

A qualitative inquiry into the construction of modern foreign language teachers' beliefs and pedagogical content knowledge

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This thesis is dedicated to my dad - Brian Michael Cooke
and to my best mate - Mark Andrew Louis Gardiner

Abstract

This thesis explores the construction of modern foreign language teacher cognition: beliefs and pedagogical content knowledge. It examines how teachers' beliefs about grammar and the role of target language in language teaching have been constructed. The research design is set within a constructivist-interpretivist framework. The conceptual framework identifies four major areas of influence on teacher cognition: pre-training language learning experiences, pre-service training experiences, in-service experiences and micro/macro policy. The qualitative research methodology is autobiographical / life history. The data is presented in the form of narratives, which chronicle the construction and evolution of beliefs and subject knowledge. Data were collected through the methods of audio-recorded semi-structured interviews and field observation over a period of three years. The research involved the participation of seven language-teaching professionals from seven different LA maintained schools.

The autobiography and life histories suggest that early learning experiences may be influential in the construction of teacher cognition about MFL methodology. Furthermore, beliefs constructed in these formative years may also be highly resistant to change. University based teacher education is a positive source of influence in providing teachers with models and techniques which are adopted in practice. The research examines the impact of twenty years of national (macro) policy on modern foreign language teacher cognition and practice. It considers how reflection and dialogue with other practitioners contribute to the construction of pedagogical content knowledge and the interpretation of national policy. Findings report that context is the conditioning factor in the choice of approach taken for the teaching of grammar and the perceived role of the target language. Emerging from the data, is the concept of a *methodologising* of teaching by school leaders through the implementation of micro policy.

The thesis recommends an exploration of how existing beliefs about language teaching have been constructed among those beginning teacher education programmes and makes suggestions for future research.

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List of abbreviations / acronyms

Assessment for Learning (AfL)

Boy (B)

Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH)

First Language (L1)

Girl (G)

Key Stage Three (KS3)

Key Stage Three National Strategy (KS3 NS)

Key Stage Four (KS4)

National Curriculum (NC)

National Curriculum Programmes of Study (NCPoS)

Modern Foreign Languages (MFL)

Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK)

Post Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE)

Programmes of Study (PoS)

Second Language (L2)

See Chapter ... (Ch.)

Student (S)

Students (Ss)

Target Language (TL)

Teacher (T)

Chapter One: Introduction, aims, policy and teacher cognition

This thesis is a qualitative inquiry into the construction of modern foreign language teacher cognition: beliefs and pedagogical content knowledge. It sets out to explore how teachers' beliefs about grammar and the role of target language in language teaching have been constructed. It delineates examples of practice and identifies influences which have led to this construction. It explores and interprets teachers' experiences as learners and as trainee teachers as well as subsequent experiences in the profession and examines how these experiences have shaped cognition and practice.

My reasons for embarking upon this research stem from my personal and professional engagement with modern foreign language learning and teaching. I studied French at secondary school, and French and Spanish at University. I learned basic Japanese and German to advanced level after graduating. I became a teacher of foreign languages, a head of department, a senior leader and a local authority modern foreign languages adviser in the space of seven years. During my ten-year tenure as the Modern Foreign Languages adviser for Norfolk Local Authority, I completed a series of secondments in a variety of secondary schools as a senior leader.

After a decade of working for a local authority in an advisory capacity, I returned to working in school full time as a Deputy Headteacher in 2013. I believe that teaching and learning a foreign language is not without its challenges. Hawkins (1981) memorably referred to teaching a foreign language in an anglophone context as

“gardening in a gale” (p.97). The autobiographical sections of this thesis, and subsequent analysis of this data will chronicle my perceived successes and apparent frustrations with language learning and teaching. Within this, I will explore the construction of my beliefs about grammar and the role of target language as a learner and as a teacher. Furthermore, as someone who has been responsible for the dissemination of national policy and micro level policy (local authority and school) in languages, and has been surprised, inspired and at times exasperated by its interpretation by other teachers, this thesis will also explore the beliefs as to how languages should be taught by others in the profession. My own autobiography will therefore be juxtaposed with the life histories of seven other practitioners, which derive from interview and field observation data. A key focus will be the role of grammar and the concept of teaching through the target language because much debate in language teaching and second language acquisition centres on these two issues (Klapper 1997, 1998; Meiring & Norman 2001; Butzkamm 2003; Macaro & Masterman 2006). Methods and approaches in the teaching of languages, moreover, are characterised by differing stances towards grammar and target language use. This debate and methods and approaches will be explored in Chapter Two.

This chapter presents the research intentions and reasons for the study, set within the context of modern foreign language teaching in England. It explores policy development in this realm over the last 30 years. It examines how policy documentation has defined the role of grammar and target language in the teaching of foreign languages. It explores the concept of teacher cognition, reviewing literature on teacher beliefs and pedagogical subject content. The conceptual framework (presented in Ch.3.1) builds upon the work of Stephen Borg (2003).

1.1 Research questions

The overarching research question which guides this study is:

What are the influences identified by secondary modern foreign language teachers, which have contributed to the construction of their cognition: beliefs and pedagogical content knowledge?

Sub-questions which flowed from the main question are:

- i. What has been the policy for the teaching and learning of foreign languages since the late 1970s?
- ii. How has macro (government) and micro (school level) educational policy influenced the construction of the pedagogical content knowledge of MFL teachers since the late 1970s?
- iii. What has shaped the beliefs of teachers in respect of teaching grammar?
- iv. What role does target language play in the teaching and learning of languages?

1.2 National policy in English education since the late 1970s

Before examining the evolution of national (macro policy) concerning modern foreign language teaching, this first section begins with an overview of general national policy developments in education since the late 1970s. It will chronicle the development of concepts such as the introduction of a standardised national curriculum and national assessment systems, which alongside the introduction of Ofsted, has led to an increase in teacher and school accountability. Policy concerning the teaching of MFL teaching has originated out of these wider developments.

1.2.i A national curriculum

Prime Minister Callaghan's Ruskin College speech in 1976 raised concerns about the quality of teaching in English schools and whether English education was fit for purpose in the mid 1970s. Callaghan questioned the control of educationalists (higher educational institutions) over teacher education and teaching methods. Furthermore, his reference to "*the secret garden of the curriculum*" alluded to the control schools and teachers had over the construction of their curriculum: the subjects offered and the content explored in those subject areas (Ball 2013, p.82). His speech highlighted the lack of state intervention into education and would spark debate about standards in education on both sides of the political fence in the late 1970s (Ball 2013, p.83). Through the Education Act of 1980, the Conservative Government introduced the Assisted Places Scheme which funded able working class students to have a private education. The act also gave parents / carers the right to greater choice in selecting a school for their children (ibid., p.84).

The DES produced *School Curriculum* booklet of 1981 provided guidelines to LEAs about the content of certain subject areas of the curriculum. Seven years later, the education act of 1988 led to the establishment of the National Curriculum, which effectively took control over the content of what is taught away from teachers (ibid., p.89). A prescribed list of topic areas for the three core subjects: English, mathematics and science alongside content lists for the foundation subjects of geography, history, modern foreign languages, music, art and design and technology were made statutory with the publication of the first National Curriculum Programmes of Study (NCPoS) in 1991, they "*would entrench traditional subjects and British cultural heritage over and against 'misguided relativism' and multiculturalism*" (ibid.).

The programmes of study not only prescribed what was to be taught, but in the case of subjects such as MFL, also prescribed *how* the subject should be taught (Ch.1.6).

The National Curriculum Programmes of Study have since been revised four times: in 1995, 1999, 2007 and in 2013.

1.2.ii National assessment

The NCPoS contained a system of national assessment criteria (attainment targets) against which teachers assessed student performance at KS3. In the core subjects, national testing was introduced (SAT tests) to provide standardised published data about a child's progress which could be used "*not only to compare individual students in their classrooms, but also schools and LEAs, in the form of league tables*" (Ball 2013, p.132). Reform of the public examination system in 1988 led to the abolition of O level and CSE examinations in English schools and to the creation of the GCSE examination. The publication of schools' examination results at GCSE and at KS3 allowed parents, the media and politicians to see at a glance how well schools were performing in relation to others. It would increase competition between schools as they began to compete for attention among a parental body, which had been given an informed choice. Furthermore, this "*very effective national mechanism of performance management*" in schools has been used "*to generate league tables of school 'outputs' and to set national benchmarks*" (Ball 2012, p.73). Schools not meeting the national benchmarks, currently the main indicator is the percentage of students achieving 5 or more A* to C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics, risk being deemed failing (ibid.). Similarly by 2010 there were a number of data analysis systems such as RAISEonline and the Fischer Family Trust

(Ball 2012, p.91, Ch.4.3.iv.b; Ch.5.9) which provided indicators as to how well individual students were progressing, and therefore how schools were performing.

1.2.iii School Inspection

The 1992 Education Act led to the creation of the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), a private inspection regime, which at that time until 2005, inspected schools every three to four years (Ball 2013, p.87). Teachers were judged on the quality of their teaching, with lessons graded on a seven-point scale from 'very poor' to 'excellent'. Lesson observation data as well as performance on a number of other indicators such as examination results were used to give a school an overall grading, such as 'satisfactory', 'good', 'very good' and 'outstanding'. Outcomes of the inspection are published in a report, which can be accessed by the public. Ofsted also produced yearly reports evaluating how teachers were implementing the NCPoS, highlighting how "*[o]bservation is a tactic of policy translation...a source of evidence of policy activity*" (Ball 2012, p.46). Teachers were inspected by specialists from their area of the curriculum from 1993 until 2005. Ofsted was reformed in 2005, inspections were made shorter and generic lesson observation criteria replaced subject specialist criteria, schools were also only given a two-day notification of an imminent inspection. This was reformed again in 2013, with the notification to schools reduced to just one day.

1.2.iv National CPD: The National Strategy

In 1999 the Government launched a national CPD programme firstly to improve the quality of literacy and numeracy teaching in Primary and Secondary schools (Fullan 2007, p.242) before focussing upon generic pedagogy at both KS2 and KS3 in 2001.

By 2005, The National Strategy, which aimed “[t]o raise standards of achievements and rates of progression...through personalised learning supported by high quality, well planned teaching” (Ofsted 2010, p.7), had provided a series of training materials in a variety of pedagogical topics, such as questioning, modelling, Assessment for Learning (AfL) and Thinking Skills. Such CPD, although non-statutory, has influenced the development of schools own micro policy on aspects of teaching and learning (Ball 2012).

The last three decades have seen considerable intervention by government in education, leading to a marked reduction in the power and control teachers have over what and how they teach. Schools and teachers have been increasingly held accountable for their work through the introduction of league tables, national benchmarks and targets and an increasingly powerful inspectional body, which has the power to fail schools (Ch.6).

1.3 Policy development in the teaching of modern languages since the late 1970s

An exploration of the construction of teacher cognition: beliefs and pedagogical content knowledge in language teaching over the last four decades must be set against the backdrop of policy and curriculum changes concerning language teaching over the same period of time. This section therefore examines policy and curriculum development in modern foreign languages teaching over approximately the last forty years, from the late 1970s onwards. The teaching of Modern Foreign Languages in 1977 was, in the absence of the type of government intervention seen in the latter part of the 1980s, principally influenced by GCE and CSE examinations, in place since 1950 and 1965 respectively (Jones 1994; Whitehead 1996b).

1.3.i GCE examination

From 1950 until 1987, two of the three main modes of assessment for modern languages in England were the General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level and Advanced Level examinations. The examination boards, which had been created by universities, (Whitehead 1996b, p.198; Adams 2000, p.191) had free rein on what was to be included in the assessments. The accreditation systems (GCE A and O Level) tested prose and version translation: pupils' ability to translate into and out of the target language (TL): "*free composition writing; comprehension tests; dictation; reading aloud; and oral conversation*" which for Whitehead (1996b), "*simply perpetuated a mode of assessment which had existed since 1918*" (p.199-198). Whitehead (1996a/b) and Adams (2000) argue that these examinations were a selection process to identify those most suitable for Advanced Level examinations, or potential undergraduate language courses. The examinations were norm referenced – allowing only a certain percentage of students to achieve a particular grade. Students were effectively in competition with each other. Accuracy was paramount – each grammatical error equated to a one-mark penalty (Bird & Dennison 1987, p.11; Adams 2000, p.192). The weighting of marks attributed to each of the component parts of the O Level examination fluctuated only slightly over the next thirty years. By 1970 the Associated Examining Board (AEB) had, for example, abolished prose translation and increased the number of points available in the oral section (*ibid.*).

Inclusion of the speaking examination at O and A Level, and the elimination of prose translation represented reform in language teaching and signalled increased emphasis on "*the acceptance of 'communication' as the aim of foreign language*

study in secondary schools" (Hawkins 1981, p.5) perhaps due to Britain's closer links with the European Common Market in the 1960s (*ibid.*). Furthermore, the development of the audio-lingual method with its focus on speaking and listening led to a growth of language laboratories and new courses in schools (*ibid.*; Ch.2.4). However, there continued to be much emphasis on the teaching of grammar and translation of text in schools from the 1960s until the 1980s due to the nature of the O and A level examinations. Indeed, by 1987, the last year of O levels in England, and the year in which I sat the AEB French O level examination, the dictation element had been replaced by a listening comprehension exercise worth eight per cent but sixty-six per cent of the marks, as in 1965, were still awarded to translation and writing (Grenfell 2007, p.11).

As a result of this, MFL pedagogy in English secondary schools in the mid 1980s still largely reflected the grammar-translation method (*ibid.*), an analysis of which will be presented in the next chapter. Meiring and Norman (2001) agree,

the place of grammar was not diminished because of the demand for grammatical accuracy in the O level examination. It was not until 1988 and the introduction of GCSE that the swing away from grammar-translation began to have a major impact. (p.59)

Forty years ago it would not be inaccurate to suggest that Modern Foreign Languages was an elitist subject in England (Bird & Dennison 1987, p.vii; Greenstock & Davidson 1996, p.195) – only the upper 30% of pupils, in terms of their attainment, studied languages in the 4th and 5th form in the late 1970s (DES 1977,

p.4; Jones 1994, p.18). This figure roughly equated to the percentage of students in my own school who continued with French in the Fifth Form in 1986. At that time, according to Rendall (1998), *“knowledge and understanding...when dealing with a selected top 20% of the ability range could be taken for granted”* (p.1). In the late 1970s, only 10% of all 15-16 years actually gained a pass at O Level (Hawkins 1981, p.17) with this figure improving little in the 1980s (Bird & Dennison 1987, p.11).

1.3.ii The Certificate of Secondary Education

The comprehensive school system would lead to the introduction of an alternative system of accreditation – the Certificate of Secondary Education (CSE). Given the highly elitist nature of the GCE O Level examination, the CSE was designed to meet the needs of a wider ability range – expanding to encompass 60% of all students (Page 1981, p.35; Bird & Dennison 1987, p.vii) including those in secondary modern schools (Hawkins 1981, p.17). The allocation of marks in the CSE examination was more heavily weighted towards speaking (30%) and listening skills (25%) (Adams 2000, p.194) implying that such skills are more accessible to a wider student body than translation and writing. In contrast to O Level, positive marking was introduced whereby students were credited for what they had managed to get right, instead of incurring penalties for inaccuracy (Whitehead 1996b, p.202). Teachers would have an influence in designing the types of tasks on which students would be examined (ibid). By 1985 the number of students sitting the CSE examination in French (163,326) exceeded the number sitting the O Level examination (147,657) (Hawkins 1987, p.66) although students who were at risk of failing O Level would often also sit the CSE examination, despite the difference in skills tested (Adams 2000, p.193).

The CSE, whilst providing an alternative to GCE, still left the lower 40% of the school demographic without an appropriate system of accreditation. The average mark awarded was a CSE grade 4, three levels below the grade 1 which was believed to equate to an O level grade A-C (Jones 1994, p.20). Despite its equivalence to a pass at O Level, the CSE grade 1 did not provide students with the necessary foundations to continue their study of an MFL at A Level (Hawkins 1987, p.15). Whitehead (1996b, p.202) attributes overall poor performance in CSE to the demands of the oral examination, which could last for up to 30 minutes, beyond the duration of the O Level speaking exam, and exceeding current expectations at GCSE, in force since 2010 (12 minutes maximum AQA (2012)). Grenfell (2007) and Adams (2000) discuss how a notable feature of the speaking examination was *The Hundred Questions* compelling students to learn responses to over a hundred questions, a handful of which would be tested in the actual examination.

[I]t is easy to criticise the 'The Hundred Questions' as mechanistic rote learning, and indeed there are apocryphal tales of the candidate who managed to transpose wrongly the answers, so that they were 'out of step' with the questions. (ibid., p.195)

By 1977 modern foreign languages was a source of much concern among Her Majesty's Inspectorate due to the poor quality of students' language skills, and low take up post-age 14. Practice typical of many classrooms encompassed:

under-performance in all four language skills by the abler pupils; the setting of impossible or pointless tasks for the average (and in particular less able)

pupils and their abandonment of modern language learning at the first opportunity; excessive use of English and an inability to produce other than inadequate or largely unusable statements in the modern language; inefficient reading skills; and writing limited mainly to mechanical reproduction which was often extremely inaccurate...in all too many language classes there was an atmosphere of boredom, disenchantment and restlessness. (DES 1977, p.8)

This negative evaluation of modern foreign languages teaching and learning in English secondary schools in the late 1970s highlights how writing was a serious weakness despite the necessary focus on teaching grammar because of the O Level examination. The inappropriate nature of the activities set had led to high levels of student dissatisfaction. One of the recommendations in the same report urged that “[p]recise linguistic objectives should be determined for pupils following the longer and shorter courses. These should be realistic, taking account of the pupils' aptitudes and needs” (ibid., p.49). This would lead to the development of Graded Objectives in Modern Languages (Adams 2000, p.195).

1.4 Graded Objectives in Modern Languages (GOML)

The purpose of Graded Objectives in Modern Languages (GOML) was to boost the appeal of learning languages by providing a system of accreditation which was more suited to the full ability range, “all GOML schemes arose from a desire to come to terms with the wide differences in achievement in foreign language learning manifested by school learners” (Clark 1987, p.29). The rationale behind the GOML was to compartmentalise learning into stages, and to award students' success at a

number of assessment points. Individual Local Authorities were responsible for developing the syllabus and accreditation system in collaboration with local teachers (Page & Hewett 1987).

GOML had its roots in competency-based language teaching, which reflected theory underpinning competency-based education. This focuses on “*defining educational goals in terms of precise measurable descriptions of knowledge, skills, and behaviours students should possess at the end of a course of study*” (Richards & Rodgers 2001, p.141). GOML was therefore criterion referenced (Page 1996, p.101). It became very popular in English schools in the 1970s and 1980s and was born out of a reaction against the irrelevance for many students of the O Level and CSE exams of the time (Page & Hewett 1987), as well as against the expectation that students should be able to understand a broad, random and unspecified vocabulary which was characteristic of the O Level examination. Page (1983) would refer to the GOML as “*one of the most remarkable phenomena in modern language learning over the last five years*” (p.292). Its purpose was communicative, and practice was characterised by the completion of information gap tasks requiring students to elicit and provide information. There was a great emphasis therefore on simulating real life scenarios and role-play, appealing to a more comprehensive intake, than the traditionally exclusive O Level and, to some extent, CSE examinations (Page & Hewett 1987).

Criticism of GOML centred on how such short-term goals had led to students merely rehearsing pre-learnt language without understanding or being able to manipulate language for their own purposes. It became a test of memory and not linguistic

ability. It was a case of the testing process influencing how languages were being taught (Page & Hewett 1987). Adams (2000) alludes to how the regular testing may have been a source of anxiety for the students, although Jones (1994) does not concur, positing that regular accreditation for what had been accomplished was motivating for students (p.21). Despite the frequent awarding of certificates for progress, GOML did not lead to a nationally recognised qualification. The number of entries in CSE MFL examinations increased in the late 1970s / early 1980s (Moys 1996, p.89). Jones (1994) attributes this increase to the motivating impact of the GOML (p.21).

1.5 GCSE and the National Curriculum (1988-1997)

For Jones (1994, p.21) this *pioneering work* of the GOML was a significant influence on policy in MFL during the 1980s. Like the CSE, GOML emphasised development in all four language-learning skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Following the trial of joint GCE and CSE (16+) examinations in the mid 1980s, the Department of Education and Science approved the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examination, replacing O Level and CSE as from 1988. The GCSE would be criterion referenced – students would be expected to achieve a certain standard, which would lead to the awarding of a particular grade. There would be equal weighting of the four skills (Grenfell 2007, p.12), with key vocabulary and grammatical concepts prescribed in topics by the examination boards. Furthermore, there was greater emphasis on rewarding communication without the hitherto draconian sanctions for grammatical inaccuracy. In its first incarnation, it was possible to achieve a grade without taking the *Basic writing* paper (Adams 2000, p.198).

From 1988 there began a process of democratisation, increasing entitlement to language learning in England as a result of the introduction of GCSE and then the National Curriculum 1991 (Ch.1.2.ii). Changes to the examination system were followed by the creation of the National Curriculum (NC), and subsequent Programmes of Study for Modern Foreign Languages (NCPoS) in 1991 (Ch.1.2.i). Such changes were to lead to the embedding of compulsory language learning in England, firstly at Key Stage Three (KS3) in 1991, and then at Key Stage Four (KS4) in 1996, attributing to the subject area the importance it should deserve within the school curriculum. Klapper would encouragingly write in 1997, "*languages have long since ceased to be subjects for the elite but represent a common entitlement for every child*" (p.22).

1.6 National Curriculum Programmes of Study for MFL

The first edition of the NCPoS was written by a National Curriculum working group for Modern Foreign Languages, which was established in August 1989 and chaired by Professor Martin Harris who at the time was vice-chancellor of the University of Essex. The working group comprised a selection of teachers, LA advisers and representatives of higher education institutions and HMIs (DES 1990, pp.179-181). There was consultation on the initial proposals in February 1990 (DES 1990), which principally involved the Association for Language Learning, the National Association of Language Advisers as well as the School Examinations and Assessment Council (DES 1990).

There have been five versions of the National Curriculum (NC) Programmes of Study (PoS) for MFL firstly in 1991, secondly in 1995, then in 1999; ten years later in 2007, and most recently in 2014.

The first two versions comprised two sections: part I was entitled *Learning and using the target language* (DES 1991, p.23; DFE 1995, p.2), and part II prescribed the contexts, or *Areas of Experience* (DES 1991, p.27-29; DFE 1995, p.4), through which the language was to be taught (see Appendices 1 & 2). In the 1991 edition, part I is subdivided into six different sections. Each section lists a variety of activities and tasks in which the pupils “*should have regular opportunities*” (p.23) to engage. The first section: *Communicating in the target language* describes a variety of activities / tasks which the students should carry out in the target language. Subsequent sections are: *Understanding and responding*; *Developing language learning skills and awareness of language*; *Developing cultural awareness*; *Developing the ability to work with others*, and *Developing the ability to learn independently* (DES 1991, pp.24-26). The 1995 edition also begins with *Communicating in the target language* but is subsequently followed by three other sections: 2. *Language skills*; 3. *Language-learning skills and knowledge of language* and 4. *Cultural Awareness*. Common to both editions, in the first section, is the concept of students communicating through role-play. The section *Understanding and responding* was removed from the 1995 edition. Aspects of this second section, for example “*listen attentively; follow clear directions and instructions...listen for gist and detail to identify and abstract information*” (DES 1991, p.24) is listed under the *Understanding and responding* section in the 1991 edition, whereas by 1995, the same skills “*listen attentively, and listen for gist and detail...follow instructions and*

directions" (DFE 1995, p.3) are presented in the *Language skills* section. There are other aspects of practice common to both editions, although they may have been rephrased slightly and categorised into different sections: for example, components of the *Developing the ability to work with others* section in the first edition have been subsumed into the *Communicating in the Target Language* section of the second version. In both editions, there are sections describing language-learning skills. Memorising of language is expected, and there is some exemplification of what should be memorised: "*rhymes, poems, songs, jokes or tongue twisters*" (1991, p.25; 1995, p.3). The term *strategies* (1995, p.3) is used "*for committing familiar languages to memory*" which implies teaching students techniques to memorise language. Such a term is not used in the 1991 edition.

Table 1. Comparison of the structure of the 1991 and 1995 versions of the NCPoS

1991 version	1995 version
Part I: Learning and using the target language Sections:	Part 1: Learning and using the target language Sections:
1. Communicating in the target language eg " <i>pupils should have regular opportunities to...take part in structured and less structured role-play</i> " (DES 1991, p.23)	1. Communicating in the target language eg " <i>[p]upils should be given opportunities to...develop their understanding and skills through a range of language activities, eg games, role-play, surveys and other investigations</i> " (DES 1995, p.2)
2. Understanding and responding eg " <i>listen attentively; follow clear directions and instructions...listen for gist and detail to identify and</i>	2. Language skills eg " <i>listen attentively, and listen for gist and detail...follow instructions and directions</i> " (ibid., p.3)

<i>abstract information</i> " (ibid., p.24)	
3. Developing language learning skills and awareness of language	3. Language learning skills and knowledge of language
4. Developing cultural awareness	4. Cultural awareness
5. Developing the ability to work with others	
6. Developing the ability to learn independently	
Part II Areas of Experience	Part II Areas of Experience
Seven individual areas of experience are presented	Five individual areas of experience are presented

1.6.i Target language

Explicit in both editions of the NCPoS is the focus on student activities; implicit therefore is also the teacher's role, as a provider of these many opportunities. The use of TL by pupils is strongly prescribed, for example: "*[w]here a response is spoken or written, it should be **in the target language**¹, except where a response in another language is a necessary part of the task (e.g. in an interpreting exercise)*" (1991, p.1) (See Appendix 1). In 1995, the phrasing is almost identical: "*[w]hen a spoken or written response is expected, it should be in the target language, except where a response in another language is necessary, e.g. when interpreting*" (p.2) (see Appendix 2). If a pupil is to respond in the TL, then the implication is that the stimulus for the response should also be in the target language. The expectation therefore was that almost all interaction in the classroom should be carried out in the target language. The use of the first language (L1) is proscribed except when interpreting.

¹ Highlighted in the original text

This focus upon teaching through and encouraging student use of the target language would signal a paradigm shift in how modern foreign languages should be taught in England. For the first time, methodology was being prescribed by national policy, and this methodology with its emphasis on role-play, drama and information gap activities in which students seek and give information, was principally communicative. Inherent in the PoS is the concept of language being constructed through interaction with others, and authentic realia. The communicative approach will be described and analysed fully in the next chapter.

Table 2. Instruction on the use of TL in the 1991 and 1995 versions of the NCPoS

1991 version	1995 version
“[w]here a response is spoken or written, it should be in the target language ² , except where a response in another language is a necessary part of the task (eg in an interpreting exercise)” (DES 1991, p.1)	“[w]hen a spoken or written response is expected, it should be in the target language, except where a response in another language is necessary, eg when interpreting” (DES 1995, p.2)

1.6.ii Grammar

There is limited reference to grammar in the first edition: “use knowledge about language (linguistic patterns, structures, grammatical features and relationships, and compound words and phrases) to infer meaning and develop their own language use” (DES 1991, p.25). Similarly out of the forty teaching points listed in the 1995 PoS, only two infer the use of grammar: for example point 3f “Pupils should be

² **in the target language** is highlighted in the actual document

taught to...understand and apply patterns, rules and exceptions in language forms and structures” and point 3g “*use their knowledge to experiment with language*” (p.3). There is an expectation that students use different time frames in order to “*describe everyday activities and narrate events*” (1991, p.23) and “*describe and discuss present, past and future events*” (1995, p.3). The word *grammar* is avoided completely, a slight semantic shift from the 1991 version. Whether this is deliberate, so as to prevent connotations of the word *grammar* triggering a type of method which will automatically lead to teachers teaching *grammar* deductively, is debatable. Grenfell (2000) maintains that, despite the PoS prescribing the teaching of *grammar* in point 3f (DFE 1995, p.3), the continued focus upon the use of target language implies that pupils are “*suppl[ied] lots of comprehensible input from which [they] may induce grammar*”, which reflects Krashen’s theories of language acquisition (p.25). As a result of this, “[*t*]the message has often been interpreted that target language is good, English is bad; induction is best, deduction is limited” (ibid.). Krashen and the concept of inductive *grammar* learning will be explored fully in subsequent chapters.

Table 3. Reference to grammar in the 1991 and 1995 versions of the NCPoS

1991 version	1995 version
“ <i>Pupils should have regular opportunities to...use knowledge about language (linguistic patterns, structures, grammatical features and relationships, and compound words and phrases) to infer meaning and develop their own language use</i> ”. (DES 1991, p.25) The term <i>grammatical features</i> is	“ <i>Pupils should be taught to...understand and apply patterns, rules and exceptions in language forms and structures</i> ” “ <i>use their knowledge to experiment with language</i> ”. (DES 1995, p.3) The term <i>grammar</i> is not used

used	
“ <i>describe everyday activities and narrate events</i> ” (ibid., p.23)	“ <i>describe and discuss present, past and future events</i> ” (ibid.)

1.6.iii Attainment Targets: Levels of attainment

Progression in terms of linguistic understanding and grammatical development is not addressed at all in Part I of the 1991, 1995 and 1999 NCPoS. However, expected progress is delineated in the Attainment Target Level descriptions (DES 1991, pp.6-17; DFE 1995, pp.5-9; DFEE 1999, pp.39-45; see Appendices 1-3). Since 1992, these levels have been used to assess student progress at KS3, with schools having to report the percentage of students achieving a particular level at the end of Year 9, which for Adams (2000) established the concept of “*profiling pupil attainment expressed positively against agreed criteria*” (p.199).

In the first edition there were 10 separate level descriptors for each of the four skills. At *Level One* in Writing, a student would be expected to copy words, by *Level Four* they should be able to “*write a small number of related sentences from memory to find out and convey simple information and feelings*” (DES 1991, p.15), they should also be able to “*adapt a simple text by substituting words and set phrases*” (ibid.). By *Level Five* they should “*apply basic elements of grammar to new contexts*” (ibid., p.16) although there is no exemplification of these basic elements of grammar.

Since 1991 there have only been minor revisions to the NC attainment target levels. In 1995, the number of levels was reduced to nine in each of the skills. *Levels One to Four* for Speaking and Writing remained differentiated by the quantity of language to be produced. For Mitchell (2003, p.17) there is an expectation of high levels of

accuracy and an emphasis on memorisation, which implies some dissonance with the communicative ethos of the PoS. In the 1995 edition students were expected to use past, present and future time frames at *Level Five*. This was modified slightly in the 1999 edition; such practice was then expected at *Level Six*. Similarly students should “*apply basic elements of grammar in new contexts*” at *Level Five* in 1995, but by 1999 (p.45) and again in 2007 it is only at *Level Six* that there is an expectation for pupils to “*apply their knowledge of grammar in new contexts*” (DFES 2007, p.173; see Appendix 4). Explicit in the Attainment Target descriptors, therefore, is how the application of grammar is seen to be a higher skill, and that students would not be expected to demonstrate such competence until later in their language education. The concept of *applying grammar in new contexts* is broad. A student in their first year of learning French who is able to apply the partitive to talk about what he/she may eat and drink: *Je mange du pain / Je bois de la limonade*³ and who then later applies the same partitive to talk about sports he/she may do using *faire*⁴ *Je fais de la natation / Je fais du surf*⁵ is applying grammar to new contexts in much the same way an older student may apply the correct ending to a new verb to produce a sentence using the simple future tense. Is it possible to argue that one is more difficult than the other? Mitchell (2003, p.18) argues that students should be given opportunities to use other tense forms at earlier stages in the language learning. Expectations at *Level Six* in the 1999 version were such that students should be able to use a variety of time frames in their writing as well as apply grammar. However to use a variety of time frames would require the application of grammar, unless students had merely memorised certain verb forms in three time frames without

³ I eat some bread / I drink some lemonade

⁴ verb - to do

⁵ I swim / I surf

understanding how to apply the rules. Without clear exemplification of what level of grammatical understanding and application is called for, the levels can be perceived as being vague (Häcker 2008, p.217). Norman (1998) suggests this was deliberate “*to leave the matter of grammatical continuity and progression to the individual teacher*” (p.53) which in turn led to a less than consistent approach to the use of the levels nationally.

For Mitchell (2003) the separate assessment of the individual skills is dated and “*predates the communicative era and is in some ways in opposition to it*” (p.17). She maintains that the four skills are rarely used in isolation, with students responding orally, or in written form to what they hear and read. The 1991 and 1995 PoS, on the one hand, call for pupils “*to take part in activities in the target language that, where appropriate, combine two or more of the four language skills*” (DFE 1995, p.2) but, on the other hand, insist that performance in those skills is assessed individually.

Table 4. Progression in grammatical competence across the four versions of Attainment Targets for Writing

1991 version	1995 version	1999 version	2007 version
	At Level Four “ <i>They adapt a model by substituting individual words and set phrases</i> ” (p.9)	At Level Four “ <i>They are beginning to use their knowledge of grammar to adapt and substitute individual words and set phrases</i> ”	At Level Four “ <i>They begin to use their knowledge of grammar to adapt and substitute individual words and set phrases</i> ” (p.177)

		<i>phrases</i> " (p.39)	
At Level Five "Pupils should be able to: ... "adapt a simple model text by substituting phrases and simple sentences of their own" (p.16) (no time frames) "apply basic elements of grammar to new contexts" (ibid.)	At Level Five "They refer to recent experience and future plans, as well as to everyday activities" (p.9) (three time frames) "They are beginning to apply basic elements of grammar in new contexts" (p.9)	At Level Five "They refer to recent experiences or future plans, as well as everyday activities" (ibid.) (two time frames)	At Level Five "They refer to recent experiences or future plans, as well as everyday activities" (ibid.) (two time frames)
At Level Six "use simple descriptive language to write about familiar topics and experiences, including future and past events" (ibid.) (three time		At Level Six "Pupils write in paragraphs using simple descriptive language, and refer to past, present and future actions and events" (three time	At Level Six "They use descriptive language and a variety of structures" (no reference to

frames)		frames) “They apply grammar in new contexts” (p.39)	tense) “They apply grammar in new contexts” (p.177)
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1.6.iv GCSE 1997

The near proscription of English by the NCPoS may have influenced the 1998 revision of the GCSE examinations characterised by “*the greatly increased role of the target language to set up tasks in the speaking and writing tests and to test listening and reading comprehension*” (Buckby 1999, p.4). GCSE MFL role-play materials for example, which instructed the candidate about the type of interaction expected to perform the tasks, were to contain no instructions in English. At Foundation Level, students were provided with symbols, which they would have to interpret in the role-play section of their speaking exam. I recall having to teach lower attaining GCSE students what the symbols meant first so that they could understand what was expected of them in the examination. It proved impractical, “*the use of only target language and visuals led to a degree of confusion or ambiguity*” (Buckby 1999, p.11) and within a year the exam boards agreed to annotate the images on role-play examination materials with English to ensure students understood what the symbols represented, completely defeating the supposed objective of encouraging production of the target language without reference to L1.

1.7 Conservative Party policy on language teaching

A major contribution to the shaping of the educational landscape during the Conservative era from 1979 to 1997 was the introduction of the National Curriculum, passed in the educational reform act of 1988, although Local Education Authorities

had been compelled to outline their own curriculum guidelines in accordance with the DES recommendations since 1981 (DES 1981, see Ch.1.2). Government policy appears to support the importance of languages in the curriculum; it would, however, be 12 years into the government's term of office before languages became compulsory at KS3, and only in their last year (1996) did it become mandatory at KS4. There may have been economic reasons for the need for languages in the curriculum, given Britain's closer economic ties with the European Union in the late 1980s and early 1990s, as well as a respect for traditional subjects such as the humanities and languages. In 1990 the government commissioned a working party (Ch.1.6) to create a standardised, outcomes focussed PoS where progress could be conceptualised in terms of levels of attainment (DES 1990). The original NCPoS (DES 1991) which was largely communicative in nature, and proscribed the teaching of grammar may appear at odds with their current thinking on how to teach languages, explicit in the 2013 NCPoS, and is discussed later. As will be explored in the next chapter, communicative approaches reflected contemporary thinking on language teaching and acquisition in the 1980s.

1.8 The national picture (1999–2002)

The Ofsted reports of 1999-2000 would highlight how speaking remained the weakest skill, despite a curriculum which appeared to place strong emphasis on oral communication. Furthermore, it highlighted how students "*are reluctant to use the target language and to seek clarification or explanation*" (Ofsted 2000, p.1-2). Teachers were similarly criticised because "*target language [was] not always used consistently or effectively*" (ibid. p.1). Alarm was also expressed at the quality, or lack of accuracy in students' writing as well as stating "*their understanding of how*

language works, grasp of basic grammar and powers of recall [were] weak” (ibid., p.3). Ofsted also highlighted how “*expectations often do not reflect the full range of the Programme of Study*” (ibid., p.1) with there being too much focus on covering language within Part II *Areas of Experience* and less focus upon opportunities for learning provided by Part One. Indeed, criticism of teachers by Ofsted (1993) in the early years of the inception of the NC focussed upon insufficient implementation of *Part I* of the PoS (p.17) and too much emphasis on *Part II* which dealt with the areas of experience, or in other words, *topics*. Clark and Trafford in 1996 highlighted the disenchantment of pupils with MFL because of “*the repetitive nature of their learning experience*” (Mitchell 2003, p.20) perhaps as a result of the same topic areas (areas of experience) applying to KS3 and KS4 with little suggestion of linguistic progression provided by the PoS.

1.8.i The 1999 version of the National Curriculum

The 1999 version of the National Curriculum heralded changes, which perhaps responded to this national picture, as well as addressing issues identified by Ofsted. The original opening section in the first two versions of the PoS on *Communicating in the target language* was removed and replaced by a new section entitled *Acquiring knowledge and understanding of the target language* (DFEE 1999, p.165). For Meiring and Norman (2002) this signalled a reduction in the status of the target language, “*the emphasis on learning and using the target language is further diminished*” (p.28). Furthermore it implied perhaps a renewed focus on grammar. Indeed in this new section, students were to “*be taught*⁶...*the grammar of the target language and how to apply it*” (DFEE 1999, p.16). The concept of grammar had only

⁶ word not highlighted in original text

been inferred in the 1995 version of the NCPoS; four years later grammar teaching was being prescribed, although what aspects of grammar should be taught and **how** they should be taught were still not exemplified by the NCPoS (Mitchell 2000, p.288; 2003, p.20).

In terms of using the TL, in the left hand corner on page 16 of the 1999 NCPoS, there was a small note:

The target language is the modern foreign language that pupils are learning. Pupils are expected to use and respond to the target language, and to use English only when necessary (for example, when discussing a grammar point or when comparing English and the target language). (DFEE 1999, p.16)

Explicit in the 1999 NCPoS, therefore, was an acceptance of English being used to discuss grammar points, or to compare the mother tongue (L1) with the second language (L2). Such practice had not been explicitly referred to in the previous two editions. It suggests a compromise, acknowledging that comparison to L1, and discussion about grammar may have a beneficial effect on the learner.

The 'Invisible Child' Research Project of 1998 examined the language learning experiences of Key Stage Three students. The Project offered insight into how learners were unable to express how they were developing linguistically but could talk about the topics they were doing in class, highlighting how learning objectives were not transparent to them.

Pupils experienced great difficulty when asked to reflect, even in simple terms, on the learning objectives of their most recent lesson. Their attempts to talk about the work were often unclear and inarticulate. Many references were made to activities, but there was little evidence that pupils had seen their purpose in terms of bringing about learning. (Lee, Buckland & Shaw 1998, p.52)

The project called for language lessons to be built around clear, concise objectives, almost mirroring the recommendation over 20 years earlier by the DES in 1977 (Ch.1.3.ii). It also highlighted how a number of pupils struggled to pronounce, spell and memorise language, suggesting that the teaching of language learning skills explicit in the NCPoS may still not have been addressed (Lee, Buckland & Shaw 1998, p.53), possibly due, as discussed, to the challenge of teaching these aspects in the target language.

Despite the concerns raised about the language learning experience in schools, the number of students sitting the GCSE examinations in a MFL continued to rise from 1994 onwards. The highest ever percentage of students studying languages to GCSE in England was in 2001 when 78% of the cohort sat the examination (CiLT 2007, p.3). Disappointing, perhaps, given that MFL at KS4 should have been compulsory, but promising given that nearly four fifths of young people were studying a language up to the age of 16. However, the subject would be dealt a severe blow, when in 2002 the DFES, despite trying to tackle issues with language pedagogy, somewhat paradoxically rejected compulsory language learning at KS4. *Languages*

for All – mandatory MFL for all students up until age 16 was, therefore, somewhat short lived and never fully achieved.

1.9 Optional languages at KS4 and The KS3 MFL Framework

1.9.i The MFL Framework

In 2003 the DFES launched the KS3 MFL Framework: a non-statutory planning tool to put a greater emphasis upon the development of language learning strategies and metacognition. The Framework set out to challenge a behaviourist dominant methodology in MFL by encouraging students to engage more with cognition, it “[gave] teachers a mental map of language learning over KS3” (DFES 2003, p.15) challenging the practice of the rote learning of language at KS3 (Hornsey 1995; Mitchell 2003). It suggested a model for grammatical progression: in Year 7, for example, pupils were to be taught examples of high frequency verbs moving to a greater awareness of tenses and full verb paradigms in Year 8, “[t]o use verb patterns and forms to understand and refer to present, past and close future events” (DFES 2003, p.38) and Year 9 “[t]o secure regular main tense verb patterns, main past and future tenses of high frequency verbs and some conditional examples” (ibid. p.39) (see Appendix 6a).

The KS3 Framework comprised approximately 34-35 teaching objectives for each of the three KS3 years. It was closely related to the KS3 Literacy Framework (2001), which similarly adopted a view of language as words, sentences and texts (see Appendix 6a). In particular, the MFL Framework highlighted the 100 or so words that make up most speech and writing and these were termed *High Frequency* (see Appendix 6a) exemplifying aspects of theory proposed by Willis (1990) and Lewis

(1993), which are discussed in Chapter 4.2.iii.a. The outcomes of the research proposed that students rarely master the use of these words because practice at KS3 was seemingly characterised by the rote learning of topic specific lists of nouns, due to the impact of part two of the NCPoS, discussed in Ch.1.8.

1.9.ii 2007 NCPoS

In 2007 the NCPoS were revised again (see Appendix 4). Comparison of L1 to L2, suggested in the 1999 version, was prescribed, with the need for students to “*recognis[e]... that languages differ but may share common grammatical, syntactical or lexical features*” (DCSF 2007, p.166). Allusion to grammar increased further too; students would continue to focus on “*the grammar of the target language and how to apply it*” (ibid., p.168) but would also “*understand...how a language works and how to manipulate it*” (ibid., p.166). Use of TL continued to be pragmatised, especially from the 1995 edict, with only the expectation that students “*hear, speak, read and write in the target language **regularly**⁷ and frequently within the classroom and beyond*” (ibid., p.169).

1.9.iii 2004-2007 GCSE

By 2004 the subject was once again non-statutory at KS4 and within three years, the percentage of students, in their last year of compulsory education continuing with foreign language study to GCSE, had declined to 46% (CiLT 2007, p.3) “*the ending of the ‘languages for all’ policy...is leading to a sharp drop in the number of GCSE FLs nationally*” (Grenfell 2007, p.14). Interestingly after 10 years of stagnation (from 1994 to 2004 - the period of time the study of languages was compulsory at KS4) the

⁷ highlighted to show emphasis

percentage of pupils achieving A*-C in GCSE languages dramatically increased by approximately 12% from 2004-2007 (CiLT 2007, p.3). By 2007, pupils educated in the independent sector were nearly twice as likely to take a GCSE modern language than those in the maintained (ibid., p.6). Despite attempts to democratise opportunities for language learning in the 1990s, it appeared that foreign language study had once again largely returned to being the domain of the privileged and able. After twenty years of government intervention, through the implementation of a curriculum and an examination, which placed greater emphasis on the development of oral and aural skills, speaking, as in 1999, remained secondary students' weakest area of performance (Ofsted 2008, p.6).

1.9.iv Changes to GCSE since 2008

Since embarking on this research there have been other changes. The GCSE was revised again in 2010. The optional written coursework element was replaced by controlled assessment (AQA 2012). Students now have to complete longer written tasks in examination conditions, without the help of supportive notes. These tasks are no longer assessed by teachers, but are submitted for marking by the examination board. The previous final speaking examination has been replaced with individual speaking tasks that can be assessed during the course, and then moderated by the examination board. The weighting of the individual skills have changed, the writing and speaking components are now worth 30% of the final grade, with listening and reading each worth 20% (AQA 2012).

1.10 Labour Party policy on language teaching (1997-2010)

Policy development concerning the status of languages in the curriculum by the Labour Party appears somewhat contradictory. Languages would remain compulsory at KS4 for much of their first two terms of power. In 2002 they would produce the *Languages for all: language for life* strategy, which acknowledged that,

[t]he ability to understand and communicate in other languages is increasingly important in our society and in the global economy. Languages contribute to the cultural and linguistic richness of our society, to personal fulfilment, mutual understanding, commercial success and international trade and global citizenship. (2002, p.4)

It would outline measures to develop the learning of languages at KS2; plans to tackle MFL teacher shortages; the need to establish a national accreditation framework for languages as well as ideas to increase the study of languages in further and higher education. Millions of pounds would, over the next six years, be invested in local authorities to co-ordinate the development of KS2 languages. A number of local authorities would employ specific MFL advisers to work with schools on implementing the KS3 Framework (2003). However, the KS3 Framework, whilst appearing to offer a pragmatic concept of progression in language learning, appeared to trigger an increase in explicit grammar teaching and reduced use of TL in classrooms (Evans & Fisher 2009, p.4). The education act of 2002 would make the learning of languages at KS4 optional from the September of 2004. Numbers sitting GCSE languages would subsequently plummet, causing the government to produce a press release in December 2005 calling on secondary schools to set a minimum target of 50% of students taking languages at KS4 as well as encouraging

schools to “*articulate the arguments in favour of language study and to do all that they can to encourage take-up so that pupils don’t miss out*” (DFES 2005). It appears the government had clearly underestimated the effect of making languages optional at KS4. The final years of the Labour government would see fewer and fewer students studying languages in schools.

1.11 Current policy on language teaching 2010 –

The coalition government would introduce the concept of an English Baccalaureate, firstly as a performance indicator (DFE 2010) – all schools would have to report the percentage of students at GCSE who achieved A*-C grades in all of the following five curriculum areas: English, maths, science, a foreign language and a humanities subject (Ball 2013, p.107). This was undoubtedly an incentive to halt the decline in take up of the latter two subjects in secondary education. The Secretary of State for Education would later call for the abolition of GCSE, to be replaced by a single qualification ‘The Ebacc’ in which all students would be assessed in the five curriculum areas delineated above, heralding a return to compulsory language learning at KS4. He would quickly backtrack, acknowledging that it was “*a bridge too far*” (2013) perhaps in response to criticism at such a major overhaul of the examination system made by the media and academia since his intentions would leave students without any form of recognised qualification if they had not passed the Ebacc.

It appears that the current government does recognise the importance of languages. The introduction of statutory language provision for primary school students as from September 2014 is testament to that, although the efficacy of this may have been

compromised by the absence of financial investment in the professional development of teachers to deliver KS2 language provision since the coalition came to power in 2010. Languages at KS4 remain optional. The current model for the curriculum (DFE 2013a) appears to suggest a return to traditional practice. There is a much greater emphasis on the teaching of grammar in English; the rote learning of British historical events in history, and the prescription of more traditional methods of working out in mathematics. Reference to languages is limited in comparison to other subjects and far less descriptive than previous PoS although there is more explicit reference to the teaching of grammar than in previous incarnations of the NC. Indeed one of the two sections is entitled *Grammar and Vocabulary* in which it is stated that students should be encouraged to “*identify and use tenses...use and manipulate a variety of key grammatical structures and patterns, including voices and moods, as appropriate...use accurate grammar, spelling and punctuation*” (DFE 2013b, p.2; see Appendix 5). The practice of dictation and translation are also prescribed in curriculum documentation for the first time. Such practice was indicative of grammar-translation and was a feature of O level language examinations. This, when coupled with greater importance accorded to writing at GCSE implies a call to place greater emphasis on the teaching of grammar in MFL.

As previously discussed, GCE specifications provided the framework for the type of teaching methodology employed by teachers throughout much of the 1980s. Success at O and A level required high levels of grammatical accuracy and skill in translation, and this would therefore have been reflected in the classroom. The evidence shows that language learning was elitist in terms of academic ability, characterised by low levels of take up and high levels of failure. The increasing of

pupil entitlement to language learning in the late 1980s and early 1990s, first with the creation of the GCSE and then the National Curriculum, signalled a paradigm shift in how languages should be taught and assessed. Exams became criterion referenced and tested the four skills: speaking, listening, reading and writing equally. Teachers were expected to teach languages in the target language – all interaction in the classroom was to be in the TL. The role of grammar appeared to have been reduced, and by 1995 the teaching of grammar had been euphemised into merely encouraging students to spot language patterns. Deductive grammar teaching was not *de rigueur*.

Over the following decade, emphasis on the use of TL would remain, whilst the proscription of grammar teaching would slowly be compromised, firstly by the 1999 edition of the PoS, which prescribed the teaching of grammar, and then by the appearance of the KS3 Framework in 2003, which suggested a model of progression in key grammatical concepts. The 2013 PoS whilst encouraging the development of the speaking skills, make no reference at all to teaching through the TL, and half of the twelve prescribed teaching points make some reference to the accurate use of grammar or writing.

Chapter Two will present a description and analysis of theory and trends in language teaching and second language acquisition since the late 1970s. This then enables an examination of how policy may have reflected theoretical developments.

1.12 Conceptual exploration of teacher cognition

In the previous sections, I have outlined what has been expected of teachers in terms of what and how they teach languages over the last 30 years. This next section explores what we know about how teachers may work and operate in reality,

according to selected literature. I examine the components of teacher cognition, principally knowledge and beliefs, and debate how what teachers think and believe may influence their practice. I also explore what has contributed to the shaping of teacher knowledge and beliefs in light of the major research question:

What are the influences identified by secondary modern foreign language teachers which have contributed to the construction of their cognition: beliefs and pedagogical content knowledge?

1.12.i Pedagogical Content Knowledge

Shulman (1986) initially suggested “*three categories of content knowledge: (a) subject matter content knowledge, (b) pedagogical content knowledge, and (c) curricular knowledge*” (p.9). The first category: (a) *subject matter content knowledge* represents the knowledge of a subject area, how that knowledge is organised, and the reasons for this organisation.

The teacher need not only understand that something is so; the teacher must further understand why it is so, on what grounds its warrant can be asserted, and under what circumstances our belief in its justification can be weakened or denied. Moreover, we expect the teacher to understand why a given topic is particularly central to a discipline whereas another may be somewhat peripheral. (p.9)

The third category: (c) *curricular knowledge* refers to what is represented by curricular materials in terms of how a teacher could present knowledge for learning.

*[t]he curriculum and its associated materials are the *materia medica* of pedagogy, the *pharmacopeia* from which the teacher draws those tools of teaching that present or exemplify particular content and remediate or evaluate the adequacy of student accomplishments. (Shulman 1986, p.10)*

Shulman's legacy is his concept of the **second** category of knowledge – *pedagogical content knowledge* (PCK); Shulman (1986) wanted to find out how teachers believed they could present their content knowledge for learning by students.

Where do teacher explanations come from? How do teachers decide what to teach, how to represent it, how to question students about it and how to deal with problems of misunderstanding?...[H]ow does he or she employ content expertise to generate new explanations, representations, or clarifications? What are the source of analogies, metaphors, examples, demonstrations and rephrasings? (p.8)

Shulman (1986, 1987) argued that *what* is taught could not be divorced from *how* it is taught. He maintains therefore that *pedagogical content knowledge* encompasses both content and pedagogy, and is a representation of knowledge made appropriate for the teaching context.

It represents the blending of content and pedagogy into an understanding of how particular topics, problems, or issues are organised, represented and adapted to the diverse interests and abilities of learners, and presented for instruction. Pedagogical content knowledge is the category most likely to

distinguish the understanding of the content specialist from that of the pedagogue. (1987, p.8)

Ball, Thames and Phelps (2008) posit,

[the] central contribution of Shulman and his colleagues was to reframe the study of teacher knowledge in ways that attend to the role of content in teaching. This was a radical departure from research of the day, which focused almost exclusively on general aspects of teaching. Subject matter was little more than context. (p.390)

Ball, Thames and Phelps (2008) acknowledge that Shulman's concept of pedagogical content knowledge has been used regularly in research to denote teacher knowledge. They suggest, however, that the basis of the concept: *content being made appropriate for teaching* has since been poorly developed with definitions being "*broad enough to include nearly any package of teacher knowledge and beliefs*" (p.394). It is questionable whether knowledge can be so clearly delineated into three categories without overlap. By 1987 Shulman had expanded the number of categories to seven, but he also admitted a lack consistency in his definition of these categories in previous publications (Shulman 1987, p.8). Missing from Shulman's original definitions of three knowledge types was the recognition of how educational policy may also be a source of teacher knowledge. By 1987 he would, however, allude explicitly to the influence of policymakers in defining the characteristics of good teaching (p.6) and the role of "*government agencies from the district through the state and federal levels*" (p.9). The role of policy is further alluded

to in Shulman's (1987) description of the four main sources of *pedagogical content knowledge*, and represents influences that could shape teacher cognition. The first is *scholarship in content disciplines*, which consists of the knowledge, understanding and skills a teacher would wish to transfer to a student. The second consists of *educational material and structures*, comprising curriculum documents, accreditation systems, "*institutions with their hierarchies, their explicit and implicit systems of rules and roles; professional teachers' organisations with their functions of negotiation, social change and mutual protection*" (ibid., p.9). The third area consists of the influence of scholarly research in education, and the fourth is *wisdom of practice* – the maxims which shape effective practitioners' interaction with students and which have developed over time through experience (ibid., p.12). This research investigates the influences in the construction of pedagogical content knowledge. It asks what is this knowledge, but also asks what are the possible sources and influences on this knowledge.

1.12.ii Sources of knowledge and tension

Inherent within Shulman's concept of *pedagogical content knowledge* is that a teacher's knowledge of what to teach and how to teach is influenced by a multitude of sources, with policy and curriculum documentation being just one potential area of influence.

The previous section explored legislation governing the teaching of languages in the UK since the late 1970s. Policy, however, may be in competition / in conflict with a variety of other influences which shape teacher knowledge. The pertinence of teacher cognition as a research area is such that it allows for an exploration of what

life is actually like for teachers in classrooms today, who are often bombarded by changes, such as rapid policy developments. Most importantly, it enables an analysis of how teachers deal with these changes, especially when such change *“may conflict with what teachers personally desire and experience as good”* (Beijaard, Meijer & Verloop 2004, p.109). Pennington (2002) suggests that teachers make choices in how they wish to teach and such choices can be limited by theory and policy. Pennington (ibid.) posits there is a conflict or tension between the two and it is this tension that I wish to explore in this research (p.5). How do teachers reconcile the differences between how they wish to teach and how they feel they are being told to teach? Are they in fact aware of how policy may have conditioned their thinking? This research sets out to examine how micro and macro policy (Ch.1.1) may have influenced the construction of MFL teachers' beliefs and pedagogical content knowledge. Phipps and Borg (2009) suggest furthermore that *“[c]ontextual factors, such as a prescribed curriculum, time constraints, and high-stakes examinations, mediate the extent to which teachers can act in accordance with their beliefs”* (p.381) (Beaumont & Change 2011; Griffiths 2011). Beliefs therefore may be compromised as a result of the teaching context, and context may contribute to the construction of beliefs, this is explored in Ch.2.2.i.

1.12.iii Knowledge of students and the teaching context

Shulman's (1987) later definition of PCK would encompass *“knowledge of learners and their characteristics”* and *“knowledge of educational contexts”* (p.8). Cochran, De Ruiter and King (1993) posit that knowledge of students and the context in which they are taught contribute more to shaping how a teacher would present knowledge for learning in the classroom than other aspects: *“in our version of PCK we*

emphasise the importance of teachers' knowing about the learning of their students and the environmental context in which learning and teaching occur" (p.263). Van Driel, Verloop and de Vos (1998) redefine PCK as teachers' craft knowledge "which represents teachers' accumulated wisdom with respect to their teaching practice" (p.674). It is therefore a construct, which has been defined over time due to an individual's engagement with the teaching context. This may include experiences from their own education, their own "*personal backgrounds and...the context in which they work*" (ibid.).

1.12.iv Teacher knowledge is flexible, hermeneutic and interpretivist

Teacher knowledge is therefore flexible and Johnson (1994,1996), Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop (2004) argue that it is hermeneutic and interpretivist and is shaped through interaction with the teaching context. Teaching,

is...largely experiential and socially constructed out of the experiences and classrooms from which teachers have come...teaching [is] a socially constructed activity that requires the interpretation and negotiation of meanings embedded within the classrooms where they teach. And finally...learning to teach is a complex developmental process that is acquired by participating in the social practices associated with teaching and learning. (Johnson 1996, pp.766-767)

Similarly Bakhtin, (1981), in the *Dialogic Imagination*, suggests that teacher knowledge develops as a result of dialogue with others and with the self. This brings into the light the idea that there is a certain degree of self-reflection and dialogue

involved in this construct. Schön's (1983) concept of the reflective practitioner has been highly influential in providing a conceptual framework for teacher knowledge, and highlights the role of reflection in Schulman's concept of PCK, involving the transferring of content into practice - a process known as *framing*. *Framing* is when a practitioner reads a particular context by referring to "examples, images, understandings and actions" (p.138) from their past *teaching repertoire* to help them interpret the situation and respond appropriately, allowing a "unique and uncertain situation...to be understood" (p.132).

1.12.v Teacher cognition and beliefs

Borg's review of research (2003) on teacher cognition, which he defines as "*what teachers think, know and believe and the relationships of these mental constructs to what teachers do in the language classroom*" (p.81) clearly reflects Shulman's concept of PCK. He maintains "*teachers are active, thinking decision makers who make instructional choices by drawing on complex, practically-orientated, personalised, and context-sensitive networks of knowledge, thoughts and beliefs*" (p.81). Pajares (1992) argues that beliefs are highly influential in shaping practice in the classroom, "*beliefs are the best indicators of the decisions individuals make throughout their lives*" (p.307). The exploration of teacher beliefs begins to shed light on why teachers may make certain decisions, which shape how they teach (Fenstermacher 1979; Nespor 1987; Goodman 1988; Johnson 1994). The challenge is in defining what is meant by *teacher beliefs* and how they may be distinguished from knowledge, "*[i]t will not be possible for researchers to come to grips with teachers' beliefs, however, without first deciding what they wish belief to mean and how this meaning will differ from that of similar constructs*" (Pajares 1992, p.308). It may be impossible to fully define the two but an exploration of selected literature on

beliefs may lead to knowing how to access them which will aid in choosing an appropriate research methodology. Clandinin and Connelly's (1987) meta-analysis of research on teacher beliefs highlight the plethora of terms used to define the concept including the term *personal practical knowledge*, which they originated. *Personal practical knowledge* has been "embodied and reconstructed out of the narrative of a teacher's life" (ibid., p.490) – personal practical knowledge is "carved out of, and shaped by, situations; knowledge that is constructed and reconstructed as we live out our stories and retell and relive them through processes of reflection" (Clandinin 1992, p.125) and is therefore experiential and constructivist (Johnson 1994, 1996; van Driel, Verloop & de Vos 1998; Beijaard, Meijer & Verloop 2004) and mirrors Schulman's suggested fourth source of PCK: *wisdoms of practice*. Knowles (1992) argues how biographies and life stories have a powerful role to play in bringing to light the construction of teacher knowledge and beliefs.

1.12.vi Knowledge vs beliefs (early experiences)

Nisbett and Ross's (1980) conceptualisation of knowledge consists of both a cognitive element, which is factual and objective and a more subjective element a *belief*. Knowledge of a subject examination specification would be an example of cognitive knowledge, whilst thinking that class 9A on Thursday afternoons can be difficult to teach, would be an example of a belief. Nespor (1987) posits that beliefs contain a stronger emotional element than knowledge, and may have been shaped by an early childhood experience, for example, a "*crucial experience or some particularly influential teacher produces a richly-detailed episodic memory which later serves the student as an inspiration and a template for his or her own teaching practices*" (p.320). Although Shulman does not acknowledge the potential influence of early learning experiences on the construction of teacher knowledge, others do

(Lortie 1975; Nisbett & Ross 1980; Goodman 1988; Calderhead 1991; Knowles 1992; Freeman 1992; Cooper & Olson 1996; Bailey & Nunan 1996; Borg 1999a; Yee Fan Tang 2002). Borg (2003) suggests, for example,

teachers' prior language learning experiences establish cognitions about learning and language learning which form the basis of their initial conceptualisations of L2 teaching during teacher education, and which may continue to be influential throughout their professional lives. (p.88)

Lortie (1975) argues that the apprenticeship of observation - the countless hours of sitting in classrooms as a learner leave us with powerful images and lingering beliefs of what remains effective teaching, “*what constituted good teaching then constitutes it now*” (p.66). Freeman (1992) concurs: “*the memories of instruction gained through their ‘apprenticeship of observation’ function as de facto guides for teachers as they approach what they do in the classroom*” (p.11).

1.12.vii Resistance to change

Nisbett and Ross (1980), Borg (2003) and Phipps and Borg 2009 posit how these early learning experiences indelibly shape beliefs and theories about how to teach and are moreover, highly resistant to change. Teachers will exhibit high levels of cognitive dissonance when presented with an alternative theory to their long held beliefs, “[p]eople tend to persevere in their beliefs well beyond the point at which logical and evidential considerations can sustain them” (Nisbett & Ross 1980, p.192). Similarly Goodman (1988) suggests that teachers are profoundly influenced by *guiding images* (p.124) from previous experiences, which act as *intuitive screens*

filtering and interpreting new information, “[b]ased upon their past experiences as pupils...students created various images about teaching” (ibid.) and “their pre-professional images formed an “intuitive screen” through which they interpreted their professional education” (p.130). Pennington builds on this with the concept of the cognitive-affective filter – teachers will respond more favourably to ideas that chime with existing beliefs, and pre-existing knowledge structures.

[T]eachers take in only those aspects of available input which are accessible to them. Accessible input refers to those types of information to which the teachers are prepared to attend to because of a high awareness and understanding of the input, coupled with favorable attitudes such as a pre-existing interest in or positive attitude towards the form of input or the person giving the input ... In contrast, input for which teachers have low awareness, low understanding, or unfavourable attitudes is inaccessible in whole or in part and will consequently have little or no impact in the way of teacher change. (Pennington 1996, p.340)

Yee Fan Tang (2002), essentially synthesizing a number of viewpoints, maintains “*that learning to teach is essentially the interaction between the learner and three important arenas of school-based learning, namely, pre-training influences, the teacher education program[me] and the teaching practice context*” (p.52). Shulman maintains that learning to teach (the development of pedagogic content knowledge and how it shapes what we do in the classroom) continues after training and those experiences gathered whilst in-service continue to influence knowledge and performance.

1.12.viii Conclusion

Teacher cognition may consist of knowledge and beliefs (Shulman 1986, 1987; Borg 1998, 1999a, 2003; Phipps & Borg 2009). Both constructs are experiential (Johnson 1994; 1996; van Driel, Verloop & de Vos 1998; Beijaard, Meijer & Verloop 2004). The concept of belief may be more subjective than that of knowledge (Nisbett & Ross 1980). Beliefs and knowledge have a role in influencing teachers' decisions as to how to teach (Pajares 1992; Borg 2003; Phipps & Borg 2009). Sources of knowledge, and influences which shape teacher cognition, may be varied and diverse (Shulman 1986, 1987; Borg 1999a). Early learning experiences will strongly shape subsequent knowledge and beliefs about teaching (Lortie 1975; Nisbett & Ross 1980; Nespor 1987; Goodman 1988; Calderhead 1991; Knowles 1992; Freeman 1992; Cooper & Olson 1996; Bailey & Nunan 1996; Borg 1999a, 2003; Yee Fan Tang 2002) and these beliefs are highly resistant to change, and teachers will accommodate new ideas to fit in with previous cognition (Nisbett & Ross 1980; Goodman 1988; Pennington 2002). Conflict may well ensue when prescriptive practice (policy) is dissonant with existing beliefs (Pennington 2002). Knowledge and beliefs may often be accessed through the exploration of a teacher's life: their narrative (Knowles 1992), which supports the research aims and methodology of this thesis (autobiography and life history).

1.13 Contribution to knowledge

This study has the potential to add to the field of knowledge in the following two ways. Firstly, this research provides valuable insight into the construction of MFL teachers' cognition and beliefs. Secondly, it offers insight into how teachers

negotiate the issues of teaching grammar in secondary mainstream education, since grammar has been such a central and contested issue for teachers (Ch1.2-Ch1.10).

To my knowledge, studies with a focus on teacher cognition within the realm of MFL teachers in English state schools are very limited if not quite non-existent. Borg (2003) commented:

[m]uch research [into teacher cognition in language teaching] has been conducted with native speaker teachers working with small groups of motivated adult learners studying in universities or private institutions. In contrast, we have minimal insight into state school settings (primary and secondary) where languages are taught by non-native teachers to large classes of learners who, particularly in the case of English, may not be studying the language voluntarily. Investigations of such settings, then, are another priority. (p.106)

Such research may provide teacher educators with valuable insight into the decisions teachers make (Johnson 1994), and the root of these decisions, be they contextual factors, or beliefs that have been shaped through experience: “*this research might be made available to trainees and teachers as the basis of teacher education activities*” (Borg 2003, p.106). Phipps and Borg (2009) argue that the study of the tensions between what teachers believe and the reality of their practice will provide teacher educators with insight into the process of teaching (p.381). Furthermore, an examination of contextual issues “*prescribed curriculum, time constraints and high stakes examinations*” must figure in “*any analysis of the*

relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices" (ibid.). The exploration of the impact of micro and macro policy on MFL teacher beliefs is, as yet, a vein of untapped rich information and this research harvests such data in terms of the impact of policy on teacher cognition and practice.

Many of Borg's own studies and review of existing research explores teachers' beliefs about grammar and how grammar should be taught. Fifteen years ago, Borg (1999a) would highlight how:

[f]ormal instruction has been one of the most researched aspects of L2 teaching. Yet not only has this research been largely inconclusive in identifying optimal strategies for grammar learning, it has actually provided very little insight into the actual processes of L2 grammar teaching as these are perceived by teachers. (pp.19-20)

As a result of this, there remained a niche in the world of research which needed to be exploited: "*the lack of attention to the cognitive bases of teachers' work in grammar teaching represents a gap in the research agenda for L2 teaching*" (1998a, p.10). Existing research has, for example, investigated the benefits of inductive approaches to grammar teaching and immersion (Shaffer 1989; Fortune 1992; DeKeyser, 1995; Cammarata & Teddick, 2012) and has "*concerned itself with the power of input and interaction to deliver acquisition of the rule system without explicit grammar instruction*" (Macaro & Masterman 2006, p.302). Others have examined how grammar / form-focussed instruction may improve second language learning (Ellis 1991,1997, 2004; Johnson 1994; Spada 1997,2011). Since the mid 1990s

“[t]he study of teachers’ beliefs has...emerged as a major area of enquiry in the field of language teaching” (Phipps & Borg 2009, p.380). In recent years The ELT Journal has published the findings of a variety of international small-scale research projects investigating teacher and learner beliefs about the role of grammar (Scheffler & Cinciata 2011; Griffiths 2012; Nishino 2012) but there has been little research into beliefs about MFL grammar teaching within mainstream secondary English education. This research will reveal how beliefs about the teaching of grammar have been constructed and how this is reflected in practice *“providing insight into the cognitive bases of these practices”* (Borg 1999a, p.29) but will also explore the impact of contextual factors on these beliefs. These findings may benefit teacher education (ibid.; Nishino 2012, p.395).

1.14 Structure of the thesis

Chapter One presents the research questions and the background to the study. It examines the historical context to language learning in England over the last forty years through the exploration of national policy since the late 1970s and describes how teachers have been expected to teach. Furthermore, it identifies other sources of influence such as the examination system on shaping teachers’ pedagogy. The latter part of the chapter analyses selected literature on teacher cognition. It examines how teacher knowledge and beliefs may be constructed as well as how they influence decisions made in the classroom. Chapter One suggests the potential contribution the thesis will make to existing knowledge.

Chapter Two

This chapter reviews relevant literature on language learning methodology and second language acquisition from the last four decades. It explores the concept of method and methodology and, in particular, the three major methods and approaches: grammar-translation, audio-lingual and communicative, which have influenced English language teaching pedagogy over this time period. A key focus will be the role of grammar as defined by theory and methodology, and the concept of teaching in the target language. This permits an examination of how language teaching legislation may, or may not, have mirrored theory. It suggests how the teaching context may be a limiting factor in the implementation of language teaching methods, and the relevance of this to the research.

Chapter Three

This chapter introduces the conceptual framework of the study and delineates the main areas of influence on teacher cognition, which form the main data capture areas of the research. It outlines the features of qualitative research and presents the methodology and the research methods chosen in the study. It reports on the ethical considerations taken.

Chapters Four, Five and Six

These chapters present the findings of the study in light of the research questions. Findings are reported in the form of one autobiography and five life histories and are structured around the areas of influence on teacher cognition outlined in Chapter Three. Chapter Five presents a cross-analysis of the findings from Chapter Four and incorporates additional data from the pilot study. This is a synthesis of key themes

drawn from the data presented. Chapter Six presents the conclusions to the study. It makes recommendations for teacher education and for the teaching of MFL in England.

Chapter Two: Language teaching methodology and SLA

The previous chapter presented a chronological exposition of the national legislation which prescribed how languages should be taught in English schools since the 1980s. This was accompanied by an analysis of literature examining the construction of teacher knowledge and beliefs and how these influence decisions teachers make in how they present knowledge to students in the classroom. Having therefore considered how teachers had been asked to teach, as well as how teachers may work in reality, this next chapter reviews the literature on language learning theory and methodology spanning the last half-century. A particular focus will be to examine the role of grammar in theory and methodology, as well as the concept of teaching in the target language. This will allow for an analysis of how policy may, or may not, have reflected theory. It will also permit an exploration of the concept of method and methodology in language learning. Subsequent life histories will explore how participants' practice may reflect a particular method, and most importantly, the reasoning behind how and why a participant may believe they teach in this way, examining how methods may be adapted, compromised, or even rejected, as teachers negotiate the reality of their teaching context.

2.1 The grammar and target language debate

Richards and Rodgers (2001) in *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*, acknowledge that the question of how to teach and learn foreign languages has been the topic of much debate over the last century (p.viii). The broad range of literature reviewed throughout the thesis, and the differing perceptions and beliefs of

my research respondents, discussed in their subsequent life histories, substantiate this.

Butzkamm (2003) argues that the role of grammar in language learning is central to the debate on language learning methodology, closely followed by the significance of the first language in language acquisition, “[s]ince the Great Reform at the end of the 19th century, the role of the mother tongue has been second only to grammar as the most discussed methodological problem” (p.300). Others support the centrality of grammar and / or the role of L1 in the argument (Klapper 1997,1998; Meiring & Norman 2001; Macaro & Masterman 2006, p.297; Kumaravadivelu 2006, p.187). Borg (1999b) expresses it thus: “*the role of formal instruction itself has been a perennial area of debate, and more than 20 years of research have failed to yield firm guidelines for grammar teaching methodology*” (p.157). Over thirty years ago, for Canale & Swain (1980), discussion was polarised around the explicit teaching of grammar vs. the concept of teaching students to communicate. This is the fundamental basis of the debate. Griffiths (2011) alludes to this as the *traditional* vs. the *communicative* dichotomy. Van Patten and Cadierno (1993) and Beaumont and Chang (2011) argue however that the debate is not simply a question of whether grammar should be taught but, more importantly, a question of **how** it should be taught. Subsequently this is reflected as conflict between two competing ideologies: explicit grammar teaching: “[e]stablishing as the prime objective of a lesson (or part of a lesson) the explanation of how a morphosyntactic rule or pattern works, with some reference to metalinguistic terminology, and providing examples of this rule in a linguistic, though not necessarily a functional, context” (Macaro & Masterman 2006, p.298) (grammatical rule presented first followed by examples) vs *implicit*

grammar learning - grammar rules being hypothesised from the presentation of language in context (input) (Blyth 1997, p.52). This dichotomy has also been expressed as conscious, learned language vs. subconscious, acquired language (Krashen 1981, 1982, 1983; Lantolf & Frawley 1983) or explicit knowledge of language vs implicit knowledge of language (Ellis 2004).

2.1.i Learning theory

Argument concerning the teaching of grammar and the use of the TL is underpinned by behaviourist, cognitivist and constructivist learning theory. These have provided some influence on the theoretical frameworks of a variety of language teaching methods and approaches apparent in English schools since the 1970s. The audio-lingual method, rooted in behaviourism (Watson 1913), encapsulates a view of language as learnt behaviour initiated through repetition, imitation, reward and correction, exemplifying operant conditioning (Skinner 1957). Cognitivism rejects behaviourism by proposing an innatist view of language learning – learners being genetically pre-determined to acquire language (Chomsky 1965, 1966). This idea of an innate mechanism that facilitates language acquisition may be evident in communicative approaches. *True* or *strong* communicative approaches (Howatt 1984) are theoretically constructivist with the intention of communicating meaning being shaped through interaction with others.

It is essential to seek a definition of the concepts of *technique*, *method* and *approach* in language teaching for I will frequently refer to such terminology throughout this thesis. Arguments concerning the role of grammar and the concept of teaching through the TL are further explored in the methods and approaches examined here.

2.2 Approaches, methods, techniques and context

Richards and Rodgers suggest that there have been many attempts “*to conceptualise the nature of methods and to explore more systematically the relationship between theory and practice within a method*” (2001, p.18). For Brown (2001, p.14), Anthony (1963) provides perhaps the most succinct definition of the relationship between the concepts of approaches, methods and techniques: “[*t*]he arrangement is hierarchical. The organisational key is that techniques carry out a method which is consistent with an approach” (p.63). Anthony maintains that an approach is a collection of beliefs about the nature of language as well as about language learning and teaching. It will encompass a philosophy about language, which may be debated but not actually proven (ibid., p.64). The communicative approach to language teaching and learning, for example, is underpinned by beliefs that language is about communication – meaningful interaction. Anthony defines a method as “*the orderly presentation of language material, no part of which contradicts...the selected approach. An approach is axiomatic, a method is procedural*” (ibid., p.65).

Richards and Rodgers (2001) further define the concept of method in the context of modern foreign language teaching as a “*notion of a systematic set of teaching practices based on a particular theory of language and language learning*” (p.1). Procedures in the classroom instigated by the teacher enable the theory to be translated into actual practice. An approach encompasses a range of beliefs and philosophy about the rationale for learning languages and may encapsulate a number of methods. Anthony defines a technique as “*a particular trick, stratagem, or contrivance used to accomplish an immediate objective*” (1963, p.66) - repetition of

phonemes, words and sentences is a technique, for example, to encourage learners to imitate sounds. Richards and Rodgers' major critique of Anthony's definitions rests on their superficiality – too much is undeveloped. Anthony does not, for example, clearly delineate the role of teacher and learner in the concept of a method (2001, p.20) although the role of the teacher would depend on the individual approach and method(s) adopted by the teacher. Anthony's hierarchy of approach, method and technique implies an arrangement where approach influences method which subsequently influences technique. In reality teachers may not think or act in such a structured manner – "*what teachers actually do in the classroom is different from what is advocated by theorists*" (Kumaravadivelu 2006, p.84). Raya (2009) suggests that the enforcement of language teaching method in teacher education courses, for example, suggests "*[a] top-down relationship that assigned little critical voice to teachers*" (p.187). As this thesis will explore, teachers' methods are hybridic and context explored in the next section (Ch.2.2.i) may have a profound influence on the choices teachers may make in the classroom.

The vague nature of Anthony's definitions of method and approach has led to the two frequently being confused in literature (Kumaravadivelu 2006, p.84). Richards and Rodgers suggest that approach and method should be encapsulated by one term – *design*, which encompasses syllabus; the order of presentation of language; the role of the teacher and learner, as well as the resources to be used (2001, p.20). Technique should be deemed *procedure* and embraces the implementation of the *design* in the classroom (*ibid.*). Brown (2001) highlights the extent to which much of this terminology is used interchangeably by teachers, which is evidenced by my research. In contemporary parlance, the term *methodology* is often used

pragmatically to denote methods and approaches, whereas method is used to describe the techniques administered in the classroom (p.15). For clarity, and convenience, I will continue to use the terms: *approach*, *method* and *technique*, as originally defined by Anthony, throughout this study.

2.2.i Context and method

Kumaravadivelu (2006) highlights a major flaw inherent within the concept of method, which rests on the idea of teaching being just a sequence of related stages that can be blindly and successfully applied by all. This is without any consideration for the “*wide range of learners in an enormous number of situational contexts*” (Brown 2007, p.18) or for the influence of teacher beliefs in shaping teachers’ decisions, as discussed in detail in the previous chapter. Indeed the framework provided by Anthony,

attempted to portray the entire language teaching operations as a simple, hierarchical relationship between approach, method, and technique, without in any way considering the complex connections between intervening factors such as societal demands, institutional resources and constraints, instructional effectiveness, and learner needs. (p.85)

Implicit within this are macro and micro policy, which whilst contributing to the shaping of the teaching context, may also be at odds with the teaching context. What teachers are expected to teach, and how they are expected to teach it, could in fact be inappropriate given the teaching context. Ur (2013, p.471) similarly suggests that the teaching context is a significant source of influence on the decisions teachers

make, delineating similar factors such as the needs of learners, expectations of stakeholders (school leaders, parents, school governance and local government), assessment demands and teachers' perceived strengths and weaknesses as guiding teachers' actual classroom practice. Nishino (2012) concurs, "*classroom practices are influenced by socioeducational factors such as high-stakes examinations and government policy*" (p.395). Kumaravadivelu (2006) refers to this *actual practice* as teachers' methodology: "*what practi[s]ing teachers actually do in the classroom in order to achieve their stated or unstated teaching objectives*" (p.84) which contrasts with his definition of teaching method "*established methods conceptualized and constructed by experts in the field*" (ibid.) examples of which will be explored in this chapter.

Bax (2003) posits that an examination of the teaching context should always be the first consideration before deciding how to teach a particular class.

The first priority is the learning context, and the first step is to identify key aspects of that context before deciding what and how to teach in any given class. This will include an understanding of individual students and their learning needs, wants, styles, and strategies. (p.285)

This implies that context is the greatest determinant of a teachers' methodology. The previous chapter highlighted how knowledge of students and the teaching context are similarly components of teacher knowledge (Shulman 1986; Cochran, De Ruiter & King 1993). It also established how teacher beliefs are powerful influences in guiding the decisions teachers make (Pajares 1992; Borg 2003; Ur 2013). However beliefs may be compromised because of context (Nishino 2012). Indeed teachers who believe themselves to be supporters of a certain method, will often "*not actually*

adhere to the basic principles associated with it" (Kumaravadivelu 2006, p.84). Fang (1996) and Borg (2003) suggest that such dissonance between beliefs and practice may be as a result of contextual factors compelling teachers to adapt their practice, which subsequently does not then mirror their beliefs.

Review of the above literature has provided me with insight into the contextual factors which may influence teacher cognition and beliefs. This is particularly relevant to informing my overarching research question. In the face of contextual issues and teachers' beliefs this thesis will explore, in the life history sections, how methods, like national policy may too be filtered, adapted, compromised and misconstrued (Sakui 2004). Methods have dominated the language-teaching world over the last 100 years with "*the quest for better methods [being] a preoccupation of many teachers, and applied linguists throughout the twentieth century*" (Richards & Rodgers 2007, p.1). Each new method would be considered to be an improvement on what had come before (ibid.). The following sections will now explore the literature describing three principal methods and approaches, which have been influential in language teaching in England since the 1970s.

2.2.ii The Reform Movement

When Anthony distinguished between approach, method and technique – a number of modern methods and approaches, such as the natural (Krashen 1983) and lexical approaches (Lewis 1983), to be analysed later, had not been written about, although concepts, such as inductive approaches to the teaching of grammar and the role of target language, that would later provide their theoretical framework, had been debated decades earlier by the Reform Movement (Rowlinson 1994). Vietor, Sweet and Passy whose ideas would provide a philosophical underpinning of the Reform

Movement proposed that much greater emphasis should be placed on the development of oral and aural skills (Richards & Rodgers 2001, p.10). Vietor, in particular, emphasized the training in phonetics to ensure that teachers were pronouncing the language correctly (*ibid.*). Furthermore, Passy founded the International Phonetic Association, which created the international phonetic language. The Association maintained that learners should hear the language first, before seeing the written form. Ideas, demonstrated by this thesis, have continued to influence contemporary practice. The Reform Movement questioned the value of explicit decontextualized grammar teaching and maintained that grammar should be taught inductively, in that learners should work out the rules for themselves from examples of contextualised language (*ibid.*, p.9) – a concept originally supported by Comenius in the 17th Century (Hawkins 2005, p.8) and an argument which similarly resonates today. For Richards and Rogers (2001), the Reform Movement did not establish a method, but the principles they promoted suggested a possible paradigm shift in the way languages should be taught by favouring an **approach**, underpinned by philosophical beliefs, to learning languages which reflected that “seen in first language acquisition” (p.11). This emphasis on learning a foreign language in the same “way a child learns its own language” formed the basis of the Direct or Natural method (Rowlinson 1994, p.10) which gained popularity in Europe in the late 19th century. Constrained, by examination requirements of the day and the poor oral skills of English MFL teachers, it largely failed in England (*ibid.* p.11). Its key principle of maximised target language use so that learners may induce grammatical rules through language input continues to be fervently debated nationally and internationally, as this thesis will demonstrate.

2.3 Grammar-translation

As explored in Chapter One, the demands of the national examination system in languages until the abolition of O levels in 1987 led to the adoption of a method in English schools which largely reflected that of grammar-translation (Meiring & Norman 2001, p.59; Grenfell 2007, p.11; Klapper 1997, p.26). Subsequent chapters presenting the life histories will analyse to what extent this was true for the participants of this research.

2.3.1 Tradition, grammar and accuracy

Grammar-translation is a method which originated in the 19th Century. It was conceived to provide “*a simple approach appropriate for school children*” to learn foreign languages (Howatt & Widdowson 2004, p.151). It is largely characterised by the memorisation of grammatical rules as well as extensive vocabulary lists, to enable students to translate sentences “*into and out of the foreign language*” (ibid., p.152; Richards & Rodgers 2001, p.6) whereas language learning had previously focussed upon the reading and translation of foreign language texts (Howatt & Widdowson 2004, p.152). It therefore reflects the type of method often used to teach Latin (Richards & Rodgers 2001, p.4). In literature it is at times referred to as the traditional method, or the traditional way of teaching (Blyth 1997, p.51; Klapper 1997, p.23; Bax 2003; Beaumont & Chang 2011; Griffiths 2011). The learning of grammar is deductive (Gollin 1998, p.88): students are taught the rules first, which they then must apply in very structured **written** activities (Blyth 1997, p.52; Meiring & Norman 2001, p.59; Richards & Rodgers 2001, p.5) and much of the teaching is delivered in the learners’ first language (Stern 1983, p.455). There is an expectation of high levels of accuracy and textbooks written in the spirit of the method present each

grammatical point in an orderly sequence (Howatt & Widdowson 2004, p.152; Griffiths 2011, p.301) a protocol which is “*based on the premise that learners acquire one grammatical item at a time, and that they should demonstrate their mastery of one thing before moving on to the next*” (Nunan 1998, p.101). This premise of the grammar-translation method that language is learnt in a linear fashion - one grammatical concept / item after another is contentious. Klapper (1997) posits that,

[g]rammar-translation was dealt a serious blow by the findings of second language acquisition which showed that grammatical structures are not acquired in a regular, once – and – for - all fashion, i.e. in the way the traditional grammar text-book presents and seeks to teach them, but in a fairly lengthy and complicated process which bears little resemblance to a steady learning curve, is characterised by interference from and interaction with other structures, and involves as much regression as progression. (p.24)

Ellis's (1985) meta-analysis of a variety of studies into second language acquisition in the 1970s demonstrated that certain concepts and structures in the L2 language may not actually be used accurately by a learner in exactly the same order in which they were presented for learning; some items of grammar are acquired more quickly than others and not in accordance with a schema for learning set out in a grammar text book. Dulay and Burt (1973; 1974) and Bailey, Madden and Krashen (1974) claimed that there was an acquisition order and that this corresponded to the order in which learnt items were produced accurately. For Ellis (1997), however, the idea “*that the accuracy order must be the same as the order of acquisition*” (p.21) implies that “*[a]cquisition is seen as analogous to building a wall, with one brick set in place before another is placed on top*” (p.22). In other words, learners will master one set

structure and then move onto the next. Ellis argues against this, using evidence that learners may produce accurate language structures but then, subsequent learning may affect the capacity to reproduce those structures as accurately as before. Ellis (ibid.) supports the theory that “[a]cquisition follows a **U-shaped course of development**; that is, initially learners may display a high level of accuracy only to apparently regress later before finally once again performing in accordance with target-language norms” (p.23).

2.3.ii The challenge of O Level and grammar-translation

Grammar-translation is a cognitively challenging method (Klapper 1998, p.25), which relies upon learners understanding grammatical concepts (ibid.). Richards & Rodgers (2001) suggest how grammar-translation was “*introduced by those who wanted to demonstrate that the study of French and German was no less rigorous than the study of classical languages*” (p.6); Hawkins (1981) concurs. However, its initial purpose was as a vehicle “*to make language learning easier*” (Howatt & Widdowson 2004, p.152; Ch.2.3.ii). As explored in Chapter 1.3.i, thirty years ago Modern Foreign Languages was an elitist subject in England. Study of languages was largely limited to the upper ability range (Jones 1994, p.18) and success rates at O Level were low (Hawkins 1981, p.17). This indeed implies that a smaller percentage of students were actually able to cope with the challenges of grammar-translation. As a method, Richards and Rodgers (2001, p.6) suggest that grammar-translation was largely unpopular among school children because of the emphasis on the memorisation of vocabulary and grammatical rules, very little of which was applied purposefully to communicate (Klapper 1997, p.24). Furthermore, even after years of attempting to master grammatical structures in carefully controlled

classroom exercises, students may then struggle to apply these structures spontaneously in a real life context (*ibid.*).

2.3.iii Theoretical basis of grammar-translation method and support for the method

Some have suggested that grammar-translation has no underlying theoretical basis rooted in linguistics or learning theory (Richards & Rodgers 2001, p.7; Brown 2007, p.17) and therefore its status as a method is questionable. However its influence is widespread. Richards and Rodgers (2001) maintain that grammar-translation “*dominated European and foreign language teaching from the 1840s to the 1940s, and...continues to be widely used in some parts of the world today*” (p.6) (Bax 2003, p.278; Beaumont & Chang 2011; Nishini 2012). Richards and Rodgers further maintain that as a method “*it has no advocates*” (2001, p.7). Blyth (1997) would disagree, “[m]any foreign language teachers hold traditional beliefs about explicit grammar instruction” (p.50). I similarly do not concur with Richards and Rodgers, especially in light of the beliefs held by some members of my research sample, as well as their own experiences with colleagues in the profession. It is interesting to see how members of my sample may have constructed their own theory to substantiate the use of translation and deductive grammar teaching: key aspects of the method. My review of relevant literature highlights much support (Klapper 1997, 1998; Pachler 2000; Grenfell 2000), not necessarily for grammar-translation, but certainly for a place for grammar in language teaching. An exploration of participants’ perceptions of the concept of grammar teaching in subsequent chapters will shed more light on this. As discussed in Chapter 1.11, the most recent edition of the NCPoS for MFL (2013) has more references to the teaching of grammar than in any of the previous four versions that have appeared in the last 23 years. This,

coupled with more exacting demands at GCSE, may appear to suggest a return to more traditional methods for the teaching of grammar.

This related literature focusing on the grammar-translation method and grammar teaching has proved valuable to my research in terms of informing what I asked respondents about their early language learning experiences and their subsequent beliefs about grammar. It furthermore facilitated the subsequent interrogation of data presented in Chapters Four and Five.

2.4 Behaviourist theory and the audio-lingual / visual method

Research into second language acquisition in the 1950s began to shape theories of how foreign languages should be taught and learned and led to a theoretical rejection of grammar-translation. Despite the methodological stronghold of the examination requirements over methods in MFL lessons up until the 1980s, one method in particular: audio-lingualism would influence practice in English schools (Grenfell 2007, p.12). This next section presents a review of literature about the audio-lingual method. It will examine how the method would develop from behaviourist theories of learning. It will debate the main characteristics of the method, comparing it to grammar-translation and consider its legacy in language teaching in England.

2.4.i Audio-lingual method and its theoretical background

Structural linguistics rejects a traditional view, such as that inherent within the grammar-translation method, of language being categorised into nouns, verbs, adjectives and other parts of speech. Instead, it proposes a hierarchy of components

of language which are classified semantically: “*[I]language [is] viewed as a system of structurally related elements for the encoding of meaning, the elements being phonemes, morphemes, words, structures, and sentence types*” (Richards & Rodgers 2001, p.55). An inherent assumption in structuralist linguistics is the idea that language is built up by combining these elements (ibid.) and this requires an understanding of the rules which govern how these elements may be meaningfully combined. Structural linguistics provides a theoretical underpinning to audio-lingualism because the method proposes that language is initially presented as simple structures, which are then developed through the addition of other words, clauses and phrases. Reflecting the structural linguistic view that language is speech, and therefore unlike the grammar-translation method, the audio-lingual method puts a much greater emphasis on the development of oral skills – all language is initially presented aurally, in the early stages of learning, followed by speaking, reading and writing. This is a concept proposed by the Reform Movement a hundred years previously, and characteristic of my very early experiences of learning French.

Whilst structuralist linguistics provides the theory supporting a view of language, it is behaviourism which provides the theory underpinning as to how language should be learnt in the audio-lingual method. Following the publication of Skinner’s Behaviour of Organisms in 1938, behaviourism would sweep through the world of psychology in the 1940s and become the default model for learning until the 1960s. It supports the idea that language is a learned behaviour and is acquired through imitation – learners repeat what they hear just as learners do when learning their first language. It is this repetition that leads to learning taking place through the formation of habits

(Ellis 1985, p.21). This copying of language is praised and therefore positively reinforced by teachers, which ensures its subsequent reproduction (ibid.).

2.4.ii The drill

A classic technique promoted by the method is the drill (Grenfell 1997, p.29; Lightbrown & Spada 2006, p.141) a term, perhaps in keeping with the origin of the method because it was conceived by the American military to develop foreign language proficiency during the Second World War (Brown 2007, p.111). It is still used by many today, including myself, to provide correct pronunciation practice for learners both in their teens and rather older, since research suggests that older learners require much more pronunciation practice than younger learners. This is perhaps due, as suggested, to an innate ability of the young to reproduce accurately new sound patterns (Hyltenstam & Abrahamsson 2003, pp. 539-540; Odlin 2003, p.468). During this early *critical period* there is the “*possibility to acquire a language, be it L1 or L2, to normal native like levels*” (Birdsong 1999, p.1). Howatt and Widdowson (2004, p.249) suggest that the drill itself predates the method – the concept of repeatedly practising isolated structures is as prevalent in the grammar-translation method as in audio-lingualism. It would lead to the Present, Practise and Produce (PPP) paradigm (Byrne 1976), prevalent in communicative language teaching, encapsulating three stages where language (a single linguistic item) (p.20) is firstly presented to students in a particular context. It is then practised in very controlled exercises where students are given “*opportunities to practise the target structure in a communicative context*” (Ellis 2006, p.93) before students are able to use the language more freely to communicate (production stage). For Byrne, the main aim of the PPP sequence was to develop “*oral frequency; the ability to express*

oneself intelligibly, reasonably accurately and without undue hesitation” (p.9). An example of the PPP paradigm is presented later in the autobiographical section of the thesis (Ch.4.1.ii.c) and its role in the language teaching of the research participants is discussed in Chapter 5.

2.4.iii Grammar and audio-lingualism

No explanation of grammar is given until the learners have had sufficient practice of the structures so they may be independently produced and so that they begin to hypothesise the grammatical rules governing how the language fits together. For this to be effective there is much emphasis on the presentation of analogies, which allows for learners to generalise a rule and apply it elsewhere. Unlike grammar-translation therefore “*the approach to the teaching of grammar is essentially inductive rather than deductive*” (Richards & Rogers 2001, p.57; Brown 2007, p.111).

2.4.iv Error correction

Consideration needs to be given to error correction because it can be an integral part of a language teacher’s practice, and will reflect a teacher’s belief about language teaching and the importance of grammatical accuracy. Attitudes towards the sanctioning of errors may also be rooted in psychological and learning theory such is the case for the audio-lingual method, or not, as was the case for grammar-translation (Ch.2.3.iii). The overwhelming consensus among behaviourists is that all errors, in this case, language errors, must be corrected to prevent them from becoming learned habits, which then become difficult to change. The umbrella term to describe this phenomenon is fossilisation (Selinker 1992).

Behaviourist theory supports the view that previous learning may interfere with new learning and this will cause errors in language production – a phenomenon commonly referred to as interference. For example, where two languages are similar in structure there is less possibility for errors to be made – errors will be as a result of concepts being expressed differently in the two languages (Ellis 1985, p.22). In other words, when structures can be literally translated from first (L1) to second language (L2), with no ambiguity, then accurate language production will take place. However, transfer errors may occur when a piece of language in L1 is structured in a completely different way in L2. This would be particularly true, for example, of the learning of idiomatic expressions: *I am cold* in English is frequently literally translated by English learners of German as *Ich bin kalt* when *mir ist kalt* is the correct version (ibid.). This type of error is due to interference from the learner's native language and is referred to as "*proactive inhibition...[when] previous learning prevents or inhibits the learning of new habits*" (ibid.). To lessen the impact of interference from L1 the audio-lingual method recommends that teachers use the target language at all times. This discovery would lead the structural linguist Lado (1957) to conceive the 'Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis' (CAH) which would provide the rationale for being able to predict when errors will occur in second language acquisition by comparing the two languages and spotting key structural differences. The identification of these differences would influence the order in which certain aspects of language would be introduced in syllabi.

2.4.v Critique of the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis and audio-lingualism

Ellis (1985) argues that the *Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis* (CAH) and the concept of first language interference fail for a number of reasons. A number of studies in the

1960s through to the 1980s would show that the majority of errors in language learning could not be attributed to interference from the first language (p.29). Secondly CAH does not offer clearly delineated criteria for identifying errors that are as a result of interference and therefore it is difficult to distinguish between an error, which is as a result of interference, and one that is not. Corder (1967) would suggest that developmental errors could be due to learners hypothesising about how a language may work which leads to errors when they apply a formulated rule incorrectly in a different context. This suggests that the production of language may not necessarily always be learned behaviour but that there may be an innate ability to process language, enabling learners to attempt to work out rules for themselves. This would certainly provide cognitive evidence that students are internally processing language in direct opposition to the behaviourist CAH, and provides a theoretical basis to inductive approaches to the teaching of grammar to be discussed later. Ellis (1985, p.53) similarly describes how learners will also make errors of *overgeneralisation* when they apply a regular grammatical rule to irregular forms, for example: the application of *-ed* to irregular past tense verbs in English or the *-é* to *non -er* verbs in the French perfect tense. This may not necessarily be as a result of learners' hypotheses, it could also be due to learners having learnt the rules by heart and then consciously applying them incorrectly (ibid.). Learners may often deliberately miss out aspects of language that they find difficult because they can still manage to communicate using a handful of simple rules (ibid.). Learners therefore produce language, which can be a mixture of L1 and L2 syntax as well as language patterns that can neither be attributed to L1 interference nor L2. The American linguist Larry Selinker (1992) coined the term *interlanguage* to refer to this formative language constructed by learners.

2.4.vi Cognitivism vs behaviourism

Noam Chomsky (1965) in particular was notably critical of behaviourism providing the learning theory behind language acquisition and supports the idea of an innate ability (a *Language Acquisition Device*) to process language and work out rules. For him “*[L]anguage is not a habit structure. Ordinary linguistic behaviour characteristically involves innovation, formation of new sentences and patterns*” (1966, p.153). Behaviourist learning theory is opposed to the existence of an innate ability to hypothesise grammatical rules. Paradoxically, the audio-lingual method, founded upon behaviourist principles, supports an inductive approach to grammar learning, which may actually depend upon an innate ability to process language subconsciously.

2.4.vii Impact and legacy of audio-lingualism

For Richards and Rodgers (2001, p.65) students instructed under the audio-lingual method were often unable to apply acquired skills to communicate purposefully outside of the classroom, a phenomenon equally common to grammar-translation. The method was developed in the US during the war to equip the military with much needed language skills (Krashen & Terrell 1983, p.13; Mitchell & Vidal 2001, p.29; Brown 2007, p.111) and was largely successful because the learners were highly motivated to support the war effort, “*[U]nfortunately, it was found that once the urgent motivation of wartime survival was no longer there, Audiolingual techniques no longer produced the same dramatic results*” (Griffiths 2011, p.302). I believe it is short sighted to attribute the language learning successes evident during the war the audio-lingual method. Under that degree of pressure to learn a foreign language, it is possible that military personnel would have drawn from metacognitive processes to

facilitate the learning, “*older children and adults...use their general cognitive and problem-solving abilities in learning a second language*” (Lightbrown 2000, p.436).

Furthermore, motivation to learn the language would have been high. Krashen & Terrell (1983) also highlight that wartime classes were small and also characterised by intensive “*conversation sessions with a native speaker*” (p.13) – as aspect of practice missing from the later formulated audio-lingual method (ibid.).

The imperative of correcting all errors may not allow students to practise language without fear of making mistakes, “[a]ffective levels can be raised because of anxiety over accuracy” (Meiring & Norman 2002, p.31) and this anxiety may prevent students from taking the opportunity to experiment and formulate their own rules.

The need for constant error correction does seem to be at odds with, or at least may not facilitate, the method’s support for inductive approaches to learning grammar. Krashen (1981, p.2; 2009, p.85) although maintaining that corrected errors provide the learner with an accurate mental representation of the linguistic form, questions whether error correction actually has any significant impact on learning. Indeed, Cazden (1972) researching into error correction in first language acquisition demonstrated that children do not always pay attention to the corrected version (p.92). Furthermore, what could be the psychological effects of constant correction – particularly for younger children, or image-conscious insecure adolescents? Hunter (2012, p.30) alludes to the challenge of ensuring enough corrective feedback to prevent fossilisation without damaging learner confidence which would lead to a reluctance to speak. The implication for this study is that if the evidence points to the students having an innate ability to process language, hypothesise rules and apply

them, even if they may be incorrect, inductive approaches to the learning of grammar therefore would have a place in the MFL classroom.

The audio-lingual method, with a greater emphasis on speaking, may have contributed to revision of the O level syllabus with the addition of an oral exam in 1965. In England a number of published courses in the 1960s and 1970 promoted the audio-lingual method, in particular: Longman Audio-Visual French published in 1967 and revised in 1974. Audio-lingualism has undoubtedly left a legacy, particularly in terms of the concept of drilling. Subsequent chapters which present my autobiography and the research respondents' life histories will explore how the methodology of our teachers of the 1970s and 1980s may have reflected that of audio-lingualism and / or may have been a hybrid largely composed of grammar-translation peppered with techniques drawn from the audio-lingual method to drill some aspects of language. Grenfell (2007) maintains that this was typical of practice at that time.

Grammar and translation formed the basis of methodology and still predominated in the classroom, with the normal language for classroom interaction being English. However, the behaviourism of the 1960s continued to be an important influence, as was evident in the plethora of 'audiovisual' and 'audio-lingual' course books, which often also took in routine 'pattern practice', either in the language laboratory or systems of tapes and slides.

(p.12)

The drill technique has had many incarnations, but is ostensibly based around repetition, substitution, extension and questioning – techniques apparent in my own and a number of my research subjects' practice, as will be explored in Chapters 4 and 5.

2.5. The Communicative Approach

Mitchell (1994) argues that the *communicative approach* “*is not a tightly structured ‘method’ of teaching, like the French audio-visual movement of the 1960s...it is a broad assembly of ideas*” (p.33) and, therefore, is more appropriately deemed an approach (Klapper 2003, p.33) in keeping with the overarching definition provided by Anthony (1963). For Klapper (ibid.) developing a definition is a challenge because “[e]ven though CLT [communicative language teaching] has been around for a long time now, most language teachers’ understanding of it remains fuzzy”. Griffiths (2011), highlighting the challenge of defining concepts such as traditional and communicative approaches, concurs “*there is the question of definitions, which remain woolly, in spite of the millions if not billions of words written on the subject*” (p.300). Thompson (1996, p.9) and Harmer (2003, p.289) similarly discuss the confusion among teachers in trying to determine what it actually is, and Jones (2000) considers that the “*‘communicative’ framework has been...defined variously and idiosyncratically*” (p.142). It is this lack of transparency, and disparity of opinion, that will become even more apparent in the subsequent life stories of my research participants. In trying to establish some clarity, I will attempt here, to define the communicative approach by exploring its main features, or in other words “*the broad assembly of ideas*” referred to by Mitchell through a review of relevant literature. I will also attempt to compare what has been suggested as components of the

communicative approach to aspects of the five versions of the NCPoS. This will enable an examination of how far policy has reflected theory supporting the communicative approach.

2.5.i Philosophy of the communicative approach

Wilkins (1979) maintains that the grammar-translation and audio-lingual methods supported the principle that “*the task of learning a language is made easier if one is exposed to one part of the grammatical system at a time*” (p.82). Hymes and Halliday (1979) highlight how the communicative approach to language teaching embodies a paradigm shift in the perception of the purpose of language, the communicative approach is therefore:

a reaction against the view of language as a set of structures; it is a reaction towards a view of language as communication, a view in which meaning and the uses to which language is put play a central part. (p.3)

Wilkins, in Notional Syllabuses, in 1976, proposed a syllabus, which focussed upon functional uses of language and not individual grammatical items. He argued that aspects of language: structures, verbs and collocations should be categorised according to notions: “*time, sequence, quantity, location, frequency*” as well as functions: “*requests, denials, offers, complaints*” (Richards & Rodgers 2001, p.154). In practice, therefore, learners would learn how to communicate a variety of functions and would embrace different grammatical structures with a similar linguistic purpose (Canale & Swain 1980, p.2).

A key belief underpinning the communicative approach is that language learning takes place “*through the process of struggling to communicate*” (Finocchiaro & Brumfit 1983, p.92). This encapsulates Howatt’s (1984) view of the *strong* version of the communicative approach, which suggests an innate ability for a learner to acquire a language by trying to make sense out of the rich input of target language, mirroring Krashen’s concept of comprehensible input (1981) which will be discussed in the next section. In this,

[t]he teacher’s role is, rather, to provide activities and language samples to help stimulate the acquisition processes, not to teach grammar or to correct all the mistakes learners make, but to allow learners to formulate and test hypotheses about the language and revise them once they have feedback.
 (Klapper 2003, p.34)

Strong communicative methodology is constructivist, it perceives language as developing through interaction with the environment and other people. The types of activities indicative of communicative methodology emphasise human interaction such as role-play, pair and group work (Brown 2007, p.18) demonstrating links to both Vygotskyian (Vygotsky 1978) and Piagetian learning theory (Piaget 1973) as well as information gap activities where students attempt to seek and give vital information to complete a task (Howatt 1984, p. 279; Klapper 1997, p.26; Sakui 2004; p.158)

Given the emphasis on communication, unlike grammar-translation and the audio-lingual methods, the pursuit of accuracy is of less importance. For Jones (2000),

finding a consensus therefore of an opinion on how grammar is dealt with in the classroom is a challenge.

The role of grammar within communicative methodology is elusive, sometimes excluded as an irrelevance, sometimes ‘done’ latently in classrooms, sometimes reinvented in what is deemed to be a more accessible, palatable format and centring on a discourse that focuses on language as ‘patterns’. (p.142)

2.5.ii Theoretical basis

Klapper (2003) argues that despite some links to Krashen's comprehensible input hypothesis (1981) there is not an overwhelming consensus as to the theoretical background to the approach, nor to an agreed methodology. Wright (1999) suggests the theoretical underpinning to the communicative approach is “*provided by theories of naturalistic Second Language Acquisition (SLA), which suggested that SLA can successfully take place in much the same way as first language development*” (p.33) in which Krashen was a prominent influence (ibid., p.34).

2.5.iii Krashen and second language acquisition

This section will examine the theories of language acquisition constructed by the American linguist, Stephen Krashen. In Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Learning (1981) Krashen proposed the *input hypothesis*, later known as *the comprehension hypothesis* (2009), which is underpinned by 5 key hypotheses about language acquisition. These would provide the theoretical basis for the principles, techniques and methods described in The Natural Approach, which he

formulated with Tracy Terrell in 1983. Three of these hypotheses will be examined here because of their potential relevance to the communicative approach; analysis of the remaining two will be contextualised in subsequent life history sections. The first of the hypotheses centres upon Krashen's distinction between language acquisition and language learning. He maintained that the former is the untutored, natural, experience of learning a second language by being fully immersed in the target language. The latter is that which has been learned from tuition. This hypothesis is prevalent in all his subsequent work.

The cornerstone in current theory is the distinction between acquisition and learning, the idea that we have two independent means of gaining ability in second languages. Acquisition is a subconscious process that is identical to the process used in first language acquisition in all important ways. While acquisition is taking place, the acquirer is not always aware of it, and he or she is not usually aware of its results...Learning is conscious knowledge, or "knowing about" language. In everyday language, when we talk about "grammar" or "rules," we are referring to learning, not acquisition. (Krashen 1989, p.8)

2.5.iv *The monitor hypothesis*

For Krashen, the role of learned grammatical knowledge is to act as a monitor to correct acquired language utterances but it can never itself produce spontaneous language. This encapsulates Krashen's Monitor Hypothesis (1981): "*[o]ur "formal" knowledge of the second language, our conscious learning, may be used to alter the*

output of the acquired system, sometimes before and sometimes after the utterance is produced” (p.2).

Klapper (1997) agrees and similarly questions whether learned grammatical knowledge “*will...ma[k]e its way into [the learner’s] subconscious and will thereafter help to guide spontaneous use of language*” (p.24). This would certainly ring true given the possible failings of the grammar-translation and audio-lingual methods in enabling students to apply grammatical knowledge outside of the context in which they learned it. Krashen (1981) delineates three conditions for *monitor* use: firstly the user needs time to think about what he/she wishes to say; the user must then focus upon the ‘correctness’ of this language and thirdly the user must already know the rule for the other two conditions to be effective (p.3).

2.5.v Input hypothesis

Krashen (1989) maintains that we acquire language “*by understanding messages or by obtaining comprehensible input. More specifically, we acquire a new rule by understanding messages that contain this new rule*” (p.11). Furthermore, by trying to make sense of what we hear and read we acquire language (Krashen 1989, p.39). There are conditions for this to be effective – the input must be just above the acquirer’s current level in linguistic development. This is referred to as *input + 1* (Krashen 1981, 1982, 1989; Krashen & Terrell 1983). Appropriate input will, in time, trigger the *language acquisition device*, an innate structure, which will allow acquisition to take place. The language acquisition device is a concept originally conceived by Chomsky (1965) and Krashen draws from the idea to support his own theory. Krashen (1989) is not implying that a beginner should just *go to the country*

where the target language is spoken because “*they will encounter only incomprehensible input, or noise*” (p.11) – an example of this will be considered later when I recount my experiences of living in Japan. The concept of merely being immersed in the target language will not necessarily lead to acquisition. The input hypothesis evolved into the comprehension hypothesis - an identical concept (Krashen 2009).

Krashen (1983) posits that speaking is not a necessary requisite for acquisition. Speaking enables the learner to practise what he/she has already learnt or acquired – it does not increase acquisition, but by interacting with another, the learner is accessing aural input and it is this that contributes to acquisition. Swain (1983) is sceptical of Krashen’s rejection of the role of speaking in developing acquisition. She suggests that a learner is driven to find alternatives when there is a communication breakdown and speaking enables the student to try out any hypothesis they may have about language functions. The concept of hypothesis testing is a process carried out by a language acquisition device, which is central to McNeill’s (1966) theory on language acquisition. Krashen may well argue however that hypothesising is a conscious process; it is as a result of learned information and is characteristic of *monitor-use*.

2.5.vi Critique of Krashen

Ellis (2004) contests Krashen’s theory that learned language can never become acquired and be produced spontaneously without conscious thought. He posits that adequate practice of any language will enable it to be uttered spontaneously: “*it may be possible to proceduralize explicit knowledge to the point that it cannot be easily*

distinguished from implicit knowledge" (p.231). He rejects therefore Krashen's distinction between acquisition and learning: "*the term 'second language acquisition' refers to the subconscious or conscious processes by which a language other than the mother tongue is learnt in a natural or a tutored setting*" (Ellis 1985, p.6). McLaughlin (1978a) furthermore, is critical of the monitor model and the distinction between *acquired* and *learned*, arguing that neither can be tested empirically because there is an underlying assumption in Krashen's hypothesis that if language is "*acquired, it's fluent, if it's fluent, it's acquired*" (Lightbrown & Spada 2006, p.38).

Others have similarly rejected this distinction between *acquisition* and *learning*, in particular the implication that acquisition can only take place in a naturalistic (non-school) environment since "*all cognitive development is constructed in and profoundly shaped by socio-cultural contexts, whether they be home community and school*" (Watson-Gegeo & Nielsen 2003, p.162). I agree: to make the distinction between a natural environment and the classroom is erroneous. The classroom is a naturalistic environment for all students and the functional exchanges that take place in the classroom: expressing agreement, disagreement and requesting, for example, would mirror that of most *natural* environments. Krashen (1982) however does not reject the classroom. It is a misconception that his theories are merely about being immersed in a natural environment. Indeed the classroom can provide just the right amount of input +1 for acquisition to take place.

The value of second language classes, then, lies not only in the grammar instruction, but in the simpler 'teacher talk', the comprehensible input. It can

be an efficient place to achieve at least the intermediate levels rapidly, as long as the focus of the class is on providing input for acquisition. (p.59)

In *The Natural Approach* (1983) he outlines the processes and procedures, based upon his theories, for developing acquisition in a classroom.

Ellis (1989) showed that there was little difference in the findings from studies investigating the effectiveness of naturalistic and classroom based FL learning. Furthermore, immersion programmes in which students are taught the entire curriculum through the second language have not enabled pupils to attain native like language output (Schinke-Llano 1990, p.220; Watson-Gegeo & Nielsen 2003, p.162) *“immersion researchers have been struck by the fossilization and plateauing of immersion students’ productive skills, despite intensive exposure”* (Mitchell 2000, pp.290). Furthermore, *“the language they acquire typically lacks grammatical accuracy, and is less complex and sociolinguistically less appropriate”* (Cammarata & Teddick 2012, p.252).

2.6 The Influence of the communicative approach on the curriculum

The communicative approach certainly may have influenced the Graded Objectives movement, which was an accreditation system administered by local authorities to reward communicative competence (role play and guided conversation) of younger secondary pupils in the 1970s and 1980s (see Chapter 1.4). The focus of GOML upon speaking and purposeful communication was more accessible to most pupils than the grammar orientated O level and, to some extent, CSE examinations. Jones (1994, p.21) posits that this *pioneering work* was a significant influence in the

construction of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study for MFL (NCPoS). From 1988 there began a process of democratising, of increasing entitlement, to language learning in England as a result of the introduction of GCSE and then the National Curriculum. For Rendall (1998) in order to meet the needs of a comprehensive cohort, language teaching in the early 1990s needed to change, “[m]ethodologies that had been honed to a fine art no longer worked” (p.1). The methodologies to which she refers are obviously grammar-translation and therefore I question her positive appraisal of such practice. Grammar-translation is hardly an art, and requires little pedagogical expertise (Richards & Rodgers 2001, p.6). When it did work, it was only ever for the minority (Ch.1.3). The next section cross-references the main components of the communicative approach with aspects of the NCPoS presented in Chapter 1.6.

2.6.i The role of target language (TL) and grammar

The use of TL by pupils is strongly recommended in the first two editions of the NCPoS, for example: “[w]hen a spoken or written response is expected, it should be in the target language” (DFE 1995, p.2; Ch.1.6.i). There are a number of prescribed scenarios in which pupils should be responding to teachers’ use of target language, for example: “listen attentively, and listen for gist and detail” and “follow instructions and directions” (1995, p.3). The use of English is only condoned for the interpretation of instructions or explanations that had been given. For Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983) however, the communicative approach does not totally proscribe the use of L1, indeed a “[j]udicious use of native language is accepted where feasible” (p.92; Ch.5.6; Ch.5.7)

The teaching of grammar and using the TL may not be separate entities – immersing students in the TL can be an approach through which grammar may be inductively learnt or acquired. The concept of students being immersed in the foreign language to trigger the acquisition of grammar mirrors Krashen's theories and exemplifies communicative approaches.

Pachler (2000) is critical of what he refers to as “[t]he ‘methodological imperative’ [in the National Curriculum] of *teaching in the TL, i.e. maximum to exclusive TL use by the teacher for instruction of and interaction with learners*” because it implies a naturalistic approach to learning a second language which for him “*is at least partly based on the misguided notion that FL learning is similar to mother tongue learning*” (p.29). Klapper (1998) concurs. I do not completely agree since such a stance dismisses the techniques needed by the teacher to support learners in this process of acquiring language through immersion in the target language. Teachers need to adapt the language they use in what Long (1983) would refer to as *interactional modification*, in the same way adults interacting with young children may similarly modify the language they use (Ch.2.5.v). Krashen maintains, for example, that the input to which learners are exposed should be only slightly above their current level of expertise (input +1). To immerse students in a torrent of L2 will lead to confusion and not allow students to learn grammatical patterns inductively. Teaching in the target language is a skill requiring teachers to draw on a variety of techniques to ensure that input presented is understood. Block (2002) acknowledges how the use of visuals and mime can support the exclusive use of the target language and facilitate student understanding (p.24). However, such techniques can be time consuming, since enormous amounts of time can be wasted trying to convey an idea

or concept in the target language, when a short explanation in the native tongue is more effective (Brown 1973).

2.6.ii Time required

A major criticism of teaching through the TL rests on the time needed for such practice to be effective. Macaro (2000) maintains that for a pupil to “*pick up the language*” in the same way a child learns its native tongue it would need “*to be exposed to enormous quantities of L2*” (p.174). Time allocated to foreign language teaching is limited in all schools - is it possible, therefore, to learn a language in the same way as you learnt L1 with just 2 to 3 hours of tuition a week, or a possible 400 hours of input over 5 years? (Gray 1999, p.41; Macaro 2000, p.173). Context therefore, as discussed earlier, may well be a deciding factor in determining a teachers’ use of TL. Indeed McLaughlin (1978b) maintains that the native learning language process is a long one with full verbal understanding only achieved for some in adulthood (p.55). Gray (1999) not only pragmatically raises the issue of time but also the concept of student motivation, “*a very limited time-scale and the lack of any real need or motivation to learn militate against a ‘purist’ [strong] communicative approach; patterns need...to be isolated, demonstrated and drilled*” (p.42). She maintains that the mother tongue is essential for students to make sense out of what they are learning (ibid.).

2.6.iii Metacognition

For Macaro (2000) avoidance of the L1 in language learning is contrary to certain theory on how we acquire language (p.173). He refers to concept of an innate language learning device (LAD), proposed by Chomsky (1965) and redefined by

Krashen (1981). The *Chomskyian* theoretical LAD enables learners to see patterns and to hypothesize about language formation entailing a comparison of the TL with L1. Avoidance of the mother tongue could therefore be detrimental, “[a]part from retarding the *FL*-learning process, dogmatic exclusion of *L1* can lead to resentment, frustration and the build-up of affective factors which are well known to be the enemy of effective *FL* learning” (Klapper 1998, p.24). This argument resonates in the life stories presented in Chapter Four; a fuller analysis of affective issues, motivation and context and their influence in the choice of method will be explored there and in Chapter 5. Meiring and Norman (2002) suggest such an explicit comparison in class may “have renewed pedagogical benefit” (p.28) and may help to avoid errors due to L1 interference. Comparison of L1 to L2 is, however, suggested in the 1999 version of the NCPoS and later prescribed in the 2007 version (Ch.1.8.i; Ch.1.9.ii).

Older learners’ awareness of their own language, as well as their developing metacognition help them to develop strategies to learn a second language by “mak[ing] connections thanks to greater contextual knowledge, devis[ing] their own semantic clusters, us[ing] strategies to help them memorise large chunks of vocabulary” (Macaro 2000, p.173; Lightbrown 2000, p.436). The National Curriculum did prescribe the teaching of such strategies in the 1990s but through the target language, which implies that teachers would have to teach pupils how to learn a language in a language that they have not yet learnt! Brooks-Lewis’s (2009) research into adult learners’ attitudes towards the use of L1 in their learning of a foreign language demonstrated that consensus of opinion was overwhelming positive towards the use of the maternal tongue, to help students contextualise and make connections, “[t]he incorporation of the *L1* allows for its comparison and

contrast with the target language and thereby the incorporation of the learner's prior knowledge and experience in the relation of what is being learned to a known reality" (p.228). Proscription of the L1 could be detrimental to the valuable role metacognition plays in facilitating the language learning experience. As discussed in Chapter One, the 1999 edition of the NCPoS, although expecting TL to be the language of the classroom, did allow for increased use of English "*when discussing a grammar point or when comparing the target language*" (1999, p.16). Indeed the teaching of grammar was to be accepted, although there is no suggestion as to how it should be taught neither which aspects of grammar should be addressed. The KS3 MFL Framework would later also place greater emphasis on metacognition and skills and strategy development (Ch.1.9.i).

The latest PoS for MFL (DFE 2013b; Appendix 5), despite an increased emphasis on explicit grammar teaching, still appears to reflect principles of communicative practice.

The national curriculum for languages aims to ensure that all pupils...speak with increasing confidence, fluency and spontaneity, finding ways of communicating what they want to say, including through discussion and asking questions, and continually improving the accuracy of their pronunciation and intonation. (DFE 2013b, p.1)

Furthermore, communicative approaches in language teaching may well be in evidence in contemporary practice worldwide (Richards & Rodgers 2001; Bax 2003; Sakui 2004; Beaumont & Chang 2011; Ur 2013). However, as Harmer (2003) astutely posits, reflecting earlier discussion in Chapter 2.5, "*[t]he problem with communicative language teaching (CLT) is that the term has always meant a*

multitude of different things to different people" (p. 289). Harmer argues that what may be considered communicative for some may not be for others. Bax (2003) whilst acknowledging the prevalence of communicative practice in the world, fails to define what that practice is. As already discussed he rejects the concept of method in favour of context determining how a teacher may teach. Sakui (2004) Beaumont and Chang (2011) and Griffiths (2011) highlight how communicative approaches find themselves in conflict with assessment systems, which continue to promote translation and high levels of grammatical awareness, particularly in the Far East. Communicative practice therefore finds itself compromised as a result of contextual factors such as the examination system (Nishino 2012, p.395). Beaumont and Chang debate the concept of the traditional / communicative dichotomy without, Griffiths (2011) argues, clearly defining what the two terms may mean. This dichotomy in language teaching, "*implies mutual exclusivity of concepts, which are polar opposites, where ne'er the twain shall meet*" (p.302). She rightfully rejects this polarisation "*suggest[ing] that the...two concepts represent the extremities of a continuum along which teachers position themselves according to their students, their situations, their teaching aims, their resources or their own teaching style?*" (ibid.). This highlights again the role of context and beliefs in determining appropriate methodology. Harmer (2003) asks "*who would argue that an insensitive insistence on a rigid methodology at the expense of classroom and learner realities was a course worth pursuing?*" (p.288).

Richards and Rodgers (2001) argue that the longevity of the communicative approach is because it is just that – an *approach*, which may allow itself to be interpreted in a multitude of ways, a flexibility necessary given contextual demands

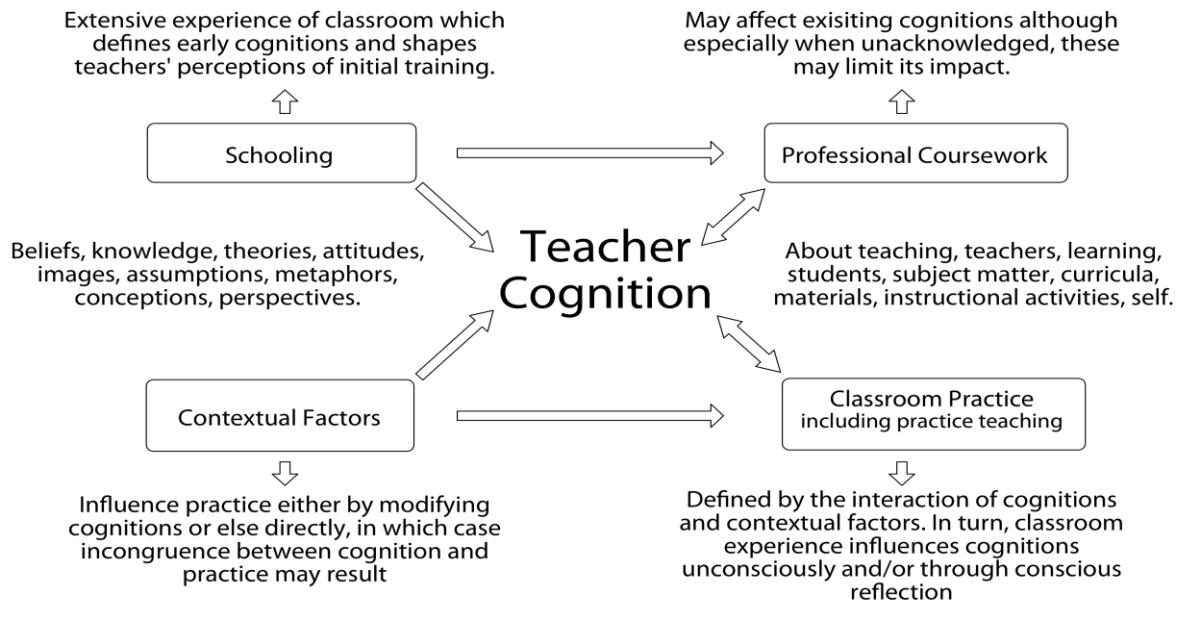
and teachers' existing beliefs. Methods, they suggest, had had their day by the late 1980s (p.245). The world of language learning is now in the post-methods era – an era where context and teachers' personal professional preference guide methodology. However this assumes a world of language learning free from government intervention and the demands of assessment systems, which inevitably influence methodology. This is an assumption, which certainly does not tally with the experiences of my research participants. The reality in England has been very far from this.

Chapter Three: Research design, methodology and analysis of data

The first chapter presented a chronological exposition of the development of national policy concerning modern foreign language teaching since the 1970s. It also presented a review of literature on teacher cognition: beliefs and pedagogical content knowledge. This highlighted possible sources of influence in the construction of knowledge and beliefs, which shape how teachers may work in reality. The second chapter analysed literature on language teaching methodology – what has characterised recent methods and approaches in language teaching. Furthermore I considered how the concept of method may be compromised by contextual factors experienced by teachers. These two sections have laid the groundwork for the conceptual framework, which has led to the chosen research methodology of this study.

3.1 Conceptual framework

In designing my research I have considered that, “[a] conceptual framework explains, either graphically or in narrative form, the main things to be studied – the key factors, constructs or variables – and the presumed relationships among them” (Miles & Huberman 1994, p.18). Borg’s (2003, p.82) ideograph (figure 1) delineates the areas of influence on the construction of teacher cognition (knowledge and beliefs) and has provided a valuable guide to the development of my conceptual framework (see figure 2). I have annotated the *Teacher Cognition* ellipsis in figure 1 to include an overarching title of *MFL Teacher Cognition: beliefs and pedagogical content knowledge* in figure 2.



Conceptual Framework: A qualitative inquiry into the construction of modern foreign language teacher cognition: beliefs and pedagogical content knowledge

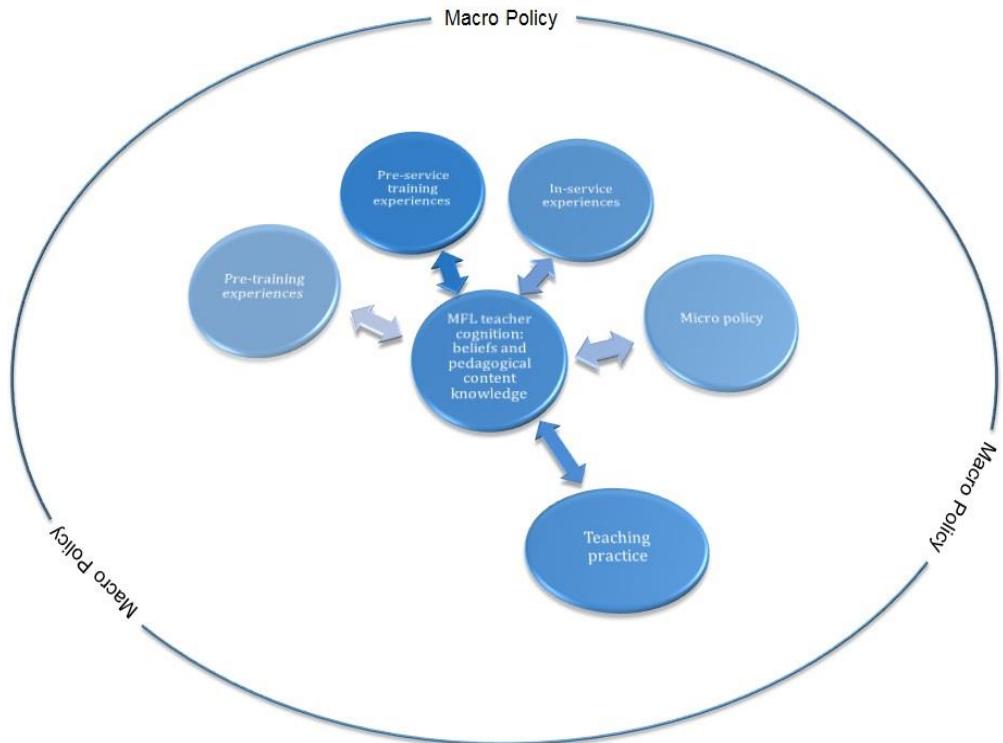


Figure 2

I changed *Schooling* to *Pre-training Experiences*. This section will now examine how early learning school and non-school based experiences have influenced teacher cognition (Lortie 1975; Nespor 1987; Nisbett & Ross 1980; Goodman 1988; Borg 1999a/b, 2003; Phipps & Borg 2009; Ch.1.12.vi)

Professional Coursework from Borg's original diagram has been divided into two sections: *Pre-service training experiences* and *In-service experiences* (Nishino 2012, p.382). The former will explore the impact of pre-service teacher education on the shaping of beliefs. The later will examine the significance of influences since the participants' teacher education courses. *Micro policy*, as defined in Chapter One, has been added as a fourth sphere around the core. This is to explore the belief introduced in Chapter 1.1 that micro policy is influencing and / or is at odds with MFL teachers' beliefs about language teaching, and reflects the second sub-question (Ch.1.1). All four outer spheres feed into the main core, which leads to the bottom sphere: teaching practice. *Macro policy* is seen as all pervading, since it may influence any of the four surrounding spheres and therefore it is represented as an all encompassing outer shell.

These five spheres of influence have informed the data collection areas described in section (Ch.3.11.vii). Whilst this research attempts to delineate influence into five key areas as depicted by the spheres, the five spheres should not be seen as static. They should be viewed as rotating around the core, which illustrates how previous beliefs and experiences blend with subsequent experiences and inform cognition. This will allow for an exploration of how cognition has evolved, such as in the realm of grammar teaching and the role of the TL in line with the research sub-questions.

Chapters Four and Five present and analyse the data elicited on the areas of influence delineated here.

3.2 Design of the research

Having established the areas to be explored in the research, the following sections of this chapter focus on the design of the research. The research questions imply a qualitative research design set within a constructivist – interpretivist philosophical paradigm. For Schwandt (1994),

[p]ropONENTS OF [THE CONSTRUCTIVIST – INTERPRETIVIST PARADIGM] SHARE THE GOAL OF UNDERSTANDING THE COMPLEX WORLD OF LIVED EXPERIENCE FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THOSE WHO LIVE IT. THIS GOAL IS VARIOUSLY SPOKEN OF AS AN ABIDING CONCERN FOR THE LIFE WORLD, FOR THE EMIC POINT OF VIEW, FOR UNDERSTANDING MEANING, FOR GRASPING THE ACTOR'S DEFINITION OF A SITUATION, FOR VERSTEHEN⁸. THE WORLD OF LIVED REALITY AND SITUATION-SPECIFIC MEANINGS THAT CONSTITUTE THE GENERAL OBJECT OF INVESTIGATION IS THOUGHT TO BE CONSTRUCTED BY SOCIAL ACTORS. (p.118)

Constructivist - interpretivism is therefore theoretically aligned to both hermeneutics and phenomenology, and is counter to scientism and positivism (ibid., p.119).

With reference to relevant literature I will describe the characteristics of qualitative research, and discuss its suitability for this study. The research questions and my subsequent engagement with literature led to the construction of the conceptual framework which has informed my choice of autobiography / life history as the

⁸ understanding

principal research methodology as the most effective means of presenting the elicited and analysed data. Justification for this choice of methodology will be presented here. Subsequent sections will describe the qualitative data collection methods as well as the processes of data analysis. Limitations of the study will be debated in various sections of this chapter. Finally, I will present the ethical considerations raised by this research.

3.2.i Qualitative research design

The research lends itself to a qualitative research design because the concept of reality in the thesis is multiple, constructed and researched holistically (Lincoln & Guba 1985, p.37). Secondly, '*the inquirer and the “object” of inquiry interact to influence one another*', they are inextricably linked and are not in isolation from one another (ibid.). Thirdly, the knowledge created by the research is dependent upon time and context, therefore generalisation is limited (ibid., p.38). Finally, the study is value-bound, and will explore participants' values and judgements, values "are seen as ineluctable in shaping (in the case of constructivism, creating) inquiry outcomes" (Guba & Lincoln 1994, p.114). The methodological approach (autobiography and life history) and data collection methods (interview and observation) are qualitative (Lincoln & Guba 1985, pp.38-40). I will begin with an analysis of the choice of research methodology.

3.3 Autobiography and life history

Simeoni and Diani (1995) posit that there is an increasing fascination for accounts of people's lives in contemporary society.

Narratives [are] a defining feature of Western societies, linking phenomena as disparate as the documentary evidence occasionally collected to enliven quantitative research and the sensational outbursts filling in the intervals between TV commercials on the reality-show catwalk. (p.1)

Autobiographies occupy a prominent position on bestseller reading lists and *reality* television which feature regularly in programming schedules construct participants' lives in order to shock, persuade and move emotionally. Reality within an autobiography is constructed. Against this contemporary cultural backdrop, the concept of autobiography has, in recent decades, become a more accepted methodology in the field of research. Goodson and Sikes (2001) discuss how postmodernist thinking, reflected in the increased acceptance of naturalistic design and qualitative research approaches, allows for the exploration of the subjective concepts of truth and reality and has favoured the return of the life story. Munro (1998) concurs.

The current focus on acknowledging the subjective, multiple and partial nature of human experience has resulted in a revival of life history methodology. What were previously criticisms of life history, its lack of representativeness and its subjective nature, are now its greatest strength. (p.8)

Coffey (1999) values the role of autobiography in ethnographic research and far from suggesting that the subjective nature of autobiography is problematic, she acknowledges its strengths as a research methodology.

The autobiographical mode of ethnographic writing reflects wider cultural emphases on self-revelation and confession, and an appeal to subjectivity and lived experience. Placing the biographical and the narrated self at the heart of the analysis can be viewed as a mechanism for establishing authenticity. (p. 117)

Coffey (1999) furthermore suggests that the autobiographical is unavoidable and prevalent in all ethnographic / qualitative research – “*[w]e author texts from a perspective of having been to, and lived in, the field*” (p.119) and to some extent, all ethnographic (qualitative) research is influenced by the self - a researcher in any field cannot avoid somehow writing themselves into the research (ibid., p. 117).

3.4 Defining life history and its pertinence as the major research methodology

For Peacock and Holland (1993) the increased acceptance of the narrative in research methodology is as a result of the changing concept of self which is less *unified* and will alter to reflect the context in which it finds itself. They distinguish between the concepts of life story and life history: the latter signifies a more factual based narrative whilst the former is more fluid and interpretive, reflecting the changing nature of the self. For Plummer (2001), “*[t]his view of life stories helps erase the older objective vs. subjective dichotomy that has marked life history research from the beginning*” (p. 409).

The concept of history not encompassing interpretation is debatable. Watson and Watson-Franke (1985) highlight the constructivist nature of life histories, which can

be subjective and interpretive. Bruner (1995) maintains that “*insight [is] impossible without a sense of history*” (p.166) – the history contextualises the interpretation of the experiences of the self in a selection of times and places – “[i]t can no more be placeless and timeless than it can be ‘self-less’” (ibid.) and “[b]y providing contextual data, the life stories can be seen in the light of changing patterns and space in testimony and action as social constructions” (Goodson & Sikes 2001, p.18).

This research is historically and contextually located; it investigates the influences that have potentially contributed to the construction of teacher cognition over the course of a life and this construction is explored against a backdrop of policy and changes to methodology in the teaching of languages. Goodson and Sikes (2001) posit:

[t]here are likely to be many influences, experiences and relationships within any teachers’ life which have led to their developing a particular philosophy of education and taking on a specific professional identity which informs their work. Then there are various contexts and conditions within which teachers have to work which further have an effect on what they do and how they do it. (p.21-22)

This study explores these influences and conditions, and therefore in line with Goodson and Sikes’ suggestions, life history has been chosen as the most appropriate methodology to elicit such data. Furthermore, given the focus on exploring the impact of policy on teacher cognition the choice of research methodology is further reinforced: “[w]hen the focus of enquiry is...something like

why someone becomes a teacher, or how they cope with imposed change, or why they adopt a particular pedagogical style...the potential of life history is enormous” (ibid., p.21).

3.4.i Construction of reality, truth and knowledge

Bruner (1995) debates the notion of reality within a life history and maintains that all such accounts are in fact constructed.

[T]here is no such thing as a ‘life as lived’ to be referred to. In this view, a life is created or constructed by the act of autobiography. It is our way of construing experience – and of reconstruing and reconstruing it until our breath or our pen fails us. Construal and reconstrual are interpretive. Like all forms of interpretation, life-construal is subject to our intentions, to the interpretive conventions available to us and to the meanings imposed upon us by the usages of our culture and language...there is no such thing as a ‘uniquely’ true, correct or even faithful autobiography. (pp.161,162)

Exploring how reality has been constructed is at the heart of qualitative research. A reflexive recursive approach will lead to an examination of how knowledge and truth have been constructed (construed and reconstrued) because of the context and influences at various points in a life. Indeed, Usher (1994), maintains that “*every ontology and epistemology is itself culturally specific, historically located and value-laden*” (p.14). Clandinin and Connelly’s (1987) *personal practical knowledge* is “*embodied and reconstructed out of the narrative of a teacher’s life*” (p.490) (Ch.1.11.vi). Portelli (1998) suggests that despite the possibility of factual inaccuracy

within life histories, they may still, in the mind of the subject, be “*psychologically ‘true’ and that this truth may be equally as important as factually reliable accounts*” (p.37). This is of significance in this research project as I attempted to chart the change in perceptions and beliefs of myself and my research participants over a time scale of, in some cases, at least 30 years.

3.4.ii Role of memory and interpretation

Memory and the recall of events are intrinsic to the production of any narrative. The issues of memory reliability, suggested by theories of forgetting and memory construction (Craik & Tulving 1975; Baddeley 2012) further highlight the subjectivity of life stories. Goodson and Sikes (2001) maintain that, “*we may change our interpretations and our stories as we remember or forget different details and as we assume (for whatever reasons) different perspectives and acquire new information*” (p.42).

Goodson and Sikes posit that memories are dynamic and will change over time as a result of new experiences - events in our lives may influence our interpretation of previous experiences (ibid.). They also suggests that we will try to make sense of events and experiences we originally never fully understood so as not to lose a sense of meaning to aspects of our lives, or to impose a kind of order to what we recall. Hastrup (1995) similarly agrees that, “*memories...are remembered, narrated, reinterpreted, sometimes rejected and often forgotten*” (p.102). Bruner (1987) maintains that factual inaccuracies as a result of memory distortion do not compromise the validity of what is being recalled – they remain right, even if they may not be truly accurate from a positivist perspective (p.14). Within my

autobiography, therefore, I have analysed my own interpretations and have questioned what has led to the construction of these interpretations.

It was inevitable that a research study, which explores conflict within the professional teaching identity, would touch upon emotive aspects of my own life and the lives of my participants. Some, if not all, of these memories have been painful, or are tinged with frustration, at times even with anger. Prior consent was sought before examining these issues within the ethical protocols of this research but they were necessary for this research. Experiences of Ofsted inspection, internal school micro policy, and initial teacher training, among others, have been contentious issues for some, if not all of those participating in this research. For Plummer (2001, p.402), what we choose not to recall is as important as what we decide to discuss therefore discretion and sensitivity on my part, as researcher, was essential to tease out potentially valuable data when participants may not have been immediately forthcoming with such information. An imperative has been to identify evidence of when I, or my participants, have clung to a particular belief despite mounting evidence against it (Nisbett & Ross 1980; Ch.1.12.vii). Pajares (1992) posits:

[a]ll individuals, at some point in their lives, suffer attacks of cognitive (belief?) dissonance, where incompatible beliefs are suddenly thrust upon them and they must behave in a manner consistent with only one of these beliefs. It is at this point that connections are discovered or created and the centrality of a belief comes to prominence. (p. 319)

Knowles (1993), drawing from a number of studies in the early 1980s, suggests that the more difficult the experiences the less reliable will be the recollections, but despite the unreliability, “*individuals draw meaning from those recollections whether or not they are accurate in detail or in spirit*” (p.74). If we can question any cognitive dissonance and explore the reasons behind it then it may reveal something enlightening.

3.5 Writing the stories

Plummer (2001) defines three forms of life story: the first is the *naturalistic life story*, which exists in all cultures and is not shaped by a social science researcher. It is a genre popular among contemporary publishers of autobiographies and biographies. He terms the second genre *researched life stories*, which as the title suggests, are stories collated from data captured by those in the field. The third form: the *recursive - reflective* genre distinguishes itself from the former two by its focus upon reflection and “*bring[s]...a much greater awareness of their own construction and writing*” (p.398). How we narrate our lives is as a result of the cultural influences; literary and traditional, to which we have been exposed (Goodson & Sikes 2001, p.46). Similarly for Coffey (1999) “*[w]e draw on cultural meanings and language to shape our memories and to provide a framework for remembering*” (p.127). The style of autobiography and life history in this thesis is both narrative and reflexive—recursive. My approach has enabled me to seek to interpret the meaning of events as if I were an observer of them, whilst at the same time I am indisputably involved in the construction of what I am writing (Babcock 1980).

Bruner (1995) argues that the authenticity of an autobiography is dependent upon how it has been written.

The 'rightness' of any autobiographical version is relative to the intentions and conventions that govern its construction or its interpretation...By the 'intentions and conventions' of an autobiography I mean something roughly corresponding to a genre in fiction. (p.163)

Bruner posits that the world constructed in the autobiography “*is as much dependent upon the narrative skills of the autobiographer as is the story he or she tells about it*” (ibid.). Wittgenstein’s famous solipsism that the world is limited by the language you have to talk about it, would further influence the construction of the autobiography. The autobiography and the life histories will evidence the types of language specific to the subject area of modern foreign language teaching and learning as well as pedagogical terms introduced into the field by national policy.

3.5.i Power and representation – giving voice

Goodson and Sikes (2001) maintain that by rejecting life histories and favouring more quantitative methods of research we deny voice to a number in society and as a consequence will “*easily service powerful constituencies within the social and economic order*” (p.8). Representation of minority groups and understanding of their condition/ culture would be lost. Since my research examines the impact of policy on the construction of teacher cognition, I am potentially giving voice to those that may have been influenced by *powerful constituencies* such as the British Government; local authority advisers communicating national policy and senior leaders in school

implementing pedagogical micro policy. As established in Chapter 1.13, research in this area is limited.

3.6 Data collection methods

[T]he key reason for using any research method has to be that it is the most appropriate one, the one most likely to produce data which address, answer or otherwise meet and fulfil the questions, aims and purposes of a specific enquiry. (Goodson & Sikes 2001, p.20)

Schwandt (1994) posits “*all interpretive inquirers watch, listen, ask, record and examine*” (p.119). I have therefore chosen interview as one of the two data collection methods since it allows for an eliciting and exploration of the perceptions and personal understanding unique to a participant, or a sample of participants, and therefore “*is perhaps the most commonly used strategy for collecting life history data*” (Goodson & Sikes 2001, p.27). Furthermore, Phipps and Borg (2009) suggest that beliefs may be elicited through discussion:

beliefs elicited through the discussion of actual classroom practices may be more rooted in reality – beliefs about what is – and reflect teachers’ practical or experiential knowledge. We believe that a more realistic understanding of the relationship between teachers’ beliefs and practices can emerge when the analysis of what teachers do is the basis of eliciting and understanding their beliefs. (p.382)

Observation in the field is the second chosen method (Ch.3.8). The life histories of my research participants have subsequently been constructed through a process of negotiation - collaborative interpretation of this interview and observation data.

3.7 Interview Method

Kvale (1996) identifies a number of major criticisms of the interview method principally concerning the reliability, the validity and the generalisability of the data drawn from the interview experience (p.230). These will be discussed in the following sections.

3.7.1 Reliability of data

Silverman (1993) posits that a highly directed approach, such as the structured interview, with participants being asked the same questions in the same order helps to ensure greater reliability (Oppenheim 1992, p.147). However, this would have been too restrictive for the purposes of this research. I adopted a semi-structured or focussed / guided interview method which allowed the interviewee a degree of freedom to talk about what was important to them and to expand upon points raised, but within a schema of themes to ensure all the relevant points about grammar and TL, micro and macro policy, for example, were covered (Kvale 1996; Bell 2005, p.161). The majority of questions were open to “*allow the respondents opportunities to develop their responses in ways which the interviewer might not have foreseen*” (Campbell, McNamara & Gilroy 2004, p.99) because “*a researcher can never know for certain which experiences have been influential and relevant in a particular sphere of life*” (Goodson & Sikes 2001, p.28).

Kvale (1996) highlights that a common objection to the interview method is that the interviewer has the potential to ask *leading questions* which can be used to manipulate the type of responses he / she is looking to draw from the interviewee. He suggests, on the other hand, that leading questions may be a means to elicit guarded information from participants (p.158). To limit such manipulation, *non-directive interviewing* has the advantage of encouraging subjects to freely talk about a particular topic without being explicitly guided by the interviewer (Hammersley & Atkinson 2007, p.101). This would have been too unstructured for the purposes of this study, given the specific focus on areas of pedagogy and could potentially have led to a loss of focus in the interview with responses, “*lacking the explicitness and / or detail necessary to [draw] ...interpretations*” (ibid., p.118).

3.7.ii Generalisation

Debate concerning the usefulness of life story focuses upon the issues of “*truth and representation*” (Reed-Danahay 2001, p.409). For the purposes of this research, it is questionable how representative one autobiography and a handful of life stories can actually be. For Watson and Watson-Franke (1985), it is not a question of representativeness but rather about how the life story reveals aspects of the ideal self within a specific context. Life story allows for an exploration of how a culture has influenced the construction of truth and meaning in a particular person’s life. Despite the small sample size however, life story may allow for generalisation among members of the same particular cultural group (MFL teachers) as well as to teachers of other subjects, and from there findings could be compared cross-culturally to existing research (Borg 1998, 1999a/b, 2003 & 2009; Sakui 2004; Nishino 2012).

3.7.iii Validity

Winter (2000) discusses how validity in research is defined eclectically, and as a concept, is viewed differently by positivist and qualitative researchers. In the former, it is a question of whether the research instrument actually measures what it intends to measure (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007, p.133), whereas validity in the context of qualitative research is dependent upon the objectivity of the researcher, and the extent of rich data elicited (Winter 2000). Hammersley (1987), whose work in defining qualitative research is extensive, similarly defines validity thus, "*[a]n account is valid or true if it represents accurately those features of the phenomena, that it is intended to describe, explain or theorise*" (p.69). Identification of bias on the part of the researcher is essential to ensure greater validity. In Chapter Four I will acknowledge my own biases concerning the teaching of grammar, and the use of target language through which to teach MFL. Those biases became more apparent through the process of reflection and reconstruing of meaning whilst redrafting the autobiography, and were more latent in the early stages of research. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) identify how the attitudes of the researcher, misconceptions on the part of the researcher as to what the interviewee is saying, misconceptions of the interviewee as to what the researcher is asking and "*a tendency for the interviewer to seek answers that support preconceived notions*" are all potential sources of bias (p.150). A pilot-study with two participants ensured a trial of the schema of questions. The process of transcribing these interviews, and reflecting upon my interview technique enabled me to ensure that any form of bias, inherent in the asking of leading questions, for example, was kept to a minimum in subsequent interviews. This is explained in more detail in the section on analysis of data.

The different perspectives of validity in this thesis firstly acknowledge that reality and truth may be constructions (Ch.3.4.i). Secondly, the collection of much rich data strengthens the validity of the findings and may allow the findings to be generalized (Ch.3.7.ii). Thirdly, the elimination of bias on the part of the researcher, as far as is possible, and a need for objectivity further contribute to ensuring validity. In the following section, I discuss how the data was triangulated.

3.7.iv *Triangulation*

Denzin (1978) delineates four types of triangulation: *data triangulation* (employing a range of different data sets); *investigator triangulation* (use of different researchers); *theory triangulation* (interpretation of data from a range of theoretical perspectives) and *methodological triangulation* (use of different methods to study the same problem). The latter triangulation or *mixed methods approaches* (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007, p.141) ensure that the object of study is viewed from different perspectives, “*more than one method may be used within a project so the researcher can gain a more holistic view of the setting*” (Morse 1994, p.224). Triangulation in this research study is through mixed methods - the second research method in this study is observation. This has provided examples of participants’ practice that could not be elicited from an interview. Its purpose in this research study has also allowed for corroboration of data gleaned from interviews, enabling me to verify whether what participants say they do in the classroom is reflected in practice. This has contributed to increasing the validity of the findings.

3.7.v Influence of the interviewer on the data

The context of being interviewed by the MFL adviser could have influenced the intentions or motives of my research participants. My *status* as a local authority adviser for MFL, as Atkinson, Coffey and Delamont (2003) suggest may have encouraged the research participants, “*to present themselves in an especially favourable light*” (p.121) by trying to tell me what they think I want to hear and therefore would have reduced the validity of any findings. It could have, for example, influenced spontaneity leading to *guarded responses*, especially if the truth could appear to show the subject in a negative light (*ibid*). From an ethical perspective, the interview situation might have been a source of stress and / or embarrassment for the interviewees, especially if they believed that their opinions differed from my own, or if they held no opinions at all on certain aspects (Kelman 1982, p.80). I had worked with all of the research participants prior to the study and this familiarity also had the potential to influence the outcomes of the interview (Heyl 2001, p.369). The researched could have been seduced into a false sense of security leading them to reveal more than they had originally intended, with regret felt afterwards, although this was never expressed by any of the participants in post interview discussion. Furthermore, familiarity may also have helped strengthen the degree of trust between myself and the research participants and this might have limited *reactivity* (Hammersley & Atkinson 2007, p.210).

3.7.vi Construction of truth

A major criticism of the interview method is that the truth elicited is a highly subjective one. Atkinson, Coffey and Delamont (2003) maintain that interviews are not about a search for truth but are more about “*what an informant’s statements*

reveal about his or her perspectives, perceptions or feelings" (p.120). My exploration in the interview and subsequent analysis of the data is to try therefore to identify what has led to the construction of these perceptions and perspectives. Kvale (1996) suggests two interesting metaphors to explain the rationale behind interview method. The first is that the interviewer is a miner who is searching for truth: concrete, absolute epistemological truth, which can be elicited from the interviewee. The second is that the interviewer is a traveller and he/she is on a journey with the interviewee and together they will construct a notion of truth from the stories and perceptions revealed by the interviewee - a metaphor which favours a "*post modern constructive understanding that involves a conversational approach to social research*" (p.5). Meaning is therefore a construct as a result of the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee. (See section on Ethics Ch.3.15)

3.7.vii Question themes

Questions aimed to capture data on early experiences as a learner encompassed general recollections of how participants were taught and learned foreign languages. Participants were asked to identify any particular methods employed by their teachers as well as to consider strengths and weaknesses of the practice they experienced and the impact it had on them as learners. Participants were asked to provide details about their teacher education, in particular the content of the theoretical aspects of the course and their practical experiences in school. I elicited information on influential figures, in the UK and abroad who had impacted on their beliefs and practice. Respondents were encouraged to express their beliefs about the teaching of grammar and the role of the target language and to articulate how those views may have evolved and the reasons for this evolution. Finally, they were

asked to consider how policy may have conditioned their thinking, as well as the impact of Ofsted, and micro policy in school on their cognition and practice.

3.8 Field observation method

In order to triangulate the data from the above capture areas, in particular the section on teaching methodology, I needed to observe my research participants in the classroom. This enabled me to corroborate how they believe they teach with what is actually demonstrated in practice. The observations gave valuable further insight into teachers' beliefs and practices especially concerning the teaching of grammar and the use of TL, such examples of practice have been used in the life histories. The observations were therefore semi – structured, which "*have an agenda of issues but will gather data to illuminate these issues in a far less predetermined and systematic manner*" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007, p.397). This enabled me to test hypotheses drawn from the interview data as well as to generate further hypotheses (ibid.).

Becker and Geer (1957) argue that observation was in many cases superior to all other methods of data collection and could "*provide us with a yardstick against which to measure the completeness of data gathered in other ways*" (p.28). Atkinson, Coffey & Delamont (2003) are critical of Becker and Geer's original belief that observation as a data collection method is free from distortion and bias. This will be considered in more detail in the next section.

3.8.i Influence of the researcher

The first obvious criticism of observation is that the presence of the researcher within the field (the classroom) could most likely influence the behaviour of both the teacher and the pupils (Jones & Somekh 2005, p.140) and thus bias any findings. From my own professional experience, the presence of a stranger in a room can affect pupils' performance both negatively or positively or have no noticeable impact at all. Unfortunately the classroom is quite a challenging field in which to research covertly and the ethical considerations are such that this is not an option anyway (Ch.3.15.iv).

My familiarity with some of the research participants may have led them to contrive what they were producing in the lesson in order to show me what they think I wanted to see. On the other hand, Coffey (1999) also suggests that my familiarity with the field and the existing relationships I may potentially have with some of the subjects may make it easier to *gain acceptance* from them than would normally be the case for a complete stranger (p.34).

Becker (1971) highlights the dilemma of familiarity when observing in fields that are not new to the researcher, especially in schools.

[I]t is first and foremost a matter of it all being so familiar that it becomes impossible to single out events that occur in the classroom as things that have occurred, even when they happen in front of you...it takes a tremendous effort of will and imagination to stop seeing only the things that are conventionally "there" to be seen. (p.10)

Furthermore Coffey (1999) suggests that if researchers cannot distance themselves from previously acquired *esoteric knowledge* from the field it may be difficult to be sufficiently analytical (p.23).

Coffey (ibid., p.22) also argues that familiarity may help make observation more effective because the self is involved in the interpretation of what is being observed and these processes will be lost if the ethnographer were a stranger. She develops her argument by proposing whether it is possible for anyone researching within a familiar culture to completely distance themselves from it (ibid.). She suggests that such a detachment could actually be detrimental because it may prevent the framing of relevant questions “*beyond the obvious and those devoid of cultural specificity*” (ibid.).

3.8 ii Recording the data

For the purposes of this research project, the primary observation focus was teacher and student interactions to test hypotheses and beliefs drawn from the interview data concerning how teachers believe they teach. The observation had to therefore be semi-structured because an overly structured observation could lead to unexpected but important data for the purposes of the research being missed altogether. It was originally the intention to film the lessons, but protocol governing the filming of children is increasingly restrictive and obtaining the necessary consent would have prevented the fieldwork from commencing for some time (Ch.3.15.iv). In light of this, all lessons were sound-recorded instead with interactions and events transcribed as field notes. These in turn can be highly selective given the partiality of the researcher to “*write...about certain things that seem ‘significant’, ignoring and hence ‘leaving*

out' other matters that do not seem significant" (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw 2001 p.353).

Furthermore, far from merely presenting descriptions of the events, I was engaged in a process of interpretation in order to seek the meanings of the behaviour I was observing. This allowed me to link how subjects perceive they teach to what actually happens in the classroom. Even though the lessons were recorded, it was essential to make field notes during observation "*since technology...cannot replace the sensitivity of the researcher's 'self', open to nuances of meaning and interpretation*" (Jones & Somekh 2005, 140) (see Appendix 8b).

3.9 Data collection period (pilot study)

Both Zara and Zelda participated in the pilot study, which took place in June 2010. The pilot study was planned to allow me to practise using the ICT equipment to capture the data, as well as for me to reflect on, hone and refine my interview technique. I informed Zara and Zelda of the data capture areas prior to the interview, although I did not give copies of individual questions, to ensure against their responses becoming too prepared. They were given the opportunity to ask for further clarification of what would be expected of them in advance of the main interview. My intention was to observe both of them teaching. Zara decided, belatedly, to take a career break and asked therefore not to be observed, but did not wish to withdraw from the research. Zelda was retiring at the end of the academic year, and because of our own working commitments it became impossible to carry out the agreed three observations, and therefore her participation in this research project stopped after a main interview, and its follow up. The interview data provided by Zara and Zelda has

not been corroborated by lesson observation, as a result of this, and the provision of substantial data from other research participants, their data are not presented in the form of life stories in Chapter Four. However, given the richness of data they provided as well as its corroboration of other research findings, their beliefs may be alluded to in other life stories, and are discussed in Chapter Five.

3.10 Main study

Data were collected over a three year period from July 2010 until August 2013. Information about the aims of the study, and details concerning participant involvement were given to potential participants in advance. Informed consent was then obtained from the participants. Access was subsequently gained from participants' headteachers before any lesson observation could proceed.

Data collection was staggered – Ken, Morag and Jane commenced participation in the research in 2010, Rosetta and Ross began in 2011. This was unavoidable given both my professional commitments and those of the participants. Finding mutually convenient dates for interviewing or observation was always a challenge. All participants were initially interviewed once for at least an hour. This was followed by a second meeting / interview to check the accuracy of comments from the first interview, to share initial interpretations with respondents and to collect further data if necessary. Respondents were also contacted by email if additional data were needed, or if there was a need to check for factual accuracy.

Participants were observed three times: for one hour with three different classes. In some cases the three observations were staggered over the course of a year, in one

case all three observations were completed in one day almost a year after the initial interview. (See Appendix 7a for time line of data collection)

3.11 Data analysis

Qualitative inquiry can produce lots of thick data and there was much produced in the process of gathering data for this thesis. For Miles and Huberman (1994, p.55), the role of the conceptual framework and resulting research questions limit data overload, by giving a focus to what should be analysed. The concept of a *stage* of data analysis in the research is misleading, the analysis has been ongoing and holistic. Even in the latter stages of refining the thesis, additional analyses were taking place, further clarification has been sought from the research participants and the conceptual framework has continued to be refined. Coffey and Atkinson (1996) agree that,

(t)he process of analysis should not be seen as a distinct stage of research; rather, it is a reflexive activity that should inform data collection, writing, further data collection, and so forth...The research process, of which analysis is one aspect, is a cyclical one. (p.6)

In the next section, I will describe the data analysis process, which chronicles the stages of analysis and explains how the data were subsequently analysed. A review of relevant literature on data analysis will provide a theoretical grounding to the stages and processes of analysis delineated here.

Coffey and Atkinson (1996) discuss how the process of analysis might be considered to be both practical and disciplined (the sorting and categorising of data) as well as innovative and creative (the interpretation of peoples' lives and worlds).

3.12 Stages of analysis

I recorded the interviews onto a laptop using the IT package *Audacity*. The subsequent recordings were then converted to MP3 files, and copies were saved onto hard disks. The interview recordings were then transcribed into a Microsoft Word document. There are voice recognition software packages, which will make reasonable transcriptions, but I decided against their use. Although the transcription process is both long, and at times tedious, it does enable the transcriber to make initial analyses whilst transcribing – *“[s]uch close listening is important because intent and meaning are conveyed as much through how things are said as through the actual words that are used”* (Goodson & Sikes 2001, p.33). Upon hearing something surprising, or unexpected I would highlight that particular part of the text and add a comment informing me to return to the remark later. Examples of this were to include Zelda’s reference to educational theory as “absolute rubbish”⁹ and Ross referring to the use of target language as “*The Holy Grail*”. Such emotive and figurative use of language needed to be examined more closely, especially to see if it was reflected elsewhere, thus constituting an emerging classification. The process of transcribing, taking many hours to complete an interview of minimum 60 minute length, would involve much rehearsal of the interview’s content. This would prove beneficial later, upon hearing similar or contrasting ideas in another interview, I would quickly be able to recall where I had heard the similar or contrasting ideas and

⁹ Zelda insisted that her original comment was euphemised

would annotate *link to participants name* on the new, and previous, transcription. Stress and intonation are identified in the transcriptions through the use of bold text, italics and underlining. The latter was used to highlight comment which was most emphatic. I transcribed every word and sound – hesitation is indicated by the use of *[pause]* and / or *erm / er*. If a section proved inaudible, although this was rare given the quality of the recording, then this was denoted in the transcription as *[inaudible]*. Some non-verbal data, such as body language and facial expressions, which may communicate a range of emotions and help strengthen opinion or weaken an argument, were however inevitably lost through transcription (Miles & Hubermann 1994, p.56; Goodson & Sikes 2001, p.33; see Appendix 8a for a sample of interview notes).

The second phase was to identify key themes or concepts in the transcriptions, some of which were obviously familiar to me and would have been identified in the conceptual framework. At this stage the conceptual framework was fluid and was being revised in response to this early analysis of data. I invented a series of codes to denote a particular concept (Coffey & Atkinson 1996, p.27). This practice reflects a grounded approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) to coding: codes are generated after an initial analysis to identify key concepts. I used 20 codes, all of which were identified during the pilot stage of the research – some were very broad such as **gr** representing reference to grammar, this was then subdivided into **gr ded** for *grammar deductive* and **gr tran** for *grammar-translation* and **gr ind** for *grammar inductive* approaches to the teaching of grammar. I also used two colour-coded markers, green for sections which made reference to grammar, and pink for reference to target language. This enabled me to find relevant sections at speed

when trying to cross link data within seven interviews. Whilst I was coding the data I would also write comments alongside parts of the transcript (see example in Appendix 8a). These comments would offer initial analysis of what was written often identifying inference, suggestions as to why a particular belief was held, and also linked to similarities or differences in other interview transcriptions. Questions would indicate that a section required further analysis. Similar interpretations were grouped together to highlight any recurring themes and to enable me to classify and cross analyse data.

There has been a process of negotiation with the research participants since the initial analysis of the interviews. This negotiation has been flexible – entailing, at times, other recorded interviews to provide additional data, or to clarify initial interpretations. At other times, this dialogue has been less formal, comprising informal discussions, when appropriate. Email has also been a means of communication, but only to provide confirmation of factual details.

Interview always preceded lesson observation which enabled an examination of the interview data to construct hypotheses concerning how the research subjects thought they taught (Glaser & Strauss 1967). These could then be tested out when observing the lesson, and again later upon examining the lesson field notes and the transcriptions of the lesson sound recordings. Initial examination of interview data was perhaps less thorough with Ross given that there were only two hours between his interview and his first observation. There is an obvious risk, however, that by interviewing the subjects before observing may have subsequently encouraged them to contrive their lesson to fit with what they said in the interview. Given the reaction

of students in the lessons, I am convinced that practice viewed was broadly typical of the research participants, with maybe the exception of one lesson from one teacher. Observation was preceded by an informal discussion providing clarification of the aims of the observation. Participants always wanted to discuss each lesson afterwards, which provided opportunities to discuss the reasoning behind some of the aspects of the lesson. Using the field notes as a guide I transcribed the lesson content. I highlighted sections concerning the teaching and learning of grammar and teacher and student use of target language. I would cross-reference this with hypotheses drawn from the interview analysis to check whether participants' beliefs about how they teach were corroborated by observed practice. Some observations were months after the initial interview; this was unavoidable given the professional commitments of myself and the research participants. However, this would have had an impact on the continuity of the research process.

The third stage of the analytical process involved categorising data in key conceptual areas for each of the research participants. Comparison of ideas followed, identifying key similarities and exploring reasons for them. I was able to identify emerging trends and consistencies in beliefs. It involved the construction of theory, and the drawing from established theory to help explain various phenomenon and attitudes (see Cross analysis chart Appendix 7b)

The life stories were constructed from the interview and lesson observation data. These were initially very descriptive and in narrative form. Over time, they were refined to ensure greater analysis, better categorising of themes and concepts, and linking of ideas to other sections of the thesis to ensure answers to the research

questions are made explicit. Chapter Five pulls together findings concerning how modern foreign language teacher beliefs and pedagogical content knowledge have been constructed and from where the influences on teacher beliefs and cognition possibly originate. This chapter also offers an exploration of what the research is actually telling us and begins to suggest conclusions for the study.

3.13 Research sample

The research design for this study comprises a sample of teachers working in secondary schools in Norfolk. Norfolk LA is representative of England because GCSE MFL results and take-up rates onto GCSE language courses were roughly in line with national averages when I embarked upon this research (CiLT 2008). Given the time scale for the project, in-depth interviews with seven research participants were envisaged. Six of the research participants were selected from different maintained comprehensive schools to ensure some degree of representativeness of the sample. It was also intended to choose participants who would have had at least 15 years experience of teaching MFL - this was to ensure that sufficient data could be drawn from the data collection areas concerning the influence of policy on practice. An obvious limitation to this is that data gathered on pre-teaching influences and pre-service training may be less reliable than that elicited from younger teachers because of issues with memory. The inclusion of a further voice from the independent sector was originally sought primarily to test my assumption that MFL teaching in private schools is largely characterised by explicit grammar tuition, but I was unable to gain access. I would not, in fact, have been able to have drawn any generalisable conclusions from one voice. My seventh research participant is a former Local Authority adviser for MFL, who was still in post at the time of the

interview (July 2010). Participants' background information is provided in Appendix 16.

My role in Norfolk, it should be noted, had been to disseminate and to some extent interpret policy. My views may provide the intersection between policy and practice and therefore it is important to investigate whether my beliefs corroborate with those of someone from the same professional context. As explained earlier, one participant retired from teaching during the research, and lesson observation was not carried out. Another participant took a career break before I was able to observe her in lessons. Both participants' interview data will be referred to in Chapter Five, but life stories have not been constructed. All participants are, or have been, subject leaders for MFL, often for substantial amounts of time. This proved to be important because it offered insight into how they had also interpreted policy and disseminated that to others.

3.14 Limitations to the study

An obvious limitation to this study is the small sample size. The views on language learning that have been elicited by this study maybe representative, or they may not. For Lincoln and Guba (1985) this is unimportant in qualitative research since the principal aim is to provide rich information that is representative of individual people and not a population (pp.201-202). This study elicited 'thick data' about teachers' perceptions of themselves as teachers and revealed insights into how these perceptions have been constructed and the reasons for this construction. In the conclusion I will discuss how this research could be carried out with teachers of other

subject areas to investigate whether there are emerging themes that are common perhaps to all teachers.

My supervisor and I were satisfied that three lesson observations would provide sufficient data to meet the aims of the study, without making unreasonable demands on the research participants. An increased number of observations, however, would have unquestionably provided more data, which would have strengthened the opportunities for triangulation.

3.15 Ethics

The ethical issues for the research project principally centred on obtaining consent from participants and their headteachers, and access to participants' schools and classrooms; ensuring confidentiality of students and the negotiation of meaning and interpretation of data elicited with the research participants. This latter point is of particular importance with qualitative research because it is unclear how a subject may react within the research situation or following publication of the research findings (Murphy 2001, p.341). Plummer (2001) further highlights the concerns when embarking on telling the story of somebody's life since it can be "*riddled with ethical issues – of confidentiality, deception, honesty, consent, exploitation, betrayal*" (p.403). It was my responsibility as a researcher therefore to take all reasonable care to ensure that the implications of the above were limited. The following, as mentioned, were of prime concern.

3.15.i Consent

Informed consent was secured before any data collection took place and this consent was reappraised during the research (Miller & Bell 2002, p.53).

All participants were fully briefed on:

- a. topics on which they will be interviewed;
- b. expectations in terms of their contribution to the research;
- c. relevant time scales.

Teaching is a highly pressurised profession with many demands on teachers' time.

The interview experience and preparation for the lesson observation placed extra pressure on already busy individuals - certainly though not to the extent that the research could be considered unethical (Hammersley & Atkinson 2007, p.213).

Participation in this project was perceived as a positive experience for all participants. They enjoyed discussing aspects of policy and practice that had been a source of frustration. One found the experience of being interviewed particularly cathartic, and this is described in Chapter Five. The experience of being interviewed, observed and then encouraged to reflect over aspects of their practice may have had a positive impact on their teaching in the classroom. However, this is only speculation.

3.15.ii Confidentiality

All research participants have been anonymised to protect their identity and have been given alternative names when referred to in the published thesis. Maintaining confidentiality can be particularly problematic with qualitative research where sample sizes are small such as here because it may be possible for those close professionally to members of the research sample to work out the identity of those

quoted by recognising basic autobiographical facts (Murphy 2001, p.341). This can be potentially damaging if they then disagree with the opinions of the subject they have identified. Participants needed to be reassured as to who will have access to the collected data such as myself, my supervisor and other lecturers. In the final chapter I have completely anonymised any quotes that may be perceived as either controversial, or could show the participant in a negative light.

3.15.iii Access

A major concern was gaining access to audio record the lessons of my research participants. I obtained formal ethical approval from The UEA ethics committee to proceed with the research. They granted my request to observe participants in the classroom and audio record lessons provided consent was obtained from the schools' headteachers, and followed the participating schools' protocols. The UEA ethics board were satisfied with block consent from the school. Permission was granted by all of the research participants as well as from the headteacher of their respective schools. No headteacher of any participant in this sample requested that I seek permission from the students' parents or carers. This facilitated access. One potential research participant did withdraw from the study when her headteacher insisted on written consent from a parent or carer for every student who would potentially be observed, citing the workload and organisation necessary to make this happen.

3.15.iv Negotiation

I have attempted to collaborate as far as possible with the research participants in negotiating which data are used. I have involved them in the process of interpreting

the interview data and have sought their approval, when possible, of any interpretation I have made, since my interpretation may be different from what the subject believes to be true. This is to ensure that the research participants do not feel that they have been misquoted or misunderstood, which could be upsetting for them (Murphy 2001, p.342).

Negotiation of outcomes was more extensive with some participants than with others and therefore was the least standardised aspect of the data collection process. Time and access were limiting factors in the negotiation process.

3.15.v Further ethical considerations - representation of participants

I have always felt a sense of responsibility for how I portray participants in this study. I have been conscious of the power that such a position has given me in terms of how I construct the life histories out of the data captured. I feel a tremendous sense of gratitude to all seven research participants for their engagement in this study, they have provided me with rich, interesting data which have enabled this thesis to be written. These seven highly professional practitioners have willingly, and I may argue, courageously, allowed their views, opinions and beliefs as well as their practice to be recorded, analysed and subsequently published. They have kindly given of their time, when time is at a premium in the teaching profession. I am conscious that engagement in such a study may have added extra pressure to already highly pressurised professional lives. They have allowed themselves to be observed on three separate occasions for me to access much needed data to corroborate views expressed in their interviews. They have answered and responded to queries about their data, and have engaged in the process of negotiation of

outcomes. Therefore given their tremendous commitment to this research, there came a point where I felt I could not trouble them any further with queries about the data provided.

As I redrafted Chapter 4 (participant life histories), I became even more conscious of my ethical obligations to present the participants positively. Responses to questions, elicited at interview, were at times confused, and presentation of such data would have been unfair and unethical in terms of how it may have been perceived by others (Plummer 2001, p.403). Furthermore, a confused response may be as attributable to the lack of skill of the interviewer than the interviewee's knowledge. In the final redraft I have omitted certain data, which may have been misconstrued, and could have presented the participant in a less than favourable light. However possibly *controversial* data have been used, especially that which concern participants' awareness of, and understanding of, national policy, which will be explored in the next chapter. At times such data evidence confusion, misunderstanding and a lack of awareness, but presentation of these findings is vital to the research aims of the study. Furthermore such findings, I will argue in subsequent chapters, may be a criticism of the national legislation of pedagogy, and must not necessarily be perceived as a criticism of the research participants.

Chapter Four: Presentation of data: autobiography and life histories

The first chapter presented a review of English national policy since the late 1970s, which had governed how MFL teachers were expected to teach. This was followed by an exploration of literature on teacher cognition: beliefs and subject knowledge, which shed light on how teachers function in reality. The second chapter reviewed literature on MFL teaching methodology and theory, analysing the major methods and approaches to language teaching of the last 30 years. This was accompanied by an examination of how the teaching context may hinder policy implementation, or be at odds with teacher cognition and render particular methods and approaches inappropriate. Chapter Three introduced the conceptual framework and described the research methodology and research process of the study. Chapter Four presents the findings of the study. In accordance with the conceptual framework and research methodology, data will be presented in the form of my own autobiography and five accompanying life histories. This section will explore the influences in the shaping of MFL teacher cognition and beliefs of the five research participants and myself. A particular focus will be the views on the teaching of grammar and the role of the target language. I will explore how attitudes to the teaching of grammar have been constructed, identifying from where these attitudes may have originated, and how they have evolved over the years.

My autobiography and the subsequent life histories begin with an examination of pre-training experiences given their importance in shaping beliefs about teaching (Lortie 1975; Nisbett & Ross 1980; Calderhead 1991; Knowles 1992; Freeman 1992; Cooper & Olson 1996; Bailey & Nunan 1996; Borg 2003; Yee Fan Tang 2002;

Phipps & Borg 2009). This first section focuses on early language learning experiences; subsequent engagement with language learning at tertiary level as well as opportunities to study and work abroad. This is followed by the second section, which examines participants' experiences of teacher education programmes. The subsequent two sections in the autobiography and each life history examine potential influences within post-training (in-service) contexts and encompass therefore, the impact of policy (macro and micro) on participant cognition. The life histories will, wherever possible mesh observation data with the interview data to show how beliefs are reflected in practice.

Chapter 4.1 Autobiography: Adam

4.1.i Pre-training language learning experiences

4.1.i.a The Longman Audio-French adventure

I began to learn French at the age of 11. My very first lesson at Secondary School was French on Thursday 2nd September 1982; it was period 5, the first lesson after lunch. According to the theoretical schema for memories, suggested by Nelson (1993), such a vivid and precise recollection would be defined as an autobiographical memory since it is “*specific, personal, long-lasting and (usually) of significance to the self-system. Phenomenally it forms one’s personal life history*” (p.8) and may reflect the concept of an *episodic memory* defined by Nespor (1987) in Chapter 1.12.vi. Description of other such autobiographical / episodic memories in this autobiography will reinforce the validity of the data I am presenting.

Teaching in that first year was characterised by question and answer routines in the TL in which we, the students, communicated simple personal information such as our names, ages and where we lived. These lessons allowed us to rehearse previously learnt language. Gray (1999) alludes to this practice as “[a] *superficial interpretation of the ‘communicative approach’ which concentrates on the learning of set phrases and vocabulary*” (p.40). Subsequent life histories and Chapter Five will show this interpretation of communicative methodology is as prevalent today as it was then. Set phrases were always introduced orally with no access to the written form. I still remember endlessly repeating *j’en ai quatre*¹⁰ to myself waiting for my teacher Mrs S. to ask me how many pencils I had. I had visualised the phrase as

¹⁰ I have four of them

johnnycat. The learning approach was therefore largely behaviourist, dependent as it was upon imitation and repetition. Spoken language was committed to memory through constant rehearsal. The practice of initially presenting language orally without access to written forms was advocated by the Reform Movement (Ch.2.2.ii), and was specified by the audio-lingual method. It is how I was taught to introduce new vocabulary whilst training to teach (Ch.4.2).

The procedure for using the textbook¹¹ in lessons always followed the same format: Mrs S. would read aloud the short stories line-by-line, which we repeated in chorus. Language in this case was therefore introduced with direct reference to written forms – reinforcing the sound – spelling link (phoneme to morpheme). The stories in the textbook were then translated, line-by-line, as a whole class activity. There were questions on the texts to which we wrote answers in class or at home. All new vocabulary was written up and subsequently learnt for homework.

The sequence of activities for drilling new language followed the model of teaching foreign languages explicit in the Present, Practise and Produce (PPP) paradigm (Willis & Willis 1996; Klapper 1997, 2003; Broady 2002) “*the idea that a grammatical structure should be first presented explicitly and then practised until it is fully proceduralized*” (Ellis 2004 p.215). Language was first introduced, then practised in controlled exercises, before it was applied in more open, creative contexts such as a picture story. It is a technique, which remains part of my teaching repertoire, although I cannot with any certainty attribute early exposure to such a model in childhood as influencing my practice today. I will explore a definition and possible

¹¹ Longman Audio-Visual French 1974

use of the PPP paradigm in Chapter 4.1.ii.c.

4.1.i.b Grammar teaching: an introduction to French verb conjugation

In the first term, the three singular forms of the verb *être*: *je suis*, *tu es* and *Il / elle est*¹² had been separately introduced in the order and the context in which they appeared in the text book. These had been practised as separate vocabulary items. In the Spring Term, Mrs S. presented the full verb paradigm of *être*. I remember repeatedly chanting the various persons of the verb but it did not make any sense. I could understand *je suis*, *tu es*, *il est* and *elle est* when contextualised, but when presented in a full paradigm they appeared, and indeed were, meaningless. This was due to the lack of any contextual clues to give meaning to the language. Such teaching can render the language learning process “*more difficult than it needs to be, because learners are denied the opportunity of seeing the systematic relationships that exist between form, meaning and use*” (Nunan 1998, p.102).

Despite some emphasis on encouraging students to speak in the first year, characterised by the reproduction of memorised phrases and nouns, by the second year de-contextualised grammar teaching became the *modus operandi*. Rules would be explained first and then applied in exercises.

4.1.i.c Grammar teaching: inductive learning

A certain haziness concerning verb conjugation would remain with me into my second year. We had been taught full paradigms for *-ir* and *-re* verbs as well as *aller*, *faire* and *avoir*¹³; I could easily recite the verbs endings off by heart; I

¹² To be: I am, you are and he / she is

¹³ The verbs *to go*, *to do* and *to have*

understood that verbs changed according to the subject but I struggled to apply correct endings in context. Inevitably I became disheartened especially since my marks suffered because in this system accuracy was paramount (Ch.1.3). Summer term of 1984 was a turning point, I recall asking my teacher that if I wanted to say *I am going to do something* all I needed to do “was stick an infinitive after aller?” I had hypothesised the rules governing the immediate future time frame in French. This was the first time I had worked out a grammatical rule for myself. Such learning is deemed *inductive* (Hammerly 1975; Willis 1990; Fortune 1992, p.161) (Ch.1.6.ii / Ch.2.4.vii / Ch.5.3). This discovery would lead to a deeper understanding of previously taught grammatical concepts, which until that point had been obscure.

I became fascinated with grammar and bought a number of grammar books in order to develop my knowledge of French grammar through self-study. I could recite the rules governing the construction of the perfect, future and conditional tenses, and could apply these tenses accurately. I taught myself how to form the future perfect and the future conditional tenses. I taught myself in the ways teachers had taught me, I had been conditioned to learn rules first and then apply them – this was therefore my understanding of language learning methodology. My own metacognition reflected the models demonstrated by my teachers.

4.1.i.d Target language

My first teacher’s use of TL was limited to simple commands such as *levez la main*¹⁴. Students were also encouraged to use set phrases to communicate, for example, *je*

¹⁴ put your hand up

*m'excuse*¹⁵ if we were late or *je n'ai pas de stylo*¹⁶ if we did not have a pen. Mrs S. did, however, instruct us entirely in English when explaining grammatical rules. My O' level teacher (the head of languages) never spoke French to us; indeed she said that she did not believe in teaching in the target language because she felt it important that we always understood what she was saying – an argument, also put forward by a number of participants in this study. At the time, I was somewhat relieved, but also a little disappointed. I was rarely exposed to aural French so inevitably my listening skills were weak. Had I been taught much more in the target language, my comprehension of spoken French may have developed more rapidly. Although this belief cannot be substantiated, it has led to the construction of a positive bias towards my own use of TL in the classroom. Debate concerning the use of TL was explored in Ch.2.6, and is developed in Ch.5.6 / Ch.5.7.

4.1.i.e A Level Studies

A new system of accreditation had been introduced for 16 year olds at the point where I re-entered secondary education in 1989 (Ch.1.5). I had taken O level French whereas the others in my peer group had studied for the new GCSE. According to one of my tutors, I would therefore have a sound understanding of grammar, and consequently would cope better with the demands of A level French than would my peers. This particular tutor seemed almost obsessive in his quest to attribute others' apparent grammatical weaknesses to the MFL GCSE. He assumed, that this new examination placed less emphasis on grammatical rigour.

¹⁵ I am sorry

¹⁶ I don't have a pen

To suggest that GCSE had indeed led at that time (1989) to a dramatic shift in teaching methodology, away from grammar towards a much more communicative paradigm, would be erroneous. Most of my peers had in fact followed a largely grammatical syllabus, delivered deductively, and some of them were as proficient as me, others less so, at applying grammatical rules. Inherent in my tutor's argument was the assumption that such a grammatical syllabus was going to be successful for *all* students. My experience suggests that this is not so, and the following section substantiates my view.

4.1.i.f De-contextualised grammar teaching at A Level

My other tutor was a native French speaker. In every lesson she would explain grammatical rules in English and the class would then embark on written *mechanical* grammar drills, such as cloze exercises (Ch.2.3.i), which we would mark and correct at the end of each lesson. She had been given the task of teaching the grammatical element of the A Level course, which was therefore separated out from other learning and robbed of the relevant context. Incidentally the opportunity for a native speaker to develop our understanding of a grammar through the target language was left unexploited.

Many students struggled with this approach, and they complained bitterly about how difficult, and boring they found the lessons. Indeed by the end of the year, nearly half the class had dropped the subject. I never questioned my teachers' methods because I quite enjoyed *doing* grammar exercises. Indeed, I believed that it was the only way to teach languages because I had only ever experienced this method. The grammar-translation method may enable some to learn grammatical rules and apply

them. It was certainly the higher attainers in the group, whom I shall crudely define as those that had achieved an A in the GCSE exams, who survived the course. For others, deductive grammar teaching simply brought about confusion.

I began to be frustrated at my progress; I was not improving in this final year of A level French. My knowledge of grammar had developed, since I had assimilated the subjunctive mood into my language repertoire but clearly my essays were not improving; my listening comprehension marks stayed static and orally I could barely communicate better than I had at O level. To compensate, I bought more grammar books and revised grammatical rules since I believed this was the way to improve my language ability. I was not drawing from a base of contextualised language and my teachers offered little help in doing so. The moment of enlightenment came when I sat down to write an essay on the media. I decided to find all of the texts that dealt with this topic in the course book, one which was rarely used by my teachers. I read the texts repeatedly, then identified key examples of language relevant to the topic and made a conscious effort to weave certain structures and idioms into my writing. The result was a breakthrough – 16 out of 20! For the first time, I had learnt to take authentic examples of language and to use them for my own purposes. Wenden (1998) maintains that metacognitive knowledge is quite simply *knowledge about learning* (p.516) that it “*is a prerequisite for the self-regulation of learning it informs planning decisions taken at the outset of learning and the monitoring processes that regulate the completion of a learning task*” (p.528). My experience here corroborates his view: I had a problem so I thought through what would help me solve my learning difficulty. I planned that activity and after carrying it out, I reflected on the outcomes. Completely unaware at the time, and only through reflection whilst writing this thesis,

I see that I began to appreciate the role of input in second language acquisition. The choices I made about how to improve my French reflects theory about the role of input in second language acquisition (Krashen 1981; 1982; 1983; 1989; 2009) as discussed in Ch.2.5.iii.

4.1.i.g Influences at university

I went to Aston University to study joint honours in French and Japanese, the Japanese to be studied *ab initio*. Almost immediately, I felt that my French was poor in comparison with most of my peers. Lectures and seminar groups were orchestrated in the target language – a challenge in itself for me, since I had only ever been taught through the medium of English. I panicked and impetuously decided to drop Japanese and move onto the single honours course in French with the option to take a beginners' Spanish course for two years, which I felt would be more useful given my intention to enter the teaching profession.

Throughout my university studies I was to feel consistently anxious in class. In my first year, being thrown into a wave of target language and feeling completely out of my depth contributed to this. Relevant here is Krashen's (1989) concept of an *affective filter*. He suggests that anxiety will prevent acquisition, "*a high filter...is caused by low motivation, high student anxiety, and low student self-esteem*" (p.10). However, I encountered two inspirational lecturers, whose practice, on reflection, has been influential. The first would provide advice, building upon my discovery about the role of input whilst studying for my A Levels. The second would shape my beliefs about developing fluency and error correction.

4.1.i.h Drawing from authentic texts (input) to develop acquisition

Fifi Framboise, a French native speaker, taught the *Written French* course in my second year. She was initially critical of my writing, which she felt was *clunky* because it was inauthentic, lacked idiom and read as if it had been translated literally from English. In the first term we were taught how to read, which seemed ludicrous to some at the time, but actually was very beneficial for me. It built on that early engagement with metacognition I had experienced during my A level French course. I learnt how to deconstruct original source material, spot inference and to assimilate useful vocabulary. On reflection, I see that I was engaging much more fully with authentic materials, and this high exposure to input had a marked and beneficial effect on my language learning. My marks improved considerably and I achieved a First in both writing and speaking at the end of my second year.

4.1.i.i Error correction

Dr Tobermory, unlike the other lecturers, involved us much more in pair and small group discussion work, a crucially important characteristic of communicative language teaching (Ch.2.5.i). She encouraged us to speak and not worry about making mistakes being more interested in developing our fluency and confidence. I distinctly remember her approach to error correction – she focussed on one aspect of grammar: mistakes relating to prepositions before countries in French, for example: *en Vietnam* instead of *au Vietnam* (she taught an option on *la décolonisation*). Everything else was left uncorrected, exemplifying possibly “*evidence...that error feedback can be effective, but it must be sustained over a period of time and...on something which learners are actually capable of learning*” (Lightbrown 2000, p.446). I remember being alarmed initially by this notion of not

correcting most mistakes, although I quickly realised it allowed more freedom and confidence to speak.

The technique of strategically targeting only certain errors and mistakes is the antithesis of grammar-translation and audio-lingual methods (Ch.2.3iii / 2.4iv) and is a practice I have adopted and developed as a teacher, a point upon which I will elaborate later in the autobiography.

4.1.i.j L'aventure française

There is a myth that *the year abroad* is going to have a profound impact on improving a learner's acquisition of a foreign language. Most of my peers and I thought that a year in the target language country would mean that we would be completely immersed in the target language from the moment we arrived at our destination. My experiences were not like that – it did not happen. For the first few months, I lived by myself in a little studio flat in a grim suburb of Paris. Opportunities for socialising were constrained by location, lack of money and the nature of my employment - I only worked two and a half days a week at the school. I actually began to lose confidence in my ability to speak French, I became anxious when speaking French and would panic that I was making mistakes, which was in contrast to the advice given by Dr Tobermory.

My early linguistic experiences in France were therefore undoubtedly demoralising. I relied too much on producing accurate French, thinking through every sentence before I spoke, to the detriment of developing fluency. Krashen (1982) defines this as *monitor over-use* and is exemplified by “*people...who are constantly checking*

their output with their conscious knowledge of the second knowledge" (p.19) and '*[they] will be limited by [their] conscious knowledge and will suffer from a lack of spontaneity*' (1981, p.38). He posits that *monitor* over-use is characteristic of those who have been "*victims of grammar-only type of instruction*" (1982, p.19), which, for me, rings true. The use of the term *victim* here clearly infers Krashen's aversion to grammar-translation. I had had little exposure to spoken French during the first 7 years of learning the language and as a result of this my pronunciation and aural ability was poor. As a theory, it appears therefore to support my own experiences.

I should have had the courageous spirit of Eric Hawkins, so obviously evidenced in *Listening to Lorca* (1999), but instead I studied in the Centre Pompidou, or wandered the streets of Paris. Hawkins recounts many tales of his travels across Europe and the many social interactions, which helped develop his linguistic ability and cultural understandings. The concept of social practice and its role in developing linguistic ability is paramount in the language learner's own journey, as affirmed by Kramsch (1994) who argues that language is not just a knowledge of rules and codes but most importantly it is about engaging in a social context to try to communicate meaningfully as well as to make sense out of the context. Language must be seen as social practice and the acquisition of words and grammatical structures is not enough to master a language. This constructivist view of language acquisition asserts that language is shaped by context and is constructed through communicating within that context. There are clear parallels here too with the work of Vygotsky (1978), who maintained that all learning was as a result of social interaction. I was in France but was struggling to find opportunities to communicate

with others in French, preventing me not only from practising my French but also from using my French within a real context to communicate

4.1.i.k Input and the concept of High Frequency Language

I turned again to grammar study to deal with apparent lack of progress I was making just as I had when I was studying for my A Levels. I believed that my frustrations with the language were due to gaps in grammatical knowledge.

I decided to work my way through Ferrar's *A French reference grammar* (1967), a book obtained whilst I was studying for my O levels. I started with the chapter on verb constructions since this was an aspect of grammar about which I had always been unsure. These French constructions often differ in prepositional use from similar expressions in English, for example, *permettre à qqn de faire* = to allow somebody to / *consister en* = to consist of, or are idiomatic expressions: *s'en sortir de* = to manage. Therefore, in light of the contrastive analysis theory (Lado 1957) discussed in Chapter 2.4.iv, they should cause significant difficulties for learners because of interference from L1.

In terms of grammar, I was improving my use of prepositions but, more significantly, I was assimilating some very useful, purposeful and functional vocabulary because of its regular frequency in the language. Mastery of such language enabled me to communicate more concisely and accurately which increased my confidence. With regular and persistent practice this language became acquired. I could use it without consciously thinking about it (see Ellis's critique of Krashen's distinction between learning and acquisition Chapter 2.5.v). I immersed myself in French media, and

recorded each new verb construction, in the context in which it originally appeared, in my notebook. The quality of my French improved because I was studying accurate, idiomatic language from authentic input.

Zhang (2012) argues that for this type of close reading to be successful the reader would already need a comprehensive understanding of grammar and vocabulary of the target language, “[a]mong the many types of linguistic knowledge that underlie successful reading comprehension, two have received particular attention: vocabulary knowledge and grammatical knowledge” (p.558). Presented here therefore is a metacognitive strategy to develop language learning for an adult who was already an advanced learner. Krashen (1983) supports the role of reading in providing comprehensible input; furthermore, the teaching of reading strategies such as scanning, skimming, extensive and intensive reading and using context as cues are inherent within *The Natural Approach* (pp.134-142).

4.1.i.1 Influences from the French classroom

I was the English assistant at a *lycée technique*¹⁷ in the suburbs of Paris. The majority of students, at the *lycée* took vocational courses such as the *Bac. Pro*¹⁸, which implied perhaps that they were considered to be less academic than students at a *lycée classique*.¹⁹

During my first week at the *lycée*, I observed Mo who delivered her entire lesson in the target language (English) – a practice which I had never experienced in a

¹⁷ 6th form college offering vocational courses

¹⁸ *Baccalauréat professionnel* – vocational course

¹⁹ 6th form college

secondary classroom before. The lesson was planned around a listening comprehension. Mo constantly monitored the students' understanding through her questioning in English. Students were encouraged to paraphrase what they had heard to demonstrate understanding. She also drew out key structures and aspects of language to boost the students' vocabulary; they subsequently had to do exercises – grammar drills - on this language. Mo used authentic, purposeful English input (the listening comprehension) from which to draw contextualised aspects of grammar. I only ever observed one of Mo's lessons and therefore to generalise her practice from these single examples would be erroneous. I do not know if, or how, her teaching would change to reflect a different context. Nevertheless the guiding principles from Mo's lesson presented a model of how language teaching could be delivered. These principles have remained with me since then and contributed to the development of new beliefs about language teaching.

4.1.i.m Return to university: the 4th Year and plans for the future

I returned to Aston to start my final year in the autumn of 1994. During that term, I applied to do a PGCE²⁰ at Birmingham University and also, somewhat whimsically, for the Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme²¹ for no better reason than it might be a fascinating experience as well as harbouring some reservations about embarking on a PGCE course, which will be dealt with later. I was successful in my applications for both, and decided to defer my entry onto the PGCE for a year and go to Japan instead.

²⁰ Post Graduate Certificate in Education

²¹ A programme, instigated in 1987, by the Japanese Government to encourage English speaking graduates to work in Japanese schools

4.1.i.n *Nihon ni ikimasho*²²

In this section I present my experiences of living in Japan and learning the Japanese language as a beginner. In contrast to my placement in France, where I had brought with me years of learning the language, but struggled to always find the opportunities to practise what I had learnt, I arrived in Japan with no knowledge of Japanese but was immediately immersed in the language. Reflecting on and writing about my time in both France and Japan has helped me identify key experiences and influences, which have contributed to the construction of my beliefs today. The on-going process of the autobiography has lent significance to events that previously remained latent in my memory.

I worked full time for the Kyouiku iinkai 教育委員会²³ in Akkeshi-cho, a small fishing town on the southern coast of eastern Hokkaido. Most of the townspeople spoke little or no English. Initially however, with the help of a dictionary, and with lots of smiling and gestures, I managed to communicate the bare essentials. I knew that my language ability needed to progress beyond this, and I was keen to learn.

I was fascinated by the Japanese systems for writing – in particular the Kanji characters; I could recognise about 500 and write 400 of them in context by the end of the year. The pronunciation I found easy – most sounds in Japanese exist in English. Unlike my early experiences in France, when I began to exhibit symptoms of Krashen's *monitor over-use* - thinking through everything I said to make sure it was correct before I spoke, by the end of my year in Japan I had become, as Krashen (1981) would suggest, a *monitor under-user*: “[t]he Monitor underuser does not seem

²² Let's go to Japan!

²³ Board of Education (Local Authority)

*to use the conscious grammar at all. The underuser typically judges grammaticality "by feel", that is, he uses his subconsciously acquired system, rather than a conscious grammar" (p.16) and was drawing spontaneously from language in my sub-conscious without consciously applying rules. I could use the basics of grammar without thinking - they were instinctive. My interlanguage was a fusion of structures, which had been learned from a textbook, and other structures, which had been, or as Krashen would maintain – *acquired*. However, all of it could be used spontaneously without conscious thought.*

On reflection, much of the *acquired* language comprised nouns or set collocations specific to the culture and weather of the area, emphasising again the role of social practice in language acquisition, for example: 鹿肉 *shika niku*²⁴, いか *ika*²⁵, カキ *kaki*²⁶, 蚊 *ka*²⁷, 海苔 *nor*²⁸, 寒いですね *samui desu ne*²⁹, 気をつけてね *kyoitsukete ne*³⁰, 地震 *jishin*³¹ and 津波 *tsunami*³² (Language specific to a fishing town on the Pacific Ocean in Northern Japan)

4.1.i.o Teaching influences in Japan

In a rural area, such as Akkeshi, it was difficult to find graduates of English to teach in schools. Although, interestingly, some of the younger non-specialists actually embraced the teaching of spoken English and could see a rationale for it, older

²⁴ venison

²⁵ squid

²⁶ oysters

²⁷ mosquito

²⁸ seaweed

²⁹ Isn't it cold!

³⁰ Take care

³¹ earthquake

³² tidal wave

colleagues were less secure. The examination system in Japan in the mid 1990s only tested written target language – a phenomenon similar to that in England until the late 1980s. Nishino (2012) describes how traditional *yakudoku*, similar to European grammar-translation, has been the prevailing method in English language learning in Japan since the nineteenth century. Despite initiatives by the Japanese Government to develop spoken English, such as the introduction of the JET Programme (ibid., p.383), in which I was a participant, assessment in school was only of written English and translation. As a result of this, there was certain reluctance from some teachers and students to develop oral ability – or to see the need for doing so.

I worked with a number of different practitioners, one of whom was Ota sensei³³ who had taught himself English from listening to authentic language on audiotapes, and repeating what he heard. This reflects a behaviourist self-study approach. His teaching was characterised by much oral work such as songs, games to practise vocabulary, role-plays and mini-dialogues. He attempted also to teach as much as possible through the target language. He was a highly popular teacher and was considered by many in the area to be one of the most effective practitioners, and his teaching practice would leave indelible images on my memory.

Unlike Mo in France, I worked with Ota Sensei many times. He sustained the same practice with each of his three classes. The classes were small however, with only six to eight in each group. He was later transferred to a much larger school in the city

³³ teacher

of Kushiro. Before he left, he expressed concern about the move, in particular how he would have to adapt his teaching to much bigger groups in a different context.

4.1.ii Pre-service training experiences

This section will highlight how my attitudes changed over the course of my PGCE. It will chronicle how my attitudes to the teaching of grammar and the role of the target language evolved during the year, and the perceived reasons for this evolution. It will furthermore bring to light the many difficulties of completing a teaching placement in challenging circumstances.

4.1.ii.a PGCE

I initially perceived my initial teacher training as a pointless burden. I felt that I was already a teacher; my experiences in the classroom in both Japan and France had been successful, from my own perspective; people told me I was naturally a teacher - so I questioned the relevance of the course. Undoubtedly, experiences in France and Japan had influenced my thinking about language teaching. It is through writing this autobiography that those events have taken on their proper significance in terms of shaping my beliefs today.

When I arrived at that University in the Midlands in September 1996 to embark on a PGCE I certainly believed in the importance of developing speaking work in lessons but I also would have firmly supported teaching grammar explicitly and deductively, despite my experiences, which highlighted the role of input, and metacognition and speaking. It would appear that early beliefs about teaching are highly resistant to change (Ch.1.12; Ch. 5.2; Ch.6.1).

I began my PGCE, under the tutelage of George in September 1996. There was a particular focus at the start of my course of looking at methodology through the ages. George lectured on the characteristics of, and critiques of, grammar-translation, audio-lingual/ visual methods, and The Reform Movement before embarking, in much greater detail, on an exploration of the communicative approach.

4.1.ii.b The role of target language (TL)

My tutor insisted that we (his trainees) would teach in the target language (TL) at all times, which reflected expectations in the 1991 & 1995 NCPoS (Ch.1.5; Appendices 1 & 2). The use of English would only be condoned for the interpretation of instructions or explanations. I initially felt some resistance to this edict, principally because I did not feel I would be able to develop positive teacher - pupil relationships. This early reluctance seems surprising given the powerful models provided by Madame O and Ota Sensei. It was furthermore at odds with my assumption that my poor aural and oral skills were attributable to never having been taught through the medium of the target language. I soon, however, began to appreciate teaching through the TL. It felt, bizarrely, like a shield, a defence, and, in a sense, I became a character, as if I was acting out a role in the classroom. The idea of a shield now seems strangely at odds with my initial reservations that I may not be able to connect with the students if I used the TL. At that point, it was perhaps a practice that appealed to me as a person – it gave me the opportunity to show off perhaps, which is both disturbing and lacking in pedagogical rationale, because it highlights how the use of TL appeared to be for my benefit and not for the students'. The underlining theoretical principles supporting target language use were not clear to me at that point.

4.1.ii.c PGCE: approaches to grammar

My tutor was adamant that all grammar had to be taught / learnt inductively. Pupils must hypothesise grammar rules from the models of languages with which they were presented. Such practice, as discussed in Chapter 1.6.ii, is of course implied by the first two versions of the PoS. George actually spoke very disparagingly about teachers who *grammar grind* referring to de-contextualised grammar teaching. We were encouraged to present examples of verbs, in the third person and in context, from which students were to spot patterns and hypothesise rules; other persons of the verb would be introduced later.

I felt some conflict over the concept of inductive grammar teaching. I wanted to teach grammar in the same way I had learned it, deductively, because that was meaningful to me. I had temporarily forgotten the many peers at school who resented learning French and struggled with it, precisely because of such a grammatical approach. Interestingly, I soon conformed, though not a natural conformist, and I do not really know the reasons for this, perhaps because I felt I really had no choice since I needed to pass my PGCE. I do remember many of my peers similarly felt obliged to do as we had been instructed, they discussed how, once they had qualified, they would teach exactly how they wished.

4.1.ii.d The three Ps...

George was a supporter of the Present, Practise and Produce (PPP) paradigm (Ch.2.4.ii; Ch.4.1.i). I acknowledge this to be the most significant aspect of practice I learnt on my PGCE course. The PPP sequence enables language to be introduced and practised. It is a methodological sequence which has become embedded within

the communicative approach principally because it provides a valuable bridge between attention to form (structure) and using that form to communicate meaning (Klapper 2003, p.34).

Present

The presentation stage is where '*the teacher draws learners' attention to a specific form or structure*' (ibid.). Krashen (1983) maintains this it is at this stage when students should be immersed in visual and aural input and they will begin the process of trying to make sense of what they see and hear. Language presented is accompanied by visual clues such as pictures on flashcards or actual objects. George reiterated the imperative that language be presented in a context, supported by visuals. If, for example, I were teaching food vocabulary, I would begin by saying: "*Je suis allé au supermarché et j'ai acheté...*"³⁴ at which point I would pull various food items out of a shopping bag and encourage the students to repeat. Such visual aids "*supply the extra-linguistic content that helps the acquirer to understand and thereby to acquire*" (Krashen 1983, p.55).

Practice

I was taught to present three items at a time, preferably always of the same gender (masculine nouns first, then feminine, finally mixed plural). George explained that this would facilitate the learning because students are presented with a regular pattern. I was instructed not to present the written form of the word for fear that the students would just read the words and therefore not learn how to say them from memory; this conjures up my early memory of trying to remember *johnnycat*

³⁴ I went to the supermarket and I bought...

(Ch.4.1.i). For more mature students a particular structure or item of vocabulary could be presented in a text – in contextualised form. Repetition of the language may take place: the teacher would say each of the items and encourage the students to repeat first in chorus, then in groups and then maybe individually, reflecting a behaviourist approach to language learning.

The teacher then proceeded with three part questioning - a technique, advocated by Krashen (1983, pp.78-79), to encourage speaking in the early stages of acquisition. This enables students to produce the language in very controlled conditions (Klapper 2003, p.34).

The first part was to check recognition, for example: the teacher would point to an item and ask:

*C'est un chien, oui ou non?*³⁵

The second part would offer the students a choice - either-or questioning (Krashen 1983, p.79) for example:

*C'est un chien, ou un chat?*³⁶

The students have to differentiate between the items and say what they think it is. Students are able to produce words for the first time, although this is obviously

³⁵ It's a dog, yes or no?

³⁶ Is it a dog or a cat?

facilitated by '*the correct pronunciation and form [being] immediately available in the preceding input*' (ibid.).

The third stage is open questioning:

*Qu'est-ce que c'est?*³⁷

Produce

In time, teacher control is lifted and students are encouraged to produce the language independently in semi-controlled activities such as role-play, cloze exercises and dialogues supported with visual clues (Klapper 2003, p.34). Practice then gives way to production, enabling students to produce the language much more independently and in other contexts. Spontaneous use of a structure in a transactional exchange would be evidence of a student being able to produce the language.

A cross-analysis of the use of PPP in the practice of the other participants and a critique will be offered in Chapter Five.

4.1.ii.e Teaching practice

I was allocated to one of the more challenging schools for my major placement. It was an inner city school on the east side of Birmingham. I aspired to the ideal, I would teach all of my lessons in the target language and I would ensure all grammar was learnt inductively – simple. I entered my teaching practice, therefore, with a number of developing beliefs, which had yet to be tested in the heat of experience. I

³⁷ What is it?

was prepared to compromise, but not too much. Little did I realise how challenging this would be given the school context to which I was sent.

4.1.ii.f Teaching grammar and target language

Behaviour at this school seemed to me to be very challenging. It would be the management of behaviour that was the key determinant of my practice, in particular with lower ability groups. It was impossible to teach entirely through the target language, and with some groups I had to use English for much of the lesson, in order to make expectations very clear, and for explanations. Furthermore many students needed lots of kind encouragement and praise. I continued, as well as I could, to teach in the target language with the more able groups, learning to adapt the input dependent upon the group – in keeping with Krashen's theory, despite being unaware of its existence at the time. It just made sense to modify which language I used with them, exemplifying Long's (1983) *interactional modification* (Ch.2.6.i).

I emphasised the development of speaking: everybody had to say something in French in my lessons and I always ensured a range of activities in my planning. I firmly followed the PPP paradigm - the objective of most lessons was to present and practise a single verbal structure and a handful of nouns. My pre-service beliefs about grammar had been transformed by my interpretation of the instruction I received by my PGCE tutor. I was avoiding grammar; I rarely moved beyond teaching the first person singular of any verb although I did attempt to encourage students to hypothesise rules from clear models and apply them to other verbs using analogies, for example: if *jouer* is to play, and *j'ai joué* is I played and *écouter* is to listen to, what is I listened to? Evident here, is how after a certain reluctance to

conform, I did adopt practice advocated by my tutor and, in time, my beliefs similarly began to favour this communicative approach, highlighting how “*changes in belief may come after, or as a result of, change in practice*” (Poulson, Avramidis, Fox, Medwell & Wray 2001, p. 273).

I was however dissatisfied overall with my experience, and to the extent I had had to compromise on how I wanted to teach because of student behaviour. I was keen to hone my practice – develop routines and establish a target language rationale that would not be consistently hampered by having to deal with classroom management issues.

4.1.iii In-service experiences

I secured employment at a mixed 11-18 comprehensive based in Hertfordshire on Monday 12th May 1997. My perception of the school was positive: it was graded good by Ofsted with a 60% 5 A*to C pass rate at GCSE. The MFL department was large, with over 10 full time teachers.

4.1.iii.a Target language use

Since I believed there would be fewer classroom management issues at such a good school, than had been the case on my teaching practice, I was keen to ensure that, this time, the principal means of communication was through the target language in all lessons. In this, perceived context was influencing my choice of methodology. However, I had also, in consciously selecting a high attaining school chosen a teaching context to match my preferred methodology. Reality did not meet my somewhat naïve expectations.

I quickly learned to adapt my teaching to a comprehensive cohort of students, especially when using TL. With lower attainers, I used less than with higher attaining groups. I established my own rationale for TL use: as a minimum I would communicate simple commands and very basic instructions, as a maximum I would attempt to use TL throughout the lesson, only using English to check for understanding. I have always believed that TL needs to be carefully planned, adapted and supported with expression, visuals and histrionics to facilitate understanding.

I have never however mastered getting students to transact with me in the TL to communicate simple classroom requests such as “*puis-je enlever ma veste?*³⁸” if they wanted to take their blazers off. I have never fully exploited opportunities in the classroom for students to naturally communicate in such a way. However, I often asked about their plans for the weekend or in the evening, or what they had done the night before to enable them regularly to communicate in different time frames in the TL. This is regular practice.

4.1.iii.b Target language: micro policy

My first Head of Languages was adamant that department colleagues should be attempting to teach at all times through the target language except perhaps when explaining grammatical concepts, loosely in line with expectations in the 1995 NCPoS (Appendix 2). I clearly remember her saying in a departmental meeting, prior to an Ofsted inspection, that we must teach in the TL otherwise we were breaking the law! This extreme interpretation of national policy conjured up visions of the

³⁸ Can I take my blazer off?

target language police descending on the school, sirens wailing because one of us had explained something in English. However, no theoretical basis to the use of TL was ever offered in departmental meetings though. Her stance appears to be simply due to adherence to policy and perhaps her fear, that if we were not teaching in the TL, then our lessons could not be graded as *Good* as had been implied in pre-NC documentation in 1990 (DES 1990).

Throughout all of my time teaching in Hertfordshire I had this nagging belief that I had failed in my use of target language because I never managed to deliver all of my lessons in it. Still to this day, I feel I compromise on using TL. However, I have met very few teachers who use as much target language as I do!

4.1.iii.c Grammar

I would disagree with another member of the department who believed fervently in explicit, deductive grammar teaching; she actually maintained that it was important to teach students de-contextualised grammar before they were given opportunities to use it. Without establishing causality, her very higher attaining GCSE group one year had disastrous results. I taught some of the more able students at A Level and these were confused by even the most basic aspects of grammar. Despite the fact the students were all higher attaining and in the first set of nine, a number struggled to even conjugate –er verbs correctly in the present tense let alone cope with the conditional perfect.

I have never taught de-contextualized grammar; I ensure examples of language are presented in context first and are drilled using the PPP paradigm before students are

encouraged to spot patterns and hypothesise grammatical rules. It is a pattern that seemed to be successful and I still adhere to it today because it appears to develop students' understanding of grammar. I fully support developing students' metacognition and will teach close-reading strategies, such as I had developed on my year in France (Ch.4.1.iv). With older students at KS4 and A level I focus on functional language, and will introduce a variety of different structures with a similar function set within a context (Appendix 9). I now question whether I do focus enough on grammar, especially with the higher attainers. As a school aged learner I was fascinated by grammar and loved reading grammar books; it is surprising therefore that I am not trying to engender that same love among some of my students. I do teach students how to use grammar reference materials and therefore if they wish to study grammar deductively they can. I encourage exploratory approaches to seeing patterns and teach functions but these approaches are dependent on context, motivational and affective factors.

4.1.iii.d Good practice as judged by others (1997-2003)

Observations of my teaching were always positive. I was consistently graded good to excellent by my head of department and by senior leaders. These judgements had some tenuous link to Ofsted criteria in use at the time (1997-2003). The reasons given for these judgements were based upon the emphasis I placed upon speaking, with students answering and asking questions of each other; the clarity of my explanation and extensive use of target language; the sensitivity of my error correction and the positive student-teacher relationships I had established. I was observed twice by Ofsted in my first year of teaching. The inspector was very

positive about my teaching and confessed to me that I had really “*brought a spark to her eye*”.

4.1.iv The impact of macro and micro policy on teacher cognition

4.1.iv.a The National Strategy

Following promotion to Head of French at the end of my third year of teaching, I was seconded onto the senior leadership team, with joint responsibility for developing teaching and learning across the school. I had submitted a proposal to set up a *teaching and learning working party* that would identify, develop and disseminate good practice. It would also provide a forum in which colleagues could engage in debate about teaching and learning. At that point in my career I acknowledged that other practitioners were a source of influence and could inspire others, as they had done in my own life, and I wished to use them as a catalyst for reflection and perhaps change. I was completely unaware that an agenda proposed by The National Strategy (Ch.1.2.iv), would eclipse my intentions for developing teaching and learning. The National Strategy, a national CPD programme which aimed “[t]o raise standards of achievements and rates of progression ...through personalised learning supported by high quality, well planned teaching” (Ofsted 2010, p.7) had produced a variety of resources and videos on aspects of teaching and learning, such as learning objectives, *starters* and *plenaries*. Our teaching and learning working party now spent much of the time watching clips of teachers delivering *starters* to anaesthetised children in perfectly sterile classrooms. It was about as inspiring as watching a plastic bag blowing around the school playground. Another deputy head took over the working party. She would exhort me to ensure that departmental members were *doing* three part lessons – as if the concept of any

practitioner delivering more than one activity in a lesson was something new. I would reply that my department did 6 or 7 part lessons: practice of previous learning, drilling of new language and a variety of practice activities involving speaking, listening, reading and writing. She would look confused. Somebody in the group had downloaded from the Internet 50 great ideas for *starters*³⁹. We all had to have a copy. Among these gems of pedagogical wisdom were suggestions to do hangman, anagrams and word searches.

I believed and continue to maintain that good practice is exemplified by the assessment of student performance and progress **throughout** a lesson. However, *plenaries* had become the new buzzword. We all now had to ensure that our lessons finished with a review of the learning that had taken place in the lesson. As a school, for the first time ever, we experienced Inset delivered by our Local Education Authority. Two newly appointed teaching and learning advisers led a twilight session on plenaries. The advisers argued that research showed *plenaries* had a profound effect on the learning experience but failed to produce any evidence to support their views.

It was now obligatory to communicate learning objectives at the start of the lesson; indeed the leadership team brought in a new ruling that a lesson could not be graded excellent if learning objectives had not been communicated to students. This did have a negative impact on my practice - it seemed such a flat way to begin a lesson. I used to begin most of my lessons with lots of fast paced speaking work.

³⁹ Activities at the beginning of a lesson

The National Strategy was a CPD⁴⁰ programme (Ch.1.2iv), it was not statutory and therefore did not prescribe practice. However it quickly translated into a very different classroom reality from the one I had originally envisaged. Ideas about teaching and learning suggested by the Strategy were treated as macro policy and soon became school micro policy. Such ideas had become imposed and mythologised: the belief was to gain outstanding in an inspection it was necessary to have component parts of the lesson in place – not the underpinning comprehension of how students make progress.

4.1.iv.b Teacher beliefs in crisis

I was experiencing conflict. For first time since my training, there was a clear tension (Ch.1.12.ii) between how I was expected to teach and the beliefs I had systematically and coherently developed and tested out during my training and in-service. The terminology of *starters* and *plenaries* actually irritated me because they sounded artificial, as though the terms had been invented, which of course they had been. I felt threatened by the concept of change where change appeared predicated on ideology and belief. I feared that this current wave of policy would lead to something bigger, something that would dismantle how I taught. I felt controlled.

Ironically despite my disenchantment with how the National Strategy was being interpreted, it was the Strategy, which would offer me a way out. The Government had commissioned a framework (Ch.1.9.i) suggesting progression in MFL concepts and skills to accompany those that had been produced for maths and English. Local authorities needed people to disseminate these new messages within LEAs. I

⁴⁰ Continuous Professional Development

applied for such a position for Norfolk LA, and was successful. On reflection, I can see that such an action was total hypocrisy given my concern about the influence of the National Strategy on micro policy in my school. At the time of interview however, I had no idea about the Framework – I believed I was interviewing for a traditional adviser position although I was not completely sure what the role would entail. I naively had no idea that I would be expected to disseminate national policy.

4.1.iv.c Adviser beliefs

I had to attend National Strategy training in order to attain accreditation on how to present the MFL Framework to schools (May 2003). Furthermore, modules of training on aspects of MFL teaching practice had also been commissioned to complement the existing Foundation Subjects⁴¹ modules of training. These included sessions on the setting of learning objectives, starters, plenaries, questioning and modelling. This implies an acknowledgement of perhaps the uniqueness of MFL methodology. In 2003, MFL was still a compulsory subject at KS4 and this perhaps gave further reason for our own subject specific materials.

I remember being particularly challenged by the *Words* strand of objectives (see Appendix 6a), which placed emphasis on the teaching of sound patterns, word formation and etymology. I rarely encouraged students to read aloud from a text, nor would I introduce the written form when drilling new vocabulary (Ch.2.2.ii; Ch.4.2). I had continued to support the belief instilled by my PGCE tutor, rooted in audio-lingual methodology, which maintained that presentation of the written form of the words would cause “*the transfer of native language habits of pronunciation into the*

⁴¹ Subjects other than English, maths and science

target language" (Krashen 1983, p.15). It was only when I studied the Framework did I realise the causal link between my practice of withholding the written forms and my students' inability to read the written word accurately. I had maintained this practice throughout my career up to that point because I believed that *sound-spelling links* would some how be acquired inductively, reflecting a belief which Erler and Macaro (2011) suggest was inherent in KS3 communicative language teaching at the time (p.497). I found myself being challenged about how I had been teaching MFL and I willingly embraced this challenge because I understood the rationale behind what was being suggested.

The Framework would also confirm my beliefs about progression in the teaching of verbs to some extent. The Framework implied that students should be taught examples of common verbs in the first person in Year 7 before advancing to use other persons of the verb later in the Key Stage (see Appendix 6a). There was also a clear focus on the teaching of high frequency language. My interpretation of the Framework and that of my research participants will be explored in more detail in this chapter and Chapter Five.

4.1.iv.d My work as an adviser

The first four years of my time as an adviser largely consisted of supporting teachers by collaboratively planning and team teaching or by providing *demonstration* lessons. I was reluctant to focus too explicitly on the Framework. I sensed that it might actually be a deterrent to change as opposed to facilitating a change in someone's practice. A number of teachers had rejected the Framework. I needed, however, to have a meaningful rationale for working with people. The main focus for

intervention was the improvement of practice strategies – the drilling of language, in particular the PPP paradigm; exploring inductive approaches to the teaching of grammar and developing student creativity with language, developing reading and listening skills, and perhaps to a lesser extent agreeing a rationale for target language use. These four areas were the principal areas for development identified in practice. I focussed much on the teaching of High Frequency language (see Appendix 6a) the 100 or so words which make up much of what is said, heard, written and read.

I produced modules of work concentrating on the understanding and use of regular verb patterns (-er verbs in French / -ar verbs in Spanish and weak verbs in German). This exemplified my belief that emphasis on such verb patterns enables students to be able to use thousands of verbs. A Year 7/8 module of work focussed on developing students' understanding and use of the present tense in French, German and Spanish taught within the context of a Spy Story (see Appendix 10), In Years 8 and Nine students would learn the Perfect tense in French in the context of a Murder Mystery. All modules followed a similar pattern: single examples of verbs in the first and third person would be presented and practised first and in time other parts of the verb would be slowly introduced, with teacher having the opportunity to differentiate how much of the verb paradigm could be taught. Language items would be gradually introduced through a narrative over a series of lessons.

From 2001 to 2010 the DFES disseminated, mainly through local authorities, messages as to what they considered to be effective teaching and learning as part of the National Strategies programme for school improvement (Ch.1.12.iv). From my

own experience, my belief is that interpretation of these messages influenced whole school micro policy on teaching and learning. Furthermore, in 2005, the focus of Ofsted changed from subject specific inspections carried out by subject specialists to generic whole school teaching and learning inspections. The quality of teaching and learning in **all** subjects continues to be assessed against one side of generic lesson observation assessment criteria (Ofsted 2014; see Appendix 11). It is my assumption that such criteria since 2005 have shaped and influenced school micro policy on teaching and learning leading to a generic methodology for all. This will be explored in Chapter Five.

4.1.iv.e Conclusion

Through out my time as an adviser, I encountered confusion as to how MFL should be taught. Colleagues would ask me whether or not they should still be teaching through the medium of the target language, whilst others were vehemently against it and would continue to teach completely in English. Attitudes to grammar were diverse. There were those certainly, who insisted that students must be taught all the grammar often in a de-contextualised didactic fashion. I remember working with a second in department on rewriting SoWs to acknowledge the Framework very early on in my time as an adviser. The previous SoW in Year 7 prescribed the teaching of the full paradigm of a multitude of verb categories. Her justification for this was that the department felt it was important to teach most of the present tense verb paradigms in Year 7. I asked whether the students could cope with this and she smiled and her reply was something akin to *“no – the vast majority of them are confused it doesn’t really work”*. Yet despite this insight, the department supported

such practice. Exploring such practice and beliefs encouraged me to embark on this research.

This autobiographical section has explored the many experiences, events and influences in shaping my beliefs about language teaching, especially the role of grammar and the target language. Like Grenfell (2000), I think the questions we, as teachers, need to ask are: *“what grammar? when grammar? why grammar? how grammar?”* (p.24). The different learning needs of a comprehensive cohort perhaps demand a variety of approaches to how grammar is tackled in the MFL classroom, and aspects such as context, motivation and affective issues must not be ignored. However, I still retain a bias against deductive decontextualized grammar teaching. An exploration of others’ beliefs compared with outcomes from selected international research will in the life history sections, and in Chapter Five elucidate some enlightening and maybe innovative ways of dealing with the grammar issue in MFL.

4.2 Life history one: Ken

4.2.i Pre-training language learning experiences

4.2.i.a Another Longman Audio-French Adventure

Ken began to learn French in his first year at a maintained grammar school. His teachers, like my own, drew from the Longman Audio-Visual French course (1967 / 1974). The course was constructed around a narrative, which chronicled the adventures, over five years of study, of firstly the family Marsaud, and then the journalist Yves Mornay. For Ken, the course “*wasn’t really followed because the teachers weren’t quite sure what it was for and neither were we*” (interview 15/7/10). In contrast to the inductive approaches to the learning of grammar underpinning the audio-lingual method, his teachers placed great emphasis on deductive grammar teaching such as the rote learning of verb paradigms, irregular verb forms and grammatical rules. However, the language studied was presented within a narrative context, grammar was “*always based around the little stories*” (ibid.).

He posits that it was this focus on deductive grammar which enabled him to produce work of quite a high level of sophistication, especially the production of narratives, “*you had those picture stories where the owl flew in and frightened some children*” (ibid.). The writing of stories is significant here because today his classroom practice leads to students creating stories and recounting events in a selection of tenses (Year 9 / 10 lesson observation 10/3/2011; Appendix 12).

4.2.i.b Speaking and target language

Ken maintains that there was little emphasis on speaking French, although he concedes that, “*I suppose we did at least do some ‘écoutez et répétez’*” (interview 15/7/10) – inferring that oral production was confined to the repetition of passages from Longman Audio-Visual French. The use of *at least* is interesting because it implies that he believes this is appropriate practice and should be expected, although this is at odds with data drawn from the lesson observations where he did not engage students in choral repetition of language. His teachers always taught through the medium of English, apart from “*one woman who randomly talked to us in French sometimes*” (interview 16/5/12).

The use of “*écoutez et répétez*⁴²” is a classic series of commands used to introduce choral repetition of new vocabulary - a technique which is characteristic of the audio-lingual method. He concludes that such limited emphasis on speaking, in particular the non-existent focus on sound patterns in his formative years at school, has led to him today being uncertain of the pronunciation of some phonemes, “*I’m still very shaky on quite when there’s an accent and when there isn’t, I’ve never been taught, it would be nice to know*” (interview 15/7/10). However, this seems at odds with practice, which encouraged repetition of vocabulary. He attributes therefore these pronunciation issues to how he was instructed, implying that pronunciation can be improved by learning rules (Erler & Macaro 2011, p.497).

⁴² Listen and repeat

4.2.i.c A Level: grammar

His teachers continued to teach grammar deductively and out of context. In time he began to experience a *haziness* over certain grammatical concepts, such as the agreement of the past participle in the perfect tense or certain adjectives that do not change to reflect gender. He suggests that “*there is stuff in French grammar that nobody really knows*” (ibid.).

He also studied literature. He posits that some of his peers struggled more than him, which he attributes partly to the teacher’s methodology when teaching literature, “*it was just reading the book, writing essays about the book in English, and for lots of people that didn’t really work*” (ibid.). He coped because he would “*spend all of the holidays reading novels in French*” and subsequently experienced “*a vast amount of exposure to language*” (ibid.) immersing himself in much written comprehensible input, which for Krashen (1983) would have stimulated acquisition, since “*reading may also be a source of comprehensible input and may contribute significantly to competence in a second language*” (p.131).

4.2.i.d Tertiary Education

Ken maintains that not a single one of his university lecturers’ methodology has subsequently influenced his own practice, except “*only in a reaction against sort of way I suppose*” (interview 15/7/10). Similarly, this *reaction against* could well be extrapolated to the practice he experienced at school, given the heavy emphasis on grammar and limited opportunities to speak. The course at Cambridge was dominated by translation with “*lectures in English [and] essays in English*” (ibid.). His

proficiency in spoken French was only ever examined once, at the end of his first year.

In contrast to this, his practice today is characterised by a focus on the development of speaking skills (lesson observation Year 9 and 10; Appendix 12). However, he uses translation, in particular interpretation, frequently as practice strategies to help scaffold the construction of short stories. The following type of exchange, observed in the Year 10 lesson appears routine in Ken's teaching, and was also observed in the Year 9 lesson. He models the type of interaction he expects from the students and involves the students in the process. In this following case, one boy produces simple sentences in English reflecting the type of high frequency structures on the support sheet (Appendix 12); the girl partner must interpret what is said into Spanish. Ken prompts the students.

B *In my holidays*

G *En mis vacaciones*

B *I liked* [corrects himself] *I like*

G *me gusta*

B *to go to the beach*

G *ir a la playa*

B *swim in the sea*

G *nadar en “la mer”*

T *not la mer...el*

G *el mar*

T *el mar*

B *with my friends*

G *con mis amigos*

T *now you've been programmed ...can you do something in the present first?*

(Year 10 observation 10/3/11)

The use of the word 'programmed' in Ken's prompt reflects my belief that, at this stage, students are mainly producing pre-learnt and highly rehearsed examples of language. Ken encourages the pair to bring in reference to other parts of the verb, and move away from this more rehearsed language "...so you said *with my friends*, *who are these friends, and do they have opinions of their own? Introduce them, say who they are and what they like to do*" (ibid.).

4.2.i.e Teaching TEFL in Mexico

After graduating, Ken spent four years in Mexico where he taught English, during which time he completed a course in TEFL⁴³ (interview 16/5/12). The practice advocated by his peers in Mexico contrasted richly with his own experiences at school and university since there was a drive to encourage students to speak – exemplifying, for him, a more communicative approach to language teaching. He suggests that TEFL has influenced current Modern Foreign Language learning methodology (interview 15/7/10). In Chapter 2.5.iii, I explored how theories of SLA, such as Krashen, have influenced communicative approaches to language learning.

⁴³ Cambridge Certificate 4 week course

4.2.ii Pre-service training experiences

4.2.ii.a PGCE

Ivan, a lecturer in Education at Leicester University, was to have a profound influence on Ken during his teacher training. Indeed, for Ken, “*Ivan...was inspirational really, he knew everything about teaching and you could ask him to do a session on something and he would do it and it would be brilliant*” (interview 15/7/10). This is unquestionably fine praise. Ivan’s extensive research and published work principally focus upon the teaching of second languages and teachers’ understanding of grammar. Ken acknowledges that Ivan undoubtedly helped fuel his enthusiasm for reading widely on the subject of language learning / acquisition, in particular the work by Lewis (1993), which was not required reading for the PGCE course, “*I read an awful lot of methodology specifically to modern languages*” (ibid.). However, Ken cannot “remember what he [Ivan] taught us to do [in the classroom]” (ibid.).

4.2.ii.b PGCE: teaching practice

Other aspects of his teacher training proved to be less satisfying, for him, the course “*was very hot on the Graded Objectives [GOML] and the university had been involved a lot in that and I didn't like what I saw*” (interview 15/7/10) (Ch.1.4). His teaching practice schools had also adopted GOML. For Ken, GOML principally involved students learning a series of symbols off by heart, each symbol represented a target language utterance, and it was the interpretation of a combination of symbols, which would lead to the production of meaningful responses by the learner. He believes the approach is behaviourist, in that a student sees a symbol and is conditioned to produce in the target language what the symbol represents (stimulus-

response). English was forbidden and this led to the time consuming practice of memorising all of the symbols off by heart. However Ken's practice could similarly be interpreted as relying on behaviourism. The exchange quoted in Ch.4.2.i.c shows one student providing a stimulus (a phrase in English) to which another student provides the response (corresponding expression in the target language).

Ken posits that GOML was to be to the detriment of developing students' self-expression – their ability to create spontaneously new utterances, not dictated by the symbols on the cards they had to use. Moreover, he maintains that there was no exploration of the grammar underpinning what the students were being asked to say. For him, "*it was parrot learning and there was no progression*" (interview 15/7/10). This infers therefore a belief in students being able to understand aspects of grammar and apply grammatical rules to be able to construct language which has not been pre-rehearsed. The following extract from the observed Year Nine lesson corroborates this. Prior to the extract, students had been asked to refer to their support sheet (Appendix 12).

Ken: asks students to find on their sheet where 1st B got his verb endings from, he reminds students that the present tense endings are to be found in their books.

G tells him that other verb endings are in the little box

T agrees and says *that's because they are not words, they are?*

G *endings*

T *why are there three boxes?*

Some Ss call out *top one is -ar*

Some Ss call out *2nd box is er / ir*

T in reference to the third box, *are the funny ones like, I went*

T *why are there 2 in the top one, why have you got aba and ía??*

G *was one like ...I was swimming*

T *which?*

G *the –aba one is I was swimming*

T confirms 'nadaba'

T refers B, who was previously away, to the box on the sheet – *next one down is comía: I was eating – you know these...*

G *if you were saying like we, or whatever, would you just add like amos?*

T *I was... I was swimming is nadaba, what's we were swimming?*

G *nadaba* [student thinks, as she applies the grammatical rule] bamos

T *say it: na da ba mos* (together with G) *na da ba mos [...] na da ba mos,*

(Lesson observation Year 9 10/3/11)

Similarly in the Year 10 lesson a student was able to express understanding of reflexive verbs:

T *who's got the verb to drown?*

G *ahogarse*

T *ahogarse, why has it got –se on?*

B *because it is for someone else*

4.2.iii In-service experiences

4.2.iii.a A tool kit of language

During his NQT⁴⁴ Year, his classroom was positioned some distance away from others in the school and this gave him the opportunity to develop this own practice without interference from others, which he preferred, “*I could do exactly what I liked*” (interview 15/7/10). This infers that he wanted to experiment and develop approaches that were meaningful to him. However, his first head of department, who focussed upon the teaching of modal verbs and connectives to provide students with a core of very useful, high frequency structures that could be used across contexts, was to provide some inspiration. He adopted this practice: “*that’s what I have done a lot of since: take these expressions and use them as a core to express yourself on any topic and extend your writing, which is really where I am today I think*” (ibid.). He has built the whole of his Year 9 course (see Appendix 12), for example, around the use of modal verbs and verbs expressing opinions, as well as other structures such as *I decided to, I was going to; I would have liked to*. Ken is quick to clarify that this sheet is only a *growing core of language* (interview 16/5/12) - students initially practise the structures in the first person singular, with other parts of the verb paradigm introduced over time. For him, limiting language to the regular practice of a core of high frequency expressions enables students to develop a degree of fluency in their speaking and writing.

They have got a kit of French, a working kit of French which they can use to express themselves and practise using it and then add on to, you know, it is like a kit you get started so that you can speak French; can give opinions

⁴⁴ Newly qualified teacher

and justify them; talk about past, future you can add anything on to that.

(interview 15/7/10)

Ken's idea of equipping students with a tool kit of French is developing students' understanding of the concept that a small amount of high frequency language may give the learner the scope to communicate in a number of different contexts. He illustrates this concept by employing a number of analogies, which he communicates to his students. He alludes to the need to give students the right language that is fit for the task in the same way that a hammer, some nails and some wood will not help you bake a cake. He perceives his role as a giver of the right materials to help students communicate appropriately (*ibid.*) - metaphors which clearly "*act as a heuristic for capturing the essence of [a] teacher's style*" (Katz 1996, p.61)

These ideas reflect, to some extent, the language teaching approach proposed by Lewis (1993), whose work Ken studied whilst on his PGCE. An analysis of the Lexical Approach is therefore essential here to examine to what extent Lewis's work has been an influence.

4.2.iii.b Lewis and The lexical approach

The lexical approach supports the concept of a language-learning syllabus that is not constructed around progression in aspects of grammar, nor around functions or notions, but, instead, focuses on the acquisition of collections of associated words and collocations of words (Richards & Rogers 2001, p.132). In practice, therefore, when learning a new word such as the verb *to go*, the student would also learn related collocations, for example: *to go up /down / in / into / out of / mad / off sick* etc.

This reflects the structure of Ken's Year 9 course which comprises a variety of structures such as "*I like, I love, I prefer, I can, I want, I'm going to, I decided to, I was going to...*" (interview 15/7/10).

In contrast with Chomsky's (1965) concept of an internal grammar system (Ch.2.4.vi) which enables learners to produce new and creative responses, supporters of the lexical approach maintain that there is very little original production of language and that most structures and collocations of words have been memorised / acquired over time – the adult language user having thousands of "lexicalised sentence stems" at their disposal (Pawley & Syder 1983). In a classroom context, if the syllabus is not built around the learning of grammar, then the implication is the focus will be on learning individual linguistic items – nouns, verbal phrases and collocations. This in turn may suggest that the language would be committed to memory by rote learning, reflecting behaviourist theory, and exemplified by Ken's approach to giving students a list of structures at the beginning of each year, which he expects them to learn.

However, Lewis (1993) rejects behaviourism. He supports Krashen's (1981, 1982, 1983) comprehensible input model as a means of acquiring language. The student is *immersed* in the language by being exposed to much aural and written input and will, over time, acquire the key structures and collocations of words of a language in much the same way as a child learns their mother tongue. Krashen (1981) (Ch.2.6.iii) however, concurs with Chomsky on the existence of an internal language acquisition device (LAD) – and the existence of such a device would facilitate the acquisition of such language through inductive approaches. In contrast with Krashen, Lewis (1997) supports the highlighting of the certain structures in the input to draw

students' attention to it, "*[a]ccurate noticing of lexical chunks, grammatical or phonological patterns all help convert input into intake*" (p.53). Willis (1990) suggests there is a need therefore to "abandon the idea of the teacher as 'knower' and concentrate on the idea of the learner as 'discoverer'" (p.131). In the lessons observed there was no evidence of Ken having planned, or encouraged students to learn inductively. However he does not dismiss such practice, "*I don't know whether I set out to do it, if it happens...as we go along, then yeah*" (interview 15/7/10).

Lewis is dismissive of the PPP (Present, Practise, Produce) model (Ch.4.1.ii.c), since he maintains that language should be learnt inductively - students should draw their own rules from the input provided – he refers to this as *the Observe-Hypothesise-Experiment cyclical paradigm* (1993, p.6). His rejection of the PPP model is short sighted - inductive learning can be generated in the initial presentation stage, and indeed should be actually encouraged in the PPP model (Klapper 2003, p.34).

4.2.iii.c Grammar

Lewis (1993) rejects the concept of instruction in grammar, he posits "*grammar is not the basis of language acquisition, and the balance of linguistic research clearly invalidates any view to the contrary*" (p.133). He can however only draw from the limited research referenced by Krashen to support his point.

Ken similarly rejects the teaching of "*a whole load of grammar*" – syllabuses that are built upon progression in grammatical concepts because this leads to the teaching of language that may rarely, if ever, be used: "*you can have as much grammar as you*

like but if you cannot use, if you are not using it, you are not going anywhere” (interview 15/7/10).

For Ken, syllabuses built around what is conventionally seen as a logical progression in grammar starting with the present tense, and then irregular verb paradigms followed by the continuous present and the past tenses (and when describing this he uses a deep, grave, solemn voice as if he is ironically implying it is the voice of authority, perhaps even the voice of God, as if this is the received wisdom when constructing a scheme of work) *“is the sequence of teaching...as understood by someone who has the complete system”* (ibid.). This view is supported by Rutherford (1987). Ken questions its relevance to those who are beginning to learn a language. Instead learners should acquire something that is *“useful and powerful”* (interview 15/7/10) – supporting his teaching of a range of structures from the start.

The following extract exemplifies how Ken interacts with students to encourage them to orally produce language. He focuses here on demonstrating the students’ ability to produce a range of tenses and structures related to the verb *nadar*⁴⁵, providing evidence of his belief in a non-traditional sequence of grammar teaching. Ken prompts with examples in English, the students produce the corresponding Spanish.

T to G *vas a escoger un verbo*

G *nadar*

T ...*nadar* (was a verb that was used in the previous lesson)

T *I am going to test you on as many things as you think you can do with nadar as possible*

⁴⁵ to swim

T *I am going to swim, ooh* **[immediate future]**

G *voy a*

T *you've got to say nadar as well*

G *voy a nadar*

T *I swam* **[simple past / preterite]**

G *er nadé*

T *I want to swim* **[use of modal verb *querir*]**

G *ooh quiero nadar*

T *I was swimming* **[imperfect tense]**

G *erm nadaba*

T *I like to swim* **[use of modal *me gusta*]**

G *me gusta nadar*

T *I have to swim*

G *tengo que nadar* **[use of *tener que* – function expressing obligation]**

T *I was swimming (whispers I know I've done that before, I'm trying to catch her out)*

G *what? Nadaba* **[repetition of previous language]**

T *I swam*

G *erm nadé*

In this lesson, students were then asked to work in pairs and reproduce what had been modelled by Ken and the girl, for example: one student in each pair would produce an English phrase, the other student would say the Spanish equivalent. The approach at this stage was encapsulated by the recall of pre-learnt language, and therefore was behaviourist. Evidence of students being able to apply grammatical rules from memory to manipulate structures was limited, although students could

produce examples of the imperfect and preterit in the first person singular. In time students were encouraged to work beyond language, which had been learnt from their support sheets.

Ken posits that the introduction of little bits of language over time equips students with very little language in the early stages of language learning. He is therefore, like Lewis, not a supporter, of the PPP paradigm where a structure and related nouns may be introduced and learnt in a lesson, with subsequent lessons building on what has been learnt before. His approach does, however, reflect a present, practise and produce format, to some extent, in that all of the language for the entire year is presented at once. It is then subsequently practised in controlled activities before students have assimilated the language and can use it more independently over time.

By not adopting a PPP model for the piece-meal introduction of language over time, Ken identifies a weakness in his own approach "*it's the not getting up and running bit that seems to be the problem*" (interview 15/7/10) since students are presented with all of the language for the year at once. They are then heavily reliant on support materials to begin with and for some time after. It may take many months for the students to be able to use the language independently without support. Year 9 students, for example, observed in March of 2011 were still reliant on their support sheets, although Ken would later clarify (interview 16/5/12) that they had only started using the sheets at the beginning of the term. What is missing from the approach is any recognisable technique for the introduction of the language, other than repetition

and translation. He does not use questioning in the target language as a means of drawing out a response – but does prompt and probe extensively in English.

4.2.iv The impact of macro and micro policy on teacher cognition

4.2.iv.a Target language

Ken encourages much student talk in his classroom, and students creating mini-stories by recycling learnt structures exemplifies this:

En mis vacaciones me gusta ir a la playa porque puedo tomar el sol. Tambien me encanta comer el helado entonces el fin de semana, voy a Wells con mis amigos. Cuando voy a la playa, me gusta nadar en el mar, por ejemplo este fin de semana... nadé en el mar pero Matt dice que hace frio⁴⁶.

(Example of student's story at the end of the Year 10 lesson)

However he does not insist on students using the target language to communicate authentic requests such as “*Can I take my blazer off? May I have a sheet of paper?*”

He sighs upon being questioned about target language and comments: “*I think what the National Curriculum said was: communication in the classroom will be mainly in the target language, it didn't say the teacher will use some set expressions and pupils will say: can I go to the toilet?*” (interview 15/7/10). He maintains that use of the target language in the classroom was perhaps one of the only aspects of practice teachers ever took from the NCPoS (1991). He argues that the concept of teaching

⁴⁶ In my holidays I like to go to the beach to catch some sun. I also enjoy eating ice-cream therefore at the end of the week I am going to Wells with my friends. When I go to the beach, I like to swim in the sea. Last weekend, I swam in the sea but Matt said that it was cold...

in the target language has been distorted. He posits that the use of target language has been interpreted, by many, as the insistence on the use of functional language, such as teacher commands and requests by students to the detriment of encouraging students to speak more freely and creatively. The latter is practice which he encourages, but this is still with considerable control exercised by him over what is produced by the students.

Ken's own stance towards target language use may seem somewhat paradoxical given his belief in the teaching of useful, high frequency functional language, but which is then not used to communicate for natural purposes in the classroom. Students narrate films and recite events in their own lives in the target language, but do not use it to request items or information. His own use of TL, when observed was limited to a few simple commands and little else at KS3 and 4, where much use of TL "*can be a really good way of annoying the kids and making them feel alienated*" (interview 16/5/12). It was, however, extensively employed in the Year 12 lesson (observation 10/3/11; Appendix 12).

4.2.iv.b National Curriculum Programmes of Study

Ken claims to have read the NCPoS (1991, 1995, 1999, 2007 versions; Appendices 1-4) and feels what is prescribed merely corroborates what he does in the classroom: "*you read the programmes of study and you go yes, that's what we do and you don't have to worry about it anymore cos that's what you do*" (interview 15/7/10).

He hints at the dissonance between his approach to language teaching which enables students to handle a lot of language with written and visual support and the National Curriculum Attainment Target assessment criteria which places a much greater emphasis upon learning and remembering in the lower levels (1-4) (Ch.1.6.iii) supporting a traditional PPP approach to the drilling of language. The majority of Ken's students can produce oral work with a range of time frames and justified opinion, which would equate to standards expected at the higher levels of the Attainment Targets, but they are heavily dependent upon support which is at odds with criteria which expects this language to be produced with little or no scaffolding. He is loathe to allow students to learn pre-prepared presentations off by heart, but is keen instead for them, with support, to be creative with the toolbox of language they have to speak spontaneously and authentically. However, he maintains that most students will only be able to achieve this after considerable practice of set structures throughout the year.

4.2.iv.c KS3 MFL Frameworks (2003 / 2009)

Ken posits that the content of both KS3 MFL Frameworks (2003 / 2009; Appendices 6a/b) is incredibly ambitious, although he believes they are "*fantastic, this is how to make progress step by step*" (interview 15/7/10). He advises against treating the Frameworks superficially by merely *ticking the boxes* as soon as an objective is covered in class. Initially he felt some resentment towards the appearance of the first Framework in 2003 because he felt "*I'[d] just sorted myself out and I know what I am doing: I get kids to extend; I get kids to use modal verbs a lot, bring in the tenses, use connectives. What's this document coming out from the government telling me how to teach?*" (interview 15/7/10). His perception of the Framework changed, as he

considered its content and acknowledged that it was suggesting practice, much of which he felt was reflected in his classroom. Later on, it would begin to challenge him in terms of his thinking on how to ensure better progression in MFL. In the Year 9 and 10 observed lessons, there are examples of students “*us[ing] knowledge of word order, high frequency and punctuation to understand and build simple and compound sentences*” (DFES 2009, p.7). Similarly students “*recognise past, present and future verb forms and switch from one tense to another in speaking and writing*” (ibid., p.8). Indeed the progression in verbs and tenses suggested by the 2nd edition is corroborated by data presented here (see Appendix 6b).

4.2.iv.d Micro policy in School

When he moved to his current school in 2006, there was an expectation that he would structure his lesson around “*a starter, a main bit and a plenary*” (Interview 15/7/10) usually referred to as a *three-part* lesson by the National Strategy (Ch.4.1.iv). He is dismissive: “*I've never done a starter in my life, you just teach your lesson, you don't throw in a starter at the beginning to go off in a different direction because it tends to last all lesson anyway*” (ibid.). The issue here is Ken's interpretation of what constitutes a *starter*. The National Strategy's original definition of a starter was an activity which:

helps settle and focus pupils quickly; promotes engagement and challenge; gives a feeling of early gain; creates an expectation that all pupils will participate and think...could prime pupils for a teaching point later in the lesson; could contribute to informal everyday assessment of knowledge and understanding. (DFES 2003, p.20)

A starter therefore may well refer back to prior learning and prepare the ground for the rest of the learning. Ken's interpretation seems to suggest that a starter is an activity which is divorced from the rest of the lesson. On the other hand, there is evidence of activities that could be construed as starters in all three of his observed lessons, especially the Year Nine lesson in which he began by identifying strengths and weaknesses in previously assessed work. Students then spent the rest of the lesson reformulating their work in response to this. In his second interview (2012), he acknowledges that he now "does starters" which he defines as "*short activities at the beginning of a lesson to create the expectation of high paced interaction and use of the TL*" (interview 16/5/12). He fears that the standardising of three part lessons in schools "*is making every lesson, like a programme of the 'Hoobs'*". The Hoobs⁴⁷ is a series for pre-school children. Each programme follows exactly the same format, relying on much repetition appropriate perhaps for children under five.

He is adamant that senior leaders have never challenged him about his interpretation of micro policy in his school. Ironically, the only time he has felt conflict was during feedback given by a senior leader after an observation of an A level lesson. The SLT member criticised his lack of target language use in the lesson, he recalls his feelings at the time "*the person observing thought that they knew about modern languages and thought and used the words 'they ought to be picking it up by osmosis'*" (interview 15/7/10). There is a hint of contempt in the first line, and implies a frustration at being criticised by a non-specialist. The concept of learning a language through osmosis clearly implies acquisition through immersion with nods perhaps towards Krashen's comprehensible input. It is most likely that the observer

⁴⁷ The Hoobs – Jim Henson Productions 2001-2002 (250 episodes)

would have been aware of the need to teach in the target language as exemplified by the initial NCPOs, although that prescription has been compromised by subsequent editions of the NCPOs (Chapter 1). However, the belief, among non-specialists, may remain. Furthermore, to be pedantic, the NCPOs have only referred to teaching of students in Key Stages 3 and 4, not post 16. Ken justifies his stance, “[osmosis] is, to my mind, not going to happen, you don’t have enough lessons for immersion to work and anyway if there are specific strategies for pupils to learn then we should be using those” (interview 15/7/10) (Ch.2.6). He further justifies his position by the fact that the lesson was on Spanish history and he wanted to introduce most of the key facts in English first so that the students understood the background history and could then translate those details into Spanish. Since this was not a lesson observed as part of this research then it is inappropriate to form any type of judgement. However, he delivered his observed Year 12 lesson (observation 10/3/11) principally through the target language.

Conclusion

Ken values speaking – activities in lessons which promote the use of speaking. He believes in the teaching of relevant, functional language *a toolbox of language* from which students can draw to create short stories. This is a reaction against the grammar-translation method which he experienced as a learner. The concept of a toolbox of language reflects Lewis’s (1993) lexical approach and mirrors practice by his first head of department. The construction of narratives figures highly in his students’ practice which is reminiscent of practice encouraged through the Longman Audio-Visual French course of his youth.

Despite his apparent rejection of grammar-translation, students interpret and translate as scaffolding activities in lessons. There is, furthermore, evidence of students being able to manipulate structures and apply grammatical rules. Behaviourism dominates his practice though: students reproduce pre-learnt structures in response to cues in English. This embodies a *weak form* of communicative approach – there is no evidence of students using their interlanguage to communicate spontaneously in class.

4.3 Life history 2: Jane

4.3.i Pre-training language learning experiences

4.3.i.a teacher personality

Jane struggled to settle in at her first school, but her French teacher put her at ease “*he made me feel safe and secure*” (interview 7/10/10). A German teacher who taught her from the third year to O level was similarly a positive influence – “*the only reason she influenced me was because she was such a nice person*” (ibid.). When asked if personality is important she replied, “*yep, that’s how I teach*” (ibid.). She elaborates: “*it is somebody who you feel understands you...you can talk to them and get advice and they will joke with you*” (ibid.).

When identifying MFL teachers who may have influenced her practice she identifies those she liked and as a result of this she enjoyed the subject because she felt at ease. For Jane, empathy and humour are important characteristics of a teacher.

Jane recalls a variety of teachers whose qualities as a person, in particular kindness, humour and an empathy have either profoundly influenced her own teacher beliefs or has positively confirmed those existing traits within herself. Her fondness for a professor of comparative literature at university stemmed from his ability to understand and accept her. His relationship with Jane was jocular, and once commented in a social setting, “*I can see one job for you and that’s in demolition*” (ibid.). The idea of Jane having destructive tendencies is surprisingly at odds with her personality in the classroom. She has indeed established a positive rapport with her students, which is built upon mutual respect, humour, kindness and

encouragement (Ch.4.3.ii.b) although these comments are not totally in accord with her attitude to authority and policy (Ch.4.3.iv).

4.3.i.b Speaking and grammar

Jane began learning French in her first year at grammar school. Her recollections of this time are less secure than more recent memories, leading to a much greater emphasis on the hypothetical expressed through the use of words such as *probably*, *might* and *perhaps*. Her first French teacher did initially encourage speaking in the TL; this was less prevalent in the practice of subsequent teachers “*he probably got us to speak a bit more than the others did*” (interview 7/10/10). Teachers’ use of target language was limited although they attempted to use more at A level, “*it was probably mainly in English, probably even at A level, although I do believe that they did use to try and use more target language at A level*” (*ibid.*).

Throughout her secondary education, language lessons were characterised by deductive grammar teaching, which she defines as explanation and then exercises. She also referred to it as *sentence work*, which she appreciated “*I would have enjoyed that anyway [laughs] because somebody gives you a pattern and you follow it er a model*” (interview 7/10/10). After the first year she began to learn German and Latin, an entitlement for the most able in languages, which was evidence of her ability at the time, Jane’s subsequent teachers continued to place emphasis on grammar, which she enjoyed:

because you don’t need to be creative with it...you just follow a model; you know, you just follow a pattern and it’s, if you know the rule then you can

follow the rule and you are going to get it right. And I suppose erm that is success isn't it and everyone likes success. (ibid.)

The surprising implication perhaps here is that grammar does not have a role to play in being creative with language. It also highlights a very monochrome belief that grammar is either right or wrong, a belief perhaps reinforced through having to complete cloze grammar drills (*sentence work*), so indicative of the grammar-translation method that Jane experienced as a student - she was thus not given the opportunities to use grammar as a way of being creative with language. Grammar in such controlled exercises may either be right or wrong, giving Jane clear boundaries and positive reinforcement when she is correct which brings her security.

The implication that there are no grey areas in grammar is, for Krashen (1982), highly debatable – the rules governing some aspects of grammar are ambiguous and may not always have a consensus as to their use, or as of yet, the rule itself is not known (pp. 89-94). The concept of a haziness in grammar, particularly at A level is alluded to by Ken (Ch.4.2.i.c). For much grammar taught in secondary school (at KS3 and 4) however the rules are clear and unambiguous.

Jane's belief that applying grammar does not enable students to be creative may also appear surprising given examples of her current practice observed in the field. She adopts creative approaches to the use of language such as encouraging students in Year 10 to apply the correct cases to German prepositions in a cloze exercise built around a short humorous, horror story. Moreover, students are given

the opportunity to apply the same cases orally in a version of the game Cluedo⁴⁸, in which students have to hunt for the body parts of a monster around a *Schloss*⁴⁹ in Transylvania! Undoubtedly these are interesting and unusual contexts in which to apply language. Ultimately though, such activities are controlled grammar drills – answers may either be right or wrong, thus corroborating her stated belief.

4.2.ii Pre-service training experiences

4.2.ii.a PGCE at the UEA

In reference to her PGCE course, Jane states “*I don’t think they were as well put together as they are now*” (interview 7/10/10). I have been unable to access the course structure of the PGCE at the UEA from the late 80s and therefore I am only able to suggest that since Jane trained in 1989, 11 years before there were any nationally recognised standards for teachers against which trainees are assessed, there may not have been the rigour, nor nationally standardised structure to the course as there is today. Jane appreciated the more practical aspects of the course, “*I could see a point in the language teaching side of it and sort of attended everything there that was necessary*” (ibid.). This contrasts with her attitude to those aspects of the course, which dealt with learning theory, “*some of the lectures to do with erm academic theory and all this, I can’t really remember, they made no impact on me whatsoever*” (ibid.). (This stance is cross analysed in Chapter 5.4.iv)

It is evident from the highly positive way Jane recalls her experiences of her PGCE tutor, Susan Halliwell, that she felt a deal of respect and admiration for her. Jane

⁴⁸ Board game circa 1930 – players have to decide the details of a murder through the process of elimination.

⁴⁹ castle

discusses how Susan was prepared to expose a certain vulnerability in front of her students such as showing a video of herself deliberately teaching a lesson inappropriately to highlight common mistakes trainee and more experienced teachers may make. This demonstrated courage and subsequently gained Jane's respect. One line in the interview: "*she had obviously taught herself and not had the best of times I believe*" (ibid.) implies that Susan may have discussed the challenges she experienced in her own career. Susan was also very supportive of Jane during her first teaching placement, which was challenging (Ch.5.4.i).

4.3.ii.b *The influence of Susan Halliwell*

Jane's recollection of Susan's input on the course is limited to what she terms *interactive games* to encourage vocabulary learning and speaking. The concept of games and competition is prevalent in her practice today – this was exemplified by the use of Cluedo with Year 10 and a sentence linking domino game with Year 7. She defines the methodology imparted by her tutor as being communicative in nature, "*it was the communicative method of teaching, wasn't it? That's what it was called, I'm not very good with labels*" (ibid.). I believe, however, that Jane knows exactly what it was, and what it was called; this highlights Jane's reluctance to embrace correct terminology, to *play the game*, to conform to something. Perhaps she rejects terms because she feels there is no need for them, this is explored in Ch.5.4.iv. Her definition of the communicative *method* is thus:

I think it is about erm getting the pupils to communicate in the target language or, you know, communicate generally rather than have a teacher standing at the front of the room and er just shouting at them, as it

were...being didactic. It's communicative, it's more of a two way, rather than a one way. (ibid.)

She suggests therefore that the communicative approach is about students using the target language to interact. This is reflected in her practice observed in the field, although the communication was still very much at the practice stage of acquisition - there was no attempt for students to use the language independently in different contexts to request items, or to use language which was not the focus of a particular activity. She did, however, with the observed Year Eight group, encourage the students to recycle previously learnt language governing the giving of opinions and expressing likes and dislikes, within a new context (see Appendix 13). This was highly effective and her praise was effusive, supporting her belief in the need for much encouragement and kindness.

In this extract taken from the Year 8 lesson students create new sentences. Students have to conjugate the new verbs; pronounce them correctly; recycle and apply prior learning (opinions) as well as say the subjects correctly.

G *Ich lerne besonders gern Deutsch*

T *you beauty!!*

G *Ich mache besonders gern Sport*

B *Ich lerne besonders nicht gern...*

T *Oooh! (laughter from Ss) In fact you might be able to say that.*

Same B: *Ich lerne besonders nicht gern Franch*

T prompts: *Franch???*...T gives him the correct word *Französisch*

G *Ich lerne überhaupt nicht gern* (she also struggles with the pronunciation of *Französisch*)

T *good try*

B *Ich spiele*

T *Ooh*

B *not spiele..(corrects himself) .. lerne... Ich lerne sehr gern Naturwiss...en schaffen*

T *nice one!*

T *I'm looking for you to go beyond the model which is on the board; I'm not going to give you any more help than that.*

G *Ich finde es nicht gern Geschichte denn ich finde es langweilig*

T *my work here is done (Ss applause)*

(Year 8 Observation 11/2/11; see Appendix 13)

4.3.iii In-service experiences

4.3.iii.a Influences at her current school

It is only when recalling her experiences at her current school that Jane can identify other practitioners who have influenced her own language teaching methodology since her pre-service training. A previous head of department challenged her thinking about her pedagogy: “*yeah, when I went to [current school] originally as head of German. I thought I could teach, I thought I was quite a good teacher but I then remember thinking, actually, no I’m not*” (interview 7/10/10)

Her head of department,

was a big influence in terms of classroom practice: the way she used to drill the pupils with the language, the repetition in 76 different ways with the same

ten words, the games, the sort of repeating things loudly, repeating things quietly. I thought I repeated stuff, but clearly I didn't and also I was shocked with just how little they got through. They didn't focus on, you know, racing through a text book to get to the end of the chapter by half term, they focussed on the children actually internalising the language; knowing the language before they moved on and that was the great difference to me.

(ibid.)

What are explicit here are the practice strategies to ensure transition from the repetition of vocabulary items to the *internalisation* of that language, encapsulating the PPP paradigm (Ch.4.1.ii / 5.7.ii). Jane implies that repetition will lead to learning, reflecting a behaviourist approach to language learning. Within the Audio-Lingual method, repetition was only one of many techniques advocated to ensure learning – substitution of words, questioning and changing syntax, among others, were practice strategies also advocated by the method (Richards & Rodgers 2001, pp.60-61). These later techniques are also highly evident in her work. Students in Year 8 are able to substitute aspects of the sentence around the structure *besonders gern*⁵⁰, which clearly involved thought (see previous section 4.3.ii.b). However, she also identifies that much of this practice work is teacher led and she feels students need to be given more freedom to find the language themselves, “*so rather than us trying to find 16 ways to present pets, what we should be doing is this is the structure for saying I have, he has whatever pet or adjective ending where else could we apply this?*” (interview 7/10/10)

⁵⁰ really like

This is corroborated by the extract in Ch.4.3.ii.b. Furthermore in her Year 8 lesson, Jane encouraged students to work out the meaning of school subjects in German, by identifying cognates (see Appendix 13).

4.3.iii.b Speaking and target language use

Jane's stance on the development of speaking skills has changed over the years.

Initially, however, she states,

I certainly probably didn't favour speaking erm in the early days, although it probably was 25% of the exam. I suppose speaking was more rote learnt although I did definitely practise pronunciation, even if the learning apart from that was pretty rote you know - prepare your answer, teacher would correct it, you'd go away and learn it. (ibid.)

The reasons for this stem from her own foreign language education, which was largely grammatically based "*that's how I'd been brought up, you weren't brought up to speak the language you, you were brought up to write it and manipulate the grammar*" (ibid). This shaped her beliefs on target language use, for which she could see little relevance, especially when teaching children from rural parts of Norfolk, who, she posits, would never actually use the language abroad. This is an unsubstantiated view, but its significance was such that she adapted her practice according to the perceived context (Ch.2.2.i) in which she taught.

At the time of the introduction of the 1991 NCPoS, her feeling towards the edict of teaching through the TL and encouraging students to speak was distinctly negative,

she did, however, attempt to adopt such practice, “*because I was told to, basically the curriculum changed, didn’t it? And I imagine that we fought against it: “Oh silly idea… children having to speak the language we’ve never done it, didn’t do us any harm*” (interview 7/10/10).

She hints at conflict between how she had been told and how now she was expected to teach indeed, all of my research participants can clearly recall the introduction of policy on target language: “*I just remember there was this big push and absolutely everything was supposed to be done in the target language*” (ibid.). Jane maintains that this seemed fallacious.

At the time alluded to here, rubrics on GCSE listening and reading papers were still in English and therefore the idea that all communication should be in the target language in the classroom was at odds with the examination system – “*the two just, just didn’t marry together*” (ibid.). The difficulties of implementing 100% target language use are also compounded by having to teach students in the later years of secondary school life who may never have experienced this approach in previous years: “*if they had been taught for four years completely in English for you suddenly to switch to the target language, they are going to kick off against that*” (ibid.).

Her attitudes have changed, and she is more positive towards its use, “*what’s the point of a language if you can’t speak it?*” (ibid.). However, her argument continues to highlight the challenges of teaching through the Target Language when curriculum time for languages in schools is limited to just 2 to 3 hours a week – explanation in English can save time. French and German media is not as prevalent in British

society as English films and songs are on continental Europe – British students have limited exposure to such media outside of the classroom. She suggests that curriculum models in English school should have the flexibility to allow students more regular exposure to foreign languages lessons. Lessons should be reduced to 45 minutes, which would allow for an extra lesson during the week. She suggests innovative approaches such as all tutor time being delivered completely in the target language, which would increase students' exposure to foreign languages. This suggestion would provide learners with a highly purposeful context in which to be immersed in comprehensible TL input which may facilitate acquisition of language over time: an interesting proposal from a teacher who had been originally opposed to TL use in classrooms!

She also discusses how she has developed her target language use with a higher attaining Year 8 group in German. She focussed on the reunification of Germany and explained everything in the target language accompanied by pictures and gestures. She maintains that the approach is only possible if teachers carefully plan which language to use, with the German reunification account she employed as many cognates as possible to render the language comprehensible for the students, reflecting Krashen's (1981, 1983, 1989) need for comprehensible input and Long's (1983) concept of *interactional modification* (Ch.2.6.i). With her Year 10 class she told a short horror story (Appendix 13), which enabled the students to be immersed for over five minutes in comprehensible input. She strategically used visuals on PowerPoint slides to facilitate the understanding of the narrative. Students' understanding was checked through questions in English, as in this example:

T *tell me about his school days*

B *he was very talented ... good at science*

T *so what did he do with that?*

B *he went to University for 5 years to become a doctor*

T *what happened to him there?*

B *did he go mad?*

T *yeah he went completely bonkers, and so having gone mad and having failed to become a doctor what was his next step?*

G *did he buy a place in the countryside?*

T *what sort of place did he buy?*

B *an old ruined castle*

(Year 10 observation 11/2/11)

Other examples of TL use included giving advice or commands “*konnt ihr Notizen machen auf Englisch*⁵¹” and “*Ihr braucht ein Konzeptheft und einen Kuli*⁵²” to encourage students to think, “*bist du sicher?*⁵³”; to confirm gender “*Badezimmer... der, die or das?*⁵⁴” and simple questions during the Cluedo game “*Wo sind die ganze Körperteile?*”. However simple opportunities to use the TL are also missed: “*give me the German for*” could be better rendered as “*wie sagt man es auf Deutsch?*”

4.3.iii.c Grammar teaching

Jane describes her approach to grammar teaching and learning:

⁵¹ you can make notes in English

⁵² you need your exercise book (rough book) and a pen

⁵³ Are you sure?

⁵⁴ Bathroom, the (m) the (f) the (n)?

I use a mixture of the old didactic approach, erm write a verb on the board and show them how to get the stem - put the endings on the stem erm and then maybe sort of chant the verb but rub bits off, I rub things off and eventually they are doing it from memory and so I might do that as a starter with a reasonably intelligent group but I would also use activities whereby they can start to see patterns in endings – so all the I forms in German with the exception of a couple are going to end in an e and get them to come up with the rules themselves so I kinda use a mixture of both, both approaches...I'll maybe teach it one way and maybe reinforce it another way, so I even do it the other way around: start with the pattern spotting and then say well look here actually you know you have come up with a rule yourselves let's write it up more formally together. So I'll do it that way around perhaps, as well, it depends on the class, it depends on the time of the day, depends on the weather. Erm For me teaching has got to be incredibly flexible, you can walk into a classroom with your lesson planned you can have a look round and go this isn't going to work, look at their faces, their body language - we had better do something different. And for me teaching has got to be able to be intuitive and then you have got to sort of have a feeling of what the class are going to be like and be prepared to adapt. (interview 7/10/10)

The idea of didactic teaching is exemplified through the immediate presentation of a full verb paradigm, subsequently repeated, leading to the possible memorisation of morphemes and full words. Jane maintains that this deductive practice is more appropriate for higher attaining students. The rationale for this is probably due to this

practice reflecting how she, a higher attainer herself, was taught grammar. Here Year 10 students demonstrate their application of grammatical rules (correct case endings), and justify their choice, providing evidence of Krashen's monitor theory.

G *en*

T *en?*

G *einer*

T *einer, go on, why is it einer?*

G *feminine*

T *yes, it's feminine er wohnt in*

G *dieser*

T *dieser, keep going ...*

T *auf what do you think?*

G [thinks for 15 seconds] *dem*

T *dem... auf dem Land in Transylvanien!*

Similarly Year 8 apply correct verb endings

B *Er lernt / macht gar nicht gern Mathe*

G *Wir machen besonders gern Kunst*

T prompts if you start with *Meine Schwester* you've got to decide which part of the verb

G *Meine Schwester macht / lernt überhaupt nicht gern Religion*

(Year 10 / 8 observation 11/2/11; Appendix 13)

Allowing students to conceptualise rules through analogies, as suggested later in the quote, reflects an inductive approach, characteristic of practice in the audio-lingual method and communicative approaches. She does not specify for which attainment

range this may be more suitable, although interestingly, when referring to her own learning experiences she implies that students spotting patterns and hypothesising rules is linked to intelligence: "*if you were, you know, if you had half a brain you could probably see what was going on and you kinda just did it automatically*" (ibid).

Key here is the implication that she will differentiate approaches to teaching grammar according to ability, and interestingly whether or not she feels it appropriate with a particular group according to how she feels they will embrace the practice. This implies that the attitude of the students may influence practice adopted by the teacher. This could be equally attributable to her own mood as much as the mood of the students. It clearly shows the role context has in influencing her methodology. More importantly it shows that *knowing* her students, not just their ability levels but how they may respond at particular times of the day is a factor which influences Jane's practice. It implies discernment perhaps, or as she herself suggests - a certain intuition.

Her stated approach, of mixing the didactic with more inductive approaches, is supported by observations in the field. With one higher attaining Year 8 group, students are encouraged to be detectives; they are given 10 minutes to hypothesise how present tense weak verbs conjugate in German. Their prior knowledge of verb formation up to that point had been limited to first and second person singular forms of very common verbs such *heißen*⁵⁵ and *wohnen*⁵⁶. The stimulus material is a grid of conjugated weak verbs in a variety of persons (Appendix 13). Students are instructed to colour in boxes where they see similarities. This is interpreted by the

⁵⁵ to be called

⁵⁶ to live

students differently: some students use the same colour for those verbs which have the same ending; other students colour in parts of the paradigm for the same verb, whilst some students do not colour anything but very quickly begin to hypothesise that all verbs in the *ich*⁵⁷ form end with an *e*, all verbs in the *du*⁵⁸ form end with *st*. Once students have completed the task and most are able to categorise the forms correctly, Jane tells them what the subject pronouns mean, although on reflection it would have been more interesting to see if they could work out for themselves what they might be in English. Students then copy down the full paradigm of the verb *spielen*⁵⁹, although the polite plural *Sie*⁶⁰ form is deliberately missing to avoid confusion with the other *sie* pronouns (she and they). The parts of the verb are repeated in chorus a number of times. To ensure recognition of parts of the verb, the students play a domino game - one student reads a sentence in English, such as *I play tennis* and this is echoed in German by the student with the corresponding German version. This example of simple translation from English to German was also observed at the beginning of the Year 10 lesson, when students played the matching game *wipe out*, also referred to as pelmanism.

T *I wash up*

G *ich wasche ab*

T *she sets the table*

B *sie deckt den Tisch*

T *he washes the car*

⁵⁷ I

⁵⁸ You (singular plural)

⁵⁹ to play

⁶⁰ Sie (capitalized) is the polite form of you / sie (lower case) may also mean she and they

B *er wascht das Auto* [pronunciation error on wascht]

T *why am I staring at him?*

B [corrects himself] *er wäscht*

T [repeats] *er wäscht*

(Year 10 lesson 11/2/11)

4.3.iv The impact of macro and micro policy on teacher cognition

4.3.iv.a National Curriculum Programmes of Study

Jane's knowledge of such documents remains patchy, if non-existent. She claims to have never read any version of the NCPoS and in the interview, confuses this document with the KS3 Framework for Languages. For her, the two merge into one overall document issued by government, "*there seems to be a new Key Stage Three Strategy every couple of years and quite frankly I have no idea which one we are actually working on at the moment...you see I don't even know what they are called*" (interview 7/10/10). This is surprising since I had worked with Jane on a project to develop creativity in language learning in 2009, during our work together I frequently made reference to aspects of the Framework. We also jointly led an LA network meeting in 2009 where I introduced features of the new Framework edition. In the interview she does refer to the exemplification document which accompanied the 2009 Framework, "*I believe the explanatory document is 98 pages long, well forgive me but I won't be reading that!*" (ibid.). My own personal recollection differs.

Jane recognises how I may have influenced her practice. Her comments highlight her understanding of my interpretation of the KS3 Framework.

Yes you have, yes definitely [been an influence] I think [in] making me look outside of the textbook box and saying, "look you can teach using things that are more creative and that are more relevant to the children and given that the new KS3 Framework is to do with structure rather than lexicon you can do these structures in a more creative way" (interview 7/10/10)

She feels that text books have had a *strangle hold* over what type of language is taught in schools and that their application has led to a too greater emphasis on the acquisition of nouns over verbs. She furthermore maintains that many contexts utilised in textbooks are not contemporary enough or just dull.

You want more colloquial language in there, more real language... you know, how can you say in German, you know, what old so and so's up to this evening, what are you going to do tonight, where are you going? Just not, "in school I wear a green jumper and black trousers." (ibid.)

Her presentation of language in more unusual contexts is evidence of her disenchantment with contexts proposed by textbooks. I concur with Jane, Krashen's (1982) affective filter hypothesis "*implies that effective classroom input must be interesting*" (p.56) for acquisition to be facilitated. If students are not interested in the messages within comprehensible input then the acquisition process is hindered. This will be explored further in Chapter Five.

4.3.iv.b Micro policy

Jane cannot specify how her current school may have prescribed certain pedagogical practice which must be adopted with the exception of how an increased focus on accountability has led to systems of tracking student performance. When she first started teaching this was not the case.

Nobody ever asked me to compare how my results were to, sorry I mustn't say Fisher Price⁶¹, to Fischer Family Trust⁶² or er anything like that erm I mean whether it existed or not I can't even remember. I went in, I taught. I came home; I prepared; I went back and did it again. (ibid.)

The term Fisher Price is used pejoratively here to refer to the Fischer Family Trust, which draws from national performance data to predict how students from particular socio-economic backgrounds, in certain locations, may achieve at the end of KS4 (Ch.1.2.ii). It is used in almost all schools to compare students' performance with how they are expected to perform across the secondary years of education.

I think probably since the introduction of league tables and Ofsted and various people requiring you to report how many children are at this level at KS3 and the percentage of results here, there and everywhere, it's kind of accountability that management teams, leadership teams which have become obsessed with figures and trying to quantify something which isn't easily quantifiable. (ibid.)

⁶¹ British toy maker, prominent in the 1970s

⁶² Charitable organisation which makes predictions as to how students should perform at GCSE based upon prior attainment

She justifies her stance, for example, by maintaining that you cannot measure enthusiasm. This *obsession with figures* is reflected in the classroom by a greater insistence that students are aware of how they are performing in relation to national criteria – practice to which she is opposed.

[What] I don't like is the kind of thought that a pupil has to be able to tell you what level it is working at cos I'm a level three, okay what's level three, is that good? – oh apparently we are supposed to get to level 4 by the end of the year well okay fine but what does that mean? It means we are good. It doesn't tell you anything; a number on a piece of paper doesn't tell you anything, it doesn't tell you that you can communicate in certain areas at a certain level it just, what does it matter what number a child is? (ibid.)

She feels that some aspects of practice, such as the formative use of assessment (repackaged by the National Strategy as *assessment for learning*) has been misconstrued by other colleagues. She recalls being invited to observe a colleague, who was doing *assessment for learning*. “*Forgive me*” she pleads, “*but that isn't a lesson. Surely assessment for learning is something you automatically do to check that the children are with you as you go along. You can't do a complete lesson on assessment for learning*” (ibid.). I believe her argument is cogent and relevant. She supports her stance by describing how, in this particular lesson, students were engaged in peer assessment but what they were doing was not meaningful and they were not actually learning anything from the experience. This is explored in more detail in Ch.5.9.

Conclusion

The affective is important – Jane posits that empathy, encouragement and humour are important characteristics of a teacher. Such qualities may help lessen anxiety in a classroom which facilitate the acquisition process (Krashen). Jane's beliefs about grammar represent a fusion of deductive and inductive approaches. She rejects educational theory and much national policy. She also admits to playing the game with school micro policy and Ofsted. Jane is reflective – her opinions on target language have evolved for example and she makes interesting suggestions for its use.

4.4 Life history 3: Ross

4.4.i Pre-training language learning experiences

Ross was raised partially bi-lingual: his mother, a native Italian speaker would communicate with him in a mixture of English and Italian from the age of nine, to which he refers as being *drip fed* Italian. He is the only research participant to have experienced this early exposure to another language by a native speaker. For the purposes of this research this is of significance because it may have influenced how he perceives both the concept of immersion and teaching through the target language.

4.4.i.a Grammar

At school Ross identifies the approach taken by his first year French teacher as communicative in nature, characterised by a lack of error correction (Ch.2.5.i). He defines this clearly.

We were very much encouraged to write regardless of accuracy, we were encouraged to speak, we had pictures for example, we'd sometimes have to describe as best we could with the language that we had and so it was almost a 'get by and do your best' and not have to worry and then errors weren't corrected. (interview 24/6/2011)

At this early point in his foreign language education, there was a real emphasis on developing confidence and fluency as a result of this relaxed approach to the correction of errors. The comment "*get by and do your best*" infers that he was

encouraged to try and communicate with the interlanguage he had, which reflects strong communicative methodology (Ch.2.5). He claims not to have been taught grammar, instead he was “*taught individual lexical items and individual verbs in certain parts of the tense, not a full verb*” (interview 24/6/11), inferring that he was not introduced to full paradigms of verbs. From the third year, he was taught by two native French speakers, one of whom placed greater emphasis on the didactic teaching of grammar: she would “*sit at her desk and talk to us and just write everything up on the board [verb paradigms] which we'd copy down and repeat*” (ibid.).

Ross suggests that he experienced polarised teaching methods. His first teacher, he believes, was too *laissez faire* and should have paid greater attention to error correction since some errors have remained fossilised in his interlanguage (Ch.2.4.v). He continues to doubt the spelling of the most basic of structures introduced in his early years of learning a language, such as whether *je m'appelle*⁶³ has two l's or one. On the other hand, his second teacher corrected all errors, which led to a loss of confidence. In his own practice he asserts that he seeks a compromise between the two, characterised by the strategic correction of certain errors whilst still trying to develop student fluency and this is supported by observations in the field. Ross attends to errors of language, which occur during the drilling process in the belief that this correction will ensure that accurate models are learnt. In Year 7 he ensures that students pronounced the –s in *nous avons*⁶⁴ because the introduction of this language was one of the objectives of the lesson.

⁶³ I am called

⁶⁴ we have

Ross drew attention to pronunciation errors on adjectives, for example: *intéressant*⁶⁵ / *ennuyeux*⁶⁶ and *parce que*⁶⁷ but he did not always immediately provide the correct model which gave the student the opportunity to correct themselves.

T asks - *who has got the guts to...*

B: *J'adore le sport par qu'elle est en ey eux*

T OOOh

B corrects himself – *ennuyeux*

T *well done! ennuyeux!*

T...*J'adore le sport, what was that really difficult word he struggled with?* [T asks another B]

B *ennuyeux*

T *and parce que ...so break it down...*

B *parce que* [boy repeats at the same time]

G *je déteste le français parce que c'est ennuyeux*

(Year 7 higher ability observation 24/6/11 ; Appendix 14)

However, Ross is less attentive to correcting *fossilised* (Ch.2.4.iv) errors of language which had been previously learned incorrectly. This was evident in the Year 10 lesson, where students would persistently pronounce the –s at the end of *je prends*⁶⁸ and this was left uncorrected.

⁶⁵ interesting

⁶⁶ boring

⁶⁷ because

⁶⁸ I take

4.4.i.b Influences from tertiary education

Ross studied at Dundee University. On reflection, he suggests that his lecturers were *old fashioned* because literature and grammar seminars were always conducted in English. The majority of research participants concur with this view. The idea that teaching through English is *old fashioned* implies that the use of target language as a means of delivery is therefore modern. With the benefit of hindsight, the interviewees are implying this is how language seminars at university should be delivered. For Ross this should therefore insinuate a positive stance towards teaching through the target language (Ch.4.4.iv.d).

4.4.i.c assistantship abroad: target language

Ross was assigned to a school near Poitiers during his year abroad. He admired a French teacher to whom he referred as “*as shit hot at teaching English*” (ibid.). To him, she appeared to use a mixture of ‘methods’: ‘*[the] communicative approach, with a need for accuracy and a need to use grammar*’ (ibid.). He maintains that it was communicative because her teaching was characterised by the exclusive use of the target language, in this case English, throughout the lesson. Inherent in the quote is the concept that the communicative approach proscribes the use of grammar. This appears perhaps surprising because the mere act of trying to make oneself understood may require the application of grammatical rules, even if they are used incorrectly. However, this mixing of ‘methods’ is significant yet again, and is evident in his own practice.

He elucidates that aspects of this teacher’s personality further contributed to her effectiveness in the classroom, she had “*a very commanding presence in the*

classroom" which he describes as "*a very granny like, overbearing mother like presence but quite, you know, soft spoken but harsh when needed to be*" (interview 24/6/11).

Despite acknowledging that this teacher's use of the TL had impressed him, he is quick to emphasise how the context had contributed to its effectiveness. He posits that the French Education system, which he believes places greater emphasis on the deductive teaching of French grammar, facilitated this teacher's use of target language throughout the lesson. I question this and fail to find any research to substantiate the idea of deductive teaching of the mother tongue grammar facilitating students' aural comprehension of another language. Ross is attributing students' comprehension to deductive grammar teaching, and not to the teacher's skills in teaching through the medium of another language. I asked him to clarify if all students could understand, to which Ross replied "*some more than others*" (ibid.), but then went on to qualify his original comment by suggesting that French secondary school students would be more willing to try and understand than English students. This is unsubstantiated. Ross identifies a model of language teaching, which he believes is successful but equally finds reasons as to why such a model may not work as effectively within an English context.

I also question the idea that an emphasis on deductive grammar teaching will enable all native French students to write their own language more accurately. It is a belief which has resonated among a number of native speakers teaching in the English Education system with whom I have worked.

4.4.ii Pre-service training experiences

After graduation, Ross commenced his PGCE at an institution in Scotland. He preferred the practical aspects of the course to those that dealt with educational theory, (this will be explored further in Chapter 5.4.iv).

I always got good or above good in observations, the actual theory side - I was never good on paperwork...or actually relating the theories of education to practice because I could never see that the practice exactly mirrored what the theories were. (interview 24/06/11)

4.4.ii.a PGCE: Communicative language teaching

In terms of teaching methodology, Ross believes he was trained to adopt the communicative approach, which he further defines as, “*using a language for a purpose, and putting it within a framework and context, that it was actually meaningful to students*” (ibid.). For Ross, the communicative approach supports the making of meaning in order to communicate in real contexts (Ch.2.5). However, by a framework, he implies that the teacher will have some degree of control over the language to be presented and practised; the teacher will decide in advance which structures are to be used. This again suggests a weaker form of the communicative approach pitched within the practice stages of the PPP paradigm. This mirrors some of Rosetta’s beliefs about communicative language teaching discussed in the next life history, as well as practice demonstrated by both Jane and Ken. This will be explored further in Chapter 5.7.ii.

4.4.ii.b PGCE: Grammar

Ross maintains that he was never instructed to teach grammar – “*it was almost a no no*”; he believes that his tutor supported the idea of immersion and that “*grammar would arrive in the students’ head by osmosis, it would suddenly one day just click into action*” (interview 24/6/11). This implies the need for maximised use of the TL - for students to be immersed in much comprehensible input so that language is either unconsciously acquired (Krashen 1981) or consciously learnt inductively (Hammerley 1975; Ch.5.3.ii). Ross elaborates further, “*grammar was not meant to be taught explicitly*” (interview 26/8/13). Indeed his tutor’s expectation was that nearly all of the lesson would be delivered through the TL, in line with the first NC PoS at the time of his training, although Ross trained in Scotland where the NC was not statutory. However, such expectations clearly mirror those of my own PGCE tutor (Ch.4.1.ii) and evidence the influence of the communicative approach on teacher education outside of England.

4.4.ii.c Teaching practice

His tutor’s instruction concerning the use of TL would contrast with the beliefs of a number of teachers encountered during his teaching placements highlighting here the polarisation of theory and practice. Ross maintains that many teachers he met in school rejected the idea of language being acquired through immersion - therefore TL use was sparse. In one of his placement schools, the teaching of grammar was very didactic. He recalls students being taught the full paradigms of *avoir*⁶⁹ and *être*⁷⁰ and reciting them until they could remember them by heart. He feels this approach equipped the students with language and he furthermore maintains that this led to

⁶⁹ to have

⁷⁰ to be

good examination results. However, this is at odds with his practice in the classroom where such deductive grammar teaching was not observed, although students were able to conjugate verbs into different tenses with prompts (see 4.4.iii.b).

There is much to unpack here. Firstly, the idea that language will be acquired merely by immersion is not wholly supported by the theories of Krashen. The application of Krashen's input + 1 theory would require teachers to plan lessons thoroughly to ensure that the language in which students are immersed is slightly above their current level of linguistic ability. It would therefore require extensive use of teacher target language. It may also require the adoption of approaches to allow students to compare and contrast language and hypothesise grammatical rules in the target language, although Krashen does not believe that any form of organised grammar teaching will lead to acquisition, inductive or deductive. This requires a change in practice and substantial investment in planning; this may help explain the resistance towards TL use among Ross' peers on his teaching practice.

4.4.ii.d PGCE: Target language

Beliefs and practice expressed by teachers, on his teaching placements, with reference to the use of target language have influenced Ross' own beliefs and practice. He describes how the target language was mostly used for activities, such as taking the register; asking the weather, greetings and for the sanctioning of minor inappropriate student behaviour. He maintains that he was unsure as to the agreed rationale for target language use in these schools but suggests that some teachers were not sufficiently competent in the foreign language, especially if it was their second or third foreign language, to be able to deliver the lesson completely in the

TL. He furthermore suggests that perhaps the schools had decided not to adopt exclusive use of target language because they did “*not want that to be er overriding to the actual learning of the students*” (interview 24/6/11). The implication here is that use of target language may actually be detrimental to student learning. If usage merely entails a teacher speaking at students in the foreign language without adapting what is said to provide comprehensible input, it could lead to confusion and disenchantment; Morag’s life history presents a clear example of how unplanned use of the TL can be disastrous (Ch.4.6.iii.a). Inherent within Ross’s comment is the belief that the Government had actually prescribed practice that could be negative in its outcomes. If target language is skilfully used, and input made comprehensible however, then this should facilitate learning or acquisition (Ch.2.6.i/ii).

Ross posits that a major weakness of teaching through the target language is that a teacher could never be sure that the students have understood what is expected of them. However, target language practice prescribed by the first edition of the NCPoS, which were in force when Ross trained, did allow, for example, for the interpretation of commands and explanation into English. His argument implies that teachers do not check understanding in a lesson. Furthermore, it implies that teachers are not regularly assessing students’ learning. This is not in evidence in his own teaching, where he frequently elicits target language responses and assesses and corrects production of language as described in Ch.4.4.i.a.

He suggests that the process of having to concentrate and think,

can also be an alienating process, if it's too long, if it's like a constant having to work things out. I do think that can make a difference as to whether a student becomes switched off ...I think if you're doing it 100% in the target language they will switch off. (interview 24/6/11)

He agrees to some extent with the idea that part of the learning process may well entail students having to listen carefully to the foreign language and try and discern gist and detail. This is furthermore expected by the NCPoS:

In listening to the target language, pupils should have regular opportunities to:

- *listen attentively;*
- *follow clear directions and instructions;*
- *interpret the meaning of language with the help of visual and other non-verbal clues;*
- *use the context of what they hear as a guide to meaning;*
- *listen for gist and detail to identify and abstract information* (DES 1991, p.24; Appendix 1)

4.4.iii In-service experiences

4.4.iii.a Target language

Nearly two decades since his PGCE, Ross believes that he now misses opportunities to use target language in lessons.

I probably miss out a lot of opportunities in the target language that other people looking would say actually, you could have done that, yes, you could have done that but it's always the difference between doing it and actually watching somebody else is easier to spot the opportunities. (interview 24/6/11)

In reality, and this is supported by observation in the field, his use of target language is limited and inconsistent. I believe that he attempted to use more target language in the observed lessons than he would normally use since this could often be discerned by the students' responses. His attempt to deliver the register in French, for example, and ensure that students replied in the target language was arduous, with him repeatedly encouraging students to use the French phrase '*oui monsieur*' implying, perhaps, that this practice was not routine, he himself even used English to praise student remarks. However, I feel a certain empathy with Ross, students are conditioned in every other lesson to reply in English when the register is called. It is perhaps therefore understandable that they will slip into English; my own experience supports this.

There were instances in both Year 7 lessons when he would speak first in English and then translate what he had said into French, for example: *okay books out – cahiers sur la table, s'il vous plaît!* He justifies this practice on the grounds that he wants the students to understand, which is supported by his beliefs discussed in Ch.4.4.ii.d. There were many instances where the TL could have been used, especially when praising, rewarding students and giving simple commands. However, there were also instances of correct and purposeful target language use –

*regardez le tableau*⁷¹! *Très bonne réponse!*⁷² and questions to elicit language from students such as *qu'est-ce que tu penses*⁷³? Certain instructions would be announced in French: *on va les corriger*⁷⁴ only to be later followed by the exact same grammatical structure being expressed in English: *we are going to play a game*. Whilst students produced much target language in the observed Year 10 lesson, Ross's interaction with the students was mostly in English with the exception of short expressions to link parts of the lesson, occasional commands or to prompt target language use: *après ça*⁷⁵; *regardez dans le dictionnaire*⁷⁶; *qu'est-ce que c'est le mot* “_____?”⁷⁷,

4.4.iii.b Grammar

Ross maintains that no teachers have influenced his practice since his PGCE. However, he is keen to discuss the work of local authority advisers. He questions the credibility of advisers who were “*very good at telling us what we needed to do but didn't actually show us...how [to] do it*” (interview 24/6/11). His comment is of course the stereotypical depiction of an educational adviser. He maintains that the most effective relationships between teacher and advisor (or another) are symbiotic – “*you can learn from him [and her], he [or she] can learn from you*” (ibid.) – inferring that pedagogical content knowledge may be mutually constructed through the interaction with another. He acknowledges my influence on his own practice during my

⁷¹ Look at the board

⁷² Very good answer

⁷³ What do you think?

⁷⁴ We are going to correct them

⁷⁵ after that...

⁷⁶ look it up in a dictionary

⁷⁷ what's the word for?

secondment at the school as acting deputy head teacher, whilst the school was placed in the Ofsted category of *notice to improve*.

You, as a person...have made, certainly myself realise, that we do not need to teach loads and loads and loads of stuff. We have to teach a basic amount and er we have to then re-visit that and re-use that and recycle that...[I] was asked to home in on what was the essentials of what students needed to know and to recycle and reuse in both listening and speaking and writing and reading the kinds of things that were coming up all the time... the same high frequency structures; the same high frequency verbs and to an extent the kind of language that was high frequency: adverbs: régulièrement, for example, comes up a lot, toute de suite, immédiatement. (interview 24/6/11)

Ross acknowledges that prior to working with me, his practice had always been characterised by a mixture of didactic grammar teaching and elements of the communicative approach: “*basically making a mélange of the two*” (ibid.). In reality he worked a lot through translation, with students interpreting into the TL from an English stimulus, reflecting practice demonstrated by Ken (Ch.4.2.i.c) and Jane (Ch.4.3.iii.b). Students were not given opportunities to use language in response to questions in the TL preventing them from practising language purposefully to mirror the expectations of the GCSE speaking exams.

He maintains, therefore, that I have encouraged him to emphasise the learning and recycling of key structures that can be used in a number of contexts: language that

was referred to as *high frequency* by the National Strategy, a concept originally conceived by Michael West in the 1930s (Howatt 1984) and later developed by Lewis (1993). In particular, I have helped him to prioritise the learning of useful verbs, often in the first person in three tenses, over the acquisition of many nouns (Appendix 15). This has led to the students having a *toolbox* of language, recalling the same analogy proposed by Ken (Ch.4.2.iii.a), to encourage students to rethink what they wanted to say in French by using language, which was already at their disposal so that they were not always trying literally to translate sentences. Interpreting does, however, still figure in his practice, as examples presented later will demonstrate (Appendix 14).

Initially, he did have concerns about the approach, I was encouraging him to adopt.

*Occasionally I thought oh we'll just recycle so much, in that how, where is the progress in this, where is the progress in the recycling? But it came out in the wash that actually...by recycling you're actually consolidating knowledge...instead of having to think what, what am I going to say? It comes up – oh je suis allé; j'ai joué; j'ai joué au foot*⁷⁸.

There is some justification for his concerns. Such an approach is principally behaviourist: students learn the language through repetition and regular practice, with the inherent danger that answers to questions in the TL become conditioned responses. Students are however encouraged to see patterns, such as the regularity of the –er verb form and apply this to other –er verbs.

⁷⁸ *I went / I played / I played football*

In the Year 10 lesson (observation 11/11/11; Appendix 14) students were presented with a box of colour-coded infinitives. They were able to differentiate between regular and irregular forms, and could find the past, present and future forms of each verb when given the infinitive by Ross.

T *jouer*

B *je joue / j'ai joué / je vais jouer ...*

T *Monsieur..prendre*

B *is the past tense j'ai prendre?*

T *J'ai prendre* [repeats mistake] *j'ai = correcte ...prendre non!*

B [corrects himself] *j'ai pris*

T [confirms] *pris ...[spells in French p / r / i / s]*

T *Mademoiselle, présent?*

G: *is it je prends? [pronounces the s which is not corrected]*

T *boire*

G *j'ai bu / je bois / je vais boire*

The language presented in the *High Frequency Verbs* chart (Appendix 14) is only the starting point, to use Ken's words: "*it's a growing core*". Other parts of the verbs, such as 1st person plural *nous* form, are subsequently introduced and students are able to conjugate verbs.

T *we are going to change the je to we, je suis allé*

B *Nous sommes allés*

T [agrees]: *Nous sommes allés* [but writes on the board as] *Nous sommes allé_*

G *There is an extra s*

T *Excellent! Nous sommes allés*

Students are able to apply grammatical rules to a variety of high frequency infinitives to produce written and spoken forms of the verb in the perfect, present and immediate future tenses. This reflects competences in the second edition of the KS3 Framework, “*recognise past, present and future verb forms and switch from one tense to another in speaking and writing*” (2009, p.8) and practice demonstrated by Ken’s students (Appendix 12; Ch.4.2.iv.c). They are able to use adverbs and connectives to communicate meaningful information about their everyday experiences and future plans. Collaboratively, with Ross’s prompting, students were able to construct a short narrative, practice which is again reminiscent of Ken’s work:

T *I want a sentence with three verbs in it, so help me out here, what could I have with j’ai visité?*

B *I visited my nan..ma grand-mère*

T *j’ai visité ma grand-mère...quand?*

B *A neuf heures*

T *A neuf heures, okay*

B *qui s’appelle*

T *qui s’appelle ...ahh!*

B *Elizabeth*

T *A neuf heures, j'ai visité⁷⁹ ma grand-mère qui s'appelle Elizabeth..okay...excellent*
... I need a linking word

G *mais*

T [repeats] *mais...how could we get je visite in it?*

G *could you add another bit to the first one – so yesterday...and then today?*

T *excellent, temporal markers they are called. Okay today, qu'est-ce que c'est le mot*
today?

B [looks in dictionary] – *aujourd'hui*

B [suggests *cependant* instead of *mais*]

T [agrees] *cependant*

This scaffolded activity prepared students, in pairs, for the next activity, which was to create another short story using a different verb.

4.4.iii.c Grammar: making meaning out of inductive teaching

When introducing new language / grammatical concepts, for example, the introduction of the imperfect tense, Ross presents the students with examples of relevant verbs embedded within a context, such as school life. He displays five or six examples of the verb, written in the first person. The students may then orally practise using the verbs in response to questions such as: *Qu'est-ce que tu faisais à l'école?*⁸⁰ with students picking appropriate examples from the board. This teaching clearly exemplifies the 'present and practise' stage of the PPP paradigm.

In the next stage, Ross encourages the students to identify the verb ending and apply this knowledge to a new infinitive. He summarises his approach, "as getting

⁷⁹ the verb *rendre visite à* is preferable to *visiter* when visiting a person

⁸⁰ What did you used to do at school?

students to generalise from examples" and suggests that encouraging students to identify patterns in grammar and to hypothesise rules is evidence of good practice, "*what a good teacher nowadays will do, [he]’ll be actually saying, ‘look this is a –je, this is an example of the il, now what’s the difference?’*" (interview 24/6/11). His comments resonate with my understanding of inductive teaching of grammar. However, he sees this approach as exemplifying deductive grammar teaching, not inductive.

It is [deductive] in the first extent because you actually say to them, this is how it is done. “So this is the first one, this is the second one and what’s going to be the rule for the third one?”...then you’ll throw a spanner in the works by throwing in one that doesn’t follow the pattern and they’ll use that pattern which shows that they’ve actually worked out the pattern and then you’ll have to say to them well actually no because this is the one that doesn’t follow this rule. (ibid.)

For him, inductive learning was inherent in how he was taught during his PGCE to enable grammar to be learnt: by osmosis. He believes this is characteristic of the *true communicative approach* exemplifying no reference, by the teacher, to form (parts of speech nor to verb endings). His interpretation of inductive teaching reflects, to some extent, Krashen’s theory of acquisition through immersion in comprehensible input, although such teaching requires language input to be modified first. Krashen (1982) defined both deductive and inductive approaches as learning, and not acquisition, because there is an active focus on forms – students are consciously engaged in the study of language (p.113-115). Ross’s early

experiences of acquiring Italian through immersion, where there would have been no conscious study of the language, have influenced his interpretation of inductive learning. However, given his stance on the use of TL, as evidenced in his practice, he does not support recreating conditions in the classroom to foster acquisition through immersion in comprehensible input.

4.4.iv The impact of macro and micro policy on cognition

Ross maintains that he has no idea what the NCPoS actually are. He feels many other teachers would be as equally ignorant. Jane may well similarly concur, although the findings from Rosetta's and Ken's life stories suggest that for them it is otherwise. Despite not knowing anything about the NCPoS, he suggests that they change all the time. He then alters his stance somewhat and agrees that he has read a version of the NCPoS but cannot remember which. His recollection of the KS3 Framework is more revealing, if a little confused: "*it's very much an approach, isn't it, to giving them [the students] the strategies and the way to learn...they're ...influencing...themselves by dictionary skills*" (interview 24/6/11). Although he then suggests that teaching dictionary skills are now not as important, a belief perhaps constructed as a result of the proscription of dictionaries from the GCSE reading exams from 2002. However, the Framework prescribes the teaching of dictionary skills, as do all editions of the NCPoS. Ross's stance therefore is an interesting example of how changes to exam specifications dictate practice and influence beliefs which are in fact counter to prescribed policy.

He is largely dismissive of the KS3 Framework, despite not being able to elucidate further as to its content. He suggests that there is nothing new to be gleaned from

reading it and that teachers have been teaching how it suggests for decades, in spite of not actually knowing what it suggests. This stance can be supported by lesson observation data (Ch.4.4.iii.b; Appendix 14) where he focuses on the teaching of high frequency language, an aspect of the 2003 KS3 Framework.

4.4.iv.a Experiences of Ofsted

Ross highlights the fear induced by Ofsted which leads to negative reflection, “*I think when Ofsted comes along you get that notification that you’re shitting yourself and actually you’re just...thinking, God, I’m a crap teacher*”. This leads, he believes, to teachers planning in more depth in preparation for the inspection and therefore questions how true a representation of school inspectors actually experience (shorter notices of inspection have been issued to schools since 2005; Ch.1.2.iii). This is a view interestingly supported by Wilshaw, Head of Ofsted (Paton, 2012). Ross ultimately feels that Ofsted is judgemental, and is neither supportive nor helpful.

4.4.iv.b Micro policy

Gathering data concerning Ross’s beliefs about school micro policy was compromised with my position in his school, at the time of the first interview, as the senior leader responsible for the introduction of micro policy on teaching and learning. There is an expectation at his school that learning objectives and learning outcomes are communicated to students, these are presented in the form of WALT⁸¹ and WILF⁸² acronyms. This may appear largely contrary, given my attitude to learning objectives (Ch.4.1.iv.a). Ross believes that teachers will often ask students to formulate learning outcomes from the context of the lesson, although this is not

⁸¹ What are we learning today?

⁸² What am I looking for?

evidenced in his own practice. Despite this he feels this practice helps students to think about their own learning.

Conclusion

Ross believes that his methodology is characterised by a hybrid of the communicative approach and instruction in grammar, which is a fusion of methods experienced as a learner at school. His beliefs about grammar have evolved: he will employ both deductive and inductive approaches to the teaching and learning of grammar. Students consciously apply their grammatical knowledge to create short stories. This practice is characterised by behaviourist approaches for the introduction of new language. Despite learning Italian through immersion, he does not support teaching through the medium of the TL since he believes this will lead to students not understanding and becoming disenchanted.

4.5 Life history 4: Rosetta

4.5.i Pre-training language learning experiences

4.5.i.a Grammar

Her first recollection of instruction in French was at the age of ten when her father attempted to teach her verb paradigms. She reflects on the event with amusement, inferring that her father's approach was inappropriate, if not a little ludicrous, but it was an approach, which, for her, reflected how he himself had been taught languages.

I think, it has to be said that, the notion of my dad trying to make me learn French from writing down the paradigm of a verb and making me learn it, in spite of my protestations, that I couldn't, couldn't understand the point of saying I am, you are, you know...he just picked the wrong way of giving me access to it. (interview 20/6/2011)

The quote brings to light two voices: the first is that of the 10 year old Rosetta who was not able to see the relevance of learning verbs paradigms; the second is that of an experienced teacher who posits that rote learning of verb paradigms is not an appropriate technique. For her, this example of deductive grammar teaching was de-contextualised and therefore meaningless. It was an experience, she believes, which helped quickly quell any enthusiasm for the subject "*I wasn't looking forward to learning French at Secondary School*" (ibid.) and has subsequently shaped her attitudes towards the teaching of grammar today (Ch.4.5.iii.a).

The grammar-translation method, characterised by the deductive teaching of grammar, was highly prevalent throughout her secondary school years. The textbook, which was followed rigidly, contained narratives about “*somebody’s life and then a number of exercises to work on*” (interview 20/6/2011). Rosetta posits that experiences of learning French in the first year at her grammar school remained negative because she could not understand, nor see the pertinence of concepts such as verbs changing to follow a pattern. This lack of comprehension, coupled with a less than harmonious rapport with her French teacher, which may well have been as a result of her difficulty with the subject, led to her being passively disengaged: “*I was a really conscientious child, always, but I do remember not being good in French. I remember once even reading a book on my lap, which was just totally unlike me*” (ibid.). Poor performance in the end of year examination, in which she came last, relegated her to the second set throughout her secondary school life. At such a formative age, she had effectively been labelled as having limited aptitude in languages, and this would deprive her of opportunities whilst at school since only students in the first set were able to study German.

The second year would however herald a breakthrough in her understanding of grammar; this was at a time when Rosetta was instructed for some time by a student teacher, although it is unclear how this was significant other than that she was no longer being taught by her first year teacher with whom she had had a negative rapport.

I do remember absolutely clearly the moment when it felt as though a penny dropped in the machine and I could see what she meant and it was

specifically to do with verb paradigms and 'so that's why you need to know all these bits that's why they write them down like that!' And that's why I knew. (ibid.)

This chimes with my own experience (described in Ch.4.1.i.c), when suddenly something clicked into place and aspects of grammar began to be meaningful for me. Ultimately, both Rosetta and myself had a *eureka moment* when grammar began to make sense, although for me, it stemmed from my hypothesising of a grammatical rule (how to construct the immediate future in French) and not from instruction. This revelation about how grammar works was the catalyst for both Rosetta, and myself, to excel in our language studies - Rosetta refers to this as if she had been *bitten by a bug*, and began fervently learning everything she was taught.

4.5.i.b Speaking and listening

Her recollection of aural and oral French at school is limited to listening and speaking exercises in the language laboratory. Teachers also did not use the target language, they were “*almost always talking about the language [in English].*” (interview 20/6/11)

Her enthusiasm for French was further fuelled by the arrival of a new deputy headteacher, who became a role model because of his passion for languages – he would learn a new language every year, and his thorough approach to assessment demonstrated a genuine interest in his students’ work. She recalls aspects of his personality: “*he had a certain flair...he did have a huge amount of charisma*” (ibid.).

He was employed to ease the school’s transition from being a girls’ grammar school

to a mixed comprehensive, and as a result of this, “*[he] had no truck with a lot of the old ideas*” (ibid.). Rosetta is the only research participant, with the exception of myself, to have learned new languages since completing her teacher training, although it is unclear whether this interest in learning is attributable to this deputy head teacher from over 30 years ago or due to the need to make herself more flexible to curriculum development in school. Indeed she is able to deliver the GCSE specification in French, German and Spanish. Whatever new ideas the deputy headteacher may have brought to the running of the school, his practice remained firmly rooted in the grammar-translation method and would deliver all of his classes through the medium of English. It was his charismatic personality, which would further fuel her attraction to the subject area.

4.5.ii Pre-service training experiences

4.5.ii.a BEd at Homerton College

Rosetta is the only research participant in this project to study for a degree in education. The first two years of the course focussed upon MFL teaching methodology accompanied by courses in the philosophy, psychology and sociology of education. Following her success in the assessments at the end of her second year, Rachel was given permission to take a year abroad. She did not particularly enjoy the course, especially having to write about French literature in English! Her remark that “*there is a huge amount of pretentiousness associated [with language learning]*” (interview 20/6/11) particularly in such an establishment struck a chord. This reflects my own belief as delineated in my autobiography (Ch.4.1.iv.d) and highlights again the importance of interesting comprehensible input (Krashen 1981, 1982, 1983) to facilitate the language acquisition process (Jane Ch.4.3.iv.a).

4.5.ii.b language learning methodology – the communicative approach

Kent, her course tutor, became a key influence. She summarises aspects of his approach.

Communicative language teaching really was his big thing, erm and so the whole notion of setting up erm pair work activities with an information gap, erm that was the really big hard sell erm which was the fashion very much erm but I'm not sure that it has ever really erm taken off in a way that he envisaged. (interview 20/6/11)

Information gap activities, in which students attempt to communicate by retrieving and giving information, are often carried out in pairs or groups of students (Ch.2.5.i). Such practice may reflect weak and strong communicative language teaching (Howatt 1984). Adopting the PPP paradigm, these activities could be employed in the practice and production stages (Ch.2.5.i) to enable students to use language in structured controlled conditions and only embarked upon once the teacher had drilled key structures. There would therefore need to be considerable emphasis on learning linguistic forms before students are able to approach the tasks (Klapper 2003, p.34). Rosetta's belief that this type of practice has not become entrenched in the way her tutor would have liked is as a result of the logistics of setting up pair information gap exercises in class and being able to ensure that students remain engaged with the activity.

Why haven't I really personally held that as a core of my teaching over the years? Erm, I think it's the difficulty of monitoring it while it is going on, erm

and that for less able pupils erm [pause] I don't think a teacher ever has enough erm control over what is happening in the classroom, you risk losing it. (interview 20/6/11)

This is compounded by class sizes, which may regularly exceed 30 students. International studies note reservations by teachers towards engaging students in pair and group work activities. Nishino's (2012) research among Japanese teachers attempting to implement communicative practice highlighted similar concerns: "*when I used pair work, some students actively participated but others did not. If I could not control my students, the classroom would degenerate into chaos*" (p.160). Sakui (2004) showed that Japanese teachers may avoid pair work for fear of having to deal with classroom management issues, and furthermore they have no control over students using the target language together when practising, "*the students may revert to conversing in Japanese*" (p.160), Phipps and Borg's (2009) findings, among teachers of English working in Turkey, concur,

having them working in pairs or groups, asking each other, I wouldn't be able to monitor them...I'd be worried about being able to monitor...if they produce something incorrectly it could become fossilised...so I tend to be quite controlled. (p.386)

Rosetta hints that the orchestration of pair work activities is more challenging with lower attaining students because of the need to spend extra time practising the language before students are able to use it independently. Indeed with all students, the activities can be largely ineffective, if time has not been invested in the drilling of

the required lexical structures beforehand. She does believe that it is a feature of her own practice where it is “*routinely a five minute part of erm, I don't know, one lesson in three*” (interview 20/06/12).

The observed Year 10 lesson (10/11/2011; Appendix 15) was constructed around a very broad objective of *arranging to go out* culminating in students taking part in a short conversation in which they made suggestions as to where they would like to go; discussed times as to when they would meet as well as give the costs of each potential activity. Much class time was devoted to drilling the necessary language for the students to carry out the activity. There was very little time for students to actually practise the language independently and make up mini-dialogues.

4.5.ii.c Grammar teaching

She recalls two techniques for teaching grammar introduced by her tutor at Homerton, which she believes she has actually demonstrated to me in the classroom prior to the start of this study – inferring that it is embedded in her practice. The first is the idea of anthropomorphising verbs to help reinforce their meaning without using English to explain what they mean. This is illustrated by the visual representation of *Monsieur Vouloir*⁸³ who “*was a wimpy kind of character who wanted to do things but didn't necessarily have the clout to do things, whereas Monsieur Pouvoir*⁸⁴, *was you know, a body builder and...*” (interview 20/6/11). At this point we both laugh, perhaps because of a shared belief that presenting verbs in this manner may be now considered insensitive. The second idea concerned the introduction of the perfect

⁸³ vouloir = to want

⁸⁴ pouvoir = to be able (can)

tense using the verb *manger*⁸⁵. A silhouette of a large (overweight) man would be beamed onto the screen. He would subsequently be fed images of foods on a little stick, with the teacher saying *il a mangé*⁸⁶ + a food item (in the target language). This would be repeated many times with different food items and the students would repeat in chorus. The choral repetition would be followed by *three part questioning*, described in Chapter 4.1.ii.c. Students would eventually reply to the question *qu'est-ce qu'il a mangé?*⁸⁷ by reproducing the language that had already been introduced, without having to manipulate the subject of the verb. The process clearly exemplifies the first two stages of the PPP paradigm. The technique of introducing verbs in the masculine third person mirrors how I too was instructed to present verbs so as to avoid agreement issues and to maintain regularity. For Rosetta, these two techniques exemplify her tutor's belief that language should be presented in an innovative way, and therefore contextualised "we were being encouraged to *erm make it as distinctive, as visual, as memorable as we could erm but otherwise [laughs] on the same kind of basis as we'd learned it in other ways*" (interview 20/6/2012). The final remark suggests that despite attempts at presenting single structures memorably as well as personifying verbs; there was still an emphasis on the deductive teaching of verb paradigms, Rosetta concurs.

4.5.iii In-service experiences

4.5.iii.a Beliefs about grammar teaching

She recognises that those early attempts of her father to teach her grammar, over forty years ago, have influenced how she approaches the teaching of grammar

⁸⁵ to eat

⁸⁶ He has eaten / he ate

⁸⁷ What has he eaten? / what did he eat?

today. “I think that erm well for one thing I was very, very much put off by that early experience of being given the verb paradigm and being told to learn it” (interview 20/6/11). She maintains the importance of teaching the parts of speech, so that students can recognise and explain the role of a noun, verb and adjective, for example; otherwise, for her, students lack the specific language to discuss what problems they may have with a particular concept. She believes that she’s “*a little bit soft on the teaching of grammar*” (ibid.) which stems from her fear of putting the students off by focussing too much on the deductive teaching of grammar, in the same way her father’s teaching of verbs led to her own lack of understanding, and early disenchantment with learning French.

I tend to tread fairly carefully and always say to my classes at the end of some kind of practice of some new grammatical tense or point or whatever erm you know, ‘well done to those of you who have got it, you’ve done well, those of you that didn’t, don’t worry because there is always going to be another chance, and you’ll get another opportunity. (ibid.)

She acknowledges that she has not adopted practice characteristic of the grammar-translation method such as “*copying out sentences and changing the verbs*” (ibid.), so prevalent in her own secondary days. A Year 7 class (observation 10/11/11) was set the task of grouping parts of speech on little cards according to the categories of: *avoir, être, negatives, pronouns, regular -er verbs and reflexive verbs*. The students were proficient in this activity providing evidence that Rosetta does ensure students can recognise parts of speech and simple aspects of grammar. Students subsequently made up sentences by linking the cards together. Rosetta sees the

value of focussing upon the –er verb paradigm because of its application to so many verbs in French.

Analysis of her practice in the classroom may help to explain her comment that she “*is a little bit soft on grammar*” but believes that “*pupils need to know the names of different parts of language because otherwise they can't tell you what they have got a problem with*” (interview 20/6/11). Students have an awareness of grammatical aspects but are not always given the opportunities to apply these further to be more creative with the language. With her Year 7 class (Appendix 15), students were able to recognise the difference between the first and third person forms of *avoir*, *être* and –er verbs. Similarly with her Year 8 group (Appendix 15), students could apply first and third person forms to regular –er verbs in the perfect tense but the highly structured nature of the lesson prevented them from going beyond that to apply this elsewhere. I believe she holds back for fear that students will become overly challenged and disenchanted. This is reflected to some extent in her quest to make students aware of the grammar sections in the back of textbooks, “*because to me that is the answer to everything, everything is at your finger tips*” (*ibid.*) but this may also exemplify an avoidance of having to specifically teach those aspects of grammar. She is giving the students the choice of independently developing their understanding of grammatical concepts.

The fear of putting students off, in the same way as she was put off language learning all those years ago, is evident throughout the interview, and this is reflected in her practice. I find this paradoxical. Despite initial difficulties with grammar, Rosetta was to eventually excel in French at school despite, or because of, a

method, which largely resembled grammar-translation. Rosetta was courageous enough to admit that some students from a previous higher attaining KS4 class had become disenchanted with French; this disenchantment she suggests may be as a result of her attitude to the teaching of more challenging aspects of grammar. Ironically, Rosetta's fear of disenchanting students by not over challenging them with instruction in complex grammar has left some students feeling unchallenged and disenchanted.

4.5.iii.b Differentiating grammar

She maintains that during the years languages were compulsory at KS4 (1994-2004; Ch.1.5) there was a greater need to differentiate which aspects of grammar should be taught to which students. At the lower end there was more of an emphasis on the learning of nouns to meet the specifications of Foundation level GCSE.

Those were the days when they learned, you know, 15 different words for flavours of ice cream flavours...the expectations were very different then, it was around about the time when everybody was expected to continue with a language to GCSE and you had to have a long term strategy for erm helping pupils to succeed without necessarily ever really being able to use a full paradigm or erm manipulate language very much, just using it as if it were an item of vocabulary really. (interview 20/6/11)

The democratisation of MFL in the 1990s demanded different approaches to enable the students to access their learning. Key structures, such as *Je voudrais*⁸⁸, would

⁸⁸ I would like

be treated as a vocabulary item or collocation being learnt in conjunction with a variety of corresponding nouns. These would be rote-learned (Mitchell 1994; Gray 1999, p.40) leading to the “*mechanical reproduction of dialogues or role plays*” (Hornsey 1995, p.19). This encompassed a *phrase book* approach to the learning of modern languages where “*it [was] possible to succeed at GCSE, if not excel, with quite limited control of a creative target language system*” (Mitchell 2000, p.287). It is likely that this practice at KS4 influenced the curriculum at KS3. This is supported by the findings of the Invisible Child (1998) research project (Ch.1.8.i).

Rosetta’s current school legislates that the upper 50% of students continue with language study to GCSE at KS4. Rosetta posits that there are now much higher expectations for the cohort overall, since many will be examined on the Higher GCSE papers. Despite this, with the lower sets there is still only the need for them to be able to apply the first and third person of the verbs, which is enough grammatical proficiency to attain a C grade at GCSE.

4.5.iv The impact of macro and micro policy on teacher cognition

4.5.iv.a Target language

Upon being asked to discuss her views on the use of target language, Rosetta laughs. She, in addition to all of my research participants, see it as a contentious issue (this is explored further in Ch.5.6). She posits that for the first ten years of her teaching career it was the “*be all and end all of teaching languages*” (interview 20/6/11). Although the timing here is interesting considering Rosetta started teaching around 1983 and the NCPOs prescribing the teaching of languages through the

medium of the target language did not become statutory until 1991. I believe she is referring to the decade from 1991.

She maintains that, “*she subscribed to it [TL] as much as she could*” (interview 20/6/11). She suggests that the imperative to teach through the target language has been compromised over time, a development which she regards positively, but also expresses some concern about: “*I was very glad when that [TL] stopped being, you know, **the be all and end all** but I do think that AfL which is extremely useful erm has now pushed us too far in the other way or has pushed me too far the other way*” (ibid.). The AfL (Assessment for Learning) to which she refers has been her own school’s micro managed policies on developing formative assessment. Although she supports encouraging students to discuss how they are learning, and what they are learning, she maintains that how this is operationalized in school may be detrimental to the use of TL in the classroom.

It must have been eight, nine, ten years ago when this whole business of giving students the objectives at the start of the lesson and having them written up in English...at that time, I would still have pretty much been doing pretty much everything in the target language because I really objected to the fact of putting it up in English. (interview 20/6/11)

She is compelled to present learning objectives in English at the start of lessons, and she must also discuss / assess in English what has been learnt in the plenary section of a lesson. Observations in the field confirm that she presents learning objectives in English on the whiteboard and these are shared orally with students.

Objectives were functional and did not refer explicitly to the acquisition of structures although these were inferred in the objectives. For example, in the observed Year 9 class (Appendix 15), students were expected to:

1. *tell someone your age and birthday;*
2. *talk about a birthday party you had helped to celebrate;*
3. *say what you are going to do to celebrate your next birthday.*

The second objective ensured use of the perfect tense to recount events whilst the third objectives required students to communicate using the immediate future. With a Year 7 group, the objectives prescribed certain sociological expectations such as *to work well in groups*.

Observations in the field reveal that her use of target language is largely limited to simple commands such as *prenez vos cahiers*⁸⁹; *tournez la page*⁹⁰ and *écoutez la machine*⁹¹. She does use questions in the target language to draw out answers from students after listening and reading activities. The register is routinely completed in French and there are instances of sanction in the TL, for example, *qu'est-ce que tu as dans ta bouche*⁹²? Explanation of how to complete activities and discussion on grammatical aspects are in English.

Rosetta now feels that she is less inclined to adhere to micro policy concerning pedagogy than she may have been a decade ago, when messages promulgated by

⁸⁹ Take your books

⁹⁰ turn to page...

⁹¹ listen to the machine

⁹² What do you have in your mouth?

the National Strategy were being hastily interpreted by senior leaders in her school to ensure a one size fits all approach to teaching and learning (Ch.1.2.iv). She attributes her stance to either age or confidence in her own ideas “*either I’m getting more bolshy or more secure in my beliefs about how things should be carried on, there are things that I term resist in terms of influence about how we should be teaching*” (interview 20/6/13). In particular she alludes to the current need to contrive some reference to the school’s specialism (science) in every lesson – “*now I don’t think that is something I want to subscribe to, can’t see the point of it*” (ibid.). The whole notion of doing this feels unnatural to Rosetta, if not ludicrous. For her, adopting this practice “*would be so diluted that it would be sort of, you know, ridiculous...ridiculously simplistic*” (ibid.). This edict may have been a result of the expectations of Ofsted under the inspection regime from 2005 - 2011 when schools were judged on the whole school impact of school specialisms, before the concept of specialist schools was abolished in 2011.

4.5.iv.b. Macro Policy: NCPoS and influence of PGCE students and NQTs

Rosetta acknowledges how her affiliation with the University of East Anglia’s PGCE programme as mentor to PGCE MFL students has helped her to maintain familiarity with the NCPoS because they are used as assessment criteria against which mentors track students’ progress (interview 20/6/11). She posits that mentoring PGCE students over a period of 15 years, as well as welcoming many NQTs into the department, have enabled her to keep abreast of policy developments in MFL. She suggests that these recently trained colleagues have come to embody the latest policy changes or approved practice – “*I’ve had a lot of NQTs here and that has alerted me to changes that quite honestly otherwise would have passed me by*”

(ibid.). She believes that fresh ideas from relatively inexperienced but recently trained colleagues have been of real benefit, whilst new colleagues can also draw strength from the expertise of others in the department. This symbiotic relationship has not always been without friction; she recalls a student, who after observing a fellow colleague was dismayed that the colleague had not taught an aspect of language in the way that she had been told to teach.

She'd been very shocked that somebody else hadn't followed some expectation of hers and she said, 'it's the law, you have to teach it like that, don't you?'...she was so thoroughly imbued in the expectations that she really thought that right down to the detail of how you taught something was a statutory thing, you had to do it like that. (interview 20/6/11)

She feels that such a strict obedience to policy – or another's interpretation of policy can be detrimental to the development of a relatively inexperienced teacher. She refers to two colleagues who had been trained, at an institution in the north of England, to teach completely in the target language, to enable students to acquire language through being immersed in comprehensible input (Krashen 1981, 1982, 1983). She maintains that this approach is now dated, and that other approaches may be better matched to certain students' needs (see Jane's life history). She maintains that teaching through the target language, "*burns teachers out very quickly because it's hugely demanding on them physically...and mentally and erm, you know five hours a day whatever, I do think it exhausts people*" (interview 20/6/11). She advises caution about expressing this concern to the trainees themselves for

fear of tempering the quality of their teaching, although ultimately she believes that a teacher's practice must be manageable and sustainable.

Conclusion

Rosetta's attitudes towards instruction of grammar have been shaped by very early language learning experiences. She is reluctant to adopt an approach, which places too much focus on form, although students are able to recognise meta-language, identify verb forms in different persons and apply correct endings to verbs in the present tense. Her practice is characterised by much *weak* communicative practice – students practise language in controlled activities. She rejects exclusive TL use considering it to be dogma with little theoretical basis. Her life story is testament to her pragmatism, she reflects on ideas, evaluates their effectiveness and will apply them only to the extent that they do not compromise her own beliefs. This is evident throughout her life history, whether it be suggestions about communicative practice from her PGCE tutor, national policy prescriptions or expectations concerning pedagogy from her own school. If she does not believe in it – she does not do it.

4.6 Life history 5: Morag

4.6.i Pre-training language learning experiences

4.6.i.a Speaking and target language

Morag was educated in Scotland and started to learn French at the age of 11. She remembers her foreign language education very clearly. Her teacher adopted the PPP paradigm for the presentation and initial practice of new language, although there was very little exposure to orthography. As a result of this this, vocabulary items in her exercise books⁹³ were often written phonetically, *“and then written beside each [little picture], I’ve got, like for stylo, I’ve got s t e e l o [she spells this]. I wrote them all phonetically, so obviously I was taught...we weren’t looking at the written forms, we were just looking, at erm sounds”* (interview 16/7/10). She absolutely loved French, and her teacher, who uniquely taught her the language for six years. She recalls much emphasis on speaking, *“we did loads of speaking and oral work”* (ibid.) and engagement with spoken language such as songs, which she learnt off by heart. Her teacher taught her about letter strings and would focus upon pronunciation when correcting errors and mistakes. This is practice which Morag continues to support.

There was, during this time, however, no exposure to native French speakers or to authentic French recordings - all spoken French was modelled by her teacher. A new course was later introduced and her teacher began to incorporate pair work, a feature of the communicative approach (Ch.4.5.ii; Ch.5.7), which Morag refers to as an *innovation*. She would, in later years, assist her teacher in lessons, supporting

⁹³These exercise books are still in her possession

students with speaking and written work. This would be an early apprenticeship into teaching.

4.6.i.b Grammar

Grammar was taught deductively: grammatical concepts were explained first, followed by exercises (drills), which would lead to the application of new grammar in essays. On reflection, Morag feels that she was using very advanced French, such as *après avoir vu*⁹⁴ and *après s'être reveillée à huit heures*⁹⁵, quite early in her education even in the second year. Moreover, she could apply this grammar in new contexts to be creative, “*you were using language to do stuff...you were actually producing stuff of your own language*” (interview 16/7/10). She attributes her understanding of French grammar to teaching she received at school, “*I really, really know my grammar you know, I know it very, very well, and it...basically comes down to what I had learnt when I was at secondary school*” (ibid.). Written work was always contextualised within areas in France that her teacher had visited; she wrote about the culture and geography of France in French. The methodology of her teacher was a fusion of both communicative approaches and grammar-translation.

4.6.i.c Tertiary education

Her understanding of how to structure the teaching of language would be influenced by Professor T., a university lecturer, who had developed a course that was communicative in ethos. She refers to it as *this special methodology*. Special, most probably because it contrasted with the traditional logical progression in grammar learning to which she had become accustomed. Its theoretical basis, however, is

⁹⁴ After having seen

⁹⁵ after getting up at 8 o'clock

supported by the work of Wilkins (1979). Its rationale was the learning of functional language with which to communicate (Ch.2.5.i); Morag learnt various set expressions concerning the functions of arguing, expressing a point of view, conveying hypothesis and doubt etc. which she had to bring into conversation. She feels this had a significant impact on her spoken French, for which she achieved a distinction at university.

4.6.i.d During her assistantship

Morag recalls the influence of a teacher with whom she worked whilst as an *assistante* during her year abroad in France. He placed much emphasis on developing role-play and drama activities in which students had to use language to communicate and be creative. She explains, "*they would be doing these sketches and they weren't just regurgitating stuff*" (ibid.). Morag's use of the term *regurgitating* alludes to the production of pre-learnt language where students work principally within the controlled practice stage of language learning, and rarely move beyond using language that has been learned to communicate in other contexts. The implication here is that the work was improvised and that the students were drawing from their interlanguage to try to communicate in the sketches. Morag acknowledges the need for students to use language purposefully and supports the need to use drama and improvisation to bring *language to life* by encouraging purposeful interaction. This concept of students being forced to draw from their interlanguage to try and communicate resonates throughout her life story, and reflects Howatt's concept of *strong* communicative language teaching (1984).

4.6.i.e *Immersion*

Morag also contributed to the section *bilingue*⁹⁶ as an assistant. She was convinced that this type of immersion could be successful, “*that’s made me (pause) at least think that it can work, if it’s done (pause) properly in my view...and so I suppose that’s maybe influenced me a little bit*” (interview 16/7/10). The word *properly* is later defined by “*we spent ages preparing beforehand*” (ibid.) implying that any form of immersion or teaching through the target language requires planning and careful thought about the type of language used to ensure comprehension, exemplifying Krashen’s Input + 1 hypothesis (Ch.4.4.ii.c).

4.6.ii Pre-service training experiences

Morag studied for her PGCE at Cambridge University, but not at Homerton College. She now sees this as ironical, because she did not train under Kent⁹⁷ “*why sign up for (laughs) a university course that has got nothing to do with Kent?*” This elucidates perhaps the significant influence Kent has had in the teaching of modern foreign languages over the last 30 years, although it is unclear how he has personally influenced Morag’s methodology.

During her first teaching practice, she was observed by her tutor from Cambridge, who commented:

⁹⁶ Subjects taught through the medium of another language

⁹⁷ Kent (Rosetta’s tutor)— BEd and PGCE course tutor at Homerton during the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. He is the author of a number of books and articles on MFL. His field of research covers: target language, motivating boys, teaching of grammar through the TL and the Graded Objectives movement.

where did you learn to do, where did you learnt to do it like that?" I said, "I didn't really know where I had learned" but when I think back it must be because that's how my teacher used to do it, I suppose...I still believe in the importance of a sort of a logical progression of grammar underpinning everything, I still believe in pronunciation and intonation being crucial, I mean I don't understand people that say, "their accent doesn't, isn't important or it doesn't matter," I think it is crucial erm - her style of teaching- [sharp intake of breath] [pause] I mean I've come, come away from that, but the principles I think are the same, you know, what she believed in I still think is important.

(interview 16/7/10)

Unquestionably, her secondary school teacher shaped Morag's beliefs about language teaching. Her teacher provided such a positive role model reinforced by Morag's enjoyment of and success in French, and helping to further endorse the type of practice to which she was exposed. Morag is the only research participant to have been taught by the same teacher throughout her secondary schooling. Her formative language learning experiences are also the most positively perceived. Key themes emerge here that encapsulate her beliefs about language teaching instilled by her first teacher: the importance of developing speaking, instruction in grammar, and ensuring that what is learnt is relevant and purposeful. This life history will also explore how other influences may have led her to reformulate some of these beliefs.

4.6.ii.b Communicative language teaching

Morag considers the approach she was taught to adopt on the PGCE was communicative. She exemplifies this approach by referencing two textbooks – *Action!* And *Tricolore*, which she was encouraged to use on her teaching practice.

Action! was really based upon little bits and pieces of language...we did loads of stuff on flashcards, it was vocab. based I would say looking back. Erm I can't remember what we did on teaching grammar (pause) or (pause) you know, skills and strategies (pause) I don't really remember much (pause) this isn't nearly as strong as my school days the memories from this part of my life (laughs). (interview 16/7/10)

The concept of the communicative approach being reflected in the teaching of *little bits of language* suggests that the focus was on the learning of certain structures and vocabulary. There is no mention of functional language, despite her appreciation of the functional method she experienced at university. The use of *flash cards* rings very true given my own experiences; they became the iconic way of introducing new vocabulary in the 1990s because the presentation of a visual form supposedly prevented the use of English. Judging by her comment that this period in her life cannot be recalled as easily, nor with as much detail as her own schooling, suggests that her own school teacher has been a more significant influence on her methodology than her PGCE course. It might be considered alarming, however, that she cannot recall a theoretical basis to support how she was being asked to teach. Given the influences in her life before her PGCE: the input of her teacher: the innovative approaches of using drama to encourage interaction, and the immersion

studies to which she contributed on her year abroad, she surprisingly perhaps felt little conflict with the practice encouraged, perhaps because students were still learning.

I came to accept, at the time, that was the way, that was the best way, to do it... because they knew all these little bits of language that that they could (pause) try and do transactional things (pause) I somehow or other (pause) I suppose I must have just thought that was okay. (interview 16/7/10)

On her teaching practice she acknowledges that her teachers influenced her approach to classroom management but not MFL methodology. This is analysed in reference to the other life histories in Chapter Five.

4.6.iii In-service experiences

Morag started teaching in 1988 at the time of the genesis of GCSE, “*I started in '88 but I er I remember, so I was...the communicative approach*” (ibid.). This quote is significant because she is clearly linking a time period to a specific methodological approach. Later she expresses some doubt in defining the particular approach taken: “*I suppose it was the communicative approach...that I was doing, I did used to do grammar with them mind*” (ibid.). Morag here divorces grammar teaching from the communicative approach. This dichotomy of the communicative approach and the teaching of grammar was explicit in Ross’s life history (Ch.4.4). When Morag was encouraged to define her concept of grammar teaching, she posits that it was deductive teaching, “*I used to do the old “explanation – practice - exercises*” (ibid.) which reflected the grammar-translation method. The use of the adjective *old* rightly

denotes practice which has been around for a long time, but it also suggests something which is perhaps familiar, even comforting, a default position for language teachers.

When referring to how the demands of GCSE had influenced methodology, Morag discusses an approach, which while certainly focussing on the teaching of functions, did so in a very controlled manner: all language being rote learned.

I remember there was a whole series of 'I can do' statements with the new GCSE, there were, they were just related to functions when I think about it, they had very specific things like: I can ask for a fork, a knife, a spoon and a plate or something like that and I remember very logically erm making sure that higher up the school I'd...covered it, you know, I'd taught them every single thing on that check list if you like, that they were all planned into my lessons, that they could do every single one of those so and those were essentially communicative things. (interview 16/7/10)

What is described here is tantamount to a phrase book approach to language learning, and reflects a very *weak* form of communicative methodology, in contrast to a *strong* communicative approach, which concerns the learning of language through the process of trying to communicate (Finocchiaro & Brumfit 1983, Howatt 1984; Ch.2.5.i). This *strong* version of the communicative approach was rarely evident in any of the practice described in the previous life stories. Reasons for this will be debated in Chapter Five.

4.6.iii.a Beliefs about target language

Throughout her teaching career Morag has supported the need to teach through the target language, and attributes her stance to the very positive experiences of learning languages as a child, when her own teacher used much TL. She posits that throughout her PGCE course, maximised target language use was expected of all the trainees, “*I used the target language a lot, my French teacher did, at university, at PGCE we were told that we should, we did a lot of work on it*” (ibid.). She acknowledges that use of TL must be planned, and supported with appropriate visuals and gestures. She alludes to a colleague, who she believes used TL inappropriately and unsuccessfully.

She didn't (pause) think it through, she just sort of, she wasn't a French National but she just tried to do everything in the target language without any support and she became part of the [problem], I think in language teaching you've got to try to be on the side of the child, erm kind of against this, not against this, it's not nasty French but you know but against...the French is kind of, the tricky thing that you're with the child trying to er get a grip of and if you, don't use the target language carefully (pause) enough and don't think about how you are using it then you can become part of the problem, you are almost on the side of the enemy against the child, sort of thing. (interview 16/7/10; Ch.4.4.ii.d)

To highlight that the colleague was not a French National implies perhaps that native French speakers are more likely to adopt the type of practice described here. She suggests that well planned, supported target language use will be more accessible to

the students, again reflecting reflects Krashen's Input +1 hypothesis. Otherwise the teacher will quickly become the enemy of the child making the language inaccessible, inevitably leading to disenchantment.

Morag maintains that her use of target language was successful.

I used to be quite good at, you know, at supporting what I was saying and the kids were used to using it and when I went to my new school I was quite shocked because they weren't and it was erm so I did, I did use to use it a lot actually and that would be quite interesting now to go back in the classroom and, and do that but also try and get them to think more and talk more about their learning and all that, that would be interesting to do. (interview 16/7/11)

4.6.iv The impact of macro and micro policy on teacher cognition

4.6.iv.a National Curriculum Programmes of Study

When asked her how the content of NCPoS may have influenced her teaching, Morag laughed, this was then followed by an intake of breath and she commented, “*the Programmes of Study erm (pause) God! Crikey Adam*” (ibid.). Her response implied that she was surprised by the question, although she had been given the areas of data collection to reflect over before the interview. She maintains that she has read and studied the NCPoS but feels that the KS3 Framework has been more useful because “*it tells you specifically what you should try to do. Whereas the Programme of Study is quite general*” (ibid.). The key difference between the two being that the PoS define the concepts and skills which should be dealt with in the

MFL classroom whilst the KS3 Framework suggests how those concepts and skills should be developed (progress) over the 3 years of KS3 (Ch.1.9).

Morag acknowledges the influence of a local Authority MFL adviser during her time at her first school. She was provided with opportunities to attend training delivered by this adviser, who would refer to aspects of the PoS when exemplifying particular practice. This adviser would also encourage experimentation and would provide useful constructive feedback. She specifically remembers some very simple advice about differentiating listening activities. Students would have a simple grid folded down the middle. If they wished to use prompts or multiple-choice answers for support, they could open up the paper, if they wished to be more challenged they could leave the paper folded. She similarly worked with a lead HMI inspector for MFL on an ICT project, which was related to the PoS. It was through her work with both that she developed an awareness of the expectations within the PoS.

4.6.iv.b KS3 Framework

For her, the Framework “tr[ied] to get people to think more clearly about what progression means in language learning” (ibid.). In her second school she recalls the time before the launch of the Framework.

We were teaching lessons in which, we were doing J'ai mal à la tête⁹⁸, J'ai mal au bras⁹⁹, J'ai mal à la jambe¹⁰⁰, drilling it, getting them to regurgitate it back, that was what I was doing and I hadn't, although I often had...we did

⁹⁸ I have a headache

⁹⁹ my arm hurts

¹⁰⁰ my leg hurts

*often have grammar objectives as well, but I think, I hadn't, I still saw progression to the extent, because of the GCSE, and because I didn't know any better as getting more words and yes being able to put them together into sentences using different grammar points but, **not really still working hard on getting the kids to see the importance of that**, so I think the KS3 Framework, by sort of highlighting what those kind of things might be and the skills and strategies that they need and then divvying them up, it kind of, helped you, helped, people to see what progression means. (interview 16/7/10)*

Her practice, to some extent, was characterised by the teaching of set expressions and the learning of vocabulary, which she earlier attributed to the expectations at GCSE influencing MFL methodology (Ch.4.5.iii.b). She posits that the Framework led to a paradigm shift in her thinking, especially in seeing the links between language teaching and the teaching of other subjects. She stopped perceiving MFL methodology as exclusive, and in isolation from the teaching of other subjects.

I don't know if it is right or wrong but, I've, I've shifted much more to looking at learning and teaching: good things for learning and, if they're good for learning and teaching then they're probably good for (pause) language learning as well. (interview 16/7/10)

Ironically therefore, a document which focussed upon suggesting progression in language teaching made her stop thinking of MFL methodology as being unique and

subject specific, but helped her see the generic appreciation of what had been suggested.

She makes reference to teachers who say:

“oh, we’re different from everybody else we can’t do that” [...] I think that we should deliberately try and align ourselves much more with some of the other subjects and I think I’ve changed a bit in that over the years, maybe in the past I would have been a bit more “oh yeah, we’re a special case, we can’t do it like that”, whereas I’ve changed on that and I think that’s down to the Foundation Subjects’ strand¹⁰¹, the T, what was it called at first? The TLF strand, teaching and learning in the Foundation subjects’ strand, all that kind of stuff that I’ve learned, sort of changed me a bit there. (interview 16/7/10)

She suggests therefore that this generic focus on teaching and learning, as a result of the National Strategy, was actually having a beneficial effect on MFL teaching and learning. However, in terms of MFL methodology, Morag maintains that the PPP paradigm *“the presentation, practise and production or whatever it was”* remains essential in language teaching, whilst the concept of practice is expressed differently in other subject areas, *“there’s not the same need for an emphasis on practice as we’ve got”* (ibid.).

Morag acknowledges how her *“attitudes have changed most radically since [she] came out of teaching”*. Her work as an adviser has fortuitously allowed her the time

¹⁰¹ collection of CPD resources for the foundation subjects provided by the National Strategy (2002)

to reflect on her practice, and study policy, such as the Framework in more detail. She attributes this change in thinking to the extra time she has had to reflect, a concept which will be explored further in Chapter Five.

4.6.iv.c Micro policy

Morag agrees to some extent with my initial belief that the National Strategy and Section Five Ofsted inspections have led to schools standardising expectations for teaching and learning.

Yeah, poss...in some schools...but not in, not in all....I mean the criteria for teaching and learning, don't ask you to teach in a particular way but some schools are possibly interpreting it in that way. Erm I come across that occasionally but not (pause) too much. (interview 16/7/10)

She does find herself opposed to systems of recording students' attainment data, in particular how some schools track progress of students over time (Ch.1.2.ii). Much of this is as a result of Ofsted's focus on student progress and their expectation that students will make so many levels of progress over a Key Stage. Schools need to make this as explicit as possible.

Perhaps over assessment I have (pause) erm in terms of, they [the students] are expected to make two (pause) levels of progress or er and sublevels and all this kind of thing, erm which I don't think is appropriate for languages any more than for any other foundation subject incidentally, but, and they're being asked to prove why children haven't made this, these two levels of

progress type thing. I suppose that comes down possibly to Ofsted or maybe just from the senior management team's drive for (pause) higher standards (pause) or whatever but I think there is quite often a tension there, not so much (voice goes up) on teaching and learning. (interview 16/7/10)

Conclusion

Morag's early experiences of language learning, in particular aspects of methodology modelled by her teacher, would profoundly shape her own views on foreign language teaching and practice, with an emphasis on the development of speaking, instruction in grammar and the need for language to be presented in relevant contexts. Influences at university, and during her assistantship in France would help consolidate the view that language can be developed through social practice, by being placed in contexts where the learner is compelled to interact with others and forced to communicate. This concept embodies strong communicative methodology. Paradoxically, however, her beliefs about language teaching support the communicative – grammar dichotomy. Beliefs would be challenged by requirements of GCSE assessment, which would favour a behaviourist approach to ensure the rote learning of structures in order to complete the tasks. Her experiences as an adviser, enabling her time to reflect on policy would signal a shift away from the learning of vocabulary, to the focus upon structure, and progression in grammatical concepts.

Conclusion to Chapter 4

The chapter displayed the data pertaining to my research participants in respect of the research questions. It explored the influences which have shaped MFL teacher

cognition and beliefs of the five research participants and myself. A key focus has been the views on the teaching of grammar and the role of the target language. The chapter explored how attitudes to the teaching of grammar have been constructed, identifying from where these attitudes may have originated, and how they have evolved over the years. Having presented the data of the study, in the form of individual life histories, the next chapter presents a cross analysis of the data presented. What follows therefore is a synthesis, which merges the characteristics described here.

Chapter Five: Analysis of data

This chapter contains further analysis of the data presented in Chapter Four of the thesis. Additional data and data from the pilot study have been included to support the analysis. The purpose of this study was to explore the influences in the construction of MFL teacher cognition:

What are the influences identified by secondary modern foreign language teachers, which have contributed to the construction of their cognition: beliefs and pedagogical content knowledge?

5.1 Defining cognition

5.1.i Pedagogical content knowledge and beliefs

Cognition was defined in Chapter One as pedagogical content knowledge and beliefs, although “*untangling closely related notions such as belief and knowledge is problematic*” (Borg 2003, pp.83-86). Grossman, Wilson & Shulman (1989, p.31); Pajares (1992, p.308); Woods (1986); Verloop, van Driel & Meijer (2001) concur (Ch.1.12.v).

Furthermore, beliefs and knowledge are defined eclectically (Ball, Thames & Phelps 2008) and interchangeably (Clandinin & Connelly 1987). Shulman’s (1986) initial concept of pedagogical content knowledge “*represent[ed] the blending of content and knowledge into an understanding of how particular topics, problems or issues are organised, represented and adapted to the diverse interests and abilities of learners*” (p.8). Pajares (1992) identifies beliefs as influencing practice in the

classroom. Similarly Borg's (2003) concept of cognition encompasses "*what teachers think, know and believe and the relationships of these to what teachers do in the classroom*" (p.81). Knowledge and beliefs are experiential and constructed (Clandinin & Connelly 1987; Johnson 1994; van Driel, Verloop & de Vos 1998) exemplified by Schulman's *Wisdoms of practice* (1986). Furthermore teacher beliefs and knowledge may develop through reflection (Schön 1983; Calderhead 1991; Clandinin 1992; Calderhead & Gates 1993) and in dialogue with the self and others (Bakhtin 1981). Areas of influence may encompass: factual subject knowledge; curriculum documentation and research findings in education (Schulman 1987).

5.1.ii Areas of influences

The conceptual framework of the study delineates four key areas of influence: pre-training influences, pre-service training experiences, in-service experiences and the influence of micro and macro policy. The first area may contain "*remembered childhood experiences about learning and family activities and family role models*" (Knowles, p.106) as well as "*significantly positive and negative university and pre-service educational theory classes*" (*ibid.*). It examines experiences from pre-school, school, university and family. The second area of experience focusses on the role of teacher education and the third, experiences in school after completing a teacher education programme. The last area is the influence of school and national policy on teacher cognition. All four areas may contain influences provided by "*role models, especially positive ones provided by 'remembrances of previous teachers'*" and "*previous teaching experiences*" (*ibid.*)

5.1.iii Structuring the analysis

Delineating analysis into the four key areas of influence identified in the conceptual framework (3.1) has been a challenge since influences from one stage of life may resonate with others. The influence of macro policy, for example, may be evident in pre-training, pre-service training and in-service experiences. This chapter will begin (Ch.5.2) with an analysis of pre-training language teaching and learning experiences which may be profound sources of influence on teacher cognition (Lortie 1975; Nisbett & Ross 1980; Calderhead 1991; Knowles 1992; Freeman 1992; Cooper & Olson 1996; Bailey & Nunan 1996; Blyth 1997; Yee Fan Tang 2002; Borg 1999a, 2003; Phipps & Borg 2009).

Section 5.4 will examine pre-service training which will allow an exploration of the impact of teacher education (Knowles 1992; Yee Fan Tang 2002). In-service experiences will not be analysed in a separate section but explored throughout the chapter. The section covering the sub-question: *what has shaped the beliefs of teachers in respect of teaching grammar?* is dealt with after the section on pre-training influences (Ch.5.3).

Subsequent sections will examine the influence of macro policy (Ch.5.5 / Ch.5.8), as defined here as national curriculum documentation in shaping beliefs. It is in this section that I will explore the sub-question: *What role does target language play in the teaching and learning of languages?* I will also pursue a definition of communicative language teaching provided by the data in section 5.7. Analysis of policy will be cross-referenced with Chapter One, which presented a review of national policy since the 1970s.

The final section (Ch.5.9) analyses participants' responses to micro policy, and its influence on beliefs. Here I will consider my belief that pedagogical practice prescribed by schools may be at odds with constructed beliefs about MFL methodology. Meshed within this are influences of Ofsted – its perceived impact on beliefs, cognition and practice.

5.2 Early language learning experiences

5.2.i Guiding Images

In Chapter 1.12, I examined how early language learning experiences may significantly influence beliefs and content knowledge (Lortie 1975; Nisbett & Ross 1980; Calderhead 1991; Knowles 1992; Freeman 1992; Cooper & Olson 1996; Bailey & Nunan 1996; Blyth 1997; Yee Fan Tang 2002; Borg 1999a, 2003; Phipps & Borg 2009). Freeman (1992) highlighted how teachers' own schooling could shape subsequent practice, *"the memories of instruction gained through their 'apprenticeship of observation' function as de facto guides for teachers as they approach what they do in the classroom"* (p.88). This is highly evident in Morag's life history; the *guiding images* (Goodman 1998) and *positive role model* (Knowles 1992) provided by her first teacher contributed to her beliefs about the importance of speaking skills; the drilling of correct pronunciation; teaching through the target language and contextualising language (Ch.4.6.i.a/b). There is a causal link: Morag's profound enjoyment of and success in learning a language was attributable to the practice demonstrated by her teacher. Morag had already adopted practice which would be reinforced by expectations on her PGCE and this is supported by the reaction of her PGCE tutor who, upon observing her for the first time, was pleasantly surprised and questioned from whom she had learnt such practice (Ch.4.6.ii).

Such guiding images are less obvious in the other life histories. Mrs S's practice of beginning lessons with questions in the target language to allow students to practise previously learnt language was evident in my own first year of learning languages, and as a routine, figures in my own practice today (Ch.4.1.i). This *guiding image* was subsequently reinforced by Ota Sensei during my year in Japan (Ch.4.1.i.o).

5.2.ii Grammar pedagogy

Throughout the formative years of early secondary education, deductive grammar teaching is a feature of the life histories of all participants. The experience of being taught grammar deductively at an early age would leave Rosetta mystified and disenchanted with learning French and this has significantly influenced her beliefs about the teaching of grammar (Ch.4.5.iii.a). Nisbett and Ross (1980), Nespor (1987) and Borg (2003) conclude that such powerful early experiences "*are resistant to change even in the face of contradictory evidence*" (p.86). Rosetta maintains that she is cautious about putting students off by adopting a deductively grammatical approach, despite herself later falling in love with grammar and language learning during her second year at school. She has furthermore acknowledged students' disenchantment, which she has attributed to her avoidance of a more thorough exploration of grammar with the students (Ch.4.5.iii.a).

Ken's *reaction against* the practice of his early teachers has led to his rejection of a traditional model of grammatical progression (Ch.4.2.iii.c) favouring instead the teaching of key functional and notional structures. However, translation (interpreting) is used as a method to encourage students to construct sentences in the TL. Jane

on the other hand loved grammar at school (Ch.4.3.1.b) because of its apparent transparency – it was either right or wrong and this brought security and immediate rewards. She has not rejected deductive grammar teaching in the classroom. She posits moreover that the choice of teaching method is dependent upon context. Her own practice reflects both inductive and deductive approaches to the teaching and learning of grammar.

Ross's early language learning experiences were characterised by the polarisation of extremes, with some teachers adopting communicative approaches and others deductive grammar teaching (Ch.4.4.i.a). This is significant since he now claims that his practice is a mixture of didactic grammar teaching and elements of the communicative approach: "*basically making a mélange of the two*".

For Zelda, it was on an exchange visit to France as a student that she suddenly realised the limitations of the approach she experienced as a child.

Something happened in a restaurant, and I needed a cloth or something, and I couldn't cope I don't think it was relevant to everyday situations. I remember being able to write essays about erm carriages going down cobble streets, farmers shooting pheasants...a lot of vocabulary we learnt was totally irrelevant. (interview 11/7/10)

She maintains that the deductive grammar teaching she experienced at school and the learning of much literary vocabulary had not equipped her to communicate in

ordinary everyday situations. Her stance now is such that grammar and vocabulary must be contextualised and relevant. This is explored in Ch.5.3.i.

5.2.iii teacher personality

Jane, Rosetta and Morag allude directly or indirectly to teacher personality. Rosetta performed badly in her first year in French at secondary school. She disliked the teacher and struggled with the subject. She began to excel following a change of teacher (Ch.4.5.i.a). Any discord in her life history is attributed by her being pressurised, “*I don’t want people to impose themselves too much on me*”, and not finding sense in what she is being asked to do “*now I don’t think that is something I want to subscribe to, can’t see the point of it*”. This may explain the relationship problems with her first teacher – she was being forced to do something she did not understand. She believes she holds back “*I think I’m too reticent about imposing myself*” and that this has led to her being “*a little bit soft on the teaching of grammar*”.

Jane’s experiences of learning languages were positive when the teachers were empathetic, kind and humorous (Ch.4.3.i.a). Such role models have shaped her beliefs about how to teach: “*that’s how I teach...the only reason she influenced me was because she was such a nice person*”. Morag loved French and loved her secondary school teacher (Ch.4.6.i.a). Feeling secure and enjoying the subject, are for Krashen key to success in learning languages. He suggests how the affective filter (Ch.4.1.i.g) may render language acquisition less effective if the learner is anxious and insecure. This is corroborated by Tsui (1996), whose research showed that anxiety is a highly debilitating factor in the MFL classroom. Furthermore, a teacher’s personality and style were considered to be far more influential in creating

positive learning experiences than teacher's pedagogical practice. Other factors, which were deemed to be most important, were affective qualities, such as being caring, mutually respectful and highly motivating (Tsui 1996).

5.2.iv Narratives

Both Ken and my secondary teachers used the Longman Audio-Visual French resources (see chapter 4.1.i / 4.2.i). Language presented in these textbooks was always in the form of a narrative, leading to short picture stories being written / or narrated by students. Ken's practice is characterised by the production of narratives (Ch.4.2.i), whilst modules of work created during my time as adviser also focussed on learning through narratives and constructing narratives such as spy stories and murder mysteries (Ch.4.1.iii). It appears that five years of being conditioned to learn through and produce short stories has left an indelible imprint on our own practice. However, this could also have been reinforced by expectations of O Level during the 1980s, whereby candidates had to produce short picture stories. Furthermore, students today should also include sections of narrative in their controlled GCSE assessment to access higher grade boundaries (AQA 2012, p.8). It could therefore be that these examinations are "*in turn directly determin[ing] classroom method*" (Norman 1998, p.49).

5.3 What has shaped the beliefs of teachers in respect of the teaching of grammar?

5.3.i Participants' meta-definition of deductive grammar teaching

Emerging from the data is a rejection of explicit, deductive grammar teaching as a single method through which modern foreign language teachers should teach. Deductive grammar teaching is defined by Rosetta as learning verb paradigms and

“copying out sentences and changing the verbs”, practice which she has proscribed for herself, although still ensures that students understand and try to recognise parts of speech. For Morag, grammar teaching is “*explanation - practice - exercises*” implying that the teaching is deductive and that language presented is de-contextualised (Ch.2.3.i). Zelda and Ross support this view.

However, both Ken’s life history and my early experience of being introduced to language in narrative suggest that language may not always be de-contextualised. For Ken, a traditional approach to the teaching of grammar leads to the learning of some language, which is not useful, and Zelda concurs (Ch.2.3.ii). Ken rejects the traditional view of a logical progression in grammar (Ch.4.2.iii.b; Ch.2.3.i) to favour the teaching of useful functional structures, a belief instilled from work with his first head of department and his reading of Willis (1990) and Lewis (1993). Supporting Rosetta’s view that deductive grammar teaching is about *sentence work*, Jane elaborates that it is also about following patterns, which can either be right or wrong (Ch.4.3.i). Similarly Ross recalls the emphasis on error correction within such an approach (Ch.4.4.i.a; Ch.2.3.i).

5.3.ii When to employ inductive and deductive grammar teaching

Jane and Ross combine deductive and inductive approaches to the teaching of grammar, and this fusion is dependent upon context (the perceived ability range of the students being taught). This supports Cochran, De Ruiter and Kings’ (1993) notion of PCK, which is influenced by the needs of the students taught (Ch.1.12.iii). However Jane and Ross interpret induction differently. Ross’s understanding of induction more closely mirrors Krashen’s concept of acquisition in language, where

there is no actual directed focus on forms by the teacher (Ch.4.4.iii.c). This perhaps reflects his early experiences of acquiring Italian, growing up in a bi-lingual household. It also may reflect Ken's interpretation of induction as something he does not plan for but which may "*happen...as we go along*".

Jane's interpretation of teaching grammar inductively is exemplified in students being guided to spot differences and similarities in selected language to assist in their hypothesising of rules (Ch.4.3.iii.c). Krashen (1982) rejects the idea that inductive approaches encapsulate the acquisition process whilst deduction leads to learning; he maintains that "*both inductive and deductive learning are learning. Neither have anything directly to do with subconscious language acquisition*" (p.113). In both, students are still learning the language, either by being told the rules, or by hypothesising what the rules may be. Krashen (1982) acknowledges that induction may be sometimes confused with acquisition, and there are similarities – students are given the input first and the rule follows. For him,

[w]hen the goal is inductive learning, the focus is on form, and the learner attempts to analyse formal aspects of the data presented. When the goal is acquisition, the acquirer attempts to understand the message contained in the input...[a]n inductively-learned rule is a conscious mental representation of a linguistic generalisation – an acquired rule is not conscious...but is manifested by a “feel” for correctness. (p.114)

Jane and Ross favour deductive approaches with the more able, but this is not exclusively the case. Zara continues to use grammar type drills and adopts

deductive teaching approaches – the explanation of rules first followed by application. She posits however that this may not always be evidence of their understanding:

I can explain it and they can write it down but you know they have got to understand it and so at the end of the day, you have got to throw them something where they are gonna have to search and find out the rules and work out why it's like that...because by doing it and discussing it they are more likely to remember it than me just telling them. (interview 10/7/10)

Her practice is similarly characterised by both inductive and deductive approaches to the teaching of grammar. Findings here reflect outcomes from Borg's (1999a) study.

Pedagogical dichotomies (e.g. inductive vs. deductive) implied in existing research on grammar teaching become blurred in practice. That is, teachers alternate between or blend these traditionally exclusive strategies depending upon specific instructional factors. (pp.25-26)

Zelda's stance on the teaching of grammar is such that it must not be taught deductively, divorced from a relevant context, reflecting my own and Rosetta's views. She is therefore opposed to deduction, "*you can't just sort of teach them a grammatical point because that will put them right off*" (interview 11/7/10). She refers to the deductive teaching of grammar as *grammar grinding*, with its negative connotations. This was exactly the same phrase used by my PGCE tutor in reference to deductive grammar teaching (Ch.4.1.ii.b) – an expression I too have

adopted. She posits that language should always be studied in a context in which the language is being used for a purpose, such as providing information on a website.

What I do is take a passage, usually from the internet because there are so many interesting things you can find relevant to the topic...and then we will pick out certain grammatical points and then go from there. (interview 11/7/10)

She then encourages the more able students to work out the rule from the examples presented in the text, which she maintains students enjoy because it is more challenging than just telling them the rules. With lower attainers she plans lots of different types of games in which the students have to apply grammatical rules to produce language orally. Such practice was observed in Jane's Year 10 group, although these students were higher attainers (Ch.4.3.i.b).

What cannot be inferred here is any clear consensus among Jane, Ross, Zelda and Zara as to for whom inductive or deductive approaches are most suitable. For Hammerly (1975) the type of language being taught should dictate the approach (inductive or deductive) taken. He maintains that the learning of certain structures, particularly those that follow a clear unambiguous pattern, such as –er verb paradigms in French will be learnt more effectively through inductive approaches than deductive (p.17). For this reason, I focus primarily on –er verbs in French or weak verbs in German when introducing the concept of a tense (Ch.4.1.iv.d). Hammerly posits that up to 80% of French and Spanish structures could be learnt this way, “*although he provided no clear guidelines to determine which structures could be learnt inductively and which ones deductively*” (Fischer 1979, p.99). Opinion

is largely divided as to which approach is most effective. Indeed for Ellis (2008), “[b]oth inductive and deductive explicit instruction appear to work with no clear evidence in favour of either” (p.903), Borg concurs (1999b, p.157) although “[n]ot all learners will be interested in or capable of inducing explicit representations of grammatical rules” (Ellis 1994, p.645). Harmer (1987) maintains that teaching students to learn inductively can be highly motivating: “encouraging students to discover grammar for themselves is one valuable way of helping them get to grips with the language” (p.39). My experience of working out how to form the immediate future time frame (Ch.4.1.i.c) proved to be highly motivating and triggered an understanding of grammar. As discussed in Ch.4.1.iii.c I promote inductive approaches to the learning of grammar, and I recognise that early experience, instruction of my PGCE tutor as well as my attribution of my originally poor speaking and listening skills to the method as key influences in this area. Borg (1999a) similarly quotes the experiences of one of the participants in his study into the construction of language teacher beliefs, “[a]nother teacher minimised the use of grammatical terminology in her work because her metalinguistically rich experiences of L2 learning had not enabled her to become a competent speaker of the language she studied” (p.26). However my autobiography chronicles how, as a result of my early education, the principles of grammar-translation conditioned my thinking about language learning methodology up to my PGCE course (Ch.4.1.ii.b) highlighting again the resistance of early beliefs to change.

Fischer (1979), drawing from the contrastive analysis hypothesis (Lado 1957; Ch.2.4.iv), suggests that inductive approaches should be adopted when the structure, or rule, in the target language is similar to the same structure in the native

language, or when the structure is dissimilar but less complex, “*where the foreign language rule is similar or dissimilar but simpler than the native rule*” (p.101). When the structure is dissimilar “*and of equal or greater complexity than the native language rule*” (ibid.) explicit explanation is needed and therefore a deductive approach should be adopted.

A critique of this would be around the subjective nature of what is complexity. The example of –er verbs, which conjugate with the auxillary *avoir* in the perfect tense, may be considered both less and more complex than the equivalent in English. The pattern in French is highly regular, unlike the present perfect or simple past in English, and therefore, for Fischer, would be considered less complex and should be taught inductively. However, the structure *J'ai joué*, for example, may literally be translated as *I have played*, and is therefore similar to the English equivalent but *J'ai joué* may also be translated, depending upon context, as *I played* and *I did play* – an example of one form in one language being represented by three different translations is a challenging concept for some students. Whilst I adopt an inductive approach to the introduction of such language there is a need for subsequent deductive explanation to avoid the inevitable literal translations: *J'ai fait joue*¹⁰² and *Je joue*¹⁰³ from students. Takimoto (2008) similarly debates whether some aspects of language are better learnt through deductive approaches because of the need for direct explanation. Borg concurs (1999b) “*not all grammar len[ds] itself to or warrant[s] the time and effort involved in discovery*” and furthermore discovery work can be time consuming and requires much planning time (p.160) (Grenfell 2000, p.24). For Scrivener (2005) “*discovery is demanding... it isn't enough to throw a task*

¹⁰² I did play (literal translation)

¹⁰³ I played (literal translation)

at the learners, let them do it and then move on. Guided discovery requires imagination and flexibility" (p.268). This is exemplified by Jane's students acting as detectives to work out the paradigm of present tense weak verbs in German (Ch.4.3.iii.b), or my own work with students differentiating present tense verbs forms in French (see Appendix 10).

Krashen (1975), in response to Hammerly's work, refers to some enlightening - but limited and now dated evidence - that right handed students, who rely more on the left hemisphere of the brain, learn grammar more effectively deductively than left handed students who rely more on the right hemisphere. The research was limited to university students and it would be unwise to generalise findings to the age and ability range of English comprehensive school students, although it might be interesting to replicate the research in that context. The findings may add support to Jane's belief that deduction is better for more able learners as well as dispute her suggestion that the more able will naturally hypothesize rules governing grammar from the input they have received.

5.3.iii The role of context

Context does not just influence the approach taken when teaching grammar it also contributes to informing what aspects of grammar are taught to students. Rosetta (Ch.4.5.iii.b) and I both differentiate the amount of grammar covered according to the ability of the students taught. Lower attaining students will at best be expected to work with just the 1st and 3rd person singular persons of high frequency verbs. We both see the value in teaching students to have full access to the –er verb paradigm (Ch.4.5.iii.a) since this allows students to access thousands of verbs. Indeed I have gone to the extremes of allowing students to write stories in French but only with

verbs following the –er paradigm (Ch.4.1.iv.d). Higher ability students will access the whole paradigm of certain high frequency verbs with those parts of the verbs being introduced perhaps over time. This also mirrors suggestions for progression in verbs recommended by the 2003 KS3 MFL Framework (Ch.1.9.i). Whilst this may reflect how I was taught to teach grammar, discussed in 4.1.ii.b, it also reflects a pragmatic belief that to attain a C at GCSE use of multiple persons of a paradigm is not needed. Morag similarly discusses how expectations at GCSE favoured a phrase book approach to language teaching whereby individual structures are rote learnt, with little progression in terms of understanding grammatical concepts (Ch.4.6.iv.b) (Mitchell 1994, 2000; Hornsey 1995; Grey 1999).

5.3.iv Can all grammar be learnt?

Experience too has contributed to a rejection of deductive grammar teaching by some. Participants' perceptions of the limitations of the method are exemplified by their lack of understanding of grammar at particular times when they were themselves students. Zelda asserts that she only really felt confident with grammar after she had been teaching for a year, "*it wasn't until I taught I should think a year before I really felt that...a complete understanding of the French grammar*" (interview 11/7/10). This infers that aspects of grammar, despite being taught through grammar-translation, remained unclear until she actually had to teach French.

Zara discusses how she only really began to grasp an understanding of French grammar when she was studying for her A levels. Before then she often experienced frustration towards grammar: "*I can remember getting really frustrated because we had to pick out verbs in the conditional tense from texts and I just couldn't do it*"

(interview 10/7/10). She attributes this to a lack of intelligence, because some of her peers were able to do it, and therefore must have been more intelligent. This idea of intelligence is disputed because at A level she believes that she forced herself to understand, "*I had to sit down and make myself understand it*" (ibid.).

Haziness in understanding grammar is alluded to by others. Ken discussed how more advanced grammar – the agreement of past participles in French remained unclear throughout his A level studies. He and Morag similarly allude to intelligence as a factor in enabling students to comprehend grammatical concepts. Furthermore, Rosetta and myself both attribute confusion during our first year of learning French to the deductive teaching of grammar.

These experiences may support Krashen's Monitor and Natural Order Hypothesis (1981 1982). Krashen and Terrell (1983) posit that only *easy* aspects of grammar can be actually learned (that learners will have a conscious understanding of the rules governing these parts of grammar and are able to apply the rules) (Ellis 1985, p.233). More difficult aspects of grammar have to be acquired over time *in a predictable order*, although Krashen's definition of aspects of grammar, which are termed easy or difficult, is vague and brief. Ellis (2006) firmly rejects the idea that only 'easy' grammar can be learned. Indeed, this thesis illuminates the ability to learn grammar; it presents details about eight MFL practitioners, language graduates, who have mastered considerable amounts of foreign language grammar. However the process has not always been easy, it has taken time and much practice of using the language in a classroom, in the target language countries and in the context of

teaching the language for this explicit knowledge of grammar to become fully understood and acquired / implicit.

5.4 Pre-service training experiences

This section explores the role Initial Teacher Training has played in the construction of participants' pedagogical content knowledge and cognition (see Chapters 4.1.ii / 4.2.ii / 4.3.ii /4.4.ii /4.5.ii /4.6.ii). It will begin by examining influences in the context of the teacher placement. It will explore the impact of the HEI tutor on participants' cognition, as well as the influence of educational theory. This is particularly relevant in light of how current government changes to initial teacher training in this country are shifting the focus of provision away from higher education institutions and in favour of school based training.

5.4.i Teaching placement

The life histories show a limited, if negligible, positive influence of teachers with whom members of the research sample worked whilst on teaching placement. Rosetta is unable to recall anything, from her extensive teaching practices during the late 1970s.

Zelda found departmental colleagues uninspiring, "*the head of department...was quite young but I felt he was just going through the motions, he didn't seem to have a real love for his subject or for the job*" (interview 11/7/10). Furthermore, acknowledging at that time a role for TL in language teaching, she was alarmed that "*the department used so much English...I thought they should be using a lot more target language*" (ibid.). She recalls that she and other trainees had to travel some

way to see a teacher whose practice was considered exemplary by her PGCE tutor because the practitioner was skilful at using target language and encouraging oral work. PGCE students having *to travel* to observe recommended practice implies that teaching through the TL was not common in the mid 1970s and therefore there were few positive role models to learn from. It does however suggest that such practice was highly valued.

Ken found departmental colleagues at his placement school patronising. He recalls their contempt for him when he offered to assist a colleague in improving her Spanish because he was the PGCE student, therefore perceived as inexperienced and unable to contribute, despite four years teaching of English in Mexico.

They thought it was hilarious that the PGCE student could help the Head of French with her Spanish because she was learning Spanish and they thought it hilarious that this person who was a PGCE student would be able to help the head of department. (interview 15/7/10)

Ross highlights the dichotomy between how he was taught to teach on his PGCE and the reality of practice witnessed on his teaching placement. His PGCE tutor advocated extensive target language use and inductive approaches to the learning of grammar both of which exemplify communicative approaches and national policy (Ch.4.4.ii). Departmental colleagues had rejected such practice - their use of target language was limited and many relied on deductive grammar teaching (Ch.4.4.ii.c) – practice, which was clearly at odds with national policy. Ross too quickly adopted their stance, “*abandoning...with the active encouragement of practising teachers, the*

ideals of training" (Grenfell 1997, p.30). This prevented him from taking the opportunity to contextualise or *frame* (Schön 1987) by drawing on what he had learned on his course, and the "*examples, images, understandings and actions*" (p.138) from past experiences essential in the process of learning to teach.

Zara was dismayed by her first teaching practice where colleagues appeared "*exhausted and fed-up*". It was a challenging school, and useful in terms of helping her to work on her classroom management techniques. She posits however that she learnt little about effective MFL pedagogy, "*I guess I learnt more about the pastoral side of things rather than the MFL teaching*" (interview 25/6/10).

Morag similarly does not identify fellow practitioners as a source of influence on her language teaching, "*methodologically wise, I wouldn't pick out anyone in particular that influenced me*" (interview 16/7/10). She does acknowledge how the placement allowed her also to develop her classroom management in a challenging school, "*I had to work my own way through making sure I got quietness or whatever to be able to do a lot of the stuff in the first place*" (ibid.). The phase *work my way through* clearly resonates with Furlong, Hirst, Pocklington & Miles' (1988) concept of teaching which encapsulates "*a constant process of interpretation, action, reflection and adjustment*" (p.123) in which there is "*uncertainty, instability, uniqueness, and value conflict*" (Schön 1983, p.49). Yee Fan Tang (2002) values how the teaching placement enables "*student teachers [to] learn the pragmatic aspects of teaching in the teaching practice context*" (p.53). Goodman (1988) found student teachers were most concerned about the need for control over their pupils (p.124).

At her second school, a selective independent, Zara became very influenced by department colleagues, “*everybody was fantastic...the head of department in particular threw everything out of the window that we would advocate would be good teaching i.e. target language, games*” (interview 25/6/10). Despite a rejection of target language use, his work was characterized by promoting inductive learning and his planning was built around pre-empting student errors. He also had a good sense of humour, which helped create a positive working environment. She describes how he encouraged students to work out the rules governing possessive pronouns in French. This had a huge impact on her: “*I've based 60% of my lessons around since...in that...he got them to work out the rules and the regulations*” (ibid.). She acknowledges that he only worked with higher attaining students but believes that inductive approaches to the teaching of grammar are appropriate for all students. This is very significant - the profound influence of one teacher over the development of a trainee teacher. Zara’s stance, even now, 20 years later, is antagonistic to the use of the target language. She does not believe in it; her justification for this is extensive and will be explored in Ch.5.6. Her primary motivation, however, for proscribing its use is because this school mentor did not use it.

Data also document friction between participants and their school mentors whilst on teaching placement. My recollection is of hating every single day of my main teaching practice due primarily to the contrary nature of my first *mentor*. Furthermore, the MFL department was an absolute shambles, with few resources, or schemes of work and there was a great deal of animosity between colleagues. My first mentor was replaced by another MFL teacher who had previously been a home economics teacher but had O level French. Constructive advice was non-existent.

The stress upon me during my teaching practice was, at times, unbearable. Another PGCE course tutor, who had a profound understanding of the key issues within the department, provided much needed support and was key to me completing my placement.

Jane similarly discusses discontent during her first placement. She considers the time to be “*a right disaster, it was dreadful*” principally due to the highly contrary nature of her school mentor, “*I couldn’t get it right. If I asked for help, I was asking for too much help; if I didn’t ask for help, I should have been asking for help*” (interview 7/10/10). At one point, the mentor submitted a negative termly report to the UEA without actually disclosing to Jane what had been written. Susan Halliwell, she felt, was incredibly supportive throughout and allowed her to write her own version of events to be submitted with the report. The support she received from her own UEA tutor was again invaluable.

5.4.ii Influence of the Higher Education Institute (HEI)

The influence of the HEI tutor has, with all but one participant, been positively and usefully perceived. A communicative philosophy exemplified by inductive approaches to the learning of grammar and the planned use of target language (Ch.4.1.ii.a-c) as well as certain techniques to drill new vocabulary such as the PPP paradigm were all advocated by my PGCE tutor, George. Such beliefs and practice remain engrained in my own teaching (Ch.4.1.iv.d). Jane speaks with much affection for her tutor and acknowledges the influence she had in helping develop a repertoire of interactive games to enable students to practise applying grammatical rules (Ch.4.3.ii.b). Rosetta is able to recall specific techniques for introducing certain

structures and aspects of grammar that had been demonstrated by Kent, which she still uses today (Ch.4.5.ii.b). Zara recalls how her tutor's thorough nature with assessment and giving students detailed feedback has definitely been an influence. Ken speaks with such respect and evident appreciation of one of his tutors: Ivan, who fuelled his interest in language teaching methodology (Ch.4.2.ii). It would not therefore be unsubstantiated to conclude that, for this research sample, the influence of the HEI tutor has been overwhelmingly more positive than school mentors and other colleagues in the teaching placement context.

The following section explores current government policy, which is reducing the role of HEI in teacher education and increasing opportunities for professionals to train in schools. This may appear alarming given the data presented here. Only Zara would identify a potentially positive role model from a teaching placement. However, his influence has been overwhelming – leading her to justify her proscription of TL merely because he did not do it. It has also led her to generalise practice, which may be appropriate in an exclusive, selective, educational context to other more comprehensive situations where it may be less suitable.

5.4.iii training experiences in schools

Unquestionably, since I embarked on this research project, there has been unprecedented change in English education driven by ideology from the current British Government. The Government White Paper: 'The Importance of Teaching' published in November 2010 provided the 'vision', supported by much rhetoric and highly selective research, to fuel much of this change over the last four years. The revised NC followed in 2013 (Ch.1.11). Initial teacher training has not remained

untouched. The White Paper highlighted an apparent need to increase the role schools and teachers will play in the training of new recruits, with the focus of training being “*on the practical teaching skills they [new teachers] will need*” because, according to the government, “*too little teacher training takes place on the job*” (DFE 2010, p.19). What is inferred, therefore, is that by spending more time training *on the job* in the classroom and less time learning about education and education theory with an initial teacher education (ITE) provider, new teachers will be better practitioners.

Initial proposals in the White Paper focussed on developing the Graduate Training Programme as well as creating a network of *Training Schools* to provide initial teacher training. Privately funded programmes such as Teach First have doubled their number of recruits since 2010 and the government- led Schools Direct programme which is “[a]n approach to ITT which gives schools control over recruiting and training their own teachers” (DFE website 14/3/2014) allows graduate trainee teachers to be based fully in school. Further justification for increasing time trainees spend in schools appeared to stem from the conclusion “*that teachers learn best from other professionals and that an ‘open classroom’ culture is vital: observing teaching and being observed, having the opportunity to plan, prepare, reflect and teach with other teachers*” (DES 2010, p.19).

This quote from the White Paper is a synopsis of a research report carried out by the London Institute and Manchester University, for the Government in 2003, into effective continuing professional development, and not ITT. I would not reject such collaborative working as a means of developing teachers’ existing pedagogical

subject knowledge. Indeed Fullan (2007, p.7) would support such practice to embed change in schools, but the challenges of making it feasible should not be underestimated.

Reaction to the Government's policies has been mixed. Wadsworth (2011), senior lecturer in Education at Goldsmiths University, writing in the *Guardian*, pinpoints the lack of evidence to support the view that school based training is superior to a mixture of school placement and university input. He highlights how the secretary of State for Education, whilst appearing to prefer school-based training, has nevertheless commented that "*our teachers are trained in some of the best institutions in the world*" (DFE 2011, p.2) which implies a certain valuing of the role tertiary education institutions play in ITT.

Eaton, writing for the *New Statesman* (26/10/12), highlights the contradictory nature of government policy. For example, Michael Gove has increased requirements for entry to the profession but financial support during training has been eliminated for those with a third degree classification or lower, exposing a assumption that those with better subject knowledge will make better teachers, and highlighting a scant disregard for other qualities such as '*patience, common sense, focus, more than a little belligerence, and vast reserves of tolerance and empathy*' (Macey 28/10/12). Indeed, as a number of research participants testify in this thesis, such personal traits have had a powerful influence on a number of the research participants (Rosetta, Ross, Morag and, in particular, Jane).

The Telegraph, perhaps predictably, welcomes the proposal that “*trainee teachers will spend more time in the classroom and less in teacher training colleges in which tired, left wing theories of education hold sway*” (Telegraph View 22/11/10). This right wing rhetoric of the Telegraph is grossly unsubstantiated, and is probably rooted in the archaic belief that teacher education is still dominated by the comprehensive vs. meritocratic grammar school debate, which characterised post war teacher training until the 1970s (Lawes 2002, p.40). This period is referred to as the *First Way* or the *Golden Age* of education, “*in which the ‘four disciplines’ of educational philosophy, history, sociology and psychology featured prominently*” (ibid.). These disciplines and the comprehensive – grammar school debate certainly did not dominate the compulsory tutorials and group seminars of my own training in the mid 1990s, although it was dealt with in one seminar on the history of education, as far as I can recall.

Teacher training has changed since the *Golden Age* and has been very much influenced by government policy since the Thatcher regime of the 1980s. Williams, lecturer in science education at the University of Sussex, writing in the Telegraph (3/2/11), suggests that left-wing orientated teacher training courses are now pure mythology. Far from being a place of creative, avant-garde and subversive thought, university teacher education courses have been “*subject to an almost oppressive regime of prescriptive standards and constant inspection*” (ibid.). The role of academic theory on ITT courses has been diminished over the years, firstly during 1980s when the focus was very much on “*a competence-based model of professional training for teachers*”, which Lawes (2002) refers to as the *second-way* (p.40). This was further reinforced by the introduction of a framework of competence-

based standards in Initial Teacher training by the Labour Government in 1998 (DFE 2011) providing:

a still more prescriptive 'national curriculum for teacher training', finally eradicating the intellectual and disciplinary foundations of teacher education, which were replaced by a skills and classroom management curriculum.

(Ball 2013, p.168)

The following section defines educational theory and examines its influence in the construction of teacher cognition.

5.4.iv The role of theory

Emerging from the data is that recall of aspects of educational theory dealt with on PGCE or BEd courses is, at times, patchy or non-existent. This may lead to a pre-emptive conclusion that the influence of theory for many participants has been limited. In seeking a definition of theory relevant to MFL teacher education, Lawes (2002) identifies two main branches encompassing "*both general educational theory which involves the 'four disciplines' of philosophy, history, sociology and psychology as well as, most importantly, the applied theory of modern foreign language teaching and learning*" (p.41). Whether it is possible to see the two fields in isolation is debatable, since behaviourism, for example, is an aspect of psychology generic to teaching and learning, but is also specific to the audio-lingual method which finds itself in the latter camp.

Some participants' perception of general educational theory is distinctly negative. Indeed Zelda, who trained in the mid-1970s (the *first wave*), before the changes brought in by the Thatcher regime, and whose course comprised much in the realm of the psychology of education, covering the work of Piaget, Montessori and De Bono, is fervently damning. She states, '*I'm not into metacognition – can you honestly say that any of that rubbish¹⁰⁴ has been of use to anyone – well was it?*' (interview 11/7/10). The question is rhetorical, assuming I would agree. However, Zelda supports inductive approaches to teaching grammar. She encourages students to work together in the construction of collective knowledge about grammatical rules, reflecting Piaget's (1973) theory about cognitive development and Montessori's (1969) theory about knowledge construction through discovery.

Jane, although appreciative of instruction on the practical aspects of the course, is equally dismissive of theory – it is unclear what those aspects of learning theory actually were because she cannot or chooses not to remember the content of the seminars / lectures. Whether this is actually true is debatable, but it is true for her from a constructed point of view. It also mirrors her initially expressed belief that the ability to teach is innate.

I don't know how I teach, I don't really analyse it, all I know is I just do it. It comes naturally; it's intuitive. I don't know how I do it, given that it was the last thing I ever wanted to do. I was born to it, I think God does exist and I think he has a very sick sense of humour and he heard me say, you know, that's

¹⁰⁴ Zelda insisted that the original word used was replaced

the last thing you'll ever want to do, "Right - here are the skills, off you go".

(interview 7/10/10)

The opening line implies that the ability to teach, or that those aspects of cognition: pedagogical content knowledge and beliefs, researched in this thesis, are innate. Jane suggests, albeit somewhat tongue-in cheek, that she has been gifted by God to teach and that this was pre-determined. She asserts that she does not analyse, which suggests a lack of reflection, but this is quickly contradicted by her subsequent comments which are reflective - she maintains, for example, that as a result of her own experiences at school, she is able to identify with young people today and pre-empt behaviour. Furthermore, her life history catalogues experiences, which have influenced how and what she teaches suggesting, paradoxically, that her teaching identity has been constructed, and is not innate (Lortie 1975; Nisbett and Ross 1980; Goodman 1988; Calderhead 1991; Knowles 1992; Freeman 1992; Cooper & Olson 1996; Johnson 1994, 1996; Bailey & Nunan 1996; Borg 1999a; 2003, Yee Fan Tang 2002; Phipps & Borg 2009).

Jane, although still dismissive of theory, later acknowledges how her teacher cognition has been shaped by other influences, and has therefore been constructed: '*I know nothing about learning theory that I learnt at university. If I know anything, it's things I have picked up now, in later life*' (interview 7/10/10). She similarly resists adopting terminology associated with language teaching (Ch.4.3.ii.b). Ross, like Jane, preferred the practical side to his teacher training to those aspects that dealt with educational theory.

I always got good or above good in observations, the actual theory side - I was never good on paperwork...or actually relating the theories of education to practice because I could never see that the practice exactly mirrored what the theories were. (interview 24/6/11)

The idea of theory being linked to paperwork almost reinforces the idea that it is academic and distant from the classroom. He also highlights his inability to see how theory is expressed through practice – how theory is reflected in what we do in the classroom. However like Zelda, Ross and Jane's practice is characterized by the repetition of words, by the encouragement of inductive learning and the construction of knowledge through discovery in pairs and in small groups. The concept of repetition to enhance learning clearly reflects behaviourist theory, the later two examples reflect learning exemplified through the ideas of Piaget (1973), Vygotsky (1978) and Montessori (1968).

Is it truly possible to remain untouched by the influences of learning theory when it is so clearly exemplified in practice? Such an observation suggests therefore that Jane, Zelda and Ross have a tacit understanding of theory but are unable to recall it or express it, “*we can know more than we can tell*” (Polanyi 1967, p.4). It is for Baumard (1999) aspects of knowledge and understanding of which we are not truly aware.

Lawes (2002,2003) however suggests that the lines between theory and the expression of theory in practice have become blurred resulting in practice becoming the theory. Mitchell (2000) posits, for example, that, “*learning activities for the*

classroom (group work, role play, tasks, etc.)" have become so embedded in the foreign language teaching that their theoretical basis has become ignored (p.289). Jane, for example, acknowledges her appreciation of the practical aspects of her ITT, such as instruction on games and group work, all of which have a theoretical basis for their effectiveness in the classroom, despite that theory (apparently) not being made explicit at the time of the training.

Ken's story brings to light a teacher who was very much interested in second language acquisition research and theory (Ch.4.2.ii). He was the only research participant to demonstrate specifically an understanding of the theory of Krashen and other researchers into academic theory. His practice is, by his own admission and backed up by observation, influenced by aspects of Lewis' lexical approach, and he is able to relate what he does in the classroom to relevant theory.

Argument concerning the role of theory in ITT is not in fact polarized into a sterile debate: practical experience in the classroom vs. theoretical knowledge provided by an academic institution. The value, indeed, absolute necessity, of practical classroom experience whilst training is certainly not in doubt. Where opinion may differ often concerns the specific role of theory in the initial stages of teacher training, and moreover what should be deemed theory (Pachler & Field 2001, p.17). For Grenfell (1997) it is a question of relevance, and suggests that the lack of appeal of "*the academic fields of sociology, psychology, and philosophy*" among trainee teachers is due to more pragmatic "*preoccup[ations] with how to survive and appear effective with large groups of children*" (p.30) (Ch.5.4.i).

For Lawes (2002), the role of academic theory has been much maligned and reduced by successive government intervention over the last thirty years, “[p]hilosophy of education has been sacrificed to better classroom management skills; curriculum theory has become learning how to implement the National Curriculum” (p.43). Lawes suggests that “[r]eflective practice has become the guiding principle of the majority of PGCE courses” (ibid., p.42; Schön 1983) and has replaced the concept of theory. She posits that the focus in ITT is very much on what should be done in the classroom, and not on exploration of the theoretical foundations which support practice. Such reflection therefore values the role of those “examples, images, understandings and actions” (Schön 1983, p.138) and *guiding images* (Goodman 1988) from past experiences in helping the teacher make sense of, and respond to, the teaching context.

Pachler and Field (2001) suggest that reflection is the integration of theory and practice in professional development (p.17). A question to raise in this respect is can reflection only be enriched by the addition of the study of educational theory? How can you merely focus upon the development of reflective practice if you only have your own practice upon which to reflect? Ken’s reading of the lexical approach (Lewis 1993) during his training helped shape his philosophy of language teaching. Sidelining theory may prevent trainees from applying theory and testing hypotheses about how to teach.

5.5 Macro Policy

5.5.i The National Curriculum

Emerging from the data is a discernable lack of familiarity with national policy documentation among the research participants. Ross and Jane claim to have never read them (Ch.4.4.iv; Ch.4.3.iv), Morag was slightly taken aback at my asking her about the NCPoS (Ch.4.6.iv). I did read the 1995 PoS on my PGCE course but I have no recollection of what I read. Before I became an adviser in 2003, my awareness of the National Curriculum Programme of Study was limited, at best, to the attainment target descriptors, against which I assessed performance at KS3. It was only embarking on this research that I studied the documents in detail.

Zara and Zelda confuse the NCPoS with the KS3 Framework and National Strategy. When asked how the Programmes of Study had influenced her practice, Zelda replies:

when the National Strategy was introduced we looked carefully at the programmes of study and incorporated them into our schemes of work because we could see the value and we could see that they would really speed up the students' language learning and make them erm develop their skills much more quickly I mean, using high frequency verbs. (interview 11/7/10)

High frequency verbs do not appear in the PoS, but do form a substantial part of the KS3 Framework documentation (see Appendix 6a). Jane appears to confuse the NCPoS with the KS3 Strategy and the KS3 Framework, “*you see I don't even know*

what they are called" (Ch.4.3.iv.a). Zara, when asked, "what are the Programmes of Study?" replied "er what do you mean?" but then elaborated,

I remember vaguely seeing a booklet probably about ten years ago with listening, speaking, reading and writing and some levels in it. I have probably somewhere got [it]...The programme of study for me, I look at the exam board specification to see what pupils need to know by the end of KS4 and work back from that. (interview 25/6/10)

This highlights the influence of GCSE specifications in shaping what is taught, and as discussed in (Ch.4.5.iii.b; Ch.5.3), how it is taught, leading to a weaker version of communicative methodology. Language teaching is characterised by the practice and rote learning of set phrases, vital to success at GCSE, which embodies a *phrase book* approach to MFL methodology (Mitchell 2000, p.289). This is not a new phenomenon – given the influence the O' Level examination had on methodology (Ch.1.3), nor is it unique to English education (Sakui 2004).

Zara's attitude towards policy generally is dismissive:

policy hasn't made any difference whatsoever...we were just talking about the KS3 strategy, a folder full of what to do and what not to do, doesn't help me because there is nothing in it that I think – oh that is really going to change miraculously the way that I teach or the way that the kids learn! Or it's common sense really if you've had a good teacher education, if that makes sense.
(interview 25/6/10)

She implies that, if you have been trained well as a teacher, then you do not need policy to tell you how to teach, although the content of teacher education courses will encompass dissemination of policy documents. In reference to my advisory work with her, she reflects slightly more positively about the Framework: “*we took the Year 7 scheme of work and worked out how and where we could fit in some of the things from the KS3 Framework that would help improve learning*” (bid.). She acknowledges that it does highlight examples of effective practice but is unable to pinpoint exactly what that practice is or how far it has influenced her own and other’s practice in the department, “*the KS3 Framework does have lots of things in it that are good practice for MFL teachers, again it’s nothing, I haven’t based a lot of what we do on it*” (ibid.). She states that as a document it is too long, complicated and at the time of the interview, its impact had not been evaluated. She does identify how I had encouraged the department to focus on the development of high frequency verbs – she maintains that this as a good idea, but does not know how it had an impact on practice in the department.

The National Curriculum documents were introduced to change modern foreign language teaching in England (Ch.1.2.i). Sikes (1992) identifies how the motivation for change stems from “*the assumption (which may or may not be justifiable) that all is not well and that students are not receiving the best education because teachers and their teaching is inappropriate or inadequate*” (p.37). As discussed in Chapter 1.3, foreign languages in the English curriculum were indeed elitist because of the nature of the O’ Level examination which largely encouraged grammar-translation in schools. The purpose of the National Curriculum and the GCSE examination was to increase accessibility to language learning and the only way to do that was to

change how languages would be taught. This was done by prescribing a communicative methodology, which proscribed deductive grammar teaching. It is a challenge to analyse the impact of the NCPoS documentation on the pedagogical subject knowledge and cognition of the research participants precisely because so few profess any knowledge of the documentation. Ken claims to have read the NCPoS but this has only confirmed for him that what he does in the classroom meets the expectations of the PoS.

5.5.ii Constructed understanding of policy documentation

Knowledge and understanding of policy documentation has often been constructed through dialogue and debate with other colleagues. Morag and Rosetta acknowledge how their knowledge of the NCPoS has developed through their work with others. Rosetta's mentoring of PGCE students over the years have vicariously kept her up to date with the latest edition of the PoS, since she has to assess them against some of the competences of the PoS. Morag's work with former LA advisers and HMI inspectors have helped develop her familiarity with the PoS. The basis of this work was to develop aspects of practice delineated by policy.

Understanding of policy is, however, more developed when teachers have the opportunity to share and reflect on it with others. Participants with whom I had worked as an adviser on interpreting the Framework could at least refer to aspects they have now incorporated into their own practice as a result of that work, and this is evidenced in observation. Jane states that I have helped her to put a greater emphasis on the teaching of structures (verbs) and how they can be recycled to encourage student creativity with language. Ross's life story highlights how I have

encouraged him to focus more on the teaching of high frequency language that is applicable in many contexts.

Fullan (2007) argues that in the highly pressurised context of school there is too little time for teachers to reflect on change and re-consider their beliefs, “[t]eachers constantly feel the critical shortage of time. And there are few intensive, ongoing learning opportunities for teachers individually or in concert to deeply acquire new learning concepts and skills” (p.24). The examples of effective change delineated here were as a result of time being made available for this collaborative construction of knowledge to take place.

5.6 What role does target language play in the teaching and learning of languages?

Despite a lack of familiarity with National Curriculum documentation, this next section examines how NCPoS have influenced participants' practice in the realm of target language as well as the role it plays in the teaching and learning of modern foreign languages.

Ken suggests that target language was the only aspect that most teachers took from the NCPoS. What emerges unquestionably from the data is that TL has been the most debated aspect of the NCPoS. Participants' use in reference to TL illustrates its significance for them. Ross states that during his training he was expected to teach mainly through the target language:

*Well initially wasn't it? It was one of those ones where you had to almost do **all** the lesson in French and that was what was seen as **the holy grail** of language teaching, you know, if you could do that, that's brilliant. (interview 24/6/11)*

His use of the term *Holy Grail* almost attributes the concept of teaching through the target language with some spiritual, religious value, as if it had been commissioned by God. Drawing from a mythological interpretation of the *Holy Grail*, it would furthermore suggest that teaching through the target language is elusive and difficult - if not impossible - to attain within classroom practice. Ross may also imply that delivery of the lesson through the target language was something which teachers (or merely himself) sought after but could not achieve. The language is also disparaging insinuating that it is almost ridiculous.

Despite target language use not endowing the practitioner with special powers or with eternal life, it was nevertheless upheld by the DES as good practice; "*the natural use of the target language for virtually all communication is a sure sign of a good modern language course*" (DES 1990, p.58). Indeed, far from it being something elusive and unattainable, the expectation before the publication of the first PoS was that interaction between teacher and students, in the target language, would be the "*normal means of communication*" (ibid., p.6). The creation of Ofsted in 1993 (Ch.1.2.iii) would force teachers to comply with the DES's mandate, because TL use could now be policed in classrooms during inspections, with teachers judged accordingly to its use. Indeed in 1993 Ofsted would posit, "*the increased use of target language by the teachers led to improved standards*" (Ofsted 1993, p.5) although there is no elaboration as to exactly how it had improved standards.

Rosetta, concurring with Ken, describes the use of target language as the “*be all and end all of teaching languages*” - attributing the practice again with some divine, omniscient metaphor. Jane remembers the introduction of policy on target language as “*there was this big push*” characterized by meetings and training to help people to teach through the TL. Rosetta similarly recalls the provision of training within her local authority at the time to help people to adapt their practice.

Drawing from the findings of this study, TL use is certainly not the *be all and end all* it was once perceived to be with its use now almost imperceptible in some participants’ practice.

Ross’s attitude towards the TL appears the most contradictory; he acknowledges a positive role model from his assistantship year, who taught through the TL. He experienced immersion being brought up bi-lingually (Ch.4.4.i.b/c; Ch.4.4.iii). He considers lectures delivered in English by his university lecturers as being dated. However, his own target language use is inconsistent and limited to the occasional command, praise and use of questions to elicit TL responses from students. Equally he misses opportunities to use the TL or will interpret TL commands into English. Rosetta and Jane’s use is similarly limited to simple commands and infrequent questions in the TL and use is inconsistent, although Jane does attempt to immerse students in short stories in the TL. Whereas Ken’s use of TL is restricted at KS3 and 4, he delivered much of his Year 12 lesson through the TL. He also refers to a previously observed A Level lesson when he was criticised for not using the TL because he was telling the students about Spanish history. It was a context in which he felt explaining historical events in the TL would be inappropriate. His near-

proscription of TL use among KS3 and KS4 students infers his view is that its use is more suited to advanced students of MFL.

It is debatable how limited and inconsistent TL use will add anything to the learning experience of the students. It appears participants are merely paying lip-service to a once statutory edict. Chapter 2.6 explored how the prescription of TL use implied that students would be immersed in rich input from which they might acquire language (Krashen 1981,1982,1983,1989). Participants either reject this as being time consuming and exhausting (Rosetta Ch.4.5.iv.b) or they believe the focus should be on encouraging student use of TL and not that of the teacher (Ken Ch.4.2.iv.a). Ross and perceive the greatest obstacle in TL use is that students will not understand (Ch.4.4.ii.d). The participant most opposed to its use is Zara.

Teaching in the target language I guess means that you speak French or German for most of the lesson wherever possible. Erm, I've never done it and I'll never do it and I don't think that...I don't think it makes a difference really, I'm sure it perhaps does maybe at AS, A2 maybe, I don't know, I've never taught in the target language. It's artificial and I think at a lower level pupils get confused, erm because they need to be able to relate to you and they can't do that if you're rabbiting on hoping that they would be able to follow. (interview 25/6/10)

Her belief that TL use does not make a difference to students' learning is unsubstantiated from personal experience because she has never tried to teach through the medium of the target language. The idea that it is artificial infers a

rejection of acquisition through input (Krashen). However, the classroom provides rich opportunities for purposeful teacher to learner / learner-to-learner interactions, which naturally could be carried out in the target language and so the argument that it is artificial is undermined (Ch.2.5.v). She attributes her stance towards the non-use of target language to the teacher she most respected whilst on her second teaching placement.

The reason I don't teach in the target language stems from this teacher that I saw in the independent school. He didn't even get them to answer the register in the target language. I mean I do token things like that...I think some teachers are good at it, I'm not, I'd rather not do it and it hasn't, it doesn't...I don't think it makes any difference to the results. (ibid.)

In reference to TL use she uses the phrase *rabbiting on* which highlights a misunderstanding of effective target language practice. Similarly the argument that students will not be able to understand is supported by Ross and Zelda and implies a lack of understanding of the reasoning behind the methodological prescription of TL use in the NCPoS.

Zelda was positive towards its use, and most critical of those who did not use it. Her first head of department “*thought the two most important skills were listening and then speaking, so he encouraged me to use a lot of speaking in activities in my lessons*” (interview: 11/7/10). This may at first seem surprising since the school was a selective grammar school and that in the late 70s the grammatical demands of O level so often shaped MFL pedagogy. Admittedly, Zelda maintains, that because the

girls were so able, she was able to do everything through the target language, even the deductive teaching of grammar, implying the higher the ability, the more target language can be used.

Zelda maintains that she:

tr[ies] to use as much target language as possible, but erm, sometimes you have to go out of the target language, at certain times, you know to ensure that the children understand what is expected of them, what the aims and objectives are of the lesson, what they should have achieved by the end of the lesson. I mean with some groups you can do the whole lesson in the target language...not with all. (ibid.)

Zelda therefore will use English to check for understanding as well as to communicate learning intentions. She further differentiates the use according to the attainment level of the students. She will use more with the upper and less with the lower. She elucidates further, “*with the lower ones [lower attainers] you can just keep using the same phrases over and over again, and then just gradually just build up*” (ibid.). She suggests therefore that the type of language used is planned and selected and that its use becomes routine. Zelda brings to light her frustrations at teachers who waste opportunities to use the TL in lessons. She recalls a French national who came for interview at Zelda’s school. During her observed demonstration lesson, as part of the interview proceedings, she “*did most of the lesson in English and said hardly anything in French at all, and that I found really frustrating*” (ibid.).

Morag and I would agree that teaching exclusively and successfully through the target language requires planning (Ch.4.6.i.e; Ch.4.6.iii.a) without which students can become disenchanted. Although Jane's use of TL was inconsistent in the lessons observed, she does see a role for TL. She discussed how with much visual support and gestures she spoke to students about German reunification in the TL. Similar techniques were employed when recounting the horror story in her Year 10 German class. This implies that students may pick up a language by being immersed in strategically planned, supported input.

Copland and Neokleous' (2011) study among Cypriot language teachers reported dissonance between how much TL teachers believed they used and how much was actually recorded in their lessons. This was attributed to feelings of guilt experienced by the teachers about how much the TL they were using.

This contradiction between stated belief and classroom routines, it is argued, may be caused by feelings of guilt as teachers struggle to reconcile pedagogical ideals with contextual realities, leaving them feeling damned if they use L1 and damned if they do not. (Copland & Neokleous 2011, p.271)

Macaro (2008, p.104) similarly reported feelings of guilt among teachers towards their use of the TL. Teachers in this study, with the exception of myself (Ch.4.1.iii.b), did not allude to any sense of guilt about the type of TL used. This could be because they have acknowledged *the contextual realities* of life in an English MFL classroom.

5.7 The communicative approach as defined by research participants' beliefs and practice

Chapters One and Two explored how the first four versions of the NCPoS clearly prescribed a methodology that could be deemed communicative in ethos. This section examines how this communicative approach is defined by participants.

5.7.i Speaking = communication?

In Chapter 2.5 I explored how the communicative approach has been defined eclectically for decades. Equally Griffiths (2011) posits how terms like CLT are used in literature without there ever being any sense of definition, to the extent that if the method does not prescribe deductive grammar teaching then it must be communicative. This reinforces the communication vs grammar dichotomy and will be explored in Ch.5.7.iii. In this study, all participants identify speaking in the target language as a characteristic of the communicative approach. The so-called shift to CLT has really been a shift to greater emphasis on speaking, which has become synonymous with communication. Activities, which involve students practising spoken language, however, can be as far removed from real communication as can a grammar drill cloze exercise.

Pair and group work, through which language is practised orally, is evidenced in Ken, Rosetta, Jane and Ross' life stories, although the purpose for which the language is practised differs. Ken encourages pairs of students to translate into and out of the target language, the approach is predominantly behaviourist – one student gives a sentence or phrase in English, the other presents the English equivalent. Most of the language presented has been learned through these regular interpreting

exercises, although there is also evidence of students applying grammatical rules. Jane employs group activities, which require students to practise applying grammatical rules orally to be able to participate in games. Rosetta uses pair work activities in a traditional sense, where students elicit and provide information. These information gap activities reflect how she was taught to teach by her BEd tutor. Students in Ross's Year 10 lesson work together in pairs and small groups to give short presentations in French using a variety of common verbs in the first person in three tenses.

5.7.ii Weak version of the communicative approach

In all lessons observed, there was little evidence of spontaneous target language use by students. Student TL is elicited through translation in response to stimuli in English (Ken); through gapped dialogues and cloze exercises and games (Jane); through the substitution of items in interactive question and answer pair work in which the language had been practised beforehand through repetition (Rosetta) as well as through group work in which students construct sentences (Ross). The type of communicative practice demonstrated by participants reflects that of Howatt's (1984) *weak version* of the communicative approach, which "*stresses the importance of providing opportunities to use their [language] for communicative purposes and, characteristically, attempts to integrate such activities into a wider programme of language teaching*" (p.279). This contrasts with the strong version of the communicative approach whereby students are believed to *acquire* language through trying to communicate in activities which mirror real life.

The strong version of communicative language teaching, however, sees language ability as being developed through activities which actually stimulate target performance. In other words, class time should be spent not on language drills or controlled practice, but in activities which require learners to do in class what they will have to do outside. (Nunan 1988, p.26)

This version reflects communicative practice advocated by Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983) and theories of language acquisition by Chomsky (1965) and Krashen (1981,1982 and 1983) (Ch.2.5.i).

Holliday (1994) argues that *controlled practice* so characteristic of weak communicative methodology and reflected in practice such as the PPP model was dominating the classroom twenty years ago. Willis and Willis (1996) concur, “[PPP] has become the dominant model for ‘communicative lessons’” (p.99) and therefore perhaps the outcomes of this research are not that surprising. The PPP paradigm is evident in the practice of all four main research participants. In Jane’s Year 10 lesson (Appendix 13), language is presented within the context of a horror story; students then practise using the newly introduced language through a game (Ch.4.3.i.b). In the Year 7 lesson vocabulary for school subjects is presented aurally and the students work out the meaning of these words before they practise giving opinions about the subjects using previously learned structures (Ch.4.3.ii.b). Similarly Ross presents structures (to express opinions with Year 7 / high frequency infinitives with Year 10; Appendix 14) which students practise using in all three of his observed lessons to give and justify opinions or to create short mini-stories. With Rosetta’s Year 10 group, language appropriate to the context of *going out* is

presented, practised and students work in pairs constructing short dialogues (Appendix 15). In the Year 9 lesson, language about describing tasks in the past were introduced and practised before students again create their own dialogues. Finally Ken's philosophy is to present a number of structures at the same time and then spend months practising them with the students.

Furthermore, the limited use of target language by teachers in this sample, and a non-existent rationale for students' spontaneous use of TL in the classroom is reinforcing the weaker form of the communicative approach, which restricts opportunities for students to struggle to draw from their interlanguage in the classroom to communicate spontaneously and purposefully.

Hunter (2012) suggests,

[m]any teachers resist the strong form of communicative language teaching (CLT) because it does not have 'concrete', 'tangible' content and, therefore, does not equate with the 'real' teaching. This is hardly surprising since the one area in which language teachers have traditionally had expertise, the structure of the language, is off-limits in the strong form of CLT. (p.30)

Hunter's strong form of CLT implies a non-form focussed, comprehensible input rich form of acquisition, reflecting Krashen's theories. I do not concur. Klapper (2003, p.34; Ch.4.1.ii.c) highlights how the PPP paradigm has provided the bridge between drilling of content, and use of that content, to communicate, and this paradigm is essential in the school foreign language classroom, where students will have between two to three hours of language instruction a week (Ch.4.3.iii.b).

I do not believe that teachers are resisting the strong form of communicative language teaching; if they are, it may also be because of pragmatism. The issues preventing the development of the strong form of communicative teaching are contextual, such as curriculum time accorded to Modern Foreign language teaching in maintained secondary education, and the demands of GCSE specifications (Ch.4.5.iii.b; Ch.4.6.iii). The compromising of stronger forms of the communicative approach is reflected in international studies, often for similar reasons. Sakai's (2004) research among Japanese Junior High School teachers highlighted how, "*teachers have to face constraining factors when implementing CLT. These external factors include grammar-orientated examinations, time constraints, classroom management problems, and rigid curriculum schedules*" (p.162). Scheffler and Cinciata (2011) explored the learning of English grammar among a sample of Polish High School students (16-18), and found that:

[t]he type of instruction they [the students] were exposed to could be described as the weak version of communicative language teaching (Howatt 1984: 279): this roughly means systematic and explicit treatment of English grammar combined with a variety of practice and communicative activities.
(p.15)

5.7.iii The polarisation of grammar and the communicative approach - the grammar / communicative dichotomy

A key theme to be drawn from this research is the dichotomous view of communication and grammar. Participants such as Ross and Morag polarise grammar and communication. This phenomenon was described in Chapter 2.1 and

persists here. What is surprising is the belief that the teaching of grammar and developing communicative practice are separate entities. Beaumont and Chang (2011) and Griffiths (2011) question, “*whether ‘traditional’ and ‘communicative’ are ‘dichotomous’*” (p.300). Beeching (1989), Johnstone (1994) and Nunan (1998) maintain that the task of communicating requires use of grammar, and favour focus upon form to enable communication. It is from here that the dichotomy arises: the idea that grammar must come first and communication will come later. Beeching posits, “[*the*] ability to generalise is what a real knowledge of grammar, and, *mutatis mutandis* real communication is all about. It is about learning to make the language your own in order to express your own ideas and meanings” (ibid., p.96). The dominance of the *weak* communicative approach within this study may also be as a result of the grammar / communication dichotomy. It encapsulates a belief that students must be taught the language first before they are able to use it, often in pseudo / non-communicative speaking activities. Ken’s drilling of functional language, Ross’s teaching of high frequency verbal structures and Jane’s deductive and inductive treatment of grammar all occur before students are able to then apply language in highly controlled speaking activities. Sakui’s (2004) research in Japanese Junior High Schools similarly showed that form focussed tuition would precede communicative activities, even among teachers who claimed to support CLT, “[*w*hile believing in the importance of CLT, [*several teachers*] felt the need to primarily conduct teacher-fronted non-communicative activities. This has led to a dichotomous curriculum realization consisting of two methodologies” (p.158). Sakui alludes to a tension between curriculum prescriptions which expect a focus upon the four skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing, and an examination system which largely tests grammatical accuracy and translation. This tension is equally

apparent in this study where the demands of GCSE specifications, to be delivered in limited curriculum time, have led to methods, which maximise attention to language essential to meet grade criteria of the GCSE examination.

5.8 Macro Policy and experiences of Ofsted

All participants have both positive and less positive recollections of inspection, although the common consensus is that the influence of Ofsted on practice is negative. Ross highlighted the fear induced by Ofsted which leads to negative self-reflection, "*I think when Ofsted comes along you get that notification that you're shitting yourself and actually you're just...thinking, God, I'm a crap teacher*" (interview 24/6/11). He believes teachers plan lessons in more detail in preparation for the inspection, and therefore he questions how true a representation of school inspectors experience. This *over-preparation* was perhaps characteristic of Section 10 inspections, when schools would be notified of the inspection months in advance. Under the more recent Section 5 inspections (2005-2012; Ch.1.2.iii), which were in force at the time when much of the research for this thesis was carried out, teachers still had a two-day notice period to prepare more fully than they would normally. This extra preparation may actually be detrimental - leading teachers to break their routine and try activities, or alter their practice, to comply with what they believe an inspector wishes to observe. The effects of this over-preparation when coupled, as discussed in Chapter 3, with the influence of the presence of the inspector on both the students' and the teacher's behaviour may lead to a less than authentic representation of a teacher's practice.

Language practitioners may be more inclined to suddenly respond to policy, such as increasing the use of target language in the lesson, because an inspector is there. In his most recent inspection, Ken discusses how he “*showed off, I showed off what the pupils could do, they spent the whole lesson speaking Spanish together, doing the speed dating sort of thing*” (interview 15/7/10) whilst being inspected with a sixth form class. Whereas when he was observed by a member of the SLT, and not Ofsted, at his school, he was criticised for not using enough TL (Ch.4.2.iv.d). As already explored, the use of TL should be well planned and students need to be acclimatized to it for it to be fully effective. Suddenly increasing the amount of TL you use could be poorly implemented and lead to confusion. Michael Wilshaw, current head of Ofsted, maintains that teachers may put on a “*great big show*” and over-prepare when inspected and this can lead to failure (Paton 23/11/12). The influence of Ofsted is such that it makes us teach in the way in which we believe we Ofsted should wish us to teach.

Jane would identify with comments about the fear induced by Ofsted. For her, this is because Ofsted is fundamentally a box-ticking exercise, and she fears that she has not ticked all of those boxes. She is unable to elucidate further as to what are the boxes that should be ticked, except that assessment for learning would be a box. Despite again being unable to pinpoint exactly how she ticks boxes, or how she goes through the motions to appease those who observe her, she maintains that her practice is skewed by the observation experience, and that she teaches differently to please the inspectors – she indeed puts on a show. When she is not being inspected, she states that she ignores all those things she thinks she should be doing. She questions what teachers can learn from inspectors because some have

been out of the classroom for so long that they have lost any form of credibility. If teachers believe that inspectors have lost their credibility given their lack of recent experience in the classroom would this lead to teachers being less inclined to take advice from them, thus reducing their influence overall?

The oldest, and most experienced research participant is Zelda and her experiences of inspection go back before the introduction of Ofsted in 1993. She has been through five inspections. The first Ofsted inspector was empathetic, “*he taught in a school in Ipswich, quite a difficult school, he realised the problems that modern foreign language teachers were facing*” (Interview 11/7/10). He, in particular praised the department for their very good use of target language. These experiences would contrast sharply with the second inspection, when the inspector upset a number of colleagues and appeared rude and disinterested, “*she wasn’t observing, she wasn’t even looking at us teaching, she just had her head down and she was making notes, and you know she wasn’t really engaged in the lesson at all*” (ibid.).

Ken similarly experienced a less than useful second inspection, the inspector made no verbal suggestions about methodology, and proved to be aggressive and negative. Zelda’s subsequent inspections were Section 5, and therefore shorter, with a greater emphasis on the school’s own self evaluation and therefore required fewer lesson observations. Zelda was graded as outstanding both times she was observed under a Section 5 inspection.

The overwhelming consensus is that Ofsted does not help teachers to develop their practice, although this is not the aim of Ofsted. Ken posits that there is never enough

detailed feedback to really help teachers improve. He would like more time to discuss methodology with inspectors. Ross ultimately feels that Ofsted is judgemental and is neither supportive, nor helpful. Zara believes that Ofsted does not help teachers.

Rosetta is the most positive of the research participants towards the current influence of Ofsted. She correctly posits that the Ofsted criteria have evolved, and she now also believes that they are more robust and fairer than at any time previously. In the past, she had “*always felt that there were ‘unfairnesses’ [and] ‘unreasonablenesses’*” (interview 20/6/11) inherent in inspection criteria. This may, at first, appear surprising because since the introduction of the shorter section 5 inspections in 2005, Ofsted have used generic observation criteria for all subjects and inspectors may not be subject specialists. She suggests that a change in government in 1997 heralded much greater consultation on how we teach. Now, for her, what is expected of teachers (in 2011) is “*for very well researched and good reasons really, I don’t think it’s quite as faddy as maybe it was in the past*” (*ibid.*). The *faddy* to which she alludes is encompassed by attitudes towards the teaching of modern languages through the target language. She exemplifies this by recalling her first inspection, which took place in the 1990s when “*we were being expected to teach in the target language the whole time. I don’t think that was particularly well grounded, it was just a dogma, a belief and it hadn’t necessarily come from very soundly tested experiments*” (*ibid.*). The inference here is that under the previous Conservative Government, before 1997, policy in MFL was whimsical and ungrounded theoretically in nature.

As discussed in Chapter 1.6 the first edition of the NCPoS was written by a National Curriculum working group for Modern Foreign Languages, and the outcomes of which were subject to a period of consultation. There is no reference to any research into language acquisition in either the initial advice issued for consultation neither in February 1990 nor in the subsequent proposals issued in October 1990. As debated throughout the thesis methodology prescribed by the final version of the NCPoS (1991) may have been influenced by the theories of Krashen and research studies into immersion, although there is no direct reference to either (Meiring & Norman 2002). For Grenfell (1997), despite the lack of reference to research, the PoS is still “*theoretical by being based on abstract, generalisable statements about language learning and teaching derived from observation, reasoned argument and research*” (p.28). Be that as it may, without the support of grounded research the document possibly lacks credibility and will lead teachers such as Rosetta to question its validity. What has always been missing from the NCPoS is not *what* should be taught, but *an underpinning theoretical and practical rationale for why* teachers should adopt such practice.

5.9 Micro policy

Zelda is quick to highlight how the Ofsted regime has influenced micro policy in school. This was very much apparent around 2003, when the Ofsted inspection criteria were adapted to put greater focus upon student learning and not teaching. For Zelda this shift led to her encouraging much more group work in lessons. She stresses that it was not an easy process, “*I found it difficult at first, because I feel if I'm not teaching from the front that erm I feel guilty somehow*” (interview 11/7/10). In terms of subject specific methodology, the increased importance of demonstrating

students learning has led her to develop inductive approaches to the learning of grammar far more than she had done in the past.

Zara was the most vehemently opposed to changes in the realm of teaching and learning imposed upon her by the senior leadership team. She was not convinced by her school's insistence of learning objectives being displayed on a board and the necessity for a four-part lesson. She refers again to her *guru* on teaching practice, who did not adhere to any of this practice, but was, nevertheless, an inspiration for her.

You can get so carried away writing your aims and objectives to tick a box and setting your homework in the middle of a lesson just to tick a box making sure that the books are marked every six weeks just to tick a box that is doesn't actually move kids forward! (interview 25/6/10)

Zara became quite animated and upset when discussing this. I think the true issue here is not that Zara is opposed to marking or setting homework, or marking books, it is the fact she is being told how to do it, which she finds frustrating. She offers further insight into this frustration.

I can see the place for policies, and I can see the place for consistency, and I can see why telling kids what you are doing in the lesson is important, but we've had lots of policies that have been introduced, and then a year later something else is introduced and therefore there is no consistency, and sometimes they just make things overly complicated. (ibid.)

This infers that there has been much interference from the senior leadership team in the school, and that for her it has become too much, and would ultimately contribute to her stated need to take a career break from teaching. If Zara's account is true from her own perspective then it is very much at odds with effective practice for change advocated by Fullan (2007). There has not been the investment in ensuring that changes are meaningful and relevant. Time has not been committed to the process of change. Zara found her interview experience cathartic, it gave her a voice to share her concerns about the pace of change, and what was expected to change within her school.

Ken discusses the expectation in his school that all lessons must be constructed around a *starter*, main activity and a *plenary*. He was adamant that he had never produced a *starter* in his life, although analysis of his lessons demonstrated that he did deliver activities at the beginning of lessons that would reasonably constitute being a starter. In a later interview (16/5/12) he would claim that he now "does *starters*" – signalling perhaps a change in beliefs and highlighting that:

[t]he relationship between beliefs and practice...[can] be dialectical rather than unilateral, in that practice does not always follow directly from beliefs; and, sometimes, changes in beliefs may come after, or as a result of, change in practice. (Poulson, Avramidis, Fox, Medwell & Wray 2001, p.273)

My autobiography and Jane's life history similarly document a change in practice before a change in beliefs (Ch.4.1.ii.d; Ch.4.3.iii.b).

Ken fears however that the regimentation of lesson structures will lead to a lack of originality and creativity. His analogy that lessons are now like episodes of the *Froobs*, a children's series of 250 episodes all of which follow the same format, substantiates this.

Rosetta is accommodating to some aspects of micro-policy such as the communicating of learning objectives in English at the start of a lesson because she feels this may have value, although acknowledges that this compromises target language use. She appears belligerent about trying to contrive some reference to science in lessons, which is expected because the school is a specialist science college. She perceives this cynically as a means for the school to show Ofsted that the specialism is influencing the whole school, which was an expectation under the last Ofsted inspection regime (2005-2011). For her, this is one step too far, and she refuses to comply (Ch.4.5.iv.a). Rosetta does not engage in practice in which she can find no meaningful rationale. This is evident in her attitude to deductive grammar teaching, which is unquestionably negative.

For Morag, Zara and Jane, the major source of tension towards micro policy concerns tracking systems in school – the need for teachers to show that students are making improvement against set targets (Ch.1.2.ii; Ch.4.6.iv; Ch.4.3.iv). Ball's (2012) research findings similarly highlight schools' obsession with data and the need for students to be continually making progress (p.77).

The targets are provided by the Fischer Family Trust, an independent charity which analyses student performance in English, maths and science at the end of KS2 and

from there suggests which grade a student is most probably going to achieve at GCSE (Ch.1.2.ii). Schools set targets based upon this data establishing expected performance at the end of KS3 and 4 for students. All schools represented by teachers in this sample have tracking systems which ask colleagues to enter the students' current level of working based upon assessment against NC level descriptors or GCSE grades, most often termly, sometimes half termly. The expectation is that students will make consistent improvement in a subject area. Zara's aversion to the system is based upon the arbitrary nature in which the targets are set, because they do not take into account any previous language learning experience at KS3 since they are set according to prior performance in English, maths and science.

Jane's critique of the system centres on how it embodies extreme accountability in schools, in particular that students must always be measured in terms of their performance against national criteria in the subject area. For her, there is no room for recording enthusiasm or other attributes. Of the three, Morag is the only one who questions the concept of students constantly making exponential improvement every half term. Indeed this is where the system is completely at odds with research and theory into language learning and acquisition. The hypothesis, that language acquired or learnt is directly proportional to the time spent learning, is highly contested and such a notion implies that "*[a]cquisition is seen as analogous to building a wall, with one brick set in place before another is placed on top*" (Ellis 1997, p.22; Ch.2.3.i). In other words, learners will master one set structure and then move onto the next.

Research into language development has clearly shown that L2 learning is a much more complex and recursive process, with multiple interconnections and backslidings, and complex trade-offs between advances in fluency, accuracy and complexity (Mitchell 2003, p.17).

Ellis (1997) similarly maintains that “[a]cquisition follows a U shaped course of development; that is, initially learners may display a high level of accuracy only to apparently regress later before finally once again performing in accordance with target-language norms” (p.23). Ellis (1997) refers to this phenomenon as *restructuring*: as new language is learned the brain restructures previous learning affecting the accuracy of its recall giving the impression that learners are regressing in their learning. To make continuous progress in language acquisition is neither supported by theory, nor research and therefore such a tracking system introduced by schools must allow for regression. Except they do not – students are not allowed to regress, they must keep making progress, or rather teachers must record data which shows that students are continually making progress. This inevitably leads to a questioning of the reliability of the data submitted.

This chapter has presented a synthesis of the key themes drawn from the data presented in Chapter Four. This cross analysis of data has led to the emergence of initial conclusions to the research. The final chapter will explore these conclusions further. It will suggest potential opportunities for further research, and will make recommendations for modern foreign language teacher education as well as for the future of MFL in England.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

6.1 Conclusions from the findings

The purpose of this research has been to explore the construction of MFL teachers' teacher cognition as defined by their beliefs and pedagogical content knowledge. It has identified areas of influence, which have shaped this construction. This thesis has shown that early experiences may be a source of profound influence. This is most strongly exemplified in Rosetta's story by her rejection of de-contextualised grammar teaching, which can be traced to her father teaching her verb paradigms as a child (Ch.4.5.i). The kind, empathetic and encouraging teachers in Jane's secondary education possibly provided her with positive role models and such qualities are both valued by her and evidenced in her own teaching. Morag's life history richly describes the influence of her first French teacher on her own pedagogy (Ch.4.3.i.a; Ch.4.6.i.a; Ch.5.2.iii). Students engaged in the construction of the short narratives evident in Ken's and my own current practice could be attributable to the *guiding images* of five years of Longman Audio-Visual French in the 1980s (Ch.4.1.i; Ch.4.2.i; Ch.5.2.iv). Ross's interpretation of inductive teaching may be as a result of his own bilingual upbringing (Ch.4.4.iii.c; Ch.5.3.ii). Such examples support previous findings concerning the power of early experiences in shaping beliefs (Lortie 1975; Nisbett & Ross 1980; Calderhead 1991; Knowles 1992; Freeman 1992; Cooper & Olson 1996; Bailey & Nunan 1996; Blyth 1997; Borg 1999a, 2003; Yee Fan Tang 2002; Phipps & Borg 2009; Ch.1.12.vi; Ch.5.1).

Beliefs can be highly resistant to change (Nisbett & Ross 1980; Nespor 1987; Borg 2003; Phipps & Borg 2009; Ch.1.12.vii; Ch.5.1.ii). My autobiography chronicles years of frustration with language learning, attributable to the almost exclusive focus on

deductive grammar teaching during much of my secondary education (Ch.4.1.i.e/i). My beliefs about how to teach and learn a foreign language were conditioned by the method I experienced as a learner. I would continually default to the learning of grammar deductively when experiencing frustrations with language learning. Despite my own subsequent positive experiences of engaging with comprehensible input, and examples of communicative pedagogy demonstrated by others at University and whilst in France and Japan, I continued to support deductive grammar teaching until my PGCE training in 1996 (Ch.4.1.ii.a/b). Similarly, although Ken rejects the grammar-translation method of his secondary and tertiary education (Ch. 4.2.i.c), his current practice is partly characterised by translation and interpreting, the former being indicative of the grammar-translation method of his secondary language learning (Ch.5.1.ii).

Beliefs also change and develop (Busch 2010; Ch.5.5.ii). Jane's story outlines the evolution of her beliefs towards the role of speaking and the use of target language (Ch.4.3.iii.b). From an initial point of rejecting both, she now acknowledges the importance of developing students' speaking skills and furthermore makes very plausible suggestions for how teaching through immersion may work within the school context. Fullan (2007) is sanguine about the rejection of and initial resistance to change triggered by policy, acknowledging that it is part of the change process. He furthermore argues that much can be learned by listening to their objections, "*[i]n some cases, resistance may be a source of learning. Resistors may be right. They may have "good sense" in seeing through the change as faddish, misdirected and unworkable*" (p.111). Jane offers a number of substantiated contextual factors, which compromise the use of TL in the classroom. However, through a process of

reflection, Jane has constructed her own rationale for developing students' speaking skills based upon a belief that such practice ultimately enhances their language learning experience.

Pre-service training provided by university tutors has been a source of positive influence. Six of the seven respondents can attribute aspects of their existing practice to ideas and techniques introduced and modelled by their PGCE / BEd tutors (Ch.4.1.ii; Ch.4.2.ii; Ch.4.3.ii; Ch.4.4.ii; Ch.4.5.ii; Ch.4.6.ii). Where teacher education has led to a more fundamental change in a participant's philosophy about language teaching is most notable in Ken's life history. His wider reading encompassing the work of Lewis (1993) helped shape his beliefs in a functional approach to language learning. Similarly, my adoption of practice encouraged by my PGCE tutor such as exploratory (inductive) approaches to the teaching of grammar and the concept of teaching as much as possible through the target language led to a philosophical shift in my beliefs about language teaching. Participants' experiences on teaching placements in schools were less positive. This merits further investigation with a wider stratified sample, especially in light of current government policy which is encouraging more school employment based training such as through the *School Direct Route* (Ch.5.4).

In-service influences have been less profound. When they have been identified, they have arisen through a process of dialogue with other colleagues and with the self (Ch.5.5.ii). The practice of Ken's first head of department would exemplify and confirm his belief about the power of teaching highly useful functional structures (Ch.4.2.iii). Jane, Morag and Ross acknowledge the influence of working with

colleagues, in particular MFL advisers, in shaping their cognition (Ch.4.3.iii; Ch.4.3.iv.a; Ch.4.4.iii.b; Ch.4.6.iv). Pedagogical content knowledge may be constructed therefore through dialogue and reflection with other language teaching professionals (Bakhtin 1981; Schön 1983; Clandinin 1992). This dialogue has helped respondents interpret national curriculum prescriptions (Morag and Rosetta) or non-statutory guidelines such as the MFL Framework (Jane, Ross, Zelda and Zara). However, understanding of such documentation may still be limited and is largely guided by interpretations constructed by the professionals with whom they have worked.

Respondents' awareness of and understanding of twenty years of macro policy (NCPoS) is limited and tacit. Unquestionably the most significant aspect of four versions of the NCPoS acknowledged by participants is the focus on teaching language through the target language. Teaching through the TL is the most prominent aspect of the NC retained by participants because this edict reflected the methodology governments of the 1990s wished teachers to adopt: language acquisition facilitated through immersion in the TL, although this can only be implied by the statutory guidelines, it is not made explicit. Some participants are unaware that the NCPoS prescribed such practice. Expectations to teach through the TL were reinforced by teacher education programmes, explicit in the life histories presented here (Adam Ch.4.1.ii; Jane Ch.4.3.ii; Ross Ch.4.4.ii; Morag Ch.4.6.ii) and were also policed by Ofsted (Ch.1.2.iii).

The edict of teaching through the TL failed because context, as explored in the previous chapter (5.3.ii; 5.3.iii), is the most conditioning factor in the choice of a

teachers' pedagogy. Early experiences of contextualising the policy, firstly within a teaching placement and then in service (Adam 4.1.ii; Ross 4.4.ii; Zara) quickly led to a compromise. In service, limited curriculum time for languages; the challenges of teaching a comprehensive ability cohort of students; the pressures of examination expectations coupled with increased teacher accountability militate against its use. Why immerse students in hours of comprehensible input in the hope that they will acquire implicit understanding of certain key structures, when it is perhaps easier, and less time consuming, to give them all the structures they need for GCSE and tell them to learn them off by heart, as exemplified in Ken's life history? Furthermore, beliefs and practice support the rote learning of certain items of vocabulary (Morag and Rosetta), and the recycling of a handful of high frequency verbs in three tenses as a means to success at GCSE (Adam and Ross). Current expectations at GCSE may reinforce this practice further. Students now have time to plan in advance for writing and speaking assessments (AQA 2012) which may indeed favour the regurgitation of rote learned blocks of language in controlled conditions. The type of language teaching described in the thesis is largely *weak* communicative practice (Howatt 1984) and behaviourism dominates as a learning theory.

Whilst findings from this research do not lead to an outright rejection of the concept of language acquisition through immersion (Morag, Adam, Jane), it does also highlight a misunderstanding of the role of TL in the teaching and learning of languages (Ross and Zara). Teachers' own use of TL, as demonstrated in this thesis is inconsistent. Its value therefore in creating conditions whereby students acquire language through input is negligible (Ch.5.6). Its use, as observed in lessons, is a relic from a former age in language teaching in England.

Contextual issues implementing acquisition through immersion may well have contributed to the reduced focus upon teaching in the target language in subsequent editions of the 1999 and 2007 NCPOS (Appendices 3 & 4). Indeed the compromising of the TL stance in subsequent versions of the NCPoS is acknowledgement of this. Methodology inferred in the latest version (DFE 2013a/b; Appendix 5), as discussed in Chapter 1.11, seems to favour a more explicit focus on the teaching of grammar and production of accurate language. What influence this NC will have is questionable since it is not statutory for academies and free schools.

The latest NCPoS for MFL, which is much reduced in length, does not legislate on the use of TL. Whilst there is an increased focus on the teaching of grammar, the production of accurate written language and the need for dictation and translation activities, there is equal emphasis on the development of speaking and listening skills (*ibid.*). The NCPoS do not imply any specific teaching method; they perhaps finally suggest a multi-method approach to the teaching of languages.

However, school leaders may still have a preferred methodology. Examples of pedagogy explicit in National Strategy documentation (2001-2010) (Ch.1.2.iv), although not prescriptive, began to shape school micro policy governing how to teach (Adam, Jane, Rosetta, Zara, Zelda, Ken and Ross). Non-statutory guidance may quickly become *policised*, as findings here show. As described in my autobiography, this was an extremely rapid process at my previous school. The *three or four part* lesson is prescribed practice in the schools of all six school based research participants. Formative use of summative assessment or assessment for

learning is also directly prescribed or inferred through the compulsion to present lesson objectives and deliver *plenaries*.

All six teaching participants acknowledged the influence of micro policy on their practice, especially in terms of following an imposed structure to lessons. However, there was also a resistance among participants to conform to guidelines laid down by school senior leaders. Rosetta openly rejected the expectation to contrive some reference to science in her lessons as “*nonsense*”. Ken did not follow the school’s policy on lesson structure, although he now recognizes that activities he orchestrates at the beginning of lessons could easily constitute being *starters*. Jane asserts that she only *ticks all the boxes* inferring adherence to micro policy when she is being observed. She rejects the *proceduralising* of assessment for learning in particular the plenary, because “*assessment for learning is something that you automatically do to check that the children are with you as you go along*”; I concur (Ch.4.1.iv). Ken and Ross similarly admitted to changing their practice as well as investing more time in their lesson planning to meet their perceived expectations of Ofsted (Ch.5.8). However this may equally be attributable to their professionalism in wishing to present themselves positively and at their very best when observed.

In terms of micro policy being possibly detrimental to language teaching pedagogy, Rosetta attributes her reduced use of TL to the need to make the structure of the lesson more transparent with lesson objectives communicated in L1 and assessment orchestrated in English. This may have prevented her from using the TL but it is questionable whether it had a negative impact on the students’ learning of French. Zara’s story perhaps highlights the most destructive effect of school micro policy.

Zara felt that the prescription of the four-part lesson was “*a hindrance because it actually stops you doing what you might like to do in the lesson*”. Furthermore, she posits “*I think that I have become less of a teacher...I think I was probably a better teacher when I didn't have to do all of this*” (interview 25/6/10). She found her school's persistent legislation on how to teach unbearable, and it was one of the reasons which contributed to her taking a career break from teaching. On reflection such policy was perhaps more detrimental to her professionalism as a competent practitioner since it robbed her of the independence, indeed the trust, needed to do the job the way she wished.

The examples of micro policy here, appear to demonstrate a *methodologising* of teaching and learning in schools. As in the past, methods in language learning were offered up as an answer to perceived language teaching inadequacies (Richards and Rodgers 2001), school leaders are possibly now looking for a format, a method, which can be replicated across the board to ensure good teaching.

Rosetta, Jane, Zelda and myself attribute increased micro policy on teaching and learning in schools to demands of Ofsted inspection and the strengthening of school accountability. However Ofsted, as discussed in Ch.4.1.iv, has never prescribed a four-part lesson. Furthermore Ofsted (2014) have been keen to reiterate that they “[do] not favour any particular teaching style” (p.57). Wilshaw, speaking on behalf of the inspectorate concurs, “[w]e don't have a preferred style of teaching, I want inspectors to make a judgement on the quality of learning” (Stewart 2013).

The introduction of generic lesson observation assessment criteria (Ofsted 2005 / 2013; Appendix 12) may have nevertheless allowed for a de-mystifying of subject specific pedagogy leading to a one-size fits all methodology. In terms of school accountability the emphasis on student progression is paramount hence the obsession with tracking systems to show constant student progress, however ludicrous such systems may be given research into SLA. Language acquisition is not directly proportional to time spent in the classroom learning the language; this research provides further evidence of this.

Leading a school is precarious, there is a need to show constant improvement; salaries are now linked to performance and a headteacher's future can be dependent on their next set of examination results (Ch.1.2). The opaque nature of Ofsted is furthermore a contributing factor – alongside allegations that one Norfolk academy chain received prior notice of inspections during 2013, a Norfolk local authority school, after three years of sustained improvement, went from being graded 'good' in every category by Ofsted (April 2013) to 'inadequate' in every category (November 2013) in the space of five months (Stalham High Ofsted 2013 May / November). It is perhaps therefore understandable that school leaders seek standardised and perceived reliable methods to offset the whimsicalities of inspection. Ball (2012) highlights how among teachers "*[t]he pressure of Ofsted and exam results [are a] preoccupation reflecting the centrality of such performative and audit mechanisms in initiating and shaping particular enactments of policy*" (p.36).

Research into this *methodologisation* of pedagogy is certainly worthy of further investigation. It would provide more recent data perhaps to examine school policy on

teaching and learning as well as what is influencing such micro legislation, especially since national CPD programmes such as the National Strategy have come to an end. Replication of this study among teachers of other subject areas could provide firstly, more recent data, but secondly would also test if the findings here are generalisable (see Ch.3.7iii) to other subject areas.

A key focus of this research was to examine how beliefs about grammar have been shaped, as well as how those beliefs are expressed in practice in the classroom. Borg (1999a) posited that research into L2 teaching had “*been largely inconclusive in identifying optimal strategies for grammar learning, it has actually provided very little insight into the actual processes of L2 grammar teaching as these are perceived by teachers*” (p.19-20). Chapter One explored how research in this area had been largely untapped especially in “*state school settings (primary and secondary) where languages are taught by non-native teachers to large classes of learners who...may not be studying the language voluntarily*” (Borg 2003, p.106).

This research was teacher focussed and not learner focussed: it examined how teachers teach grammar and the reasons for the choices they make. It does however provide detailed evidence from observations in the field of how students respond to how they were being taught. Teachers working over a period of time with a selection of functional structures or a variety of high frequency verbs will enable students to construct short stories, and students will be able to spot patterns and hypothesise verbs endings. Students can produce short dialogues from a selection of drilled sentences. This thesis does not however investigate students’ views on how they should be taught / should learn grammar. Should this research be replicated, the

addition of student interviews on how they are being taught grammar would add further rich data.

This study does however confirm the ways in which context and beliefs can be significant conditioning factors in terms of the choices teachers make in the classroom. Early learning experiences will continue to resonate and be highly influential in terms of shaping beliefs about how grammar should be taught. Teachers have constructed their own *optimal strategies* for teaching grammar but such strategies are diverse and there is no consistent message to be drawn from the research sample, except that one singular method or approach is inappropriate because of contextual factors. Furthermore, despite the diversity of approaches, practice is often consistent with the present, practise and produce model for the introduction and practice of grammar / language.

The research provides however rich data - contextualised examples of practice and the underpinning perceived reasons for that practice in the realm of grammar teaching. The study, therefore, offers valuable insight into the instructional decisions teachers make which inform their practice, and "*[s]uch data can play a central role in L2 teacher education and development initiatives which stimulate teachers to reflect on and hence improve the quality of their own grammar practices*" (Borg 1999a, p.29). The biographical sections support the contribution life history has to make in understanding teaching (Goodson 2001 / see Chapter 3) and therefore could "*be made available to trainees and teachers as the basis of teacher education activities*" (Borg 2003, p.106).

6.2 Recommendations for MFL teacher education

Since “*understanding teachers’ beliefs is essential to improving teaching practices and professional teacher preparation programmes*” (Johnson 1994, p.439), trainees embarking on their teacher education should compile their own life histories, which could enable them to “*understand the formative influence of past educational and professional experiences on their current beliefs*” (Borg 2011, p.379) about how to teach MFL, in particular grammar. This should be accompanied by research into pedagogical knowledge and belief construction enabling them to mesh theory with autobiographical experiences. Furthermore, it will allow for an analysis of the impact of teacher role models, pleasant and unpleasant learning experiences (Knowles 1992) and those *guiding images* of past practitioners (Goodman 1988), on their initial beliefs. Busch (2010) posits that such an exploration of existing beliefs will enable “*language teacher educators...to take into account the belief systems of pre-service teachers early in training programmes as a means of maximising the intake of information taught in courses*” (p.319).

Trainees should compare their own life histories with those of their peers, to identify resonating themes, differences and similarities. This could be further supplemented by published life histories, such as presented here, to allow for an examination of how experience, and context affect instructional decisions. It would provide trainees with “*instructional strategies for teaching grammar*” and would also “*illustrate how and why...L2 teachers in real classrooms utilise these strategies*” (Borg 1999a, p.28).

There should be time for experimentation (micro teaching). Trainees should be able to test out hypotheses they have drawn from their life histories, as well as test new ones drawing from the contextualised examples studied within a variety of different teaching contexts, and reflect on the outcomes of those experiences. Busch (2010), drawing from outcomes of existing research, suggests that such “*experiential and reflective activities [seem] to have a stronger effect on the development of belief systems than declarative knowledge (theories and research) taught alone*” (p.319). This could encompass the trialling of inductive and deductive grammar teaching as well as teaching grammar through immersion.

As regards language teaching in England, the latest eclectic PoS and reassurances from Ofsted that they are not looking for a particular methodology appear to be positive steps in that there is an underlying assumption that context is the most determining factor on pedagogy.

All participants agreed that the popularity of MFL in English schools is a major cause for concern. Combined take up on language courses has fallen year on year since 2002, (Exley 21/8/2014) despite a slight recovery in 2013 (Garner 22/8/2013) due to introduction of the Ebacc attainment indicator. Take up at A Level (Ratcliffe 15/8/2013) and on degree courses (Codreo-Rado 10/4/2014) are similarly worrying and due, to some extent, to the perceived difficulty of the subject and the slump in take up at GCSE (Ratcliffe ibid.). There is possibly a simple solution to the decline in entries and that is to make GCSE languages a double award. Students could be awarded a grade for their performance in speaking and listening and another grade for their attainment in reading and writing. Such a system would allow lower attainers

to still achieve a grade but without having to negotiate assessments in either writing or reading. It would free up curriculum time for students who are just focussing on developing two skills, such as listening and speaking, to engage in a variety of TL media: films, television programmes and even computer games and educational visits, and so enhancing their understanding of the cultures of the target language country as well. This could boost the appeal of languages to students, parents and most definitely school leaders.

Finally, inclusion of languages in the KS2 curriculum is a positive move towards acknowledging the importance of language learning in the curriculum, as well as hopefully providing firm foundations which may be built upon by secondary practitioners. However, it must not be seen as a panacea for the problems nationally in language teaching. Huge financial investment was made in developing KS2 MFL languages from 2004 until 2010, without this ever having stemmed the decline in take up at KS4. There is now no accompanying financial investment to provide training or support for those that may deliver the KS2 language curriculum. In policy terms this begs the question of how the success of the initiative is to come about. This thesis is testament to the determining factor of context in influencing pedagogy. Without this insight and understanding of appropriate methodology to meet the needs of a particular primary school cohort of students, and without clear exemplification of the objectives of the KS2PoS, language teaching at KS2 could, in the long term, potentially do more harm than good.

There has been much change in education since I embarked on this research in 2010. The publication of the White Paper (2010) led to a proliferation of academy

schools; the focus on school based teacher education has increased, there is a much reduced role for Local Authorities in their support of schools, LA subject specific advisers are now relegated to history, and national CPD programmes such as the National Strategy have come to an end. The phasing out of the National Strategy reflected a shift away from centralised national CPD programmes to a “*greater devolution of funding and responsibility to individual schools*” (Ofsted 2010, p.4). The emphasis is therefore much more on schools being responsible for teachers’ professional development without direct guidance from government. How schools are managing this is an area for future research. There is no certainty, for example, that devolved money going into schools is being invested in CPD. Without the provision of local subject specific advice provided by local authorities, and no centralised guidance from government, to whom are schools turning for support? Furthermore how are they organising their own school improvement systems and how are they doing this given the pressures of life within school? Do schools have the capacity to do this?

Finally, although anonymised, some of the HEI tutors mentioned in this thesis were highly prominent and respected language teacher educators. Their research has informed and shaped thinking about MFL pedagogy, and the longevity of their influence is apparent here. Should the government continue down a path of annexing, indeed disregarding such powerful and erudite influence, from where are teachers going to find such comparable guidance within a school? This is an area that certainly requires further exploration.

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Attainment target 4: Writing

The development of pupils' ability to communicate in writing.

LEVEL	STATEMENTS OF ATTAINMENT	EXAMPLES
1	<p>Pupils should be able to:</p> <p>a) copy familiar words correctly.</p>	<p><i>Copy subject title on to notebook; copy words as aid to learning; type words using word-processor or keyboard overlay.</i></p>
2	<p>a) copy familiar short phrases correctly.</p> <p>b) write individual words from memory.</p> <p>And, for pupils learning Chinese or Japanese:</p> <p>c) copy simple characters with correct stroke order.</p>	<p><i>Write simple signs or instructions for classroom or corridor use; copy set phrases used regularly in class; select words on a keyboard overlay to construct simple phrases.</i></p> <p><i>Write the names of familiar objects (eg in a memory game); label items in a picture; write a shopping list.</i></p>
3	<p>a) write short sentences to convey simple, factual information.</p> <p>b) write short phrases from memory.</p> <p>And, for pupils learning Chinese or Japanese:</p> <p>c) copy a range of characters with correct stroke order.</p>	<p><i>Write captions for pictures; describe the weather; write about themselves, family and friends.</i></p> <p><i>Design a simple menu or wall-signs containing classroom instructions.</i></p>
4	<p>a) write a small number of related sentences from memory to find out and convey simple information or feelings.</p> <p>b) adapt a simple text by substituting individual words and set phrases.</p> <p>And, for pupils learning Chinese or Japanese:</p> <p>c) copy a wide range of characters with correct stroke order.</p>	<p><i>Seek autobiographical information from a pupil in a different class, as a prelude to writing to a penfriend abroad.</i></p> <p><i>Adapt a greeting card or thank-you note; fill in an official form or personal ID card based on a model.</i></p>

LEVEL	STATEMENTS OF ATTAINMENT	EXAMPLES
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) produce a short piece of continuous writing, consisting of simple sentences, to seek and convey personal information, feelings and opinions. b) adapt a simple model text by substituting phrases and simple sentences of their own. c) apply basic elements of grammar to new contexts and generally adopt correct word order. 	<p><i>Describe a favourite person or picture, situation or a familiar object; write a telephone message based on notes taken during a role-play telephone conversation.</i></p> <p><i>Adapt a postcard, or part of a letter, to suit their own purpose.</i></p>
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) use simple descriptive language to write about familiar topics and experiences, including future and past events. b) perform familiar tasks which require elementary linking of sentences and structuring of ideas. c) use formal and informal styles of writing at a simple level. 	<p><i>Record a sequence of recent events (real or imagined) in a diary.</i></p> <p><i>Keep a diary, write a dialogue or conversation; record facts from reference books and magazines.</i></p> <p><i>Write a letter booking accommodation at a hotel or requesting more information; write to a penfriend about a recent family holiday; use appropriate form of personal address.</i></p>
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) write a sequence of statements to explain how something is done or give clear instructions. b) produce a short piece of continuous writing on a real or imaginary topic, with little error, linking sentences and paragraphs and structuring ideas. c) redraft writing tasks already given, achieving greater accuracy, precision and variety of expression. 	<p><i>Design a poster setting out road safety rules or how to use public transport.</i></p> <p><i>Contribute to a news-sheet for a link school; write a personal account of an event for the school magazine.</i></p>
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) write a short non-factual text, responding to and developing the content of something read, seen or heard. b) express ideas, opinions or a personal point of view, with reasons, on a familiar topic. c) seek information or the views of others on a matter of personal significance. 	<p><i>Write the story suggested by a news headline, photo, cartoon.</i></p> <p><i>Write about a trip made at home or abroad, explaining ways in which it was successful and how it could have been improved; write a letter to express an opinion about a programme or television series.</i></p> <p><i>Design and write a questionnaire; write up the results of the survey using a word-processor.</i></p>

LEVEL	STATEMENTS OF ATTAINMENT	EXAMPLES
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) express a range of responses and attitudes to events, issues and opinions. b) develop an argument giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view. c) complete a range of written tasks, both factual and non-factual, adapting length and style to match purpose and reader. 	<p><i>Write a letter to the press about a current or recent event; respond to someone else's letter about the same event, expressing different opinions.</i></p> <p><i>Write a letter or an article from the perspective of a native speaker about an issue that concerns them.</i></p> <p><i>Write an article for younger pupils on being a teenager; prepare a leaflet for foreign visitors about local amenities and businesses.</i></p>
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) adopt different ways of writing on the same subject in order to change the impact on the reader. b) choose the appropriate form of writing for a particular task, organising content and ideas to produce a coherent and largely accurate piece of writing. c) write independently on a range of factual and non-factual topics with little or no use of reference materials. 	<p><i>Produce an awareness-raising poster, a letter to local industry, and a short article for a school magazine on the same topic.</i></p> <p><i>Produce a brochure, leaflet, survey, booking form or 'standard letter' for use with visitors from abroad in a real or simulated work experience (eg with the local tourist office).</i></p> <p><i>Write for different purposes and different audiences on a range of subjects, in a time limit and without reference materials if the nature of the task requires it.</i></p>

General requirements for programmes of study



Two programmes of study are defined:

Model A – for pupils in key stage 3 and those in key stage 4 following a single subject GCSE course.

Model B – for pupils in key stage 4 not following a single subject GCSE course.

The programmes of study for both models at key stages 3 and 4 consist of two parts:

Part I – Learning and Using the Target Language.

Part II – Areas of Experience.

Part I covers the skills which should be developed through activities **in the target language**. **Part II** sets out the content of the modern foreign language curriculum as areas of experience which should be explored **through the target language**. Parts I and II of the programmes of study should be taught together.

Throughout both programmes of study, pupils should take part in activities which:

- **combine two or more of the four language skills** (listening, speaking, reading, writing), where appropriate;
- enable them to use language for real purposes as well as to practise skills;
- help them acquire, learn and use the target language to communicate with each other, their teacher and other speakers of the language.

Pupils are expected to use the target language. Provision should be made for pupils who need to use:

- non-sighted methods of reading, such as braille, or acquire information in a non-visual or non-aural way;
- means of communication other than speech, including technological aids, signing, symbols or lip-reading;
- technological aids in producing written work.

All pupils should have opportunities in both key stages to develop information technology capability through the programmes of study.

Programme of study

Model A

1991 POS

Part I:

Learning and using the target language

Communicating in the target language

Links with: In speaking the target language, pupils should have regular opportunities to:

- practise and develop their pronunciation and intonation;
- communicate information which is not known to the listener;

AT2

- describe everyday activities and narrate events;
- make comparisons;
- express personal feelings and opinions;
- develop and justify their own ideas and opinions;

- ask and answer questions;

- find out and give information;

- ask about meanings, seek clarification or repetition;

- give and ask for explanations and instructions;

- take part in structured and less structured role-play;

- initiate and sustain conversations, some of which contain unpredictable elements;

- discuss their own interests and experiences and compare them with those of others;

- discuss an increasingly wide range of issues and ideas;

- adjust language to suit context, audience and purpose;

AT2 and AT1

- summarise and report the main points of spoken or written texts;

- express agreement and disagreement;

- use what they hear or read as a stimulus for speaking.

Links with:

In writing the target language, pupils should have regular opportunities to:

- copy phrases, sentences and short texts;

- communicate information which is not known to the reader;

AT4

- describe everyday activities and narrate events;

- make comparisons;

- express personal feelings and opinions;

- develop and justify their own ideas and opinions;
- write about their own interests and experiences and compare them with those of others;

AT4*continued*

- discuss an increasingly wide range of issues and ideas;
- vary language to suit context, audience and purpose;
- produce a variety of types of writing (*eg connected sentences and paragraphs, stories, poems, songs, diaries, letters*) for various audiences, including other learners;

- ask and answer questions;
- find out and give information;
- seek clarification;

**AT4 and
AT3**

- give and ask for explanations and instructions;
- redraft their own writing to improve its accuracy and presentation;
- redraft an existing written text (including their own) for a different audience or purpose;

- make notes from what they hear or read;
- summarise and report the main points of spoken or written texts;
- express agreement and disagreement;
- use what they hear or read as a stimulus for their own writing;

**AT4 and
AT1/AT3**

- record and express information in different forms (*eg text, tables, charts, graphs*), for different audiences.

Understanding and responding

Links with:

In listening to the target language, pupils should have regular opportunities to:

AT1

- listen attentively;
- follow clear directions and instructions;
- interpret the meaning of language with the help of visual and other non-verbal clues;
- use the context of what they hear as a guide to meaning;
- listen for gist and detail to identify and abstract information;

**AT1 and
AT2/AT4**

- respond to different types of spoken language (*eg songs, rhymes, poems, plays, messages, instructions, dialogues, conversations, narratives and reports from the media or live sources, extracts from news items, interviews and documentaries*).

Links with:	In reading the target language, pupils should have regular opportunities to:
AT3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● follow clear directions and instructions; ● interpret the meaning of language with the help of visual and other non-verbal clues; ● use the context of what they read as a guide to meaning; ● skim texts for gist and scan for detail to identify and extract information; ● read extensively for personal interest;
AT3 and AT2/AT4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● respond to different types of written text, of varying lengths (<i>eg signs, notices, postcards, letters, short stories, poems, diaries, brochures, newspaper or magazine articles, extracts from authentic imaginative writing</i>).

Developing language learning skills and awareness of language

Links with:	In learning and using the target language, pupils should have regular opportunities to:
AT 1, 2, 3, 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● learn phrases by heart; ● learn (and at times recite) short texts (<i>eg rhymes, poems, songs, jokes or tongue twisters</i>); ● learn how sounds are represented in writing; ● develop their awareness of the different conventions of the written and spoken language; ● increase their awareness of different language forms and registers; ● use knowledge about language (linguistic patterns, structures, grammatical features and relationships, and compound words and phrases) to infer meaning and develop their own use of language; ● infer meaning; ● interpret in both directions between the target language and another language (<i>eg interpret between two people speaking different languages</i>).

Developing cultural awareness

Links with:	In learning and using the target language, pupils should have regular opportunities to:
AT 1, 2, 3, 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● come into contact with native speakers in this country and (where possible) abroad; ● work with authentic materials from the countries or communities of the target language, (<i>eg from link schools abroad or schools in this country</i>);

AT
1, 2, 3, 4
continued

- consider and discuss the similarities and differences between their own culture and those of the countries and communities where the target language is spoken;
- identify with the experiences and perspectives of people in these countries and communities, (eg *in role-play or creative writing*);
- learn the use of social conventions (eg *forms of address and greetings*) and become increasingly aware of cultural attitudes as expressed in language;

and, during key stage 4, pupils should also have the opportunity to:

- investigate, discuss and report on aspects of the language and culture of these countries or communities.

Developing the ability to work with others

Links with: In learning and using the target language, pupils should have regular opportunities to:

- plan and carry out practical and creative activities with a partner or in a group;
- conduct surveys and other investigations in the class, school or outside;
- interview each other, adults and (where possible) native speakers;
- take part in language games;
- take part in improvised drama;

AT
1, 2, 3, 4

and, during key stage 4, pupils should also have the opportunity to:

- work on extended joint assignments with other members of a group;
- use the target language in a real or simulated adult working environment.

Developing the ability to learn independently

Links with: In learning and using the target language, pupils should have regular opportunities to:

- work independently of the teacher (on their own and with others);
- use a range of reference materials and resources (eg *glossaries, exercise books, textbooks, bilingual and monolingual dictionaries, indexes, encyclopaedias*);
- use computers (eg *for language games, problem-solving, information retrieval, word-processing, drafting and redrafting, desktop publishing and communicating via electronic mail*);
- develop independence in their choice of tasks, materials, and use of equipment (eg *audio and video recorders and video cameras*).

AT
1, 2, 3, 4

Part II:**Areas of experience**

Pupils must explore seven areas of experience over the period of each key stage. The areas of experience are:

- Area A:** **Everyday Activities**
- Area B:** **Personal and Social Life**
- Area C:** **The World Around Us**
- Area D:** **The World of Education, Training and Work**
- Area E:** **The World of Communications**
- Area F:** **The International World**
- Area G:** **The World of Imagination and Creativity**

Each area of experience is illustrated by a number of possible topics appropriate to key stages 3 and 4. Topics should:

- be relevant to pupils' needs and interests;
- give pupils a good insight into each area of experience, at a breadth and depth matched to their individual capabilities, maturity and interests;
- provide opportunities for comparisons between the pupil's own way of life and that of the other language community;
- be planned and taught in a way which helps pupils develop the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to progress through the levels of attainment in each attainment target.

Through the areas of experience, pupils should have opportunities in each key stage to:

- explore links with other subjects;
- develop knowledge, understanding and skills related to cross-curricular dimensions and themes;
- extend their knowledge and understanding of the language, linguistic conventions and culture of the country or communities where the target language is spoken.

The seven areas of experience are detailed below. Areas of experience are not mutually exclusive; some topics relate to more than one area of experience. The examples of topics in italics are non-statutory.

Area A: Everyday Activities**Examples of topics:**

During each key stage, pupils should have regular opportunities to explore in the target language topics which deal with activities they are likely to engage in at home and at school. This should include the language of the classroom.

- *home life*
- *daily routines*
- *shopping*
- *food and drink*
- *going out*
- *leisure activities and sports*
- *youth culture*
- *school life*
- *school holidays*

Area B: Personal and Social Life

During each key stage, pupils should have regular opportunities to explore in the target language topics which deal with aspects of their personal lives; relationships with family, friends and others; social attitudes, customs and institutions which are relevant to them.

Examples of topics:

- *self, family and friends*
- *being a teenager: relations with others*
- *health and fitness*
- *personal problems*
- *major institutions (schools, hospitals, clubs, etc)*
- *special occasions: personal, local, national, religious*
- *personal, teenage and social attitudes towards religion, politics and society (including stereotyping and equal opportunities)*

Area C: The World Around Us

During each key stage, pupils should have regular opportunities to explore in the target language topics which deal with the physical environment including their own home, home town or region and environmental themes at home and abroad.

Examples of topics:

- *houses and housing*
- *home town and region*
- *the wider world*
- *weather and climate*
- *the natural world*
- *the man-made environment*
- *local history and geography*
- *home region compared with a region abroad*

Area D: The World of Education, Training and Work

During each key stage, pupils should have regular opportunities to explore in the target language topics which deal with education, training, employment and careers; the world of business and industry.

Examples of topics:

- *school subjects, courses and further study or training*
- *jobs, occupations and future career plans*
- *personal experience of the world of work*
- *money: prices, cost of living, banks*
- *personal finance*
- *local businesses, industry and commerce*
- *unemployment*
- *tourism locally and abroad*

Area E: The World of Communications

During each key stage, pupils should have regular opportunities to explore in the target language topics which deal with various means of communication, including the use of information technology and the media.

Examples of topics:

- *writing and sending letters (informal and formal) including the use of electronic mail/fax*
- *phones and phoning*
- *radio, television and satellite TV*
- *newspapers, magazines, comics*
- *computers and IT at home, school and work*
- *advertising*

Area F: The International World

During each key stage, pupils should have regular opportunities to explore in the target language topics which deal with **experiences of travelling or staying abroad; contact with speakers of the foreign language; wider international issues.**

Examples of topics:

- *foreign contacts, travel and holidays*
- *school visits and exchanges*
- *helping and hosting visitors from abroad*
- *national stereotypes*
- *international organisations and events*
- *the foreign language in use in different countries or regions of the world*

Area G: The World of Imagination and Creativity

During each key stage, pupils should have regular opportunities to explore in the target language topics which deal with **imaginative and creative activities of all kinds; hobbies and interests; the creative arts in one's own and other cultures.**

Examples of topics:

- *designing and making*
- *popular, classical or folk music*
- *fashion and make-up*
- *fiction, songs and poems*
- *TV, cinema, theatre and other entertainments*
- *photography, drawing and painting, famous pictures and artists*
- *making a class cassette, magazine or video*

KEY STAGES 3 AND 4 PROGRAMME OF STUDY

The programme of study for Key Stages 3 and 4 consists of two parts, which should be taught together.

■ Part I: Learning and Using the Target Language

This covers the skills and understanding that should be developed through the target language at both key stages.

■ Part II: Areas of Experience

This sets out the broad topic areas that provide contexts for learning and using the target language at each key stage.

In England, the minimum statutory requirement at Key Stage 4 is a short course.

In Wales there are no statutory requirements at Key Stage 4.

PART I: LEARNING AND USING THE TARGET LANGUAGE

Pupils should be given opportunities to take part in activities in the target language that, where appropriate, combine two or more of the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. When a spoken or written response is expected, it should be in the target language, except where a response in another language is necessary, *eg when interpreting*.

■ 1. Communicating in the target language

Pupils should be given opportunities to:

- a** communicate with each other in pairs and groups, and with their teacher;
- b** use language for real purposes, as well as to practise skills;
- c** develop their understanding and skills through a range of language activities, *eg games, role-play, surveys and other investigations*;
- d** take part in imaginative and creative activities, *eg improvised drama*;
- e** use everyday classroom events as a context for spontaneous speech;
- f** discuss their own ideas, interests and experiences and compare them with those of others;
- g** listen, read or view for personal interest and enjoyment, as well as for information;
- h** listen and respond to different types of spoken language;
- i** read handwritten and printed texts of different types and of varying lengths and, where appropriate, read aloud;
- j** produce a variety of types of writing;
- k** use a range of resources for communicating, *eg telephone, electronic mail, fax, letters*.

■ 2. Language skills

Pupils should be taught to:

- a** listen attentively, and listen for gist and detail;
- b** follow instructions and directions;
- c** ask about meanings, seek clarification or repetition;
- d** ask and answer questions, and give instructions;
- e** ask for and give information and explanations;
- f** imitate pronunciation and intonation patterns;
- g** initiate and develop conversations;
- h** express agreement, disagreement, personal feelings and opinions;
- i** describe and discuss present, past and future events;
- j** skim and scan texts, including databases where appropriate, for information;
- k** copy words, phrases and sentences;
- l** make notes from what they hear or read;
- m** summarise and report the main points of spoken or written texts;
- n** redraft their writing to improve its accuracy and presentation, *eg by word-processing*;
- o** vary language to suit context, audience and purpose.

■ 3. Language-learning skills and knowledge of language

Pupils should be taught to:

- a** learn by heart phrases and short extracts, *eg rhymes, poems, songs, jokes, tongue twisters*;
- b** acquire strategies for committing familiar language to memory;
- c** develop their independence in language learning and use;
- d** use dictionaries and reference materials;
- e** use context and other clues to interpret meaning;
- f** understand and apply patterns, rules and exceptions in language forms and structures;
- g** use their knowledge to experiment with language;
- h** understand and use formal and informal language;
- i** develop strategies for dealing with the unpredictable.

■ 4. Cultural awareness

Pupils should be given opportunities to:

- a** work with authentic materials, including newspapers, magazines, books, films, radio and television, from the countries or communities of the target language;
- b** come into contact with native speakers in this country and, where possible, abroad;
- c** consider their own culture and compare it with the cultures of the countries and communities where the target language is spoken;
- d** identify with the experiences and perspectives of people in these countries and communities;
- e** recognise cultural attitudes as expressed in language and learn the use of social conventions, *eg forms of address*.

Modern
Foreign
Languages
Key Stages
3 and 4
Part I

PART II: AREAS OF EXPERIENCE

In Key Stage 3, pupils should study Areas of Experience A, B and C.

In Key Stage 4:

- pupils following a **short course** should continue to study one of Areas A, B or C in greater depth, and in addition should study Area D or E.
- pupils following a **full course** should continue to study Areas of Experience A, B and C in greater depth, and in addition should study Areas D and E.

■ A. Everyday activities

This should include:

- the language of the classroom;
- home life and school;
- food, health and fitness.

■ B. Personal and social life

This should include:

- self, family and personal relationships;
- free time and social activities;
- holidays and special occasions.

■ C. The world around us

This should include:

- home town and local area;
- the natural and made environment;
- people, places and customs.

■ D. The world of work

This should include:

- further education and training;
- careers and employment;
- language and communication in the workplace.

■ E. The international world

This should include:

- tourism at home and abroad;
- life in other countries and communities;
- world events and issues.

ATTAINMENT TARGETS

LEVEL DESCRIPTIONS

The following level descriptions describe the types and range of performance that pupils working at a particular level should characteristically demonstrate. In deciding on a pupil's level of attainment at the end of the key stage, teachers should judge which description best fits that pupil's performance. Each description should be considered in conjunction with the descriptions for adjacent levels.

By the end of Key Stage 3, the performance of the great majority of pupils should be within the range of Levels 2 to 6. Levels 7 and 8 are available for very able pupils and, to help teachers differentiate exceptional performance at Key Stage 3, a description above Level 8 is provided. The scale does not apply at Key Stage 4.

For languages with non-Roman scripts, the level descriptions assume pre-reading skills (recognising letters/syllables, printed/handwritten forms) and pre-writing skills (forming letters, joining letters, making strokes in the correct order).

For Chinese and Japanese, the modifications on page 10 apply.

Attainment Target 4: Writing

■ Level 1

Pupils copy single familiar words correctly. They label items and select appropriate words to complete short phrases or sentences.

■ Level 2

Pupils copy familiar short phrases correctly. They write or word-process items, such as simple signs, instructions and set phrases used regularly in class. When they write familiar words from memory their spelling may be approximate.

■ Level 3

Pupils write two or three short sentences on familiar topics, using aids such as exercise books, textbooks and wallcharts. They express personal responses, such as likes, dislikes and feelings. They write short phrases from memory and their spelling is readily understandable.

■ Level 4

Pupils write individual paragraphs of about three or four simple sentences, drawing largely on memorised language. They adapt a model by substituting individual words and set phrases. They are beginning to make appropriate use of dictionaries and glossaries as an aid to memory.

■ Level 5

Pupils produce short pieces of writing in which they seek and convey information and opinions in simple sentences. They refer to recent experience and future plans, as well as to everyday activities. They are beginning to apply basic elements of grammar in new contexts, but there may be a number of mistakes. They use dictionaries or glossaries as an aid to memory and to look up unknown words.

■ Level 6

Pupils write in paragraphs, using simple descriptive language, and refer to past, present and future actions and events. They use both informal and formal styles of writing, such as when keeping a diary, booking accommodation and scripting dialogues. Although there may be some mistakes, the meaning is usually clear.

■ Level 7

Pupils produce pieces of writing of varying lengths on real and imaginary subjects. They link sentences and paragraphs, structure ideas and adapt previously learnt language for their own purposes. They edit and redraft their work, using reference sources to achieve greater accuracy, precision and variety of expression. Although there may be occasional mistakes, the meaning is clear.

■ Level 8

Pupils express and justify ideas, opinions or personal points of view, and seek the views of others. They develop the content of what they have read, seen or heard. They produce longer sequences in which spelling and grammar are generally accurate, and the style is appropriate to the content. They use reference materials to extend their range of language and improve accuracy.

■ Exceptional performance

Pupils write coherently and accurately on a wide range of factual and imaginative topics. They choose the appropriate form of writing for a particular task, making effective use of resources to vary the style and scope of their writing.

MFL Key stages 3 & 4

Programme of study: modern foreign languages

Key stages 3 & 4

During key stage 3 pupils begin to understand, speak, read and write at least one modern foreign language. They become familiar with the sounds, written form and grammar of the language, and use this knowledge with increasing confidence and competence to express themselves in role plays, conversations and writing. They improve their understanding of the language by listening to people talking about different subjects and by reading a range of texts. They also increase their cultural awareness by communicating with people who speak the language and by using materials from countries and communities where the language is spoken.

During key stage 4 pupils begin to use a modern foreign language more independently, drawing on a firmer grasp of grammar and a wider and more complex range of expression. They adapt their use of the language according to context, purpose and audience. They learn to understand a more extensive range of unfamiliar language by reading and listening to a variety of materials from countries and communities where the language is spoken. They also increase their cultural awareness through more direct contact with people who live in those countries and communities.

Note about using the target language
The target language is the modern foreign language that pupils are learning. Pupils are expected to use and respond to the target language, and to use English only when necessary (for example, when discussing a grammar point or when comparing English and the target language).

Knowledge, skills and understanding

Acquiring knowledge and understanding of the target language

- 1 Pupils should be taught:
 - a the principles and interrelationship of sounds and writing in the target language
 - b the grammar of the target language and how to apply it
 - c how to express themselves using a range of vocabulary and structures.

Developing language skills

- 2 Pupils should be taught:
 - a how to listen carefully for gist and detail
 - b correct pronunciation and intonation
 - c how to ask and answer questions
 - d how to initiate and develop conversations
 - e how to vary the target language to suit context, audience and purpose
 - f how to adapt language they already know for different contexts
 - g strategies for dealing with the unpredictable [for example, unfamiliar language, unexpected responses]
 - h techniques for skimming and for scanning written texts for information, including those from ICT-based sources
 - i how to summarise and report the main points of spoken or written texts, using notes where appropriate
 - j how to redraft their writing to improve its accuracy and presentation, including the use of ICT.

Developing language-learning skills

- 3 Pupils should be taught:
 - a techniques for memorising words, phrases and short extracts
 - b how to use context and other clues to interpret meaning [for example, by identifying the grammatical function of unfamiliar words or similarities with words they know]
 - c to use their knowledge of English or another language when learning the target language
 - d how to use dictionaries and other reference materials appropriately and effectively
 - e how to develop their independence in learning and using the target language.

Developing cultural awareness

4 Pupils should be taught about different countries and cultures by:

- working with authentic materials in the target language, including some from ICT-based sources [for example, handwritten texts, newspapers, magazines, books, video, satellite television, texts from the internet]
- communicating with native speakers [for example, in person, by correspondence]
- considering their own culture and comparing it with the cultures of the countries and communities where the target language is spoken
- considering the experiences and perspectives of people in these countries and communities.

1b, 3c → links to other subjects

These requirements build on En1/5 and En2/6 and En3/7.

2j → links to other subjects

This requirement builds on En3/2 and ICT/3b.

4b → ICT opportunity

Pupils could communicate by e-mail with speakers of the target language, including those in more distant countries.

5d → links to other subjects

This requirement builds on ICT/3b.

5e → links to other subjects

This requirement builds on ICT/3c.

Breadth of study

5 During key stages 3 and 4, pupils should be taught the Knowledge, skills and understanding through:

- communicating in the target language in pairs and groups, and with their teacher
- using everyday classroom events as an opportunity for spontaneous speech
- expressing and discussing personal feelings and opinions
- producing and responding to different types of spoken and written language, including texts produced using ICT
- using a range of resources, including ICT, for accessing and communicating information
- using the target language creatively and imaginatively
- listening, reading or viewing for personal interest and enjoyment, as well as for information
- using the target language for real purposes [for example, by sending and receiving messages by telephone, letter, fax or e-mail]
- working in a variety of contexts, including everyday activities, personal and social life, the world around us, the world of work and the international world.

Note for eligible languages

6 Schools must offer, in key stages 3 and 4, one or more of the official working languages of the European Union (Danish, Dutch, Finnish, French, German, Modern Greek, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, Swedish). Schools may, in addition, offer any other modern foreign language. Non-EU languages count as a foundation subject only when offered to pupils alongside the possibility of studying an official working language of the EU. A pupil may, therefore, study any modern foreign language that the school offers, but the offer must include an EU language.

Attainment target 4: writing

Level 1

Pupils copy single familiar words correctly. They label items and select appropriate words to complete short phrases or sentences.

Level 2

Pupils copy familiar short phrases correctly. They write or word process items [for example, simple signs and instructions] and set phrases used regularly in class. When they write familiar words from memory their spelling may be approximate.

Level 3

Pupils write two or three short sentences on familiar topics, using aids [for example, textbooks, wallcharts and their own written work]. They express personal responses, [for example, likes, dislikes and feelings] They write short phrases from memory and their spelling is readily understandable.

Level 4

Pupils write individual paragraphs of about three or four simple sentences, drawing largely on memorised language. They are beginning to use their knowledge of grammar to adapt and substitute individual words and set phrases. They are beginning to use dictionaries or glossaries to check words they have learnt.

Level 5

Pupils produce short pieces of writing, in simple sentences, that seek and convey information and opinions. They refer to recent experiences or future plans, as well as to everyday activities. Although there may be some mistakes, the meaning can be understood with little or no difficulty. They use dictionaries or glossaries to check words they have learnt and to look up unknown words.

Level 6

Pupils write in paragraphs, using simple descriptive language, and refer to past, present and future actions and events. They apply grammar in new contexts. Although there may be a few mistakes, the meaning is usually clear.

Level 7

Pupils produce pieces of writing of varying lengths on real and imaginary subjects, using an appropriate register. They link sentences and paragraphs, structure ideas and adapt previously learnt language for their own purposes. They edit and redraft their work, using reference sources to improve their accuracy, precision and variety of expression. Although there may be occasional mistakes, the meaning is clear.

Level 8

Pupils express and justify ideas, opinions or personal points of view, and seek the views of others. They develop the content of what they have read, seen or heard. Their spelling and grammar are generally accurate, and the style is appropriate to the content. They use reference materials to extend their range of language and improve their accuracy.

Exceptional performance

Pupils write coherently and accurately about a wide range of factual and imaginative topics. They choose the appropriate form of writing for a particular task, and use resources to help them vary the style and scope of their writing.

Modern foreign languages key stage 3**EXPLANATORY NOTES**

The study of languages: This may include major European or world languages, such as Arabic, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Mandarin, Russian, Spanish and Urdu. Schools may choose which languages they teach.

Linguistic competence: Pupils who are competent in using language are able to adapt their knowledge and skills, take the initiative and cope with unexpected responses and unpredictable situations.

Knowledge about language: Pupils should explore and learn about standard structures and patterns.

Manipulate: Pupils should understand how to adapt and reuse language in modified forms for different purposes and contexts. This is essential for being creative with language.

Creativity: The ability to express ideas and feelings using a limited range of language is an important skill for pupils to develop and practise, as it prevents them from feeling frustrated because they are restricted in what they can say and write.

For new purposes and in new contexts: This gives pupils the opportunity to use language imaginatively and creatively and to take risks.

Intercultural understanding: Learning a new language provides unique opportunities for pupils to explore national identities and become aware of both similarities and contrasts between the cultures of different countries, including their own.

Diversity: Many languages are spoken in more than one country and there may be significant cultural differences between these countries.

Other cultures: This could include different aspects of other cultures, such as everyday life, social customs, school life, festivals and events of national importance.

Different ways of seeing the world: These include religious beliefs, social customs, traditions, values, attitudes towards other countries and reactions to world events.

1 Key concepts

There are a number of key concepts that underpin the study of languages. Pupils need to understand these concepts in order to deepen and broaden their knowledge, skills and understanding.

1.1 Linguistic competence

- Developing the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing in a range of situations and contexts.
- Applying linguistic knowledge and skills to understand and communicate effectively.

1.2 Knowledge about language

- Understanding how a language works and how to manipulate it.
- Recognising that languages differ but may share common grammatical, syntactical or lexical features.

1.3 Creativity

- Using familiar language for new purposes and in new contexts.
- Using imagination to express thoughts, ideas, experiences and feelings.

1.4 Intercultural understanding

- Appreciating the richness and diversity of other cultures.
- Recognising that there are different ways of seeing the world, and developing an international outlook.

2 Key processes

EXPLANATORY NOTES

Patterns in the target language: These include patterns in pronunciation, spelling, word order and sentence structure.

These are the essential skills and processes in languages that pupils need to learn to make progress.

2.1 Developing language-learning strategies

Pupils should be able to:

- a identify patterns in the target language
- b develop techniques for memorising words, phrases and spellings
- c use their knowledge of English or another language when learning the target language
- d use previous knowledge, context and other clues to work out the meaning of what they hear or read
- e use reference materials such as dictionaries appropriately and effectively

2.2 Developing language skills

Pupils should be able to:

- a listen for gist or detail
- b skim and scan written texts for the main points or details
- c respond appropriately to spoken and written language
- d use correct pronunciation and intonation
- e ask and answer questions
- f initiate and sustain conversations
- g write clearly and coherently, including an appropriate level of detail
- h redraft their writing to improve accuracy and quality
- i reuse language that they have heard or read in their own speaking and writing
- j adapt language they already know in new contexts for different purposes
- k deal with unfamiliar language, unexpected responses and unpredictable situations.....

Techniques for memorising: These include: identifying similarities between new and known words; associating words and phrases with a physical response, actions, images, the written form or sounds (including rhymes and repetition); practising with a friend or family member; and using the technique 'look, cover, write/say, check'.

Knowledge of English or another language: This includes comparing new words, phrases, expressions and grammatical structures with English and/or another language that the pupil knows well. This can help pupils to remember new language and to understand how the target language works.

Other clues: These include tone of voice, intonation, non-verbal communication (such as facial expression or body language), key words, similarities between the target language and English or another language, and grammatical function.

Skim and scan: 'Skim' refers to reading for general understanding; 'scan' refers to looking for specific information in a text.

Reuse language: This includes pupils using language that they have encountered as building blocks for their own spoken or written use of the target language. This kind of 'borrowing' of language makes it easier to express ideas or information.

Deal with unfamiliar language, unexpected responses and unpredictable situations: This includes developing strategies for coping, such as asking for repetition or clarification, listening or looking for key words, and using previous knowledge, context and other clues to try to make sense of what they hear or read.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

Interrelationship between sounds and writing: This includes underpinning principles such as common letter strings.

This section outlines the breadth of the subject on which teachers should draw when teaching the key concepts and key processes.

The study of languages should include:

- a the spoken and written forms of the target language
- b the interrelationship between sounds and writing in the target language
- c the grammar of the target language and how to apply it
- d a range of vocabulary and structures
- e learning about different countries and cultures
- f comparing pupils' own experiences and perspectives with those of people in countries and communities where the target language is spoken.

4 Curriculum opportunities

EXPLANATORY NOTES

Beyond: This could include using websites, taking part in special days and events, school visits abroad, and exchanges and links with schools abroad.

During the key stage pupils should be offered the following opportunities that are integral to their learning and enhance their engagement with the concepts, processes and content of the subject.

The curriculum should provide opportunities for pupils to:

- a hear, speak, read and write in the target language regularly and frequently within the classroom and beyond
- b communicate in the target language individually, in pairs, in groups and with speakers of the target language, including native speakers, where possible, for a variety of purposes
- c use an increasing range of more complex language
- d make links with English at word, sentence and text level
- e use a range of resources, including ICT, for accessing and communicating information in the target language
- f listen to, read or view a range of materials, including authentic materials in the target language, both to support learning and for personal interest and enjoyment
- g use the target language in connection with topics and issues that are engaging and may be related to other areas of the curriculum.

Including native speakers: This could be face to face, in school (eg with a foreign language assistant), on visits abroad, by email, or through videoconferencing. Communication with young people in a country where the target language is spoken is particularly relevant and can be very motivating.

Variety of purposes: These include real purposes, such as sending and receiving emails, simulated or actual real-life situations, and creative and imaginative work.

Links with English: Learning another language helps pupils develop literacy skills, including understanding the origin of words, formation of structures, grammar and syntax, different text types and drama.

Range of resources: This includes live or recorded audio and video resources, texts (including on-screen and multimodal texts) and the internet.

Authentic materials: These could include textual materials of different kinds, video, television, images or video and audio recordings from the internet.



Modern foreign languages: Attainment targets

Attainment target 4: Writing

Level 1

Pupils write or copy simple words or symbols correctly. They label items and select appropriate words to complete short phrases or sentences.

Level 2

Pupils write one or two short sentences, following a model, and fill in the words on a simple form. They label items and write familiar short phrases correctly. When they write familiar words from memory, their spelling may be approximate.

Level 7

Pupils write articles or stories of varying lengths, conveying opinions and points of view. They write about real and imaginary subjects and use an appropriate register. They link sentences and paragraphs, structure ideas and adapt previously learnt language for their own purposes. They edit and redraft their work, using reference sources to improve their accuracy, precision and variety of expression. Although there may be occasional mistakes, the meaning is clear.

Level 8

Pupils produce formal and informal texts in an appropriate style on familiar topics. They express and justify ideas, opinions or personal points of view and seek the views of others. They develop the content of what they have read, seen or heard. Their spelling and grammar are generally accurate. They use reference materials to extend their range of language and improve their accuracy.

Level 3

Pupils write a few short sentences, with support, using expressions that they have already learnt. They express personal responses. They write short phrases from memory and their spelling is readily understandable.

Level 4

Pupils write short texts on familiar topics, adapting language that they have already learnt. They draw largely on memorised language. They begin to use their knowledge of grammar to adapt and substitute individual words and set phrases. They begin to use dictionaries or glossaries to check words they have learnt.

Exceptional performance

Pupils communicate ideas accurately and in an appropriate style over a range of familiar topics, both factual and imaginative. They write coherently and accurately. They use resources to help them vary the style and scope of their writing.

Level 5

Pupils write short texts on a range of familiar topics, using simple sentences. They refer to recent experiences or future plans, as well as to everyday activities. Although there may be some mistakes, the meaning can be understood with little or no difficulty. They use dictionaries or glossaries to check words they have learnt and to look up unknown words.

Level 6

Pupils write texts giving and seeking information and opinions. They use descriptive language and a variety of structures. They apply grammar in new contexts. Although there may be a few mistakes, the meaning is usually clear.

The ability to understand and communicate in another language is a lifelong skill for education, employment and leisure in this country and throughout the world

Modifications for pupils studying Chinese (Cantonese or Mandarin) or Japanese are available from www.qca.org.uk/curriculum



Languages programmes of study: key stage 3

National curriculum in England

Purpose of study

Learning a foreign language is a liberation from insularity and provides an opening to other cultures. A high-quality languages education should foster pupils' curiosity and deepen their understanding of the world. The teaching should enable pupils to express their ideas and thoughts in another language and to understand and respond to its speakers, both in speech and in writing. It should also provide opportunities for them to communicate for practical purposes, learn new ways of thinking and read great literature in the original language. Language teaching should provide the foundation for learning further languages, equipping pupils to study and work in other countries.

Aims

The national curriculum for languages aims to ensure that all pupils:

- understand and respond to spoken and written language from a variety of authentic sources
- speak with increasing confidence, fluency and spontaneity, finding ways of communicating what they want to say, including through discussion and asking questions, and continually improving the accuracy of their pronunciation and intonation
- can write at varying length, for different purposes and audiences, using the variety of grammatical structures that they have learnt
- discover and develop an appreciation of a range of writing in the language studied.

Attainment targets

By the end of key stage 3, pupils are expected to know, apply and understand the matters, skills and processes specified in the programme of study.

Schools are not required by law to teach the example content in [square brackets].

Subject content

Key stage 3: Modern foreign language

Teaching may be of any modern foreign language and should build on the foundations of language learning laid at key stage 2, whether pupils continue with the same language or take up a new one. Teaching should focus on developing the breadth and depth of pupils' competence in listening, speaking, reading and writing, based on a sound foundation of core grammar and vocabulary. It should enable pupils to understand and communicate personal and factual information that goes beyond their immediate needs and interests, developing and justifying points of view in speech and writing, with increased spontaneity, independence and accuracy. It should provide suitable preparation for further study.

Pupils should be taught to:

Grammar and vocabulary

- identify and use tenses or other structures which convey the present, past, and future as appropriate to the language being studied
- use and manipulate a variety of key grammatical structures and patterns, including voices and moods, as appropriate
- develop and use a wide-ranging and deepening vocabulary that goes beyond their immediate needs and interests, allowing them to give and justify opinions and take part in discussion about wider issues
- use accurate grammar, spelling and punctuation.

Linguistic competence

- listen to a variety of forms of spoken language to obtain information and respond appropriately
- transcribe words and short sentences that they hear with increasing accuracy
- initiate and develop conversations, coping with unfamiliar language and unexpected responses, making use of important social conventions such as formal modes of address
- express and develop ideas clearly and with increasing accuracy, both orally and in writing
- speak coherently and confidently, with increasingly accurate pronunciation and intonation
- read and show comprehension of original and adapted materials from a range of different sources, understanding the purpose, important ideas and details, and provide an accurate English translation of short, suitable material
- read literary texts in the language [such as stories, songs, poems and letters], to stimulate ideas, develop creative expression and expand understanding of the language and culture

Languages – key stage 3

- write prose using an increasingly wide range of grammar and vocabulary, write creatively to express their own ideas and opinions, and translate short written text accurately into the foreign language.

Words

teaching objectives

Year 7 Pupils should be taught:	Year 8 In addition to working further on objectives from Year 7 pupils should be taught:	Year 9 In addition to working further on objectives from Years 7 and 8 pupils should be taught:
<p>7W1 How to build and re-apply a stock of words relating to everyday contexts and settings</p> <p>7W2 How to learn, use and appreciate the importance of some basic high-frequency words found in many contexts</p> <p>7W3 How to accumulate and apply a stock of words for use in language learning and classroom talk</p> <p>7W4 That gender and plural patterns in nouns may differ from English and how other words can be affected</p> <p>7W5 Present tense forms of high-frequency verbs, examples of past and other tense forms for set phrases</p> <p>7W6 The alphabet, common letter strings and syllables, sound patterns, accents and other characters</p> <p>7W7 How to find and memorise the spelling, sound, meaning and main attributes of words</p> <p>7W8 How to find or work out and give the meaning of unfamiliar words</p>	<p>8W1 How to extend their vocabulary and include some abstract items</p> <p>8W2 Connectives to support sentence building and linking and how to use them</p> <p>8W3 To understand and use words found in comments or advice about their work</p> <p>8W4 Some regular patterns of word change linked to gender and plural forms</p> <p>8W5 To use verb patterns and forms to understand and refer to present, past and close future events</p> <p>8W6 Some common exceptions to the usual patterns of sounds and spellings</p> <p>8W7 How to use detail and exemplification in dictionaries and other reference materials</p> <p>8W8 That words do not always carry their literal meaning</p>	<p>9W1 To discriminate between words similar in meaning or appearance to others in the target language</p> <p>9W2 To extend the range of connectives to support the understanding and composition of complex sentences and text</p> <p>9W3 Words about points of language, resources and tasks set</p> <p>9W4 To apply main points of inflection using reference materials if needed</p> <p>9W5 To secure regular present tense verb patterns, main past and future tenses of high-frequency verbs, and some conditional examples</p> <p>9W6 That some letter strings and syllables have a specific function or meaning</p> <p>9W7 How to collect and learn words independently and form other words in same family</p> <p>9W8 How to use knowledge of word forms, patterns and context to identify meanings</p>

Sentences

teaching objectives

Year 7 Pupils should be taught:	Year 8 In addition to working further on objectives from Year 7 pupils should be taught:	Year 9 In addition to working further on objectives from Years 7 and 8 pupils should be taught:
<p>7S1 How to recognise and apply typical word order in short phrases and sentences</p> <p>7S2 How to work out the gist of a sentence by picking out the main words and seeing how the sentence is constructed compared with English</p> <p>7S3 How to adapt a simple sentence to change its meaning or communicate personal information</p> <p>7S4 How to formulate a basic question</p> <p>7S5 How to formulate a basic negative statement</p> <p>7S6 How to formulate compound sentences by linking two main clauses with a simple connective</p> <p>7S7 To look for time expressions and verb tense in simple sentences referring to present, past or close future events</p> <p>7S8 Punctuation and orthographic features specific to phrases and sentences in the target language</p> <p>7S9 How to understand and produce simple sentences containing familiar language for routine classroom or social communication</p>	<p>8S1 How the main elements of simple and complex sentences are usually sequenced</p> <p>8S2 How compound and complex sentences are built up using connectives, phrases and clauses</p> <p>8S3 The basic nature of modal verbs and how to use them in simple sentences</p> <p>8S4 To understand and use a variety of question types, including some reflecting an attitude or expectation</p> <p>8S5 To understand and use a variety of negative forms and words</p> <p>8S6 How to develop a sentence by adding or replacing elements, making necessary changes</p> <p>8S7 To understand simple sentences using high-frequency verbs referring to present, past and future events</p> <p>8S8 How to use knowledge of high-frequency words and punctuation to understand sentences</p>	<p>9S1 That emphasis in a sentence can be changed by positioning words, phrases and clauses</p> <p>9S2 To use knowledge of the order of words, phrases and clauses to find the meaning of a sentence</p> <p>9S3 How verbs work together in different tenses to extend meaning</p> <p>9S4 To use a question as a source of language for an answer</p> <p>9S5 To understand and use less common negative forms</p> <p>9S6 How to understand and build extended sentences with clauses of different types</p> <p>9S7 To recognise and begin to use different tenses of familiar verbs within complex sentences or text</p> <p>9S8 That inflections carry information which can be necessary for understanding</p>

Appendix 6a: KS3 MFL Framework example of high frequency verbs

8 Demonstrative adjectives/pronouns (*les adjectifs et les pronoms démonstratifs*)

ce/cette/ces	this/that/these/those
celui/celle/ceux/celles	the one/the ones
-ci/-là	(added to <i>celui</i> etc. to mean this one/that one etc.)

9 Verbs (*les verbes*)

This is not a comprehensive list. The following verbs are listed purely on the basis of likely frequency of use in the early stages of language learning. They include regular and irregular verbs and modals (e.g. *pouvoir*). The various forms are not listed, but learners who know all forms of these verbs will have a sound basis for adding and using others over time. Specific forms of some verbs are particularly useful (e.g. *je voudrais*).

acheter	to buy
aller	to go
aimer	to like
apprendre	to learn
avoir	to have
boire	to drink
commencer	to begin
comprendre	to understand
devoir	to have to, 'must', 'ought'
donner	to give
écouter	to listen (to)
écrire	to write
entendre	to hear
être	to be
faire	to make, do
finir	to finish
habiter	to live
lire	to read
jouer	to play
manger	to eat
parler	to speak
pouvoir	to be able to, 'can', 'may'
prendre	to take
regarder	to look at
rester	to stay, remain
savoir	to know
travailler	to work
venir	to come
voir	to see
vouloir	to want (to)

Teachers will need to deal with other aspects of verbs such as the use of key verbs as auxiliaries (*avoir*, *être*) and the use of *de* and *à* with some infinitives.

8 The National Strategies | Secondary

The Key Stage 3 Framework for languages: overview and learning objectives

4.5 Verbs and tenses

Year 7	Year 8	Year 9
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> understand and use present tense forms of high-frequency verbs, and examples of past and other tense forms for set phrases understand and use some high-frequency modal verb forms in simple statements and questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> understand and use a range of verb forms referring to past, present and future events understand and use a range of modal verb forms in different contexts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> recognise past, present and future verb forms and switch from one tense to another in speaking and writing understand and use key past and future tense forms of modal verbs for set phrases

4.6 Questions and negatives

Year 7	Year 8	Year 9
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> understand and use confidently some common question types in different contexts understand and use confidently some common negative forms in different contexts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> understand and use a range of question types understand and use a range of negative forms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> make confident use of question types with simple and compound tenses make confident use of negative forms with simple and compound tenses

Appendix 7a: Time line of data collection

	Consent given	Access granted to observe	1 st Interview	Follow up meeting to check for accuracy / negotiation	1 st Observation	2 nd Observation	3 rd Observation	Subsequent participation if needed
Zelda	11/7/10	n/a	11/7/10	25/7/10	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Zara	25/6/10	n/a	25/6/10	left teaching	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Jane	7/10/10	5/11/10	7/10/10	11/2/11	Year 7	Year 8 11/2/11	Year 10 11/2/11	Email - 2013
Ken	25/6/10	30/1/11	15/7/10	10/3/11	Year 9	Year 10 10/3/11	Year 12 10/3/11	Interview 16/5/12
Rosetta	10/6/11	14/6/11	20/6/11	10/11/11	Year 9	Year 10 20/6/11	Year 10 10/11/11	Email 2013
Ross	10/6/11	10/6/11	24/6/11	11/11/11	Year 7 (L) 24/6/11	Year 7 (H) 24/6/11	Year 10 11/11/11	Interview 26/8/13
Morag	16/7/10	n/a	16/7/10	September 2010	n/a	n/a	n/a	Email - 2013

Appendix 7b: extract from cross analysis chart

	Me	Ken	Jane	Rosetta	Ross	Morag	Loved French – loved her teacher	Zelda	Zara
Early experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some emphasis on developing speaking - TL was encouraged - Je m'excuse in first year PPP - No TL later used by teachers - audio-lingual course was used – but practice was not audio-lingual in nature – it was a hybrid initially then grammar-translation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Grammar-translation - Longman Audio-Visual was used idea that teachers were in transition. Some "écoutez et répétez" mixed methods? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Teacher 'personality' -encouragement / empathy / motivation -She liked the subject if she liked the teacher or if the teacher liked her (affective issues) grammar-translation: explanation then exercises (sentence work) Influence of narratives? – see current practice – link to lessons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Father - teaching her de-contextualised grammar- put her off 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Communicative' - mistakes were not corrected - led to fossilization of errors - second teacher (French national) - didactic / deductive grammar teaching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raised bi-lingually 'Communicative' - mistakes were not corrected - led to fossilization of errors - second teacher (French national) - didactic / deductive grammar teaching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some speaking work Sophisticated / advanced grammar Emphasis on speaking Sound spelling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grammar – translation Struggled to understand Frustration at not having the language to communicate (link to exchange trip in France) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grammar-translation One of the first GCSE intakes – what did she experience? Struggled to understand Only really understood grammar – amazed at her grammatical prowess at an early age Forced herself to understand at A level Deeper learning?
Grammar: further details	Didn't understand and then eureka moment BUT would	Haziness over Grammar – "there is stuff in Fr. Grammar that nobody really knows" – so should they?	Understood it – liked the absolutism	Didn't understand Haziness over grammar and then eureka moment	Acknowledges gaps / unsure in some aspects of grammar because early mistakes were not corrected.	Understood grammar – amazed at her grammatical prowess at an early age	Only really understood grammar when she began to teach it	Forced herself to understand at A level	Deeper learning?

Well I was thinking that you were still in your first year of teaching and I'm just thinking about the support that you might have had, were you assigned a mentor?

No, the good thing about the first year was that I was in a mobile at the bottom of the car park and I could do exactly what ever I liked *erm* but very quickly the things that *** was working on, made a lot of sense, well actually not very quickly, quite slowly in my brain actually. *Erm* *** has always worked a lot with [GR] modal verbs, connectives, modal verbs plus infinitives to extend pupils' writing and after a little while I really twigged that and ran with it and that's, you know, that's what I have done a lot of since: take these expressions and use them as a core to express your self on any topic and extend your writing which is really where I am today I think.

Erm Okay (20:07)

It came from *** and she does a lot with it but I've sort of made it my sort of thing that I do and we do it here at [anonymised] as well the whole year 8 course is built around [GR] *I like, I love, I prefer, I can, I want, I'm going to, I decided to, I was going to, I would have liked to* and you can speak endlessly about yourself. Then there comes a point where you want to talk about other people, oh and that's the time to teach it. [other persons of the verb?]

Okay, how does that then move onto Year 9? How does that develop into Year 9?

Yeah, well it doesn't have to be honest it can, it started off at GCSE. At GCSE give opinions, justify them, talk about past and future. [GR] At Year 9 here we very much try to bring in other persons of the verb and in Year 7 as well actually it's there all along and we are going to bring it more in Year 8 as *well* but (pause) the thing (pause) that seems to matter quite a lot is not how much French you know but how good you are at using it and by limiting it to a core and by insisting that it is used and used well then once they are good at it, once they have got French coming out speaking and writing, you can do whatever you like but it's the, it's the idea of not teaching them enough French or *piecemeal* French (21:27) so you get nothing useful (interesting?) or teaching them a whole load of grammar (use of

Comment [AC1]: Is this a reflective practitioner who wishes to find things out for himself?

Comment [AC2]: This is his first head of department – this is a key part of his practice.

Comment [AC3]: Core language that can be recycled in many contexts.

Comment [AC4]: Are these functions?

Comment [AC5]: Staggered introduction of parts of the verb – different persons introduced over time.

Comment [AC6]: Link to GCSE criteria

Comment [AC7]: GR Expectation to use more parts for the verb in Year 9 (progression) link to MFL framework

language) that doesn't get used either (pause) it it you've got to get somewhere in the middle where they have got a kit of French, a working kit of French which they can use to express themselves and practise using it and then add on to you know it is like a kit you get started so that you can speak French; can give opinions and justify.

Comment [AC8]: GR See later for comments about traditional grammar teaching sequence

Comment [AC9]: He uses the term tool box later? Core of language link to Lewis 1993 / high frequency language 2003 Framework

Ross Year 7 Higher (example of field notes) 24 June 2011

00.24 "Okay books out – Cahiers sur la table, s'il vous plaît ! » uses English first and then translates into French

Comment [AC1]: TL use commands

00.33 *Er, regardez le tableau!*

Comment [AC2]: TL use - commands

On the board already are the following:

Le professeur est sympa	The teacher is nice
C'est ennuyeux	it's easy
Intéressant	it's boring
Nous avons beaucoup de devoirs	it's my fav.subject
C'est facile	We get loads of homework
C'est ma matière préférée	It's interesting

Comment [c3]: *C'est* added on later

T - *le français et l'anglais* [pause] *Les paires* [pause] *'dans la tête'*

B tells T that he has left his geography book in geography

Comment [c4]: I think he is insinuating that he wants the students to match up the equivalents in their heads

1.37 Register - T reminds the Ss to say *oui présent* and *non absent*

He has to remind them early on to use French – "what did I say? *Oui présent, non absent*"

Comment [c5]: No mention of female equivalents

0.56 He says "well done" when G enthusiastically says "Oui monsieur" later he says in English – "that's a nice reply" 03.00 he also says *bonjour / salut, merci and excellent* to some students when they reply correctly.

There is some mix of English (yes sir) and French (oui / présent) which makes me question how established this practice is as a routine. How often does T insist on French for the register? – Ross says he had to do it 4 times in the lesson.

03.17 register completed

03.22 R *Les paires, volontaires, deux volontaires* repeats more slowly *deux volontaires*

03.30 Some students say what ??

Les paires – see if you can get them right The students have a minute to match up the phrases on the interactive white board 04.00

Comment [AC6]: Not sure the Ss understand at this point

Comment [AC7]: Match English to French (translation)

Whilst the two students are matching the pairs, T reads the sentences out loud.

2 boys have to match up the expressions. Once this is completed

04.50 T *On va les corriger, correct oui ou non?*

Comment [AC8]: TL use command

Students are allowed to shout out whether the boys' answers are correct or not. T reads out the answers as decided by the boys.

The students mainly use English in response, they say "yeah" whereas T says in French "Oui c'est correct..."

05.05 [Assesses the exercise with the class]. T acknowledges that he has missed off C'est, he asks class, "What should I have done here?" B replies "C'est?"

05.15 TA arrives at door, T speaks to her in Spanish. B leaves class and says au *revoir!*

Comment [AC9]: TL use from S

06.06 T "Okay we are going to play a *game*"

Comment [AC10]: No TL use

Splat Game: 1 boy (from the starter activity) and a girl

06.36 "I'm going to say *en anglais*, one of those" (expressions in English). He continues to explain in English that students must hit the corresponding French equivalent. Students have to say *splat*. Students respond in French to English prompts. Nothing is being verbalised.

Comment [AC11]: Interpreting / translation

Appendix 9: slide of functional language to introduce future / hypothetical plans (used with Year 10 GCSE German group)

Was sind deine Zukunftspläne?

Ich werde	auf die Uni gehen	
Ich will	heiraten	
Ich möchte	eine Weltreise machen	
Ich könnte	Kinder haben	
Ich sollte	Alkohol trinken	
	ein Auto kaufen	
	im Ausland wohnen	

Appendix 10: Spy story extract

La mission de Premium Bond en Egypte

Premium Bond est un espion qui travaille pour le Gouvernement Britannique.

Un jour, le 5 juin, Premium Bond décide d'aller en Egypte pour trouver l'assassin Myclops qui est très laid. Il part de Londres en avion et il arrive au Caire à 17 heures trente. Il sort de l'aéroport à 18 heures quinze et il voyage à son hôtel en taxi.

Une fois à l'hôtel, Premium descend du taxi et il entre dans le bar où il commande une vodka-martini. Ensuite, il sort du bar et il monte à sa chambre par l'ascenseur.

Le 6 juin, Premium va aux Pyramides pour rencontrer l'agent Miou Miou la Belle, qui est une femme très jolie. Miou Miou voyage aux Pyramides en hélicoptère. Miou Miou et Premium entrent dans le tombeau de Toutânkhamon où ils trouvent l'assassin Myclops !!! Quelle horreur ! Premium tire sur Myclops et il meurt !!

Premium et Miou Miou quittent la Tombe et puis ils reviennent à l'hôtel. Le 7 juin Premium et Miou Miou rentrent à Londres en avion. ...

Activities:

1. There are at least 20 cognates / semi-cognates in the text, can you circle them?

2. underline all of the verbs in the text

3. How many of the verbs are regular -er verbs? How do we know?

Which ones do not appear to follow the -er pattern? list them:

	-er verbs	non -er verbs
il/ elle		
ils /elles		

4. Open your dictionaries and try to find the English meaning of the following words:

a. laid =

b. l'ascenseur =

c. rencontrer =

Which word is a verb, which one is an adjective and which one is a noun?

5. Imagine that you are Premium Bond, could you retell the first paragraph using the subject pronoun Je?

Appendix 11: Ofsted quality of teaching observation criteria

**Grade descriptors – Quality of teaching in the school**

Note: These descriptors should not be used as a checklist. They must be applied adopting a 'best fit' approach that relies on the professional judgement of the inspection team.

Outstanding (1)

- Much teaching over time in all key stages and most subjects is outstanding and never less than consistently good. As a result, almost all pupils currently on roll in the school, including disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs, disadvantaged pupils and the most able, are making sustained progress that leads to outstanding achievement.
- All teachers have consistently high expectations of all pupils. They plan and teach lessons that enable pupils to learn exceptionally well across the curriculum.
- Teachers systematically and effectively check pupils' understanding throughout lessons, anticipating where they may need to intervene and doing so with notable impact on the quality of learning.
- The teaching of reading, writing, communication and mathematics is highly effective and cohesively planned and implemented across the curriculum.
- Teachers and other adults authoritatively impart knowledge to ensure that pupils are engaged in learning and generate high levels of commitment to learning across the school.
- Consistently high quality marking and constructive feedback from teachers ensure that pupils make significant and sustained gains in their learning.
- Teachers use well-judged teaching strategies, including setting appropriate homework that, together with clearly directed and timely support and intervention, match pupils' needs accurately.

Good (2)

- Teaching over time in most subjects, including English and mathematics, is consistently good. As a result, most pupils and groups of pupils on roll in the school, including disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs, disadvantaged pupils and the most able, make good progress and achieve well over time.
- Teachers have high expectations. They plan and teach lessons that deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding and enable them to develop a range of skills across the curriculum.
- Teachers listen to, carefully observe and skilfully question pupils during lessons in order to reshape tasks and explanations to improve learning.
- Reading, writing, communication and mathematics are taught effectively.
- Teachers and other adults create a positive climate for learning in their lessons and pupils are interested and engaged.
- Teachers assess pupils' learning and progress regularly and accurately at all key stages. They ensure that pupils know how well they have done and what they need to do to improve.
- Effective teaching strategies, including setting appropriate homework and well-targeted support and intervention, are matched closely to most pupils' needs, including those most and least able, so that pupils learn well in lessons.

**Requires improvement (3)**

- Teaching requires improvement because it is not good.

Inadequate (4)

Teaching is likely to be inadequate where **any** of the following apply:

- As a result of weak teaching over time, pupils or particular groups of pupils, including disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs, disadvantaged pupils and the most able, are making inadequate progress.
- Pupils cannot communicate, read, write, or apply mathematics as well as they should.

Appendix 12: Ken lesson information and support materials

Year 9 Lesson (10 March 2011)

A higher attaining (Set 1) Year 9 Spanish class (30 Ss). They were effectively beginners, having only studied the language since the beginning of Year 9 for three lessons a fortnight. In Years 7 and 8 they had uniquely studied French.

Part One – T presents examples of Ss' work on the whiteboard. T reads out extracts of the work (in Spanish) and comments on the quality. He highlights key structures, which increase the sophistication of what is written. Examples of this include: use of 1st person plural –*amos* / use of *si* clauses / verbs followed by prepositions *decidir de*. T makes comments on length. He compares one example from one S with an example from another, pointing out strengths (length, complexity – range of tenses and verbs in a variety of persons) and weaknesses (repetition, pedestrian) of what has been written. T asks the Ss to comment on the work. T links competences in the work to NC Attainment Target Levels.

Part Two – T asks Ss to consider the strengths and weaknesses highlighted in part one, and then asks them to refine their speaking work in light of this. T refers Ss back to their support sheets, and points out the verb endings. T makes up examples, with the Ss' help, of sentences using verbs in the imperfect tense. He models the activity with the Ss. T produces the English, or prompts in English and a S produces the "equivalent" in Spanish. T asks Ss to assess the quality of the work. He asks questions, which involve grammatical terminology such as: "*did she use the preterite?*"

Part Three – Ss work in pairs reproducing the activity that had been modelled by T and the S (in Part 2). T prompts in English, encouraging the Ss to include various tenses or structures. Ss are asked to swap roles after three minutes, and to rely less on their support sheets. After a minute T asks a G to demonstrate what had been practised. T guides her to develop what has been produced.

Part Four - Ss change partners – they pair up with somebody else. They repeat the activity again, one S prompts in English another produces the equivalent expression in Spanish. T monitors constantly, guiding students to develop what they are saying.

Part Five - Ss are asked to work without consulting their sheets. (44.00) Ss are asked to change partners again.

Part Six - Volunteers are requested to present their work orally to the class. T provides feedback.

End of lesson

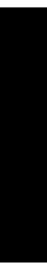
0 to 6 in 60

En mis ratos libres...

Voy a	pescar bailar tocar la guitarra jugar al tenis hablar por teléfono montar a moto montar a caballo montar a bici sacar fotos cantar nadar	con mi familia en una discoteca en un club en el cine en el mar en una piscina en la playa en el instituto con mis amigos en un restaurante
Me gustaría		
Puedo	é aba	
Tengo que		
Quiero		
Prefiero		
Me gusta	í ia	
Me encanta		
Iba a	ir ir a la playa ir de compras ir hacer los deberes	
Decidí		
Sé	fui hice	
Espero	iba hacia	
No...		

Dijo...
Dijo...el fin de
semana pasado
el fin de
semana
próximo
ayer
hoy
mañanahace...
hacía...
sol
frio
calor

cuando

y
pero
por ejemplo
porque
sobre todo
sí
entonces

Year 10 lesson (10 March 2011)

A mixed ability year 10 Spanish GCSE group of fifteen Bs and ten Gs, which had been taught by Ken since Year 9. They had three lessons a fortnight of Spanish in Year Nine and five one hour lessons a fortnight in Year 10. The predicted grade range for the class at GCSE was A* to D.

Part One – *Abre los cuadernos donde tenemos la lista de verbos de ayer* - Ss are asked to refer to the list of verbs which had been re-introduced the day before. S is asked to pick a verb and is prompted (in English) to produce that verb in a variety of different tenses / model constructions. Ss are then asked to work in pairs and repeat the activity modelled with a different verb. Ss are then requested to repeat the activity with an –er or an –ir verb. Ss are asked to demonstrate. T prompts and guides and students respond in Spanish.

Part Two – Ss are again asked to work in pairs and produce as many different versions of the chosen verb as possible. T stops B and prompts him to think about what he needs to produce to get an A*. He and his partner then present what they had been practising. T encourages the boy to use verbs in the third person. Ss are also encouraged to incorporate different verbs. T asks another pair of Ss to demonstrate. He encourages the S prompting in English to think about what he/she wants to say in Spanish first to help avoid translation issues.

Part Three – T stops the Ss and asks them to reflect on whether they are beginning to create a convincing narrative. T questions the students (in English) on what they included in their story.

Part Four – T asks Ss to write down what they have been practising orally. As support there is a *cuaderno grammatico* containing verb paradigms, explicit rules, gap fill and translation exercises. Some Ss use their own notes to help and / or dictionaries. Some use no support at all. T circulates and prompts and supports “right you’ve all got...in my holidays sort of start...can you think story, can you think narration? So a specific time frame – last year, on the first day and then you are going to need an imperfect: I was going, I was staying, I was sunbathing...”

After 7 minutes, all Ss have produced at least two lines of Spanish. Some are advancing more than others. T advises against the overuse of *tambien* to prevent what is being written becoming a list.

Part Five – Ss stop writing and T asks a B to read out his story. T provides feedback on the story.

Year 12 Lesson (10 March 2011)

A small Year 12 group of two: one G and one B. There should have been three in the class but one was absent. The G had achieved an A grade in GCSE Spanish, and the B a B grade. The B had been educated at another school at KS4. They were studying for AS level over two years.

Part One – T briefly explains in the TL the life history of the singer (Manu Chao) whose song the Ss are going to study.

Part Two – Ss listen to song and write down all of the things he says he likes (in Spanish). T encourages B to be more ‘aggressive’, and not panic if he misses some of the items. Ss listen again.

Part Three – T asks Ss to infer what sort of person the singer is from what he sings about. They agree he is positive – he likes a lot of things – including nature, the environment, *la marijuana*, he’s international, *abierto* etc.

Part Four – Ss are given a copy of Manu’s life story and are asked to read and work out the meaning of underlined phrases or idioms. T prompts and supports them through his questioning so that they can work out the meaning of the language.

Year 7 lesson (22 November 2010)

This was set one of two, there were 10 Gs and 10 Bs. They had been learning German since September. Previous work on grammar (verbs): Ss had been introduced to the 1st 3 persons singular of *haben*. *Ich wohne* and *ich heiße* had been taught as stand alone separate items of vocabulary.

Part One - Register in German. G reads objective from board *Bist du ein guter Detektiv / eine gute Detektivin?* T elaborates: the focus of the lesson is for Ss to work out the parts of the verb *spielen*.

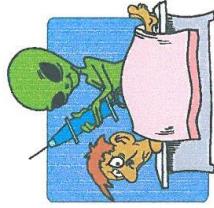
Part Two - Ss are spotting patterns and hypothesizing rules. Ss are given a table of parts of verbs (see below). They are asked to work out patterns – categorising parts of the verb according to endings. Ss work in pairs. Ss colour in boxes; some highlight those parts which belong to the same verb in the same colour; others highlight the same person of a verb in the same colour. Some do not colour but appear to work out the endings straight away and write these down.

T elicits students' findings. B identifies the correct endings for *du*, *er/sie* and *ich*, he also spots that there are different endings for *Sie / sie*.

Outcome: B was able to fully conjugate the verb *spielen*

Part Three - T introduces the personal pronouns and tells Ss what they mean. There is choral repetition of the personal pronouns - Ss also point to themselves or others to demonstrate their understanding of the subject / person of the verb.

Part Four - Ss copy down the full paradigm of *spielen* in their exercise books. They play a *domino game*. Ss are each given a card on which is a part of the verb. Ss stand up and say what is on their card and this has to be followed by the S with the next part of the verb. When all the Ss have participated, T reads each part of the verb in English and Ss give her the corresponding verb in German.



Was kann ich über Verben lernen?

Mache Experimente!

4 regelmäßige deutsche Verben im Präsens.

Infinitiv Formen: "to" spielen = to play; gehen = to go; wohnen = to live; machen = to make / do

ich spielle	sie wohnt	wir gehen	Sie machen	ihr geht	du wohnst	er spielt	ihr macht
sie macht	er geht	ihr wohnt	du spielst	sie spielen	er macht	wir wohnen	Sie gehen
du gehst	wir machen	Sie spielen	er wohnt	ich mache	sie geht	sie wohnen	ihr spielt
sie machen	sie spielt	du machst	sie gehen	Sie wohnen	wir spielen	ich gehe	ich wohne

How many parts does a German verb have?

Do they follow any kind of pattern?

Can you make up a rule about how to use them?

Year 8 lesson (11 February 2011)

This was a Year 8 German class. They had been learning German since Year 7. They also studied French. They had two 1 hour lessons of German weekly.

Part One - T communicates the objective: *we are going to be doing joined up German...liking and disliking in the context of school subjects* (this is a new topic). T informs the Ss that she is not going to teach them; they are going to learn them for themselves.

Part Two - Revision of the alphabet. Ss repeat after T a-z in German; they then repeat the vowel sounds a e u and then ß; Ss then repeat the letters in 3s, for example: abc ...def...Some letters on the board are the same colour because they have the same sound, eg. b c d e g p t – these are repeated, one after another, as a group

Part Three - Listening activity, Ss listen to people mentioning their favourite subjects, they have to guess the meaning of the words they hear

Eg 1. *Hallo was ist dein Lieblingsfach? Mein Lieblingsfach ist Musik.*

T elicits responses from Ss. Ss are then encouraged to spell the words they have heard – applying rules of German pronunciation. T says the word – Ss write down the spelling on mini-white boards. There is lots of choral repetition of the school subjects and T introduces *Kochen*, *Physik* and *Biologie*. Ss repeat the subjects in chorus

T refers Ss to what is on the board and reads out the sentences

Ich spiele gern Tennis Ich gehe nicht gern in die Disko

T presents *machen* (to do a subject) and *lernen* to learn a subject on the board. T wants the Ss to apply the 2 new verbs following the model above so that the Ss can express opinions about their subjects.

Ss produce a variety of examples

Part Four - T displays different pronouns, Ss now have to repeat the same activity but with different parts of the verb. They have to apply correct verb endings. Ss copy down school subjects in the vocabulary books

T asks them to get their planners out. Homework – learn the subjects and write four sentences giving opinions about their school subjects. B asks if he can write *I like this but somebody else likes...* T says that would be excellent.

Year 10 lesson (11 February 2011)

This was a higher attaining Year 10 class of 16 Ss, which had been taught by Jane since Year 7. They had 5 hours of German lessons every two weeks. The Ss were expected to all achieve at least a C grade at GCSE.

Part One - T plays 'wipe out'. Ss pick a number in German which corresponds to a box on the interactive white board. An image is then revealed and the Ss have to answer a question associated with the image. They may have to identify what it is in German; state its gender or create a sentence with a separable verb linked to the image in response to a sentence in English eg.T. I wash up G. *Ich wasche ab.*

Part Two - T tells a story and Ss make notes in English. T uses lots of expression / facial expression and histrionics to facilitate the Ss' comprehension.

Story: Es ist über meiner Familie. Ich habe einen Onkel und mein Onkel heißt Herr Doktor Professor Von Gerotski und er wohnt in einer Burg. Er wohnt in dieser alten ruinierten Burg, das hat ein Schloss yeah und auf dem Land in Transylvanien.. [repeats a little] Ich bin nicht wie ihn, überhaupt nicht. In der Schule war er sehr talentiert, sehr talentiert, in drei Fächer: Biologie, Chemie und Physik. Ja, er war ganz ganz gut - sehr talentiert und er wollte, er wollte Arzt sein, Arzt!! Er wollte in einem Krankenhaus arbeiten, yeah, als Arzt und er hat fünf Jahre Lang auf der Universität in Berlin studiert, fünf Jahre lang!

Es ist sehr, sehr schwierig Arzt zu werden ganz, schwierig so fünf Jahre lang musste er auf der Universität studieren und die Arbeit war sehr hart, sehr hart und endlich, endlich war es zu viel und er wurde total verrückt, weil es zu hart war, wurde er verrückt, total verrückt. So er ist, er ist nach Transyvanien geflogen und er hat diese alte ruinierte Burg gekauft und diese Burg ist auf dem Land und jetzt heute jetzt wohnt er und arbeitet er hier ganz ganz allein.

Er hat keine Frau, keine Kinder, keine Haustiere, ganz ganz allein in dieser alten ruinierten Burg auf dem Land in Transylvanien und ganz ganz (inaudible) es ist ganz traurig und mein Onkel Herr Doktor Professor Von Gorrodsy fühlt sich sehr, sehr einsam, weil er allein ist. Er fühlt sich einsam und er braucht, er braucht einen Freund oder eine Freundin aber, aber es gibt ein Problem, weil er so verrückt ist, weil er total verrückt ist - niemand wollte seinen Freund sein [inaudible] weil er so verrückt ist. Also eines Tages hatte er eine Idee. *Ah!* hat er gesagt, er hatte die Idee einen Freund oder eine Freundin zu machen zu bauen...Ein Monster [Ss laugh] So er hat die Körperteile, ja die Arme, die Beine, er hat alle Körperteile gesammelt...aber er ist sehr vergesslich (17.30) und er weiß nicht wo sie sind... er hat die Körperteile [inaudible] in der Burg verloren. Also braucht er ein Assistent oder eine Assistentin um ihn zu helfen er braucht Assistent oder Assistentin um ihn zu helfen die Körperteile zu finden. Okay das ist die Geschichte von Meinem Onkel Herr Professor von Gorrodsy in einer Burg in Transyvanien.

T checks Ss' understanding by eliciting details about the story in English.

Part Three - T gives each S an adapted transcript of the story which has been gapped in places so that Ss can fill in the correct grammatical forms (cases and adjectival endings). Ss complete this cloze exercise. T then elicits answers from Ss.

T circulates and assists Ss and asks questions such as, who can tell me why certain words are in bold?

T elicits Ss' responses, she prompts and probes to get them to justify why something is correct or not.

Part Four - Cluedo Game

T announces that they are going to play Cluedo. The song 'Monster March' is playing in the background. Ss are split into four groups. There is choral repetition of key vocabulary to drill pronunciation. The game is a process of elimination to work out which cards are in the envelope. Ss have to ask where the body parts are, eg. *Meine Meinung nach ist die linke Hand ist im Kuhlschrank in der Küche*. This enables Ss to practise using the dative case with prepositions.

T has to cut the game short because of time. Lesson ends.

Appendix 14: Ross lesson information and support materials

Year 7 lesson (lower ability) (24 June 2011)

This was a small, lower attaining group of 5 Bs and 8 Gs. They had been learning French for nine months. They had two 1 hour lessons of French weekly.

Part One – T asks Ss to look at the board and work out the meaning of the French expressions and match them to equivalent English expressions. The language displayed had been introduced in the previous lesson. Whilst they do this, T calls the register in French. He then elicits answers from Ss.

Part Two - There is choral repetition of *positif / négatif* and then choral repetition of the displayed French expressions. T elicits responses from Ss in chorus: Ss shout out whether the expressions on the board are *positif ou négatif*. Two Bs come to the front of class to match up the expressions on the interactive whiteboard. T reads out their answers, other Ss shout out whether they are correct or not.

Part Three - Ss work in pairs with examples from the text book as support. One reads out a French expression, the other replies with either *positif or négatif*.

Part Four - T writes new sentences on the board – Ss have again to shout out whether they are *positif ou négatif*. T writes up *Je déteste la géographie parce que c'est intéressant*. This is followed by class discussion as to why the sentence does not make sense. T asks Ss to change the sentence by substituting the word *intéressant* with another adjective so that it makes more sense.

Part Five - T refers Ss to an exercise in the textbook in which they must work out if the sentence makes sense or not. Ss work in pairs. T elicits answers from the Ss.

Part Six - Ss open exercise books. T asks Ss for the date in French. He writes up the lesson objective as ‘understanding peoples’ reasons for their opinion’. T models French sentences with the Ss (he asks for their suggestions). There is much choral repetition to reinforce pronunciation of these sentences. T elicits suggested sentences from individual Ss, and encourages choral repetition of words that are mis-pronounced.

Part Seven - Ss ask each other whether they like certain subjects using *Tu aimes?* *Et pourquoi?*

Homework is set – they must write up their school timetable in French.

Year 7 lesson (Higher ability) (24 June 2011)

This was a Year 7 Higher attaining class of 9 Bs / 14 Gs. They had been learning French since September. They had two 1 hour lessons of French weekly.

Part One - Ss are asked to look at the board and match the French to the English equivalents. T completes the register in French whilst they do this. Two Bs come to the front and match up the expressions on the interactive whiteboard. T reads out their answers, other Ss shout out whether they are correct or not.

Part Two - T reads out an expression from the board and two Ss (B/G) must hit the corresponding translation with a fly swatter. This is repeated with two Gs.

Part Three - T reads out the English example and a student volunteers a French equivalent. If a S mis-pronounces something T encourages individual / choral repetition of the correct version. T asks Ss for an appropriate link word between *J'adore le français / c'est facile*. Prompts Ss for other examples of high frequency language.

Part Four - *J'adore, je déteste* and *je n'aime pas* are presented on the board. T models an example: *moi, je déteste les maths*, he then asks B in French, *monsieur, les maths, qu'est-ce que tu penses?* B. hesitatingly replies *je n'aime pas*. T replies, *Je n'aime pas les maths, pourquoi?* B replies *parce que ... Nous avons beaucoup de devoirs*. T questions others G / B/ G / B.

Part Five – T writes model on board and says, *Je n'aime pas* (there's your opinion) *les sciences* (subject) *parce que* (link word) *c'est ennuyeux* (reason). Drills *qu'est-ce que tu penses?* through much choral repetition. T asks Ss to write opinions of three subjects (*les maths, les sciences, l'anglais*), keeping to the model on the board.

Part Six – T asks Ss to practise orally what they had written in pairs but with the question *quelle est ton opinion?* and not *qu'est-ce que tu penses?*. *Quelle est ton opinion* is drilled orally. T asks Ss for another way of asking for an opinion in French, but previous learning of *qu'est-ce que tu penses* has been displaced by *quelle est ton opinion?* T re-drills the question through choral repetition.

Part Seven - Ss work in pairs, asking each other questions. T circulates and corrects pronunciation. T asks individual Ss *qu'est-ce que tu penses?*

Part Eight - Class survey activity – Ss draw table and are told to ask five people for their opinions on school subjects. They record the responses on the table. T circulates and corrects mis-pronunciation.

Part Nine - Ss write up their answers in the third person – T. models an example of how to do this on the board.

Year 10 lesson (Higher attainers) (11 November 2011)

This was the sole GCSE French group in Year 10. The 9 Bs and 7 Gs had been learning French since Year 7. They were allocated two 1 hour lessons of French a week. It was expected that all Ss would attain at least a C grade at GCSE.

Part One - Three verbs in their infinitive form are presented on the board. T asks Ss to decide which are regular and which are irregular verbs. T prompts Ss to provide examples of each verb in the 1st person singular in the perfect, present and immediate future tense.

Part Two - T presents the objective on the board: *be able to use regular and irregular verbs in past, present and future.*

Part Three - T displays four new verbs – *prendre, visiter, boire* and *regarder*, and asks Ss in pairs to find the perfect, present and immediate future forms. Ss work enthusiastically in small groups and pairs, discussing their thinking. T elicits answers from individual Ss.

Part Four - T displays a variety of high frequency verbs, and time expressions on the board. He models example sentences using this high frequency language on the board. Ss are asked to assist him in making up sentences.

Part Five - Ss are asked to work in pair and make up their own sentences using only two irregular verbs: *aller* and *prendre*. Ss work in pairs or threes, discussing their ideas. Some resort to using dictionaries. Three boys ask if *prendre une vie* works.

Part Six - Ss read out their examples sentences. They present examples of sentences in three tenses and also change the subject of the verb from *je* to *on* and to *nous*.

Part Seven - T presents the final verb *se coucher*. Ss are encouraged to conjugate the verb in the three tenses and change the person of the verb from *je* to *on* and *il*.

GCSE High frequency verbs in present, past and future tenses

	Qu'est-ce que tu as fait...?	Qu'est-ce que tu fais...?	Qu'est-ce que tu vas faire...?
		PRESENT	FUTURE
regarder	<u>Hier</u> j'ai regardé un film	<u>Aujourd'hui</u> je regarde une vidéo	<u>Demain soir</u> je vais regarder une émission
manger	J'ai mangé du poulet et des frites	Je mange du riz et du poisson	Je vais manger un sandwich au fromage
jouer	J'ai joué au basket	<u>Le samedi</u> je joue au foot.	<u>Plus tard</u> je vais jouer au tennis.
visiter	<u>L'année dernière</u> j'ai visité la France	<u>En vacances</u> je visite des châteaux	<u>L'année prochaine</u> je vais visiter l'Espagne
quitter	<u>Ce matin</u> j'ai quitté la maison à 8 heures	<u>Tous les matins</u> je quitte la maison à 7 heures et demie	Je vais quitter l'école à 4 heures
acheter	<u>Le week-end dernier</u> j'ai acheté une voiture	<u>En général</u> j'achète mes vêtements au supermarché	<u>En France</u> je vais acheter du vin et du fromage.
travailler	<u>L'été dernier</u> j'ai travaillé dans un supermarché	<u>Le week-end</u> je travaille dans un magasin	<u>A l'avenir</u> je vais travailler dans un bureau
écouter	<u>Hier soir</u> j'ai écouté de la musique	J'écoute <u>de temps en temps</u> la musique pop.	<u>Ce soir</u> je vais écouter un CD

Year 7 lesson (Lower ability) (10 November 2011)

This was a lower attaining group of 12 Ss: 6 Bs and 6 Gs. They had been learning French since the beginning of the academic year

Part One - T communicates the learning objectives which are displayed on the board.

Part Two - Ss are split into groups. They are given a selection of cards on which are written parts of the verbs *avoir*, *être*, regular –er verbs, examples of reflexive verbs, negatives and pronouns. Ss have to identify the items of language and categorise them into the following groups:

- a. *avoir*
- b. *être*
- c. –er verbs
- d. reflexive verbs
- e. negatives
- f. pronouns

Part Three - T asks the Ss to make up sentences using the words on the cards. T models three sentences on the board, Ss assist by making suggestions.

I'm called Nadia = *je m'appelle Nadia*

I'm tall = *je suis grande*

I sing = *je chante*

Part Four - T asks Ss for examples of sentences in English on the board. She asks Ss to help her to translate. She writes their translations on the board. The example sentences in English increase in complexity.

Year 9 lesson (20 June 2011)

This was a middle attaining group of 23 students. They had been learning French since the beginning of Year 9.

Part One - Ss have to match dates / ages written in English to French equivalents.

Part Two - Register is given in French. Ss answer in French *oui Madame / présent / absent (e)*.

Part Three - Ss ask each other, *Tu as quel âge maintenant?* T asks 2Bs for ages / birthdays.

Part Four - Learning outcomes are shared – these are differentiated – referred to as aims by T. Each outcome is linked to a NC level.

Part Five - Listening activity: Ss read and listen to the same text about a boy discussing the arrangements for a party which took place 'last Saturday'. T. reads the same text, stops after each sentence to check for S understanding. Ss are given a list of ten sentences in French and have to match each one to a corresponding picture of an activity.

T elicits responses from Ss *c'est quelle image?* Ss reply with letter corresponding to the picture.

Part Six - Listening activity: Ss have to work out what the four young people did to help organise the party. Ss listen to the extracts 3 times. T elicits in TL responses from Ss: *Qu'est-ce qu'elle a fait? Tu peux m'aider?*

Part Seven - Ss work in pairs. One says a sentence, their partner repeats the sentence and then adds another sentence.

Part Eight - Ss are going to learn how to describe what they brought as a present to the fictional party. T introduces *les cadeaux* pictures on board. Ss say what they bought, and why.

T *Qu'est-ce que tu as acheté? J'ai acheté... Pourquoi? Elle aime lire...?*

Part Nine - Letter to a French Godmother – T explains how to start the letter. Ss have to write about their age, birthday and what happened at Nathalie's Birthday.

Part Ten - Listening activity - this provides a model of the type of language the Ss should produce in the letter. T plays the extract again – Ss have to pick out useful language. T writes this up on the board. This provides the Ss with a model.

Part Eleven - Ss work on the letter, although they only have three minutes. T tells them that they will finish it next lesson.

Year 10 lesson (10 November 2011)

This was a mixed ability Year 10 GCSE class of 11Bs and 11 Gs. They had been learning French since Year 7.

10 minutes of the lesson were lost because the Remembrance assembly overran.

Learning Obj are displayed on the board: *Arranging to go out / using question words*

Part One - Ss are given a list of words / expressions that would appear on advertisements for cultural events – plays, films and *spectacles* in French and they have to match them to English equivalents. T reads out the English version – Ss volunteer the French. T prompts in English to help Ss find the right answer.

Part Two - T explains what the end outcome is – a poster advertising a cultural event in French. T encourages Ss not to lapse back into English. Encourages Ss to set the event in Strasbourg because the school has cultural links with the city. Teacher writes locations, which are common to Strasbourg on the board.

Part Three - Listening exercise: Ss match content of spoken exerts to the corresponding event detailed in their text books. T models how to pick out key words to help them find the right answer. T elicits responses from Ss.

Part Four - Ss to plan out what their event will be in their rough book. Ss are asked to reuse the language that has already been presented in the lesson.

Part Five - On the board is a 3 by 3 grid containing times written in figures (24 hours times which is culturally specific). Ss practise *on se retrouve à quelle heure?* *On se retrouve...* Ss play o/x/o with the T. T asks *On se retrouve à quelle heure?* Ss reply - they have to say *on se retrouve* and then convert the figures into full French times.

Part Six – T changes *the variable* on the o/x/o/ grid. It is the same activity but this time Ss give prices in response to *ça coûte combien?* T asks *ça coûte combien?* Students in turn offer prices.

Bell goes – end of lesson

Adam

I was born in 1970 in the fenland area of Cambridgeshire. I was educated at a comprehensive school and completed my A levels at a further education college in Peterborough. I completed my first degree, in modern foreign languages, at the University of Aston. I graduated in 1995 and then subsequently participated in the JET Programme in Japan for one year. I studied for my PGCE at the University of Birmingham. I began my teaching career at a large comprehensive in Hertfordshire where I stayed for six years. From 2003 to 2013 I was the modern foreign languages adviser for Norfolk LA. However from 2009, I began a series of secondments in school as an assistant headteacher / deputy headteacher. I am currently one of the two deputy headteachers at Sheringham High School, where I lead the Sixth Form and teach French, German, Japanese and A Level Psychology.

Morag

Born in the 1960s, Morag was educated in Scotland. She studied French, German and philosophy at University. She completed her PGCE at Homerton College, Cambridge in the late 1980s. She was the Head of MFL at an LA maintained comprehensive for over 9 years and then subsequently became a MFL adviser for a Local Authority in 2002. She currently (2014) works as a freelance consultant for language learning as well as teaches French and German part-time in a secondary comprehensive school. She is the author of several language learning textbooks.

Ross

Born in 1969, Ross was educated entirely in Scotland. He is the only participant to have been raised bi-lingually; his mother was Italian. He completed his degree in French at Dundee University. He currently (2014) teaches at a small, rural 11-16 LA controlled school in Norfolk, where he is the subject leader for MFL. He has been teaching for nearly 20 years.

Ken

Ken was born in the late 1960s and was educated at a grammar school in the north of England. He completed his degree in French and Spanish at Cambridge University in the late 1980s. He subsequently spent four years teaching English as a foreign language in Mexico. He returned to the UK to complete his PGCE at the University of Leicester. He is currently Head of MFL at a LA maintained school. He contributes to the teaching for the MFL teacher training programme for the Open University. He has been teaching for over 20 years.

Rosetta

Rosetta was educated at a grammar school in the south of England in the 1970s. She completed a four year BEd (French) programme at Homerton College, Cambridge in the late 1970s early 1980s. She is currently a head of modern foreign languages at a converter Academy. At the time of the research she had been teaching for over 20 years.

Jane

Jane was born in the mid 1960s. She completed her grammar school education in the north of England. She studied German and French at Reading University. She

completed her PGCE at the University of East Anglia in the late 1980s. She currently teaches at a school in Norwich, and has been teaching for over 20 years. She contributes her expertise on the Graduate Training Programme.

PILOT STUDY

Zara

Born in 1972, Zara is the youngest participant in the study, and the only participant to have sat GCSE examinations. She had a comprehensive school education in Cambridgeshire and completed her degree in French at the University of London. She studied for her PGCE at the University of Warwick. At the time of the research, she was an assistant headteacher of a language college and had been in teaching for 13 years. Shortly after the interview she took a career break. I believe she has now returned to teaching.

Zelda

Born in 1953, Zelda is the oldest participant in the study. She has retired since her engagement in the research. She had a grammar school education in the North East of England in the 1960s / 1970s. She completed a degree in French at the University of Hull. The first three years of her teaching career were spent at a grammar school. She subsequently spent the next 30 years as head of modern foreign languages at a LA maintained school. She retired from teaching in 2010.