these processes was a number of theoretical constructs that extend our conceptual toolkit for understanding ELT. These constructs, namely intentionality, the affordance landscape, and prototypical lessons, are described in more detail in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 respectively.

A particular set of concerns, which emerged at this stage of engagement with the data, pertained to the bilingual nature of the study. Specifically, I had to deal with the tensions between the requirement to make data accessible to readers of this thesis who might not understand Modern Greek, and ensuring that my account remained faithful to the participant's voices, thus preserving interpretative validity (Maxwell, 2002, pp. 48-50). This tension, which was further compounded by the ethical and political implications of representation (Kostoulas, 2012), was flexibly resolved as described in the next paragraphs.

With English language data, my representation choices were often dictated by the principle of non-maleficence. Although it would sometimes seem desirable to reproduce the participants' output with maximal faithfulness, such a representational strategy risked stigmatising the participants (cf. Preston, 1982). In a number of interviews, for instance, participants who were non-native speakers of English occasionally used non-standard language forms such as the one below:

“For example (2 sec) I when I *teached* the passive voice, I gave them the rule, and I told them ‘try to give me an example’” (emphasis added).

Given the high premium placed on linguistic accuracy in the professional context of the research participants (cf. Hughes & Lascaratou, 1982), the publication of any instances of non-standard use was expected to have detrimental effects on the participants' confidence and professional standing, as well as to negatively impact the reputation of the institute where the research took place. In such cases, after analysis but prior to representation, the data were subjected to unobtrusive editing, at which stage language was standardised.

With regard to Greek language data, I opted for presenting a translation in English alongside the original. This choice was partly motivated by a desire to promote the visibility of languages other than English in academic discourse with a view to countering the hegemonic status of English as an academic lingua franca (cf. Daryai-Hansen, 2012). An additional motive was the concern that translations tended to conceal linguistic behaviour that could be theoretically significant. The following extract, from an interview with one of the teachers, illustrates this point:

Teacher: Και το ξέρεις κι εσύ καλύτερα από μένα, πως στην σχ- >το μάθαμε και απ' την σχολή< ότι για να μάθει το παιδί κάτι πρέπει απαραίτητα να γίνει καποιο «**noticing**», έτσι; (2 sec) Αλλά ο Άγγλος όταν μιλάει με σωστή, με **RP**, θα πει «**dishes**» αλλά επειδή είναι **native speaker**, θα είναι με **devoicing** στο **d**, ξέρεις, και καλά σαν **tishes** (3 sec)

Achilleas : Πιστ- Νομίζεις ότι αυτό είναι, ότι αποτελεί πρόβλη[μα];

Teacher: [Ναι, αλλά ο Άγγλος αυτό το κάνει χωρίς να το καταλαβαίνει, γιατί είναι **native speaker**. Και όχι μόνο αυτό, δεν καταλαβαίνει κιόλας ότι αυτό είναι, συνιστά πρόβλημα για τον Έλληνα μαθητή, αν μιλάει έτσι.<sup>2</sup>

An unreflective translation of such a transcript would obscure the high prevalence of English lexical items (bolded). Presenting such a translation without reference to the original might divert attention from the functional distribution of languages (i.e., under what circumstances each language tended to be used) at the host institute, and from the way in which this teacher constructed her professional identity by using English language terms when discussing teaching methodology. Other theoretically significant issues, which

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<sup>2</sup> A translation of the extract can be found in p. 188.

translations risked masking, included dialectic variation (in Greek and in English), and the effects of code-switching. Though such issues lie outside the purview of this study, it was felt that, in the interest of “validity through transparency and access” (Nikander, 2008, p. 227), readers should have access to the original text as well as a translation whenever possible.

Formally, data analysis lasted from May 2010 to August 2011. However, as hinted above, it was in actuality a process that started shortly after data generation had begun, and also overlapped with the write-up of this thesis. It was an iterative process, beset by a number of false starts and dead ends, which I was able to overcome due to the rigour and flexibility of my research methods. I believe that these properties have been demonstrated both by the preceding narrative, and can also be attested by the richness and interpretative power of the findings, which are discussed in the chapters that follow.

~

I began this chapter by describing the foundational considerations that underpinned this study. I then went on to narrate the preliminary explorations of the field, and continued by presenting the methods I used in order to generate empirical data and analyse them. In the three chapters that follow, I turn my attention to the outcome of these processes, namely a synthesis of the data, which provides answers to Research Questions 1 through 3, and paves the way for addressing Research Question 4 in the final chapter.

## Chapter 5

### Drivers of Activity in the Host Institute:

#### The Role of Intentionalities

This chapter addresses the first of the aspects of ELT at the host institute that are examined in the thesis, namely its ‘purposes’. The emergent theme of ‘purpose’, which was derived from the data through analytical induction, has been connected to the theoretical construct of ‘intentionality’, which I have drawn from Stelma’s (2011, 2013) refinement of Young et al.’s ecological model (2002). By putting together the insights from the literature and data-driven theorisations, and using Complexity as a theoretical lens, I develop a new conceptualisation of the intentionality construct. Pending an extensive definition of the construct and its properties in the first part of the chapter (Section 5.1), intentionality can be roughly understood as a driver of activity within a complex system.

Drawing mostly on interview and questionnaire data, I traced five discrete intentionalities in the host institute. These include: a drive to certify language proficiency (*Certification*, Section 5.2); a concern, particularly among students, to integrate into transnational discourse communities (*International Integration*, Section 5.3); a desire, especially among teachers, to impart cultural values associated with the Anglophone West (*Cultural Awareness*, Section 5.4); a concern about the way the host institute relate to state education (*Competition*, Section 5.5); and an unstated agenda of protecting the vested interests of local ELT (*Protectionism*, Section 5.6). In Sections 5.2 through 5.6, each of these intentionalities described with reference to data from the host institute. In addition, pertinent insights from the literature are used to supplement the empirical data, wherever salient influences from outside the school were in place, since these influences lay outside the empirical purview of this study. After presenting these intentionalities separately, in

Section 5.7, I define their synthesis as a ‘dynamic of intentions’, and hint at its likely effect on the activity of the host institute.

## 5.1 Defining intentionality

Intentionality, the key theoretical construct around which this chapter is structured, is viewed in this thesis as a self-organised, collective driver of a system’s activity, which leads to a specific outcome. This conceptualisation is consistent with the “folk-psychological” definition of intentionality as “purpose” or “intention” (Stelma, 2013, pp. 2-3), which has informed research into educational technology (Young, et al., 2002), classroom interaction (Barab et al., 1999; Papadopoulou, 2011; Stelma, 2013) and higher education (Stelma, 2011; Stelma & Fay, 2014). More recently, the scope of intentionality has been broadened to include Searle’s (1983) phenomenological definition (Stelma, 2013, 2014), but such a conceptualisation has not been adopted here, as it did not map well against the themes emerging from the data. Rather, in the paragraphs that follow, I further develop the construct and adapt it to the analytical needs of this study, by arguing that it is *collective*, *nested*, *emergent* and *generative*.

### ***Intentionality is collective***

While some studies of intentionality have focused on the intentional behaviour of individuals (e.g., Stelma, 2011; Stelma & Fay, 2014; Young, et al., 2002), intentionality need not be understood in an individualistic sense. For instance, in Stelma (2013) the construct is brought to bear on the interpretation of classroom discourse produced by pairs of learners. In addition, Young et al. (2002) argue for a hierarchical conceptualisation of intentionality: e.g., lower-order intentionalities, such as those associated with walking to a polling station and casting a vote, might be seen as a component of a higher-order intentionality embodied in a political agenda. Even though Young et al. do not make the point explicitly,

such changes in the scale at which activity is studied normally involve an analytical shift from individuals to increasingly broader collective entities. The perspective taken in this study, which seeks to understand the operations of a language school, privileges a collective interpretation of intentionality. To illustrate, in Section 5.2 I argue that one of the intentionalities driving activity at the host institute was providing learners with language certificates. Such references are meant as pertaining to the host institute as a collective entity, even if they were not representative of the individualistic intentionalities of each and every agent in the system.

### ***Intentionality is nested***

The relation between intentional activity and the environment in which it develops is central to ecological psychology. In Young et al.'s (2002) ecological model, this relation is described in deterministic terms. Activity is described as being embedded in a cascade of constraints, ranging from the constraints posed by the logically feasible world, through additional levels of constraints associated with physical possibility, the laws of nature, the ecology in which the activity develops, and the actual world, to the constraints created by the socio-cultural reality. At each level of this hierarchy, the new set of constraints limits the degrees of freedom available for intentional activity to develop (pp. 50-51).

Young et al.'s model, though intuitively applicable to the natural world, has not withstood empirical scrutiny when applied to the social sciences. Accommodating agency has been one particular concern, as it has been convincingly argued that "individual agency operates within and through social structures, but is not necessarily subjugated to them" (Hopwood, 2010, p. 832). Stelma (2011) eschews this difficulty by suggesting a heterarchical conceptualisation of context: in his model, Young et al.'s cascading levels of constraints are replaced by overlapping sets of "shaping influences", akin to the "interpenetrating"

systems postulated in generalised views of complexity (Byrne & Callaghan, 2014, pp. 39-56). In a description of the increasingly intentional way in which doctoral students made use of information technology, Stelma (2011) points to the ways in which doctoral projects were influenced, but not determined, by shaping influences including the expectations of supervisory teams, their School and University, national and international entities, as well as the resources that were made available by all of the above.

Shaping influences, which might be loosely defined as the effects exercised by ideological beliefs and resources, differ in terms of the power they exert and in their geographical distribution. Based on CST, one might hypothesise that proximate entities exert more powerful influences than distally placed ones (Davis & Sumara, 2006, pp. 104-105). Such a hypothesis stands in contrast with deterministic narratives of ELT, which foreground the role of powerful influences stemming from the Anglophone West, while downplaying local activity (Phillipson, 1992). To better understand the role of shaping influences, in the discussion that follows, I define their *locus of origin*. Loci of origin are classified in three groups: those stemming from the host institute, those originating in the local context (i.e., the state schools the students attended, their families, the training programmes in which the staff had participated, and Greek society more broadly) and those emanating from the global context (i.e., the structures associated with ELT as an international profession).

### ***Intentionality is emergent***

Although intentionality is sometimes used in the literature to describe “volitional, conscious and explicit behaviour that aims at the fulfilment of a clear and recognisable target” (Papadopoulou, 2011, p. 579), explicit awareness of purpose is not an essential feature of intentionality, as understood in this study. Rather, intentionality is viewed as a phenomenon that emerges from the “intentional dynamics” (Young, et al., 2002, p. 50) that

develop among multiple shaping influences. This conceptualisation is in line with Barab, et al. (1999), who argue that:

We further argue that the ecologized, or self-organization, model (relational ontology) establishes that (under the appropriate conditions) the particles (learners), in effect, "want" to or strive opportunistically to order themselves once the intention has been properly initialized (p. 350).

For instance, in Section 5.4, I argue that Anglophile attitudes among the host institute staff, a sense of cultural custodianship that English language teachers seem to share, and Anglocentric references in the learning materials all contribute towards the emergence of the Cultural Awareness intentionality. It should not be assumed that all agents in the system would be consciously aware of this intentionality, or that there was a deliberate alignment to it. However, the absence of explicit awareness at the individual level does not preclude the operation of the intentionality at the collective level.

### ***Intentionality is generative***

Lastly, intentionality is not viewed as a mere product of environment, as might be suggested by Young et al.'s (2002) model of cascading constraints. Rather, it carries the potential to affect changes in the environment, create possibilities that would otherwise nor be present, and thus add degrees of freedom to the system (Stelma, 2011, p. 371). This potential was demonstrated by Stelma and Fay (2014), who described how the developing intentionality of novice researchers impacted the quality of their learning experience. In the present study, each of the five intentionalities has been associated with a pedagogical and a cultural effect. The intentionalities' pedagogical *orientation* refers to whether it aligned ELT more strongly towards transmissive, communicative or critical pedagogy (Section 2.2), whereas its cultural *outlook* refers to whether the intentionality was primarily associated with an affinity towards the Anglophone West, Greece or a neutral global culture.

In the sections that follow, five prominent intentionalities that were present at the host institute are described in detail. These intentionalities have been selected on account of their empirical salience, and their explanatory power, i.e., the number of phenomena that appear to be linked with them. A large part of the discussion pertains to the shaping influences from which the intentionalities appear to have emerged. In some cases, the locus of origin of some shaping influences was traced outside the host institute, and therefore lay outside the empirical purview of this study, so insights from the literature have been used, as necessary, to supplement empirical data. The description of shaping influences is followed by a discussion of the emergent properties of the intentionality, namely its orientation and its outlook.

## 5.2 Certification: Proving English language proficiency

The most salient intentionality in the data was *Certification*, defined as the expectation that language learning should lead to formal acknowledgement in the form of a certificate. In the discussion that follows, Certification is linked to expectations about language learning and assessment (Section 5.2.1) and to resources that catered to these expectations (Section 5.2.2). After describing these shaping influences, in Section 5.2.3, I take a more holistic look at the intentionality, and argue that it was Anglocentric in outlook and a Communicative in orientation.

### 5.2.1 What was so important about certification?

The Certification intentionality conceptually brings together several shaping influences with disparate loci of origin, of which some stemmed from the local context of the host institute (i.e., Greek society), others were associated with international entities, and yet others could be traced within the host institute itself.

There are frequent references to a credentialist ethos in descriptions of ELT in Greece (e.g., Karavas-Doukas, 1995, p. 64; Mattheoudakis, 2007, p. 1274; Sifakis, 2009, p. 235). Angouri, Mattheoudakis and Zigraka (2010) explicitly claim that language learners in Greece tend to be primarily motivated by a desire to obtain language certificates, which often outweighs motivation to learn the language as such. The value of language certificates seems to relate to the belief that they facilitate access to the job market, including coveted posts in the civil service and teaching posts in language education (Papaefthymiou-Lytra, 2012). In most of the accounts above, credentialism appears to be undertheorised, or described as a unidirectional deterministic influence, which often ignores the complex ways in which societal expectations interact with both agency and other contextual influences. To better understand how the credential ethos impacted practice in the host institute, I now turn to empirical data proffered by the learners and the teachers.

### ***Students' views regarding certification***

The student-generated data that are reported in this section were elicited from lower Intermediate and Advanced students in two questionnaire surveys (Appendices D.3 and D.5, respectively). Of these, the former survey included both a qualitative and a quantitative component, whereas the latter used open-ended qualitative questions which capitalised on the respondents' enhanced verbal skills. Despite cognitive and affective differences associated with the respondents' differing age, the two sets of data yielded compatible results, which are presented below.

Figure 5-1 depicts the answers provided by lower intermediate learners to Likert-type items pertaining to certification. As can be seen, the importance attached to obtaining a certificate was very high, even among relatively young students who were at the mid-point of a multi-year language course (Item 4.2). In fact, obtaining a language certificate was

considered more important than a good command of the language, at least for some students in this group (Item 4.3). These findings were triangulated by the other survey: in one question, student participants were presented with a scenario which involved an imaginary student who wanted to stop learning English, and they were asked to provide comments (Figure 5-2).

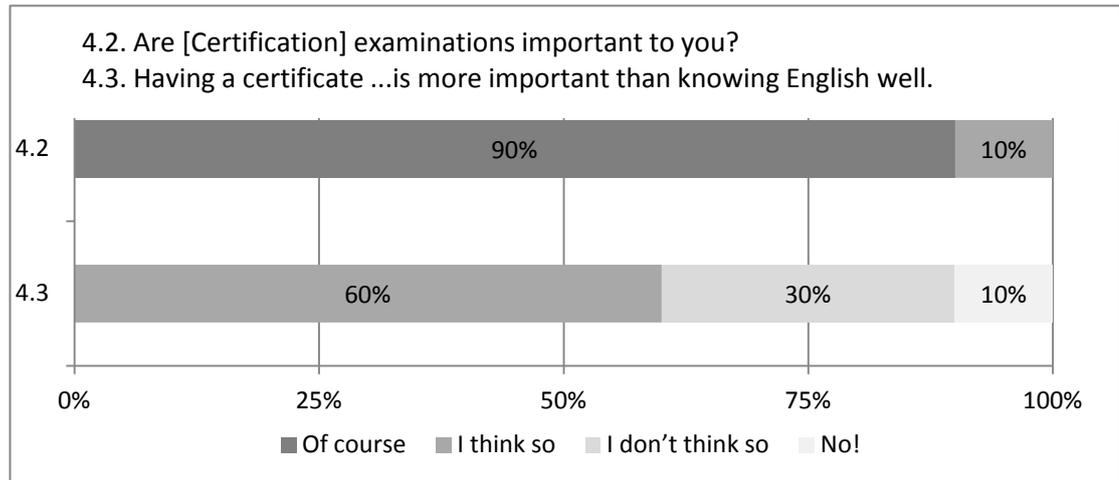


Figure 5-1 Student attitudes towards certification

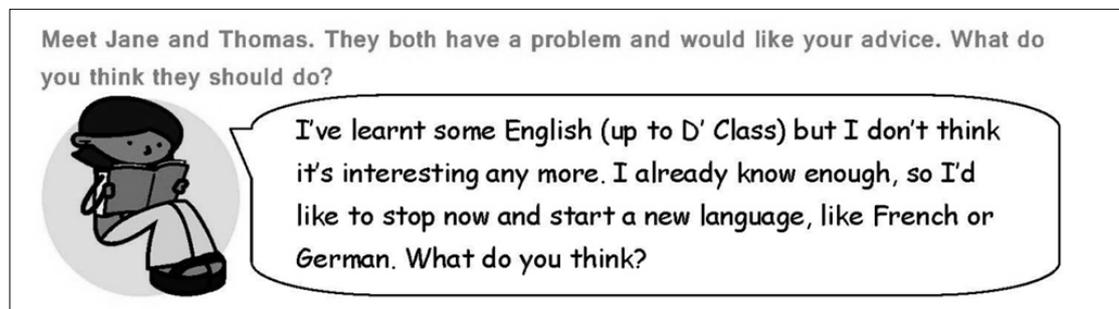


Figure 5-2 Questionnaire item (Questionnaire Three (a), p.2)

In the students' responses, the view was unanimously expressed that the imaginary student should not interrupt her studies, and many respondents explicitly recommended that she should acquire some form of certification before quitting. Typical responses included the following:

- "In my view, you should at least take the first certificate as it is necessary for you the job".
- "I would recommend that you take at least the ECCE certificate (for job reasons) and then if you would like to stop, stop".

- “I don’t disagree with the choice of starting a new language, but in my opinion it is better to continue learning English at least up to Lower level (...)”
- “She could continue for a couple of years her lessons, in order to take [illegible] her certificate. Then her English will be recognized (...)”

It would appear, therefore, that in the students’ perception at least the value attached to holding a certificate outweighed the benefits of being able to communicate multilingually.

Elsewhere in the data, several students linked certification to the instrumental goal of improving their academic and employment prospects. While some students acknowledged that “[it] is more important to know and speak English rather [than] to have the papers and not use [the language]”, the prevalent attitude seemed to be encapsulated in the following statement: “It’s more important to speak and write English but without a diploma it’s like you don’t know anything”. In some students’ view, “you need these papers to find a good job” because a certificate “[proves?] that you are good in English”. In addition, having such a certificate means “you can find easier job and you can also study in England in very well [i.e., good] universities.”

To recap, students at the host institute appeared to be driven by the desire to obtain a language certificate, which they associated with enhanced professional and academic prospects. These views broadly aligned to the teachers’ sentiments, which are reported below.

### ***Teachers’ views regarding certification***

From the teachers’ perspective, there was unanimous agreement that obtaining certification constituted a priority, but attitudes about this goal seemed ambivalent. The data that are presented below have mainly been drawn from two interviews which focused primarily on examinations, but the pervasiveness of the exam-oriented culture was such that passing references to Certification were made in several other interviews as well.

The suggestion was put forward by some teachers that students in Greece tended to learn English primarily because of intense societal pressure, which they sometimes internalised.

According to one of the teachers:

For some learners there is also the element of fun, the intrinsic motivation of learning a new language. This was mainly true in the smaller levels, where activities tend to be better suited to the interests of young learners. But overall, the main reason students come to the school is because their parents expect a 'lower' or a 'proficiency'<sup>3</sup> when the student shows some promise.

The same teacher went on to explain that parents and students seemed to care more about obtaining a certificate, rather than about acquiring the knowledge that it certified. She supported her belief by pointing out that parents who came to consult with her seemed very keen to know when their children might take the exams, but "they never ask about what words [the students] know, what they can do with the language". Similar views were expressed in another interview, where the topic of certification was discussed in passing:

Teacher: ... I have students who don't want to come to the (.) classes, who cry, who say they 'I don't like English but I have to do it in order to find a job and in order to satisfy my parents.' And I think that they don't learn English (.) just for their own sake. They learn it in order to take a degree, to gain a degree. To hold a degree.

Achilleas: How many students do you think that is? I mean do you think that is a small percentage of students many students? How you describe that?

Teacher: From my personal experience, I would say a large (.) amount, of students. Yeah they are and I don't know if it has to do with the the place where I work but I if I go back to my school years I think that a lot of, students didn't want to learn [English

Achilleas: [didn't really want to learn English=

Teacher: =they were forced to.

Although the two teachers appeared to hold differing views with regard to the learners' actual motivation, both extracts refer to intense parental pressure to obtain a certificate.

In yet another interview, it was suggested that certification served two important functions: Firstly, it enhanced the students' motivation, which was important because "not

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<sup>3</sup> See pp. 157-158 for an explanation of these terms.

all the children in the class are always interested in learning more grammar or more vocabulary”, whereas certification offered a real goal which was important to them. In this sense, Certification seemed to address the lack of motivation inherent in what would otherwise be a Teaching English for No Obvious Reason (TENOR) situation (Abbot, 1981; see also Xanthakou, 2005 for a discussion of TENOR in the Greek context). Secondly, it was claimed that the certification examinations helped to maintain standards of professional excellence, and provided external validation to the fact that individual teachers, and the school as a whole, were providing excellent quality education. Similar views were recorded in passing by another teacher, who suggested that “even though standards are declining”, certification exams are still important in motivating the students to excel, and that students “are certainly not harmed” by being encouraged to study harder or by receiving independent confirmation of their linguistic proficiency.

Similar views were expressed in an informal discussion with the acting Director of Studies, who suggested that encouraging learners to obtain outside certification was beneficial to the host institute, in addition to the “obvious advantages to the students themselves”. It was emphatically pointed out that there was no direct financial benefit for the host institute, and that the pecuniary incentives provided by some examination providers were trivial. However, it was felt that success rates, which were consistently above average, compared very favourably against commercial competitors, and served to enhance the reputation of the host institute, and hence (it is to be assumed) its long-term commercial viability.

Although the priority attached to Certification was more or less undisputed, some critical remarks were also voiced. For example, it was suggested by one teacher that the most important problem facing ELT in Greece was the lack of differentiation between learning the language and obtaining a certificate, a fact for which she felt societal expectations and

commercial interests were equally to blame. In addition, the view was put forward that the importance attached to testing generated pressure to compress learning time. One teacher pointed out at a trend whereby “some *frontistíria* [private language centres] are even advertising that one can obtain a certificate even after five years of studies”, rather than the six or seven which she felt were necessary for a young learner to reach the B2 level of linguistic proficiency. This resulted in what she described as “shallow, hollow” knowledge of the language. There seemed to be a strong view among teachers that the time pressure and examination-oriented training that were associated with the credentialist ethos were responsible for the poor academic results and lack of lasting learning outcomes that allegedly typified Greek ELT as a whole.

Summing up the teachers’ perspective, it would appear that their attitudes were broadly consistent with the expectations set up by the credentialist culture. However, dissenting views were also recorded in the data, signifying that the socio-cultural context did not always constrain the views of teachers in the host institute.

### **5.2.2 What certification options were available?**

Turning from expectations to resources, this section looks into the certification options that were available to learners at the host institute. In doing so, the discussion moves from the host institute and Greek society towards the global ELT context. This information reported in the following paragraphs has been drawn from an open-ended questionnaire administered to students, teacher interviews, documentation provided by the host institute management, as well as my professional knowledge of the setting.

There seemed to be a shared expectation among teachers, students and their parents that the majority of students would obtain a B2-level certificate (or a “lower” in lay usage), which indicated the ability to function independently as a language user (Council of Europe,

2001, p. 24). The Upper Intermediate programme at the host institute was oriented towards preparing students to receive such a certificate, and it culminated in an extended period of exam preparation. Many students would then enrol in the Proficiency programme, which prepared them to sit a C2-level examination. A C2-level certificate (a “Proficiency”) indicated the ability to use English “with the degree of precision, appropriateness and ease that typifies [...] highly successful learners” (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 36), and it conferred upon its holder the right to apply for an English Language Teacher’s licence («επάρκεια», *epárkia*, “[certificate of] adequacy”) after they had completed secondary education. Although precise information about student enrolment and progression was considered commercially sensitive, and therefore cannot be published, virtually all (>90%) the students who enrolled in the General English programmes at the host institute would eventually take a B2-level examination, and the number of students who went on to take C2-level exams was approximately a third of that.

| <b>Examination board</b>                                   | <b>Academic affiliation</b>                      | <b>B2</b>  | <b>C2</b>   |
|--|--|--|---|
| <b>Cambridge ESOL</b>                                      | University of Cambridge (UK)                     | First Certificate in English                       | Certificate of Proficiency in English               |
| <b>University of Michigan / English Language Institute</b> | University of Michigan (USA)                     | Examination of Communicative Competence in English | Examination of Communicative Proficiency in English |
| <b>Edexcel (London Exams Hellas)</b>                       | External audit by University of Westminster (UK) | London Tests of English Level 3                    | London Tests of English Level 5                     |
| <b>State Certificate of Language Proficiency</b>           | University of Athens (Greece)                    | B2(Καλή γνώση)                                     | -   |

**Table 5-1 Overview of prominent examinations**

It was standard practice for students who finished a language course to register for at least two, and sometimes three, examinations of the same level in order to maximise the prospects of success. Information about the most prominent examinations from which students could choose is summarised in Table 5-1, and a more detailed description can be found in Appendix H. Certification options that have not been listed below, such as City and

Guilds, the Test of Interactive English (TIE), the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) tended to fill niche functions and their market share was relatively low. As a result, the host institute did not normally prepare students for these examinations.

A feature common to these examinations was intense Anglocentrism, which seems to relate to the Standard Language Ideology (Section 2.1.1), and uncritical theorisations of ELT (Section 2.3.1). Two of the major examination boards, Cambridge ESOL and University of Michigan English Language Institute (UMI/ELI) were based in the United Kingdom and the USA respectively, and these appeared to enjoy the best reputation and greatest prominence. A third major examination provider, London Exams Hellas, was part of a Greek conglomerate, but relied on a UK examination board for their testing materials. In addition to the physical location of the boards, many of these examinations tended to prioritise Standard Language varieties. The Cambridge ESOL and UMI/ELI examinations almost exclusively used British and American English in their listening materials (Kanellou, 2012). Moreover, Cambridge ESOL documentation indicated that a consistent use of American or British spelling was desirable (University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, 2007, p. 4) and the UMI/ELI examinations were explicitly self-described as examinations of Standard American English (Irvine-Nikiaris, 2009, p. 4). Lastly, most examination boards seemed to make use of Anglocentric branding. This was particularly evident in the case of London Exams Hellas, who evoked associations with the UK in their name, and prominently marketed their association with Edexcel, their international partners.

The State Certificate of Language Proficiency (also known by its transliterated initials KPG, for «Κρατικό Πιστοποιητικό Γλωσσομάθειας», *Kraticó Pistopiitikó Glossomáthias*) was exceptional in this regard, not only in that it was designed and administered by a Greek

examination board, but also because it was explicitly self-described as having a

‘pluricentric’ outlook:

As far as the KPG exams in English are concerned, it should be noted that English is viewed as a pluricentric language and the KPG exams deal with World Englishes. As a result, oral and written texts are not exclusively in British or American English but may be, for example, in Australian or Canadian English (University of Athens Research Centre for English Language, 2012, p. 3).

It is interesting to note, though, that “pluricentrism” was idiosyncratically defined, with reference to non-prototypical native-speaker settings, rather than Outer or Expanding Circle settings. Curiously, the University of Athens Research Centre for English Language, which designs the KPG examination, has advertised vacancies for staff with descriptions such as the following (National and Kapodestrian University of Athens Research Board, 2010, emphasis added):

Άτομα που έχουν την αγγλική ως μητρική γλώσσα με κάποιου τύπου θεατρική αγωγή (για να παίξουν ρόλους σε επικοινωνιακές περιστάσεις που θα ηχογραφηθούν) και άλλοι με εμπειρία σε επιμέλεια κειμένων θα απασχοληθεί [sic] στο Υπόεργο 01.

People who have English as a mother language and some kind of theatrical training (in order to play roles in communicative situations which will be audio-recorded) and others with experience in copyediting will be employed in Sub-project 01 [i.e., development of language assessment instruments].

In other words, it would seem that despite claims to the contrary, the State Certificate of Language Proficiency also seemed to valorise Inner Circle norms in practice.

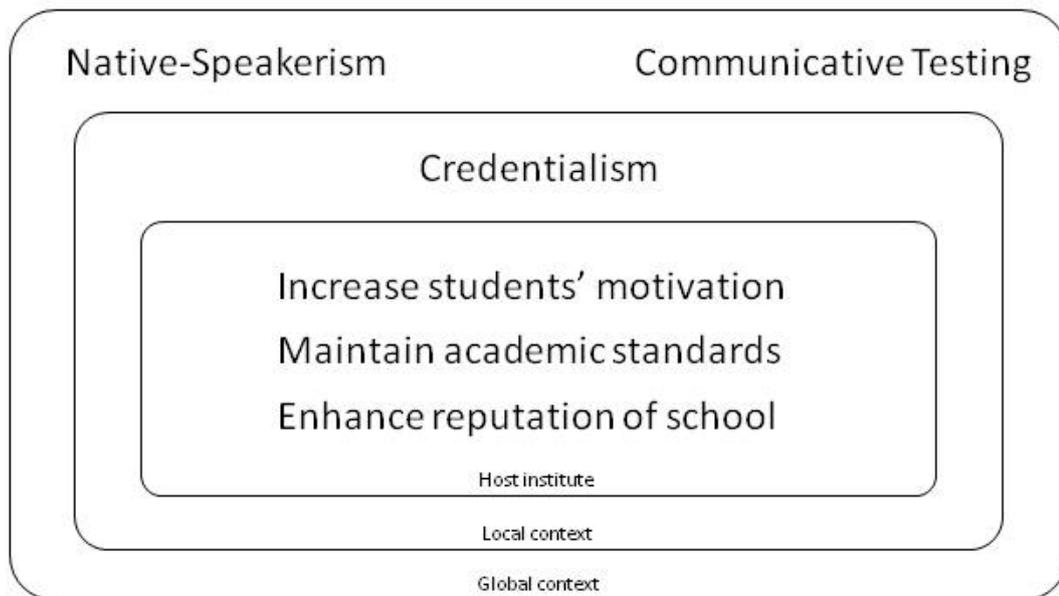
Another feature common to all the examinations was the communicative (cf. Section 2.2.2) definition of the linguistic constructs that they tested: all the examinations primarily measured the candidates’ ability to use the language in order to achieve communicative goals. This orientation was most obviously evidenced in the way that all the examinations had been mapped against the Common European Reference Framework, which defines key communicative competencies at various levels of ability (Council of Europe, 2001). In addition, candidates were mainly examined through direct testing of their communicative

skills (i.e., through reading, writing, listening, and speaking tasks). The LTE tests, which simulated real-life scenarios, were a prototypical example of such communicative testing, although it should be noted that the face validity (Alderson, Clapham, & Wall, 1995, pp. 172-173) of these examinations seemed to suffer from the absence of a grammar and vocabulary component. The UMI/ELI tests, which used discrete-item multiple-choice testing extensively to test grammar awareness, lexical range and the receptive skills, was a notable exception, but it is interesting that these tests were nevertheless described as Examination(s) of *Communicative Competence/Proficiency in English*, thus indicating at least nominal alignment with the communicative orthodoxy.

### **5.2.3 Certification is not deterministic**

In summary, the Certification intentionality emerged from the interaction between the expectations present at the host institute and the local society and the resources that were available globally. In this section, I look into the properties of the emergent intentionality, and argue that it tended to push the system towards Anglocentric and communicative directions. I also note that the influence of this intentionality was not deterministic, as the system seemed to exhibit resilience to the communicative orientation of Certification.

The intentional dynamics associated with Certification are depicted in Figure 5-3, where the shaping influences have been arranged according to their locus of origin. In the figure, three loci of origin, i.e., the host institute, its immediate context (Greek society) and the global setting in which it is embedded (Global ELT) are depicted as roughly concentric spaces. Various shaping influences such as credentialism, or communicative language teaching are then positioned in the diagram depending on their origin. It should be stressed that the diagram is only intended as an illustration of the relative positioning of the three loci, rather than a more general portrayal of the way in which these settings interrelate.



**Figure 5-3 Dynamics of Certification**

Among the influences shaping Certification from the global context, was the Communicative Language Teaching theory that informed most certification examinations, and a native-speakerist bias, which seemed to valorise Anglocentric norms and expertise at the expense of local resources. To clarify, it is not suggested the communicative influence and native-speakerism were causally connected, but rather that they shared a common locus of origin. In the local context, the most prominent shaping influence seemed to be a credentialist ethos, which fused beliefs about the structure of the Greek labour market and aspirations of educational excellence. The credentialist ethos permeated the host institute as well, since it was part of the students' belief systems. Other institute-specific influences included the desire to increase the students' motivation, the belief that external audit in the form of testing student outcomes prevented the erosion of standards, and the imperative to enhance the reputation of the host institute through consistently high success rates.

Certification, the intentional driver that emerged from these shaping influences, tended to be associated with Communicative Language Teaching and with Anglocentric resources and norms. In Chapters 6 and 7, I argue that Certification influenced many aspects of

pedagogical practice, especially at the more advanced levels of instruction. For now, however, I confine myself to two observations: Firstly, the intentional dynamic indicates the power of shaping influences emanating from the Anglophone West, thus partially confirming critical narratives of ELT (Phillipson, 1992). On the other hand, it also demonstrates that the influence of the intentionality was not deterministic. For example, even though the Certification was strongly associated with Communicative Language Teaching, the examinations with the most strongly communicative format (LTE) were regarded with scepticism. Similarly, a large number of students indicated a preference for the UMI/ELI exams, which employed a format not commonly associated with communicative language testing. These attitudes seem to suggest that the system had a certain degree of resilience to the communicative influence of Certification.

### 5.3 International Integration: Belonging

The second intentionality that drove activity in the host institute, International Integration, was a desire to enhance the students' ability to engage in English-medium communication in a global setting. Deriving from Gardner and Lambert's (1972) distinction between integrative and instrumental motivation, Integration has been reconnotated in this thesis to reflect sociolinguistic changes brought about by the global spread of English. Integration, in sense used here, does not refer to assimilation in the culture of a host country where English is spoken, but rather to the speakers' desire to be accepted as competent members in transnational English-using discourse communities (Widdowson, 2003). Moreover, unlike Gardner and Lambert's usage, the term is not used in juxtaposition to 'instrumental' motivation (the desire to perform tasks through the use of English). Rather, the ability to successfully perform tasks in English is viewed as the criterion that defines membership in English-using discourse communities as "successful users of English" (Prodromou, 2006, 2008).

The International Integration intentionality aligns with what Sifakis and Fay (2011) termed an ‘International-Intercultural’ orientation to ELT, which they define as “teaching that mostly focuses on preparing learners for English-medium communication in international contexts” (p. 287). The two concepts share an emphasis on communication encounters among non-native speakers of English, akin to ELF (Section 2.1.3). Sifakis and Fay find some empirical evidence of an International-Intercultural orientation among English language teachers in Greece (p. 289). Although attitudes towards this orientation seem ambivalent, and their sample consisted almost entirely of teachers who worked in the state sector only (p. 287), their findings lend credence, however tentative, to the claim that at least some teachers in the Greek context hold views conducive to the development of an International Integration intentionality.

Sifakis and Fay (2011) stop short of defining what the “international contexts” might be, within which communicative needs are served in English, as that was outside the scope of their research. The present study extends their findings, by teasing out three broadly-construed types of discourse communities into which some learners at the host institute seemed to want to integrate: *vocational-professional* communities, *international youth culture* communities and a community of *internationally mobile citizens*. One should point out that these discourse communities are conceptualised as overlapping categories, rather than as mutually exclusive groups. Most of the data that are presented below were generated by means of two questionnaire surveys distributed to lower intermediate (early teens) and advanced students (late teens or young adults) (Appendix D.3 and D.5). The responses from the two surveys were consistent, but those provided by the older students seem more suitable for presentation, on account of their relatively greater coherence and overall readability.

The majority of students seemed keen to obtain membership to what can be defined as **vocational-professional** communities, for which they perceived English language competence as a requisite qualification. When asked to describe “why learning English is important for [them]”, the student participants typically responded with variants of “for working in a job which needs English degrees”. In fact, reference to the connection between English language competence and employment prospects was made by all respondents in the older students’ survey. Some respondents explicitly referred to international communication as part of their jobs. Some examples included:

- “It is useful for most of the jobs nowadays for communication with people from other countries”.
- “If in the future you are require [sic] to write a formal letter or talk to somebody older than you, then you will face some problems of communication (unless you attend formal lessons)”

Others focused on the societal expectation that future professionals are conversant in English, as was the case in the following response:

- “First of all, learning English is essential enough for our future plans, as jobs are refered [sic]. It is known that nowadays society asks for a variety of qualities and knowing English language is one of them”.

It is also interesting to note that the value of English language proficiency was not expressly associated with references to geographical mobility. In other words, the learners did not appear to be communicating a desire to learn English in order to find employment in a country where English was used as an official language. Rather, their responses indexed a belief that English language proficiency was a defining feature of membership in the professional and vocational communities into which they aspired to integrate.

A second set of discourse communities which seemed to be defined by English language proficiency might be subsumed under the term **international youth culture**. This term has been coined to refer to virtual communities of adolescents and young adults who interacted through English or engaged with English-language cultural artefacts. By way of

example, many students identified themselves as Beliebers or Directioners (in reference to inexplicably popular singers and bands) or as Twilight and Harry Potter enthusiasts (in reference to commercially successful book series and film franchises), and indicated that they often interacted with peers who shared similar interests through social media. For these students, English language proficiency served both to better appreciate the cultural artefacts around which their communities coalesced, and to facilitate communication among their members. Some examples of responses typical of a desire to use English for the purposes of engaging with cultural artefacts and discourse community membership included the following:

- “I will be able to see English speaking films without subtitles, because some films cannot be download [sic] with Greek subtitles. Also I can read English books because some books are better when you read them as they were written from English writers”
- “You will chat in a better way, you will be able to understand everything on the Internet and also the songs of the lyrics you listen to”.
- “Learning English helps me to communicate with people from another country or understand the lyrics of some songs”.

Much like the vocational-professional community, this community also appeared to transcend geographical borders, but it was not necessarily associated with mobility.

The communicative needs of *internationally mobile citizens* were also mentioned, albeit infrequently, in the context of reasons for learning English. A small number of respondents suggested that they needed to learn English for reasons like the following: “When I spend my holidays in a foreign country I can communicate with the people over there”. Specific purposes associated with international mobility, such as studying outside Greece were also sporadically mentioned (e.g., “I also indent [sic] to study abroad so that’s another reason, too”). It is interesting that only one respondent explicitly mentioned a country where English is used natively (“travel to the UK”). While being aware of the danger of overanalysing, the lack of such specific references might index some degree of awareness

that English is as an international lingua franca not confined to particular 'native-speaking' countries.

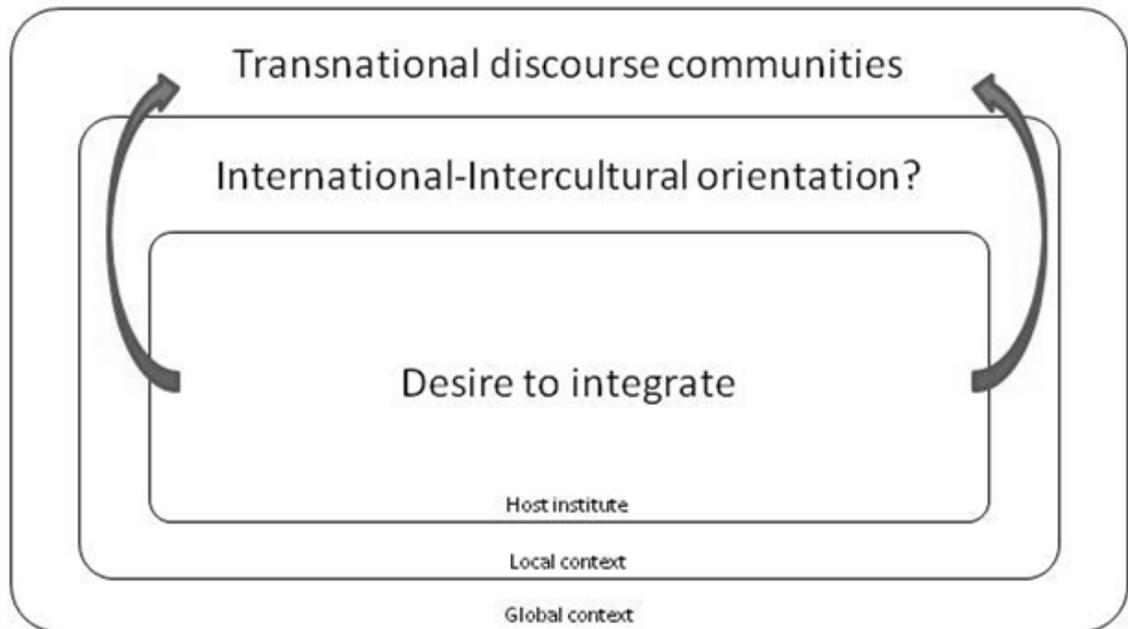


Figure5-4 Dynamics of International Integration

To summarise, the International Integration intentionality refers to the students' motivation to become members in English-using discourse communities. These included vocational-professional social groups, which were defined by its members' ability to use English for professional purposes; international youth culture groups, which achieved cohesion through English-language communication and through shared appreciation of English-language cultural artefacts; and an internationally mobile social group, the members of which used English as a lingua franca. Outside the host institute, there is some evidence in the literature of an International-Intercultural teaching orientation, which is broadly compatible with these motivations.

A feature shared by all the influences that came together to shape the International Integrative intentionality was that the English language appeared to be conceptualised as a common resource equally available to native and non-native speakers. A case could perhaps be made that many cultural artefacts (music, films, books, etc.) that were

important to the international youth culture communities were produced in the Anglophone West. However, what seems important is that the respondents appeared to want to integrate in the transnational community of people who appreciated these artefacts, rather than the specific culture in which they were produced. On account of the instrumental role to which the English language appeared to be delegated, and the international outlook of this intentionality, it might perhaps be tentatively associated with the critical paradigm (Section 2.4).

## 5.4 Cultural Awareness: Learning about England

A third intentionality pertained to developing the students' Cultural Awareness, i.e., expanding their knowledge about the dominant cultures of the United Kingdom and, to a lesser extent, the United States (cf. the discussion of cultural flows in Section 2.3.2). Before moving on to the discussion of the shaping influences out of which this intentionality emerged, it should be stressed that 'cultural awareness' is used here in a restricted sense. Firstly, the term refers to acquainting learners with cultural information which was considered intrinsically valuable, rather than fostering skills that could facilitate cross-cultural encounters (as done in, e.g., Fay, et al., 2010; Fay, Ntvaliagkou, & Lytra, 2009; Kramsch, 1993, pp. 181-182). Secondly, the 'cultural awareness' to be developed seemed restricted to British and North American culture, to the exclusion of the cultures present in other communities where English was used. Even within these 'target cultures', the Cultural Awareness intentionality seemed oblivious to regional, generational and class variations. In all, this intentionality seemed to involve the transmission of a limited set of cultural codes, symbols and values with which local ELT professionals were most familiar.

The Cultural Awareness intentionality appeared to emerge from Anglophile attitudes, particularly among the staff of the host institute, and from the (limited) Anglocentric

cultural input found in many learning resources. After discussing these influences in Sections 5.4.1 and 5.4.2, I conclude with the paradoxical observation that, its association with the values of the Anglophone West notwithstanding, this intentionality seemed to originate locally, and that it was associated with transmissive pedagogy.

#### **5.4.1 Anglophile attitudes: the role of expectations**

A recurring theme in the data was a degree of affinity towards the dominant cultures of the Anglophone West. References to “UK/US culture” in this section should not be interpreted as naïve to diversity within these communities. Rather, such references constitute terminological shorthand for how salient aspects of these cultures were projected internationally, and how the dominant cultures of the Anglophone West were received locally (at the host institute and the Greek society at large). The data that are presented in this section primarily draw on teachers’ interviews, as well as some student questionnaires, and they show that, among teachers in particular, views towards the culture of Anglophone countries were overwhelmingly positive.

One way in which affinity towards the Anglophone West was manifested was through the expression of positive feelings towards the English language. For example, one of the teachers made it clear that her chief motivation for training as an English Language teacher was that she “was fascinated by the English pronunciation”, which incidentally was why she insisted that her own learners develop “beautiful” native-like accents. Despite not being prompted, another teacher seemed keen to let me know that she was very positively predisposed towards the English language:

Achilleas: that we’ve pretty much covered it. Is there anything you’d like to add?

Teacher: About teaching English? Besides the fact that I en- like the language and I love it and I have loved it for (.) a long time since I started learning it [...].

A very similar narrative was repeated in yet another interview, where “love” for the English language was repeatedly cited as a reason for joining the profession (“I suppose I’ve always

wanted to be an English teacher. [...] I've always loved the language and I always had a connection to it. Loved it...").

Such affinity towards the language was also invoked by several students. To the question of why they were learning English, a common response was that they "really like[d] this language and [were] interested in it". Elsewhere in the corpus of student responses, the claim was made that English "is a very interesting language". These student statements are considerably weaker in strength and relatively fewer than similar sentiments expressed by teachers, but they seemed to indicate a positive predisposition towards the language, at least by some students.

The positive attitudes towards English seemed to be intertwined with similar affinity towards cultural artefacts of the dominant cultures of the Anglophone West, such as films, songs, and books produced there. The following extract, which is part of my notes from a post-interview discussion, illustrates the point:

One of the topics we touched upon was Martha's love for England. This had not come up quite so strongly in the [interview]. In fact, there was something in the way she had talked about English Literature earlier on that had given me the impression that Martha was very unlikely to be an Anglophile. However, she spoke very enthusiastically about her visit to London, the friendliness of the people, the architecture... Not only did she want to visit England again, but she'd gladly stay there if she could.

In one of the interviews, a teacher talked extensively about the fact that she had not actually wanted to be a teacher, but she loved Victorian literature, and she felt that by teaching the language she gave students the ability to access such texts. Another teacher stated that she wanted to attend a postgraduate course in English literature, because in her view "it is important to be well versed in the culture of the language one taught". Yet another teacher claimed that she tried to immerse herself in English culture in order to become a more effective teacher:

Teacher: I try to (2 sec) I watch movies without, erm?

Achilleas: Subtitles

Teacher: Without subtitles! I listen to English music and try to understand the lyrics. HH I read magazines, English magazines. I think my my biggest problem has to do with the:: the words. I don't know a lot of words. And I try to learn >as many as possible. There is a friend of mine who has a book. It's about a game<, and has a lot of terms in it, so I borrow it and I try to learn a lot of words.

Achilleas: What game is that?

Teacher: It's called D & D, it has to do with Dragons and=

Achilleas: =Dungeons and Dragons.

The attitudes expressed above were in some ways similar to the data pertaining to the "international youth culture" theme (this thesis, pp. 165-166), but differed in two regards. Firstly, the 'target culture' was defined in explicit national terms; and secondly, emphasis seemed to be placed primarily on the valued cultural artefacts, rather than the sense of belonging to a community.

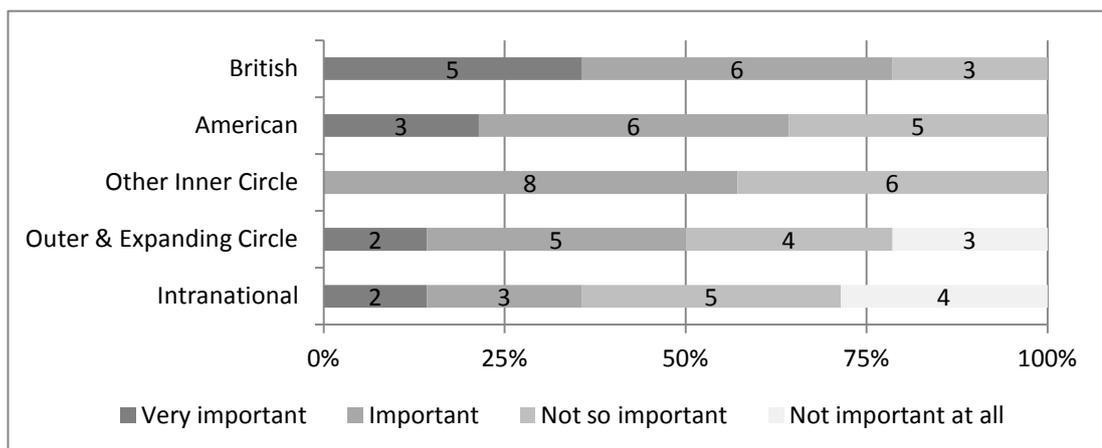


Figure 5-5 Student attitudes towards cultural input

The students' attitudes towards cultural input seemed to confirm a degree of affinity towards a reductively defined Anglophone culture. As can be seen in Figure 5-5, the majority of respondents in a questionnaire survey (Appendix D.5) claimed that learning about British culture was "very important" or "important" to them. By comparison, feelings seemed to be mixed regarding (US)American culture, which was claimed to be "very important" or "important" by two out of every three respondents and "not so important" by the remaining one third. Learning about other Inner Circle cultures, such as Australia or

Canada, and about cultures outside the Inner Circle was reported to be even less important. In summary, the student responses appear to suggest a hierarchical ranking of cultures, in which British and American cultural input was viewed as more important compared to similar input from the communities.

#### **5.4.2 Anglocentric input: the role of resources**

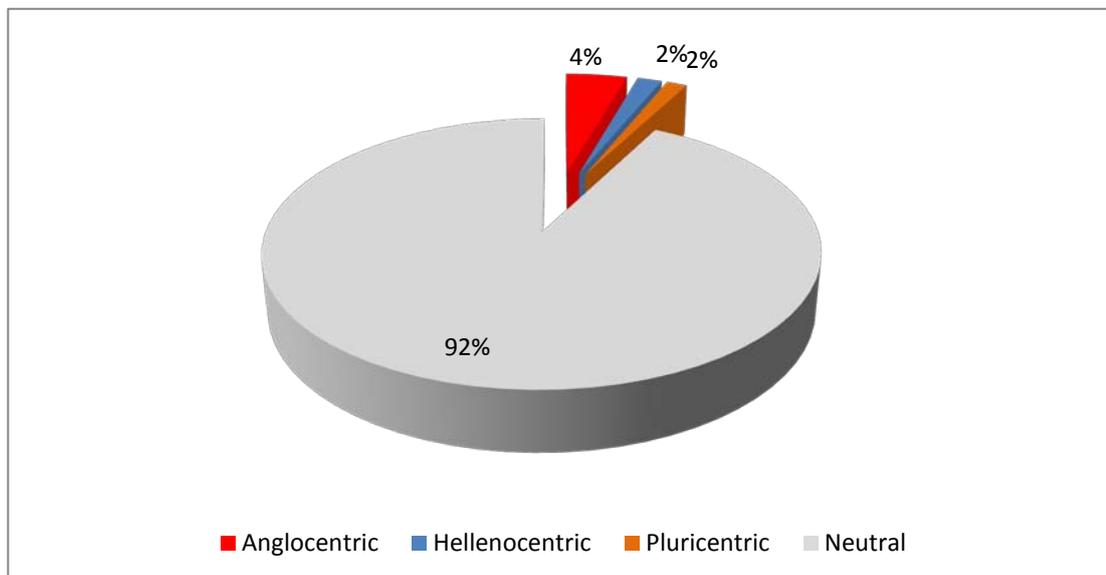
In addition to the expectations discussed above, a weak Anglo-centric influence was traced in the learning resources that were used at the host institute. Depending on their cultural content, the activities in the courseware corpus were coded as Anglocentric, Hellenocentric, Pluricentric and Neutral.

- **Anglocentric** activities were defined as those activities which made reference to cultural icons from the Centre of the English-using world: e.g., a story about King Arthur (Quest 1, Students' Book, p. 74) or a set of listening activities regarding life in Australia (Code Green, Students' Book, p. 54). The category also included texts where the country of origin was not explicitly invoked but could be inferred, such as a series of passages comparing a cottage in the English countryside, a Tudor house, a boat house and council housing in a city (Rainbow A, Class Book, p. 51).
- Topics which drew on contemporary or ancient Greece were categorised as **Hellenocentric**. Examples included a text about Hippocrates (Action, Student's Book C, p. 90), and a passage about a deceased Greek actress and politician (Action, Student's Book C, p. 98).
- The **Pluricentric** category encompassed activities which provided cultural input from settings other than the above, such as a series of texts about festivals around the world (Rainbow A, Class Book, p. 65). It also included activities which seemed designed to provide information about cultural diversity, such as a text about English as a Global language (Action C, Student's Book, p. 80).

- Activities which could not be placed in any of the above categories were designated **Neutral**.

In case of ambiguity, priority was assigned in the following order: Pluricentric, Hellenocentric, Anglocentric, Neutral.

The overwhelming majority of the activities that were sampled were found to be Neutral (92.4%). However, when focusing on those activities that were culturally marked, Anglocentric activities outnumbered Hellenocentric or Pluricentric ones by almost 3:1. To be exact, there were 45 Anglocentric activities in the data (4.4%), as compared to 18 Hellenocentric ones (1.8%) and 15 that were Pluricentric (1.5%). These results seem to indicate a tendency to equate the English language with the culture of the Anglophone West (Figure 5-6).



**Figure 5-6 Distribution of reading passages by cultural content**

The weak Anglocentric influence in the courseware seems consistent with what is known about the cultural orientation of state education ELT. It has been suggested that, despite claims to the contrary, the official curriculum used in state education appears to aim towards the development of a “loose sense of cultural awareness about the customs and

traditions of the countries where English is spoken as a native language” (Sifakis, et al., 2010). In a content analysis of the textbooks used in state primary education, Pozoukidis and Balabanidou (2010) note that the English language textbooks tend to promote the visibility of ‘high-prestige’ cultures, a term that they do not unambiguously define, but which can be inferred to be loosely equivalent to ‘English-speaking’, based on the examples they provide. For instance, they point out that on one of the coursebooks:

For the overwhelming majority of [named] characters, names are used which belong to high-status cultures (Andrew, Nick, Betty, Carol, Patrick), whereas Greek names (Maria, Sophia, Kostas, Argyro) trail far behind them. But what is particularly important to note is that there are merely four names of characters that come from low-status cultures (Omar, Amir, Yang, Lee), which are mentioned for a total of just ten times in a total of 403 references (pp. 342-3, translation mine).

Similarly, Kostoulas (2011a) puts forward the claim that much of the content in the ELT textbooks used in state secondary schools promotes a monolithic and somewhat superficial view of British culture to the exclusion of all other communities where English is used.

Taken together, all this information seems to suggest that many learning resources, both at the host institute and the Greek context privilege an Anglocentric view of the world. This effect is perhaps weak, as much content is devoid of explicit cultural references, but when cultural imagery is used, it is more likely to refer to the Anglophone West.

### **5.4.3 Cultural Awareness emerges locally**

In summary, the Cultural Awareness intentionality indexed a belief that linguistic proficiency should be complemented with knowledge about the culture in which the language is used. This belief was associated with a restrictive view of culture that privileged the dominant culture(s) of the Anglophone West. This intentionality appears to be consistent with the common observation in the critical literature (Section 2.3.3) that ELT is associated with cultural imperialism (e.g., Kumaravadivelu, 2006a; Phillipson, 1992), but the absence of visible influences directly linking the Anglophone West to the host institute

adds nuance to our understanding of this phenomenon. Rather than being directly imposed from the Anglophone West, the Cultural Awareness intentionality seems to have emerged from local attitudes and resources.

As regards expectations, it was discovered that most teachers and some learners at the host institute appeared to hold very strong positive views about the English language and the culture(s) of the communities where it was natively used. This finding is consistent with the unsubstantiated, but plausible, claim that English language teachers in Greece tend to view themselves as local custodians of the English language and culture (Sifakis, 2009, p. 235). Although the data in this study can neither confirm nor challenge such a broad claim, it would seem that the teachers at the host institute seemed to value the dominant culture and language of certain Anglophone countries, whereas the culture of other English-using communities was valued less. It is possible that the value attached to this type of cultural information was related to the ways in which it affirmed the status of English language educators (of which more in Section 5.6).

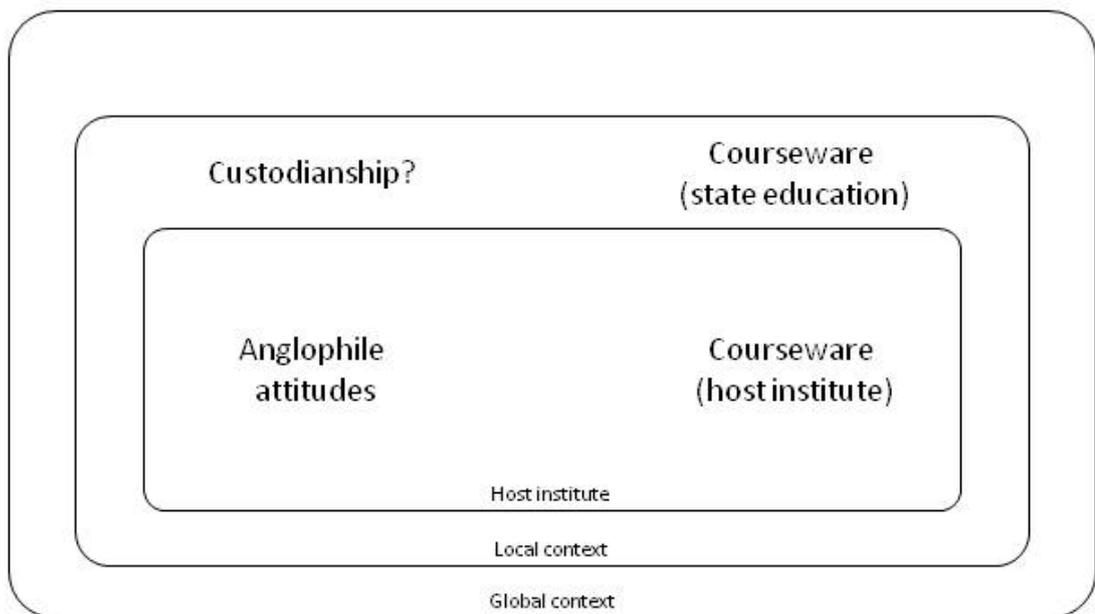


Figure 5-7 Dynamics of Cultural Awareness

The local origins of the Cultural Awareness intentionality appear to be confirmed by examining the resources from which it emerged. In the courseware used at both the host institute and state education there are traces of Anglocentric input, and (in some cases at least) an implicit hierarchy of cultures. It should be noted that the courseware used at the host institute was produced by local publishing enterprises, or the Greek branches of international publishers, and the fact that textbooks had been “specially designed for the needs of Greek students” appeared to be a strong marketing point. Similarly, the courseware used in state education was commissioned by a government agency and produced locally. An argument could be made that this finding indicates the pervasiveness of cultural imperialism, which was evidenced even in locally produced resources. An alternative argument, which appears to be more consistent with the dialectic relationship between the needs of local teachers and the output of local publishers (Kostoulas, 2007), is that the materials reflected, in part, the collective Anglophile beliefs of the local ELT community.

The Cultural Awareness intentionality is, in some ways, paradoxical. Despite having an Anglocentric outlook, it appears to emerge from influences present at the host institute and its local context. In addition, by reducing cultural awareness to information about the “target culture”, it sustained a power differential between the agents in the system who possessed this knowledge (i.e., teachers) and those who were expected to receive it (i.e., learners). In this sense, it seemed to orient the system towards the transmissive pedagogy.

## 5.5 Competition: Dealing with state education

The interaction between the host institute and the state education system appeared to generate a fourth intentionality, which I have termed Competition. This might be defined as a preoccupation with visibly enhancing learning outcomes so as to supplement the state

ELT provision, and thus demonstrate that the host institute provided a valuable service in exchange for the tuition fees that they charged. Among the influences that contributed to the emergence of Competition was an expectation that private language institutes should provide rigorous instruction to address the shortcomings of the state education system (Section 5.5.1), a culture of accountability within the host institute (Section 5.5.2), and the introduction of Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL) in the state education system (Section 5.5.3). Although the outcomes of these processes were not always compatible, a fact which resulted in tensions, the overall orientation of Competition appeared to be transmissive.

### **5.5.1 Limitations of the state education system**

Information about the state education system has been drawn from the literature on Greek ELT, and a questionnaire survey administered to the students (Appendix D.5). Teachers' views were not elicited, as most of the teachers did not have direct experience of working in the state education system.

It is a recurring theme in the literature that state ELT provision is widely regarded as ineffective (Angouri, et al., 2010; Karavas, 2010; Scholfield & Gitsaki, 1996). In one study it was tentatively suggested that the reasons for the pervasive lack of trust towards state ELT include large, mixed-ability classes, uninteresting lessons, a lack of motivation among teachers, and –bizarrely– the fact that tuition fees are not levied (Angouri, et al., 2010, pp. 190-191). State ELT is described elsewhere in the literature as inadequate in terms of time, lacking in essential resources and pedagogically inconsistent, and it is suggested that this results in low motivation and “behavioural problems” among students (Karavas, 2010, pp. 71-72). In addition, private foreign language institutes have been described as providing a “stricter environment with more class tests and greater discipline”, better ratios of students / teachers and more exposure to the language, compared to state education

(Scholfield & Gitsaki, 1996, p. 126). An important caveat is that all the studies above refer to perceptions towards state ELT, rather than actual measurable outcomes. This lacuna in the literature is accentuated by the difficulty in isolating the effect of state education from that of the supplementary tuition (for those students who can afford evening courses) and the effects of low socio-economic status (for those who cannot). Regardless of their validity, however, such perceptions influenced the activity of the host institute.

The perception that state education did not cater to the ELT needs of learners was echoed by the students at the host institute, who described it as a “waste of time” and “irrelevant”. Lessons were repeatedly described as “boring”, and it was stated that they “have nothing new” to offer, because the students believed that “already know most of the things they teach us”. The following response synthesises many prevailing views:

[At the state school] all the students are naughty and don't pay attention because they already do private lessons and the teachers can't do their job properly. [The books] have many errors and mistakes [...] we don't have the choice [chance?] to have listening tests, because the state doesn't provide us recordings.

Similar statements were made by almost all questionnaire respondents, including one who added that “Since they know that all the students have private english [sic] classes, [teachers] don't give the appropriate attention to the subject”. In other questionnaire responses teachers at the state education system were described as “indifferent”, and it was suggested that “the teacher usually doesn't care if we learn something or not”. In the view of at least one respondent, “The only thing [teachers] have in mind is how to get done with the lesson, and to finish as quickly as possible the syllabus”. At times, the students' responses appear exaggerated, as was the case with claims that the state school teachers were “amateur” and that “some of them do not know English as [well as] some students do”. While occasional overstatement might limit the credibility of the student-generated descriptions, it does seem uncontroversial to assume pervasive dissatisfaction with the ELT provision of the state school system.

The poor match between the students' needs and the educational provision of state ELT appeared to frame expectations for the host institute. In the same student survey, it was claimed that lessons in private language centres are "more 'difficult'", and that students who attend courses in such institutes "have much studying, but they learn many things". In another questionnaire, it was said that students in private language centres "are silent, and pay attention to the teacher, because they take lessons seriously". It was said that lessons are typified by "very good analysis of [grammatical?] phenomena, [with] multiple examples and exercises". On the whole, it would appear that an expectation existed among students for more rigorous and structured forms of instruction to compensate for the deficiencies in the state school system.

### 5.5.2 A culture of accountability

In addition to beliefs about the state school system, the Competition intentionality appeared to be influenced by a culture of accountability among the teachers at the host institute. In several interviews the point was made that the teachers had to accommodate for the emphasis state ELT placed on grammatical awareness and lexical range. For example, one teacher suggested that she often had to make time in her lesson plans to help students revise grammar whenever a test was announced in the state ELT classes:

Teacher: [Δεν είναι δυνατό να ακολουθώ πιστά το πρόγραμμα γιατί π.χ. πρόσφατα χρειάστηκε να αφιερώσω τουλάχιστον μισό μάθημα για να κάνω επαναλήψεις και να λύνω απορίες για το σχολείο τους.

Achilleas: Γιατί για το σχολείο;

Teacher: .HHHHH Τους, γιατί τους είπε [η καθηγήτριά τους] πως θα γράφανε διαγώνισμα: >present simple, continuous, perfect και past<, και έπρεπε να επανα[λάβω-

Teacher: [It's not possible to strictly adhere to the syllabus because, for example I recently had] to dedicate at least half a lesson doing revisions and answering questions for their school.

Achilleas: Why for their school?

Teacher: .HHHHH They, because they were told that they would take a formal test: >present simple, continuous, perfect and past<, and I had to re[vis-

Achilleas: [Τώρα εγώ θα κάνω το δικηγόρο του διαβόλου, αλλά γιατί να επα- γιατί να μην κάνει την επανάληψη αυτή, κι εσυ::εις να συνεχίσετε κανονικά με το μεβα[ση το πρόγραμμα;

Teacher: [το πρόγραμμα (2 sec), ναι αλλά αν γράψει κανείς ξέρω γω 12, μετά εγώ θα, εμένα, για εμένα θα λένε ότι δεν ξέρουν τα παιδιά ούτε τα βασικά.

Achilleas: [Now, I'll take on the role of the de-devil's advocate, but why re- why shouldn't [the state school teacher] rev- do the revision, and you can go on normally, accor[ding to [your] syllabus?

Teacher: [the syllabus (2 sec), yes, but if someone gets a, I don't know, 12 [out of 20, a low mark], then I will-, me, it will be me who will be discussed, they will say that the kids don't even know the basics.

It should be noted, by way of providing context, that formal tests in the state education system are regulated by law and must contain reading comprehension, morphology and syntax components (see Section 1.1). The expectation that students should prepare for such tests by revising grammar was a product of such strong emphasis on form.

Another teacher expressed indignation that the textbooks used in the state school included long lists of lexis which was not relevant to students needs ("Unless they become aircraft mechanics at age 11, why would they want to know 'fuselage' and 'ailerons'?"). She went on to argue that this created the unfair impression that the learners were not adequately prepared by the private school, and complained that it seemed unrealistic for her to strike a workable balance between the requirements of her own syllabus and "incomprehensible" expectations imposed by the school system.

In yet another interview, a teacher expressed her surprise that young learners were being made to take grammar tests in Year 3:

Teacher: Μου είπε η μάνα από ένα A/P ότι το κορίτσι το έβαλε η δασκάλα στο σχολείο της να γράφει τεστάκια με present continuous και have got,

Achilleas: Δεν προβλέπεται.

Teacher: The mother of an A Junior [student] told me that the teacher at school made the girl write tests with present continuous and 'have got'.

Achilleas: That's irregular.

Teacher: Έτσι μου είπε πάντως κι  
έμεινα κάγκελο. Τί κάνεις μετά,  
δηλ- της εξηγείς ότι πως εμάς  
μας ενδιαφέρει να μάθει να  
μιλάει πρώτα, σωστά;

Teacher: That's what she told me  
anyway, and I was stunned.  
What does one do then?  
Explain to her that we are  
interested in learning how to  
speak first, right?

What these comments seem to have in common is a preoccupation that the prospect of poor performance by the students at school could reflect on them. In response to this, they strove to align their objectives with those set by the state school system, which appeared to be strongly form-focussed.

### **5.5.3 Introduction of TEYL**

The planned implementation of Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL) courses in state education also exercised an influence on the host institute, because private language education and state education in Greece appear to be in a co-adaptive relationship. Co-adaptation is a relationship between two (or more) systems whereby changes in one system trigger changes in the other one(s) (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008, p. 67). In this case, it appears that changes in the state school system were motivated by policies in private education, and then fed back into the latter.

When fieldwork was conducted, English was normally introduced in the state school curriculum in Year 3, but plans were in place for its gradual introduction starting in the Year 1. Similar policy decisions had previously taken place in 2003, when the starting age for ELT tuition was set at Year 3, and in 1995, at which point English was introduced in primary education from Year 4 onwards. The rationale for the proposed change in the curriculum is described in a series of online publications that appeared in journal set up to showcase the TEYL programme, and vaguely reference the Critical Period Hypothesis (Lenneberg, 1967), the benefits of bilingualism, and examples of other European countries where Primary ELT programmes had been introduced (Zouganeli, 2011a, 2011b; Zouganeli & Giannakopoulou,

2011). However, it seems likely that the trend towards introducing ELT at progressively earlier ages was related to the commercial practices of private language institutes, which have traditionally tended to admit students a year before ELT provision begins in the state school system. In fact, in the TEYL website it is explicitly stated that the programme was addressed to cater to the needs of “parents who end up sending their children to a language school in order to support their first contact with the foreign language” («γονείς που καταλήγουν να στείλουν το παιδί τους σε φροντιστήριο για να το υποστηρίξουν στην πρώτη επαφή του με την ξένη γλώσσα») (University of Athens Research Centre for English Language, n.d.).

The change in school policy was already causing repercussions in the host institute. According to the acting Director of Studies, the standard and early enrolment ages had already been reduced by a year, to eight and seven respectively. The changes in the students’ cognitive maturity were expected to have a domino effect throughout the curriculum, and necessitated redesigning courses so that they would be more “children-friendly”. Another effect of this policy was the planned introduction of two Very Young Learners’ classes, one of which was targeted at the four- to five-year-old age group, and one for six- to seven-year olds. Learning activities in these programmes made extensive use of teaching methods that aligned with the communicative approach (broadly construed), such as Total Physical Response (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, pp. 73-80), story-telling (Cameron, 2001, pp. 159-179) and theme-based projects (Cameron, 2001, pp. 180-198).

Although most of these changes were at the pilot and early implementation changes, precluding a definitive answer regarding their potential and limitations, teachers’ attitudes towards them ranged from ambivalent to critical («με τραγουδάκια, παλαμάκια και χα-χα-χα, δε βγαίνει χρονιά που να χτυπιέσαι» [“You can’t have a year’s worth of lessons with little songs, clapping hands and ha-ha-ha, no matter what you try”]). Questions were raised

about the learners' ability to comprehend grammar at such early ages, the extent to which these classes were compatible with the teachers' specialised skills, and the ethics of charging parents for classes "in which children do nothing but talk to each other" while the teacher looked on. In all, the teachers at the host institute seemed to acknowledge that a demanding grammar-based course would challenge the youngest learners, but a strong belief seemed to persist that a traditional approach was preferable to the new communicative courses.

To sum up, it would seem that the effect of the implementation of TEYL was creating pressure towards a more communicative instruction mode, but such a re-orientation was met with strong resistance.

#### **5.5.4 Complex interactions, unpredictable outcomes**

To recapitulate: the Competition intentionality, which emerged from the interaction of the state school system and the host institute, aimed at enhancing academic outcomes for learners. The effect of this intentionality was two-fold: On the one hand, the expectation for rigorous and structured learning activities resulted in the prevalence of transmissive modes of instruction, which allow for greater teacher control. Similarly, the accountability culture in the host institute resulted in an alignment between the learning objectives at the host institute and the form-focused instruction that seemed to typify the syllabus of the state education system. On the other hand, the repercussions of the planned introduction of TEYL in the state education system appeared to orient the system towards a more communicative direction, due to the joint effect of the international literature on TEYL and the pragmatic realisation that transmissive modes of instruction were incompatible with the needs of the youngest learners. The tension between these competing effects was manifested in the sceptical way in which many teachers positioned themselves towards the curricular changes that were being introduced.

Looking at the genesis of the Competition intentionality, the dynamic from which it emerged offers insights into the interaction of shaping influences. For example, the expectation in the host institute for relatively structured and rigorous modes of instruction appeared to relate to beliefs about the limitations of the state education system, which were widespread in the local context. Similarly, the culture of accountability (i.e., the belief that the educational outcomes of students at the school system would reflect on their teachers at the host institute as well) seemed to work in unison with the emphasis on formal teaching at the state school. Lastly, the curricular reform at the host institute was impacted by the planned introduction of TEYL in the state education system, due to the co-adaptive relationship between the systems. In addition to these local interactions, mainstream ELT methodology seemed to impact the host institute, directly (in the design of the revised curriculum), and indirectly (through the TEYL programme in state education). The complexity of interactions operating in different levels, which has been showcased here, hint at the sometimes unpredictable outcomes of the Competition intentionality, which will be revisited in Chapter 6.

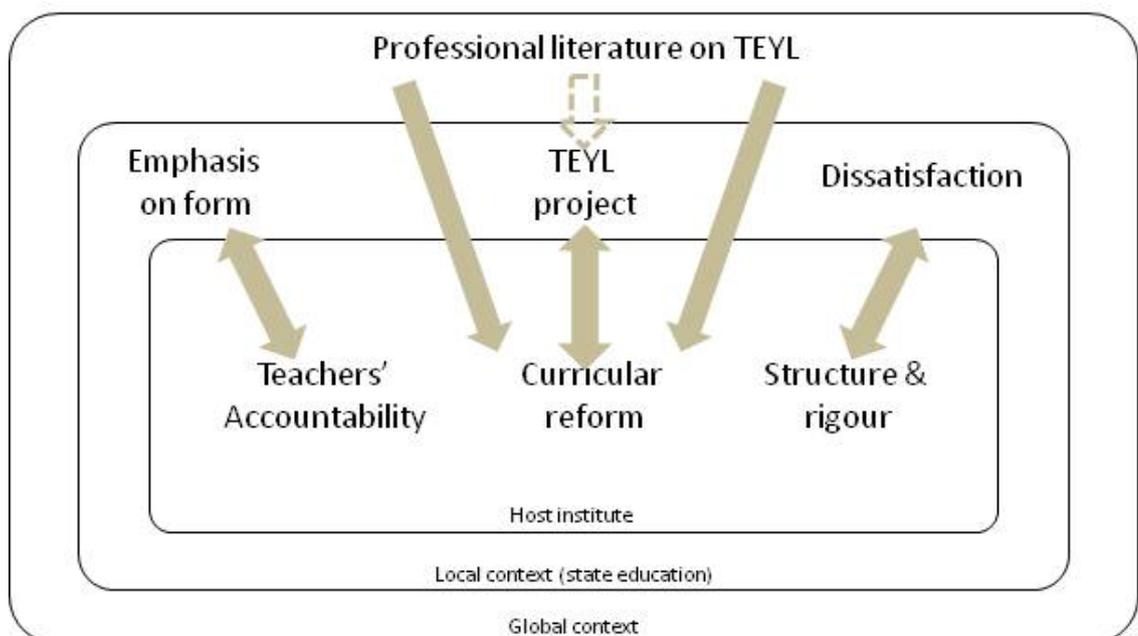


Figure 5-8 Dynamics of Competition

## 5.6 Protectionism: Conserving the properties of the system

The last of the five intentionalities, Protectionism, seemed geared towards safeguarding the vested professional interests of local ELT practitioners. Three shaping influences seemed to work together to produce this intentionality, namely concerns over the particularity of the Greek context (Section 5.6.1), the value attached to the Pedagogical Content Knowledge of locally trained bilingual teachers (Section 5.6.2), and the primacy of professional experience over theoretical knowledge (Section 5.6.3). Although these influences were not always compatible, taken together, they appeared to valorise the comparative strengths associated with the local teachers' professional identity.

### 5.6.1 The 'Greek reality'

There were frequent references in the discourse of the host institute to what was termed the 'Greek reality', which appeared to index a belief that the educational needs of Greek students were different from those described in the mainstream ELT literature. This belief regarding the particularity of the Greek context has been traced in the courseware used at the host institute and in some teachers' statements.

Most of the coursebooks were locally designed, and they claimed to be designed to cater to the Greek students' needs. For example, the blurb in the back cover of one series read: "A two-level course for A and B Junior classes, *written especially for Greece*, with lots of exciting resources for students and teachers" (Rainbow, all books, emphasis added). Similar information was highlighted in another set of coursebooks, whose author was described as having extensive experience "working in the field in Greece" (Action, all books). In the promotional materials of the same series, it was also stated that special treatment was given to "the common grammatical and lexical mistakes that Greek students often make". In another series, it was suggested that "Quest is a three-level course for Greek students"

and that “it addresses the needs of Greek students and teachers” (Quest 1, Teacher’s Book, p. iii). Although the needs of Greek students were frequently invoked, there was little explicit reference in the materials as to what these needs were or how they were catered for, which was why I turned to the teachers for this information.

In one of the interviews, it was suggested that Greek EFL students tended to differ from their counterparts in other countries on account of their age, their linguistic background and the lack of opportunities to engage in authentic communication. The teacher suggested that learners in Greece tended to begin ELT courses at very young ages, which meant that they had lower levels of cognitive maturity and different interests, compared to students in different countries. As a result, she claimed, an older (internationally marketed) coursebook which had been used at the host institute, proved inappropriate for her classes:

Yes, it was a good book, but it was difficult - >not very easy< to work from. (2 sec) With these students we have . here. [...] half the time, I had to explain the ideas in the book. What are the causes of poverty, social problems, volunteering. I had to translate all the time, and they still, they didn’t understand because and in the Greek school they don’t know these [concepts].

It was also suggested that learners in Greece benefited from a solid background in grammar, which was extensively and explicitly taught in the state education system. In the same teacher’s view, there were several universal features (“basic grammar phenomena”) which could be transferred from one language to another. As a result, it was possible to engage with grammar “in sufficient depth”, which she presumed was not possible in contexts where grammar was only taught inductively. Lastly, she felt that learners in Greece lacked opportunities for authentic communication, which resulted in “very poor” speaking skills and hindered the efficient implementation of communicative tasks. For reasons such as the above, she argued that it would be inappropriate to incorporate “foreign” theory in her lessons.

## 5.6.2 The role of local pedagogical content knowledge

Another influence which contributed to the emergence of Protectionism was the belief that the Pedagogical Content Knowledge of locally trained teachers was particularly relevant to the needs of Greek students, especially when compared against Native English Speaking Teachers (NESTs). Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) is a broad term which comprises knowledge of context, knowledge of pedagogical theory and subject matter knowledge (Shulman, 1986), but the aspects which were reportedly most relevant to ELT were familiarity with linguistics, explicit knowledge of the grammatical system, and a literary background.

The importance of background knowledge in linguistics and literature was indexed in what seemed like a covert hierarchy according to which teachers at the host institute ranked themselves. Many teachers at the host institute had completed four-year undergraduate courses in subjects like pedagogy or the Arts, which –coupled with a C2-language certificate– conferred them a teaching license. These teachers were sometimes referred to with the official, yet somewhat disparaging designation «επαρκειούχοι» (*eparkiúxi*, “adequately trained [teachers]”), and there seemed to be a perception that those teachers who held university degrees in English Language and Literature («πτυχιούχοι», *ptichiúxi*, “degree holders”) were better qualified. This attitude was encapsulated in statements such as the following:

Οι επαρκειούχοι γνωρίζουν τη γλωσσα, δε λέω, αλλά αλλά εμείς ξέρουμε να διδάξουμε για τη γλωσσα. Αυτή είναι η διάφορά μας [...] για να καταλάβεις δηλαδή σε τι σημείο έχουμε φτάσει, όχι μόνο παίρνουμε τα ίδια λεφτά, απαξιώνεται και η γνώση μας. Τέσσερα χρόνια δε σημαίνουν τίποτα δηλαδή, και το ξεκούδουνο που πήρε ένα proficiency είναι το ίδιο πράγμα.

The “adequately trained teachers” know the language, sure, but but we know how to teach about the language. This is our difference [...] see how bad things are: not only are we paid the same salary, but also our knowledge goes unacknowledged. That is four years [of university studies] mean nothing, and the strumpet who got a proficiency counts for just as much.

A very similar statement was made by a ‘degree holder’, who felt that “some [‘adequately trained teachers’] may know the language well enough, but no teaching license brings them to the level of graduates “who have devoted their life to studying English”, and wondered how “four years at university, with literature, linguistics and [ELT] methods” can legitimately be compared “with a proficiency”.

Similar arguments were explicitly brought to bear on the discussion of NESTs, signalling both the pervasiveness of these views and their protective function. Both ‘adequately trained teachers’ and ‘degree holders’ appeared to share the belief that their Pedagogical Content Knowledge compared very favourably against that of NESTs, who often held only entry level qualifications, and in the words of one interview participant “become teachers overnight” («γίνονται καθηγητές μέσα σε μια νύχτα»). When asked to specify where locally trained teachers enjoyed an advantage against NESTs, teachers invoked their knowledge of the formal features of the language and their ability to describe them. In one interview, for instance, it was claimed that NESTs are at a disadvantage at teaching pronunciation:

Teacher: Και το ξέρεις κι εσύ καλύτερα από μένα, πως στην σχ- >το μάθαμε και απ’ την σχολή< ότι για να μάθει το παιδί κάτι πρέπει απαραίτητα να γίνει καποιο «noticing», έτσι; (2 sec) Αλλά ο Άγγλος όταν μιλάει με σωστή, με RP, θα πει «dishes» αλλά επειδή είναι native speaker, θα είναι με devoicing στο d, ξέρεις, και καλά σαν tishes (3 sec)

Achilleas : Πιστ- Νομίζεις ότι αυτό είναι, ότι αποτελεί πρόβλη[μα];

Teacher: [Ναι, αλλά ο Άγγλος αυτό το κάνει χωρίς να το καταλαβαίνει, γιατί είναι native speaker. Και όχι μόνο αυτό, δεν καταλαβαίνει κιόλας ότι αυτό είναι, συνιστά πρόβλημα για τον Έλληνα μαθητή, αν μιλάει έτσι.

Teacher: And I’m sure you know this better than I do, that at uni- >when we were at University< we learnt that for a child to learn there needs to be some kind of noticing, right? But when an Englishman speaks in correct, in RP [Received Pronunciation], he will say “dishes” but because he’s a native speaker it will be with devoicing in the d, you know, as in, like tishes

Achilleas: Do you be- Do you think that this is, it amounts to a prob[lem]?

Teacher: [Yes, but the Englishman does this without understanding, because he’s a native speaker. And not only that, he doesn’t even understand that this is, it constitutes a problem for the Greek students, if that’s how he speaks.

A very similar argument was put forward by another teacher with regard to what was perceived as inadequate command of the grammar system by NESTs:

Αν για εμένα, εγώ δυσκολεύομαι να περιγράψω τις διαφορές μετα-αναμεσα σε Present Perfect και Past Simple, ή Past Present Perfect Simple και Continuous, πως θα τους εξηγήσει ο Άγγλος ή Αμερικανος; Να είμαστε σοβαροί. [...] Στην Αγγλία δε διδάσκουν γραμματική τα τελευταία 20-30 χρόνια. Στο μεταπτυχιακό που ήμουν μόνο εγώ και μια άλλη κοπέλα, ελληνίδα κι αυτή, ήξεραν κανονικά γραμματική να εξηγήσουν τι γίνεται. Οι άλλοι ελεγαν πράγματα που πολλά δε στέκουν, ό,τι να'ναι δηλαδή. [...] Δε διδάσκονται έναν έναν τους χρόνους. Αν τους πεις τι είναι αυτό; ένας Past Perfect παράδειγμα, θα σε κοιτάζει σα βλάκας. Δεν ξέρουν ούτε τα ονόματά τους.

If I am, I struggle to describe the differences am- between Present Perfect and Past Simple, or between Past Present Perfect Simple and Continuous, how can an Englishman or an American do this? Let's get serious. [...] In England they haven't taught any grammar for the last 20-30 years. In the postgraduate course that I attended, only I and another girl, she was also Greek, knew any proper grammar to explain what was happening. The others kept saying things that were not logical, whatever.[...] [Native Speakers] are not taught each tense in turn. If you tell them what is this?, a Past Perfect for example they will look at you like fools. They can't even name them.

The same teacher went on to argue that locally trained ELT professionals, such as herself, could capitalise on the thorough grounding they had on grammar and the experiences they shared with learners to become more effective teachers:

[Τα ξέρει αυτά] Γιατί τα έχει κάνει στο φροντιστήριο! Και στο πανεπιστήμιο. Ξέρει δηλαδή και να μιλάει σωστά, με ακρίβεια, και να εξηγεί. Και ξέρει ακόμη, επειδή τα έχει κάνει πως, επειδή σα μαθητής τα έχει κάνει σα μαθητής, πως σκέφτονται οι μαθητές και τους βοηθάει.

[They know grammar] Because they've done this at the private language school! And university. They know both how to write properly, accurately, and how to explain. And they also know, because they have done this, how, because as students they have done this as students, [they know] how students think and they can help them.

In summary, there appeared to be a tendency among several teachers to valorise certain forms of knowledge, including literature and aspects of phonology and grammar, and view them as requisite elements of language instruction. The unstated implication seemed to be

that language learning should capitalise on the knowledge of local ELT practitioners and especially those who had attended prestigious (within the context) English Language and Literature university courses.

### 5.6.3 Primacy of practice

A third shaping influence was the belief that practical teaching experience constituted a more valuable resource than the kind of received theoretical knowledge that is associated with In-Service Training (INSET) initiatives or advanced studies courses. For example, when asked about her professional development aspirations, one teacher argued that she didn't feel the need to take an advanced studies course, because "[i]t's not the studies that turn you into a teacher. It's teaching. When I began, I was almost clueless, but I learnt as I moved along, just like my students do." A similar sentiment, expressed more negatively, was articulated by another teacher, who appraised an INSET seminar with the following comments:

the theory was just too much – devastating! – multiple intelligences, affective learning, groups and tasks. I've learnt this already. What I need is advice from someone who has experience teaching classes like mine!

In yet another interview, the following comments were made regarding professional development:

Achilleas: Uh-huh. Erm, moving just for a second outside the, erm, agenda of this interview, have you ever considered the, erm, courses offered by the [Hellenic] Open University?

Teacher: That would be a possibility, yes, but I find them a little bit . boring to tell you the truth. It's all linguistics. I would like to do something like translation or literature.

In all the interview extracts, there seemed to be a tendency to either devalourise theoretically oriented professional development, or to relegate its importance to initial teacher education. For these teachers, what seemed to matter most was practical knowledge gained through teaching experience.

#### 5.6.4 A synergy of incompatible beliefs

The Protectionist intentionality, which involved safeguarding the professional interests of local teachers, seemed to emerge from the co-activity of several, sometimes discordant, influences. The first influence was a belief in the particularity of the Greek context. This influence was traced in the teachers' discourse, as well as the marketing claims of local publishing ventures. A second influence was the belief that teacher effectiveness was a function of those aspects of Pedagogical Content Knowledge that sustained the local ELT hierarchy, mostly knowledge of literature and linguistics. The last influence was a belief that, following initial certification, the kinds of professional development that were most relevant to teaching were associated with practice rather than received knowledge.

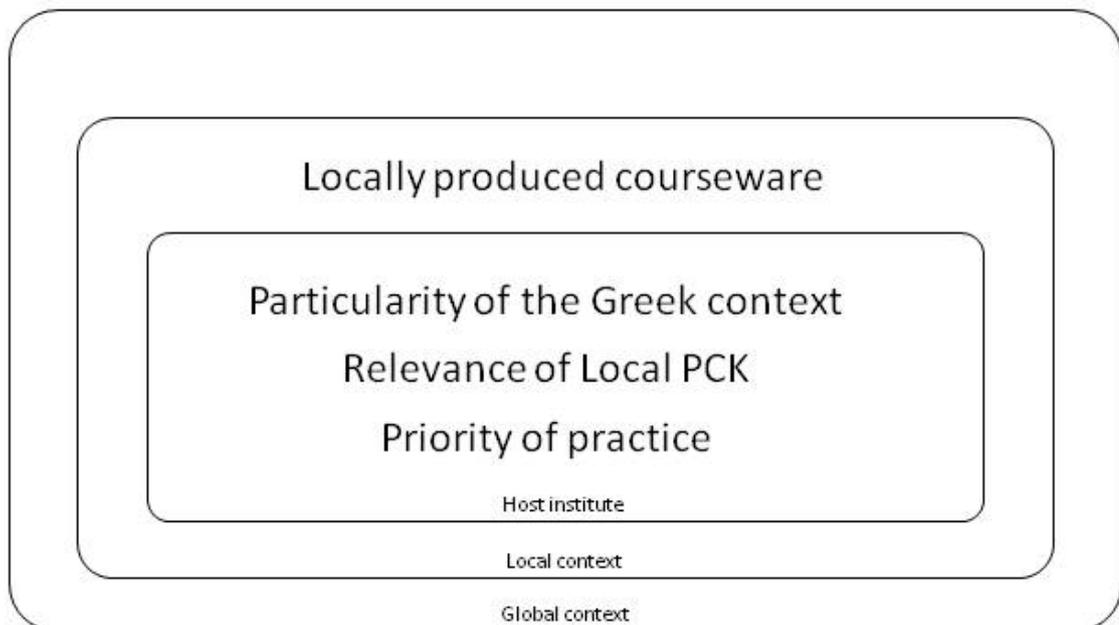


Figure 5-9 Dynamics of Protectionism

The synergy of these influences resulted in the emergence of a rather distinctive form of pedagogy, which capitalised on the locally available resources, while devaluing possible alternatives. Some principal features of this pedagogy, which are discussed in more detail in Chapter 6 and exemplified in Chapter 7, were emphasis on grammatical form and reliance on tried-and-tested methods, both of which seemed associated with the technical

paradigm (this thesis, p. 65). This section has contributed towards understanding how this transmissive form of pedagogy came into being, and it has illustrated how an emergent intentionality can synthesise competing agendas in possibly unexpected ways.

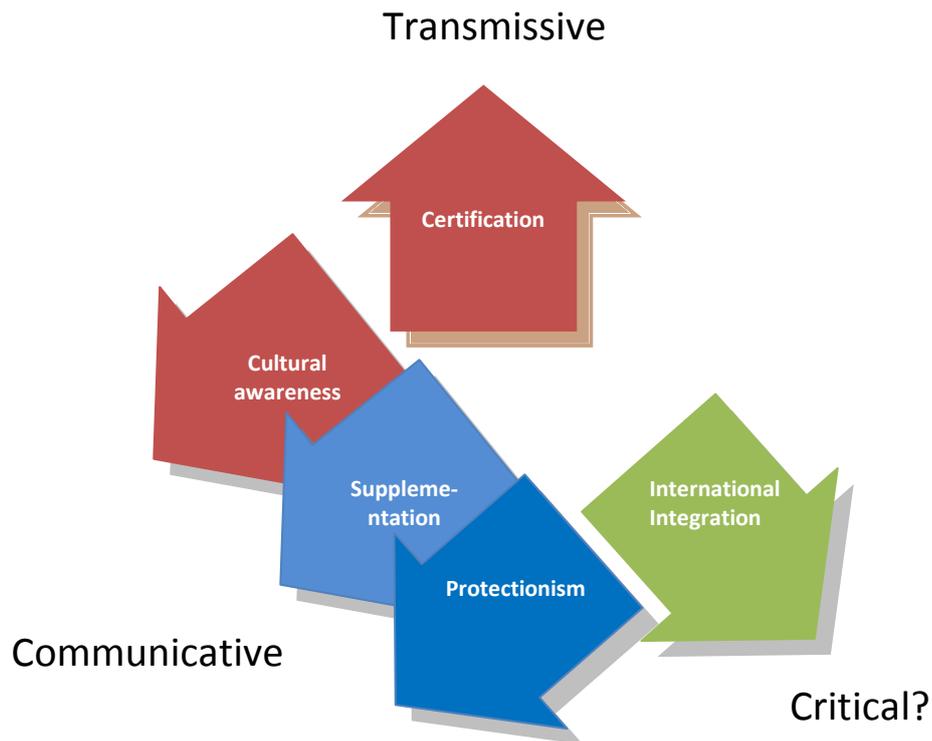
## 5.7 Towards an understanding of the dynamics of intentions

To recapitulate, in this chapter described how five intentionalities, namely Certification, International Integration, Cultural Awareness, Competition, and Protectionism, motivated and sustained activity in the host institute. These intentionalities emerged from the combined influences of various resources and expectations (shaping influences), which were distributed in the host institute, its local context and the broader structures of global ELT.

By looking at the locus of origin of the shaping influences, I argued that most of the interactions between the host institute and its environment were local, and the impact of shaping influences from the global context was usually limited and indirect. It was also noted that influences tended to have a differentiated effect, depending on their locus of origin. Those originating at the host institute and the local context were more likely to orient the system towards transmissive teaching, whereas those originating in the global context were tended to draw it in a communicative direction. However, the complex interactions between these shaping influences meant that such effects were not always straightforward.

In the discussion above, the intentionalities were described in isolation for the sake of analytical convenience. However, the collective behaviour of the language school was influenced by the *interaction* of the intentionalities, or what Young et al. have termed “dynamics of intentions” (2002, p. 53). In Figure 5-10, the intentionalities have been represented by arrows pointing towards one of the three pedagogical orientations (i.e.,

transmissive, communicative, critical). The colour of the arrows indicates the communities with which the intentionality was primarily associated (its outlook): red represents associations with the Anglophone West, blue indicates connections to the local educational context, and green stands for a global English-using community.



**Figure 5-10 Dynamics of intentions at the host institute**

Thus, Certification prioritised forms of pedagogy that were Anglo-centric and communicative (Section 5.2), whereas Competition (Section 5.5) and Protectionism (Section 5.6) prioritised local expertise and resources, resulting in a transmissive impulse. Cultural Awareness was atypical, in that it combined an Anglo-centric outlook with a transmissive orientation (Section 5.4). Finally, International Integration, which was primarily associated with the students, seemed to be closer to the critical paradigm (Section 5.3). In Chapters 6, I argue that the balance between these intentionalities was in a constant flux: certain intentionalities seemed dominant in some levels of instruction, but

their influence waned later on, others appeared to have different effects depending on the context, and others seemed to grow stronger over time.

In addition to the empirical contribution made by tracing the intentionalities in the host institute, this chapter has conceptually extended previous work on ecological psychology (Stelma, 2011; Stelma & Fay, 2014; Young, et al., 2002) by developing the construct of intentionality from a perspective explicitly informed by Complex Systems Theory. In this chapter, empirical data were used to develop a grounded understanding of intentionalities as being collective, emergent, nested and generative. Moreover, building on Stelma's (2013) work on the intentionalities created by student dyads, this chapter showed how the construct of intentionality can be brought to bear on the description of how collective entities, such as a language school, behave.

The primary focus of this chapter has been on the genesis of intentionalities at the host institute. Moving onto their generative effects, in the two chapters that follow, I will take an in-depth look at how materials and practices were impacted by the intentionalities that were identified above.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Learning Materials:**

#### **Resources and Affordances**

In this chapter I turn my attention to the learning materials that were used at the host institute, which constituted the second emergent theme in the study of teaching and learning at the host institute. The empirical focus on learning materials has been motivated by two aims. Firstly, the materials used at the host institute provided insights into perceptions about linguistic and pedagogical appropriateness, and thus evidenced the influence of the intentionalities described in Chapter 5. While a historical account of how and why the materials were selected for use at the host institute lies outside the purview of this study, an empirical look into the learning materials revealed traces of intentionalities, which in turn provided an epistemological warrant for the retrodictive description of the dynamics of intentions at the host institute. Secondly, a description of the learning materials provided insights into pedagogical practice, thus foreshadowing the discussion in Chapter 7. While the precise relation between materials and practice remains contentious (see, for instance, Hutchinson & Torres, 1994; Jacobs & Ball, 1996; Littlejohn, 1992), the tentative argument is put forward in this chapter that the learning materials in the host institute created a collective set of affordances which influenced pedagogical activity.

The structure of this chapter reflects the dual goal described above. After a broad holistic overview of the learning materials, which serves to orient readers (Section 6.1), the materials are described in detail, with a view to teasing out the influence of various combinations of intentionalities (Section 6.2). First, it is shown that considerations of Protectionism and Competition impacted the grammar and vocabulary strands of the syllabus (Sections 6.2.1 and 6.2.2 respectively), but the effects of their combined influence

were not uniform. The Certification intentionality strongly impacted many activities across the syllabus, especially in the more advanced levels of instruction, as is illustrated with reference to the listening and speaking strands of the syllabus (Section 6.2.3). The effects of the dynamics of intentions, however, were not always straightforward: Section 6.2.4, which focuses on reading and writing activities, provides examples of such non-linear effects.

In the next major section of the chapter (Section 6.3), I suggest a way of conceptualising the relation of learning materials and pedagogical practice. I argue that affordances are implicitly present in the learning materials, which made certain forms of teaching and learning likelier than others. To help with the conceptualisation of this influence, I draw on the construct of a *state space* (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008, p. 46) from Complex Systems Theory, and develop what I call an 'affordance landscape', which is a metaphorical visualisation of the collective effect of the affordances implicit in the learning materials, and, by extension, of the probability that certain forms of pedagogy materialise in practice.

## 6.1 Overview of the learning materials

Learning materials could be construed to include a wide range of resources, such as syllabus documents, testing materials, extensive reading resources, posters etc., but the discussion in this chapter will be restricted to a core set of materials that were used in actual teaching, as defined in the syllabus documents of the host institute. Materials, in this restricted sense, comprised published courseware (typically a coursebook and a workbook) and in-house supplementary materials. Of these, the courseware was systematically sampled, and quantitative methods were used for its description (Section 4.3.4), whereas in-house materials were sampled theoretically (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, pp. 144-157). The most salient features of the materials are described below, in order to help orient readers in the analytical description that follows in Section 6.2.

### 6.1.1 Courseware

The description of the courseware has been facilitated by the fact that the structure of the coursebooks and workbooks was hierarchical and modular (see Table 4-8). There were minor differences in the nomenclature used in different programmes, but in the interest of terminological consistency these have been disregarded. The basic building block of the courseware was a *course* i.e., a set of textbooks and activity books that were used in a single programme. Each course consisted of two or three *levels*, designed for use in a single academic year. Every level was divided into four to six *modules*, which were further subdivided into two to four *units*. A typical unit, which often cohered around an overarching topic, was made up of three to five *lessons*. Lessons normally took up a double-page spread, and comprised several *activities*. While the structure of individual lessons sometimes varied, the structure of units and modules within each course was identical.

The course used in the Junior programme was titled *Rainbow*, and it was published by Oxford University Press expressly for the Greek ELT market. The course was divided into two levels (A and B), which had been adopted for the A and B Junior classes respectively. The course components that were used were the Class Book and the Activity Book (Maidment & Roberts, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c, 2005d). Each level was divided into six modules, consisting of two units and a revision lesson, which tested grammar and vocabulary. Each unit contained three lessons. Of them, two contained a story in cartoon form, which “introduces the target [grammar] structures in a clear and meaningful context” (Roberts, 2005, p. ix), a formal presentation of a target language structure, and several listening, speaking and writing activities, where the structure was practiced. The third lesson in each lesson focussed on vocabulary and also offered scope for developing the productive skills.

| Lesson           | Focus                         |
|------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Unit 1</b>    |                               |
| <b>Lesson 1a</b> | Reading (Vocabulary), Grammar |
| <b>Lesson 1b</b> | Reading (Vocabulary), Grammar |
| <b>Lesson 1c</b> | Vocabulary, Writing           |
| <b>Unit 2</b>    | (as above)                    |
| <b>Revision</b>  | Vocabulary, Grammar           |

**Table 6-1 Structure of a typical module (Rainbow)**

In the 2010-2011 academic year, when fieldwork was being conducted, a restructuring of the curriculum was in progress, which involved the gradual introduction of the *Quest* course. *Quest*, which was also published by Oxford University Press “for Senior classes in Greece”, consisted of three levels, of which the lowest, *Quest 1* (Rainham, 2010; Saxby & Shipton, 2010), was already in use in A Senior. Much like *Rainbow*, *Quest 1* was divided into six two-unit modules, and each unit contained three lessons, with additional ‘revision’ or ‘fun’ lessons interjected between them. The first and second lessons in every unit contained passages (a continuing story in dialogue form and a quasi-genuine text) which contextualised grammar and lexis, and these were followed by grammar presentation and practice activities. The third lesson in each unit focused on writing. Although *Quest* was generally well received by the staff, not least because it was accompanied by numerous Interactive Whiteboard (IWB) resources, concerns had been voiced that the materials did not provide enough grammar coverage, and to that end, an additional grammar book (Dooley & Evans, 2010) was used to supplement the course.

| Lesson              | Focus                         | Lesson           | Focus                         |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Unit 1</b>       |                               | <b>Unit 2</b>    |                               |
| <b>Lesson 1a</b>    | Reading (Vocabulary), Grammar | <b>Lesson 2a</b> | Reading (Vocabulary), Grammar |
| <b>Lesson 1b</b>    | Reading (Vocabulary), Grammar | <b>Lesson 2b</b> | Reading (Vocabulary), Grammar |
| <b>Lesson 1c</b>    | Writing                       | <b>Lesson 2c</b> | Writing                       |
| <b>‘Fun’ Spread</b> | Speaking                      | <b>Revision</b>  | Grammar, Vocabulary           |

**Table 6-2 Structure of a typical module (Quest)**

The *Action* course, which was being phased out, consisted of three levels, of which *Action B* (Vassilakis, 2003a, 2003c) and *Action C* (Vassilakis, 2003b, 2003d) were still in use. Much like the courses described above, *Action* had been produced for the Greek ELT market, by Macmillan Hellas, a local imprint of an international publisher. Each level of the course

comprised four modules, corresponding to the four two-month terms into which the academic year was divided. There were three units and a review in every module, and each unit consisted of four lessons. The first two lessons in every unit were based on dialogues that formed a continuing storyline, and the third one was structured around a quasi-authentic article or similar text. The passages in these “numbered” lessons served to practice reading skills and present vocabulary; they also contextualised grammar, which was presented and practiced later in the same lesson. The fourth lesson in the unit (“Action Plus”), which focused on writing, contained a model text and guided writing activities. The Action course was very popular among the staff, who praised its rigorous and methodical structure and comprehensiveness. However, there was a growing recognition that topical texts were dated, and that the content of the course was at times too challenging for learners who began English at an increasingly younger age.

| <b>Lesson</b>      | <b>Focus</b>                  |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Unit 1</b>      |                               |
| <b>Lesson 1</b>    | Reading (Vocabulary), Grammar |
| <b>Lesson 2</b>    | Reading (Vocabulary), Grammar |
| <b>Lesson 3</b>    | Reading (Vocabulary), Grammar |
| <b>Action Plus</b> | Writing                       |
| <b>Unit 2</b>      | (as above)                    |
| <b>Unit 3</b>      | (as above)                    |
| <b>Unit 4</b>      | (as above)                    |
| <b>Revision</b>    | Grammar, Vocabulary           |

**Table 6-3 Structure of a typical module (Action)**

At the Upper Intermediate programme, the course in use was *Code*, also published by Macmillan Hellas. It comprised three levels, of which *Code Green (B1+)* (Aravanis & Cochrane, 2010; Stiles, 2010) and *Code Red (B2)* (Bandis & Nicholas, 2010; Cochrane, Crawford, & Nicholas, 2010) were used in D and E Classes respectively. Each level was divided into six two-unit modules, and each unit contained five double-page ‘lessons’ focussing on reading, grammar, vocabulary, the oral skills and writing. However, the layout of the book encouraged flexible use: for instance, the reading and vocabulary sections were often taught together, despite the fact that they were physically separated by a grammar

section. Although *Code* was not nominally an exam-preparation course, its outlook was strongly exam-oriented. In the Teacher’s Book that accompanied the course, it was explicitly stated that the course “offers extensive practice of the types of exercises in the Cambridge FCE and Michigan ECCE exams” (Aravanis, 2010, p. 8). Moreover, almost all the activities in the course were modelled after common examination tasks, and ‘steps to success’ boxes with examination strategies were found in most pages. In addition to the *Code* materials, collections of practice tests (e.g., Flanel-Piniaris, 2010) were also extensively used towards the end of the Upper Intermediate programme, both as teaching materials and for developing examination skills.

| <b>Lesson</b>   | <b>Focus</b>            |
|-----------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Unit 1</b>   |                         |
| ‘Lesson’ 1      | Reading                 |
| ‘Lesson’ 2      | Grammar, Vocabulary     |
| ‘Lesson’ 3      | Listening, Speaking     |
| ‘Lesson’ 4      | Grammar (exam practice) |
| ‘Lesson’ 5      | Writing                 |
| <b>Unit 2</b>   | (as above)              |
| <b>Revision</b> | Grammar, Vocabulary     |

Table 6-4 Structure of a typical module (*Code*)

### 6.1.2 In-house materials

The second category of learning materials consisted of various resources that had been created for in-house use. Many of these materials had been commissioned by the host institute to supplement various perceived deficiencies in the courseware. In addition, a small number had been designed in in-house professional development workshops, and some had been created by individual teachers for their classes, but were shared in the spirit of collegiality. This corpus of materials was stored in a large number of files, which were dispersed in different buildings, and some of which were on loan to individual teachers. The distributed nature of the filing system, the absence of effective indexing and the unclear ownership of the materials all precluded systematic sampling. As a result, their

analysis was driven by theoretical sampling, and it focused on the most salient qualitative features.

The corpus of in-house materials contained four main categories of resources. First, many materials including practice tests, newspaper articles, podcasts, video-recordings, etc. were available for the Proficiency programme, for which no coursebook had been set. A second category consisted of monolingual wordlists, which were used to facilitate vocabulary learning in the Senior and Upper Intermediate programmes (Section 6.2.2). An additional category was made up of photocopiable worksheets, most of which contained grammar notes and exercises (Section 6.2.1), and writing activities (Section 7.4). Lastly, there were a number of self-contained thematic and occasional lessons, which would be used at the teachers' discretion whenever a deviation from the courseware was deemed appropriate.

## 6.2 Traces of intentionalities in the learning materials

As stated in the introduction, my interest in the learning materials lay in the fact that they manifested the linguistic and pedagogical beliefs that underpinned teaching and learning at the host institute. In this sense, they constituted tangible artefacts onto which the influence of the intentionalities might be traced. In the description that follows, the corpus of learning materials has been analytically divided into six strands (Grammar, Vocabulary, Listening, Reading, Speaking and Writing), and the effects of intentionalities on these strands are discussed separately. This discussion runs the risk of appearing reductive, but despite the limitations imposed by descriptive necessity, it does demonstrate the multiplicity of considerations that seemed to have influenced syllabus design, their complex interrelations and their sometimes unexpected effects.

## 6.2.1 Grammar: Protectionism & Competition in synergy

Grammar activities appeared to be the most salient syllabus strand, both in the published courseware and in the in-house materials. In this section, I argue that Protectionism and Competition were both visible in the importance attached to grammar learning. More specifically, it seems both the content of the grammar activities and their frequency in the courseware embodied beliefs regarding the value attached to metalinguistic awareness as a requisite for language learning. Moreover, the deductive teaching modes that these activities afford appeared to fit with the teachers' views about the particular needs and abilities of Greek students (this thesis, pp. 185-186).

### *Grammar activities in the courseware*

Grammar activities in the courseware were particularly frequent, and for the most part they seemed to be transmissive. The salience of grammar in the learning activities was hinted by a cursory examination of the contents pages of the coursebooks. Despite organisational differences, the syllabus of every course invariably contained an outline of the grammar structures to be studied in every lesson (Figure 6-1).

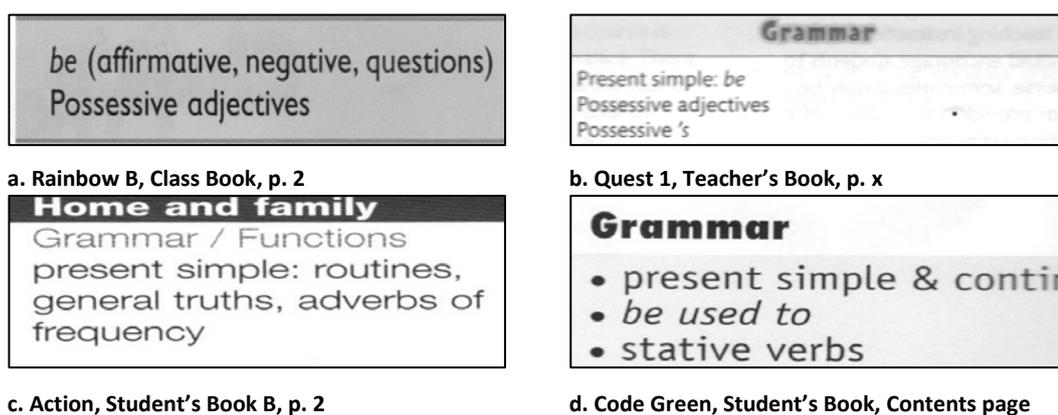
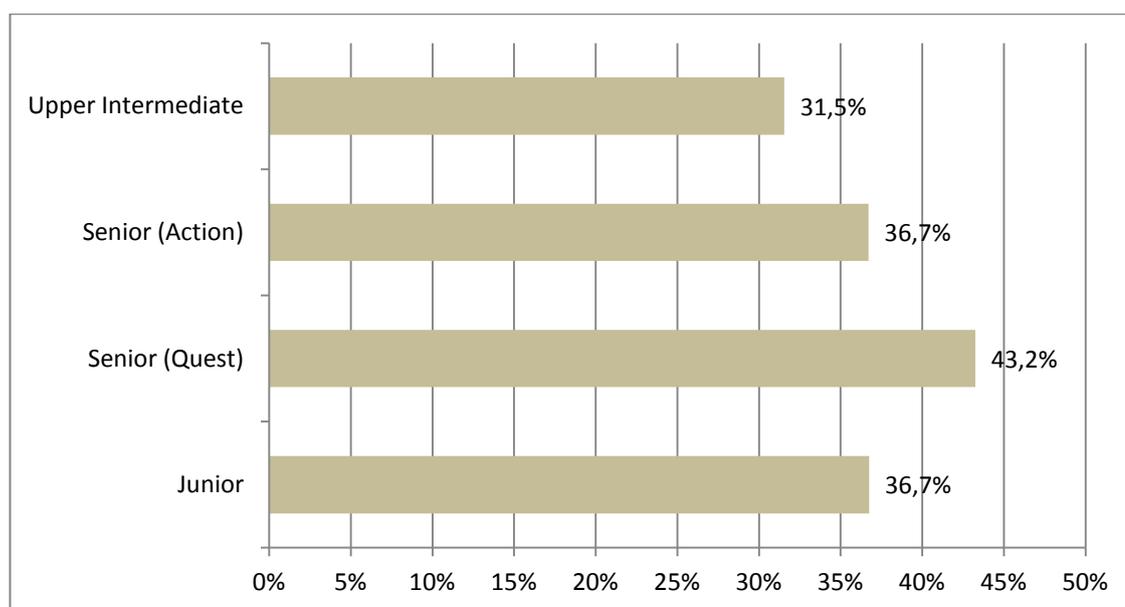


Figure 6-1 Syllabus extracts depicting grammar strands

This insight was quantitatively corroborated by the content analysis: activities that focused on developing grammar awareness and practicing grammar structures took up more than a third (37%) of the sample, which made them the most prevalent activity type in the

courseware. Figure 6-2 shows that the prevalence of grammar activities was considerably higher in the newly introduced *Quest* materials (43.2%). In informal discussions with the management of the host institute, I was told that this reflected a deliberate decision to increase the grammar provision, in response to teacher feedback, and the students' "unsatisfactory performance" in this area.



**Figure 6-2 Prevalence of grammar activities**

Despite the salience of grammar in the courseware, its prevalence may have been underestimated due to the limitations of the coding methods I used. Each activity had to be coded as belonging to a single syllabus strand, but many activities, particularly in the Junior and Senior levels, tended to have an implicit grammar objective alongside the overt objective of practicing receptive and productive skills. For instance, many reading passages and listening texts were contrived to contextualise "target" structures (e.g., Figure 6-3a). Similarly, a large number of activities that involved productive skills seemed designed to elicit such structures (e.g., Figure 6-3b). As a result, the role of grammar instruction in these levels may be even more prominent than Figure 6-2 suggests.



a. Contextualised language structures  
(Rainbow B, Class Book, p. 38)

**Speaking and Writing**

**1** How do you usually celebrate your birthday?  
Use these phrases and your own ideas.

- invite friends
- have a party
- listen to music
- make a cake

b. Free production activity  
(Action, Student's Book B, p. 11)

**Grammar**

**Present simple: affirmative**

|             |       |      |         |
|-------------|-------|------|---------|
|             | like  | go   | study   |
| I/you       | like  | go   | study   |
| he/she/it   | likes | goes | studies |
| we/you/they | like  | go   | study   |

c. Grammar presentation I  
(Quest 1, Students Book, p. 24)

**Grammar**

**Present simple vs present continuous**

We use the present simple for things that happen again and again, or things that are always true.  
He always **wears** his boots when he goes out.  
They **love** travelling.

We use the present continuous for something that is happening now, or something that is happening only for a short time.  
I'm **driving** past the supermarket at the moment.  
I'm **working** on the other side of town this week.

d. Grammar presentation II  
(Action, Student's Book B, p. 11)

**2 Write don't or doesn't.**

- 1 I don't like bananas.
- 2 My dad doesn't drive a van.
- 3 We don't climb trees.
- 4 She doesn't play the violin.

e. Controlled practice activity (Rainbow B, Class Book, p. 38)

Figure 6-3 Sample grammar activities (Junior and Senior programmes)

On the whole, grammar activities in the courseware tended to be transmissive. This was particularly the case in the Junior and Senior programmes, where grammar activities typically involved presentation or practice. Figure 6-3 (c & d) contains examples of grammar notes in the coursebooks, which hinted at the importance attached to explicit awareness of grammar structures, including the use of metalanguage. These grammar presentations were followed by limited production activities in a variety of formats, such as

multiple-choice, multiple-matching, gap-and-cue, etc. (e.g., Figure 6-3e). The distribution of presentation and practice activities seemed to facilitate transmissive forms of instruction such as Presentation-Practice-Production, or PPP (Harmer, 2001, pp. 80-82), whereas the predominance of limited production activities might suggest emphasis on accuracy and conformity.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Grammar 1</b></p> <p><b>Check</b> present simple and present continuous</p> <p>See page 138 for information about present simple and present continuous.</p> <p><b>Match these extracts with the uses of each tense.</b></p> <p>1 My family <b>are always complaining</b> ...</p> <p>2 ... my pet hamster, <b>is walking</b> all over my desk ...</p> <p>3 Interpreters <b>meet</b> people and <b>travel</b>.</p> <p>4 My French lesson <b>starts</b> at six!</p> <p>5 Tomorrow I'm <b>adding</b> the last few details ... !</p> <p><b>Present simple</b> is used to talk about:</p> <p>a a general truth or habit .....</p> <p>b a timetabled future event .....</p> <p><b>Present continuous</b> is used to talk about:</p> <p>c an activity taking place around or exactly at the time of speaking .....</p> <p>d a plan for the future - something already decided .....</p> <p>e an annoying habit .....</p> | <p>We use the present simple to talk about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a general truth or fact.<br/><i>Penguins <b>live</b> in the South Pole.</i></li> <li>• a habit.<br/><i>I <b>get up</b> at seven thirty every morning.</i></li> <li>• a state, situation or feeling.<br/><i>You <b>don't look</b> well.</i></li> <li>• a timetabled or scheduled event in the future.<br/><i>The train for Paris <b>leaves</b> at 10.50.</i></li> </ul> |
| <p><b>a. Grammar presentation III</b><br/>(Code Green, Student's book, p. 8)</p>  | <p><b>b. Grammar self-reference section</b><br/>(Code Green, Student's Book, p. 138)</p> <p><b>3 Complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence. Use one of the words in bold. Don't change the word in bold.</b></p> <p>1 Mia is enjoying working in an office more than working as a shop assistant.<br/><b>prefers / preferring</b><br/>Mia ..... to working as a shop assistant.</p>                                   |
|   | <p><b>c. Exam-oriented grammar practice activity</b><br/>(Code Green, Workbook, p.8)</p>  |

Figure 6-4 Sample grammar activities (Upper Intermediate)

This pattern of mainly transmissive grammar activities was less evident in the Upper intermediate programme. Grammar activities in this level were less prevalent (Figure 6-2), and tended to be clustered in self-contained sections (Table 6-4), while there were few traces of implicit grammatical objectives in the activities that developed receptive and productive skills. Most importantly, grammar activities often aimed at engaging the student's cognitive skills and helping them infer grammatical regularities on their own (e.g., Figure 6-4a). Grammar reference sections containing detailed presentations of the target structures were available for self-reference at the end of the coursebooks (e.g., Figure 6-4b), but they did not appear to form an integral part of the activity sequence. Controlled

practice activities were in evidence in the Upper Intermediate courseware, but they tended to be few in number, and their format suggested that their main function was examination preparation, as they appeared to be modelled after common examination tasks (e.g., Figure 6-4c).

### ***Grammar worksheets***

The grammar provision in the courseware was supplemented by large number of photocopiable worksheets that had been created by the staff of the host institute over time. Notes explaining the structure and use of tenses, such as the one shown in Figure 6-5, were particularly common. These notes were usually produced to supplement or replace grammar notes in the courseware, which were sometimes perceived to be insufficiently detailed or unclear. They were invariably written in English, and tended to use metalanguage extensively. Apart from grammar notes, a large number of worksheets consisted of grammar exercises, such as the ones shown in Figure 6-6. These exercises were usually intended to provide learners with additional practice, or served as short class tests (“dictations”, «ορθογραφίες», *orthografies*).

A notable feature of these worksheets was that they appeared to be more traditionally-oriented than exercises typically found in the courseware. The first exercise reproduced in Figure 6-6, where learners were to demonstrate awareness of various verb forms without any reference to context, provides a typical example of traditional pedagogy. The strongly traditional orientation that appeared to inform these worksheets might be attributed to the fact that many of these resources had been produced in the past. However, their continued use alongside more recent materials could be suggestive of some teachers’ attitudes regarding language and language learning.

## Present Perfect Continuous

### 1. What is the present perfect continuous?

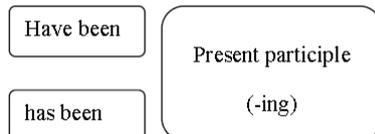
The present perfect continuous is a tense like the present perfect.

It describes things that started in the past but have not finished yet.

*e.g. He has been talking on the telephone for two hours.*

### 2. How can I make this tense?

The present perfect continuous has two parts.



*I have been studying for three hours.*

*She has been running all day.*

*We have been watching TV since the morning.*

### 3. What are the key words of the present perfect continuous?

The present perfect continuous is often used with words like **since** and **for**, **all day**, and **"how long...?"**.

Figure 6-5 Sample supplementary grammar notes

Complete the table:

|     |         |        |        |       |
|-----|---------|--------|--------|-------|
| 0.  | to play | played | played | παίζω |
| 11. | to cry  |        |        |       |
| 12. | to play |        |        |       |
| 13. | to stop |        |        |       |
| 14. | to have |        |        |       |
| 15. | to do   |        |        |       |
| 16. | to sing |        |        |       |
| 17. | to say  |        |        |       |
| 18. | to eat  |        |        |       |
| 19. | to go   |        |        |       |
| 20. | to show |        |        |       |

### Transform these sentences from Active to Passive Voice:

1. She sells books in the library.
2. The painters paint my house every three years.
3. They have cut a slice of bread.
4. Cars pollute the atmosphere.
5. He will show us a magic trick tomorrow.
6. I haven't seen Santa Claus.
7. He did his homework very carefully
8. I can not find the answer in this book.
9. Christopher Columbus didn't discover Africa.
10. You mustn't eat this mushroom.
11. They had bought a new car.
12. She has carried the boxes alone.
13. My brother posts the letters.
14. They have stolen the money.
15. Our teacher corrects the exercises every night.

Figure 6-6 Sample supplementary grammar practice activities

## Traces of intentionalities

The influence of Protectionism, i.e., the tendency to privilege local knowledge and resources, was easy to trace in the grammar content of the syllabus. For example, the view that language awareness constituted a requisite for language proficiency fits with the extensive grammar presentations that were found across the learning materials. Similarly, the reliance on tried-and-tested teaching methods such as PPP, seemed linked to the Protectionist beliefs that valued the teachers' practical experience over empirically or

theoretically informed recommendations in the literature. The effect of Protectionism appears to have been amplified by considerations of Competition, which was often associated with expectations of a structured and rigorous learning experience. The large corpus of additional notes and activities appeared to be motivated by a desire to enhance learning outcomes for the students by developing their accuracy.

In addition to Protectionism and Competition, weak traces of the Certification intentionality were to be found in the learning materials of the Upper Intermediate programme. These traces were most obvious in the grammar practice activities at these levels, which were modelled after examination tasks. It is interesting to note that the appearance of these traces coincided with a shift from grammar presentations to inductive grammar learning, although a direct causal link between the Certification intentionality and this change is difficult to establish.

In summary, it appears that the interaction of the intentionalities, as seen through the lens of grammar learning materials, was quite dynamical. In the Junior and Senior Programmes, the dynamics of intentions were dominated by the combined effect of Protectionism and Competition, and learning materials accordingly privileged transmissive forms of grammar teaching. In the more advanced, exam-preparation programmes, traces of Certification began to appear, and this new influence coincided with a sudden re-orientation of the activities from the Transmissive to the Communicative approach. This finding, which recurs in the chapter, offers a glimpse into the non-linear processes of change in complex systems, where changes are often sudden, and their effects are unexpected.

### **6.2.2 Vocabulary: Protectionism & Competition in opposition**

In the previous section, I discussed how Protectionism and Competition worked in synergy. These intentionalities were also present in the vocabulary strand of the syllabus, but they

appeared to operate against each other. As is shown in the discussion that follows, Competition, the impulse to enhance learning outcomes for the learners, seems to have impacted the learning materials in two ways: firstly, through a quantitative increase in the vocabulary with which students engaged; and secondly, through the imposition of a rigid monolingual (“English-only”) policy. The vocabulary content of the syllabus was so extensive that, in the interest of efficiency, some teachers and learners used bilingual resources (Vocabulary companions), which showed traces of the Protectionism intentionality, and this seemed to create some tension when set against the monolingual policy of the host institute.

For the purposes of description that follows, vocabulary has been broadly defined to encompass lexemes, lexical phrases (Nattinger & De Carrico, 1992) and institutionalised expressions (Lewis, 1993), all of which will be referred to as *lexical items*. Depending on its distribution in the learning materials, the vocabulary has been divided into three categories: intentionally taught vocabulary, incidentally taught vocabulary and independently occurring vocabulary, all of which are defined and discussed in the next section.

### ***Vocabulary activities***

The influence of Competition can be deduced from the extensive provision for vocabulary learning in the courseware, which was further augmented by the host institute. Activities focusing on vocabulary development (e.g., presentation of lexical sets and vocabulary practice tasks) took up nearly a quarter (24.1%) of the courseware sample, which made vocabulary the second most prevalent activity type in the syllabus (Figure 6-7). The highest proportion of vocabulary activities were found in the materials used in the Senior programmes. In addition to containing a large number of vocabulary activities, the

materials in the Quest and Action courses were typified by a sometimes surprising lexical density. Using *Action B* as an example, Figure 6-8 shows the number of new lexical items (in the y axis) with which learners engaged in every lesson (in the x axis). The mean number of new lexical items per lesson was 18, and the density of new words was even higher in the ‘numbered’ lessons, which focused on reading, vocabulary and grammar (Table 6-3): of these, more than a third contained over 25 new lexical items.

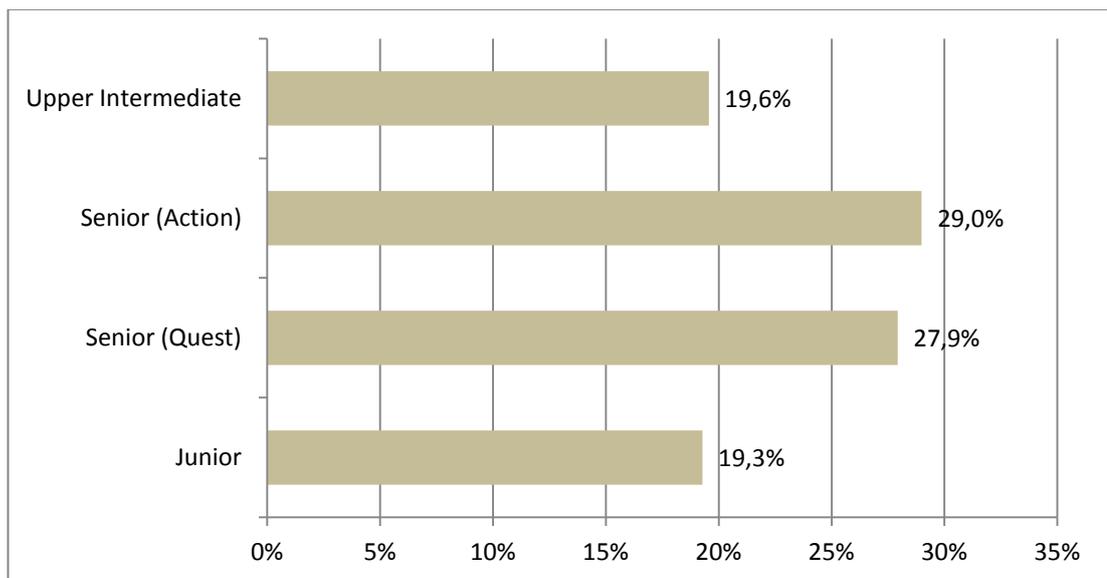


Figure 6-7 Prevalence of vocabulary activities

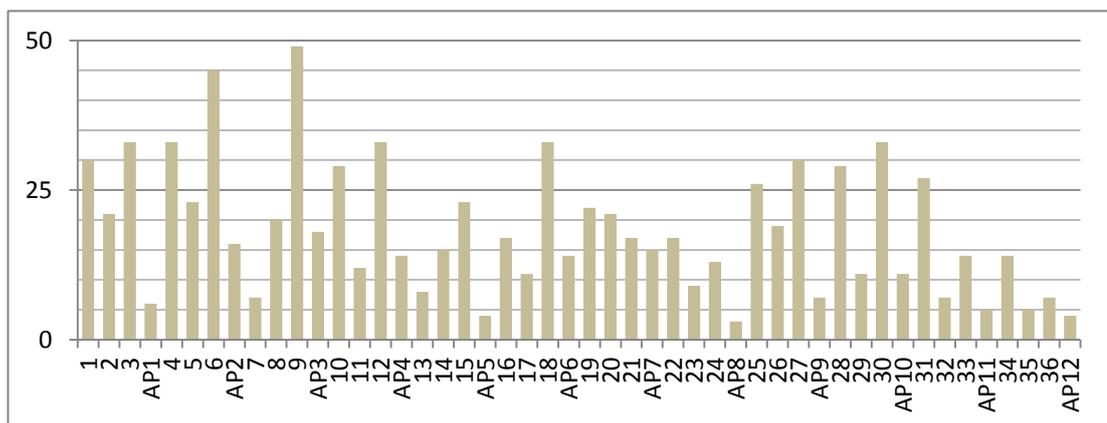


Figure 6-8 New lexical items per lesson (Action B)

Most of the vocabulary activities in the courseware focussed on what I have termed *intentionally taught vocabulary*, i.e., sets of six to eight lexical items (or fewer in the Junior programme) that the students were expected to learn. Examples of such intentionally taught semantic sets are shown in Figure 6-9, and the top of Figure 6-14. Normally, the

criteria used for grouping the lexical items were semantic (Figure 6-9a & c). Occasionally, lexical items might be grouped according to formal criteria, such as a common base verb (e.g., Figure 6-9b) or other formal similarities (e.g., “adjectives ending in -ed & -ing”), although these cases were less frequent.

**Vocabulary**  
**Meat, fruit and vegetables**  
7 Match the pictures with these words.

lemons 2. onions 4. beef 1.  
beans 9. apples 3. lamb 6.  
tomatoes 7. oranges 8. chicken 5.

1. beef, 2. lemons, 3. apples, 4. onions, 5. chicken, 6. lamb, 7. tomatoes, 8. oranges, 9. beans.

**Vocabulary**  
**Multi-word verbs: turn**

Choose the right meaning (a-f) for each multi-word verb with *turn* (1-6).

a appeared   
b went to bed   
c made quieter   
d refused   
e switched on   
f became clear

1 Craig **turned up** in the middle of my music lesson.  
2 It **turned out** he wanted to have music lessons.  
3 Jenny wanted to go out with Craig but he **turned her down**.  
4 It was late and I was tired, so I **turned in**.  
5 She **turned down** the radio because she wanted to speak to her mum on the phone.  
6 They **turned on** the TV because they wanted to watch their favourite programme.

a. Semantically related lexis I  
(Quest 1, Students’ Book, p. 43)

b. Formally related lexis  
(Action C, Student Book, p. 19)



c. Semantically related lexis II (Rainbow A, Class Book, p. 36)

Figure 6-9 Sample ‘intentionally taught’ vocabulary activities

A second type of vocabulary activities often encountered in the courseware was *incidentally taught vocabulary*. This category comprised various vocabulary activities that either led to reading and listening activities or followed them. Reading passages, for instance, were almost invariably accompanied by activities with a vocabulary-related goal, such as inferring the meaning of unknown lexis in a text (Figure 6-10). The lexical items that made up the incidentally taught vocabulary differed from the intentionally taught semantic

sets, in that they were seemingly selected at random, as there was no apparent semantic or formal connection between them.

**E Find words in the texts that mean the following.**

**Paragraph 1**

1 animals .....

2 the remains of an animal .....

**Paragraph 4**

7 marks left on the skin or body .....

8 not easily convinced .....

Figure 6-10 Sample 'incidentally taught' vocabulary activity (Code Green, Student's Book, p. 39)

These two vocabulary categories were encountered in a numerous practice activities, which made up more than 50% of the content in some workbook units. A variety of exercise formats were encountered, including multiple-choice, matching and gap-and-cue exercises, as well as activities focusing on synonyms, antonyms and cognates, as can be seen in the sample activities reproduced in Figure 6-11.

**Look and write.**



1 cook    2 \_\_\_\_\_    3 \_\_\_\_\_

a. Rainbow B, Activity Book, p. 18

**2 Choose the right answer.**

1 He was **miserable/pleased/enthusiastic** because his friend left without saying goodbye.

2 Ellie got very **jealous/pleased/grateful** when her best friend went to the cinema with Ron.

3 Marie was very **pleased/jealous/depressed** when she came first in the competition.

4 Ron is sure his parents will be **satisfied/**

b. Action, Student's Book B, p. 63

1 The Cuban fighter was ..... in the fifth round.

a knocked down

b knocked out

c knocked off

d knocked back

c. Code Green, Companion, p. 84

Figure 6-11 Sample vocabulary practice activities

The last vocabulary category, *independently occurring vocabulary*, made up the largest part of vocabulary in the syllabus. This term designates diverse lexical items that were extracted from various activities in the coursebooks or, less frequently, the workbooks. Despite the fact that independently occurring vocabulary was not in all cases essential for engaging

with the activities at hand, there seemed to be an expectation that every word must be explained in class and learnt by the students, as can be deduced from the following journal extract:

I followed up on Martha, on account of her the concerns she had expressed previously with reading comprehension. Today she did Lesson 6, which is also a reading lesson. The principal difficulty, she said, was caused by the large number of words that are unknown. She believes that students tend to fixate on these words, and as a result they fail to understand the meaning of the text.

It appears that, from the course authors' perspective, this category of lexical items was intended to be part of the student's 'receptive' vocabulary (Melka, 1997), which might explain why no production activities were found in the courseware focusing on this vocabulary category. However, a distinction between productive and receptive vocabulary was not made in the syllabus documents of the host institute, and an extensive corpus of exercises had been created over time by the school staff to address the lack of practice activities for this vocabulary category in the courseware. Figure 6-12 shows an example of such an activity, in which learners would be expected to replace the words or phrases in brackets with a recently learnt lexical item.

#### **Vocabulary**

Environmental protection groups have been saying for years that the earth's ecosystems need protection, but not enough is being done. Although [1. public knowledge] of the problem has been increased in recent years, the [2. pollution] of our air, land and water continues. Ecologists who study the way pollution is changing our world now realise that animals are threatened with [3. dying out] as a result of pollution, [4. forest destruction] and other forms of [5. natural home] destruction as well. It is absolutely necessary to ensure the survival of the earth's [6. flowers] and [7. animals]. One of the suggestions that have been put forward is that [8. strict] punishments should be introduced for people who damage the environment. However, for more serious problems, such as the destruction of the ozone [9. part of the atmosphere] or [10. poisonous rain], such a solution may not be enough.

**Figure 6-12 Sample 'independently occurring' vocabulary practice activity**

In summary, the vocabulary content of the syllabus was fairly extensive, and there seemed to be an expectation that the learners should be able to recognise and produce all the lexical items that it comprised. Both these features appear to have been motivated by the desire to maximise learning outcomes, which is associated with the Competition intentionality.

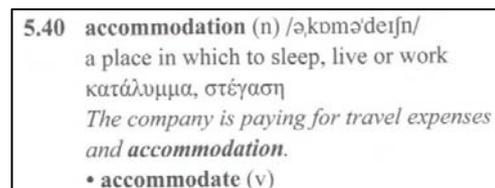
## Vocabulary resources

Apart from the courseware, there were two main vocabulary resources on which students could draw: companions and monolingual wordlists, which show traces of Protectionism and Competition respectively.

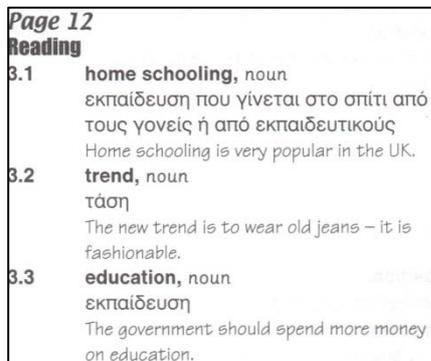
Companions were vocabulary supplements that accompanied published courses. The main content of these resources consisted of wordlists that paralleled the structure of the coursebooks. Each entry in the lists contained, at minimum, a keyword and its semantic equivalent in Modern Greek. This information was sometimes supplemented with definitions in English and phonological, grammatical and pragmatic information, as shown in Figure 6-13.



a. Rainbow, Study Companion A, p. 42



b. Code Green, Companion, p. 45



c. Action, Companion C, p. 10

Figure 6-13 Companion extracts

Although the use of companions was not encouraged at the host institute, several teachers and learners reportedly used them as vocabulary aids. Some hints about their popularity can be found in Kostoulas (2007), where it is argued that these materials seemed to cater for idiosyncratic needs of the local educational setting. In that study, a key figure in a major publisher is quoted as saying that “[local] teachers say that [companions] are useful to

establish quick links with mother tongue” (p. 73). The head researcher of the local office of a major publisher elaborated on this view by suggesting that the bilingual lists in the companions:

...reflect the manner in which a reading text or dialogue is taught in class. The average teacher will 'comb' the text or even translate it in a manner very similar to the way words and phrases are entered in a companion (Kostoulas, 2007, p. 73).

The view that companions were well suited to local teaching styles was corroborated by several teachers in this study. The following interview extract conveys a typical view:

Achilleas: Right. Tell me a bit- about the companion. Why is this so helpful?

Teacher: Be- Because it has the words, Greek and English. It has pictures, it ha:::s examples, it has, short activities, mostly vocabulary to::: reinforce, to make kids practice, the vocabulary they have in front of them.

Achilleas: Some people feel uncomfortable with the companion=

Teacher: =I not. >I love the companion<.

In summary, the use of companions seems suggestive of the effect of the Protectionist intentionality. The structure of these resources was compatible with local teaching styles, and their content capitalised on the teachers’ and learners’ shared knowledge of Modern Greek.

B' Class (Action)  
Vocabulary

UNIT FOUR  
**Lesson 12**

| Transport            |     |  |
|----------------------|-----|--|
| <b>coach</b>         | (n) | a bus that travels between towns                             |
| <b>limo</b>          | (n) | limousine, a large expensive comfortable car for rich people |
| <b>return ticket</b> | (n) | a ticket that lets you go to a place and come back           |
| <b>single ticket</b> | (n) | a ticket that only lets you travel to a place but not return |
| <b>timetable</b>     | (n) | a list of the times when buses, trains etc. leave and arrive |
| <b>tram</b>          | (n) | a kind of electric train that moves in the city              |

|                      |       |   |
|----------------------|-------|---|
| <b>backstage</b>     | (adj) | in the area behind the stage in the theatre       |
| <b>bucket</b>        | (n)   | a container with a handle for carrying water      |
| <b>caterer</b>       | (n)   | a person who prepares food for a party            |
| <b>dressing room</b> | (n)   | a room where actors get dressed for a performance |
| <b>gallon</b>        | (n)   | 4.55 litres                                       |

Figure 6-14 Monolingual wordlist extract

Despite the above, in the host institute companions were usually replaced with monolingual wordlists («φωτοτυπίες», *fototipies*, “photocopies” or «φυλλάδια», *fyládia*, “handouts”), such as the one partially reproduced in Figure 6-14. These resources, which were produced for in-house use, replicated what were perceived to be the more useful features of the companions, such as the structure and sequencing of their lists. The content of the wordlists has been summarised in Table 6-5: each headword was followed by a definition in English, and typically a note identifying its grammatical category (e.g., “noun”, “verb”). Cognates, synonyms and antonyms were sometimes listed, with increasing frequency as one progressed to the more advanced levels. In some cases, the use of the words in context was illustrated through example sentences. In the most recently produced wordlist, the one for the Senior (Quest) programme, the use of grammatical designations was dropped, and examples were introduced, which (according to the teacher who was responsible for their production) was an attempt to accommodate to the needs of younger learners.

|                           | Headword | Grammar category | Definition         | Cognates etc. | Examples |
|---------------------------|----------|------------------|--------------------|---------------|----------|
| <b>Junior</b>             |          |                  | List not available |               |          |
| <b>Senior (Quest)</b>     | ✓        |                  | English            |               | Few      |
| <b>Senior (Action)</b>    | ✓        | ✓                | English            | Few           |          |
| <b>Upper Intermediate</b> | ✓        | ✓                | English            | Several       | Several  |
| <b>Proficiency</b>        |          |                  | List not available |               |          |

Table 6-5 Format of monolingual vocabulary lists

These resources differed from the Companions that they replaced in that they deliberately avoided the use of Modern Greek, for two reasons. Firstly, the use of bilingual companions was thought to undermine the school’s policy of maximising the students’ exposure to English. In addition, it was felt that providing students with learning materials that were useful, visually appealing and comprehensive, as an alternative to what were believed to be high-priced alternatives of dubious utility, was advantageous for marketing purposes.

### ***Competition overshadowing protectionism***

In all, it seems that the dominant intentionality in the vocabulary strand of the syllabus was Competition. Its influence was quite discernible in the extensive range of the vocabulary coverage and the number of activities associated with it. It was also discernible in the decision to maximise exposure to English language input with a view to enhancing learning outcomes. The strength of the Competition intentionality was such that it seemed to cancel out the effects of Protectionism, as evidenced in the replacement of Companions for monolingual wordlists. However, there seemed to be some tension between the competing intentionalities, which (as is seen in Chapter 7) carried over to actual practice.

### **6.2.3 Oral skills: The impact of Certification**

The listening and speaking strands of the syllabus differed from the above, in that they seemed to be predominantly associated with the Certification intentionality. Activities focusing on the oral skills tended to increase in frequency in the Upper intermediate programme, which focused on examination preparation, and as their prevalence increased, their influence of the communicative approach became more evident.

### ***Listening***

Listening activities have been defined as activities in which students were expected to interact with the propositional content of aural discourse that had been recorded or was being read out from a transcript. This definition excludes activities that mainly focused on pronunciation work, where recordings were used for demonstration, as well as 'read and listen' activities, during which students read a passage while a recorded version of the text was being played back (this thesis, pp. 256-257). Using this definition, listening activities were found to be the least prevalent activity type in the courseware: only 60 activities were

identified in the textbooks used at the host institute. Figure 6-15 shows the distribution of these activities across programmes, and it can be seen that their frequency increased from one in forty (2.4%) in the Junior programme, to more than treble the number in the Upper Intermediate programme (7.9%).

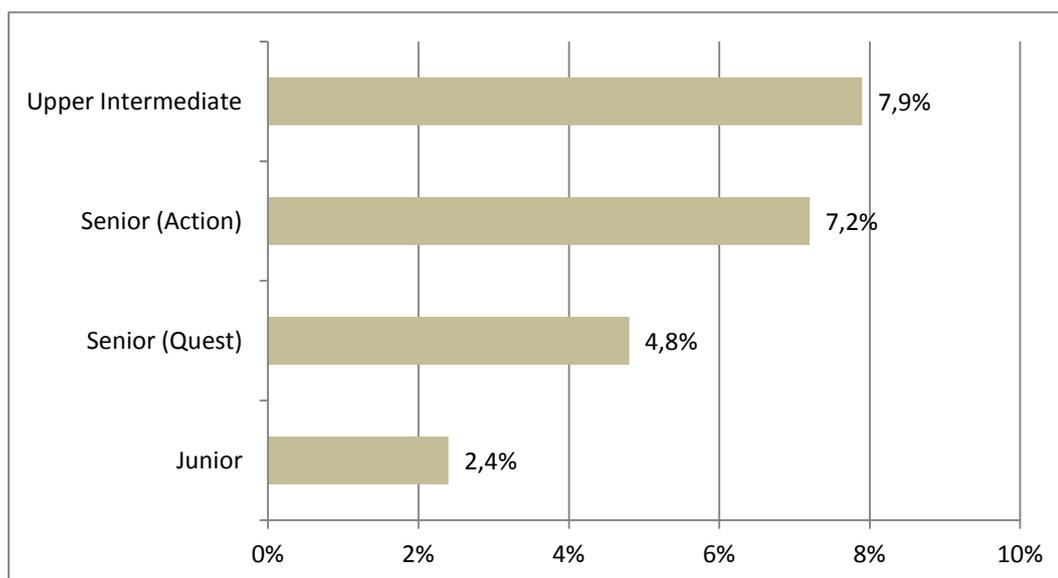


Figure 6-15 Prevalence of listening activities

Depending on their pedagogical function, listening activities were divided into two categories. The first category, *form-focused* listening, comprised activities that were used in order to assist students in attaining other linguistic or pedagogical objectives, such as the consolidation of recently taught lexis or grammar, as illustrated in the following tapescript (Rainbow B, Teacher’s Book, p.53):

**Tapescript 1**

Shop assistant: Good morning, Danny!  
 Danny: Hello! I want some red paint and some paintbrushes, please.  
 Shop assistant: How much paint do you want? And how many paintbrushes?  
 [...]  
 Shop assistant: Hello, Flora.  
 Danny: Hello! I want some red paint, some green paint and some paintbrushes, please.  
 Shop assistant: How much paint do you want? And how many paintbrushes?

Most listening activities in the Junior and Senior programmes fell into this category (e.g., Figure 6-16c).

**Listening**

**A** Work in pairs. Look at the pictures. What could the connection be between them?



**B** You are going to hear a radio interview about a famous art award called the Turner Prize. You will hear the speakers mention the following artists. Listen and match the names with the pictures from A.

Cathy Wilkes \_\_\_\_\_  
 Tracey Emin \_\_\_\_\_  
 Martin Creed \_\_\_\_\_  
 Simon Starling \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mark Wallinger \_\_\_\_\_

**Steps to success**

- For multiple choice questions, first try to think of your own answer for each question.
- Then, compare your own answer with the options you are given. Which option is closest to your own answer?

**C** Work in pairs. Read these questions about the interview and discuss possible answers.

- 1 Why do people argue about the Turner Prize?
- 2 What does Dave think about Cathy Wilkes' art?
- 3 How does Dave feel about the fact that *My Bed* did not win the prize?
- 4 How much money did Martin Creed win?
- 5 How did Simon Starling sail down the River Rhine?
- 6 Why hasn't Mike got a favourite winner?
- 7 What was special about Mark Wallinger's winning entry for the 2006 prize?

**Quick chat**

What do you think about the Turner Prize? Is it nonsense?  
 Do you like modern art or do you prefer more traditional art?

a. Listening activity sequence  
(CODE Green B1+, Student's book, p. 64)

**Listening**

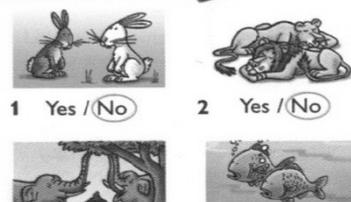
**1** You are going to listen to two conversations. Where are the people in the first conversation? Where are they in the second conversation?

**2** Listen again and choose the right answer.

- 1 Why are David and the children going to catch a taxi?  
 A The hotel is very far. B They're tired.  
 C They've got a lot of bags.
- 2 What did Daniela do before she left?  
 A She helped them carry their bags.  
 B She said goodbye. C Nothing.
- 3 What did Ron want to talk to Daniela about?  
 A Sightseeing in Paris. B Football.  
 C The Stade de France.
- 4 Why doesn't Daniela want to go sightseeing with the children?  
 A She wants to see her aunt.  
 B She's busy. C She's tired.
- 5 Who is going to call Elie at the hotel?  
 A Daniela's cousin. B Daniela's aunt.  
 C Daniela.

b. Listening activity sequence  
(Action, Student's Book B, p. 43)

**4 Listen and circle.**



- 1 Yes / No
- 2 Yes / No
- 3 Yes / No
- 4 Yes / No

c. Form-focused listening activity  
(Rainbow A, Class Book, p.83)

Figure 6-16 Sample listening activities

By contrast, the second type of listening activities involved an authentic engagement with texts, such as dialogues, interviews or radio broadcasts, for the purpose of *skills development*. It should be noted that authenticity, in this sense, refers to the purpose of listening, rather than the texts (Widdowson, 1979). For example, learners might listen to a simulated radio interview in ways that resembled real-life situations, such as for global comprehension, or for extracting specific information. The texts themselves were genuine-like, in that they conformed to the formal conventions of their genres, but appeared to have been written and recorded for pedagogical purposes. It is unclear whether the absence of genuine texts was related to copyright restrictions or to beliefs regarding their pedagogical suitability.

Skills-development listening activities tended to be clustered in clearly demarcated 'listening sections'. In the Upper Intermediate programme (e.g., Figure 6-16a) they also tended to be flanked by pre-listening activities intended to activate schematic knowledge and post-listening tasks involving oral or written production (cf. Anderson & Lynch, 1988). Many activities in this category mirrored the format of the listening tasks encountered in certification exams, and explicit advice for engaging with such tasks was often at hand (e.g., the 'Steps for Success' box in Figure 6-16a).

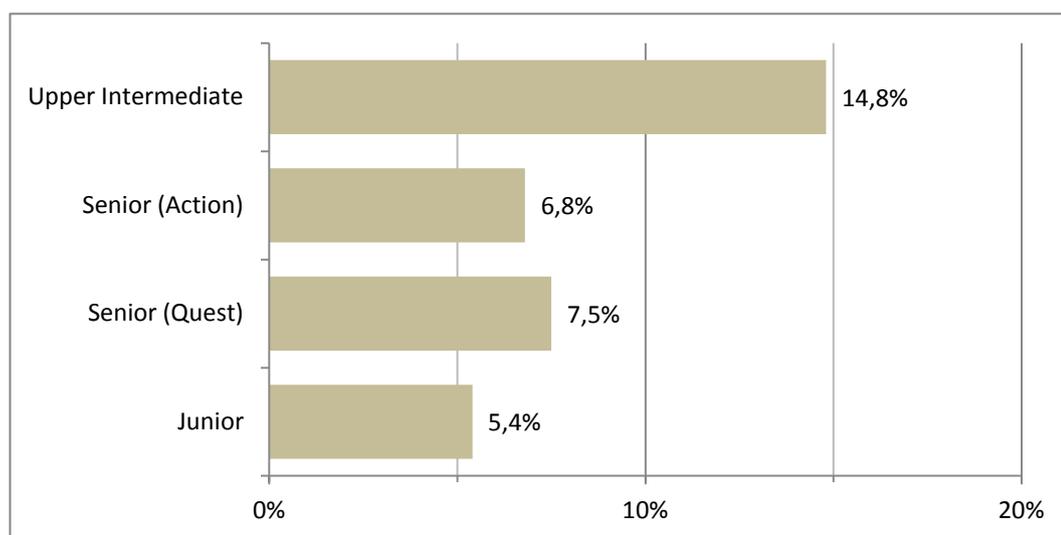
### ***Speaking***

Similar observations can be made concerning the speaking strand of the syllabus. Compared to listening, there was an even more marked increase in the provision for speaking practice in the Upper Intermediate programme, as well as a qualitative shift towards communicatively informed activities, both of which seemed to be associated with the influence of Certification. However, traces of Protectionism were also evident in the format of speaking tasks in the earlier stages of instruction.

Arguably, most activities in courseware involved some degree of oral production. However, for the purposes of this chapter, speaking activities have been defined as activities that were primarily designed to either (a) develop the students' ability to engage in the negotiation of meaning or (b) produce relatively extended pieces of discourse using the oral modality. The existence of visual or verbal signposting identifying the activity was also taken into account. Activities in which oral production was only incidental (e.g., reading out a passage for pronunciation practice, or reciting answers of a grammar exercise in order to receive feedback) were excluded from this definition.

Using these criteria, speaking activities accounted for 9.3% of the sample (n=95), of which nearly half (n=47) were clustered at the Upper Intermediate programme. In fact, speaking

activities accounted for almost 15% of the materials in the Upper Intermediate programme, which was almost twice or treble that encountered in the other programmes (Figure 6-17). As was the case with listening activities, it appears that this sharp increase seems to relate to the direct testing of the speaking skill in the examinations for which the learners were preparing.



**Figure 6-17 Prevalence of speaking activities**

In addition to the distribution disparity, a qualitative differentiation was also observed in typical speaking activities, depending on the level of instruction. In the Junior programme, speaking tasks mostly took the form of short exchanges intended to practice previously taught vocabulary or grammar structures (e.g., Figure 6-18). The expected language output was repetitive, and in fact not dissimilar to language drills. Unlike drills, however, the recommended format of the speaking activities almost invariably involved pair-work rather than teacher-led interactions (e.g., Figure 6-19). In other words, it seemed that activities in the Junior programme blended traditional and communicative influences.

In the Senior programmes, speaking activities seemed to adhere to communicative methodological orthodoxy but there were traces of underlying transmissive influences. Most of the activities in these levels were designed for pair- or group-work (n=25), as shown in Figure 6-20c. Several (n=10) were flexibly structured so that collaborative work

was possible but not required: for example, the activity depicted in Figure 6-20a could be used both for discussion and as a prompt for a short 'display' monologue. A small number of activities (n=4) seemed suitable for teacher-led discussions.



Figure 6-18 Drill-like speaking activity (Rainbow, Class Book B, p. 26)

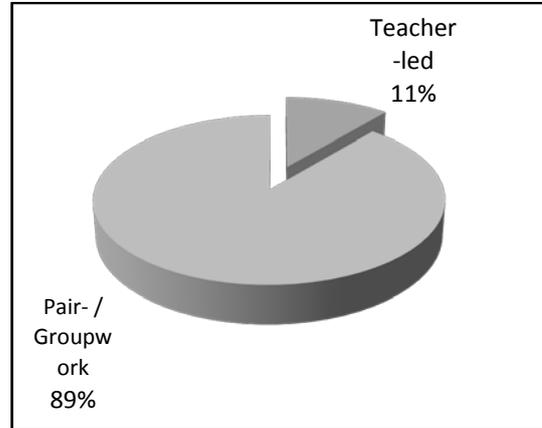
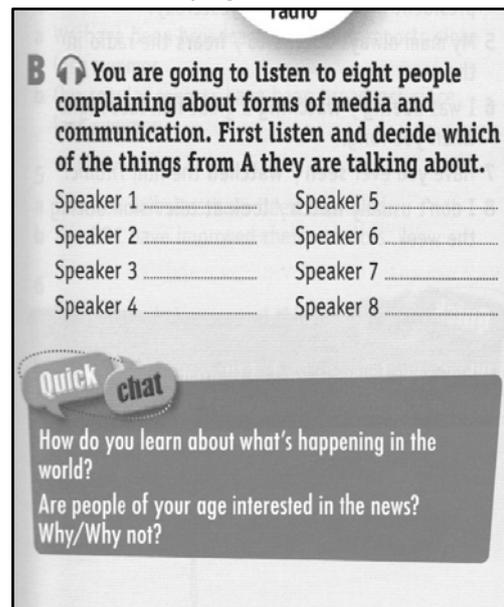


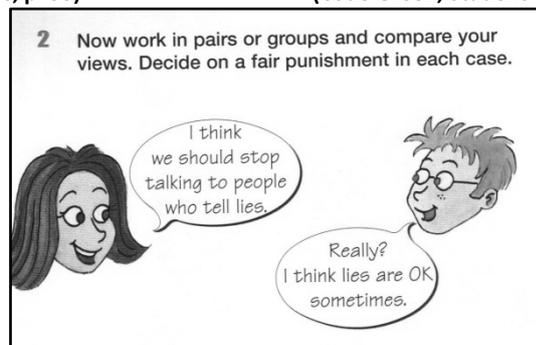
Figure 6-19 Speaking activity format (Junior programme)



a. Monologic speaking activity (Action, Student's Book C, p. 53)



b. 'Follow-up' speaking activity (Code Green, Student's Book, p. 76)



c. Conversational speaking activity (Action, Student's Book C, p. 63)

Figure 6-20 Sample speaking activities (Senior and Upper Intermediate programmes)

In the syllabus outlines, these activities were usually described with reference to their topics (e.g. “Talk ... about speaking foreign languages”, “Talk ...about what you have done”), but they tended to be implicitly linked to specific language structures: returning to the activity depicted in Figure 6-20a, this seems to have been contrived to elicit ‘modal verbs for possibility’, which had been the focus of preceding grammar activities. In short, the speaking activities seemed to strike a balance between conformity to communicative methodological orthodoxy, and accommodating to the transmissive practices with which teachers and learners were most comfortable.

**7**

**Speaking**

**A** Look at the things mobile phones can do. Work in pairs. How useful are these things for you or your friends? Put the things in order of importance.

- take photos
- play games
- listen to music
- send texts
- send emails
- make calls
- keep information about friends

**B** What would these people want to use a mobile phone for? Tell your partner what you think.

**C** Listen to Marcus talking about the two photos in B. Which uses of mobile phones from A does he mention?

**Steps to success**  
 - if you can't remember the exact word, try to describe what you mean with other words.

**D** Listen to Marcus. What word is he looking for?

colleague \_\_\_\_\_  
 manager \_\_\_\_\_  
 texting / email \_\_\_\_\_  
 twins \_\_\_\_\_

**E** Work in pairs. Take turns describing these things to each other without using the actual words for them.

**F** Work in pairs. Student A look at the photos below. Student B look at the photos on page 165. Talk for a minute about the photos. Make sure you answer both parts of the question. Use the expressions in the Language chunks box.

Student A's photos:

Compare the photos and say why these people are using computers.

**Language chunks**

**Talking about similarity**  
 similarly ...  
 likewise ...  
 in the same way ...

**Talking about difference**  
 in contrast ...  
 on the other hand ...  
 whereas ...  
 however ...

**Say it right!**

Long and short vowels: /ɑ:/, /æ/ and /ʌ/

**G** Listen and circle the words that have the same vowel sound as the word you hear.

|          |        |       |        |
|----------|--------|-------|--------|
| dad /æ/  | bad    | rat   | late   |
| bar /ɑ:/ | father | stamp | cart   |
| cup /ʌ/  | mop    | pup   | monkey |

**H** Now listen, check and repeat.

**77**

Figure 6-21 Upper Intermediate speaking activities sequence (Code Green, Student's Book, p. 77)

This balance between transmissive and communicative influences was disrupted in the Upper Intermediate programme. Approximately a third of the speaking activities (n=14) were embedded in longer sequences, as lead-in or follow-up to other tasks (e.g., Figure 6-20b, bottom). These activities were flexibly designed, so that they could be used as either prompts for teacher-led discussions or as scaffolding for pair- and group-work. The remaining activities, however, were clustered in sequences which seemed to draw on Task-Based-Learning methodology (Willis & Willis, 2007). As can be seen in Figure 6-21, which presents a typical example, student collaboration was built in the task structure, and it was explicitly signalled through rubrics and visuals. Extensive support was provided through recordings of model conversations, word lists containing appropriate discourse markers, and explicit instructions on discourse management. There are multiple clues in the activities indicating that this communicative turn was associated with examination preparation, including the formal similarity of speaking activities with common examination tasks, and the provision of explicitly signposted examination strategies.

In summary, two trends could be discerned in the listening and speaking strands of the courseware, both of which might be associated with the Certification intentionality. First, the number of oral skills activities increased dramatically as one progressed towards the Upper Intermediate levels, which focused on exam preparation. This increase was likely associated with the fact that the listening and speaking skills were directly tested in all the major certification examinations (Appendix H). Secondly, although the format of listening and speaking activities tended to accommodate for local preferences in the early stages of instruction, stronger influences of the communicative paradigm became visible in the Upper Intermediate programme. Again, this re-orientation could be interpreted as an adaptation to the communicative approach underpinning certification examinations.

#### **6.2.4 Written skills: Mixed signals**

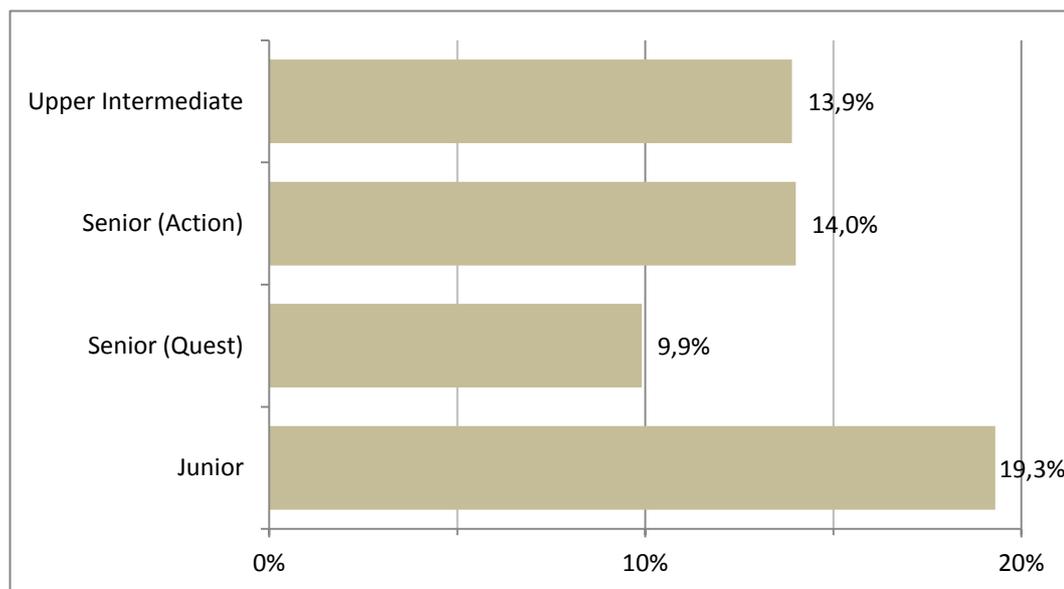
In contrast to the previous syllabus strands, where the influence of specific intentionalities was relatively easy to interpret, activities focussing on reading and writing displayed rather unexpected patterns. Reading activities, in particular, seemed to be impacted by the Competition intentionality, which paradoxically led to a simplification of the syllabus in this case. Another seemingly strange pattern was that writing activities did not display the relatively smooth progression from transmissive patterns to communicative ones, as was the case with the listening and speaking strands of the syllabus. Rather, a non-linear pattern of change seemed to be in evidence.

#### ***Reading***

Two intentionalities that could be traced in the reading strand of the syllabus were Certification and Competition. Based on the patterns seen in the previous sections, one might have expected that Certification would lead to a gradual increase in the number of reading activities in the syllabus, and a re-orientation towards the communicative paradigm in the Upper intermediate programme. With regard to Competition, one might have predicted that it would be associated with increasingly challenging texts. Of these predictions, the former was only partially confirmed, whereas the influence of the latter seemed to be the opposite of what was expected.

No clear pattern could be discerned regarding the prevalence of reading activities in the sample (Figure 6-22). In all, reading activities were very prominent in the courseware: taking up 13.5% of the activities in the sample (n=138), they were the third most prevalent form of activity after grammar and vocabulary. The prevalence of reading activities was highest in the Junior programme (19.3%), which (according to the acting director of studies) reflected the high importance attached to exposing learners to language before they were

expected to produce it. Strangely, in the Senior (Quest) programme the prevalence of Reading activities fell to almost half of the Junior levels (9.9%). This statistical anomaly might be due to a weakness of the design of the content analysis. When unitising the sample, all activities were given equal weighting regardless of their length, so the results in the Quest materials might indicate a different balance between few time-intensive reading activities and a large number of relatively short activities that focused on other skills. If one disregards this anomaly, it seems that after the Junior programme the prevalence of reading remained fairly constant. This observation runs against the prediction that the Certification intentionality would lead to an increase in the provision of reading activities to accommodate for the direct testing of reading in the certification examinations.



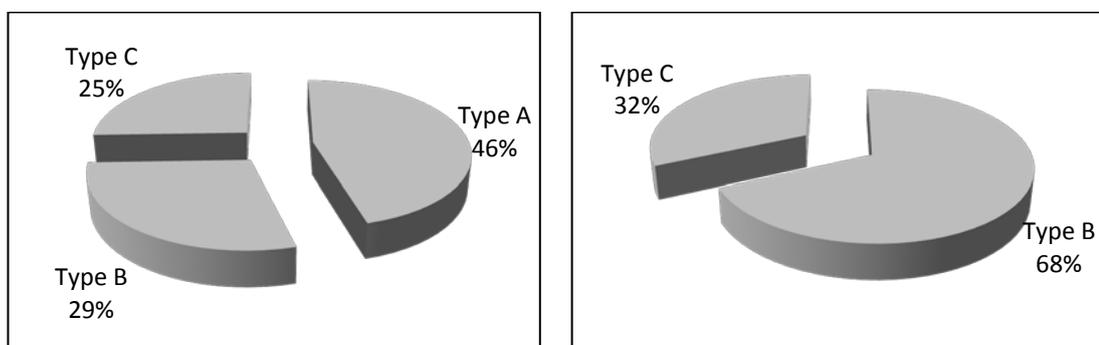
**Figure 6-22 Prevalence of reading activities**

There were, however, some qualitative traces of the Certification intentionality in the reading activities. In terms of their format, the texts in the courseware were grouped into three categories:

- **Type A** texts narrated events in the lives of recurring characters, and they were often displayed in cartoon or dialogue format (e.g., Figure 6-3a), which made them very suitable for language practice.

- **Type B** texts were quasi-genuine passages that were thematically linked to the overarching topic of each unit. These passages were contrived for pedagogical purposes, but displayed formal features of real-life texts, such as websites, newspaper articles (e.g., Code Green, Student’s Book, p. 116), agony aunt columns (e.g., Action, Student’s Book C, p. 72) or song lyrics (e.g., Rainbow B, Class Book, p. 46).
- **Type C** texts functioned as models for subsequent writing tasks. Frequently-encountered genres included short personal narratives (e.g., Rainbow, Class Book A, p. 37), email messages (e.g., Action, Students’ Book B, p. 74), film reviews (e.g., Code Green, Student’s Book, p. 80), reports (e.g., Action, Student’s Book C, p. 66), and argumentative essays (e.g., Code Green, Student’s Book, p. 46-47)

As can be seen in Figure 6-23, there was a stark differentiation in the distribution of the different text types across programmes. In the Junior and Senior programmes, approximately half the texts (46%) belonged to Type A, but this category was not present in the Upper Intermediate programme. Conversely, the number of Type B texts more than doubled in the Upper Intermediate programme, rising from 29% to 68% of the reading activities in their respective coursebooks. This shift towards more genuine-like reading materials might be associated with the content of reading tasks in the certification examinations.



**a. Junior, Senior (Quest) & Senior (Action)**      **b. Upper Intermediate**  
**Figure 6-23 Distribution of text types across programmes**

When discussing the grammar and vocabulary strands of the syllabus, it was noted that the Competition intentionality tended to be associated with an impulse to enhance learning outcomes by pushing the learners towards the limits of their abilities. To test whether similar influences were at work in the reading provision, I calculated the typical length and difficulty<sup>4</sup> of the passages (Table 6-6). Predictably, there was an increase in the number of words per passage, and a reduction in the Reading Ease of texts as one progressed towards the more advanced stages of instruction.

| Programme    | Level                         | Typical length (words) | Mean Flesch Reading Ease |       |
|--------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|-------|
| Junior       | a (Rainbow A)                 | 40-60                  | 97.28                    |       |
|              | b (Rainbow B)                 | 40-100                 | 94.77                    |       |
| Senior       | Quest A (Quest 1)             | 100-200                | 91.58                    |       |
|              | Action                        | B (Action B)           | 150-250                  | 84.59 |
|              |                               | C (Action C)           | 250-350                  | 83.71 |
| Upper        | D (Code Green)                | 450-550                | 68.94                    |       |
| Intermediate | E (Code Red & practice tests) | 450-550                | 67.13                    |       |
| Proficiency  | Proficiency (practice tests)  | 700-1000               | 52.26                    |       |

Table 6-6 Length and readability of reading passages

Of particular interest were three rather abrupt transitions in this progression: namely between the Senior (Quest) and the Senior (Action) programmes (Transition I), between the Senior (Action) and the Upper Intermediate programmes (Transition II) and between the Upper Intermediate and the Proficiency programmes (Transition III). Transitions II and III might be interpreted as the product of the increase in the numbers of quasi-genuine (Type B) and genuine texts respectively, which was associated with a shift towards examination preparation. Transition I, on the other hand, appears to signal a disparity between the newly introduced *Quest* materials and the *Action* materials which they replaced. In Section 5.5.3, I noted that this change was part of an overall restructuring of the host institute's curriculum, which was partly attributed to the introduction of the TEYL

<sup>4</sup> The readability of the texts was calculated using the Flesch Reading Ease (RE) score, a metric which takes into account the average length of sentences in the text and the average number of syllables in a word. The metric is calculated using the formula:  $RE = 206.835 - (0.846 \times NSYLL) - (1.015 \times W/S)$ , where NSYLL stands for the mean number of syllables / 100 words and W/S for the mean number of words / sentence (Alderson, 2000, pp. 70-71). A high score in the metric denotes high reading ease.

programme in state education. In other words, it seemed that in the case of reading at least, Competition atypically led to a simplification of the content with which the students engaged.

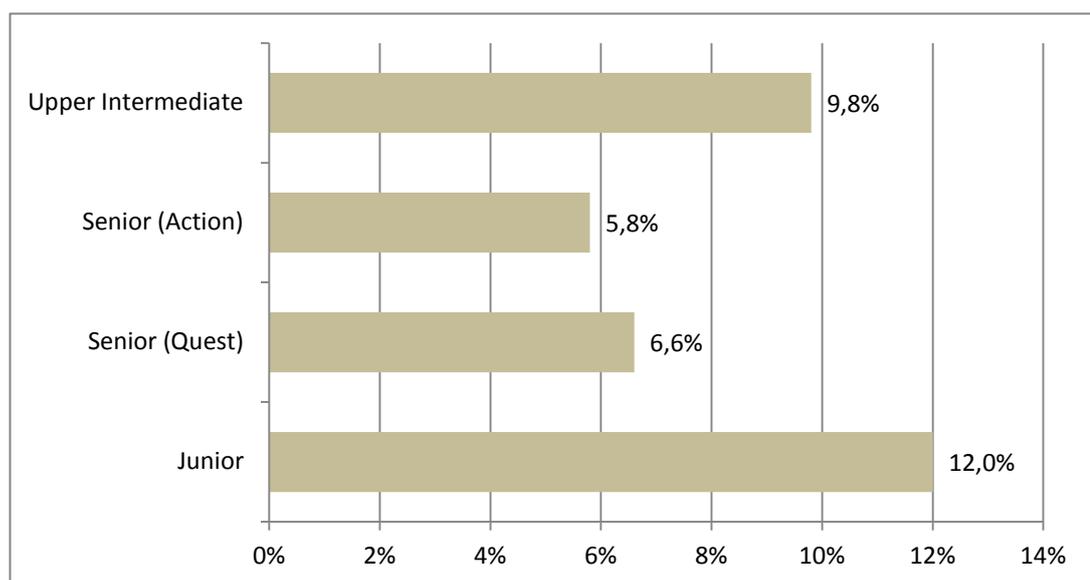
By looking into the reading activities in the syllabus, one comes to the conclusion that the effects of the intentionalities were not linear: For instance, it was seen that the Certification intentionality was not uniformly associated with a quantitative increase in the provision of reading activities (although there was a qualitative shift in the format of reading passages). Furthermore, it was noted that while Competition most commonly resulted in more numerous and more challenging activities, in certain circumstances it could have the opposite effect. Such findings underscore the complexity of relations between dynamics of intentions and outcomes.

### ***Writing***

The activities that aimed at the development of writing skills also showed non-linear patterns. In the early levels of instruction, it appeared that the number of writing activities gradually decreased, perhaps due to the combined effect of Protectionism and Certification which prioritised controlled practice over free production. This trend was reversed when Certification became the dominant intentionality. There was also a tendency towards more communicative activities, but this was not a case of gradual progression from early levels to more advanced ones.

Writing activities, which made up 8.3% of the learning materials (n=85), were unevenly distributed in the sample (Figure 6-24). In the Junior and Senior programmes, there was a gradual decrease in their number: Starting from 12% of the activities in the Junior programme (n=20), they eventually fell to 5.8% of the Senior (Action) materials (n=12). This trend seemed to coincide with a substantial increase of vocabulary activities in the Senior

programmes, and a similar increase in the grammar activities in Senior (Quest): the learning materials in these levels seemed to focus more on developing accuracy over free production, possibly due to the combined influence of the Competition and Protectionism intentionalities. This trend was reversed in the Upper Intermediate programme, where writing activities took up 9.8% of the learning materials (n=31). This reversal of priorities might be due to the difference in the dynamics of intentions in the exam preparation courses.



**Figure 6-24 Prevalence of writing activities**

As was the case with the reading strand of the syllabus, there was a qualitative differentiation in the writing activities. Three distinct types of writing activities were identified, namely form-focused writing, genre-based writing, and process-based writing activities, of which the former two were transmissively oriented and the latter was closer to the communicative approach.

- *Form-focused* activities used writing as a means for consolidating previously taught language. Most commonly, they constituted the final parts of larger activity sequences, which tended to follow the Presentation-Practice-Production pattern. A typical

example of such an activity is depicted in Figure 6-25a, where input seemed to have been deliberately structured to elicit sentences in the Past Perfect tense.

- *Genre-based* activities were defined as writing tasks which entailed the production of text types with specified formal features (Tribble, 1996, pp. 45-64). For instance, learners might be tasked with producing stories, reports or email messages. Genre-based writing activities were often embedded within larger pedagogical sequences, which involved engaging with prototypical instantiations of the genre ('model' texts), and explicitly identifying salient features, such as its macro-structure and discourse markers. There was often a progression from more controlled modes of production to relatively freer ones, as illustrated in Figure 6-25b.

**Speaking and Writing**

**Work in pairs.**  
Rita Roams became a photographer in 2001. Before that she had done a number of different jobs.

- a fashion model in Paris (1996 - 2001)
- a hotel receptionist in New York (1992 - 1996)
- a bank clerk in Oxford (1990 - 1992)

**Talk about Rita's career and write a paragraph about it. Begin like this:**



Rita had been a fashion model for five years  
when she decided to become a ...

99

**Guided writing**

Your teacher has asked you to write an article on the following topic:  
*Should young people work during the summer?*

**Follow this paragraph plan:**

**Paragraph 1:** a lot of young people work during the summer – is this good or bad?  
**Paragraph 2:** advantages: learn things; earn some money; do something different  
**Paragraph 3:** disadvantages: no free time; holidays?  
**Paragraph 4:** your opinion

**Writing**

**Write an article on the following topic:**  
*What job would you like to do?*

Remember to write about the advantages of this job in the second paragraph and the disadvantages of this job in the third paragraph. In the fourth paragraph, say why you want to do it.

**a. Form-focussed writing activity**  
(Action, Student's Book B, p. 99)

**b. Genre-based writing activities**  
(Action, Student's Book C, p. 101)

**Figure 6-25 Sample transmissive writing activities**

- *Process-based* writing activities were defined as activities that focussed on developing various writing sub-skills, such as planning, drafting, editing, etc. (cf. Seow, 2002). By way of example, in the activities that have been reproduced in Figure 6-26, students were provided with opportunities to practice proofreading. These activities tended to

be embedded in larger pedagogical sequences that culminated in the production of a text, often through collaborative work.

### Writing

#### Checking spelling

Check your spelling when you write.  
Be careful with these four spelling problems:

|  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| a words with two vowels next to each other | <i>meat</i>     |
| b words that have silent letters           | <i>cupboard</i> |
| c words with double consonants             | <i>swimming</i> |
| d different words that sound the same      | <i>four/for</i> |

**6** What type of spelling problem (a-d) have these words got?

|                                    |       |
|------------------------------------|-------|
| 1 wrong Wednesday answers          | ..... |
| 2 aren't/aunt they're/their two/to | ..... |
| 3 chair four mouth                 | ..... |
| 4 tennis summer funny called       | ..... |

**7** Correct six more spelling mistakes in Andrea's email.

Hi Sara

Hey! We're in our <sup>new</sup> ~~knew~~ flat now and I've got a new computer <sup>here</sup> ~~hear~~ in my new <sup>bedroom</sup> ~~bedroom!~~

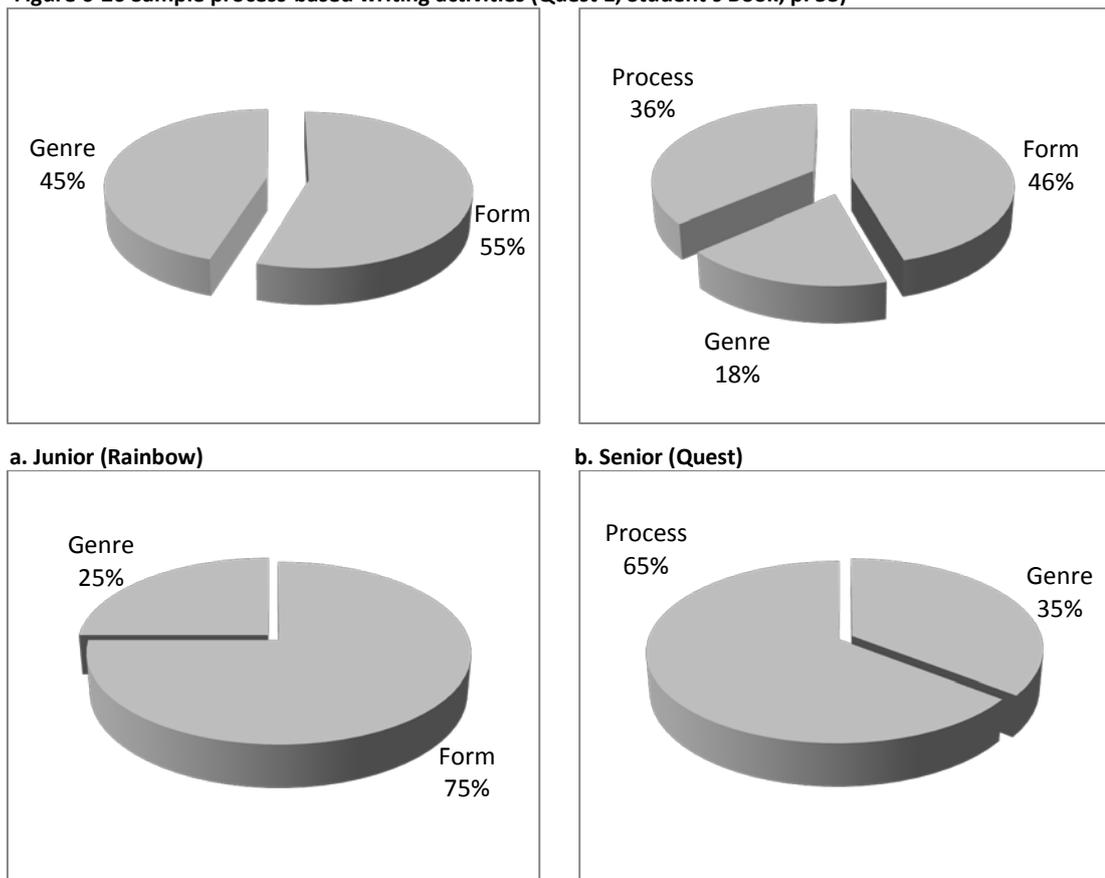
I've got a brilliant new bed too! There's a desk in the room and a bord for all my posters.

And there's a huge TV on one of the walls. I can lie in bed and wotch it! And I've got a balcony! I can see our scool and the town park from their!

Come and see our flat. It's fantastic!

Love Andrea     XXX

Figure 6-26 Sample process-based writing activities (Quest 1, Student's Book, p. 53)



c. Senior (Action)

d. Upper Intermediate

Figure 6-27 Distribution of writing activities by programme.

The three types of writing activities were unevenly distributed across the programmes (Figure 6-27). The Junior and Senior (Action) programmes were very transmissive: In the Junior programme, form-focused and genre-based activities were evenly balanced, but in the Senior (Action) programme, activities that aimed to practice previously taught grammar outnumbered activities that focused on the production of text types by 3:1. The Senior (Quest) programme contained a mix of all activity types: although the majority of activities seemed to be transmissively oriented, there appeared to be a balance between activities that focussed on 'writing-to-learn' grammar and 'learning-to-write' extended discourse. Finally, in the Upper Intermediate programme, the writing strand of the syllabus seemed to be geared towards exam preparation, with some activities focussing on the formal features of specific text types, and the majority focusing on developing the writing skills.

The distribution of writing activities is broadly consistent with the effects of the Competition, Protectionism and Certification intentionalities that were repeatedly encountered in this chapter. The preponderance of form-focused activities in the early stages of instruction, especially the Senior (Action) programme can be interpreted as a product of Protectionism and Competition, which placed a premium of accuracy. Similarly, the prevalence of communicative activities in the Upper Intermediate programme conformed to expectations regarding the effects of the Certification intentionality. What is less easy to interpret is the appearance of process-based writing activities in the Senior (Quest) materials. This apparent anomaly, in the most recently introduced course, may be reflective of a broader process of diachronic change at the host institute.

To summarise, the reading and writing strands of the syllabus evidenced the influence of the intentionalities in somewhat unexpected ways. Both strands appeared to be impacted by similar dynamics of intentions as the other syllabus strands. Protectionism and Competition seemed more prominent in the early stages of instruction, and they gradually

gave way to Credentialism. However, this did not result in a gradual increase in the overall number of activities, as was the case with the oral skills. Rather, the differences in the dynamics of intentions were manifested in qualitative ways. In addition, non-linear effects were sometimes observed, including the atypical ways in which Competition impacted the reading strand, and the rather unanticipated prevalence of process-based writing in the newest courseware.

### **6.2.5 Dynamic variation in the materials**

This section has discussed how the learning materials used at the host institute were influenced by the dynamics of intentions, i.e., the interaction of multiple intentionalities at the host institute. The analytical outlook adopted in the previous sections has helpfully highlighted differentiated effects, but it runs the risk of obscuring patterns that run across the learning materials. Consequently, I conclude the description of the learning materials by discussing the overarching theme of *dynamic variation*: by drawing on the findings that were presented below, I argue that the dynamics of intentions were in a state of constant flux, across a range of dimensions.

One aspect of variation concerned the uneven influence of intentionalities in different syllabus strands, which might be termed *spatial variation*. The grammar and vocabulary strands of the syllabus were seen to be predominantly impacted by considerations of Protectionism and Competition. The influence of these intentionalities was very evident in the large number of activities that encouraged the transmissive, systematic, and extensive teaching of language form. Other syllabus strands, most visibly listening and speaking, evidenced the influence of the Certification intentionality: many of the activities that made up these strands seemed to be designed for the purposes of exam preparation, and were thus more closely aligned to the communicative approach, which underpinned the examinations.

A second aspect of variation referred to the way in which the dynamics of intentions changed as students progressed from the earlier levels of instruction to the more advanced ones. At the risk of over-simplifying, it seemed that instruction at the host institute was divided into two *phases*, which were impacted by different dynamics of intentions. During the first phase, which comprised the Junior and Senior programmes, the materials seemed to be predominantly influenced by Protectionism and Competition. This might be easily inferred from the high salience of grammar and vocabulary activities in these programmes. Additional evidence of the effect of Protectionism and Competition in this phase can be found in the Reading and Writing strands of the syllabus: very often these activities seemed to have been contrived to respectively showcase and elicit language structures. In the second phase, however, Certification became the dominant intentionality: There was an increase in the number of activities practicing the oral skills, and a qualitative shift in the reading and writing activities, both of which seemed to be related to the demands of exam preparation.

A final way in which the dynamic of intentions varied was *diachronic*, and related to the way in which the host institute evolved over time. Traces of diachronic differentiation were most easy to discern in the Senior (Quest) programme, which was most recently introduced. In the Senior (Quest) materials, there was a marked increase in the prevalence of grammar activities (in part explained by the introduction of a grammar book). At the same time, however, communicatively-oriented activities such as genre-based writing were introduced, and, the vocabulary handouts evidenced a shift in emphasis from formal information (e.g., grammatical categories) to information about usage (e.g., examples). To describe such changes as a uniform drift towards the mainstream paradigm appears as an oversimplification: rather, it seems that the impact of the Protectionism intentionality became more focused in the new materials.

In addition to these forms of differentiation, the dynamism of the interaction between intentionalities was underscored by the functional differentiation of their combined effects. For example, Protectionism and Competition seemed to reinforce each other in the grammar strand of the syllabus, and in doing so they facilitated the development of transmissive pedagogical patterns. By contrast, the same intentionalities were seen to be in some tension in the vocabulary strand: while their combined effect privileged the teaching and learning of numerous lexical items, the possibility of using resources such as the vocabulary companions, which capitalised on local knowledge and expertise, was counteracted by the impulse to provide additional exposure to the English language. Another example of functional differentiation was provided by the effects of Competition on the reading strand: while this intentionality was most commonly associated with more numerous and more challenging activities, in the case of the Senior (Quest) programme, it resulted in an increase in the readability of texts.

In summary, the effect that the intentionalities had on the learning materials was highly dynamic and complex. Various combinations of intentionalities were found to operate in different aspects of the syllabus, which varied in different phases of instruction and over time. Moreover, the effect of dynamics of intentions seemed to differ not only depending on the dominant combination of dynamics but also according to context. In the section that follows, I argue that this dynamic, complex impact of the intentionalities tended to privilege certain forms of instruction over others, and I put forward a way of conceptualising its influence.

### 6.3 Pedagogical affordances in the materials

In the preceding section, I described how the complex interactions of multiple intentionalities might be traced in the learning materials which were used at the host

institute. I now move the discussion forward by looking into the connections between the learning materials and pedagogical practice. I argue that the learning activities in the materials generate affordances for practice to materialise, and that these affordances might be collectively mapped against an 'affordance landscape', a visual metaphor similar to the 'state space' often used to describe a system's activity (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008, p. 46). This discussion serves to bridge the description of the relation between the dynamic of intentions and the learning materials, with the description of actual teaching and learning patterns that follows in Chapter 7.

### **6.3.1 Relating materials to practice**

The relation of learning materials with pedagogical practice is a recurring theme in the literature, although the strength of the influence they exert appears to be a matter of contention. For example, Jacobs and Ball (1996) have suggested that coursebooks have minimal influence on practice, "given that some teachers ignore teacher's manuals and even the instructions in the student's book" (p. 101), and instead opt for more autonomous lesson planning which is responsive to the students' needs. In their perspective, the determinants of learning events are the teachers' views on the learning process, as well as the learners' needs, rather than coursebook content. This position is consistent both with methodological orthodoxy, which has emphasised the need for teacher creativity, and with empirical findings according to which teachers reportedly prefer to modify coursebooks for specific learning situations (e.g., Leung & Andrews, 2012). While it is not my intention to challenge the role of individual autonomy, or suggest that teachers are insensitive to the needs of their students, I believe that Jacobs and Ball may be downplaying the role of courseware as a constraint on agency, and they seem to disregard the ways in which coursebook content shapes expectations regarding what may be regarded as a "legitimate" or "effective" lesson (Littlejohn, 1998, p. 190; Nunan, 1991, p. 210).

A more nuanced position has been taken by Hutchinson and Torres (1994). In an often-cited article, they point out the published courseware helps teachers to manage learning, and it addresses the learners' need of structure. Hutcheson and Torres reject the strongly deterministic view that learning materials constitute scripts for pre-planned learning events (e.g., Littlejohn, 1992), and suggest that they function as frameworks for flexible lesson planning, and as drivers for curricular change. Although Hutchinson and Torres do not articulate a fully developed theory regarding the role of courseware, their argument seems to suggest that learning materials limit the freedom of choice that would otherwise be available to teachers and students, and help them to channel agency in predictable ways.

Without prejudice to the overall validity of the claim put forward by Hutchinson and Torres (1994), empirical data from the Greek context appears to suggest that teachers in Greece tend not to deviate much from the recommendations in the teacher manuals or the course of action implicit in the design of the activities. For example, Alexandropoulou (2002) provides evidence that teachers in the state sector in Greece tend to plan their lessons with reference to their coursebooks, rather than learner needs or the national curriculum (p. 44). Similarly, M. Papageorgiou (2002) describes teachers in the private EFL sector as "course implementers", whose duties are limited to the delivery of the content in the set coursebooks (p. 50). Analogous findings have been reported in other studies, including Georgiadi (2003) and Xanthakou (2005). While none of the studies quoted above have appeared in peer-reviewed publications, they are the only relevant sources of empirical data that I was able to access pertaining to the Greek ELT context, and their findings are generally consistent with anecdotal evidence from the field.

What this study aims to do is present an alternative way of conceptualising the relation between learning resources and pedagogical practice: one in which accounts of determination are replaced by the construct of affordances. Building on ecological

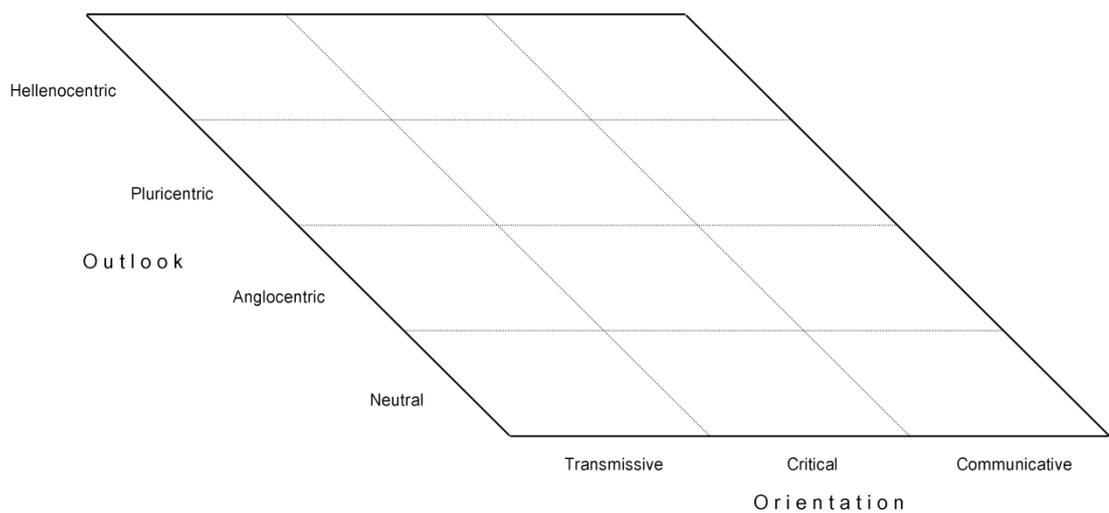
psychology (Gibson, 1977, 1979), affordances are defined as action possibilities implicit in the design of an activity, which impact pedagogical practice in two ways. Directly, they privilege certain ways of teaching by making them easier to implement compared to alternatives. Indirectly, they shape expectations, not least among learners and other stakeholders, regarding the 'legitimate' content and format of language lessons.

### **6.3.2 Building an affordance landscape**

One way to conceptualise the collective effect of the affordances present in the learning materials is by means an 'affordance landscape'. This is a metaphorical visualisation that shows the relative likelihood for any particular course of action to materialise. Similar visualisations, such as state (or phase) spaces, are commonly used to illustrate various aspects of complex systems' behaviour (Byrne, 1998, pp. 32-33; Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008, pp. 45-49; Thelen & Smith, 1994, p. 124), although I am not familiar with any instances where they have been used to map affordances.

The starting point for the generation of an 'affordance landscape' for the materials used in the host institute is the definition of a 'state space' of the system. A state space is a collection of possible states which a system might occupy (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008, pp. 45-49), or (for the purposes of this study) a depiction of all the forms that pedagogy at the host institute might conceivably take. This might involve specifying numerous parameters along which pedagogy might vary, but for reasons of simplicity I will use only two, as it is my aim to demonstrate the construct, rather than develop a fully articulated model. As can be seen in Figure 6-28, the state space has been defined with reference to pedagogical orientation and cultural outlook (see Section 5.1), which specify a two-dimensional plane. In this model, *orientation* refers to whether pedagogical practices were predominantly transmissive, communicative or critical. The other dimension, *outlook*, refers to whether the content of an activity referenced Greece (Hellenocentric outlook),

the Anglophone West (Anglocentric outlook), the entire English-using world (pluricentric outlook) or none of the above (neutral outlook). The values of these parameters are categorical, and their positioning along the dimensions is arbitrary. In other words, a pluricentric outlook should not be conceived as being quantitatively different from an Anglocentric one, nor is a critical orientation an intermediate value between transmissive and communicative ones.

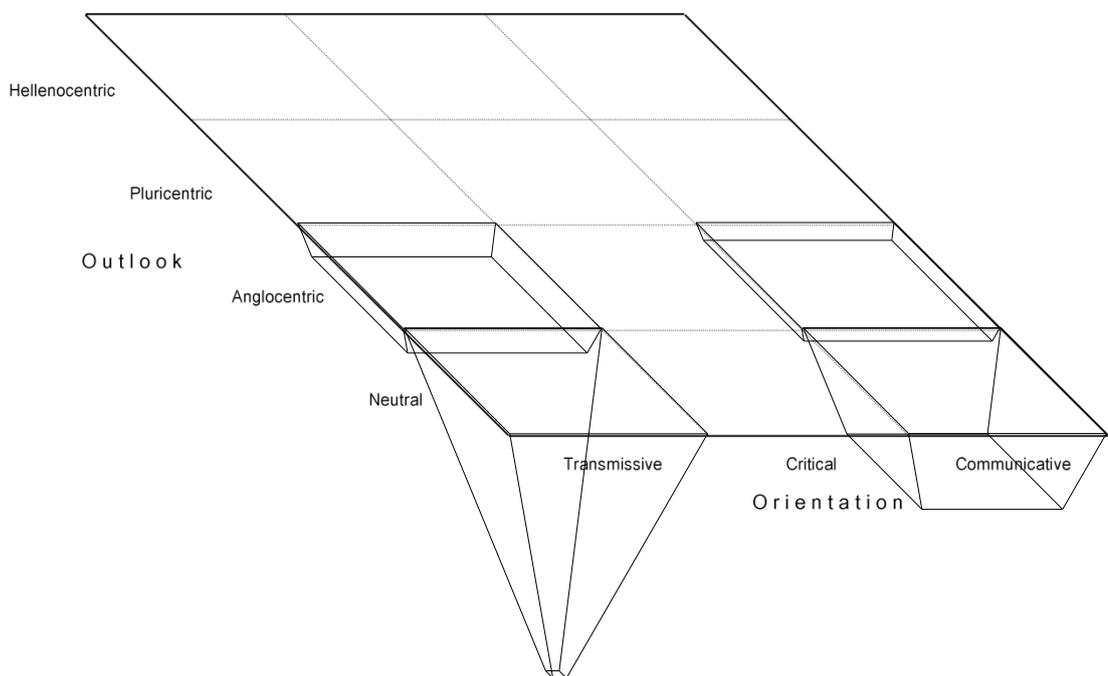


**Figure 6-28 A two-dimensional state space**

By defining distinct positions across the two dimensions, the state space has been carved up in a number of possible states, or 'regions', such as communicative/Anglocentric, transmissive/neutral and so on. To illustrate, a teacher-fronted lecture on Halloween would be an example of a transmissive/Anglocentric activity, whereas a discussion task in which learners talked about their school experiences would be an instance of a communicative/Hellenocentric one.

If pedagogy at the host institute were totally unconstrained, teaching and learning activities would, in principle, have an equal chance of taking any of the 12 forms that have been delineated in the state space. One might then visualise a lesson, or indeed an entire course, as a trajectory of activities moving randomly across the 'regions' of the state space. Such unpredictability, however, is rarely encountered in practice. Rather, the content and

format of learning events are influenced by the operation of intentionalities, such as the ones described in Chapter 5, and the affordances that the learning materials present. The dialectic interaction between the two tends to make some 'regions' in the state space likelier than others, and these proclivities are reinforced by 'social routinisation' (Prabhu, 1992). In my developing conceptualisation, the effect of affordances is visualised by adding to the state space a third dimension, depth, which indexes the prevalence of affordances that channel pedagogy towards specific forms of teaching and learning (Figure 6-29).



**Figure 6-29 Attractors in the affordance landscape**

By adding the effect of affordances to the developing conceptualisation, the state space has been transformed into a metaphorical landscape, the most prominent features of which are four depressions, corresponding to the transmissive/neutral, transmissive/Anglocentric, communicative/neutral and communicative/Anglocentric regions. These depressions correspond to the preponderance of activities that privilege transmissive and communicative forms of instruction, as summarised in Table 6-7. In addition, the depressions model the predominance of activities with a neutral and, to a much lesser extent, Anglocentric outlook. A scale-accurate representation that takes into

account the exact prevalence of various activity types was not technically possible, due to restrictions in the imaging software I used, but the depth of each depression provides an indication of the relative strength of the affordances that pointed towards specific directions.

| <b>Transmissive Paradigm</b> | <b>Communicative Paradigm</b> |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Grammar presentation         | Grammar (inductive discovery) |
| Grammar practice             | Type B reading passages       |
| Vocabulary                   | Process-based writing         |
| Type A reading passages      | Most speaking activities      |
| Form-focused writing         | Listening activities          |
| Genre-based writing          |                               |
| Some speaking activities     |                               |

**Table 6-7 List of activities by associated paradigm**

The model presented in Figure 6-29 allows for an economical description of the effect of the affordances created by a large number of activities. Collectively, the learning materials appeared to constrain the range of actual pedagogical possibilities to two dominant forms of pedagogy, which I term the Transmissive and the Communicative ‘attractors’. In Complex Systems Theory, attractors are usually described as the ‘preferred’ behaviours of a system (see Section 3.2.2) but my use of the term is slightly different as it describes the collective effect of the affordances inherent in multiple activities. An attractor, in this sense, is not an aggregate of recurring behaviours that have been observed, but rather a potential for recurring behaviour, the boundaries of which are determined by the system’s ecology.

One final note that needs to be made with regard to the affordance landscape is that it is in a constant flux. In section 6.2.5, I empirically identified three types of variation in the intentional dynamics that impacted the learning materials. Accordingly, the state space may be conceptualised as displaying similar volatility. For one, the relative depth of the attractors might differ from one syllabus strand to another, so for instance, the transmissive attractor would appear much deeper when discussing grammar lessons rather than lessons focussing on the oral skills. In addition, variation in the depth of the attractors

would be evident depending on the level of instruction, as the communicative attractor would appear relatively deeper in the advanced levels. Thirdly, the shape of the metaphorical landscape would change over time, to reflect the diachronic evolution of dynamics of intentions.

## 6.4 Concluding remarks

By looking into the learning materials that were used at the host institute, this chapter accomplished two aims. Firstly, it elaborated on the role of the emergent intentionalities that were identified in Chapter 5. It was empirically demonstrated that the most prominent intentionalities in the learning materials were Protectionism, Competition and Certification; that their effect was distributed unevenly across different strands of the syllabus, different phases and over time; and that their interaction was not always predictable. These findings highlight the dynamism inherent in the interaction of the intentionalities, and hinted at the descriptive utility of a complex systems perspective as an analytical lens for the understanding of pedagogy at the host institute.

Absent from the above discussion was any reference to the International Integration and Cultural Awareness intentionalities. Indeed, traces of Cultural Awareness were only found in a few reading passages (Section 5.4.2), and some materials that had been prepared for in-house use on occasional lessons (e.g., Christmas, Halloween). Traces of International Integration were even more sporadic, as they were limited to few in-house materials that had been created for thematic lessons, such as lessons focussing on social media, popular football teams, films and songs. This somewhat surprising finding seems to go against critical theorisations of ELT, where it is suggested that language teaching functions as a vehicle for cultural imperialism (e.g., Kumaravadivelu, 2006a; Phillipson, 2009b). While not challenging the validity of concerns regarding the globalising pressures in ELT, the data at

hand seem to suggest that considerations of Protectionism appear to have effectively insulated the host institute from such outside pressures.

The second main aim that this chapter addressed was conceptual, and it concerned the relation between learning materials and practice. It was suggested that the materials influenced practice, by making some courses of action more likely. This function evoked the concept of affordances, or action possibilities that were created by the interaction of agents with their environment. An 'affordance landscape' was used to visualise both the full range of options available for pedagogical practice, and the impact of the affordances that the learning materials provided. This discussion culminated in the conceptual construction of two attractors, which index the likelihood that particular pedagogical patterns materialise. The empirical validity of these attractors will be demonstrated in Chapter 7, which looks into actual teaching and learning practices.

## Chapter 7

### **Pedagogical Activity in the Host Institute: The Shape of Teaching and Learning**

In the previous chapters the argument was put forward that teaching and learning at the host institute was driven by the interplay of five intentionalities; that learning materials acted as a 'sedimented' form of the dynamics of intentions; and that transmissive and communicative pedagogical patterns were made likelier, on account of the collective set of affordances inherent in the learning materials, and this effect was visually represented as attractor basins in an affordance landscape (Figure 6-29). It was also hinted that the affordances amplified the orientation effect of the intentionalities.

This chapter moves the discussion forward by looking into the outcomes of the interaction between intentionalities and learning materials. In the sections that follow, I describe pedagogical routines in the host institute, thus addressing the third emergent theme i.e., teaching and learning practices. To answer this question, pedagogical practice has been conceptualised as empirically-derived 'prototypical' sequences of teaching and learning activities, of which three are presented in detail in this chapter. A theoretical discussion of how these sequences were defined can be found in the first section of the chapter (Section 7.1). The sequences might be visualised as trajectories in the system's state space (Figure 6-28), which are driven by intentionalities and influenced by the attractors present in the system.

Two of the sequences that are described in this chapter seem to be constrained by the transmissive attractor. Of these, the Reading and Vocabulary sequence provides insights into the interaction between learning materials, Competition and Protectionism, and the

tensions that sometimes developed among them (Section 7-2). The other transmissive sequence, Traditional Grammar, illustrates how learning materials were reinterpreted, partly due to Protectionism, to create a distinctive local form of pedagogy (Section 7.3). Process-based Writing, the third sequence, is manifested in the Communicative attractor, and therefore provides a paradigmatic counterpoint to the other two, highlighting the potential of change inherent in the system and the challenges associated with such change (Section 7.4). The chapter concludes with brief remarks on the processes of stasis and change at the host institute (Section 7.5).

## 7.1 Prototypical instructional sequences

Viewed from a social constructivist perspective, learning events are the contingent outcome of the interaction between teachers, learners and tasks within a context (Williams & Burden, 1997, pp. 41-45). Although the form of these learning events could, in principle, be unbounded, in practice they seem to be subject to a process of 'social routinisation', which reduces unpredictability and makes the social event cognitively and psychologically manageable (Prabhu, 1992, pp. 227-229). In Prabhu's words:

One needs to be able to anticipate events, in some general form, take some things for granted, even tentatively, and have a frame of reference and roles with which to interpret and respond to what happens. The more recurrent the encounter [...] the greater the need for a shared routine and a shared set of expectations (p. 229).

The existence of such patterns is well documented in the professional literature, where several pedagogical routines are described, including Presentation-Practice-Production (Harmer, 2001, pp. 80-82), Authentic use-Restricted use-Clarification and focus (Scrivener, 1996), Observe-Hypothesise-Experiment (Lewis, 1993), Pre-task-Task cycle-Language Focus (Willis, 1996), and Before Reading-While Reading-After Reading (Nuttall, 2005, pp. 154-169), to name but a few.

The pedagogical routines that typified instruction at the host institute emerged bottom up from the interaction between the intentionalities that were identified in Chapter 5, and the affordances implicitly present in the learning materials, as discussed in Chapter 6. While bearing in mind that the outcome of these interactions was situation-contingent and variable, I was able to economically describe such outcomes by drawing on Prototype Theory (Geeraerts, 2006; Rosch, 1999), which has been derived from empirical work carried out by Rosch and Mervis (Mervis & Rosch, 1981; Rosch & Mervis, 1975). According to Prototype Theory, entities are placed into categories on the basis of their similarity to a 'prototype', which is construed as either a 'best' exemplar of the category, or as an idealised abstraction akin to a schema (Lakoff, 1999, p. 391). The difference between Aristotelian theories of classification and Prototype Theory is that, in the former, "all instances of a category share a set of properties singly necessary and jointly sufficient for membership within the category", whereas Prototype Theory posits that "category membership is a matter of having some sufficiently many properties that members of the category tend to have" (Margolis, 1994, p. 77).

For the purposes of this study, I used inductive categorisation techniques derived from Prototype Theory to abstract seven prototypical instructional sequences. Actual lesson sequences were reconstructed from my observational data, and these were supplemented by sequences derived from the cluster analysis in the Pilot inquiry (Section 4.2.1), interview and questionnaire data, as well as implicit sequences in the learning materials. These sequences were then clustered on the basis of similarity. Following that, prototypical instructional sequences were defined as ideational procedures that contained most of the features present in the sequences in each cluster. Consistent with Prototype Theory, I have not attempted to define these prototypes with reference to lists of necessary and sufficient features; rather, a rich description of each prototype is provided, using the participants' voice to the extent possible.

### 7.1.1 Terminological ground-clearing

In the interest of terminological clarity, before embarking on the description of lesson prototypes, in this section I define a number of potentially confusing terms which are used in this chapter:

- An **instructional sequence** is a series of pedagogical activities which were structured around a specific goal. For instance, a Reading and Vocabulary sequence would normally be structured around a textbook passage. Similarly, a Traditional Grammar sequence might be structured around a specific language structure (e.g., ‘Learning the Past Simple: Affirmative’). In the discussion that follows, instructional sequences are typographically signalled by capitalisation.
- Instructional sequences are divided into several **stages**. During each stage, there was a specific, distinct pattern of interaction among the teacher, the learners and the learning materials. For instance, a Revision instructional sequence might be divided into stages when the teacher elicited information (‘review’), stages when students engaged with exercises (‘practice’), a testing stage (‘test’) and a stage when feedback was provided (‘feedback’). In this chapter, when a word such as ‘practice’ denotes a stage, it is enclosed in single quotation marks.
- Each stage might contain one or several **activities**. To illustrate, during the ‘practice’ stage of a Review sequence, learners might sequentially engage with more than one grammar exercises. The term “activity” is used for terminological consistency throughout the chapter as an umbrella term that encompasses various types of exercises and tasks. In this sense, the term describes modes of behaviour, rather than textual units as was the case in Chapter 6, but there is a one-to-one correspondence between the constructs that the two uses of the term denote.

- The term **lesson** is used in this chapter to refer to a single class session (usually lasting 50 or 90 minutes), and is therefore distinct from the lesson-as-textual-unit described in Chapter 6. Sometimes instructional sequences would take up a single lesson, but more often than not this correspondence was imperfect. It was quite common, in other words, for sequences to extend beyond a single lesson, with some stages being assigned as homework, or being continued into a subsequent lesson. Less frequently, a lesson might contain more than one instructional sequence.

### 7.1.2 Types of prototypical sequences

Seven instructional sequences were reconstructed from the data. Pending an extensive description of some sequences in the sections that follow, these are listed below:

- a. **Reading and Vocabulary** sequences, which were structured around textbook passages, mainly aimed at developing reading comprehension skills and enriching the learners' lexicon. These sequences, which were highly transmissive, were prevalent throughout the curriculum, being present at Junior, Senior, Upper Intermediate and Proficiency programmes. A prototypical Reading and Vocabulary sequence is presented in Section 7.2.
- b. **Traditional Grammar** sequences focused on learning about one or more language structures, and applying this knowledge onto language use. They were especially common in the earlier stages of instruction (the Junior and Senior programmes), although they were sometimes encountered in the Upper Intermediate programme as well. Traditional Grammar sequences were typified by a strongly transmissive orientation. A detailed description of a Traditional Grammar sequence can be found in Section 7.3.
- c. **Inductive Grammar** sequences, which were common in the Upper Intermediate and Proficiency programmes, focused on specific language structures, but usually aimed at

revising previously-taught forms. In addition, these sequences provided opportunities to develop examination-related competencies by applying metalinguistic knowledge on examination style activities. These sequences differed from Traditional Grammar (above), in that they seemed to be informed by cognitive psychology and constructivism, and they were less dependent on teacher-generated input. Though one would hesitate to describe them as communicatively-oriented, these sequences were closer to the communicative paradigm than was the case with Traditional Grammar.

- d. **Genre-based Writing** sequences aimed at familiarising learners with the formal features of various genres, such as stories or letters of complaint. Genre-based Writing was transmissive in orientation: students were provided with appropriate information and scaffolding which aimed at fostering their ability to produce specimens of the genre on their own. Genre-based Writing was relatively common in the older programmes, i.e., Junior and Action (Senior).
- e. **Process-based Writing** sequences also aimed at fostering the learners' ability to produce written discourse, but the learning objectives with which they were associated involved developing specific writing sub-skills (e.g., planning, editing). Process-based Writing sequences were strongly communicative in nature. They were mainly encountered in the Upper Intermediate and Proficiency programmes, and traces were also in evidence in the Action (Quest) programme. A prototype of this sequence is described in Section 7.3.
- f. **Integrated Oral Skills** sequences were thematically linked collections of activities that aimed to develop the listening and speaking skills. They typically started with fairly transmissive listening activities, followed by communicative speaking tasks. Both types of activities (listening exercises and speaking tasks) emulated common examination tasks. Integrated Oral Skills sequences were fairly uncommon in the early stages of

instruction (the Junior and Senior programmes), but their frequency increased in the Upper Intermediate and Proficiency programmes.

- g. **Reviews** were multi-lesson sequences, in which previously learned grammatical structures and vocabulary would be revised, a test would be administered and feedback would be provided to the learners. These sequences were ubiquitous across the curriculum, although the format and formality of the test varied from level to level.

|                   | Junior               | Senior (Quest) | Senior (Action) | Upper Intermediate     | Proficiency |
|-------------------|----------------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Grammar</b>    | Traditional Grammar  |                |                 | Inductive Grammar      |             |
|                   | Review               |                |                 |                        |             |
| <b>Vocabulary</b> | Reading & Vocabulary |                |                 |                        |             |
| <b>Reading</b>    |                      |                |                 |                        |             |
| <b>Listening</b>  |                      |                |                 | Integrated Oral Skills |             |
| <b>Speaking</b>   |                      |                |                 |                        |             |
| <b>Writing</b>    |                      | Process-based  |                 | Process-based Writing  |             |
|                   | Genre-based Writing  |                |                 |                        |             |

**Table 7-1 Distribution of instructional sequences in the curriculum**

Information about the sequences is summarised in Table 7-1. Rows represent various strands of the curriculum, and columns represent the main programmes on offer at the host institute, ranked from the earliest (Junior) to the most advanced (Proficiency).

Instructional sequences have been colour-coded: dark gray represents instructional sequences that were mostly transmissive, and light gray is used to index a communicative orientation. In interpreting this table, it should be noted that the absence of information in certain cells does not indicate neglect or imbalance in the curriculum, but rather that the ‘missing’ skills were integrated in other sequences, or were taught independently as minor stand-alone sequences, unrelated to the seven prototypes that are described in this chapter. In other words, the prototypical sequences described in this chapter do not represent a comprehensive description of all the instructional activities that took place at the host institute, but they provide very extensive coverage.

The three sections that immediately follow present detailed descriptions of three prototypical sequences: Section 7.2 describes a Reading and Vocabulary sequence; next, in

Section 7.3 a Traditional Grammar sequence is presented; last, Section 7.4 contains a description of a Process-based Writing sequence. These sequences have been selected on the basis of salience and theoretical significance. As seen in Table 7-1, Reading and Vocabulary sequences were encountered across levels of instruction. Traditional Grammar and Process-based Writing sequences were restricted to the upper and lower end of the curriculum respectively, and their complementary distribution helps to illustrate the dynamics at different phases of instruction. With regard to theoretical significance, the prototypes have been selected to provide insights into pedagogical practice that was associated with both the traditional and the communicative attractors. For those prototypical sequences that are not described in this chapter, outlines can be found in Appendix I.

## 7.2 Reading and Vocabulary

The Reading and Vocabulary sequence was arguably the most prevalent instructional sequence in the host institute. Its name has been coined as a descriptive placeholder for the purposes of this thesis. In the discourse of the host institute such sequences were normally referred to with terms such as «μάθημα» [*máthima*, lesson] or “the story” in reference to the reading passage around which they were structured. In Reading and Vocabulary sequences learners typically engaged with a passage that was contained in their coursebooks, working under the direction of the teacher. These sequences appeared to serve multiple goals: written passages were often read for pronunciation practice, information was extracted from the texts to develop reading comprehension, and useful vocabulary was highlighted so as to enrich the learners’ mental lexicon.

Reading and Vocabulary instructional sequences were succinctly, if somewhat incompletely, described by a student as follows:

Διαβάζουμε την ιστορία ή το κείμενο, και η κυρία μας κάνει ερωτήσεις και μετά τις ασκήσεις με το λεξιλόγιο. Μερικές φορές μας βάζει και να κάνουμε μετάφραση για να δείξουμε ότι ξέρουμε τι σημαίνουν οι λέξεις και το κείμενο, και αν δεν ξέρω μια λέξη τότε σταματάω και τη ρωτάω να μου εξηγήσει.

We read the story of the text, and the teacher asks us questions and then [we do] the vocabulary activities. Sometimes she makes us translate the text to show that we know what the words and the text means, and if I don't know a word I stop and ask her to explain it for me.

| Stage                    | Description & comments   | Timing  |                                       |
|--------------------------|--|---|---------------------------------------|
| Prompt                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher pre-teaches vocabulary, activate schemata, and/or establish continuity</li> </ul>                     |   |                                       |
| Read & Listen            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students read a text while listening to a recording.</li> <li>Sometimes, simple comprehension task</li> </ul> | Timing for these stages varied, depending on the students' level and the lexical density of the passage |                                       |
| Read aloud               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students read passage for pronunciation practice</li> <li>Incidental vocabulary explained</li> </ul>          |   |                                       |
| Reading comprehension    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comprehension questions answered</li> </ul>   |   |                                       |
| Vocabulary consolidation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Detailed explanation using handout</li> <li>Copied to vocabulary notebook (homework?)</li> </ul>              |   |                                       |
| Vocabulary practice      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Several multiple-choice, matching, etc. activities</li> <li>Often based on workbook</li> </ul>                |   | Lesson 1<br><br>Lesson 1<br>Homework? |
| Dictation                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Simple test focusing on spelling and recall.</li> </ul>   | 10-15'  | Lesson 2                              |

**Table 7-2 Overview of a Reading and Vocabulary sequence**

Prototypically, a Reading and Vocabulary sequence involved seven stages, spread out over two lessons. After an introductory 'prompt' (Section 7.2.1), learners would silently read a passage while simultaneously listening to it (Section 7.2.2). Then, they took turns reading the text aloud, at which point unknown lexis was explained (Section 7.2.3). Following that, the students engaged with such 'reading comprehension' activities as might be included in the textbook (Section 7.2.4), and next they would "consolidate" vocabulary knowledge (Section 7.2.5). Additional vocabulary work, which was sometimes assigned as homework, involved copying vocabulary in dedicated notebooks, and engaging in 'practice' activities

(Section 7.2.6). The Reading and Vocabulary sequence concluded in the next lesson with a ‘dictation’, where the retention of vocabulary items was assessed (Section 7.2.7).

### 7.2.1 Prompt

Reading and Vocabulary instructional sequences often began with some kind of prompt, which was sometimes labelled “pre-reading” in the lesson plans. Prompting stages, where present, seemed to serve one or more of three functions, namely pre-teaching vocabulary, activating schematic knowledge, and establishing narrative continuity.

Sometimes teachers used the prompting stage in order to pre-teach lexical items that were considered critical for text comprehension. The following lesson observation notes how a teacher used deixis and realia in order to elicit the meaning of key vocabulary items from her A Junior students:

Next, the teacher took out a set of flashcards and showed them to the learners, asking them what they show. The first was a hamster. A student pointed out that «είναι χάμστερ, αλλά δεν ξέρω πως το λένε στα Αγγλικά» [“It’s a hamster, but I don’t know how it’s called in English”]. Another added that she had a hamster at home, so the teacher took the opportunity to ask what colour it was:

S: Καφέ και άσπρο [brown and white].

T: OK, στα Αγγλικά [in English] brown and white [points to the next flashcard which shows a brown blot and the white walls] BROW::N . and . WHI::TE. Is your hamster SMA::LL? [gestures]

She used her flashcards and similar phrases to elicit the meaning of several words, and then proceeded to show the flashcards around very fast for the students to identify.

Some other pre-teaching activities that were occasionally mentioned in the lesson plans included the generation of mind-maps or the completion of cut-out diagrams. These were commonly carried out by the students working individually, and then feedback was provided in plenary mode. Pair- and group-work were occasionally mentioned, but these modes of work were not preferred, as they were perceived to be inefficient, and because students tended to use Greek when collaborating.

A second function of the prompting stage was to activate cognitive schemata, or to equip the learners with the background knowledge necessary for engaging with the passage. In one Upper Intermediate class, for instance, prior to reading a text about Bonfire Night, the teacher elicited information regarding a similar local custom, «τζαμάλες» [*jamáles*, local idiom meaning ‘bonfires’] and went on to deliver a brief history lecture on the Gunpowder Plot. In other lessons, students were called on to predict the content of the passage, as seen in the following extract:

The teacher asked the learners to see the pictures [i.e., the illustrations of the cartoon] and guess the plot. She used phrases like «Τί συμβαίνει;» [*Ti simvéni?*, What’s going on?] and “What’s this?”, “Who’s this?”

A more elaborate prediction activity, from a different lesson, is described below:

The teacher explains that they will read a text about a yacht the crew of which mysteriously disappeared. The class is divided into four-member groups [...], and they brainstorm possible explanations [...]. Representatives from each group are called to the board to write their ideas [...].

The extract above is of interest in that deviated from the teacher-centred norms that seemed to typify prompting, and indeed the entire instructional sequence.

Some coursebooks were structured around continuing storylines, and in these cases, the prompting stage was often used by teachers to make narrative connections between previous lessons and the passage with which the students would subsequently engage, as seen below:

[...] the teacher asks a student to summarise the Anna Frank text [which had been read in the previous lesson]. [The student] achieves that with minimal prompting, which mostly serves to keep him from going into unnecessary detail.

The use of “display questions” (Long & Sato, 1983) strongly resembled oral examination techniques typical of traditional pedagogy, which relied on the rote reproduction of pre-specified content, and in fact they were occasionally described by students in similar terms (e.g., «λέμε το μάθημα» [we narrate the lesson]). From the teachers’ perspective, these activities were said to facilitate transition, and to provide communicative practice.

In general, prompting stages tended to be rather brief (rarely exceeding ten minutes), and as can be deduced from the examples above, they were usually teacher-directed in the interest of efficiency.

## 7.2.2 Reading and Listening

The next stage of a Reading and Vocabulary instructional sequence was often referred to as “read and listen”, after a commonly encountered textbook rubric. During this stage, the students engaged with the text by reading silently while listening to a recording of the passage.

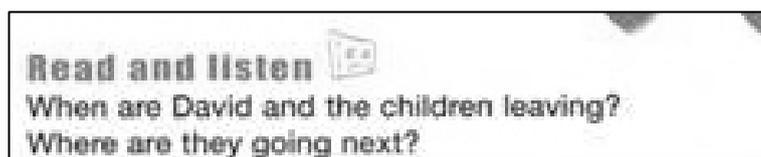


Figure 7-1 Example of a ‘read and listen’ rubric (Action, Student’s Book B, p. 102)

Sometimes, the text was read out by the teacher for the benefit of the learners, either because a recording was not available, or because the native speaker pronunciation in the recordings was considered too challenging for the learners. Such a sequence is described below:

Then [the teacher] played the recording that accompanies the story and instructed the learners to ‘read and listen’. I was struck by the fact that many learners (though not all) were tracing the sentences with their fingers as they were being read [...] The recording was repeated once.

The rationale behind this procedure, according to a senior teacher, was to expose learners to the “correct pronunciation of words” so that they will be able to reproduce them accurately later. This belief was grounded, she continued, on the principle that the receptive skills must precede production.

Although the students were often expected to passively listen to the recording while reading, on some occasions they were also tasked with answering simple comprehension

questions. The rationale behind these unchallenging questions did not appear to be reading comprehension as such: rather they appeared to serve the function of sustaining the students' motivation in the face of an activity that often failed to stimulate much interest. This can also be deduced by the fact that, more often than not, answers to these comprehension questions tended to be found towards the end of the passage, and were not always key to its comprehension.

### **7.2.3 Reading aloud**

Following 'read and listen', learners took turns to read the text out loud. This stage was generally referred to as "reading", but I have chosen to designate the stage 'reading aloud', on account of the potential ambiguity of the former term. It appeared that one of the main functions of this stage, especially among the less advanced learners, was to practice pronunciation. This goal is visible in the following extracts from my classroom observation notes:

#### **Extract 1 (Junior class)**

Following that, [the teacher] played the recording again, pausing at the end of each sentence and having it repeated by one of the learners. This was done three times until all the learners had read several different sentences. Finally she assigned a different role to each learner and had them to act the cartoon out (while remaining at their seats, though).

#### **Extract 2 (Upper Intermediate class)**

Then the students open the books and take turns reading the text, with the teacher occasionally correcting various words they mispronounce – and there are a few of them. These corrections are generally ignored by the students, who read on unperturbed, which makes me wonder whether they are for my benefit.

It is interesting to note that, even though students did not always take much heed of feedback, the teacher in the second extract seemed conscious of an expectation to correct non-standard pronunciation during this stage of the lesson, hinting at the prevailing valuation of accuracy.

The ‘read aloud’ stage also seemed to serve as an opportunity to explain such unknown lexis as might be present in the text. This function is illustrated in the following extract, which describes part of an Upper Intermediate lesson:

Following that, the teacher nominated students to take turns reading different paragraphs in the text. At the end of each paragraph, the teacher asked the learners if they had unknown words, and when they did, she first elicited responses from other students and, failing that, provided a definition in English. Some learners requested confirmation by providing the Greek equivalent, and the teacher either nodded or provided an alternative definition. Most learners seemed to gloss the words on their books, although some were apparently taking notes on a vocabulary notebook.

This process was similarly described by students, according to whom “when [the teacher] finds in the text an unknown words she explains us the meaning”. The preferred language for conducting this activity was said to be English (e.g., “My teacher explains the words in English but rarely explains them in Greek.”), but this was not always confirmed during the classroom observations. The discrepancy between statements and observed practices hints at both the strength of the monolingual policy of the host institute and the challenges of constantly implementing it when engaging with tasks that made multiple demands on the learners’ cognitive resources.

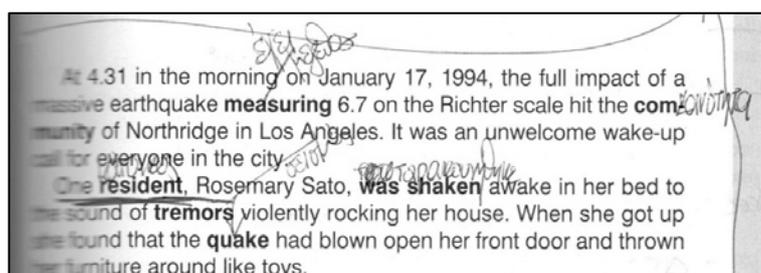


Figure 7-2 Extract from a glossed-over textbook

More often than not, newly taught lexis was recorded directly on the coursebook using its semantic equivalent in Modern Greek, as seen in Figure 7-2. Although this practice was ostensibly not in line with the monolingual policy of the host institute, it was in fact observed in a number of lessons, as seen in the following notes:

### Extract 1 (Proficiency)

Most learners seemed to gloss the words on their books, although some were apparently taking notes on a vocabulary notebook.

### Extract 2 (Senior)

The words were then identified and glossed in the handout (where they were listed alphabetically by unit).

Further confirming its prevalence, the use of glossing was also attested in the students' questionnaires. Most students claimed that they frequently or sometimes glossed the vocabulary in their coursebooks, whereas none reported completely avoiding this practice (Figure 7-3).

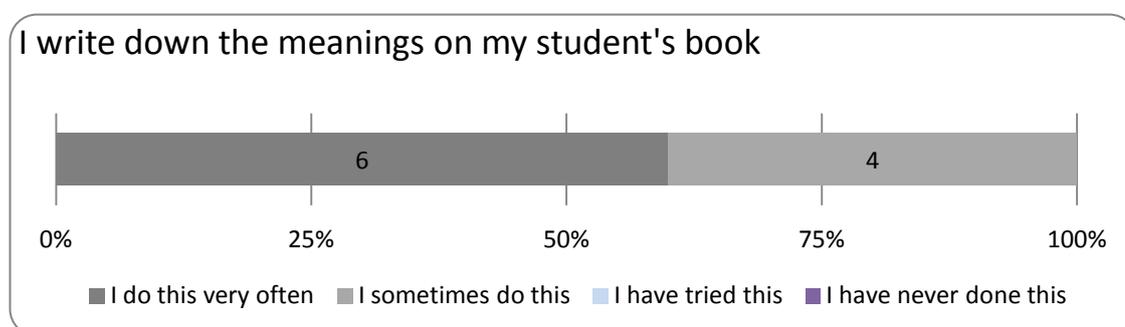


Figure 7-3 Prevalence of glossing among Upper-Intermediate students

It seems interesting to note that the teachers tended to describe somewhat more elaborate processes of engaging with the vocabulary, which allegedly encouraged learners to be active and use English as much as possible. For instance, one of the teachers claimed that she relied on elicitation techniques to capitalise on the pre-existing knowledge of her students:

... επειδή ακούνε και πολλές λέξεις στο δημοτικό τους δίνω την λέξη και τους λέω αμα καταλαβαίνουνε, τι ... «αυτή, ποιος την ξέρει αυτή τη λέξη», ή άμα δεν την ξέρουν θα την εξηγήσω στα Αγγλικά.

... since they hear many words in their primary school as well, I give them the word and I tell [ask] them if they understand, what... "this-who knows this word", or if they don't know it I will explain it in English.

Similarly, another teacher claimed that she encouraged her learners to infer the meaning of various lexical items:

Αν κάποια λέξη δεν τη γνωρίζουν, τότε τη λέω εγώ ή καμιά φορά βάζω το συμμα- συμμαθητή τους, κάποιο συμμαθητή δηλαδή που είτε την ξέρει από κάπου αλλού, είτε μαντεύει τι σημαίνει από τα συμφραζόμενα. Γιατί πρέπει να μάθουν, και δηλαδή έχει σημασία πως, να μαντεύουν τι σημαίνουν οι άγνωστες λέξεις, αν δεν έχεις δηλαδή τον καθηγητή πάν- από πάνω σου να ρωτάς συνέχεια.

If [the students] do not know a word, then I will say it, or sometimes I will have their class- classmates, a classmate who either knows the word from somewhere, or guesses what it means from the co-text. Because they must learn, and, that is, it is important how to guess what unknown words mean, that is if you don't have a teacher on- on standby to ask all the time.

Glossing, according to yet another teacher, was only sporadically used as an 'emergency' technique for dealing with vocabulary of secondary importance, which was not otherwise available to the students:

Βασικά, εμένα με έχει βολέψει το φυλλάδιο με το λεξιλόγιο που δίνουμε σε κάθε κεφάλαιο. Πάμε δηλαδή εκεί και λέμε τις σημασίες των λέξεων, και μπορούν να τις βρουν εκεί τα παιδιά. Και όποιες άλλες άγνωστες βρούμε που να μην είναι στο φυλλάδιο, μπορούμε να τις σημειώσουμε στο βιβλίο, για να ξέρουν τι σημαίνει, χωρίς να είναι όμως μέρος της ύλης.

In reality, I find the vocabulary list that we give [the students] in every chapter to be very handy. That is, we can go there and say the meanings of the words, and the children can find them there. And if there are other unknown words, which are not in the list, we can make a note in the book, so that they know what it means, but it's not part of the syllabus.

Once again, the overall impression that I formed was that the multiple emphasis (reading, pronunciation and vocabulary learning) in this stage tended to overburden the students' cognitive abilities. This resulted in the use of relatively straightforward learning strategies, which were tacitly accepted by the teachers. However, such strategies seemed to be frowned upon as they deviated from the 'English only' policy of the school, and it seems telling that teachers tended to downplay their prevalence.

#### **7.2.4 Reading comprehension**

In the next stage of a prototypical Reading and Vocabulary instructional sequence, 'reading comprehension', students focused on the propositional content of the passage. This typically involved skimming and scanning to engage with the reading comprehension

activities that typically followed a passage. As before, there seemed to be a strong proclivity for conducting these activities under tight teacher control. In almost all cases, the reading comprehension activities were completed by the students working individually, possibly under a time-limit. This process is illustrated in the following extract from classroom observation notes:

The students take turns reading the multiple-choice questions after the text, and the teacher instructs them to look back into the text for the answers. She insists that they should pay special attention to words like ‘no, never, rarely, seldom’, because they are ‘misleading’. They should also underline the relevant extract in the text. [...]

Following the completion of the task, the teacher would normally nominate students to read out the correct answers. Alternatively, answers might be displayed using an OHT or the IWB. The reading comprehension tasks were sometimes assigned as homework, but this deviation from the prototypical lesson was relatively infrequent.

### **7.2.5 Vocabulary Consolidation**

Once the passage had been processed for meaning, the next stage of the Reading and Vocabulary instructional sequence involved revisiting its vocabulary content. Unknown lexis was sometimes pre-taught (see Section 7.2.1) or, more usually, explained when first encountered during the ‘reading aloud’ stage (see Section 7.2.3), so this stage of the lesson involved more focused work aiming at the “consolidation” («εμπέδωση», *empédosi*) of newly acquired lexis. To that end, students might be provided with handouts containing the vocabulary items to be learnt (see Section 6.1.2) and / or asked to record the lexis in dedicated vocabulary notebooks.

The use of these wordlists was observed in several lessons, and also attested by many students, as in the following examples:

- “In each unit my teacher give [sic] me a list of words that are used in this unit.”
- “I have to learn about fifteen (15) words in each lesson. They are chosen by my teacher and then she gives us a list with these words and their English meaning.”

- “I have ~~20~~ 12 words to learn in each lesson. These words are chosen by our teacher.”

Normally, these lists would be perused in class, possibly read aloud, and the teacher would provide clarification as required. In some of the classes that I observed, students persistently asked for the Greek semantic equivalent of each item in the list, which they then proceeded to record next to the definition. Interestingly, teachers appeared to be reluctant to engage in direct one-to-one translation. In the words of one learner: “[i]f we don’t understand the meaning of word she explaine [sic] us again and again”, but sometimes the equivalent would be helpfully suggested by one of the other students. Some teachers suggested that they would on occasion resort to using Greek but “only if I understand that [the learners] are way off” in their comprehension of the English definition. Greek also tended to be used on those occasions when significant time constraints necessitated that this stage be conducted rapidly.

| #    | Programme          | Vocabulary Notebooks   |
|------|--------------------|--|
| II.4 | Junior             | [The teacher] then ... told the learners to write down the new words in their vocabulary notebooks under headings such as ‘nouns’ and ‘adjectives’.  |
| II.1 | Senior (Action)    | The students were asked to open their notebooks and so that [the teacher] could inspect whether they had copied the vocabulary from the previous lesson.   |
| II.3 | Upper intermediate | The words were then identified and glossed in the handout (where they were listed alphabetically by unit), and the students were instructed to copy them in a separate (thematic) section in their vocabulary notebooks titled ‘Jobs and professions’. |
| II.2 | Upper intermediate | Some were apparently taking notes on a vocabulary notebook, presumably using personal recording systems  |

**Table 7-3 Format of vocabulary notebooks**

A notebook (referred to by the English term “vocabulary notebook” or simply “vocabulary”), onto which new lexis was recorded, was also universally used. Table 7-3 shows how the vocabulary notebooks were used in various classes, and illustrates the variety of possible formats, using glosses from my classroom observation notes.

The importance attached to the notebook as a learning aid can be attested by the fact that students were normally required to record all new lexical items, even when these were available in other equally accessible resources, such as the wordlists referred to above. Copying the content of the wordlist onto the vocabulary notebook was usually assigned as homework. For one of the teachers, assigning such copying tasks ensured the students' engagement and facilitated the retention of lexis («έστω και τα μισά να τους μείνουν, πάλι καλό θα τους κάνει» / “if they just retain half of it, it's still good for them”). More pragmatically, another teacher stated that, in her experience, students tended to lose individual handouts, so it was useful for them to have a well-bound, lasting master wordlist at their disposal.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the students' attitudes towards this practice were ambivalent.

Some claimed that the process of creating such a notebook served an important mnemonic function. According to some questionnaire responses:

- “Our teacher give [sic] us a photocopy of some words and she asks from us to copy them in our notebook. I think it a nice way learning new words because as you copy you learn them well.”
- “I find it OK, because we learn the words well and as we copy we just learn better and we can easy remember them.”

However, the point was also made that mechanical reproduction was a counterproductive way to learn:

- “My teacher give [sic] us a photocopy to copy in our notebooks so we'll learn them. I don't find it helpful, ~~because~~ sorry about that but I find it silly to copy them, it's a waste of time. We'll learn them better only from the photocopy.”
- “Sometimes when you copy you don't concentrate on the words and it's a waste of time. I think that the teacher should suggest us some ways we can learn new words because as you know, people have different ways to learn them.”

Some vocabulary notebooks were highly personalised, as teachers encouraged students to illustrate their notebooks according to their tastes and interests. Nevertheless, both the

content of the notebooks and the process of populating them with words were indicative of the strong control teachers exercised on the learning process.

### 7.2.6 Practice

To further enhance vocabulary retention, the new lexical items were typically used in exercises, with emphasis placed on the accurate reproduction of orthographic form, and on awareness of each item's semantic content. Examples of such exercises, which typically included multiple-choice, gap and cue and other similar items, have been presented in Figure 6-11. In most of the lessons I observed, students tended to engage with these exercises individually during class, or they were tasked with completing them at home. After the exercises had been completed, students would usually take turns reading out their answers, which the teacher would either acknowledge or correct. Alternatively, the correct answers might be provided on the board or using an OHP. In general, these activities seemed to be done rapidly, probably due to time constraints.

### 7.2.7 Dictation

The final stage of a Reading and Vocabulary sequence was a 'dictation', which took place in a second class session. It should be noted that term 'dictation' («ορθογραφία», *orthografia*) was used somewhat loosely to include any type of assessment activity that was conducted individually by the learners and subsequently marked.

This could include traditional forms of dictation, as described in the following interview extract:

Teacher: Οι μαθητές εξετάζονται κυρίως με dictation, [...] να κάνω ένα dictation μια περίληψη του κειμένου που κάναμε με αυτές τις λέξεις.

Teacher: The students are mainly tested through a dictation, [...] I conduct a dictation, a summary of the text we did that includes these words.

Achilleas: και να πρέπει να τις=  
Teacher: =να τις  
γράψουν σωστά. Εάν έχουν κι  
ευχέρεια χρόνου, δυο τρεις  
προτάσεις θα τις μεταφράσουν  
στα Ελληνικά. Για να δούμε τι  
γίνεται.

Achilleas: and they must=  
Teacher: =they  
must write them correctly. If  
time permits, two or three  
sentences will be translated into  
Greek. So that we know what's  
going on.

Alternatively, 'dictation' could refer to any of kind of vocabulary-focused task that was marked, as seen in the extracts below:

**Extract 1 (Interview notes)**

...in the next lesson they write a dictation, which I create on my own, and I include those words that I consider to be the most important. The exercises I use are matching synonyms or antonyms, writing sentences with some words I give them, completing gaps and replacing phrasal verbs with verbs that have the same meaning.

**Extract 2 (Classroom observation notes)**

The students are instructed to turn [the sheet containing their homework] over so that they can write a vocabulary test on the back side of the sheet. The test consists of five words which are dictated and have to be defined in English, five definitions for which the students need to provide the word, and five verbs for which they are required to produce a derivative noun.

Differing attitudes were documented regarding dictations: in their interviews, teachers tended to acknowledge that these tests served a direct pedagogical function as students "internalised" vocabulary through practice, and an indirect one in that they "encouraged systematic studying". Some also spoke of the need for accountability, which was catered for by dictations. On the other hand, a number of complaints were voiced, including the demands that these tests made on preparation and class time. Doubts were raised by one teacher regarding the long-term benefit of memorisation («Κι εγώ και τα παιδιά τις μισούμε τις ορθογραφίες. Το vocabulary μαθαίνεται μέσα απο την εξοικείωση και τη χρήση και όχι αποστηθίζοντας» ["Both I and the children hate dictations. Vocabulary is learnt through familiarisation and use rather than by rote learning"]). A similar sentiment was echoed by one of the students: "An another [sic] thing that I don't like very much was the small vocabulary tests that we write every day".

### **7.2.8 Emergence of transmissive pedagogy**

As suggested by its name, the Reading and Vocabulary instructional sequence broadly consisted of a series of stages involving the pedagogical exploitation of a passage, followed by another series of stages focusing specifically on its lexical content. This prototypical sequence serves to illustrate the ways in which pedagogical practice was impacted by the learning materials, as well as the impact of the Protectionist and the Competition intentionalities.

In the previous chapter, the argument was put forward that the content and format of lessons was influenced by the affordances of the learning materials. The Reading and Vocabulary instructional sequence seems to empirically corroborate this observation in two ways. Most obviously, the instructional sequence bears strong structural resemblance to the way activities were organised in the coursebooks (see Section 6.1.1 for details). In the Junior and Senior programmes, Reading and Vocabulary sequences tended to be clustered together in a way that was reflected in the stages of the sequence. However, the instructional sequence should not be seen as a product of undifferentiated implementation of coursebook content, since it was observed in the Upper Intermediate programme as well, despite the different organisational structure of the courseware used in those levels. Additional substantiation of the influence exerted by the learning materials is provided by the fact that the stages that made up the sequence were mostly transmissive, both in terms of classroom organisation and in terms of how language was conceptualised. This finding provides empirical corroboration of the influence of the transmissive attractor that was identified in Section 6.3.2. In all, it seemed that the materials appeared to influence practice, but such influence was not strictly deterministic.

The actual form practice took was also influenced by the impact of intentionalities, of which Protectionism was particularly salient. Traces of protectionism can be found in the

ways in which the Reading and Vocabulary instructional sequence deviated from mainstream pedagogical orthodoxy. In the professional ELT literature, reading lessons are commonly divided into pre-reading, reading and post-reading stages (Edge & Garton, 2009, pp. 141-146; Nuttall, 2005, pp. 154-167). The Reading and Vocabulary instructional sequence conformed to this pattern very broadly, but differed in that the post-reading stage was substituted by extensive vocabulary-focused work. In doing so, teaching and learning emphasis shifted from language use to language form, which is a hallmark of the Protectionist intentionality. Other traces of Protectionism were to be found in the transmissive ways in which reading passages were put to pedagogical use, and especially during the 'reading aloud' stage. The deconstruction of the text in small segments for pronunciation practice seemed related to the valuation of accuracy, which typified local pedagogy. Similarly, the ways in which the segments were processed for meaning, often by means of translation, was indicative of how shared knowledge of the local language impacted pedagogy.

In addition, the Reading and Vocabulary instructional sequence also provides insights into the influence of the Competition intentionality. A very visible trace of Competition was in the 'dictation' stage which invariably concluded Reading and Vocabulary sequences. This stage seemed to be underpinned by considerations of accountability and academic rigour, which were highly valorised in the host institute. Similar considerations appeared to be motivated by the host institute's rather inflexible monolingual policy. As it was felt important that all activities must be carried out in English, monolingual wordlists were normally provided for the students' reference, and the use of translation as a teaching technique was expressly discouraged. Although observational data suggested that monolingual instruction put strains on the learners' linguistic and cognitive resources, and thus resulted in inefficiency, it was interesting to note that deviations from this policy were downplayed, or not acknowledged at all, in the student- and teacher-generated data.

To sum up, Reading and Vocabulary sequences constituted one of the mainstays of instruction at the host institute. These were fairly extended sequences, which served multiple teaching goals: alongside the more obvious goals of developing reading skills and expanding the target language vocabulary, they provided some scope for pronunciation and speaking practice. Regarding their genesis, these sequences seemed to emerge from the interaction of considerations of Protectionism, Competition and mainly transmissive materials. The combined effect seemed to be that the sequence was manifested within the space defined by the transmissive attractor.

### 7.3 Traditional Grammar

Traditional Grammar sequences were among the most common instructional sequences encountered at the host institute. They were most frequently encountered at the Junior and Senior programmes, where they were particularly prevalent. In the B Junior syllabus, for instance, they amounted to almost half of the instruction time. It should be noted that teachers and learners confusingly used the term “grammar” to refer to both these sequences and Inductive Grammar, which was more commonly encountered in the Upper Intermediate and Proficiency levels. The designation Traditional Grammar has been coined for the purposes of this study, to differentiate between the two different sequences.

Traditional Grammar sequences aimed at providing learners with metalinguistic knowledge about the formal features of the English language, as well as with the ability to apply this knowledge in their linguistic output. Although there was some variety in the actual practices observed, Traditional Grammar prototypically consisted of three stages (Table 7-4): a ‘prompt’, a presentation (‘explanation’) and controlled ‘practice’ activities, which were sometimes supplemented with a feedback/free production (‘application’) stage. This macro-structure seemed to merge local pedagogical practices and pedagogical patterns

idiosyncratic to ELT. Specifically, it appeared that the Presentation-Practice-Production (PPP) model, on which much of the courseware was based, was adapted to conform to practices derived from traditional forms of language education and local pedagogical tradition, e.g., the ‘prompting-explanation-application-consolidation’ pattern described by Matsangouras (1988, pp. 355-380).

| Stage         | Description & comments  | Timing  |                         |
|---------------|---|---------|-------------------------|
| Prompt        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schematic links made between previously presented material and target structure</li> </ul>                           | 5'      | Lesson 1                |
| Explanation   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher delivers lecture on target structure (form, use, examples)</li> </ul>  | 15'-20' | Lesson 1                |
| Practice      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Simple limited production exercises conducted individually.</li> <li>Exercises corrected in plenary mode.</li> </ul> | 25'-30' | Lesson 1<br>(+homework) |
| (Application) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oral production of target form (IRF?)</li> <li>Production of short written text</li> </ul>                           | 5'<br>→ | Lesson 1<br>Homework    |

Table 7-4 Overview of a Traditional Grammar sequence

### 7.3.1 Prompting

Grammar lessons typically began with some kind of prompt that illustrated the target structure. This prompt was sometimes provided by the textbook (e.g., Figure 6-3a), or alternatively through realia, seemingly impromptu observations (“*is it going to rain?*”), or specially-designed tasks, such as the one below:

The class is divided into two groups (boys vs. girls), and each group is given several strips of paper. These contain fragments of a story which has been divided in strategic spots so as to draw attention to the past perfect forms.

The following extract, from one of the classroom observations, illustrates how segments from a previously taught passage were used, somewhat unsuccessfully in this instance, to prompt the presentation of a complicated language structure:

The teacher writes the following sentence on the board:

***Life in Amsterdam was too ... for the Franks, so they had to hide***

and invites the students to complete the missing word. This is met with silence, so after some unsuccessful prompting, she writes in the word ‘dangerous’, and asks the learners why that might be the case. One student raises his hand and –seeing that

there are no other offers- replies 'because is war'. The teacher adds another sentence:

***The annexe was too small for the Franks to live.***

She asks the learners if this was true, and some nod their agreement. The teacher seems rather frustrated now: she points out that they lived there for a number of years. 'The room was *NOT* too small', and adds the word NOT to the sentence. I was left with the impression that the students were puzzled.

Prompts were generally brief, and –to use a phrase frequently stated by the teachers and often encountered in lesson plans– they served “to connect the new language to what already had been taught”.

### 7.3.2 Explanation

The second stage of a prototypical grammar lesson, or 'explanation', was a lecture on the formal features and uses of the language structure in focus. These lectures, which were often quite sophisticated and lengthy, took up nearly half the duration of the lesson. Some examples can be seen in the following observation notes:

#### **Extract 1 (Proficiency)**

The teacher announces that they are going to talk about the future tenses. She uses the IWB to project a slide with two columns, one for predictions and another one for plans. In each column she has made a list of words such as *arrangement, plan* etc., which are arranged in order of certainty. After explaining the model, she provides examples for each category and directs the learner's attention to the tense of the verb, checking comprehension. The learners do not seem to be experiencing much difficulty – they use meta-language fluently.

#### **Extract 2 (Senior)**

The teacher then uses different colour pens to underline various words in the sentence, and provides the grammar rule in the abstract

***TOO + adjective + TO + infinitive***

She explains that this shows that the action described in the infinitive is impossible because of what is described in the adjective, writes this on the board and repeats it in Greek. Adding numbers to the board, she then asks the learners to copy this information in their notebooks (first the rule, then the examples).

#### **Extract 3 (Upper Intermediate)**

Next, Rose dictates a sentence exemplifying the Past Perfect Continuous ('*When I returned home, my daughter had been talking on the telephone for 45 minutes*'), and draws attention to the verb. She asks the learners to identify the tense and goes over its properties. This is relatively unproblematic, perhaps because it is a revision of material that has been taught at some previous lesson (and C' Class). I am struck by the eagerness of the learners to participate, and the ease with which they use meta-

language (the Present Participle was identified as such almost as frequently as it was called the ‘-ing’).

During these lectures, students were sometimes referred to grammar reference sections in their coursebooks (Figure 6-4b). These presentations were often read on class, and key terms were normally glossed over in either Modern Greek or English. However, a number of teachers reported that they were not always comfortable using the grammar reference sections in the coursebooks, as these were not always sufficiently detailed or explicit. The following interview extract illustrates this belief:

Teacher: ...>τα παρουσιάζουν<  
πολύ, ε, >περιληπτικά< δηλαδή  
σε σημείο είναι έτσι και «μάθε  
τα παπαγαλία», χωρίς, ε «αυτό  
πρέπει να γίνει έτσι» ή «επειδή  
έχει αυτές τις...

Achilleas: Δηλαδή εσύ πως θα  
προτιμούσες να το δείχνει;

Teacher: (2 sec) HHH (3 sec) Να  
δείχνει λίγο πιο πολύ  
>λεπτομέρεια στους< κανόνες.  
Δηλαδή φτάνει σε ένα σημείο  
να δείχνει (3 sec) «He does, She  
does, It does» αλλά >να μην  
εξηγεί γιατί βάζει E S<.

Teacher: >they present stuff< very,  
erm >succinctly<, I mean to the  
point of being “here’s what it’s  
like, so learn it by heart”, rather  
than “this must be done in  
such-and-such a way” and  
“because it has these...”

Achilleas: So how would you rather  
they show grammar?

Teacher: (2 sec) HHH (3 sec). Show  
a few more >details< in the  
rules. Because they sometimes  
reach the point of showing (3  
sec) “He does, She does, It  
does” but >not explaining why  
they add ‘e-s’<.

A similar point was raised elsewhere in the data by a teacher who argued that:

...the grammar sections [in the books] were not very useful to the students, as they tend not to read them, but they are quite useful to the teachers, because they allow them to elaborate on the grammatical content of the lesson. After prompting, she explained that learners are of course exposed to new grammar in the language input sections of the materials, but this is not always comprehensive as it did not cover all eventualities or exceptions. For instance, there may be a text in the students’ books demonstrating the plural forms of nouns, but it’s unlikely to contain enough input to cover all the irregular forms.

In order to work around this perceived deficiency, many teachers required their students to use dedicated “grammar notebooks” in which the content of the ‘explanations’ was recorded. In Figure 7-4, which collates data from a survey administered to an advanced class, there is extensive reference to such notebooks.

- She **explains** us the grammar
- She always **explain** us the grammar rules the unknown words but all of them in English
- She **tells** and **examples** us the grammar. We **write down** it to the notebook.
- My teacher **explaine** as to the grammar with **examples**
- The teacher **explains** to me the grammar that I'm going to learn and she always says to **write it down** in my notebook
- Our teacher writes new grammar on the blackboard and she **tell us to write everything down**. Then she **explain** us the grammar and answer our questions.

Figure 7-4 Students' descriptions of the 'explanation' stage

As an alternative, some teachers' provided their classes with supplementary handouts containing the main points of the 'explanation' (Section 6.3.2). In one pre-observation briefing, a teacher "made a point of reassuring me that the students have already been given a list of words followed by gerunds and infinitives 'with exceptions, verbs, adjectives etc.' on which they will 'of course' be tested." It seems interesting to note that, in this case, the grammar reference section in the coursebook listed six verbs, whereas the list in the handout spanned over half an A4-sized page. The rationale provided by the teacher for supplementing the coursebook so extensively was that she felt it was necessary in order to better prepare her learners for an upcoming term test.

During the 'explanation' stage, the students' role tended to be passive. In addition to the qualitative data reported above, students' responses to quantitative questions in a survey (Table 7-5) indicate a fairly low level of active engagement in the construction of knowledge. In item 1.1, the respondents unanimously replied that they often "listen to the teacher explain the rules", although they also suggested that they try to infer the rules from examples very often (n=1) or sometimes (n=9) (Item 1.2). The overwhelming majority (n=8) reported that they often wrote down the rules in their notebooks (Item 1.6). According to a note made next to the item by one of the learners, this activity was 'very helpful'. They also seemed to prefer to study the rules from their notes or the coursebook

rather than the companion, which contained lengthy grammatical comments in Modern Greek (Items 1.3, 1.4 and 1.5). The same student who wrote the previous comment also indicated that she found studying from the companion to be “boring”.

| Item | Descriptor  | I do this very often | I sometimes do this | I have tried this | I have never done this |
|------|---|----------------------|---------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| 1.1. | I listen to the teacher explain the rules           | 10                   | 0                   | 0                 | 0                      |
| 1.2  | I read the examples and try to understand the rules | 1                    | 9                   | 0                 | 0                      |
| 1.3  | I study the rules at my student's book              | 5                    | 5                   | 0                 | 0                      |
| 1.4  | I study the rules at my companion                   | 2                    | 2                   | 2                 | 3                      |
| 1.5  | I study the rules on my notebook                    | 4                    | 4                   | 0                 | 1                      |
| 1.6  | I write down the grammar rules on my notebook       | 8                    | 0                   | 1                 | 1                      |

Table 7-5 Grammar learning activities (presentation)

### 7.3.3 Practice

The third stage of traditional grammar lessons involved controlled practice of the recently-taught language forms. Although this stage was structurally similar to the ‘practice’ component of a typical PPP instructional sequence, and the activities with which the students engaged seemed to have been designed for such sequences, in this section it will be argued there were notable differences beneath the surface: while PPP is derived from audio-lingual learning (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, pp. 50-69) and aims at developing language competence through habit formation, at the host institute the ‘practice’ stage seemed to function (in some cases at least) as a trigger for low-level cognitive processes. In addition, the emphasis placed on writing partially differentiated the ‘practice’ stage from audio-lingual theory.

The ‘practice’ stage was succinctly and accurately described by a student as follows:

We do exercises like to answer questions about grammar or our teacher gives us photocopies with exercises. Most of them are in our workbook and our book. The others are from the teacher.

The activities to which the student referred typically required the controlled production of language forms, and were completed individually, in writing, under the supervision of the

teacher. Examples of practice activities included gap-and-cue, multiple-choice or transformation exercises. In the words of some students:

- “Our exercises are related to multiple choice or texts where we have to put the correct verb in the correct form.”
- “It... has some verbs, that we have to put in the correct form.”
- “We do exercises like multiple choice [sic] or write a sentence to be the same as a sentence below.”

In addition to the activities included in the published courseware, supplementary practice handouts were often used which contained similar activities (see pp. 202-203).

The following extracts, from my classroom observation notes, provide descriptions of typical ‘practice’ stages.

**Extract 1 (Senior)**

Next, the students are given a handout with notes which [they] are to use in order to form sentences. Students work individually on this, and then the answers are read out in class. This is well done [...] with few mistakes in the tenses...

**Extract 2 (Proficiency)**

Following that, she presents each learner with a handout where there are several examples of sentences in future tenses. She asks the learners to identify and justify the use of each tense. This is followed by a multiple-choice exercise where the learners are asked to select between different verb forms.

The emphasis placed on the ‘practice’ stage can be evidenced both qualitatively and quantitatively. As seen in Table 7-6, participants in a survey unanimously replied that they were assigned grammar exercises “very often” in class (Item 1.7). In addition, several students made reference to the large number of grammar exercises with which they had to engage:

- «Θέλω να μας βάζουν λιγότερες ασκήσεις στο grammar γιατί είναι πολύ μεγάλες.» [“I want them to assign fewer grammar exercises because they are too long.”]
- “You must pay many [sic] money for pens :)”
- “[Our teacher] gives us a lot of exercise to do so we will be practice, [...] I don’t find it helpful at all but we can’t do anything about this.”

| Item | Descriptor                                    | I do this very often | I sometimes do this | I have tried this | I have never done this |
|------|---|----------------------|---------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| 1.7  | I do exercises                                | 10                   | 0                   | 0                 | 0                      |
| 1.8  | I review the mistakes I made in the exercises | 8                    | 0                   | 1                 | 1                      |

**Table 7-6 Grammar learning activities (practice)**

Perhaps due to the sheer frequency of such activities, the learners in the classes I observed often carried them out with remarkable efficiency and confidence. The activities were described as “boring and easy” in the class survey and in fact, students were often observed engaging in ludic behaviour during this stage, as seen in the following extracts from classroom observation notes:

**Extract 1 (Senior Action)**

This is followed by a fast drill, where the teacher mentioned a verb and learners took turns to provide the correct Past Perfect Continuous form. Additional practice was provided in the form of a gap-and-cue exercise from the workbook, where the learners are asked to produce the Past Perfect Continuous. After completing the exercise, the learners are instructed to exchange workbooks and correct the answers, using the key that is provided in an OHT. The student who was in front of me offered to give me her workbook if I would give her my notes. They seem to enjoy this quite a lot, and there is some mock scolding exchanged among them.

**Extract 2 (Senior Action)**

...the learners are directed to the exercises in their book (multiple matching and gap-and-cue), which they do in turns. There is some banter, as the students recite the examples: When a girl reads that ‘I’m too young to drive’ one of the boys points out that women shouldn’t drive anyway; another subverts the assumption in his sentence by reading that ‘I’m NOT too young to go on holiday on my own’ to which one of his peers replies ‘You are a baby’. I am rather surprised both by the facility with which the learners seem to have learnt the structure, and by their merriment.

Such instances of “schismic” discourse (van Lier, 1988, p. 141), carried out even in spite of the potentially face-threatening presence of an external observer, stood in stark contrast to the relatively sombre classroom dynamics that typified the preceding ‘explanation’ stage, and seem suggestive of a high degree of confidence resulting from competence and familiarity.

The theoretical legitimisation of the ‘practice’ stage was provided by one of the teachers, who pointed out that in her, considerable, experience the grammar sections in the

textbooks tended to be ignored by the learners, and the grammar notes provided a minimum of exposure, but it was in the practice activities where true learning took place, and learners “consolidated” the language. This response seems to suggest that the goal of the practice activity was to further develop language awareness, rather than to foster mechanical skills formation.

Developing the same theme, another teacher argued that practice activities help to “internalise” structures, and suggested that the coursebook activities were not always adequate for that end:

Teacher: ... κάνουν ασκήσεις πάνω σ’ αυτό, τι πιάσαν, πως το εμπεδώσαν.

Achilleas: Ασκήσεις οι οποίες είναι=

Teacher: =Γραμματικής

Achilleas: Ναι, στο βιβλίο, είναι στο.

Teacher: Μπορεί να είναι κι έξω από το βιβλίο. (5 sec) Επειδή συχνά δεν . δηλαδή δεν φτάνουν έχει μονο μια ή δύο, ασκήσεις >για κάθε φαινόμενο<. και δε φτάνουν για να μιλήσει το κάθε, ο κάθε μαθητής.

Teacher: ..., they do exercises on this, what they got, how they consolidated it.

Achilleas: Exercises which are=

Teacher: =Grammar

Achilleas: Yes, in the book, are they in.

Teacher: They might be from outside the book. (5 sec) Because usually it’s not . that is, there isn’t enough there’s only one or two, exercises, >for each phenomenon<. and these aren’t enough for each, every student to speak.

More insights into the kind of mental processes that were associated with grammar practice were provided in one of the surveys. The student participants described grammar practice exercises as “the most efficient and practical way to learn something”, and as a way to “learn when we must use this form and when the other”. Intriguingly, the reason cited by the learners did not involve mechanical habit formation, as might be expected by the informing theory of behaviourism. Rather, the students’ responses contained references to processes such as “understanding”, “learning” or “noticing”, as illustrated below:

- “They are helpful if you haven’t understood the grammar.”
- “I learn better a specifik [sic] grammar phenomenon.”
- “I think they are helpful because we can see and ~~check~~ correct our mistakes in order not to do them and improve our ~~grammar~~ English.”
- “They are helpful, because we can do [put?] the things that we know to action and this learns it better because for me the exercises are [something] like examples.”

The implication seemed to be that for in some cases at least, grammar practice activities provided opportunities for some kind of cognitive engagement with the language.

Some other benefits students associated with grammar practice activities included test preparation and general linguistic development. Some students seemed to value controlled language practice as an opportunity for self-check (“They are very helpful because I review from them if we take a test and they help me to check what I know and what I must read again”). Rather unexpectedly, it was also suggested by two students that grammar exercises not only help one practise “how to talk and write good [sic]” but also “help you with your ancent [accent]” and that “they are helpful for the improvement of writing and speaking as well”. However, it is not possible to ascertain how well these responses correspond to the students’ actual beliefs and whether they are influenced by considerations of social desirability and loyalty to their teachers.

### **7.3.4 Application**

Practice stages were sometimes followed by a semi-free production stage, during which the students were expected to produce oral or written discourse using the previously taught lexis and structures. In the lesson plans and the teachers’ discourse, these stages were referred to as “production” or “application”.

‘Application’ stages were not very common in traditional grammar lessons. In fact, I did not have the opportunity to observe such an activity in any of the lessons I observed. In my experience however, and according to informal conversations held with teachers, they

were generally regarded as less important than the preceding ‘explanation’ and ‘practice’ stages. Teachers tended to view these activities as either an optional extra which could usefully fill instruction time if the ‘practice’ stage finished early, and could serve to provide feedback to the teacher regarding the effectiveness of instruction. Consequently, the time allocated to such activities tended to be brief. In the lesson plans submitted by the teachers, ‘application’ stages were often allocated between five and ten minutes of instruction time, but there was a tacit understanding that these entries were included in the plan in the interest of comprehensiveness, and that the stages would be most likely be shortened or omitted in response to time pressure.

The activities used in the ‘application’ stages were normally derived from the courseware. Although the rubrics in the courseware and the instructions in the teacher’s books suggested that the oral activities (e.g., Figure 6-3b) could be done by the students working in pairs or groups, more often than not they tended to involve Initiation-Response-Feedback exchanges between teacher and learners (Ellis, 1994, p. 575), i.e., the teacher would nominate students to produce pieces of discourse with minimal guidance, and would then provide feedback regarding the accuracy of the student’s output. Form-focused writing activities (e.g., Figure 6-25a) would generally be assigned as homework. The prevailing view among teachers seemed to be that classroom time could be used more productively for grammar practice, and that students would be better able to concentrate on a writing task in their home environment. As regards their pedagogical effectiveness, written tasks were viewed with some ambivalence by the teachers, who described them as “stilted and counterproductive” and “useful but rather tedious”.

### **7.3.5 Adapting materials to suit local practice**

As was the case with the Reading and Vocabulary sequence, traditional grammar sequences appeared to be influenced by the content of the learning materials, which

prioritised language form and controlled practice, and by their format, which tended to be based on the Presentation-Practice-Production sequence. However, teachers at the host institute tended to adopt these materials to derive a distinctive pedagogical sequence, which that resembled the transmissive patterns sometimes encountered in Greek pedagogical literature (see section 2.2.1).

The most salient modifications seemed to be the following: (a) a relatively brief ‘prompt’ stage was generated through improvisation or the design of new materials; (b) during the ‘explanation’ stage, additional emphasis was placed on metalinguistic awareness; (c) the ‘practice’ stage, though formally similar to that encountered in a PPP sequence, seemed to supplement the ‘explanation’, as it aimed to foster language awareness rather than mechanical habit formation; and (d) the activities aimed at prompting free production were reconceptualised as a means to test learning.

Taken together, these adaptations seem indicative of how local pedagogical tradition (i.e., the Protectionist intentionality) built on the transmissive affordances provided by the learning materials, to generate entrenched forms of teaching and learning, which made change challenging.

## 7.4 Process-based Writing

The third instructional sequence that is described in this chapter has been termed Process-based Writing. At the host institute, writing lessons tended to be referred to as “composition” [«έκθεση», *ékthesi*], a designation which terminologically conflated the lesson and the output that students were expected to produce. Furthermore, “composition” indexed two instructional sequences, which I have termed Genre-based and Process-based Writing, building on a distinction made by Tribble (1996). In this section, I present the latter sequence, for a number of reasons. First, by virtue of its communicative

orientation, it provides a paradigmatic counterpoint to the transmissive sequences described above. Secondly, this description offers insights into the processes of change at the host institute, and the tensions associated with such change. A final difference is that this sequence brings to the forefront my insider status in this setting, and it showcases how my privileged knowledge of the context helped to supplement the empirical evidence.

Process-based Writing had been introduced at the host institute as part of a major curricular reform that I designed and implemented between 2004 and 2006 in my former capacity as Director of Studies (this thesis, p. 106). The main aim of that reform had been to replace transmissive teaching methods and activities, which had typified instruction at the host institute, with equivalent methods and activities that drew on Communicative Language Teaching. At the time, students engaged either with form-focused writing activities, which involved the semi-free production of recently-taught structures (see Section 7.3.4), or Genre-based Writing, whereby students were taught the formal features of a genre, and then worked individually to produce a text within the target genre. The Process-based Writing sequence which I introduced to replace these practices had been inspired by Seow (2002), and it emphasised collaborative activity, creativity and assessment on multiple criteria other than orthographic and grammatical accuracy.

When fieldwork for this study was being conducted, it seemed that the lasting effects of the changes that I had introduced had been uneven. Process-based Writing sequences were a regular feature in the Upper Intermediate and the Proficiency programmes, as well as the Action (Quest) programme, which was being gradually phased in. On the other hand, in the Junior and Action (Senior) programmes, Genre-based Writing continued to be the dominant form of writing instruction. This observation is borne out by the distribution of writing activities in the courseware (Figure 6-24).

When it came to obtaining data on Process-based Writing, a number of challenges surfaced, which related to my dual role as a researcher and former Director of Studies. For example, when I expressed the wish to observe such a writing lesson during a staff meeting, several teachers countered that there was not much to be observed (“just the kids working in groups”), and concerns were voiced regarding the disruptive potential of my presence. The teachers’ reluctance to be observed in this instance stood in sharp contrast to their otherwise relatively welcoming attitude. At the time, I assumed that it was due to the teachers’ scepticism regarding the pedagogical value of collaborative activities, and perhaps the potential loss of professional face associated with the lack of strong teacher control. In retrospectively reflecting on the experience, I further believe that some teachers may have felt uncomfortable at the prospect of being observed by me, as they implemented lessons that deviated from my occasionally prescriptive guidelines. Whatever the underlying reasons, I was unable to draw on evidence from classroom observation to construct this prototypical sequence, but I counterbalanced the lack of direct observational data by drawing on lesson plans and learning materials, sensitively phrased questions, and informal conversations with teachers and students.

#### **7.4.1 Overview of Process-based Writing**

A distinctive feature of writing lessons was that they formed a somewhat independent strand in the syllabus. To begin with, they were allocated designated slots in the timetable once weekly or every two weeks. These lessons tended to be assigned to senior teachers, who were not necessarily the regular class teacher. In a discussion with a management figure at the host institute, I was told that this organisational oddity was necessitated by the relatively high demands that Process-based Writing sequences placed in terms of lesson preparation and preparing feedback for the learners. I was told that the unusual nature of the activities was a better match to the skills of experienced teachers, and that

the time-intensive nature of preparation had to be reflected in the pay-scale of the teachers involved.

| Stage                       | Description & comments  | Timing                                |
|-----------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| Collaborative writing       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generating content / planning</li> <li>• Drafting</li> <li>• Editing</li> <li>• Peer-review</li> </ul> | 45' (*) End of Lesson 1               |
| Individual writing practice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice draft (homework)</li> </ul>   | → Homework                            |
| Feedback                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group feedback</li> <li>• Individual feedback</li> <li>• Portfolio document</li> </ul>                 | 45' Beginning of Lesson 2 (+homework) |

*\*The time allocated to each activity within this stage varied depending on the lesson objectives.*

**Table 7-7 Overview of a Process-based Writing sequence**

A Process-based Writing instructional sequence can be conceptualised as a cycle spanning two half-lessons and a homework session (Table 7-7). In the first half-lesson, the students would collaboratively engage in a series of tasks, which ranged from generating content and planning to providing peer-review (Section 7.4.2). Students would then be assigned a writing task, in response to which they independently produced a draft “composition” as homework (Section 7.2.3). The cycle concluded with a second half-lesson, during which various forms of feedback were provided, and a “portfolio” version of the paper was produced (Section 7.4.4).

## 7.4.2 Collaborative writing tasks

In the first stage of a Process-based Writing lesson, learners were assigned to 2-3 different groups, comprising 3-4 students each, and worked together on a number of activities, which corresponded to different writing sub-skills, namely pre-writing activities, drafting, editing and providing peer-review. All these skills were practiced in every lesson, although emphasis would shift from one skill to another depending on the objectives of the particular lesson. Table 7-8 lists some writing objectives in abbreviated form.

In the pre-writing step, learners in each group would typically engage in collaborative brainstorming and planning activities, based on prompts provided by the teacher (e.g., Figure 7-5). There was an expectation that these activities would be carried out in English, particularly among the more advanced learners, but on the basis of comments informally provided by students, it seems that linguistic resources in both Greek and English were pooled in order to complete such tasks.

| <b>Unit 1</b>   | <b>Unit 2</b>  | <b>Unit 3</b>   |
|---|--|---|
| <u>Descriptive Writing</u>  | <u>Emails</u>  | <u>Formal transactions</u>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selecting a topic</li> <li>• Paragraphing</li> <li>• Note-making</li> <li>• Editing (Content)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structuring an email</li> <li>• Generating content</li> <li>• Using prompts</li> <li>• Editing (Style)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expanding</li> <li>• Rephrasing</li> <li>• Proofreading</li> </ul> |

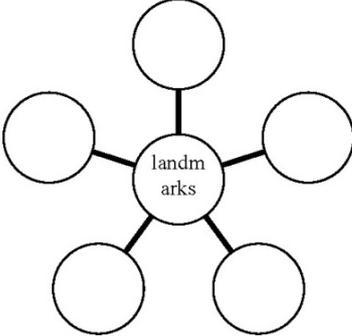
**Table 7-8 Extracts from the D' Class syllabus (writing)**

Following that, students were tasked with producing different parts of a larger text. For instance, each student in a group might be assigned a different paragraph of a five-paragraph argumentative essay. Instructions, such as the ones reproduced in Figure 7-6, would be provided to each student in order to facilitate the writing process. Learning resources, such as dictionaries, would be made available to foster autonomy. At this stage the teachers' role was limited to supervising efficient work, and acting as a resource when assistance was requested.

Next, the students would edit and proofread the texts produced by other group members, according to instructions provided by their teacher. These activities tended to be quite focused: on different occasions, students might be asked to focus on spelling, or format, or register. To ensure that the goal of each editing activity was universally understood, practice might be provided in plenary mode, using sample passages from the coursebooks (Figure 6-26), or scripts produced by other student cohorts. The edited drafts were then collated, and the students worked in groups to ensure textual cohesion. The end result of this process was a collaboratively-produced text, sometimes referred to as the "practice" draft.

**Step 1: Deciding what to write**

Think of five famous landmarks and write them in the bubbles:



Which of these landmarks will you describe? \_\_\_\_\_

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

What can you write about this landmark? Choose 3 items from this list and decide how many paragraphs you will write:

|                                     | Par 2 | Par. 3 | Par. 4 |
|-------------------------------------|-------|--------|--------|
| Historical details                  |       |        |        |
| Its condition today                 |       |        |        |
| Legends & myths                     |       |        |        |
| Activities that people can do there |       |        |        |

Figure 7-5 Writing worksheet extract (E' Class, supplementary materials)

**Introduction & Conclusion**

You will write the first and last paragraph of the *essay*.

You could begin:

- ⇒ With a general remark (e.g. *everybody has different opinion about what an ideal school should be like...*) or
- ⇒ By talking about your present school and saying what you like/dislike about it.

Don't forget to say what this *essay* is about.

In the conclusion, explain *why you think this school is nice.*

Figure 7-6 Drafting instructions (D' Class, supplementary materials)

In the last activity of this stage, learners would be asked to read the practice drafts produced by other groups and to provide summative feedback using an analytical grid, such as the one partially reproduced in Figure 7-7. The aim of this step was to raise the students' awareness of the multiple factors that contributed to successful written communication, as well as to familiarise them with the analytical grading schemes encountered in certification examinations.

|              |   |   |
|--------------|---|---|
| Organisation | 5 | Your work is clearly organised into paragraphs. Each main paragraph starts with a topic sentence. The information in each paragraph is logically organised. You use linking words effectively between paragraphs and inside them. |
|              | 4 | Your work is clearly organised into paragraphs. The information in each paragraph is generally organised. You use linking words effectively between paragraphs or inside them.  |
|              | 3 | Generally speaking your work is clearly organised into paragraphs but perhaps the information in each paragraph is not always logically organised. You use simple linking words between paragraphs or inside them.                |
|              | 2 | Information is not always in the right paragraph. There is little linking.  |
|              | 1 | Information is presented in a very confusing way. There is no linking.  |

Figure 7-7 Analytical assessment grid for argumentative writing (E' Class, supplementary materials)

As can be deduced from the description above, a key feature of this stage was its collaborative nature, which strongly differentiated it from other instructional sequences. This differentiation seemed to generate some tension at the host institute, as it seemed that at least some teachers felt apprehensive about relinquishing control of the learning process. The following interview extract illustrates what I believe to have been widely spread scepticism regarding collaborative modes of work:

Teacher: Το σκεπτικό το καταλαβαίνω, αλλά για να είμαι, ε, ειλικρινής δεν ξέρω πόσο καλά δουλεύει. Φέτος το κάνω πρώτη φορά το, ε, βιβλίο, και το έχω, το βλέπω σα δοκιμή και καλά, [σα

Teacher: I understand the rationale, but to be erm frank I do not know how well it works. This is the first year I am working on this, erm, book, and I have it, I see it as a trial of sorts, [like

Achilleas: [Σαν πείραμα

Achilleas: [like an experiment

Teacher: Ναι πειραμα, γιατί δε θέλω να το απορ- να απορρίψω να κάτι χωρίς να το έχω δοκιμάσει. Και εντάξει, στη θεωρία, ε, δεν είναι κακό ↓

Teacher: Yes, an experiment, because I don't want to rej- yes to reject something without having tried it out. And, OK, in theory, erm, it's not ba:d. ↓

Achilleas: (2 sec) Και πως θα κρ- αξιοποι- αξιολογήσεις . το πειραμα αυτό αν πέτυχε στο τέλος της χρονίας;

Achilleas: (2 sec) And how will you jud- appro- appraise it, this experiment if it has worked by the end of the year?

Teacher: @@@Γιατί. Θα με ρωτή[σουν];

Teacher: @@@Why. Is anyone going to as[k me?

Achilleas: [Αν δε με ενδιέφερε η γνώμη σου δε θα ρωτούσα

Achilleas: [If I didn't value your opinion, I wouldn't ask

Teacher: @αν είναι έτσι, για σένα, θα δω αν τα παιδιά είναι πιο ευχαριστημένα, αν γράφουν καλύτερα, (3 sec) αν βγαίνει η ύλη.

Teacher: @OK, if that's the case, for you, I'll see if the children are more satisfied, if they write better, (3 sec) if I can teach all the syllabus

Achilleas: Στη φάση αυτή, μπορείς προχειρα μπορείς να κάνεις μια εκτίμηση

Achilleas: At this point, can you roughly can you make an estimate

Teacher: (3 sec) Δεν έχω καταλάβει διαφορά

Teacher: (3 sec) I haven't noticed much difference

Some other reservations that teachers expressed, when informally queried about their attitude towards collaborative writing, included apprehension about noise levels that these activities tended to entail, as well as the students' proclivity to use Greek when not directly supervised.

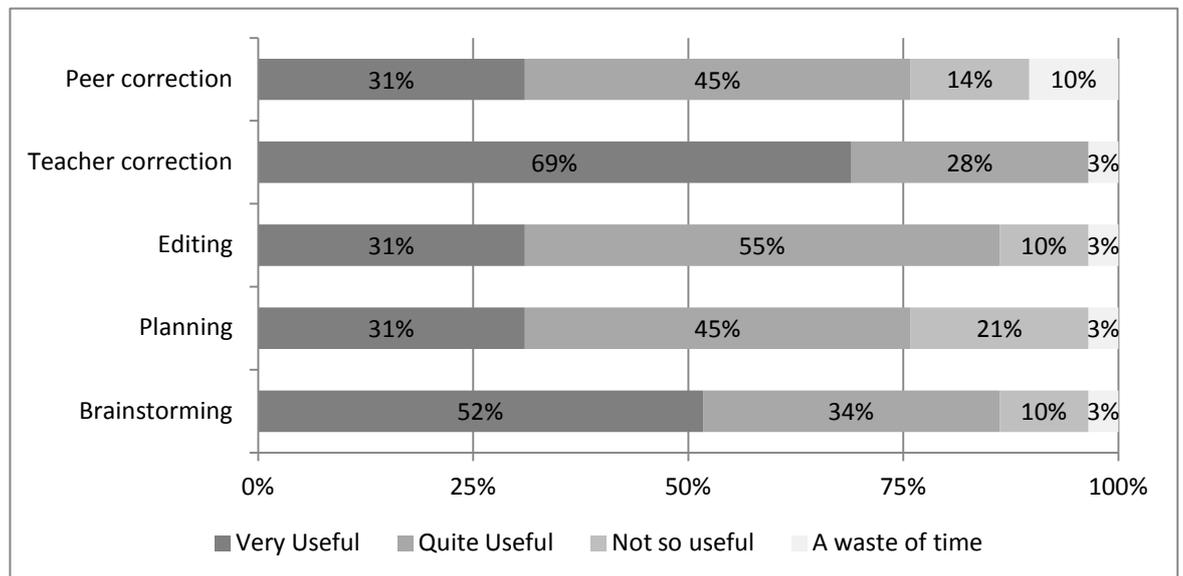


Figure 7-8 Student preferences regarding the writing activities

On the other hand, the collaborative learning activities that this stage comprised seemed to be quite popular among the students. Figure 7-8 demonstrates overwhelmingly positive attitudes regarding most collaborative activities, as expressed by a group of 29 Senior and Upper Intermediate students. These teenagers' positive attitude seemed to be related to the feeling that their 'voice' was valorised in the classroom. In the words of one student, "I enjoy very much the opportunity to discuss with my friends and say what I think about important social subjects". Interestingly, the most negative attitudes were expressed with regard to peer correction, a finding which might be attributed to interpersonal dynamics,

as well as the challenge this activity posed against the traditional power structure in a classroom. The teachers' dominant role was further affirmed by the very strongly positive attitudes students expressed regarding the importance of receiving feedback from their teacher.

### 7.4.3 Individual writing practice

In the second stage of a process writing sequence, learners were expected to produce a first draft of a text, based on a prompt, commonly referred to as the "subject" («θεμα», *théma*) or "question" («ερώτηση», *erótisi*). Individual writing practice was normally assigned as homework, to be carried out by the students at home or at the self-access centre. The writing prompts used in this stage were modelled after those encountered in common language certification examinations (e.g., Figure 7-9).

Despite the fact that producing extended pieces of written discourse involved investment in time and effort, many students expressed very positive attitudes towards producing "compositions". In one of the questionnaires, a student claimed that writing stories was the most interesting aspect of her learning experience ("the most interesting was when we were writing some stories of our minds"), and another one stated that he enjoyed writing tasks "because they have unusual subjects and that makes you curious". Further, in an informal discussion with an advanced learner, where I elicited her views on process-based writing, I was told that:

emena m aresoun oi ek8eseis pou  
mas vazozn , autes oi erwthseis!!!!  
einai apla apsoges, xairomai na  
grafw. [...] o ti kalutero gia ena  
paidi, na tou deixneis oti se  
noiazoun auta pou leei!

Personally, I like the writing tasks  
that we're assigned, these  
questions!!!! They are just perfect,  
I like writing. [...] it's the best thing  
for a kid, when you show them  
that you care about what they say!

In addition to providing an outlet for the learners' creativity, and a space for voicing for their opinion, "compositions" were also considered important for instrumental reasons: As

one student pragmatically remarked, “It is difficult to know without teaching, how to write reviews, reports, etc. which they are in the lower [i.e., the B2-level examination], so it’s useful to practice this and find information to help you”.

**Homework**

Your British penfriend wants to learn how you celebrate an important festival in your country. Write a letter in 120-180 words describing a festival you know well. Apart from general information about the festival (when, where, why it takes place), you can describe any local traditions, superstitions and beliefs. You may want to talk about the preparations leading to the festival and the events in the event itself.

You recently entered a competition for learners of English. You have just received this letter from the organisers of the competition, on which you have written some notes.

Congratulations! We are very pleased to inform you that you have won the first prize in our competition: a FREE week for yourself and a friend in Los Angeles or New York. This includes:

- ✓ Free return flights Someone to meet us at airport?
- ✓ Accommodation for you both in a 3-star central hotel Which one?
- ✓ Three meals a day
- ✓ Spending allowance ???
- ✓ A guide (if you want) Yes, please

We now need to know which city you would both like to go to, your preferred travel dates, and any special arrangements you would like us to make for you. Yes!

We look forward to hearing from you and we will then send you the tickets.

Yours sincerely,  
*Catherine Ritter*  
 Competition Organiser

Read the letter carefully. Then write a reply (between 120-180 words) giving the information requested and covering the notes you have written on the letter.

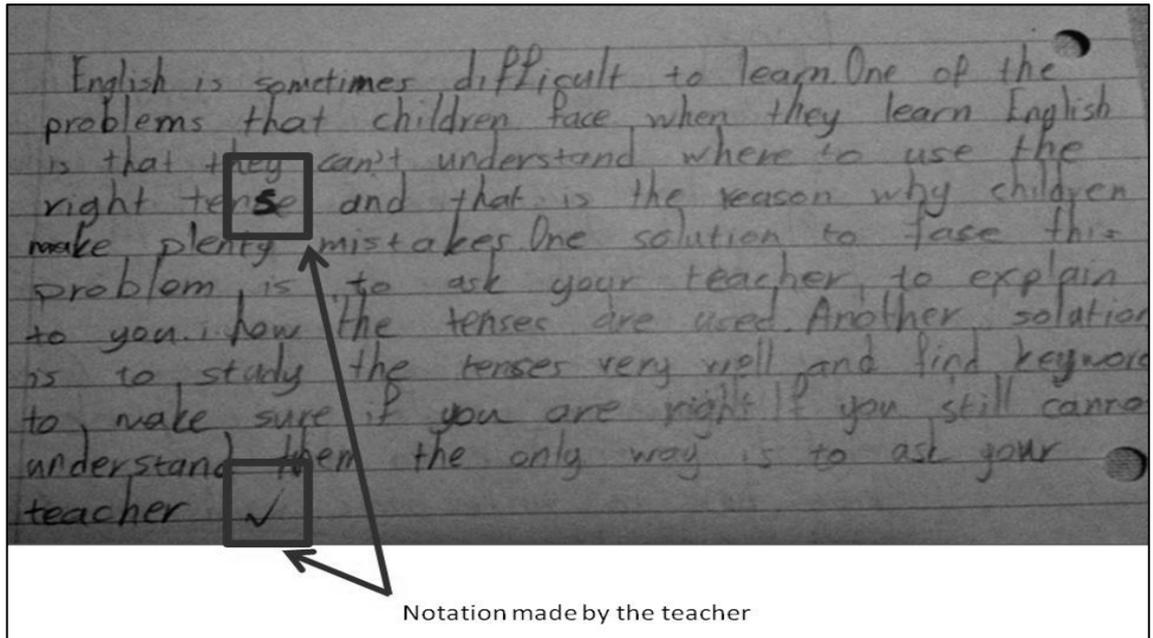
Figure 7-9 Sample writing prompts

### 7.4.4 Feedback

The final stage of a Process-based Writing instructional sequence took place at the beginning of the next writing lesson. During this stage, learners received feedback on the draft “compositions” they had produced, which was then used towards producing a final or “portfolio” versions.

Feedback was provided in three forms: At its simplest, it consisted of comments written directly on the learners' script, as shown in Figure 7-10a. In addition, learners would be provided with an Analytical Feedback Form containing a mark and formative comments (Figure 7-10b). The analytical criteria on which the assessment of the composition was based were the same as the ones used at the end of the collaborative writing stage (Figure 7-7). Lastly, feedback might be provided in plenary mode, as follows: Noteworthy extracts from the student's scripts were presented on the board, on OHTs or in handouts, such as the one partially reproduced in Figure 7-10c, and students were invited to comment upon them. It is interesting to note that, although the syllabus documents and assessment rubrics emphasised the need to assess the student's writing performance on the basis of several criteria (e.g., content, cohesion, coherence and accuracy), there was a proclivity among teachers to emphasise grammatical and orthographical accuracy in their feedback. This tendency seemed to be more pronounced in the direct comments and plenary feedback documents, which were designed by the teachers themselves. By contrast, the rigid structure of the Analytical Feedback Form seemed to influence teachers to provide feedback that was more balanced.

The process-based writing instructional sequence was completed with the production, by the students, of a "portfolio" version of their paper, sometimes facetiously referred to as the "clean" copy («καθαρό», *katharó*), which was used for assessment.



a. Direct notation (E' Class)

|                            |   |     |
|----------------------------|---|-----|
| <b><u>Content</u></b>      | Congratulations on the nice way you rephrased and expanded most of the points. The only (small) problems are that you should have mentioned <u>how much</u> money you want, and that it is not very clear what disappointed you in the shops. | 4,5 |
| <b><u>Organisation</u></b> | The text is reasonable well organized, although sometimes you forget to start the new paragraphs further inside.  | 5   |
| <b><u>Range</u></b>        | It is clear that you have no difficulty with complex grammar, but this time you seem to have made a number of mistakes which you normally avoid, such as use French words   | 4   |

b. Analytical Feedback Form (D' Class)

Vocabulary and grammar

The following sentences have been taken from your essays. Can you spot and correct any mistakes?

1. As long as genetically engineered food are on sale, people may be tempted to taste them.
2. This may look beneficial however it causes problems to the food chain.
3. Genetically modified fruit are bigger than normal, they have more sugar and they are growing faster than normal ones.

c. Handout for plenary practice (Proficiency)

Figure 7-10 Sample writing feedback

### 7.4.5 Reorienting the system

Unlike the sequences that were described in the previous sections, Process-based Writing sequence seemed to materialise within the space of the communicative attractor. The communicative underpinnings of this sequence were mostly visible in the first stage, during which where students engaged in collaborative meaning-focused activities. Additional traces of communicative influence were in evidence at the feedback stage, as the assessment criteria took into account the negotiation of meaning alongside formal features of the students' output. In addition, this instructional sequence involved a radical re-conceptualisation of the ways in which the classes operated. Classroom discourse shifted from metalinguistic instruction to what were described as "unusual" and "important" topics; similarly, the learners' voice was legitimised, as they were called to bring their creativity and knowledge to bear on the production of text that was judged in terms of its content. This constituted a departure from the norm at the host institute, where classroom discourse tended to be under tight teacher control.

In addition to providing a counterpoint to the transmissive sequences in the previous sections, the description of a communicatively informed prototypical sequence offers insights into the potential for change at the host institute and the challenges associated with it. The move away from entrenched transmissive practices was, in part, a product of a rigorous and sustained curricular reform that aimed to disrupt Protectionist influences at the host institute, and reorient practice towards the Communicative approach. Although this reform had been only partially successful, residual effects were still evident in routinised procedures, in aspects of the courseware (Section 6.2.4) and in numerous supplementary learning resources, examples of which were reproduced in this section. In addition to the residual effects of the top-down pressure that had been applied to the system, this reorientation might be associated with the phase shift in the dynamics of

intentions at the onset of the Upper Intermediate programme: in Chapter 6, it was noted that as practice becomes more exam-oriented, the influence of Protectionism which might have counteracted the curricular reform, tended to wane.

While many students seemed positively predisposed towards this change, there is evidence in the data to suggest a certain degree of tension between the communicative orientation of this sequence and the intentionalities that prevailed elsewhere at the host institute. For example, many teachers appeared to hold ambivalent feelings towards Process-based Writing sequences, as might be inferred from the apprehension they indicated when I requested permission to observe them. Additionally, there appears to have been some tension between the way Process-based Writing lessons were conceptualised in the syllabus and the way they were implemented in practice. An example of this tension was found in the Feedback stage: although instructions in the syllabus tended to stress the importance of assessing the students' work on the merit of multiple criteria, it appeared that some teachers tended to give feedback that was biased towards grammatical and orthographic accuracy.

## 7.5 An evolving system

The prototypical sequences that were described in the three previous sections constitute but a part of the teaching and learning activity that took place at the host institute.

However, their prevalence allows for some tentative generalisations within the system: The Reading and Vocabulary sequence was in evidence across levels, from beginners to very advanced learners. The Traditional Grammar sequence was particularly common at the lower levels (the Junior and Senior programmes) and accounted for between a third and a half of the instruction time these learners received. The Process-based Writing sequence was perhaps less common, but it formed a regular feature of instruction at the Upper

Intermediate and Proficiency levels, where one lesson in three was earmarked for 'writing'. In addition, some of the stages that were described above were also encountered, in different combinations, in other instructional sequences. For instance, the 'consolidation' and 'practice' stages that made up the latter part an Inductive Grammar sequence (Appendix I) were substantively similar to the 'presentation' and 'practice' stages encountered at the beginning of a Traditional Grammar sequence. Similarly, the overall structure of Genre-based Writing (Appendix I.4) sequences involved a gradual movement from presentation, through guided practice to semi-free production, which echoed the macro-structure of a Traditional Grammar lesson.

While the reconstruction of the sequences has descriptive merit on its own, as an illustration of how various aspects of English are taught in a particular context, I believe that it also provides a number of findings about the ways in which the interaction between resources and intentionalities was resolved. The description of the instructional sequences seems to confirm the tentative insights developed in Chapter 6 regarding the tendency of the system to operate within the space of a transmissive and a communicative attractor. However, it was seen that practice was not strictly determined by the learning materials, but rather intentionalities such as Protectionism and Competition had a recursive influence on teaching and learning. This finding adds nuance to our understanding of the Greek ELT context, which has tended to interpret practice in linear terms as a product of credentialism (e.g., Papaefthymiou-Lytra, 2012), or as an outcome of uncritical 'consumption' of coursebook material (e.g., M. Papageorgiou, 2002).

In addition, the description of instructional sequences provides empirical corroboration to the processes of change in the dynamics of intention that were retroactively identified in the discussion of learning materials (Section 6.2.5). Many of the activities that make up the instructional sequences appear to be underwritten by transmissive conceptions of

language and pedagogy, thus illustrating the tendency of systems to remain within their 'preferred' states, even in the face of sustained changes in their environment. However, the complementary distribution of transmissive and communicative instructional sequences is consistent with the existence of a phase shift in the dynamic of intentions, which seems to take place at the onset of the exam-preparation programmes (i.e., the start of the Upper Intermediate programme). Similarly, the existence of a communicatively-informed sequence in the newly designed Senior (Quest) programme seems to confirm a diachronic drift of the system towards practices that were more overtly informed by the communicative approach.

It should be noted that these change processes were neither uniform nor monotonic. With regard to the oral skills, for example, communicative speaking tasks were introduced at the exam-oriented courses, but listening tasks were highly transmissive due to the washback effect of the same examinations. Similarly, in the redesigned Senior programme the shift towards Process-based Writing coincided a stronger emphasis on traditional grammar, i.e., there was a bifurcation of instructional patterns. In addition, the effects of the changes tended to be differentiated due to the teachers' mediation, as evidenced by the bias towards providing grammar-focused feedback even in the Process-based Writing sequences. These unexpected findings highlight the complexities involved in affecting change on an educational setting, and put linear assumptions of causality to the test.

In summary, this chapter provided a description of the pedagogical practices of the host institute, which were abstracted in the form of seven prototypical instructional sequences. Three of these sequences were described in detail, with a view to showing how pedagogical practices were impacted by the interaction between learning materials and intentionalities. It was noted that pedagogical practices were largely transmissive, but changes in the dynamic of intentions were mirrored by similar changes in pedagogical practice. These

processes of change seemed to partially disrupt the transmissive tradition of the host institute, but their non-linear effect underscored the usefulness of a complexity-informed analytical perspective for their interpretation.

## **Chapter 8**

### **Insights and ways forward**

In this chapter, I revisit salient findings that were presented elsewhere in the thesis, with a view to addressing Research Question 4 (“how can aspects of ELT... be described as complex phenomena?”). In the discussion that follows, the findings are synthesised with the CST literature, so as to generate theoretical observations about the relevance of complexity in Applied Linguistics. I begin by describing how the host institute was conceptualised as a complex system (Section 8.1). Following that, the discussion mirrors the structure of the thesis. In Section 8.2, I revisit the intentionalities present in the host institute, and discuss their diversity and the complexity of their interactions. In Section 8.3, I look into the role of learning materials, and examine how they facilitated the study of the historicity and behaviour of the host institute. I also examine the implications of the transmissive and communicative attractors in the system’s affordance landscape. I then move on, in Section 8.4, to the discussion of the system’s activity, which is construed as a product of interaction between resources and intentionalities. I also note the salience of local contextual factors, and develop a hypothesis pertaining to the interplay of local and global factors in shaping situated practice. The chapter, and the thesis, concludes by suggesting possibilities for further investigation (Section 8.5).

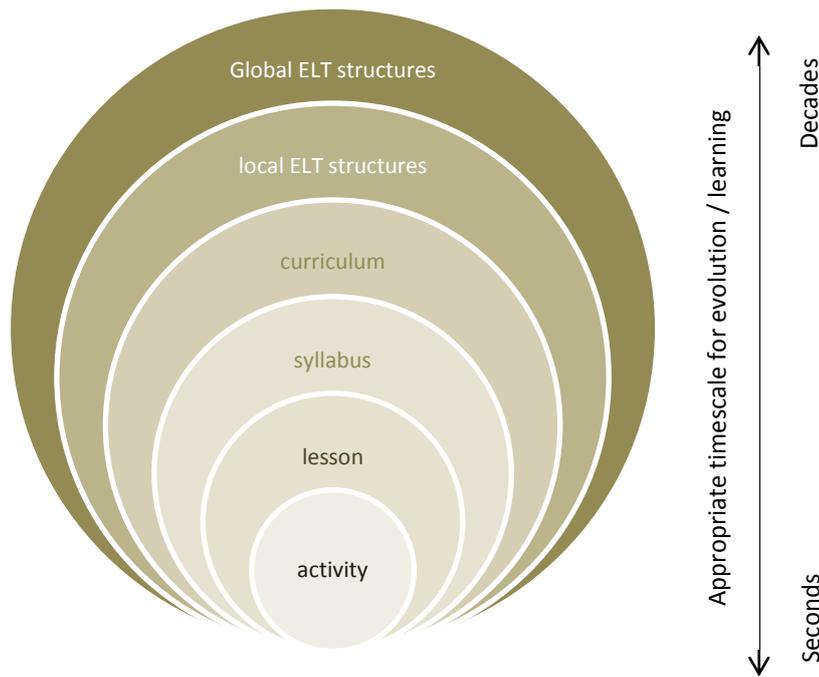
#### **8.1 A school as a complex system: boundaries and timescales**

This case study combined ethnographic methods of data generation with methods of data analysis derived from grounded theory (Chapter 4), and with a complexity-inspired ontological perspective (Chapter 3), in order to provide a holistic, empirically grounded and theoretically coherent account of ELT in the periphery of the Anglophone world. Key to this

endeavour was the question of 'framing' the system, or defining its boundaries (Agar, 2004; Byrne, 2009). In the paragraphs that follow, I discuss how the host institute was framed, in order to demonstrate that a complexity-informed outlook is compatible with ethnographic case studies.

The literature on case study methodology emphasises that "a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in its real life context, especially *when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clearly evident*" (Yin, 2003, p. 15, emphasis added), and acknowledges that the boundaries of cases are "not quite as solid as a rationalist might hope" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 27), but it stops short of specifying how such boundaries might be drawn using criteria other than pragmatic considerations. In this study, I demonstrated the potential of an ontological outlook in which the boundaries of the system do not serve merely to separate it from its surroundings, but rather connect it to the structures in which it is embedded (Juarrero, 1999, p. 110). In doing so, I eschewed the risk implicit in 'bounding' a system: namely that by artificially isolating the school from its environment for the purposes of inquiry, one might divert attention from important interconnections that develop between them (Cilliers, 1998, p. 2).

A key concern of this study was to map the interface between agents that were 'inside' the system and agents that operated in its periphery, to understand when, why and how such interactions arose, and to trace what their effects were. Examples of such insights included the finding that the host institute would, in certain cases, isolate itself, sealing out external influences (Section 5.6), while at the same time other aspects of its activity evidenced outside influence, as seen, for example, in the Anglophile orientation of the Cultural Awareness intentionality (Section 5.4).



**Figure 8-1 Embeddedness of systems (based on Davis and Sumara, 2006, p.27)**

An insight relating to the way in which the host institute was framed was the observation that different components seemed to operate in different timescales. This finding is consistent with the complexity literature. In Section 3.2 it was noted that complex systems are enmeshed with other structures, of bigger or smaller magnitude, which can themselves be conceptualised as complex systems. Although Byrne and Callaghan convincingly argue that these systems are overlapping rather than hierarchically organised (2014, p. 45), for the purposes of this argument and in the interest of simplicity, they might be viewed as a hierarchy of systems nested within systems. So, for instance, a learning activity may be thought of as being embedded in lesson, which is in turn embedded in a syllabus, a multi-year curriculum, as well as local (e.g., national) and global ELT structures (Figure 8-1). It is suggested that the dynamics that develop within these systems operate at different timescales (Davis & Sumara, 2006, pp. 28-29): lower-order systems are more volatile, whereas higher-order systems are stable enough to be described as structures. Crucially, however, the difference between higher- and lower-order systems is one of degree, as it relates to the different rates of change.

These theoretical insights about timescales were confirmed by this study. Multiple dynamical processes were observed at the host institute, which were associated with different rates of change. Lessons were relatively volatile, as the pedagogical orientation of their constituent activities could change multiple times within a 60- or 90-minute time-frame. Viewed from this level of activity, the syllabus and the curriculum appeared as static structures, which seemed to constrain the content and format of individual lessons. However, if one 'jumps levels' (Davis & Sumara, 2006, p. 107), processes of change become evident in the curriculum level as well, as the introduction of a new syllabus every few years was influenced by shifting dynamics of intention. In terms of methodological implications for future research, this seems to suggest that framing a complex system can be theoretically guided by criteria such as the kinds of dynamics that one wants to observe, as systems of different orders of magnitude are associated with different scales of change.

In summary, the study appears to confirm that the host institute, as a whole, can be usefully conceptualised as a complex system. Two key affordances of this perspective are an epistemologically constructive and theoretically productive way of viewing the boundaries of the case that is empirically investigated, and a useful way of conceptualising the connections between interconnected social entities which evolve in different rates. Having made this holistic observation, in the next three sections I describe how specific aspects of the host institute were viewed as complex phenomena.

## 8.2 Intentionalities driving the system

In Chapter 5, I looked into what drove and sustained the activity of the host institute. This process involved conceptually defining the drivers of activity (intentionalities), as well as mapping them onto the data and looking into their generative effects. In Section 8.2.1, I synthesise insights from the complexity literature with my own inductive findings, to

develop an understanding of intentionalities that can facilitate complexity-inspired studies of educational settings. In addition to this conceptual contribution, in Section 8.2.2 I look into the specific intentionalities that were present in the host institute and discuss possible implications.

### **8.2.1 Intentionalities in educational settings**

The conceptual definition of the intentional drivers (intentionalities) was derived from the literature (Stelma, 2011, 2013; Tudor, 2001; Young et al., 2002) and engagement with the data. Tudor suggests that activity in an educational setting, such as a school, can be understood with reference to what he describes as ‘rationalities’, i.e., the “perceptions and goal structures” that drive language education (2001, p. 33). While this terminological choice connotes conscious rational reflection and deliberate choice, Tudor suggests that:

[t]hese rationalities may not be explicitly formulated in the way we find in writing on methodology, or in official policy statements, but nevertheless influence the meaning which classroom learning activities assume (2001, pp. 33-34).

Tudor lists five groups of rationalities as starting points for empirical inquiry, namely student rationalities, methodological rationalities, socio-cultural rationalities, institutional and corporate rationalities, and teacher rationalities, noting that these groupings are not always cohesive (i.e., there may be several rationalities present in each group), their influence is unlikely to be symmetrical, and some may present themselves more readily for empirical investigation than others (2001, pp. 31-39). While bearing in mind these caveats, Tudor (2001)’s taxonomy is analytically helpful in at least three ways: (a) it draws attention to the plurality of drivers that present themselves within a system, (b) it provides us with a theoretical construct for conceptualising the collective activity of multiple and possibly heterogeneous agents, and (c) it brings to the forefront the role of intentionalities that stem from outside the system.

Young et al. (2002) provided me with a way of conceptualising the relation between intentionalities and the environment in which they arise, which was viewed as a hierarchical set of constraints. Young et al.'s model also hinted at how intentionalities could form part of overarching 'dynamics of intention'. This conceptualisation was further elaborated drawing on Stelma (2011, 2013), who demonstrated that how intentionalities emerge from the resources and expectations in a system. Further, Stelma's model hinted at how intentionality-driven activity could add to the system's degrees of freedom.

In Chapter 5, I used empirical data in a bottom up way to identify five 'purposes' that appeared to drive activity in the host institute, which I subsequently related to the literature on intentionalities. In doing so, I not only provided additional empirical substantiation to the construct, but also managed to further develop it theoretically. I noted that intentionalities are collective entities, which sometimes synthesise apparently incompatible beliefs, as was the case with Protectionism (Section 5.6.4). Using data about Cultural Awareness, I suggested that intentionalities are mostly shaped by local conditions (Section 5.4.3). I further argued that individual intentionalities are associated with specific pedagogical and linguistic effects. Credentialism, for instance, tends to be associated with mainstream ELT ideology (CLT), whereas Protectionism is associated with pedagogical and linguistic beliefs that align more closely with Greek education. However, such effects are not deterministic (Section 5.2.3), and their influence is sometimes unpredictable (Section 5.5.4). Finally, drawing on Young et al. (2002), I argued that these intentionalities come together to form broader 'dynamics of intentions', which collectively influence the behaviour of the system. In making these observations, I developed an understanding of intentionality that helps to 'nativise' Complex Systems Thinking into the domains of Applied Linguistics and Education.

## 8.2.2 Intentionalities in the host institute

The discussion of intentionalities also facilitated the articulation of two findings about the host institute, and (more tentatively) about ELT. First, it points towards the existence of multiple, heterogeneous drivers that are present in educational settings (cf. Tudor, 2001; Tudor, 2003), and in doing so it calls into question the validity of reductive narratives. In addition, it brings to the forefront the existence of ‘silent’ intentionalities, which may have a visible impact in the system’s activity. This finding raises questions about the mechanisms which make such differentiated effects possible.

### *From mono-causal explanations to nuanced understandings*

To briefly recapitulate, in Chapter 5, I described five intentionalities that were present in the host institute. Predominant among them was a preoccupation with proving English language proficiency through certification. I also documented a desire, among students, to integrate in transnational discourse communities, which achieved coherence through the English-mediated communication. A third intentionality involved providing learners with information about the English-speaking culture, which was restrictively equated with mainstream UK culture. Fourth, there was competition with the state education system. Finally, there was empirical evidence of a protectionist intentionality, i.e., a concern to protect the professional interests of the local ELT professional community.

By empirically identifying several intentionalities in the host institute, I was able to develop a nuanced understanding of ELT as a complex phenomenon. This view seems to add to understanding of ELT in Greece, which is sometimes reductively described as being exclusively concerned with certification (e.g., Angouri, et al., 2010; Papaefthymiou-Lytra, 2012). Furthermore, a causal account that is based on dynamics of intentions (i.e., the synthesis of intentionalities) provides a convincing explanation about an apparent paradox

that scholarship in Greek ELT often ignores or stops short of resolving: namely, why the washback effect of communicative examinations is, at least some times, resisted in pedagogy, despite the obvious value attached to these examinations. The usual caveats about projecting the findings of a single exploratory case study onto a broader setting (e.g., Greek ELT in general) obviously apply, and it would be interesting to investigate whether traces of such intentionalities are present outside the host institute and what forms they might take. The initial probes into specific intentionalities that were made by this study could provide the analytical categories for such confirmatory investigations, and the conceptual insights about intentionality might serve as a theoretical foundation to inform such a research agenda.

### ***Differentiated effects of intentionalities***

In addition to providing theoretical sensitivity to the existence of multiple, possibly competing, intentionalities, the complexity outlook that underpinned this study generated clues about the differences in their visibility and their generative potential.

In the preceding chapters it was suggested that many aspects of the host institute's operation could be interpreted in the light of interaction between Certification and Protectionism. Of these, Certification was salient both in the literature about ELT in Greece and in the discourse of the host institute (Section 5.2). Protectionism (Section 5.6), on the other hand, seemed to function as a 'silent' intentionality. Even though the shaping influences from which it emerged were traceable in the data, there was little evidence of the intentionality as such in the participants' discourse, and I was unable to locate references to protectionism in the literature. This paradoxical observation demonstrates the potential of the intentionality construct (and, more broadly, Complex Systems Theory) for generating economical and theoretically coherent accounts of a system's behaviour, by

synthesising apparently disparate shaping influences. What this study did not do, however, is attempt to explain why Protectionism is absent from the discourse, a question to which Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 1995; Pennycook, 2001, pp. 74-110) might have yielded interesting responses.

Another point of interest related to the differentiated impact of intentionalities. While it seemed that Certification and Protectionism had a visible effect on both the learning materials and the pedagogical practices of the host institute, the students' desire to integrate to transnational discourse communities (International Integration, Section 5.3), did not seem to have a similar impact. This finding seems to hint at asymmetries in the power structures that ran through the host institute. Regrettably, the data at hand did not support an in-depth investigation of such differences, but such an inquiry would likely yield interesting insights about the power structures in which ELT is embedded, and it therefore holds promise for research informed by the critical education tradition.

These differences in the visibility and impact hint at the challenges associated with making linear connections between specific intentionalities and effects. Put differently, it seems uncertain that isolating any intentionality and attempting to relate it to pedagogical practices would be a productive way forward. Rather, what this study has demonstrated is that a holistic outlook, which looks at the dynamics of intentions and relates them to the entire system, seems to offer greater descriptive and theoretical potential.

### 8.3 Resources and affordances in the system

Another set of findings related to the role of learning resources in the host institute. As before, the discussion of these findings is organised into two sections, which respectively focus on conceptual and descriptive contributions. I begin by making some general observations regarding the role of learning materials in educational settings, a discussion

which culminates by presenting a way of conceptualising their effect. Following that, I focus on the ways in which the learning materials in the host institute seemed to orient pedagogy towards transmissive and communicative practices, and discuss some implications about the study of ELT.

### **8.3.1 Using affordance landscapes to understand the role of resources**

The systematic study of the learning resources available to the host institute yielded insights into both the diachronic development and the current state of the system. With regard to the former, it was assumed that whenever a syllabus or a set of learning materials was created, the intentionalities that were present in the system at that particular time were given material shape. As a result, a systematic investigation of the learning materials was expected to shed light into the system's historicity, even when using a synchronic research design (Dörnyei, 2014; Juarrero, 1999, pp. 227-231, Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008, p. 72). Moreover, the learning resources were part of the system's structure, and therefore influenced its activity. As noted in Section 6.3.1, the view taken in this study was that the influence exercised by resources was not deterministic in the sense that the coursebook content directed teaching. Rather, it was suggested that they presented pedagogical affordances, and (taking into account the pragmatic difficulties associated with materials generation or modification) they tended to make certain forms of language learning activity likelier than others.

To investigate the effect of the learning materials, I put forward a minor modification to existing conceptual tools. In the literature, the behaviour of complex systems is often described by means of topographical metaphors, such as state or phase spaces (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008, pp. 45-49), fitness landscapes (Byrne, 1998, pp. 32-33) or ontogenetic landscapes (Thelen & Smith, 1994, p. 124). These metaphors are used to graphically represent the range of options available to a system, with features such as

depressions, valleys, separatrices (ridges) and saddle points depicting differences in the frequency with which a system finds itself in a particular state. In Chapter 6, I appropriated the topographical metaphor to portray the collective affordances that present themselves to a system at a given point in time. This re-conceptualised metaphorical space, or 'affordance landscape', comprised multiple logically possible types of teaching and learning (or 'system states'), which (for ease of conceptual manipulation) were defined with reference to two dimensions: cultural outlook and pedagogical orientation. I argued that an unconstrained system could in theory move randomly through all these possible states, but the affordances present in the resources seemed to make some states likelier than others. Drawing on the terminology of complexity, I used the term 'attractors' (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008, pp. 49-53), which I slightly reconnotated, to label the effect of learning resources on a system's proclivities. I also noted that attractors did not correspond to fixed, unvarying types of teaching and learning in which the system found itself, but rather to loosely defined 'regions' of activity within which a system's behaviour fluctuated dynamically.

The discussion of affordance landscapes in Chapter 6 was intended as a demonstration of the concept, and therefore no attempt was made to use affordance landscapes more extensively in the study of the host institute. However, this conceptual tool seems to offer potential for the study of complex phenomena in Applied Linguistics, which arguably transcends insights particular to the host institute.

### **8.3.2 Transmissive and communicative affordances**

By examining the affordance landscape of the host institute, I identified two strong attractors, which were associated with transmissive and communicative pedagogy. I related these attractors to the effects of the intentionalities that had been identified in Chapter 5, noting once more the prevalence of the technical and communicative paradigms

and the lack of any visible manifestation of the critical paradigm. It should be noted that neither the epistemological outlook that underpins this study, nor the data available support a direct causal link between the intentionalities and the materials. However, the similarity of findings pertaining to the intentionalities and those pertaining to the learning materials, which was re-encountered in the system's activity as well (see below), lends credence to the hypothesis that mutually shaping influences developed among the intentionalities and the resources.

While one needs to be mindful of the usual cautions against over-generalising, the existence of the two attractors in the system's affordance landscape seems to hint at three significant insights. Firstly, it provides scope for refining conventional wisdom about ELT in Greece, which seems to hold that learning materials are predominantly concerned with transmissive grammar instruction (Kostoulas, 2007; Prodromou & Mishen, 2008). This tendency was partially confirmed, but the systematic study of the learning materials in the host institute seems to suggest rich affordances and dynamism that existing accounts risk concealing. Secondly, the dynamics between the two attractors hint at tensions between the mainstream and technical paradigms. More broadly, they may be seen as evidence both of the encroachment, into the local context, of the ELT ideology prevailing in the Anglophone West, and of the resistance stemming from local beliefs and practices. Thirdly, it is interesting to note that the critical paradigm is not represented in the learning materials, even though there was evidence in the data of a critically-oriented intentionality (International Integration, Section 5.3). This is suggestive of the power relations which seemed to run through the host institute. Since this critically-oriented intentionality was primarily associated with the students, it would appear that the students' needs were more likely to be catered for when they aligned to the beliefs and interests of other agents in the system.

I further found that the relative strength of the two attractors seemed to be influenced by three parameters: the type of lesson, the level of instruction, and diachronic change. Activities focussing on grammar, vocabulary and reading tended to be transmissive, whereas activities aiming to develop the oral skills and writing were more likely to be communicative. In addition, the transmissive attractor was considerably stronger in the early stages of instruction, rather than in the exam preparation courses in which more advanced learners were enrolled. Finally, it seemed that the transmissive attractor waned, and the communicative attractor was correspondingly strengthened, as the host institute evolved over time. Caution should be exercised before claiming that such a re-orientation is part of a broader change in ELT in the Greek context (or the periphery of the Anglophone world, for that matter), but it is an intriguing possibility, which may be further explored by similar work in other settings. In addition, it would be interesting to try and confirm this finding with longitudinal or follow-up studies, for which the insights developed in this thesis might serve as starting points.

## 8.4 Pedagogical activity emerging in the system

The final set of findings pertains to the actual pedagogical practices that took place at the host institute. After succinctly going over the seven prototypical instructional sequences that were defined in this study, I argue that they were products of the interplay between intentionalities and learning resources. I also suggest that they indicate a heightened role of the local context in shaping practice, and finally I develop a hypothesis regarding the underlying mechanisms which connect the host institute to processes of globalisation.

### 8.4.1 Pedagogical activity as an outcome of intentionalities and resources

As expected from the analysis of learning resources (Chapter 6), the prototypical sequences observed at the host institute were either predominantly transmissive or predominantly

communicative. Among the former, I found evidence of: (a) transmissive grammar teaching, seemingly derived from the grammar-translation method and presentation-practice-production sequences, (b) sequences consisting of intensive reading activities and of vocabulary teaching that relied on memorisation, (c) genre-based writing, which aimed at mastering and reproducing the formal features of specific text types, and (d) 'review' sequences, which featured recall and mechanical practice of grammatical and lexical knowledge. Communicative sequences, on the other hand, included: (a) series of process-based writing activities, (b) speaking and writing tasks, and (c) inductive engagement with grammar structures. The transmissive and communicative orientation of these sequences seems to align with observations made in previous sections regarding the prevalence of the technical and mainstream paradigms, and the underrepresentation of the critical paradigm.

The development of transmissive and communicative pedagogical sequences is consistent with theoretical understandings of complex phenomena. For instance, it has been argued that intentionality is bound by the system's structure (Young, et al., 2002), and from that it follows that the pedagogical sequences might be seen as being constrained by the transmissive and pedagogical attractors described in Chapter 6. In Stelma's less deterministic perspective, intentionally-driven activity is generated through the interplay between expectations and resources (Stelma, 2011, 2013; Stelma & Fay, 2014), which also seems consistent with the findings in this thesis.

Similarly, Juarrero argues the current state of the system can be used as the starting point for a hermeneutical narrative, which can disentangle "the specific path the [system's] behaviour took" to reach its current state, as well as how such behaviour "was specifically constrained by the intention and how much by the lay of the land or the external structure of the intention's control loop, as well as (...) other dynamics" (Juarrero, 1999, p. 231).

Juarrero's insistence on identifying the "specific" contributions of agentic behaviour and

“the lay of the land” (the structure within and around a system), among others, seems to be at odds with the understanding of causality that is advanced in this thesis, but we seem to be in essential agreement that the end states of a system are jointly influenced by intentionalities and structure.

Overall, a theoretical perspective which sees teaching and learning activity in the host institute as a product of the interaction between intentionality and resources seems to satisfy both the need for fit with data and theoretical validity, i.e., coherence with existing theorisations (Maxwell, 2002, pp. 50-52). Moreover, such a nuanced account of causality seems useful in understanding patterns of activity which evidence regularity, though not absolute predictability, as is typical of education.

#### **8.4.2 The role of local context**

A second finding relating to pedagogical activity pertains to the prominence of local contextual influences. For example, the Traditional Grammar sequence (Section 7.3) was related to language ideology in Greece, and to transmissive pedagogical practices commonly encountered in Greek education (Section 2.2.1). This interpretation offers insights into a number of apparent puzzles. These include the survival of what might appear as dated practices (when appraised against mainstream ELT professional discourse), or the rationale underpinning the combination of activities which derive their provenance from arguably incompatible ELT methods (e.g., translations and structuralist drilling). Similarly, the use of inductive research methods helped to describe the Reading and Vocabulary sequence (Section 7.2) in terms that reflected parallels with mainstream Greek education, and were a closer match to the data than common instructional sequences encountered in the ELT literature. Furthermore, the nominally discouraged yet pervasive use of bilingual wordlists offers one more example of how local influences (in this case, the L1 shared by most teachers and learners) impacted the teaching and learning practices of the host

institute. In cases such as these, complexity provides both the warrant for extending the investigation into the surroundings of the system in search of significant local influences, and theoretically useful interpretations of the interface between the system and its surroundings.

By relating pedagogical practice to local pedagogical practices, the thesis addresses a significant, if unacknowledged, shortcoming of research into Greek ELT. Historical accounts of ELT in Greece, such as Soulioti (2007), tend to describe the diachronic development of ELT as a turnover of methods and approaches that stem from the Inner Circle and spread outwards. Consequently, they look to narratives such as Richards and Rodgers (2001) and Stern (1983) as a source of analytical categories, despite the fact that such descriptions cannot, and do not, take local pedagogical traditions into account. Moreover, scholarship and research about ELT in Greece sometimes uncritically assumes isomorphic correspondences between the theoretical description of constructs such as 'communicative language teaching' in the literature, their instantiations in Inner Circle settings, and the way in which they are implemented outside the Inner Circle.

While such a perspective offers advantages of narrative convenience, it seems politically problematic and epistemologically misleading. On political grounds, there is a case for challenging accounts which invisibilise local educational traditions in favour of an Anglocentric outlook. Epistemologically, the interpretative validity (Maxwell, 2002, pp. 48-50) of such accounts is often hard to discern, because they seem to disregard local beliefs about language and pedagogy, which have potentially significant effects on practice. For such reasons, the development of descriptive accounts of situated practice seems to constitute a research priority, and this thesis has made a contribution to that end.

### 8.4.3 ELT and globalisation

One final insight of this study pertains to the ways in which ELT develops against a backdrop of globalisation. There is a strand in the literature suggesting unidirectional flows of linguistic norms, cultural values and teaching methodology from the Inner Circle outwards (Kumaravadivelu, 2006a; Phillipson, 1992, 2004). However, the empirical data from this study do not fully confirm such a thesis. To begin with, there was a perhaps surprising absence of Anglo-centric cultural content in the learning materials (Table 5-6). Moreover, there appeared to be active resistance to methodological intrusions into the local context (Section 5.6), and there were some indications that when Inner Circle cultural values and linguistic norms were invoked, this was done for the benefit of the local ELT establishment (Section 5.4). Of course, the scope of this inquiry is such that it would be injudicious to challenge the overall validity of the claims regarding linguistic and cultural imperialism, but in light of the evidence at hand it seems that the mechanisms at work are perhaps more elaborate than what has sometimes been suggested. In the paragraphs that follow I develop a hypothesis regarding one of these mechanisms, drawing on the data from the study.

The relation between local and globalising forces in the host institute might be interpreted as a situation in which a seemingly stable state, typified by practices associated with local pedagogy, gives way to a radically different state, which seems oriented to the mainstream paradigm. Taking into account the drastic nature and abruptness of this change, I described it as a 'phase shift', a sudden change when the dynamics which sustained one state are "transformed into qualitatively different dynamics governing a different space of possibilities" (Juarrero, 1999, p. 233). Juarrero argues that phase shifts are crucial in understanding the behaviour of complex systems, and that a theoretical explanation of such a reconfiguration should account for three factors: (a) the internal processes and

contextual influences that drove the system far from equilibrium, thus enabling such a drastic change possible; (b) the actual perturbation that triggered the phase shift, and (c) the reasons why the system took a specific new form rather than others. The exploratory nature of this particular study precluded the generation of definitive answers to the questions that Juarrero sets. However, on the basis of the available evidence, it seems possible to hypothesise that the phase shift was associated with the valuation of certification.

In Chapter 7, it was seen that instruction at the host institute was initially aligned to the technical paradigm, but this should not be taken as evidence of the absence of influences associated with the mainstream paradigm. The relatively stable 'preferred' state of the system, which might be described as a state of 'dynamic stability' (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008, pp. 55-56), was sustained by complex dynamics of intentions. The underlying dynamics were typified by the confluence of several intentionalities, which served to orient the system towards the technical paradigm, but the Certification intentionality, which was associated with the mainstream paradigm, was still present in them, its effect being cancelled out by competing intentionalities. This intentionality had the potential to drive the system away from equilibrium, when the conditions were conducive to such a change.

In the literature, it is stated that phase shifts are often triggered by a change in a critical variable in the system (a 'control parameter') (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008, p. 53). In such cases, when the control parameter passes a certain 'tipping point', the effects on the system tend to be disproportionately large (cf. this thesis, p. 71). In the case of the host institute, the control parameter appeared to be the imminence of certification examinations. As long as the examinations were a distant possibility in the students' future,

the system tended to operate in its preferred 'transmissive' mode, but a radical reconfiguration took place when examinations were impending.

With regard to the final question set by Juarrero (1999), it seems very plausible that state of the system after the phase shift relates to the linguistic and pedagogical ideology associated with the certification boards. As I argued in Section 5.2.2, the certification examinations were underpinned by communicative conceptualisations of language, and the examination format, which involved the direct testing of communicative skills, seemed to prioritise communicative pedagogy. However, although the reconfiguration of the system was associated with non-local linguistic and pedagogical beliefs, importantly, it was not without benefit to the host institute. Through this reconfiguration, the host institute provided instruction that increased the students' success rates in the examinations, which increased its own commercial viability.

In this section, I looked into the phase shift that seems to occur in the pedagogical activity of the host institute, and used it as a springboard to develop a tentative hypothesis regarding the interplay between local and global influences in ELT. This account, which draws on complexity theory, offers intriguing insights regarding the resilience of local pedagogy, and identifies one of the mechanisms through which globalising forces associated with ELT permeate the local context. Further research, which might confirm this tentative hypothesis, presents itself as a worthwhile possibility for future empirical work.

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So far, I have described how an ELT setting might be conceptualised as a complex system, and discussed the epistemological affordances of such a conceptualisation. By synthesising key insights from the literature with the findings of this study, I showed how an educational setting might be framed, and I presented salient findings about the intentionalities that

sustain its activity, the resources available to it, and its actual activity. I conclude this thesis by placing this study within a broader research agenda, and tracing possible avenues by future research.

## 8.5 Future directions

A finding that recurred in this study was the tension between transmissive and communicative teaching, or (more broadly) between the technical and mainstream paradigms which were defined in Chapter 2. This tension seems to relate to the differences between the beliefs and practices associated with Greek education, and the linguistic and pedagogical ideology associated with ELT as a global profession. It is, however, unclear whether such tensions are idiosyncratic to the host institute or if they recur in other ELT settings in Greece. The generalisability of these findings could perhaps be confirmed through large-scale survey research which could focus on the perceptions, beliefs and practices of teaching practitioners in Greece. Alternatively, a series of case-studies in language education settings selected through theoretical criteria could provide partial confirmation, as well as theoretical depth, to the findings. Some possibilities for such research include case studies in schools in different locations (e.g., rural or metropolitan settings), schools of different sizes and with different student makeup, and ELT situations in the state education system.

Another intriguing possibility for further research involves tracing the impact of socioeconomic changes on the intentionalities that appear to underlie ELT in Greece. Fieldwork for this study was conducted in late 2010 and early 2011, which means that societal beliefs and practices which were used to derive intentionalities may no longer be current. One particular concern is that the findings reported in this thesis may not fully account for the societal impact of prolonged economic depression, the effects of which

began to be felt after the austerity drives that were initiated in May 2010. A follow-up study in the host institute or a similar setting might be able to provide traces of how dynamics of intentions prevailing in the Greek ELT context adjust to such severe perturbations.

The absence of information regarding the critical paradigm in the data presents two possibilities for further research. More obviously, it may prove useful to conduct research in educational settings where different paradigms co-exist. For instance, it may prove interesting to compare the tensions that arose in this study against the tensions that might emerge in settings where the critical and mainstream paradigms are more salient, as is the case in some ESL contexts. A series of ethnographic case studies, such as the one reported in this thesis, could be used to document different kinds of tensions, which might subsequently be integrated in a broader theory about ELT.

Apart from ethnographic investigations, it may prove interesting to conduct action research inquiries (Silver, 2008; Wallace, 1998) in educational settings similar to the host institute, in order to introduce aspects of critical pedagogy into their activity. Such an approach is in line with the recommendations in the CST literature, where it is suggested that action research and experiments that deliberately perturb a system can offer insights into its potential and the underlying processes that sustain its activity (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008, pp. 243-245). Examples of such research might include projects that attempt to challenge perceptions about the normative role of the standard language, or to problematise the societal effects of ELT. Despite the fact that Action Research is praxis-oriented, the observational data generated in these projects could advance our understanding of both ELT and complex systems in general.

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This thesis has demonstrated the feasibility and potential of a complexity-informed study of an educational setting. Using complexity as an ontological frame, it has generated a rich ethnographic description of a language school in the periphery of the English-speaking world, which has extended, and at times challenged, prevailing beliefs about ELT in Greece. Using the data from the language school, it has yielded insights that have advanced understanding of complex systems. While this study has made a step towards nativising complexity to the domain of Applied Linguistics, it is clear that considerable work still remains to be done in this direction. Perhaps then it is fitting that I struggle to find a rhetorically suitable closure for this thesis. This exploration is just beginning.

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# Appendices

## Appendix A: Glossary of Greek terms

This table lists the most important Greek terms that have been used in the thesis, along with a phonetic approximation using the Latin alphabet and a translation or explanation of the term. I do not follow the common Greek practice of transliterating terms, which preserves historical spelling, because my goal is to facilitate pronunciation by readers who are not speakers of Greek. Due to the imperfect match between the Latin alphabet and the Greek phonetic system, the following conventions have been used:

- *-th-* is always used to denote a voiceless labio-dental fricative, similar to the one at the beginning of the word ‘**think**’. The voiced dental fricative which is sometimes indexed with the same spelling (“**there**”) has been rendered in this list as *-d-*.
- Accented vowels (*á, é, í, ó, ú*) are used to indicate a stressed syllable.
- The cluster *-ch-* indexes an aspirated guttural fricative, similar to the one found in Scottish pronunciations of the word “**loch**”.
- I have used the cluster *-ss-* between vowels to indicate voiceless pronunciation, but I index the same pronunciation with a single *-s-* in word-final position, for reasons of simplicity.

| Greek term  | Phonetic rendition                                   | English equivalent   |
|---|--|--|
| <b>Αναλυτικό Πρόγραμμα Σπουδών Αγγλικής Γλώσσας</b> | analitikó prógrama spudón anglikís glóssas           | English Language Analytical Curriculum; a list of notions and functions to be taught in the state ELT system |
| <b>Γυμνάσιο</b>                                     | gimnásio   | junior secondary school  |
| <b>Γενικό Λύκειο</b>                                | genikó líkio   | academically-oriented secondary school   |
| <b>ΓΣΕΕ</b>   | GSEE [ <i>Genikí Synomospondía Ergatón Elládas</i> ] | General Labour Association of Greece   |

| <b>Greek term</b>  | <b>Phonetic rendition</b>                                 | <b>English equivalent</b>  |
|--|---|--|
| <b>Διαθεματικό Ενιαίο Πλαίσιο Προγραμμάτων Σπουδών Ξένων Γλωσσών</b> | diathematikó eniéο plésio proramáton spudón xénon glossón | Interdisciplinary Comprehensive Curricular Framework for Foreign Languages; a specification of aims for MFL in state education                                     |
| <b>Επαγγελματικό Λύκειο,</b>   | epangelmatikó líkio                                       | Vocationally-oriented high school  |
| <b>Επαγγελματική Σχολή</b>   | epangelmatikí scholí                                      | Vocational school  |
| <b>Επάρκεια</b>  | epárkia   | Literally: Adequacy; entry-level teaching qualification  |
| <b>Επαρκειούχος</b>  | eparkiúchos   | Teacher whose teaching credential is an 'epárkia'; cf. ptychiúchos   |
| <b>Κέντρο Ξένων Γλωσσών</b>  | kéntro xénon glossón                                      | Private school offering supplementary language courses (formal use)  |
| <b>Κρατικό Πιστοποιητικό Γλωσσομάθειας</b>                           | kratikó pistopiitikó glossomáthias                        | State Certificate of Language Proficiency  |
| <b>Ολιγοθέσια Σχολεία</b>  | oligothéssia scholía                                      | Literally: Schools with few teaching posts; Rural schools  |
| <b>ΟΕΔΒ</b>  | OEDV - Organismós Ekdóseos Didaktikón Vivlión             | Educational Textbooks Publication Organisation; a (now-defunct) government agency  |
| <b>Ορθογραφία</b>  | orthografía   | Dictation; any ad hoc test   |
| <b>Παιδαγωγικό Ινστιτούτο</b>  | pedagogikó institúto                                      | Pedagogical Institute; a (currently defunct) agency responsible for formulating educational policy   |
| <b>Πρόγραμμα Εκμάθησης Αγγλικών σε Πρώιμη παιδική ηλικία (ΠΕΑΠ)</b>  | prógrama ekmáthissis anglikón se próimi pedikí ilikía     | Teaching English to Very Young Learners programme; this pilot programme involved testing the feasibility of teaching English in Years 1 and 2 of primary education |
| <b>Πτυχιούχος</b>  | ptichiúchos   | Literally: Degree-holder; teacher whose teaching credentials is a BA in English Language and Literature  |
| <b>Σχολεία Ενιαίου Αναμορφωμένου Εκπαιδευτικού Προγράμματος</b>      | Scholía eniéu anamorfoménu ekpedeftikú prográmatos        | Comprehensive Reformed Curriculum schools; relatively large primary schools  |
| <b>Φροντιστήριο</b>  | frontistirio  | Private school offering supplementary tuition (informal use)   |

## Appendix B: The case selection inquiry

### B.1 Finding a suitable research venue

Although this study took place at a language school with which I had been affiliated in the past, it had been my original intention to conduct this research at an alternative venue, in order to minimise reactivity, and because I was apprehensive about the reflexive implications of working in a context that I felt to be too familiar. To that end I engaged in a methodologically rigorous exploration of possible research sites.

The Case Selection Inquiry, as I termed this exploration, consisted of three intertwined activities: (a) collecting information about language schools that might host the study, (b) pragmatically refining my selection criteria on the basis of the information I collected, and (c) selecting a case. These activities would be implemented in three sequential stages (Figure B-1), although in practice the process proved considerably more iterative.

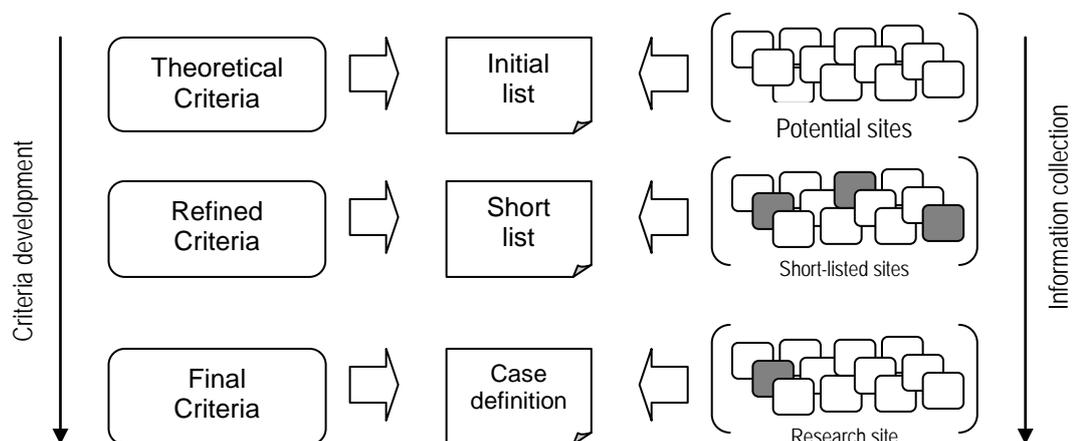
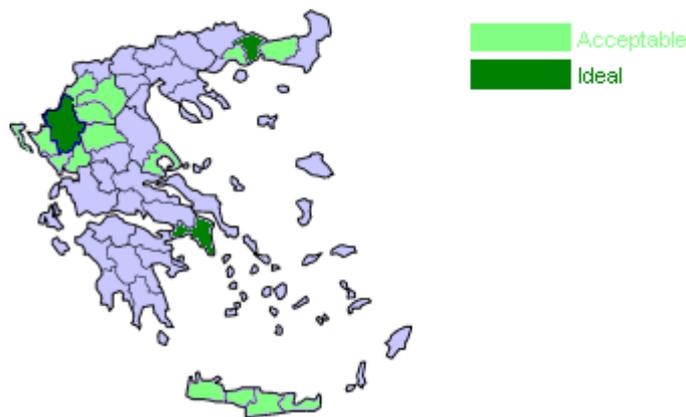


Figure B-1 Overview of the case selection inquiry

During the first stage (preliminary screening), I collected limited demographical information about potential research sites from the public domain, and sought initial consent to approach them with a research proposal. This enabled me to eliminate cases that were

obviously unsuitable for theoretical or practical reasons. Initially, twelve possible cases (Cohort I) were identified, and these were later supplemented with an additional 41 (Cohort II) due to the unexpectedly high attrition rate among potential research sites. My growing frustration about the reluctance of potential collaborators, led me to include the language school with which I had been affiliated at this stage, although it had been excluded from Cohort I.



**Figure B-2 Locations considered for Cohort I**

The sites that were identified at this stage were appraised against four theoretical criteria, namely (a) *institute type*, (b) *size*, (c) *location* and (d) *repute*. For theoretical reasons, it was decided that the institutes to be studied should focus primarily on ELT, and provide a broad range of courses. I also decided to exclude the largest schools, because I was concerned about the within-group generalisability (Maxwell, 2002, pp. 52-55) of the findings, as well as small language schools, which posed a high risk of participant attrition. A loose geographical criterion was applied in order to minimise exclusion of theoretically promising cases (Figure B-2). A minimum of two years of operation was required and a reputation of success was preferred, as a safeguard against sudden closure of the school. Based on conformity to these criteria, each school was assigned to one of three possible categories: Institutes which met at least three of the criteria were assigned to the 'study' category;

institutes that met two criteria were assigned to 'consider' category; the remaining institutes, which fulfilled fewer criteria, were assigned to the 'reject' category.

During the *contact stage*, contact was made with the gatekeepers of 42 institutions which had been placed in the 'study' and 'consider' categories. For schools in Cohort I, initial contact was made by means of an email message, a succinct description of the proposed study, and a link to a web location with additional information about the scope of the research, potential benefits for participating schools and ethical issues. An introductory letter by my academic supervisor was also attached. Also included in the email message was a very brief survey form where gatekeepers could record general information about the school and indicate consent to be contacted again (Appendix B.3). The survey was available in both a printable form and an electronic version in order to facilitate completion. In case of non-response, additional contact was made by telephone a week later, and an attempt was made to elicit responses orally. The contact protocol was slightly modified for the Cohort II schools: electronic communications were replaced with telephone calls and print documentation was used more extensively in an attempt to minimise technology-related inhibitions.

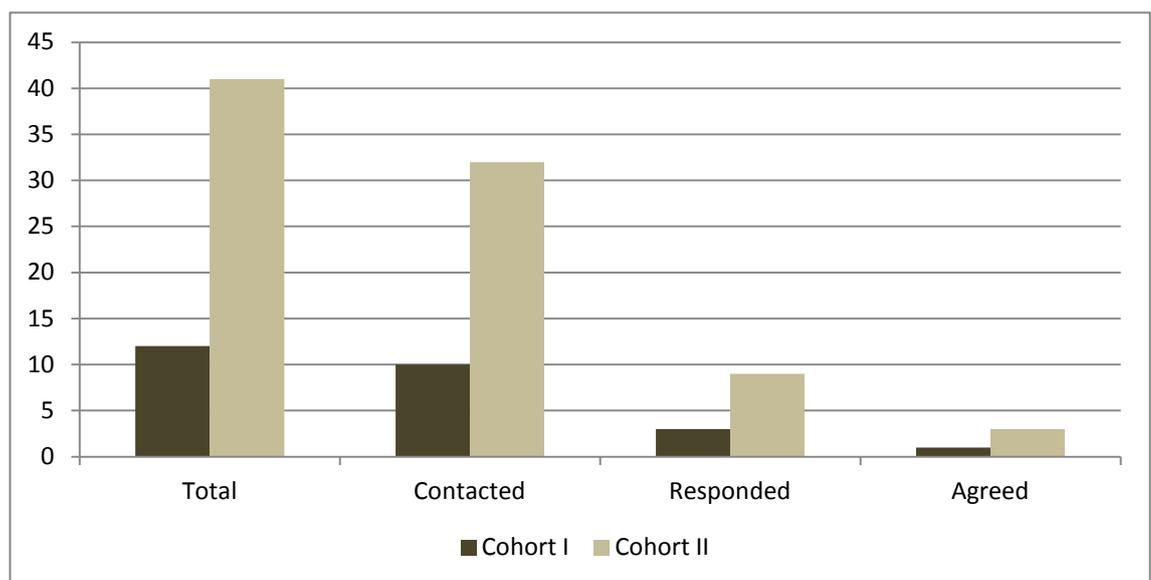


Figure B-3 Attrition rates for the Case Selection Inquiry

Responses from both cohorts were low (Figure B-3): twelve gatekeepers responded, eight of whom indicated that they would prefer not to be contacted during the further stages of the research. The reasons underlying the gatekeepers' scepticism may be inferred from the following email message, sent by one of the gatekeepers who declined to complete the questionnaire:

Dear Achilea,

My name is [...] and I run the frondistirio [foreign language centre] with Ms [...]. In which region of Greece are you conducting your research? Are the results of your survey going to be published somewhere and available to the public? I am reluctant disclosing the kind of information you are asking on this research as you can understand. If you have any other questions I would be happy to help you with your research.

Kind regards,

[...]

From the low response rates and responses such as the above, it appeared that many gatekeepers were apprehensive about releasing sensitive information which could be used by government authorities, and additionally they may have been wary of local commercial competition.

The information that was generated from survey was used to further refine the selection criteria taking pragmatic considerations into account. For instance, the 'size' criterion was operationally defined as:

- a) The institute should employ between 3 and 10 staff involved in EFL instruction.
- b) Ideally, a broad range of courses should be on offer (YL, exam preparation, ESP, teacher development courses).
- c) Consideration will also be given to institutes offering a more restricted range of courses.

A full list of the operational criteria has been reproduced in p. 384. These criteria were then applied to the list of schools which had agreed to participate in the research, and a ranked list was produced according to their suitability. The language school (the 'host institute') which was eventually selected for the research was the second in the ranked list, but, after

eight months of negotiating with potential research sites, I had become conscious of the ways in which considerable pragmatic considerations could outweigh small theoretical advantages, and therefore decided to conduct my research there.

Having come to an initial agreement with the gatekeepers of the host institute, the third stage of the Case Selection Inquiry involved the negotiated delimitation of my study, i.e., the definition of the 'case'. This was conducted through a series of meetings with the school gatekeepers and key personnel. The first meeting served primarily to introduce school stakeholders to my research (with aspects of which they were already familiar, due to personal connections). During the meeting, the school stakeholders were presented with a draft research plan and sample research instruments (questionnaires and interview guides), and they had the opportunity to voice certain concerns they had. Suggestions were also invited regarding the most appropriate timeframe for the research, and which aspects of the day-to-day operations of the institute they would be comfortable to have observed. A revised research plan which incorporated the feedback from the school stakeholders was presented in a second meeting, during which consent to conduct research was formally provided by the school management. A third meeting was held with institute staff, in order to present them with information regarding the study, explain the process of eliciting informed consent and invite their comments.

Although I ended up researching the same school which I had started out it (and one which I had hoped to avoid), the Case Selection Inquiry helped me to develop an appreciation of how this school compared against other settings in Greece where English is taught, and this understanding is reflected in the presentation of my findings.

## B.2 Screening survey

**MANCHESTER**  
1824

The University  
of Manchester

**TESOL in Greece: Phase 1 Survey**

Hello!

Thank you for agreeing to help with this research. I would be grateful if you could take 5 minutes to complete the following survey. All the information you provide will be processed in **strict confidence** and will not be used for any purposes except research.

1. How many students attend English courses at your school in a typical year? *(please tick one)*
  - 50 or fewer
  - 51-100
  - 101-250
  - 251-500
  - 501 or more
2. What courses does your school offer? *(please tick all that apply)*
  - General English
  - Exam preparation
  - English for Academic Purposes
  - English for Special Purposes (e.g. Business English)
  - English for Young Learners / Very Young Learners
  - Other (please specify): .....
3. How many ELT teachers are employed in your school, including directors of study? *(please tick one)*
  - 3 or fewer
  - 4-12
  - 13 or more
4. Could you provide a brief description of your school, focussing on the aspects that make it unique?  

---

---

---

---
5. Would you be willing to take part in the further stages of this research? *(please tick one)*
  - Yes, please!
  - No, thank you.

Thank you for completing this survey: your help is very much appreciated! Please save this document on your computer and mail the **completed version** as an attachment to [achilleas.kostoulas@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk](mailto:achilleas.kostoulas@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk), or return it in the self-addressed envelope provided.

### B.3 Selection criteria

In a personal memo, I defined the following criteria for selecting a research venue:

**1. Institute type:**

- a. Ideally, EFL should either constitute the main aim of the curriculum or as form a substantial part of the curriculum. Examples of such institutes include Foreign Language Centres providing EFL courses or private day schools where English is used as a medium of instruction.
- b. Departments of larger institutes, which focus on English language instruction may also be considered as alternatives. Examples of such institutes include Foreign Language Centres offering courses in several languages including English, EAP units in tertiary institutions, and modern languages departments in large schools.

**2. Institute size:**

- a. The institute should employ between 3 and 10 staff involved in EFL instruction, in order to ensure an adequate number of potential informants without creating selection difficulties.
- b. Ideally, a broad range of courses should be on offer (YL, exam preparation, ESP, teacher development courses), so as to ensure that a variety of issues are raised.
- c. Consideration will also be given to institutes offering a more restricted range of courses.

**3. Institute location**

- a. The institute should be located in the Ioannina, Arta, Preveza, Thesprotia or Attica prefectures for facilitate data collection visits.
- b. Ideally, the institute should be located in a single site.
- c. Schools dispersed over multiple sites may also be considered, provided individual sites can be autonomously studied.

**4. Institute history**

- a. The institute should have been in operation before September 2008, in order to ensure that operational norms have been established.
- b. Ideally, the institute should be successful as ascertained by its reputation or indicators of growth, as this would mean that they are more likely to allow scrutiny and less likely to experience attrition.

## Appendix C: Interviews

### C.1 Interview Progress Chart

The following document was used to track the progress of interviews, and the processing of data.

The University of Manchester



### Interview Progress Chart

**Section I: At a glance**

| Pseudonym    | Status   |
|--------------|----------|
| Consent form | Pending  |
| Audio file   | Ongoing  |
| Transcript   | Complete |
| Hard copy    |          |

**Section II: Procedures**

|  |       |    |
|--|-------|----|
| 1. Was the teacher present at the pre-fieldwork briefing?                | YES   | NO |
| 2. Was the teacher given the information package?                        | YES   | NO |
| 3. When was the teacher contacted to elicit consent?                     | _____ |    |
| 4. Who was the teacher contacted by?                                     | _____ |    |
| 5. Did the teacher consent to participate in the research?               | YES   | NO |
| 6. Was a consent form provided?  | YES   | NO |
| 7. Has an appointment with the teacher been arranged?                    | YES   | NO |
| 8. Has the interview taken place?  | YES   | NO |
| 9. Was the interview audio-recorded?                                     | YES   | NO |
| 10. Was the recording been saved on the computer?                        | YES   | NO |
| 11. Has the Post-interview Form been completed?                          | YES   | NO |
| 12. Has the interview been transcribed?                                  | YES   | NO |
| 13. Has a backup of the transcription been made?                         | YES   | NO |
| 14. Has the transcript been printed out?                                 | YES   | NO |
| 15. Has a copy of the transcript been made available to the participant? | YES   | NO |
| 16. Have corrections been made to the transcript?                        | YES   | NO |
| 17. Has the initial markup been completed?                               | YES   | NO |
| 18. Have the thank-you card and book vouchers been sent?                 | YES   | NO |

**Instructions**

Use **Section I** to record the name of computer files and the location of hard copies. In **Section II**, whenever a NO answer is selected, use the right hand column to succinctly describe alternative arrangements. Also indicate cross-references to the field journal or memos as appropriate.

## C2. Eliciting consent

Prior to an interview, teachers were contacted by an associate, who presented them with a copy of the following letter (or a more personalised version, where appropriate).

Dear (name)

I would like to invite your participation in a study focussing on the way English is taught to young learners in Greece. This research, which forms part of my PhD studies at the University of Manchester, looks into various influences which inform our professional views and practice. But why is this significant?

As teachers of English, we might be forgiven for being somewhat skeptical about concepts and methodological suggestions in the literature, which can appear 'too theoretical' or 'too foreign' for the 'Greek reality'. It would indeed seem that our shared professional context is shaped by unique dynamics, dynamics which we all seem to know implicitly, but have not come under sustained scientific scrutiny so far. Dynamics that I hope to explore with your help.

Should you decide to provide your assistance to this study, you will be asked to participate in a series of interviews in the coming academic year (2010-2011). In total, I hope to meet you in four interviews over the year, which should last approximately an hour each, but you only need to participate in as many interviews as you feel happy to. In order to ensure that your views are reported as accurately as possible, it will be helpful to make an audio recording of the interviews, but alternative arrangements are possible if you do not feel comfortable being recorded. Even in a recorded interview, you will have the option to express views 'off the record'.

The interview data will then be transcribed for analysis and selected quotations may be anonymously used in publications resulting from this study, subject to your approval. Any information or opinions you decide to share with me will be treated with strict confidentiality and will not be used for purposes other than the ones explicitly stated in this letter. To protect your anonymity, the data will only be made available to people directly associated with the University of Manchester, and you will only be identified by a random pseudonym in internal documents and research reports.

To participate in this study all you need to do now is complete the attached *Demographics and Consent Form* and return it to me in any of the ways indicated. I will then contact you to arrange the interview at a time and place that is mutually convenient. You can always withdraw your participation later if you change your mind. If you require any further information about the scope, purposes or methods of the research, please do not hesitate to contact me.

I would be truly grateful if you could consider contributing to this study. As a teacher in the beginning of your career, you are uniquely positioned between the teacher training experience and the challenges of putting your knowledge to practice. I feel confident that your insights will be invaluable in helping me to understand the reality we share with our students; and that this understanding will in turn help us and teaching professionals such as us to shape our professional domain in ways that are both purposeful and significant.

I am looking forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely yours,

Achilleas Kostoulas

The following two-page form was used to record demographic information about interested teachers, record their consent, and schedule an interview.

**MANCHESTER**  
1824

The University of Manchester

### Demographic Data and Consent Form

Thank you for your interest in this study on Greek ELT.

The interview to which you have been invited will last approximately an hour. We will talk about your experience as an English Language teacher, as well as your perceptions of various challenges and factors that impact our shared professional context. I would like to have this interview recorded so as to ensure that your views will be reported accurately, but you have the option to provide comments 'off the record' if you so prefer. Your views will be treated with strict confidentiality and reported anonymously. Under no circumstances will any information gathered during the interview be used for purposes other than those of the research project.

This document is used primarily used as a record that you are satisfied with the information I have provided about the study and that you are happy to participate, which is a requirement by the University Research Ethics Guidelines. It is also used to elicit some information about participating teachers (this is will help readers compare my research to other studies) and about your availability (this will help to arrange the interview at a time and location that are convenient to you). Please return the completed document as an email attachment to [achilleas.kostoulas@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk](mailto:achilleas.kostoulas@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk) or by fax at <redacted>. I will then contact you to finalise arrangements for the interview.

Should you have any additional queries about the research or issues you may wish to discuss, please contact me at the above email address or my mobile (<redacted>).

**Important:**

Before reading on, please answer the following questions:

- ➔ I have read and understood the cover letter outlining the purpose of the research project.  
Yes  No
- ➔ I understand that I do not have to participate in the interview, and that I am free to withdraw my participation at any time.  
Yes  No
- ➔ I understand that the interview may be recorded in part or in full; that this recording will not be made available to parties not involved in the study; and that I will have the option to make 'off the record' comments which will not be recorded.  
Yes  No
- ➔ I understand that some of my responses may be anonymously quoted in the research report(s), and I consent to this use.  
Yes  No

If you have answered YES to ALL the questions above, please sign at the dotted line below and proceed to the following page.

.....

**First, could you please tell us a few things about yourself? This information will be useful in describing participants in the study.**

- How long have you been teaching English? (in years)
  - 1 to 5 years
  - 6 to 10 years
  - 11 to 15 years
  - more than 15 years
  
- Have you ever attended any of the following training courses? (tick as many as apply)
  - CELTA / DELTA
  - BA English Language & Literature / ELT or related
  - MA TESOL or related
  - Non-accredited teacher training courses and seminars
  - Other professional development (please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)
  
- How would you describe your current job? (tick as many as apply)
  - Teacher (Foreign Language Centre)
  - Teacher (Day School)
  - Teacher (1-on-1 tuition)
  - Director of Studies (Foreign Language Centre)
  - Other (please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)
  
- Have you participated in any Education-related research projects in the past?
  - Yes
  - No
  - Prefer not to answer

**The following questions will help me to arrange an interview at a time and place that is convenient to you.**

- When would you prefer the interview to take place? Please list the date and time that is most convenient for you and an alternative if possible.
   
\_\_\_\_\_
   
\_\_\_\_\_
  
- Is there any place where you would prefer to meet?
   
\_\_\_\_\_
   
\_\_\_\_\_
  
- How would you prefer to be contacted?
  - Telephone (number: \_\_\_\_\_ ; time: \_\_\_\_\_)
  - Email (address: \_\_\_\_\_)
  - Other (please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)

## C.3 Interview guide

These are extracts from one of the interview guides that I used in a Phase One interview. At the early stages of the study, my interviews tended to be rigid, as the plan attests, but deviations from the scripts became increasingly common as the study progressed.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| The University of Manchester   | <b>MANCHESTER</b><br>1824  |
|  | <b>Initial Interview Schedule</b>  |
|  | <p><b>0. Introductory comments</b></p> <p>⊕ <b>Appreciation</b><br/><i>I truly appreciate your agreeing to take part in this interview. I know how many demands there are on a teachers' time, and I would like to thank you for making your available.</i></p> <p>⊕ <b>Introduce self and study:</b><br/><i>As you probably know, I am conducting doctoral research at the University of Manchester. Specifically, I am looking into the way English is taught to young learners in Greece.</i></p> <p>⊕ <b>Purpose of the interview:</b><br/><i>What I am trying to do through these interviews is to broaden my understanding of what exactly is taught, how it is taught and to what end. I feel quite certain that you will be able to help me because of your extensive experience as a teacher in this context.</i></p> <p>⊕ <b>Confidentiality &amp; ethics</b><br/><i>As I mentioned in the cover letter, anything you say in interview will be strictly confidential. By this I mean that only I will have access to the records of this conversation; that the information will only be used for the purposes of my research, and that if I do quote you I will not do so by name. Is it OK if I record this interview?</i></p> <p>⊕ <b>Obtain consent:</b><br/><i>Before we go on, is there any more information that you would like to know regarding this research?</i></p> <p><i>Can I have the consent form?</i></p> |
| <p><b>3. Methods</b></p> <p>Would you describe the teaching methods at the school as being more communicative or more traditional?</p> <p><u>Follow up:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <i>How do you feel about this?</i></li><li>- <i>Why do you think these methods are used?</i></li><li>- <i>To what extent do you think these methods are appropriate?</i></li><li>- <i>Do you think we might change something in this direction?</i></li></ul> <p><b>4. Goals</b></p> <p>It seems to me that there is a certain pre-occupation with preparing students for examinations, by which I mean both in-school exams and language certificates. Why do you think this is so important?</p> <p><u>Follow up:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <i>How does this situation affect your teaching?</i></li></ul> |  |
|  | <p><b>10. Closure</b></p> <p>Thank you for your comments – before finishing this interview, is there anything else that you would like to add about your job?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Thank you for your time!</b></p>   |

## C.4 Interview Feedback Form

After the end of an interview, the Interview Feedback Form was completed, with information regarding the administration of the interview and reflexive comments.

|   |   |                                  |  |
|---|---|----------------------------------|--|
| <b>MANCHESTER</b><br>1824   | <b>The University<br/>of Manchester</b> | <b>Interview Feedback Form</b>   |  |
|   |   | <b>Section I: Interview data</b> |  |
|   |   | <i>Interview number:</i>         |  |
|   |   | <i>Pseudonym:</i>                |  |
|   |   | <i>Date / Time:</i>              |  |
|   |   | <i>Duration:</i>                 |  |
|   |   | <i>Location:</i>                 |  |
| <b>Section II: Procedural remarks</b>   |   |                                  |  |
| 1. How well as the interview handled?   |   |                                  |  |
| a. Very well: All the objectives were attained; rapport was very good.  |   |                                  |  |
| b. Mostly well: All the objectives were attained despite some awkwardness   |   |                                  |  |
| c. Improvement is required: Most objectives were attained, but there were several instances of<br>miscommunication, awkward moments of silence etc. |   |                                  |  |
| d. Badly: The interview was not concluded due to poor communication.  |   |                                  |  |
| Why? .....  |   |                                  |  |
| .....   |   |                                  |  |
| .....   |   |                                  |  |
| 2. How did I feel during the interview? .....   |   |                                  |  |
| .....   |   |                                  |  |
| .....   |   |                                  |  |
| 3. What was my impression of the interviewee? .....   |   |                                  |  |
| .....   |   |                                  |  |
| .....   |   |                                  |  |
| 4. What aspects of the interview went well? .....   |   |                                  |  |
| .....   |   |                                  |  |
| .....   |   |                                  |  |
| 5. What aspects of the interview could be improved? How? .....  |   |                                  |  |
| .....   |   |                                  |  |
| .....   |   |                                  |  |

6. Did the interviewee have any comments on the process? .....

.....

.....

.....

7. Other comments:.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

**Section III: Notes**

8. Did the interviewee make any comments that were not recorded on tape?.....

.....

.....

.....

Why was the interviewee reluctant to have these views recorded? .....

.....

.....

9. What new questions might I want to ask based on what I learnt in this interview? .....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

## C.5 Transcription Symbols

### *Pauses*

- , Short pause, continuing intonation.
- . Short pause, concluding intonation. This does not necessarily mark the end of a sentence.
- (.) More noticeable pause, lasting a second or less. May contain a filler.
- (5 sec) Longer pause (in seconds). May contain a filler.
- Sharp cut off of the prior word or sound.
- : The speaker has noticeably stretched the preceding sound or letter. Each colon indicates a length of one tenth of a second.

### *Turn-taking*

- = Latched sentences.
- [ Onset of overlapping talk.

### *Intonation*

- ? Rising inflection. It does not necessarily mark a question.
- ↑↓ Arrows pointing upwards or downwards indicate a rising or falling intonation. These are placed immediately prior to the onset of the intonational shift.

### *Emphasis*

Under Speaker emphasis

- CAPS A section of speech delivered in a noticeably louder voice.
- °° A section of speech delivered in a noticeably quieter voice.
- >< A section of speech delivered in a noticeably faster rate.
- <> A section of speech delivered in a noticeably slower rate.

### *Other*

- .HH In-breathing. Each H indicates length of a second.
- HH Out-breathing. Each H indicates length of a second.
- (( )) Non-verbal activity.
- () Inaudible or unclear fragments in the tape.
- @ Laughter. Each symbol indicates duration of a second.

## Appendix D: Questionnaire Surveys

### D.1 Survey Progress Chart

The progress of questionnaire administration was tracked using the form below:

|  |                               |               |
|--|-------------------------------|---------------|
| The University of Manchester   | <b>MANCHESTER</b><br>1824     |               |
|  | <b>Survey Progress Chart</b>  |               |
|  | <b>Section I: At a glance</b> |               |
|  | <b>Cohort</b>                 | <b>Codes:</b> |
| <b>How many letters were sent?</b>   | <b>Status</b>                 |               |
| <b>How many consent forms were completed?</b>  | Pending                       |               |
| <b>How many questionnaires were returned?</b>  | Ongoing                       |               |
| <b>Where are the questionnaires now?</b>   | Complete                      |               |
| <b>Section II: Procedures</b>  |                               |               |
| 1. Has contact been made with the class?   | YES                           | NO            |
| 2. Have letters of consent been distributed?   | YES                           | NO            |
| 3. Have incentives been given out?   | YES                           | NO            |
| 4. Have questionnaires been given out?   | YES                           | NO            |
| 5. Have collection boxes been deployed?  | YES                           | NO            |
| 6. Have questionnaires been collected (week 1)?  | YES                           | NO            |
| 7. Has the teacher reminded learners to hand in questionnaires?  | YES                           | NO            |
| 8. Have questionnaires been collected (week 2)?  | YES                           | NO            |
| 9. Have collection boxes been removed?   | YES                           | NO            |
| 10. Have questionnaires been screened?   | YES                           | NO            |
| 11. Has a thank you notice been posted on the bulletin board?  | YES                           | NO            |
| 12. Has the appraisal memo been drafted?   | YES                           | NO            |
| 13. Have questionnaires been translated / transcribed?   | YES                           | NO            |
| 14. Have questionnaire data been imported into CAQDAS?   | YES                           | NO            |
| <b>Instructions</b>  |                               |               |
| Use <b>Section I</b> to the number of questionnaires distributed and collected. Also record the sequential numbers for the questionnaires that correspond to this cohort and the location where hard copies are stored. In <b>Section II</b> , whenever a NO answer is selected, use the right hand column to succinctly describe alternative arrangements. Also indicate cross-references to the field journal or memos as appropriate. |                               |               |

## D.2 Eliciting consent

Prior to taking part in a questionnaire survey, learners and their parents indicated their consent in writing. The following document is a translation, from Modern Greek, of a letter addressed to the learners' parents, followed by a (translated) consent form.

|  |                           |        |
|--|---------------------------|--------|
| The University of Manchester   | <b>MANCHESTER</b><br>1824 | [date] |
| <p>Dear parents,</p>   |                           |        |
| <p>I am writing to ask for your help in a study I am conducting at the school your children attend. This research, which forms part of my doctoral studies at the University of Manchester looks into the way English is taught in language schools in Greece. I believe it is useful because it will enable language schools and policy makers to develop courses that are more appropriate and better address our needs.</p>   |                           |        |
| <p>The views of students, such as your children, will be very helpful to my research. This is why I have obtained permission from the language school that your children attend to conduct a questionnaire survey among their students. The survey, which will take approximately 30 minutes to complete, will not disrupt the teaching programme, because the questionnaires are to be completed outside normal teaching hours. In my experience, most students find this to be an enjoyable experience, and they generally appreciate the opportunity to be heard.</p>   |                           |        |
| <p>I would like to reassure you that your children's responses will be processed anonymously. This means that I will know which students participated in the research, but I will not be able to match the data from any questionnaire with any individual student. Some extracts from the research may be used in reports of this investigation, but the anonymity of the students will be respected.</p>   |                           |        |
| <p>Your child's participation to this survey is entirely voluntary and subject to your approval, and I would very much appreciate it if you could take a moment to indicate this in the form that accompanies the questionnaire. If you <u>do not</u> wish for your child to take part in this survey, please indicate this in the form and have it returned to me care of the language school, as I will assume that questionnaires that have been returned without an accompanying form will have been completed with your knowledge and approval. Should you require additional information about this research, you can contact me at [redacted] or my email address (<a href="mailto:Achilleas.kostoulas@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk">Achilleas.kostoulas@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk</a>). Alternatively, you can provide your contact information to the document attached so that I will communicate with you.</p> |                           |        |
| <p>I hope that this research effort will meet with your support. Your child's participation is of great scientific value, because it will help to formulate more valid research findings. Also, on a practical level, I believe that this questionnaire is an excellent prompt for every student to reflect critically on their learning experiences.</p>  |                           |        |
| <p>Thank you in advance for your help in this project.</p>   |                           |        |
| <p>Sincerely yours,</p>  |                           |        |
| <p>Achilleas Kostoulas<br/>Postgraduate researcher<br/>The University of Manchester</p>  |                           |        |

Parent Statement and Consent Form:

- ➔ I have read the attached letter and understand the purposes of the study.  
Yes  No
- ➔ I understand that students participate in this study only if they are happy to do so.  
Yes  No
- ➔ I understand that some of the responses given by students may be used anonymously in publications arising from this research and I consent to this use.  
Yes  No
- ➔ I consent to the participation of my child in this survey.  
Yes  No

.....  
(signature)

Additional Information Request:

I am interested in learning more about your research and would like you to contact me in the following way:

.....  
.....

Volunteer's Statement:

- ➔ I have taken part in other research projects like this.  
Yes  No
- ➔ I am happy to take part in this research.  
Yes  No
- ➔ I understand that I needn't answer all the questions if I don't want to.  
Yes  No
- ➔ It's OK if you use some of my ideas in a publication without saying my name.  
Yes  No

Please remember to bring this document back with the questionnaire.  
Place this document in the RED box, and the questionnaire in the BLUE box.

### D.3 Questionnaire One

This is a copy of the questionnaire administered to students at the host institute during Phase One of fieldwork. The questionnaire was distributed in A4 sheets, fronted with a cover page (not shown). The overall layout of the questionnaire was designed to conform to the visual identity guidelines of The University of Manchester, with the exception of the typeface, as Comic Sans Serif was considered to be more visually appealing to young respondents.

The University of Manchester

MANCHESTER  
1824

Hello,

Thank you for agreeing to help me out in this project. I am interested in finding out more about why you learn English, how you prefer to learn and what you consider important. I hope that all this information may help teachers design more enjoyable and more effective lessons. You can help me to do this by giving detailed answers to the questionnaire I have designed.

You needn't answer any questions if they don't apply to you, or if you don't want to. Remember that this is not a test: there are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers, and your replies will have no effect on your grade. Besides, your answers will be completely anonymous: this means that your teacher or parents will never know who wrote what. So you can write your opinion completely freely.

I am looking forward to reading your replies!

Achilleas Kostoulas  
The University of Manchester

## How do you prefer to learn?

---

Not all English lessons are the same. Here are some examples of different English lessons. I would like to know your opinion about each lesson. You can write if it is interesting or boring, useful or not, usual or unusual.

### Lesson type 1

The teacher talks about a new grammar rule

The students do exercises to practice the new language

The students talk or write a story using what they have learnt

---

---

### Lesson type 2

The students read or listen to a text

The students find information in the text that helps them understand a grammar rule

The students use the grammar rule in exercises

---

---

### Lesson type 3

The students work together on a task

The students then present what they did

The class discusses language mistakes

---

---

#### Lesson type 4

The class revises grammar and vocabulary from previous lessons

The students do exercises in the book and the teacher checks them

The teacher tells the students to study for a test on the next lesson

---

---

#### Lesson type 5

The class read the next lesson in the coursebook

The class answer questions about the new lesson

The teacher explains new words and grammar

The students do exercises

---

---

#### Lesson type 6

The class read a text (e.g. a story)

The class do listening and speaking tasks

The students prepare to write a text

The class write a text (in class or for homework).

---

---

## What do you think about learning English?

Now it's time for something different. Look at the pictures below: these are children who have very different opinions about English, and since they cannot agree, you must decide who's right! Put a tick (✓) under the child whose opinion seems more reasonable, and answer the questions that follow.



I am a better student than Aris, because I never make mistakes. When I meet my cousins from America, I only speak if I am sure, because I hate making mistakes. I don't always understand them, but in a few years my English will be perfect!

Marios



I do better at English than Marios. Of course he does better in tests, but whenever our cousins from America visit, he doesn't even talk to them. I always talk to them and we have great fun, but my mother says that my English is not as good as theirs.

Aris



I am finishing my grammar exercises. It is important to practice grammar, because this will help us speak and write correctly.

Katerina



Knowing a language is all about speaking and listening, reading and writing; it's about being able to communicate. I couldn't care less about grammar!

Dimitra

What is your opinion? What should we be learning in an English class?

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Our teacher never speaks in Greek and I don't always understand what she says. She must sometimes speak in Greek too. Does she think she's in England?

Our teacher must always speak in English even if some children do not understand her. I don't like it when she speaks in Greek. This is not a Greek class!

Thomas



Joanna

How important is it to use English in class? Should we use Greek sometimes? If so when?

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When people say that they like my Greek accent, I feel so happy! It shows where I am from, and I am proud of that. Besides, children who try to speak with an English accent just sound weird.

When people say that I speak like an English girl, I feel so proud! It shows that I am a good student, and it sounds great too!

Nikos



Valia

How do you feel about people who speak with British or American accents? How important is it for you to speak with such an accent?

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## Reasons for learning English

Surely you know that most children like you attend English lessons. But they don't all learn English for the same reasons! Some children even attend English lessons even though they don't want to! In order to design courses that are more useful, we need to find out more about your reasons for learning English. Please circle the option that best describes your opinion and answer the questions.

How do you feel about learning English?



Why (not)? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Will English help you later in life?



Why (not)? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Why do you think most children learn English (rather than any other language)?

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

## Some information about you

Wonderful! We have almost finished! All I need now is some information about you.

- Which year were you born in? \_\_\_\_\_
- What class are you in? \_\_\_\_\_
- How long have you studied English? \_\_\_\_\_
- Can you speak any other languages (besides Greek, that is!) \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you very much for your help!

## D.4 Questionnaire Two

Below are pages from the questionnaire survey administered in the second phase of the fieldwork. The questionnaire, which fully conformed to The University of Manchester visual identity guidelines, was designed as an A4-sized booklet, with each A4 sheet containing two of the pages shown below. Not shown below: the cover page of the questionnaire, a letter (in Greek) to the participants' parents (identical to the one translated in p. 362), and the back page, where my contact information was listed.

Hello,

Thank you for agreeing to help me out in this project. I am interested in finding out more about the way that English is taught at your school. I am especially interested in the way you learn grammar and vocabulary and your feelings about testing. I hope that all this information may help teachers design more enjoyable and more effective lessons. You can help me to do this by giving detailed answers to the questionnaire I have designed.

You needn't answer any questions if they don't apply to you, or if you don't want to. Remember that this is not a test: there are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers, and your replies will have no effect on your grade. Besides, your answers will be completely anonymous: this means that your teacher or parents will never know who wrote what. So you can write your opinion completely freely.

I am looking forward to reading your replies!

Achilleas Kostoulas

The University of Manchester



**Before we can go on, please read the following statements, and tick (✓) the right box.**

- I am happy to take part in this research.  
Yes  No
- I understand that I needn't answer all the questions if I don't want to.  
Yes  No
- It's OK to use some of my ideas in a publication without saying my name.  
Yes  No

**If you have ticked YES to ALL the previous statements, you can go on completing the questionnaire**

## How do you usually learn?

---

There are many different ways to learn something, and not everybody finds the same method most effective. In this part of the questionnaire, you can give me information about how you usually learn grammar and vocabulary.

Which of the following things do you do to learn new grammar?

1. I listen to the teacher explain the rules.  
I do this very often  I sometimes do this  I have tried this but it doesn't really work for me  I have never done this
2. I read the examples and try to understand the rules.  
I do this very often  I sometimes do this  I have tried this but it doesn't really work for me  I have never done this
3. I study the rules from my student's book.  
I do this very often  I sometimes do this  I have tried this but it doesn't really work for me  I have never done this
4. I study the rules from my companion.  
I do this very often  I sometimes do this  I have tried this but it doesn't really work for me  I have never done this
5. I study the rules from my notebook.  
I do this very often  I sometimes do this  I have tried this but it doesn't really work for me  I have never done this
6. I write down the grammar rules on my notebook.  
I do this very often  I sometimes do this  I have tried this but it doesn't really work for me  I have never done this
7. I do exercises in my book / workbook / grammar book.  
I do this very often  I sometimes do this  I have tried this but it doesn't really work for me  I have never done this
8. I review the mistakes I made in the exercises.  
I do this very often  I sometimes do this  I have tried this but it doesn't really work for me  I have never done this
9. I speak and write in English  
I do this very often  I sometimes do this  I have tried this but it doesn't really work for me  I have never done this
10. I review the mistakes I made in the writing exercises.  
I do this very often  I sometimes do this  I have tried this but it doesn't really work for me  I have never done this

**What does your teacher do to teach the grammar? Do you find that helpful? Why?**

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Which of the following things do you do to learn new words?

1. I write down the meanings of the words I don't know on my student's book.  
I do this very often  I sometimes do this  I have tried this but it doesn't really work for me  I have never done this
2. I study the words using the vocabulary handouts.  
I do this very often  I sometimes do this  I have tried this but it doesn't really work for me  I have never done this
3. I study the words using my companion.  
I do this very often  I sometimes do this  I have tried this but it doesn't really work for me  I have never done this
4. I study the words using a Greek – English dictionary.  
I do this very often  I sometimes do this  I have tried this but it doesn't really work for me  I have never done this
5. I study the words using an English dictionary.  
I do this very often  I sometimes do this  I have tried this but it doesn't really work for me  I have never done this

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**What does your teacher do to teach new words? Do you find that helpful? Why?**

## Who's right?

Now it's time for something different. Look at the pictures below: these are children who have very different opinions about English, and since they cannot agree, you must decide who's right! Put a tick (✓) under the child whose opinion seems more reasonable, and answer the questions that follow.



I am finishing my grammar exercises. It is important to practice grammar, because this will help us speak and write correctly.

Katerina



Exercises are not helpful for me! I sometimes have the exercises correct but make mistakes when I talk or when I write. So I need more practice in speaking and writing.

Dimitra

What types of exercises do you usually do to learn the grammar? How many are they? Are they in your book, your workbook or a handout?

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Do you find them easy or difficult? Why (not)?

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Do you think they are helpful? Why (not)?

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If I don't know a word I check my companion. The companion has most of the words I need. I also have a Greek English dictionary that can help me if I can't find the word in the companion.

Thomas



If I don't know a word, I check my dictionary. I have a dictionary that explains words in English. It's not always easy to understand but I get more practice in reading and understanding!

Joanna

Does your teacher explain the words in Greek or in English? How do you feel about that?

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My teacher has given me a list of words to study. I think these lists are very helpful, because they have all the words I need to know. This helps me study.

Marios



My teacher told me to find the words I don't know and look up their meanings. I like working like this, because I only need to learn the words that are most useful to me.

Aris

How many words do you have to learn in each lesson? How are these chosen?

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## Let's talk about tests!

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Generally speaking, there are two kinds of tests: tests that we have in class and examinations such as the First Certificate in English (the 'Lower'). In this part of the questionnaire we can talk about both. In the questions that follow, circle the choice you prefer and explain why you chose it in a few words.

How do you feel about class tests?



Why (not)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Are examinations such as the FCE (Lower) and the Proficiency important to you?



Why (not)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Having a certificate such as the FCE or the Proficiency is more important than knowing English well.



Why (not)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Some information about you

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Wonderful! We have almost finished! All I need now is some information about you.

- Have you taken part in research such as this in the past? YES  NO
- What year were you born in? \_\_\_\_\_
- What class are you in? \_\_\_\_\_
- How long have you studied English? \_\_\_\_\_
- Can you speak any other languages (besides Greek, that is!) \_\_\_\_\_

## Comments

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You can use this space to record anything else you want to say.

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**Thank you very much for your help!**

## D.5 Questionnaire Three (a)

Below are pages from the first questionnaire survey administered in the third phase of the fieldwork. The questionnaire, which fully conformed to The University of Manchester visual identity guidelines, was designed as an A4-sized booklet, with each A4 sheet containing two of the pages shown below. Not shown below: the cover page of the questionnaire, the back page where my contact information was listed, a page where informed consent was recorded (identical to the one reproduced in p. 366), and a letter (in Greek) to the participants' parents (identical to the one translated in p. 362).

### Reasons for learning English

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People learn English for many different reasons. Could you describe why learning English is important to you (or your parents)?

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Meet Jane and Thomas. They both have a problem and would like your advice. What do you think they should do?



I've learnt some English (up to D' Class) but I don't think it's interesting any more. I already know enough, so I'd like to stop now and start a new language, like French or German. What do you think?

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I use English every day: I chat with friends all over the world, browse the Internet, listen to music... I am quite good at it, so I don't think I should have to take lessons. Should I quit my English course?



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## Learning about other cultures

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In this part of the questionnaire, I would like you to consider how important it is for you to learn about foreign cultures in your English classes. For each item, you will need to circle the answer that is closest to your opinion:

I believe that it is important to learn about...

**1. British culture:**

Very important       Important       Not so important       Not important at all

**2. American culture:**

Very important       Important       Not so important       Not important at all

**3. The culture(s) of other English speaking countries (e.g. Canada, Australia)**

Very important       Important       Not so important       Not important at all

**4. The culture(s) of other countries all over the world**

Very important       Important       Not so important       Not important at all

**5. The culture(s) of other people who live in Greece**

Very important       Important       Not so important       Not important at all

"Culture" can mean many different things: for example books, films and television, music, theatre etc. Can you think of any examples of cultural things that you will be able to do when your English is good enough?

Write some activities and why they are important to you

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## Language Centres & State Schools

In addition to learning English here, you also take English lessons in your public school. In this section you can write your opinion about these lessons.

Complete the following sentence:

I think that the lessons at school are ..... because.....

.....

Use the table below to compare public schools and private language centres:

|   | Public Schools | Private Language Centres |
|---|----------------|--------------------------|
| <b>The lesson</b><br>    |                |                          |
| <b>The books</b><br>   |                |                          |
| <b>The teacher</b><br> |                |                          |

## Choosing an exam

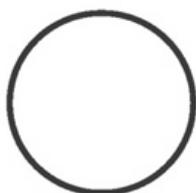
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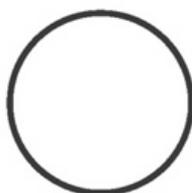
In this part of the questionnaire, we will look into your opinions about specific tests. I want to find out how you decided / will decide which exam you will take, and what you know about the different alternatives.

The box below lists various exams. I want you to place them in the circles depending on whether you think they are suitable for you.

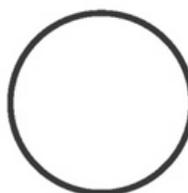
FCE (Cambridge), ECCE (Michigan), LTE Level 3 (Edexcel), ΚΠγ (B2), TIE, City and Guilds



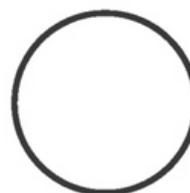
Very suitable



Not sure



Not suitable



I don't know about this

Now I want you to tell me a few things that you know about each exam that influenced your decision:

FCE (Cambridge)

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ECCE (Michigan)

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LTE Level 3 (Edexcel)

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ΚΠγ (B2)

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TIE

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City and Guilds

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## Certificates

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In this part of the questionnaire, I want you to tell me about your decision to take a language certificate. In your view, why is it important to have a language certificate?

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## Some information about you

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Wonderful! We have almost finished! All I need now is some information about you.

- Have you taken part in research such as this in the past? YES  NO
- What year were you born in? \_\_\_\_\_
- What class are you in? \_\_\_\_\_
- How long have you studied English? \_\_\_\_\_
- Can you speak any other languages (besides Greek, that is!) \_\_\_\_\_

## Comments

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You can use this space to record anything else you want to say.

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**Thank you very much for your help!**

## D.6 Questionnaire Three (b)

Below are pages from the second questionnaire survey administered in the third phase of the fieldwork. The questionnaire, which fully conformed to The University of Manchester visual identity guidelines, was designed as an A4-sized booklet, with each A4 sheet containing two of the pages shown below. Not shown below: the cover page of the questionnaire, the back page where my contact information was listed, a page where informed consent was recorded (identical to the one reproduced in p. 370), and a letter (in Greek) addressed to the participants' parents (identical to the one translated in p. 362).

### Listening activities

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Meet Jane and Thomas! They're both good learners, but they have different views on listening. Who do you agree with more?



I prefer to practice English by listening to my teacher speak to me in English!



I prefer to practice English by listening to CD recordings / videos of people talking to each other!

Why?

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How useful do you think the following strategies are for learning English? (Circle the best answer)

|   |             |              |               |                  |
|---|-------------|--------------|---------------|------------------|
| • I listen to songs / video clips         | Very useful | Quite useful | Not so useful | A waste of time! |
| • I listen to CDs with dialogues in class | Very useful | Quite useful | Not so useful | A waste of time! |
| • I listen to my teacher speak in English | Very useful | Quite useful | Not so useful | A waste of time! |
| • I watch films in English                | Very useful | Quite useful | Not so useful | A waste of time! |

How often do you do strategies for learning English? (Circle the best answer)

|   |            |           |        |       |
|---|------------|-----------|--------|-------|
| • I listen to songs / video clips         | Very often | Sometimes | Rarely | Never |
| • I listen to CDs with dialogues in class | Very often | Sometimes | Rarely | Never |
| • I listen to my teacher speak in English | Very often | Sometimes | Rarely | Never |
| • I watch films in English                | Very often | Sometimes | Rarely | Never |

Can you describe how you practice listening in class?

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## Writing activities

Here are three more students: Marios, Erdigena, and Maria. They reasons for writing paragraphs and essays. Whose opinion is closest to yours?



It is important to write, in order to remember the words and grammar, because if you don't use them, you will forget them!



It is important to practice writing, because it helps us later in life and in exams, if we want to write a letter, or an email, or a story...



Writing essays and paragraphs helps me because I learn how to organize my thoughts, and how to work with my classmates!

How useful do you think the following strategies are for writing a good paragraph or essay?

- |  |             |              |               |                  |
|--|-------------|--------------|---------------|------------------|
| • Discussing ideas in class                  | Very useful | Quite useful | Not so useful | A waste of time! |
| • Making a plan                              | Very useful | Quite useful | Not so useful | A waste of time! |
| • Using a dictionary to translate from Greek | Very useful | Quite useful | Not so useful | A waste of time! |
| • Correcting mistakes that my teacher found  | Very useful | Quite useful | Not so useful | A waste of time! |
| • Correcting mistakes that my friends found  | Very useful | Quite useful | Not so useful | A waste of time! |

Can you describe the steps you take in writing an essay or paragraph?

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What is the greatest difficulty in writing a paragraph / essay, and how can your teacher help you with it?

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## Reading activities

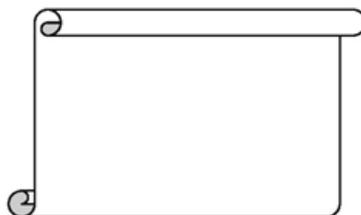
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Great! Let's now talk about reading. Read the following statements, and indicate what you believe about them.

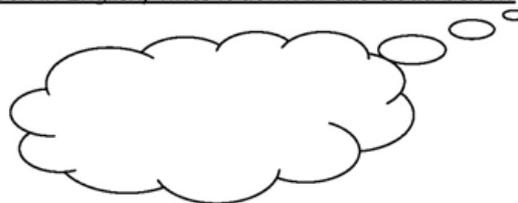
I get better in English when I read English books.

Strongly Agree      Agree      Disagree      Strongly Disagree      Don't know

If you have read any books in English, write them down in the scroll below:



If you want to read a book in English, write it down in this cloud below:



I get better in English when I read English newspapers and magazines:

Strongly Agree      Agree      Disagree      Strongly Disagree      Don't know

There are a number of books and magazines in the Self-Access Centre for you to read. If you don't read often, can you write down why?

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## Some information about you

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Wonderful! We have almost finished! All I need now is some information about you.

- Have you taken part in research such as this in the past? YES  NO
- What year were you born in? \_\_\_\_\_
- What class are you in? \_\_\_\_\_
- How long have you studied English? \_\_\_\_\_
- Can you speak any other languages (besides Greek, that is!) \_\_\_\_\_

## Comments

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You can use this space to record anything else you want to say.

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**Thank you very much for your help!**

## D.7 Analytical memos

The memo below describes a questionnaire which was deemed unusual, as most of the responses seemed to differ from the ones provided by the respondent's peers. The pseudonym 'Ioanna', was randomly assigned to designate the respondent.

Of the eight Phase One questionnaires completed, Ioanna's is unique because it's the only one where a negative attitude towards English is openly expressed. In her view, English is something she doesn't like, because *'you start learning English from a very early age, and you get bored with it every year.'* An indication of the strength of Ioanna's beliefs can be seen in the fact that, Ioanna's the only respondent who made use of the *Additional Comments* field, where she wrote that she wished she *'didn't have to attend English classes at the frontistirio [Foreign Language Centre]'*.

Based on the *responses* provided in the first section of the questionnaire, it seems that most of the lessons Ioanna attends involve the teaching, practice and revision of grammar: Lesson Patterns 1 (PPP), 2 (inductive grammar) and 4 (Grammar and Vocabulary Review) are described as *'usual'*, *'unliked'*, and *'board'* [i.e. boring]. In addition, her description of a typical lesson seems to involve little other than 'exercises' and 'dictation': *'In an English lesson, first we do a dictation, then we read the lesson, then we do exercises and finally, we are given exercises for homework, as well as words [to learn] for dictation'*.

I originally thought that the Ioanna's grievance seemed to focus on the content of her lessons, and in particular, the emphasis on grammar. However, in the later questions she clarifies that she believes grammar to be an important part of the syllabus, *'because if you know grammar well, you also know how to speak and read etc.'* What she does seem to mind most is the quantity of work that she's expected to carry out because *'we sometimes have lots of homework for school, and we don't have enough time, and they [i.e. teachers] yell at us'*.

In a similar vein, Ioanna has expressed some dissatisfaction with what she perceives as an emphasis on testing. In her words: *'we shouldn't take tests, because if someone does very bad, but she has studied a lot at home, then the teacher will yell at her and tell her to study again. And the [other] kids will ask how she did, and that's very embarrassing.'*

Ioanna believes that the English Only policy used at the school does not serve all the students well, because *'there are also some kids who don't understand the teacher but are too embarrassed to say so'*.

This image described by Ioanna is at stark contrast with the perspective of other students who talk about the value of learning English, the motivation generated by making progress, and the intrinsic interest in learning a new language. For Ioanna, learning English is a tedious and repetitive process (*'we start with the Present Simple every year and then do the same grammar we did and before'*), and it is only valuable to the extent that it constitutes a passport to future employment (*'it will help me in the future for my job'*).

The analytical memo partially reproduced below is an example of the 'summary of responses' memos, used in the preliminary analysis of questionnaire data.

## Learning grammar

In terms of content, the grammatical syllabus of D' Class is a broad overview of language structures that have been systematically taught in previous years. This review seems to be perceived in favourable terms by the learners, who pointed at the need for revision and consolidation (*'the grammar is also known since the previous years but some things or details must [be] explain[ed] to us again'*), and commented that *'I find that helpful because we don't spend a lot of time in class for things that we knew from lower classes'*.

As far as methods are concerned, grammar-focused instruction tends to take the form of an explicit presentation followed by controlled practice. Grammatical points are presented ('explained') in the form of rules, followed by illustrative examples (Table 1). These are written on the board and copied by the students on their notebooks. This is followed by a discussion of the rules that had been presented, during which the teacher answers the students' queries.

After that, the new language is practiced through controlled production activities. These activities are chosen from the course book or workbook although handouts are also used extensively. As concisely summed up by one of the learners: *"We do exercises like to answer questions about grammar or our teacher gives us photocopies with exercises. Most of them are in our workbook and our book. The others are from the teacher."*

These activities are done by the entire group working in plenary mode, which allows the teacher to make additional clarifications as necessary in response to difficulties or mistakes that the students make.

She **explains** us the grammar  
She always **explain** us the grammar rules the unknown words but all of them in English  
She **tells** and **examples** us the grammar. We **write down** it to the notebook.  
My teacher **explaine** as to the grammar with **examples**  
The teacher **explains** to me the grammar that I'm going to learn and she always says to **write it down** in my notebook  
Our teacher writes new grammar on the blackboard and she **tell us to write everything down**. Then she **explain** us the grammar and answer our questions

Additional grammar practice is usually assigned as homework *'in order to check the grammar and the mistakes that you can do'*. Students are routinely assigned several grammar exercises to complete at home. These are typically in the form of controlled production, such as gap-and-cue, multiple-choice or transformation exercises (*'It... has some verbs, that we have to put in the correct form'*; *'Our exercises are related to multiple choice or texts where we have to put the correct verb in the correct form'*; *'We do exercises like multiple choise or write a sentence to be the same as a sentence bellow'*), and are usually contained in the student's coursebooks or workbooks.

The grammar exercises are generally perceived as being both easy and useful. The facility of the exercises seems to stem from their straightforward nature and their close relation to the language that was recently taught. Several variants of the following comment were encountered in the responses: *'They are easy because I read them very carefully and I have studied the grammar very well before I do them'*. In fact, *'they are difficult only if you have unknown words or don't understand what you have to do.'* Grammar practice exercises were also described as *'the most efficient and practical way to learn something'*. The reason most often cited was their utility in help learners better understand the grammar: *'They are helpful if you haven't understood the grammar'*; *'I learn better a specifik grammar phenomenon'*; *'I think they are helpful because we can see and ~~check~~ correct our mistakes in order not to do them and improve our ~~grammar~~ English'*; *'we learn when we must...'*

## Appendix E: Classroom Observations

### E.1 Observation Progress Chart

Progress of classroom observations was tracked using the form below:

|  |                                   |                          |
|--|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| The University of Manchester   | <b>MANCHESTER</b><br>1824         |                          |
|  | <b>Observation Progress Chart</b> |                          |
|  | <b>Section I: At a glance</b>     |                          |
|  | <b>Observation</b>                | <b>Status</b>            |
| <b>Data &amp; Time</b>   | <b>Teacher</b>                    | <b>Field Notes</b>       |
|  | Pending                           | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|  | Ongoing                           | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|  | Complete                          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Section II: Procedures</b>  |                                   |                          |
| 1. Was the teacher present at the pre-fieldwork briefing?  | YES                               | NO                       |
| 2. Was the teacher given the information package?  | YES                               | NO                       |
| 3. When was the teacher contacted to elicit consent?   | _____                             |                          |
| 4. Who was the teacher contacted by?   | _____                             |                          |
| 5. Did the teacher consent to be observed?   | YES                               | NO                       |
| 6. Was a consent form signed?  | YES                               | NO                       |
| 7. Have the observation date & time been set?  | YES                               | NO                       |
| 8. Has the pre-observation meeting taken place?  | YES                               | NO                       |
| 9. Has a copy of the lesson plan been obtained?  | YES                               | NO                       |
| 10. Have Sections I & II of the field note document been completed?  | YES                               | NO                       |
| 11. Has the observation taken place?   | YES                               | NO                       |
| 12. Were observation field notes made?   | YES                               | NO                       |
| 13. Did a post-observation briefing take place?  | YES                               | NO                       |
| 14. Were the observation field notes shown to the class teacher?   | YES                               | NO                       |
| 15. Has the observation document been completed?   | YES                               | NO                       |
| 16. Has the initial markup been completed?   | YES                               | NO                       |
| 17. Have the thank-you card been sent?   | YES                               | NO                       |
| 18. Have the fieldnotes been entered into the CAQDAS?  | YES                               | NO                       |
| <b>Instructions</b>  |                                   |                          |
| Use <b>Section I</b> to record the name of computer files and the location of hard copies. In <b>Section II</b> , whenever a <b>NO</b> answer is selected, use the right hand column to succinctly describe alternative arrangements. Also indicate cross-references to the field journal or memos as appropriate. |                                   |                          |

## E.2 Observation form & Instructions

The form below was used for recording information during classroom observation. The form consisted of two pages and was accompanied by a two page instruction sheet (pp. 391-392).

| The University<br>of Manchester                     | <b>MANCHESTER</b><br>1824   |   |           |          |                 |                    |              |
|---|---|---|-----------|----------|-----------------|--------------------|--------------|
|   | <b>Classroom Observation Field Notes</b>  |   |           |          |                 |                    |              |
|   | <b>Section I: Observation Information</b>   |   |           |          |                 |                    |              |
|   | <table border="1"><tr><td>Class:</td><td>Students:</td></tr><tr><td>Teacher:</td><td>Objectives:</td></tr><tr><td>Date / Time:</td><td></td></tr></table>   | Class:  | Students: | Teacher: | Objectives:     | Date / Time:       |              |
| Class:  | Students:   |   |           |          |                 |                    |              |
| Teacher:  | Objectives:   |   |           |          |                 |                    |              |
| Date / Time:  |   |   |           |          |                 |                    |              |
|   | <b>Section II: Pre-Observation Notes</b>  |   |           |          |                 |                    |              |
|   | <table border="1"><tr><td style="width: 20%;">What am I trying to learn through this observation?</td><td></td></tr></table>  | What am I trying to learn through this observation? |           |          |                 |                    |              |
| What am I trying to learn through this observation? |   |   |           |          |                 |                    |              |
|   | <b>Section III: Observation Notes</b>   |   |           |          |                 |                    |              |
|   | <table border="1"><thead><tr><th style="width: 60%;">Description of lesson</th><th>Remarks</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td rowspan="3"></td><td><i>Language</i></td></tr><tr><td><i>Methodology</i></td></tr><tr><td><i>Goals</i></td></tr></tbody></table> | Description of lesson                               | Remarks   |          | <i>Language</i> | <i>Methodology</i> | <i>Goals</i> |
| Description of lesson                               | Remarks   |   |           |          |                 |                    |              |
|   | <i>Language</i>   |   |           |          |                 |                    |              |
|   | <i>Methodology</i>  |   |           |          |                 |                    |              |
|   | <i>Goals</i>  |   |           |          |                 |                    |              |
|   | Classroom Observation Field Notes   |   |           |          |                 |                    |              |

**Section IV: Post-Observation Notes**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Did the teacher make any additional comments? |  |
|---|--|

|  |  |
|--|--|
| What insights did I gain through this observation? |  |
|--|--|

|  |  |
|--|--|
| What was the effect of my presence in the classroom? |  |
|--|--|

**Section V: Emerging Questions**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| What questions might I ask based on this observation? |  |
|---|--|

**Section VI : Data Management**

|              |  |                     |  |
|--------------|--|---------------------|--|
| Completed:   |  | Store in:           |  |
| Coded:       |  | Memos linking here: |  |
| Scanned:     |  |                     |  |
| Transcribed: |  |                     |  |

## Classroom Observation Field Notes

### Completion Instructions

#### Section I: Observation Information

Use a pencil to complete this section with information elicited by the class teacher when arranging a classroom observation. Use a pen to complete this section after the meeting is confirmed.

- Complete the left-hand column by recording the **class** which is being observed, the name of the **teacher** and the **date** and **time** of observation. This will form a reminder for the meeting.
- Complete the right-hand column (**students, objectives**) only if a lesson plan is not provided. Use values from the following tables:

| Students |        | Objectives (multiple values allowed) |           |           |
|----------|--------|--------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Age:     | Level: | Content                              | Skills    | Other     |
| VYL      | A1     | Pronunciation                        | Listening | Exams     |
| YL       | A2     | Vocabulary                           | Speaking  | Cultural  |
| Teen     | B1     | Grammar                              | Reading   | awareness |
| Adult    | B2     | Discourse                            | Writing   | Social    |
|          | C1     |                                      |           |           |
|          | C2     |                                      |           |           |

If a copy of the lesson plan has been provided, attach it to the field notes and indicate this by writing 'see attached' in the **Students** and **Objectives** fields

#### Section II: Pre-Observation Notes

Complete this section on the day of the observation, preferably shortly before entering the class.

#### Section III: Observation Notes

Use the left hand column to record a running commentary of the lesson. Use the right hand column to make notes regarding the language used in the lesson, the methods used and the goals of instruction. Do not record names of individual students. Bear in mind that this part of the document will be shown to the teacher after the lesson, so do not make comments that are open to misinterpretation.

#### Section IV: Post-Observation Notes

Complete this section immediately after the post-observation discussion with the teacher.

- Use the first box to record any comments they made which help to interpret events that happened in the classroom.
- Use the second box to make an immediate record of initial insights. This is intended as an aide-memoire rather than a comprehensive theoretical memo.
- Use the third box to record any comments regarding reactivity in the class setting. Indicate your interpretation of events and the reasoning behind the interpretation.

**Section V: Emerging Questions**

Use this section to make an immediate record of unresolved questions that were prompted by the observed events.

**Section VI: Data Management**

1. When the document has been completed, indicate this by writing the date in the **Completed** field. Normally this should be the date of observation.
2. Make marginal comments on the field notes and the lesson plan, and indicate that this task has been completed by writing the data on the **Code** field.
3. Scan the document and the attached lesson plan and save them as .pdf documents. Indicate that this task has been completed by indicating the date on the **Completed** field. If this task is outsourced, request that the field is also initialled.
4. Copy the contents of this document into the CAQDAS file. Indicate that this task has been completed by writing the date in the **Transcribed** field.

On the right hand column, use pencil to indicate

- which box or folder the document is normally stored in
- any memos that were generated using this document.

## E.3 Observation report

A report summarising the lesson was generated shortly after each observation. An extract from one of the reports is reproduced below:

OBSERVATION REPORT

## LESSON TWO.2

This lesson was observed in order to gain further insights into the way grammar and vocabulary is taught at the host institute. As I have already conducted an observation in a lower-intermediate class of young learners, I thought it would be theoretically interesting to juxtapose those findings with my observations in a higher intermediate class who were preparing for the FCE examination.

**THE CLASS**

Seven higher intermediate learners who are taking the FCE examination in May 2010. These learners have been described as highly motivated and intelligent.

**PRE-OBSERVATION MEETING**

I went over the lesson plan with the teacher, who seemed more interested in learning about the purpose of my observation than in sharing details about the rationale of the activities she had planned. When I asked her what this lesson was about, she described it as 'future tenses'. To probe further I remarked that this is something that has been taught extensively in past years: why is she revising it? She said that she wanted to provide additional practice, because in her view this is something that learners do not generally master, and they keep making basic mistakes especially in free production. To counter this, she would revise all the tenses together and focus on their similarities and differences.

**CLASSROOM OBSERVATION**

**READING AND VOCABULARY**

The class had been assigned a text about group holidays to read for homework. The teacher asked them to summarise this text, and then nominated students to answer specific comprehension questions. By using progressively more open-ended questions, she led the class into a discussion about the advantages and disadvantages of travelling in groups. These were recorded on the board, and the students were encouraged to copy them, as they would have to write a paragraph on this topic for homework.

Following that, the teacher nominated students to take turns reading different paragraphs in the text. At the end of each paragraph, the teacher asked the learners if they had unknown words, and when they did, she first elicited responses from other students and failing that provided a definition in Greek. Some learners requested confirmation by providing the Greek equivalent, and the teacher either nodded or provided an alternative definition. Most learners seemed to gloss the words on their books, although some were apparently taking notes on a vocabulary notebook.

# Appendix F: Learning Materials Content Analysis

## F.1 Sampling Unit Checklist

This checklist was used to guide sampling for the content analysis (this thesis, pp. 131-132)

### Tier 1 Sampling Unit / Book

**Bibliographical Information**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Author(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Publisher: \_\_\_\_\_

**Content Information**

|           |                                  |                                |                               |                                 |                                    |   |
|-----------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| Level     | <input type="radio"/> Intro      | <input type="radio"/> Junior   | <input type="radio"/> Quest   | <input type="radio"/> Action    | <input type="radio"/> Upper Inter. | <input type="radio"/> Proficiency           |
| Component | <input type="radio"/> Coursebook | <input type="radio"/> Workbook | <input type="radio"/> Grammar | <input type="radio"/> Companion | <input type="radio"/> Test         | <input type="radio"/> Other<br>( Describe ) |

**Sampling Information**

|                        |  |                        |  |                      |
|------------------------|--|------------------------|--|----------------------|
| Total number of units: |  | Total number of pages: |  | Units sampled (CIN): |
| # of sampled units:    |  | # of sampled pages:    |  |                      |
| % of sample (units)    |  | % of sample (pages)    |  |                      |

**Notes**

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## F.2 Recording Unit Inventory

| RU # | Lesson  | Pages   | Activities |
|------|---|---------|------------|
| 01/1 | Rainbow A, Student's Book, Unit 3, Lesson a                   | 32-33   | 1-8        |
| 01/2 | Rainbow A, Student's Book, Unit 3, Lesson b                   | 34-35   | 9-15       |
| 01/3 | Rainbow A, Student's Book, Unit 3, Lesson c                   | 36-37   | 16-22      |
| 02/1 | Rainbow A, Student's Book, Unit 4, Lesson a                   | 38-39   | 23-29      |
| 02/2 | Rainbow A, Student's Book, Unit 4, Lesson b                   | 40-41   | 30-37      |
| 02/3 | Rainbow A, Student's Book, Unit 4, Lesson c                   | 41-42   | 38-43      |
| 03   | Rainbow A, Student's Book, Remember with Snowy Units 3 and 4  | 43-44   | 44-50      |
| 04/1 | Rainbow A, Student's Book, Unit 9, Lesson a                   | 74-75   | 51-57      |
| 04/2 | Rainbow A, Student's Book, Unit 9, Lesson b                   | 76-77   | 58-64      |
| 04/3 | Rainbow A, Student's Book, Unit 9, Lesson c                   | 78-79   | 65-71      |
| 05/1 | Rainbow A, Student's Book, Unit 10, Lesson a                  | 80-81   | 72-78      |
| 05/2 | Rainbow A, Student's Book, Unit 10, Lesson b                  | 82-83   | 79-86      |
| 05/3 | Rainbow A, Student's Book, Unit 10, Lesson c                  | 84-85   | 87-93      |
| 06   | Rainbow A, Student's Book, Remember with Snowy Units 9 and 10 | 86-87   | 94-99      |
| 07/1 | Code GREEN, Student's Book, Unit 1, Dive In & Reading         | 6-7     | 100-108    |
| 07/2 | Code GREEN, Student's Book, Unit 1, Grammar 1 & Vocabulary    | 8-9     | 109-122    |
| 07/3 | Code GREEN, Student's Book, Unit 1, Listening & Speaking      | 10-11   | 123-136    |
| 07/4 | Code GREEN, Student's Book, Unit 1, Grammar 2 & Practice      | 12-13   | 137-145    |
| 07/5 | Code GREEN, Student's Book, Unit 1, Writing                   | 14-15   | 146-157    |
| 08/1 | Code GREEN, Student's Book, Unit 2, Dive In & Reading         | 16-17   | 158-165    |
| 09/2 | Code GREEN, Student's Book, Unit 2, Grammar 1 & Vocabulary    | 18-19   | 166-179    |
| 09/3 | Code GREEN, Student's Book, Unit 2, Listening & Speaking      | 20-21   | 180-193    |
| 09/4 | Code GREEN, Student's Book, Unit 2, Grammar 2 & Practice      | 22-23   | 194-204    |
| 09/5 | Code GREEN, Student's Book, Unit 2, Writing                   | 24-25   | 205-215    |
| 10   | Code GREEN, Student's Book, Check your knowledge 1            | 26-27   | 216-222    |
| 11/1 | Code GREEN, Student's Book, Unit 9, Dive In & Reading         | 104-105 | 223-229    |
| 11/2 | Code GREEN, Student's Book, Unit 9, Grammar 1 & Vocabulary    | 106-107 | 230-240    |
| 11/3 | Code GREEN, Student's Book, Unit 9, Listening & Speaking      | 108-109 | 241-254    |
| 11/4 | Code GREEN, Student's Book, Unit 9, Grammar 2 & Practice      | 110-111 | 255-265    |
| 11/5 | Code GREEN, Student's Book, Unit 9, Writing                   | 112-113 | 266-275    |
| 12/1 | Code GREEN, Student's Book, Unit 10, Dive In & Reading        | 114-115 | 276-281    |
| 12/2 | Code GREEN, Student's Book, Unit 10, Grammar 1 & Vocabulary   | 116-117 | 282-292    |
| 12/3 | Code GREEN, Student's Book, Unit 10, Listening & Speaking     | 118-119 | 293-306    |
| 12/4 | Code GREEN, Student's Book, Unit 10, Grammar 2 & Practice     | 120-121 | 307-317    |
| 12/5 | Code GREEN, Student's Book, Unit 10, Writing                  | 122-123 | 319-329    |
| 13   | Code GREEN, Student's Book, Check your knowledge 5            | 124-125 | 330-339    |
| 14/1 | Code RED, Workbook, Unit 1, Reading                           | 4-5     | 340-342    |
| 14/2 | Code RED, Workbook, Unit 1, Grammar & Vocabulary              | 6-7     | 343-350    |
| 14/3 | Code RED, Workbook, Unit 1, Misc.                             | 8-9     | 351-356    |
| 15/1 | Code RED, Workbook, Unit 2, Reading                           | 10-11   | 357-358    |
| 15/2 | Code RED, Workbook, Unit 2, Grammar & Vocabulary              | 12-13   | 359-366    |
| 15/3 | Code RED, Workbook, Unit 2, Misc.                             | 14-15   | 367-372    |
| 16   | Code RED, Workbook, Check your knowledge 1                    | 16-17   | 373-374    |
| 17/1 | Code RED, Workbook, Unit 9, Reading                           | 64-65   | 375-377    |
| 17/2 | Code RED, Workbook, Unit 9, Grammar & Vocabulary              | 66-67   | 378-383    |
| 17/3 | Code RED, Workbook, Unit 9, Misc.                             | 68-69   | 384-390    |
| 18/1 | Code RED, Workbook, Unit 10, Reading                          | 70-71   | 391-392    |
| 18/2 | Code RED, Workbook, Unit 10, Grammar & Vocabulary             | 72-73   | 393-400    |
| 18/3 | Code RED, Workbook, Unit 10, Misc.                            | 74-75   | 401-407    |
| 19   | Code RED, Workbook, Check your knowledge 5                    | 76-77   | 408-409    |
| 20/1 | Action Student's Book C, Lesson 28                            | 86-87   | 410-420    |
| 20/2 | Action Student's Book C, Lesson 29                            | 88-89   | 421-428    |

| RU #     | Lesson   | Pages       | Activities |
|----------|--|-------------|------------|
| 20/3     | Action Student's Book C, Lesson 30                                 | 90-91       | 429-438    |
| 20/4     | Action Student's Book C, Action Plus 10                            | 92-93       | 439-447    |
| 21/1     | Action Student's Book C, Lesson 31                                 | 94-95       | 448-458    |
| 21/2     | Action Student's Book C, Lesson 32                                 | 96-97       | 459-472    |
| 21/3     | Action Student's Book C, Lesson 33                                 | 98-99       | 473-482    |
| 21/4     | Action Student's Book C, Action Plus 11                            | 100-101     | 483-491    |
| 22/1     | Action Student's Book C, Lesson 34                                 | 102-103     | 492-504    |
| 22/2     | Action Student's Book C, Lesson 35                                 | 104-105     | 505-515    |
| 22/4     | Action Student's Book C, Lesson 36                                 | 106-107     | 516-521    |
| 22/1     | Action Student's Book C, Action Plus 11                            | 108-109     | 522-529    |
| 23       | Review, Units 10-12  | 110-111     | 530-536    |
| 24/1     | Quest 1 Student's Book, Lesson 3a                                  | 24-25       | 547-545    |
| 24/2     | Quest 1 Student's Book, Lesson 3b                                  | 26-27       | 546-556    |
| 24/3     | Quest 1 Student's Book, Lesson 3c                                  | 28-29       | 557-570    |
| 24/4     | Quest 1 Student's Book, Lesson 3. Puzzle Page                      | 30-31       | 571-572    |
| 25/1     | Quest 1 Student's Book, Lesson 4a                                  | 32-33       | 573-582    |
| 25/2     | Quest 1 Student's Book, Lesson 4b                                  | 34-35       | 583-594    |
| 25/3     | Quest 1 Student's Book, Lesson 4c                                  | 36-37       | 595-605    |
| 25/4     | Quest 1 Student's Book, Lesson 4. Revision 3-4                     | 38-39       | 606-613    |
| 26/1     | Quest 1 Student's Book, Lesson 5a                                  | 40-41       | 614-621    |
| 26/2     | Quest 1 Student's Book, Lesson 5b                                  | 42-43       | 622-634    |
| 26/3     | Quest 1 Student's Book, Lesson 5c                                  | 44-45       | 635-645    |
| 26/4     | Quest 1 Student's Book, Lesson 5. Puzzle Page                      | 46-47       | 646-647    |
| 27/1     | Quest 1 Student's Book, Lesson 6a                                  | 48-49       | 648-658    |
| 27/2     | Quest 1 Student's Book, Lesson 6b                                  | 50-51       | 659-670    |
| 27/3     | Quest 1 Student's Book, Lesson 6c                                  | 52-53       | 671-682    |
| 27/4     | Quest 1 Student's Book, Lesson 6. Revision 5-6                     | 54-55       | 683-691    |
| 28/1     | Quest 1 Workbook, Lesson 3a  | 20-21       | 692-698    |
| 28/2     | Quest 1 Workbook, Lesson 3.2                                       | 22-23       | 699-700    |
| 28/3     | Quest 1 Workbook, Lesson 3.3                                       | 24-25       | 700-713    |
| 29/1     | Quest 1 Workbook, Lesson 4.1                                       | 26-27       | 714-721    |
| 29/2     | Quest 1 Workbook, Lesson 4.2                                       | 28-29       | 722-728    |
| 29/3     | Quest 1 Workbook, Lesson 4.3                                       | 30-31       | 729-739    |
| 30       | Quest 1 Workbook, Revision Units 3 & 4                             | 32-33       | 740-749    |
| 31/1     | Quest 1 Workbook, Lesson 5.1                                       | 34-35       | 750-757    |
| 31/2     | Quest 1 Workbook, Lesson 5.2                                       | 36-37       | 758-765    |
| 31/3     | Quest 1 Workbook, Lesson 5.3                                       | 38-39       | 766-777    |
| 32/1     | Quest 1 Workbook, Lesson 6.1                                       | 40-41       | 778-783    |
| 32/2     | Quest 1 Workbook, Lesson 6.2                                       | 42-43       | 784-790    |
| 32/3     | Quest 1 Workbook, Lesson 6.3                                       | 44-45       | 791-801    |
| 33       | Quest 1 Workbook, Revision Units 5 & 6                             | 46-47       | 802-809    |
| 34       | Rainbow A, Workbook, Lesson 9a, 9b, 9c                             | 64-69       | 810-825    |
| 35       | Rainbow A, Workbook, Lesson 10a, 10b, 10c                          | 70-75       | 826-838    |
| 36       | Rainbow A, Workbook, Lesson 11a, 11b, 11c                          | 78-83       | 839-852    |
| 37       | Rainbow A, Workbook, Lesson 12a, 12b, 12c                          | 84-89       | 853-865    |
| 38 & 39  | Rainbow A, Workbook, Remember with Snowy 5 & Remember with Snowy 6 | 76-77,90-91 | 860-876    |
| 40/1, /2 | Action Workbook B, Lesson 10, 11                                   | 27-30       | 876-888    |
| 40/3, /4 | Action Workbook B, Lesson 12, Revision 4                           | 31-33       | 889-900    |
| 41/1, /2 | Action Workbook B, Lesson 12, 13                                   | 34-37       | 901-913    |
| 41/3, /4 | Action Workbook B, Lesson 14, Revision 5                           | 38-40       | 914-924    |
| 42/1, /2 | Action Workbook B, Lesson 16, 17                                   | 41-44       | 925-939    |
| 42/3, /4 | Action Workbook B, Lesson 18, Revision 6                           | 45-47       | 940-951    |
| 43       | Action Workbook B, Action Plus 2                                   | 48-49       | 952-956    |

| RU #    | Lesson  | Pages | Activities |
|---------|---|-------|------------|
| 44a     | New Roundup B, Present Simple                             | 40-43 | 975-984    |
| 44b     | New Roundup B, Present Simple (continued)                 | 44-46 | 985-993    |
| 45a     | New Roundup B, Present Continuous                         | 47-52 | 994-1005   |
| 45b     | New Roundup B, Present Continuous (continued)             | 53-54 | 1006-1011  |
| 46a     | New Roundup B, Prepositions                               | 55-59 | 1012-1024  |
| 46b, 47 | New Roundup B, Prepositions (continued); Progress Check 3 | 60-63 | 1025-1034  |
| 48      | Practice Test 1   | 8-28  | 1035-1041  |

## F.3 Recording Unit Checklist

This checklist was used in the second phase of the content analysis (p. 133)

RJ Number.

### Coding Checklist

**Recording Unit information**

| Level | Component | Lesson |        |
|-------|-----------|--------|--------|
| A1    | A4        | B1     | B4     |
| A2    | A5        | B2     | B5     |
| A3    | A6        | B3     | B6     |
|       |           | Pages  |        |
|       |           | Coder  | 1    2 |

**Coding**

| Activity | Methods | Orientation | Content     |
|----------|---------|-------------|-------------|
|          | T C I   | A W G N     | G V R W L S |
|          | T C I   | A W G N     | G V R W L S |
|          | T C I   | A W G N     | G V R W L S |
|          | T C I   | A W G N     | G V R W L S |
|          | T C I   | A W G N     | G V R W L S |
|          | T C I   | A W G N     | G V R W L S |
|          | T C I   | A W G N     | G V R W L S |
|          | T C I   | A W G N     | G V R W L S |
|          | T C I   | A W G N     | G V R W L S |
|          | T C I   | A W G N     | G V R W L S |
|          | T C I   | A W G N     | G V R W L S |
|          | T C I   | A W G N     | G V R W L S |
|          | T C I   | A W G N     | G V R W L S |
|          | T C I   | A W G N     | G V R W L S |
|          | T C I   | A W G N     | G V R W L S |
|          | T C I   | A W G N     | G V R W L S |
|          | T C I   | A W G N     | G V R W L S |

**Instructions:**

1. Copy the Recording Unit Information from the Recording Unit Inventory.
2. Complete the Activity Column, using a single line for each activity (including the ones that are not numbered).
3. Referring to the codebook, assign one value for each variable (Methods, Orientation, Content) to each activity.
4. In cases of uncertainty, or where no value can be defined, indicate this by writing a consecutive number in the last column, and making a brief note in the comments box below.

**Comments**

**Data management**

Document prepared: \_\_\_\_\_ Document completed: \_\_\_\_\_ Transferred to SPSS: \_\_\_\_\_

*Mark the date when each task is completed. Use blue for coder 1, black for coder 2 and red for verification.*

## F.4 Listening, Reading and Writing Activities Checklists

These checklists were used in the third phase of the content analysis (this thesis, p. 133)

### Listening texts checklist

RT Number.

**Checklist information**

| Level | Component | Book      |
|-------|-----------|-----------|
| A1    | A4        | B1 B4     |
| A2    | A5        | B2 B5     |
| A3    | A6        | B3 B6     |
|       |           | Coder 1 2 |

**Coding**

| Activity | Genre | Content | Type    | Model |
|----------|-------|---------|---------|-------|
|          |       | A H G ? | A B C ? | B A ? |
|          |       | A H G ? | A B C ? | B A ? |
|          |       | A H G ? | A B C ? | B A ? |
|          |       | A H G ? | A B C ? | B A ? |
|          |       | A H G ? | A B C ? | B A ? |

**Instructions:**

- Identify the book, by completing the checklist information.
- Complete the Text Column by recording the pages where each text was located.
- Identify genre, content (A=Anglo-centric, H=Hellenocentric, G=Global, ?=Indeterminate), Type (A=Read and Listen, B=Listen to learn, C=Learn to listen, ?=Other), and model (B= 'prestige' varieties of British English e.g. Received Pronunciation, Estuary English, A=unmarked versions of American English e.g. General American English, ?=marked varieties of English e.g. Southern American, Scottish English, or noticeable foreign accents). Use a slash to indicate the selected value
- Where a question mark has been used, use the comments box below to provide further details.

Comments

**Data management**

Document prepared: \_\_\_\_\_ Document completed: \_\_\_\_\_ Transferred to SPSS: \_\_\_\_\_

Mark the date when each task is completed. Use blue for coder 1, black for coder 2 and red for verification.

### Writing activities checklist

RT Number.

**Checklist information**

| Level | Component | Book      |
|-------|-----------|-----------|
| A1    | A4        | B1 B4     |
| A2    | A5        | B2 B5     |
| A3    | A6        | B3 B6     |
|       |           | Coder 1 2 |

**Coding**

| Activity | Type  | Language Focus | Genre | Skill |
|----------|-------|----------------|-------|-------|
|          | A B C |                |       |       |
|          | A B C |                |       |       |
|          | A B C |                |       |       |
|          | A B C |                |       |       |
|          | A B C |                |       |       |

**Instructions:**

- Identify the book, by completing the checklist information.
- Complete the Activity Column by recording the pages where the activity is located, and the designation or rubric of the activity.
- Identify the activity type (A=Language focus, B=genre, C=Skills).
- In cases of uncertainty, indicate this by inscribing a consecutive number in the white space under "Type", and provide further details in the Comments box below.
- Use the three last columns to further describe the activity by specifying its main focus (e.g. Past Tense / Story / Editing).

Comments

**Data management**

Document prepared: \_\_\_\_\_ Document completed: \_\_\_\_\_ Transferred to SPSS: \_\_\_\_\_

Mark the date when each task is completed. Use blue for coder 1, black for coder 2 and red for verification.

## Reading texts checklist

RT Number:

### Checklist information

| Level | Component |       | Book      |
|-------|-----------|-------|-----------|
| A1    | A4        | B1 B4 |           |
| A2    | A5        | B2 B5 |           |
| A3    | A6        | B3 B6 |           |
|       |           |       | Coder 1 2 |

### Coding

| Text | Genre | Content | Type  | Length | Sn | W | SI |
|------|-------|---------|-------|--------|----|---|----|
|      |       | A H G ? | A B C |        |    |   |    |
|      |       | A H G ? | A B C |        |    |   |    |
|      |       | A H G ? | A B C |        |    |   |    |
|      |       | A H G ? | A B C |        |    |   |    |
|      |       | A H G ? | A B C |        |    |   |    |

#### Instructions:

1. Identify the book, by completing the checklist information.
2. Complete the Text Column by recording the pages where each text was located.
3. Identify genre, content (A=Anglo-centric, H=Hellenocentric, G=Global, I=Indeterminate), Type (A=Recurring characters, B=Semi-genuine, C=Writing model), and length (in number of words). Use a slash to indicate the selected value.
4. Record the number of sentences (Sn), Words (W) and Syllables (SI). In case of longer texts (>50 words) select a 50-word extract for analysis.
5. In cases of uncertainty, or where no value can be defined, indicate this by circling a value followed by a consecutive number, and making a brief note in the comments box below.

**Comments**

| Data management  |                     |                      |
|--|---------------------|----------------------|
| Document prepared:   | Document completed: | Transferred to SPSS: |
| Mark the date when each task is completed. Use blue for coder 1, black for coder 2 and red for verification. |                     |                      |

## Appendix G: Data analysis

### G.1.Extracts from matrix used in preliminary analysis

| Observations Summary Tables |   |   |  |  |
|-----------------------------|---|---|--|--|
|                             | B' Class  | FCE   | D' Class   | Junior A   |
| <b>Grammar</b>              | T. initially tries to link grammar to previously taught text. This is largely unsuccessful. Then provides learners with an abstract rule (w/ metalanguage). Rule and examples copied to notebook. Controlled practice in the form of several production exercises, which ss are apparently very comfortable with. | Presentation of a framework, with examples. Information elicited from learners. Extensive use of metalanguage. Learners asked to apply framework on examples. Additional practice (one multiple choice exercise)  | Tasks followed by explicit presentation. Rules (w/ metalanguage) and examples are copied in notebooks. Followed by practice. Students at ease with this mode of work. Learners have a solid background in grammar.                                     | There was no grammatical content in the lesson. But the vocabulary was recorded in grammatical categories.   |
|                             | Behavioural / habit forming?  |   | Cognitive?   |  |
|                             | B' Class  | FCE   | D' Class   | Junior A   |
| <b>Vocabulary</b>           | T. inspects notebooks<br>T. revises vocabulary by asking for definitions (oral + written)<br><br>Vocabulary defined in English  | Vocabulary incidental to text. Selected by learners.<br><br>Meanings elicited by learners; failing that definition provided by teacher.<br><br>Glossing & notebooks used to record lexis<br><br>English used mostly, but learners check comprehension in Greek. | Vocabulary is based on a list in the coursebook.<br><br>Meanings elicited by learners; failing that definition provided by teacher.<br><br>Lexis recorded in handout; copied in notebooks (thematically)   | Vocabulary based on coursebook.<br><br>Vocabulary explained by teacher / some elicitation.<br><br>Lexis recorded in notebooks according to grammatical classification.<br><br>Tested regularly (spelling & translation). Very high emphasis on accuracy.<br><br>Greek is used along with English as appropriate to the learners' level |
|                             | B' Class  | FCE   | D' Class   | Junior A   |
| <b>Exams</b>                | Testing vocabulary (oral / written). Emphasis on definitions of words (in English). Test takes up nearly 2/5 of lesson.   | Exam preparation class<br>Writing task is a simulation of exam task   | No test in this lesson. Previous lesson tested grammar (links to today's lesson). Ss interested in marks; largely indifferent to feedback.   | Vocabulary tested (spelling and translation). The students' poor performance was reason for severe reprimand.  |
|                             | B' Class  | FCE   | D' Class   | Junior A   |
| <b>Other</b>                | IRF pattern in social interaction<br><br>Text read aloud<br><br>Pronunciation mistakes corrected by T. but ignored by ss.   | Open-ended class discussion<br><br>Text read aloud  | Speaking task (group work); some otherwise good learners find this challenging.<br><br>Very poor pronunciation; generally ignored by teacher.  |  |
|                             | B' Class  | FCE   | D' Class   | Junior A   |
| <b>Reflexivity</b>          | T. attempts to correct pronunciation errors, but this is apparently not a regular feature of lesson, and corrections are generally ignored.   |   | My presence was explicitly requested for this lesson – feedback requested.<br><br>I also suspect that this is a CYA measure so that the teacher can demonstrate the low speaking ability of some students, in anticipation of the Speaking tests soon. | I was largely ignored, and I think that my presence might have made the teacher uncomfortable. It is possible, but not likely, that the teachers' severity was in reaction to my presence.   |

## G.2 Extracts from interim reports

### *Description of fieldwork*

Three semi structured interviews were conducted in order to elicit the views of teachers at the host institute. Of these, two interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed, whereas the third participant declined to be recorded. In the latter case, a three-page summary of the conversation was created based on notes that were taken during the interview. In all cases, participant validation was obtained by making a transcript or summary available to the participants for comments. One additional interview has been planned but repeatedly postponed, and is therefore not included in this report.

The results are displayed in Figure 1 and summarised in Table 5. Following that, the prevalence of transmissive, communicative and indeterminate methods was calculated for each programme, by cross-tabulating the level variable (variable A) against the methods (variable C), which revealed a statistically significant difference in the distribution of the paradigms ( $\chi^2 = 35,120$ ,  $df=6$ ,  $sig.=0$ ). As seen in Table 6, the percentage of transmissive activities is highest in the *Junior* level, and somewhat lower in the *Senior* levels and lowest in the *Upper Intermediate* level. The distribution of indeterminate activities is the exact opposite, with the maximum percentage encountered at the *Upper Intermediate* level and the lowest one at the *Junior* level.

### *Presentation of tentative findings*

One line of inquiry that particularly interested me pertained to the desirability of promoting a native-like pronunciation. The information that could be gleaned from the courseware on this topic was ambiguous: [...] Mixed views were also expressed by the teachers (all of whom are non-native speakers). Two of them categorically stated that developing a native like accent is not as important a goal as clarity of expression:

SJ: [No, I don't think, no I don't think that's at all. I mean how are they going to::: how are going to, how are they going to acquire native-like proficiency or a native-like accent when the teacher isn't a native speaker, when (3 sec) when they don't have access to this kind of input. OK, it's I think it would be. more than enough (3 sec) if they were able to communicate in clear. English. So (.) enough for the- for the sp- if their interlocutor, to understand them, I think that's enough (SJ: 18).<sup>2</sup>

No mention was made to pronunciation practice in the **learners'** questionnaires, or in the teachers' interviews. It could be argued that the **teachers'** preoccupation with accuracy that was recorded in the interviews might be translated as a concern with developing a native-like pronunciation, but in the **lessons** observed the pronunciation standards at the lessons were rather low. On two occasions students were tasked with reading texts aloud, which could have been intended as pronunciation practice, but unusual pronunciation patterns were generally ignored by the teachers, even in cases where individual words would be unrecognisable to a speaker from a non-Greek background.

### ***Methodological, ethical and reflexive commentary***

In comparison to the other data generation strands, the interviews seem to be generating disproportionately rich data. This is a reflection not just of the amount of data that can be generated by transcription but also of the multiple layers of meaning in the recordings. Aspects of form, such as variations in the rate or volume of delivery or code-switching, appear to be generating almost as many insights as the actual content of the interview, and probably more interesting ones.

At the same time, I believe that my presence at the host institute may be helping to introduce positive change even though I am not deliberately taking any action to that effect. For example, the fact that the lessons are being observed seems to result, in some cases at least, to experimentations with different pedagogical methods and techniques. No claim is made as to the appropriateness of these methods for the context, but the use of different methods is likely beneficial to teachers (who can better judge the affordances and limitations of these innovations) as well as learners (who are exposed to a wider variety of teaching styles).

The impact of this multiplicity of roles was very evident in the interviews with the teachers, which proved to be the most problematic aspect of this data generation phase. It was previously suggested that the poor rapport with these teachers may have been an outcome of the teachers' own perceptions about the utility of the research, and their reservations about the research having a secret evaluative agenda. It should also be noted that during my tenure as director of studies at the host institute I had instituted several syllabus changes that aimed to bringing practice closer to the communicative paradigm. These changes made little lasting impact at the school, particularly as regards the teaching practices of senior teachers such as the ones interviewed, and seem to have caused a certain degree of wariness in their relations with me.

### ***Forward planning***

My main priority in the second phase of fieldwork will be to elaborate on the new conceptualisation of the tentative framework. This will involve learning more about the newly-identified transmissive paradigm, as well as identifying traces of broader influences that impact the system.

During the next two months, data generation will focus on extraneous dynamics that impact the system. Priority will be given to better understanding the role of examinations, because of the impact of examination washback on the system. Additional empirical data will be generated on societal expectations as perceived by the teachers and learners. The role of the English language, as a vehicle for instruction and expression, will also be examined.



## Appendix H: Certification Examinations

This appendix describes the main certification examinations towards which learners at the host institute were channelled. This information supplements the discussion in Chapter 5, by providing additional insights into the content of the examinations and about attitudes towards them.

### *The Cambridge ESOL suite*

The Cambridge ESOL examination suite was the set of language certificates preferred by the host institute. These tests were designed by Cambridge ESOL, an examination board affiliated to the University of Cambridge. The most popular certificates were the *First Certificate in English (FCE)* and the *Certificate of Proficiency in English (CPE)*, which corresponded to the B2 and C2 levels respectively.<sup>5</sup> These communicatively-oriented examinations consisted of four components (“papers”) that directly tested the Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking skills, as well as a paper that tested grammar and vocabulary (Use of English).

The Cambridge certificates were considered the most prestigious options available to students. According to some teachers, the high standards associated with these examinations encouraged students to excel. It was also felt that success rates at these examinations were a particularly good indicator of quality of preparation. Among the students, the prestige of these certificates was undisputed. One prospective candidate described them as entailing “good prospects of finding a job worldwide”, and another claimed that these certificates were “recognized everywhere”. It was also suggested that

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<sup>5</sup> Since data collection was implemented, these examinations have been rebranded as *Cambridge English: First*, and *Cambridge English: Proficiency*. The terminology used in here will reflect usage at the time of data collection. A special version of the *Cambridge English: First* is now available for school-age candidates, but did not exist at the time when data was collected.

this examination was especially suitable “for students who are very good at English”.

However, many students felt uneasy about the examinations through which the certificates were conferred: some students felt that the time-intensive examination (in excess of four hours) was too exacting and many believed that the examination was disproportionately hard compared to alternatives.

### ***The University of Michigan certificates***

The main alternative to the Cambridge ESOL certificates were the certificates offered by the University of Michigan English Language Institute (UMI/ELI), namely the *Examination of Communicative Competence in English (ECCE)* for the B2 level, and the *Examination of Communicative Proficiency in English (ECPE)* for the C2 level. These examinations consisted of Writing, Listening and Speaking components, as well as a component blending Grammar, Vocabulary and Reading (plus several cloze tasks at the ECPE test). A distinctive feature of these tests was the preponderance of multiple-choice items, which were extensively used to test grammatical competence, vocabulary range and the receptive skills. The tests that led to these certificates were generally regarded as being easy compared to those designed by Cambridge ESOL, a fact which made them popular among students. However, concerns were voiced among some teachers that by encouraging students to apply for such tests entailed “diluting standards”.

### ***The “Edexcel” certificates***

A third certification option was offered by the London Tests of English,<sup>6</sup> which were designed by Edexcel, and administered in Greece by a local educational agency called London Exams Hellas, in conjunction with the Pan-Hellenic [National Greek] Association of Language Schools Owners. The examinations conferring B2- and C2-level certificates were

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<sup>6</sup> This examination suite is now known as Pearson Tests of English.

known as *LTE Level 3* and *LTE Level 5* respectively, although they were more commonly referred to as the “Edexcel Lower” and the “Edexcel Proficiency”. These examinations comprised a succession of interlinked communicative tasks which simulated a real-life scenario (e.g., taking notes while listening to an answering machine, and then using them in order to draft a letter). This examination format was quite popular with some learners, but it seemed to compromise the ‘face validity’ (Alderson, et al. 1995, pp. 172-173) of the examination: according to some teachers and students it was not a ‘proper’ test since it did not explicitly test vocabulary or grammar.

### ***The KPg certificate***

A less popular certification option was the State Certificate of Language Proficiency («Κρατικό Πιστοποιητικό Γλωσσομάθειας», *Kratikó Pistoipiitikó Glossomáthias*, often referred to as the ‘kratiko’ or ‘KPg’), which was designed by the University of Athens Research Centre for English Language and administered by the Hellenic Ministry of National Education and Religions<sup>7</sup>. At the time of data collection, there was a certificate on offer for the B2-level («ΚΠγ Καλή Γνώση», *KPg Kalí Gnóssi*, KPg Good Command), but not for C2. The examination consisted of four components, testing Reading and Linguistic Awareness, Writing, Listening Comprehension and Speaking. A distinctive feature of the examination was that it placed emphasis on the candidates’ mediation skills (Council of Europe, 2001, pp. 87-88), which were operationally defined as the ability to summarise information in Greek and present it to an English-using audience using appropriate register and levels of detail (Karavas, 2009, pp. 31-32).

The KPg certificate was by far the least popular option among teachers and students at the host institute. The KPg examinations appear to have developed a reputation of

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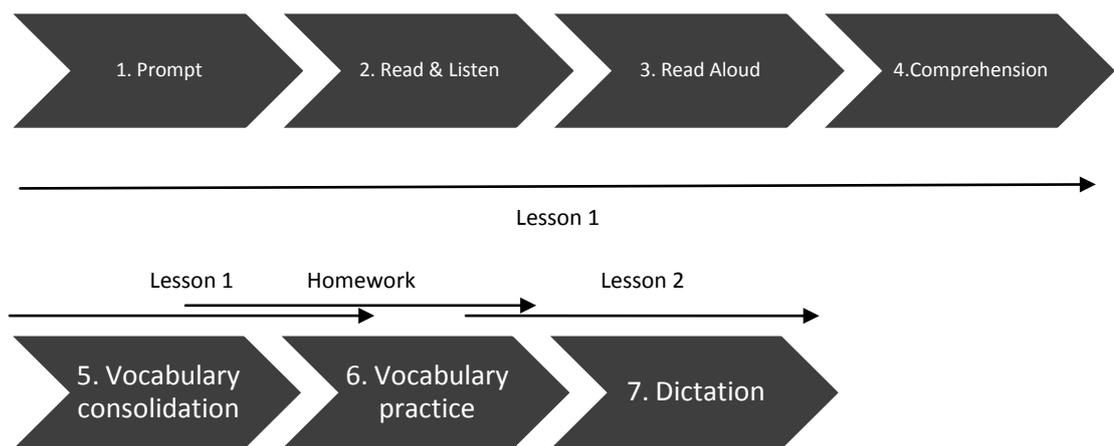
<sup>7</sup> Currently, the Ministry of Education and Religions.

unprofessional and bureaucratic administration procedures, as can be inferred by anecdotal evidence that several teachers shared with me. Teachers also criticised the paucity of feedback on examination results, and what they perceived to be inconsistent marking. In addition, a belief seemed to exist that local language certificates lacked international validity, or (in the words of a student) that “it is not so important, because it is not accepted by foreign countries”. It appears, in other words, that this examination also suffered face validity challenges, although these seemed to be primarily related to beliefs about the efficacy of the entities associated with it, rather than with the format of the examination as such.

## Appendix I: Prototypical Instructional Sequences

This appendix supplements Chapter 7 by providing descriptions of seven prototypical lesson sequences that have been empirically defined at the host institute. Prototypical sequences consist of several phases, which might be distributed across several lessons. Each phase was defined by different, communicative or transmissive, activity patterns. In the graphics that accompany the description of the sequences, phases are graphically represented with a colour-coded chevron shapes (dark gray for transmissive and light gray for communicative).

### I.1 Reading and Vocabulary



**Figure I-1 Overview of the Reading and Vocabulary sequence**

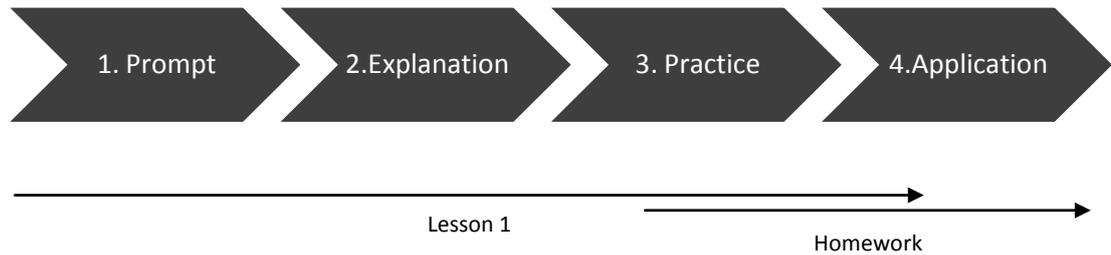
Reading and Vocabulary sequences were structured around a passage, and consisted of six phases, spanning two lessons.

1. The sequence usually began with a prompt, which served to contextualise the passage and activate schematic knowledge.
2. Following that, students read the passage silently, while listening to a recording. During this phase, they might be tasked with a simple global comprehension task.

3. The students then took turns reading parts of the passage aloud. When unknown lexis was encountered, the teacher might elicit its meaning or provide a definition.
4. Next, the students engaged with a comprehension task, which usually involved skimming or scanning the text to extract information. Common tasks included comprehension questions, matching or text reconstruction based on discourse markers. Usually, interaction followed the IRF pattern: the teacher nominated a student, who provided the answer to one of the items, and then feedback was provided.
5. Towards the end of the lesson, the teacher revised the lexis that had been encountered during the lesson, often with reference to a vocabulary handout (Figure 6-14). Words were often glossed with Greek semantic equivalents. The lexical items were then copied onto vocabulary notebooks (a task often assigned as homework).
6. After the lexis had been thus “consolidated”, learners went on to practice using it in limited production exercises (multiple-choice, recall, multiple-matching, anagrams, etc.). These exercises were often assigned as homework and feedback was provided in the next lesson.
7. In the second lesson, a short test (“dictation”) focusing on recall and orthographic form was held to assess whether the vocabulary had been learnt.

A more detailed description of the Read and Listen sequence can be found in Section 7.2.

## I.2 Traditional Grammar



**Figure I-2 Overview of the Traditional Grammar sequence**

Traditional Grammar sequences focused on a grammatical structure. They prototypically consisted of four transmissive phases, which were normally conducted in a single lesson, although some activities might be assigned as homework:

1. The sequence began with a brief prompt, which served to contextualise the structure. This was often based on the content of a recently read passage.
2. The most distinctive feature of a traditional grammar sequence was the “explanation”, an extended lecture on the form and use of the target grammar structure, often spanning 10-15 minutes. During the “explanation” students might be referred to grammar sections in their coursebooks, or to additional handouts, or they might be instructed to take notes in dedicated “grammar” notebooks.
3. Following the explanation, students would engage in numerous limited production exercises (e.g. multiple-choice, gap-and-cue, transformations) which aimed to provide practice in the accurate production of the target language structure. These exercises were done individually, and then the students took turns reading their responses, at which point they received feedback from the teacher. Practice exercises were often assigned as homework as well.
4. Depending on time constraints, the sequence might conclude with activities which elicited the target structure. For instance, the teacher might ask individual students

display questions, or students might rehearse a dialogue. A written follow-up to this activity might be assigned as homework.

Section 7.3 contains a detailed description of a prototypical Traditional Grammar sequence.

### I.3 Inductive Grammar

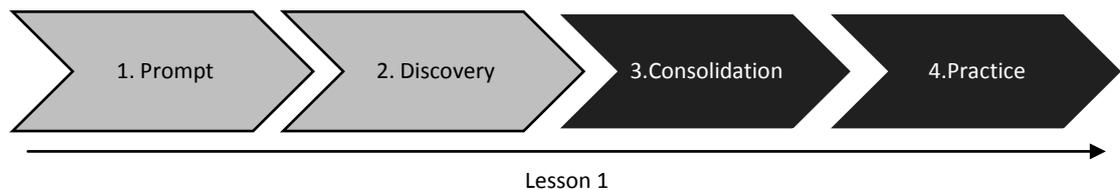


Figure I-3 Overview of the Inductive Grammar sequence

Inductive Grammar sequences were a variant of the Traditional Grammar more commonly encountered in the advanced levels of instruction. Inductive grammar sequences, which usually aimed to recycle previously taught grammatical structures, were prototypically divided into four phases, which evidenced both communicative and transmissive influences:

1. Much like Traditional Grammar sequences, Inductive Grammar sequences would commence with a prompt that served to activate schematic knowledge, and generate input for the subsequent tasks. Language input was often found in recently read passages. For instance, students might underline specific verb forms, or find examples of counterfactual hypotheses in a passage. Alternatively, students might engage in short productive tasks (e.g., reconstructing a story, answering questions about themselves) that elicited the target form(s).
2. Following that, learners would engage with tasks that facilitated the inductive generation of grammar rules. During this 'discovery' phase, students might, for example, categorise proper names under headings such as "countries" and "rivers", in

order to notice how articles were used, or they might compare and contrast different ways of expressing guesses, with a view to uncovering regularities about the modal verbs of possibility. These tasks were usually conducted by pairs or groups of three or four learners. Using their insights and prior knowledge, the groups would form tentative hypotheses about the target grammar structures which they might then present in class.

3. The Discovery phase would often be followed by “consolidation”. This was brief lecture delivered by the teacher, which aimed to confirm the student-generated rules, or expand on them. This was very similar in structure to the “explanation” phase of a Traditional Grammar sequence (i.e., it prototypically covered form and use, and was punctuated by examples, and questions that monitored comprehension), but it was considerably briefer.
4. Finally, learners would engage in practice activities where knowledge of the target structure was brought to bear. These exercises were often modelled after common examination tasks (e.g., open cloze activities, key word transformations, multiple-choice), but unlike actual examination tasks, they tended to focus on the target structure(s) only. The discourse patterns during this phase were very similar to the “practice” phase of a Traditional Grammar sequence, but the exercises were fewer in number, and extensive feedback was provided.

## I.4 Genre-based Writing

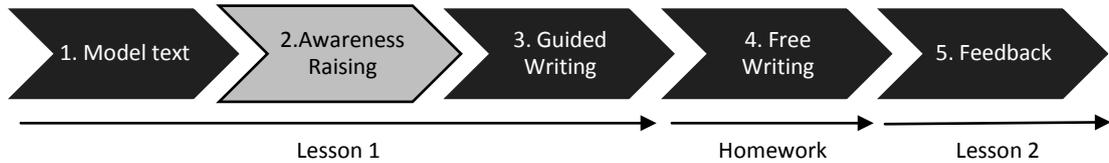


Figure I-4 Overview of the Genre-based Writing sequence

Genre-based writing sequences focused on specific text genres (e.g., stories, transactional letters). They began with the study of the formal features of the genre, and then provided scaffolding activities that culminated in the production, by the students, of an exemplar of the genre. Typically, a Genre-based Writing sequence included five phases, spanning two lessons, as follows:

1. The first phase involved reading a “model text”, which exemplified the genre. This phase was, in some ways, a condensed version of the Reading and Vocabulary sequences (Section 7.1). Students would read the text, pausing at times for the teacher to clarify challenging lexis, and there might be a token reading comprehension task. Then, the new lexis would be revised and recorded. However, this phase was considerably briefer than a Reading and Vocabulary sequence, due to the relatively low lexical density of the passage and its unchallenging propositional content.
2. Following that, students would study the formal features of the genre that were exemplified in the model text, such as its usual macro-structure, cohesive devices and register. This was done through inductive awareness-raising activities, which were collaboratively conducted in pairs or groups of three to four students. For instance, the students could construct a reverse outline of an argumentative essay, in order to generate insights into the function of topic sentences and supportive argumentation; or they might underline cohesion markers, with a view to understanding how they enhanced cohesion. These collaborative tasks were sometimes followed by a very short

teacher-fronted lecturette, which served to confirm the inductively-generated insights. Sometimes, the students would also engage with practice activities, which aimed at further enhancing their familiarity with the target features. For instance, they might be asked to change the register of sentences, or join sentences using appropriate linking.

3. The lesson concluded with a guided writing activity, during which the learners were expected to produce an exemplar of the genre, having been provided with appropriate scaffolding. For instance, learners might use a detailed outline in order to produce an argumentative essay, or they might be tasked with writing a story using cartoon prompts. Additional scaffolding might be provided in the form of word banks, where useful lexis was listed, checklists and instructions. Guided writing activities were carried out in class by students working individually or in pairs, and feedback was provided on the spot by the teacher.
4. Genre-based writing lessons culminated in a 'free writing' phase, in which learners produced an exemplar of the genre in response to a prompt provided by the teacher (e.g., "Write a four-paragraph story ending in the sentence: 'It was the happiest day in my life!'"). The production of this passage was normally assigned as homework, to be carried out by students individually. Support, in the form of outlines and other writing resources, was available at the self-access centres, for students who chose to do their homework there.
5. The 'free writing' passages that the students produced were handed in to their teacher for feedback. Feedback, which was provided on a subsequent lesson, was normally given individually in the form of marks on the student's script. Plenary feedback was sometimes provided focussing on common mistakes, which were written on the board or displayed in an OHT / PowerPoint presentation, and discussed.

Genre-based Writing sequences had been the default option for delivering writing instruction at the host institute, and one with which many teachers felt most comfortable.

However, when this study was conducted, these sequences were mostly encountered in the Senior programme, and there was a trend towards replacing them with Process-based Writing (below).

### I.5 Process-based Writing

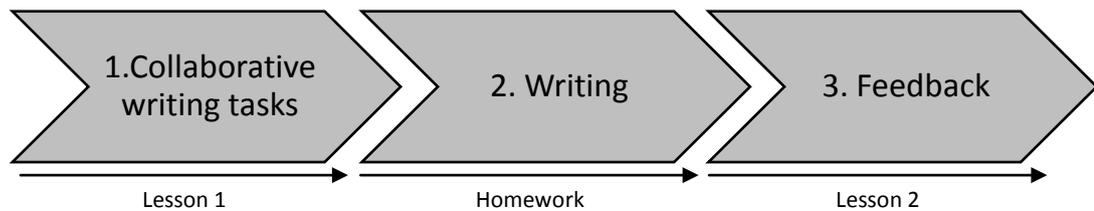


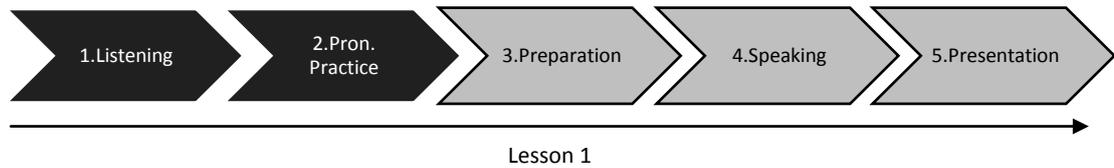
Figure I-5 Overview of the Process-based Writing sequence

Process-based writing sequences aimed at developing particular writing sub-skills, such as brainstorming, planning, drafting, editing, proofreading, etc. They tended to take place in a single self-contained lesson, towards the end of a week (i.e., on Thursdays or Fridays):

1. Typically, a sequence would begin on the second half of the lesson. In this phase, which spanned approximately 45 minutes, groups of three to five learners engaged in collaborative tasks that simulated the writing process.
2. Following that, learners would be assigned a writing task, to be implemented individually as homework. The assignments would be handed in for feedback at the start of the next week.
3. The third phase, which took place on the beginning of the next writing lesson and lasted approximately 45 minutes, was dedicated to feedback. Depending on time constraints, learners might be tasked with re-writing their assignment based on the feedback that they had received, or alternatively this might be assigned as homework.

The Process-based Writing sequence, which was particularly common in the more advanced classes (Upper Intermediate and Proficiency), is described in detail in Section 7.4.

## I.6 Integrated Oral Skills



**Figure I-6 Overview of the Integrated Oral Skills sequence**

Integrated Oral Skills sequences were a feature of instruction at the Upper Intermediate and Proficiency classes. These sequences normally took place within a single (90 minute) lesson or less, and consisted of five distinct phases sharing a common theme, such as Football Violence, Healthy vs. Unhealthy Eating or the Death Penalty.

1. The sequence began with a series of listening tasks, during which students passively listened to a recording being played back. The recording was played back at least twice, once for global comprehension and then once for the extraction of more detailed information. The structure of the recordings and the listening tasks mirrored that of listening tasks in certification examinations, and the tasks were often conducted under conditions that simulated exams. After the text had been played back several times and the tasks had been completed, feedback might be provided by presenting the correct answers, and ambiguous parts of the recording might be played back again at the students' request for clarification.
2. These listening tasks were sometimes followed by more intensive listening, during which learners were instructed to watch out for specific words, grammatical structures or intonation patterns that were deemed pedagogically useful to know. The students listened to the words and repeated them chorally, in order to accurately reproduce the target pronunciation. This process of listening and repeating might be repeated several times.

The listening phases were followed by a multi-phase speaking activity, which was thematically linked to the topic of the recordings. Depending on factors such as the learners' linguistic proficiency and confidence levels, some options from which teachers could choose were dialogues, open-ended role plays or tasks roughly modelled after the Task-Based Language Teaching framework (Willis & Willis, 2007). The variety of activities precludes a general description, but the following phases were quite common:

### ***Speaking Sequence 1: Dialogue***

3. In the first phase of a dialogue activity, learners read a model dialogue that was thematically linked to the recording they had previously listened to. The recording of the transcript sometimes served this role.
4. The students then acted out the dialogue in small groups. Small changes to the script were encouraged as an outlet for the students' creativity.
5. Finally, pairs of students might act out their version of the dialogue for the whole class.

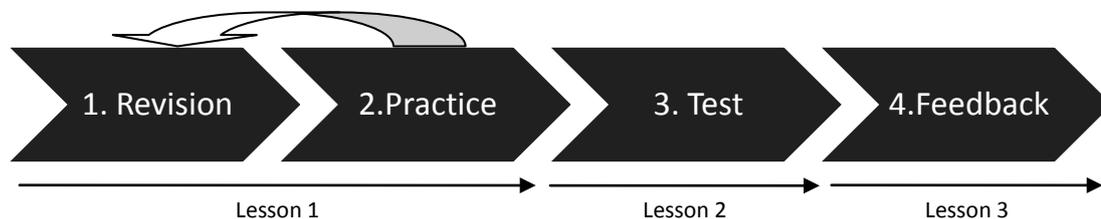
### ***Speaking sequence 2: Role play***

3. In a role-play, learners were first presented with role cards which contained information about their character and agenda, and were given time to plan their output.
4. The students then engaged in the role-play, while the teacher monitored their output.
5. Selected groups might then act out their role-play for the benefit of the entire class.

### ***Speaking sequence 3: Task***

3. Students engaged in some kind of activity, such as classifying or ranking information or solving a puzzle. Although Willis & Willis (2007) recommend that this activity be carried out collaboratively, it was common for learners to work individually under their teacher's supervision, as teachers were sometimes reluctant to relinquish control of their classes.
4. This was followed by a discussion that was carried out in groups of three to five learners. During the discussion the students compared their answers and selected the best ones or tried to reach consensus.
5. Finally, group representatives presented their work to the rest of the class in a short, prepared monologue, and possibly answered questions.

### **I.7 Review**



**Figure I-7 Overview of the Review sequence**

Reviews were multi-lesson sequences that took part towards the end of every two-month term, and aimed at revising grammar and vocabulary.

1. Typically, a review would begin with a revision of a lexical set (e.g., “words related to transport”) or a set of grammar structures (e.g., conditional sentences). During the revision stage, the teacher would normally elicit information from the learners, and add or clarify information as needed.

2. This would be followed by practice activities, which were similar to the 'practice' phases of Reading and Vocabulary and the Traditional Grammar sequences.

Several 'revision' and 'practice' phases might take place within a single lesson, with a view to covering the most salient grammatical and lexical content that had been taught in the term.

3. The 'revision' and 'practice' phases were followed by a formal examination, which normally took up an entire class session (60' or 90' depending on the programme).
4. In the lesson immediately following the examination, feedback was provided. After providing learners with a copy of the test they had just taken, the teacher would nominate individuals to provide the answers they had given. Common mistakes were flagged and discussed as necessary, and any student complaints were addressed in this phase as well.